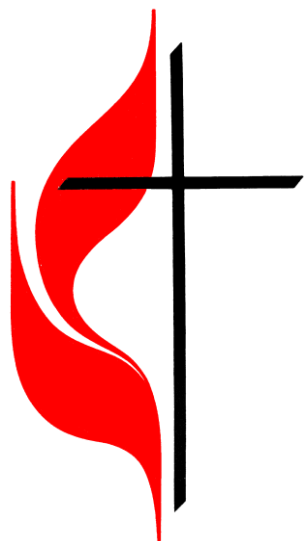




*Love God by loving others.
Serve God by serving others.*

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
September 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IX

by Pastor Paul Lee

In this ninth discourse on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley turns to Jesus's teaching that no one can serve two masters. He reads Matthew 6:24 as an absolute claim rather than a matter of degree. A person cannot hold divided loyalty between God and mammon, because the two demand opposite dispositions of the heart. Wesley defines mammon broadly. It is not only gold and silver but everything money can buy, including ease, honor, and sensual pleasure. To serve mammon is to make riches, or what riches provide, the object of one's ultimate desire and trust.

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Wesley argues that serving both masters at once is impossible on several grounds. It is impossible psychologically, since love naturally excludes rival loves of the same kind. It is impossible practically, since a person who tries to please both God and the world ends up satisfying neither, gaining the discomforts of religion without its joys. And it is impossible morally, since the behavior required by one master constantly contradicts the behavior required by the other. From this he concludes that a Christian must worship God alone, seeking nothing in heaven or earth but God, and aiming at nothing except to know, love, and enjoy God.

This exclusive devotion, Wesley says, is the foundation for the next part of the passage, Jesus's instruction to take no thought for food, drink, or clothing. He is careful to clarify what this command does not mean. It does not forbid ordinary forethought, planning, or honest labor for one's needs. What it forbids is anxious, distrustful care, the kind of worry that treats material provision as though it depended on human effort alone rather than on God's providence. Wesley reads the examples of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field as illustrations of this providence. Neither labors in anxiety, yet God sustains them, and human beings, who are of far greater worth, have even less reason to be consumed with worry.

Wesley connects this teaching back to the opening command about two masters. Anxious care for material things is itself a form of serving mammon, since it reveals where trust actually lies. The remedy is to seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, trusting that other needs will be provided along the way. He closes by reflecting on Jesus's counsel that each day has enough trouble of its own, reading this as an

invitation to live in present trust rather than borrowing anxiety from tomorrow. For Wesley, singleness of devotion to God is what makes such freedom from worry possible.

~ 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

Pastor Paul will be attending a Leadership event on Sept. 29-Oct. 1

September Birthdays

September 18 – Lois Gerling



Sunday School News



Welcome back to Sunday School! The first day of Sunday School will be Sunday, Sept. 27th. We'll start around 10:00 AM with snacks and then have our lesson time. We will have four teachers this year, so there will usually be a different teacher each week. All ages, grades K-12 are welcome to attend Sunday School. We look forward to seeing everyone again!

Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, September 3rd 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.

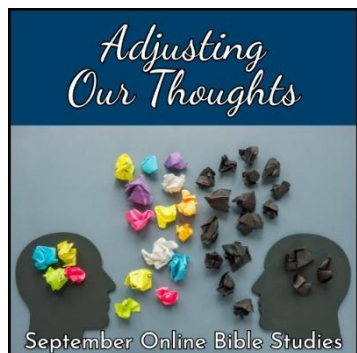


Mission of the Month – Heating Assistance

September is our traditional month to collect funds to help our low-income neighbors pay to heat their homes. Some of us add a small amount to our own utility bill designated for heating assistance. Others prefer to make a one-time donation through the church. We take the money we collect to Couleecap for distribution to local people who need it in an emergency. If you would like to donate, please make checks payable to the church and write "Heating Assistance" on the memo line. If you are someone in need of assistance, you can apply through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) online ([DEHCR Assistance](#)) or contact the ADRC or Couleecap for help filling out the forms.

"Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

~ Joshua 1:9



September Online Studies – Adjusting Our Thoughts

Sometimes one of the greatest challenges we face is being able to adjust our thoughts and attitudes so we can make them more Christ-like. Another challenge is determining who the enemy is when we're facing difficulties in our life.

During this month's online studies, we'll receive some words of wisdom from Joyce Meyer on how to know who we're fighting and how to adjust our thoughts to be more Christ-like.

Here are the links to this month's online studies:

- **Know Your Enemy – 10 days – Sept 1**
 - Link for Bible App on mobile device: <https://bible.com/reading-plans/16459/together/81734154/invitation?token=K4BFdcwzRlMmZW2LO3yJUG&source=share>
 - Link for Bible App on computer: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/16459-know-your-enemy>
- **Power Thoughts Devotional – 14 days – Sept 13**
 - Link for Bible App on mobile device: <https://bible.com/reading-plans/822/together/81734168/invitation?token=R24mEoNoWbkYSlF0Z1G5sA&source=share>
 - Link for Bible App on computer: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/822-power-thoughts-devotional>

Combined Church Website Updated

Our current combined church website was revised three years ago. It was suggested that we review the website to give it a refresh. In April, a committee of people from both churches and Pastor Paul began the process of reviewing the website. It was decided to adjust it and make it more of a marketing tool to attract new people instead of being an information place for current church members. The goal was to make it easier to navigate and be more informative for people looking for a church.



After several months, the updated website is ready. There is still information available on the updated website for current church members, such as upcoming special events, links to recorded messages on our YouTube channel and links to the newsletters. The website address will remain the same, www.viroquawestbyumc.org. Please take a few minutes to peruse the website and find out what is new. Thank you to the committee and Pastor Paul for the time and effort you contributed to make this update possible.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † August 12, 2026

Present: Julie Fargen, Ardith Hoff, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Verna Drake, Pastor Paul and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

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

Treasurer's Report: Apportionments (revised amounts) - Verna Drake provided the financial reports for July

and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. In June, the insurance company had a glitch and didn't charge enough, so in August, we will be paying more to make up the difference. We received some money from Ann Shaw's Memorial and the family said to use it where needed. Our Apportionments will increase when the new calculations go into effect. Our apportionments will go from \$335 to about \$385. Jane Gaskell and Julie Fargen motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- ✚ Hail Damage Church repairs – update & FEMA requirements – The roof replacement is finished. The venting on the roof was changed to ridge venting. The contractor started to replace the siding. The HVAC adjustor and Coulee Region Heating & Air Conditioning will be meeting on Aug. 14 to discuss what we need for an air conditioning unit to replace the damaged one in the courtyard. For the awning over the west door, the paperwork has been sent to the company to start the replacement process.
 - FEMA – Pastor Paul applied for FEMA assistance and asked for \$5,000 to be reimbursed for the deductible we paid. Pastor Paul will meet on Aug. 13 with representatives to discuss our application.
- ✚ Burgers in the Park / Bake Sale – recap – This was a good event, and it was a blessing that it was moved indoors due to the air quality issues and heat. Bars and cookies were sold at \$0.50 per bag and we made \$156.50. Next year we should charge \$1 per bag.
- ✚ Website Review – update – We should be able to make the go live date of Sept. 1. Linda Weilnau and Pastor Paul will meet to discuss the final adjustments that are needed.
- ✚ Safe Sanctuary Policy [Updated draft emailed 6/15/26. Sent to insurance company for review before voting on approval] – This item will be moved to the September meeting.
- ✚ Vision Discussion – No updates at this time.

New Business:

- ✚ PhD Research Study Invitation – We received an email asking us to participate in a research dissertation study for a pastor in Iowa. We will not be able to participate because we were asked to provide a minimum of 30 responses from our church, but we're not able to do that. We will reply to the email to let the pastor know we will not be participating.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✚ **Trustees** – The contractors will be replacing the siding on the north and west sides of the church.
- ✚ **SPRC** – Verna Drake reported that she needs to arrange a time to meet with Phyllis Kalnins, from Viroqua UMC. Pastor Paul is doing the Provisional Membership program, which will take about 3 years. We have been asked to support Pastor Paul in this endeavor.
- ✚ **Worship** – There will be a backpack blessing on Sunday, Aug. 30 during worship.
- ✚ **Youth & Sunday School** – VBS August 16 – For VBS, Connor and Riggs will be helping with the activities. Pastor Paul expects to have about 10 children in attendance. Pastor Paul is working to coordinate a Sunday School parents' night, possibly in September. We will start Sunday School on Sunday, Sept. 27.
- ✚ **Missions** – The September mission of the month will be heating assistance. These funds will be given to Coulee Cap for emergency heating needs.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Paul has started to do a worship message at Norseland on the 5th Thursday of the month and as a substitute. Pastor Paul will be attending a Pastor Leadership event on Sept. 29-Oct. 1. His parents and other family members will be visiting Oct. 1-18. He will be taking a vacation Oct. 12-18. Cavan Fang will do the message on Oct. 18 at both churches. Oct. 19-20, Pastor Paul will attend a seminar for the Provisional Membership program.

In Jean Shore's absence, everyone motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	2 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	3 9:00 AM – Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	4 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	5
6 9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	7 <i>Labor Day</i>	8 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	9 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	10 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	11 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	12
13 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	14 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	15 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	16 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	17 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	18 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	19
20 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	21 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	22 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	23 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	24 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	25 Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	26
27 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	28 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	29 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	30 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)

