THE CROSS & THE FLAME



November 2026

Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, XI

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pastor's Letter ..... page 1

Birthdays ..... page 2

Looking Back at October ..... page 3

Looking Forward ..... pages 4-7

Meeting Minutes..... pages 8-10

November Calendar ..... page 11

Mission

Love God, Grow Together In Faith, Serve Others

Vision

F.I.N.D. God!

Our vision is to be a church that helps people grow in their relationship with God and with one another by focusing on four core commitments:

- **F** Focus on Worshiping God
- **I** Invest in Growing Faith
- **N** Nurture Relationships
- **D** Develop The Next Generation

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Wynne Roberts	November 6
Kelli Schulz	November 7
Lorraine Gerdl	November 12
Mary Deters	November 18
Janice Fortney	November 19
AJ Frels	November 22
Finn Brenneman	November 26
Jessica Janzen	November 28
Pat Matz	November 30

God's Blessings on You!



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

OUR PRAYER Viroqua UMC

God, the giver of life, generous giver of gifts and abilities, help us discover our talents and have the courage to use them to serve you and our community with unimagined new purposes and deepening love for Jesus Christ. Amen.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

John Wesley



The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly**, **serve joyfully**, and **lead courageously** in local communities and worldwide connections.

Rummage Sale
October 22 & 23, 2026

Collections for the Rummage Sale began last spring when it became know that people could drop off sale items here at church. The amount of “merchandise” grew steadily and we ended up with a great deal. Thanks to all who donated items!!

The Baked Potato Meal Sale which has been held in early October as a drive through event in other years, could not happen as usual this year because of the street construction. The decision was made to have it in conjunction with the Rummage Sale.

Workers began to organize and display Rummage Sale items in early October. They worked each Monday afternoon for 3 weeks. Some people worked more—whenever they had time. It was a HUGE JOB! Many thanks for all the hard work!

The Missions Committee organized a Bake Sale to be held in conjunction with the Rummage Sale. Lots of sweet treats and breads were donated by church members and the money raised was designated for our missionary, Temba.

The weather was beautiful on October 22nd and 23rd and street construction did not interfere with access to the building. The turn out was good. Praise God! The sale (both rummage and baked potatoes) brought in over $3,100! - a record high amount for this project! The money raised will go to the church General Fund to help support our ministries. The Bake Sale raised another $325 for Temba.

Members of the Rummage Sale Committee and workers are Phyllis Kalnins, Barb Casper, Debbie Strait, Elaine Strait, Marcia Dooley, Layne Hanson, Miny Hirschfield, Angie Hanson, Kathy Hanson, and Kristen Parrott (bake sale). Kitchen workers were Sonja Bjerkos, Alice Sloane, Peach Hoiland, Annie Bjerkos, Betty Ross, Barb Huschka, and Joanne Hornby. (Sincere apologies if we missed any names.)













Left over Rummage Sale items are in boxes along the north wall of the Fellowship Hall. If you are going near a place where they accept these kind of items, please take a few boxes with you. The intent is to have them all moved out in the next month. Thanks for your help with this!



All Saints Sunday

Shirley Gilman will be remembered during the worship service on November 1st, All Saints Sunday.

We thank God for Shirley's life and her presence with us.

Blessed be her memory.

Thanksgiving Reflections

Let's be thankful this month!

Pastor Paul has put together a booklet of reflections for us to use each day as we focus on being thankful.



25 DAYS OF THANKSGIVING

Be sure to pick up your booklet and get started on November 1st!

Street Construction

Completion!

The first layer of blacktopping was completed this week and a second layer will go on this next week.

Then it's done!

Thanks so much to the street crews for their cooperation and efforts to keep us open all throughout the project.!

Advent Devotionals

Advent will be here before we know it!

We will be putting together a devotional booklet again to use as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. This is not something new to us. If you have written a devotional before, please sign up to do it again. The sign up sheet is in the Narthex.

Devotionals should be submitted to the office by November 15th in order that the booklet will be ready by the start of Advent on November 29th.

Thanks for doing this. We all benefit—those who write the devotionals and those who read them.



Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.
Psalm 62: 8

We Pray For One Another

There are several organized avenues for prayer at work in our congregation.

Prayer Chain: This is a formalized list of people who pray by special request and when notified by phone. Members are organized into groups in order that requests might be passed quickly. Barb Casper is the first contact when someone wants to start the prayer chain. Barb then calls the first person in each group. Each member then passes it on. Everyone is responsible to pray when they get the message. **If you would like to be a member of the Prayer Chain, let Barb Casper know.**

Prayer Group: Prayer group meets every Wednesday morning at 8:30 by Zoom. The group generates a list at every meeting based on requests made during worship or other information learned. The group prays together. **If you'd like to join the Prayer Group, arrange with the office to get the Zoom link. A phone number is also listed in the bulletin to call when desiring to join or ask for prayer.**

Sunday Bulletin Prayers: The names listed in the bulletin each week are names of people mentioned during Joys and Concerns or submitted in some other manner. Everyone is reminded to pray for these people.

Individual Prayer: Of course, we are all encouraged to pray on our own whenever we can. We can pray prayers of supplication, prayers of praise, prayers of thanksgiving. Pray often!

Ushers, Greeters, Communion Servers

The sign up process for these important jobs has changed. We need you, so please take note of how to get on the schedule.

Note: We have added an Outdoor Greeter to the schedule.

Three Easy Ways to Sign Up (choose the one that works best for you)

1. **Sign up at church**
   Paper sign-up sheets are available in the **Narthex** for you to sign up.
2. **Sign up online**
   Use our new online sign-up form:
   Sunday Server Sign-Up Form
3. **Call the church office**
   If you would rather sign up by phone, call the church office at **637-3551,** preferably during office hours.

November Sunday Servants

	Ushers	Indoor Greeter	Outdoor Greeter	Communion Stewards
November 1		Barb Casper		
November 8	Miny Hirschfield		Kathy Hanson	
November 15				
November 22				
November 29		Barb Casper		

Please Sign Up to Help Fill These Positions

Book Club



The Book Club is currently reading *How The Word Is Passed: A Reckoning With The History Of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith.

Clint Smith takes the reader on a tour of monuments and landmarks in the US—those that are honest about the past and those that are not—and offers an intergenerational story of how slavery has been central in shaping our nation's collective history, and ourselves.

The book is available through McIntosh Memorial Library. Discussion of the book will be held on Monday, November 16th at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to join the group.



Veterans will be honored during Worship on November 8th

With love and gratitude we thank members of our current church family for their military service.

Join the Veterans for cake following the service.

Gregory Cheever, Marine Corps

David Peterson, Army

Gerald Schroeder, Air Force

Marlo Volden, Army

(If we have omitted any names, please let us know)



Community Thanksgiving Meal



Planning has begun for the Community Thanksgiving Meal. Good Shepherd Lutheran is in charge this year, and the meal will be held at St. Mary's Catholic Church on Thanksgiving Day.

Each church is asked to help roast turkeys and provide pies and volunteers. A sign up sheet will be placed in the Narthex as soon as we get it.

Thank you to Lorna & David Peterson and Joanne Hornby for representing our church at the planning meeting.

Handbell Concert



The Community Handbell Concert will be held in our sanctuary on

Sunday, November 29th at 2:00 pm.

This is always a wonderful afternoon of great music!

A great way to start the Christmas season!

Westby Christmas Cookie Walk

Dec. 5



You can start your Christmas baking early without having to use any recipes or dirtying any dishes. Come to Westby UMC's annual Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026, from 9:00-12:00. There will be a wide variety of Christmas cookies, homemade candies, and other baked goods available. The cookie walk is like having a salad bar, where you get to choose your own salad toppings, but with cookies in place of the salad items. The cost is $10 per pound, with some items priced separately. Coffee and hot chocolate will be available. Remember to come early for the best selection of cookies.

November Online Study

Thirty 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

Thank You

A special thank you to all who have given so faithfully to our church so far this year.

As the year winds down, let us remember that each and every gift given to God's work through our church is extremely meaningful.

Financial giving is an important way to support the church. We are also called to serve with our time and our talents. We are truly blessed that so many members serve in all these ways.

As we go forward, let us all be grateful and open to serving God as much and in every way that we are able.

Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, October 18, 2026

Attendees: Layne, Phyllis, Kathy, Pastor Paul, Gregory, Aaron

Mission: **Love God, Grow Together In Faith, Serve Others**

Vision: **F.I.N.D. God!**

Our vision is to be a church that helps people grow in their relationship with God and with one another by focusing on four core commitments:

F — Focus on Worshiping God **I** — Invest in Growing Faith N — Nurture Relationships D–Develop The Next Generation

Agenda Item	Notes
Opening Prayer	Pastor opened with a prayer.
Old Business/Follow ups 1. Joint Retreat with Ministry Team discussion 2. Christmas Eve Offering (Re-visit in September) 3. Signage and redecorating committee update 4. Church Council Bylaws 5. Sexual Harassment Policy	1. A list of Retreat follow up questions was presented to the Council. The Council believes that most of these ideas can be encompassed within the idea of small groups. Paul and Layne will take this discussion back to ministry team for further discussion. We will have a list of priorities developed by December. 2. We'd like to pass on to the ministry team the idea of developing a small group to talk to Kathy about a Christmas Ministry Project for next year. 3. Seland's is going to fix the entry floor by the main door in the next couple of weeks. The estimate for carpet for the Narthex seems high. Will we consider a capital fundraiser? The new drinking fountain will be installed soon. 4.Questions/Suggestions for review Layne will clean up from the discussion we had regarding these questions to develop the final draft. 5. We need to get this policy in place. Phyllis will email it out again. We are to give suggestions regarding the policy before our next meeting.
Financial New Business 1.Treasurer Report's Simple Financial Report Balance Sheet 2027 Budget Worksheet 2. Financial Secretary's Report 3. Audit	1. Gregory shared the Simple Financial Activity Report which indicates that our income so far this year is $25,726 less than is need to meet our budget. He shared a proposed budget for 2027.Council made a motion to recommend it to the Charge Conference. 2. Financial Secretary Report presented by Gregg. 3. The 2025 audit has been completed with the exception of the accounts held in Citizens Bank. That will be completed soon.
Trustees New Business The water fountain should be installed soon. Strang's will need to fix the radiator in the Sanctu-	
SPRC New Business 1. Compensation Package	1. We need to recommend approval at Charge Conference. Motion made.
Pastor's Report Pastor attended leadership conference.	Pastor shared his thoughts about how our church has struggles, but there are always worse struggles in other places. We need to trust God to help us listen to his will.

Motions for Approval—All approved	Motion 1: Approval of August Minutes Motion 2: Approval of the Treasurer's report. Motion 3: Approval of the Financial Secretary's report Motion 4: Approval of 2027 Budget Worksheet for submittal to Charge Conference (Layne, seconded by Kathy) Motion 5: Approval of Compensation Package recommendation for Charge Conference (Aaron, seconded by Aaron)
Announcements/Adjourn Next Meeting Date	Tuesday, November 17th @ 6:00

Ministry Team Meeting Minutes

Sunday, October 11, 2026

Mission: **Love God, Grow Together In Faith, Serve Others**

Vision: **F.I.N.D. God!**

Our vision is to be a church that helps people grow in their relationship with God and with one another by focusing on four core commitments:

F — Focus on Worshiping God **I** — Invest in Growing Faith N — Nurture Relationships D–Develop The Next Generation

Agenda Item	Notes/Action Items
Opening Prayer	
Review of Mission and Vision Joint Meeting with Church Council Review Budget requests for church council	We haven't done enough prayer and reflection to narrow down our list of priorities for next year at this point. Paul has lots of ideas revolving around the idea of "Who is God." Spiritual Growth and helping people find their relationship with God was also discussed. Our goal will be to have the list narrowed by the December meeting. Paul will submit some requests he has for next year. Hospitality, Discipleship and Church Celebrations will be areas to look at. Other budgets seem to be ok without an increase for next year.
Pastor's Vision & Ministry Discussion Preaching Plan 1. Pastor will be gone on October 18th 2. Charge Conference October 25	 1. Cavan will fill the pulpit. 2. Potluck
Worship & Music New Business 1.Thanksgiving 2. Advent 3. Veterans Day	 1. Paul is using Thanksgiving as the preaching theme for November. December plan is updated. 2. Layne will contact the decorating committee to organize Christmas decorations. November 29th is the first Sunday of Advent. Poinsettias will need to be ordered. Layne will discuss with Kathy. Caroling of the choirs is the first Sunday in December (it is not our turn to serve cookies) Advent wreath? Peach will work with Paul to coordinate readers and readings. Devotional Booklet–Paul will organize. Possible play on December 13th (Cavan is exploring this) 3. Paul will provide a cake for Veteran's Day. Paul will develop the recognition for the church service as well.

4. All Saints Memorial 5. Thanksgiving	4. November 1st. Kathy will have the list of people that died in the past year. We'll recognize those individuals during the service with candles and flowers. Cavan will coordinate with Phyllis and Paul. 5. Paul will make a Thanksgiving workbook for people to use during November. He will also make a video.
Missions & Outreach Old Business World Communion Sunday was last week. **New Business** There will be a bake sale in coordination with the Rummage Sale	Maris Kalnins wrote a newsletter article. Kristen will get an article in the newsletter to recruit baked goods. Layne will coordinate with Kathy about a possible sign up sheet for recruiting help for the sale and bake sale.
Hospitality Old Business Welcoming team Quarterly Potlucks will continue. We'll plan to set dates ahead at ministry team meetings. Shut ins Committee Update	We have transitioned to signup sheets for ushers/greeters. Will need to monitor how this is going. We've also have been trying to use outdoor greeters. The committee will continue to develop the welcoming team process. Acolytes? Keep thinking about this. January 3rd will be the next Potluck. Meeting didn't happen yet. Ideas include Grandparents Day, etc…. Sending mail is a good thing for older people that don't get much mail.
Education Old Business 1. Fall Sunday School Update 2. Youth group update **New Business** 3. Confirmation class? 4. We need to develop a stronger education team/committee 5. Christmas Program 6. Christmas party for youth 7. Cookies for December 13. 8. Sponsor for a needy family.	Janette, Sunwoo, Anita, Peach, and Miny will all help teach SS. 5 teachers! Some still need background checks. Mitchell and Paul will start this month. None this year. Big group next year. Christmas Program December 13th
Lay Leader / Discipleship **Old Business** We need to promote Lay leadership in our church with the congregation. (Using online resources and classes for interested people)	
Next Meeting: November 8th @ 11:45	

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9am Adult SS 10:30am Kids SS 10:30am Worship w/ Communion	**2**	**3** 10:30am Exercise Group	**4** 8:30am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	**5** 10:30am Exercise Group	**6**	**7**
8 9am Adult SS 10:30am Kids SS 10:30am Worship 11:45am Ministry Team 4pm Bible Study @ Kathy Hanson's	**9**	**10** 10:30am Exercise Group	**11** 8:30am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	**12** 10:30am Exercise Group	**13** 8:30am Redecorating Committee	**14**
15 9am Adult SS 10:30am Kids SS 10:30am Worship	**16** 7pm Book Group	**17** 10:30am Exercise Group 12pm Soup Group 6pm Church Council	**18** 8:30am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	**19** 10:30am Exercise Group	**20**	**21**
22 9am Adult SS 10:30am Kids SS 10:30am Worship	**23** NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	**24** 10:30am Exercise Group	**25** 8:30am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	**26** THANKSGIVING	**27**	**28**
29 9am Adult SS 10:30am Kids SS 10:30am Worship 2pm Bell Choir Concert	**30**	**1** 10:30am Exercise Group 12pm Meatball Dinner Planning	**2** 8:30am Prayer Group 6pm Choir Practice	**3** 10:30am Exercise Group	4	5 9:00 am Westby Cookie Walk

The Cross & The Flame is published monthly for our congregation and friends. *We welcome you with open hearts, open minds and open doors.*

VIROQUA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

REV. PAUL LEE
(262) 393-8416
pastor.dplee@gmail.com

Check Us Out On Facebook!

CHURCH OFFICE

221 S. Center Ave.
Viroqua, WI 54665

Phone: 608-637-3551
Email: viroqua@viroquawestbyumc.org
Website: www.viroquawestbyumc.org
Office Staff: Kathy Hanson/Barb Casper

OFFICE HOURS

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Adult Sunday School Class—9:00 am
Worship—10:30 am

Broadcast on
WVRQ 1360 AM/107.3 FM or on
Facebook Live



Viroqua United Methodist Church's Mission Statement

Love God, Grow Together In Faith, Serve Others