

THE CROSS & THE FLAME



January 2025

Thoughts Upon Methodism

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

John Wesley, *Thoughts Upon Methodism*.

In 2025, I hope to share about Methodism through each month's newsletter article. I have received the same question from many people. Why are there so many kinds of churches in the world? My simple answer to this question is that denominations are developed and founded according to the needs of the world.

Many people try to understand the denomination in the context of this present day. However, there is about a 200-year gap between Lutheran/Presbyterian churches and Methodists, meaning the historical context was different when each denomination was founded. Therefore, it is very important for us to know about the denomination's history and how each denomination worked for God in its context. Also, we need to apply what we have learned from each denomination in our lives.

Since I am a Methodist pastor, I hope to talk more about Methodism through the articles this year. For the first start, I brought a quote from John Wesley's article, which was written in 1786. Wesley passed away in 1791. He wrote the article, *Thoughts Upon Methodism*, 5 years before he died. At this time, the Methodist movement had dramatically grown up. A lot of people joined the Methodist movement, and they influenced their society a lot. As a founder of the Methodist movement, Wesley wrote the article to review the identity of Methodism in this context.

He mentioned the quote above in the very first part of his article. We can see that he was not worried about the number of people in the movement, but he was worried about Methodists who lost their Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline.

Now, the United Methodist Church – probably not only the UMC but also all churches in the United States – is experiencing a sharp decline in the number of church members. We are worried about the decreasing membership of the United Methodist Church. However, when I was concerned about the church's challenges, I always remembered Wesley's quote and had a self-question. "Am I worrying about losing Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline as much as decreasing the numbers of people?"

I believe it is very important for us in this present day to know and learn about Methodism because we are experiencing what Wesley said. So, in 2025, through this newsletter article, I hope to share about Methodism with you. And I hope to find the way that we should walk together as Methodists in this present day. May God give us wisdom and guidance for the blessed 2025 year. Amen.

Pastor Paul



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pastor's Letter.....	page 1
Birthdays/Anniversaries	page 2
Looking Back at December	pages 3-5
Looking Forward at January	pages 5-7
Committee Reports.....	pages 8-10
January Calendar	page 11

Happy
New Year!

OUR PRAYER Viroqua UMC

God, the giver of life, generous giver of gifts and abilities, help us discover our talents and have the courage to use them to serve you and our community with unimagined new purposes and deepening love for Jesus Christ. Amen.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Peggy Selin	January 1
Chuck Mulvaney-Kemp	January 2
Matthew Ostrem	January 4
Ruby Roberts	January 16
Gus Roberts	January 20
Gregory Cheever	January 25

God's Blessings on You!

happy
birthday

Long Range Objective *Viroqua UMC*

Develop a unique identity by becoming servants of the community and providing Christian opportunities for all people.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

John Wesley



I will walk with you—I will be your God, and you will be my people.

Leviticus 26: 12

December Happenings



Joanne Hornby's 90th



Toys For Tots Mitten Tree



Christmas Family Shopping



Youth Pizza Party

Advent Pageant

An Angel's Story



How To Access the Hearing-Loop System in the Sanctuary

Some congregants have been asking about accessing the hearing-loop system in the sanctuary for Sunday morning services. In order to access the loop system, your hearing aid must have a “telecoil” or “t-coil” for short. This is a small copper coil embedded in the body of the hearing aid.

The t-coil has been manufactured in hearing aids for at least 50 years. It was originally designed to help people hear better while using a landline telephone and also to allow people to hear better in public spaces. The t-coil is usually standard in all hearing aids; however, some manufacturers have removed the t-coil to be able to make the devices smaller. T-coils can be activated by holding down the increased volume button on the hearing aid until you hear the system connect.

To find out if your hearing aid has a t-coil, contact your audiologist or the manufacturer of the device. With my hearing aid, the audiologist had to activate the t-coil through a computer APP. The first time I activated the device in church, the sound was extremely loud. I needed to have the audiologist adjust the volume on the device. The sound is fine now.

If you have any questions that I might help you with, please contact me. However, I can only talk about the experience I have had with my own hearing aid. I am not an expert on this subject.

Maris Kalnins

Thank You, Jim

A big **THANK YOU** goes out to Jim Porter!

He volunteered to clean, buff, and wax the Fellowship Hall. This is a very big job, & has not been done for some time.

Jim has been working on this for several days and it looks beautiful!

Be sure to take a look when you are downstairs.



FOOD PANTRY

We donated 37 pounds of food to the pantry on December 6.

This includes our Thanksgiving special drive.

Items may be placed in the shopping cart any time.

Viroqua UMC December Giving

Thank you to those who keep up their giving. This is so much appreciated, as we do our best to continue God’s work.

The amount needed each week to meet our 2024 Budget is \$2,952.

December 1	\$2,439.05
December 8	\$3,349.05
December 15	\$1,400..75

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11: 28

<i>January Sunday Servants</i>				
	Liturgist	Ushers	Greeter	Communion Stewards
January 5		Joanne Hornby Dale Gudgeon	Alice Sloane	Phyllis Kalnins Cavan Fang
January 12		Miny Hirschfield Janette Hanson	Barb Casper	
January 19		Janet Welch Chuck Mulvaney Kemp	Betty Ross	
January 26	Tom Lohr	Mary Cheever Cavan Fang	Ardith Olson	

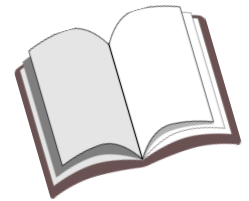
Book Group

The Book Group's next book is *A Little Piece of Ground* by Elizabeth Laird.

This is a story about Palestinian boys living under Israeli military occupation. A Christian boy and a Muslim boy become friends and find a piece of ground on which to make a soccer field. These boys manage to go on growing up, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

There are not many copies of the book, so the group is sharing. If you'd like to read this book, let the office know.

The discussion of *A Little Piece of Ground* will be held on Monday, January 20th at 7 pm.



Reset, Refresh & Renew

January Online Bible Studies

"Have you tried turning it off and back on again?" If you have ever had issues with technology, this phrase is likely not new to you! Occasionally, pieces of technology get bogged down, stuck, or have other operating issues where a reboot or reset can make a world of difference and solve a problem. Wouldn't it be nice if we could do the same with our everyday lives?

There are times in each of our lives where we want to press the reset button and find refreshment and renewal. Thankfully, our God offers us a kind of rest and refreshment that we could never find in this world! All we need to do is be open to the opportunities for renewal and refreshment that He offers us!

As we enter the new year, we invite you to join us on a journey where we will hit the reset button, rebooting our spiritual journey as we find refreshment and renewal in God's loving embrace. Use the links below to join us as we find the kind of renewal and refreshment that only our Heavenly Father can provide!

Times of Refreshing – begins on Jan. 4th <https://bible.com/p/70726759/5c10eb2e97e2272a52f7c44f4164b3dd>

The Reset – begins on Jan. 11th <https://bible.com/p/70726767/f0b03854422587ed334b1ca31cdfaccf>

Reset: 7 Ways – begins on Jan. 18th <https://bible.com/p/70726784/f2f2ba8affe412c95a854ce3dd9d228f>

Receiving the Refreshment – begins on Jan. 25th
<https://bible.com/p/70726789/fc7293282b40a2735e198762bc65ee5f>



February Meatball & Lefse Dinner

Our largest fundraiser of the year has been held in February for some time now. We started out with The Big Thing and then changed to the Chili Cookoff which we invited other churches to join. Neither of these two venues gave us the desired result, so this year, we're going to do an old fashioned church dinner—meatballs, lefse, mashed potatoes and gravy. It will be held on Wednesday, February 12th.

Help will be needed to make lefse, help with food prep including meatballs and potatoes, serve the meal and clean up. Please be thinking about how you can help. Sign up sheets will be out very soon.



Meatball & Lefse Dinner

Wednesday, February 12th

4:30—7:00 pm

Viroqua United Methodist Church

221 S. Center Ave.

Viroqua, WI



Rummage Sale

You may start to bring items for a rummage sale to the church in January. A date has not been set, but there will be an indoor sale again in the early spring. We appreciate your donations for this. Let the office know when you'd like to bring items.

Leadership Visioning Retreat

The Administrative Council and Finance Committee are planning a retreat to be held on January 10 & 11 during which they can spend time creating a vision and goals for the future of our church. This is something we have discussed for some time as we strive to deal with declining membership and the age of our building.

The event will be held in Sun Prairie in the Conference office meeting rooms. Bradley Kalajainen, a retired pastor with experience in this field, will be meeting with us.



Administrative Council

December 18th, 2024

Members Present: Phyllis Kalnins, Kathy Hanson, Layne Hanson, Aaron Hanson, Cavan Fang, Kristen Parrott, Barb Casper, Pastor Paul.

We pretty much combined the meeting of the Administrative Council with the Finance Committee meeting. Minutes are broken out by committee.

Thanks were extended to Cavan for all of his work on the Advent Pageant. Great job!

The Leadership Retreat is being planned for January 10th and 11th in Sun Prairie. We will be using the conference meeting room. Bradley Kalajainen will lead the meeting and has sent the questions that we will be discussing. Pastor Lee is working on finalizing reservations, etc.

Discussion was held in regard to the quotes we have received from EO Johnson about a new copy machine. Some members are promoting the purchase of a printer for much less money. They will bring more information. A bid from Tri-State business machines has been requested.

The February Fundraiser will be a meatball and lefse dinner on Wednesday, February 12th. A planning committee of Kathy, Cavan, Phyllis, Alice Sloane, Pastor Paul, and Sonja Bjerkos is making plans, and will be enlisting help from the congregation.

We are going to try a different meeting time and date for our council meeting. We decided on the 3rd Sunday of each month immediately following worship.

Committee Reports were cut short because of the lengthy discussion about the copy machine. See committee minutes elsewhere in the newsletter.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting: January 19 @ 11:45 am

Missions Update

Thank you to all who contributed to our Toys for Tots mitten tree in early December. Our church contributed two big boxes of toys and warm clothes to this local missions project.

Artists, now is the time to start working on your creations for the annual art silent auction in March. Winter is a great time to make art! All types of art are welcome. Proceeds from the auction will benefit our missionary, Temba Nkomozepi, who works at Mujila Falls Agricultural Centre in Zambia. More details to come.

The first United Methodist Special Sunday in 2025 will be Human Relations Day on January 19. This is the Sunday before the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's., birthday. Human Relations Day is focused on social justice, on serving the people who live unnoticed in the margins of society and who struggle to survive and thrive.

One of the wonderful aspects of the United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On Human Relations Day, we join other UMC congregations in a special offering to support three national projects: neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services, and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs. Thank you for participating in the Special Sundays.

Trustees Meeting

December 10, 2024

Present: Aaron Hanson, Jack Deters, Phyllis Kalnins

Aaron opened the meeting with prayer.

The church office is in need of a new copy machine. This week we met with a sales representative from Ricoh. He presented several options for new copiers to us. The Trustees reviewed the information and will be making a recommendation to the Finance Committee as to which option best fits our needs. The Trustees also request that we get at least one more estimate from a different company and also request information on refurbished machines.

Bills Paid:	Walmart for cleaning supplies and batteries	\$ 41.68
	Roborock Q5 Max+ Robot Vacuum	\$295.39

Parsonage concerns:

Second floor faucet leak—part has been ordered

Toilet leak on first floor—will check with Strang's

Pastor Paul has been asked to call Strang's directly for problems in order to expedite the process of repairs.

Plowing and shoveling season is approaching. Pastor Paul has said that he will shovel his own sidewalk and driveway. Angela and Matthew Hauser, the family in the house on Terhune, would like Kevin Frederickson to shovel their property also. The Hauser's have also said that they are willing to share the plowing expenses for the parking lot and drive to their home with us. Aaron will talk to Hauge Brothers to see if they can help determine how much of the plowing expense the Hauser's fair share would be.

The Hauser's have also asked us to allow Southwest Sanitation to drive one of their trucks to the back of the church parking lot to pick up their garbage and recyclables. The Hauser's stated that Southwest Sanitation will not do this without permission from the church. The trustees are afraid of damage to the blacktop and are going to say no to this request.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Finance Committee

December 18, 2024

Members Present: Phyllis Kalnins, Kathy Hanson, Layne Hanson, Aaron Hanson, Heidi Garrett, Cavan Fang, Kristin Parrott, Barb Casper.



Joys & Concerns, Several birthdays were mentioned as joys. We also are thankful and joyful about the Christmas Family shopping and the good job done by the kids.

Kathy gave the opening prayer.

Gregory presented the Treasurer's report. Giving has been up recently along with attendance. Phyllis made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Heidi seconded. The report was approved.

Discussion was held in regard to the quotes we have received from EO Johnson about a new copy machine. Some members are promoting the purchase of a printer for much less money. They will bring more information. A bid from Tri-State business machines has been requested.

The February Fundraiser will be a meatball and lefse dinner on Wednesday, February 12th. A planning committee of Kathy, Cavan, Phyllis, Alice Sloane, Pastor Paul, and Sonja Bjerkos is making plans, and will be enlisting help from the congregation.

We are going to try a different time and date for the Finance Committee meeting. We decided on the 3rd Sunday of each month immediately following worship.

Next meeting: January 19th @ 11:45 am.

Worship Committee

December 5, 2024

Those present: Cavan Fang, Phyllis Kalnins, Pastor Paul, Kathy Hanson, Avis Marino and Barb Casper.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Pastor Paul.

We had good feedback on Veteran's Day. Everyone liked having the Veteran's pictures in the Newsletter and on the screen.



There has been some improvement with the use of the pastor's microphone. We will continue with what we have barring any further problems. Maris will write up information for the Newsletter about how to connect your hearing aid to the loop system.

Several people commented that they liked the bigger Thankful Tree that we used this year. Will do again.

The screen will now be operated from the pew instead of the balcony.

The choir will not be singing on Christmas Eve but Tom Lohr will sing a solo. Janice Fortney will provide music for the 12-29 service and the choir will sing "The Song of Herod" on January 5th. This is one of the songs that they did for "The Caroling of the Choirs" that was so well received we thought that our congregation should hear it. The theme for January is "the church".

Avis has lined up Advent Wreath lighters.

Phyllis and Kathy will be responsible for getting the Christmas Eve candles ready.

Poinsettias will be arriving the week before the 15. Pageant crew can decide how to use them or where to place them for that service.

Pastor Paul would like to have something to give out to the congregants. We decided on a candy cane with the legend of the candy cane attached to it. Barb will get these ready.

1-5-25 will be Epiphany Sunday. We will have communion and it will be served by the confirmands.

We will un-decorate the sanctuary on Thursday 1-9-25 at 1:00pm.

Our next meeting will be held on 1-2-25 at 6:00pm.

Barb Casper, Chair

Hospitality Committee

December 10, 2024

Members Present: Kathy Hanson, Alice Sloane, Avis Marino

LOVE

Joan Everson passed away since our last meeting.

Avis reported on the cards she has sent this month.

LEARN (Old business)

We wrote on Christmas cards and inserted the Merry Christmas bookmarks made by Ann Carlow for our Homebound members.

We discussed the January 5th Happy New Year potluck and the set up, serving, and clean up for that.

DECIDE/DO (New Business)

We will discuss future plans next month when we have more members present.

Kathy offered the closing prayer.

Next meeting: January 14th at 1:00 pm.

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 8am Prayer Group	2 6pm Worship Committee	3	4
5 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/ Communion 11:45am Happy New Year Potluck	6 5pm Meatball Supper Committee Mtg 6pm SPRC Meeting	7 10:30am Exercise Group	8 8am Prayer Group 1:30pm UWF 6pm Choir Practice	9 10:30am Exercise Group	10	11
12 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 4pm Bible Study @ Kathy Hanson's	13 5:30pm Education Committee	14 10:30am Exercise Group 12pm Hospitality Committee 6pm Trustees Meeting	15 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice 7pm Finance Committee 8pm Administrative Council	16 10:30am Exercise Group	17	18
19 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 7pm Book Group	21 10:30am Exercise Group	22 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	23 10:30am Exercise Group	24	25
26 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship PM Lefse Making	27	28 10:30am Exercise Group	29 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	30 10:30am Exercise Group	31	

The Cross & The Flame is published monthly
for our congregation and friends. *We welcome you
with open hearts, open minds and open doors.*

VIROQUA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PASTOR

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 12:00pm

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Adult Sunday School Class—9:00 am

Worship—10:30 am

Broadcast on

**WVRQ 1360 AM/107.3 FM or on
Facebook Live**

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Viroqua United Methodist Church's Mission Statement

The Viroqua United Methodist Church exists for the purpose of carrying out Christ's Great Commission by enabling all who come to personally know the joy of God's love and forgiveness and to lovingly share this joy in the fellowship of the church and in reaching people throughout the world.

God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.

John Wesley

