

September  
2011

# The Good News



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



## HOME SWEET HOME

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Here we are again approaching September, and Gerry and I are settling into the parsonage in Sparta. It's very good to be home!

If you go on a vacation just "to get away" from everything, including housework, bills and your usual routine or surroundings, you probably feel exhilarated at first. After a while, however, you may find that you are ready to get back home. As people say: "it's good to get away, and it's good to come back home."

If you are elderly and become "home bound," that can be a very confining and depressing experience. In the winter we can all develop "cabin fever" if we can't get out for an extended period of time. At those times it is good for us to remember people who can't walk well enough to leave their homes, their wheel chairs or even their beds. Yet in spite of the drawbacks to being "home bound", most people will do anything to stay in their homes in illness, injury or old age. Why? Because there is no place like home! More and more services are emerging to help us aging baby boomers and our parents stay in our homes where we have a greater sense of independence, freedom and familiarity. These all seem to outweigh the problems of confinement and depression that come with being home bound.

As I listened to the news today, I heard about the over crowded refugee camps in Somalia, and grieved. I have friends and colleagues who have lived in such camps. They have brought the reality of this experience to life for me. Today I also talked to my brother who is helping to build a home for Habitat for Humanity for the first time. I've never heard him sound as happy as he is bringing the happiness of a home to others. This fall our youth will participate in Box City again, experiencing briefly what it is to be homeless. These can all be eye opening experiences.



Reflecting on this past year, I realize that I have felt very up rooted. I dwelt in attractive but unfamiliar surroundings; I operated out of boxes and unpacked essentials. I have never been without a roof over my head, never homeless, but even this experience has had an impact I wasn't expecting. More than before, I realize now that being rooted somewhere is important, whether it is an apartment, a condo, a house or even one room in a house. Private space is sacred space. It provides a foundation for our lives, a sense of security without which we are left distracted and fragmented emotionally. Homeless, we feel like visitors not residents, people who do not really belong somewhere.

By the way, our church is scheduled to receive and provide hospitality for the homeless (IHN Interfaith Hospitality Network) from Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> (in the afternoon) through Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Let's all mark our calendars now so that we can be instruments of grace for those who find themselves homeless in our community. May we all increase our awareness and sensitivity to the difficulties of those who are without a place to call home.

Grace and Peace,

### Upcoming Worship Events

**September 4th** — Hymn Sing.

**September 11th** — Peace Service. After ten years we will commemorate the tragic attack on our country by focusing on peace and remembering all who suffered loss on that day.

**October 2nd** — World Communion Sunday. Rev. Alden Welch will be preaching.

**October 9th** — Is Children's Sabbath Sunday, see more information on the UMW page

# Nomination Form for Special Mission Recognition

## Sparta United Methodist Women



Special Mission (SMR) is a way

Recognition for our local

UMW Unit to honor individuals in the church for outstanding mission service. Persons nominated should be active in mission work in church and beyond, and representative of the purpose of the UMW. Anyone in the Sparta United Methodist Church can nominate an individual using this form.

Past SMR Honorees and Current Officers of Sparta UMW will vote and select Honorees by November 15 of each year. The names of the Honorees are held in secret until they are announced in a SUMC worship service in the spring. Each Honoree is presented with a SMR Pin, a donation to UMW Mission is made in their name, and they are honored by the District UMW.

**SMR Nominee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list all mission activity this person is involved in:**

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**Person making the nomination:** \_\_\_\_\_

### The Thursday Bible Study — Begins September 8th

The title of the study is "Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality: Moving from Tradition to Affirmation." Identical classes will be held in the morning at 10am and at night at 7:30pm so that you can choose one time or go back and forth between the two depending on your schedule. There will be 10 sessions.

The study will be led by Matthew Querns. Ann Freeman Price will present information about the traditional view. There will be presentations, and there will also be time for respectful discussion. If you have questions, call Matthew at 520-904-1404.



### RAINBOWS MEETING AGAIN IN THE FALL!

The Sparta United Methodist Church and the Sparta Ecumenical Council will sponsor the fall session of *Rainbows*, a program supporting children (kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) of single-parent or step-family homes, at the Sparta United Methodist Church. *Rainbows* offers peer support along with the guidance of trained, caring adults who will listen and give youngsters a safe place to express their feelings about the changes in their family's dynamics. This may be a result of death of a parent, divorce, separation, or incarceration of a parent. The fall session begins September 27, 2011 and ends November 1, 2011 (Tuesday evening meetings). If you would like to register your child for this program, please call Pat Johnson, 973-729-3233.



MOUSE THRIFT SHOP NEWS

The summer season at the Mouse is coming to a close. Our Thursday extra hours for the summer have been a success. Customers have enjoyed the leisurely shopping, and the evening staff has assisted in getting new merchandise displayed and keeping the shop neat.

We will be closed on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Then September 7<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> will be a Bag Sale followed by our seasonal change-over work day on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. We will open on Wednesday, Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>, with the Fall/Winter merchandise ready for sale.

We continue to receive many donations and think you would enjoy browsing in the shop to see the great array of merchandise that comes to us. You can bring your donations any time we are open. Our hours and the items we cannot accept are listed on the Church Website.

YOUTH NEWS! by Matthew Querns



Greetings all!

Our summer of fun and service has come to an end. July was the highlight with our mission trip to the Heifer Ranch in Massachusetts (24 youth) and our week long VBS Junior High Service Squad (16 youth). I want to thank every youth who was involved in these worthy endeavors. I am finalizing our fall schedule, and all of our groups will have them by the end of August if not sooner. Let me know if you need one! Highlights of our fall season will be our annual Ocean City Weekend trip, Box City, laser tag, Bread of Life Ministries, the Crop Walk, and much more. All are welcome to join us, so come and experience the fun! Matthew



Big Jungle Adventure Vacation Bible School

Thank you to everyone who volunteered with Big Jungle Adventure Vacation Bible School in July. We had an average of 65 children for the half-day program and approximately 18 participants for the travel team. Over 20 adults and youth volunteered time during the week. The church was a very busy place with crafts, storytelling, bible story/science, recreation, music and of course yummy snacks made by the children every day. Thank you also to the wonderful decoration team that set-up the sanctuary and narthex as well as decorated the hallways to transform into the jungle theme.

Again, Thank You!

Vacation Bible School coordination team consisting of Martha Berghahn, Sarah Franks, Jessica Ma, Susan Williams.





## 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.*

## Peaceful Tomorrows

The Committee on Church and Society would like to introduce you to the website: [www.peacefultomorrows.org](http://www.peacefultomorrows.org) so that you can read the thinking of some of the families who lost loved ones in the attacks on the World Trade Center September 11, 2001. The pastor at Red Bank UMC, Myrna Bethke, is one of the members of this group. Her brother died in one of the Towers. This is a letter dated August 8th, 2011 on this website.

## Konichiwa, Dear Japanese Friends, (Konichiwa is a greeting like Hello)

As we once again approach the saddest days of the year---August 6 and 9 for you, September 11 for us---I am struck by the insignificance of the number of years we mark in the face of the true meaning of each day. Please allow me to explain.

In 2010, with much sadness, your country observed the 65th commemoration of the days you suffered horrific attacks at the hands of our country. This year our country will solemnly observe the 10th commemoration of the day we suffered a horrific attack from a terrorist group. These milestones occur in years that correspond in multiples of five. We humans have an obsession with the order and comfort we see in numbers, and so we come to give special dates that fall in such years more significance than those that fall in other years.

But there is no inherent order, no ability to neatly control and manage the effect on humanity of these events. And certainly no solace in the observance merely based on the passage of time since it occurred. The reality is that the number of years, neatly divisible by five or not, is not important. The number of lives affected is. What is that number of lives? It isn't the number killed, or the number wounded, or the number of survivors that matters most. It is the incalculable number of people affected by our joint tragedies.

For you and I, those affected by the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 is enormous, as it includes people across many generations all over the planet. For my part, as someone who has visited the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park and talked directly with Hibakusha about their experiences, the effect is deep and permanent and has become my own. For our sad day, the effect is more recent, but continues to grow as it similarly ripples across the planet and history, and we know that it has become yours, too.

I recently talked with a person of Mayan descent about the upcoming milestone b'ak'tun 13 they will observe in December 2012. The media has also made much of this milestone, but in truth it too is really just another year in their cycle of time-counting. The man told me, "It is true that December 21, 2012 is really just a day in which the Mayan Long Count begins again, but we hope it will be a year in which significant changes occur in the human consciousness. Our planet and our species cannot afford for the current abusive mindset to continue."

And so we all hope. Each time we commemorate a significant event, our shared wish is for the collective consciousness of the world to shift, if even just a little, to a gentler, more realistic approach to peaceful human coexistence. Whether the dates of the observances are ten years, sixty-five years, or thousands of years from the tragedies, the significance of the events that we are commemorating is what's important. Whether the tribute falls on an even or odd year, and whether the event commemorated involved one person or one billion people, the lessons we should learn are unchanged. We must not forget these lessons. We must hold dear and sacred not only the memories of lives lost and those who have been suffering since, but the knowledge that humans can do better than one, two or many terrible events suggest. We can do better, far better, and we must do so.

So this year, as always, we at September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows send our support, our prayers, our love and our heartfelt wishes to you as we commemorate these sad days for all of humanity. We hope that by your steadfast example and observance we will all continue to learn and practice the only lesson that can save our world, the message of peace.

Ai to heiway, (Love and peace)

Nancy Meyer

September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows



## Be Sure to Be in Church

### Sunday, October 9th

October 9th is the date of the Children's Sabbath and Sparta will be having a very special service that day. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to worship with you.

Starting on October 9th we will be collecting items for "School Supply Kits" for children in need around the world. If you'd like to contribute, the list is as follows:

pair of blunt scissors

pack of loose leaf paper (150 sheets only)

hand held pencil sharpener (at least 1" long)

12 inch ruler



24 boxes of crayons

pads of paper (spiral or top bound)

hand held paper sharpener (at least 1" long)

six unsharpened pencils

1 1/2 eraser

You can start collecting items now in the midst of back-to-school sales. Be sure to conform to the list exactly as it is. If the pack of loose leaf paper has 200 sheets, we cannot use it. It HAS to be a pack of 150 sheets as it is listed.

**Remember, circle October 9th on your calendar--It's the Children's Sabbath Service!**

## September 7 Is the Date for UMW Healing Prayer Group



Each month on the first Wednesday of the month, a small group gathers for prayer from 11:15 to 11:45. Do join us in person, or in your home and be sure to give us your prayer requests.



Continues with great  
Enthusiasm

The time is 9:30 am---the task of writing is still the same---the invitation is open to come try this group. The charge is \$5.00, donated to the UMW World Thank Offering. You'll be surprised at the ideas you have---and the insights. Call Ann Freeman Price (973-383-5014) for more information.

The next date is Saturday, September 3rd.



## Holy Hookers Start Up Again On September 7th from 1-3pm

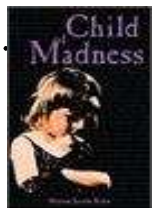
You wouldn't believe the amount of yarn in the closet. Come help us transform it into afghans and baby blankets. It's good company, and you'll be welcome.



## October 17---Date for October Book Group

Book: Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White

by Adam Hamilton



## SEPTEMBER 12 BOOK GROUP TO HAVE AUTHOR PRESENT

MARION JACOBS KAHN IS THE AUTHOR OF CHILD OF MADNESS. SHE WILL BE PRESENT AT THE SEPTEMBER 12 UMW BOOK GROUP AT 10:00AM. THE BACK OF THE BOOK SAYS, "HER READERS EXPERIENCE ALONG WITH HER WHAT IT WAS TO BE A CHILD OF A FAMILY TORN APART BY MENTAL ILLNESS, A JEWISH PERSON DURING WORLD WAR II, AND A WOMAN TENTATIVELY BUT DEFIANTLY COMING INTO HER OWN..."

# HOW DOES SPARTA UMC WORK?.....

## The Finance Committee — by Bud Larson



### The Role of the Finance Committee

The finance committee implements and maintains the procedures and systems that provide for the use of the church's financial resources. It exists to support others who are working more directly on the mission of the church. It does not set policy. It provides information and service to the Church Council so that they can better fulfill their role in guiding the operations of the church.

The finance committee's work falls in four main areas. (planning, making sure that financial resources are handled appropriately, record keeping and providing information)

The planning starts with the stewardship program. This is coordinated by Steve Magnotta. Pledge income is the church's largest source of income. Without a good estimate of its income, it's very difficult to develop a rational plan for the church's operations. You can imagine how difficult it would be to plan your household budget if your employer said to you "You are doing a good job. Times are a little tight now. I will pay you what I can after I take care of every thing else." The information from the stewardship program is combined with historical information and information from other church committees (such as trustees, staff parish, education ...) and a first draft budget is prepared. This draft is reviewed by the finance committee and discussed with members of the Church Council. Generally options are presented to the Church Council. They then approve a budget for the church. While many think of a budget as a financial document, it is really a statement about how we as a church are using our limited resources to fulfill our church's mission.

Once the budget is in place, the finance committee moves on to the task of making sure that the church's financial resources are handled appropriately. This is divided into a number of tasks. First is income, we want to make sure it is handled securely and that it is accounted for correctly. The largest source of income is from the offering plate. Eleanor Shumaker coordinates the counters. Each Sunday two counters count and record the offering. They prepare deposit tickets and control sheets that include the offering and other revenue that was received by the church during the week. The money is deposited in the bank; the control sheets are used by the treasurer (Diane Gelone) to update the accounting records, and the detail giving information is given to the financial secretary (Martha Berghahn) to update the giving records. It is this record of giving that is used to prepare the quarterly and annual statements of giving.

Now that we have some income we can move on to paying bills. One of the largest expenses (about half our budget) is staff parish cost. This is managed by the staff parish committee and includes items like payroll, health insurance, pensions, and reimbursement of expenses. The payroll is handled by a payroll service (which includes preparing tax and withholding statements). Other staff parish costs are approved by the chair of the staff parish committee and paid by the treasurer.

The next largest area of expense is the trustee's budget (about 25% of our budget). This includes all those costs of maintaining the church property (maintenance, utilities, equipment, insurance...). These, as well as all other expenses except those paid by the payroll service, are paid by the treasurer. Expenses other than prior approved reoccurring expenses (such as monthly utilities) require the approval of the chair of the trustees to be paid.

The third largest area of expense (about 13%) is shared giving (sometimes called apportionment). This is paid by the treasurer on a monthly basis. This money goes to the United Methodist Church (beyond this local church) to support its work and mission.

The remainder of the operating budget goes to program (such as education, worship, church and society...) and administration costs. Again the expenses are approved by a committee chair and paid by the treasurer.

In addition to the operating budget mentioned above, the church maintains a capital and a restricted budget. These accounts are maintained separately. The capital account is in a separate bank account. Some members or groups give money for a specific purpose. Pledge envelopes have a place to designate an offering to the capital account. Money in this account is not used for operating expenses. It is used for major building upgrades (examples: convert from oil to gas heat, new windows, new flooring...). The restricted account includes items like money raised by the church thrift shop (Mouse) or World Mission Shop for missions. It also includes money given by an individual for a specific purpose (examples: flowers, bequest, specific mission donation...). Weekly reviews are done to make certain that all money that is designated for a specific purpose goes to the designated purpose.

Additional controls to see that our resource are used correctly include a requirement that all checks have to have two authorized signatures, a monthly bank reconciliation (by Mark VanderVeen), weekly statements prepared and reviewed (by Bud Larson), and annual audit prepared (by Rich Moriarty CPA). The monthly and weekly review should identify any correction or adjustments required to the financial statements so that a clean opinion can be issued.

In addition to the audited year-end statements, which are sent to the conference and included in the report of our annual conference, year-to-date financial statements are prepared for the Church Council and other committee as requested. These reports are used by the Church Council and other committees to help manage the church's resources.





## The Bells are Ringing!

Starting August 30th the Heavenly Metal Ringers will resume rehearsals every Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 9 p.m. New ringers are always welcome but you must be able to read music. We are especially in need of someone who can lift the big bells. If you'd like to give it a try please contact Yvonne Roux at 973-209-2288 or [yrouxrings@gmail.com](mailto:yrouxrings@gmail.com)



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY !



Laura	LaFrance	September 6
Aaron	Sawicki	September 18
Lucy	Franks	September 19
Ed	Johnston	September 30
Lauren	Stage	September 30
Linda	Ingala	September 30



If you would like to included your birthday in our monthly newsletter, give the office a call at (973)729-773, or e mail them to [Linda@spartaumc.org](mailto:Linda@spartaumc.org)

It is the 90th  
Birthday of

**Laura LaFrance!**

All are invited to  
Barn Hill Nursing  
Home at 2:00 PM  
on Tuesday, September 6th to help her  
and her family  
celebrate!

### Church Library Under Construction / Shifting



The Sparta Church Library Committee (Ann Freeman Price, Matthew Hunt, Sandy Svenningsen, and Matthew Querns) has divided the library more clearly into circulating and reference. Circulating is against the Wesley Room wall that is on the other side of the hallway. Reference is in the cabinets closer to the sofa. And as always there are a few books in the narthex. Here is information about five of them:

1. The Future of Faith by Harvey Cox. Cox says that we are now in “the age of the spirit” where Christians are ignoring dogma and breaking down barriers between different religions, and where spirituality is replacing formal religion.
2. Mountains Beyond Mountains---The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World, by Tracy Kidder. This book takes us from Harvard to Haiti, Peru, Cuba and Russia as Paul Farmer takes modern medicine to those who need it most.
3. A History of God---The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, by Karen Armstrong. On the back of the book it says, “Karen Armstrong traces the history of how men and women have perceived and experienced God, from the time of Abraham to the present.”
4. See Yourself as God Sees You by Josh McDowell. There are five parts to this book: Who are you? Who told you who you are? The basis of your true identity. Aligning your perception with God’s perception. Gaining a New Identity.
5. Leap Over a Wall---Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians by Eugene H. Peterson. This book holds reflections on the life of David.

When you take out a book, be sure to sign a sign-out sheet so we know where the books are. There are other books than these five in the narthex---have a look!



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## Chancel Choir:

The chancel choir has started rehearsals for the new choir season and invites anyone who would like to “make a joyful noise” to join us. We rehearse on Sundays from noon to 1:15 in the choir room and sing for the 10:30 service as well as selected special events throughout the church year. No audition is required; just a desire to be a part of the musical family. For more information, talk to Rich Kelley.

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## CONFIRMATION UPDATE

We will be discussing the possibility of having confirmation class this year. If you have any comments or suggestions please see Pastor Koob. A decision will be made at the September 28th Church Council meeting.



**COME JOIN THE FUN!** Sunday School registration will be held on Sunday, September 11 at 10:00 AM in each child’s respective classroom. At that time parents and children will have the opportunity to meet their teachers and ask any questions. We look forward to a wonderful year of sharing God’s Word and Love.

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## A Letter from the Hartigans

"Greetings from the Hartigans in Oregon! We won't begin by telling you how 'deliciously' cool the nights have been, the totally sunny days in the low 80's with no/low humidity, while you've suffered with heat and humidity. If we DID tell you that though, we'd at least tell you that you have our sympathy.:) When our drizzle starts, you'll surely do the same for us, won't you?:)"

Pastor Diane asked us to send our address when we got one, so anyone who wishes to, can keep in touch. Our home address is 6346 NE Rosebay Dr, Hillsboro, OR 97124 and our e-mail is [jehartigan@gmail.com](mailto:jehartigan@gmail.com). We moved into our home 8/5 and after 5.5 wks are no longer homeless! It's been an 'interesting adventure'; one it's probably best we didn't thoroughly anticipate beforehand:), but we recognize God's hand, and the loving prayers and support of family and friends that have carried us through. We're already enjoying doing many family things with our 'west coast family', beginning to learn our way around (thank goodness for GPS!!), and continuing the unpacking and settling-in process.

Of course there is the 'missing'...it only means we love those we've left behind. We've been greatly blessed to be a part of you for 23 years, and that caring and relationship won't stop...just change. We know God will keep us close in our hearts, minds, and e-mails, and of course when we visit Sparta again (or you come to Portland!).

As I close, I suggest you accept the challenge a friend challenged us to, given by a Bible Study teacher after a move; it works wherever you live, whatever the circumstances. Ask yourself daily "where did you meet Jesus today?". ('At church' doesn't count as 'looking'!:) As she noted, over the weeks He was seen many, many places; places we seldom expect to see or look for Him. There was the sighting of unexpected kindness in a busy grocery/bank line, a much-needed smile or hug 'just at the right time', the delight of a child watching a bubble, an awareness of the beauty of the day even if some of it's 'happenings' are NOT beautiful, an e-mail that came when you need it, and wonder of wonders, He was even seen at McDonald's!:) Could WE even be someone else's 'Jesus sighting'? How ever you see Him, where ever you find Him, know that we share your 'eyes of faith' as we each walk life's journey, and feel greatly blessed He's given YOU to US!

God's blessings, love and hugs to you all,

Jack & Elaine Hartigan"

# SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*We're on the web!*

[www.spartaumc.org](http://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 Free Trade Shop



### The Good News

You can reach Ann Freeman Price, co-editor at 973-383-5014 or at

[annfreemanprice@embarqmail.com](mailto:annfreemanprice@embarqmail.com) or

Linda Kristiansen, co-editor at the church office (973)729-7773 or at [linda@spartaumc.org](mailto:linda@spartaumc.org)

The next Newsletter will be compiled for October

The DEADLINE for all articles is:

**October 15th**

### SERVICES

Sunday 8:30 am & 10:30 am

followed by fellowship

In Demarest Hall

Nursery care is available

**ALL ARE WELCOME**



**SUNDAY SCHOOL  
BEGINS SUNDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 18 at 9:30**

**COME JOIN THE FUN**