



March 2026 Issue

## GOOD NEWS

### *Willowbrook United Methodist Church*

*"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"*

19390 North 99th Avenue

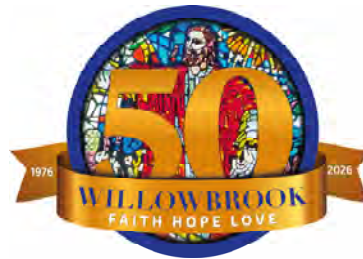
Sun City, AZ 85373-1102

Office Hours: 8:30 am—4:00 pm Monday thru Friday

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Chuck Christensen



## GOLDEN BANQUET

Put on your "Sunday Best" and be part of the celebration honoring 50 years of Willowbrook. The Golden Banquet will be held Friday, March 20 at 5:00 p.m. in Wilson Fellowship Hall.

The menu will feature Chef Peter's herb-roasted pork loin and parmesan-crusted chicken breast accompanied by chef-selected sides and dessert. Gluten-free is available upon request.

Tickets at \$25.00 per person will be on sale through Friday, March 6. Contact Donna for additional ticket information.



Anita Jones



John Jones



### First Tuesday at Noon

Join us April 7th for First Tuesday at Noon! This month Lorrie Karn, Director of BeneFitness, will discuss Injury and Fall Prevention. Our very own Youthful Seniors will be providing the lunch of ham, scalloped potatoes, veggie and dessert. Sign up is March 14/15 and 21/22. Although there is never a charge, donations are always appreciated to defray costs.



***“Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.”***

Willowbrook United Methodist Church helps people to embody Christ in mind, body, spirit, and service. Every person is a valued child of God, and we want each person to experience health and wholeness in every aspect of life. Caring for people is central to our congregation's mission and ministry.

This month we're celebrating Willowbrook's Fiftieth Anniversary with a banquet and special worship services on March 20th-22nd. I am excited about the launch of a new ministry that will speed us into our church's next fifty years of ministry.

From its earliest days, the Church has cared for people who are sick, injured, hunting, lonely, grieving, and dying. Jesus modeled care and compassion for the sick even when they were cast out by society. James witnessed to the early Church's practice of paying for the sick and anointing them with oil. John Wesley and the early Methodists made caring for the sick a regular part of their spiritual practice. And Methodists were instrumental in starting hospitals to care for people.

Congregational Care is central to Willowbrook United Methodist Church's mission and ministry too. For fifty years, Willowbrook pastors have walked alongside you during times of need. Our Stephen Ministers establish long-term caring relationships with people who need a caring person to walk alongside them during a challenging season in their lives. And now we are adding a new dimension to our Congregational Care ministries.

Over the last month, a group of laity have been trained to assist the pastors with caring visits to hospitals, care centers, and homes. On Sunday March 8th, this group of dedicated volunteers (and one therapy dog!) will be commissioned in worship as Caring Visitors, part of our new Caring Ministry.

While Stephen Ministers focus on long-term caring relationships with people who are going through significant struggles, our Caring Visitors may only see you once or twice when you are in the hospital or a care center. And they will be an important connection to our homebound members, extending our fellowship and care to those who can no longer come to Church.

The United Methodist Church has always been its strongest when dedicated lay people commit their lives to volunteer ministry in the Church. I am excited because this special group of people will help us to do the very best job we can of caring for people.

See you in church or on livestream!

*Rev. Matt Ashley*

**Willowbrook Strong**



**KRIS KRAFTERS**

## “Hands to work, Hearts to God”

The KrisKrafters’ motto is at work in virtually everything we do. In January we focused on pillowcases for the veterans to go with the pillow drive and were able to donate 229 pillowcases for this very worthy and beloved cause. In February new ideas and skills were used as we continue creating items that will be donated to special causes and preparing others that will be sold. Prayer shawls, cancer caps, and heart pillows for cancer and cardiac individuals are among our ongoing, year-round efforts. In March our focus will be preparing items to be offered at our Partners in Bloom Open House and Craft Sale on April 11, part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations. Our ambitious members welcome all who are interested in being a part of these creative and fulfilling endeavor by joining us on the first and third Thursday of each month in Wilson Fellowship Hall from 9:00—11:00 a.m.



**Lura Turner Homes**  
For Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Lura Turner Homes’ mission is to provide adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities a safe, enriching, loving environment in residential, social and vocational settings. They strive to ensure the health, happiness, security and highest potential of those they serve. It is also their mission to reach out to men and women with special needs who are unserved and underserved

In December, your Outreach Committee made a donation to Lura Turner Homes on behalf of Willowbrook. We recently received a thank you note from Max McQueen, their executive director.

“On behalf of the women and men with special needs served by Lura Turner Homes, I thank you for your thoughtful and generous gift. As we have since 1965, we will put your donation to good use through our education, residential and social programs.



March 29th is the first 5th Sunday of 2026. These 5th Sundays are a food drive for the HART Pantry (food items for homeless teens to carry in their backpacks.) Let’s show these kids Willowbrook cares and we want

to help them focus on school. HART changed a few of their food items at the end of 2025. They are still having trouble getting some items in large quantity and/or a timely manner. They would appreciate it if we could donate the following food items:

- Jif-to-go
- Pop tarts
- Premier protein drinks
- Ramen type noodle packs
- Pudding/Fruit/Applesauce cups
- Austin/Lance type crackers

Additional suggested items are: individual-size cereal cups, protein bars, Quaker chewy granola bars. Just a reminder, current “best by” dates, please.

There is always a bin in Fellowship Hall labeled “HART Pantry” to drop off new unopened travel-size toiletries (deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.). Please remember these at-risk teens carry everything in their backpacks. Thank you for your continued support of HART Pantry!

## Willowbrook Supporting Veterans

Thanks to all who helped make our 5th Annual Pillow Drive a success. Whether you donated pillows, made a monetary donation, sewed pillowcases, or helped load the pillows onto the Veterans Furniture Center's truck, know that your help is greatly appreciated. By the time we loaded pillows into the truck, we received: 156 pillows, 229 pillowcases (Thank you KrisKrafters) and \$585 in donations.

For those unfamiliar with the Veterans Furniture Center, they are a community based, veteran-run 501c3 organization fighting to end veteran homelessness in the Greater Phoenix area. All veterans that they serve are enrolled in the VA's HUD-VASH program and are referred to the Center by the VA.

The Veterans Furniture Center provides and delivers new furniture and household goods that help veterans transitioning from homelessness. To learn more about the Veterans Furniture Center, visit their website at

[veteransfurniturecenter.org](http://veteransfurniturecenter.org)



Willowbrook's play pass the pillow!



Rev. Matt and Bob Henry are joined by Bill and



### A recent letter from Valley View Food Bank

Dear Friends,

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your continuous support of the Valley View Community Food Bank. Your generosity has been essential in helping us serve those in need which makes a real difference in our community.

Jesse Ramirez  
Founder/Director

*Jesse's full letter is posted on the Outreach bulletin board in Fellowship Hall*



### When Life Needs a Little Wind

Botanists say that trees need the powerful March winds to flex their trunks and main branches, so that the sap is drawn up to nourish the budding leaves.

Perhaps we need the gales of life in the same way, though we dislike enduring them. A blustery period in our fortunes is often the prelude to a new spring of life and health, success and happiness, when we keep steadfast in faith and look to the good in spite of appearances.

—Jane Truax

from Newsletter Newsletter, March 2026



Have you ever wanted to celebrate a special birthday or occasion with flowers in the

church service? Maybe a special person in your life could use a little recognition. The opportunity is there, for just \$50.00 you can pick a Sunday, and special flowers will be ordered and placed in the Sanctuary for Sunday services, with a note recognizing the event in the bulletin. You may then take the flowers for that special someone after the service is over. All you need to do is fill out the information in the flower notebook that is housed in the Narthex on the left hand side as you exit the Sanctuary. The calendar for the full year is there, so you can pick the Sunday that best suits you. The order just needs to be placed at least a week ahead of time. If you have any questions, contact Mike McGinty or the church office.



Pictured:

### News Flash—Patriots Win Willowbrook's Super Bowl Food Drive

As the Patriots and the Seahawks competed to become Super Bowl champions, earlier in the day, Willowbrook cast their votes for the team they wanted to win. To vote, you needed to donate a food item.

The final outcome was close.

As we started the count, it looked like the Seahawks were going to be the clear winner. This was not to be the case. Slowly but surely, the Patriots pulled from behind and ended up with a 660/616 victory over the Seahawks.

Thanks for all who participated in the food drive. In the end, the real winner was the Salvation Army food pantry. GO TEAM WILLOWBROOK!



### PASTA PALOOZA!

Friday, March 13

5:00 p.m.

\$10 per person

SIMPLE & DELICIOUS!

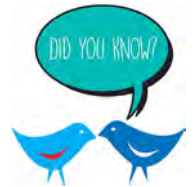
Pasta Dinner

Then enjoy the heartwarming movie

"NONNAS"

### Willowbrook Foundation

**Did you know** The Willowbrook Foundation, established on February 17, 1983, is a corporation separate from Willowbrook United Methodist Church and was created to receive and administer gifts for the ultimate benefit of Willowbrook. The Foundation's mission is rooted in the belief that all gifts are from God, and that it is our responsibility to steward these gifts—whether given to the Church or the Foundation—faithfully and prayerfully for the glory of God. The Foundation also seeks to enhance the value of these gifts through prudent investment practices.



*Easter Worship Services*

Saturday, April 4, 5:00 p.m. in the Chapel



A *GriefShare* support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief.

Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

At Willowbrook, *GriefShare* meets each Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Library Lounge. You don't have to be a member, or attend the church, to be a part of the *GriefShare* program.



The Revised Common Lectionary—a three-year cycle reading through the Bible based on the synoptic gospels of (A) Matthew, (B) Mark and (C) Luke. If you read the lections for all three years, you will read 85% of the

Bible. Join us Monday mornings at 11:00 am in the library to read the following Sunday's lectionary and talk about it. We stop at noon.

**The Weekly readings for FEBRUARY are:**

**CLASS DATE                      DATE USED**

<b>March 2</b>	<b>March 8</b>
Exodus 17:1-7	Psalms 95
Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42

<b>March 9</b>	<b>March 15</b>
1 Samuel 16:1-13	Psalms 23
Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9:1-41

<b>March 16</b>	<b>March 22</b>
Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalms 130
Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45

**Guess Who Is Coming to the United Women in Faith in March and is bringing his easel?**



United Women in Faith

Pastor Steve Marshall will be doing an art sermon on March 16 at 12 noon as we continue to observe Lent. The art sermon topic will be "His Eye is on the Sparrow". As usual, all are invited including gentlemen this time. The UWFaith will be providing a salad bar lunch for a donation. Sign ups will be on Sunday March 1 and 8. Pastor Steve is only doing art sermons occasionally so if you haven't seen one in a long time or at all, please join us.

Willowbrook United Women in Faith was awarded the Mission Today 5-Star Award for 2025 which means that we completed at least 20 of the criteria including all levels of contributions and service. Our April meeting will be presented by Lynn Koan and the devotion will be Prayer and Self Denial.



Members of United Women in Faith, following their January 2026 team meeting, prepared "Meals in a Bag" for Valley View Community Food Bank. Jesse Ramirez, Sr. is shown accepting the donation from Linda Borton. Thank you to everyone who helped make a difference in our community!



**HOOKED ON BOOKS**

Do you enjoy reading? Do you like to discuss what you are reading with others? Come join us at "Hooked on Books." We meet in the church library on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1:30.

Upcoming books:

- Mar 26 "Heart of Fire" by Mazie K. Hirono
- Apr 23 "The Marble Hall Murders"