

# The Willow Word

A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church

God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving

## Come Home for Advent Family Nights

Tuesdays Dec. 8, 15, 22

6:00-8:00 p.m., Woodhaven

Do you have dreams of a simpler Christmas? Are you wishing for quiet time with your family in the glow of the Christmas tree and without all the clutter of life surrounding you? Would you like to spend some time in prayer and reflection this season? Do you long for time with friends over a meal? We have just the answer. Gather up your family and come home to Woodhaven on the Tuesday evenings of Advent, anytime between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. You'll find friendly faces, a potluck supper and seasonal activities to nourish your spirit.

### December 8: Play Together

We will play a variety of games for all ages.

### December 15: Walk the Labyrinth

We will share Mary and Joseph's search for a safe place to stay in Bethlehem, walking the labyrinth as part of our journey to the stable.

### December 22: Serve Others

We will be making bagged meals for the homeless and decorating cookies, too.

We hope you'll come in from the cold and crazy of the season and get warmed up at Woodhaven with your church family.

We need Christmas cards! If you have unused Christmas cards to donate, please bring them to Pastor Susan.

If you would like to help by bringing part of the potluck meal one evening, please contact Pastor Susan ([susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)). We would also like to have a host family each week to help with the set-up, greeting, serving and clean-up.



## Celebrating Christmas

Christmas is a wonderful time to worship with your church family, and we hope you will join us on Christmas Eve for one of our two candlelit celebrations:

Our 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service is designed for families with children, but is delightful for worshippers of all ages. Our children will share some special Christmas music, our praise band will lead us in familiar and contemporary Christmas carols, and the children will tell the Christmas story from a heavenly perspective. The joy of Christmas is shared with energy and hope and peace at this service.

At 10:00 p.m., join us for a peaceful, candlelit service. The familiar words of the Christmas story combine with the beauty of familiar Christmas music to create a peaceful and renewing celebration of the gift of Christ into our lives. Come and hear the good news in a way that will speak to your life for the year to come.

May all your Christmas celebrations bring you closer to the love of God.

### December 2015/January 2016

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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

## Coming Home

I love the cold(er) weather we've been having! Having grown up in Iowa and Montana, the wind chill always makes me think of home. I remember flying home for Christmas my freshman year in college. I missed my connecting flight in Denver because my plane had to be de-iced twice and was late getting out of Boston. Back then, the airlines would put you up for the night in a hotel! When I woke the next morning, there was a foot of snow on the ground and more coming down fast. I went to the airport anyway and waited and waited. By afternoon, they started letting planes land and take off. When I finally stepped off the plane in Billings, the sky was clear and the temperature was 25 below zero. It stayed well below zero for the next three weeks.

Bay Area folks don't know that kind of cold, but even in Montana I always had a warm bed to sleep in. Now when I get excited that the weather is turning cold, I immediately think of the souls who have to sleep in it on our streets. And others are thinking, too. For the past several weeks, people of faith have been meeting at our church to talk about how we can respond to the dual challenge of cold weather and heavy rains this winter and the dangers for our brothers and sisters in the homeless community. With other churches in the area, we are talking about resurrecting the rotating shelter and we want to be ready to do whatever we can to make it happen in Willow Glen.

This is where we have come to on a journey that began back in 2011 when our Mexico Mission team came home and wanted to be more engaged locally and started our three-church Building Hope mission team. That eventually led to inviting some people who are without homes to a Change the World Day this past January. The stories we heard then spurred us to provide weekly meals during Lent to help feed the former residents of the large homeless encampment called "The Jungle." This spring the UMW invited them to lunch and the whole church invited 70 of them to a barbecue this past summer.

But one meal didn't seem like enough. This fall we hosted a showing of a documentary film about the police sweep of the encampment. After the movie, we gathered to discuss what we can do as individuals and faith communities, and we are now meeting weekly to work on various proposals, including safe parking for people who live in their cars, drop-in day centers and overnight shelters. In the meantime, a few of our members have been advocating with the city and county to get them to step up their efforts to address the affordable housing crisis and lack of safe shelter space in San Jose.

As Pastor Susan has said many times, we don't know where this journey is taking us, but I believe that the Holy Spirit is leading this and telling us that it is the right journey to be on. As plans come together, we will be asking you how you are being called to what is soul-stirring and could well be life-saving work this winter. This is our opportunity to "prepare the way of the Lord" who wants to make a home in our hearts and calls us to love all those who are longing for home.

Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Rebecca



## Willow Glen UMC's Daily Advent Devotional

For our daily Advent devotions, we are sharing our homecoming stories to help us "come home" to God this Christmas. If you are on our email list, you should already be receiving a devotion to read each day. You can also find them posted on our church's Facebook page. If you would rather receive a hard copy of the week's readings, come to worship on Sunday or call the office and we can mail it to you. If they inspire you to write your own story, please send it to Pastor Rebecca. She enjoys reading them and sharing them with everyone else.

## Worship This Advent and Christmas Season

"Homecoming" is the theme for our worship this Advent season. We often talk about faith as a journey and God as our "home" because "home" is such a powerful metaphor for belonging, acceptance and love, whether or not our actual homes provide any of these things. And just as God has made a home for us, our job as Christians is to provide a spiritual home for others. So invite someone "home" to church this Advent and Christmas.

### December 6: Luke 3:1-6

How do we prepare for his homecoming?

### December 13: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Songs for the journey home

### December 20: Luke 1:39-45

How do we know when we get there?

### December 24: Two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5:00 p.m. Family Service with music, drama, and family fun  
10:00 p.m. Traditional Service with choir, candles and quiet

### December 27: Joint Worship Service

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

Thank you to our new worship team for preparing the way for us this season. Thank you to Steve Quigley for repairing the Advent wreath and inventing a tool to hang banners from the ground without having to climb a ladder. Thank you to Kristen Brown for new banners and Kathy Benedict and Karen Kwon for altar decorations.



## Financial Snapshot

WGUMC financial snapshot year-to-date, through October 2015.

	Actual	Budget
Income		
Giving	\$299,436	\$292,130
Other Income	\$56,226	\$59,592
TOTAL	\$355,662	\$351,722
Expense		
TOTAL	\$361,556	\$372,221
Conference Apportionments	\$18,585	\$26,550
Special Offerings	\$4,067	----





## CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship for  
Third, Fourth and Fifth Grad-  
ers

Friday, December 11  
7:00-8:30 p.m.

Kohlstedt Hall & Wesley  
Room

**Theme: Making Our Path  
Straight To Christmas**

**Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6**

We're continuing to seek wisdom from Proverbs as we develop faithful habits. This month, we'll make plans to celebrate Christmas in ways that truly honor the birth of Jesus and the presence of God on earth. We'll be turning the holiday around a little so bring some Christmas advertisements or catalogs to redesign into holy art.

Friday, January 8  
7:00-8:30 p.m.

Kohlstedt Hall & Wesley  
Room

**Theme: TBD**

Start the new year off right with friends and faith! Watch your inbox for more information about our CrossWalk 2016 kick-off.

As always, there will be fun and friends, food and fellowship. CrossWalk is for all third, fourth and fifth graders. Bring a friend!

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

## An Unexpected Christmas

Join us as we tell the Christmas story from God's perspective and get an insider's view of God planning with the angels in heaven to send his Son to earth. The Sunday School children will be invited to design the setting and further develop the angel characters according to their faithful imaginings. To accomplish this, our auditions and cast rehearsals will be held in a workshop format that will engage everyone in making decisions about music, characters, setting and staging.

**Choir:** All of our Sunday School children become the Christmas choir. Rehearsals are at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday (at the end of Sunday School). Practice CDs are available from Pastor Susan.

**Costumes:** Our set and costumes will be mostly white and gold with props and accents of the children's choosing that will help define their angel characters (soccer angel, scientist angel, etc.) If you have angel wings or plastic armor/swords from old Halloween costumes, we would love to borrow them. White shirts, pants and dresses would be great, but are not required.



**We need your help!** We will need parent help making simple sets (stage platforms and a stable), decorating heaven, and setting it all up prior to Christmas Eve. We also need some help coordinating costumes and props, a photographer and videographer for the service, and stage assistance. Please e-mail Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org) if you can help in any of these areas.

## Compassion Challenges

### Sunday School This December

For the month of December, we're heading back to the movies and "Triple-Dog-Daring" kids to show compassion to the people around them and even across the world. We define compassion like this: caring enough to do something about someone else's need. But when it comes to compassion, no movie even comes close to the greatest story of all time, yep, THE Christmas story.

If you look at the Christmas story, it's easy to see that one aspect of God's character is compassion. God saw our greatest need, and He met it in the most remarkable way. To get kids thinking more about this, we're taking the entire Advent season to talk about compassion and ask a different question each week to get kids and families thinking about how they can show compassion.

Our memory verse is John 3:16 "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life." This is the best verse to describe God's compassion for us. He loved us SO much and wanted us to be with Him SO much, that He did something about it and sent Jesus to us.

*More Sunday School news on Page 5*



## Volunteer at the Family Giving Tree

**Sunday, December 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

Come be an elf for the Family Giving Tree – sorting and wrapping gifts for needy children in the valley. We will meet at the church at 5:30 p.m. and carpool to the Family Giving Tree warehouse in Milpitas for a 2-hour shift of Christmas wish fulfilling. This is a great project for older elementary children on up. Bring the family! E-mail Susan ([susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)) for more information or to let her know you're coming.



## Change the World Day of Service and Community

**January 9, 2016**

We are inviting our houseless neighbors for an afternoon of food and fun. We'll have lunch and play bingo together. To offer additional warmth to our guests, we will be collecting socks, gloves, hats and coats throughout the month of December. Please bring your donations to the collection box at church.

Mark your calendar for January 9 and watch your church publications for other ways that you can help with this event.

**CHANGE**  
**THE WORLD**  
**DAY OF SERVICE**  
**& COMMUNITY**

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## Power Up: Changing the Way We Play

**Sunday School in January**

We've all experienced them—young and old alike—moments when frustration gets the better of us and we suddenly feel like we're losing our minds and losing control. Self-control is important, and this month, we'll learn that self-control really has more to do with God than self.

Throughout the Bible, God talks about a lot about self-control. As a fruit of the Spirit, self-control is a response to the changes that He is making in our lives. On our own, we are helpless to control anything, but with God's power we have an advantage. We have the power of the Holy Spirit living within us and are able to do what we should do even when it's not what we want to do.

The book of Proverbs includes several verses where God gives us wisdom to practice for those moments when we'd rather do anything but show self-control. Proverbs are not merely wise sayings. Rather, they are part of God's story where He leans into the world that He created and whispers to us: "Here's how you should live." As we learn to reflect the character of God and respond to His love for us, we'll learn together to pause, select the right words and actions, and most importantly tap into God's power to show some self-control.

## 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, January 7  
7:00 p.m.  
Woodhaven  
Contact Susan Smith

UMW Executive Board will meet Monday, January 11, at 9:00 a.m. in Woodhaven. UMW is open to all women regardless of church membership.

For more information about UMW, call Patricia Madsen.

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

## Christmas Party for Women's Gathering Place

Wednesday December 9

UMW is putting on a Christmas party for our friends at the Women's Gathering Place on Wednesday, December 9, leaving the church at 11:30 a.m., to take lunch and Christmas treats to the 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), sox, sanitary items and toiletries. 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, usually on the first Monday of the month. To volunteer to help in any way, please contact Pat Farrow at [patricia.farrow@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.farrow@gmail.com).

## New UMW Officers Hold Planning Session

Monday, January 11

The women who will be elected to office at the December meeting will gather on January 11 to plan their programs and activities for the year. Meeting at Woodhaven at 9:00 a.m., board members are expected to bring sack lunches and carry over their meeting into the early afternoon. New officers will be recognized and introduced to the congregation during a worship service in January.



## Important City Council Meeting December 8

The City Council meeting on Tuesday, December 8, is going to be very important for us. The Council will be considering a recommendation that they waive the normal permitting requirements in order to allow churches to help shelter the homeless this winter. Since several churches are considering doing this (including WGUMC), we need this temporary waiver to be approved or else we couldn't possibly get a permit before winter is over. We need people of faith to show up in force at this meeting which will be held in the City Council chambers on Tuesday afternoon. If you need directions or want to know approximately when the item will come up on the agenda, please contact one of the pastors, Pat Farrow or Jolene Jones.

## Thanks From Family Supportive Housing

We served 40 at the Shelter on Halloween! The Teriyaki Chicken meal has proven to be the best so far. Thanks to Ruth Granfors help for baking chicken and serving and to Judy Barker for making Halloween cupcakes. We appreciate all the help to setup and serve from Stacey Ross and son Matt, and Bill and Sara English. Everything's better with you all in it!

Serving dates for 2016 (all fifth Saturdays):

- January 30
- April 30
- July 30
- October 29

And here is a note from Christi Moyer, Family Housing Resource Manager:  
"Thank you, again, to all involved at WGUMC, for a wonderful year of service!"



## In Memoriam

Willow Glen UMC members were saddened to learn of the death of Judy Dentino on October 31. Judy was a long-time member and soloist in the Chancel Choir, as well as a member and director of the Willow Glen Ringers for many years.

Our condolences are extended to the family of Randy and Lisa Wallace in the death of Randy's mother, Rosamond. She was the step-daughter of Grace Praisewater and a member of Willow Glen UMC for many years. Her sudden and unexpected death came on the eve of the memorial service for Grace.



# Pancake Breakfast and Silent Auction Fundraiser

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

New This Year – Ping Pong Tournament!

Pancakes, Link Sausage, Bacon and Diced Fruit with Orange Juice, Coffee, Tea or Milk

Adults \$10, Children under five \$5, Family Maximum \$50.00

Tickets go on sale early January.

Come and eat. The food is great (and the company is not bad either)!

## Auction Items Needed!

Please help us make this silent auction the best yet. We are looking for donations: Gift Baskets, Vacation Rentals, Volunteer Services, Anything and Everything! For questions and donation drop-off, contact Michelle Unger at [mrtunger@gmail.com](mailto:mrtunger@gmail.com), Brian Ganz, or Kyle Mastrolia.

We also need to borrow ping pong tables. Brian will pick them up and return them.



## Willow Glen United Methodist Church

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