

THE WILLOW WORD

God's Family Growing Through Caring,
Sharing and Serving



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Sunday Worship:

[Worship Online on YouTube](#)

Coffee Hour and Fellowship at 11:00 am: Check your Weekly Message from WGUMC for Zoom Login information

Pastor's Column

The word crisis comes from the Greek word meaning "to sift" or "distinguish." Crises can be moments of clarification. Our values may become more clear to us in times of turmoil or trouble; the things we cherish may return to the forefront of our thinking. Taking the long view of any crisis might help us to see the opportunities that might emerge. As we live through the current Pandemic; and as we see the cracking veneer of our social order, revealing old wounds and deep pain; and as we experience uncertainty in almost every aspect of our lives; well, it feels like we're in a crisis. Amen?



It is also true that every crisis brings with it opportunity. As our values are clarified, we may be compelled to change behaviors so that we may realign ourselves. As we are kept physically and socially distant from one another, perhaps the things that have long divided us ideologically seem less important.

About fifteen years ago, while working as a community organizer, I learned a process called "assets-based organizing." It is an approach to community work that begins with what a community has to offer. It's easy to begin with all the things wrong in the world, and to focus on our feelings of powerlessness. But it is more difficult, and more rewarding, to take a look at the resources we have to affect change.

As the Pandemic wears on, we are seeing increasing fatigue. There may be some among us who have gone many months without human contact- a hug or a handshake. There are others who lack the technology to maintain relationships in a world that grows ever-more "tech-y." And still others for whom virtual connections, video conferences, and social media platforms are overwhelming or just plain exhausting.



During our Zoom Coffee Hour last Sunday, the conversation turned toward the needs of folks who are fatigued by the demands of virtual engagement. We began to wonder what we as a community might be able to offer. What kind of respite can the church give? Someone suggested dragging out the old fabric labyrinth, and inviting socially-distant walks. Another suggested that the garden might be a place of rest and rejuvenation for some.

Do we have a good sense of how we're all doing? Are there needs within the congregations that are unmet? How will we know?



Beyond that, as we look out into the broader community, we might wonder: What are the needs in our community that the church is uniquely qualified to meet? As a church we always must ask who is not represented among us- who isn't walking through our doors. But in this moment, no one is walking through our doors, and the needs of God's people are ever-growing.

As we head toward Silicon Valley Pride, I wonder about the needs of LGBTQ people of faith. During the Pandemic I wonder about our unhoused neighbors- are they able to stay well and fed and cared for- or are they more marginalized these days than ever? In the social moment, I wonder about People of Color- and those who are standing up for racial justice- how can we support this work?

The answers to these questions may be about educating ourselves; or about reaching out, or raising our voices. I have heard from many of you that you are reading books on race- learning about the racial inequities endemic in our society- how might we broaden that work? I know that the congregation has a heart for the homeless; and as I pass by the church, I sometimes see an unhoused man parked in his wheelchair in the shade of our building. How can we show Christ's love to him? I know also that the Pandemic is exacerbating the mental health concerns among LGBTQ youth. What can we do?

Sounds like a lot of bad news- but I would argue that we are presented with countless opportunities to show up and be the Church. In a bad news world, the power of Good News cannot be overstated.



Do all the good YOU CAN.
 BY all the means you can.
 IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN.
 IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN.
 At all the times YOU CAN.
 To ALL THE PEOPLE you can.
 AS LONG as you ever can.

john wesley

I want to invite you to be in prayer about how we are being called to action; about who we're being called to love; and about the places we're being called to go. The Spirit will reveal these things to us. In the coming weeks and months, I hope that we will develop a new ministry plan that reflects the growing and changing needs of our congregation and communities for "such a time as this."

The Conference has called for each church to convene a "relaunch team" to consider how and when to regather the church, safely. As our team comes together, it is my hope that we will also consider the ways we're called to be the church right now. The current crisis isn't a pause in the work of the church- it's a re-positioning. We're called to do all the good we can, in all the ways we can, with all the means we can, with all the people we can. And the thing I love most about all of that is that part about "we can."

Let's lean in to this crisis; and discover the opportunities that God is laying out before us.

Pastor Brian

Rev. Mariellen Yoshino's "Down Home" Talk Show

As we get to know each other, I hope to learn more about your lives and loves; passions and projects, memories and ministries. You will learn more about me over time, too: about my Pentecostal grandmother, my growing up on the farm, and my work with refugee populations and as a community organizer.

Recently, I had the opportunity to be interviewed by the Rev. Mariellen Yoshino of Almaden Hills UMC. During the time of pandemic and separation, Pastor Yoshino has created a new project: interviewing community folks about their lives and callings. I don't know if she has a name for the project but "Mariellen's Down-Home Talk Show" feels right to me, or maybe just "Porch Time" (because it really feels like a front-porch conversation with a friend.) She is so gracious and inviting, it's very easy to open up to her!



I had the good fortune to speak with her a couple of weeks ago. The completed video is [here](#). Take a look, if you're interested.

Church Staff

Brian Adkins

Senior Pastor

brian@wgumc.org

Susan Smith

Pastor of Children & Family Ministries; Director, Woodhaven Preschool

susan@wgumc.org

Lisa Jacobs

Director of Joint Youth Ministries

lisa3cyouth@gmail.com

Katrina Kraynick

Associate Youth Director

katrina3cyouth@gmail.com

Robert Birnstihl

Organist & Director of Music Ministries

Tom Mounts

Director of the Willow Glen Ringers

Roxanne Kohlin

Office & Facilities Manager
info@wgumc.org

Finance News



As often is the case when we report on the Church's financial status, there is good news and not-so-good news. On the not-so-good side, our regular, on-going, giving is down \$8,000 per month compared to last year coupled with the reality that we are receiving no income from church building use. Therefore, even though our expenditures are down, we have a projected on-going deficit of \$7,000 to \$10,000 per month.

On the positive side, we had a couple large, one-time gifts from members or past members of our congregation that helped us get through May with a little money in the bank. In addition, we were successful in receiving a government Paycheck Protection Loan for the Church and the Preschool. We now fully expect to meet the necessary requirements to have the loan fully forgiven.

After applying the proceeds from the Paycheck Protection Loan we expect to start July with approximately \$40,000 in the bank to help us with our structural deficit. However, even with this cushion, we do not expect to be able to pay all of our bills this year without cutting our expenses. We cannot sustain such a large monthly deficit. We're looking for places where we can cut our expenditures (and hopefully increase our income) so we can get back to a sustainable level.

And you can help! We know these are difficult times for many of you, but for those of you that can find a way to increase your giving a little more, this would be the time where we really need you to step up. Over the next month we are going to have to make some very difficult decisions about how we will cut our expenses, but the more giving we can count on the less we will have to cut. Please prayerfully consider if this is a time that you can increase your giving. If it is, simply go to www.wgumc.org/give, or write a check and either mail it or drop it off at the church.

Thank you for all you do for Willow Glen UMC. We will get through this together! ~Your Finance Team

Zoom Fellowship on Sundays



Meet us for [worship online](#) on Sunday! You can go to the website and watch at any time, but if you watch at 10:00am, you can join a Zoom coffee hour afterward at 11:00am. Make yourself a cup of coffee or tea, and park yourself in front of your computer or phone to wait for your church family friends to show up. It will be so good to see you!

See your midweek email message for directions to join the zoom meeting. If you need further assistance, please contact the office at info@wgumc.org.

The Heart of Men

We're live with "Online" & "Local" meetings! Join us online to do God's work - digitally on Tuesdays: 7 - 9:00pm for local members and on Wednesdays: 6 - 8:00pm for online members. The [Heart of Men](#) is a men's group built for our current time. [Click this link](#) to Subscribe and receive: free membership & "Wild at Heart" book, local & online meeting schedules, meeting & retreat information, newsletter & much more.



Christian Meditation Meets Online



Join WGUMC's Christian Meditation Group, which meets **Mondays 12:30pm-1:15pm** each week. Ingrid Quigley is the facilitator for this group, which has been meeting at Woodhaven for the past 9 years. All are welcome.

For questions and meeting information, contact Ingrid (email the office if you need Ingrid's contact info).

Wednesday Early Bible Study (WEBS)

Visitors welcome. Join us on Zoom at 7:00 am. For more info, please contact Jane Vivian at 408-269-3907.

Women's Groups

United Methodist Women is open to all women regardless of church membership. Please call the contact listed below for information.

Heart & Hands

Meeting Online
Pastor Susan Smith

Friendship Circle

Sue Johnson &
Ruth Granfors

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN NEWS:**UMW Zoom Meeting on August 15th**

Mark your calendars for **August 15, 2020** for the next El Camino Real District UMW Zoom meeting. The subject will be "Interrupting the Cradle to Prison Pipeline (part 2)". For more information, [click here](#).

UMW Zoom Meeting Recap from July 25th

Ruth Granfors was lucky to be able to attend the first meeting of "Interrupting the Cradle to Prison Pipeline" on July 25th. Several of the ladies in UMW started to tell their story of being black while growing up. One lady said that she did not care how you referred to her color as long as it wasn't "n" word. We then managed to get into small breakout groups and each told what awareness they had about racial differences and how we can now start to bring about a change. We no longer should remain silent. Later in the meeting, Pastor Dale Weatherspoon joined the discussion and provided many statistics about the imbalance of jail sentencing. About 109 people attended the event and look forward to the future Zoom meetings. We actually went over the schedule meeting time by 30 minutes!

Several books were mentioned as good sources of information: "Sacred Resistance", "White Fragility", "Begin Again", "So You Want to Talk About Race". If you are unable to take to the streets to

join the Black Lives Matter brigade you can also write letters of support to: California District 19, Zoe Lofgren at 635 N. 1st St., Suite B, San Jose, CA 95112 or to 1401 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. The phone number there is (202) 225-3072.

Recap of UMW Webinar from July 28th

On July 28th, Ruth attended a Zoom meeting for adults and youth called "Environmental Racism and the Role of Youth", concerning the environment and how we need to encourage the youth to become active in the process of environmental justice. Although it's difficult to find a good time to meet for a nationwide audience, the event was attended by about 100 UMW nationwide. The event speakers stressed that even if we are unable to march or make good trouble, we can write political letters and make phone calls to encourage people to vote in November.

The speakers at the meeting included Ilka Vega who is a racial justice charter team member, Eriqah Vincent the manager from Just Energy, and Sarah Son, UMW member from Nevada who is a climate justice intern.

WGUMC UMW Reading List Participation

Our local unit has been meeting on Zoom thanks to Gwyne Grubb. Currently we are reading books from the UMW reading list. Level One requires you to read five (5) books from the recommended areas of study: Spirit Growth, Leadership Development, Social Action, Mission Education, Nurturing for Community. Level Two means that you read 10 books, 2 from each category. Some books count as double. Once you complete the reading, prepare a report and send it to the Program Resources district officer: Carolyn Bircher at 1663 Martin Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, by mid-August. Many of the books are in the local church library. Most books are purchased through local book stores. Lots of information can be found on the UMW website. Any book that has been selected in the past four years can count for the award. Alice Singh, our local librarian, and secretary of program resources is available for help if you contact her.

Upcoming UMW Events:

Please [click here](#) for El Camino Real District UMW Events.

Please [click here](#) for California Nevada Conference UMW information.



JYM in August

We are continuing with distant togetherness, online games and discussion, online worship, instagram engagement etc and recreating a new normal.

We know lots of you have gotten the news about the school year beginning indefinitely with total virtual distant learning as well as sports being pushed back and grouped together until at least December. Everyday since March things have been so different than normal and we know the changes have caused some anxiety, some reflection, some loneliness, some depression, some rejuvenation and some reflection...sometimes all in the same day!

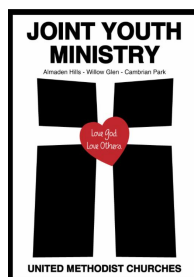
JYM Calendar

You can find out what's happening with the JYM by visiting our website: <http://www.jointyouthgroup.com/>, or better yet, check out our Facebook and Instagram accounts and weekly JYM emails for the most up-to-date programming information.

JYM Leaders Contact Info

Lisa - lisa3cyouth@gmail.com

Kat - katrina3cyouth@gmail.com



Have you followed us on Social Media?

Pictures, up to the minute reminder and lots of fun to be found by:

- Liking us on Facebook

[JYM FACEBOOK](#)

- Following our JYMrocks page on Instagram

[Follow us on Instagram](#)

Donate to the JYM

Do you like what is happening in the JYM? Do you think it's important and you want it to continue? How do you donate?

We'd love a small or large monthly contribution to the JYM to help be sure all our programming, events and scholarships for events are able to happen this year.

You can click here to make a one time, or monthly donation [DONATE](#)

The deadline for the September
Willow Word is **August 24**.
Please send your story ideas
and submissions to
Janissa.Dayrit@gmail.com

Finding ways to connect at Compassion Camp

Vacation Bible School is always a highlight of the summer. It is busy and noisy with lots of kids in brightly colored t-shirts following their teen and adult leaders around campus from activity station to activity station. There is food and games and music and crafts.



Most of all, there are children from around our neighborhood connecting with one another and their leaders in faithful ways, strengthening their relationships with one another and with God.

VBS looked a little different this summer with online video lessons, printable activities and at-home craft and science projects. Even in this new format, however, the heart of VBS was the same. Our teen volunteers faithfully met with some of our campers each week to connect online, playing games and sharing their projects. Most of all, we shared our hearts. As one teen told me, "It wouldn't be summer without VBS," and my heart smiled. Even separated by a pandemic, we can be church for one another.

Compassion Camp was an experiment in many ways. I got to try out some new formats for providing online lessons to our kids, and we all got to discover some new ways to play on zoom, connecting with old friends and making new ones as well. The digital formats have their limitations and we do get tired of them, but they are also a wonderful way to see one another's smiles, to laugh together at silly jokes and to share what's happening in our lives and how we are feeling about it all.

At Compassion Camp, we dug into the elements of compassion so we can more fully open ourselves to seeing and responding to the needs around us. They are lessons that will serve us well for the rest of our lives. And to keep with the traditions of Vacation Bible School, we explored the Bible, sang some catchy songs, wore brightly-colored t-shirts, followed our teen leaders around (to zoom breakout rooms), did some cool projects, and found ways to share our faith with others.

BE LOVE.
BE KIND.
BE YOU.

Most years, as I clean up after Vacation Bible School, I usually have a lot of stuff to put away and supplies to sort (and I think there is still stuff in the garage from VBS 2019). This year, I find myself sorting through our blessings as I stash away our supplies:

- our families who supported this new style of learning and found ways to engage with it that fit into their summer,
- our teens who volunteered to spend time with our kids even when it was a little awkward because they love VBS and they love our kids,

- our collaborative churches who remind us that church is not just about our buildings but about the faith we share in our larger community,
- a church family who cares about our children and how they are growing in faith.

God is good. All the time!

What will Sunday School look like this year?



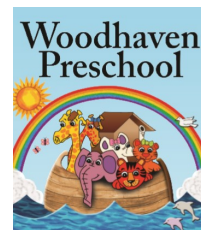
When we began sheltering in place in March, Pastor Susan was able to record Sunday School lessons each week and put them online for families to watch together. Each week provided a presentation of the Bible story, some discussion and life application as well as some games and crafts for families to do at home to support the Bible learning.

Throughout the spring, it was delightful to see children and families engaging this materials together and continuing their faith development during uncertain times.

As we look ahead to fall, Pastor Susan is asking the same questions that all the schools are asking - what does school look like in this season of COVID-19? After looking at a number of models and formats and curriculum options, there still is not a clear choice, so we are taking some more time to pray about how to best support our children and families through Sunday School this fall and hope you'll watch this space for more information as it becomes available. In the meantime, if you have ideas about what might work best for your family, please do not hesitate to send Pastor Susan an email (susan@wgumc.org) with your thoughts. As much as this might be a case of there being a different solution or answer for every family, we'd like to try and find a way to bring Sunday School to your home each week and stay connected with you and your children until we can be together again.

Woodhaven Preschool re-opening soon

Plans are underway to head back to school at Woodhaven Preschool. With reduced enrollment, redesigned classrooms and increased safety measures in place, we are cautiously excited to start a new year of playful learning, and hopeful that more students will return as the COVID-19 status improves in our area and families feel comfortable. Our Health & Safety Plan can be found on our website (woodhavenpreschool.org) under the Current Families tab. We appreciate your continued prayers and support as we navigate preschool ministry in a challenging season.



Launching a Re-Launch Team

While we don't know when it will feel safe to come together again for worship and other ministry activities at Willow Glen UMC, we are taking the first steps in this conversation by creating a Relaunch Team. Assembled by Pastor Brian and Pastor Susan and chaired by Tom Grubb and Tom Mounts, this team will meet regularly over the next few months to consider how we can best live by John Wesley's three simple rules: Do no harm; do good; and stay in connection with God.

Our first priority is not to reopen our doors for worship, but to create an action plan for our ministry and how our mission and ministry can continue safely in this season. We will be considering the needs of our church family and our community, and how we can best meet those needs in light of Wesley's rules. All of our plans will require approval from the District Superintendent before any in-person gatherings begin again. It is our hope that this team will be the beginning of a fresh start for our congregation, looking at what has been done in the past and what is important to do in the future while holding the hearts and safety of our church family carefully.

Prayer Requests Process Updated

Please join our Prayer Chain email list. If you, or someone you know, would like their email address added to the Prayer Chain, please send a note to prayers@wgumc.org.

Prayers are copied exactly as they are written to us via email or on the Prayer & Presence slips on Sundays. Please be sure to write legibly and in large enough text for the office to be able to read and spell correctly. Thank you!



Thank you for your faithful ministry to the Prayer Chain!

A VBS Shout Out to our Leaders

Leah Tedeschi - St. Francis Episcopal

Lyndsey Bravo - Almaden Hills UMC

Grace Trout - Cambrian Park UMC

Small Group Leaders

Ben Chamberlain

Maddie Marshall

Jane Partsch

Jennah Partsch

Chandra Pham

Evan Pham

Lydia Pham

Bible Readers

Maddie Marshall

Chandra Pham

Evan Pham

Paige Unger

Yoga Leader

Molly Freeman

Paige Unger

Set Creation

The Pham family

Craft Leaders

Ben Chamberlain

Paige Unger





**All-Church Summer Fun
Virtual Campfire Night
Friday, August 7
7:00pm**

Join us for an online campfire night.

Set up your zoom station near your outdoor firepit or your indoor cozy spot
and break out the marshmallows and chocolate.

Get a family skit or song ready or bring your best jokes and stories.

Watch for the Zoom login in the weekly church email...

We'll sing songs, tell jokes & stories, and eat s'mores around a virtual campfire.

Want to help with this event? Have some great ideas for the fun?

Email leslie_chamberlain@hotmail.com.

THE WILLOW WORD

Willow Glen United Methodist Church

1420 Newport Avenue

San Jose, CA 95125

(408) 294-9796

www.wgumc.org



August 2020