

*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 Witness



Sharing
God's Love



Westby United
Methodist Church
November 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

The Witness of the Spirit II

by Pastor Paul Lee

In The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II, John Wesley continues to explain the important question of how believers can know they are truly children of God. He begins again with Romans 8:16—“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Wesley’s goal is to show how this inner testimony of the Holy Spirit works, how it can be distinguished from false impressions, and how it unites with the witness of our own spirit to give true assurance of faith.

Wesley first explains that the witness of the Spirit is not a loud voice or an emotional excitement. It is a quiet, deep assurance given by God to the heart of the believer. This assurance brings peace, joy, and confidence in God’s love. The Spirit tells the soul directly, “Your sins are forgiven; you are God’s child.” This is not imagination or self-deception, but a real spiritual experience. However, Wesley warns that this assurance does not mean believers will never doubt or feel weak. Feelings may change, but the Spirit’s witness remains true and steady when grounded in faith.

He then describes the witness of our own spirit as the evidence we see in our lives—our love for God and neighbor, our desire to please God, and our obedience to God’s Word. This human witness is important because it confirms the reality of our faith through our daily actions. Yet, this alone is not enough. Even moral and religious people may live well but lack the inner testimony of God’s Spirit. True assurance comes when both witnesses agree: the Spirit gives inward peace, and our lives show outward fruit.

Wesley next addresses common misunderstandings. Some people believe that this witness is only for strong believers or spiritual leaders. But he insists that it is the right and privilege of every true Christian, no matter how weak in faith. Others fear that this doctrine leads to pride or false confidence. Wesley answers that the Spirit’s witness always leads to humility, gratitude, and greater holiness, not arrogance. Those who truly know they are loved by God are moved to love others more and to walk faithfully before God.

Finally, Wesley shows the purpose of this assurance. The witness of the Spirit is given to strengthen believers against fear, to help them in times of temptation, and to give courage in suffering. It brings comfort in death and

Message	p. 1
Pastor’s Schedule	p. 2
Sunday School.	p. 2
Mission of Month.	p. 2
Thursday Groups.	p. 2
Online Study	p. 3
Other Activities	p. 3
Board Minutes	p. 5
Calendar	p. 7

joy in eternal hope. Without it, Christians may live uncertain and anxious lives. With it, they stand firm, knowing that nothing can separate them from the love of God.

In conclusion, The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II teaches that the Spirit's inner testimony and the evidence of a holy life work together to give full assurance of faith. Through both, believers can know—calmly, humbly, and joyfully—that they are indeed 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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Sunday School News

During October, we learned that God always loves us. In November, the lessons will be about how we can trust God. We'll also start practicing for the Christmas program during Sunday School in November.

On Sunday, November 2nd, after Sunday School, the youth will go shopping to purchase gifts for the Operation Christmas Child boxes. We will pack the boxes on November 9th during Sunday School. The goal is to pack 15 boxes this year for this service project.



Looking ahead:

- There will not be any Sunday School on Sunday, Nov. 30th.
- The Sunday School Christmas Program will be during worship on Sunday, Dec. 14th.



Thursday Morning Groups

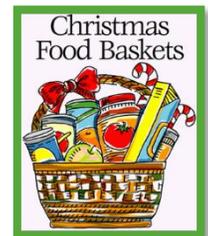
Our monthly prayer group will meet on Thursday, November 6th, at 9:00 AM.

The Thursday morning Bible Study Group will not meet this month, so everyone can enjoy Thanksgiving Day with their families.

Mission of the Month – Baskets of Love and Gifts for Norseland

As usual, we are planning ahead to be sure we have the funds to provide gift certificates for groceries for area families to purchase a holiday meal. We will also be giving gifts to residents at Norseland Nursing Home who might not otherwise receive Christmas gifts. All donations for either project need to be collected by early December, which is why we start in November.

We will have envelopes on the back table for your "Baskets of Love" donations. There will be names on the bulletin board with suggested gifts for specific Norseland residents or for a new resident. If you have names and addresses for families in our area who might need our help, please bring the names to Ardith. Please remember to indicate Baskets of Love on checks. Please use gifts bags for the Norseland gifts (not wrapped gifts) and include the name of the intended recipient for the gift bag.





November Online Studies – Practice Gratitude Daily

Our culture today leaves many of us feeling frustrated, anxious, and overwhelmed. We feel like we are constantly in need of more. But it doesn't have to be like this. We don't have to live this way! New habits can be formed, and fresh hope can be found. Joy truly is right around the corner!

So how do we get there? Through the transformative nature of gratitude in our lives! As Christians, we are well aware that prayer changes things... both within and around our loved ones. But it also changes us! So while you've got God's ear, why not express your gratitude and thanksgiving for all He's done for YOU!

We invite you to join us as we discover how cultivating a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving can bring joy, peace, and a deeper connection with God. Throughout the month of November, we will dive into God's Word through a series of online studies designed to help you unlock the power of gratitude! Use the links below to join us for these studies!

- ❖ Choosing Gratitude – begins Saturday, November 1st
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/22647/together/76479926/invitation?token=EeOKS3oEggmt5lXY7oMk-A&source=share>
- ❖ Gratitude That Glorifies God – begins Tuesday, November 11th
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/36499/together/76480080/invitation?token=d7NN6UnLmAQQ8dcc4JlnWQ&source=share>
- ❖ 5 Prayers of Gratitude – begins Tuesday, November 18th
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/13353/together/76480123/invitation?token=4rVrnPR7uLMqIGR78BPKAQ&source=share>
- ❖ Thanksgiving and Gratitude – begins Sunday, November 23rd
https://bible.com/reading-plans/45260/together/76480151/invitation?token=m2MoxTPi7dB4iP_Qu8IJ8A&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.



Gratitude Wall

The past few years, we've had a Gratitude Wall, or we should say window where everyone can place a note on the window to indicate what they are thankful for. We will be doing this activity again this year. There will be sticky notes and markers available to write down a joy you received during the week or other things you are thankful for. Let's fill up the window with our gratitude, because God is good all the time!

Daylight Savings Time Ends

It's time to fall back. Just a reminder that Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, Nov. 2nd, so turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, Nov. 1st.





All Saints Sunday – Nov. 2

On Sunday, Nov. 2nd, we will be taking some time during our worship service to remember our loved ones who passed away this past year. If you have anyone you would like to remember at this special time, please give their name to Linda by Sunday, Oct. 26th.

Honoring Veterans – Nov. 9

We will be honoring veterans and those who are currently serving in the military on Sunday, Nov. 9th. If you have served in the military, please let us know so we can honor you at this time. If you know of anyone who is currently serving, please give their name and what branch of the military they are in, to Linda by Wednesday, Nov. 5th.



Joint Advent Devotional Booklets – Due Nov. 8



We will be doing a Joint Advent Devotional Booklet with Viroqua UMC again this year. Westby UMC will be responsible for writing devotions for 8 Bible verses. If you sign up to create a devotional, please write what the verse means to you and include a prayer. Please have the total number of words be a total of 150 or less between the devotion and prayer. This total does not include the Bible verse.

The devotions are due on Wednesday, Nov. 8th to allow Kathy Hanson ample time to put the booklet together and get them printed so they can be handed out by Nov. 30th. Please send or give your finished devotionals to Linda.

Westby Community Thanksgiving Meal – Nov. 27

The Westby Community Thanksgiving Meal will probably be on Thursday, Nov. 27th from 11:00-1:00 at Our Savior's church. We anticipate that our church will be asked to provide pies and/or lefse for this meal, but we don't exactly how many pies or lefse will be needed at this time. A notice will be sent out via email and posted in the bulletin when we have more information about this event.



Advent Begins – Nov. 30

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, November 30th. Please join us as we prepare for the birth of Jesus! Everyone will receive one of the Advent Devotional Booklets to help us get ready for the celebration of Christmas.

Charge Conference – Wednesday, Dec. 3

This year, Charge Conference will be held at Westby UMC on Wednesday, Dec. 3rd. This will be a joint event with Viroqua UMC and there will be a potluck meal at 5:00 PM, followed by the Charge Conference meeting at 6:00 PM. Our district superintendent, Amanda Stein, will preside over the meeting.



For those who need to fill out forms for Charge Conference, please have the forms completed and submitted by November 14th.

Christmas Cookie Walk – Saturday, Dec. 6

Ready, get set, bake! It's time to start thinking about our annual Christmas Cookie Walk fundraiser and dig out your favorite Christmas cookie recipes or find some interesting new recipes to try and bake for this event. We hope to have a wide variety of cookies, homemade candy and other baked goods donated.

In addition to donations of cookies, candy and other baked goods, we will need volunteers to help with the following:

- Hanging up flyers around the area about 2 weeks before the event
- Setting up the tables and decorating
- Day of the sale – keeping trays stocked, cashiers, clean-up crew

Sign-up sheets will be placed in the narthex, the last part of November. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!



The Christmas Cookie Walk will be held 9:00-12:00 on Saturday, Dec. 6th. The cost will be \$8 per pound for cookies, and some items will be priced individually.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † - October 1, 2025

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

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the October newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Jean Shore and Verna Drake motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: (Annual Budget / Insurance update) - Verna Drake provided the financial reports for September and the adjusted 2026 Annual Budget. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. The Sunday School (Youth) checking account has been closed and the funds were added to the Special Accounts. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to accept the budget for 2026. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † West Entrance Railings – 3 bids received – Fred Fronk approved - Fred Fronk said he will try to get this project done by the end of October. It will cost an extra \$100 to have the railings painted black.
- † Westby Business Trick or Treating – October 31 – This event will be from 3:00-5:00 PM on Friday, Oct. 31. We need to put the batteries in the flashlights. Jane Gaskell will put information on the chalkboard sign. Verna Drake said she will be able to help hand out flashlights.
- † Charge Conference – Date change to Dec. 3 @ Westby – It was decided to have the forms due by Nov. 14. We'll have a potluck, starting at 5:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:00 PM. This will be a joint event with Viroqua UMC. Since Westby UMC is hosting, we will provide beverages for the potluck.
- † Small Group Meetings – The groups have been established.
- † Vision Planning - Fellowship time & personal time – praying for God's vision – No additional information available at this time.
- † Cemetery Headstone Repair – The company has been paid to do the repairs, but they haven't done it yet.

New Business:

- ✚ Pastor Appreciation Breakfast – There will be a presentation during worship to honor Pastor Paul, during the Joys and Concerns part of the service. The Sunday School will present a gift to Pastor Paul during fellowship.
- ✚ November / Thanksgiving Plans: Gratitude Wall, Service – We will setup the Gratitude Wall for people to add notes as to what they are grateful for. Pastor Paul wasn't available to give any information regarding a possible Thanksgiving service.
- ✚ Advent Devotional Booklet – We will do this activity with Viroqua UMC again this year. A possible due date of Nov. 16 was suggested for the devotions to allow ample time to compile the booklet.
- ✚ November board meeting date – Sunday? – It was decided to have the November board meeting on Sunday, Nov. 9 during fellowship.
- ✚ Cookie Walk – The Cookie Walk will be on Saturday, Dec. 6. It was decided to increase the cost from \$7 per pound to \$8 per pound.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✚ **Trustees** – A suggestion was made to replace the current fluorescent lightbulbs and ballasts with toggle LED lightbulbs. The toggle LED lightbulbs do not need ballasts, are more energy efficient, and can be installed in the current light fixtures. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to purchase toggle LED lightbulbs, 2 per fixture, from Home Depot, to replace the existing fluorescent lights in the fellowship hall, kitchen and women's restroom. The cost will be about \$860. Motion passed.
- ✚ **SPRC** - The costs for the pastoral salary between Viroqua UMC and Westby UMC have been updated. Our portion of the cost will be reduced in 2026.
- ✚ **Worship** – Veteran's Day / All Saints Day – We need to ask people to submit names to be mentioned on All Saints Day, Nov. 2. The names will be due on Oct. 26. We will put notices in the bulletins on Oct. 12 & 19.
 - For Veteran's Day, we will hang up a special wreath.
- ✚ **Youth & Sunday School** – The youth will not be going to the Corn Maze because several of the families are not available on Oct. 19. It was suggested to have a meeting with the Sunday School parents to discuss possible activities for the youth.
- ✚ **Lay Leadership** – Ardith Hoff is still writing and submitting more essays to be used in the Reminders section of the church website.
- ✚ **Missions** – The mission of the month for November and December will be Baskets of Love and Gifts for Norseland.

Pastor's Report: No report at this time.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

**Being Thankful Bible Verses**

During November, on the church's Facebook page, we will post a Bible verse each day about something to be thankful for as a way to help you count your blessings from God.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. ~ Psalm 107:1

November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 - Daylight Savings Ends ☩ 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 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 & Church Board Meeting	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	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 – Fellowship & Sunday School	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	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	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	27 <i>Happy Thanksgiving Day!</i> 	28 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	29
30 – 1st Sunday of Advent ☩ 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 courage to dream Your dreams for our church. Please open our minds and hearts and ears, so we can hear Your voice to know what Your purpose is for our church. We pray in Christ’s name, Amen.

God is able to do much more than we ask or think, through His power working in us.

~ Ephesians 3:20 (NLV)