

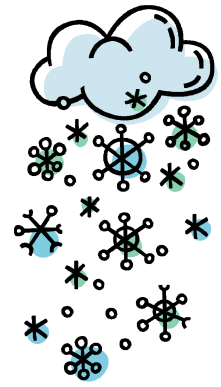
February  
2012

# The Good News



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

## **“A Church That Works Together....”**



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you again this coming year!

I was overwhelmed by the turn out at the Church Council meeting Wednesday, December 28th at which people contributed an extra \$17,000.00 to help close the budget deficit. Since then several of you have borne witness to that extraordinary meeting in worship. It's good to know the church members care so much and that the Holy Spirit can actually work in and through us at even long church meetings! Several of you have come forward to make or increase your pledges since then, and several of you have offered yourselves in service to the church.

The most joyful thing about all of this for me is not just the fact that the church is making an effort so that we will not need to change pastors. It is not even the decision to try to keep money from our Thrift Shop primarily for helping those in need rather than for balancing the budget. The most joyful thing is that that it looks as though church members as a whole are beginning to take more responsibility for serving in ministries and supporting the church financially.

It is never healthy to have a few people carry the weight of an organization, especially the "organization" we call the body of Christ! The more invested members feel, the better it is for everyone. With across the board involvement, no one point of view can dominate; no group of persons has too much influence. Everyone has a voice and is using their voice to speak up and contribute to the well being of the community.

As a result of the meeting on the 28th we now have two (possibly three) persons who will work on communications within the church and publicity in the area. Two more people agreed to oversee fund raising efforts. Since then someone new has stepped forward to coordinate the coffee and fellowship time. It also looks as though we will have new volunteers and a new leader in the Mouse Thrift Shop.

With God's help, all things are possible. It seems as though the people here have enough faith to actually take a risk and "live by faith". May the enthusiasm and hart felt warmth among so many that night and in worship January 1st continue in the year and years to come.

Shalom,

Pastor Diane

### **Upcoming Worship Events**

**February 12th — We celebrate Boy Scouting during our service**



**February 22nd — Ash Wednesday, come join us for worship at 7:30 PM**



**February 26th — The first Sunday in Lent**

**March 2nd — World Day of Prayer**

**March 11th — We celebrate Girl Scouting during our service**



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# All Are Welcome To Attend The Next

## Skylands District Day of Learning

February 18, 2012

Starts 8:30 am

Ends 1:15 pm

To register on-line please click here <http://www.gnjumc.org/registrations/register/6>

### **Event Schedule**

8:30 am- 9:00 am - Registration (light breakfast provided)

9:00 am - 9:45 am - Gathering Worship

10:00 am- 11:30 am - First Session Workshops

11:45 am - 1:15 pm - Second Session Workshops

**Note:** No lunch break will be provided.

**Location / Address:** First UMC (Newton) 111 Ryerson Ave, Newton, NJ 07860-1529

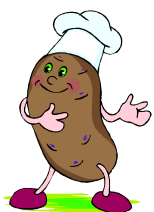
Topics covered include church finances, shared ministries calculations and preparing church reports.

We encourage you to take advantage of this day to learn more about the workings of the United Methodist Church

### **Workshops include:**

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, Life-Changing Small Groups, Stewardship 201, Children & Prayer, Growing a Healthy Church with Natural Church Development, Youth Leader's Tool Box, Year-End Statistical Reports, Employee Related Taxes, Intro to Lay Speaking, Vacation Bible School, General /Jurisdictional Conference Q&A where a member of the General Conference Delegation will be present.

Flyers with sign up sheet and complete details are on the Welcome table in the Narthex.



## **ANNUAL YOUTH SPUD BOWL TO SUPPORT MISSION TRIP**

On February 5, 2012 directly after church, the annual Spud Bowl will take place. Come and build your own "Spud" with the many toppings available, salad, and entertainment.

All proceeds from this event are used for the youth mission trip taken in the summer. Contact Matthew Querns (520-904-1404).

## **PICTORAL DIRECTORIES HAVE ARRIVED!**

Our new church directories have arrived! They can be picked up in the narthex at your convenience. Directories have been labeled so please only take one with your name on it. If you don't see a directory with your name on it, see Linda in the church office.

*LifeTouch*  
**CHURCH  
DIRECTORIES  
AND PORTRAITS**

# YOUTH NEWS!



Greetings everyone! It is time to kick off another exciting, spirit, mission, and fellowship filled season of youth group. For our new season, I have kept some old favorites, and I have added some new activities. Also, our youth mission team will reactivate as we prepare for this summer's mission trip. This summer, we will be traveling to Lewiston-Auburn, Maine to work in small, rural town ministry. This trip will combine service in the community with local, cultural events in the evenings to help plug the youth further into their experience. Stay tuned for more information on how you all can help to support our youth and their ministries. As usual, all are welcome to join our youth group. If you have yet to experience this ministry, feel free to start anytime!

Matthew

PS. I have scholarship packets from the Conference for anyone furthering their education. Please see me for details.

## 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade Youth:

- **February 12th** - Pottery Pizazz, meet at the church at 12:30pm. We will paint and create our art from 1:00 to 3:00. The cost is \$15.00 to \$20.00.

## Junior High Youth:

- **February 5** - Spud Bowl Fundraiser- Meeting during Sunday School for set up and stay until 1:00 for clean up.
- **February 10&11**- Winter Laser Tag Lock-In, meet at church Friday at 7:00 pm with \$24.00. Pick up on Saturday at 8:00 am after a pancake breakfast

## Senior High Youth:

- **February 5th** - Spud Bowl Fundraiser- Meeting during Sunday School for set up and stay until 1:00 for clean up.
- **February 10&11**- Winter Laser Tag Lock-In, meet at church Friday at 7:00 pm with \$24.00. Pick up on Saturday at 8:00 am after a pancake breakfast

## Conference Wide Youth Events: \*

**Taize 2012 Young Adult Spiritual Pilgrimage-** July 27- August 7, 2012

See <http://www.gnjmyp.org/resources> for details.

- **Youth Lay Speaking-** March 9-10, 2012- [www.gnjmyp.org](http://www.gnjmyp.org)

\*Though not on our schedule, feel free to ask for more details on these conference wide events.

## **Gerry Koob to Lead Adult Education Program**

On **Monday, January 30, 2012**, Pastor Gerry Koob will resume his leadership of an adult education program on **Monday nights**. The meetings will take place in the library [a.k.a Wesley room] at **7:15 PM** and will run until 9:30 PM.

The focus this time around will be on the meaning of the term "Progressive Christianity."

It may include a reading of John Shelby Spong's new book *"Re-claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World."* We will also explore several other dimensions at the heart of the Progressive Christian movement and examine the web site, [ProgressiveChristianity.org](http://ProgressiveChristianity.org)., the children's curriculum under development and some of the worship resources being published there.

Much of what this movement is promoting is quite consistent with the vision of the Sparta UMC. It would be a worthwhile effort for long-time, new, and prospective members of the church alike to enter into this type of learning and discussion.

This program will also be open to visitors from the Sparta community, churched and unchurched alike – anyone who wants to explore the way Progressive Christians think, pray, worship, study, and serve the world around them.

PS We will take orders for purchasing the book *"Re-claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World"* at the first session on January 30.



## 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.*

#### 2011 Report of Committee

##### On Church and Society

Here's what we did in 2011:

We continued to advocate on the following peace and justice issues and sponsored several educational events:

The committee sent letter to President Obama urging him to end the war in Afghanistan.

The congregation signed letter to Senators Lautenberg and Menendez urging them to protect programs for the poor and to cut the deficit by cutting the Pentagon.

The congregation signed letter to the Sussex County Freeholders urging them to approve a \$3 fee on transactions recorded by the County Clerk in order to establish a Sussex County Homeless Trust Fund.

The committee sent letter thanking Congressman Frelinghuysen for voting to increase funding for nuclear non-proliferation in fiscal year 2012.

The committee co-sponsored with the Multifaith Peace and Justice Alliance the conference "Move the Money – Swords Into Plowshares".

Sponsored 3-Sunday morning adult education sessions on Understanding Islam, led by Dr. Ali Chaudry and attended by church members and community members.

Purchased the 3 sacred Abrahamic texts, the Christian Bible, the Koran, and the Jewish Bible and have them displayed in the church library.

The committee continued its strong opposition to "torture". We hung our "Torture Is A Moral Issue" banner outdoors during June, viewed a film during a Sunday morning class followed by discussion, and signed a petition to our elected officials to end torture.

The committee sponsored a vigil in the sanctuary during the trial of Rev. Amy De Long, tried by the church for performing a same-sex wedding ceremony.

Committee members urged the members of the Delaware River Basin Commission to protect our drinking water and not to approve fracking.

Sponsored the alternative Christmas card program by offering the congregation an opportunity to purchase gift cards for Doctors Without Borders,

#### Church Council Holds Its December Meeting

The Church Council met for three-and-a-half hours on December 28<sup>th</sup> for the sole purpose of finding a solution to the \$45,000 budget deficit problem. As the Staff Parish and Trustees committees are responsible for the largest segments of the church's budget, they were asked at the November meeting to submit proposals regarding where cuts could be made in order to close the financial gap. These proposals, along with two others from individual Council members, were received by the Church Council for consideration. The December meeting focused on examining these proposals. All measures were considered, including the drastic solution of a change to a pastor who would require a lower salary. By the end of the meeting, a motion was passed that asked Pastor Diane to remain with us, as the Council vowed to meet her salary requirements. Fundraising and long-term planning initiatives were identified as means to close the deficit and ensure ongoing solutions to financial difficulties. Two task forces were established under the leadership of Ann Freeman Price. One task force is charged with overseeing the governance and operations of the Church Mouse and the World Mission Shop; the second task force will oversee long-term solutions. Individuals also volunteered to be in charge of communications and fundraising. Please speak with Ann, Dave Johnson, or Diane Koob if you would be willing to serve on a task force or help with communications or fundraising. At the beginning of the meeting, Steve Magnotta reported that he had received \$10,000 more in pledges since the last stewardship update. By the end of the meeting, more than \$17,000 was raised through additional pledges and donations from those gathered at the meeting. The Council rejoiced in the positive, forward-moving direction that the meeting had taken. Copies of the complete minutes of the December Church Council meeting are available in the narthex.

# United Methodist Women Go in Many Directions

## Come Join Us!

### Cleaning Bucket Kits Are UMW Lenten Project

Starting on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and ending on Palm Sunday, April 1, United Methodist Women will be collecting items for Cleaning Bucket Kits for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). These used to be called Flood Kits. There is now a New Jersey emergency team so the supplies will be kept locally for New Jersey emergencies. Sometimes during the collection period Laura Kempson, who is one of the emergency responder persons, will tell the congregation about this program.

As with all UMCOR kits, items must be exactly as they specify.

5 gallon bucket with resealable lid (this can be a used bucket if washed, no paint or chlorine buckets)

liquid laundry detergent---two 25 oz. or one 50oz. bottles only

liquid household cleaner---12-16 oz. liquid cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray cleaners)

dish soap---16-28 oz. bottle any brand

1 can air freshener---aerosol or pump

1 insect repellent spray---6-14 oz. aerosol or spray pump with protective cover

1 scrub brush---plastic or wooden handle

18 cleaning wipes---handi wipes or reusable wipes, no terry cleaning towels

7 sponges

5 scouring pads

5 clothespins

clothes line---two 50 ft. or one 100 ft. cotton or plastic

24 roll heavy duty trash bags

5 dust masks

2 pair disposable waterproof gloves---rubber or latex

United Methodist Women recognizes that this is a more expensive "kit" so you are encouraged to contribute what you can.

### The Holy Hookers

#### Meeting again on Wednesdays

Come join us as we crochet blankets for needy babies, children and adult and enjoy a time of fellowship.

Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 in the Wesley room. Contact Diane Gelone with Questions at (973)973-729-6961.



### Food Gift Cards - Love Thy Neighbor

Thanks to the generosity of the Thrift Shop and the members of this church we were able to give out 1380 \$10.00 food gift cards or \$13,800.00 worth, to the needy of Sussex County. This is one of the ways we are showing our ability to care for one another. Thank you for your support of this program. My hope is to be able to continue it through 2012.

Thanks again, Diane Gelone, United Methodist Woman



### February 1st To Be

#### UMW Healing Prayer

We will gather from 11:15 to 11:45 to pray together. We meet in the Wesley Room. Join us or let Ann Freeman Price or Wilma Smith know of persons you would like us to pray for.

### UMW Writing Group

#### Takes a Sabbatical

It's called a winter break. And that's what the UMW Writing Group is taking. They will meet again next on Saturday, March 3 at 10am.

### UMW Book Worms Are On Facebook

Actually the Facebook Group is Sparta UMW, but there is now a monthly report there from the UMW Book Worms

The next meeting is February 13 at 10am and the book is That Used To Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back by Thomas L. Freedman and Michael Mandelbaum. Join us.



## CHURCH MOUSE THRIFT SHOP Disbursements to Agencies/Projects - 2011

CHURCH MOUSE NEWS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| People Help                              | Sparta UMC Youth program and Mission Trip          |
| Aldersgate Campership                    | Manna House  |
| Keep Inc.                                | Rainbows (Children's grief support -local program) |
| United Methodist Com. On Relief          | Pastor's Discretionary Fund for needy              |
| Japan, Tornado Victims N.J. Floods       | Monthly Food Certificates -local needy             |
| Katie's House                            | Interfaith Hospitality Network                     |
| Sparta Ecumenical Food Pantry            | Sparta UMW Thank Offering                          |
| Cumac/Echo (Food Pantry and Distribution | Books, Bikes, Beyond Literacy                      |
| Center) in Newark area                   | Habitat for Humanity                               |
| Sparta Youth Minister                    | Harvest House Soup Kitchen in Sussex               |
| United Methodist Homes                   | Cancer Relief fund project                         |
| Giving Tree (Christmas gifts for         | Camp YDP (Youth Development Program)               |
| Needy Children)                          | SUMC Parsonage Remodeling                          |
| Coupons for the Community                | Samaritan Inn                                      |
| Project Self-Sufficiency                 | Airplane for relief flights                        |
|  | Greater New Jersey Annual Conference               |

- Shared Ministry Program
- Clergy Support
- World Service
- Black Colleges
- Africa University
- Ministerial Education

### Disbursements/Donations of Merchandise

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Salvation Army                              | Haiti - Hackettstown Vol. Traveling Group  |
| SUMC Kitchen supplies                       | Sussex Cleaners - Hangers                  |
| And Church School                           | Andover Nursing Home                       |
| People Help                                 | Helen Morgan School - PTO Scholarship Fund |
| Children's Back to School Giveaway-Hurdtown | Dasi                                       |
| Life Choices - Holy Family                  | Andover Methodist Church - Yarn            |
| Center in Phillipsburg                      | Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice - books          |
| Flower Box - Vases                          | SUMC Knitting/Crocheting Group             |
| Books for Graceland Park Elementary         | Supplies to Jefferson Middle School        |
| School in Baltimore                         |  |

(Average of) 36 certificates each month for  
Merchandise in shop (\$20 each)

# Noteworthy News



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Patricia Burroughs February 5  
Nancy Smith February 5



I would like to put more birthdays in the Newsletter. Please contact me with yours!  
Linda@spartaumc.org or (973)729-7773

## CARNATION SALE FEBRUARY 12TH

The Sunday School will be selling carnations as a fundraiser on February 12, 2012 during coffee hour. Flowers will be \$2.00 and all monies raised will be used to defray the general budget deficit.



## Results of Christmas Card Sales



Results of Alternative Christmas Card Sales Due to the generosity of members of our congregation, the Church and Society committee collected a total of \$510.00 through the sale of alternative Christmas cards during the Advent season. Checks were sent to three different charities in the name of our church. The funds were disbursed as follows: UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) - \$80.00; Foundation for Orphans - \$275.00; Doctors Without Borders - \$155.00. Thanks to all of you who supported this worthwhile project.



## RAINBOWS CHILDRENS GRIEF SUPPORT

The Sparta United Methodist Church and the Sparta Ecumenical Council will sponsor the winter/spring 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 winter/spring session begins February 28, 2012, and ends April 3, 2012 (Tuesday evening meetings). If you would like to register your child for this program, please call Pat Johnson, 973-729-3233.



## 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'.

**February- toilet paper**

## UMW To Sell Soup and Quiche



January 29 and February 19 & 26 are the next dates when you can buy soup and quiche after the 10:30 worship service. These are made by UMW members. Profits go toward their pledge to the church finances.

## Sunday School Children Collect for Heifer International



Our Sunday School has collected \$691.42 and sent it to Heifer International. This organization provides animals and knowledge of farming to people in underdeveloped countries bettering their lives. Our Children/Youth did a great job, let them know when you see them.

## Save The Date

April 14, 2012

The head of the Greater New Jersey delegation to the General Conference will speak about the conference and the issues facing the United Methodist Church. We will have a car pool going. The location will be in the next newsletter. Interested persons should contact Ann Freeman Price at (973)383-5014.



## Humor Corner

This comes from Steve Magnotta's mother who was a Church Secretary for 34 years. She got this from the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*.

### The Perfect Preacher

He preaches exactly 20 minutes, then he sits down, he condemns sins, but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8am to 10pm in every type of job, from preaching to custodial services. He makes \$60.00 per week, wears good clothes, buys good books regularly, has a nice family, drives a good car and gives \$30.00 a week to the church. He also stands ready to contribute to every good work that comes along. He is 26 years old and has been preaching for 30 years. He is tall & short, thin & heavyset, handsome. He has one brown eye and one blue; hair is parted in the middle on the left side dark and straight; the right brown is wavy. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all this time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him dedicated to his work. He makes 15 calls a day on church members, but is never out of his office.

Editor's note: If you have any comments, please make them to Steve

# SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Sparta, NJ 07871

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Fax: 973-729-8703

*We're on the web!*

[www.spartaumc.org](http://www.spartaumc.org)

Please note our WINTER 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

The World Mission Shop will be open after the 10:30 worship service on Sunday, January 29, and Sunday, February 5. Come down and check out some new Valentine gifts.

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](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 March

The DEADLINE for all articles is:  
**February 15th**

#### SUNDAY SERVICES

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

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

*Ash Wednesday*

Service takes place on  
Wednesday, February 22nd at 7:30 PM