

Our calling is to reach all people with the life-changing power of God's Love and Grace available to all through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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
April 2026

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Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IV

by Pastor Paul Lee

John Wesley's fourth sermon on the Sermon on the Mount focuses on one of Jesus' most well-known images — salt and light. Jesus told his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world." Wesley immediately recognized something important: Jesus did not say "try to become" these things someday. He said, "You are." That simple present tense carries the entire message of the sermon. Identity comes first. The calling follows from it.

Wesley's central concern was this: if Christians truly carry the life of God within them, why does so little of that life actually show? He saw two opposite dangers pulling people away from what Jesus described. The first is blending in — living so much like the world around us that no real difference can be seen. Salt in Wesley's day was not just a seasoning; it was how people preserved food and kept it from spoiling. It was essential. But salt that has lost its flavor is completely useless. Wesley applied this directly: when our faith makes no visible difference in how we treat people, how we use our time, how we respond to hardships or injustice, we have lost the very thing we were meant to offer the world.

The second danger moves in the opposite direction — withdrawing from society entirely to protect one's faith. Some in Wesley's time believed that separating from the world was the safest path to holiness. Wesley rejected this just as firmly. You do not protect a lamp by covering it with a bowl. That does not keep the flame safe — it puts the flame out. Christians are called to remain present in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. Not to be slowly shaped into the image of the world around them, but to engage that world with genuine love, patience, and grace. The difference between the two is not location. It is the condition of the heart.

Wesley also addressed the question of how faith becomes visible. He argued that a truly changed heart cannot stay hidden for long. Humility, kindness, generosity, and a sincere concern for others — these things are noticed. You do not have to announce them. They show up naturally in the ordinary moments of daily life, and people around us begin to take note.

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His most important point, though, is about purpose. We do not let our light shine to build a reputation or earn the approval of others. Jesus gives one clear goal: that people may see our good works and glorify our God in heaven. Every small act of kindness, every word of encouragement, every moment of patience under pressure — none of it is meant to draw attention to us. All of it is meant to point toward God. That, Wesley said, is the calling of every Christian in every season of life — not a flashy faith, not a hidden faith, but an honest and visible one.

~ 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

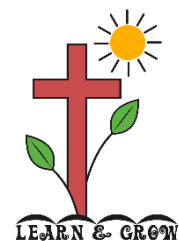
Cell Phone: 262-393-8416

Email:

pastor@virouqawestbyumc.org

April Birthdays

April 17 – Roger Zogg



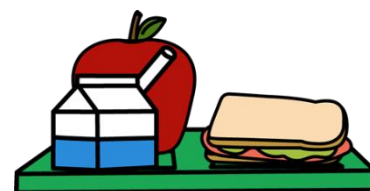
Sunday School News

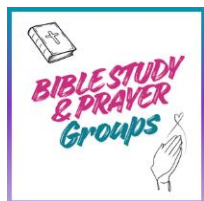
During March, we learned about the events that happened between Palm Sunday and Easter in addition to practicing for the Palm Sunday skit. Thank you to the students for working diligently to present the skit during worship on Palm Sunday.

There will not be any Sunday School class on Easter Sunday, April 5. Class will resume on Sunday, April 12. The last day of Sunday School will be May 3. The students will do a community service project on May 3. They will be painting the parking area posts at Davidson Park.

Mission of the Month – Westby School Lunch Program

This month's mission is the Westby School lunch program. We received a letter from the Coon Valley American Legion saying that someone in their organization had spoken to Steve Micheals, the Westby School Superintendent, and had been told that the Westby schools do not allow children who cannot afford to pay go without and the school has taken on that cost. The problem is that apparently these costs have accumulated to \$10,000, which has become unsustainable. The Legion has pledged to help but are too small a group to raise the entire amount on their own and are asking churches for help. The goal is to have the donations in by April 15th. For that reason, we feel that this is another opportunity to heed Jesus' command to "feed the hungry" here in our own community. If you are able, we encourage you to donate and to have the money to the church by the Sunday the 12th (or before) so that we can get it to Coon Valley so that they can surprise Superintendent Micheals with a gift to help in this vital program for local children. Please make checks out to the church with "School Lunches" on the memo line so that we can write one check from our church. Thank you!





Thursday Morning Groups

Please join our Prayer group on Thursday, April 2nd 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.

The Thursday morning Bible Study Group will meet on Thursday, April 23rd at 9:00 AM. We will continue studying the book of Galatians.

April Online Studies – Hoping and Listening

Easter is a season of hope. The grass is greening up. Flowers are preparing to bloom. Animals are waking up from their winter hibernations. New life is springing up around us. Meanwhile, as we gather on Easter, we celebrate the hope of new life that Jesus brings into each of our lives, and even more, into the entire world. The earth-shattering events of that first Easter changed everything and continues to impact our lives and world today!



As we wrap up Holy Week, we invite you to join us for a quick four-day study as we consider the life-changing hope of Easter by diving into John's account of Jesus' death and resurrection. It's a great study that will help to spark the hope of Easter in your life!

- Easter Hope – begins Wednesday, April 1st
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/24944/together/79451904/invitation?token=6rkDrPGpuPMBn3XEGyS4Ng&source=share>



For the remainder of April, we will be focusing on recognizing and listening to God's voice in our lives. Hearing God's voice is far simpler than many believers imagine. Truth is, you may have heard Him yourself but didn't even realize it. In a world of chaotic and never-ending noise, God's voice is often overshadowed by fear, ignorance, self-condemnation, busyness, and self-dependence. We invite you to join us as we work to rise above the distractions, identify His voice in our lives, and learn to listen intently to Him. It's one of the most important parts of our relationship with Him, so let's become

better listeners of God's wonderful words!

- How to Recognize God's Voice Effortlessly – begins Monday, April 6th
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/67562/together/79451958/invitation?token=zi8kktw4neDKSigtQJKplw&source=share>
- Being Attentive to God's Voice – begins Monday, April 13th
 - https://bible.com/reading-plans/14814/together/79452185/invitation?token=drx5_C5Rr-RXSLOxjOt5tg&source=share
- Listening to God's Voice – begins Monday, April 20th
 - <https://bible.com/reading-plans/58766/together/79452202/invitation?token=0kqcyYBpYlg80v6PBlunQA&source=share>

These online studies and more can be accessed through the Bible App on your mobile device or the bible.com website, which are free resources.

Holy Week Services

- Sunday, March 29 – Palm Sunday service
- Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday service at Viroqua UMC at 6:00 PM
 - We will have a potluck meal during this service. If you're able, please bring a dish to share.
- Friday, April 3 – Good Friday service at Viroqua UMC at 1:00 PM
- Sunday, April 5 – Easter service



Vision Mission Discussions

Instead of adding another meeting to our schedules, it was decided to have discussions about our Vision Mission during fellowship time. During these conversations, we can share what God is telling us to do or where you feel He is leading us, for our main vision mission. The prayer requests of our Visioning Prayer will be more effective if everyone is making this part of their daily prayers.

Jesus states in *Matthew 18:19* "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you." Jesus also states in *Matthew 7:7* "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you." So, our prayers will be more powerful if everyone continues to pray daily for God to give us direction regarding what He wants us to do for serving our community.

Website Review – April 6

It has been several years since the website for Viroqua UMC and Westby UMC was created, so we decided to review the website to determine if any adjustments should be made. Some of the board members from each church will be meeting on Monday, April 6 at 6:30 PM at Westby UMC to review the website pages.



If you have any questions or suggestions for the website, please let Linda know so this information can be passed on at the meeting. The website is www.viroquawestbyumc.org.



Bethel Foundation Appreciation Dinner – April 13

The Bethel Foundation will have their Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at our church on Monday, April 13. We have been asked to help serve and provide one food item, a variety of salads, for this event. They will be using the church from 4:30-7:00, so we need to have 3-6 people to help during this time and people to provide and/or help make a few salads, to serve about 50 people. This is a good community service outreach for us to allow them to use our church for this event.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."
~ Matthew 28:5-6



Westby United Methodist Church – Board Meeting † March 15, 2026

Present: Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Verna Drake, Ardith Hoff, Lois Gerling, Julie Fargen, Kelly Bjornstad, Jill Bjornstad, Pastor Paul and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the February newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. There wasn't a meeting in February. Ardith Hoff and Verna Drake motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: (March checklist: Financial Audit & Bi-Annual Property Tax Exempt Form) - Verna Drake provided the financial reports for February and Year-to-Date. These reports were emailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Verna Drake reported that Viroqua UMD is now billing us monthly for parsonage and garage insurance. For the Financial Audit, Lois Gerling reported that the audit is almost done. Lois needs to contact Maranda to have her complete her part of the audit.

Old Business:

- † Insurance update -Verna Drake reported that we now have a credit with the building insurance due to having the square footage adjustment finished. Our new premium will be about \$348 per month. Currently, we don't know what our deductible is.
- † Statistical Report – Verna Drake completed this report and submitted it before Feb. 28, 2026.
- † Microsoft licensing for church computers – Linda Weilnau sent out an email indicating that our free Microsoft 365 license expired and we would not be able to use this software after March 25. One option would be to purchase the non-profit \$3 per user per month licensing so we could continue to use it on our church computers and Linda's computer. This would allow us to install the software on 5 devices. A vote was taken by email to approve purchasing this option. The license was purchased and the computers have been updated with the new licenses.
- † User Credentials for Various Accounts – Verna Drake finished compiling a list of the user credentials she uses for the church's financial accounts. We discussed where to keep this documentation, and it was decided to keep it in the small safe at church. Question was asked whether we should keep a key to this safe off-site. It was decided to discuss this at the April meeting.

New Business:

- † Palm Sunday Brunch – It was decided to have this during fellowship. An email will be sent out to ask for food donations and a sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex. We will ask the Sunday School parents if they can assist with this event.
- † Growing in Faith Study – Pastor Paul will think about possible 6-to-8-week sessions with different topics. He will provide this information at the April board meeting so we can discuss a possible day and time.

- ✝ Group Outings – The breakfast at Borgen’s on March 14 went well. We will try to do this quarterly, or as we feel inspired. It was suggested to keep the outings within the local area. One suggestion was to have lunch in the park or go see a movie.
- ✝ Cemetery clean-up (April) – Verna Drake reported that she has a form to submit this month. This form needs to be submitted annually in March. Tim Gaskell is going to research if we could turn the cemetery over to a different group. For the cemetery clean-up, we will decide on a day and time at the April meeting.
- ✝ Bethel Buttikk Recognition Dinner – This will be on Monday, April 13, from 4:30-7:00. We will need to provide 1 meal items and help serve. We will contact the Bethel Foundation to find out what food item they want us to provide and how many servers are needed.
- ✝ Spring Cleaning – The windows are the main thing that needs cleaning. We will decide on a day and time at the April meeting.
- ✝ Vision Discussion – It was decided we need to make an effort to do this more during fellowship instead of scheduling a special meeting.
- ✝ Sexual Conduct Form for Insurance – Verna Drake reported that she filled out this form. Verna suggested that when we review our Safe Sanctuary policy, we should add sexual conduct to this policy.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – Verna Drake painted the narthex. Verna has been talking with Geno Davidson to determine how to dispose of the old fluorescent lights. There will be a cost to do this.
- ✝ **SPRC** – Verna Drake and Julie Fargen need schedule a meeting time.
- ✝ **Worship** – Palm Sunday | Maundy Thursday @Westby | Holy Week plans | Easter Sunday – The Maundy Thursday service will be at Viroqua UMC at 6:00 PM, and there will be a potluck during the service. Viroqua UMC will have a Good Friday service at 1:00 PM.
- ✝ **Youth & Sunday School** – The Sunday School students will perform a skit on Palm Sunday. The meal and discussion with the parents went well. The parents are looking into possible days to have a youth outing. On May 3, the students will paint the posts in the parking area at the park as a community service project. May 3 will be the last day of Sunday School.
- ✝ **Lay Leadership** – Ardith Hoff continues to write short articles for the website.
- ✝ **Missions** – It was decided to help a group from Coon Valley pay for school lunch debts for the April mission of the month.

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Paul reported that the small group meetings went well.

Ardith Hoff motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	2 9:00 AM – Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class 6:00 PM – Maundy Thursday @ Viroqua	3 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day 1:00 PM – Good Friday @ Viroqua	4
5 Easter Sunday 9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	6 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Website Review	7 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	8 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	9 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	10 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	11
12 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	13 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 4:30 PM – Bethel Volunteer Dinner	14 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	15 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	16 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	17 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	18
19 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	20 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	21 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	22 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	23 9:00 AM – Bible Study Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class	24 Pastor Paul’s Sabbath Day	25
26 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Sunday School	27 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	28 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM – Strength Training Class	29 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	30 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 12:30 PM –Strength Training Class		

**** 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)