

*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
March 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

Doctrine – The Way to Be a Perfect Christian

by Pastor Paul Lee

We see (and who does not?) the numberless follies and miseries of our fellow creatures. We see on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of lifeless, formal religion. We are grieved at the sight, and should greatly rejoice, if by any means we might convince some, that there is a better religion to be attained, a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.

An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion – John Wesley

Pastor's Message	p. 1
Pastor's Schedule	p. 2
Birthday – Anniversary.	p. 2
Prayer Group	p. 2
Sunday School.	p. 2
Mission of Month.	p. 3
Bible Study Group	p. 3
Growing in Faith	p. 3
Online Study	p. 3
Other Activities	p. 3
Board Minutes	p. 6
Calendar	p. 8

Wesley warned that Methodists would become a dead sect if they did not hold on to three things, the first of which was "Doctrine." Before we talk about the doctrine of Methodist, we should know what doctrine means. In the dictionary, the word "Doctrine" is defined as "a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a Church, political party, or other group." So, we can understand that the doctrine of Methodist is the belief held and taught by Methodists. Then, what belief did Wesley want to hold and teach to the early Methodist members?

As I shared in last month's newsletter article, the purpose of Wesley's spiritual practices was to be a perfect Christian. What do we imagine when we hear about the perfect Christian? We probably imagine the perfect Christian as a person who totally does not have any flaws. However, Wesley did not propose to be a person who did not have any flaws.

Wesley mentioned the perfect Christian in his writing, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

This man can now testify to all mankind, 'I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is 'holy as God who called' him 'is holy,' both in heart and 'in all manner of conversation.' He 'loveth the Lord his God with all his heart,' and serveth him 'with all his strength.' He 'loveth his neighbour,' every man, 'as himself;'

In Wesley's definition, the perfect Christian was a person of "Loving God, Loving neighbors," a person who was full of love that came from Christ. So, Wesley did all spiritual practices to be this perfect Christian.

His understanding of the perfect Christian became the doctrine of Methodist. He addressed the doctrine in his writing, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. Wesley believed that the best religion – the best Christianity – should be the religion of "Loving God and Loving neighbors." So, in the early Methodist, all the teaching, ministry, spiritual practice, and discipline aimed to be a perfect Christian and to make perfect Christians who love God and neighbors.

In this background of the idea, Wesley provided a very specific way to be the perfect Christian. In his sermon, *Upon Our Lord's Sermon On The Mount: Discourse One*, He said, "And it is equally true, that real Christianity always begins in poverty of spirit, and goes on in the order here set down, till the "man of God is made perfect." Wesley said that there is the order to be a perfect Christian. Early Methodists understood that the Christian faith has several steps to being a perfect Christian. The Doctrine of Methodists was to guide people to walk those steps to be perfect Christians. Therefore, when Methodists lose their doctrine, it means that they lose the purpose of their religious life, the purpose of their gathering, and the path of faith itself. This is the reason why Wesley said Methodists would be the dead sect if they lost their Doctrine.

Next month, I hope to share more about the steps of early Methodist Doctrine.

Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

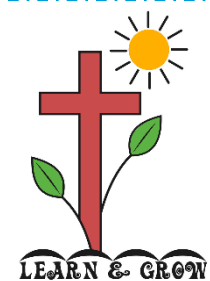
- Thursdays (9:00-12:00)
- Anytime by appointment

Contact Information:

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

March Birthdays

Mar. 14 – Sharon Sharratt



Sunday School News

The Sunday school kids put their creativity to work and made 52 Valentine's to share with the Norseland Nursing Home and Friendship House residents. Thank you kids!! Unfortunately, Snow Days at Living Waters was canceled because there wasn't enough snow on Feb. 9th. We were one week off – plenty of snow on the 16th! We'll be finishing up our focus on David and start our plans for Palm Sunday and other New Testament activities.

Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Prayer is a gift from God and a powerful tool that He gave to us. 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, March 6th for our monthly prayer group time. Thank you for your continued prayers for our church ministries, church members and our community.



Mission of the Month – Bethel Butikk

Bethel Butikk always needs nonperishable food and other items and this winter is no exception. As we did last year, we are planning to collect both food and items for our hygiene bags that contain things like tooth brushes, tooth paste, body wash, shampoo, hand soap, laundry detergent, hand lotion, deodorant or feminine hygiene products. The most requested food items are hearty canned soups, cold cereals, spaghetti, peanut butter, canned meats and tuna. We also found out that it will be helpful to donate can openers. Please bring items to the church any time during the month of March. Of course, we will also accept money if you prefer. In that case, please make checks out to the church with Bethel Butikk on the memo line. Thank you!



Thursday Morning Bible Study Group

Please join us on March, February 27th at 9:00 AM for our monthly Bible Study group. We are studying the book of Luke and Acts. Previously, the group watched the Overview of Luke on the Bible Project website (<https://bibleproject.com/>)

(<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/luke/>). To prepare for this month's study, please read all of the book of Luke and Acts.

Growing in Faith Study Group

During Lent, we will postpone our book discussion so we can attend the ecumenical Wednesday evening Lent services at area churches.



March Online Study – On Purpose: A Lent Devotional Journey

Day in and day out, we go through our lives performing tasks, interacting with others, and doing things we enjoy. But what is the purpose behind everything that we do? This Lent, we invite you to join us on a journey to discover the God-given purpose in everything that we do in our lives. Through this 40-day journey, you will begin to think differently about your whole life – your family, friendships, work, interests, and neighborhoods/communities. Together, we will begin to understand the Bible's view of purpose as we read scripture and true stories of how that purpose is worked out in all

kinds of Christians' lives today.

This online study begins on Ash Wednesday – March 5th. Join us by using the link below!

- On Purpose: A Lent Devotional Journey – begins March 5th.
 - <https://bible.com/p/72275107/049d2b890ca2bb50d05de9f51ee49bb9>

This online study and more can be accessed through the Bible App on your mobile device or the 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.

Ash Wednesday – March 5th

This year Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th. Westby UMC will have an evening Ash Wednesday service at 6:00 PM. Prior to the service, we will have a small soup supper, at 5:30 PM. Please let Verna, Jane or Linda know if you would like to help prepare/provide something for the soup supper.





Daylight Savings Time Begins – March 9th

On Saturday, March 8th, remember to turn your clocks ahead 1 hour for the start of Daylight Savings Time on Sunday, March 9th.

Food Drive for Lent – March 9 to April 13

Lent is a time to grow closer to God and a time to practice generosity. One good way to show generosity to others is through donations. This year during Lent, we will have the “Food Drive for Lent” again since it was successful and well received last year. Our food donations will be supporting the Cashton Cupboard & Closet Food Pantry and Bethel Butikk this year.

To make things more interesting, we’ll be collecting specific groups of food items each week and have a place to stack all the food so we can watch the pile grow each week. Here is what food groups we’d like you to bring on Sunday mornings:

- Sunday, Mar. 9 – Proteins: peanut butter, canned meat, canned or dried beans (baked beans, pinto beans, etc.)
- Sunday, Mar. 16 – Pasta/Grains: pasta, noodles, rice, macaroni & cheese
- Sunday, Mar. 23 – Breakfast/Snacks: cereal, oatmeal, pancake mix, granola/snack bars, fruit snacks, trail mix, jelly, pancake syrup
- Sunday, Mar. 30 – Soup: canned soup, dried soup mixes, canned chili
- Sunday, April 6 – Fruits: canned fruits, dried fruits, fruit cups, fruit juice
- Sunday, April 13 – Vegetables: canned vegetables, spaghetti sauce, tomato sauce



Let’s spread some generosity and work to help others by having overflowing piles of food on March 24th.



Doing Something Special for Lent

Before beginning his public speaking, Jesus went into the wilderness to be alone with His Father in heaven. The wilderness represented a place of isolation and hardship, allowing Jesus to fully focus on his spiritual preparation before beginning his public teaching. During Lent, we try to follow Jesus’ example of finding a place or activity to help prepare us for being more intentional about what we do regarding to serving God and others.

Lent is a time for reflection and preparation. It is a special time to ask yourself some questions:

- “How is my relationship with God and Jesus?”
- “Is there anything I can do to improve my relationship with them?”

Reflecting on your relationship with God and Jesus can also help you to prepare your heart for Easter, looking forward to the hope we have because through Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection, we have forgiveness of our sins and can look forward to Him coming back again.

We encourage everyone to find something special to do on their own or with others to help you reflect on and prepare during Lent this year. There are a variety of things you can do during the 40 days of Lent to help you grow closer to our Lord and prepare for Easter. Some people give up habits, reduce the amount of time spent doing some activities, such as watching television or screen time, and give up certain foods, like sweets.

Here are some things you can do towards spiritual growth during Lent:

- Read the Bible daily or if you already do this, increase your Bible reading

- Try to pray more throughout the day. A simple “Thank you Jesus” always helps.
- Donate to a cause or a local organization, such as participating in the church’s Food Drive.
- Do random acts of kindness each day. This can be as simple as opening the door for someone or write a note thanking someone for something they did.
- Attend worship service and volunteer to help with an activity at church.

Lent Bible Reading Schedule

This year, during Lent, Pastor Paul has developed a reading schedule to help us read through all four of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). These readings will correspond to the devotionals in the Lent Devotional Booklet that was written by members of Viroqua UMC and Westby UMC.

Date	Book	Chapters
3/5	Matthew	1-4
3/6	Matthew	5-6
3/7	Matthew	7-9
3/8	Matthew	10-12
3/9	No Reading	
3/10	Matthew	13
3/11	Matthew	14-16
3/12	Matthew	17-19
3/13	Matthew	20-21
3/14	Matthew	22-24
3/15	Matthew	25
3/16	No Reading	
3/17	Matthew	26-28
3/18	Mark	1-2
3/19	Mark	3-4
3/20	Mark	5-6
3/21	Mark	7-9
3/22	Mark	10
3/23	No Reading	
3/24	Mark	11-13
3/25	Mark	14
3/26	Mark	15-16
3/27	Luke	1-3
3/28	Luke	4-5
3/29	Luke	6-7
3/30	No Reading	
3/31	Luke	8
4/1	Luke	9-10
4/2	Luke	11
4/3	Luke	12-13
4/4	Luke	14-16
4/5	Luke	17-19
4/6	No Reading	
4/7	Luke	20-21
4/8	Luke	22-23
4/9	Luke	24
4/10	John	1-3
4/11	John	4-5
4/12	John	6-7
4/13	No Reading	
4/14	John	8-9
4/15	John	10-11
4/16	John	12-13
4/17	John	14-16
4/18	John	17-18
4/19	John	19-21



Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † - February 12, 2025

Present: Pastor Paul, Jean Shore, Verna Drake, Jane Gaskell and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Verna Drake opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the February newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Jean Shore and Jane Gaskell motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for January. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. It was noted that \$7,000 was transferred to the money market fund in November. Jean Shore and Jane Gaskell motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † West Entrance Modification – Need one more estimate before Spring – Contact Janzen's – Verna Drake left a note with Jesse Janzen about this request. Verna will also call them.
- † Meal Site Contract – renewal for 2025 – Received a payment of \$1,600 for using our church for the year.
- † Insurance – The Conference is going away from Church Mutual, which may be official on Feb. 16th, but we still have to pay Church Mutual through March 20th so we can be covered for the 2 months during the transition.
- † Burgers in the Park – Verna Drake found out that the Westby Chamber of Commerce has decided to stop doing Burgers in the Park. Bethel Home & Butikk will be doing this event. Verna received the dates for Burgers in the Park and will ask if we can help with the July 17th one. She will also find out additional details about this event.
- † Lenten Devotional – We have writers for all the devotions which were assigned to our church.
- † AED – Setup, Installation and Training, Thank You Card – Jane Gaskell took a Thank You card to VMH for the AED system. Jane has a manual and will see what is recommended for training. We need to have the cabinet installed. It was decided to place the cabinet on the wall near the stairwell to the south entrance in the narthex.

New Business:

- † Lenten Services vs. Book Study – It was decided to not have the book study during Lent. Pastor Paul would like everyone to attend the ecumenical Lent services in Viroqua on Wednesday evenings. The locations and dates for these services will be posted in the bulletin each week.
- † Food Drive or Other Lenten Activity – We will have a food drive again this year during Lent. Verna Drake indicated that Bethel Butikk requested donations of can openers, if possible. They also need cereal. We will put an article in the March newsletter about doing personal activities during Lent, in addition to the Bible Reading schedule Pastor Paul created.
- † Statistical Report for 2024 – Verna Drake said that this report is finished and submitted. This report helps the Conference to calculate our apportionments. This past year, it helped to lower our apportionments.
- † Gather 25 – Verna Drake said this is a global event for Christians around the world participate in making disciples. Anyone can attend online for free. It is a 25-hour conference. It takes place from 7:00 PM on Feb. 28 to 8:00 PM on March 1.
- † Bethel Butikk Volunteer Appreciation Dinner – Verna Drake is going to ask if they need assistance with this event.

- ✠ March Church Board Meeting – The board meeting in March will be on Sunday, March 16th during fellowship to allow more people to attend.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✠ **Trustees** – One of the Senior Meal attendees repaired the men’s toilet. Later this spring, we would like to paint the narthex. Verna Drake is going to purchase a rubber base plate for the west door because it gets bumped frequently by carts.
- ✠ **SPRC** – Julie Fargen and Verna Drake met with Pastor Paul on Feb. 13. Verna will meet with the Viroqua SPRC to review the percentage for the pastor’s salary and other pastoral expenses.
- ✠ **Worship** – Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter
 - Ash Wednesday – Viroqua UMC will have a 1 PM service and Westby UMC will have a 6 PM service. We will have a soup supper before the service, starting at 5:30 PM.
 - Palm Sunday – The Sunday school students will participate in the service and wave palms at the beginning of the service.
 - Maundy Thursday – This will be a joint service with Viroqua UMC and will be held at Westby UMC at 6 PM.
 - Good Friday – Viroqua UMC will have a service during the day.
 - Easter – Our Easter service will be at 9 AM.
- ✠ **Education** – There wasn’t any snow for the Snow Days event. They will plan a different fund event. 52 Valentine cards were made for Norseland residents. The Sunday school will participate in the Palm Sunday service and the food drive.
- ✠ **Lay Leadership** – No report
- ✠ **Missions** – Ardith Hoff provided a summary of the missions of the month for the year and the contact information for them.

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Paul will be attending ICD classes on March 11 & 12. He’s going to ask if he can bring someone with him. He will continue to attend the ICD classes through July since he wasn’t able to attend these classes last year.

- Pastor Paul will be on vacation from Feb. 17-23. Tim Gaskell will be the guest speaker on Feb. 23.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau



Newsletter’s 10th Year Anniversary

In March 2015, the first Westby UMC newsletter was published after many years of not having a newsletter. The March 2015 newsletter was only 4 pages, so we’ve added to our newsletter over the years because the newsletter is now usually at least 6 pages long.

Thank you to everyone who continues to provide articles and information to make our newsletters possible!

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	3 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	4 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	5 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Ash Wednesday Service	6 9:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	7 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	8
9 ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School *Food Drive: Proteins	10 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	11 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	12 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Ecumenical Service in Viroqua	13 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	14 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	15
16 ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Board Meeting & Fellowship & Sunday School *Food Drive: Pasta & Grains	17 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	18 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	19 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Ecumenical Service in Viroqua	20 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	21 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	22
23 ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School *Food Drive: Breakfast Items	24 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	25 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Ecumenical Service in Viroqua	27 9:00 AM – Bible Study Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	28 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	29
30 ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School *Food Drive: Soup	31 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site					

**** 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)