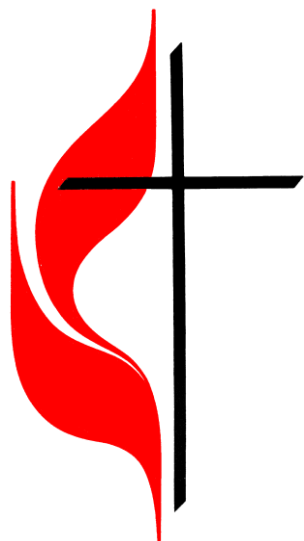




*Love God by loving others.
Serve God by serving others.*

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
August 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VIII

by Pastor Paul Lee

Discourse Eight takes up Matthew 6:19-23: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Wesley insists that the purity of intention he has already described in giving, praying, and fasting must extend to every ordinary corner of our lives. He explains Jesus's image of the eye in a striking way: the eye is to the body what our intention is to the soul. When our eye is single, fixed wholly on God, our whole life is filled with light, holiness, and even happiness. When it is divided, chasing after earthly things alongside God, our whole life grows dark, restless, and full of ungodliness and unrighteousness.

From here, Wesley turns directly to money. He is careful to say that Jesus does not forbid providing for our own basic needs or our family's, nor does he forbid saving what is reasonably needed to keep our work free of debt and to leave something for our households. But beyond that reasonable measure, Wesley says plainly, saving is forbidden. To lay up treasure on earth beyond what we need is not a small failing; Wesley calls it nothing less than murdering our own souls, because it substitutes trust in riches for trust in the living God.

He does not shy away from hard words for the wealthy. Quoting Jesus's warning about how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom, Wesley presses further: the danger is not wealth itself but the deliberate, calm desire to acquire more of it. He asks who will warn this generation of that danger, and reminds his hearers that riches, however comforting they feel, cannot buy happiness or hold off death. He asks his readers directly whether the richest people they know are truly the happiest.

The sermon closes with a call to stewardship. Whatever we have beyond our genuine need belongs, in effect, to the poor, and hoarding it while others go hungry or unclothed makes us accountable before God for suffering we could have relieved. Wesley's remedy is not guilt for its own sake but a redirected gaze: give with a single eye and an upright heart, be merciful as our Father is merciful, and hold whatever we have loosely, as faithful stewards rather than owners.

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~ Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul's Schedule:

Westby UMC Office Hours:

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

Contact Information:

Direct Office Phone: 608-638-7627

Cell Phone: 262-393-8416

Email:

pastor@virouqawestbyumc.org

August Birthdays

August 3 – Adrian Hoff

August 14 – Maranda Oliver

**Sunday School News - VBS**

On Sunday, August 16, we will be joining with the youth from Viroqua UMC for Vacation Bible School. The theme for VBS this year is "Find the Name of the Lord!". There will be a variety of activities, games, music and a message. A meal will be served after an afternoon of learning more about Jesus.

VBS will be held at Westby UMC this year and will be from 4:00-7:00 PM.

Invite friends, family and neighbors to join this fun-filled event!

**Thursday Morning Prayer Group**

Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, August 6th 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 – Habitat for Humanity (<https://www.habitatlacrosse.org>)

The Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region serves local communities—including Vernon County—by building affordable housing, repairing existing homes, and operating a discount home improvement store.



Here is an overview of what the Greater La Crosse Area Habitat for Humanity offers and how we can engage with them: The core programs include: Home Ownership: which builds and rehabilitates affordable homes for partner families who help build their own homes and pay a 0% interest mortgage.

RePair: which assists low-income homeowners who struggle to maintain the safety and integrity of their homes.

Habitat for Heroes: Dedicated to supporting and building homes for local veterans and their families.

ReClaim & ReNew the Block: Programs focused on environmental sustainability, material salvaging, and revitalizing specific city blocks with focused repairs and stormwater mitigation.

We can help in a number of ways, by donating to the 3181 chapter financially either directly or through the church, by donating gently used furniture to the restore (they even offer free pick up) or by volunteering on a project to repair broken furniture (There will be a workshop in September), helping with a build or helping salvage materials, appliances and furniture from houses being torn down among others. Please make checks payable to the church with Habitat for Humanities on the memo line or mail them to the Greater La Crosse Region 3181 Berlin Drive, La Crosse, WI 54601. To donate physical items, you can take them to the restore at the same address or call 608-785-2375 to arrange for a pickup.



August Online Study – Living a Joy-Filled Life

Joy. It's one of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22. However, today's fast-paced world can often leave us feeling drained and even depressed. Thankfully, amid the pressures of life, God offers us something deeper than relief: joy that leads, strengthens and sustains. So, what does this joy look like and how can we experience it?

Let's discover a joy-filled life together! You are invited to join us in August for a series of studies focusing on joy. Each day, we will dive into the Book of

Philippians to help us experience a deeper, steadier joy that remains strong even in difficult seasons. We'll explore how true joy grows through gratitude, humility, purpose, peace and contentment in Christ. And in the end, we will be guided toward the kind of joy that cannot be shaken!

Our August online studies focusing on Joy start on Saturday August 1st and lasts the entire month. Join us at any time. All are welcome to participate.

Please use these links to join the study through the Bible App on your mobile device:

- A Life in Christ (14 days) – starts August 1st
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/33048/together/81111475/invitation?token=gpX5jYvybUOtVXSdiGD12A&source=share>
- Life of Joy (7 days) – starts August 15th
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/66816/together/81111485/invitation?token=kHKfQpJMMHKB6NpXozzzmQ&source=share>
- Unshakeable Joy (10 days) – starts August 22nd
<https://bible.com/reading-plans/70718/together/81111491/invitation?token=MB7Jobe1Mzpzl4FQxY5Mjw&source=share>

If you don't have the Bible App, you can use these links to start the plans by yourself on your computer:

- A Life in Christ (14 days) – starts August 1st
<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/33048-philippians-a-life-in-christ>
- Life of Joy (7 days) – starts August 15th
<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/66816-life-of-joy-lessons-from-philippians>
- Unshakeable Joy (10 days) – starts August 22nd
<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/70718-unshakeable-joy-a-deep-dive-into-philippians>

Burgers in the Park – Thank You

Once again we came together as a church to support Burgers in the Park. We had a great turnout and practically sold out all baked goods. Thank you to all who worked the event, baked homemade cookies & bars, and prayed for the event's success.



We sold 2 cookies or 1 bar for \$.50 and we made \$156.50. That's over 300 little bags of deliciousness. Thank you again for supporting your church's involvement in this community event.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † July 8, 2026

Present: Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Jean Shore, Verna Drake and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

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

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for June and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Verna reported that the beginning of July, the amount paid to Viroqua UMC was reduced by \$200.

- Pastoral Expenses - Pastor Paul is now a Provisional Elder, so his salary will increase. Verna Drake received a message that we will now be paying Pastor Paul's dental insurance. Between the salary increase and dental insurance costs, the amount we pay each month will increase about \$107.
- Apportionments - At Charge Conference, it was announced that a new formula will be used to calculate apportionments. The new formula requires each church to pay \$80 per member, if they have more than 25 members, and to pay 11% of the costs of several lines from the Statistical Report. Since we have less than 25 members, our cost for this portion of the formula is \$0. Verna calculated that our potential apportionment costs will be \$385.35, starting in January 2027. We are currently paying \$335 per month for apportionments. It was decided to discuss this again in November to determine whether we can afford to pay the new amount in 2027.

Jane Gaskell and Jean Shore motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † Hail Damage Church repairs – update – HVAC: We were given 3 options for the HVAC repairs. Option #3 would be to do maintenance on the north side of the classrooms unit and replace the one in the courtyard, that is closest to the parking lot. This unit would be replaced with a smaller unit. This smaller unit would cost about \$8000. Verna Drake said that the insurance representative would be willing to take a 2nd look to possibly increase the amount we receive from the insurance company. We will need to pay 50% as a downpayment for these repairs/replacements. It was decided that we will wait for the insurance company to re-evaluate the HVAC costs before making our final decision for the HVAC repairs.
 - Awning over west door: After contacting several companies, Verna Drake found a company in Baraboo, WI which can replace the awning. They will take the awning down and take the unit to their place so they can install the new cover with a logo. The cost would be about \$6103. We will need to pay 50% as a downpayment for this repair.
 - Window screens: Verna found out that Nelson's Agri Center can repair the window screens. She took down 6 window screens and took them to Nelson's to be repaired.
 - Roof: With the amounts approved by the insurance company and the bid we received from Kickapoo Roofing, we will be able to replace the entire roof, not just the part over the sanctuary. Kickapoo Roofing can start very soon after they receive our signed contract and a 50% down payment. Jane Gaskell and Jean Shore motioned to sign the contract with Kickapoo Roofing for doing the replacement and recoating which was approved by the insurance company. Motion passed. Funds will be used from the Money Market account and possibly the checking account for this payment.

- ✝ Burgers in the Park / Bake Sale – July 16 – People have signed up to work and bring items for the bake sale. It was suggested to take some sidewalk chalk for children or adults to use on the sidewalks at the park.
- ✝ Outdoor Service – July 26 @ Davidson Park, Westby – After some discussion, it was decided to have the service under the pavilion by the sidewalk instead of the location down the hillside. This will make it easier for everyone to access. The service will be at 10 AM, with potluck following. Jane Gaskell will transport the speaker system, microphones and music stands to the park. Linda Weilnau will transport the extension cord, power strips, cups, cold beverage container and napkins.
- ✝ Website Review – update – We're making good progress and the potential go live date is September 1, 2026.
- ✝ Safe Sanctuary Policy [Updated draft emailed 6/15/26. Sent to insurance company for review before voting on approval] – The draft was sent to the insurance company, and we received a suggestion of including information about situations with older adults. Jane Gaskell will work on adding the suggested information.
- ✝ Movie & Brunch – July 12 – I Can Only Imagine 2 – People have signed up to bring items for the brunch. The Gaskells will either provide an account or check out the DVD from the library for watching the movie.
- ✝ New phone, voice mail and call forwarding – The new phone has been purchased and was setup as a wall phone near the restrooms. The new phone has voicemail, so after 4 rings it goes to voicemail. If there is an issue with the phone's voicemail, after 5 rings, the call goes to the voicemail available through Vernon Communications. The call forwarding to Viroqua UMC has been cancelled. If there are messages on the phone, it will go to voicemail after 2 rings. Verna Drake recommended that we go to paperless billing because it will save us \$2.50 each month. We will use the westby@viroquawestbyumc.org email account for the Vernon Communications voicemail and to the billing information.
- ✝ Tables for Door of Hope Corn Boil – July 30 – The Door of Hope staff will pick up the tables in the afternoon on Wednesday, July 29 and return them on July 30 after the Corn Boil.
- ✝ Fellowship Hall for Oney Siam graduation – July 11 – Jane Gaskell will unlock the doors for them for this event and then lock up afterwards. The event should be done around 4:00 PM.
- ✝ Vision Discussion – No new information to discuss.

New Business:

- ✝ Meal site substitute – July 20 – 23 (*Meal site supplies will be left in kitchen 7/19) – This is information to let us know that meal site items will be setup in the kitchen during fellowship on July 19. Jane Gaskell will give her door fob to the substitute, so no one needs to unlock the doors for them.
- ✝ Membership list review - New members – Connor Haakenson and Riggs Davidson – Connor and Riggs have been added to the membership list.

- Contact Oney-Siam's to verify continued membership – Verna Drake talked to this family, and they want to stay on our membership list.
- ✝ Ann Shaw Funeral – The funeral for Ann will be on Saturday, July 18 at 11:00 AM. We have been asked to provide bars and beverages.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – The AED pads expire this August. Jane Gaskell ordered the replacements and we have received them.
- ✝ **SPRC** – On June 23, Verna Drake and Julie Fargen met with Pastor Paul for his pastoral review. There were 2 items of concern. One was to have Pastor Paul respond to emails in a timely manner to at least indicate he received the message. The other concern was to join a group in Westby. Verna has contacted Norseland to see if they still want area pastors to do services at their facility, and she contacted the Westby school superintendent to see if there is a way Pastor Paul could help out at school.
- ✝ **Worship** – Music for 7/19 – Jane Gaskell will see if Pastor Paul is going to play his guitar for the songs this day or if she needs to find videos online for the songs.
- ✝ **Youth & Sunday School** – Summer events / VBS – Verna Drake found out that Pastor Paul is doing the planning for VBS. She let him know that we're willing to help with the planning so he doesn't have to do it all himself.
- A roller skating youth outing has been planned for July 19. We want to have at least 3 youth going, otherwise we will cancel this event. We will provide snacks for the youth to have in the car.
 - We are trying to arrange a date to have a meeting with the Sunday school parents to discuss curriculum and other items with the parents for the coming school year.
- ✝ **Missions** – No report.

Pastor's Report: No report.

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

“But what about you?” he asked.
“Who do you say I am?”
Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,
the Son of the living God.”
 ~ Matthew 16:15-16

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	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	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 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	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 4:00 PM - VBS	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	24 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	22 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	27 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	28 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	29
30 ✠9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	31 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)