

# The Willow Word

A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church

God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving

## Financial Update

We are transitioning into a new way to approach church finances, one that sees stewardship more as a lifestyle than an ad campaign. Last year we sent pledge cards only to those who asked for them. We did not spend six weeks begging you to give, but instead, promised to keep sharing the good news of the great works of God in Willow Glen throughout the year. In letters at Christmas and Easter, we told you about the summer mission trips and our winter shelter and the great work the church staff has done during Pastor Rebecca's cancer treatments.

The Finance Committee is now feeling its way through this first year and can make a brief progress report. We currently have 100 givers and out of that 100, 83 give regularly (both pledgers and non-pledgers). Praise God! That being said, we should mention that our expenses for staffing and maintenance have increased this year. At the same time, we are noting a decline in giving, if not in the number of givers. Thanks to a small surplus from last year, we have been able to pay all of our bills this year.

While this is cause for some concern, we remember that God has always been good to Willow Glen, and we expect the blessings to continue. Just think of our kids at camp, our youth on mission trips and our adults studying, praying, singing and serving together, and remember to keep up your generous support of these life-giving ministries throughout the summer, and I have faith that we'll have lots of stories to tell you about the disciples we are making for the transformation of the world.

Thank you.

## Worship in May and June

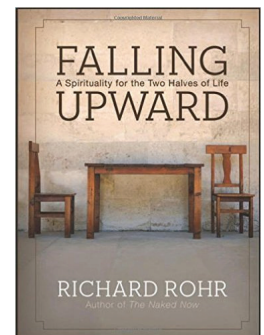
We continue with our series on Richard Rohr's book, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. Falling upwards is a good way to think about resurrection. The resurrection experience is like falling in love, but if you fall in love with God, you fall upward!

May 1, Confirmation Sunday. We will confirm our 7th and 8th graders in worship.

May 8, Mother's Day and Ascension Sunday. In his ascension, Jesus "falls upward." Luke 24:44-53

May 15: Pentecost Sunday. "Putting Flesh on the Spirit." Richard Rohr helps us rethink the duality of spirit and flesh in the letters of Paul. Romans 8:5, 14-17

May 22: Trinity Sunday. "The Second Half of Life and Suffering." How wisdom from the second half of life can help us deal with necessary suffering. Romans 5:1-5



## Summer Worship Schedule Starts Memorial Day Weekend: One Service at 10 a.m.

May 29: Who are our Second-Half-of-Life Christians? 2 Timothy 4:1-8

June 5: Music Sunday to worship God and celebrate our music ministry as summer begins.

June 12: Disability Awareness Sunday. WORSHIP WILL BE IN KOHLSTEDT HALL because it is more accessible than the sanctuary.

### May 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 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

Tom Mounts  
Director,  
the Willow Glen Ringers

Dee Davis  
Office & Facilities Manager

Karen Kwon  
Wedding Coordinator

## Coming Soon: “Spiritual Conferencing”

Back in the 1980's and 90's, mainline churches were involved in what we called “worship wars.” That was a time when mainline churches began to experience a decline in membership, and they looked with envy at the nondenominational churches that had praise bands and big crowds. Many United Methodist churches responded by adding their own praise service in the sanctuary or multi-purpose room to attract baby boomers. That usually caused some conflict and loving Christians fought with each other over what true worship was supposed to look like. Oh, the good old days! (sarcasm alert)

How often we forget what Jesus said as he was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. She tried to engage him in a “worship war” by asking him if he thought that people should worship at Beth-el, as the Samaritans did, or on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, as the Jews did. He responded by saying, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...when you will worship God in spirit and truth....” [John 4:21,23] I read these words and hear Jesus saying to us that when the Messiah comes (and he is now here!) that the time, place and form of worship is far less important than its spiritual authenticity.

Fortunately, the worship wars of the 80's are mostly memories, but the question of what constitutes authentic worship must be answered by every congregation and every generation. There are people today who see worship very differently than any of us did back in 1980. In churches across the country, all kinds of much older traditions are being revived and brand new ones are being created.

As for Willow Glen, the shape of Sunday morning has been the same for many years now, but the congregation is not the same. So now is a good time to ask ourselves how this model is working for us and, even more importantly, whether it will work for the people with whom we hope to share the Gospel in Willow Glen.

I do not have the answer to these questions, nor do I know in advance what shape our worship should take. But I am confident that the Holy Spirit knows. By trusting the Spirit and doing what Wesley used to call “spiritual conferencing” together as a church, we can open ourselves to different ideas and not be afraid to try out new/old ways of doing things and, as a result, grow closer to God as we seek to help others worship in spirit and truth.

Homework: In preparation for this congregation-wide conversation, think about what makes worship authentic for you. Then ask a friend or family member who doesn't attend church what authentic worship might mean to them. How are your ideas the same? How are they different? Report back to me.

## Rebecca



## Meditation and Mountains

8:30 am on May 12

Pastor Rebecca would like to gauge interest in a once-a-month mid-week holy hiking group for all ages and ability levels. By now, she is well acquainted with the trails and would like to invite those who are eager to improve their physical, mental and spiritual health to join her on a spirit-ed walk/hike (no running, promise). We will meet in the church parking lot, decide together where and how far to go and carpool to the trail. Once we get there, we will share in a brief devotion before heading out. Wear a hat and sunscreen, put on mosquito repellent, and bring some water. Let her know if you are also bringing a dog.

## Mission Possible News

If you come by the church office or enter from the parking lot, you'll see the newly painted and spiffed up office hallway. Since this is the first space that most weekday visitors see, we are glad to have it looking as good as Kohlstedt Hall, Wesley Room and the kitchen now do. Thank you, Mission Possible team and faithful donors! We will be calling new members for the effort this summer. If you are looking for a way to make a difference, help us make the mission possible.



## Belated Thank You

We thank the authors of our Lenten Devotional 2016 who were willing to write a week's worth of devotions to share with the congregation and community via email and Facebook for the Lenten season. Lisa Jacobs wrote about the dynamics of grief in reflecting on Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. Katrina Kraynick wrote about the various themes found in Philippians 3. Ingrid Quigley shared some insights from Henri Nouwen on the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. And Hank Millstein wrote some reflections and poetry for Holy Week. It was a rich journey indeed. Bless you!

## General Conference May 10-20

General Conference for the United Methodist Church is in Portland, Oregon, this year. We can't all go, but we can follow the proceedings on the General Conference website at <http://gc2016.umc.org> (or [umc.org/gc2016](http://umc.org/gc2016)). You can also follow General Conference on Facebook and Twitter using #UMCGC. Features will include news coverage in multiple languages, with daily summaries, feature stories and videos, such as interviews with delegates, volunteers and other key individuals. All plenary sessions, worship services, episcopal and laity addresses, and other special events will be live streamed. Users can track petitions and obtain general information about the legislative process. Plenary transcripts and consent calendars will post each day.

## Financial Statement

Needed giving for January – March: \$99,816

Difference between needed giving and actual giving: \$20,540

What this means: Giving is BELOW the minimum projected for this point in the year to fund our core ministries.

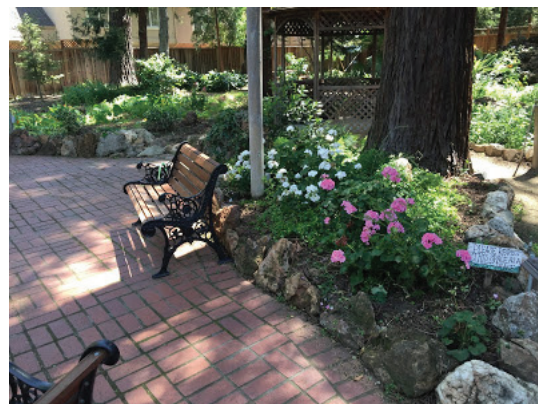
## Spring 2016 Garden Work Party Is Done!

By E. Clay Buchanan

Since Woodhaven was being used the entire day the two Garden volunteers and the two landscapers who came decided to not use any blowers or string trimmers so it was three solid hours of bend over, pull weed, repeat. But the group in Woodhaven had a quiet meeting and how often do you get to pull weeds to the sound of hymns!

So, just how many weeds can four guys pull in three hours? See the WGUMC Garden Blog on the church website ([www.wgumc.org](http://www.wgumc.org)) to find out!

Visit the garden after a service where you can meditate on questions like: Why does the meditation garden have so much glitter in it?







## CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship for Third,  
Fourth and Fifth Graders

Friday, May 6  
7:00 – 8:30pm  
Wesley Room and Kohlstedt

CrossWalk will welcome our newest members - next year's third graders. We will introduce ourselves and get ready for another year of growing together in faith, while having some crazy Cross-Walk fun!

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

## Volunteers Needed for a Wild Ride!

Vacation Bible School 2016

June 13-17

Come join the western fun and ride alongside our little ranchers as we ride through Joshua's story. We are looking for adult and teen volunteers to spend a day or two or three or the whole week at Vacation Bible School. Email Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org) if you'd like to be part of our ranch leadership!



## Toyon Kids Camp

July 10-15, Monte Toyon, Aptos

Our conference offers summer camps for children and youth beginning in third grade. CrossWalk kids are planning to attend Toyon Kids Camp at Monte Toyon in Aptos, July 10-15. Pastor Susan will not be on the camp staff this summer, but many of our favorite camp leaders from previous years will be there, and they want your kids to be there too. Check it out at <http://www.cnumc.org/youngpeoplesministries>. There is nothing like camp to bring you closer to God! Consider a week of faith, friends and fun at camp this summer. Registration is open now. If you have questions, contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org).

## It's Time To Be Happy With What We Have

We're Exploring "Contentment" and a New Sunday School Format in May!

Something radical happens when we look at our life as not really ours. When we view our life as God's gift to us, everything changes. When we see that all the stuff we have is somehow connected to God and the story He wants to tell with our lives, it begins to change the way we see everything. When our world doesn't revolve around us, our situations look a lot different.



This month, we're talking about contentment and deciding to be happy with what we've got. In other words, you can choose to be happy because of what God has actually given you. You can choose to shift your focus away from what you don't have and toward what God desires to do with the life you have. When you trust Him with your life, you become more focused on being grateful for everything He's already given to you.

The Bible has a lot to say about contentment. This month, we're going to unpack several of those moments where people learned something about contentment as well as some key principles about how we can live our lives focused on trusting God no matter what. When it comes right down to it, contentment is a heart issue. It can't be solved by getting the thing that's off-limits, the thing that someone else has, or even more of a good thing you already have. In other words, contentment happens when we place our trust in the One who is able to meet our needs each day.

When we teach kids to see their life as a gift from God it sets them up for a life of contentment and fulfillment. There will be no reason to be distracted by what others have, or what's off limits, or what we had in the past. And when all of us really trust God, we will be content with exactly what He has put in our life for today and won't worry about the future.

**A Few Changes:** This spring, we will be experimenting a little with how our Sunday School classes are organized and how the curriculum is presented. At the end of the school year, we will evaluate some of the different ideas and make some decisions about possible changes for the fall. For this month, we will be combining our classes into a large group for the storytelling portion of our lesson each week and then dividing into our regular age-level groups for the remainder of the lesson. Kids will start and end in their regular classrooms, but will come together in the middle of our class time to hear the Bible story together. Come, check it out and let us know what you think!

## Confirmation Class 2016 Life Creeds

### Molly Freeman

I believe in God and his unconditional love for everyone, no matter circumstances or struggles.

I believe in God's faith in us to make our own decisions.

I believe in Jesus, the son of God, who died and rose again. I believe he healed the sick, the blind, the deaf, and the crippled.

I believe in serving others, being in a community of faith, and being in communication with God.

### Mekiah Glynn

I believe in God the Almighty and creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his son. I believe in the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

### Evan Pham

I believe in God the Almighty. I believe in the Holy Trinity of God, the son, and the Holy Spirit. I believe in God the creator of Heaven and Earth. I believe in Jesus Christ our Savior. I believe in the Holy Spirit which is always with us

### Carolyn Schwartz

I believe in God the Father,  
infinite in wisdom, power and love,  
whose mercy is over all his works,  
and who focuses His will on what is best for all His children.

I believe in Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Son of man  
The gift of the Father's never failing love,  
The root of our hope  
And the promise of freedom from sin and death.

I believe in the Holy Spirit  
as the divine presence in my life,  
surrounding me at all times, reminding me of God's grace, strength and help in times of need.

I believe that my faith in this Trinity of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, should show itself in my service of love and grace to myself and others, as the Lord showed us, and as He gave His only Son, He gave us life everlasting.

### Katie Schwartz

I believe God is the ultimate creator who always was and always will be there with his unconditional love

I believe God helps us and guides us to choose his way of love

I believe God is in everyone

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the word made flesh

I believe Jesus is a compassionate and generous forgiver of sins

I believe that the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with God

I believe the Holy Spirit helps us strengthen our faith and gives us guidance

I believe the Church lays the foundation for further growth

I believe the Church joins us and unites us as one with Jesus at the center of our faith

### Logan Unger

I believe in God the Father who created heaven and Earth,  
His son Jesus, who, after being crucified on the cross, came back from the dead

And the Holy Spirit, which is always with us



## 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, May 5  
7:00 p.m.  
Woodhaven  
*All women of WGUMC, please join us for a Cinco de Mayo celebration.*  
Contact Susan Smith

UMW Executive Board will meet Monday, May 16, at 9:30 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 June *Willow Word* is May 25. Please send your story ideas and submissions to Leslie Chamberlain.

## Heart and Hand Open House on Cinco de Mayo

Women of UMC, come find out more about the United Methodist Women and our Heart and Hand group. Thursday, May 5, 7:00 p.m. at Woodhaven. Snack on Mexican-themed appetizers, churros and chocolate fondue while we enjoy fellowship and conversation. We hope to see you there!

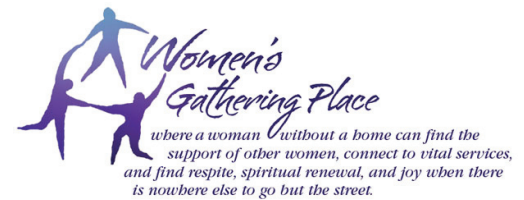


## UMW Annual Potluck Picnic on June 1

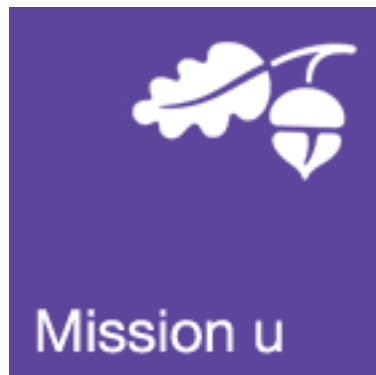
Bring a hot dish, a salad or a dessert and picnic with us in the Wesley Room on Wednesday, June 1, starting at 11:00 a.m. This follows a tradition of an informal luncheon, which was formerly held in a member's backyard or at a park. We're making it easier on ourselves now, meeting in the Wesley Room where we don't have to worry about ants or bees. Program plans are in the works; watch the weekly news or bulletin for details or call UMW president Ruth Granfors. All are welcome and childcare can be made available if arranged in advance.

## Women's Gathering Place: Every First Monday of the Month

We will be serving lunch to our friends each month on the first Monday, and anyone is welcome to come along. This is an on-going project of United Methodist Women and we are committed to providing food and fellowship each month this year, although we are uncertain at this time whether the program will operate on Monday, July 1.



Please get in touch with Pat Farrow for more information at [pattricia.farrow@gmail.com](mailto:pattricia.farrow@gmail.com). Gently used clothing of all sizes, shoes and personal items are needed. There is a box in the Wesley Room for donations.



## Summer Learning Opportunities

Please see the UMW board in the office hallway for information about Mission u, a Conference program of United Methodist Women to provide information about United Methodist mission and outreach throughout the world. This year's studies are in three areas: The Bible and Human Sexuality, Climate Justice and Latin America. There is a weekend event and two one-day events, all in August. Scholarships are available for first-time attendees. Contact Ruth Granfors with questions.



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you in the name of Jesus the Risen Christ. It's hard to believe, but the 168th session of our California-Nevada Annual Conference is fast approaching. Once again we will gather at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Burlingame, CA from June 22 to 25. We will be continuing with the theme we began last year, "Engaging Faith in the Public Square" and focusing on some of the ways we can make a difference when the church becomes engaged in the community.

I will be retiring at the end of August, so this will be the last annual conference session in which I preside. It has been a tremendous blessing to serve the last eight years as your spiritual leader. What a joy to finish in the annual conference in which I served most of my 43 years of active ministry.

As we gather in Burlingame, we will continue the process for Acts of Repentance to Native peoples and communities in our region. These acts of repentance will be woven throughout our session with a service of repentance on Friday Afternoon. Our California-Nevada Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) has compiled a list of resources to help our local churches, and congregants, explore and learn their local history in relation to native people. This is only a portion of the work towards repentance, which is not an easy, or quick process. I challenge you to join this process that leads to repentance. Prior to gathering in Burlingame, begin reading these documents and start to do the work in your communities to bring about healing.

Worship will be led by the dynamic Rev. Dr. Lisa Allen, Assistant Professor of Worship and Music, at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. She is an ordained elder in the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The annual conference session will open in worship with Holy Communion on Wednesday, June 22, at 10 a.m. before moving to clergy and laity sessions in the afternoon. The Commissioning and Ordination service will take place on Friday evening. For the tentative annual conference session schedule, [click here](#). We will conclude our time together by 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, June 25.

The conference offering this year will benefit projects identified by California-Nevada Conference Native American congregations: Round Valley UMC, Schurz UMC, Klamath UMC, and Point Arena UMC. The goal is to more fully live into a renewed commitment to learn more about and partner with these local churches in the conference providing ministry on or near formally recognized tribal lands. These funds will give the churches the resources needed to put United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM) teams to work on much needed projects that will strengthen their abilities to be in ministry within their communities. The UMVIM office will be working with these churches to organize these projects and deploy teams.

Please invite your congregation to pray for us as we gather in Burlingame. I pray that the God of hope will bless us as we work to support the ministries of the people called Methodist. Our ultimate goal is growing as Disciples of Jesus Christ and responding to our call to the work of God inspired transformation in the world. May transformation begin right in the communities where God has placed us.

Your Brother in Christ,

Warner H. Brown, Jr., Resident Bishop



# Spring 2016 Garden Work Party Is Done!

*Continued from Page 3*



*About five minutes after the final path cleaning, the picnic table was in use!*



*Tulips are planted around the citrus tree near the barbecue.*



*With the weeds gone, the flowers really stand out!*

## **Willow Glen United Methodist Church**

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