

A Journey of Blessings

Children's Christmas Program

Lights, camera, action! This year's Kid's Christmas Program will be presented on Sunday, December 18, at both worship services. Join us for an entertaining telling of the Christmas story.

Blue Christmas Service

If the holidays feel challenging for you or if you are deeply missing someone special, we invite you to join us on Wednesday, December 21, at 7:00pm for a service of hope in the midst of darkness. This service will be offered in-person as well as online.

Christmas Eve Worship

3:00pm Family Christmas Eve Experience

Bring your family and enjoy this interactive Christmas experience with a special craft, games, songs, and a reading of the Christmas story.

7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship

Join us for this service with carols, music by our choir, Small Talk and Children's Church for the kids, communion, and candlelight.

8:00pm Online Christmas Eve Worship

View this service with scripture and carols, a homily, and at home candlelight. This service will be available online indefinitely for those who would like to watch at a later time.

10:00pm Christmas Eve Service

Wrap up your Christmas Eve with this service of scripture lessons and carols, a homily, communion, and candlelight.

One-Service Sundays

On both December 25 and January 1, we will combine our Sunday morning services into one service at 10:00am. We will offer an online service as well. On December 25, be sure to wear your ugly Christmas sweaters or Christmas jammies for extra Christmas fun!

Look inside for more details on these and other ways to celebrate this joyous season!





Sunday Mornings at Willow Hill

Worship Services

9:00am Traditional Worship

11:00am Contemporary Worship

Children's Church during both services

Nursery available for up to age 3

Online Worship Service

www.willowhill.org, YouTube, Facebook

10:00am



Directing Pastor

Nicole Cox

pastornicole@willowhill.org

Administrative Assistant

Kathy Thompson

kthompson@willowhill.org

Director of Discipleship

Gina Hulett

ghulett@willowhill.org

Director of Online Ministries

Leigh Hager

lhager@willowhill.org

Director of Hospitality

Joshua Atkins

jatkins@willowhill.org

Director of Traditional Music

(open)

Director of Contemporary Music

(open)

Pianist

Evonne Cowling

Keyboard Musician

Lyda Roberts

Retired Pastors:

Pastor Ted Snider

Pastor Ken Hogren

Pastor Ken Harris

Nursery

Katie Fisher

Sr. High UMYF

Gina Hulett, Bob Moletti

Jr. High UMYF

Heidi Landes

Office Hours

9:30 –12:30, Mon-Thu

Phone

309-383-2700

Office Email

office@willowhill.org

Website

www.willowhill.org

~ GATHER ~

Hanging of the Greens

The Witness Team invites the everyone to participate in any or all of the following Hanging of the Greens opportunities.

- ★ Monday, 11/14, 6:00-8:00 - Tree Prep Work Night #1 (aka "tree fluffing")
- ★ Tuesday, 11/15, 6:00-8:00 - Tree Prep Work Night #2 (aka "tree fluffing")
- ★ Sunday, 11/20, 9:45:00am-1:00pm - Hanging of the Greens Daytime session
 - ★ 8:45 attendees are invited to stay after first service ends.
 - ★ 11:00 attendees are invited to come early and work for an hour before second service begins. We will keep working until 1:00pm. Hopefully that won't leave us with much to finish at the 6:00pm session!
- ★ Sunday, 11/20, 6:00pm - Hanging of the Greens Evening session
- ★ First week of January - Watch for an invitation to help with Retiring of the Greens.

Advent Wreath Lighting

Volunteers are needed to light the candles of the Advent wreath at the both the 9:00 and 11:00am services on Sunday mornings during Advent beginning November 27. Individuals, couples, families, and groups of friends who are interested in sharing this special gift of the season with the congregation, please contact the church office.



Holiday Hymn Sing

Who doesn't love to sing Christmas carols? Join us for a classic Christmas Hymn Sing on **Sunday, December 18, at 10:15am**. Grab some coffee or

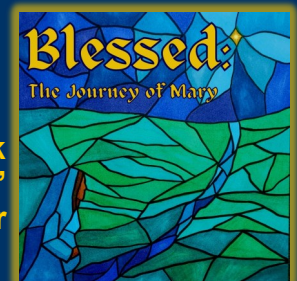


lemonade and a treat then join us in the Lobby as we choose our favorite Christmas hymns to sing!

Advent Sermon Series *Blessed: The Journey of Mary*



When we think about the Christmas story, many of us think about Mary and Joseph gathered around Baby Jesus' manger – a sweet moment that we see pictured in our Christmas nativities.



But, sometimes I wonder if the sweetness of that moment overshadows the difficult journey that Mary took to get there. Mary was given one of the greatest tasks in human history – to carry and give birth to the Messiah. But, it wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. Mary had to face some very real and very scary challenges in becoming the mother of Baby Jesus. It was a blessing, but that doesn't mean it wasn't a struggle.

Like Mary, the journey God has called each of us on is a blessing. We don't always see it that way. Mary's journey gives us insight into how we can view challenging journeys as a blessing as well.

Join us this Advent season as we take an in depth look at Mary's story to see what we can learn about finding blessings in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Kids' Christmas Program

Lights, camera, action! It's time to start rehearsing for the Christmas program. Karen Rhoads and Gina Hulett are excited to work with the kids to prepare this year's Christmas program for all the congregation to enjoy on **Sunday, December 18, at both worship services**. Kids will relax between services with activities and snacks or join in singing Christmas carols in the Lobby. Rehearsals for speaking parts are **Sunday afternoons, 2:00-4:00pm, November 27, and December 4 and 11**. Dress rehearsal for all participants will be **Saturday, December 17, at 4:00pm**, followed by a cast party. Children ages 3 through 8th grade are encouraged to participate and sign up at www.willowhill.org by November 13. Contact Gina Hulett at ghulett@willowhill.org or 309-678-3761 with questions.



Blue Christmas Service

Christmas isn't always the holly, jolly time that we are promised in songs. Sometimes, it just makes us feel blue. For many of us, the holidays are a difficult time. While others are celebrating with joy and happiness, we feel a deep sense of grief and pain. During the holiday season, the pain and loss we've experienced in our lives can easily bubble to the surface.

In order to meet people where they are, we will be offering service where we hold space for our grieving hearts. We will acknowledge that sometimes the holidays are hard. We will pray, hear beautiful music, light candles, and remember.

If the holidays feel challenging for you or if you are deeply missing someone special, we invite you to join us on Wednesday, December 21, at 7:00pm, for a service of hope in the midst of darkness. This service will be offered at Willow Hill as well as online.



Christmas Eve Family Experience



There is so much joy surrounding the Christmas season, but there can also be a lot of chaos! There are decorations to put up, parties to throw, and presents to purchase. It's so easy to let the entire month of December pass by and totally forget *why* we celebrate Christmas. We don't want that to happen this year, so we're hosting an event called "Gingerbread Bash!"

This is a fun and interactive experience designed for the whole family! We'll build gingerbread nativities, play games, sing songs, hear the Christmas story from the Bible, and discover that sometimes the best gift comes in the most ordinary box. It's a truly sweet way for your family to celebrate the birth of Jesus!

We'll be hosting this event on Christmas Eve, **Saturday, December 24, at 3:00pm**. You are absolutely not going to want to miss out on the fun, but we need you to register so we have a table and supply kit ready for you! You can do that by going to the Sign Up page at www.willowhill.org. Please contact Gina Hulett at ghulett@willowhill.org or 309-678-3761 with questions.



Grief Seminar

Are you dreading the holidays because it just won't be the same since you've lost your loved one? Are you unsure of how to handle family dynamics now that your family has changed with the loss of your loved one? Don't miss this 2-hour seminar designed to help you navigate the holiday season while grieving.

Surviving the Holidays will be held on **Monday, November 14** at **6:30pm**. Whether you lost someone recently or in years past, you are welcome to join this helpful session.

Sign up online at <https://www.griefshare.org/holidays/events/43454>. If you have questions, please see Pastor Nicole.

Commitment Sunday



Members of our congregation will soon be mailed a packet for our *What if . . . ? Dreaming of Opportunities* campaign. In the packet you will find a letter from Pastor Nicole asking you to take some time to dream and pray about what God is calling Willow Hill to do as a church and what He is calling you personally to do through Willow Hill in 2023. It will take all of us together, sharing what we have, to be the church Jesus has called us to be.

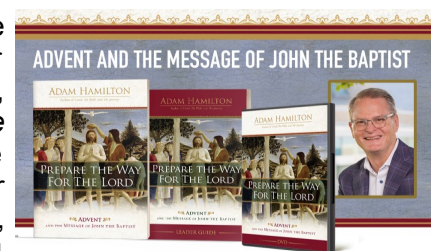
In the packet you will also find an Opportunities to Serve sheet (blue paper) and a pledge card. We ask you to use these to share your intentions for the coming year with us. If you prefer, you may go to www.willowhill.org and fill out the online versions of these documents from our Serve and our Giving pages.

On Sunday, November 20, during our worship services, we will turn in our Opportunities to Serve sheets and our pledge cards. This will be a meaningful moment in our services, so make sure to mark your calendars for the 20th! If you are worshipping with us online or unable to attend in person, simply mail the blue sheet and pledge card to the church or fill out our digital forms as mentioned above.

We are excited to see where Jesus will lead us in ministry next year. Our world is in desperate need of the hope and good news of Jesus, and we have the opportunity bring that hope to life for people. We invite you to share with us in the joy of serving Jesus through our giving of our time, talents, and financial resources. May God use Willow Hill to further his Kingdom in 2023!

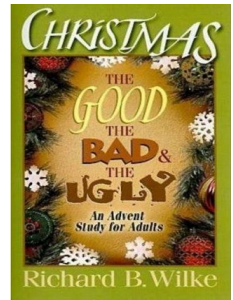
Advent Study Groups

Can you carve out a little time each week to step away from the "busy"ness of the holiday season to prepare your hearts and minds for Jesus? Join us for a new Advent study by Pastor Adam Hamilton, *Prepare the Way for the Lord: Advent and the Message of John the Baptist*. In the study, Hamilton explores the Advent themes of John's life and ministry and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts and lives for his coming. Participants will read a short chapter, watch a 15-minute video, and join in discussion for 4 weeks **beginning the week of November 27**. You are invited to attend the study at church on Sundays at 10:15am with Gail Brown, or sign up to attend on Mondays at 1:30pm at church or 7:00pm on Zoom, both with Pastor Ken Hogren and Gina Hulett. Books are available for purchase in the church office at \$13 each. If interested in one of the Monday groups, please sign up at www.willowhill.org. Contact Gina with questions.



Wow! Group Advent Study

Join a group of women who meet at Willow Hill at **1:00pm on Wednesdays** for Bible study and discussion. The group will use the study, *The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly*, by Richard B. Wilke, to guide their hearts and minds during the Advent season. The study focuses on people in the story of Christ's birth, including the wise men, Joseph, the shepherds, and King Herod. Books are available to borrow. Please contact Kathy Miller at knkids5@yahoo.com with questions.



Mystery Blessing ADVENTure

During the season of Advent, you are invited to take part in a mystery blessing. In the church Lobby, you will find a board of envelopes. Each envelope will lead you in a way to bless others in our community during the Advent season. Pick an envelope, read the prompt inside, and then complete the task. This is a fun, exciting way to get into the Christmas spirit! Grab a friend or your family and see what mystery blessing awaits you! When you complete a task, take a picture and post it on social media using the hashtag #MysteryBlessingAdventure. This is going to be a blast!



Little Willows



Little Willows classes are having a blast as children continue to learn and grow. Children are making friends and learning to love "school". The scholarship fund is currently assisting one family with tuition so their child can have the early learning experience. Thank you to all who have donated to this fund!

We have a couple of teacher changes to announce. One of our new teachers for the 2-year-old class had to resign for medical reasons, so we have hired a new teacher, Emily Malerich. One of our 4-year-old teachers, Cheryl Wilmot, is on medical leave for the rest of the school year, so Jamie Beccue has been hired to teach her class.

Registration for next year's classes will open in late February for current families and church members and in March for the public.

~ GO ~



Salvation Army



New or gently used coats for kids of all ages are needed for the Salvation Army **Coats for Kids** campaign. Please place your donations in the barrel in the church entranceway by **Friday, December 9**, and share the gift of warmth this year!

Everyone is invited to ring bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign at the Metamora IGA (now Kirby Foods) **beginning November 23**. 100% of the proceeds raised will stay in Woodford County. Children and youth are encouraged to participate but must be accompanied by an adult. Please follow the link on the Sign Up page at www.willowhill.org for available dates/times.

Blessing Tree

The Outreach Team is working on another One-Minute Mission, and they need your help. In November and December we plan to gather items for care packages for the Snyder Village residents. On Christmas Eve we will bring all those items together for our One-Minute Mission to assemble the care packages. We will be collecting different items each week as follows:

Nov 13

- * Travel-size lotions
- * Lip balm

Nov 20

- * Hershey's miniatures
- * Individual facial tissue packets

Nov 27

- * Devotions
- * Socks with grippers

Dec 4

- * Colored pencils, markers, crayons
- * Adult coloring books



Blood Drive

In our local area, ImpactLife is the exclusive provider of blood products to OSF HealthCare and Unity Point Health hospitals. ImpactLife will be holding a holiday blood drive at Willow Hill on **Thursday, December 15, from 2:00 to 7:00pm.** To schedule an appointment, please go online to www.bloodcenter.org or call 1-800-747-5401. You may also go the Sign Up section of the Willow Hill website. Registration will be open in a few weeks.



UMW Cookie Walk

December 4
Between Worship Services

Help the United Methodist Women raise money for various charities and ministries.

Sign Up to Donate
4 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies or candies.

Bring Your Cookies
Friday, December 2, 9:30am to 12:30pm
Saturday, December 3, noon to 3:00pm

Purchase
a great selection of tasty cookies and candies for \$5.00 per pound.



A Program of Prison Fellowship®

Receiving a gift on behalf of a parent who is in prison can bring joy and relief to families who are separated or in need at Christmas. Twenty-seven children with a parent in prison have been assigned to Willow Hill this year. They live in the Peoria, Peoria Heights, Chillicothe, and Metamora areas. Some of the families have been served by our church in the past. To participate in this year's Angel Tree, choose an angel tag off the tree in the Lobby, purchase the gift listed (approximate value of \$30), wrap the gift with the receipt, attach the Angel tag, and place the gift under the Angel Tree at church **by December 18.** There will also be opportunities to sponsor a child with a monetary donation and to sign up to help deliver gifts the week before Christmas. Check the Sign Up page at www.willowhill.org or the table in the Lobby to sponsor a child or deliver gifts. Contact Gina Hulett at ghulett@willowhill.org or 309-678-3761 with questions.

Thank You, Servants!

As we near the end of the year, we do not want to miss the opportunity to say a big “THANK YOU!” to all of those who have completed their commitment to serve on various committees and teams at Willow Hill. Without these faithful servants, we wouldn’t be able to accomplish the work that Christ has called us to. We are grateful for their gift of time and talent. If you see the following people at church, be sure to thank them for their dedication and service to our church.

Jean Bellisario

Greg Holloway

Natalie Roberts

Brandy Billingsley

Deb Kessler

Diane Wipfler

Angie Brown

Gene Lambert

Leta Wooley

Lilli Davis

Cal Ludema

Morgan Zeller

Libbe Dawdy

Kevin Meyer

Janell Hoenert

Ellie Peterson



St. Jude Thanks!!

Friends,

I am so far behind – my quote for that is. . . “I am so far behind that I can see my back in front of me”!

The 2022 Memphis to Peoria Run was a huge success! I wish to THANK ALL MY WILLOW HILL FAMILY that supported me with their prayers & financial support for the 2022 Memphis to Peoria Run! Many of you supported this “ole coach” as he ran in his 33rd Memphis to Peoria Run. The Willow Hill Family has always been very supportive of St. Jude so that families do not need to worry about the cost of getting their child well. The patients and their family members appreciate your generosity, and I appreciate your loyal support that keeps me “runnin’ for the Kids”!

Yes – I will be around again next Spring asking for your prayers and financial support for my 34th Memphis to Peoria Run!

THANKS - again to my Willow Hill Family!
Gene Jones (Jonesy)



~ Looking to the New Year ~

January Sermon Series

Dreamer: The Journey of Joseph

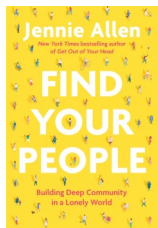
The story of Joseph in the book of Genesis has it all – family drama, betrayal, seduction, unjust punishment, and a delicious turn of events ripe for revenge. It's like a modern-day soap opera! But the thread woven throughout Joseph's story is one of God's faithfulness and goodness. We're kicking off the new year by taking a look at this story to see what we can learn from Joseph and his famous God-given dreams.



Dreamer Study

In tandem with our sermon series on Joseph, Pastor Nicole will offer a Bible study delving deeper into the weekly themes addressed in the sermon. You won't want to miss the opportunity for conversation around the themes of Joseph's story. This small group will meet on Wednesday evenings, beginning January 11 at 6:30pm and will run through February 15. Sign up online or in the Lobby.

Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World



In a world that is more connected than ever, we are fighting an epidemic of loneliness. We were meant to live known and loved. In her book, Jennie Allen combines fascinating insights from science and history with timeless Biblical truths and personal experiences to help us build authentic community. We will be hosting a small group study of the book, *Find Your People*, beginning in mid-January. Timing and online or in-person format will be decided once we know who is interested in joining the group. Please sign up at www.willowhill.org. Books are available in the church office for \$16.

Food on the Fifth

January happens to be a five-Sunday month, so we will be going the extra mile to help restock our local food pantries. Please plan to pick up some extra items at the grocery store for those in need. Please watch the Midweek Messenger for a list of most needed items.



Super Bowl Pizza Sale

Senior High Youth Group is planning to hold a Super Bowl Pizza fundraiser again in the new year. We will take orders for Papa Murphy's pizzas beginning in mid-January and have freshly made pizzas ready to pick up on Sunday morning, February 12, for you to take home and bake in your own ovens. Funds raised will help the youth pay for mission trips, camping, and retreats. Watch the Midweek Messenger and bulletin for more specifics in mid-January.



Student Led Sunday

Mark your calendars for February 5! Our youth will be leading our Sunday services. You won't want to miss this special worship opportunity!



~ Youth Ministries ~



Senior High Youth Group

High school students gather in the youth room **Sunday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm**, for fun, friendship, and lively discussion with Gina and Bob. Willow Hill youth group is a safe place to explore thoughts and ideas about faith and life, and all are welcome! We currently have students representing high schools in Metamora, East Peoria, Washington, and Peoria. Bring your friends and your questions or thoughts for discussion. We will be planning a way to put ourselves in service during the Advent season and preparing to help lead a worship service in early February. Watch for details about December and January meetings, service opportunities, and events in the Midweek Messenger and Remind text messages. Youth group will not meet on December 25.

Thank you to all who volunteered, donated, and participated in the Halloween Extravaganza! The youth were able to host a tremendous event for about 150 children and their families and were able to earn a little money for the mission/camping fund at the same time. Thanks to all the high school students, junior high students, and others who helped with the event!

Feel free to contact Gina Hulett at ghulett@willowhill.org or 309-678-3761 with questions or to receive text updates and reminders.

Junior High Youth Group

All students in grades 7 and 8 are invited to join Heidi and Gina in the youth room at church on **Sunday afternoons, 4:00-5:15pm**. The time is filled with games, discussion, and of course snacks. We will be doing some sort of service project for the holidays as well. The group will not meet December 25 or January 1, but will resume weekly meetings on January 8. Please contact Heidi Landes at 309-241-4069 with questions or to be added to the Remind contact list.



~ Other Announcements ~

Year-End Gifts

With the church office closed beginning December 23 and reopening January 3, we encourage year-end gifts to be dropped off at the church before December 23 or brought to a worship service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Gifts may also be made online through the Online Giving tab at www.willowhill.org. **Mailed-in contributions must be postmarked by December 31, and online gift transactions must be dated December 31 or prior to be recorded as a 2022 gift.**



Offering Envelopes

If you are interested in receiving a supply of offering envelopes to keep at home, please email kthompson@willowhill.org and include the quantity needed. Envelope orders will be available for pick up beginning mid-December at the Information Desk or in the church office. Offering envelopes are also available on the tables at the back of the Worship Center each week.

GIVING	Willow Hill <small>UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</small>	Date: _____
	Operating Fund \$ _____	
	Building Fund \$ _____	
	Other (please specify) _____ \$ _____	
	Total \$ _____	
Name: _____		
Address: _____		

Church Office Closed

Thanksgiving
November 23-25

Christmas/New Years
December 23 - January 2

Martin Luther King Day
January 16



Prayer & Pastoral Care Concerns



Please send prayer concerns to Gina Hulett at 309-678-3761 or ghulett@willowhill.org.

Please contact Pastor Nicole at 217-993-2243 or pastornicole@willowhill.org with pastoral care concerns.



Willow Hill UMC will be closed whenever Germantown Hills District #69 is closed due to weather. This includes the church office, as well as meetings and activities. Weekend cancellations, including worship services, will be discussed and determined by the Pastor and staff. In the event of a weather closure, an announcement will be made on Social Media, through the Remind App, via an email from the church, and on WHOI, WEEK and WMBD TV stations and their websites. Staff will do their best to contact the leaders of groups affected by a closure in a timely manner. Group leaders will be responsible for contacting the members of their group if needed.



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

304 East Far Hills Drive
East Peoria, IL 61611