

***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**  
**February 2026**

IN THIS ISSUE

**Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, II**

by Pastor Paul Lee

In Sermon on the Mount II, John Wesley explains Matthew 5:17–20, where Jesus speaks about the law and true righteousness. Wesley begins with Jesus’ words that he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. Wesley explains that this means Jesus came to complete their purpose, not to cancel them.

Wesley describes what is meant by “the law.” He explains that it includes the law given through Moses and the teaching of the prophets. He then makes a clear difference between parts of the law. Some laws, such as ceremonies and rituals, were completed in Christ and are no longer required. Other parts, especially the moral law, still remain. According to Wesley, Jesus confirms the importance of the moral law by showing its true meaning.

The sermon then turns to Jesus’ statement that a person’s righteousness must be greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees. Wesley explains that their righteousness focused mainly on outward actions. They tried to keep the law in ways that could be seen by others. Jesus, however, speaks about a deeper righteousness that includes the heart, thoughts, and intentions, not actions alone.

Wesley also explains Jesus’ words about even the smallest part of the law not passing away. He understands this as a strong statement about the seriousness and lasting nature of God’s moral will. The law continues to show what God desires from human life.

Throughout the sermon, Wesley treats the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus’ clear explanation of the law. It shows what obedience to God truly involves and describes the kind of righteousness expected of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven. Wesley presents Jesus’ final warning as a direct statement about who will enter the kingdom, based on the nature of this righteousness.

~ Pastor Paul

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

## Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

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

### **Contact Information:**

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## February Birthdays

Feb. 12 – Jill Bjornstad

Feb. 16 – Sooho Lee

Feb. 22 – Tim Gaskell

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



## Sunday School News

In February, we will finish our lessons about how Jesus loves us and begin lessons about how God is good, no matter what.

Sunday, February 8 will be a busy day. During Sunday School, we will make Valentine cards for the residents at Norseland Nursing Home. Later, we will attend the Snow Days at Living Waters Bible Camp for an afternoon of outdoor winter activities.



## Mission of the Month – Bethel Butikk

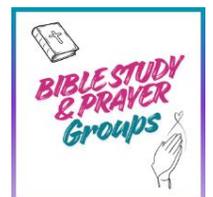
As part of our observance of Lent, we are planning, once again, to collect food for the food pantries in Westby and Cashton. Watch the bulletins for suggestions of what we plan to emphasize each week. For example, it might be breakfast cereals one week and pasta or canned foods another. In tandem with that, our mission of the month, is Bethel Butikk and their other missions such as clothing, household goods and financial help for people in need. Monetary donations are always welcome at Bethel Butikk! You can make checks out directly to Bethel Butikk or to the church with Bethel Butikk on the memo line, or you can put cash in an envelope with Bethel Butikk on the outside. Thank you for your past support of this worthy mission, and please consider donating whatever you can again this year.

## Thursday Morning Groups

Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. Come and help us to use the power of prayer as we pray for others and our church.

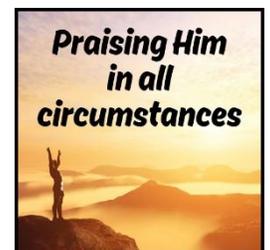
The Thursday morning Bible Study Group will meet on Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

We will continue studying the book of Galatians this month.



## February Online Studies – Praise and Lent

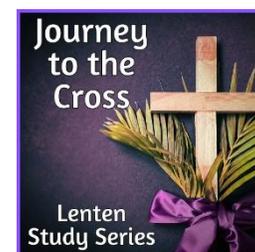
Since Valentine's Day is in February, we usually think about love during this month. What could be a better way to show our love to God than to praise Him. Our first study for this month will help us focus on praise and being positive. We'll see how to take negative situations and find something to smile about, while praising God no matter what the circumstances.



This first study, 14 Days of Praise & Positivity, will begin on February 1st. Here is the link to this study:

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/38028/together/78471378/invitation?token=Z5QwrF0pBXoDZ4SGq0GeJQ&source=share>

The season of Lent begins on February 18th, so the studies for the last part of February will focus on Lent. For our Lenten studies, we'll be reading a 6-part series, which has a new study each week. Hopefully, these studies will help you to pause, reflect and draw closer to God during Lent. The studies for this series includes:



- Lent Week 1: Turning Back to God (begins on Feb. 18)
  - [https://bible.com/reading-plans/56570/together/78471444/invitation?token=BGPovPX0\\_s-KxPCS9A3T-Q&source=share](https://bible.com/reading-plans/56570/together/78471444/invitation?token=BGPovPX0_s-KxPCS9A3T-Q&source=share)
- Lent Week 2: Trusting God for What You Need (begins on Feb. 25)
  - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/56687/together/78471462/invitation?token=OMx30cYd2uMDyxnvzRNtyA&source=share>
- Lent Week 3: Living Out What Jesus Taught (begins on Mar. 4)
  - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/56870/together/78471476/invitation?token=ldafYmK7N2YwFc5LsH1Og&source=share>
- Lent Week 4: Jesus' Journey to the Cross (begins on Mar. 11)
  - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/61362/together/78471492/invitation?token=C7dl6dfpKUZ6m7Vze5-wYA&source=share>
- Lent Week 5: What Jesus Did for You (begins on Mar. 18)
  - [https://bible.com/reading-plans/57206/together/78471508/invitation?token=FmGtWdnY\\_N5vB2EWh-jZtg&source=share](https://bible.com/reading-plans/57206/together/78471508/invitation?token=FmGtWdnY_N5vB2EWh-jZtg&source=share)
- Lent Week 6: A New Beginning (begins on Mar. 25)
  - [https://bible.com/reading-plans/57551/together/78471519/invitation?token=ZPzaGdex73\\_N-gM1yPSIXA&source=share](https://bible.com/reading-plans/57551/together/78471519/invitation?token=ZPzaGdex73_N-gM1yPSIXA&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.*

## **Lent Devotional Workbook**

As we did last year, we will again read the Bible together during the season of Lent. This Lent, we will be reading **the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts** together. In addition, every year during Lent our church has created a Devotional Booklet. This year, we will prepare it in a new form as a **Daily Devotional Workbook**. Through this workbook, each person will read Luke and Acts, reflect on God's Word, and take time to write down the grace that God gives through daily meditation.

Especially during this Lenten season, we plan to create opportunities to **share our reflections** using the Daily Devotional Workbook.

After Sunday worship, during our fellowship time, we would like to create space for people to **freely share their reflections** from their daily devotions. This will be an informal and open time to listen to one another and reflect together on God's Word. We pray that this season of Lent will be a meaningful time for us to draw closer to God through Scripture, reflection, and sharing together.



## **Food Drive for Lent – February 22 to March 29**

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:

- Week 1 (Feb. 22) – Proteins: peanut butter, canned meat, canned or dried beans (baked beans, pinto beans, etc.)
- Week 2 (Mar. 1) – Pasta/Grains: pasta, noodles, rice, macaroni & cheese
- Week 3 (Mar. 8) – Breakfast/Snacks: cereal, oatmeal, pancake mix, granola/snack bars, fruit snacks, trail mix, jelly, pancake syrup
- Week 4 (Mar. 15) – Soup: canned soup, dried soup mixes, canned chili
- Week 5 (Mar. 22) – Fruits: canned fruits, dried fruits, fruit cups, fruit juice
- Week 6 (Mar. 29) – 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 29th.

**SNOW**



**TUBING**

### **Snow Days – February 8<sup>th</sup>**

Snow Days at Living Waters Bible Camp from 1:00-5:00 PM. Everyone is invited to attend this fun filled outdoor event. We will meet at the church around 12:30 PM and carpool to this event. A hotdog lunch and hot chocolate will be available. The youth account will pay the entry fees for the Sunday School students. All family members can attend this activity. Cost is \$7 per person (3 and under are free). Enjoy an afternoon of tubing, broomball, cross-country skiing, and ice skating. If there isn’t any snow, we will plan on doing something

different this day.

Sign-up by Feb. 1 if you plan on attending the Snow Days on Feb. 8 at Living Waters Bible Camp. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex or contact Linda Weilnau if you plan on going. We need to let the camp know how many people from our church will be coming. Everyone needs to fill out a release form to attend this event.

### **Meatball & Lefse Dinner – February 11 @ Viroqua UMC**

On Wednesday, February 11, Viroqua UMC will be having a Meatball & Lefse Dinner from 4:30-7:00 PM. Carry outs will be available. The cost is \$15. The dinner will have meatballs, homemade lefse, mashed potatoes with gravy, a vegetable, coleslaw, homemade pie and a beverage.



Render your heart  
and return to God

### **Ash Wednesday Services – Feb. 18**

This year, Ash Wednesday is February 18th. There will be Ash Wednesday services at both churches. Viroqua UMC will have a service at 1:00 PM. Westby UMC will have a service at 6:00 PM. There will be a soup supper at Westby prior to the service, starting at 5:30 PM. Please join us as we begin the season of Lent and work to draw closer to God.

## **Soup-er Love Luncheon & Auction – February 14 @ Faith UMC**

Faith UMC will be having a soup luncheon and auction on Saturday, Feb. 14. The luncheon will be from 11:00-12:45 and the auction will begin at 1:00 PM. The meal is a freewill offering and will include three types of soup, crackers, bread, cheese, sausage, dessert and beverage.




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### **Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † January 14, 2026**

**Present:** Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Verna Drake, Ardith Hoff, Jean Shore, Pastor Paul and Linda Weilnau

**Opening:** Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the November board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the December newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. There wasn't a meeting in December. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Verna Drake provided the financial reports for December and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Verna Drake indicated that our monthly payment to Viroqua UMC will be reduced by several hundred dollars in February. We are waiting for Viroqua UMC to provide more information. The cost of the railing repair for the back entrance and the new railings for the west entrance and the handicap doorstop was \$1905. This bill has been paid. Jane Gaskell and Jean Shore motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

#### **Old Business:**

- † COOKIE WALK – results & review – We raised \$1210 from this event. This fundraiser was well received by the community, and it was a nice fellowship time for the workers. We received several compliments about our setup and selection of cookies, from those who purchased cookies. If we have enough people to bake, we will do this again next December. It was suggested to use some of these funds to purchase a new whiteboard, on wheels, some new dry erase markers, new dry erase cleaning cloths, and a dolly to move the portable speaker around easier in the church. Tim Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve this purchase. Motion approved. Linda Weilnau will order these items from Amazon.
- † Small Group Meetings: January 16 & 23 – 10 am & 5 pm with Pastor Paul – Pastor Paul indicated that 6 people will be attending the 10 AM meeting on Jan. 16 and 3 will be attending the 5 PM meeting. No one has indicated they will be attending on Jan. 23, so he may schedule a meeting time in February.
- † Vision Meeting discussion summary – The discussion went well. We determined three possible focus groups to pray about: Youth and possible afternoon activities, Sunday School parents and the seniors. We are to pray in what way(s) we can develop closer relationships with these people. We will schedule another discussion meeting in April.
- † Meal Site Contract – funds received & updated contract signed – We received the payment from the meal site in December. The signed contract is for a calendar year.

#### **New Business:**

- † Statistical Report – This report is due at the end of February. Verna Drake will complete the report. This report helps to determine the amount of money we pay towards apportionments.

- ✠ Lenten Devotional with Viroqua UMC – Pastor Paul indicated that instead of the devotional booklet, he is going to create a reading plan for Lent and create a workbook for the reading plan which includes questions for each day’s reading. This workbook will be available on Feb. 15.
- ✠ Ash Wednesday Service – February 18 – Viroqua UMC is going to have an Ash Wednesday service during the day. We will have a service at 6:00 PM and a soup supper at 5:30 PM.
- ✠ Lenten Services on Wednesdays? – Pastor Paul asked if we would like to participate in the Lent Ecumenical Services on Wednesdays, like we did last year. It was agreed to do this. Pastor Paul will ask if we can have the Ecumenical service at our church on Wed., March 4. The service will be at 6:00 PM and we will need to provide a soup supper, which would start at 5:00 PM.
- ✠ Lay Ministry Course – January 17 & 31 in LaFarge – Pastor Paul was told that if someone took the Lay Ministry course over 5 years ago, they should repeat it as a refresher. The time for these classes will be 9:00-3:00, both days. Pastor Paul is going to see if there may be a way he can teach the courses at a later date since there are some people who want to take the course but cannot attend both days.
- ✠ Blood Drive inquiry – A person from the Blood Center of Wisconsin stopped by the church and asked if we would be interested in hosting a blood drive for them at our church. Before agreeing to this, we need to know what would be required of our church to host this event. Linda Weilnau emailed the person and asked about the requirements but hasn’t received a reply yet.
- ✠ Activity Planning Date for 2026 – It was decided to discuss our activities for 2026 on Sunday, Feb. 8 during fellowship.
- ✠ Cemetery Concern – Verna Drake mentioned that there is a concern because currently, funeral homes contact her directly for burials. After they contact her, she has to verify if the person does have a plot in our cemetery and then call the funeral home back. This is a concern for when she is out of town.

#### **Business from Board Committees:**

- ✠ **Trustees** – Railings completed – Jane Gaskell reported that the urinal in the men’s bathroom isn’t flushing properly. We need to find out how to dispose of the old fluorescent tubes that were removed from fellowship hall because they need to be recycled in a special way.
- ✠ **SPRC** - No report.
- ✠ **Worship** – Luke & Acts series – Pastor Paul will be giving messages about these books of the Bible for several months.
- ✠ **Youth & Sunday School** – Snow Days at Living Waters – February 8 – Linda Weilnau asked if the students invited a friend, would the church pay for the friend to attend. It was decided that the church will pay for each student from the church and one of their friends. Parents and other people from the church may attend but will need to pay for themselves. There will be a due date of Feb. 1 to sign up to attend the Snow Days. If there isn’t snow, we will try to go bowling.
- ✠ **Lay Leadership** - Ardith Hoff continues to write essays for the website. Ardith plans on attending the Lay Ministry courses.
- ✠ **Missions** – Food Drive during Lent? (Feb. 22-Mar. 29) – It was decided to have the food drive again during Lent. Bethel Butikk will be the mission of the month for February for those who just want to make a monetary donation instead of purchasing food for the food drive.

**Pastor’s Report:** Pastor Paul will be taking some time off the end of January, so Tim Gaskell will be our guest speaker on Sunday, January 25. Pastor Paul indicated that DS Amanda Stein will be visiting on Sunday, Jan. 18 during our service. She will also be going to Viroqua UMC that day.

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

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## February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> ☩ <b>9:00 AM</b> – Worship Service (Communion) <b>10:00 AM</b> – Fellowship & Sunday School	<b>2</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>3</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>4</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>5</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> – Prayer Group <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>6</b> Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> ☩ <b>9:00 AM</b> – Worship Service <b>10:00 AM</b> – Fellowship & Sunday School <b>1:00 PM</b> – Snow Days Outing	<b>9</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>10</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>11</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>6:00 PM</b> – Church Board Meeting	<b>12</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>13</b> Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> ☩ <b>9:00 AM</b> – Worship Service <b>10:00 AM</b> – Fellowship & Sunday School	<b>16</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>17</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>18 Ash Wednesday</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>5:30 PM</b> – Soup Supper <b>6:00 PM</b> – Ash Wed. Service	<b>19</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>20</b> Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> ☩ <b>9:00 AM</b> – Worship Service <b>10:00 AM</b> – Fellowship & Sunday School * Food Drive: Proteins	<b>23</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>24</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>25</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site	<b>26</b> <b>9:00 AM</b> – Bible Study Group <b>11:30 AM</b> – Senior Meal Site <b>12:30 PM</b> – Strength Training Class	<b>27</b> Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	<b>28</b>

**\*\* 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)

