SPARTA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
October 11, 2026, 10:30 A.M.

**Please* stand in body or spirit

Prelude — *Blessed Assurance* — by Phoebe Palmer Knapp, arranged by Mark Hayes, Lorenz Publishing Co. © 2011

Words of Welcome

*Call to Worship

Come, let us remember the goodness of God.
Every good gift comes from the Lord.
Come, let us remember God's faithfulness.
God has sustained us through every season.
Come, let us worship the One who gives life, hope, and purpose.
With grateful hearts, we come to worship God.

*Opening Song of Praise — *Baptized in Water* — FWS 2248

Congregational Prayer

Generous and gracious God, before we offered you our praise, you offered us your love. Before we sought you, you were already seeking us. Before we drew our first breath, you called us your own. Yet we confess that we sometimes forget. We forget your faithfulness when life is difficult and your provision when life is abundant. We forget that all we have and all we are comes from you. Forgive us. Renew thankful hearts within us. Open our eyes to recognize the gifts that surround us each day. Open our hearts to receive your grace with gratitude. Open our lives to your transforming presence so that our worship may become a living response to your goodness. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer — Ian Good

The Sacrament of Baptism

T*oday, we welcome into the family of God Graham Anthony Keenan and Isla Blair Keenan, children of Daria and Blake Keenan, through the sacrament of Baptism.*

Congregational Response: We give thanks for all that God has already given you and welcome you in Christian love. With God's help, we renew our covenant to live according to the example of Christ and proclaim good news of great joy for all people. We will surround Graham and Isla with a community of love and grace and forgiveness that they may grow in his service to the world. We will pray for them, that they may live a life of your abundant grace. Amen.

A Time for Young Disciples

Anthem — *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* — Traditional Hymn Tune from the southern part of the U.S. A., arranged by Virgil Thomson, Warner Bros. Publications U.S. Inc. © 1966

Scripture Reading — *John 15:1-8*

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. [2] He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. [3] You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. [6] Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7] If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

The Message — *Connected to God: Everything is a Gift*

The Giving of our Tithes and Offerings

This Week in the Life of the Church

The Offering of Our Prayers

*Closing Song of Praise — *For the Beauty of the Earth* *Verses 1, 2, 4, and 6* — UMH 92

*Sending Forth

Postlude — *The Solid Rock* — by William B. Bradbury, arranged by Larry Shackley, Alfred Music Publishing Co., Inc. © 2004

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,
Adults, 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

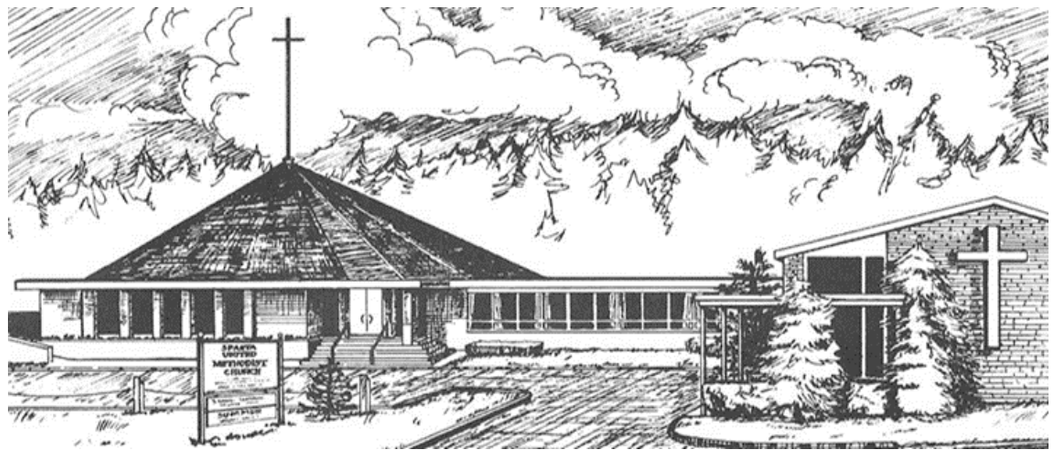
MINISTERS ..... Every Member of Sparta UMC
PASTOR.....Rev. Dr. Steven Bechtold
PASTOR EMERITUS ..... Rev. Dr. Alden Welch
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT..... Sue Reynolds
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES ..... Bonnie Pomeroy
SEXTON.....Eleanor Shumaker

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SPARTA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



October 11, 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