

CHECK US OUT
ONLINE HERE!

NEWSFLASH

CHURCH OFFICE:
616-887-8255
PASTOR PHIL:
616-799-4281

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SAVE THE DATE!

There will be an All-Church Tent Raising, following worship service on Sunday, March 28. Pizza will be provided and we are asking that people bring their favorite goodies to share for dessert! Individually wrapped servings (think, COVID friendly) will work best. Drinks will also be provided. We will plan to get underway directly after worship with food being served outdoors. Don't forget, everyone can be helpful, from young to old! Hope to see you there!

PICTURE RETAKE DAY MARCH 26

Did you miss our SUMC Photo Directory picture days, back in November? Don't worry, our picture re-take day is coming up on Friday, March 26 from 2 PM until 7 PM. To schedule your appointment, please visit www.ucdir.com and click on the "click here to schedule your photography session" button (on the right of the screen). Enter your church code: **mi1552** and then enter your church password: **photos**. Next, click on the enter button and then click on the March 26 date. Follow the prompts after that. Feel free to call Ari at 616-887-8255, if you are having troubles or do not have internet to schedule online. Pictures will be held in the Church Building in Wesley Hall and everyone is welcome! Please keep in mind, you do not have to purchase a picture packet to get a SUMC Photo Directory.

If you cannot make it to the retake day, you may submit a digital copy of a picture you'd like to use in the Photo Directory by emailing Ari at spartaumc@spartaumc.com or by dropping off an original print (4X6 or larger) to the Church Office. She will scan the picture and submit your digital copy to Universal Directories for you! No harm will come to your picture and it only take about 30 seconds to scan! Please call Ari at 616-887-8255 if you have questions or concerns. Thank you!

SUMC QUICK REEL

Tune into 105.5 FM to catch our Sunday Worship services LIVE over the RADIO! This is only available in our parking lot, every Sunday at 9:50 AM



Don't forget to use our Sunday call in number, to listen in on our Sunday worship experience from home: (669) 274-9319



SUNDAY ATTENDANCE IN REVIEW

- 2-21:** 44*peak views
- 2-28:** 45*peak views
- 3-7:** 42 in-person
39*peak views
- 3-14:** 33 in-person
32*peak views

** attendance marked with an asterisk (*) is based off of our Facebook live stream's peak number of viewers (at a time).*



Dr. Jay Dean's Psalm
of the week:

#30

*Read it and be
Blessed*

UPCOMING CHURCH OFFICE CLOSINGS:

Thursday & Friday, March 18-19

Friday, April 30

Ari held her in-person office hours this past Monday, March 15. The Church Office (virtual & in-person) will be closed tomorrow, Thursday, March 18 and Friday, March 19. She will return to her normal office hours on Monday, March 22. As always, please view the [SUMC online building calendar](#) for any changes in the Admin schedule. Thank you!

TIP: Are you still having trouble getting registered to receive your COVID-19 vaccine? Call 616-863-3410 for the Meijer Pharmacy on 10 Mile. You should receive a call within about 2 weeks.

EXPECTING A STIMULUS CHECK?

OPINION PIECE

Many Americans are receiving stimulus payments this week. Those who are hurting financially will really appreciate the support the stimulus payment provides. Those who are doing OK financially may chose to save, invest, or spend their stimulus payments. New TV? New patio out-back? Maybe some Bitcoin? There are no strings attached that I'm aware of.

However, if your stimulus payment is above and beyond what you need, please consider sharing a portion with your church. Sparta United Methodist Church is just one of many organizations and small businesses that have been adversely affected by the fallout from COVID-19. Your "church stimulus" contribution will be welcomed support as we continue to rebound from a difficult year, return to normal activities, and reach-out to others in our community! Thanks, Kurt Burmeister

MARY MARTHA CIRCLE SET TO MEET IN APRIL

Mary Martha circle, who typically met on the second Wednesday of the month, will be holding their first official, in-person meeting of the year on April 14, from 9:30 AM to 11 AM, in Wesley Hall. For questions, please contact Marge Blaauw at 616-887-0773. Thank you!

PRAYER REQUESTS & PEOPLE NEWS

Please continue to pray for God's protection over the health of children and youths in Bolivia as they return to school. May this request enrich your prayers for Enrique Laura (SUMC Sunday School's Compassion International child), and serve as a powerful reminder that God is at work, and he allows us to be a part of that work through our prayers. Thank you, SPRC & Missions

Please continue to pray for LTJG Nicholas R. Spaleny, US Navy, who is stationed in Bahrain. He is serving on the Navel base there as a Public Affairs Officer for one year. Please pray for his safety. Thank you, De Knappen

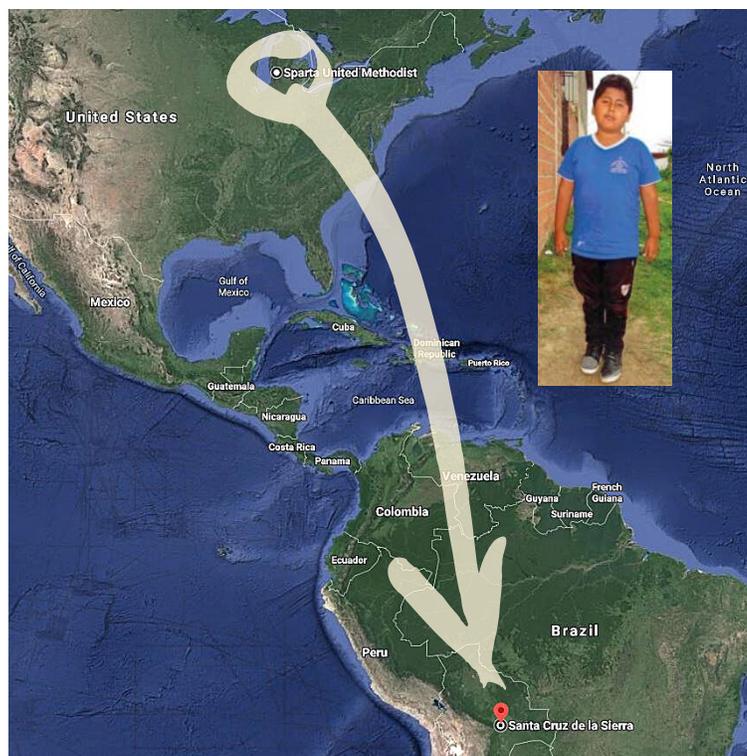
GET TO KNOW ENRIQUE LAURA

SUMC SUNDAY SCHOOL'S COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL SPONSORED CHILD

Enrique Laura lives in the Nuevo Mundo neighborhood, home to about 5,000 people, in the city of Santa Cruz. The primary ethnic group is Quechua, and Spanish is the common language. Typical houses are constructed of cement floors and brick walls. The regional diet consists of beef, chicken, bread, cassava, and rice. Common health problems include colds and stomach infections.

Most adults in Nuevo Mundo make a living by working as day laborers in construction, performing domestic services, or selling items in the market. The average family income is equivalent to \$291 per month. This community is affected by high levels of delinquency, alcohol and drug consumption, and dysfunctional families with absent fathers. It needs a local medical facility and more income-generating opportunities.

Our monthly Compassion International sponsorship of \$38, allows the staff of the Nuevo Mundo Student Center to provide Enrique with Bible teaching, food, health screening, vaccinations, hygiene and basic life-skill training, school supplies, tutoring, contests and prizes, soccer tournaments, sports and music activities, livelihood skills and community service opportunities. The staff also visits the Laura Family.



DON'T FORGET TO SEND A LETTER OR BIRTHDAY CARD TO ENRIQUE

SUMC's youth program has been sponsoring Enrique Laura from our Youth Ministries account. We plan to continue Enrique's support until he ages out of the Compassion International system. If you'd like to donate to help continue Enrique's support, please write on your check memo line or on your giving envelope, "gift for youth ministry account."

Enrique's birthday is April 28, and he will be turning 13 this year! Help make his birthday extra special by making a birthday card or writing a letter to Enrique wishing him well! This could be a fun activity for your kids to get involved too.

Please drop off your letters and/or cards for Enrique to the Church Office by April 2, 2021. We will be sure to get them mailed out (all together). Thank you for your continued support of Enrique!

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM MARY ELLEN:

Hey, Kids! This is the 4th Week of Lent! Last week our message was, "Not My Will But Thine." We also asked you to think of a rock to symbolize that when we pray to God it can be hard to wait for answers to our prayers.

This week we ask you to think of God's message, "You Are Forgiven." To symbolize this message we want you to think of a cross.



The cross symbol is used to also represent Sparta Methodist Church. It reminds us that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Our craft projects for you this month will also be crosses. Watch for their delivery by next week.

Don't forget to check out this week's Celebrate Wonder Lesson, *Praying in the Garden*. It reminds us that having a special place to pray to God, can help us focus on Him; in good times and in hard times.

KIDS CORNER

CHIME BAR PRACTICE BEGINS!



We will be starting our Chime Bar Practice starting this coming Sunday (3/21), after our in-person worship service. We will wear masks and socially distance to prepare a song for our Easter Service. Hope to see you there!

OUTDOOR EASTER EGG HUNT!



Mark your calendar's for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! This will take place on Easter Sunday (April 4th) between our 2 services at 11:00 AM.

CANDY DONATIONS



Candy donations for our Egg Hunt can be dropped off during our upcoming Sunday worship services, or during Ari's office hours (Friday's 12-2 PM*) and/or placed inside the Hand2Hand Deck box, located on the Church Office porch (whenever you are able).

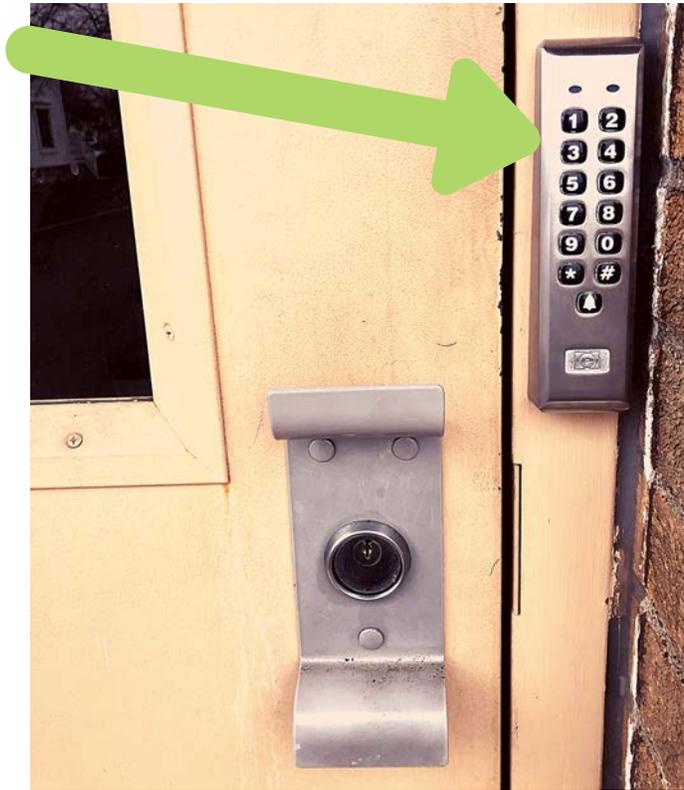
CELEBRATE WONDER LESSON 3/21: PRAYING IN THE GARDEN

*Jesus left them, telling them to pray.
Jesus then went a little way away
from them and knelt to pray. Jesus
was sad...*

CLICK ON
IMAGE FOR
LESSON!



TO VIEW THIS WEEK'S CELEBRATE WONDER LESSON PAGES, [CLICK HERE](#)



NEW KEYPAD FOR CHURCH BUILDING

The new exterior keypad gives access to our Wesley Hall door and allows for more flexibility for our building usage. A huge thank you to Ron Drier & Denny Knappen for all of their help!

The Administration Council approved the new key pad purchase last year. And now it is programmed and ready for use! If you need access to the Church Building, please contact the Church Office at 616-887-8255 for the access code. The code is easy to remember and the keypad is simple to use!

GENERAL CONFERENCE POSTPONED UNTIL 2022

General Conference organizers announced that the denomination's top lawmaking assembly — long postponed by pandemic — must wait to meet another year. The global gathering is now scheduled Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2022, in Minneapolis. To continue reading, click [HERE](#)



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND BEFORE COMING TO CHURCH ON SUNDAYS

As a way of keeping people as safe as possible, we'd like to remind everyone of the following, as you head into Church on Sunday mornings:

- Please try not to arrive early. Arrival for 9:45 AM is preferred (for now)
- Feel sick – please stay home! Join us virtually!
- Masks are required
- Social distance (household members may sit together)
- Sing gently (more like whispering)
- No handshaking or hugging; try a friendly wave or air high-five instead
- Restrooms are closed (except for essential use*)
- There is no coffee time or in-door socializing (for now)
- Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the church
- Elevators are available
- All doors will be open; it is chilly! Please dress warmly
- Hymn books may be used
- A large offering bowl will be located at the entrance to the sanctuary
- Holy communion will be served in the pews (for now)
- There will be no bulletins (for now)
- Some of the balcony will be open
- There will be no nursery or Sunday school (for now)
- Follow these practices even if you have been vaccinated, please!



ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (VIRTUAL):

The second Monday of the month, at 7 PM, virtually held via ZOOM. Please contact Pat Sharpe at 616-826-5865 or the Church Office at 616-887-8255 for details.

TRUSTEE COUNCIL (IN PERSON):

This council will meet as needed. Please contact Denny Knappen for more information at 616-225-8359.

FINANCE COUNCIL (VIRTUAL):

Please contact Renee Miles at 616-617-2303 for details or questions.

Monday, February, 8 6:30-7 PM

Monday, April 12, 6:30-7 PM

Monday, July 12, 6:30-7 PM

Monday, December 13, 6:30-7 PM

MISSIONS (IN PERSON):

Missions tends to meet every other month (starting February 2). They will take place on the first Tuesday of that month, at 7 PM, in the Church Dining room. Their next meeting will be April 6. Please contact Mindy Tilli at 616-644-2373 for details.

SPRC (VIRTUAL):

Please contact Kurt Burmeister at 616-291-6524 for details or questions.

Thursday, February 4, 7 PM

Thursday, February 25, 7 PM

Thursday, May 6, 7 PM

Thursday, August 5, 7PM

Thursday, November 4, 7PM

**WHERE YOU CAN MAKE
A REAL DIFFERENCE!**

*VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT
SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*



HEAD USHERS NEEDED!



Are you interested in helping our in-person worship service experience by providing excellent aide to our worship team and congregation? WE NEED YOU! This volunteer opportunity would only require once a month (on Sunday) participation and help our team! Text/Call 616-887-8255 for more information!

WESLEY HALL WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Currently, only our Wesley Hall space remains open for group gatherings of 10 people or less.

To view all schedules, please click [here](#). If you'd like to request this space, please fill out an [online form](#) or email Ari at spartaumcespartaumc.com

Monday: AA 7 PM

Tuesday: GirlTalk 9:30-11 AM,
GriefShare 6-7:30 PM

Wednesday: AA 7 PM

Thursday: AA 7 PM

Friday: AA 12 PM

Saturday: see online calendar for availability*

Sunday: see online calendar for availability*



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

**The times listed below are approximates. We run a real-time live stream, so starting times may change throughout any given service.*

9:50 Celebrate Wonder Children's Program

9:55 Powerpoint Announcements

10:00 Gathering Music

10:10 Welcome & Pastoral Announcements

10:15 Call To Worship & Opening Song

10:20 Opening Prayers

Text Pastor Phil at

616-799-4281 to

have your prayer

added LIVE!

10:23 Children's Time & Song

10:25 Prayers of the People

10:30 Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

10:35 Scripture Lesson: *John 12:20-33*

10:38 Message from Pastor Phil: *We Must*

Listen

11:00 Closing Song & Dismissal with

Blessing



**SUNDAY
WORSHIP
SERVICE
CALL IN NUMBER:
(669) 274-9319**

FOUR EASY WAYS TO GIVE

- 1. Give Online:** Gifts may be made electronically through our website by clicking the "give" tab at the top of the page. You will be directed to our PayPal website. There is a small fee associated with this service.
- 2. Mail a Check:** checks may be mailed to our Church Office at Sparta United Methodist Church, 54 East Division Street, Sparta, MI 49345. **Please do not mail cash and do include any special requests in the memo line of your checks. Thank you!*
- 3. Automatic Debit:** this is another way that some people of our church friends make their contributions. This is a monthly, automated process that requires a signed form; please contact the Church Office to help you get started (616-887-8255).
- 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.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

We are currently offering one, in-person Sunday Worship experience, every Sunday, starting at 9:50 AM. There are limited seats available and guests are asked to follow the guidelines posted. For questions, please call 616-887-8255.

March 21

Soundboard & PowerPoint:

- Brandon Ingersoll
- Dave Steenhagen

Head Usher:

- Ken Sr. & Ken Jr. Buitendyk

Intercessory Prayer on behalf of the Pastor:

- Amy Burmeister

Scripture Reader:

- Sheila Pederson

March 28

Soundboard & PowerPoint:

- Brandon Ingersoll
- Dave Steenhagen

Head Usher:

- Alan & Nicholas Hartman

Intercessory Prayer on behalf of the Pastor:

- Paul Schulz

Scripture Reader:

- Dorothy Hendricks