

The Willow Word

A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church

God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving

Welcome Brunch on Saturday, February 4

Pastor Rebecca invites visitors and anyone curious about membership to a welcome brunch at 10 a.m. at Woodhaven on Saturday, February 4. We will gather to share food and faith stories, get to know a little bit about each other and about the church, and see where the conversation leads us. This is something we plan to do several times a year, so if you can't make this one, let us know and we'll put you on the invitation list for the next one!

Year-End Financial Report for 2016

Many of you know how our income ran below budget all last year (by about \$40,000). Throughout the year, we tried to underspend the budget. We reduced some office hours and increased our building income. And we used our reserve fund to fill in the gaps. That was barely enough to squeak by, but thanks to some awesome and generous donors at the end of the year, we finished 2016 with our designated accounts covered and about \$25,000 in the bank! I'd say it was a miracle, but I know better. God is good...and has raised up some wonderfully faithful givers. Thank you so much for your support of our ministries. Your gifts mean more than you know.

Building Hope Mission Trip to Mexico

July 29 - August 5, 2017

This is an intergenerational mission project and we invite anyone ages 5-85 to consider joining the team. Working with Amor Ministries, we will build two-room houses for impoverished, working families. For most of this week-long trip, we will sleep in tents pitched in a basic campground, work full days in the Mexican sun, rain or wind and shower with a bucket of water warmed only by the sun. This trip will change your life as you get to know and fall in love with the people of Mexico who live in these conditions every day. Amor Ministries has been building in Mexico for more than 30 years. Find out more about their work at www.amor.org



The cost of the mission trip covers all mission expenses including transportation, lodging, food and the cost of the building materials (\$725 for adults, \$425 for children under 10). Your deposit of \$225/adult and \$125/child will be due by March 19. Come find out more. Informational meetings will be held at all three churches in January and February:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---------|
| January 29 | Almaden Hills UMC | 11:30am |
| February 12 | Cambrian Park UMC | 11:30am |
| February 12 | Willow Glen UMC | 4:00pm |

See photos from the previous trips and hear about our experiences first-hand. Find out more about the mission trip including the daily schedule and building plan. Discuss trip safety and finances. Ask all of your questions, and have them answered by folks who have taken this trip before and want you to join the team for 2017.

We hope you will join us this summer to build houses instead of walls.

Contact Pastor Susan Smith (susan@wgumc.org) or Lisa Jacobs (lisa3cyouth@gmail.com) for more information.

February 2017

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Sunday Worship

9:00 a.m.
Sunday School

10:00 a.m.
Combined Worship

11:00 a.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

Roxanne Kholin
Office & Facilities Manager

A Harvest of God's Blessings

When we have to make hard decisions, how can we know what God has to say about it? Spiritual discernment doesn't come naturally to most of us. But there is a method we use to judge whether our way is anything close to God's way: if it is, we will know it because others will see it and witness to it. When a person is ordained to the ministry, this is how their call is confirmed. It wasn't enough that I felt called to ministry; that call had to be affirmed by others. They had to see the "gifts and graces" in me.

By now, most of you have gotten word that Pastor Susan has been hired as our Pre-school Director even as she remains our Pastor to Children and Families. And I will be bold enough to assert that I believe that this decision is in keeping with the way of God because of the many witnesses we have to Susan's incredible gifts for leadership and God-given graces for relationship.

Lorene Sheridan has been a wonderful Preschool Director in so many ways. She has mothered and grandmothered scores of our children and their parents as they navigate those crucial preschool years, and she has done so with unfailing devotion and love. She has nurtured a great teaching staff and she has made our Preschool a neighborhood gem. It was hard for us to think about her retirement (after 27 years!) and what that would mean for our children's ministry.

When Susan's name came up during the search process for a new director, the SPRC immediately saw the beauty (and the complexity!) of the idea. And since we announced our decision to hire Susan as Preschool Director and Michelle Partsch as her Executive Assistant, the confirmations keep coming in: "What a fabulous idea." "Can't imagine a better team—Susan and Michelle—or a better solution!" "Hear, hear! Brava!"

The other way we can tell if God is in our decisions is to judge by the fruit they produce. [Matthew 7:20] Time will tell, but Pastor Susan's ministry with children and families has already produced good fruit for Willow Glen UMC, and there is no reason to think that the harvest will not be just as bountiful for Woodhaven Preschool starting July 1. In fact, the only way that the "harvest" could fail would be if we didn't do our best to support her as she embarks on this new ministry. I will commit to picking up some of the slack in the area of mission and outreach ministry, but we need all of you to step up and some of you to take leadership in our Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and other children and family ministries.

As I see it, God made a way for us, in the midst of our financial struggles, not only to keep Pastor Susan and to maintain our children and family ministries, but to extend them in new and exciting ways. The Preschool, Church and Community will all be stronger for it. I pray that we will do all we can to bring in the harvest of God's blessings!

Pastor Rebecca



Welcome Michael Kuo, Our New Praise Band Director

At the beginning of the year, Michael Kuo joined our music ministry as the new praise band director and substitute worship leader. He found out about us through the Willow Glen School of Music where he teaches piano and voice. Michael is currently a student in the masters program in vocal performance at San Jose State. His family lives in Southern California, however, Michael went to a boarding school in Napa for high school. Michael was raised in the Adventist Church and is familiar with traditional church music as well as popular contemporary songs. He is also learning to play the organ under the direction and encouragement of Bob Birnstihl. On top of his qualifications as a musician, Michael is a really nice guy! We hope you'll come up after worship and introduce yourself and make him feel right at home at Willow Glen UMC.



Parents' Night Out on Saturday, February 4

Come drop your children off for a few hours with the capable students of the Joint Youth Ministry!

When: Saturday, February 4, 5-8 p.m.

Where: Willow Glen United Methodist Church, 1420 Newport Ave, San Jose

Who: Children ages 12 months through fifth grade are welcome to be babysat by our teenage students

What: We will play games with children, have a couple of craft activities, and serve them dinner

Cost: A LITTLE DIFFERENT!

In March, our youth group is holding a large fundraiser which includes a silent auction. Instead of money, we want to take donations of items and gift cards that we can auction off! So if you are bringing a child, here are some things we would love to receive from you:

- Tickets to any local sporting event
- Gift cards to any local restaurants, gyms or spas that are valued at \$25 or more
- A stay at a vacation home you may have access to
- Bottles of wine
- Gift baskets
- Electronics
- Interesting items
- New items that are valued at \$25 or more
- Gift certificate for a services you provide: Gardening, photography, airport shuttle, handyman, babysitting, etc. Any donation of item you make is totally tax deductible!

RSVP by clicking the link below. You are welcome to invite neighborhood friends and pass this on to other people as well. Anyone who registers is welcome to participate.

Babysitting Night Sign-Up for Kids: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4hhLT_h0nc3wEFHzCuLXdzPZB-hSSTIF29Pmnn-h9xxjQbFg/viewform?c=0&w=1



The Golden Rule of Love in Sunday School

Love is a reflection of the character of God.

God is love. As we read through the Bible, we see an epic love story unfold that started in a garden with creation. Because we are created in God's image, we have the capacity to love. Every time we choose to treat others the way we want to be treated, we show others a glimpse into the perfect love God has for each and every one of us.

Jesus is the ultimate example of love.

When God sent Jesus to earth, Jesus showed us exactly what it means to love. Jesus prioritized love above everything else. When the Pharisees asked Jesus about the greatest commandment, He reached into the 600+ laws of the Old Testament and took a law that existed about your neighbor and He linked it to loving God. Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. Love him with all your mind ... and love your neighbor as yourself,' (Mark 12:30-31 NIV). Our relationship with Jesus changes how we love God, love others, and even love ourselves. Love, above all else, was what Jesus stressed most.

Love isn't just something we demonstrate because it's a good thing to do. Love doesn't even start with us. We love because God loves us. Love is an essential part of who God is and how God interacts with the world. We love others because of the capacity He put within us to love, and we will spend the month of February taking a closer look at the way love shows up throughout the Gospels in how Jesus interacts with others.

Sunday School meets each Sunday at 9 a.m. See you there!



Save the Dates

Vacation Bible School 2017

June 26-30

Mark your calendars... VBS is a week earlier this year, and you won't want to miss it!

More information is coming soon...

Toyon Kids Camp 2017

July 9-14

Monte Toyon, Aptos, CA

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 9-14. There is nothing like camp to bring you closer to God as you make new friends and try new things! Consider a week of faith, friends and fun at camp this summer. Registration will begin soon. If you have questions, check out the website at www.calnevypm.org or contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org).



CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship for
Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders



Friday, February 10, 7-8:30 p.m.

Kohlstedt Hall and Wesley Room

Theme: A friend like Jesus (Matthew 16:13-23)

What kind of friend is Jesus, and how can we be that kind of friend too? We'll dig into the Bible to find out and we'll strengthen our friendships with one another as we do. There is always something silly happening at CrossWalk as we learn about our faith together.

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

Almaden Hills UMC Opens Daytime Warming Center for Village House Guests

AHUMC is opening the doors of Fellowship Hall again this year to provide a daytime warming center for the 15 medically fragile homeless women staying at the Village House shelter. Starting February 2 and running through April, the warming center will be open each week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Church members and other volunteers will provide a caring, loving environment, and support to help Village House guests stabilize their lives and perhaps move beyond homelessness.



Almaden Hills is one of our partner churches and would love our support for this ministry. There are many ways to be involved. Some folks are most comfortable in the kitchen. You can offer to prepare lunch for 10-15 people. Some of us are great listeners and provide ears to hear what is on our guests' mind. Others are great care- and comfort-givers to help lift spirits. There are those who are good at organizing activities. Each of us has something to give, even if it's just being present.

To volunteer to help staff the AHUMC warming center or find opportunities at the other Village House churches, visit the Village House website at www.villagehousesccca.com/volunteer. If you need more information, or have questions about the center at AHUMC, please call Carol Horan (408-505-9650) or Jody Tempel (408-891-6931).



Family Giving Tree™

2016 Holiday Wish Drive Delivers Record Number of Gifts to Bay Area Children

Family Giving Tree, a Bay Area nonprofit focused on fulfilling the exact holiday wishes and providing core school supplies to children in need, today announced that its 2016 Holiday Wish Drive set a record with over 76,000 gifts distributed.

"For the past 27 years, Family Giving Tree has expanded its holiday outreach to deserving Bay Area children and adults," said Jennifer Cullenbine, Family Giving Tree founder and CEO. "With the support of local organizations, corporations, social service agencies and volunteers, in 2016 we surpassed our goal with over 76,000 gifts. We especially thank our 7,000-plus volunteers, who gave generously of their time and resources to make the holidays shine brighter for others."

Stephanie Black, Program Director at Community United San Jose, stated, "For the past six years, I have seen firsthand the incredible impact Family Giving Tree has on at-risk families in my neighborhood. For some of our children, this is the only gift they receive; it truly makes a difference in their lives. I sincerely thank Family Giving Tree and their volunteers and donors for making a lasting impression on those who need it most."

Another drive highlight was the first-time operation of two successful drop-off centers in San Francisco and Castro Valley, simplifying gift drop-offs for Bay Area donors outside of Silicon Valley.

Larry Loper
Director, Marketing Communications
408-596-1500
larry@familygivingtree.org
www.familygivingtree.org

Women's Groups

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

Heart & Hands

Thursday, February 2
Ornament Exchange
7 p.m. in Woodhaven
Susan Smith

Friendship Circle

Thrid Wednesday
12:30 p.m. in Woodhaven
Sue Johnson

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 20**. Please send your story ideas and submissions to Leslie Chamberlain.

Upcoming UMW Events

We will be busy the next few months with Women's Gathering Place luncheons the first Monday of each month. Please contact Pat Farrow for information on how you can help.

There are three exciting training events planned in the next few months. The first is on Saturday, February 4, in Salinas at Salinas First UMC. This program is "Leading from the Heart" and it is a no-fee event. You can see the flyer about this on the UMW bulletin board in the church office hallway. In the same spot, take a look at the flyer for the Annual Social Action Event planned for March 18.

The third event is the Mission Springs Spiritual Retreat which will be held March 31 - April 2. This event is filling up fast, so please send in your registration form as soon as possible. Rev. Linda Holbrook is leading this retreat on "Soul Tending: Spirituality for Everyday Life." The retreat will be held at the beautiful Mission Springs Center. Registration forms are on the bulletin board. Please contact Ruth Granfors for more information at rag-san-jose@aol.com.



UMW CEO Joins Interfaith Opposition to Refugee Ban Based on Religion, Nationality

Harriett J. Olson, United Methodist Women chief executive of the national office, joined with interfaith leaders to oppose a proposed U.S. ban on refugees and immigrants based on their national origin or religion. Ms. Olson's January 25 statement against the ban is part of an effort initiated by Church World Service, Interfaith Immigration Coalition, The United Methodist Church's Immigration Task Force and the General Board of Church and Society.

Ms. Olson stated: "United Methodist Women takes to heart Jesus' commandment to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Throughout our 150-year history we have carried this out by extending God's love to women, men, youth and children around the world, including immigrants and refugees. Our foremothers met boats at Ellis Island to support young women, and created Gum Moon, a national mission institution in San Francisco to safeguard Chinese immigrant women. We have been active in receiving refugee families in our communities and welcoming immigrants to our churches. Working with immigrant organizations and The United Methodist Church, we advocate for just immigration reform at state and national levels in the United States and globally.

"Today, we affirm this history by calling on the United States to protect men, women and children fleeing war, famine, drought or persecution. We denounce calls to refuse refugees based on national origin and to turn away Muslim refugees. Our nation has a moral obligation to welcome refugees in numbers commensurate with the need, rather than excluding persons in need due to fear or xenophobia. The U.S. review process for refugees is Link opens in a new window. already stringent and extensive.

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Thank You

- To all those who wrote on the question “Why Christian?” for our Advent devotional this year
- To Heart and Hand for providing the yummy breakfast (and setting up all the tables and chairs for worship) in Kohlstedt Hall on January 1st. It was a wonderful way to start the year as a church family.
- To Kristen Brown and Steve Quigley for sanctuary decorations during Advent. Perfectly simple and simply perfect.
- To Susan Smith, Matt Thornton and the crew for the amazing kids’ video we watched this Christmas. You can see it now on YouTube. [can we get the url?]
- To Bob Birnstihl for all his help this season and for playing for both Christmas Eve services and then again the next morning!
- To Michelle Partsch and our older children’s ensemble on Christmas Eve. Looks like the start of a youth choir!
- To the bell ringers for bringing the sounds of the season into the sanctuary
- To the chancel choir for blessing us with good music despite having minimal practice time
- To the Praise Band for learning a bunch of new music for the Advent season. Lots of extra work without anyone to lead rehearsals!
- To Tom Mounts for carrying on his dad’s candle tradition and for lighting candles for Jodi’s wedding, too. Beautiful!
- To Michelle Unger for her help in finding our new Praise Band director, Michael Kuo.



Welcome Team

Heather Pham has started up a Welcome Team. Thank you, Heather! Here’s her first report:

The welcome team is up and running! Thank you to Tom and Gwyne Grubb, Sherri Raia, Steve and Ingrid Quigley, Michelle Unger, and Kristin Kufeldt for helping form the team! We will be ordering name badges for anyone who would like one. There will be a sign up sheet available in the narthex. If you see a new face be sure to tell them “Hello!”

Volunteer Corner

Thank you to Sherri Raia who has volunteered to come and fold bulletins on Fridays.

We could use a few more folks who are willing to be trained in running the sound and projection system once a month or so.



UMW CEO Joins Interfaith Opposition to Refugee Ban Based on Religion, Nationality

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“United Methodist Women joins ecumenical and interfaith partners in affirming our support of refugee resettlement. We oppose any new U.S. policy that would cut the number of refugees we have agreed to welcome, and any policy that would prevent refugees from selected countries being resettled or exclude religious groups.”

United Methodist Women is the women’s mission organization within The United Methodist Church in the United States, focusing on the needs of women, children and youth since 1869. Its programs promote spiritual growth, leadership development, transformative education, and service and advocacy.

Presbyterian Women of The Stone Church of Willow Glen (PCUSA) invite you to the

Linda Hagan Memorial Lecture

In remembrance of Linda and honoring her passion for Justice and Peace

Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

The Stone Church of Willow Glen, 1937 Lincoln Avenue



“Let the Walls Fall Down”

The Reverend Alison J. Harrington, Southside Presbyterian Church, Tucson, Ariz.

The Rev. Alison Harrington brings to us her passion for Christ and for social justice. She attended U.C. Berkeley, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies with an emphasis in U. S. Race Relations. A graduate with a Master of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary, she served at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Palo Alto and as facility chaplain in the Santa Clara County Jail system. Among her many honors, she was chosen as 2016 Distinguished Alumna from SFTS. We are delighted to have Alison with us for this special day.

Schedule

10 a.m. – Opening worship

10:30 a.m. – Keynote

11:30 a.m. – Question and Answer

12 p.m. – Lunch will be provided by Presbyterian Women at no charge

1 p.m. – Small groups

2 p.m. – Break

2:15 p.m. – Closing reflections

2:45 p.m. – Closing worship



In lieu of tickets for the day, a free will offering will be received that will be divided between The Women's Gathering Place and The Rev. Kate Taber, Mission Co-worker in Israel/Palestine. We would, however, like to know that you will be coming so that we may plan accordingly for our lunch. Please make a reservation with Claudia Hamm at 408-356-6665 or jnchamm@gmail.com by Monday, February 6.

Willow Glen United Methodist Church

1420 Newport Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125

408-294-9796

www.wgumc.org

