



### Children's Christmas Program

#### Sunday, December 16

The program will take place during worship service. If your child would like to participate, please have them to the church as close to 9 AM as possible. We will be meeting downstairs where Sunday school would normally meet.

An extra practice takes place December 12 from 5–7 PM with pizza for the kids and assignment of costumes.



#### Fireside Story Time

Join Pastor Phil and Gail at the parsonage (1960 Skyview Drive) on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 4 PM to hear the story of St. Nicholas. Children, parents and grandparents are invited. Learn about the origins of Santa Claus. Light snacks provided.

#### PRAYER NEEDS



Joanna Huizenga—sight issues from Thom & Pat Babcock—please pray for our dear friend, Samantha Leonard, in Australia, hospitalized with a possible brain tumor

Mary Ellen Kimble's friend Jack Meulenberg recovering at home from lung blood clots and is very weak

Thank you to all who support Exodus Place with donations. Also a thank you to those that came to serve the Christmas meal. It was so good to see so many folks from Sparta UMC come out to serve our men at this event. It is so appreciated. —Brad Greeno

Thanks for Your Help!

SIGN UP FOR 2019

The 2019 Altar Flower and Kids Kans sign ups are posted in the parlor. And 'Best Gift' program information is still available at the display table in the parlor.

#### Greater New Jersey Conference

##### N.J. Supreme Court affirms property rights

ALPINE, N.J. — The New Jersey Supreme Court affirmed a lower court's ruling that local church property is subject to governance by United Methodists of the Greater New Jersey Conference and the trust clauses of the Book of Discipline. The case settles a series of actions stemming back to 2015. Josh Kinney has the story.

[Read story](#)

[Read previous conference story](#)

#### United Methodist Communications

##### Take the Advent, Christmas music quiz

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMC.org) — The Peanuts gang sings a Charles Wesley hymn in the final scene of "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Can you name the hymn?

[Take the quiz](#)

#### Many happy returns



Somehow, not only for Christmas,  
But all the long year through,  
The joy that you give to others,  
Is the joy that comes back to you.  
And the more you spend in blessing  
The poor and lonely and sad,  
The more of your heart's possessing  
Returns to you glad.

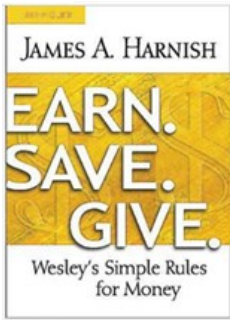
—John Greenleaf Whittier

#### +Christian Symbol+ Five-Pointed Star

The star of Bethlehem is often shown as a five-pointed star. Roughly shaped like a human being, it symbolizes Christ's incarnation. It also calls to mind the wise men's journey:

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him'". (Matthew 2:1-2, NIV).





Faith & Money with John Wesley:  
 "Earn all you can.  
 Save all you can.  
 Give all you can."

*Earn. Save. Give.* is filled with the kind of wisdom we have come to expect from Jim Harnish. His approach puts making disciples at the core and raising money as a by-product.

Join a small group for this four-week study of John Wesley's teachings. If you would like to facilitate a small group, please let the church office or Pastor Phil know. The study and sermon series begin the week of January 20, 2019. Orders for participant's books will be taken through the church office and on Sunday morning's Next Step Card.



2018	November	Year to Date	Annual
General Operating Income	\$20,136.07	\$210,870.80	\$240,440
Operating Expense	\$21,739.91	\$205,175.79	\$224,935
Difference	<b>(\$1,603.64)</b>	\$5,695.01	\$15,505
General Fund Balance	\$14,270.85		
2018 Ministry Shares apportioned to Sparta UMC (payable through the General Fund): \$33,867 Paid through November: \$4,233			

### Special Gifts & Offerings Received in November

Adult Choir..... \$160	Missionary Dornon..\$25
Best Gifts..... \$35	Pastor Disc Fund.. \$100
Blanket Sunday ..... \$25	Rent..... \$188.50
Facility Fund..... \$60	Sunday School .... \$6.50
Haiti Hot Lunch ..... \$35	UM Student Day.... \$10
Hand2Hand..... \$803.46	UMCOR..... \$50
Kids Kans..... \$178.40	Youth Ministries...\$5,353.91

### Schedules

Tuesdays  
 9:30 AM ..... Girl Talk Study Group

Wednesdays  
 6 PM ..... Worship Design Team  
 7-8 PM ..... Adult Choir practice

4th Thursday of the Month  
 6 PM ..... Vision Team

Sunday mornings  
 8:45-11:45 ..... Nursery (ages 0-4 years)  
 8:30-9:45 ..... DISCIPLE Bible Study  
 9:00 ..... Adult Bible Study  
 9:00 ..... Middle & Senior High Sunday School  
 9:00 ..... Chime Choir Practice / Craft Time  
 (Pre-K - 5th)  
 9:30 ..... Children's Choir Practice (Pre-K - 5th)  
 Parents: pick up your child at 10 AM from practice  
 9:50 ..... Adult Choir pre-service rehearsal  
 10:10 ..... Morning Worship Celebration  
 10:30 ..... Pre-K - 5th Grade Sunday School

### 10:10 AM Worship Attendant Volunteers December 16

Soundboard ..... Brandon Ingersoll & Isaiah Marks  
 Head Usher ..... Justin Westra  
 Greeter ..... Tena Stuhan  
 Nursery Assistants ..... Caelin & Camryn Murdock  
 Welcome Table ..... De Knappen  
 Intercessory Prayer .... Bonnie Shupe  
 Fellowship Time... Mike & Mary Eggleston  
 Earl & Pat Babcock

### Save the Date

Dec. 16 ..... Children's Christmas Program  
 ..... Retirement Recognition  
 4 PM ..... Fireside Story Time @ Parsonage

Dec. 18 6:30 PM .... Trustees

Dec. 22 8-10 AM ... Free Community Breakfast

Dec. 23 ..... dining room and kitchen in use



Dec, 24 7 PM ..... Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
 11 PM ..... Candlelight in a Stable  
 at 3325 14 Mile Road, NW, Sparta  
 A special service hosted by  
 Sparta UMC and Peace Lutheran Church

Dec. 24-25 ..... Church Offices Closed

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)

CHURCH OFFICE p 616.887.8255 • Pastor Phil Friedrich c 616.799.4281 • FAX 616.887.8256 • WEBSITE [www.spartaumc.com](http://www.spartaumc.com)

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 *News Flash* are due on Tuesday. Contact the church office with updates and additions.