

*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
September 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

Effective Work

by Pastor Erika Martinez-Flores

*"They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work"
Nehemiah 2:18b*

While we are analyzing the Letter of the Apostle addressed to the Church of Ephesus, we are also discovering our mission as a Church. Knowing what our purpose is and being clear about our mission, the next step is to do what is necessary to be able to fulfill it. As children of God, we have gifts and talents that have been given to do it to which we have been called. This leads us to put into practice methods and strategies to be able to act effectively and use our gifts more effectively. The planning of strategies and optimization of resources is not a new topic within the biblical story; for this we can take a quick look at the Book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was cupbearer to the King of the Persian Empire. Being a cupbearer was like a kind of prime minister. They say that after his wife, the cupbearer was the most influential person in a King. After the captivity in Babylon ended, the people of God began to return and rebuild the city, but even though several years had passed, the city was without walls.

When Nehemiah found out about the situation of the wall of Jerusalem and its gates, he did not stay with his arms, but decided to take an active part in solving the problems of his people. He was concerned about the situation in Jerusalem and the remnant, and he took this personally, crying, praying, fasting, mourning, and taking action. Nehemiah's actions were not improvised, he had a plan, which allowed him to effectively rebuild the city walls. Let's see what is the Strategic Planning process that Nehemiah went through:

- 1) He investigated the current condition of the walls.
- 2) He fasted and prayed asking God for forgiveness, understanding and direction.
- 3) He developed a plan.
- 4) He prayed to God for the plan and resources.
- 5) He explained the vision and sought to obtain the resources (four months later – see beginning of Nehemiah chapter two).
- 6) He explained the framework of realization of his plan.

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- 7) He gathered the workers and explained the vision.
- 8) He worked despite the opposition of the enemies.
- 9) He achieved the result.

Having a plan will help us to see better results of the investments made and the time and effort spent in everything related to the projects of the church. It is true that Nehemiah faced obstacles, but even so, he remained firm, confident, and focused. I recommend that we learn from the experience of Nehemiah, who even though many people knew the need for the walls of Jerusalem, he in particular did not remain comfortable, but decided to take part in the transformative action through a logical process under the direction of God.

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

Contact Information:

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September Birthdays

Sept. 11 – Amanda Oney-Siam

Sept. 18 – Lois Gerling

Sept. 21 – Sara Berg

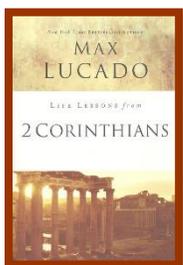


Sunday School News

Nine kids from the Sunday school crew traveled to Viroqua for a combined VBS the evening of August 14th. "Sing Songs to the Lord" was the theme from the book of Psalms. Kids sang praise songs and played games. They traveled to stations to learn that God made them, wants them to seek peace, is with them every day and especially when they're afraid. There were crafts, snacks and tacos! Thank you to everyone who donated, prayed, and volunteered with this important ministry for kids. Thank you Pastor Erika for your leadership and your amazing heart.



Planning will begin soon for Sunday school in the fall. We will begin sometime after the Vernon County fair – dates and details will follow. Please let Jane know if you have ideas, suggestions or concerns as we get ready for a new school year.



Growing in Faith Study Group

We will continue with our study of 2 Corinthians, using Max Lucado's "Life Lessons from 2 Corinthians" study book. The study sessions begin at 6:00 PM. Anyone is welcomed to come and join the discussion, even if you don't have the book. Just read the scriptures prior to the study time and then come and join the conversation!

- Lesson 6 (2 Corinthians 6:1-10) on Wednesday, September 14th
- Lesson 7 (2 Corinthians 7:2-16) on Wednesday, September 28th



Thursday Morning Prayer Group

Please and help us flex our “prayer muscles” by coming to our monthly Prayer Group on Thursday, September 1st at 10:00 AM for a time of fellowship with our Lord through prayer. Prayer is a powerful resource, so it’s important that we prayer together to combine our prayer strengths.

Everyone who attends can offer up prayer requests, and everyone has an opportunity to offer up prayers to our Lord. The time commitment can vary from 15-60 minutes.

There is a prayer request box in the narthex for prayer requests.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Come and join us on Thursday, September 22nd at 9:30 AM for our monthly Thursday Morning Bible Study group. We will continue our study of the book of Psalm, led by Pastor Erika. Come for a time of learning, good discussion and fellowship.



September Online Studies – God is Always with Us!

In an increasingly connected world, it may seem counterintuitive that Americans feel lonelier than ever. Yet, a 2018 study found that roughly half of the 20,000 Americans surveyed reported feeling alone or left out with little to no meaningful in-person interactions. And that was before a global pandemic dramatically changed our lives, making us more isolated for a period of time. However, in the face of our feelings of loneliness, the truth is that we are truly never alone! God is always with us! In his final words to his disciples, Jesus promised that “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

Through a series of three quick studies during the month of September, we will be examining this great truth: God is ALWAYS with us. We invite you to join us, beginning Tuesday, September 6th as we reaffirm this truth in our lives and grow in closer relationship with our Lord. You can join us for all three studies, or whatever works best for you! To join our studies, use the links below!

- “You Are Never Alone” by Max Lucado – a 5-day study beginning Tues. Sept. 6th
<https://bible.com/p/53235554/3edae72206294ccbf24040b5492cc6e1>
- “God is With You Every Day” by Max Lucado – a 14-day study beginning Sun. Sept. 11th
<https://bible.com/p/53235563/3928d5d97f56a343f7d5437d4a793c85>
- “Trusting God in the Eye of the Storm” by – a 5-day study beginning Sun. Sept. 25th
<https://bible.com/p/53235569/46f8a01cf42930cd5bf605a292b484fd>

The online study 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.

**Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and he will establish your plans.**

~ Proverbs 16:3

Mission of the Month – Baskets of Love

This is the time of year when we start the series of missions that we like to complete before Christmas. In September we will start collecting for our traditional “Baskets of Love”. In the past two or three years we have switched from filling actual containers with food, to giving gift certificates to local businesses so that people can choose what they need rather than trying to provide ingredients for a holiday meal that some families may not be able to use. For those who wish to contribute, we will be accepting donations starting in September, but can also accept them up until the middle of November, if you prefer to wait. That way we have the option of spreading out our giving over a few months rather than collecting everything in November or December. If you wish to give, please make your checks payable to the church or put cash in an envelope marked “Baskets of Love”. We will buy gift certificates with whatever we have received by November 15th. We would also like the names and addresses of families or individuals who might need some extra help. Thank you!



Westby United Methodist Church - Board Meeting ✠ August 17, 2022

The Westby UMC board meeting for August was cancelled due to too many board members not being able to attend the meeting.

The next Westby UMC board meeting will be on Wednesday, September 21st at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to attend.

**Many are the plans in a person's heart,
but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.**

~ Proverbs 19:21

Prayer Seed: Dear Abba, We ask that You guide us in what projects we do as a church body and as Your children so that Your will is done. Please direct our planning so we can work effectively as a group to serve You, so You can be glorified. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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.

John, the Beloved Disciple.

Mark 1.16-20, Matthew 4. 17-25

Do you know what a disciple is? A disciple is a person who follows a leader, to learn from him and to follow his example. John was a disciple of Jesus and was the youngest of the 12 of them.

He was about 17 years old when Jesus called him and said, "Follow me." He worked as a fisherman along with his brother James and his father Zebedee. He was also Peter's companion. John, James, and Peter followed Jesus immediately. Then they walked with him throughout his life. From town to town, from city to city, they preached the word of God. John loved Jesus very much. One afternoon, when they did not receive Jesus and the disciples in a city of Samaria, John and his brother wanted to ask for fire from heaven so that the whole town would burn.

-Don't think like that, Jesus told them. I also love the people of this city, even if they don't love me. I want them to be saved too.

On another occasion, John, Jacob and his mother asked Jesus for something special. -We would like to sit next to you in heaven; one to the right and one to the left. "I cannot promise you such a thing," Jesus answered. The heavenly Father knows for whom he has prepared that place. You don't know what you ask for.

Surely they asked for that because they wanted to be close to Jesus.

John followed Jesus throughout his life. He first walked with Jesus while He was on earth. When Jesus ascended to heaven, John traveled to different places preaching the gospel. For many years he served as the pastor of the church in Ephesus.

Juan also devoted himself to writing. He wrote his experiences when he walked with Jesus, he also wrote 3 letters that speak of God's love and, later, when John was old, he was taken prisoner for preaching the gospel and taken to the Island of Patmos. While Juan was on this island, he wrote one more book: the book of Revelations.



John, the Beloved Disciple



Scripture: Mark 1.16-20, Matthew 4.17-25

Age: 17 years old

Address: Galilee

Parents: Zebedee and Salome

Funny facts:

- his nickname was "son of thunder"
- he is represented with an eagle, because in his writings he teaches about Jesus as Son of God.

Interesting facts:

- he was the only disciple who was there when Jesus died
- he took care of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 10:00 AM - Prayer Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	2 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	3
4 9:00 AM –Worship Service (Communion) 10:00 AM – Fellowship	5 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	6 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	7 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	8 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	9 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	10
11 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	12 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	13 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	14 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Study Group	15 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	16 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	17
18 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	19 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	20 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	21 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Church Board Meeting	22 9:30 AM - Morning Bible Study Group 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	23 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	24
25 9:00 AM – Worship Service 10:00 AM – Fellowship	26 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	27 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	28 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site 6:00 PM – Study Group	29 11:30 AM – Senior Meal Site	30 Pastor Erika's Sabbath Day	

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)

