

December 23, 2019



A weekly newsletter of The Sparta United Methodist Church



Discover our church website and all of the stories linked to our newsletter at www.spartaumc.com.

SAVE THE DATE! **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:**



7 PM Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the Church Sanctuary.

All contributions will go towards the Compassion & Good Samaritan Funds!

11 PM a very Special Christmas Eve Service at Bettes Barn at the corner of Peach Ridge and 14 mile (3325 14 Mile NW). The theme this year is "Just Another Homeless Family."

All contributions will go to the Family Promise Fund!

ALL ARE WELCOME!

NURSERY ATTENDANTS NEEDED



As our present Nursery Worker retires and our Church continues to grow, our Church Council has decided to hire 2 new Nursery Attendants. The position pays \$10 an hour and requires 3 hours of your time every Sunday morning. Please contact the

Ministry Office at 616-887-8255 for application inquiries or Pastor Phil at 616-799-4281.

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

There are new sign up sheets posted in the Church Parlor for next year! Please take a look and sign up.

January volunteers are sparse, so if you're able, please sign up! Updated signs include: Alter Flowers, Fellowship Time, Greeters & Welcome Table.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

The Ministry Building Office will be closed Tuesday December 24th and Wednesday December 25th for the Christmas Holiday. The Office will close again the following week for the New Year's Holiday; Tuesday, December 31st and Wednesday, January 1st, 2020.



If you need any assistance during this time please feel free to call Pastor Phil at 616-799-4281.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Sparta UMC will be working with the Heifer International Organization this coming year! They help provide in the areas of livestock and agriculture to develop programs that alleviate hunger and poverty in the world. Gifts may be purchased though Epiphany. Stop by the display table in the Church Parlor for more information!



FAVORITE TOY

Parents & Children: please bring your favorite Christmas present to Sunday's service! Sunday's service will be a little more relaxed so please feel free to share and show your favorite new toy!



THANK YOU

A huge thank you to all the volunteers and congregation members for all of your help since my start in November. I am truly blessed to have had such a warm welcome. Merry Christmas! Arieal

MENS MEALTIME RALLY



Every second Saturday, in the Ministry Building at 8 AM, men of all ages of the congregation come enjoy breakfast and good conversations! Join us next month on January 11th at 8 AM.

CHILDRENS PROGRAM FUN



MISSIONARY UPDATE

Today is the first day of the month of Poush. This is the 9th



month of the year of 2076! Happy December 17! I had good intentions to send this letter before the last minute Christmas rush – but, here we are! It is a beautiful morning – I can see the sun on the Himalayas from my window as I write. We are thankful for the beauty of this place around us – the colors of the morning sky are amazing! Last evening, we had our 3rd annual Christmas meal for our househelpers. All year long, these wonderful ladies work in our homes – doing laundry, cleaning, baking, and just helping us in so many ways! We now have 11 ladies who are working in our homes and gardens, plus we included the 3 ladies who work at our guest house, so we were serving 14 people. It is the one chance a year we have to serve them – as they do for us all the rest of the time! We baked chickens, made twice baked potatoes, veggies and yeast rolls. Pumpkin pie, ice cream and cookies was dessert. It was a fun evening. I was challenged in my baking skills – doing pumpkin pie from scratch – making the pie dough and the filling without anything from a can. On Friday the Hospital Christian Fellowship group will do its annual tea and snacks day for all the hospital staff. So – that is around 400 people! They are divided up by departments and come throughout the day. It is a nice chance to share about the reason we are celebrating Christmas. That evening, we will all go caroling around the hospital wards and give out oranges to the patients. Christmas here is so much different still than in the west. It is not a national holiday (it was for awhile, but is not at this time) and people are not always aware of the season. The churches do various outreach programs, but it is lovely to have a very non-commercial Christmas. It helps us to focus on the real reason we celebrate - the birth of Jesus. August, Sept, and Oct were busy months for the hospital. Our patient numbers continue to stay high, and lots of training goes on, as well. We made a quick trip to Pokhara in September to help a friend move there for work, we enjoyed having many visitors as it is one of the nicest seasons in Nepal (after the monsoon rains finish), and we enjoyed continuing to be active in church and various fellowship groups. We were encouraged to be part of panel discussions about marriage and parenting at the church – in spite of cultural differences, it is amazing how many similarities there are in these areas...

Please visit www.spartaumc.com to continue reading their newsletter; including their wonderful pictures as well!

Schedules

Mondays

7 pmBoy Scouts Church Wesley Hall

Tuesdays

9:30 amGirl Talk Study Group Ministry Building

1st Tuesday of each Month

5:45 pm.....Finance Meeting Church Dining Room

6:30 pm.....Ad Council Meeting Church Dining Room

2nd Tuesday of each Month

6:30 pm.....Trustees Meeting

Wednesdays

6 pmWorship Design Team

7-8 pm.....Adult Choir Practice

2nd Wednesday of each Month

9:30 amMary Martha's Circle

5:30 pmDorcas Circle

4th Thursday of each Month

6 pmVision Team

2nd Saturday of each Month

8 am.....Men's Mealtime Rally Ministry Building

4th Saturday of each Month

8:00-10:00am.....Free Community Breakfast

Sunday mornings

9:00-9:45.....Adult Bible Study (Ministry Building)

9:00.....Middle & Senior High Sunday School

9:00-9:30.....Children's Chimes (DANIEL ROOM)

9:30-10:00.....Children's Choir (UPPER ROOM)

*Parents: please pick up your children from the UPPER ROOM at 10:00am

9:50.....Adult Choir Pre-Service Rehearsal

10:10Morning Worship Celebration

10:30Pre-K – 5th Grade Sunday School

10:10 am Worship Attendant Volunteers December 29, 2019

Soundboard & PowerPoint...Brandon Ingersoll & Kerry Emelander
Head Usher.....Alan Hartman
Nursery AssistantErica Sarat
Nursery Leader.....Mindy Tilli
Welcome TableMarge Blaauw
Intercessory Prayer.....Paul Schulz
Scripture Reader.....JoEllen Pinckney
Fellowship Time.....TBD
Greeters.....TBD
Altar Flowers.....Christmas Poinsettias

Office Volunteers Scheduled Week of December 30, 2019

Monday.....Jeanne Drier
Tuesday.....OFFICE CLOSED
Wednesday.....OFFICE CLOSED
Thursday.....Mary Scott
Friday.....TBD

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

OFFICE HOURS Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 3 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 by Tuesday at 2 PM. Contact the church office with updates and additions.