

THE WILLOW WORD

God's Family Growing Through Caring,
Sharing and Serving



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Sunday Worship:

[Worship Online on YouTube](#)

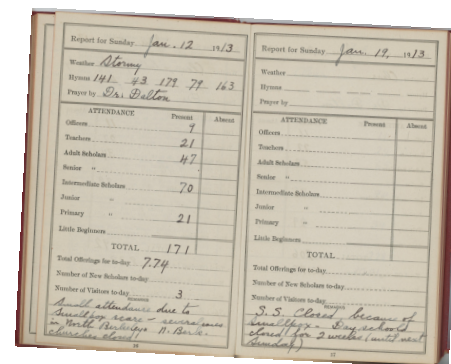
Coffee Hour and Fellowship at 11:00 am: Check your Weekly Message from WGUMC for Zoom Login information

Pastor's Column

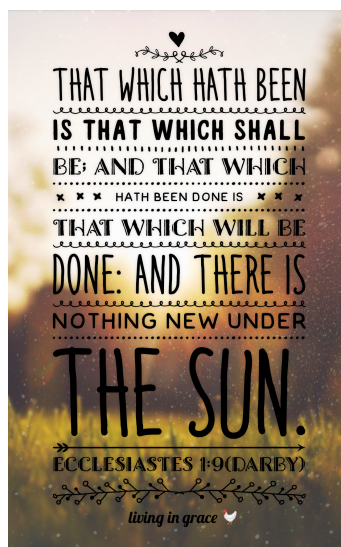
While serving at Trinity UMC in Berkeley last year, I happened upon a box of old meeting minutes and documents dating back to the late 1880s. Among them were attendance records, Trustee's reports and notes from gatherings of the Women's Home Missionary Society (a predecessor to United Methodist Women). As I sorted through these items, there were two things that stood out to me.

The first was a Sunday School superintendent's notebook dated 1913. Its keeper had faithfully tracked attendance, which hymns were sung, notes from the lessons and other pertinent information. But, as I turned the pages I encountered a number which were blank except for a note scrawled in the margin, "Sunday school closed due to Smallpox outbreak." It helped put in perspective our

experience in this pandemic. We are not the first to face realities of a public health crisis as the church; nor are we the first to have our routines disrupted this way.



Then I came across a notebook of the San Francisco Women's Home Missionary Society, which chronicled the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Among the accounts of the tragic losses were notes about which of our Methodist churches had burned down or collapsed during that event. But there were also notes about which of our churches served as field hospitals for the wounded and which of them had opened up kitchens for the hungry. I was reminded that the church has endured crises before and always found ways to remain in service. I wonder where they worshipped in the aftermath of that tragedy? I wonder what new means of ministry emerged from that experience?



An acquaintance who is a history professor recently said to me, "One of the words historians hate most is 'unprecedented.'" He meant of course that a lack of knowledge of history can lead to misconceptions about our own lived experiences. That stuck with me as I considered how rare and unusual our current circumstances are. While this Pandemic might feel unprecedented to us, we know that many around the world have lived in the shadow of catastrophic plagues and diseases. Others endure apocalyptic natural disasters. A review of history or survey of recent crises around the globe can shatter our worldview that our experiences are truly unique.

It suggests to me that maybe Solomon was right, "There's nothing new under the sun." (Though there are things new to us). Earthquakes and fires, floods and plagues are so often referred to as "Acts of God." But as one theologian put it, "The storm isn't the act of God. The act of God is the rebuilding of lives afterward."

I might add that other acts of God continue to unfold in our midst. In light of the Pandemic and recent fires, we've met neighbors we might otherwise have not. We've had the opportunities to serve together. We've gained a heightened awareness of the needs of those around us. We've become aware of those who are food insecure, or those who are financially struggling. In short, needs and opportunities are being revealed to us, new relationships are forming. These acts of God are easy to shrug off or overlook, but they matter.

We know that the Church has endured. Millennia of conflict (sometimes the oppressed and sometimes the oppressor), wars, plague, natural disasters. The church has carried on, found new ways of being in community and living out the Gospel. It's time to count our blessings. To look back on the great and unmerited grace of God that has brought us this far and to look ahead with confidence that we can and will adapt to our changing circumstances. What a mission and what a message we've inherited! God is so good, so faithful. And we are blessed to be witnesses.

Pastor Brian



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. 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.

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 (email the office if you need Jane's contact info).

Church Staff

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Willow Glen UMC continues to collaborate with Almaden Hills and Cambrian Park UMCs



The Isaiah 43:19 ("Behold, I am doing a new thing ...") Working Group was organized in response to the UMC El Camino District's request to address new ministries and areas of cooperation. Based on our long history of working together with the Joint Youth Ministry, combined services, and other ministries, Pastors and lay members from all three churches (Almaden Hills, Cambrian Park, and Willow Glen) came together to develop a number of recommendations and

a proposed structure for staffing and funding of these new initiatives before the COVID pandemic struck. While the District elected not to go forward with those recommendations, the Isaiah 43:19 group has enthusiastically decided to continue to meet to explore new ways that the three churches may collaborate in worship, service, and community – both during this pandemic era and beyond. In addition to collaborating on a virtual VBS this summer and a Reconciling Ministries Sunday worship this Fall, a number of new opportunities are being explored and the working group expects to share these with the three congregations in the coming weeks and months as they develop.

ReLaunch Team begins their work



Looking ahead to the time when we will be able to re-open the doors of the church, we have established a ReLaunch Team as directed by the Bishop and the Cabinet.

Ultimately, this team will make the plans that return us to in-person worship. Before that, however, we will consider the ministry that God is calling us to be doing in this place and time, and how we can answer that call safely. As the re-opening protocol states, our main

task is to follow John Wesley's first rule and "do no harm."

Church leaders and pastors are now meeting regularly to determine the needs of our church community and neighborhood, and to create a timeline and plan that will allow us to respond to guidelines from the county as new opportunities for gathering are possible. With new procedures and safety training in place, we will be prepared to come together again when we feel our congregation is ready. Even if our doors remain closed for now, we are doing our best to faithfully live out John Wesley's two other rules: Do good, and stay in love with God.

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!

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:**WGUMC UMW Reading List Participation**

United Methodist Women end of year reports are due September 1st. So, I hope you have completed the reading program and mailed the supporting documents to Carolyn Bircher at cmbricher@gmail.com. Anyone that read 1 book from each of the five categories will receive a certificate at the October 24, 2020 annual El Camino Real District Celebration. The proper reporting paper form can be found on the UMW web site. For more information, [click here](#).

2020
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
READING PROGRAM

**Recap of "Faith Talks" podcast on August 27th**

On August 27th, a program called Faith Talks was attended by 416 persons around the United States via Zoom. Speakers included Bee Moorhead, Rev. Traci Blackman, Sabrina White, Liz OuYang, Rev. Brianna Parker and Jennifer P Farmer. The major theme was voting in 2020.

Due to the pandemic everyone is encouraged to vote by mail, but due to the post office shortage of labor, a better course of action is to return your signed ballot to a drop box at your Registrar of Voter. Currently they are giving you from October 31 to November 3 to return the signed envelope and the ballot. Use black ink for all marks on the ballot. Santa Clara will be mailing ballots to all registered voters. Remind your neighbors and friends to vote. Don't get into the discussion of who to vote for. Plan to help anyone that needs help before the deadline. What day and time of day is best for them to go to return their ballot? Try to be available to offer help on that day and time. Be very mindful of anyone over 65 years old. If they are not registered be sure to tell them to do it very soon. Help them find the address of the local Registrar of Voters. If they have trouble reading, offer to help read the material with them in advance of October 31. Not everyone has online ability to research information. Offer your help! Build a bridge of communication not judgement.

If they are not on the current voter list but have been voting in the past, question why they are suddenly not allowed to vote. Go up the level of authority if you must. Get to the bottom of it!

Voting is about more than just who is President. It's people power, from the top to the local sheriff and school board members. VOTE!



While you are waiting to vote and turn in your marked ballot, you can write letters and make phone calls to your House of Representatives and Senators to plead with them to extend the time for the Census count. Due to Covid 19, they have shortened the time to take the count of people in the state. 64 million people still must be counted, and the Census takers cannot possibly complete the task in the time left as many of them have had to take time off for quarantine themselves. The time should be extended not shortened! You can call daily if you have time! Be courteous but be a pest! The proper count will determine what will happen for the next 10 years! It needs to be as correct as possible! Call! Write! Vote!

To learn more about Faith Talks and see a list of other podcasts, [click here](#).

Upcoming UMW Events:

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

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



JYM in September

We hope to see you soon! Please reach out if you need any help with anything, we know that things are hard right now, especially with school starting again. If finances are tight and you need any help with school supplies, groceries, internet access, or anything else let us know and we will see what we can do! Additionally if your family becomes effected by the fires, please let us know! We continue to pray for our first responders and all of the victims of the fires.

Lisa and I are also trying our best to come up with creative ways to be together, either in person or virtually, during this time. If you have any ideas of ways we can better do that, please let us know!

JYM Leaders Contact Info

Lisa - lisa3cyouth@gmail.com

Kat - katrina3cyouth@gmail.com

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.

Have you followed us on Social Media?

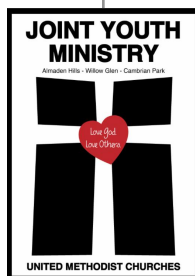
Pictures, up to the minute reminder and lots of fun to be found by:

- 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 October *Willow Word* is **September 24**. Please send your story ideas and submissions to Janissa.Dayrit@gmail.com

Woodhaven Preschool welcomes children back to school

After months of planning, we reopened our preschool on August 24, welcoming almost 50 children to beautifully prepared classrooms with loving teachers and new friends. Never before have we seen such relief on children's faces as they see other people their size and join together to play and explore. Their happiness makes our hearts smile, and we are thrilled to be able to offer a safe place for our young friends to learn and grow. As a school, we are extremely grateful for the support of the church to help us keep this ministry to our neighborhood alive, and we are deeply honored by the trust given to us by parents and families as partner with them in old and new ways. Personally, I am humbled by the care and courage of our staff who have worked tirelessly to ready us for this new adventure at Woodhaven, and I ask for your continued prayers of health, peace and patience as we continue to live into this season.



Peace,
Pastor Susan

Pastor Susan imagines ministry with children and families beyond COVID Season

Do you ever look around and try to remember what our world looked like just a few weeks or months ago? COVID has radically transformed our daily lives in ways that may be more lasting than we would like to consider. These transformations, though, provide us an opportunity to re-imagine how we commit to our faith, nurture one another and grow closer to God.



The spring months of shelter-in-place offered me a chance to try some different things, learn some skills and connect with our children and families in a variety of ways. From video Sunday School lessons to virtual Vacation Bible School, we have the technology to offer lessons and activities to children and families so they can continue to grow together in faith at home. However, as summer turns to fall and our kids return to school at their kitchen tables, I feel a sense of weariness, maybe even exhaustion, looming over our digital experiences and I worry that our efforts to connect with children and families this way may not be as welcome as it was early in the pandemic.

So we are starting our children's ministry this fall with less of a plan and more of an idea and we will explore ways to support and nurture our children and families, trying a variety of new

things and discovering what works for the moment. Here are my ideas for fall:

- CrossWalk will alternate meeting in-person outdoors and meeting online to provide safe ways for all of our students to connect with their friends.
- Instead of weekly Sunday School lessons, I will find ways to visit children and families safely, taking a walk through their neighborhood or exploring an outdoor space together. I am looking forward to caring for and building deeper relationships with families and, especially, hearing what our children have been up to and how they have grown.
- I will send home monthly resources for families to share together as devotional or Bible study family time.
- We will offer seasonal outdoor activities for the whole church family to participate in here at the church. Some of these activities may be set-up for you to enjoy in your own time (like the Lenten Prayer Walk). Others may be planned for a Sunday afternoon for families to come together in socially distant ways to explore their faith lessons together.

In all of these ways, I hope we can begin to reconnect with one another and continue to grow closer to God with our church family. Our fall season may look a little different than it has in years past, but we will be in ministry with one another – caring, sharing and serving as the family of God.

CrossWalk

Faith and Fellowship for Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders



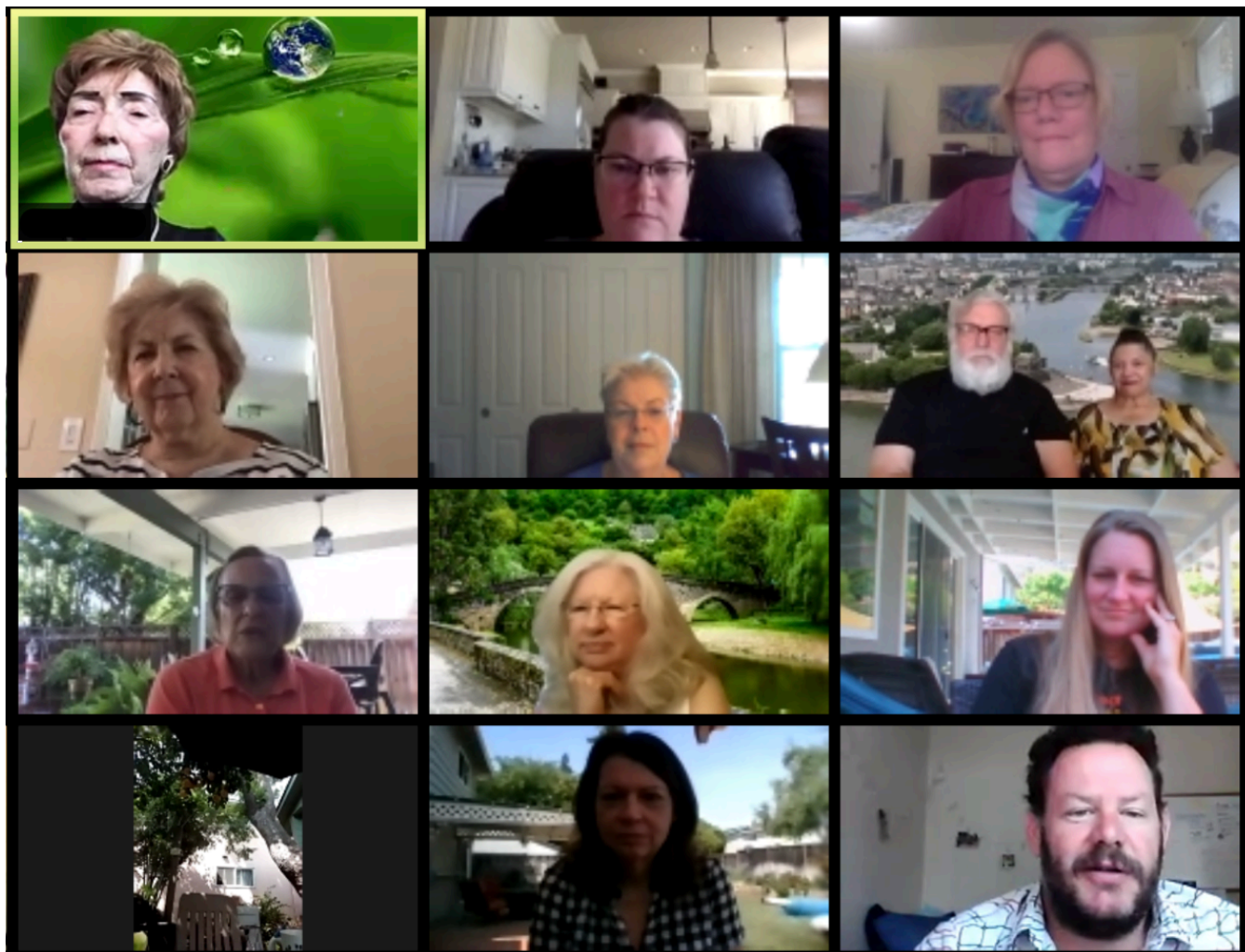
Friday, September 25
7:00 – 8:30pm *online*
Theme: Harvest Moon
Scripture: Psalm 104

All third, fourth and fifth graders are invited to CrossWalk. We meet once a month to learn about ourselves and our faith, and have a lot of fun! In September, we will be learning about the fall equinox, giving thanks for the strength and beauty of creation and considering how we honor our Creator. As always, there will be friends and games, new experiences, thoughtful conversations and plans for more faithful fun.

Please watch your e-mail for more details, or e-mail Pastor Susan (susan@wgumc.org) to ask to be added to our CrossWalk distribution list. CrossWalk is for all third, fourth and fifth graders, so think about inviting a friend!

Online Fellowship on Sundays

We'd love to see you at the Virtual Coffee Hour Fellowship via Zoom at **11:00am** after Sunday service! Make yourself a cup of coffee or tea and park yourself in front of your computer or phone and wait for your church family friends to show up. It will be so good to see you!



THE WILLOW WORD

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September 2020