

SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

August 23, 2026, 10:30 A.M.

*Please stand in body or spirit

Prelude

My Lord, What a Morning

Traditional American Spiritual
Arranged by Larry Shackley
Lorenz Publishing Co. © 2010

Words of Welcome

*Call to Worship

The invitation is given to every person by Jesus Christ: “Come to me! Follow me! Be my disciples!”

We come to this place, to this time, at the invitation of Jesus Christ, and in the name of Jesus we accept the invitation to discipleship.

In the name of Christ, as his disciples, we worship and praise God.

In the midst of a world where cruelty abounds, we proclaim the God of compassion.

In the midst of despair that threatens to swallow up whole lives, whole peoples,

We proclaim the God of Hope and the God of Love

Come, let us worship together

and share our witness of God's living presence in the world.

*Opening Song

Come, Christians Join to Sing

UMH 158

Congregational Prayer

God, you bring us together in this place to be fed, to be renewed, to seek understanding. You challenge us in this place, and today we embrace the challenge, trusting that through challenge we grow in faith. As we worship today, Lord, you are revealed to us sometimes in shining glory and sometimes in tears and struggle. God as we worship today, refresh, renew, and challenge us so that we would see your awesomeness. For we pray in Jesus’ name who showed us the way to walk the path of discipleship, and who taught us to pray:

The Lord’s Prayer

Ian Good

Special Music

Just A Closer Walk With Thee

Traditional Southern Gospel Hymn
Soloist: Ruth Kelley
Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation © 1983

A Time for Young Disciples

Song of Preparation

Spirit of the Living God

UMH 393Wor

Scripture Reading

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Message

Choices, Discipleship, and Joy

Rev. Ellen Mearns Bechtold

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

This Week in the Life of the Church

The Offering of Our Prayers

*Closing Song

Joy in the Morning

FWS 2284

*Sending Forth

Postlude

Joshua (Fit the Battle of Jericho)

African-American Spiritual
Arranged by Glenda Austin
The Willis Music Co. © 2011

WELCOME TO ALL

COME AS YOU ARE . . .YOU ARE WELCOME!

Who hope for a better world & all who have lost hope:
Believers and seekers,
Conventional Christians & questioning skeptics
Women, men, youth and children
Of all sexual orientations & gender identities
Of all races and cultures,
Of all income levels,
Of all social classes
Of all physical & mental abilities.

SPARTA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Ministry Team

MINISTERS..... Every Member of Sparta UMC
PASTOR.....Rev. Dr. Steven Bechtold
PASTOR EMERITUS Rev. Dr. Alden Welch
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.....Sue Reynolds
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES Bonnie Pomeroy
SEXTON Eleanor Shumaker

Website: www.spartaumc.org

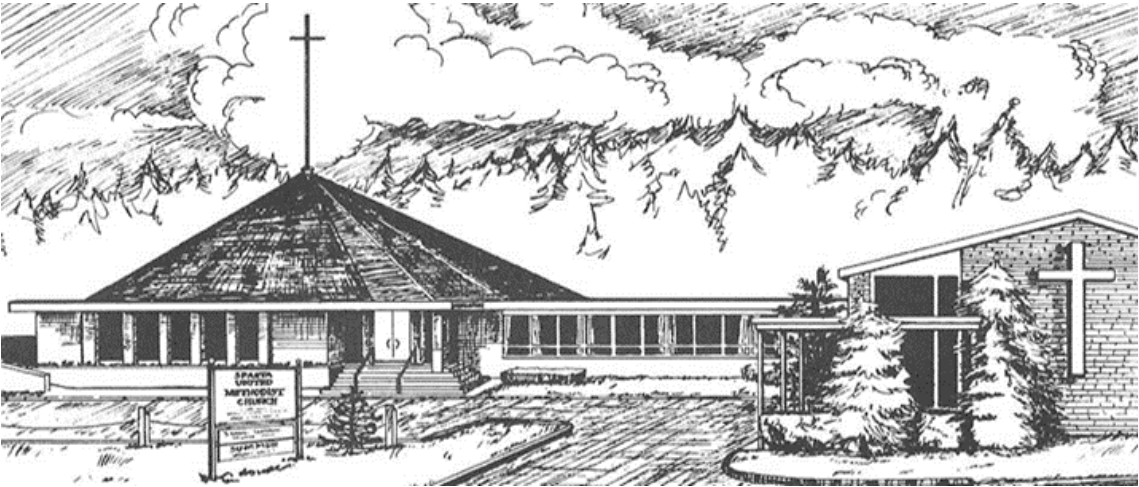
All Songs - One License A-719583

*For your convenience, you may scan the QR Code to reach the Sparta
UMC On-line Giving Platform through Vanco.*



SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



August 23, 2026
10:30 A.M. Worship Service

71 Sparta Avenue
Sparta, New Jersey 07871
973-729-7773

Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors:
Not Just a Tagline: This IS who we are