

March 25, 2020

NewsFlash

Parsonage Edition

The Weekly Newsletter of the Sparta United Methodist Church

CHURCH CLOSINGS RAMP UP

If we thought last week was loaded with changes and challenges, this week is just as difficult, if not more so. We went from minimal interaction in our church (and throughout Sparta and the State of Michigan) to a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order from our governor. Our bishop, Bishop David Bard, also issued a statement (<https://mailchi.mp/miareaumc/bishop-david-bard-recommends-no-church-gatherings-until-april-2771269?e=0520487007>). The Bishop has called for us to end all multi-person activities at the church, even those that allow us to live-stream our worship. With the mandates changing so quickly, it’s been very difficult to provide a meaningful Sunday service. The first week of our live-streaming (March 15th) Pastor Phil, Peggy and Brandon got us underway with a simple approach. Then, last Sunday (March 22nd) Steve and Julie, and Connie and Dave joined in to greatly enhance the worship. Thanks go out to everyone for such efforts.

SO, WHAT WILL WE DO ON SUNDAYS NOW?

This coming Sunday we will dramatically simplify things and broadcast from the parsonage. Pastor Phil will do his best to serve as both technician and preacher. In the weeks ahead we will undoubtedly come up with additional ideas that will keep us in basic compliance with the Governor’s Order and our Bishop’s message (both of which have our best interest at their heart).

HOW DO I WATCH THE CHURCH SERVICE?

To see the service LIVE (as it is happening) each Sunday, simply go to the **Sparta United Methodist Church FaceBook Page** and from there you simply touch on the link for our **live-stream service**. Although we may have some music playing prior to 10:10 a.m. on Sunday morning, Pastor Phil won’t begin speaking until our usual start time.

HOW LONG WILL THIS CONTINUE?

We don’t know how long this “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order will be in place. Nor do we know how long it will be until it will be advisable for us to gather in groups, particularly as large as a group as a typical Sunday service. But until then we will seek to be the church while keeping ourselves and our neighbors as safe as possible.

PEOPLE CHECKING ON PEOPLE

The church is seeking someone to coordinate people in making phone check-in with our church membership. If you would like to take on this project please give Pastor Phil a call or text at (616-799-4281). There is no preconceived design to this idea. Pastor Phil would like to thank those who are already making these contacts. However, we want to make sure that no one falls through the cracks. For those who prefer, contacts might also be made through Facebook and texting.

OUR CHURCH BEGINS VIDEO CONFERENCING

Pastor Phil began holding Zoom meetings this week from the parsonage. This is a technology that allows participants to see and hear the other participants. Each person needs a smartphone, pad, or computer to use the Zoom system. Very soon Pastor Phil will roll out this technology for our church leaders. We’ll begin with our Administrative Council and Vision Team and then, if additional groups would like to hold a meeting, Pastor Phil can serve as a host.

HOW DO WE GIVE OUR CHURCH OFFERINGS?

Just like all other small businesses, we continue to have expenses. You can help us by mailing your gifts to the church at:

Sparta United Methodist Church
54 East Division Street
Sparta, MI 49345

...Or make a donation from our webpage at:
www.spartaumc.com

Our Finance Chairperson, Jim Bosserd, will be sending a letter to the congregation very soon which will give us additional information.

WE ARE SAVING WHERE WE CAN

While these unfortunate circumstances are plaguing our nation, and it is necessary for us to keep our facility closed and much of our programming on hold, we are making efforts to save money where savings are possible. As an example, the heat has been turned down in our buildings. Thanks also go out to our custodian, Tena, as she (until the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Orders) has been doing deep cleaning and floor striping and waxing.

PRAYER REQUESTS & PEOPLE NEWS

- Thom Babcock's surgery has been postponed until April 8th.
- Steph Reinks has moved again. Her new address is 9645 Meadowland Court, Zeeland, MI 49464.
- For now text **PRAYER REQUESTS & PEOPLE NEWS** to Pastor Phil at: 616-799-4281, or email to: philfriedrick@gmail.com