



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, SPARTA ILLINOIS

# THE LAMPLIGHTER

## AUGUST 2023



Just a reminder that July has a Fifth Sunday! Do not forget to save your loose change (although we will not turn down your paper money either!). The money collected this Sunday, and will go to 'Change for Community Change.' Thanks for your support of this ministry!

For those who have lost a loved one, GriefShare will begin Thursday, August 17th at 7:00 PM in the gathering room. Anyone who has lost a loved one, whether recently or longer ago, is welcome. You will learn about characteristics of grief, common experiences of grief, and learn of some suggestions as to how to come to terms with it, what steps to take, and ways to rebuild your life. The 13 week program consists of a video, a workbook, and questions for guided group discussion. Please call the office to leave your name and number if you plan on attending.



The church will be holding the annual Back 2 School Looking Cool this Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup> from 9-1. Students in the community have the opportunity to receive school supplies, a dental exam, and new this year finger printing in partnership with CARITAS.

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## Hello Sparta First!!

It has been an amazing first month here at Sparta First UMC! I have enjoyed meeting so many of you, having a coffee together, eating lunch or during our Pastor Chats. I love seeing everyone in worship with new faces each and every weekend. And I look forward to getting to know you all better.

Celebrations are in order! We are starting a couple of new groups for Sunday School soon. If you are not in a group, you should join one! Groups are an important part of our faith journey. They are a place to learn together, live life together through the ups and downs and a place to serve together. Consider joining a new group. Watch the bulletin for more information.

Second, we will celebrate a new member joining the church in the next couple of weeks. If you are interested in membership at Sparta First let me know via the Connect Card in worship or shoot me an email. You should consider membership if you feel like this church is home to you and your family and you see yourself being a part of what God is doing in this church. You commit to being fully engaged in the life of Sparta First by attending worship regularly, building community in a small group, serving where God has gifted and called you and living generously.

Thank you to all the kids singing last Sunday! You all did an amazing job leading us in worship. Beautiful voices! I can't wait to see you next month! If you would like more information about joining the adult choir or Praise Kids, you can contact Gary Cox.

So what is coming up you ask? Next month we will start a three week worship series on prayer. This will not be your basic prayer series, we will be talking about Breakthrough Prayer. We will be asking what is God's will and plans for Sparta UMC and how we can get on board with what God is doing in this church and community. We will also have a 21-day prayer challenge if you choose to accept. No matter where we are on our faith journey, we can always take another step in prayer. I hope you will join us each week to find out more and participate in listening and responding to where God is leading.

We will be launching Pastor Chats in August. These are one hour get-togethers with light refreshments, a time to chat with one another and a time to answer a series of five questions. These get-togethers are important for two reasons. First, we can get to know one another better. Second, the answers you give to the five questions will help me and the Ad Council see where we are as a church and what your dreams are for our church. This will help in the fall planning process for where we will go in ministry in 2024. I would love to see everyone attend one Pastor Chat. We will have them at various times, in-person and on zoom to help best fit your schedule. I'm looking forward to dreaming with you and seeing what God has in store for Sparta UMC. I hope you will join me. Look for sign ups in the church entryway.

Tuesday, August 8th @ 10am Fellowship Hall (In Person)  
@ 6:30pm Fellowship Hall (In Person)  
Thursday, August 10th @ 6:30pm (In Person)  
Sunday, August 13th @ 11am Fellowship Hall (In Person)  
Wednesday, August 16th @ 6:30pm on Zoom  
Sunday, August 27th @ 9am - Jr and Sr High Students (In Person)  
@ 11am Fellowship Hall (In Person)

Starting on August 6th, come a few minutes early to worship and enjoy some time to chat and have some coffee and refreshments each week. We will start serving coffee and light snacks at 8:30am. Come before your class or join us in the Gathering Room before worship. Hope to see you there. If you are looking for a place to serve, this is a great place to sign up! Come and brew some coffee, chat and build community on a Sunday morning. If you are interested contact Carol Ashley at 618-449-1307.

See you all in worship this Saturday or Sunday for our final week of Road Trip. We will talk about the flip side of the coin to Love God - Love Neighbor.

(If you would like to get together check "Coffee with the Pastor" on your connect card during worship on Sunday or email me anytime at [PastorLeslieC@gmail.com](mailto:PastorLeslieC@gmail.com).)

## Administrative Council Meeting June 13, 2023, 6:00pm

Persons Attending: (11/13)

Leslie Chalupny (Pastor, Lay Leadership Committee), Jeremy Volkmar (Chairperson), Gary Cox (Music Director, Lay Member to Annual Conf), Patti Cecil (Treasurer), Kathy Ruhmann (Recording Secretary), Mary Hauskins (Church Family Meals), Brooke Gerlach (Church School Supt, Youth, Missions), Linda Bird (Financial Secretary), Jan Seals (Evangelism, Lay Member to Annual Conf), Carl Holland (Finance Comm), Autumn Peck (Worship)

The meeting began at 6:00 pm with a prayer by Gary Cox. Minutes from the June 12th meeting were reviewed by all. Autumn Peck moved to approve the minutes. Brooke Gerlach seconded the motion. The minutes were approved. It was noted that when the minutes appear in the Lamplighter, they should always be labeled, "not yet approved." Some time ago, it was decided to include up-to-date minutes in the Lamplighter even though they hadn't been approved by the council as yet. Occasionally, minor changes are made and reported in the next month's minutes.

Church School Superintendent, Youth, Missions: Brooke Gerlach  
The Youth will be planning a chili cook-off in the fall. Pastor Leslie reminded us that we must satisfy requirements to be a "safe sanctuary." This involves an online video for leaders to complete and background checks for those involved with children. Just as in schools, church leaders are considered "mandatory reporters," and this role should be taken seriously to make families feel secure.

Meal Ministry: Mary Hauskins

Mary Hauskins has updated the shut-in list. Anyone making regular visits to shut-ins should make Mary aware. She can be sure that all our shut-ins are receiving visits each month.

Worship Committee: Autumn Peck

Autumn is hoping to have someone to work on the flowers for the altar. Hopefully there would be a new arrangement each month. A discussion followed about communion. Pastor Leslie will decide if we will continue with the intinction method or use the small communion cups sometimes.

Music Director: Gary Cox

The choir will sing again on July 16<sup>th</sup> and then take a break until the Sunday after Labor Day. Gary has found out that the Sparta schools will not be dismissing early on Wednesdays this year. There will be a discussion about when the children will gather to practice their songs to present on Sundays.

Lay Leader, Annual Conf: Jan Seals

Jan would like to consider getting together again to watch "The Chosen, Season 3" in the fall. Jan has also invited some young women to get together at her home soon.

Trustees: (Carl Holland)

The Trustee Committee looked at three options for some improvements to the parsonage to accommodate the new pastor's large family. They recommended adding a bedroom, bath, family room, and egress window to the basement. The cost of the project would be about \$40,000. To keep the budget in check, Pastor Leslie and her husband have pledged to donate \$5000 to the project and Pastor Leslie and the boys would donate

the work of installing sheet rock and flooring. A discussion on the project brought up several points. After discussion, Jan Seals moved to approve the construction to the parsonage. Autumn Peck seconded the motion. The motion to approve the construction at the parsonage carried. Now this information will be brought to the Finance Committee to make plans on how to pay for it.

Finance Committee: Carl Holland

A Finance Committee meeting will follow this meeting and they will consider several items, including:

Moving expenses for the new pastor.

A plan to pay for the construction at the parsonage.

Increasing the limit on the church credit card. This has begun to be a problem during certain times of the year when things are happening at the same time. It was suggested that along with an increase in a limit, there be rules/limits on spending with the card as well. Pastor Leslie and Carl will put together possible "rules/limits."

Pastor Leslie's salary increase. The church calendar year goes from July to June and at the annual conference, a minimum salary for a full time pastor was raised by 3% so therefore, Pastor Leslie's salary will be raised.

The Sharon Runge Educational Scholarship Fund guidelines.

Treasurer: Patti Cecil

Patti Cecil presented the Treasurer's Report. There were 96 people in church on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 73 on July 9<sup>th</sup>. More numbers means the offering is also larger. All bills are being paid on time and the building loan continues to decrease. Brooke Gerlach moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, pending later audit. Autumn seconded the motion. The Treasurer's Report was approved, pending later audit.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Leslie will begin getting to know everyone by having "Pastor Chats," where she'll meet with a few people at a time. During those get-togethers she'll be asking a few questions, which will lead to understanding how we all feel about the state of our church at this time and what community needs we could address. She will also be initiating a "breakthrough prayer" to energize our prayerfulness. She will be looking at a cloud-based church management system and making slight changes in the bulletin – a tear-off section for prayer requests, for example. The webpage will be getting an update as well.

She's been in contact with our new DS who is now in charge of a couple of districts – we're now the Central District. Charge Conference will be in mid-November this year and will be at Union Church in Belleville with all the Central District churches. Paperwork will be due in mid-October.

The new breakthrough prayer initiative is being explored by the Ad Council through the book, Open Road by Sue Nilson Kibbey. Our prayers should be asking for new possibilities and about opening doors, asking what is God's will. Listening, surrendering, and doing are also goals in our prayer life. There will be a plan to lead the congregation in Breakthrough prayer. Along with Pastor Chats and a survey of the community, we will use the responses to plan our next steps for 2024.

The next meeting will be August 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

Brooke Gerlach moved to adjourn. Linda Bird seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**\*\*THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROVED\*\***



- 8/01 Ray Heil, Isla Schwartz
- 8/06 Lynox Glodo
- 8/09 Tam Cowan, Katie Peck
- 8/10 Dena Carol Kilman
- 8/11 Bonnie Bardo
- 8/13 Julia Heil
- 8/14 Adriana Sheridan
- 8/15 Jeanette Burns  
Parker Haskenhoff
- 8/16 Jane Schupbach
- 8/17 Jonathan Norton
- 8/22 Wade Peck
- 8/25 Henry Schupbach
- 8/27 Janet Treece
- 8/28 Kenny Heaton
- 8/29 Nancy Ashley
- 8/30 Sue Morrison
- 8/31 Justin Baird

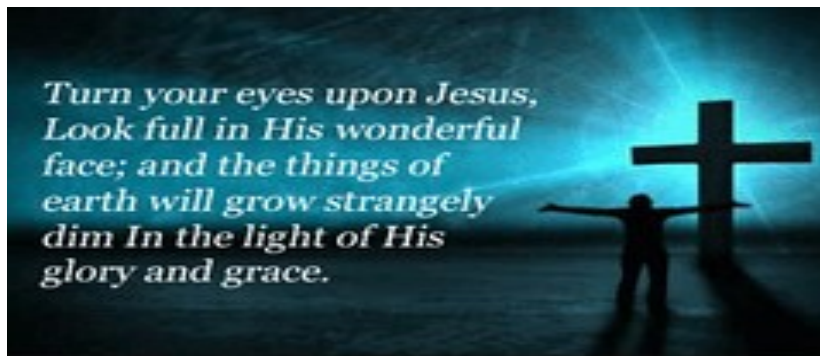


- 8/12 Arlen & Rose Walters
- 8/16 Carl & Sharon Holland

**Prayers**—Family of Matt Henson, Frank Beckley, Haddie Mettler, Karen Reeves, Rhonda Gerlach, Perry Brooks, Melinda Wolf, Carolyn Loesing, Myla Ashley, Charlie Heuman, Dillon Jacobus, Lori Blackburn, Linda Bird, Haddie Mettler



Beginning in August, the office hours will change a little bit. Currently they are Tuesday & Thursday from 12:30-3:30 and Wednesday from 12:30-4:30, but beginning August 1, they will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00-4:00. Hopefully this will make it easier for everyone to remember when they can come in and say Hi!



Date	General Budget	Capital Campaign	Other	Total For the Week	Sat/Sun/Online/Sunday School
07/02/23	\$4,134.85	\$468.35	\$96.00	4,699.20	0/96/97/24
07/09/23	\$4,825.30	\$610.00	\$168.42	\$5,603.72	12/71/37/28
07/16/23	\$3,530.30	\$370.00	\$201.03	\$4,101.33	14/75/53/33
07/23/23	\$2,323.59	\$180.00	\$213.50	\$2,717.09	17/84/38/32
<b>Total for Year to Date for General Budget: \$106,117.43</b>					

