

November
2011

The Good News



SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 71 Sparta Ave., Sparta, NJ 07871



“What Do I Really Need?”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

November 13th is this year’s Consecration Sunday celebrated with a Pot Luck following the 10:30 a.m. service. We hope to have some of the various groups we support available with displays and/or representatives so that you can learn more about our outreach to the local community. It is always a pleasant surprise to see how God uses this church to help transform people’s lives in the name of Jesus Christ!

Our preacher for the morning is Gil Rambach, a long time friend and active lay person in this Conference. Gil taught English and Theatre at the secondary school level for years, depending on where his wife, the Rev Bobbie Rambach, was appointed. I first met him when I was appointed to Embury United Methodist Church in Little Silver. Bobbie was serving the Red Bank United Methodist Church nearby. Gil was teaching as well as doing community theatre and Chancel dramas at the church. When he was there he started his own company, the Fellowship Theatre, and began writing plays based on biblical themes and texts. His efforts were so successful neighboring churches became interested in his productions. This necessitated Gil’s taking the shows on the road to other churches.

Although Gill is not presenting one of his plays here, you can expect his message to be peppered with humor and theatrical wit. The sermon title is “Green or Gold”, it is centered on a thoughtful reflection on our values, priorities and lifestyle. Jesus himself never forced or manipulated people into sharing their assets. Instead he opened their hearts to the joy of giving and the desire to bless. We must first experience freedom in Christ in order to move beyond anxiety about our own welfare so that we can become more generous. We must learn what we *do not need*, in conjunction with how good it feels to help others receive what *they do need*, both spiritually and physically. Stewardship isn’t just about meeting a church budget. Rather it is a lifestyle that celebrates the best possible use of our gifts, our talents and our money; it also includes celebrating the miracles God brings forth from the proper use of these.

So contemplate what God is asking you to give, to do and to be as a steward and minister of the gospel. Then come with your pledge card on November 13th, place it before the cross, enjoy a stimulating, thought provoking sermon and stay for the potluck celebration of our ministry together.



God bless and keep you all,

Pastor Diane Koob

Upcoming Worship Events

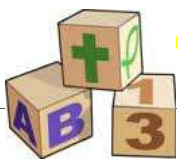
November 6 — Daylight Savings Ends. Change your clock and sleep an extra hour, then come to Church!

November 13 — Consecration Sunday with guest preacher Gil Rambach. Then we all join together for a Pot Luck Luncheon after Church. On this day, we celebrate our commitment to God, our church and each other.

November 22—Thanksgiving Eve “Eve” Service at 7:30 pm (see page 2 for details)



***Please note: We will have Interfaith Hospitality guests on November 20th to December 4th—see info in Narthex



Nursery Helpers Needed

Please stop by the nursery and sign up to help out. We have Eileen Snover in the nursery to take care of the children from 8:30 to 12:30, however we are in need of someone to help her during the 10:30 services, as we have been having more children in the nursery than one person can watch safely. If you do sign up and cannot make it, please call the office and let Linda know so that we can get someone else to cover for you. This is one way that you can help welcome others into our church home.

Children's Hospitality Bags

Need Replenishing!

If you have any new, unused crayons, coloring books, cars, kids books, or small quiet toys that you don't need, we would love to have them to replenish the children's hospitality bags that are available to little ones while they're worshipping with us. If you have any items, please give them to Pastor Diane. Please refrain from sending anything that may be messy such as Play Dough, paints, etc...

1st PAGEANT REHERSAL is on Sunday, November 20th at 9:15 AM
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on November 27th
PAGEANT REHERSALS ON Saturday, 12/3 and 12/10 9:00-11:30 AM

3rd Quarter Giving Statements



The 3rd quarter giving statements are available for pick up in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Martha Berghahn (973)973-823-1852



HAPPY BIRTHDAY !

Jocelyn	Sawicki	November 1
Robert	Brennen	November 3
Emma	Jedlica	November 5
Tom	Ingala	November 8



THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

Many people like to worship on or close to Thanksgiving Day itself but are too busy or are traveling. This is our opportunity to sing hymns of the season and to express the joy we often feel as the earth turns beautiful colors before our eyes. Invite friends and neighbors, bring food for our ongoing collection and worship together on, Tuesday November 22nd at 7:30 p.m. (technically Thanksgiving Eve Eve). Come Ye Thankful people come!



Save December 3rd for UMW Christmas Program

This year the United Methodist Woman's Christmas Program will feature three members of our congregation who have come to this country at some point in their lives. We'll hear about their country of origin and about the Christmas customs there.

Gathering will be at 9:30 am with coffee and munchies.

Throughout the year at various points the UMW sends Gift in Memory cards to people in the congregation who have somehow been connected with UMW. At the December meeting those persons will be remembered with a brief candle lighting.

So come, have a cup of coffee, and start the Christmas season in a special way.

Small Group Leaders Training Opportunity

Trinity UMC in Hackettstown is offering a Small Group Leaders Training on Saturday, November 12th, from 8:30 am- 12:30 pm. This training will help with the formation of small groups, and equip new small group leaders.

A donation of \$10.00 for up to 3 persons per church, and \$20.00 for 4 or more persons will be collected to cover the expenses for breakfast and printing materials. A Small Group DVD and Leaders Kit will be given free to each church that participates.

For more information or to RSVP please contact Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez via email at evgaperez@catchthespirit.org or at 908-852-3020 ext 13.

RSVP's must be received by Friday, November 4th.



MOUSE THRIFT SHOP NEWS

THRIFT SHOP HOURS

Wednesday 10:00—2:00

Thursday 1:00-4:00

Friday 1:00—4:00

Saturday 10:00—2:00

CHURCH MOUSE EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

The next bag sale will take place on November 9th – 12th



On November 14th, there is an all day work day for volunteers. Stay as long as you can, we will be stocking Christmas items and the Christmas shop will open on November 16th.

Please note: The Church Mouse will be closed on November 24-25 for Thanksgiving.

Youth News by Matthew Querns



Greetings all!

There is chill in the air; yet, our youth group marches on with the warmth of the Spirit of God intact. I wanted to lift up a quick joy. I am coming out of my ears with youth. 35, mostly from our church, went to our annual Corn Maze and Hay Ride event. Many times over the past year, our youth have brought friends- friends who later return. In other words, they are enjoying the ministry we have for them and becoming disciples as they spread the news of what they have at SUMC. For this fact and for the joy of their presence, we should all be proud of our youth. Let no one say that there are no youth at this church. They are alive and well! Below are our scheduled events as well as conference events available to all youth. Anyone interested in any event should talk to me, and if your youth has yet to join us, contact me and we will get them connected! Happy Fall Everyone! I love this season the most!

4th/5th Grade Youth:

- **November 13-** Laser Tag @ Laser One
 - Meet at Sparta UMC at 4:15 and return at 7:30. FREE to all regular members.

Junior High Youth:

- **November 6-** \$30 Challenge- Fall Can Food Drive
 - Meet at Sparta UMC at 5:00, bring \$5 and a snack to share, finished at 7:00.
- **November 13-** Laser Tag @ Laser One
 - Meet at Sparta UMC at 4:15 and return at 7:30. FREE to all regular members.

Senior High Youth:

- **November 13-** Laser Tag @ Laser One
 - Meet at Sparta UMC at 4:15 and return at 7:30. FREE to all regular members.
- **November 19-** Bread of Life Ministry
 - Meet at Sparta UMC at 10:00 for prep, finished by 1:00

Conference Wide Youth Events:*

- **Just Girls/Just Guys-** November 4-6, for youth in Grades 6-10
 - Go to www.gnjmyp.org for more information and registration.
- **Taize Pilgrimage 2012-** July 27-August 6-
 - Go to www.gnjmyp.org for more information/registration. Deadline February 15
- **Youth Lay Speaking-** March 9-10, 2012

* Even though these events are not on our regular schedule, anyone interested should contact me at (520)904-1404.



PUTTING FAITH INTO ACTION

Opportunities from the Church & Society Committee

The Church and Society Committee of Sparta United Methodist Church is connected to both the Conference and General Boards of Church and Society. It is the job of Church and Society at all these levels in the United Methodist Church to work on issues of social justice within the society.

November 12 Is Day for New Jersey Peace Action's Annual Soup Luncheon



Celebrate Peacemaking with NJ Peace Action on Saturday, November 12, 2011 at Bloomfield High School. There will be a social hour and silent auction at 11:45am. Lunch will be at 12:45pm. The whole event ends at 4pm.

The program is: Move the Money from the Pentagon to Human Needs Programs. Speakers will be Phyllis Bennis and Judith LeBlanc. Phyllis Bennis is a Fellow of the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington, DC, where she directs the New Internationalism Project. She is also a fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. She works on U.S. foreign policy issues, particularly regarding Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Palestine, as well as United Nations issues. Judith LeBlanc is Field Director of Peace Action, and coordinates efforts on campaigns to cut military spending, nuclear abolition and to oppose the war in Afghanistan.

The Bloomfield High School is located at 160 Broad Street in Bloomfield, NJ 07003. Reservations can be made on the web at: www.njpeaceaction.org or you can call 973-259-1126

Church and Society Study On Homosexuality

Now on the Affirmation Section---Join In On Thursdays

The study is called, "Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality: Moving from Tradition to Affirmation." The first weeks were spent on the specific verses in the Bible that are often quoted in the homosexuality and the church discussions. But there is more---and that 's where the study is now---on the affirmation part.

Identical sessions are held on Thursday mornings at 10am and on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm. The study is being led by Matt Querns. Pick a time or move back and forth between the two times depending on your schedule. If you have questions, call Matt at 520-904-1404.



Alternative Christmas Cards To Be Sold by Church and Society

Starting with the first Sunday in Advent (November 27) the Church and Society Committee will offer Alternative Christmas Cards after each service. Each card is \$5.00 and you can select from one of three charities to support with your money.

One of the charities is Foundation 4 Orphans. This is a new charity, recently formed by Wayne Lavender. He has spoken at Sparta many times. His organization is committed to supporting the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the Orphan. The other two charities are UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) and Doctors Without Borders.

The cards are a unique way for you to tell someone you have thought of them AND you have given a gift in their name.

Come Join Us!

School Supplies Can Still Be Brought Until November 6

Many people brought school supplies on the Children's Sabbath in October. They can still be brought up until Sunday, November 6. United Methodist Women will then coordinate them into kits and send them to United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Please remember to bring the exact item asked for. You can bring the ingredients for an entire kit or just a few of the items. Here's the list:

pair of blunt scissors

pads of paper (spiral or top bound)

hand held pencil sharpener (at least 1" long)

6 unsharpened pencils

24 count box of crayons

pack of loose leaf paper (150 sheets only)

12 inch ruler

2 1/2 inch eraser

UMW Healing Prayer

Meets on November 2



It happens every month on the first Wednesday of the month--a small, and dedicated group of people gather to pray. Last month we used the psalms to help us pray. Join us on November 2 from 11:15 to 11:45 and once again we will pray.

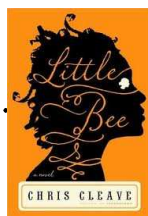


UMW Writing Group

Meets on November 5

What to write? When will I do it? The night before?

Those are some of the questions. Come on November 5 at 10 am to the UMW Writing Group to find out what the answers are. Call Ann Freeman Price (973-383-5014) for information.



November 14 Is the Next Meeting

Date for the UMW Book Worms

This will be an important gathering. We not only will discuss Little Bee by Chris Cleave. But we will also decide on the books to be read in 2012. In the United Methodist Women's Official Reading Program, there are five categories of books: Spiritual Growth, Social Action, Mission Education, Nurturing for Community, and Leadership. The group picks one from each category on the official list, and then fills in the other seven months. So come prepared with ideas.

UMW To Hold Mini-Spiritual

Retreat Saturday, November 12

Our first Mini-Spiritual Retreat is planned to be a short one---from 10am to 2pm. We'll assemble the school kits, we'll have lunch together, and we'll have several times of "retreat." Be sure to join us.



Holy Hookers

Meet Wednesdays!

Join us for fellowship while we do heartwarming work! We meet at 1:00 PM in the Wesley room.

Questions? Contact Diane Gelone at (973)729-6961





THE CHURCH MOUSE THRIFT SHOP

Approximately 35 years ago when Armen Hanjian was minister at Sparta UMC, the congregation (especially Marge Wills, Peg Pierson, and Henny Braue) with approval from the Official Board decided they could assist the church and the Sparta community by establishing a Thrift Shop in an unused area of the church basement. They found some shelving, some tables and a few pieces of display equipment to equip the room. The trustees assisted with some painting and installed a long rod for hanging clothes and shelving and one room was opened to sell good, usable clothing and some household equipment for a nominal price. Hours were set to be open, an organization was set up for good distribution of duties needed to run a business, and two volunteers staffed the room. Donations of goods were sorted and displayed. Gradually the number of rooms, the amount of donations, the number of volunteers, the organization needed, and the outreach has grown to include much more than was visualized when it was first established.

We now have 44 regularly scheduled volunteers -- comprised of persons from many of the area churches; we are an ecumenical group that works together in our mission. We have 8 additional volunteers (plus some regulars) who work on Monday to clean, organize and set up for the week. We also have 4 other volunteers who work occasionally. These persons are women and men of all ages and interests. We can use volunteers with all talents, since there is merchandise of many kinds to organize and display -- and to price and sell.

We need more volunteers -- especially more men -- since there are things to move, store, and transport that need some muscles. We need good, usable items to sell such as seasonal clothing, knick knacks, small appliances, toys, holiday (all holidays) items, and baby equipment. Please see our church web site for items we cannot use.

We have low prices, since we want to serve those in need. We also give away \$20 vouchers once a month to those in need in Sussex County with proper identification. We have recently been having over 40 families a month requesting these vouchers. We have a Bag Sale every other month to provide our merchandise at an even lower cost (\$3 per grocery bag). These sales help us to reduce merchandise quickly so that we have space to display new items. We donate excess merchandise each week to other service organizations and local community fund drives for service projects.

The money from our sales is distributed through the Mission Committee of our church and the approval by the Church Council to Shared Ministries of the United Methodist Church, to our church food certificates, to the Sussex County Food Pantry, and to many other local, national, and world-wide humanitarian groups. The Mission Committee lists these allocations in the Newsletter often.

We provide a social and support ministry as we work together and offer friendship in a Christian setting for the Mouse customers and the volunteers. There are times when customers express their needs and concerns to the volunteers and we can offer our pastoral support or our prayers for them. We also exemplify a means of being good stewards of our material possessions through reuse and recycling.

We experience many "God-sightings" in our shop. The following are examples of these happenings:

One time a couple with a young daughter was shopping in our store for a Christmas gift and found a lovely doll house which a volunteer had just repaired and put on display. (The couple was shopping with their \$20 free merchandise voucher provided to people in need one time per month.) They gasped when seeing the doll house. "Our daughter says the only Christmas gift she wants is a doll house," they said. They examined the doll house and some furniture with it and found that the price was \$20!

Recently a young couple with a 6 month-old baby came to the Mouse looking for items to replace the losses they experienced during our rains. They said, "We lost everything in the recent flood." We were able to give them a supply of clothes, blankets, baby equipment, and some toys for their baby. Then we suggested they choose some things for themselves. They said, "No, this is enough." However, we made sure that they did select some items. They plan to be back to use our \$20 vouchers as they try to re-establish their home.

People often remark, "I've been looking everywhere for this item -- and I find it here in the Mouse."

Surely, God has been active in our outreach in the "Mouse." It has grown into a big business, but it maintains the purpose which was established many years ago:



To be a resource for those in our community who are in need of assistance.

To be good stewards of material possessions through reuse and recycling.

To extend our mission worldwide, wherever and whenever possible.

To extend God's love worldwide, wherever and whenever possible.

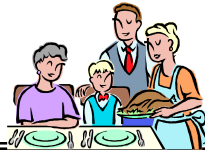
By Wilma Smith

COME CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING DINNER WITH SUMC FAMILY AND FRIENDS

All are invited to come and join in the Thanksgiving festivities at SUMC. We will be hosting guests from Sussex County Interfaith Hospitality for two weeks, including Thanksgiving Day. The Mission Committee is coordinating a Thanksgiving Dinner, and thought it a great idea to ask anyone from the congregation who would like to do so, to gather with us for fellowship and a delicious meal with each other and our guests.

We are seeking donations of turkeys for this event and we are asking participants to prepare one of your holiday favorites to share. If you are interested in attending or assisting with food, there is a sign up sheet in the Narthex after Sunday services.

For questions, further information, or to help contact
Steve Magnotta (973-670-8552) or Linda Giammanco (973-383-8443).



OPERATION WINTER MONTHS

Each month of November, December, January, and February we will be collecting a different item for our team of workers to take with them to Manna House to hand out to each of the patrons. These are items that are needed and are usually not covered with food stamps. Please help us by donating an item or two in the box in the narthex. If you would like to make a monetary donation please drop it in the offering plate or office marked for 'Operation Winter Months'.

November- men's and women's warm socks.

December- soap and/or shampoo

January- toothbrush and/or toothpaste

February- toilet paper



THE GIVING TREE

Can you believe that Christmas is just around the corner? To start to prepare for the season the mission committee is looking for some people to help with the Giving Tree this year. We will need help making the tags to go on the tree, setting up the tree and also collecting the gifts. Volunteer to help brighten someone's Christmas this year. For more info or to volunteer contact Laura Kempson @ 973-579-0140 or lj Kempson@embarqmail.com

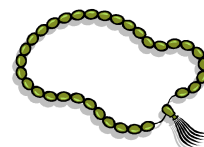
Beads for Life Arrive at World Mission Shop

Check out the new beads in the World Mission Shop. They are made from recycled paper by Ugandan women who are working their way out of poverty. They are bright and colorful and real conversation starters.

Orders from SERRV, WorldFinds, and Ten Thousand Villages are in the works, so be sure to come on down.

Hours of the World Mission Shop are Thursday 1 to 4pm; Friday 1 to 4pm; and Saturday 10am to 2pm.

Call Ann Freeman Price if you'd like to volunteer one or two days each month.





Trustees Corner

Saving green by going green

Our Solar panels have been on line now since late February 2011 and I thought that perhaps the congregation might be curious as to how they are faring. Even with all

the cloud cover and rain we have had this summer, our electric bills are smaller by an average of \$515 per month for a projected yearly savings of \$6,183. In 2010, our church building

electric bill was \$20,031. This represents a 31% reduction. For every Kilowatt (1000 watts) the panels produce, we accrue 1 SREC. Currently we produce about 3 SRECS per month. These SRECs, or Solar Renewable Energy Credits, can then be sold on the open market to Utility Companies who must buy them to satisfy State mandated quotas. The sale of our credits go towards paying off the \$130,000 loan we took to pay for the new roof and the solar panels. As of September, we have paid down \$24,336 of the principal on the loan for a total of 105,663 remaining. The current market value per SREC is \$220. When we first turned the system on in February, the price was \$655. This sharp drop in price was caused mostly by an unexpectedly large number of solar projects coming on line in NJ in a relatively short period of time. Suddenly, Utility companies were purchasing their required quota from a much larger pool of SRECs, driving the market down. While this is a good thing for New Jersey's overall carbon footprint, it is a temporary price disappointment for new solar power producers like Sparta UMC. There is legislation pending sponsored by State Sen. Bob Smith that will increase SREC value by increasing the mandated amount of credits Utility companies must purchase. We are watching prices closely every month for a trend. From the low in August of \$151 per SREC, the trend has been upward so we remain hopeful.

The important thing is, the solar panels are definitely saving us money as they continue to help our air quality by reducing our carbon footprint on God's world. The 15 year time period to sell our SRECs will bring in \$102,300 at the current \$220 per credit. The electric savings at current rates over 15 years will be \$92,745. The solar panels will produce power for 30 years or more for a grand total of \$185,490 of savings at current utility rates. The Newton United Methodist Church is following our lead and installing a solar system of their own that is roughly twice the size of ours. Now if we can work on those prayers for more sunny days.... ☀

Speaking of cleaner sources of energy, you might not know that in the last year, both the church and the parsonage underwent the Trustee 12 step energy addiction program and were successfully weaned off of old dinosaur carbon juice (oil) and on to the cleaner and less costly old dinosaur carbon gas (natural gas) with the installation of two brand new highly efficient gas furnaces. To this we owe a nod of gratitude to former Trustee chairperson Tom Ingala. THANK YOU!

To date the gas furnace at the church has been operational for 12 months. The savings has been about \$5,600 over the comparable period last year using oil. The parsonage has not been through a winter yet as its furnace was installed in July but the savings is expected to be in excess of \$1,800 especially with the replacement of all the old single pane windows at the parsonage with new energy efficient windows. More importantly Diane will be warm and toasty without the help of 18th century Amish technology.

At one point this summer, we almost considered weighing the costs of building an ark versus the costs of the continued flooding in the church basement. No one sells ark insurance anymore so we had no choice but to try to fix the problem. Sandbags at the door saved the thrift shop from Hurricane Irene, but Mother Nature flooded the Sunday School classrooms instead. Currently, a landscaping contractor is building a retaining wall at the rear entrance that should help reduce water flow into our 1958 vintage drain system. We are also in the process of getting gutters for the sanctuary slate roof that will direct all runoff into the parking lot drains. These measures will hopefully fix our flooding problem. Thanks go out to all who pitched in to help water vac, pick up wet carpet and provide moral support during the many floods we suffered the past year. Special thanks to Rich Moriarity for replacing the carpet in such a timely and cost efficient manner. Time and time again the members of this church prove to be our safe harbor in the many storms of life.

We would be remiss if we didn't send out a huge pat on the back to Vinnie Castaldi. Vinnie just last month resigned from the Trustees after over 10 years of service on the committee.

That's like 65 in Trustee/working like a dog years. Vinnie served as our faithful scribe and minute recorder for all those mind numbing hours of meetings. He also brought with him a ready made obedient army of 3 that were ready and willing to do manual labor in the name of the Lord at moments notice, his three sons, Nick, Chris and Patrick. A heartfelt thanks Vinnie, like Dimaggio's 57 game hitting streak, your record will stand the test of time.



If you read this without nodding off, we truly appreciate it. We are still looking for a few good men and women to help us. Be all you can be... be a Trustee.

In your service,

Mike Vrabel, Cullen Kempson, Gail Swain, Ed Johnston, Barry Higgins, Connie Yellinski

SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

71 Sparta Avenue
Sparta, NJ 07871

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We're on the web!

www.spartaumc.org

Please note our FALL HOURS:

THRIFT SHOP HOURS

Wednesday 10:00—2:00

Thursday 1:00-4:00

Friday 1:00—4:00

Saturday 10:00—2:00



World Mission Shop Hours

Thursday 1:00 to 4:00

Friday 1:00 to 4:00

Saturday 10:00 to 2:00

Come browse gifts from our Fair Trade Shop



The Good News

You can reach Ann Freeman Price, co-editor at 973-383-5014 or at annfreemanprice@embarqmail.com or Linda Kristiansen, co-editor at the church office (973)729-7773 or at linda@spartaumc.org

The next Newsletter will be compiled for December

The DEADLINE for all articles is:
November 15th



SERVICES

Sunday 8:30 am & 10:30 am
followed by fellowship
In Demarest Hall
Nursery care is available

ALL ARE WELCOME



Join Us For Our

Thanksgiving "Eve" Eve Service

On Tuesday, November 22 at 7:30 PM