

*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
August 2025

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New Birth

by Pastor Paul Lee

We are continuing to learn about the doctrine of early Methodists. We are especially studying the Way of Salvation, which Wesley identified as essential to understanding their doctrine. I have shared that there are two main pillars in the early Methodists' view of salvation: Justification and Sanctification. Before Justification, humans go through the step of Repentance. Then, humans experience Justification, where they are assured by God that they are righteous. At the same time, or immediately after Justification, people experience the "New Birth." This New Birth is the gate and start of Sanctification.

New Birth is a very important part of the Christian life. It means being born again. John Wesley explained about New Birth in his sermon "The New Birth" well. He explains that every person must go through a spiritual change in order to be saved and have a real relationship with God. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "You must be born again" (John 3:7).

Wesley says that when we are born the first time, we are born with a sinful nature because of Adam's sin. This means we are naturally selfish, far from God, and unable to truly love or obey God. Even if someone tries to be a good person, goes to church, or follows the rules, it's not enough. A deep, inner change is needed.

The new birth is a work of God. It's something the Holy Spirit does in a person's heart. It's not something we can do by ourselves. When we are born again, God gives us a new heart. We begin to love God, want to do what is right, and live a holy life. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions start to change. This is the beginning of real Christian life.

Wesley explains that this new birth happens through faith. It's not just about believing facts about God — it's about trusting in Jesus, turning away from sin, and receiving God's grace. When this occurs, we are forgiven and also transformed.

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The new birth also leads to a new way of living. A person who is born again will show love, kindness, patience, and other fruits of the Spirit. They will not be perfect, but their life will be different because God is now working in them.

Wesley warns that no one should think they are saved just because they were baptized, go to church, or try to be good. These things are not the same as being born again. Only through the new birth can we become true children of God.

Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

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

Contact Information:

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Email: pastor@viroquawestbyumc.org

August Birthdays

August 3 – Adrian Hoff

August 14 – Maranda Oliver



Vacation Bible School

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL is almost here!

Build Your Faith

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 | 4:00 – 7:00 PM

@ 202 East State Street in Westby

Hosted by Westby & Viroqua United Methodist Churches



JOIN US FOR MUSIC | GAMES | FOOD | FUN

- Everyone in the family is welcome. Kids age 3 – 103 are invited!
[Kids younger than age 3 are welcome with a parent or family member to supervise!]
There is no cost for the evening.
- Kids might get a little messy. Be sure to wear play clothes.
- The evening concludes with a meal.
Please join us as we build our faith with Legos ~ brick by brick..... and bring a friend!

More kids = More fun!

Please RSVP!!

Westby: Jane at 608.606.0317 | Viroqua UMC: 637.3551

Adults and High School kids: Are you available to help with crafts or in the kitchen?



Thursday Morning Prayer Group

On Thursday, August 7th, please join us for our monthly prayer group time. 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 come and participate as we pray for guidance, our church ministries, church members, our pastor and our community.

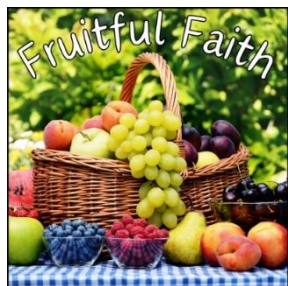
Thursday Morning Bible Study Group

Please join us on Thursday, August 28th at 9:00 AM for our monthly Bible Study group. We will continue our discussion of 1st and 2nd Corinthians and will continue to use the inductive Bible study method.

Please read through both books to understand the story. Read a 2nd time and underline or color in different colors the who (names, titles, groups, etc), time (time of day, year, time of year), trinity (God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit) and where (places, town names, etc).



During Bible Study, the discussion will be about observations, questions, answers, and life application of the Corinthians books. Even 2000 years later we can apply it to our current day lives.



August Online Studies – Fruitful Faith

During the summer, many people have flower and vegetable gardens which they nurture, water and weed to help the plants produce beautiful flowers to view or delicious vegetables to eat. It takes time and effort to tend to these gardens to help ensure there are flowers or vegetables to harvest. Our faith life is like a garden. We need to cultivate it so we can be fruitful and grow in our relationship with Jesus. How is your faith garden doing?

The online studies for this month will provide guidance for having a fruitful life for and with Jesus. Please join us as we work to become more fruitful.

- Fruitful Life – begins on Aug. 3rd
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/32238/together/75127127/invitation?token=3YIyJiEjw1leke4BQMbmGg&source=share>
- A Fruitful Life – begins on Aug. 10th
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/34224/together/75127149/invitation?token=zbG0KHcLMwJCAI8A2tFY2g&source=share>
- Fruitful Faith – begins on Aug. 19th
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/31335/together/75127169/invitation?token=E59ZcmjYAbM-hymvZJBaA&source=share>
- Forever Fruitful in Christ – begins on Aug. 24th
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/20906/together/75127188/invitation?token=zw0QJ7lp2yUgBGE7CA3-lg&source=share>

These online studies 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.

Mission of the Month – Compassion International Gift

Last year we collected donations and sent the money we collected to Compassion. We were able to purchase a flock of chickens for a poor family for a \$40-dollar donation and two goats for two other families for \$200 each. We will be collecting donations this month for more Compassion International Gifts. We welcome donations of any amount and we can put them together for a particular gift or individuals can choose to give a separate gift. There are eight options outlined on cards on the back table in the narthex that you can choose from. If you choose the option of giving a separate gift, please write your check to Compassion International and write the name of your specific gift on the memo line. If you just want to give a general donation, you can write your check to the church and we will designate how we would like to have our combined donations distributed. Thank you for helping to provide a gift that can impact an entire family.



Burgers in the Park Update (from Verna Drake)

Thank you to all who helped with Burgers in the Park on July 17th. The baked goods I'm sure were delicious and plentiful. We only had 22 single item pkgs (1 9x13 pan worth) and 2 plates of 6 left. They went to the potluck after the Joint Worship Service on July 20th.

We talked and got reacquainted with many people. Pastor Paul and family were with us all evening and met Pastor Russ and his wife, who is from Korea, so we had the pleasure of hearing fast Korean conversation.

We did raise \$127.25, which is more than 250 items. Everyone was glad there was a dessert table available.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting ☩ - July 9, 2025

Present: Verna Drake, Julie Fargen, Jean Shore, Ardith Hoff, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Kelly Bjornstad, Jill Bjornstad and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Jane Gaskell opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the June board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the July 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 June. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Verna Drake reported that the Conference hasn't cashed our insurance checks since May. We haven't received any exact amount of expenses from Viroqua UMC for May or June. We will use money from the Cookie Walk and the general funds to pay for having the parking lots seal coated. Ardith Hoff and Jane Gaskell motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- ☩ West Entrance Railings – 2 businesses contacted for bids – Both businesses were contacted and asked them to stop by to check on this request. We are waiting for estimates.
- ☩ Back entrance repair – Fred Fronk (Handicap door check needed) – Mr. Fronk said it will cost \$230 to repair the railing. He hasn't had time to do it yet. We also need Fred to check the bolt on top arm of the handicap door because the bolt is bent.
- ☩ Insurance – update – No new information at this time. We are still waiting for our square footage audit.

- ✝ Small Group Meetings – on hold for July
Fellowship time & personal time – We encourage everyone to be praying for God's vision for our church. We will continue to discuss this during fellowship times.
- ✝ Burgers in the Park – July 17 - Bake sale and prayer activity – The sign-up sheet to provide baked goods and to help with the bake sale and prayer fence is in the narthex and it was also emailed to the congregation. We are doing this to be a presence in the community.
- ✝ Outdoor service & Potluck – July 20 @ Ekhart Park, Viroqua (Westby to supply sound system) – The service begins at 10 AM. There will be small group discussions, similar to last year's joint service. Will need to bring a lawn chair and your own plates and silverware.

New Business:

- ✝ Review Membership list: Hailee Janzen (new member completed confirmation) – Hailee has been added to the membership book.
- ✝ Exchange student email – The church received an email asking if anyone from the church would be able to host an exchange student, or if we could refer someone to host a student. If we referred someone to host a student, a donation would be made to our church.
- ✝ Adams Voice Performance – We received an email from the group, Adams Voice, indicating they would be in the area Sept. 20 & 21 and that they would like to perform at our church. They requested a free will offering and a meal for the group. It was decided to decline this performance at this time. Linda Weilnau will email a reply to the group.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – The parking lot seal coating is in progress. We need more light bulbs replaced in the fellowship hall and some of the cylinder lights in the sanctuary. Kelly Bjornstad will look into getting some of these replaced.
- ✝ **SPRC** – As of July 8, the Conference indicated that pastor would receive health and pension benefits during this interim period. District Superintendent Amanda Stein suggested thinking about the possibility of merging with another church due to low attendance numbers.
- ✝ **Worship** – guest speakers in July – Layne Hanson will be the guest speaker at both Westby & Viroqua on July 13. Tim Gaskell will be the guest speaker at both churches on July 27, if needed. Viroqua UMC is checking into possible guest speakers for August, if needed.
- ✝ **Youth** – VBS August 10 – VBS will be from 4-7 PM and will be held at Westby UMC this year. The theme is "Build Your Faith" and Legos. There will be a joint meeting with both churches on July 15 at 2 PM, at Westby UMC.
- ✝ **Lay Leadership** – Ardith Hoff continues to write more articles for the website and was the guest speaker on July 6.
- ✝ **Missions** – Compassion International Community Gift will be the mission of the month for August. The gift will be something that will help to sustain a community, such as animals. The Door of Hope is asking for monetary donations to purchase food needed for their Corn Boil, which will be held on July 31.

Pastor's Report: No report

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	2
3 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	4 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	5 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	6 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	7 9:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	8 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	9
10 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship 4:00-7:00 PM - VBS	11 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	12 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	13 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	14 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	15 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	16
17 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	18 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	19 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	20 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	21 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	22 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	23
24 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	25 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	27 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	28 9:00 AM – Bible Study Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	29 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	30
31 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship						

**** 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)