SPARTA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
November 8, 2026, 10:30 A.M.
COMMITMENT SUNDAY

**Please stand in body or spirit*

Prelude — *I Surrender All* — Words by Judson W. Van DeVenter, Music by Winfield S. Weeden, Arranged by Melody Bober, Alfred Music © 2008

Words of Welcome

*Call to Worship
God has blessed us with grace upon grace.
We give thanks for God's goodness.
God calls us to share what we have received.
We are blessed to become a blessing.
God sends us into the world with hope and purpose.
We come to worship and offer ourselves to God's mission.

*Opening Song — *Welcome* — W & S 3152

Congregational Prayer
God of abundance and grace, you have blessed us beyond measure and called us to participate in your work of healing, reconciliation, and hope. We recognize that fear sometimes keeps us from trusting you fully. We hold too tightly to what has been entrusted to us and focus on scarcity rather than abundance. We forget that your blessings are meant to flow through us to others. Renew our trust in your provision and open our hearts to your mission. Fill us with gratitude for all we have received and inspire us to share your love with the world. Through Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer — Ian Good

A Time for Young Disciples

Special Mission Recognition

Anthem — *Follow Me!* — South Carolina Spiritual, Arranged by John Carter, Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. © 1993

Reading of the Scripture — *Matthew 25:14-30*

*14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them;
15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he
went away. At once 16 the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made
five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the
one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.
19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who
had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over
to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and
trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things;
enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying,
'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to
him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you
in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the one who had received the one
talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not
sow and gathering where you did not scatter, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the
ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew,
did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have
invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with
interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to all those who
have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what
they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where
there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

The Message — *Wise Choices*

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

This Week in the Life of the Church

A Time of Commitment

The Offering of Our Prayers

*Closing Song — *Take My Life, and Let It Be* — UMH 399

*Sending Forth

Postlude — *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus* — by George J. Webb, arranged by Cindy Berry, Alfred Music © 2013

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

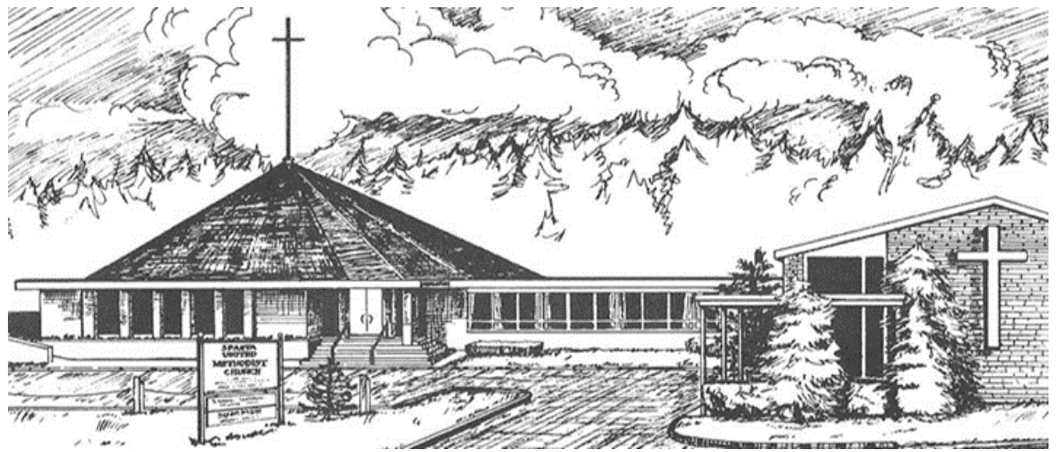
MINISTERS ..... Every Member of Sparta UMC
PASTOR.....Rev. Dr. Steven Bechtold
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT..... Sue Reynolds
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES ..... Bonnie Pomeroy
SEXTON.....Eleanor Shumaker

Website: www.spartaumc.org

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SPARTA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



November 8, 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