

SPARTA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

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

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| *Please stand in body or spirit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| Prelude                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Near to the Heart of God               | Tune: McAFEE<br>by Cleland B. McAfee<br>arranged by Stan Pethel<br>Lorenz Publishing Co. © 2011                               |
| Words of Welcome                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| *Call to Worship                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| People of God, let us open our hearts and minds to the presence of God as we worship together.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>We gather today trusting in God’s spirit that has called us to this time and place, uniting us as the body of Christ.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| For each of us is a unique part of that body, and though each of us has different gifts and different talents, we are united with one hope and one love.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>And we celebrate today that each of us are blessed and loved by God.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| *Opening Song                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | O God Beyond All Praising              | FWS 2009                                                                                                                      |
| Congregational Prayer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>God of grace and love, we come today sometimes doubting our self-worth, wondering whether we are worthy to call ourselves your children, forgetting that you have made us in your image and your goodness has never left us. Even when we fall short of your hopes and expectations for us as your children and co-creators in your creative order, you never abandon us but offer forgiveness and reconciliation as the signs of your love. Help us to accept the love you offer us and to share that same spirit with one another and all your people. May we together offer the world a new vision of community, a vision where all people are valued for the blessing that they are. For we lift up this prayer in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:</b> |                                        |                                                                                                                               |
| The Lord’s Prayer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ian Good                               |                                                                                                                               |
| Special Music                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Arms of Love<br>Soloist: Ruth Fulgenzi | Words & Music by<br>Gary Chapman,<br>Michael W. Smith<br>and Amy Grant<br>Bug and Bear Music and Meadowgreen Music Co. © 1982 |

|                                                                                                                         |                              |                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A Time for Young Disciples                                                                                              |                              |                                                                                        |
| Scripture Reading                                                                                                       | Psalm 139: 1-14a             |                                                                                        |
| <sup>1</sup> O Lord, you have searched me and known me.                                                                 |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.                        |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.                              |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.                                        |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.                                               |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.                             |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?                                   |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.                            |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,                           |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.                               |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>11</sup> If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,”                         |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>13</sup> For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.                      |                              |                                                                                        |
| <sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.                                                    |                              |                                                                                        |
| Song of Preparation                                                                                                     | Through it All               | UMH 507                                                                                |
| The Message                                                                                                             | Yes - We Matter to God       |                                                                                        |
| The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings                                                                                  |                              |                                                                                        |
| This Week in the Life of the Church                                                                                     |                              |                                                                                        |
| The Offering of Our Prayers                                                                                             |                              |                                                                                        |
| *Closing Song                                                                                                           | God of Love and God of Power | UMH 578                                                                                |
| *Sending Forth                                                                                                          |                              |                                                                                        |
| Postlude                                                                                                                | Rock - A - My Soul           | African-American Spiritual<br>Arranged by Glenda Austin<br>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](http://www.spartaumc.org)

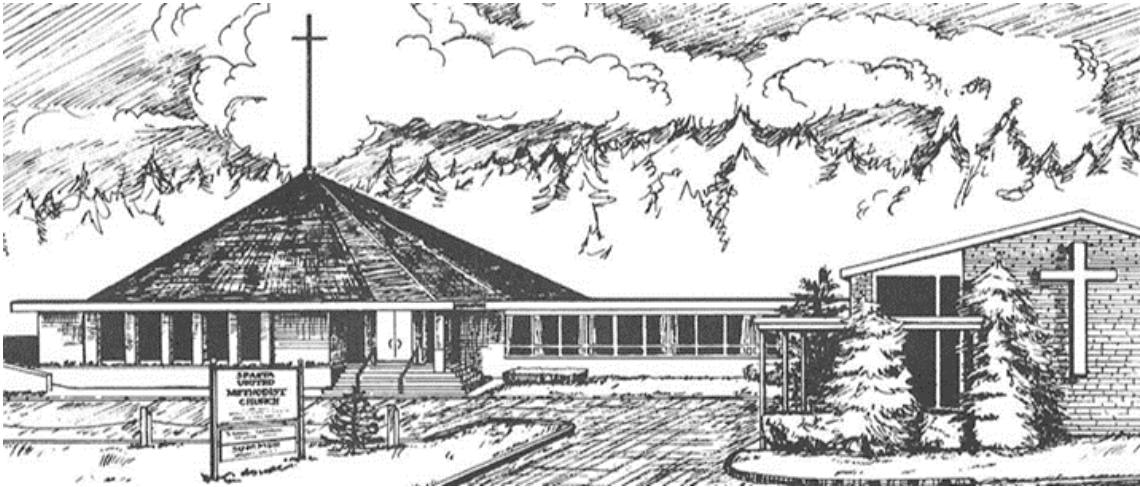
All Songs - One License A-719583



*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 30, 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**