

The Willow Word

**A Publication of the Willow Glen United Methodist Church
God's Family Growing Through Caring, Sharing and Serving**

Willow Glen United Methodist Church

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In This Issue:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Pastor's Page | Page 2 |
| General Church News | Page 3 |
| Women's Page | Page 5 |
| Children & Family Ministries | Page 6 |
| Joint Youth Ministry | Page 7 |

Editor's note: Due to technical issues, this month's issue is lacking the usual pleasing layout/format....please forgive!

Pastor's Letter

Charles Wesley wrote a hymn about Paul in prison (Acts 16:26) and one of the verses goes like this: "I woke the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee." That was the soundtrack playing in my head as we made the last payment on the Woodhaven debt in September. Being in debt is like being in a dungeon and paying off the debt is a truly liberating feeling. Now that we are debt-free and have reduced our payroll costs, we need to look at some of the other obligations that we have been neglecting.

One of the important things that we haven't been doing for a very long time, since way before I arrived, is fully supporting the shared ministry that we do with other United Methodists in our Annual Conference and around the world. We use to call our share of that ministry our "apportionment" and it was calculated using a complicated formula based on church expenses. Churches would pay it as if it were a ministry "tax."

Several years ago, we changed our thinking about apportionments from "tax" to "tithe," and now each church is expected to tithe a tenth of its total income (not counting capital campaigns, debt payments and certain rental income) to the greater ministries of the United Methodist Church. If this is new to you, it will be helpful to know that apportionment money goes to pay the salaries of our district superintendents, bishops, support staff, missionaries, camp directors, and campus ministers. It also funds Annual Conference meetings, church camps, youth gatherings, social justice programs, clergy education, and resources for revitalizing older congregations and starting new ones.

Tithing is a practice that originally comes from the Hebrew Bible. The Levites were the tribe of priests that took care of the temple. They were the only tribe that didn't have their own land and couldn't produce their own food, so the other eleven tribes paid a "tithe" of their harvest to support them. [Numbers 18:21] After the Christians stopped giving up *all* of their wealth [Acts 2 and 4], they picked up on the Hebrew idea of a tithe as a gift to God that would help them take care of the church and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These days, those who tithe or are working toward tithing do it because it is a valuable spiritual discipline. Tithing or giving a sacrificial gift of any size to God at the beginning of the month rather than waiting to see if there is anything left at the end of the month is one very practical and powerful way to put God first in one's life.

At Willow Glen, the Finance Committee will be working toward tithing our income in 2018. During the years of debt, we tried to pay 80% of our tithe. However, Bishop Minerva Carcaño has made it clear that she will make pastoral appointment and compensation decisions based on 100% payment. So the goal has been set for us, and it is no more of a "mission impossible" than our capital campaign was. We accomplished that goal and we can make this mission possible as well.

While we won't get to see all the good that our gifts do, nonetheless, I am certain that we will be blessed. As the Prophet Malachi says, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing." [Malachi 3:10]
Rebecca

Worship Schedule for November/December

- **November 5th** : Children's Sabbath celebration in Kohlstedt Hall. Come to help us celebrate this church's commitment to children and families. Pastor Susan will be preaching.
- **November 12th**: Worship in Kohlstedt Hall.
- **November 19th**: Worship in the sanctuary. The Joint Youth Group will just be back from their fall mission trip in San Francisco. Lisa Jacobs preaches.
- **November 26th**: Thanksgiving worship in the sanctuary.
- All the worship services in Advent and the Christmas Eve services will be held in the sanctuary.
- **December 31**: Come celebrate the new year. Worship with breakfast in Kohlstedt Hall.

The Coming of Joy: Advent 2018

This year has been full of both natural disasters and man-made ones. Some of us can't wait for this year to end and a new one to begin. Fortunately for Christians, the new year begins early, on December 3rd, which is the first Sunday of Advent.

In the Catholic and Orthodox tradition, Advent is a somber season of repentance in preparation for the coming of Christ and only the third Sunday is a celebration of joy. But it seems as if we've been in a somber season all year, so we will take all four Sundays of Advent to celebrate the coming of Joy, the coming of Jesus.

We can combat the sadness and negativity in our world by recalling the moments of pure joy in our lives. And it is good to share these memories with each other because those are the God-given moments that bring us closest to the heaven that Jesus promises us. To that end, we will again be preparing a daily devotional written by you to take us to Christmas. Please start thinking and writing. Advent is right around the corner.

Stewardship

If you have made a pledge toward our 2018 operating budget or to the LiftUp! campaign to replace the sanctuary lift, you will be receiving an acknowledgment soon. If you have not yet had the chance to do so, you will be receiving a letter and a pledge slip. Unfortunately, our office computer is in the shop and that has slowed down our work. As soon as we are up and running again, our thank-you will be in the mail.

"Going on to Perfection" in Giving

Methodists use this phrase to talk about growing in grace. It's not that we ever reach perfection, but we do make progress and our efforts are "perfected" by the perfect love of God. The same goes for our gifts. We encourage you to work toward tithing in your giving. That doesn't mean giving 10% of your income all at once. It means taking a small step up each year. If you are giving 1%, give 2%. If you are giving 2%, then 3%. You will be blessed and your gift, however big, will be perfected by God's grace.

Future Woodhaven Retreats

With the success of our self-care retreat at Woodhaven this fall, Pastor Rebecca is looking for other topics and spiritual teachers that will entice parents, singles and seniors to carve out time for their own spiritual growth and development. What would be worth giving up a weekend for? Send us your ideas.

Shelter Planning Team

Village House returns to Willow Glen UMC in February 2018 and we are beginning to plan how to make it even better this year. If you have a heart for this ministry, we need you on our planning team. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Rebecca.

Lift Update (from Jim Leonard)

Progress is being made! Final changes are currently being made to the project design drawings so they can be submitted to the city for review, comment and hopefully approval. At the same time the drawings will be submitted to at least 2 contractors for their refined bids. Discussions continue with the dealer who will supply and install the lift. He has identified a second manufacturer that he feels has a better product with shorter delivery times for the same price.

Financially we are getting closer to our goal of \$55,000.00. With the money we have in hand along with that pledged we have over \$30,000.00 now. At the last Trustee's meeting it was voted to take \$10,000.00 from the Major Maintenance Fund and put it toward the lift. This means that we are now within \$15,000.00 of our goal (there is light at the end of the tunnel). At this rate we should be able to get started with ordering the equipment and site preparation as soon as we get the go ahead from the city.

Keep the positive thoughts and prayers coming that we can reach our financial goal and get things going ASAP.

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 over 15 years ago for needy families whose children attend Lietz or Oster School 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!



Save the Date! UMW Christmas Party and Bead for Life Marketplace

Thursday, December 7

Heart and Hand will host a Christmas party for the United Methodist Women and friends on Thursday, December 7 in Woodhaven. The evening will be a celebration of women empowered by their efforts through the Street Business School and BeadforLife in Uganda. We will share the women's stories as well as our support for their work and transformation. Bring your joy-filled heart and some friends. We will learn about our sisters around the world and celebrate their entrepreneurial efforts as we share the promised coming of Christ.

Lifted Spirits is a Thriving Mission of Willow Glen UMW

What a wonderful group of appreciative women have enjoyed the luscious lunches we have served each month this year. The Mexican chicken enchilada lunch was a great hit, especially the Tres Leche Cake Ruth Granfors made. As always, the Willow Glen UMW appreciates everyone's involvement and support in this ongoing local mission. Please watch the weekly bulletins for your opportunity to get involved with this "Love Your Neighbor" service. We will serve lunch Wednesday, November 1st and again on Wednesday, December 6th. We meet at the church at 1a.m. and assemble all donated items, and then carpool to Lifted Spirits. Please contact Ruth Granfors, 408-444-0702, with any questions.

Celebrate 150 Years of Women Organizing for Mission

"The Power of Bold" UMW 20th Quadrennial Assembly May 18-20, 2018

Come and join women from around the country and world in Columbus, Ohio, for a faith-filled event launching into the future with bold mission action addressing the needs of women, children, and youth. Assembly2018 will focus on biblical texts surrounding the story of Jesus'

mother, Mary. Mary was a teenage mother, wife, sister and migrant refugee. Her life demonstrates what it means to boldly answer “yes” to God’s call despite life’s challenges. Plan now to experience the “Power of Bold” moving worship and riveting workshops. Together we can change the world as part of a daring and compassionate 150-year and counting movement. Find out more at www.UMWAssembly.org.

In Awe of Our Own UMW Leadership

Looking back over the last 30 or so years, it is remarkable to discover all the accomplishments of Willow Glen U.M.C.’s United Methodist Women.

The UMW Executive Board will meet Sunday, November 12, at 11:30 a.m. in Woodhaven. United Methodist Women is open to all women regardless of church membership.

Children’s / Families News

Christian Community: Advent Family Nights

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

Tuesdays of Advent (Nov. 28, Dec. 5, 12 & 19)

It has become our tradition to gather as a church family to celebrate the season of Advent with activities and fellowship, food and preparation. We hope you will take a break from the “everyday” and join us each Tuesday for a simple potluck dinner and a little bit of “special” for the season. Drop in at Woodhaven anytime between 6:00 and 8:00pm. You’ll find friendly faces, a warm meal, Christmas crafts and activities for the whole family.

If you would like to help plan our Advent Family Nights, please contact Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org) to share your ideas and join the team.

The Gift of a Bible

It has been said that giving a child a book will open the world to them. If that book is a Bible, the stories of God’s love and power will allow them to step out into the world with a personal foundation of faith and hope. It is our tradition to give each third and fourth grader a Bible of their own that will guide their faith journey into adulthood. We will give these gifts in worship on Sunday, November 5 and celebrate the spiritual growth of our children.

Looking ahead to Christmas Eve with our children

Our family worship service on Christmas Eve will be held at 5:00 pm in the sanctuary. Our children will once again participate in the early service, serving as the choir for worship and sharing in some of the leadership of the service by helping to tell the Christmas story in an upbeat and lively way. The Praise Band will also lead us in contemporary and traditional Christmas music as we celebrate the arrival of a special newcomer in a Bethlehem stable.

Please join us for this spirited candlelit service that does find its moments of peace even amidst the chaos and excitement of celebration.

Our Christmas kids' choir, the Sunday School Singers, will begin rehearsing at the end of Sunday School beginning mid-November. Sunday School meets at 9am each Sunday in the preschool building. All of our Sunday School students will be invited to be part of the telling of the Christmas story as well.



CrossWalk: Faith and Fellowship for 3rd, 4th and 5th Graders

Friday, November 10 (Veteran's Day) - 9:00am-12noon

We will be demonstrating our compassion by serving at Sacred Heart Community Services this month for a special daytime CrossWalk. Please watch your email for more details and RSVP with Pastor Susan by November 5.

CrossWalk is for all third, fourth and fifth graders. Come join the fun and faith that happens at CrossWalk! E-mail Susan to let her know you are coming, and bring a friend!

Joint Youth Ministry News

JYM Walk-a-Thon Is Sunday, November 5

1 - 4 p.m. at Cambrian Park UMC

The JYM big fall fundraiser is fast approaching. The Walk-a-Thon is a pretty straightforward fundraiser, where students ask church members, family and friends to donations to the Joint Youth Ministry. Donations are tax-deductible, and we will have prizes and incentives for students to raise money.

Money that we raise provides scholarships, pays for our program budget, provides groceries or counseling to families in need, contributes to salaries and lots of other boring but super important expenses! So help us to raise, raise, raise and make the JYM a wonderful place for everyone.

Senior High Mission Trip to San Francisco

When: Friday, November 10, at 6:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, November 12

Who: Any students in the JYM or their friends. 40 students MAX (all spaces now full!)

What: A weekend of social justice education, volunteer work at multiple nonprofits, teambuilding, spiritual growth and a little free time in an awesome city.

Where: We will sleep at the Waller Center, a United Methodist-owned retreat center in the heart of the Haight. We will travel around the city in our rented 15 passenger vans. We also will do lots of walking.

Why: To grow in our understanding of the world and diverse people groups, to bond as a youth group, to serve others and to challenge ourselves spiritually.