

# 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

## I Believe... Even When...

This Advent and Christmas, we are filling the night with light - affirming and acting on the reasons why we can still "believe, even when" we are discouraged.

The opening words of an anonymous Jewish poet, "I believe in the sun, even when the sun is not shining," were scrawled on a wall during the Holocaust. This faith statement inspires the theme for our season and the power of God's story calls us to transformation and reconciliation through hope, love, joy, and peace.



## Advent Devotional

Consider your faithful struggles and triumphs, and write your own statement of faith or share your story. We will share these reflections as an Advent devotional posted regularly throughout the season to our church community.

You might start by writing a simple statement of belief for troubled times...

"I believe that [fill in the blank with a lament, a sorrow, a confession]"

AND

"I believe that [fill in the blank with a prophetic word of change]."

Or you might consider the faithfulness that has seen you through difficult experiences by writing...

"I believe in [fill in the blank with a tenet of your faith] because [give an example of how you have seen this belief alive in your life and how that has sustained you]."

Share your "I believe..." stories or statements or your reflection on your favorite Christmas carol or hymn with our community by sending them to [devotions@wgumc.org](mailto:devotions@wgumc.org) soon. If you would like to receive the Advent devotions in your e-mail box each day, please e-mail [info@wgumc.org](mailto:info@wgumc.org) to be added to the distribution list.

## Sunday Worship

We are collaborating with three other San Jose UMCs for Advent and sharing our messages for this sermon series. Each week, we will be visited by one of the pastors of our sister churches (Almaden Hills, Cambrian Park and Evergreen UMCs) who will offer their Advent message to us.

**November 29:** I Believe in the Sun  
Rev. Amy Beth Durward - Cambrian Park UMC

**December 6:** I Believe in Love  
Rev. Sunae Cho - Evergreen UMC

**December 13:** I Believe in Joy  
Rev. Mariellen Yoshino - Almaden Hills UMC

**December 20:** I Believe in the Light  
Bishop Minerva Carcano - CA-NV Annual Conference

**December 27:** Believe This! The Time has Come  
Lisa Jacobs - Joint Youth Ministries Director

## Church Conference

Sunday, December 13

1:50-2:50pm

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Come meet our new District Superintendent Samuel Hong and join in the annual business of the church. In addition to reporting on our ministry and membership, we will honor our saints, elect leaders and share our ideas for the church going forward into 2021.



**Church  
Conference**

In preparation for our meeting and faithful conversation, consider these questions:

- A. What in your world has changed since your last regular annual charge or church conference?
- B. How have these changes affected your life and the life of your church?
- C. What changes will your church have to make in order to respond to the changes in your community?
- D. What will your leadership as a church and as individual disciples of Jesus need to look like going forth for you to continue your work of disciple-making for the transformation of the world?
- E. What in your church's history of faith commitment can be a help to you and to the world in the days and years to come?

## Advent Prayer Walk

Your Family Ministry team is planning Advent prayer stations for the Woodhaven garden. Watch your weekly e-mail for details, and plan to spend some time outdoors preparing your hearts for the arrival of the Messiah through simple prayerful reflection activities that can be done individually or as a family on your schedule. Please maintain social distancing and COVID safety at all times.



## Christmas Eve Services

Christmas is a wonderful time to worship with your church family, and while we may be physically apart this year, we are planning a variety of ways for you to celebrate the birth of Christ with traditions new and old.



### Christmas Eve Online

Our traditional service of lessons and carols will be available online for viewing at home with your family. God's gift of love comes to us through the familiar words of Scripture and in the beauty of traditional carols. We will tell the old, old story that still has the power to give us new life to take into the new year. Worship at [www.wgumc.org](http://www.wgumc.org)

## Drive-Thru Christmas Eve Worship

December 24 at 4-5pm

WGUMC Parking Lot

For something a little different, we are planning a drive-thru Christmas Eve service in our parking lot. In the comfort of your car, drive through stations of worship and experience many of the elements of our candlelit services with new twists for our outdoor setting. We are also hoping to premiere our children's nativity pageant video following the drive-thru service in a drive-in setting under the trees behind Woodhaven. Watch your weekly email for more details as our plans come together.



If you would like to help create or lead the worship stations in our drive-thru service, please contact Pastor Susan ([susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)). This might be a way for your family to worship together on Christmas eve – sharing a piece of the story with your church family as they drive through.



**Reminder: Giving Tree gifts are due December 7. Thank you!**

## Pastor's Column

We are all ready for a little Christmas! It has been a long and strange year. Just when we think we know what's happening, everything changes yet again. Since September, your ReLaunch team has been meeting regularly to consider how and when we can reopen safely. We started with outdoor events and just last month, brought back a couple of small groups indoors, and now we are back to all outdoors and online again. It's like a boomerang ride for all of us!

Throughout all of it, though, your ReLaunch team has been considering what is important and how can we do it safely. We have talked a lot about Christmas and what will make it feel like Christmas. If we can't be together in the sanctuary with candlelight and bells and excited children, what can we do to celebrate the arrival of Christ and feel the hope and joy of God's gift to us? We have had many ideas and struggled to find ways to make them happen. Now with COVID numbers rising and tighter restrictions in place, we are forced to accept that we won't be in the sanctuary for Christmas, and find other ways to celebrate the season outdoors and safely distant from one another.

This issue of the Willow Word is full of creative ideas and new opportunities to celebrate the season and enter the new year. From Hanging of the Greens outdoors to a traveling Advent wreath, an Advent prayer walk in the garden to our traditional Christmas Eve service online, a virtual passing of the candlelight to a drive-thru Christmas Eve worship experience, we hope you will find special ways to prepare your hearts for Christmas. We know so much feels different this year, but I hope you will find the same warmth and love, the deep joy and faith that Christmas brings too. May the foundation of our traditions and our community ring through each new opportunity and bring us to a deeper understanding of God's presence with us. Emmanuel, God with us.

Peace,  
Pastor Susan

## Worship & Zoom Fellowship on Sundays



Meet us for worship online on Sunday! You can go to our [YouTube Channel](#) or our [website](#) and watch at any time (posted at 7am Sundays), then join the Zoom coffee hour fellowship 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](mailto:info@wgumc.org).



On **December 6th**, we will again celebrate communion together on zoom with the same link we use for the virtual Coffee Hour Fellowship.



## 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)

Continuing to meet every Wednesday, ALL are welcome to join in these virtual (Zoom) meetings. WEBS Zoom meetings now begin at 7:30am for socializing and Bible Study. Bring your coffee. Visitors may contact Tom Farrow at [montrealtom@hotmail.com](mailto:montrealtom@hotmail.com) or call (925) 890-0048 for an invitation/instructions to the Zoom meeting.

## Church Staff

**Brian Adkins**

*Senior Pastor*

[brian@wgumc.org](mailto:brian@wgumc.org)

**Susan Smith**

*Pastor of Children &  
Family Ministries; Director,  
Woodhaven Preschool*

[susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)

**Lisa Jacobs**

*Director of Joint Youth  
Ministries*

[lisa3cyouth@gmail.com](mailto:lisa3cyouth@gmail.com)

**Katrina Kraynick**

*Associate Youth Director*

[katrina3cyouth@gmail.com](mailto:katrina3cyouth@gmail.com)

**Robert Birnstihl**

*Organist & Director of Music  
Ministries*

**Michael Kuo**

*Director of Praise Band*

**Tom Mounts**

*Director of the Willow  
Glen Ringers*

**Roxanne Kohlin**

*Office & Facilities Manager*  
[info@wgumc.org](mailto:info@wgumc.org)



**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:****Cookie Sunday – December 20th**

On **Sunday, December 20th** United Methodist Women are asked to provide cookies (for sharing at a later date) from 2 pm to 4 pm at WGUMC. It is suggested that you select cookies that are not too sticky, as they will be packaged in smaller units for dispersment. They can be homemade or store bought. Pastor Susan and the Heart and Hands Circle have plans for future sharing.

**Recap of WGUMC's UMW Meeting on November 12th**

On November 12th, the Willow Glen United Methodist Women held a Zoom meeting/program featuring treasurer Becky Morgan explaining that our unit received an award for the 5 channels of giving. One of the five is "The World Thank Giving". These funds help missions around the world. California has two missions in San Francisco, California. Jane Vivian shared that her son-in-law's mother was one person that received services from Gum Moon. The other mission is Mary Elizabeth Inn. A former member of WGUMC, Mary Wren, lived at Mary Elizabeth Inn as a

young single women when she found it necessary to support herself in the large city. Becky reminded the members attending that the Bible scripture tells of Mary Magdalene carrying the message to the disciples who did not believe her until they could see for themselves that Jesus was arisen. Mary went on to spread the gospel and used her own funds to spread the message. We give to help spread the message to those in need. If you have not contributed you can still mail in your gift to Becky at the church office.

In other business, Jane Vivian presented the Nominating Committee Report of Officers For 2021:

President – Gwyne Grubb

Vice President – Mary Dee Dickerson

Secretary – Michelle Unger

Treasurer – Becky Morgan

Program Resources – Alice Singh

Education & Interpretation – Jane Vivian

Membership, Nurture & Outreach – Heather Pham

Spiritual Growth – OPEN

Social Action – Carmen McBride

Communications – Ruth Granfors

Historian – Joyce Osborn

Sunshine – Ruth Lines

Nominations – Jane Vivian, Janet Ehrke and Linda Russo

Sierra Leone Liaison – Jan Leonard



It is hoped that the election will be in December. If you are interested in serving as Spiritual Growth officer contact any member on the nominating committee. On January 10, 2021 at 12:30 pm all new officers will meet to start planning the year and getting acquainted. It will be a Zoom meeting so watch for information.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd at 6:00 pm.**

**Upcoming UMW Events:**

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

## JYM in December

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you soon. As always our upcoming plans may completely pivot, but we sure hope they won't have to!

Please read details about upcoming events below to be sure you know all of our latest policies and protocols, thank you!

1. Weather - An hour and half before any JYM events, Lisa and I will make the decision about meeting pertaining to weather. We will update in a few different places, but the quickest way to check is to look at our Instagram (@JYMRocks) or our website ([www.jointyouthgroup.com](http://www.jointyouthgroup.com))
2. We will continue to meet outdoors and only outdoors for the foreseeable future.
3. Traveling/Visitors - If you choose to go out of state or have people visit you out of state we ask that you do not attend in person JYM events for 14 days upon return/from when your visitors leave. This is what our county is currently recommending and we think this will help everyone feel safer if we follow these guidelines.
4. Exposure - if you find out you have been exposed to someone who is confirmed to have Covid, and/or receive a positive test yourself, and have attended a JYM event within the past two weeks - we ask that you alert Lisa and myself asap so we can help with contact tracing in our small community. We are not trying to shame or blame, we just want everyone to be as informed as possible to help flatten any potential spread.
5. Input - Lisa and I are doing our best to stay informed on county and church guidelines, and plan things that feel safe and fun for your students. If you have any ideas about activities to do, ways to stay safe, or concern about past or future events, please reach out to myself and Lisa.

## Financial Donations for the JYM

With a very interesting ministry year, and no large trips for the foreseeable future, we have decided to forgo our annual fall fundraiser. We know many people's financial situations are changing, and we feel that we do not need to do our typical large push for pledges from church members and community members this fall.

However, we know that the three churches who support us continue to have their own financial obligations, and the JYM also has constant financial obligations, such as van registration and insurance, payroll, program costs, etc.

If you had already planned to make a donation at our annual fall fundraiser, or have the extra financial means at the moment and would like to support us, please consider making a one-time donation today. Or if you would like to become a monthly donor, any small amount helps!

Thank you for your consideration!

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

## Have you followed us on Social Media?

You can find out what's happening in the JYM by checking out our Facebook and Instagram accounts and weekly JYM emails for the most up-to-date programming information.

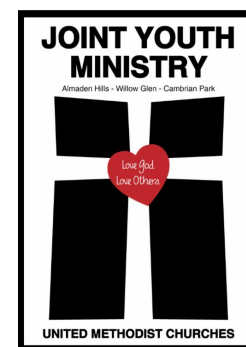
[JYM FACEBOOK](#)

[Follow us on Instagram](#)

## JYM Leaders Contact Info

Lisa - [lisa3cyouth@gmail.com](mailto:lisa3cyouth@gmail.com)

Kat - [katrina3cyouth@gmail.com](mailto:katrina3cyouth@gmail.com)







## Sunday School at Home

Advent is a wonderful time for family activities and traditions. What could be better than snuggling up for a holiday movie night each week? Sharing the story together and then talking about it in terms of your faith, of course. Our Advent series this year, "I Believe Even When..." includes a family film festival. Each week, families will receive a lesson based on a holiday special that you can watch and talk about together. While the movies included are secular, each one does a wonderful job of embodying one of the core themes of Advent - Hope, Love, Joy, Peace, or Believe (faith) - and I hope equipping children with ways to go beyond the walls of the church building to find the message of God's love in the everyday, including Christmas movies.

The movies selected are:

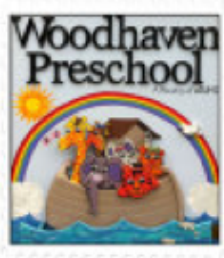
- A Charlie Brown Christmas - Hope
- How the Grinch Stole Christmas (animated version) - Love
- Frosty the Snowman - Joy
- The Muppet Christmas Carol - Peace
- The Polar Express - Believe

This year has been a year like no other, but it has been filled with faith and family - two things I hope will help you prepare for the arrival of the Christmas baby. Especially in the darkness, we look forward to the light and the hope of Christmas. May it brighten your lives this season.

If you are not on our Sunday School mailing list but would like to receive the film festival lessons, you can [find them online here](#).

## Woodhaven Preschool Virtual Open House

Interested families are invited to tour the school and learn more about registration for the 2020-21 school year. Find the link to our video tour at [woodhavenpreschool.org](http://woodhavenpreschool.org) beginning January 23. Check it out yourself or pass the information to a friend or neighbor. We love sharing our school!



## CrossWalk

*Faith and Fellowship for Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders*

**Friday, December 11**

**5:30-7:30pm\***

**\*please note earlier time**



We're heading to the Family Giving Tree warehouse for a shift serving as elves. We'll sort and wrap gifts safely socially distanced as we work to be sure that everyone has a special Christmas. Please contact Pastor Susan to make arrangements to attend with us (each child must be accompanied by an adult). We need RSVPs by December 7 so we can complete the waiver forms in advance.

**Friday, January 22**

**7:00-8:15pm**

**\*online\***

It's a new year. We are continuing to discover how we can make good choices in 2021. This month, we'll consider the joy of giving and determine some ways we can give to others in 2021. As always, there will be good friends, lots of learning and growing, and big fun at CrossWalk. Pastor Susan will bring or send you some supplies for our activities. Please let her know that you are planning to attend.

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

## 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](mailto:prayers@wgumc.org). Prayers are copied exactly as they are written to us via email or as stated during the Zoom Coffee Fellowship on Sundays. Thank you for your faithful ministry to the Prayer Chain!



## Finance News



This is a critical time of year for the church and your Finance Team. We are coming to the end of the year and we are in the middle of our stewardship campaign. The results from giving the next few weeks and the amount of pledges we receive will help determine our path for the coming year while we await our new senior pastor and the end of the shutdown.

As of the end of October we are running a deficit of over \$38,000. This large of deficit would have been very alarming had we not received approximately \$68,000 from the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan earlier this year. Because it is a loan, we have not yet included the PPP proceeds in our income until we have completed the paperwork for the loan to be forgiven. We are confident this will happen. So for now, we believe we are in an acceptable financial condition and will end the year with money in the bank. Unfortunately, the PPP was a one-time event which we cannot count on next year. Therefore, in the coming year we must deal with our structural deficit of about \$6,000 per month, either through additional giving or additional expenditure cuts. Unfortunately, most of our expenditures for the coming year are either fixed or increasing, like our property taxes and utility bills (which continue to increase in spite of the shutdown). And while the church is shut down we are not receiving the nearly \$1,300 each month in building use income we had counted on.

So, as we approach the end the year and head into the Christmas season we ask each of you to prayerfully consider your commitment to the life and ministry of Willow Glen UMC and to please grow your giving to the extent you are able. We are asking everyone to submit their pledge cards by December first. As the end of the year approaches this would also be the perfect time to consider a one-time additional gift to the church as well.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13). Thank you for your faithful generosity to the ministry of Willow Glen UMC!

~Your Finance Team

## Answer the Call!

Your Lay Leadership Development (Nominating) team is hard at work calling on church leaders for the coming year. Since we are still in the midst of a pastoral transition, we are hoping that most leaders will remain in their positions for an additional year. However, we know that is not always possible, so answer the phone (or the email) and let us know how you can serve in 2021 and beyond. Thank you for offering your gifts of time and service.

## We Need You for our Video Production Team

Last March, we took our worship services online for what we thought would be a limited time. We have two volunteers who have graciously shared the task of producing the worship video each week. As we look ahead to more weeks or months of online worship, we need to add to our video production team, and are looking for volunteers who are interested in helping create our service by editing together the recorded pieces of worship into one video worship service. We will be happy to train you - no special skills are needed. If you enjoy online scrapbooking, digital photography or creating short videos and would like to learn a little more and help make worship happen, we'd love to have at least two more volunteers so we can each serve one week a month. Please contact Pastor Susan ([susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org)) or Roxanne ([info@wgumc.org](mailto:info@wgumc.org)) if you are interested in finding out more.

**IMPORTANT:** Put your creative and proofreading talent to work as a volunteer editor for the monthly Willow Word! We're looking for someone who enjoys putting together newsletter communications that are distributed to our Church family.

Please email [susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org) if you're interested or know someone who is.

The article submission deadline for the January *Willow Word* is **December 23rd**.  
The deadline for February is **January 23rd**.  
Please send your story ideas and submissions to [info@wgumc.org](mailto:info@wgumc.org).

# THE WILLOW WORD

## Willow Glen United Methodist Church

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December 20