



*Our calling is to reach all people
with the life-changing power of
God's Love and Grace available to
all through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

The Westby United Methodist Church
welcomes **everyone** with open arms and open
hearts as indicated in Romans 15:7 (NIV):
*Accept one another, then, just as Christ
accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*



Westby United
Methodist Church
December 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

Advent

by Pastor Paul Lee

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his
paths straight,'
~ Mark 1:3*

For most people, December is the end of the year. But for Christians, it is a new
start. We open the new season by waiting for Jesus Christ.

Personally, I think the word "waiting" is a very interesting word. Waiting always
made me bored. And it was very hard to wait for something that I desired.
However, at the end of the wait, I felt great joy that could not be expressed in
words.

In December, we will start to wait for the day of incarnation, the day of birth of Jesus Christ.

After Halloween, I was surprised when I went to Walmart to do some grocery shopping. I saw that all the seasonal
sections were transformed from Halloween goods to Christmas items. The store was prepared for Christmas even
in November.

I saw that not only Walmart, but also other businesses prepared a lot of events and items at the end of November
for the Christmas season. But I could not find Jesus in any business stores.

People prepare for Christmas by selling goods and business. But we should prepare for Jesus's birthday with the
heart of waiting. We should celebrate the coming of Christ, who came to us with the human body. We prepare and
celebrate Advent and Christmas for Jesus Christ.

In December, I hope we can prepare the way of the Lord. I hope each day can be full of grace and truth during this
advent. So, on the day of Jesus's birthday, we can celebrate the incarnation of our God.

Pastor Paul

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Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

- Thursdays (9:00-12:00)
- Anytime by appointment

Contact Information:

Direct Office Phone: 608-638-7627
 Cell Phone: 262-393-8416
 Email: pastor@virouqawestbyumc.org

December Birthdays

Dec. 25 – Jesus

Happy Birthday Jesus!



Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Prayer is a powerful tool that God gave to us, and He wants us to use it, individually and as a group. Please continue to exercise your prayer muscles by joining us at 9:00 AM on Thursday, Dec. 5th for our monthly prayer group time.

Thank you for your continued prayers for our church ministries, church members and our community.

Thursday Morning Bible Study Group

Since the 4th Thursday of December will be the day after Christmas, we will not have the Bible Study group this month. This group will resume in January 2025.



Missions of the Month – Basket of Love and Norseland Gifts

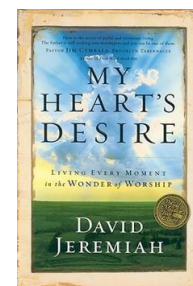
We will continue with the Baskets of Love and Norseland Gifts as our missions for December. Thank you to those who have already given to the Baskets of Love and/or agreed to provide gifts for a Norseland resident. The deadline for both is December 8th. We need to have time to purchase and mail the gift cards for people who need our help to purchase groceries for a holiday meal and to deliver the gifts to Norseland Nursing

Home in time for them to get everything in place for the residents Christmas party. Please remember to bring the gifts in a gift bag, with no other wrapping, other than a sheet of tissue paper loosely topping the gift. Thank you in advance to those who still plan to help us fulfill two of our most joyful traditional missions.

Growing in Faith Study Group

We will continue with our discussion about the book, *My Heart's Desire* by David Jeremiah. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM. Anyone is welcome to come and join the discussion even if you don't have the book.

Chapter 5 will be discussed on Dec. 4th and chapter 6 will be the discussion topic on Dec. 18th.



**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.
 And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

~ Isaiah 9:6

Sunday School News

Thank you to everyone involved with Operation Christmas Child by donating, organizing, packing, and writing notes. This is one of our favorite traditions. Fifteen boxes were delivered to the donation center in Viroqua – the first stop on the journey to kids in other countries. What a wonderful way to share the gift of Jesus with those who have never before heard.



We started the month of November by adding leaves to our Fall tree with reminders of what we're thankful for written on them. We've been learning about the life of David as a shepherd and focusing on Psalm 23. We've also been praising God with the songs "Must Be Done in Love" and "More Love, More Power."

Sunday, December 15 ~ The Sunday school kids will be part of the Christmas Celebration during the church service @ 9 AM. Sunday school will follow. Sunday school students, please let Jane know if you're unable to be there on December 15 (608-606-0317).

Planning Ahead:

No Sunday school on December 1 (Thanksgiving weekend)

No Sunday School on December 22 and December 29



December Online Study – O Holy Night: An Advent Devotional

"O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;" Can you name this tune? If your answer was "O Holy Night", you were correct. The words to this Christmas carol are very descriptive and give us a glimpse of what it must have felt like to be a witness of our Savior's birth. Can't you imagine a sky filled with multitudes of stars and their beauty, set as a backdrop as angels announce Jesus' birth? This carol continues to describe in detail what happened the night that Jesus was born.

As we journey through the Advent season, we invite you to join us as we experience the birth of Jesus through the Christmas carol, "O Holy Night" in this month's online Bible study. This 25-day study will begin on December 1st. Use the link below to join us on our Advent journey!

- O Holy Night: An Advent Devotional – begins on Dec. 1st
 - <https://bible.com/p/70009119/25ee74fd6162c6fb9a874cc2978d076a>

This online study and more can be accessed through the Bible App or [bible.com](https://www.bible.com) website, which are free resources. In addition to wonderful devotional and reading plans, they provide a verse of the day, and you will be able to read the Bible in a wide variety of versions. The Bible App is available in your app store on your mobile device, or accessible online at www.bible.com. Please note that Bible.com online will no longer support Plans with Friends. You will need to open the Bible App on your mobile device to continue to use this feature.

Personal Time with Pastor Paul

If you haven't had your visit with Pastor Paul yet, please remember to schedule a time for an informal, friendly visit with him. Pastor Paul can visit with you either at the church, your house or a coffee shop or restaurant. Please contact Pastor Paul via telephone or email (262-393-8416 or pastor.dplee@gmail.com) to schedule a time and day to visit. It would be helpful if everyone could have their personal time with Pastor Paul scheduled before Thanksgiving. This will also be a good opportunity to get to know him better.

Christmas Cookie Walk – Dec. 7th

Start your Christmas baking early without having to use any recipes or dirty any dishes. Come to Westby UMC's annual Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024, from 9:00-12:00. There will be a wide variety of Christmas cookies, homemade candies, and other baked goods available. The cookie walk is like having a salad bar, where you get to choose your own salad toppings, but with cookies in place of the salad items. The cost is \$7 per pound, with some items priced separately. Coffee and hot chocolate will be available. Remember to come early for the best selection of cookies.



For those who are baking cookies and other baked goods, please drop off your donations to the church on Thursday, Dec. 5 between 5:30-7:00 or on Friday, Dec. 6 between 5:30-7:00. There is a sign-up sheet for tasks to help with the day of the cookie walk. Thank you to everyone who helps with this annual fundraiser!



Christmas Caroling & Chili Supper – Dec. 11th

What would Christmas be without singing Christmas Carols? Come and share some Christmas cheer through songs. Warm up your voices and join us at Westby UMC on Wednesday, Dec. 11th as we go Christmas Caroling at the care centers in Westby. We'll meet at the church at 5:00 PM and then carpool to the care centers. Afterwards, we'll meet back at church and have a chili supper.

Christmas Eve Service – Dec. 24th

O come, let us adore Him on the night before Christmas! We'll gather for our Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, Dec. 24th at 7:00 PM. Join us as we express our joy to the world as we celebrate the birth of our King!



Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † November 17, 2024

Present: Pastor Paul, Verna Drake, Ardith Hoff, Jean Shore, Donna Perkins, Lois Gerling, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell and Sunwoo Lee

Opening: Tim opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the November newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Jean Shore and Lois Gerling motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for October. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Ardith Hoff and Jane Gaskell motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † West Entrance – Update – We have received one bid from One Shot Concrete for \$4900. We have asked Von Ruden to submit a bid and have not received it. Still need to get another bid. It was determined to ask Janzen Concrete.

- ✚ Cookie Walk – Need more flyers to be posted around town. Linda has done the online advertising. Need bakers and workers, Linda will have sign-up sheets soon. Tim and Jane will not be able to work the event.
- ✚ AED – Grant request from VMH - Jane has info and grant completed but waiting to see if ADRC will contribute or supply AED. Once she hears from ARDC she will submit grant to VMH.

New Business:

- ✚ Meal Site Contract – Jean Shore and Lois Gerling motioned to increase the meal site fee to \$1600 for 2025. Tim has a copy of last year's letter and will submit it for 2025.
- ✚ Decorating for Advent – We have a new large unlit tree that will be at church during this next week. We need clear lights. Decorating will take place the week of Nov 24th.
- ✚ Advent Readings – Explained to Pastor Paul that Advent readings are in addition to his scriptures for the message and that we do not light candles but have 4 small trees we light. Ardith volunteered to write advent readings. Still need to have someone read these four readings.
- ✚ Caroling and Chili – It was decided to carol and have chili supper on Wed., December 11th start with caroling at 5pm and supper to follow.
- ✚ December Board Meeting – It was decided that no December Board meeting was needed.

Business from Board Committees:




- ✚ **Trustees** – Pastor Paul has replaced more fluorescent bulbs in the kitchen.
- ✚ **SPRC** – In 2025, SPRC along with Finance members will be looking at the percentages Westby and Viroqua are paying for pastoral costs. If it changes, it will not happen until 2026.
- ✚ **Worship** – Christmas Eve service will be Dec. 24th at 7pm.
- ✚ **Education** – Children's Christmas message will be on December 15th.
- ✚ **Lay Leadership** – No report
- ✚ **Missions** – Ardith Hoff reported that the November/December missions of the month will be Norseland resident gifts and Baskets of Love. Norseland names are posted on bulletin board with suggestions.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Verna Drake



December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 ☩ 9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	2 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	3 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	4 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Growing In Faith Study Group	5 9:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	6 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	7 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Christmas Cookie Walk 
8 ☩ 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	9 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	10 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	11 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 5:00 PM – Christmas Caroling & Chili Supper	12 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	13 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	14
15 ☩ 9:00 AM – Worship Service – Sunday School Program 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	16 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	17 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	18 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Growing In Faith Study Group	19 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	20 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	21
22 ☩ 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	23 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	24 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 7:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service 	25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i> 	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	27 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	28
29 ☩ 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	30 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	31 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class				

**** Remember to join us at 3:20 PM each day for being unified in prayer to pray for our church and how we can reach and serve others, while serving God ...**

“God, Give us the courage to dream big dreams. Please open our minds and hearts so we can have new breakthroughs to Your new possibilities. Amen.”

God is able to do much more than we ask or think, through His power working in us.
 ~ Ephesians 3:20 (NLV)