

# The Willow Word

A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church

God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving

## Willow Glen Advent Devotional 2015: Coming Home

For the past several years, we've been composing our own Advent Devotionals. We have learned each other's stories and shared each other's joys and sorrows. This year our theme for Advent is "Coming Home," and we know that you have a homecoming story to share. We are inviting every one of you to think about a special homecoming and how the memory has shaped you and what your story can teach the rest of us. Here are some questions to get you started:

1. What is your most memorable homecoming?
2. Were you able to go home? What baggage did you have to leave by the road in order to get there?
3. When you arrived, what was different? What was the same? How did you feel?
4. For those who have long since left home, what and where is home for you now?
5. Have you ever created a home for someone else?
6. Has someone made a home for you who wasn't your parent or your spouse?
7. Where is God in your homecoming story?



## "Exodus from the Jungle"

### Community Response Meeting

Tuesday, November 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Wesley Room

Please join the conversation as we consider our response to the needs for winter shelter, as well as long term housing. Understanding the needs of low-income and homeless neighbors, how can we collaborate and organize to help meet their needs? Come back and share your thoughts and ideas after seeing "Exodus from the Jungle." How will we respond?



The film "Exodus from the Jungle" will be shown again at 6:00 p.m. for those who have not yet seen it or who would like to see it again. Hosted by Building Hope: A mission team of the Almaden Hills, Cambrian Park and Willow Glen United Methodist Churches in partnership with the Housing for All Alliance. Questions? Email [susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org).

## Worship in November and December

Pastor Rebecca thanks everyone who has preached for her this summer and fall as she has been undergoing cancer treatment: Stan Praise-water, Kathy Benedict, Rev. Louann Roberts, Rev. Larry LaPierre, Tom Grubb, Hank Millstein, Rev. Susan Smith, Traci Menicucci, Steve Quigley, and Lisa Jacobs. She's grateful for all the different ways they shared God's Word, and she will be back in the pulpit from now until Christmas. Here's what's coming:

### November 8 & November 15

Two stories about two brave widows  
Mark 12:38-44 and I Kings 17:8-16

### November 22

The Rain Will Come: Give Thanks!  
Joel 2:21-27

### November 29 – First Sunday in Advent

Can Jesus come home again?  
Luke 21:25-36

### December 6

How do we prepare for his homecoming?  
Luke 3:1-6

### December 13

Songs for the journey home  
Zephaniah 3:14-20

### December 20

How do we know when we get there?  
Luke 1:39-45

### December 27

We will combine services and worship at 10:00 a.m. Tom Mounts will preach.

## November 2015

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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 Irelan  
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

Tom Mounts  
Director,  
the Willow Glen Ringers

Dee Davis  
Office & Facilities Manager

Karen Kwon  
Wedding Coordinator

## In Memory of Grace Praisewater

Some of you know that I have been writing a series of Facebook posts that I am calling my "Tree Therapy." On the day that Grace Praisewater died (October 23), I wrote this:

When pastors get calls at 6:30 in the morning, they know it's not good news. Stan Praisewater had called the day before to tell me that his mom was going downhill fast. I wasn't surprised to hear his voice telling me that Grace had died just a few hours earlier. Stan was calling from Chicago, on his way by train to Wisconsin, to see his new grandchild. I had been waiting for this call for a long time, but I wasn't ready for it.

Grace Praisewater was one of my favorite people. Because I couldn't get to Vancouver where she died, I couldn't think of a better way to give thanks for her life than to get up and get myself to the trees, for Grace was a spiritual redwood if ever there was one.

Redwood trees live a long time, but not forever. Though fire doesn't kill them, it can hollow them out and weaken them. Eventually a strong wind will come and topple them. Grace lived a long time, but she couldn't live forever. When she was diagnosed with bladder cancer a couple of years ago, I knew it wasn't going to be easy. For a woman in her 90's, the radiation burned like a fire. I guess it must have hollowed her out because it really weakened her. Then came congestive heart failure, and like a strong wind, it finally toppled her.

When a giant redwood falls or is cut down, new trees grow up from its roots. They circle around the old stump in a formation called a family circle (or fairy ring). When I think about Grace, I think about her family that has always circled around her. Her children have long since grown tall and are impressive trees in their own right. Her grandchildren are getting taller by the day.

As I was taking pictures of family circles in the forest today, I found a circle of young trees surrounding the stubby remains of a giant old stump. And in the middle of the circle, right in the center of that stump was a young seedling growing, like the new great grandchild that Grace didn't live to see. But I have no doubt that child will one day grow very tall because she has good roots. In the church, and in the Praisewater family, we call that Grace.

## Rebecca

***"From his fullness, we  
have all received  
grace upon grace."  
John 1:16***



## 2015 Church Conference Highlights

- We're grateful for Rosa Soler, Ruth Granfors, Suzanne Selby, and all their helpers for putting together and cleaning up after the potluck lunch held during our meeting.
- We welcomed Rev. Kristie Olah, our former district superintendent now retired, as our presiding elder for our conference.
- We approved the pastors' salary packages and recommended Stan Praisewater for renewal of his Lay Speaker certification.
- We elected church officers and celebrated a 4-page list of church volunteers. We have two new task groups already at work this year. The Garden Group, coordinated by E. Clay Buchanan, cleaned up the Woodhaven Garden in preparation for Katie Pense's wedding in October. E. Clay has even created a garden blog! And the new Worship Team, led by Kathy Benedict and Karen Kwon, met for the first time in September to make plans for the Advent season.
- We discussed the membership audit and celebrated seven baptisms and three new members received earlier this year. We also remembered nine dear ones who died in the past year: Anita Arthur, Bill Chamberlin, Jack George, Virginia Knight, Opal Lewis, Al Mauseth, Claudia Pierson, Grace Praisewater, and Walt Mounts.
- We approved our welcoming statement with 36 "yes" votes; 1 blank vote; and 0 "no" votes. You will see the amended statement on [www.wgumc.org](http://www.wgumc.org) soon.
- Pastor Susan talked about changes to the children's program and new adventures in ministry to the homeless and Pastor Rebecca looked forward to an important conversation about the future of Sunday morning worship, a conversation that will begin next January.

If you would like a copy of the church conference reports, we have extras in the church office.

## Walk to Emmaus Is Here in November!

We are again hosting two Walks in November. The church campus will be full from Thursday to Sunday evening on November 5 – 8 and November 12 – 15. Please pray for the Spirit to bless these new pilgrims. And say a prayer for the plumbing!



## Financial Snapshot Year-to-Date

Through September 2015

Income	Actual	Budget
Giving	\$267,277	\$265,320
Other Income	\$49,660	\$53,188
TOTAL	\$316,937	\$318,508

Expense		
TOTAL	\$325,562	\$336,470

Conference Apportionments	\$18,585	\$23,895
Special Offerings	\$4,067	-----

## Christmas Giving Tree for Esther's Outreach and the Family Giving Tree

Esther Jakel, a longtime member of Cambrian Park UMC, started a Christmas outreach program more than 15 years ago for needy families whose children attend Lietz or Oster Schools in the Cambrian Park neighborhood. This year, twenty families will be selected by the school offices and then supported by this outreach program in Esther's memory. Willow Glen UMC will be participating in Esther's Outreach through our annual Giving Tree. Gift tags will offer you the opportunity to provide gifts for family members or grocery gift cards for a holiday meal. Tags will be on the tree in the Wesley Room early in November. Come by and choose how you will share some love and hope this Christmas.

We will also be supporting The Family Giving Tree. All gifts and donations need to be returned to the church early in December. Please read your chosen gift tag carefully for specific instructions and deadlines. Thank you for sharing with others during this holiday season. What a wonderful time to surround others with joy and love!





## CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship  
for Third, Fourth and  
Fifth Graders

Sunday, November 15  
1:00-3:00 p.m.  
Preschool Building  
Theme: Canned Food  
Scavenger Hunt

We'll take a walk through the neighborhood, collecting canned food for Second Harvest Food Bank. Who can collect the most cans? The most points? We'll see... It's all in the name of fun and service. Come and join us for this special Sunday edition of CrossWalk.

CrossWalk is for all third, fourth and fifth graders. Bring a friend!

E-mail Pastor Susan ([susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)) to ask any questions, let her know you are coming, or just say "hi!"

## Taking Initiative for Dirty Jobs (and More) in Sunday School

Some people just seem to see things that other people don't see. Even more admirable are the people who notice that there's a job to be done – like cleaning up a spilled glass of soda or emptying an overflowing trashcan. What if this ability to notice things has more to do with being trained to open your eyes instead of a simple natural ability? Because when it comes down to it, seeing what needs to be done is not just about training yourself to see what's around you; rather, it should be more about doing something about what you've seen.

But let's be honest for a second, sometimes what you end up seeing are jobs that are pretty dirty, huh? Not many people like taking out the trash, cleaning up the yard after the dog has been out there, or those bathrooms that just never seem to clean themselves. But somebody's gotta do those jobs. If they don't, life will get pretty messy, pretty fast.

Dirty jobs aren't just about cleaning the house, however. Sometimes we see a relationship that needs to get fixed or someone that needs some encouragement. Are we really aware of what's happening around us to take notice and take action?

The same goes for our kids. Shouldn't we train our children to open their eyes, to be aware of their surroundings and get involved? What would happen if we started teaching our kids how to really look at the world around them and actually do something about what they see? What would it be like if our children could begin to notice things that need to be done and do them without being asked? What could happen if they look at the people in their life that need help and take the initiative to help them?

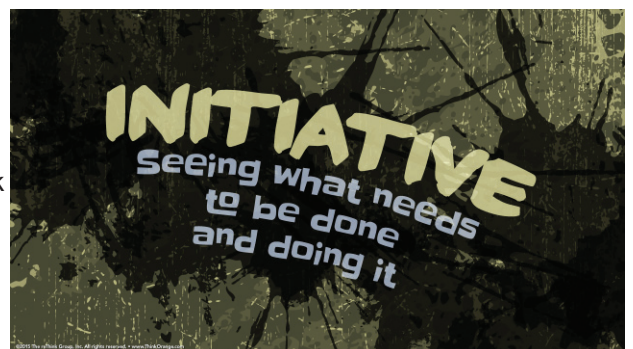
And what about when it comes to their own life? What if they saw things that needed to be changed and changed them? These don't have to be huge. It could be something simple like brushing their teeth or taking a bath or keeping their room clean. That's why we're taking this whole month to discover more about initiative.

Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it. Initiative isn't just some practical principle; it's really a spiritual principle that starts with God. Initiative is part of God's character. God took initiative on our behalf. When God saw our broken relationship with Him, He sent Jesus to make it right. When we show initiative, we are reflecting God's image that is hardwired in us.

Help your kids see life in a different way. Start asking the question, "What do you see?" When you walk into a room, when you walk by someone and when you're trying to teach children to see themselves from a different perspective, train your kids to notice things they would not ordinarily notice and encourage them to do something about what they see.

In fact, we all might pay attention a little more when we realize that we aren't just working for our parents or our bosses but we are actually working for God. That's why Colossians 3:23 (NIV) is our memory verse for the month. "Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord."

To dive deeper into initiative, we're heading back to the Old Testament to talk more about one of the greatest examples of someone taking initiative—a man by the name of Nehemiah. This month, we'll break down the story of Nehemiah into four segments that will give kids insight into this idea of initiative. What a great reason to be in Sunday School this month!



## JYM Walkathon a Huge Success!

Our JYM Walkathon 2015 was the biggest success we have ever had in the history of this event. Our gutsy goal was that students would raise \$17,500 and as of the day of the event, we had \$18,085 pledged (not to mention a couple hundred from students who couldn't walk but collected and have envelopes at home!). In addition to beating the goal set for the total amount raised, Lisa Jacobs raised about \$3,000, including a large donation by Roundtable Pizza on Lincoln Avenue and others donors. **We raised at total of \$22,800, far surpassing our target!**

### Junior High

2014 – 56 percent of active JYM members participated; average raised per person \$121.77

2015 – 68 percent of active JYM members participated, average raised per person \$132.92

### Senior High

2014 – 47 percent of active JYM members participated; average raised per person \$107.33

2015 – 57 percent of active JYM members participated; average raised per person \$135.72

**2014 student total \$14,111 vs. \$17,775 student total in 2015.**

**More than a dozen additional students collected \$300 or more this year.**

We know you are busy. We know lots of places to fundraise. We know your students are plugged in and committed to a million causes. We wish we had unlimited funding but since we don't, we are so very thankful for this increase in funds raised and participation.

In addition to raising money I believe it's important that we walk in community with each other. We get to know each other when we spend an afternoon together advocating for a common cause, walking slow enough to chat for hours or running together to push for a common goal. Parents volunteer and get to know other parents. Pastors get to meet lots of our JYM families. Younger siblings get to see the "cool" JYM. Even dogs get some exercise! So thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thanks to Kiersten Manuel for yet another year as the incredible leader of the Walkathon and to Wendy Chung for meticulously managing our finances. Thanks to alumni and current parents for staffing shifts and to MANY leaders, parents and church members for donating. So many of our small group leaders who already give their time to be with your teens all the time, also pledged hundreds of dollars. They absolutely believe in your students and in our loving God! Thanks to Anika M., Lucy Y., Gillian G., Jason C., Ashley H., Sarah A., Corrie B. and Evan A. for raising \$500 or more! Congrats to Kaelie T, Darius C., Aidan C. M. and Logan U for walking/running more than 15 miles.

If you intended to donate and haven't, we would still love your donation. We always have a need and would love to give you a tax deductible receipt for your donation. Please visit [jointyouthgroup.com/donate-to-the-jym](http://jointyouthgroup.com/donate-to-the-jym) if you want to give on behalf of our students and our incredible trips and adventures, service projects and needs in the future.



## Our Children Are Preparing to Tell the Christmas Story

**Christmas Preview – November 22 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Parents' Meeting – December 6 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Audition Workshop – December 6 at 1:00 p.m.**

Once again, our children will lead worship on Christmas eve at our 5:00 p.m. family service with a newly staged, heavenly presentation of "An Unexpected Christmas." To begin preparing our pageant, Pastor Susan will meet with all of the Sunday School classes together on Sunday, November 22, to preview the script and begin planning the sets and costumes with the children's input. This will be the first of two or three pageant workshops that will be held in the coming weeks as the children put together their Christmas drama.

Our Sunday School children will become the Christmas choir and rehearse together at the end of Sunday School each week beginning November 22. Auditions for speaking and dramatic roles in the pageant will be held on the afternoon of December 6. All parents whose children will be part of the Christmas eve worship service should plan to attend a parents' meeting during Sunday School on Sunday, December 6.

## Women's Groups

Open to all, newcomers are welcome. Please call the contact listed below for information.

### Friendship Circle

Third Wednesday  
1:00 p.m.  
Woodhaven  
Contact Sue Johnson

### Heart and Hand

Thursday, November 5  
7:00 p.m.  
Crepevine (Lincoln Ave.)  
Contact Susan Smith

UMW Executive Board will meet Monday, November 9, at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Room. UMW is open to all women regardless of church membership.

For more information about UMW, call Patricia Madsen.

The deadline for the December/January *Willow Word* is November 25. Please send your story ideas and submissions to Leslie Chamberlain

## Women's Gathering Place

UMW is scheduled to visit the Women's Gathering Place on Monday, November 2. Leaving from the church at 11:30 a.m., we will take lunch to our friends at WGP who gather at First Presbyterian Church in downtown San Jose. These are women without permanent housing, most of whom are living on the streets of San Jose. They welcome the food and gifts we bring, but they seem to most appreciate and enjoy our being with them for a few hours of visiting and sometimes quiet activities, such as knitting, puzzles, and card games. We usually are there from noon to around 3:00 p.m.



Newcomers are always welcome, and we appreciate gifts of clothing, underwear (especially in larger sizes), socks, sanitary items and personal items such as lotion, etc. We would also welcome monetary donations to help finance the cost of the food we provide. As this is a project of United Methodist Women, checks may be made to UMW, noted for Women's Gathering Place. We will be visiting the Women's Gathering Place each month on the first Monday. To volunteer to help in any way, please contact Pat Farrow at [patricia.farrow@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.farrow@gmail.com).

## What in the World Are We Doing?

Members of the Executive Board of UMW looked over their 2015 calendar and discovered they have been quite active in the world and in the local church community. We would like to share this list with the congregation.

### UMW Activities and Accomplishments 2015

Activities as part of UMW worldwide church, Conference and District:

- Held Pledge Services – in January Circle meetings
- Met our Pledge to Mission – \$3,500
- Met requirements to be a Mission Today Unit
- Were represented at Mission U – August, September
- Participated in Reading Program (although no one completed the program this year)
- Attended Leadership Development Event – January
- Were represented by WGUMC delegate at Annual Conference, UMW Breakfast – June
- Were represented at Conference UMW Celebration – October
- Were represented at District UMW Celebration – October
- Received Call to Prayer and Self Denial offering – April, May
- Received World Thank Offering – November
- Participated in 2015 UMW Study Program – in circles and general meetings

Activities in cooperation with other churches:

- Lenten Feeding program – prepared and delivered breakfast one week in Lent
- Limitless Retreat (jointly sponsored by JYM and UMW) – August

Activities of our own unit:

- General Meetings
- Luncheon meeting with homeless guests – February
- Luncheon meeting with Betty Dickey, Conference Coordinator Green Ministries – April
- Potluck Picnic – Review of Mission to Mexico presented by Susan Smith
- Evening in Mexico all church dinner with entertainment – September
- Christmas Luncheon and Program – December
- Executive Board Meetings – January, March, May, August, September, October, November

*Continued on Page 7*

## In Memoriam

We grieve the loss of Grace Praisewater in Vancouver, Wash., on October 22 and extend sympathy to her family. A memorial service will be held in our sanctuary on Saturday, November 28.



## What in the World Are We Doing?

Continued from Page 6

- Circle Meetings (Heart & Hand, Friendship Circle meetings as scheduled)
- Lunch and Learn
- The Church and People with Disabilities – Guest speaker Liz Sandoval Kane “Autism” – July
- Geographic Study of Latin America: Missionary Nan McCurdy and her husband Miguel Mairena – September
- Women’s Gathering Place (monthly gatherings at First Presbyterian Church of San Jose)
- See’s Easter Candy Sale (fundraising project)
- To Kalon meetings (serving dessert as a fundraising project) – as scheduled
- Memorial Receptions – as scheduled
- Cookie Sunday in December
- Care of our members with cards, meals, prayer – as needed

This list will be evaluated to enable UMW to establish goals and plans for the future.

## What’s the Word on the Sanctuary Windows?

This summer, we announced that the Mission Possible Team and Board of Trustees are working together to replace the sanctuary windows in time for possible El Nino rains to fall. While up on the roof in preparation for VBS, Tom Grubb and Susan Smith found extensive damage to the windows and window frames. In order to prevent serious leaking into the sanctuary and further damage to the building, we have decided that the windows must be replaced ASAP. Our intention is to remove the colored scenes that were fixed to the windows as carefully as possible and to assess their condition, in the hopes that we can repair and rehang or re-purpose them in some way. The new windows are on order and are due in sometime this month. We do not yet know when the installation will take place. Stay tuned. Meanwhile, read a history of the windows written by Jane Vivan, below.

## Sanctuary “Stained Glass” Windows

By Jane Vivan

The upper windows on each side of the sanctuary were designed and executed by Vance Smart, who was then in his 20’s. He was the son of James and Rachel Smart who were prominent members of WGUMC. Vance had been raised and confirmed in this church. The windows were probably installed in the early 1980’s.

Vance was afflicted with bone cancer and had already lost a lower leg when the windows were installed. He died within a few years and was survived by his widow, Jyl Wallace Smart, the daughter of Ken and Rosamond Wallace. Rosamond is the step-daughter of Grace Praisewater.

Artists were invited to submit designs for the windows. Among other entrants was a design by WGUMC member Wayne Champion, then a professor at San Jose State University. I believe it may have depicted The Last Supper, but I cannot say this with certainty. His design was not chosen. However, he did design the tile window on the outside of the Woodhaven dining room, which depicts an early Methodist Circuit Rider.

Vance designed the sanctuary windows to represent the hills that line the two sides of the Santa Clara Valley. He made patterns of each piece that made up the design. Church members were invited to cut a piece of colored plastic, using the prepared patterns. This work was carried out in the chapel, now known as the Trinity Room. These pieces were then assembled, and affixed to clear plastic. I don’t know any other details of the construction or installation processes.



Save the Date! Mark your Calendar!  
**Mission Possible Second Annual**

# Pancake Breakfast and Silent Auction

Saturday, January 30  
7:30-11:00 a.m.



**New this year – Ping Pong Tournament!**

We are asking for:

- Auction items for our silent auction fundraiser
- Four ping pong tables to borrow (we will pick them up and return them)
- Volunteers – ticket sales, servers, cooks & cleaners

Tickets will go on sale in January. For more information, and to donate an auction item, contact Michelle Unger at [mrtunger@gmail.com](mailto:mrtunger@gmail.com), Brian Ganz or Kyle Mastrolia.



## **Willow Glen United Methodist Church**

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