

The Willow Word

A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church

God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving

Living into Lent

Lent is the forty-day period of preparation before Easter that invites us to relive the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry. Just as it was a time of testing and strengthening for Jesus, so it can be for us. This year, we will live into Lent by taking a six-week tour of the Christian life, one that is fully engaged in risk-taking mission and service for Christ.

Ash Wednesday:

Lent begins with an evening service of ashes at 7:30 p.m. on Ash Wednesday. In addition to giving up, what is it that we are taking up for Christ this year?

The Sundays of Lent:

The Scripture readings for the Sundays in Lent invite us to examine different stages in our spiritual lives. At each stage there is both peril and possibility. And through it all is the amazing promise of God that an awesome life is ours for the living.

Discussion Groups:

Each Sunday between the worship services, we will be providing additional conversation time in the Wesley Room for those who want to take the themes of the morning's lessons a little further. If you'd like to facilitate one of these gatherings, we will provide you with questions for pondering. Contact one of the pastors if you can serve as a small group leader one Sunday.

Lenten Labyrinth Walks:

Each Tuesday evening of Lent, starting on February 28, you will have the opportunity to do some interior work on the themes of the week while walking the labyrinth in the youth room downstairs. Similar to our Advent Walks in December, we will host a time for walking the labyrinth 5:00-8:00 p.m. on Tuesday nights and leave the labyrinth up during the week so that you can take a self-guided walk using the printed materials provided.

Be looking for the next Willow Word for information about Holy Week and Easter Services.

Lay Leadership Council And Mission Team Consider Mission Focus For 2012

At the February 15 meeting of the Lay Leadership Council, our Risk-Taking Mission and Service Team will meet with Lay Leadership for discussion of our direction and vision for mission work at Willow Glen UMC. This conversation will include the interests and needs we have in serving in our community and in the world. In addition, we will consider the faithful reasons we engage in mission work together. Are we simply trying to do good for others? Are we hoping to grow in our discipleship as well? The responses we bring will help guide our work together as a congregation. If you are interested in mission and service, please come and be part of this conversation at the Lay Leadership Council meeting on Wednesday, February 15, at 7:30 p.m. in Woodhaven.

February 2012

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Sunday Worship

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

Contemporary Worship

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Time

10:00 – 10:45 a.m.

Christian Education/Sunday School

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Traditional Service

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Fellowship Time

Church Staff

Rebecca Ireland
Senior Pastor

Susan Smith
Pastor of Children &
Family Ministries

Lisa Jacobs
Director of
Joint Youth Ministries

Lorene Sheridan
Director of
Weekday Ark Ministries

Robert Birnstihl
Organist & Director
of Music Ministries

Barbara Brustrom
Conductor,
the Chancel Choir

Nichole Boaz
Director, the Praise Band

Tom Mounts
Director,
the Willow Glen Ringers

Becky LaBree
Office & Facilities Manager

Karen Kwon
Wedding Coordinator

Getting Our House In Order

On February 19, Transfiguration Sunday, I hope to share the beginnings of a vision for ministry that has been slowly coming into focus for me after seven months as your pastor. I want more than anything to pose some questions and help you formulate some answers, so that we can concentrate all our energies on making disciples of Jesus Christ. Together, we can change our world here in Willow Glen.

However, before we can fully capture the vision and run with it, we need to get our house in order and our people in shape. So, I see 2012 as the year to do the prep work we need before we can really release our passion.

During my pastoral evaluation in December, I set out goals for myself and shared them with the Staff Parish Relations Committee. They have asked me to share them with you, which I gladly do, because I will need your help in achieving them.

Getting the house in order:

I see a real need to work on building the congregation's trust around money in this church. To that end, I will make it a priority to work with the Extravagant Generosity Team (EGT) to increase both our accountability and transparency regarding church finances. Specifically, I will:

- Continue the work of separating out the tasks of Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Money Counters to install proper checks and balances.
- Ensure that the members of the EGT have complete and accurate reports upon which to base their decisions.
- Assist the EGT in developing a budget and a plan for staying within it.
- Help the EGT to establish a protocol by which bills are paid and shortfalls are communicated to the congregation.
- Oversee regular reporting of church finances in the bulletins, newsletter and email news.
- Put more resources and creativity into the stewardship campaign for next year.

Getting our heads together:

When I arrived there was much unfinished business waiting for me. That's true of every appointment. In the coming year, I will strive to:

- Guide the congregation in making a sound decision about the unfinished renovation project.
- Begin the hard conversations about stewardship and staffing in the context of the church's evolving mission.
- Work on a plan with a goal of full payment of apportionments within five years, showing measurable improvement each year.
- Work with the preschool to redefine the relationship between the church and preschool; renew or recreate bylaws for the preschool.

Getting our people in shape:

There is so much potential in this congregation, but it must be developed. We won't go forward unless we are intentional about supporting our current leaders and identifying and nurturing new leaders who can flesh out a vision for ministry. Therefore, this year, I will:

- Provide at least two opportunities for leadership development.
- Support the Risk-Taking Mission and Service group as our focus group for 2012.
- Build a worship team for passionate worship. • Provide resources and support for band to strengthen the early service (copyright compliance, music selection, worship education).

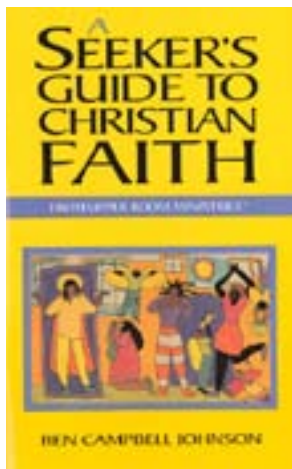
Getting back to growing:

Our denomination is serious about growth, both spiritual and numerical, and church leaders want to see measurable fruits of our faith. As a baseline, I will labor to:

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Sustainable Living Group

This once-a-month gathering of those interested in creation care will have its first meeting at Woodhaven on Thursday, February 2, at 7:30 p.m. Pastor Rebecca envisions a place where we meet to read some Scripture out of the Green Bible (a Bible with all the creation texts in green ink!) and a prayer out of the book, Earth Gospel, and then discuss different ways to make our lifestyles more earth-friendly. We can encourage each other (go get that bike tire fixed; remember to leave your cloth bags in the car; buy local produce; learn how to cook with kale!) and also share resources (what kind of compost bin should I buy? what is the best earth-friendly laundry soap?) and ideas for advocacy (what would really make a difference in our energy usage? how do we promote it?). The group will have other great ideas and that's a good thing. We will invent it as we go.



Exploring Christianity

Seekers Class Begins February 26

A small-group experience for those interested in membership, and all those who want to explore a deeper faith with these new faces in our congregation

At the Seekers Class we offer you the opportunity to experience a small group environment that introduces you to tools to help you grow in your Christian faith, and to understand ways in which Willow Glen UMC can support you in that effort.

The class meets for six Sundays beginning February 26 from 4pm to 6pm in the Woodhaven Retreat Center back room. Childcare is available at no charge in our preschool building during this time.

At Willow Glen United Methodist Church, we welcome everyone regardless of membership status. Joining this class does not constitute a commitment to membership, only an interest in pursuing an intentional faith journey. We hope you will prayerfully consider joining us on February 26. Please pre-register with Grace Praisewater or Ingrid Quigley.

100 Day Bible Challenge

Do you want to be a part of it?

By Lisa Jacobs

Who: Parents, students and leaders! Anyone who wants to challenge their devotional life and get an overview of the Bible.

What: An overview of important stories and lessons from the Old and New Testament

When: Daily. It could take as little as 5 minutes if you just read the one thing it asks you to, or as long as you want if you spend time in prayer, journaling or writing down questions you might have.

Where: In your home, at the park, at the breakfast table, before American Idol, in the bath...anywhere you can fit in time to read or listen to the Bible.

Why: The habits of our faith are important and our knowledge and understanding of scripture is integral, not just on Sunday and Wednesday. This is a manageable, accountable time of Bible reading that a group of people is committed to doing together!

How: Each day, read your small chunk/chapter of the Bible and put a check mark by it! Here's the schedule: <http://myemail.constantcontact.com/100-Day-Challenge-for-Students--leader-and-parents.html?oid=1101668541490&aid=zrMKXkJUq-8>

Incentives: It will help you grow in your faith. After 50 days we will get together and talk through what we read over a delicious meal and dessert hosted by Lisa!

The following WGUMC members have made the 100 Day commitment:

Kindra Ahrens

Dave Freeman

Natalie Benedict

Stephanie Freeman

Jeff Chamberlain

Laura Glynn

Amy Fall

Mekiah Glynn

Gabbie Fall

Alexandra Moore

Let Lisa know you are doing the challenge and she will add you to the list!

Getting Our House In Order

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- Comply with the Conference-mandated tasks of setting congregational goals and reporting on congregational vitality weekly.
- Take in ten new members in addition to confirmations.
- Increase average worship attendance.

As you can see, this is enough work for a whole church. Exactly! I can't begin to do this alone. I need God's help and I will need your help. If any of these goals grabs you, if you are feeling the Spirit's nudge to partner with me on any of these vital projects, please, please come talk to me. If you don't, Lord have mercy on me!

Kids Knitting Group

This group of young people is learning to knit or crochet so they can create blankets and hats for the homeless in our community. By working on their projects each Sunday during worship, we will eventually have items to donate to those in need. It's fun to learn something new, but it does take practice. We are meeting each Thursday at 4:00 p.m. in Woodhaven. Stop on by and knit with us awhile!

If you have yarn or needles or knitting looms that need a home, we would love to put them to use. Contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org) for more information.

Celebrating Church in Sunday School

Who do I see at church? How do we help people? Why is church important? How can I serve the church? In February, our kids will be finishing up a Sunday School unit on discipleship, and beginning to consider the questions above. In an age-appropriate way, each class will be learning what it means to be the church, who makes the church work, and how we can be the church in the world. They are discovering why the church is important to them and to others as they grow in their participation in our church family. We have such fun growing together in Sunday School! Join us at 10:00 a.m. each week.

A Note From The Ark

By Lorene Sheridan

Happy New Year Everyone! It is hard to believe that it is now the year 2012 – the days seem to fly by for all of us at the preschool. It makes us realize how very important each and every day is.

During the month of January we have been learning all about winter and bears. The children wore their pajamas to school, baked biscuits for their bears, and put their teddies to sleep in our hibernation room. The following week, those rascals came out of hibernation and had a picnic with the children!

During the month of February, we will be preparing for our Valentine's Day Parties. The children will be decorating their school and making Valentine Day holders for their valentines. We shall be very busy!

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Save The Dates!

Vacation Bible School 2012

June 25-29

More details coming soon!

Toyon Kids Camp 2012

July 8-13

Monte Toyon, Aptos, CA



Our conference offers summer camps for children and youth beginning in third grade. Pastor Susan and our CrossWalk kids are planning to attend Toyon Kids Camp at Monte Toyon in Aptos, July 8-13. However, there are lots of camps available throughout the summer. Check it out at www.cnumc.org (under Leadership Development). There is nothing like camp to bring you closer to God! Consider a week of faith, friends and fun at camp this summer. Registration will begin in February. If you have questions, contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org).

CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship
for Third, Fourth
and Fifth Graders



Friday, February 3 –
Saturday, February 4
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Wesley Room & Kohlstedt Hall

Cost: \$5.00

Theme: Camping under the stars

Don't miss this overnight CrossWalk campout! We will be pitching our tents in Kohlstedt Hall and camping under the stars of our wishes and prayers. There will be time for camp favorites, goofy fun, and good friends. CrossWalk is for all third, fourth and fifth graders. Please e-mail Pastor Susan to let her know you are coming.



Evening At The Movies

March 25, 5:00-8:30 p.m., at Almaden Hills UMC

Be part of this amazing evening, which includes:

- A catered buffet dinner
- A huge silent auction filled with gift cards, trips, time share stays, electronics, gift baskets, and services such as babysitting & yard work
- Breathtaking decorations with reminders of all of your favorite movies
- An amazing talent show

This fundraiser helps to pay for mission trips, summer camps, leadership retreats, and big events for the 150 teens in the Joint Youth Ministry, so that no one is left out because of finances. Tickets go on sale in mid-February.

Confirmation Class Begins February 7

Confirmation Class is that time in a teenager's life when they look closely at what it means to be a Christian in general, to be a United Methodist in particular, and to be a member of this church precisely. It is a great time to explore their faith, to grapple with some of the tough questions facing them individually and as a generation (and facing all people of faith), to get to know themselves and their church a bit better.

All seventh and eighth-graders are invited to join our Joint Youth Confirmation class which will regularly meet on Tuesdays from 5:30-7:00 p.m. (February through early May). Confirmation Sunday will be celebrated on May 6.

As part of the confirmation experience, Lisa and I ask that each youth find a mentor. This should be a member of the church (preferably not a family member) who is willing to spend some time sharing with a teen about his or her faith and church experience. Mentors will be expected to join us for two or three classes, stand up with their teens when they are confirmed, and spend several hours with the teens outside of class talking about various faith-related issues. If you would be interested in serving as a Confirmation mentor, please contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org).

February Activities

Most Youth Group events will be held at Willow Glen UMC this month.

Wednesday, February 1

6:30-8:30 p.m. – Leadership Team

Saturday, February 4

6:00-8:00 p.m. – “What If We Did Something” dinner and show for St. Jude at Cambrian Park

Sunday, February 5

12:30-2:30 p.m. – “Family Matters” picnic lunch and flag football game at the park

Tuesday, February 7

5:30-7:00 p.m. – Confirmation Kick-off

Wednesday, February 8

6:30-8:30 p.m. – “Dig Deeper I & II” Bible Study

Saturday, February 11

5:00-10:00 p.m. – “I Need a Valentine's Break” babysitting fundraiser

Sunday, February 12

4:00-5:30 p.m. – Junior High Youth Group

5:00-6:30 p.m. – Worship Band Practice

5:30-6:30 p.m. – Hip Hop Team Practice

6:30-8:30 p.m. – High School Youth Group

Tuesday, February 14

5:30-7:00 p.m. – Confirmation class

Wednesday, February 15

6:30-8:30 p.m. – Guys Night /Girls Night

Friday, February 17

5:00 p.m. – Leave for Southern California trip

Monday, February 20

5:00 p.m. – Return from Southern California trip

Sunday, February 26

4:00-5:30 p.m. – Junior High Youth Group

5:00-6:30 p.m. – Worship Band Practice

5:30-6:30 p.m. – Hip Hop Team Practice

6:30-8:30 p.m. – High School Youth Group

Tuesday, February 28

5:30-7:00 p.m. – Confirmation class

Wednesday, February 29

6:30-8:30 p.m. – “Dig Deeper I & II” Bible Study



Women's Groups

Heart and Hand

Third Thursday
7:00 p.m., Woodhaven
Childcare available Please
arrange with Susan Smith

Friendship Circle

Third Monday
Noon, Le Boulanger
Sue Johnson

Wesley Women

Fourth Tuesday
1:00 p.m., Woodhaven
Jane Vivian

The UMW Executive Board will meet Monday, February 20, at 9:30 a.m. in the Wesley Room. Please note the change in scheduled date.

UMW is open to all women regardless of church membership.

For more information about UMW, call Ruth Granfors

The deadline for the March *Willow Word* is February 25. Please send your story ideas and submissions to Leslie Chamberlain

UMW: New Officers, A New Calendar

Members of the 2012 Executive Board of United Methodist Women were recognized and installed in worship services on Sunday, January 22. They are:

- President, Alice Singh
- Vice President, Becky Morgan
- Secretary, Margery Epperson
- Treasurer, Pat Farrow
- Program Resources, Alice Singh
- Education and Interpretation, Ruth Granfors
- Social Action, Sue Johnson and Gerri Hodson
- Spiritual Growth, Fran Love
- Membership, Nurture and Outreach, Suzanne Selby
- Communications Coordinator, Jane Vivian
- Nominations, Patricia Madsen, Jane Vivian, Jacque Lauer
- Sunshine, Jacque Lauer



At a planning session on January 9, goals were set and plans formulated for the year ahead. Calendar items include regular monthly executive board meetings, general meetings in June, October and December, fund raising events and (tentatively) a retreat for Willow Glen women. Three small groups (or circles) hold monthly meetings which are open to all. See the side bar for information.

Membership in UMW is open to all women, regardless of church membership. Inquiries may be directed to any of those named above.

District Leadership Development And Membership Training Events

That's a long title for an event which takes just a few hours, but which results in officers being better prepared to carry out the work of the year ahead. Two such events have been scheduled. The first on Saturday, January 28, at Salinas UMC has already taken place, but another event is scheduled for Saturday, February 4, at Hillsdale UMC in San Mateo from 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.. Several members will be attending each event. For information, please contact Alice Singh.

Caring Hands Ministry

By Jacque Lauer

Who: Anyone interested in knitting and crocheting prayer shawls

When: Mondays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Where: Woodhaven

Handiwork provides an opportunity to meditate and fellowship while providing practical goods to those in need. Knitting and crocheting in solitude gives us a time and space to listen to God. Working with others allows us to celebrate God's presence and the gifts we make are a tangible symbol of God's love for us all.

For me, knitting connects me to the divine deeply and simply. It connects me to others and to my past. My female ancestors are connected to me through a four-ply strand of wool. Like me, and I hope my grand-daughters, these women kept their family's heads, toes and heart warm through the work of their hands.

Once very simple and useful, knitting/crocheting has deep symbolic meaning. It speaks to women's traditional ways of knowledge, of honoring domesticity, and of acknowledging the power of creating and giving. A knitting/crocheting ministry is domestic and maternal,

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Body Builders – So Far, So Good

Thank you to the kind and hospitable people who provided treats for Body Builders during the month of January. We have all enjoyed this time of fellowship and treats.

There are eleven more months in this year, and opportunities for everyone to take their turn at Sunday morning hospitality. The sign-up sheets are on the wall in the Wesley Room. If you have questions about what the responsibilities are, please get in touch with Beth Minton for the first service or Jane Vivian for the second service. We will help in any way we can to make Body Builders a pleasant experience for everyone.

Volunteers are also needed to help in the dishwashing department following Body Builders. This is an unglamorous but necessary job, which requires no experience and not a great time commitment. Please see Mark Bergmann or Lex Danson and find out when and how you can help perform this valuable service.

Willowmates Make Plans For 2012

At the January 20 gathering of Willowmates, plans were made and committees assigned for six meetings in 2012. Meeting dates selected were: March 16, May 18, September 21, November 16 and December 21. All members have received a schedule of dates and committee assignments. Each committee is free to plan the time, place and format for each event, and even to change the date if there is no conflict on the church calendar. This year's theme of "Showtime" was introduced in January with a review of the 1927 musical "Good News" and group singing of the hit tune from the show, "The Best Things in Life Are Free."

Willowmates have been meeting continuously since 1959, although there have been many changes in membership since that time. Membership is open to all adults, regardless of age, marital status or worship hour preference. For information, please see Dianne Oswald or Jane Vivian, or watch for future announcements.

San Jose Family Shelter Announces 2012 Dates

By mutual agreement, our dates for providing the Saturday evening meal at the Shelter for 2012 are: February 11, April 7, June 2 and October 6.

For February, there is a need for someone to make the spaghetti sauce, someone to prepare garlic bread, two people to provide 2 dozen cupcakes each, and 2 or 3 persons to help at the Shelter. Helping at the Shelter means being there at 4:00 p.m. to cook the pasta and put together the supper to be served at 5:00 p.m. After all the guests have been served, the volunteers are free to leave, usually no later than 6:30. This is a great opportunity to get to know some new people, and to perform a valuable service in the community. Please contact Jane Vivian for additional information.

A Note From The Ark

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We have only two openings in our preschool at this time in our Mon-Wed-Fri PM Pre-K class. Please pass this on to anyone who is interested. We are so very blessed to say all of our other sessions are full!

The time for us to start our Fall 2012-2013 Registration is approaching fast. For priority registration as a church member you will need to turn in the Pre-Registration Forms the week of February 12-18. If you are a current WGUMC preschool family, we will have the forms in your child's cubby ahead of time. If you are a church member, but do not have a child currently enrolled in the preschool, please stop by anytime during that week and we will give you the necessary forms. We look forward to speaking with you.

Caring Hands Ministry

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and its products soft and humble, but it reminds us that the divine is also in the small stuff.

Our mission is to provide hope, love, and healing to our community through the work of our hands while exploring our own relationship with God through knitting and crocheting. May God bless our hearts, minds and hands.

Sympathy

To the family of Betty Heckbert who died on January 4, 2012. A memorial service was held on January 15.

Spring Retreat At Mission Springs

By Ruth Granfors

The new El Camino Real District UMW will be hosting the Mission Springs Retreat in Scotts Valley starting at 4:00 p.m. March 16 until Sunday lunch, March 18. The purpose of the retreat is to provide a time for spiritual enrichment to a new or returning participant. Last year, Harriet Hosack, Susanne Selby, Ruby Goodnight, Ingrid Quigley and Ruth Granfors attended and, due to the rain storm, had quite a story to tell about Sunday morning!

The theme this year is "Everything has a crack in it, that's how the light gets in it." The presenters are Kathi McShane and Shirley Stephenson. Kathi is a United Methodist clergy person who currently serves as Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. She has been Senior Pastor at First United Methodist Church in Sacramento, and Associate Pastor at San Ramon Valley UMC. She also chairs the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Shirley is a member of San Ramon Valley UMC, and is a leader of Women's Faith Sharing groups and a Stephen Ministry Leader. She studied Spiritual Direction at Mercy Center, and has attended the two-year Academy of Spiritual Formation. She is a member of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Scholarships to attend the retreat are available through both the District and our local Willow Glen UMW. Willow Glen UMW will give \$100 towards the cost to any first-time attendees. We may also be willing to help with the cost of babysitting, if needed. Applications for scholarships and sign-ups to attend are on the corridor wall close to the stairs going up to the Pastor's study at WGUMC, or ask any UMW officer for information. Deadline for the scholarships is February 3. Registration to attend the retreat is due February 16. District Vice President Patricia Madsen, of our own church at Willow Glen, is the registrar, and can be contacted for more information.

Men's Retreat on March 10

Stan Praisewater is organizing a group to attend the Men's Retreat on March 10. In the past, this has been an overnight event, but this year it will be a one-day retreat. It is open to all men from Bay Area churches who want to dedicate themselves to be great men of faith.

Where: At Los Altos UMC in the Creekside Center.

When: March 10 at 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

What: The movie "Courageous" will be shown in two parts as part of the program.

The day will begin with breakfast, followed by music, Program 1, lunch, and Program 2. You will experience lively music and a great time of fellowship with other men. Donations will be requested to pay for the food. Sign-up today at <http://umc-men-2012.eventbrite.com>. Contact Stan for more information.

Willow Glen United Methodist Church

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