

January 3, 2018



A weekly newsletter of Sparta United Methodist Church



Discover our church website and all of the stories linked to our newsletter at [www.spartaumc.com](http://www.spartaumc.com).



## TEAMWORK

On Sunday, Dec. 17, Pastor Phil said our church needed to work as a Team. Well, we did that for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For Thanksgiving we fed five families. For Christmas we took care of 8 families which consisted of 15 children and 12 adults. Thanks to Mary Martha Circle for the food, the former Sarah Ruth Circle for the food, money, gifts, and food gift cards, and our church family for turkeys, hams, clothes, and food, and the Senior Neighbors for food from their monthly Commodity Boxes. The families we provided for all said Thank You to our Church for the surprise of gifts, food, and clothes. We entered the Mission Field when we left our Worship Service on Sunday mornings.

Thank you and Blessings to all,  
Dave and Joanna Huizenga

Dear Church Family,

Do you remember the song, Jesus Take the Wheel by Carrie Underwood? The song describes someone's life who feels overwhelmed and alone. They travel along a dark road at night with their baby in the back seat. The protagonist loses control on an icy patch. It is at that moment, she realizes that she needs to put Jesus in control. More than just in the near accident, but to give Jesus the wheel of her life.

Do you ever find yourself in the passenger seat? I rarely find I am ever in it. Michael, my six-year-old son, still has ten years before he begins driving. This finds me behind the wheel for every trip that we take. When I do have someone else drive, I find I am tense and cannot fully relax. I discover that my right foot extends and begins to push on the floor when I think we should be coming to a stop. These reflexes demonstrate that I am not comfortable with someone else taking the wheel.

However, there is one exception. Whenever my dad drives, not only am I relaxed, I almost immediately fall asleep. Now my dad is a good driver, but his driving style isn't exactly what you'd call a slow, relaxing Sunday drive. We get to where we need to go in record time. Though others in the car may not appreciate this style of driving, I find it comforting. I can rest when my dad is in the driver's seat. Through many long road trips, I have grown accustomed to his style of driving and will readily let him take the wheel.

The same is very much true with our Heavenly Father. It is only through years of walking and learning His "driving style" that we are able to relax and feel comfortable when He takes the wheel. How do we learn what this feels like when He is behind the wheel? What can we do to see God steering His path in our lives?

The answer is through His Words. Through the study of the Bible, we learn how He directs us. I challenge you this year to attend Sunday school to begin to become familiar with Jesus's driving style. As we study, we unpack the story of Jesus in our own lives and learn how to read the roadmap of Scripture. The Bible is a complex book, but we work through it together.

Adult Sunday school meets every Sunday morning at 8:45 AM in the church dining room. We graciously welcome those who run late and arrive at 9 AM.

Supervised nursery care, as well as elementary- and middle-school-age Sunday school meet on Sunday mornings, too. Myself and Dr. Jay Dean encourage you to join us as we continue to study His word and gain an understanding of what it is like to place Jesus behind the wheel.

Thank you,  
Tim Shangle

From your



Thank you Sparta United Methodist Church for your generous giving to Missions in 2017. As you know Missions Committee gifts are not a part of our Church budget and rely totally on your loving hearts.

In 2017 your generosity helped fund Blanket Sunday, Sparta CROP Walk, UMCOR emergency fund requests, Haiti Hot Lunch, Grand Rapids Exodus Place, Certification for the Incarcerated (CFTI), our Back-to-School Kickoff, Margaret Blaauw's mission trip to Peru, and sponsorship of the Food Truck for one month. One half of your 2017 Advent offerings will be used toward funding another food truck sponsorship next April. Your giving for these outreach programs totaled over \$3,500. In addition to these gifts, from your Sunday KIDS KANS contributions, we sent Mamrelund Lutheran Church \$500 for their food pantry, and North Kent Connect (formerly North Kent Service Center) over \$2,000, and the bulk of over 4,000 food items you gave over the year. Your food donations also helped stock our local food pantry. Thank you and God Bless you.

TIME TO  
Un-Decorate

Help is needed on Monday, Jan. 8, at 9 AM to remove and store the Christmas decorations in the church building. Please come to assist on Monday morning.



Wes Scott—hip replacement Jan. 2

Thank You!  
THANK YOU!

Dear Sparta United Methodist Church,  
Thank you for your beautiful Christmas card and very generous staff Christmas gift presented on Christmas Eve day. You are all a blessing to work with and share worship with. Here is looking forward to great things for the church and God's work in 2018.

Steve Barnum

I would like to thank the church for the wonderful Christmas gift. It was very thoughtful and I greatly appreciate the generosity. I love working with the kids and look forward to the music we'll share in the coming year!

Blessings,  
Caelin Murdock



Mary/Martha Circle's 2017 Christmas Party included an in-gathering of food for our church's food pantry.

Schedules

- Choir Practices  
Sundays  
9:30 AM..... Children's (Parents: please pick up your child at 10 AM from practice)  
9:50 AM..... Adult preservice rehearsal  
Wednesdays 7 PM. Adult
- Tuesdays  
9:30 AM..... Girl Talk Study Group  
6:30 PM..... GriefShare (Feb. 6 to May 1)
- Third Thursday of the Month  
1 PM..... Reading Group
- Sundays  
8:45 AM..... Adult Sunday School  
**SEE ARTICLE ON PREVIOUS PAGE**  
9 AM..... Middle School Sunday School  
9 AM..... Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Craft/Prayer Time  
10:10 AM..... Morning Worship Celebration  
10:30 AM..... Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School

10:10 AM Worship Attendant Volunteers Jan. 7

- Soundboard..... Chad & Shelly Murdock  
Head Usher..... Alan Hartman  
Acolytes.....  
Usher..... Bonnie Wilkinson  
Nursery Leader..... Naomi Collins  
Nursery Assistant ..... Caelin & Camryn Murdock  
Welcome Table ..... Mary VanGessel  
Greeters .....  
Intercessory Prayer ... Stephanie Rienks  
Scripture Reader ..... Thom Babcock  
Fellowship Time ..... Kay Chase, Hess Wever & the Tilli Family

Save the Date

- Jan. 7 ..... Baptism of the Lord Sunday—Baptisms  
Jan. 8 9:30 AM.... Un-decorate the church  
6:30 PM ... Trustees meeting  
Jan. 9 6:30 PM.... Church Council  
Jan. 13 8 AM..... Men's Mealtime Rally  
Jan. 14 ..... Human Relations Special Offering  
Jan. 18–25 ..... Week of Prayer for Christian Unity  
Jan. 21 ..... Community Service @ Sparta UMC for Prayer for Christian Unity

This Upcoming Week's

Birthdays

- Jan. 8 Adrian Miller  
Jan. 12 Dale Young  
Jan. 13 Madelyn Hume



SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH • 54 EAST DIVISION STREET • SPARTA MI 49345

The Mission of Sparta United Methodist Church: *Helping each other follow Jesus' way* (John 14:6)

The Vision: *That through Him all might be saved* (John 3:17)

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OFFICE HOURS Monday – Thursday, 9 AM – 1 PM • WORSHIP TIME Sunday 10:10 AM

We are a connected ministry. Check out:

[Michigan Area United Methodist Church](#) • [United Methodist, Grand Rapids District](#) • [United Methodist News Service Daily Digest](#)

Articles for next week's *Flash* are due on Tuesday. Contact the office with updates and additions.