



***Love God by loving others.
Serve God by serving others.***

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
July 2026**

IN THIS ISSUE

Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VII

by Pastor Paul Lee

Having just warned against turning prayer into performance, Jesus moves to another practice easily twisted by the same temptation: fasting. In John Wesley's Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse VII, he takes up Matthew 6:16-18 and asks a question that runs through the whole Sermon — not whether we do the right religious things, but why we do them.

Wesley opens with a diagnosis of a very old problem. From the beginning, he says, the devil has worked to pull apart what God joined together — outward religion and inward religion — setting one against the other. Some Christians have made fasting nearly everything, as if the act itself carried saving power. Others, recoiling from that excess, have dropped it altogether. Wesley wants to recover the original, balanced practice.

His first concern is the heart's direction. Like almsgiving and prayer in the previous discourse, fasting must be aimed at God alone, not at an audience. The hypocrites Jesus describes disfigure their faces precisely so others will notice their suffering — and that notice is the only reward they will ever receive. True fasting happens before “your Father who is in secret,” with no need for anyone else to know.

Wesley is equally clear that fasting earns nothing on its own. The bare outward act — going without food — carries no automatic blessing. It is not a transaction with God. What gives fasting its value is what happens inside a person during it: a broken and contrite heart, honest sorrow over sin, self-examination, and a renewed hunger to obey God's will. Wesley also adds a note of practical wisdom — fasting should never be so severe that it damages the body God has given us to steward.

Two companions complete the practice. First, fervent prayer: fasting empties the body so the soul can pour itself out more fully before God, confessing sin and laying bare its needs. Second, and just as essential, works of mercy. Wesley points to Cornelius, whose prayers and acts of charity rose together before God as one offering, and to Isaiah 58, where the fast God truly desires is one that loosens the bonds of injustice and feeds the hungry.

For Wesley, fasting is never just self-denial for its own sake. It is self-denial joined to prayer and joined to love of neighbor — three threads woven into a single act of devotion before God.

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Fasting is not an easy practice to find in today's church. Even Wesley himself once included Friday fasting in the early Methodist guidelines, only to remove it later — a reminder of just how difficult this discipline is for creatures of flesh and blood. Today, fasting takes new forms as well: alongside abstaining from food, many practice fasting from media, sugar, or other things that constantly stimulate us. Whatever shape it takes, the lesson we can draw from Wesley's sermon remains the same — everything we do should begin and end with God, and should serve as a means of deepening our relationship with him. This July, I encourage us to set aside time at least once — whether through fasting or simply letting go of something we love for a while — to turn our attention more fully toward 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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July Birthdays

July 19 – Julie Fargen



July Anniversaries

July 23 – Paul & Linda Weilnau

Sunday School News

On June 14th, we had our first summer activity for our youth. Seven youth and three adults traveled to the Jump Start in La Crosse, and for 90 minutes our youth didn't stop moving. There was jumping 10' to slam dunk basketballs, jumping over short & tall walls, bouncing off walls, running through slides and ball pits, and the biggest smiles ever. After all that expending energy, eating at Pizza Ranch was the best. Everyone ate their fill and ended with ice cream.



For our next youth activity, we'll go to High Rollers in La Crosse on Sunday, July 19, 2026.



Thursday Morning Prayer Group

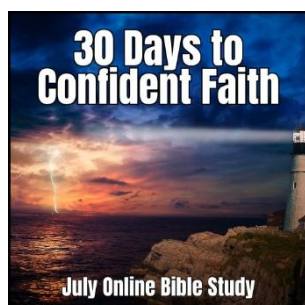
Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, July 2nd at 9:00 AM. Come and help us to use the power of prayer as we pray for others and our church. Prayer is more powerful when we pray together.

Mission of the Month – Stuff the Bus

As usual, our July Mission of the Month is Stuff the Bus. Families needing supplies will register between June 1st and July 17th. We can start bringing donations and supplies to church ASAP. We like to do our best to get any monetary donations and supplies collected and at the church by Sunday, July 12 because the sorting for distribution starts later that week.

Suggested Stuff the Bus Supply List for 2026:

- Plastic Folders in the colors: yellow, orange, red, purple, or fun colors.
- Paper Folders in the colors: yellow, orange, red, purple, or fun colors.
- One-subject spiral notebooks in all colors (many schools request red, yellow, blue and green)
- Glue sticks are a big need! Many schools request a minimum of two per person.
- Soft three-ring pencil cases
- Pack of 12 - #2 pencils
- Pack of 12 colored pencils
- Watercolors (single strip)
- Pack of 10 markers
- Pink Pearl erasures, or a 1-inch large eraser
- Hard pencil cases, clear or neutral colors
- Both black and red composition notebooks
- Thin dry erase markers
- Scientific and standard calculators
- Post-it notes
- Lined Index cards
- Packages of loose leaf paper
- Tissues and disinfectant wipes
- Headphones and ear buds.



July Online Study – 30 Days to Confident Faith

Do you long for bold, unshakable faith? In this 30-day journey, you'll discover what true confidence looks like—not in yourself, but in Christ. Each day features a powerful Scripture, a short devotional packed with real-life application, a thought-provoking reflection question, and a prayer to strengthen your trust in God's promises. Whether you're facing fear, uncertainty, or the impossible, this plan will equip you to walk with courage, clarity, and confidence, rooted in God's Word.

Faith. It can be a wonderful and powerful tool when we're facing challenges. Our faith in Jesus helps to give us confidence, clarity and courage, and needs to be based in God's Word. But sometimes we feel that our faith isn't strong enough. If you've ever felt this way, please join us on a journey to build our faith so we can have the faith of a mustard seed, so we can move mountains.

Our journey to having confident faith starts on July 1st.

30 Days to Confident Faith – https://bible.com/reading-plans/62320/together/80923817/invitation?token=WL1NrL_adJcnknVbYlSiAQ&source=share

**** Please note that the Bible.com website does not support Plans with Friends. You will need to open the Bible App on your mobile device to use this link to the plan.**

If you don't have the Bible app on your phone, you can use this link to begin the study:

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/62320-30-days-to-confident-faith>



Website Review – July 6

The website review committee met on June 1 and decided on a color scheme for the website and approved some other adjustments. Members from each church will work on gathering information for the individual church pages. A tentative go-live date will be the beginning of September. We will meet again on Monday, July 6 at 6:30 PM.

Brunch & Movie – July 12

On Sunday, July 12 during fellowship, we will have a potluck brunch and watch a movie. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex for items needed for the brunch.



**BAKE
SALE**

Burgers in the Park – Bake Sale – July 16

On Thursday July 16th, our church is co-hosting with Bethel Home & Services for Burgers in the Park. This is an opportunity for our church family to work with others outside of our church and in the community.

We need church wide participation in the following ways:

- Work at our bake sale table (5-7pm for the 1st or 2nd hour)
- Bake your favorites for the Bake Sale. Please bring your baked goods to the church by 1pm on Thursday, July 16th.
- Cut and/or wrap baked goods at the church from 3:00-4:45pm before the bake sale
- Spread the word about the event to bring in a good crowd



There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex at church to indicate what type of bar, cookie or another baked item you will provide. It will be helpful to have a wide variety of baked goods. Please do not cut bars or any other larger baked goods items. We will cut them at the church to have a uniform size. Any baked-good items are welcome. Dessert is not included with the meal so some of the bake sale items will be sold in single servings for those wanting a dessert.

We have arranged to have live music by Roddy Dull, so bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the music when you are able. Thank you for helping with this event!

Joint Outdoor Worship Service – July 26

Our annual Joint Outdoor Worship Service with Viroqua UMC is scheduled for Sunday, July 26th at 10:00 AM. This year the service will be held at Davidson Park in Westby. Please bring your own lawn chair.



Outdoor Worship Service

After the service, there will be a potluck and time for fellowship. You're invited to bring a dish to share, but if you're not able to bring something, don't worry, there will still be plenty of food. Please bring your own plates, serving utensils and dinnerware. Beverages, cups and napkins will be supplied. In case of rain, we will meet at Westby UMC.



Save the Date – VBS – August 16

Vacation Bible School will be on Sunday, August 16 in the afternoon. More information will be available in the August newsletter.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † June 10, 2026

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

Opening: Kelly Bjornstad opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the June newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Ardith Hoff and Jean Shore motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for May and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Insurance update – We now pay \$350.58 per month for our building insurance. Verna said there will be an increase in the water bill. There will also be a cost increase for the phone line and internet in July. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † Hail Damage Church repairs – update – We received the initial adjuster's quote. We received a bid for replacing the siding from Kickapoo Roofing, which is within our limits. The initial quote was only for replacing the siding and redoing the rubber coating on parts of the fellowship hall roof. Kickapoo Roofing worked with the insurance company and was able to get approval for replacing the roof for the sanctuary. We received a check from the insurance company, so this was used for the \$20,000 down payment to secure Kickapoo Roofing as our contractors and get on their schedule. We now have signed a contract with Kickapoo Roofing. The HVAC unit in the courtyard, closest to the parking lot, needs to be replaced due to hail damage. Verna Drake will submit the replacement costs to the insurance company to see if they will increase the amount allowed for replacing this unit. The awning above the west door has some splits, so will need to check into having it replaced. There was also damage to the brick veneer of the church sign, so we need to determine how to have this fixed or replaced. The railing for the west entrance will be repainted. All repairs need to be completed by April 2027.
- † Burgers in the Park / Bake Sale – July 16 – Roddy Dull has agreed to provide music for this event. We will be having a bake sale and need to be set up before 5:00 PM. We will ask for cookies and bars to be brought to the church on the afternoon on July 16 and then we will put the goodies in bags.
- † Outdoor Service – July 26 @ Davidson Park, Westby – The service will begin at 10:00 AM in the lower shelter, with a potluck to follow. Our church will provide beverages. Everyone should bring lawn chairs, a dish to share and their own table service.
- † Website Review – update – We've set a tentative go live date for the beginning of September. Members from both churches are determining what information to put on their individual church page. The color scheme was approved at the June meeting. The next meeting is July 6 at 6:30 PM.
- † Safe Sanctuary Policy – Review – Jane Gaskell provided the updated Safe Sanctuary Policy document, and we discussed the changes and made a few adjustments. Jane will work with Verna Drake to submit the document to the insurance company for review.
- † Vision Discussion – We have started to talk about this a little more during fellowship.
- † Annual Conference - We received a letter of recognition for paying all our 2025 apportionments. Pastor Paul and Jane Gaskell helped to lead some worship songs during the conference.

New Business:

- ✝ Mission Statement Review – Current one: *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.*
It was suggested that we shorten our mission statement, so it is easy to remember. The proposed new mission statement is *Love God by loving others. Serve God by serving others.* Verna Drake and Jean Shore motioned to change our mission statement to the one proposed. Motion passed.
- ✝ Meal site substitute – June 22 – Jane Gaskell will be gone on June 22, so she is going to have the meal site items set up in the kitchen over the weekend for the substitute.
- ✝ I Can Only Imagine 2 – movie date – It was decided to view this movie on Sunday, July 12 after worship, during fellowship. We will also have a brunch potluck on this day. There will be a sign-up sheet for bringing food. We’ll show the movie in the sanctuary.
- ✝ Call forwarding for church – Currently, after 3 rings, the church phone is forwarded to the Viroqua UMC office phone. Sometimes they are not able to answer the phone since their office hours are only in the morning. Verna Drake found out that we do have voicemail for the phone, but it will only store 30 messages. It was decided to stop forwarding our phone to the Viroqua church’s phone and we’ll check for voicemails. It was suggested that we purchase a new phone, that has voicemail capabilities, caller ID and can be wall mounted. Linda Weilnau and Ardith Hoff motioned to purchase a new phone as suggested. Motion passed. We will use Cookie Walk funds to purchase the phone. Jane Gaskell will find a phone to purchase.
- ✝ Door of Hope Corn Boil – The Door of Hope is asking churches to donate funds for purchasing food for their Corn Boil. A \$500 donation was recently given to the Door of Hope, so this will be our contribution.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – The fluorescent tubes have been disposed of. The cost was \$107.50 for this. Verna Drake shampooed the narthex and the walkway area into the fellowship hall. Someone from Vernon Communications will be coming to replace our modem.
- ✝ **SPRC** – Verna Drake and Julie Fargen finished collating the results of the Pastoral Feedback. They will meet with Pastor Paul on June 23 to discuss the results.
- ✝ **Worship** – Guest speakers in June – Ardith Hoff will be the guest speaker on June 14. Pastor Paul will be back on June 21 and there will be communion that day.
- ✝ **Youth & Sunday School** – Summer events / VBS – We haven’t heard anything about VBS from Viroqua UMC. The youth are going to the Jump Park and Pizza Ranch on June 14. On July 19, the youth will go roller skating.
- ✝ **Missions** – Stuff the Bus will be the July mission of the month. Ardith Hoff suggested that next year, we move the Stuff the Bus mission to June. She talked to the person who is organizing this and they are currently planning orders for school supplies, using monetary donations. Ardith was told they prefer monetary donations.

Pastor’s Report: No report. Pastor Paul is on vacation.

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

July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	2 9:00 AM – Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	3 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	4 <i>Happy Independence Day!</i> 
5 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	6 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:30 PM – Website Review	7 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	8 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	9 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	10 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	11
12 9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Brunch Potluck & Movie	13 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	14 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	15 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	16 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class 5:00-7:00 – Burgers in the Park Bake Sale	17 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	18
19 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship Noon- Youth Roller Skating	20 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	21 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	22 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	23 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	24 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	25
26 10:00 AM – Joint Outdoor Worship Service @ Davidson Park in Westby 11:00 AM – Potluck	27 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	28 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	29 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	30 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	31 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	

**** 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)