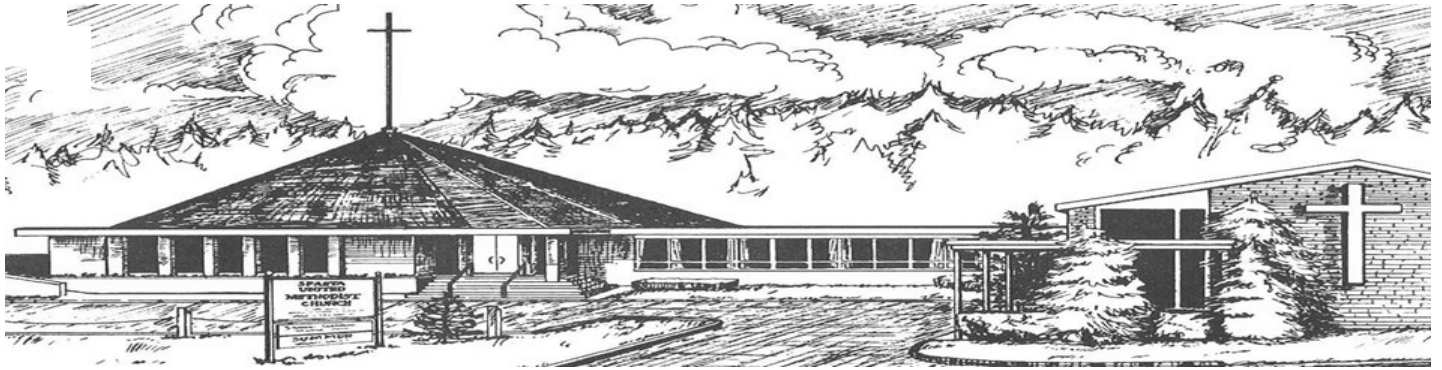


SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



NEWSLETTER—April 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

The celebration of Easter is a reminder that we are resurrection people, and there is no better time to experience the joy of new life than Spring. Just this past week, I saw daffodils and crocuses pushing their way through the surface of the ground, trees are beginning to bud as a reminder that soon they will burst open and the green leaves of summer will soon be here. It is fitting, therefore, that this is the month of Earth Day. Just as we see new and resurrection in Jesus as he came out of the tomb, we can see in the natural world God's plan of new life and resurrection.

What does new life mean for our sisters and brothers around the world, including right here in our country? Fresh water to drink, healthy food to eat, clean air to breathe – these are among the blessings that should be available for all of God's children. Our responsibilities as followers of Jesus include caring for our world so that all might enjoy and experience the abundance of life as God intended for us. While Earth Day is not specifically a religious celebration, it is certainly in line with the values that we hold as Christians who are called to care for our neighbors, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to set free the prisoners, including those imprisoned by dangerous and unhealthy environments without the resources to relocate.

The United Methodist Church in its Social Principles states, *“All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.”* (§160)

I hope that each day in this month, as we see the winter season fade away and new life open up before our very eyes, we will remember that new life is God's plan and hope for us, for our neighbors, and for our planet. I pray that together we can continue to make a difference in large and small ways in our homes and in our church, because in so doing, we are sharing the good news of the Risen Christ which is as real today as it was years ago.

In Christ,

Steve

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are a way to acknowledge someone special or highlight an important occasion. Many thanks to all who have requested altar flowers. The flower calendar is full through April. Requests are now being taken for May 5th, and 26th, as well as June 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th.

Altar flowers cost \$30. We keep costs low by reusing containers and vases. Please pay the church directly and include a note that the funds are for Altar Flowers and the date chosen. When requesting flowers please provide your name, phone number, email address and dedication. Let us know if you plan to take the flowers after the 10:30 service, or if you want them delivered to someone needing a pick-me-up.

Use this [link](#) to reserve your flowers.

Any questions? Contact Yvonne Roux, yrouxrings@gmail.com, or 973-534-6129.

PFLAG Meeting



The April meeting of Sussex PFLAG will be Wednesday, April 17th, in Demarest Hall, at 7 p.m. Zoe Heath, President of Sussex Pride, will be joining the meeting to solicit ideas for community activities at the Sussex Pride Celebration on Saturday, June 8th. Anne O'Dair, a Board Member of Sussex PFLAG, will facilitate support group discussions. Refreshments are available. All are welcome to attend. Participants under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent.

Church & Society



The Church and Society Committee
of the Sparta United Methodist Church
Pursuing Peace; Seeking Justice; Living Faith

SAVE THE DATE!

Trinity United Methodist Church (Hackettstown), Denville Community Church (UMC), and Sparta UMC have been working together for the past two years to focus on issues of food insecurity and racial inequity. In February, members of the three churches journeyed to Washington DC to meet with the staffs of our US Representatives and US Senators to discuss concerns about the continuation and expansion of programs that alleviate hunger and provide crucial services for struggling families.

The Church and Society committee is extending an invitation to all to attend a special event on **Saturday, April 27th, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Denville Community Church (190 Diamond Spring Road)** to explore how we might make a difference in advancing the quality of life for all. We need your ideas and perspectives.

All are welcome to attend. For more information and/or to sign up for the event, see Sandy Svenningsen, or contact her at sandra.svenningsen@gmail.com.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

--John Wesley

Church & Society

ENVIRONMENTAL

C O R N E R



TIPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE SPRING

Plant native plants – which need less water and are better able to survive.

Use non-toxic cleaning products. Vinegar, water and baking soda can handle most daily cleaning needs. Use natural fiber sponges and cleaning agents that are biodegradable, phosphate-free, chlorine-free, and unscented.

Reduce paper use. Use rags instead of paper towels and wash them for reuse. Buy post-consumer recycled paper and recycle it when you're done.

Repair instead of replace. Spring is wonderful time for a fresh start. But think twice before you throw out that perfectly good pair of shoes or piece of clothing from "last season." The longer you use an item, the less virgin materials are needed to replace it.

Church Mouse

CHURCH MOUSE APRIL SALES

BE SURE TO STOP IN FOR A VISIT



APRIL 10 – 13: Pick a golf ball and get a discount.

APRIL 17 – 20 Pick a bag of seeds to discover your discount.

APRIL 24 - 27: Entire Shop 50% off!!!

SHOP HOURS: WED & SAT: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thurs & Fri: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Small Group Opportunities

For all Zoom Gatherings, you may use either the Video Link or the Phone in # with ID #

BEYOND THE BASICS - (ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL)

Sunday Mornings at 9:30 a.m. in Room 8

MONDAY NIGHT

Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM

The Monday Night Group will be reading Howard Thurman's "Jesus and the Disinherited" through the month of February in recognition of Black History Month. Thurman was an acclaimed theologian at Boston University School of Theology and an influential teacher for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For February 5, we will read the preface and the first chapter.

All are welcome to join for this book discussion held on ZOOM from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/771970415?pwd=bFdUQk9YQUlyZXRhYUZnNVhRVEZvUT09>.

Even if you can't come each week, please feel free to join whenever you can. If you need help finding the book, please see Pastor Steve

HEALTHIER LIVING GROUP

PLEASE NOTE NEW TIME!! Every TUESDAY Morning at 10:30 a.m. Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85294018790?pwd=bScXqgjh6RICDFWN93I16_aMcguqxFl

Meeting ID: 852 9401 8790 Passcode: 389789

One tap mobile +16465588656,,85294018790#

Dial by your location +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 852 9401 8790

UMW BOOK GROUP-

THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH IS UMW BOOK GROUP

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89033468706?pwd=M3FYTHZPcm55SmIjdGIRckRXTjgrQT09>

Meeting ID: 890 3346 8706 Passcode: 681008 -- One tap mobile +13017158592,,89033468706#

Dial by your location: 1 301 715 8592, Meeting ID: 890 3346 8706

WEDNESDAY MORNING MEN'S STUDY

Wednesday Mornings at 7:15 a.m.

Angelo's Franklin Diner

READING TOGETHER/BIBLE STUDY

Friday's at 10:00 a.m. If God Is Love Don't Be a Jerk

Book by John Pavlovitz

Join Zoom Video Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/389284226>

Alternate Phone in #: +1 646 876 9923; Meeting ID: 389 284 226 -- Passcode: 7773

SATURDAY PRAYERS & CONVERSATION GATHERING

Join a ZOOM gathering on Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m. just to touch base and connect with others from the congregation just to check in and share with each other. Join Zoom Video Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/826747498> Phone in #: +1 646 876 9923;

Meeting ID: 826 747 498 Passcode: 7773

SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

71 Sparta Avenue

Sparta, NJ 07871

973-729-7773

spartaumc.org

Inside This Issue:

Altar Flowers	2	PFLAG	2
Church & Society	3,4	Small Groups	5
Church Mouse	4		

Thrift Shop

973-729-9121

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Friday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

