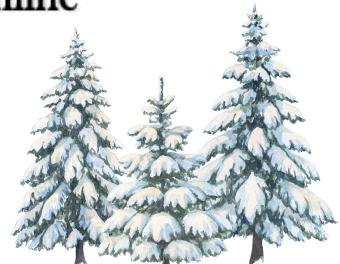
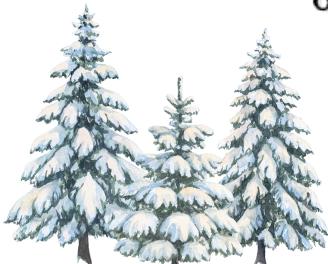


Sunday Worship Times
8:30 a.m. In-Person & 10:45 a.m. In-Person & Online



January 2026 Newsletter

Everybody, it's a new year and a new start for you and your family, so ask God to bless the new year for you and your household. We have a tradition at SSUMC of taking pictures of homes, driveways, or porches with the CHALKING of HOUSE with the blessing.

So, it's that time of the year to take a picture and post to it to our FACEBOOK account @Sprucestreetumc or email to pastor@sprucestreetumc.org and I will post them for you. I have enclosed the home service.

The Church will have some chalk for you at the if you need it from December 29th until it is gone.

Remember to Mark the doorway or driveway: 20 + C + M + B + 26; and what does 20+C+M+B+26 mean? Well the 2026 is the new year. CMB has two meanings the first is the initials for the traditional names of wise men or the magi Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. The second meaning is the Latin abbreviation for the blessing of May Christ bless this house; "Christus mansionem benedicat." So that is what the formula means.

Happy New Year!!!

Every Blessing,
Pastor Bart



Upcoming Birthdays

1/3	Brian McCracken
1/9	Lee Beaumont
1/12	Ben McMullen
1/15	Syndy Slaughter
1/16	Patricia Harman
1/18	Yvonne Bucklew
1/19	Fran Barnes
1/19	Randy Courtney
1/26	Caleb Britton
1/29	Sally Collins

HAPPY
birthday

SOMETHING TO DO ON NEW YEAR'S DAY OR EPIPHANY

SERVICE FOR CHALKING YOUR HOME

The Lord is with you;
And also with you.

Peace be to this house and to all who live, work, and visit here.

The three wise men came to Bethlehem in search of the Lord. They brought to him precious gifts: gold to honor the newborn king, incense to the true God in human form, and myrrh to anoint his body, which one day would die like our own.

Let us pray. O God, you once used a star to show to the entire world that Jesus is your Son. May the light of that star that once guided wise men to honor his birth, now guide us to recognize him also, to know you by faith, and to see you in the epiphanies of the daily experiences of our lives.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord — Jesus born of Mary — shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

As the Wise Men once sought your brilliant light, O Lord, so may we seek to live and work in your splendor. O God of Light, bless this house and our community of faith. May this be a place of peace and health. May each member of this community cultivate the gifts and graces you have bestowed, dedicating our talents and works for the good of all.

Make this house a shelter in the storm and a haven of rest for all in need of your warmth and care. And when we go out from this place, may we never lose sight of that Epiphany star.

As we go about our work, our study, our play, keep us in its light and in your love.

A Blessing of the Chalk for Marking the Door

Lord Jesus, through your Incarnation and birth in true human form, you have made all the earth holy. We now ask your blessing upon this simple gift of your creation — chalk. We use it as a tool to teach our children, and they use it as a tool in their play and games. Now, with your blessing, may it become a tool for us to mark the doors of our home with the symbols of your wise servants who, so long ago, came to worship and adore you in your first home.

Mark the doorway or driveway: 20 + C + M + B + 26

May we, in this house, and all who come to visit, to work, and to play, remember these things throughout the coming year. May all who come and go here find peace, comfort, joy, hope, love, and salvation, for Christ has come to dwell in this house and in these hearts.

May we be Christ's light in the world. Amen.



INFORMATION ON THE NEXT LITURGICAL SEASON

Epiphany:

The Epiphany (Manifestation) of the Lord (January 6), an even more ancient celebration among Christians than Christmas, originally focused on the nativity, incarnation, and baptism of Christ. Today we celebrate the coming of the three wise men (magi), who brought gifts to the Christ child. For this reason, in Puerto Rico and in most Latin American countries this day is observed as Three Kings Day or Dia de Los Reyes.

Epiphany is celebrated by both the Eastern and Western Churches, but a major difference between them is precisely which events the feast commemorates. For Western Christians, the feast primarily commemorates the coming of the Magi, with only a minor reference to the baptism of Jesus and the miracle at the Wedding at Cana. Eastern churches celebrate the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan. In both traditions, the essence of the feast is the same: the manifestation of Christ to the world (whether as an infant or in the Jordan), and the Mystery of the Incarnation. The miracle at the Wedding at Cana is also celebrated during Epiphany as a first manifestation of Christ's public life.



The Season of Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas Cycle, which began the First Sunday of Advent. The Latin culture has preserved and developed this ancient celebration in a way that is a great gift to the whole Church. Within the church service, this day is celebrated with plays and special songs emphasizing the coming of the kings and their gifts for the Christ child. In the home the children are told to place boxes filled with hay under their beds so that the camels will eat the hay and the kings leave presents for the children.

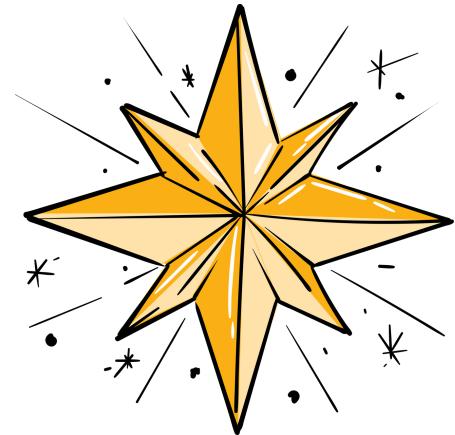
Many congregations that do not worship on January 6 unless it is a Sunday may celebrate Epiphany on the first Sunday in January. - *United Methodist Book of Worship*

Home Prayer:

Everlasting God, the radiance of faithful souls,
you brought the nations to your light
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the nations;
through him who is the true light and the bright and morning star,
even Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

(LATIN SACRAMENTARY, 5TH-7TH CENT., ALT.)



FUN TRADITION IN EPIPHANY

- King Cake (Galette des Rois): A French tradition with a hidden bean (fève) or tiny Baby inside a cake, making the finder king or queen for the day.
- <https://houseofnashseats.com/king-cake-recipe/> Make your own King Cake.

This year Epiphany 2026 falls on **Sunday, January 4th**, kicking off the King Cake season which runs through Mardi Gras (February 17th, 2026) in New Orleans, celebrating the arrival of the Three Kings with sweet, decorated cakes containing a hidden baby or bean, signifying the finder becomes "king" or "queen" for the day, with traditions varying from flaky French Galette des Rois to brioche-style NOLA cakes with purple, green, and gold sugar.

Key Dates for 2026

- **Epiphany/Twelfth Night:** January 4, 2026 (Start of season).
- **Mardi Gras:** February 17, 2026 (End of season).



What is a King Cake?

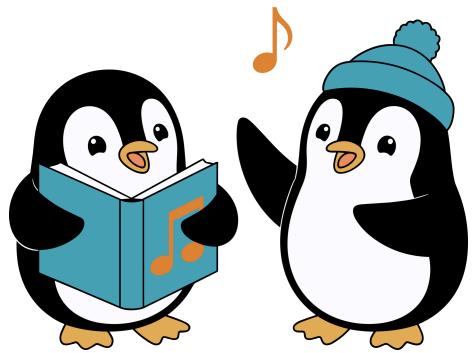


- **Symbolism:** It commemorates the biblical Epiphany, when the Magi visited baby Jesus.
- **Hidden Item:** A plastic baby (Jesus) or a fava bean is hidden inside.
- **The "King":** Whoever finds the baby or bean is crowned king/queen and traditionally buys the next cake.
- **Colors:** Purple (justice), Green (faith), and Gold (power) represent Mardi Gras.

January Music Musings

“How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given; . . . “

Music is a curious form of art. Once it is performed and heard, it is gone; already a memory. Unlike painting, sculpture, architecture, crafts, literature, drama – it exists in space and time only. It cannot be displayed and enjoyed in its live form by millions. Dance might be Music’s closest cousin in this regard. The marriage of Music and Dance does have its own quintessence. During this season of cantatas, recitals, and the arts, we are surrounded by all forms, enjoying them in unique ways.

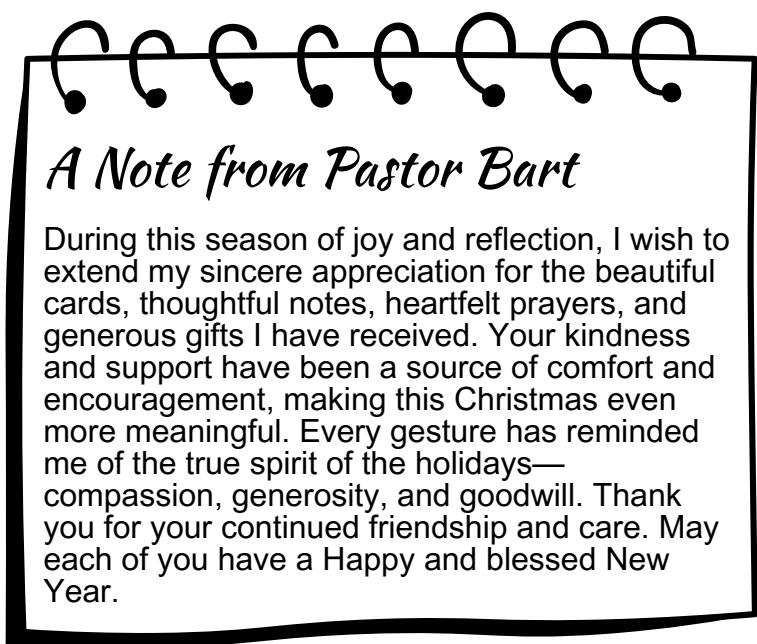
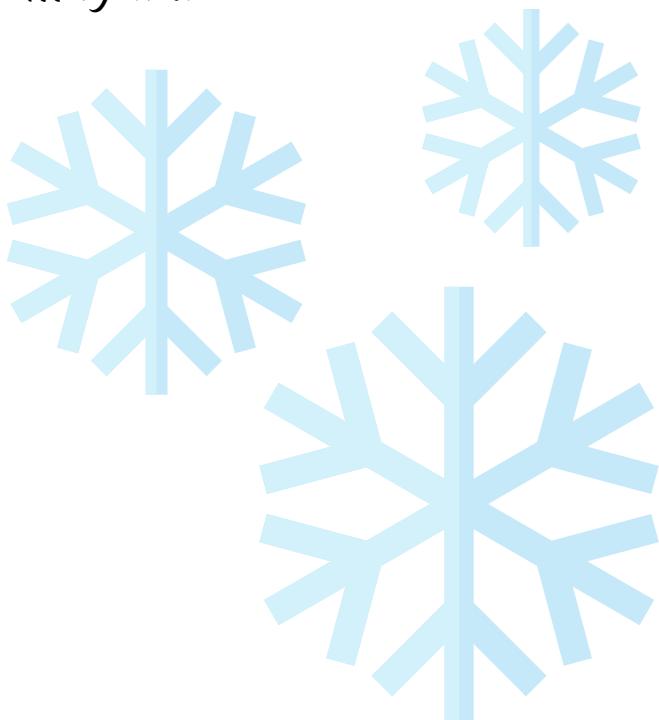


SSUMC recently had to cancel our Christmas Cantata, due to extreme cold and snow. The decision was disappointing, but there was a lovely performance on December 11! This was our dress rehearsal, intended to replicate everything planned for the Sunday performance. In retrospect, dress rehearsal truly became our best performance, and there were about twenty-five of us there to enjoy it as both audience and musicians.

There is blessing and rewards in the making of music at every stage, and we must savor those happenings in those moments! Lovely solos, guest instrumentalists, glorious full choir sounds – we could not ask for more. I have had many practice sessions in solitude, which captured exactly what I wanted, but no one was there! To me, this reflects our Christian journey and is food for thought as we face a New Year.

Being appreciated for our public works is genuinely nice and can be motivating. Many hands make light work and provide fellowship. But much of our service to the Lord is done in private, requiring just as much sincerity and love. Rather than “If only everyone could have heard this” we should say “Thank you, Lord for showing me the way to give back to You.” He is always with us every step of the way, and whether we are close to perfection, or struggling to reach it, He is our judge, our audience, and our lifelong friend in ministry. Love came down at Christmas, and we must always be thankful for His Love rather than our own understanding.

-Marguerite



C C C C C C C C

A Note from Pastor Bart

During this season of joy and reflection, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation for the beautiful cards, thoughtful notes, heartfelt prayers, and generous gifts I have received. Your kindness and support have been a source of comfort and encouragement, making this Christmas even more meaningful. Every gesture has reminded me of the true spirit of the holidays—compassion, generosity, and goodwill. Thank you for your continued friendship and care. May each of you have a Happy and blessed New Year.

MonValley District
BOOK CLUB



United
Women
in Faith

February 3, 2026

6 p.m.

Book: ***The Girl with the Louding Voice*** by Abi Daré

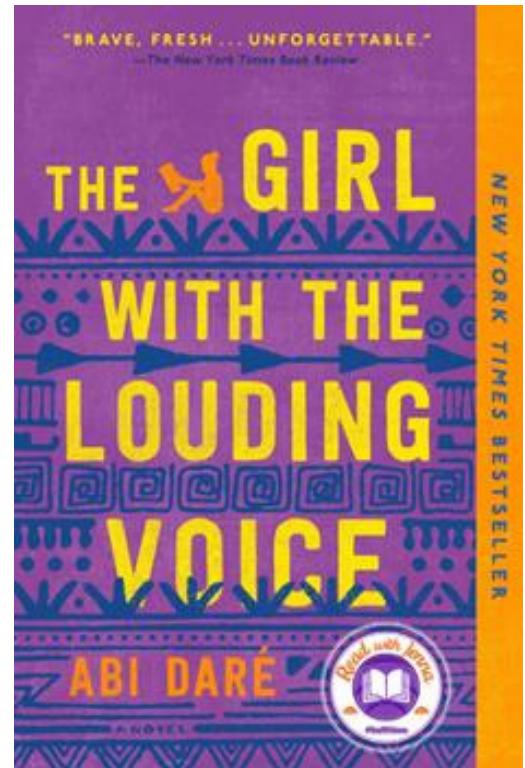
Reading Category: Education for Mission In the reading program, this title is a bonus book (counts as two books). Open to anyone!

Zoom Link To Be Announced

Next meeting: April 14, 2026, 6 p.m. Book: ***We Are Not***

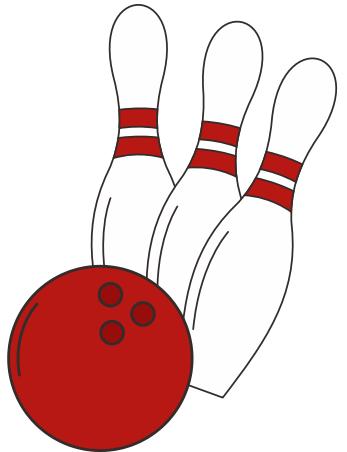
Here to Be Strangers by Linda Sarsour

Place: To Be Announced



Congratulations!

We want to congratulate Sam Lee and Abby Erenrich for their achievements at the Special Olympics State Bowling Tournament in Charleston, WV. Abby took home a bronze medal in singles, while Sam took the gold!



SCOTTS RUN DONATIONS

We collect nonperishable food and other items for Scotts Run Settlement House in our Overflow Area. **Our January meal is chili.** We will be looking for items such as cans of tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, and chili beans. You might also add cornbread mix and chili seasonings!

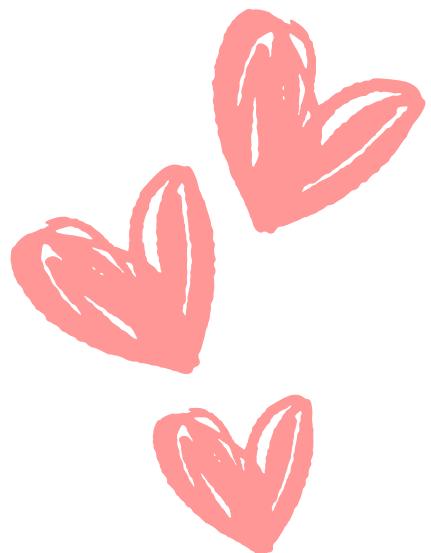
Food is a priority need for many right now. Please keep our low-income neighbors in mind as you are doing your grocery shopping. Additional helpful things to donate include non-perishable, high-protein items such as canned tuna or beans and whole grains such as rice or pasta. These items help keep bellies full!



Gifts of Love

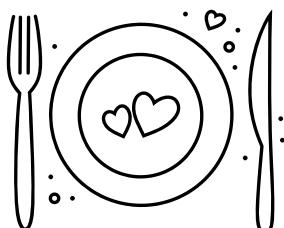
Thank you for supporting this ministry and donating your gently used household items. Please ensure items are clean and usable before donating. Suggested items include but are not limited to:

- Dishes
- Pots & pans
- Silverware
- Glasses/mugs
- Cooking utensils
- Can openers
- Mixing bowls
- Serving dishes/spoons
- Tupperware
- Coffeemakers
- Toasters
- Blenders
- Microwaves
- Dishcloths
- Towels
- Baking sheets
- Bakeware
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Potholders/mitts
- Cutting boards
- Storage organizers
- Blankets/quilts
- Backpacks
- Flashlights/lanterns
- Batteries
- Basic hygiene items



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Our weekend meals this month will be January 17-18. If you would like to help serve, please contact Carolyn Carr at coccarr@yahoo.com.



January Lectionary Scriptures

January 4 - Epiphany Sunday

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 11 - Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

January 18 - 2nd Sunday After the Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 25 - 3rd Sunday After the Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:13-20



Prayer Chain

Our prayer ministry is very active. If you are part of the prayer chain and have not been receiving the emails or if you'd like to join the prayer chain, please send your email address to Carolyn at coccarr@yahoo.com. Short term prayer list can be found in the bulletin each week. Names are moved to the long-term list in the Newsletter after a month in the bulletin.



Prayers For

Laurie Audria	Ben Lee
Lori Britton	Lacey Lewis
Roger Britton	Glenn McCracken
Saundra Britton	Sharon Richman
Cindy Cramer	Mary Belle Rowe
Dianne DeAngelis	Pat Ryan
Rubyann Downes	Janet Schlobohm
Barbara Fox	Ken Shanes
Sara Fuqua	Linda Sweetman
Mike Grant	Gwen Thornburg
Jerry Holt	Penny Turley
Aly Hutzel	Mary Lynn Withrow
Teresa Johnson	



January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 1st Sunday After Christmas 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	29	30	31	1 New Years Day – Church Office Closed	2	3
4 Epiphany Sunday 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	5	6	7	8 10AM Chair Yoga	9	10
				11AM Bible Study 10AM Chair Yoga		
				1:30PM Heritage Bible Study		
				6:30PM Barnabas Group		
				6:15PM Handbell Choir		
				7PM Chancel Choir		
11 Baptism of the Lord 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	12	13	14	15 10AM Chair Yoga	16	17 4PM Circle of Friends
				11AM Bible Study		
				6PM UMM @ Eat N Park		
				6:15PM Handbell Choir		
				7PM Chancel Choir		
18 Christ the King Sunday 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	19	20	21	22 10AM Chair Yoga	23	24
				11AM Bible Study		
				6PM Prayer Meeting (Zoom)		
				6:15PM Handbell Choir		
				7PM Chancel Choir		
25 1st Sunday of Advent 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	26	27	28	29 10AM Chair Yoga	30	31
				11AM Bible Study		
				6PM Prayer Meeting (Zoom)		
				6:15PM Handbell Choir		
				7PM Chancel Choir		

Spruce St UMC Office Hours & Contact Info

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Monday - Thursday)

304-292-3359

sprucestumc.org

SPRUCE STREET STAFF DIRECTORY

Pastor	Rev. Bart Thompson	304-813-7213 pastor@sprucestreetumc.org
Lay Minister	Eldon Callen	304-290-7142 eldonc45@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant	Em Pechon	304-292-3359 secretary@sprucestreetumc.org
Financial Secretary	Judy Kennell	finance@sprucestreetumc.org
Music Director	Marguerite Bostonia	margbos6@gmail.com
Choir Director	Ashley Lewis	jashleylewis@gmail.com
Children's Ministry	Lena Glowacky	childrensministry@sprucestreetumc.org
Building Supervisor	Bonnie Johnson	johnson26541@yahoo.com
Prayer Focus	Carolyn Carr	cdccarr@yahoo.com

