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 Witness
Sharing God's Love

Westby United Methodist Church November 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

Message . . . . . p. 1
Pastor's Schedule . . . . p. 2
Sunday School. . . . . p. 2
Prayer Group . . . . . p. 2
Mission of Month. . . . . p. 2
Online Study . . . . . p. 3
Other Activities . . . . . p. 4
Board Minutes . . . . . p. 5
Calendar . . . . . p. 7

Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, XI

by Pastor Paul Lee

In this eleventh discourse on the Sermon on the Mount, Wesley notes that Jesus has already warned us about dangers from inside, from our own sinful hearts. Now He turns to dangers from outside, especially bad examples and bad advice. Wesley saves bad advice from false prophets for the next sermon. Here he focuses on bad examples.

Wesley first describes the wide gate and the broad road. Sin is the gate to destruction, and it is very wide. God's commands cover not only our actions but every word we speak and every thought in our hearts. There is only one way to keep a command, but there are a thousand ways to break it. That is why so many people walk this road. Wesley says this is true even in his own Christian country. The road holds people living in open sin, people who look good outside but are proud and selfish inside, and people who try to earn God's favor by their own goodness instead of trusting in Christ. Many rich, powerful, and educated people walk this way too.

The narrow road is the road of holiness. Nothing unholy can pass through its gate. It is not enough to stop doing wrong and start doing right. A person must be changed inside. This road is the way of humility, mourning over sin, gentleness, hunger for righteousness, mercy, love, purity of heart, doing good, and suffering for what is right. Few people find it. The crowd's example pulls hard on us. The smart and well-spoken argue that the broad road is right. The powerful work on our fears, and the rich work on our hopes. Those on the narrow road are usually poor, plain, and looked down on.

That is why Jesus says, "Enter in." Wesley points to Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in." The word means to strive as if in agony. Many seek to enter in a lazy way and are not able. Others wait until the door is shut, and by then it is too late. Wesley gives a simple rule. If you are walking with the crowd, you are on the wrong road. A Christian must be willing to be different. It is far better to stand alone than to fall into the pit. Our companions may be few now, but one day we will join a great company in heaven.

Wesley closes by urging his listeners to strive now, with sorrow for sin, holy fear, deep desire, and constant prayer. They must also strive in how they live. They should avoid all evil, do all the good they can, deny

themselves, and take up their cross daily. They should be ready to lose anything on earth to enter the kingdom of heaven.

~ 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



Sunday School News

On October 18, the Sunday school class went to Kickapoo Orchard and enjoyed wandering through their corn maze and sampled some different apples. In November, our lessons will be about how God can take the skills we have and use them for His good.

This year, the students will go shopping for items to put in the Operation Christmas Child boxes on Sunday, November 8th. On Sunday, November 15th, we will pack boxes for Operation Christmas Child. The goal is to pack 15 boxes this year for this service project.

There will not be any Sunday School on Sunday, Nov. 29th.

Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Prayer is one of God's gifts and is more powerful when we pray together. Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, November 5th at 9:00 AM. Come and help us to use the power of prayer as we pray for others and our church.



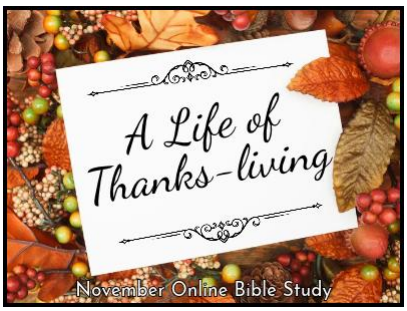


Mission of the Month – Baskets of Love & Norseland Gifts

As we have done in the past, we will be collecting funds to purchase gift certificates for families in need under the banner of "Baskets of Love". This will be starting in November so that they can be given out or mailed early in December. Please let a board member know the names and addresses of people you know of who might benefit from this worthy mission.

We will again ask Norseland Nursing Home to provide the wish lists for people for whom we can purchase gift items. The names will be posted sometime after Thanksgiving, as soon as we get them. These gifts need to be brought to the church so that they can be delivered to Norseland before their Christmas party. Gifts should be unwrapped and brought in gift bags with the name attached. If you have a problem shopping but wish to be involved, you may contribute toward a gift to be purchased by someone else. Thank you in advance for contributing to either or both of these outreach opportunities.





November Online Study – 30 Days of Thanksgiving and Worship

Do you need some help and encouragement on how to give daily admiration to God? Join us this month on a journey of adoration that will position us into God's power and presence. Along the way, we'll learn more about living a life of thanks-living to expand our daily worship of our Lord.

This 30-day plan will begin on Nov. 1.
Here is the link to join the plan through the Bible App on your personal device:
https://bible.com/reading-plans/21391/together/82648663/invitation?token=7lPWX7kJTFMJb8bnLb19oA&source=share

Here is the link to start this plan on your computer:
https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/21391-thirty-days-of-thanksgiving-and-worship

25 Days of Thanksgiving Journal



From November 1 through November 25, the day before Thanksgiving, we invite you to join us in keeping a Thanksgiving journal. Each page holds a short Scripture verse, a brief prayer, and space to write three things you are thankful for that day.

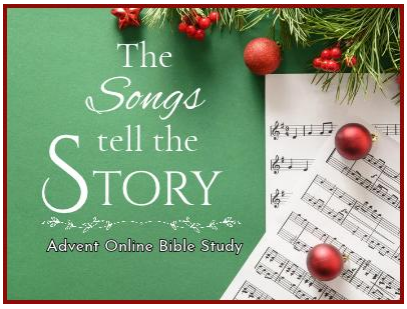
The heart of the journal is those three blessings. On busy days, you may not have time for the verse or prayer, but please try to write your three things. Even a few words will do. If you miss a day, simply pick up where you are. Grace is part of this practice. Our hope is that through these 25 days, thanksgiving to God will grow in our hearts until it overflows.



Gratitude Wall

As an additional way to give thanks, we will be doing a Gratitude Wall during November. When you're at church, please take a few minutes to write something that you're grateful for on one of the sticky notes and put the note on the window at the back of the sanctuary. Let's fill the window with gratitude!

Advent Online Study – The Songs Tell the Story



When you think of Christmas, what other things in addition to the birth of Jesus come to mind? Many of us would probably include Christmas carols on our list of things about Christmas. This Advent study will give us more insight into many of our favorite Christmas carols so we can sing them with new life and more enthusiasm.

This 25-day study will begin on Nov. 29. Here is the link to join the plan through the Bible App on your personal device:
https://bible.com/reading-plans/17342/together/82648680/invitation?token=J_VDoHU29KeVYuH7mqduRg&source=share

Here is the link to start this plan on your computer:
https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/17342-the-songs-tell-the-story-a-25-day-advent-devo



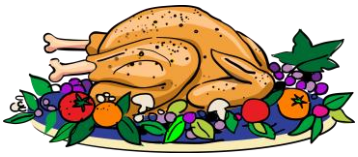
Honoring Veterans – Nov. 8

We will be honoring veterans and those who are currently serving in the military on Sunday, Nov. 8th. Pastor Paul's family will be providing a cake to honor the veterans that we can enjoy during fellowship.

Joint Advent Devotional Booklet – Devotions Due Nov. 15



Advent begins on Sunday, Nov. 29th. We will be doing a Joint Advent Devotional Booklet with Viroqua UMC again this year. Westby UMC will be responsible for writing devotions for 7 Bible verses. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex. The devotions are due on Sunday, Nov. 15th to allow Kathy Hanson ample time to put the booklet together and get them printed so they can be handed out by Nov. 29th. Please send or give your finished devotionals to Linda.



Westby Community Thanksgiving Meal – Nov. 26

The Westby Community Thanksgiving Meal will be on Thursday, Nov. 26th from 11:00-1:00 at Our Savior's Lutheran church. The menu is turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, green beans, corn, rolls/lefse, pie and beverage. This meal is sponsored by the Westby Lions Club, area businesses and area churches.

Our church has been asked to provide 7 pies for this meal. The pies can be any flavor and dropped off at Our Savior's church on Wednesday, Nov. 25th between 9:00-4:30. We will have a sign-up sheet in the narthex on Nov. 15 for the pie donations. If you would like to help with the preparations on Wednesday or help serve on Thursday, please text Amanda at 608-606-5963.

The meal is dine-in or takeout. Please call Julie at 608-632-5151 to reserve a takeout meal.

Christmas Cookie Walk – Saturday, Dec. 5



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.

In addition to donations of cookies, candy and other baked goods, we will need volunteers to help with the following:

- Hanging up flyers around the area about 2 weeks before the event
- Setting up the tables and decorating
- Day of the sale – keeping trays stocked, cashiers, clean-up crew

Sign-up sheets will be placed in the narthex, the last part of November. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

The Christmas Cookie Walk will be held 9:00-12:00 on Saturday, Dec. 5th. The cost will be $10 per pound for cookies, and some items will be priced individually.

Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting ✞ October 14, 2026

Present: Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Ardith Hoff, Verna Drake and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September board meeting were emailed to the board members and published in the October newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Verna Drake and Jane Gaskell motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for September and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. The treasurer's forms for Charge Conference have been submitted. We received the final payment from the insurance company for the hail damage in September.

- Annual Budget / Pastoral Compensation – updates – There will be an increase in the Pastoral Compensation in January. This increase was set by the conference. The pastor's salary will be $53,000 in January. We will be responsible for 24% of the pastoral compensation.

Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- ✞ Hail Damage Church repairs – update – The items we still need to pay for are having the end railing of the west entrance painted, the new HVAC unit and having electrical power run to the new HVAC unit.
- ✞ Charge Conference – October 25 – Due to the Packers game starting at 3:25 PM on Oct. 25, the start time of this event has changed. The potluck will start at 5:30 PM and the meeting will start at 6:30 PM.
- ✞ Safe Sanctuary Policy – background checks – The background checks for the Sunday school teachers were submitted and everyone passed.
- ✞ Social event – Several Westby MS and HS musical events and Westby community musical events were discussed (band & choir concerts and fall musical). We will ask during fellowship on Oct. 18 to find out what event(s) everyone would like to attend as a group.
- ✞ Pastor Appreciation (Oct 25) – It was decided to have the regular fellowship snacks and give some gift cards for showing our appreciation of Pastor Paul.
- ✞ Vision Discussion – There was nothing new to discuss at this time. It was suggested that we continue to concentrate on seeking Jesus and not worry about a vision.

New Business:

- ✞ Building Use Form – update liability wording per Safe Sanctuary policy – Jane Gaskell provided possible wording to add to the Building Use form, which pertains to damage to the building and personal injury due to their actions. Jane will send this information to Linda Weilnau so the form can be updated and then sent out to the board members.
- ✞ Field Trip Permission form & wording – Wording was added to indicate the church, its staff, and volunteers would be released from any liability for injury, loss, or damage to person or property during the events.
- ✞ Accessibility Report – Conference requirement – Verna Drake said the Accessibility Report is part of the Charge Conference documents for the trustees to complete. We haven't done this report previously. It was decided to work on this report gradually because it requires several exact measurements related to accessibility in the parking lot, in our building and within our building.

- November / Thanksgiving Activity – Gratitude wall or other? – It was decided to do the Gratitude Wall by placing sticky notes of gratitude on the window in the back of the sanctuary.
- Cookie Walk (Dec. 2?) – The Cookie Walk will be Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9:00-12:00. It was decided to charge $10 per pound due to the cost of baking ingredients increasing.
- Advent Devotional booklet – Pastor Paul will be providing a list of Bible verses for a joint Advent devotional booklet. He asked Westby to do at least 5 days, but we will let him know that we can do 7 days if needed.
- Downtown Trick-or-Treating? (Oct. 30 – 3:30-5:00 PM) – It was decided to not participate this year.

Business from Board Committees:

- **Trustees** – Snow Plowing for winter – Janzen's sent an estimate of $60 per lot for this coming winter. Verna Drake is going to contact them for clarification, as to what they consider a lot. Connor Haakenson agreed to shovel our sidewalks again this winter.
- **SPRC** – No additional information at this time, other than the pastoral compensation which was included in the treasurer's report.
- **Worship** – Veteran's Day / All Saints Day – We will remember those who passed this year on Nov. 1. Linda Weilnau will send out an email to ask for names. On Nov. 8 we will honor veterans. Pastor's family will provide a cake for this.
- **Youth & Sunday School –** Gays Mills apple orchard – There will be 8 students and 2 parents attending this event. It was decided to purchase apple cider donuts for everyone. It was decided to not have a Sunday school Christmas presentation this year due to only 4 students. We will invite the Sunday school families to go Christmas caroling with us to replace the program.
- **Missions –** The November mission of the month will be Baskets of Love and then the Christmas gifts for Norseland residents, which will be after Thanksgiving.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Paul is working on a New Ministry Grant. For this grant, equipment that costs under $100, supplies for the program (food, paper for printing bulletins, disposable paper goods) and the music program that was used at Annual Conference, would be covered. Pastor Paul would like to start and evening worship service, possibly a Friday night, once a month, beginning in January, that would be focused on young parents. This would involve a worship service, a meal, and childcare.

- November Thanksgiving Series – During November, Pastor Paul will have a sermon series on the theme of Thanksgiving. He is preparing a 25-day Thanksgiving workbook to use during November, which will lead up to Thanksgiving Day. Each day will offer a question to help us reflect on that day's gratitude. Copies will be available on Sunday, Oct. 25.
- Upcoming schedule – Oct. 19-20 – Attend Provisional Elder Seminar
    - Oct. 29 – Leading worship at Norseland.

Ardith Hoff motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.
Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.
~ Colossians 3:17

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 ✝**9:00 AM** – Worship Service (Communion) **10:00 AM –** Fellowship & Sunday School	**2** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**3** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class **5:30 PM –** Peer-Led Grief Group	**4** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**5** **9:00 AM –** Prayer Group **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class	**6** Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	**7**
8 ✝**9:00 AM** – Worship Service **10:00 AM –** Fellowship & Sunday School **11:00 AM** – Sunday School Shopping Trip for OCC	**9** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**10** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class	**11** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **6:00 PM –** Church Board Meeting	**12** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class	**13** Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	**14**
15 ✝**9:00 AM** – Worship Service **10:00 AM –** Fellowship & Sunday School	**16** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**17** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class **5:30 PM –** Peer-Led Grief Group	**18** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**19** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class	**20** Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	**21**
22 ✝**9:00 AM** – Worship Service **10:00 AM –** Fellowship & Sunday School	**23** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**24** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site **12:30 PM –** Strength Training Class	**25** **11:30 AM** – Senior Meal Site	**26** ***Happy Thanksgiving!*** **11:00-1:00 –** Community Thanksgiving Meal	**27** Pastor Paul's Sabbath Day	**28**
29 ✝**9:00 AM** – Worship Service **10:00 AM –** Fellowship	**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)