

*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
May 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Build Peace in Times of War

by Pastor Erika Martinez-Flores

*"Jesus said, "Peace be with you!"
~ John 20:21a*

Is there something that we Christians can contribute to the establishment of peace? At this time, it is necessary to point out that the Christian way is not the only call to make peace or much less the one that has a definitive answer for establishing peace. For the followers of the gospel, it is understood that peace is a consequence of our faith; that is, it is the experience of discovering God's presence in history. Peace is a gift and a task because peace is born from within and is a personal experience to be shared in communion with others.

Peace as a gift is the fruit of God's presence among us. But let's not get confused. Affirming that peace is a gift seems to free us from our responsibility to make and keep peace. But let's understand, in the Christian experience, every gift affirms the absolute majesty of God. But, at the same time, every gift implies a human response that welcomes that gift, allows it to unfold in history, and makes it bear fruit as in the parable of the talents.

In this sense, the Christian faith provides a profound meaning of peace as a gift and an acquired commitment. As a gift, it exceeds our expectations and always overwhelms us. We will never get to say, "this is peace", "peace exists here" or "we have achieved peace". It will, however, always give us the opportunity to make peace possible, to solidify it, to give it visibility, to live it, to savor it and to experience it.

The greeting of the Risen One "Peace be with you" (John 20:21) invites us to build peace among us. For this, it is necessary to reach peoples' hearts so that peace may spring from within because it is necessary for peace to reside within each of us. Let each of us experience peace. May everyone live in peace. Without this personal experience, it is very difficult to think of a peaceful society. In this way, along with the search for universal peace, there is the question of peace within each of us. Build peace from within so that it can be realized on the outside!

In full celebration of Easter, we will see that the strength of the cross and the hope of the resurrection will become the strength of God for those who believe and the force that works in the conversion of all those involved in the

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creation of peace. Peace is everyone's task. Everyone should strive to create peace and not support the false idea that peace can be achieved through war. May the Lord of peace give us His Spirit tonight to truly be builders of peace!

May God be with all of you,
Pastor Erika Martinez-Flores



Pastor Erika's Schedule:

Thursday at Westby UMC – 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

- 3rd Thursday of the month (11:30 AM - 1:00 PM)

Sunday morning before worship – 8:30 AM – 8:50 AM

** Pastor Erika will be on vacation from May 2-16. If you have any pastoral needs during this time, please feel free to contact Pastor Jorge at 608-359-8181.*

Contact Information:

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May Anniversaries

May 28 – Tim & Jane Gaskell

May 30 – Mike & Julie Fargen



Sunday School News

The Sunday school kids presented the Palm Sunday message with music, sign language, an object lesson and scripture. Thank you to kids and families for being part of this celebration of Holy Week leading up to Easter. The last week of April we celebrated the confirmation of Adey Oliver. The last day of Sunday school for the school year is May 1. We will celebrate with our traditional Sundaes on Sunday, a Mother's Day surprise and a final game day. Thank you parents, for sharing your very wonderful kids this year ~ they are an amazing blessing!!

We're planning to do a summer get together again ~ once a month on a Sunday evening for food and fun! We will be in touch with details.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | **SUMMER 2022** |

More information to come!!!

Dates have not yet been decided. Your prayers are appreciated. ~ Suggestions and ideas are welcome!

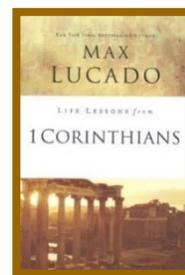
Mission of the Month – Church Accessibility

It is easy for most of us to come into our church, but for others, even a small step or heavy door can make it difficult if not impossible. We have some memorial gifts that have been designated toward improving access, but we need more to complete the job. An automatic door opener is one part, but we also need to extend the existing concrete pad to make the door accessible for people with walkers and wheelchairs. Current estimates are that it will require around \$6,000. to complete the project. With that goal in mind, we would like to challenge the congregation to donate generously, in an ongoing way. A symbolic chart on the mission bulletin board will help us measure our progress toward this worthy goal. Thank you in advance for your support.

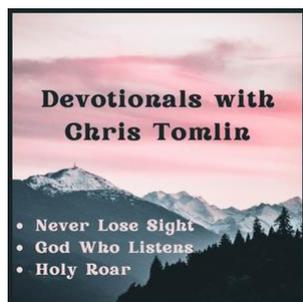


Growing in Faith Study Group

As we finish our discussion of 1 Corinthians this month, we will meet on Wednesday, May 11th at 6:00 PM to discuss Lesson 11 (Christ's Victory Over Death - 1 Corinthians 15:20-34) and on Wednesday, May 25th at 6:00 PM to discuss Lesson 12 (Giving to God's Work - 1 Corinthians 16:1-11). Please come and join us for a time of fellowship and thought-provoking discussion, even if you don't have the book.



In June, we have decided to continue to use Max Lucado's "Life Lessons from" study book series and will use the "Life Lessons from 2 Corinthians". We will plan on purchasing these study books the middle of May so they can arrive by the beginning of June. The anticipated cost of the book will be \$10-\$13, depending on whether the books are on sale at the time of purchase. If you would like to purchase a book to join our next study sessions, please let Linda or Jane know by May 15th



May Online Studies – Devotionals with Chris Tomlin

The music of Grammy and Dove-award winning Contemporary Christian artist Chris Tomlin has inspired and motivated people around the world to worship our Amazing God. Now, during the month of May, you will have the opportunity to dive into some of his amazing songs like "Holy Roar", "Is He Worth?", "Good Good Father", and "Nobody Loves Me Like You" with several devotionals as part of our Interactive Online Bible Studies! Together, we will: fix our eyes on God, strive to never lose sight of His goodness and glory, and be encouraged to talk to God more and more as we dive deeper into the character of our amazing God who listens.

Come and dive into the Word through the music of Chris Tomlin with us! We welcome you to join us for all three of these studies, or just one or two – whatever works best for you!

- "Never Lose Sight" will begin on Tuesday, May 3rd. To access this 11-day study, use the following link: <https://bible.com/p/50918613/a4e8eef272fa3a09f2c4d75d4044463c>
- "God Who Listens" will begin Saturday, May 14th. Use the following link to access this 7-day study: <https://bible.com/p/50918660/90e0b9c3c9da6adb74b499d5fd8d4092>
- "Holy Roar: Live from Church" will begin on Saturday, May 21st. To access this 5-day study, us this link: <https://bible.com/p/50918677/2669bc0c308d8237e03d38408f247299>

These online studies can be accessed through the Bible App or [bible.com](https://www.bible.com) website, which are free resources. In addition to wonderful devotional/reading plans, they provide a verse of the day, and you will be able to read the Bible in a wide variety of versions. The Bible App is available in your app store on your mobile device, or accessible online at www.bible.com.



Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Please join our monthly Prayer Group on Thursday, May 5th at 10:00 AM for a time of fellowship with our Lord through prayer. Everyone who attends can offer up prayer requests, then the group prays for these requests. Praying starts with whoever feels like beginning then anyone can add their prayers. Pastor Erika does the ending prayer. The time commitment can vary from 15-60 minutes. There is a prayer request box in the narthex so anyone can drop their prayer requests in the box and this group will pray for them. Prayer is powerful, so it's important that we prayer together to combine our prayer strengths.



Thursday Morning Bible Study

Come and join us on Thursday, May 21st for our monthly morning Bible study group. We will continue with studying the book of Psalm, lead by Pastor Erika. We'll start at 11:30 AM, so come for a time of learning, good discussion and fellowship.

Westby United Methodist Church - Board Meeting † April 20, 2022

Present: Pastor Erika Martinez-Flores, Tim Gaskell, Jane Gaskell, Ardith Hoff, Verna Drake, Jean Shore, Julie Fargen and Linda Weilnau

Opening: Tim Gaskell opened with prayer.

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

Treasurer's Report: Verna Drake provided the financial reports, which included the report for the month of March, Year-to-Date report, special accounts, and the credit card statement. These reports were emailed to the board prior to the meeting. Verna indicated that the insurance is now billed quarterly instead of monthly. Jane Gaskell and Ardith Hoff motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- † Review COVID Policy – It was decided that at this time masking will be optional.
- † Painting and Fixing Interior Walls – It was decided to paint the part in the fellowship hall that was repaired and wait on painting the other interior walls at a later date. We decided that obtaining an automatic door opener should be a higher priority for building improvements than painting the interior walls.
- † Mowing Position – Pastor Erika mentioned that someone from Viroqua UMC, Grady Hanson is interested in this position. Tim Gaskell said that Grady should contact him for more information about the position.
- † Automatic Door Opener – It was decided to make this the main project for building improvements. The cost will be at least \$6,000. We will need to start a donation campaign and probably do some fund raising. Jane Gaskell mentioned that Cornerstone Christian Academy had a "Take and Bake Pizza" fundraiser. Jane is going to talk to Kathy Clark to get more details about how this fundraiser went. Information about this project will be published in the May newsletter.

New Business:

- † May Baskets for Neighborhood (Marigolds in small plastic cups?) – It was decided to put marigolds in small plastic cups and give them to the residents at Norseland instead of doing May baskets for the neighborhood. We will need about 45 flowers. Jane Gaskell will create small notes to put in the cups. Ardith Hoff has some potting soil we can use. Verna Drake will purchase the flowers. Linda Weilnau will purchase the cups. We will meet after church on Sunday, May 15 to assemble the flowerpots.
- † Meal for Sunday School Parents – The last day of Sunday school is May 1, so it was decided to wait until the fall to discuss this project.
- † Mother's Day (May 8th) – Jane Gaskell will look into finding a small item to give to the ladies for Mother's Day.
- † Growing in Faith Study Book for June – It was decided to continue studying the New Testament in order, so we will do II Corinthians and continue with our regular meeting times during the summer. An announcement will be put in the bulletins and May newsletter to find out who wants to purchase a book to study II Corinthians.

- ✝ Cemetery Clean-up – We need to trim the grass around the stones, pick up sticks and check for leaning stones. Weed eaters will work well for doing the trimming. Verna Drake will check on the extent of what needs to be done and let others know so a date and time can be arranged to do this clean-up.
- ✝ Sons of Norway (May 14) – The Sons of Norway will be having their Frokost breakfast at our church during Syttende Mai. They will get a key from Jane Gaskell on Thursday, May 12th.

Business from Board Committees:

- ✝ **Trustees** – This was taken care of during the discussions about the painting and automatic door opener.
- ✝ **SPRC** – No report.
- ✝ **Worship** – Confirmation is Sunday, April 24th. The confirmation students and their mentors decided on the setup of the worship service. Cavan Fang will be giving the message on May 8th and Tim Gaskell will be giving the message on May 15th.
- ✝ **Education** – The last day of Sunday school is May 1st. They will be doing a Mother's Day project for their mothers. There will be a monthly gathering on Sunday evenings during the summer in addition to VBS.
- ✝ **Lay Leadership** – No report.
- ✝ **Missions** - The automatic door opener will be the mission of the month for May.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Erika asked if we want to start passing around the offering plate again. We decided to keep it as is. Pastor Erika will be on vacation from May 2-16. The Thursday Bible Study group is continuing with the study of Psalms. Dr. Amanda Stein is going to be our new district superintendent.

Jean Shore motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.
Minutes submitted by Linda Weilmann



Flowers for Norseland

It was suggested that we try to brighten the rooms for the residents at Norseland by providing a flower in a small container for their room. After worship on Sunday, May 15th, we will form an assembly line to plant a flower in a colorful plastic cup and place a small note in the cup to let the residents know we're thinking about them. We will have all of the necessary items, so we just need you to come and help with the planting.

Automatic Door Opener Project

As stated in the Mission of the Month article, it will be beneficial to many if our church installs an automatic door opener for the west entrance. This project is a major undertaking financially, so we would appreciate any suggestions for fundraising projects to help make our church easy for everyone to access. If you have any fundraising ideas, you are welcome to present them at a board meeting or tell one of the church board members.

We will need everyone's assistance to reach the goal of \$6,000 to accomplish this task. After we have reached our fundraising goal, we can get bids for the project and then establish a start date for the construction.

Please be praying for this project: for ways to raise the funds, and that the fund raising will go well.



Women of Faith – Memorial Day Dinner (May 30th @ Faith UMC)

The Women of Faith will be hosting a Memorial Day Dinner on Monday, May 30th from 11:00-1:00. The menu includes chicken & noodles, beef & noodles, salads, dinner rolls, beans, dessert and beverage. Cost is \$12 for adults, \$7 for children ages 7-12, and children ages 6 and under are free. Everyone is invited.

LITTLE HEROES FROM THE BIBLE

Young in their age, but not in their willingness to be used by God. Sometimes we think that God only uses great leaders and those who are mature in faith, but God can use anyone who has a humble and obedient heart. This is the case of these boys and girls. Despite their young age, they were great heroes in biblical history for God's will to be done. Throughout this year we will be meeting some of these great little heroes. This is just an aid to encourage you, dear parents, to take time out and sit down with your children and share exciting family Bible stories. Do not forget at the beginning and at the end of each time, to pray to put yourself and your family in God's hands through prayer.

DAVID, THE BRAVE LITTLE SHEPHARD

SAMUEL 17.1-58

Long ago, in the ancient Kingdom of Israel, David was born, the youngest son of a shepherd from Bethlehem. David was a boy from a humble family who helped his father with the sheep while his older brothers fought in the army of King Saul, the first king of Israel, against the Philistines.

The Philistines had the soldiers of King Saul terrified, because among their ranks was a warrior of enormous stature named Goliath. For many days Goliath shouted at the Israelites to choose a man to fight with him: "Let the bravest among you Israelites fight against me! If he wins, we Philistines will be your slaves, but if he loses it will be you Israelites who submit."

Nobody wanted to fight against the great Goliath, the greatest and most fearsome warrior of all time.

Every day young David brought food to his brothers in the camp. One day, David was earlier than usual, so he heard the threat of Goliath. "What's going on? Why does no one want to fight? David asked his brothers.

"Goliath has been like this for forty days, but nobody has enough courage to face that grumpy giant" -answered one of his brothers. "If no one does, then I'll go," said young David. David's brothers got very angry: "War is not your thing, boy," the eldest of David's brothers told him. "Your place is with father, taking care of sheep." "I will defeat the giant!" David insisted.

Some soldiers who heard the conversation ran to warn King Saul. The king approached David and said, "Young David, you cannot fight Goliath. You are small and young, and Goliath is a great warrior with experience.

"I may be small, but I am brave," said David. "I killed a bear and a lion that took my father's sheep. I'll take down that Philistine too. God will help me." "Go then," said King Saul, "and God be with you."

David took five stones from a nearby river and put them in his backpack, next to his sling. He then went to where Goliath was and said: "Goliath, accepted the challenge. I will fight for my people." Goliath got very angry. He couldn't believe that King Saul would send a little shepherd boy to fight. But still he accepted. "I will finish you off in the blink of an eye, you little vermin!" Goliath bellowed.

"You come to me with a sword, a spear and a javelin, but I come against you in the name of God. With the help of him I will bring you down." So, David took his slingshot from him, placed a stone and threw it at Goliath. The stone hit the giant's forehead with such force and precision that he fell to the ground, defeated.

This is how the young and brave David freed the Israelites from the Philistines and gave a lesson in courage, skill and faith to all his people.



DAVID, THE BRAVE LITTLE SHEPHERD

Scripture: 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel

Age: older than 15 years old

Address: United Kingdom of Israel.

Father: Jesse

Funny facts:

- In addition to being a shepherd, warrior and king, he was also a musician.
- He has a best friend named Jonathan.

Interesting facts:

- He was king for 44 years and was considered one of the best kings of Israel.
- He wrote more than 70 psalms (songs).



May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 AM – Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Last Day of Sunday School	2 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	3 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	4 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	5 10:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	6 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	7
8 <i>Happy Mother's Day</i> 9:00 AM –Worship Service – Guest Speaker: Cavan Fang 10:00 AM – Fellowship	9 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	10 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	11 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Study Group	12 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	13 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	14
15 9:00 AM – Worship Service - Guest Speaker: Tim Gaskell 10:00 AM – Fellowship & Flowers for Norseland	16 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	17 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	18 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	19 11:30 AM - Morning Bible Study Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	20 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	21
22 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	23 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	24 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	25 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Study Group	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	27 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	28
29 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	30 <i>Memorial Day</i>	31 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 ...

“God, Give us the courage to dream big dreams. Please open our minds and hearts so we can have new breakthroughs to Your new possibilities. Amen.”

God is able to do much more than we ask, or think, through His power working in us.

~ Ephesians 3:20 (NLV)