

*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  
December 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

## Advent

by Pastor Paul Lee

As the Christian year moves into December, the church once again begins the season of Advent. While many people recognize this time with wreaths, candles, calendars, and holiday preparations, Advent calls us to look deeper. It is not just the countdown to Christmas; it is a season of spiritual renewal, reflection, and holy anticipation.

The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming” or “arrival.” For four weeks before Christmas, the church intentionally pauses to remember two important truths: Christ has come, and Christ will come again. This focus defines the heart of the season. We look back with gratitude at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and at the same time, we look forward with hope to the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Advent is marked by a quiet yet deliberate waiting — not a passive delay, but an active stance of preparedness. It encourages us to pay attention, nurture our spiritual lives, and observe signs of God’s presence in the world and within our hearts. In a culture that quickly moves toward the noise and rush of Christmas, Advent offers a countercultural invitation: slow down, breathe, and seek God’s light.

One of the key symbols of this season is the Advent wreath, with its four candles representing Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each week, as another candle is lit, we are reminded that the light of Christ grows brighter, pushing back the shadows of fear, division, and despair. On Christmas Eve, the Christ Candle shines at the center, proclaiming the good news that God’s light has entered the world and cannot be overcome.

Advent also challenges us to embody its themes in our daily lives. Hope becomes a commitment to trust God even in uncertainty. Peace becomes the work of reconciliation in our families and communities. Joy becomes gratitude rooted not in circumstances but in God’s presence. Love becomes a choice to serve, forgive, and extend compassion in tangible ways.

In this season, may we open our hearts to the transforming grace of God. As we prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth, may we also prepare for Christ’s coming again — living with expectation, courage, and faith. May Advent be for each of us a time of renewal, clarity, and deepened discipleship. ~ Pastor Paul

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## Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

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

## Contact Information:

Direct Office Phone: 608-638-7627  
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## Sunday School News

The Sunday School class was busy in November. Our lessons were about trusting God in all situations, and the verse of the month was Psalm 33:4. We helped to purchase items for the Operation Christmas Child boxes and then packed 15 boxes. We also began practicing the skit and the musical part of the Christmas program.

The Christmas program will be on Sunday, Dec. 14th during the worship service. For Sunday School on Dec. 14th, we will have a Christmas party.

Please note:

- Confirmation classes for 2025-2026 will start the 2nd week of December
- No Sunday School on Dec. 21st, Dec. 28th and Jan. 4th
- Sunday School will resume again on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>



## Thursday Morning Groups

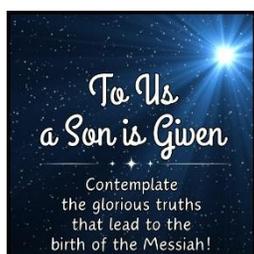
Our monthly prayer group will meet on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 AM.

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

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

There are envelopes on the back table for your “Baskets of Love” donations. 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.

There are names on the bulletin board with suggested gifts for specific Norseland residents and for some new residents. Please use gifts bags for the Norseland gifts (not wrapped gifts) and include the name of the intended recipient for the gift bag. The Norseland gifts are due Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.



## December Online Study – To Us a Son is Given

As we begin the season of Advent and start counting down the days until the most significant birth in the world, it is good for everyone to take some time to pause and reflect on the happenings that led up to Jesus' birth. We invite you to join us for this month's online study, which is a 25-day journey that will guide us through scripture readings to help us contemplate the glorious truths that lead to the birth of the Messiah.

Here is the link to this month's online study:

◇ **To Us a Son is Given** – begins on Dec. 1st - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/41268/together/77135626/invitation?token=MQXmaQ01-LLcKIXaRJSMKQ&source=share>

*These online studies and more can be accessed through the Bible App on your mobile device or the [bible.com](https://bible.com) website, which are free resources.*

ADVENT

PREPARING TO  
RECEIVE

## The Season of Advent

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. 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. The Advent devotionals will also be posted on our church's Facebook page each day of Advent.

During worship, we will have special readings each Sunday of Advent when we light our Advent trees. If you and your family would like to do a reading, please contact Pastor Paul, Linda or Jane.

We still need someone to read on Sunday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.

## 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.



## 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.

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.

## Christmas Caroling & Chili Supper – Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>

What would Christmas be without singing Christmas Carols? Come and share some Christmas cheer through songs. Warm up your voices and join us at Westby UMC on Wednesday, Dec. 10th as we go Christmas Caroling at the care centers in Westby. We'll meet at the church at 5:00 PM and then carpool to the care centers. Afterwards, we'll have chili supper and fellowship time.



## Christmas Eve Service – Dec. 24th

Come let us adore Him on the night before Christmas! We'll gather for our Christmas Eve service on Wednesday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Join us as we express our joy to the world as we celebrate the birth of our King!

***Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.***

*~ Isaiah 7:14*



## Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † - November 9, 2025

**Present:** Julie Fargen, Verna Drake, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Donna Perkins, Lois Gerling, Jean Shore, Ardith Hoff, Sharon Sharratt, Pastor Paul, Sunwoo Lee and Linda Weilnau

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

**Treasurer's Report:** - Verna Drake provided the financial reports for October and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. We did receive an insurance adjustment. Ardith Hoff and Jean Shore motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

### Old Business:

- † West Entrance Railings – Fred Fronk will install when ready – Fred is waiting for the railings to be finished.
- † Cemetery Headstone Repair – update – Verna Drake reported that we received a refund for the headstone repair because someone had already paid for it.
- † Advent Devotional Booklet with Viroqua – submit by Nov 8 – We received all of the devotionals for our church and Linda Weilnau emailed them to Viroqua UMC.
- † Charge Conference – Dec. 3 @ Westby Forms due by November 14 / Potluck – We will need to provide beverages for the potluck. We will provide coffee, milk (1 gallon) and water. Pastor Paul is going to look into changing the meeting time to start at possibly 5:00 PM and have the potluck afterwards because some of our church board members can only be available from 5-6 PM.
- † Cookie Walk – December 6 – Linda Weilnau submitted this event to several online calendars and the church's Facebook page. Flyers will be available on Nov. 16 to distribute to area businesses.
- † Small Group Meetings – Pastor Paul said there have been delays in coordinating meeting times for the small groups. To make it easier for everyone, Pastor Paul is going to setup days and have people come when they are available. Pastor Paul will send the meeting days to Linda Weilnau so she can distribute the information.
- † Vision Planning - Fellowship time & personal time – praying for God's vision – It was decided to setup a day to just share our thoughts, possibly a Saturday morning. It was suggested to do this on Jan. 10, 2026, at 10 AM.

### New Business:

- † Meal Site Contract – renew for 2026/Amount – It was decided to continue to have the meal site at our church and keep the amount the same as last year (\$1600). Tim Gaskell will submit a letter to ADRC to renew this contract.
- † Decorating for Advent – We need to purchase lights for the new tree and get the tree out of the box in the next few weeks. We will decorate the sanctuary for Advent on Tuesday, Nov. 25 at 1:30 PM.

- ✝ Advent Readings? – We will have families light the candles and do an Advent reading. Pastor Paul will prepare the readings.
- ✝ Caroling and Chili? December 10 or 17? – We will go caroling on Wed., Dec. 10 and have a chili supper afterwards. We will meet at the church at 5 PM.
- ✝ December Board Meeting – It was decided to not have a board meeting in December.

#### Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ Trustees – Lighting project complete. Thank You gift for volunteer \*\* - It was decided to get a Kwik Trip gift card for the volunteer who worked on the lights. The fire inspectors came. We found out the beeping sound coming from the restroom area was the smoke detector in the storage room. We will check to see if the batteries need to be replaced.
- ✝ SPRC – It was reported that Pastor Paul is working on his ordination. After he completes this, he will receive a salary increase.
- ✝ Worship – Christmas Eve Service – We will have our Christmas Eve service at 7 PM on Dec. 24, separate from Viroqua UMC. We will discuss the format of this service with Pastor Paul.
- ✝ Youth & Sunday School – Children’s Christmas message December 14 / Confirmation start? – Confirmation has not started yet, due to coordinating this class with Faith UMC. The Sunday School Christmas message will include a skit and bucket drumming. We have several people who are doing the teaching as a joint effort.
- ✝ Lay Leadership – Ardith Hoff continues to write essays for the website.
- ✝ Missions – For December, we will continue to have Baskets of Love and Norseland Gifts as the missions of the month. Lois Gerling will get names of Norseland residents. The Baskets of Love donations are due on Dec. 7.

**Pastor’s Report:** - Pastor Paul didn’t have any additional information, other than what was reported during the other meeting topics.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.  
Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

***Thanks be to God for his  
incredible gift!  
~ 2 Corinthians 9:15***



## December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>2</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	<b>3</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 5:00 PM – Potluck w/Viroqua UMC 6:00 PM – Charge Conf.	<b>4</b> 9:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	<b>5</b> Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	<b>6</b> 9:00-12:00 – Christmas Cookie Walk
<b>7</b> ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	<b>8</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>9</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	<b>10</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 5:00 PM – Christmas Caroling & Chili	<b>11</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	<b>12</b> Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service & Sunday School Program 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	<b>15</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>16</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	<b>17</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>18</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	<b>19</b> Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	<b>22</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>23</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	<b>24</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 7:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> <b>Merry Christmas!</b> 	<b>26</b> Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> ☩9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	<b>29</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	<b>30</b> 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	<b>31</b> 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 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)

