



Creeks & Valleys

May
2025

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CONTACT INFO:

Pastor Diana Lucas

(608)-421-0230

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

Admin. Assistant

Logan Willis

ltwillis16@gmail.com

Church Office Info:

Hours:

Mon.—Thurs.

9am—3pm

(608)-585-2281

acwvumc@gmail.com

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“Willow Valley Church”

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As I write this, the window in the office is wide open, and a gentle breeze sneaks in. The sounds of kids on the playground overpower that of a nearby lawnmower. Summer is right around the corner. First, there is the rush of the end of the school year. GIG will finish up. VBS plans are underway. Coming up are the awards banquet, Baccalaureate, graduation, and all the parties that go with it – it is all part of the rhythm of life in our community.

The flowers I planted at the parsonage are thriving. The trees I planted have probably grown, but not fast enough for my liking. You can’t hurry these things, but that doesn’t stop me from wishing. Spring cleaning is a real thing. Thanks to Pinterest, I know how to get into and clean the oven door properly. It is such a promising time of year.

I have learned that things do not slow down in the summer. Although many folks will dip in and out of church due to family vacations, there always seems to be a lot going on. I have finally learned my lesson and don’t plan for the living to be easy just because it is June, July, and August. That’s all right. I always seem to get more done when I am busy. Does that happen to you?

Taking time off is nearly a lost art form. I tried to work the first few days of my recent vacation, but it was unrewarding. I then committed to genuinely treating it as Sabbath time. I devoted my thoughts and attention to God. I attempted to empty myself of worldly distractions and focus solely on Jesus, who, in these 50 Days of Easter, is on his 40-day journey with his disciples. The ascension of Jesus, a core belief in Christianity, describes his bodily ascent into heaven 40 days after his resurrection. This event is a key moment in Christian theology, marking the transition from Jesus's earthly ministry to his heavenly one. I reflected on what it must have been like for these followers to have this unexpected time suddenly—this life after death, but on earth, where those around him experienced Jesus’ presence. And then to lose Jesus a second time. How did the disciples meet this challenge? Meeting the risen Christ deepened their relationship with Jesus. The disciples were called to be witnesses, to tell the story of what they had seen. It is my hope that as we walk through these 50 Days of Easter, you realize that you too are just as much a witness of the Jesus story as those original followers. Your Easter experience is as authentic as theirs. If you were to reflect, you would see that your understanding of Jesus has changed over the years. Your faith has hopefully deepened, your understanding has grown, and your love for Christ and all he did for you is something you are truly grateful for.

We are Easter people, and for that I say Amen and Alleluia!
Pastor Diana

Pastor Diana observes the Sabbath on Fridays;
in the case of emergencies and urgent matters that arise on Friday,
text her cell phone number at 1-608-421-0230.

Report from the Church Office

Contributed by
Logan Willis



Month in Review

The past month has been busy in the life of the church! On April 20, both churches held their Easter services. Ash Creek held their traditional Easter Sunrise service at 7:00am. The service also had its own youth sermon led by Pastor Diana, a photo of which can be seen below. A photo of the church that morning, courtesy of Cindy Deckert, can be seen on above.

Willow Valley held their Easter service at the normal service time of 10:30am. During this time, the church saw a baptism. Victor Schulte, the son of Jordon and Michelle Schulte, was baptized in the Willow Valley church during the easter service. Photos from the baptism can be found on pages 4

and 5 of the newsletter. Congratulations to the Schulte family!

At the end of April and early portions of May, we had a few guest speakers serving in the Ash Creek and Willow Valley pulpits while Pastor Diana enjoyed a post-Easter vacation. On April 27, Willow Valley congregant and current SPRC chair Marty Richards led from the pulpit. His sermon touched on interpersonal judgment and its consequences. Thank you for serving, Marty!

On May 4, the pulpit was filled by Chaplain Cecil Richardson, who had served as the 16th Chief of Chaplains of the United States Air Force from 2008 to 2012. He has been a valued member of the greater Richland Center community, and we were extremely privileged to hear him speak and to have him lead the sacrament of communion. Thank you for your time, Chaplain Richardson!

Throughout this time, Willow Valley has also started offering a Prayer Room service for anyone who wishes for anonymous prayer requests prior to services. A report from Teri Richards, Willow Valley's Lay Leader and head of the Prayer Room project, has shared a report on page 4.

On May 7, Growing in God saw its final session of



the 24-25 academic year. On behalf of GIG, I would like to thank all of the students for participating during this year, and I would like to send a special thank you to all of the teachers and staff that help to make each week possible.

The Month Ahead

Looking to the future, the churches will have another Sunday of guest pulpit supply. Ron Fruit will be filling in on May 25 while Pastor Diana is traveling. We hope you will be able to come and hear his message.

On May 31, the Willow Valley church will be hosting a Celebration of Life for Tess Guinther. Tess, a long-time member of the community, passed away in Florida earlier this year, and we have been working with the Guinther family to arrange a local celebration to her life before her burial. All are welcome to attend the service at 11:00am and are invited to share stories of Tess. The service will be followed by a reception and banquet prepared by the Willow Valley United Women in Faith.

Later in the summer, be on the lookout for Willow Valley's Vacation Bible School! Heather Dickey has announced that this year's theme is "Camp Firelight." Date is still forthcoming, so keep an eye out for updates!

In other area church news, One of our long-time friends will be giving a sermon at the Little Brown Church in Bear Valley. Rev. John Sumwalt, who had grown up in Willow Valley and became a United Methodist pastor, will be offering a guest sermon for the congregation of Little Brown Church on May 18 at 1:30pm. We hope that you will be able to attend!

Please leave room in your prayers for all the students in the school systems wrapping up their year, including the seniors wrapping up their final year. Also spare a thought for the school faculty and

staff as they are in the final stages of grading and trip organizing.

And, as always, if any of you have events, fundraisers, or other info that you would want known by the ACWV churches, please reach out to us! We're always open to voicing our support for our neighbors' projects!

"Willow Valley Finance News"

WV Financials (through April 30):

April Revenue: \$4,242

Year-to-Date Revenue: \$27,356

April Expenses: \$7,083

Year-to-Date Expenses: \$27,197

Year-to-Date Surplus of \$160

Checking account balance: \$7,899

Our year-to-date expenses are now just slightly under our year-to-date revenue. As we've mentioned in prior columns, we have not paid our apportionments to the Wisconsin UMC Conference so far this year, as Pastor Diana submitted an application for "relief" from the Conference for our apportionments, and we are still awaiting a decision from them. The total that has been allocated to us for January-April is \$4,320.

At the WV Ad Council meeting earlier this week, we voted to pay the outstanding four months of apportionments from six months of proceeds of the Cattle Center. We offer a huge thank you to everyone who supports the Cattle Center lunch sales with their generous gifts of time and food!

Willow Valley Finance Committee

Barb Clary, Annette Louis, Bonnie Jones,
Suzanne Anderson, Pastor Diana Lucas

Report from the Prayer Room

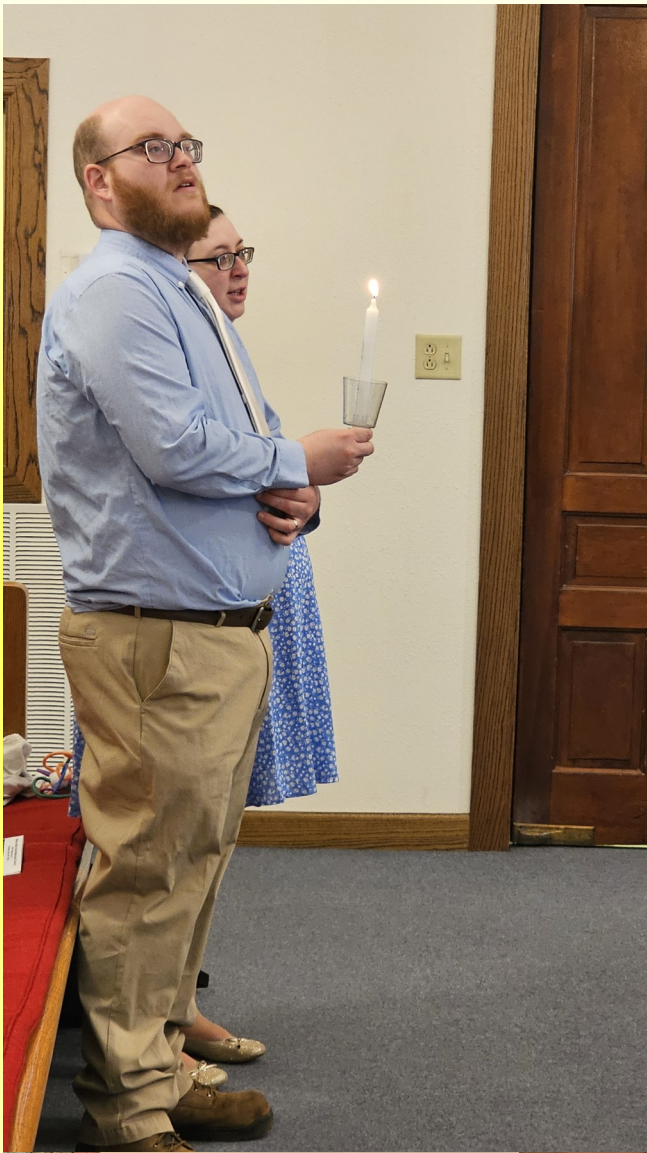
Contributed by Teri Richards

Many wonderful things are happening in the Prayer room of Willow Valley UMC and during the prayer time on Sunday mornings. The Prayer room (room where the mural painting) is open the morning of every Communion Sunday. We have had 3 Open Sundays so far. I have had the pleasure of praying with 5 individuals. After meeting with individuals, I then pray for the bulletin/church service, the newsletter information, the organizations inside the church- UMWIF, UM Men, GIG, the members & friends in the Church Directory, the sick listed on the bulletin and for the lost in our local community. Anyone can come on Communion Sundays (usually the 1st Sunday of the month) anytime between 8:00am-10:00am, at this time, you do not need to sign up for a time slot. No one will be turned away.

The Prayer room soon will be more comfortable as I have donated a couch, end table, bookshelf and lamps. The room is available for small bible studies as well and is quite lovely for gathering. I will have an "Open House" for the Prayer Room on Sunday, May 25th. Come for coffee and treats before service, 9:30-10:30 and check out our new, inviting space and learn how you can promote the prayer room to friends & non-churchgoers that may need prayer. Any questions, contact Teri Richards, Lay Leader.

Baptism of Victor Schulte





ASH CREEK

Birthdays:

Chad Johnson—5/05
Nina Adams—5/05
Zekial Brown—5/06
Diana Lucas—5/09
Mary Hahn—5/11
Max Schmidt—5/14
Cayden Nelson—5/15
James Kadousek—5/20
Cathy Jurgensen—5/21
Cooper Unbehaun—5/22
Ryan Burras—5/26
Eileen Studnicka—5/29
Jillian Hess—5/29
Serenity Clary—5/29
TyLacey Sims-Hines—6/04
Elijah Brown—6/09
Dean Schmidt—6/09
Dale Schmidt—6/10
Allyson Jurgensen—6/15
Alexys Stibbe—6/17
Brooklynn Johnson—6/18
Springfield McCauley—6/25
Bruce McCauley—6/26
Tonya Kadousek—6/27
Wyatt Heisz—6/28
Aimee Ziegahn—6/29

Anniversaries:

David & Aimee Ziegahn—6/15
Monte & Bridget Schmidt—6/22

WILLOW VALLEY

Birthdays:

5/02—Patti Olson
5/05—Joe Pizer
5/06—Shirley Gochenaur
5/06—Jr. Miller
5/08—Finley Miller
5/09—Diana Lucas
5/09—Dustin Wanless
5/11—Lori Pizer
5/17—Kristy Wanless
5/22—Emmett Miller
5/22—Isaac “Russ” Willis
5/26—David Nelson
5/30—Barb Denman
5/31—Merna Queen
6/02—Megan (Burnley) Durst
6/04—Spencer Nelson
6/04—Judy Shadewald
6/11—Adam Durst
6/13—Carissa Willis
6/17—Bonnie Jones
6/25—Cameron Brown
6/28—Doris Eck
6/28—Patrick Peterson
6/29—Ann Durst

Anniversaries:

5/05—Dave & Deb Coopridner
6/04—Cole & Juanna Miller
6/05—Tom & Millie King
6/08—Normand & Vickie Bedard
6/09—Tim & Kris Willis
6/12—Marty & Trudy Kinyon
6/14—Adam & Ann Durst
6/22—Rodney & Shirley Gochenaur
6/28—Dave & Marge Brock



May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AC 9:00 AM WV 10:30 AM			FINAL GIG SESSION @ 5:15pm			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AC 9:00 AM WV 10:30 AM			Ithaca Baccalaureate @ 7:00pm			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
AC 9:00 AM WV 10:30 AM						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
AC 9:00 AM WV 10:30 AM						Celebration of Life for Tess Guinther @ 11:00am

Ash Creek & Willow Valley United Methodist Churches

Willow Creek UMC & Charge Office

24811 State Hwy 58

Richland Center, WI 53581

Phone: (608)-585-2281

E-mail: acwvumc@gmail.com

Visit us on Facebook — [“Willow Valley Church”](#)

Ash Creek UMC

28820 Henry Clark Lane

Richland Center, WI 53581

Visit us on Facebook — [“Ash Creek Church”](#)

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Address Service Requested

Upcoming Administrative Council Meetings:

Ash Creek:

Next Meeting is ???

Willow Valley:

There will not be a May Meeting

Next Meeting is June 23 @ 6:00pm

AC Worship Time:

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

WV Worship Time:

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

G.I.G. Time:

Wednesdays 5:15 p.m.—7:00pm

(September—May)