

# THE CROSS & THE FLAME



**March 2026**

## *Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, III*

In this third discourse, Wesley expounds on Matthew 5:8-12, focusing on three Beatitudes: the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness' sake.

**The Pure in Heart:** Wesley argues that purity of heart goes far beyond external moral behavior or ceremonial cleanliness. It refers to a heart entirely cleansed from all sinful desires, pride, self-will, and love of the world. The pure in heart are those who love God with their whole being and whose intentions in every action are directed solely toward God's glory. This inward purity, Wesley insists, is only possible through the sanctifying grace of God. The reward — "they shall see God" — means not merely a future vision in heaven, but an intimate, present communion with God experienced in the soul even now.

**The Peacemakers:** Wesley defines peacemakers broadly. They are first at peace with God through justification and sanctification, and consequently at peace within themselves. From this inner peace flows an active pursuit of peace with others — reconciling enemies, healing divisions, and spreading goodwill throughout their communities. Their love is not passive but energetically seeks the spiritual and temporal welfare of all people. Because they reflect God's own character as the God of peace, they are called "children of God."

**The Persecuted:** Wesley addresses the inevitability of persecution for true Christians. Those who live out genuine godliness — especially inward holiness — will face opposition from the world, because authentic Christianity exposes and condemns ungodly living by contrast. Wesley encourages believers to rejoice under persecution, viewing it as confirmation that they are on the right path and as a means of deeper conformity to Christ.

Throughout, Wesley emphasizes that these Beatitudes describe a progressive, interconnected journey of grace, where each blessing builds upon the last toward full salvation.

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## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Dan Dustin	March 4th
Alice Sloane	March 4th
Avis Marino	March 12th
Lorna Peterson	March 13th
Jayden Dustin	March 15th
Sheryl Steele	March 19th
Phyllis Kalnins	March 20th

*God's Blessings on You!*

## MARCH ANNIVERSARY

Dan & Lana Dustin      March 7th



## 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.



**Meatball & Lefse Dinner**



## Lenten Study

It's not too late to join a Lenten group to discuss Luke & Acts. The groups are led by Pastor Paul and based on the study guide workbooks he put together.

If you are interested in joining, let Pastor Paul or the office know.



## Ecumenical Lenten Service Schedule

Meal @ 5:00 pm      Worship @ 6:00 pm

February 25th @ Good Shepherd, Pastor Paul preaching

March 4th @ Immanuel, Pastor Chris preaching

March 11th @ Westby UMC, Pastor Michele preaching

March 18th @ Viroqua UMC, Pastor Michele preaching

March 25th @ Immanuel, Pastor Paul preaching



We plan to serve Tacos for the Ecumenical Lenten Service on March 18th at our church—a simplified version of the big Taco Suppers we used to have.

A few people will be needed to bring bars for dessert and about 5 people to help prepare the meal on the afternoon of the 18th.

Watch for sign up sheets by March 1st.



## A Painting Project

How about a fresh look for the kitchen? Plan to come and help make that happen on March 21st. Work time will be from 8am to 1 pm that day.

Peach Hoiland is organizing the project. Cupboard doors will be numbered and removed ahead of time and laid out ready to be painted along with the room itself.

The "purple room" in the education hall will also be painted that day.

If you have old sheets, drop cloths, or plastic, please bring them in ahead of time so that everything can be ready for the work day. Bring your paint supplies, brushes, paint pans, or rollers with you.

This is a big project, so lots of help is needed. Sign up sheets will be in the Narthex by March 1st.



**It'll Be Fun!!**

# Viroqua UMC Easter Egg Hunting

Saturday, March 21st at Viroqua UMC

Ages 3-6

10:30 am - 11:00 am: Egg Hunting & Easter Craft

Ages 7 & Up

11:00 am: Find the Golden Egg



**Open Doors Forum (a series of occasional community conversations) presents ...**

## Preparing for Life's Final Chapter

*- Practical and emotional support around death and dying*

What is a "death doula"? A death doula provides non-medical emotional, practical, and spiritual support. This work may include sitting vigil, helping individuals or families navigate a serious diagnosis, legacy projects, advance planning, grief support and more.

Susan Nesbit of Viroqua will share what an end-of-life doula (or "death doula") does, the types of support available, and how death doulas work collaboratively alongside medical providers and hospice teams.

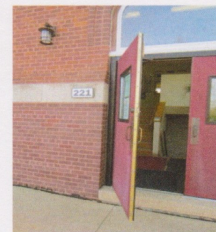
**Tuesday, March 24, at 5PM**



Everyone is welcome.

Program will be held in the chapel of the Viroqua United Methodist Church  
221 S. Center Ave., Viroqua  
(near the Viroqua Post Office)

*enter through the double doors  
facing Center Ave.*



**Open hearts  
Open minds  
Open doors**

Building is handicapped-accessible,  
with an elevator located at the northwest corner,  
just off the parking lot

608-637-3551

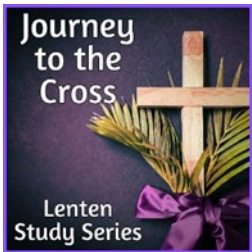
[viroquawestbyumc.org/Viroqua](http://viroquawestbyumc.org/Viroqua)

Views presented are not necessarily those of the Viroqua United Methodist Church.

## *March Sunday Servants*

	<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Greeter</b>	<b>Communion Stewards</b>
<b>March 1</b>	Joanne Hornby Mitchell Hanson	Alice Sloane	Phyllis Kalnins Kelli Schultz
<b>March 8</b>	Anita Frels Janette Hanson	Dale Gudgeon	
<b>March 15</b>	Miny Hirschfield Peach Hoiland	Betty Ross	
<b>March 18 (Lenten Service)</b>	Phyllis Kalnins Cavan Fang	Betty Ross	
<b>March 22</b>	Heidi & Josh Garrett	Barb Casper	
<b>March 29</b>	Mary & Chuck Mulvaney Kemp	Alice Sloane	

## March Online Studies – Lent



This month, we'll continue and finish the Lenten studies which we started reading in February. We'll be reading weeks 3-6 to finish this 6-week series. Hopefully, these studies will continue to help you to pause, reflect and draw closer to God during the remainder of Lent, in preparation for Easter. Here are the links to Lent studies for March:

Lent Week 3: Living Out What Jesus Taught (begins on Mar. 4)

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/56870/together/78471476/invitation?token=ldafYmK7N2YwFc5llsH1Og&source=share>

Lent Week 4: Jesus' Journey to the Cross (begins on Mar. 11)

<https://bible.com/reading-plans/61362/together/78471492/invitation?token=C7dl6dfpKUZ6m7Vze5-wYA&source=share>

Lent Week 5: What Jesus Did for You (begins on Mar. 18)

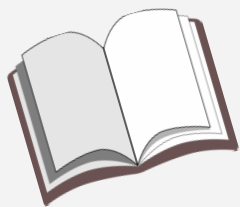
[https://bible.com/reading-plans/57206/together/78471508/invitation?token=FmGtWdnY\\_N5vB2EWh-jZtg&source=share](https://bible.com/reading-plans/57206/together/78471508/invitation?token=FmGtWdnY_N5vB2EWh-jZtg&source=share)

Lent Week 6: A New Beginning (begins on Mar. 25)

[https://bible.com/reading-plans/57551/together/78471519/invitation?token=ZPzaGdex73\\_N-gM1yPSIXA&source=share](https://bible.com/reading-plans/57551/together/78471519/invitation?token=ZPzaGdex73_N-gM1yPSIXA&source=share)

*These online studies and more can be accessed through the Bible App on your mobile device or the [bible.com](https://bible.com) website, which are free resources.*

## Book Group



The Book Group's new read is *The Exvangelicals* by Sarah Mc Cammon.

Sarah Mc Cammon's personal journey from evangelical Christianity intertwines with investigative reporting on a growing movement of people leaving the evangelical church, examining its cultural and political impact.

Discussion of this book will be at 7:00 pm on Monday, March 23rd. Everyone is welcome.

## Missions Update

Calling all artists! The Missions Committee is having a silent auction of art to raise money for our missionary Temba in Zambia. Please put your artwork in the box in the narthex. Artwork submissions are due by noon on Thursday, March 5. The silent auction will run Sunday, March 8, through Sunday, March 22. Artwork will be displayed with bidding sheets in the narthex. Get your final bids in by 11:45AM on Sunday, March 22. Thank you to all of our artists, and to all of our art patrons!

This year, UMCOR Sunday will be observed on Sunday, March 15. We observe this special Sunday every year on the 4th Sunday of Lent. "UMCOR" stands for the "United Methodist Committee on Relief". UMCOR is our church's relief agency, similar to the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. Its goal is to alleviate human suffering all over the world.

Originally founded in 1940 in response to displaced and vulnerable populations in the wake of World War II, UMCOR assists the most vulnerable people affected by crisis or by chronic need without regard to their race, religion, or status. UMCOR's work is carried out by providing relief and assistance in response to natural and human-made disasters, and by supporting programs in the areas of migration, health, food security, and environmental sustainability.

Offerings given on UMCOR Sunday help to keep our denomination's relief agency strong. Please mark your donations "UMCOR Sunday" and send them to our church office, or use the envelope provided in church that Sunday.

**Please put the following into the newsletter calendar:**

Sunday, March 8, art auction begins

Sunday, March 15, UMCOR Sunday

Sunday, March 22, 11:45AM, art auction ends

## FOOD PANTRY



**We sent 56 pounds of food to the Food Pantry on February 5th.**

**Thanks to all who contributed!**

# Church Council Meeting

February 5, 2026

Attendees: Pastor Paul, Phyllis, Kathy, Greg C. Layne, Gregg R.

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Opening Prayer	
<p>Old Business/Follow ups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Meeting with DS, Amanda Stein</li> <li>3. Christmas Eve Offering</li> <li>4. Who should take offering to the office after church?</li> <li>5. Auditing Process</li> <li>6. How will we make up the deficit for next year?</li> <li>7. Replace AED pads</li> <li>8. Facilities Use Facilities Use Request.docx <a href="#">Facilities Use Request.docx</a></li> <li>9. How is it going without a custodian?</li> <li>10. Background Checks</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Frustration with rental/non rental policy. Other churches have gone through this in the past, not a new problem. Merge with Westby? Merging churches can be advantageous to both congregations. It was suggested that we have small group input from the congregation regarding the vision of the church and the future of the church.</li> <li>3. Re-visit in September</li> <li>4. One of the Church Council Members will take care of it each week.</li> <li>5. Sonia B. would like to start the 2025 audit. <b>Greg will get the papers together. Dan will then contact Sonia.</b></li> <li>6. We will continue to evaluate. One idea is to share information with the congregation to raise interest.</li> <li>7. Jane Gaskell is working on getting a grant to replace the pads. Paul is working with her.</li> <li>8. Form has been updated.</li> <li>9. Consider hiring a cleaning service once or twice a year?</li> <li>10. Up to date.</li> </ol>
<p>Financial New Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parsonage Insurance - see note section <a href="#">Treasurer's report - 2025</a> <a href="#">2025 Treasurer Review</a> <a href="#">Treasurer Supplemental report</a> <a href="#">Treasurer Report Jan2026</a> <a href="#">Treasurer Supplemental Jan</a> <a href="#">Cash Position 01-31-2026</a> <a href="#">Secretary's report</a></li> </ol> <p>Radio Ministry</p>	<p>Parsonage Insurance - With the insurance change over, it has brought the attention that parsonage insurance has not been treated as a shared expense. Starting 2026 parsonage and garage insurance will be shared based on the square footage. My question is do we want to initiate a discussion with Westby UMC to try and collect for the past 6 years of unbilled shared expenses?</p> <p>The 2025 Treasurer Report is the final report for 2025. The Cash Activity Statement is a simple explanation of actual cash changes that happened in 2025 for all accounts</p> <p>2025 payroll reports for Federal &amp; State are submitted. W'2's are distributed.</p> <p>2-2-2026 Workmans Comp audit has been completed and submitted to SFM insurance company. It will take approximately 30 days to process.</p> <p>Radio pledges are declining. Will ask the ministry team for ideas to support the</p>
<p>Trustees New Business</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Door locked?</li> <li>2. Open Doors Forum (Kristen and Chuck MK have inquired about hosting this program)</li> <li>3. Teen Court (Chuck MK has inquired about hosting this here)</li> <li>4. Kitchen clean-up day</li> <li>5. Taking off the pew for the offering table</li> <li>6. Sunday School room</li> <li>7. Furnace</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Sherriff's department recommends locking the door at all times other than Sunday mornings.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4. Peach - Pastor asked Peach to paint the purple room, too. She will also be organizing a kitchen clean up and painting. Finance committee authorized \$250 for supplies.</li> <li>5. Layne and Aaron will remove the back pews. We'll talk to Josh G before doing this</li> <li>6. Pastor will talk to Amanda Clements for ideas to set up the new SS room.</li> <li>7. The pumps have been oiled and the furnace is in good shape (currently)</li> </ol>

SPRC New Business 1. Sheriff's Dept. Safety Review of Church on 01/21 2. Church must have a sexual misconduct policy.	1. Sherriff's department recommends cameras at all entrances. 2. Phyllis will work on developing this.
<a href="#">Review of Action Items</a>	Greg suggested developing an informational sheet about the structure and roles of our council. We should spend time each month discussing.
Pastor's Report 1. Develop Vision of the future	Can we have the council meeting twice a month? A separate meeting for visioning.
1. The Church Council mentioned that they really would like to have us discuss how to reach teens/ young adults. Aaron specifically has ideas that he'd like to share with us. 2. Lent devotional book development small group (Pastor will organize) 3. We'll continue to investigate the ideas of small groups within the church	1. 2. 3. Pastor is using the devotional book writing as the beginning of a small group development.
Motions for Approval	Motion 1: <a href="#">Approval of January Minutes</a> Removed from the January Minutes <i>*****We don't have committee chairs to sign vouchers.</i> <i>This will be done at monthly Church Council Meetings.</i> Motion 2: Take out the back pews, paint the SS room and the kitchen. Authorize \$250 for supplies.
Announcements/Adjourn Next Meeting Date	Next meeting: Sunday, February 15th @ 6:00 (vision) Thursday, March 12th @ 6:00 (regular meeting)
Closing Prayer	

## *Ministry Team Meeting*

February 8, 2026

Members Present: Pastor Paul, Layne, Kristen, Cavan, Janet, Alice, Peach

Agenda Item	Notes/ <b>Action Items</b>
Opening Prayer	
<b>Worship &amp; Music Old Business</b> 1. Wednesday Lenten service— <b>Pastor will work with VMA to determine the date</b> 2. Meal? We will finalize the meal plan <b>Peach will plan to lead</b> , Tacos? <b>Worship &amp; Music Old Business</b> 3. Ash Wednesday service February 18 at 1:00. <b>Pastor will set up the chapel for the service.</b> Ashes are on hand.	1. Feb. 25-March 20. Our service here will be March 18. 2. Taco's are a go. We'll need a final count. Dinner at 5 and Service at 6. <b>Layne and Peach will be the committee to organize.</b>  3. Westby service is at 5:00 with a possible meal.

<p>4. Maundy Thursday, is it at Westby or here? More discussion next month</p> <p>5. Good Friday service at 1:00 (<b>Pastor will plan the order of service with the VMA</b>)</p> <p>6. Easter breakfast (<b>Sonja B. will organize the breakfast</b>)</p> <p>7. Easter morning service will be in the fellowship hall along with breakfast.</p> <p>8. 10:30 Easter service in the Sanctuary</p> <p>9. We will start using liturgists again, but only for announcements (<b>Layne and Paul will organize</b>)</p> <p>10. Paul would like kids/youth to read scripture during the services</p> <p>11. How can we make the offering table more accessible and inviting? Do we need a pew or 2 removed?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Business</b></p> <p>12. Palm Sunday</p> <p>13. Joys and Concerns</p>	<p>4. Pastor would like Maundy Thursday always at Westby since Good Friday is here. Pastor will check on this.</p> <p>5. Joint service with Westby</p> <p>6. <b>Layne will coordinate with Sonia.</b></p> <p>8. 10:30 service will have Communion served.</p> <p>9. Possible a Lay Leader moment to start the service and read announcements to give Pastor a few extra minutes to greet people.</p> <p>10. Kids need to be worked with about how to use the microphone to be heard. <b>Pastor will work with them.</b> How can we get this started?</p> <p>11. Church council approved this, an offering display will be built in its place, incorporating</p> <p>12. Layne will check with Kathy about ordering Palms.</p> <p>13. We need to help people learn to use the microphone better. Layne will develop a Joys/Concerns/Prayer request card.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Missions &amp; Outreach Old Business</b></p> <p>1. <b>Pastor will connect with Temba to get a message from him, and we will spotlight him for a service</b></p> <p>2. Local Missions opportunities? We should explore (Couleecap, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Food Pantry?)</p> <p>3. Art auction is the next Missions project. Kristin is the lead, March 8 &amp; 15 will be the dates.</p> <p>4. Umcors Sunday is coming (how can we promote it?)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Business</b></p> <p>5. Open Doors Forum (Kristen and Chuck MK have inquired about hosting this program. Do we have any concerns?)</p> <p>Teen Court (Chuck MK has inquired about hosting this here) Do we have any concerns?</p>	<p>1. Goal is to have this happen in April.</p> <p>2. Keep eyes open for a good opportunity to support. Sleep in Heavenly Peace is ok right now so probably not them.</p> <p>3. Should start on March 8, through March 22nd. Coffee will be moved to the overflow room for these 3 weeks so the art display can be visible. <b>Layne will organize the coffee area. Kristin will organize the art display.</b></p> <p>4. A promotional video will be shown ahead of time and there will be a special envelope. Kristin also advertises. March 15th is UMCR Sunday.</p> <p>5. Susan Nesbitt is an end-of life Dulat that would be presenting. Her services are free of charge. We have no concerns. Offered to the whole community. This is an inhouse offering, so no facility use paperwork should be required. We need this on the church calendar. No concerns from the ministry team.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hospitality Old Business</b></p> <p>Kathy H is the lead for the Meatball dinner and has a committee working on it</p> <p>2. Kathy H. is the lead for the Rummage Sale and will develop a committee</p> <p>3. Welcoming team could be 3-5 people that ensure that visitors are informed and welcomed</p>	<p>1. .</p> <p>2. <b>Going to be pushed to late summer/early fall.</b></p> <p>3. <b>CPR training? Usher Greeter training? Cameras and safety are a great thing to consider. We should continue to develop a welcoming process.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education Old Business</b></p> <p>1. Kristine Starnes, Janette Hanson, Mary Cheever and Anita Frels are teaching SS</p> <p>2. Youth group goal will be to meet 2x per month</p> <p>3. Next Generation is youth leading services</p> <p>4. Downstairs SS room has been cleaned and is ready for next steps (Amanda Dustin input?)</p> <p>5. <b>Pastor will organize the Easter Egg Hunt (inside this year)</b></p> <p>6. Outing</p> <p><b>New Business</b>—VBS Planning begins soon. Will be in Viroqua this year. Pastor will recruit a committee to plan this.</p>	<p>1. <b>Going well. Kristine will start in March or April.</b></p> <p>2. <b>Mitchell and Pastor will start 2x in possibly April.</b></p> <p>3. .</p> <p>4. <b>Council agreed to use this room for SS. Painting is approved. Date TBA</b></p> <p>6. <b>Youth group outing being planned.</b></p>

# March 2026

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lay Leader / Discipleship Old Business</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Church Council mentioned that they really would like to have us discuss how to reach teens/young adults. Aaron specifically has ideas that he'd like to share with us.</li> <li>2. Lent devotional book development small group (Pastor will organize)</li> <li>3. We'll continue to investigate the ideas of small groups within the church</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1</b></li> <li><b>2. Will be handed out February 15. Groups will begin meeting once sign ups are complete.</b></li> <li><b>3. Perhaps asking leaders of the church to participate in a small group to learn how to lead a small group.</b></li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>United Women of Faith Old Business</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>New Business</b></u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Not as active as we used to be.</b></p>	<p>So many members are also members of other groups and involved with so many things. A gift of money is sent to the district every year. How can we increase membership and interest? (Currently about 8 that come to meetings)</p>

Next Meeting: March 8 @ 11:30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship w/ Communion 10:30am Youth Sunday School		10:30am Exercise Group	8am Prayer Group 5pm Lenten Meal @ Immanuel 6pm Lenten Service @ Immanuel	10:30am Exercise Group 6pm Choir Practice		
<b>1</b> 9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship 10:30am Youth SS	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Art Auction Begins 9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship 10:30am Youth SS 11:30am Ministry Team meeting 4pm Bible Study @ Kathy Hanson's 6pm Council Visioning	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> UMCOR Sunday 9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship 10:30am Youth SS	<b>16</b> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8am Painting Day 10:30am Easter Egg Hunting Ages 3-6 11am Easter Egg Hunting Ages 7 & Up
<b>22</b> 9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship 10:30am Youth SS 11:45am Art Auction Ends	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9am Adult SS 10:30am Worship 10:30am Youth SS	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

*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**

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**OFFICE HOURS**

**SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**

**Adult Sunday School Class—9:00 am**

**Youth Sunday School—10:30 am**

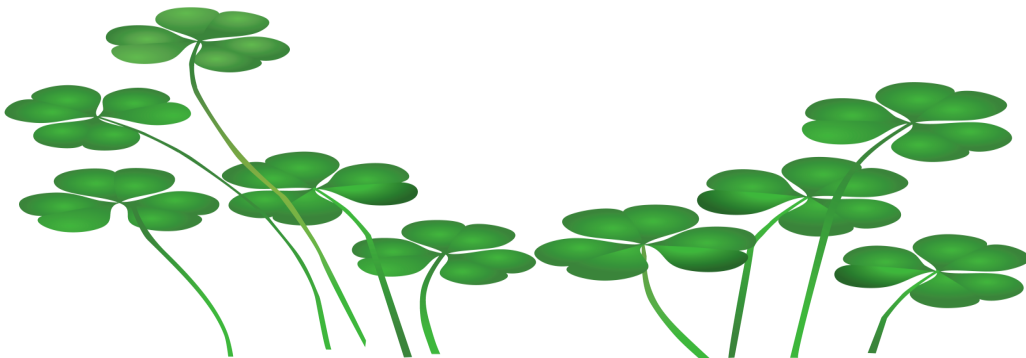
**Worship—10:30 am**

**Broadcast on**

**WVRQ 1360 AM/107.3 FM or on**

**Facebook Live**

**Check Us Out On Facebook!**



**Viroqua United Methodist Church's Mission Statement**

The Viroqua United Methodist Church exists for the purpose of carrying out Christ's Great Commission by enabling all who come to personally know the joy of God's love and forgiveness and to lovingly share this joy in the fellowship of the church and in reaching people throughout the world.