

April 22, 2020



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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Ella, Brandon, and Addison Uzarski all turn 11 on Sunday!

FOOD AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES IN NEED



If you know of someone who needs food, please text or call Pastor Phil at 616-799-4281.

ADMIN BACK FROM MATERNITY LEAVE

Our Office Administrative Assistant, Arieal Lynch, has returned from her six-week maternity leave. Our church is very thankful that Arieal assisted in some administrative tasks throughout her time away. Because of Michigan's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" orders, we've set up a temporary office in Arieal's home in Cedar Springs. She is available Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 3 PM via email or phone. She is working in coordination with Pastor Phil, who is doing his work out of the Parsonage. If you need Arieal feel free to call or text her at 989-745-3492 or email her at spartaumc@spartaumc.com. If you don't reach her right away, please leave a message, send a text or shoot her an email.



NEW ONLINE BIBLE STUDY

Our new online Bible study might be the perfect way to fill your time with a meaningful option during the COVID pandemic. Those in attendance are enjoying coming together to study a different book of the Bible each Wednesday night at 7 PM. There is no homework and if you miss a week, it's not a problem! To be a part of this group simply join the live stream on the Sparta UMC Facebook page or by clicking on the link on our website, SpartaUMC.com.



FAMILY HAS HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

A family (with children) in our congregation has faced a family crisis which has left them without several common household items. If you have any of the items from the list below, that have some good life left in them, please text (or call) Arieal 989-745-3492 or Pastor Phil 616-799-4281. They will make arrangements for where and when you can drop-off of your item(s):

- Toaster
- Vacuum
- Pots and pans
- Silverware
- Baking pans
- Dishes



UPPER ROOM DEVOTIONAL BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE



The new Upper Room Devotional Books have arrived at our Church Office. This creates a problem because we've always depended on people picking up the booklets on Sunday mornings. Currently we don't know who to mail booklets to. So here is the plan for now:

1. There is a clear plastic box located outside of the back of the Church, by the double glass doors (the doors by the elevator). In that box you will find copies of the Upper Room. For some reason we have not received large-print editions for this quarter. Feel free to stop by on the way to the drug store or the grocery store and take one.
2. Contact Arieal at 989-745-3492 or Pastor Phil at 616-799-4281 and ask for a copy to be mailed to you.
3. Download the Upper Room App on your smart phone or tablet. The cost is \$13.99 per year. This is a very convenient option for those of you who have their phones with them all the time!

NEW LAPTOP PURCHASED FOR OFFICE



A new laptop computer has been ordered for our Church Office. Two months ago our Ad. Council approved the purchase of a new desktop computer for the Admin's desk and another for the volunteer desk. Then COVID-19 came along, and we learned how valuable portability can be. The Council has since modified its decision and ordered a laptop with a docking station instead. This new laptop will function like a desktop during the day and can be simply unplugged and taken home in the evening. This approach will also position us better in the event that there is another "Stay at Home" order. Our primary church software and data has also been moved off local hard drives to the cloud so that work can also be more easily done off site.

JOIN US FOR “VIRTUAL” COFFEE FELLOWSHIP TIME

Immediately following Worship each Sunday, there is now a fun way to connect with some of the people you have been missing. Last week was our third Sunday Zoom coffee time. To participate, grab a cup of coffee (or any beverage of your choice) and just follow the link on our Facebook page or the link on our website.



GIVING REMAINS STRONG



We're not doing a financial count every week because we don't want to risk exposing our volunteer counters too often. However, the numbers remain strong! Thank you to everyone for sacrificing so much to keep our church financially stable during these challenging times.

FOUR EASY METHODS OF GIVING

1. Using your debit or credit card through our website: Gifts may be made through our website by pressing the menu box at the top and pressing “give” in the drop down menu.
2. Mail a check: Checks may be sent to the Church at Sparta United Methodist Church, 54 East Division Street, Sparta, MI 49345
3. Automatic Debit: This is another way that some people of our church make their contributions. This is an automated process that requires a signed form that Pastor Phil or Arieal can help you set up. Call him at 616-799-4281 or Ari at 989-745-3492 if you would like to do this. Church income from this uninterrupted source has been very valuable during this crisis!
4. Automatic Bill Pay: This is an arrangement you can make with your bank or financial institution. With this procedure, your bank sends the church the amount you determine at the intervals you also choose.

STANLEY IS BACK

The Stanley Box that Pastor Phil uses with the children on Sunday morning is back. If you know someone who would like to put something in Stanley, please give Pastor Phil a call or text at 616-799-4281. Phil would like to pick the item(s) up from your porch early in the week so that they can sit for a few days before being handled.



SUNDAY WORSHIP ELEMENTS

Keep the last page of this newsletter (perhaps even print it off, if you are able) and use it as a helpful way of participating on Sunday morning's Worship.

PEOPLE CHECKING ON PEOPLE

We now have someone to coordinate people in making phone check-ins with our church family, Kathy Reed. If you're willing to assist, please text or call Kathy at 616-560-8575.



Thanks to everyone 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 via text messages.

PRAYER REQUESTS & PEOPLE NEWS



- Let's remember all those who are struggling with all forms of “stay at home” orders.
- Megan, niece of Pastor Bill from Cedar Springs United Methodist Church is fighting suspected COVID-19.
- Salina Eggers is expecting a baby on April 23rd.
- Prayers, please, for our Son-in-Law, Mike Kapteyn, and his family, as he is nearing the end of his life here on earth. Prayers, too, for others facing their own challenges. Thank you, Jim & Carla VanAsselt
- Praying for first responders of every kind. Just imagine the kind of responder that comes to your mind and heart.

**Going forward, please text or email
PRAYER REQUESTS & PEOPLE NEWS to Arieal
at 989-745-3492 or spartaumc@spartaumc.com**

HELP NEEDED!

Lynne is moving to the Sparta area at the end of May. She is currently a member of the United Methodist Church in Union Missouri and is excited to be moving back to Sparta! She is currently looking for a place to rent or possibly purchase around that time and is in need of some help finding a place. If you could help or possibly provide some information, please email her at lynnexerri@gmail.com or give her a call at 616-560-0200. Thank you!



THANK YOU

Thank you so much for all of the warm wishes for Rosie B, while I was away on maternity leave. All the letters and gifts were so thoughtful, helpful and encouraging. She is doing well and growing so fast!

With Love,
Arieal

WORSHIP ELEMENTS
APRIL 26, 2020
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
(Use this on Sunday with Worship)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Beware this morning. The risen Christ is here...

Waiting for us along our way.

But isn't an encounter with Jesus the reason we came to worship? Why should we be concerned?

*If we truly meet Jesus, he will open our eyes,
and such knowledge could lead to change.*

But we want to be transformed.

Then listen... And follow...

Amen.

OPENING PRAYERS

Lord, we have come to you this day bringing all that we have, our lives, our hopes, our dreams, our fears and our sorrows. We place these before you in faith, knowing that no matter what happens, you are with us and blessing us. Open our hearts to receive your Word and your Spirit, that we may find healing and comfort. Open our lives to the wondrous possibilities for service and ease our minds that we may hear the words of encouragement and peace you have for us today. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.