



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.

Newsletter

Westby United Methodist Church

December 2018

GOD’S TIMING, PURPOSE

IN THIS ISSUE



Blessed Christmas

by Pastor Pam Harkema

Even non-believers are generally accepting of the Christmas season. After all, our Savior brought us the most lucrative and productive shopping season of the year. And there’s also Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Omisoka, and other days

that celebrate a spirit of giving. Perhaps people are stuck in the commercial and financial aspect of holidays because they don’t see the real meaning of the season beyond a blitz of lighted Santas and sappy Hallmark channel movies.

Christians know the greatest love and greatest gift ever given. Christmas gives us the ideal time to share this story. Go ahead and say “Merry Christmas” – or even “Blessed Christmas”. Greet with the sincerity and love of the Lord. Extend an invitation to worship on Sunday or to attend Christmas Eve services at 4 p.m. at New Hope or 7 p.m. at Westby. Invite someone to share the children’s program on December 16.

If you want to give a Christmas gift to someone, let it be the experience of renewal in Christ.

Christmas gives us an opportunity to share God’s love uniquely. Pray for our church. Pray that we will see and follow God’s direction for us. Pray for the renewal of Christian love among all people. Christ the Savior is born. Joy to the world!

Pastor Pam

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December Birthdays

- Dec. 5 – Luanne Olstad
- Dec. 11 – Norm Davis
- Dec. 26 – Adelia Holey



- Dec. 28 – Aniah Olstad
- Dec. 31 – Ruth Gilmore

Pastor Pam's Schedule:

Monday – Thursday
Driftless Regional Ministry office (8:30-4:30)

Friday – Sabbath

Saturday – Available by Appointment (9:00-12:00)

Sunday – Worship Services (8 am – 12 pm)

Pastor Pam is often away from the office for visitation or meetings. Please call the parsonage and leave a message or contact her via her cell phone. She can also receive text messages on her cell phone.

Driftless Regional Ministry Office:

E2286 Hwy. 82 in De Soto

Contact Information:

Cell Phone – 989-666-1277

Parsonage Phone – 608-648-2528

December Online Study – Carols: A Christmas Devotional



Join us this Christmas season for the online study, Carols: A Christmas Devotional. Christmas is the birth of our Lord and Savior, so how can we help but sing about this wonderful time! Come and explore the songs of Christmas and rediscover their relevance in your life today during this 25-day reading plan. We're going to start on Dec. 1st.

To sign up, click on the link provided and create an account, if needed. This is a free online study.

<https://bible.com/p/8785227/f5a74fa52429ffe407f3527e0a9dc6e3>

Our Generosity Campaign

In November, we looked at various aspects of the human spirit and our response to God. Interestingly, the message that got the most feedback was our spirit of generosity and the six ways we can be generous every day.

Be generous with **prayer**: When we Pray, we lay down our innermost vulnerabilities and petitions with the Lord. Our spiritual discipline of praying mends our hearts and leads us to patiently wait for the Lord's response.

Be generous in **worship**: Find ways to celebrate God every day and join others in the community of faith. Sunday worship centers us in a life of praise, and also worship when we see God in the sunrise, hear God in the laughter of a child, feel God holding the hand of someone in pain.

Be generous in **scripture**: Study scripture and create the practice, the habit, of at least a few minutes with scripture every day. Less time with TV and social media and technology and more time in the Word.

Be generous in service: Stepping outside of ourselves and our own interests to give something of ourselves to someone else. Serving God's creation and all of God's people.

Be generous in **witness**: Through the ways we boldly live Christian values we share our testimony and witness to teach others about Jesus' love with our actions. What better time of year than Christmas to live the spirit of Christ.

Be generous in **giving**: Giving with a pure heart sows seeds of growth for the future of the church.

Which ways are easiest for you to be generous?



Youth Sunday School

Thank you to everyone involved with Operation Christmas Child ~ Donating, organizing, packing and writing letters... What a wonderful way to share the gift of Jesus with those who have never heard about Jesus.



- **Sunday, December 16th** - The Sunday school kids will sing and be part of the Christmas Celebration during the church service. *** Families are invited to a special Fellowship Time at 10:15 for the kids to serve refreshments.*
- We will be learning our Christmas songs & message on December 2, 9, & 16. (Reminder: No Sunday school on Thanksgiving weekend: November 25) Please let me know if you're unable to be there on December 16th ~ 634-3283.
- We will have Sunday school on December 23.

Planning Ahead - No Sunday school on December 30th and January 6th.

Sunday school will resume on Sunday, January 13, 2019.

Sunday School at 9:30 AM | Fellowship Time at 10:15 AM | Worship Service at 10:45 AM

Mission of the Month – Norseland Christmas Gifts

Our December mission is Norseland Christmas Gifts. We help to purchase a few Christmas gifts for some of the Norseland residents who may not receive Christmas presents.



Choose a Norseland resident to buy a gift for! Names and gift ideas will be on a sheet in the narthex, and wrapped gifts must be returned to the church by Sunday, December 9th. Thank you!



Christmas Cookie Walk – Dec. 1, 2018

It's time for our Christmas Cookie Walk! This year will be the 4th year for this event!

The Christmas Cookie Walk will be on Saturday, Dec. 1st from 9:00-12:00.

Invite your family and friends to come and start their Christmas cookie baking early, without all the fuss. The proceeds from this event will go towards youth and outreach projects.

The cost will be \$6 per pound for cookies and candy, other baked goods will be priced individually. Coffee and hot chocolate will also be available, so you can have a hot beverage with a cookie while you visit with your friends after making your purchases.

For those who are baking cookies and other items, the drop-off times are:

- Thursday, Nov. 29 (5:30-7:30 PM)
- Friday, Nov. 30 (5:30-7:30 PM)

Christmas Caroling – December 12

We will have a Christmas Caroling night on Wednesday, Dec. 12, starting at 5:00 PM. We will meet at the church and then go caroling at the area senior centers. After caroling, we'll come back to the church for a chili supper.

Come and join us as we try to spread some Christmas cheer as we sing about our Savior's birth to others!



Prayers for December

Each day of the week use this simple prayer starter as part of your conversation with God. Copies of these prayers are distributed on the last Sunday of each month in the bulletin; extra copies are available to place in different locations to help us remember to pray.

Monday:

Make me a channel of your peace, Christ. Let me listen with an open heart of acceptance. Let me consider with an open mind of understanding. Let me respond with an open spirit of charity.

Tuesday:

Christ, I am your servant. You always remember me and provide for me. I am a student of your word. You actively create examples and ways for me to learn. I am your child. You shelter me and protect me. I am only complete in You, my God.

Wednesday:

What do I mean when I say I am a Christian? What does it mean to believe in Christ as my Savior? Lord, make my words, my actions, and my life, be a humble reflection of your immense love. When I make a mistake, help me to realistically see my own flaws, to make amends and to take action to change myself.

Thursday:

I'm so busy. I busy myself with things that don't matter. Instead, let me fill my days with worship and praise for You. Let me nurture your people and work for your kingdom. Holy One, teach me that glorifying God is what is truly important. Show me today how I can glorify You and uplift others.

Friday:

Forgive me when I miss the opportunity You give me to forgive someone. I want to be accepted and yet sometimes I shut my heart to accepting another. In this holy season of love, help me show the love I want to receive. Lord, send those who need You to our church and help me receive them with an open heart of hospitality.

Saturday:

I pray a lot for myself God. Today, I pray for the people I know who are sick, disheartened, lonely, broken, and empty. Lord, in your mercy, bring them healing, hope, sharing, fulfillment. Use me if it is your will, to help those who have any need, large or small. Always for Your glory, holy Lord.

Sunday:

Each week of this holy month, we step closer to the day when celebrate again the coming of the Christ. Hearts are lighter. Smiles come more easily. Reminders are all around as we decorate for the season. Lord, let me live with this sense of hope always and let me share the light of Christ everywhere.

Anytime throughout the day:

The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.

The greatest of these is Love.

Love came down at Christmas.



Fellowship Brunch – Sunday, December 16

There is going to be a special fellowship time on Sunday, Dec. 16th. We thought it would be nice to take some time to visit with friends and family while we enjoy good food before the children perform their special Christmas presentation during the worship service. We will be serving quick breads, a breakfast baked dish with beverages.

Everyone is invited to come and have a late breakfast with us!

Westby United Methodist Church - Board Meeting † November 14, 2018

Present: Pastor Pam Harkema, Jean Shore, Ardith Hoff, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Pastor Pam opened with prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October board meeting were emailed to the board and published in the November newsletter, so they could be reviewed prior to the meeting. Jean Shore and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports for October and the Yearly Report (Jan.-Oct.). Ardith Hoff and Jean Shore motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † Charge Conference Forms – possible corrections – Verna Drake left a note indicating that for the Finance Report, #3 should be *Annually* and #13 should be *No*.
- † Furnace Installed? – Yes, the furnace has been installed. As of Nov. 5, we have not received a bill for it. The programming seems to be working for Sunday, but not sure about the other days of the week. We should see if there is a manual for programming the furnace.
- † Rental Fee for Fellowship Hall Usage by Senior Meal Site – Linda Weilnau spoke with Tricia Clements about the rental fee. Tricia said they can pay \$1,000 as a rental fee for 2019 and \$300 for 2018. Ardith Hoff and Jean Shore motioned to approve the rental fee offer of \$1,000 for 2019 and accept the offer of \$300 for 2018. Motion passed.

New Business:

- † Sidewalk Snow Removal – Verna Drake talked to Austin Brown and he will shovel the sidewalks this winter season. Verna also contacted Jansen for a contract for plowing the parking lots.
- † Website Fees – Linda Weilnau contacted InMotion web hosting to find out about plan options when our current plan expires in April 2019. Our current plan is the Power Plan and it would cost \$239.76 for a 2-year contract. We could switch to the Launch Plan, which would cost \$191.76 for a 2-year contract. The difference between the plans is that the Launch Plan can only host one website, where the Power Plan can host multiple websites. The support and other features are the same for both plans.
 - Costs for the plan, domain registration for 1 year (\$15.99) and domain privacy for 1 year (\$12.99)
 - Power Plan = \$268.74 (\$67.19 for each church)
 - Launch Plan = \$220.74 (\$55.19 for each church)
 - Website hits – Over the past 11 months, the DRM website has averaged 40,000 hits/month, 1,500 visits/month and 50 visits/day.
 Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to change to the Launch Plan with InMotion when the current plan expires. Motion passed.
- † Small Group Study – Three people have decided to participate in this group. It was decided to meet twice a month and start in December. The December meetings will be on the 2nd and 16th at 9:30 AM. Please read up to page 29 for the first meeting.
- † Westby Community Thanksgiving Meal – Our church has been asked to provide 7 pies, 3 dozen of lefsa and 2 workers per shift. We only need one more pie and a few more workers. Linda Weilnau will send out an email to ask for more workers.

✝ Upcoming Events in December

- Cookie Walk – Dec. 1 – Need a cashier and people to bake cookies and other items. Flyers will be given out at church on Sunday for distribution.
- Advent – Decorations? Anything special for start of Advent? – Advent begins on Dec. 2. Pastor Pam said the Advent trees are okay but will talk with Verna Drake to decide on potential decorating activities on Dec. 2.
- Christmas Caroling & Board Meeting (5 PM) – Dec. 12 – Jane Gaskell said she will have the Sunday school make something to hand out to the senior care center residents when we go caroling. Linda Weilnau suggested we make cookies, but Jane said we shouldn't do to dietary restrictions for some residents. After caroling there will be a chili supper. Ardith Hoff and Jane said they would provide chili. Linda said she would bring cheese, crackers and a veggie tray.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (7 PM) – Dec. 24 – Yes, we will have this service.
- Dec. 16th – Children perform during church. Linda Weilnau suggested that we have a special event with the parents, possibly after church on the 16th. It was decided to have a small brunch during Fellowship time (10:15-10:45) and invite the Sunday school parents. We will have muffins/quick breads, beverages and a hash brown breakfast bake that cooks in a crock pot.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – No report.
- ✝ **SPRC** – Tim Gaskell and Verna Drake need to arrange a time to meet with Pastor Pam.
- ✝ **Worship** – Pastor Pam asked for opinions on using the PowerPoint slides during worship. Most thought it was a positive addition. Pastor Pam is trying to plan ahead on her sermon topics.
- ✝ **Education** – Children are performing during worship on Dec. 16th. There are some new families attending. OCC project went well.
- ✝ **Lay Leadership** – Ardith Hoff went to a lay class in Monroe, WI and it was a good event.
- ✝ **Missions** - Baskets of Love is the mission for November and the food will be purchased and distributed sometime in December. Norseland Christmas Gifts will be the December mission of the month, but we will have to announce this in November due to needing the gifts by Dec. 9th.

Pastor's Report: For Advent, Pastor Pam is going to focus on the different characters in the Christmas story (animals, John the Baptist, Joseph, Mary).

- Life Touch photography has asked if we would like to have them do a church directory. There would be no cost to the church.
- In January, there will be a meeting at Retreat UMC about investing the church's money and getting a better return on the investments.
- ACH (Automatic Clearing House) can provide a service of possible automatic offering donation from a person's checking account.
- Pastor Pam will be doing a daily message on WVRQ January 7-11
- Pastor Pam has joined the Viroqua Rotary to have more of a presence in the area.
- Vernon Communications asked if we will continue to provide our Sunday worship services for their channel 15. Pastor Pam tried to email them to see if they would accept just the sermon or not but hasn't heard back from them.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Linda Weilnau

Small Study Group – Dec. 2 and 16

This month we will start a small study group session, covering the book *Flood Gates, Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church* by Sue Nilson Kibbey. This study group will be held from 9:30-10:15 AM on Sunday, Dec. 2nd and 16th. If you want to spend some time sharing thoughts and ideas with your fellow Christians, please come and join us as we explore this book and discover ways we can help facilitate a new spiritual momentum for our church.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Come and join us in celebrating the birth of Christ on December 24th at 7:00 PM for a candlelight service. It's a time of singing Christmas hymns and giving praises to God for giving us His Son, Jesus, the greatest gift of all!



Craft Show in La Farge – Dec. 1st

Women of Faith will have tables at the Crafty Cookers Craft Show at LaFarge High School on December 1st from 9:00-3:00. We will have crafts and baked goods, featuring hand decorated sugar cookies. The proceeds will be used to help pay for our Christmas food baskets which are distributed locally to people in need.

Women of Faith Christmas Celebration – Dec. 4th

WOF will hold their annual Christmas celebration at Borgen's in Westby on Tuesday, December 4 at 1:00 p.m. All Driftless Ministries women (and men) are invited to attend. We order from the menu and everyone pays for their own meal. We do not exchange gifts but instead suggest that everyone donate \$10 toward the Christmas baskets we distribute before Christmas. Please call Sheri Ballard at 608-632-9007 or Marla Lavold at 608-689-2590 to let us know you are coming. It is a fun fellowship time and we hope you will join us.



Community Christmas Program – Dec. 9th

Everyone is welcome to join us for a wonderful evening of music, fellowship, and food! Coming up on Sunday, December 9th starting at 4 p.m., the New Hope UMC will host a community Christmas program featuring music by The DisChords. Fellowship and a delicious meal provided by the church will then follow the program. Again, this event is FREE and open to everyone, so invite your friends and neighbors to come on out for a night of Christmas festivity and help us celebrate the true reason for the season!

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

~ Luke 2:14

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00-12:00 – Cookie Walk 9:00-3:00 – Craft Show @ La Farge
2 Advent Begins! ☩9:30 AM – Youth Sunday School & Study Group ☩10:15 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service (Communion)	3	4 1:00 PM – WOF Christmas Celebration @ Borgen's	5	6	7 Pastor Pam's Sabbath Day	8
9 ☩9:30 AM – Youth Sunday ☩10:15 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service 4:00 PM – Community Christmas Program with "The DisChords" @ New Hope	10	11	12 5:00 PM - Caroling & Chili Super 6:00 PM or when done caroling – Church Board Meeting ... All are welcome!	13	14 Pastor Pam's Sabbath Day	15
16 ☩9:30 AM – Youth Sunday School & Study Group ☩10:15 AM – Fellowship Brunch ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service (Children perform)	17	18	19	20	21 Pastor Pam's Sabbath Day	22
23 ☩9:30 AM – Youth Sunday School ☩10:15 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service	24 7:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27	28 Pastor Pam's Sabbath Day	29
30 ☩10:15 AM – Fellowship ☩10:45 AM – Worship Service	31					