

THE CROSS & THE FLAME



October 2025

The Witness of the Spirit

John Wesley said that he was worried about Methodists becoming a group that was only with the shape of religion, losing Doctrine, Spirit, and Discipline. Over the last few months, we learned about the Doctrine of Methodism that John Wesley mentioned in his article Thoughts upon Methodism. From this month, we will learn what Spirit is in the understanding of Methodists.

Wesley understood that the Spirit is the relationship between the spirits of humans and the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. While the Doctrine of Methodism provided Methodists with the foundation and direction of faith, the Spirit helps Methodists walk the way of Doctrine with God through the interaction of humans' spirits and the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, people can have the assurance of God's presence in their lives, and our faith journey is not one that is human alone, but one that is shared with God together.

In The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse I, John Wesley teaches about the deep assurance that Christians can have through the Holy Spirit. He begins with Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Wesley explains that this verse points to a special gift from God—the Spirit gives believers an inner testimony that they belong to God.

Wesley first makes a clear difference between two kinds of "witness." The first is the witness of our own spirit. This means that we look at our lives and see the signs of God's work—love for God and neighbor, obedience to God's commands, and a changed heart. These are outward and inward fruits that give evidence that we are truly born of God. In other words, our own conscience, shaped by God's Word, can tell us that we are living as God's children.

The second, and even greater, is the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is not something we create ourselves or prove by logic. It is a direct work of God in the heart. Wesley describes it as an inward impression, a voice of the Spirit, assuring us that God has forgiven our sins and adopted us as God's children. This assurance is immediate, strong, and filled with peace and joy. It is not simply a feeling, but a true testimony that comes from the Spirit of God.

Wesley also warns about confusion. Some may mistake emotions, imagination, or sudden thoughts for the Spirit's witness. Others may rely only on outward works or moral behavior, without any inward assurance. True Christian confidence comes from both witnesses together: the Spirit assures us directly, and our lives show the fruit of that assurance. The two agree, confirming that we are children of God.

He also explains that this witness is not given only to a few special believers. It is the common privilege of all who truly believe in Christ. Every Christian, whether strong or weak, may receive this inner assurance. It is part of the gospel promise that God's Spirit works in us, not only to guide but also to comfort and confirm us in faith.

Finally, Wesley shows the great importance of this doctrine. Without the Spirit's witness, believers may live in doubt or fear. But with it, they enjoy peace with God, strength to endure trials, and joy in holy living. This assurance is not pride but humble confidence in God's love. It encourages believers to love more deeply, obey more fully, and hope more strongly in the promise of eternal life.

In conclusion, The Witness of the Spirit I teaches that the Christian life is marked by this double testimony: the evidence of a holy life and, above all, the inward assurance of the Spirit. Together, they give believers certainty that they are truly children of God.

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OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Janet Welch	October 1
Sherry Carney	October 2
Sunwoo Lee	October 10
Tom Steele	October 12
Nicolas Clements	October 12
Heidi Garrett	October 18
Sharon Alvorson	October 21
Paul Bjerkos	October 22
Sua Lee	October 29
Shirley Gilman	October 29

God's Blessings on You!

happy
birthday

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Sherman & Sherry Carney	October 12
Dan & Dawn Stalsberg	October 12
Cavan Fang & Kristen Parrot	October 14
Paul & Sonja Bjerkos	October 17
David & Lorna Peterson	October 24



*I trust you, Lord, and I claim you as
my God.*

My life is in your hands.

Psalms 31: 14

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



A Reminder

We are still reading Psalms through the month of October!
Reading schedules may be found on the back tables in the sanctuary.



Cleaning can be FUN!



October Sunday Servants

	Ushers	Greeter	Communion Stewards
October 5	Joanne Hornby Tom Lohr	Alice Sloane	Phyllis Kalnins Cavan Fang
October 12	Janet Welch Anita Frels	Avis Marino	
October 19	Mary & Chuck Mulvaney Kemp	Barb Casper	
October 26	Marlo Volden Anita Frels	Betty Ross	

FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Talk to Austin Kropf, assistant manager, or Becky Rider, manager.

Call 608-637-7410.



October 5th Fall Potluck—Pastor Appreciation

- Be sure to join us for the Fall Potluck and Pastor Appreciation on Sunday, October 5th immediately following the World Wide Communion Worship service.
- Please bring a dish to pass if you can, but if you can't, join us anyway. There's always plenty of food!
- See you there!



Proceeds go to help fund the missions of the church

Baked Potato Meal

with Chili or Ham & all the Trimmings

Thursday, October 9th

4:00 pm—6:30 pm or until potatoes are gone

\$8.00

A Drive-up event at the
Viroqua United Methodist Church
221 S. Center St., Viroqua

Choices for Trimmings Include:

Chili or Ham
Butter
Sour Cream
Cheese
Onion

Sunday School

It is planned that Sunday School will begin on October 19th. If you are willing to help with this, please let Pastor Paul know.

Book Group

The Book Group's current read is *Abundance* by Ezra Klein & Derek Thompson.

Abundance explains that our problems today of unaffordability and shortage (insufficient housing, shortage of workers, consequences of climate change) are the results of rules and regulations designed to solve the problems of the 1970s, and often prevent urban-density and green energy projects that would help solve the problems of the 2020s.

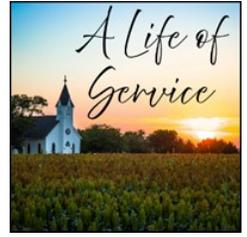
Progress requires facing up to the institutions in life that are not working as they need to. For liberals, it means recognizing when the government is failing, and for conservatives, recognizing when the government is needed.

The Group will discuss the book on Monday, October 6 at 7:00 pm. All are invited to join the group.



October Online Studies - Serving

Serving. As Christians, should we serve? Do we need to serve? If so, who should we serve? 1 Samuel 12:24 states: *But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.* This indicates that we need to serve God. 1 Peter 4:10 states: *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms,* which shows that we also need to assist and serve other people.



How do we serve God? How do we serve others? The online studies for this month will show us a variety of ways that we can serve God, serve others and grow in our relationship with God. Please join us as we learn how we can improve our service skills.

Unlimited Service – 14 days – begins Oct. 1st

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/17518/together/76058437/invitationtoken=jSrx0hc0yrZpnObCRc4ZWA&source=share>

Serving | Spiritual Practices – 7 days – begins Oct. 15th

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/60307/together/76058454/invitation?token=apUT51XX03BVk6z68W00xQ&source=share>

Our Daily Bread: Serving Together – 10 days – begins Oct. 22nd

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/33224/together/76058479/invitation?token=Rjrqla1V9gXbCn2FYy2ylg&source=share>

We Made It!!

Radio Fund Pledge Drive

THE RADIO MINISTRY HAS BEEN FULLY FUNDED FOR THIS YEAR ---

All because of your generous donations!

We actually have enough funds to carry some over for next year.

Thank you all so much!

If you want to sponsor a radio broadcast yet this year, you are very welcome to do so.

The money you give will go towards funding the ministry next year.

Thanks so much for your support!

Viroqua UMC Radio Ministry

The radio ministry is an important ministry that reaches shut-in's, passer-by's, and many others that are unable to attend church in person. Continue reading to understand how you can be a part of sharing God's love with other's.

You can be a part of sharing God's love, too! [Make a pledge today!](#)

To make a pledge, scan the QR code below, or on Sunday morning offering, or calling the church office (608-637-3551).

The "Radio Ministry" for the Viroqua United Methodist Church is funded with direct contributions from listeners and members of the church. Starting in 2025, the back-up funding comes from a designated fund "Wills & Memorials". Previously the back-up funding came from the general budget of weekly offerings.

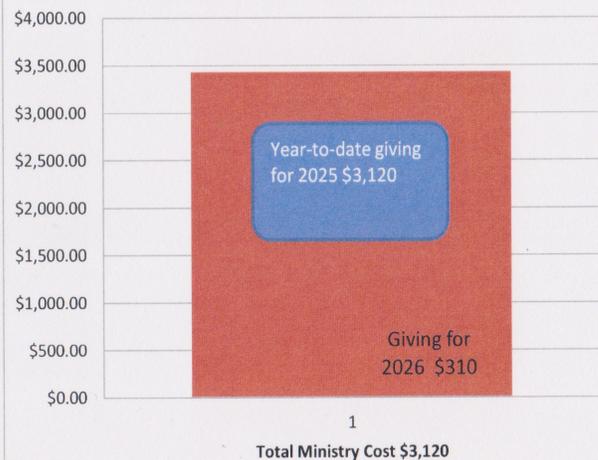
[WVRQ](#)
1360 AM

107.3 FM
[Sunday Morning](#)
10:30am - 11:30am

**Make
A
Pledge
Today!**



Viroqua UMC Radio Ministry



Make a pledge to announce a 'Birthday', 'Anniversary', or 'In Memory' of a loved one on the Sunday of your choice!

An Interview With Pastor Paul

In honor of World Wide Communion Sunday

Where were you born?

I was born in Seoul, South Korea.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in South Korea, China, and New Zealand.

What is it like there? How is it similar to or different from here?

South Korea is very different from here. It has a small land area—59% the size of Wisconsin—and about 70% of it is mountainous. Most people live in the remaining 30%, with one-fifth residing in the capital, Seoul. As a result, South Korea has a very high population density, and its cities are large and well-developed. Wherever you go, you'll encounter crowds and a busy atmosphere. On the other hand, Viroqua is quiet and peaceful.

Both the people of Wisconsin and South Korea love sports. However, football is not as famous in South Korea. Baseball and soccer are the most popular sports in South Korea.

Tell us about your name, and about naming traditions in Korea.

I go by Paul in the US. But I have my original Korean name. My Korean name is Dongwoo. Dong represents the generation I am in my family. And my father picked the last part of my name, "Woo." So, people can understand I am the Dong generation in the Lee family, and my name is Dongwoo. I got my name according to the very old naming tradition of South Korea because I was born in a family that has a very strong Confucianist culture. South Korean people do not name their children in this tradition anymore.

What do you know about your ancestors? Where did they live? What did they do?

Although I was born in Seoul, my ancestors traditionally lived in An-dong. My family was renowned for its Confucian scholarship. Most of my ancestors were Confucian scholars. One of them developed Confucianism, which originated in China, and systematized it into a philosophy suited to Korea, and its influence spread as far as Japan. He was a teacher to the king, and his students served the nation well. Because of this family pride, becoming a Christian was nearly impossible for me.

How is the Methodist Church in Korea different from the UMC here? How is the worship style different from our Viroqua UMC?

The Korean Methodist Church (KMC) was founded in South Korea by a missionary from the US, Henry Appenzelar. Since Korea accepted Methodism from the United States, KMC has almost the same theology as the UMC.

There are structural differences between KMC and UMC. KMC still has Class Meeting (the small group system of the Methodist) in every church. And the worship style is also different. KMC has an early morning prayer at 5:00 am every day. And they do out loud prayer together a lot during the service (I have no idea how to explain this because even the missionaries name this prayer in the Korean name, Tongsung-gido. You can search on YouTube, Korean style prayer).

How were you inspired to become a pastor?

God called me while I was praying for my future in New Zealand. After I believed in Jesus, I prayed for my future, what I could do for God, and how I could dedicate myself to God's Kingdom. Then, God strongly poured the heart of ministry and being a pastor. It was a really strong pouring of God's calling that I could not reject. If I hadn't had this experience, I wouldn't have been able to overcome my family's strong opposition.

What is one thing about living in the U.S. that has surprised you? What do you like about living here? What do you not like?

I was surprised by the fact that the US has diverse cultures. I like living here because I can experience diverse cultures and people. And at the same time, sometimes diversity makes me a little tired because I have to consider so many things.

What do you miss about Korea?

I miss my family, friends, and food. I did some calculations recently, and if my parents pass away around the age of 80, I'll only be able to see them about 5 times, assuming I can see them once every two years.

This is not an easy time to be an immigrant living in the U.S. – have you faced prejudice here?

Because Korean culture is so widely known, I do not feel as much prejudice as I did when I lived in New Zealand. The people at my church have been so welcoming and kind to me, so I've never experienced the difficulties other immigrant pastors face at church.

Of course, I experienced it in the Viroqua neighborhood. But I won't go into detail here, because their behavior is understandable, and we should love all our neighbors.

What else would you like us to know about you?

I know it is not easy for a church to accept an immigrant pastor with a different nationality and culture. However, I am always deeply grateful for the love and kindness our church has shown me, my wife, and my children. I consider it a great blessing to have found our church as my first pastoral home in the United States. I believe I still have much to learn about the United States, Wisconsin, and Viroqua. I hope our church will share many things in God's love and grace, and become a place of joy for me and our congregation.

Missions Update

The next meeting of the Missions Committee will be Sunday, ---November 2, at 11:45AM. New people are always welcome to join!

This is the season of garden produce. If you have extra produce, please consider bringing it to sell (by donation) at the Missions Committee's table in the narthex. All proceeds will benefit our missionary, Temba, who runs an agricultural mission in Zambia, in Africa.

Our church will celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 5. World Communion Sunday calls the church to reach out to all people, and to model diversity among God's children. We will take a special offering that day, using envelopes that will be found inside your worship bulletins. The special offering supports World Communion Scholarships, the Ethnic Scholarship Program, and the Ethnic In-Service Training Program. Our gifts are a blessing to individuals who face financial obstacles while preparing for the vocation God has given them.

In honor of World Communion Sunday and its emphasis on people all over the globe, there will be a display of items from other countries at the front of the sanctuary. You are welcome to contribute to this display.

Another way that we are marking this special Sunday is with an interview with Pastor Paul, who is originally from Korea.

Hospitality Committee

September 4, 2025

Members Present: Barb Casper, Alice Sloane, Avis Marino, Kathy Hanson, Betty Ross, Joanne Hornby, Gregory Cheever, Pastor Paul.

The meeting was opened with prayer.

Avis sent 17 birthday cards and 4 anniversary cards for September.

The Homebound list has not changed, but we will add a few names for this month to remember with our fall decorations—people we think can use some extra encouragement.

Fall All Church Potluck: It will be held on Sunday, October 5th. We will observe pastor appreciation at this potluck.

Baked Potato Sale: The date was set for Thursday, October 9th. Plans were reviewed. Alice will order the potatoes and sour cream. Pastor Paul will order paper cups for the chili, and Kathy will pick up the other supplies and groceries. Advertising will begin the week of September 22nd.

Work will begin at noon on the day of the sale to get the potatoes washed and in the oven and condiments ready. We will also plan to have our October meeting while the potatoes are baking.

Welcome Baskets: The idea of giving welcome baskets to new people in town was proposed. Some ideas were shared about what to put in the baskets. We'll start one for the next meeting and develop the plans over the next few months.

The meeting concluded with putting together the fall pumpkin decorations for our shut-ins.

From Many Committees to One: A New Structure for Our Church

Over the past several months, our church leadership has been in conversation and prayer about how we can best organize ourselves for ministry. Like many United Methodist congregations, we've had a variety of committees—Trustees, Finance, Staff-Parish Relations (SPRC), Church Council, History, Worship, Education, Hospitality—each with separate meetings, minutes, and responsibilities. While these groups have served us faithfully, the reality is that fewer people are available to serve on multiple committees, and the need for greater coordination has become clear.

After thoughtful discernment, the decision has been made for our church to transition to a one-board, or "single committee," model of governance. This structure, which is approved and encouraged by our United Methodist Book of Discipline, allows us to streamline decision-making and focus more of our energy on actual ministry instead of meetings.

Here's what this will look like:

One "Church Council:" Instead of several separate committees, we will have one leadership body that combines the responsibilities of Trustees, Finance, SPRC, and the Administrative Council.

- **Fewer Meetings, Better Communication:** With all key leaders in the same room, decisions can be made more quickly and with better coordination.
- **Focus on Mission:** The goal is not simply to change our structure, but to free us up from administration overload so that more time and energy can be spent on growing disciples, serving our community, and strengthening our ministries.
- **Shared Responsibility:** The new committee will be composed of a carefully selected group of church members who bring a balance of gifts, perspectives, and experience.

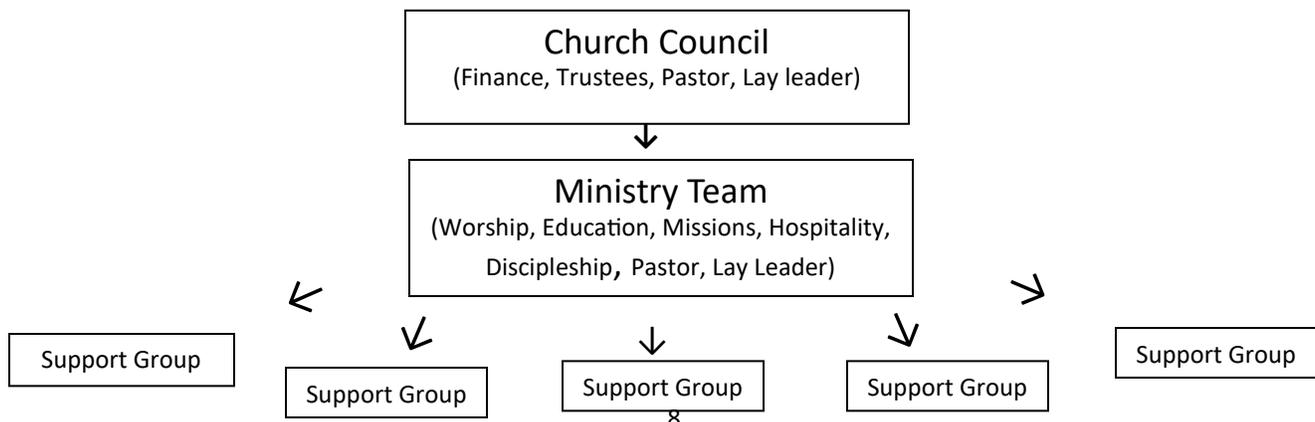
What about the other committees?

While the single board handles administration, we will also have a separate "Ministry Team" that will focus on overseeing more specific ministries—such as worship, hospitality, missions, youth, children, discipleship or care ministries. The Church Council will support the Ministry Team with the resources, guidance, and encouragement they need.

Moving Forward

In the coming weeks, this matter will be voted on at Charge Conference to be implemented beginning January 1st. The most important thing to remember is that this change is designed to help us live more fully into our mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. By moving from many committees to one Church Council—and empowering a Ministry Team—we hope to spend less time in meetings and more time doing what God has called us to do. Most importantly, this change is not about doing "less" but about doing more of what matters most. By simplifying our structure, we believe we can be more faithful and effective in living out our mission. Many other United Methodist congregations have already made this shift and have found it to be a life-giving way of organizing for ministry.

If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to Layne Hanson, and we encourage you to attend the Charge Conference in December for more information.



Administrative Council Committee

September 21, 2025



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

The meeting was opened with a devotion by Kathy.

The minutes were reviewed.

Committee Reports:

Trustees: The water fountain in the upstairs hallway is not working. The cooling element is shot and will be expensive to repair. The Council recommended that Aaron ask the plumber for quotes on replacing the fountain rather than repairing the old one. He will get quotes for both a simple drinking fountain and one with a cooler and bottle filler.

We received a quote from Isaac Theisen Masonry to repair the brickwork on the elevator corner of the building. Cavan made a motion to accept the quote and move ahead with the project. Phyllis seconded. Motion passed. It is expected that it will be done yet this fall.

There is a window in the parsonage that needs repair. Pastor Paul will call David Bitz to look at it.

Missions Committee: World Communion Sunday on October 5th will be celebrated with a display and special offering. The produce table is going well.

SPRC: Phyllis is working to establish relations with a company to do Criminal Background Checks. A meeting with Westby to coordinate pastor compensation will be scheduled for October 2nd.

Worship Committee: Pastor Paul will be on vacation a couple of Sundays coming up. Tim Gaskell will preach on September 28th and Layne Hanson on October 12th. Beginning in October, offering plates will not be passed.

Education Committee: It is planned that Sunday School will start on October 19th.

Charge Conference: The meeting will be held at Westby this year and include a potluck.

One Committee Leadership:

The SPRC will need to keep a separate committee in order to meet the requirements of our Book of Discipline.

The Church Council will be the governing body and include finance and trustees representatives along with the Lay Leader, Delegate to Annual conference, and the Pastor.

The Ministry Team is made up of all the ministries of the church. The Lay Leader and the Pastor will be part of both groups.

Discussion was held and questions answered. Layne made a motion and Phyllis seconded it to move forward with adopting the new structure. Motion passed.

Next steps include filling the positions needed on the Ministry Team and presenting the plan to the congregation.

Kristen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:30. Aaron seconded the motion. Motion passed. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Education Committee

September 8th, 2025

Members Present: Avis, Kathy, Janette, Pastor Paul

Old Business:

Sunday School: The target date to begin Sunday School is October 19th. Pastor Paul is working on getting teachers.

VBS: VBS went very well.

Teen Group: Teen Group will meet on September 24th. Mitchell will work with the older kids.

Blessing of the Backpacks: this also went well. We may incorporate making Back to School bags again next year. The congregation helped provide for those. Last year

New Business:

Sunday School Teacher Training: Cavan will be attending the conference in Kansas City. Pastor Paul has asked him to attend some sessions on Sunday School.

We have no confirmands this year.

Next meeting will be held on Monday October 13th at 6:00 PM at the Church.

Trustees Meeting

September 9, 2025

Present: Aaron Hanson, Dale Gudgeon, Phyllis Kalnins, Pete Gilman, Pastor Paul Lee

Pastor Paul opened the meeting with prayer.

We received an estimate for the repair of the brickwork on the NW corner of the church near the elevator. The estimate was from Isaac Theisen Masonary, LLC for \$2950.00 which includes labor, materials, and clean up. The estimate is good until October 13. A non-refundable 30% is due at signing. The trustees would like to get a start and finish date from the company. Pastor Paul agreed to contact the company for this information. Aaron made a motion to accept this bid and take this bid to Finance and the Ad Council. All agreed.

We will check to see if road construction will impact this repair in any way.

An ad from a security company was received. It was discussed; however, such a system is too expensive for us to consider at this time.

Saturday, September 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. has been designated as the "all church work day". We will clean out the room next to the old day care room. Items from this room will temporarily be stored in the old choir room or discarded. We will check to see if there is a community clean-up day so we can have trash taken away. This room also has ceiling tiles that are missing. Pastor will find a way to cover them.

There recently was a Sunday when there were quite a few cars parked in our lot which did not belong to our congregation. If it happens again or becomes an issue, we will consider getting signs prohibiting community parking on Sundays.

Our exercise class has grown from about 5 people to up to 16. The group requested to remain meeting in the chapel instead of moving back downstairs again. Some of the folding chairs will be moved to storage.

There is a window in the parsonage that needs repair or replacement. Aaron will have someone evaluate the situation and replace or repair the window.

Next meeting is October 14 at 6:00 p.m.

United Women of Faith

September 17, 2025



Members Present: Ardith Olson, Betty Ross, Barb Casper, Phyllis Kalnins, Joanne Hornby, Janet Welch, Sandy Welch

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

President Janet read the Secretary's report from the May meeting.

Treasurer Barb gave the Treasurer's report of \$2,401.51

Child Fund sponsors are: September—Jolene, October—Phyllis, November—Lorraine Gerdl, December—Betty.

Cookies and coffee for Sunday morning: September—Hospitality I.

October—Lydia Circle: Oct. 5-Betty, Oct. 12-Joanne, Oct. 19-Barb,
Oct. 26- Phyllis.

Our Local Leadership Form needs to be sent to the District.

We voted to \$500 pledge to Mission.

November 8th is District Day of Enrichment in Baraboo.

The next meeting is on October 8th. Joanne will have snacks.

Maris Kalnins gave a talk with video on his childhood in Latvia for the program. He lived in many refugee camps during the war. He also described coming to America.

October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p>1 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>2 10:30am Exercise Group 6pm Worship Committee</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/ Communion 11:45am Fall Potluck- Pastor Appreciation</p>	<p>6 7pm Book Group</p>	<p>7 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>8 8am Prayer Group 1:30pm UWF 6pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>9 10:30am Exercise Group 4pm BAKED POTATO SALE</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 4pm Bible Study @ Kathy Hanson's</p>	<p>13 6pm Education Committee</p>	<p>14 10:30am Exercise Group 1pm Hospitality Committee 6pm Trustees Meeting</p>	<p>15 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>16 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 11:40am Administrative Council 11:40am Finance Committee</p>	<p>20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p>	<p>21 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>22 8am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>23 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 9am Adult Sunday School 10:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>29 8am Prayer Group 5pm Teen Group 6pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>30 10:30am Exercise Group</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1</p>

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

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OFFICE HOURS

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**



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.