

THE CROSS & THE FLAME



February 2025

Holy Club - Methodist

To understand about Methodist, and before we talk about Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline, we should know where the name “Methodist” came from.

John Wesley’s spiritual life was influenced by his mother, Susanna Wesley. Susanna’s education was very strict. Susanna disciplined her children to keep the routines. Susanna checked what the children had learned and remembered before mealtime. Susanna disciplined the children not only in studying but also in various areas, such as eating and behavior. This discipline of Susanna affected Wesley to form his spiritual lifestyle.



After Wesley became a fellow at Oxford, he went back to his hometown to help his father’s ministry. While John was in his hometown, his brother, Charles Wesley, entered Oxford. At this time, Charles founded a small gathering with his two friends for spiritual discipline and studies about God and faith. After John Wesley came back to Oxford from his hometown, Charles and his two friends invited him to be the leader of this gathering. They named this gathering “Holy Club,” and this was the start of Methodist.

John Wesley’s strict spiritual discipline affected this Holy Club. It was not the club just sharing their story, checking in on each other’s lives. They hardly trained their spiritual lifestyle like sports players in this present day. Just as athletes make detailed plans and execute how much weight to lift today and how much to lift tomorrow, what to eat today, and what training to do tomorrow for their body and performance during the game, Wesley and Holy Club members make their own plans, and prepared a specific list and rules for spirituality and tried to stick to them. They had some list to do. Pray every morning, read the Bible and spiritual readings, receive Communion every week, fast every Wednesday and Friday, visit prisoners, etc.

We could know that Wesley named this gathering as Holy Club, so why do we call us “Methodist”? Holy Club had a very strict schedule for their spirituality. However, they seriously devoted their lives to keeping those rules and schedules that they set up. So, people around the Holy Club members started to mock Holy Club members as “Methodist.” The word “Methodist” came from a group of doctors when Emperor Nero ruled the Roman Empire. Those doctors believed that all illnesses could be cured if a person lived a well-scheduled and ordered life and ate healthy foods. Those doctors were called, “Methodist” at that time. Wesley liked the name “Methodist.” He believed the Holy Club could be called Methodist because they followed the schedules and rules for God well.

If the Holy Club just pursued what to do, they would be legalist. However, Wesley had an obvious purpose and direction in doing all the disciplines. The purpose was to be a Perfect Christian, and the way to be a Perfect Christian was “Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline.” This was why Wesley was afraid of losing “Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline.” If the Methodists lose those three things, we lose our fundamental purpose and the way of our spiritual life. So, in the next few months, I hope to talk more about what a Perfect Christian is and about our Doctrine.

Pastor Paul

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Long Range Objective *Viroqua UMC*

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

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.

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



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

SooHo Lee	February 16
Sonja Bjerkos	February 19
Barb Casper	February 20
Stephanie Brown	February 29 <i>God's</i>

happy
birthday

Blessings on You!

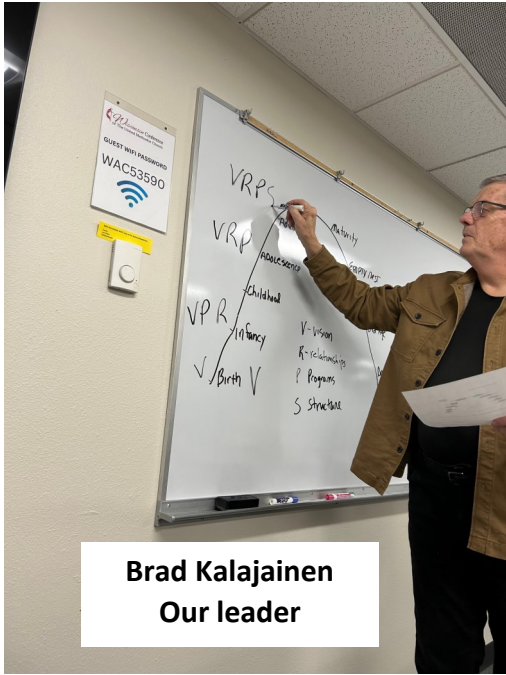
FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY

Dale & Jolene Gudgeon February 5



Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37: 4



Brad Kalajainen
Our leader



Lunch Time!

Council Visioning Retreat

Our church council members held a visioning retreat for our church from January 10 to 11. We invited Rev. Bradley Kalajainen to lead the meeting. He gave us ideas and tools to use as we establish our church vision.

It was a great time to consider our church and our community. Church council members shared our church’s situation and discussed its future. Then, we brainstormed many ideas about what we should do in the future. The Church council agreed to set up a visioning team to advance the ideas we shared during the retreat. I will form the visioning team soon, and it will be the first step in revitalizing our church.

Please pray for our church council members and visioning team so that we can follow God’s guidance for the future of our church.

Pastor Paul Lee -

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
Philippians 4: 13

Viroqua UMC December/January 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 2025 Budget is \$2,635.

December 22	\$2,439.05
December 24	\$5,083.96
December 29	\$2,219.65
January 5	\$\$1,846.05
January 12	\$1,705.75



Department of Human Services
318 Fairlane Drive Suite 100
Viroqua, WI 54665
Phone 608-637-5210
Fax 608-637-5505

January 14, 2025

Viroqua United Methodist Church
Attn: Kathy Hanson
221 South Ave
Viroqua, WI 54665

RE: Thank you!

I am sending this note to thank you for donating Christmas gifts and food to this needy family in Vernon County. We told the family that the Sunday School class from Viroqua United Methodist Church had donated them.

Your support makes a difference to these families!

*On behalf of the Department of Human Services staff and the recipient families,
Thank you.*

Sincerely,

Marla E. Marx

Marla E. Marx
Vernon County Department of Human Services

Thank You Notes

VIROQUA LIONS CLUB EYEGLASS PROJECT HAS COLLECTED 15,103 PAIRS IN 36 MONTHS

We continue to place eyeglass containers in businesses (it brings them new customers). We are now receiving glasses from Viroqua, Westby, Cashton, Coon Valley, Chaseburg, Readstown, Soldiers Grove, Mt Sterling, Retreat, New Hope and DeSoto. This project is accomplished 7 days a week in order to achieve our goal of 15, 103 used eyeglasses. Thank your for 2024

All glasses are taken to the Wisconsin Eyeglass Collection Center in Roholt, Wisconsin to the Wisconsin Lions Foundation. There they are sorted and inspected for scratches. They are read for their prescription and filed into their appropriate boxes. Broken metal frames are sent out for their metal value. All these glasses are used during our mission trips for distribution to those that need them after a proper screening to determine the prescription they need.

In addition to eyeglasses, you can deposit hearing aids, cell phones, ink jet cartridges, safety glasses and sun glasses in the containers.

Michael Stephen, Viroqua Lions Club Eyeglass Coordinator

Meatball & Lefse Dinner



Meatballs
Homemade Lefse
Real Mashed Potatoes/Gravy
Vegetable
Coleslaw
Homemade Pie

Wednesday, February 12th
4:30—7:00 pm
Viroqua United Methodist
Church
221 S. Center Ave.
Viroqua, WI
608-637-3551

Carry Outs Available



\$15

Youth Winter Activity Day

Save the Date

Saturday, February 15th

Possibilities include snow tubing @ Ft. McCoy or a trip to a water park.
More to follow.

Book Group

The Book Group's next book is *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here* by Jonathan Blitzer.

This is an epic, heartbreaking, and deeply reported history of the disastrous humanitarian crisis at the southern border that tells the story of the migrants forced to risk everything and the policy makers determining their fate.

The book can be obtained through the McIntosh Memorial Library, but it is a new book, so there may be a wait to get it.

The discussion of *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here* will be held on Monday, March 17th at 7 pm.



Rummage Sale

You may start to bring in items for our spring rummage sale. A tentative date of May 1-2 has been set. Donations will be collected in the Fellowship Hall after the February 12th Meatball Dinner, but if you need to bring them earlier, coordinate with the office about where to leave them.

We appreciate your donations!

Lenten Devotionals

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5th. During this Lenten season, Pastor Paul is encouraging each of us to spend more time reading the Bible. We'll read the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Our Lenten Devotional Booklet will give us the structure to follow. The scripture for each day will be a couple of chapters so that by Easter we will have read all of the gospels.

If you are writing a devotional, pick verses or a portion of the reading that you find most meaningful to write about. Please be willing to give this a try and say "yes" when asked to write a devotional. It will be a little different, but meaningful.

<i>February Sunday Servants</i>				
	Liturgist	Ushers	Greeter	Communion Stewards
February 2		Joanne Hornby Jerry Brenneman	Alice Sloane	Confirmation Class
February 9		Miny Hirschfield Cavan Fang	Barb Casper	
February 16		Janet Welch Chuck Mulvaney Kemp	Betty Ross	
February 23		Mary Mulvaney-Kemp Janette Hanson	Ardith Olson	

Ruth - One Woman's Journey from Loss to Legacy

Do you ever wonder if the little things in life matter? Do you sometimes wonder why some things happen or don't happen in your life? Do you ever ponder whether what you are doing in your life and with your life matters? In the book of Ruth, Ruth and other people in this book of the Bible had some of these same feelings, but through God's providence, these people experienced more positive things in their lives. This book shows us that no person or event is insignificant in God's plan.

Please join us this month as we go on a journey for 26 days with Ruth. Here is the link to this month's reading plan, which will begin on February 1st.

Love God Greatly: Ruth

<https://bible.com/p/71825388/fd33c2b7054adadb46ba6bec81f563f1>



This online study and more can be accessed through the Bible App or 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.

The Most Recent Newsletter From Temba

Dear God's Holy people, Faithful brothers and sisters, Fellow workers and soldiers in Christ,

I greet you all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Grace and Peace be unto you! I write to wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy new year, 2025!

I am also very thankful for your kind gifts in 2024. Through your most generous giving, you have exceeded the goal for missionary support. We planted maize and the crop is doing very well.

In our community, the traditional meal for Christmas is rice and chicken. This year we were selling our low priced off-layer (end of lay) chickens just in time, and many families will surely have a chicken to feast on this Christmas. Most people prefer off-layers not only because they are cheaper, but also because the meat is tougher and less tender. Here are some pictures below:



Ladies and gentlemen, the pictures above tell the story of how we sold 1,200 chickens in less than a week.

On behalf of the Mujila Falls Agriculture Center, its staff and beneficiaries, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to God, and to you our supporter who answers the call to sow into the center. Your support enables us to reach out to the poor, the orphans, widows and despised immigrants. God Bless you!

Wish you all the blessings of the season, Merry Christmas!

Peace and Blessings,

Temba Nkomozepi

Administrative Council

January 19, 2025



Members Present: Kathy Hanson, Cavan Fang, Kristen Parrott, Dan Brown, Gregory Cheever, Gregg Roberts, Pastor Paul.

We have changed our meeting time to the third Sunday of each month following the worship service. The plan is that the Finance Committee and Administrative Council will have a combined meeting lasting one hour.

Cavan gave a report about the visioning retreat that we attended in Sun Prairie and led by Brad Kalajainen. Pastor Paul will designate a team to move forward with implementing what we are learning.

The Trustees have approved the purchase of a copy machine at the cost of \$3,995. The Council approved this purchase. An appeal will be made to the congregation for donations towards this purchase.

Kristin gave a Missions Committee report. See the information elsewhere in this newsletter.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting: February 16th @ 11:45 am.

Missions Update

Artists, remember to be working on your artistic creations for our annual art silent auction! You have at least another month to get ready. The auction will take place probably in March, or possibly early April, during Lent. Each year our church hosts a Wednesday evening ecumenical Lenten worship service, and that is the week that we'll have the silent auction. This date has not yet been determined. People from throughout the community will attend the Lenten service at our church, and they will also have the opportunity to make bids on the auction items. Proceeds from the auction will benefit our missionary, Temba Nkomozepi, who works at Mujila Falls Agricultural Centre in Zambia.

Finance Committee

January 19, 2025

Members Present: Dan Brown, Kathy Hanson, Cavan Fang, Kristin Parrott, Gregg Roberts, Gregory Cheever, Pastor Paul.

Gregory presented the December Treasurer's report. Along with a year end report. He made these observations about 2024 finances:

- Budget Revenue was up 13%
- Budget expenses, payout for the budget was 83%
- Trustee savings used to cover budget, \$8,325.39
- Trustee savings carryover to 2025, \$21,674.61
- Cash carryover in checkbook, \$22,160.94
- Apportionments paid in 2024, **100%**
- All payouts for Financial Secretary (non-budget payouts) are scheduled and paid.
- Shared expenses with Westby UMC, 5 Star rating



The Treasurer's reports were approved.

Gregg presented the Financial Secretary report. Approval given.

Next meeting: February 16th @ 11:45 am.

UWF

January 8, 2025

Members present were Janet Welch, Barb Casper, Ann Carlow, Joanne Hornby, Avis Marino and Phyllis Kalnins.

President Janet read a meditation from "No Wrinkles on the Soul".

Janet read the secretary's report from the November meeting. The December meeting/Christmas luncheon was cancelled because of the weather.

Barb Casper gave the treasurer's report. We have a balance of \$1,680.51.

The Child Fund for January will be Joanne and for February will be Hester Nelson.

Coffee/cookies for church in February will be; Joanne Hornby for 2-2, Barb Casper for 2-9, Janet Welch for 2-16 and Phyllis Kalnins for 3-23.

A letter from Eric, our Mexican Child Fund sponsorship, was passed around.

Ann passed around "Thinking of You" cards for us to sign and send to Betty Ross and Ardith Olson.

Joanne read some selections on "Old Age Isn't for Wimps" and gave us a selection of puzzle activities.

Barb served snacks and Phyllis will serve in March.

We will not meet in February because it falls on the same day as the Meatball/Lefse supper. So our next meeting will be held on March 12th.

Hospitality Committee

January 14, 2025

Members Present: Kathy Hanson, Alice Sloane, Avis Marino, Barb Casper, Joanne Hornby, Betty Ross

Kathy opened the meeting with prayer.

Review/Old Business

Avis gave her report on cards sent.

The January potluck went well even though a small crowd attended. Our spring potluck will be in April.

New Business

Kathy shared some info from the visioning retreat. One of the topics covered was "the front door," which concerns the first impressions and welcoming that first time attendees experience when they come into our church. The Hospitality Committee will most likely be a part of further plans in this area.

Plans for the Meatball Lefse Dinner were shared.

The spring Rummage Sale was discussed. A tentative date of May 1&2 was set. We will check that out with the rest of the Rummage Sale committee.

A possible Block Party for next summer was explored. We tabled it for now, as Pastor Paul wants it to be a whole church project.

We will not have a meeting in February, as our meeting day falls at the same time we will be preparing for the Meatball dinner.

Pastor Paul offered the closing prayer.

Next meeting: March 11th at 1:00 pm.

Trustees Meeting

January 14, 2025

Present: Aaron Hanson, Jack Deters, Dale Gudgeon, Pete Gilman, Pastor Paul

Business Items:

Copy Machine—a purchase of a copier from Tri-State Business for \$3,995 will be recommended to the Ad Council.

Snow Plowing—approved paying Hauge for snow plowing and salt.

Bell Choir—approved a request to come an hour earlier (4:30) on Tuesdays for practice for some extra practice time.

Men's Bathroom—A request to remodel the men's bathroom in the basement was considered. More information will be obtained.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Worship Committee

January 2, 2025

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



Pastor Paul opened the meeting with a prayer.

It was decided to have a greeter before next years Christmas Eve service and hope that more members would stick around to greet any visitors after the service. We were disappointed in the condition of the Poinsettias this year. Next year we need to scope out better places to supply them. Not enough can be said about the wonderful pageant that the drama group shared with us. There was an unbelievable amount of time put into it and scheduling so many people was a challenge.

Four new small microphones were bought to help improve hearing speakers.

We are not sure why, but the TV screen has gone off a couple of times. We will try to find out if operator location is an issue or if the TV's sleep timer has been turned on.

The bell choir will be playing on the 19th of January. Choir music has been chosen for all but one Sunday of the month. Pastor will inform Cavan about subject matter for the last Sunday.

1-5-25 is Epiphany and we will have communion. The confirmands will help to serve it.

1-12-25 is Baptism of the Lord Sunday. We will have a service about keeping the promises that were made.

We will start having the Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed or some such creed during the service.

Ash Wednesday will be on March 5th this year, Holy week will start on April 13th with Easter landing on April 20th. Pastor Paul will follow the lectionary for subject matter. Pastor Paul will meet with the local Pastors association to find out about rotating Wednesday night Lenten Services and if we will have soup suppers as before. Pastor Paul is considering a Bible reading along with the devotional for Lent. Format as yet undecided. More to follow.

Pastor Paul will be on vacation on Sunday February 23rd. We are planning a special musical service instead of a guest speaker.

May 18 is Confirmation Sunday.

The undecorating of the sanctuary was set for Thursday 1-9 but has been changed to Wednesday January 8th at 4:30. We hope that the choir members can come a little early to help.

We will occasionally have a short blurb on the history of a hymn that we are singing that day.

It is Viroqua's turn to have the Picnic in the Park service this year. It is planned for July 20th.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday February 6th at 6:00 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 Letse 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

REV. PAUL LEE

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pastor.dplee@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE

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Viroqua, WI 54665

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Website: www.viroquawestbyumc.org

Office Staff: Kathy Hanson/Barb Casper

OFFICE HOURS

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

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

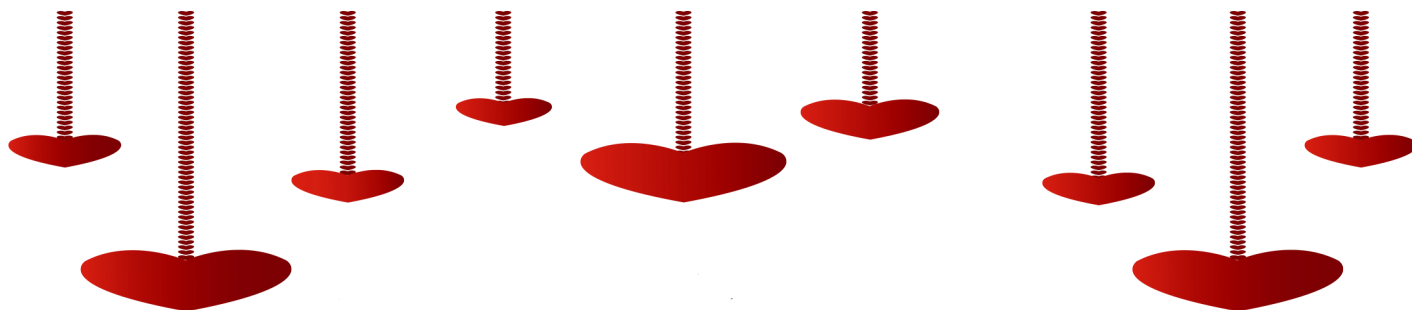
Adult Sunday School Class—9:00 am

Worship—10:30 am

Broadcast on

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

Check Us Out On Facebook!



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

