

## UpWord Philosophy of Ministry

The following convictions guide our ministry:

- **Books of the Bible are the best resource for spiritual growth.** Our studies focus on a biblical book, although topical studies may also be appropriate on occasion.
- **Enhanced learning takes place when women engage in personal and creative Bible study.** Study guides help women discern and reflect on the message of the Bible. This personal study provides a foundation for dynamic group discussion and transformational learning. We also incorporate a variety of visual/creative elements to help women connect with the biblical truths they are learning.
- **God gifts women to teach. Gifted and trained teachers from our own body teach the studies.** Video studies, although helpful to many, are avoided in order to develop and utilize our own gifted women.
- **God's desire for us is transformation.** We aim to go beneath the surface with engaging, thought-provoking studies that challenge women to live for Christ and participate in his mission to rescue and renew his broken creation.
- **Community is an important part of life change.** Women enjoy and learn from each other. Small groups help women engage with God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and each other. All class members belong to a small group because we were not meant to do this alone. Community is essential to our life in Christ. And as we focus on being disciples who are making disciples, these relationships begin to reflect this mission.
- **Fruitful and effective ministry takes place through teams.** Teams allow us to share the workload, exercise our gifts, and grow together. We develop teams within a variety of areas that help UpWord to grow and thrive.
- **Our ministry aims to connect women to leadership opportunities.** There are some women that God has called to be leaders, within the church and within the community. We are focused on helping to cultivate this gift within women, and equip them to lead with purpose.

## Leadership Bios



**Shelli Alaniz** - Team Leader & Teaching Director

I am a hungry person...now I am not talking about Uberrito and Milk Duds (although those are fabulous). I hunger for a deeper connection with God. It is something that I pursue, knowing that I can NEVER be close enough or deep enough in Him. I also hunger for authentic connections with other women, where we can be real and where we can grow together. And I cannot tell you how fulfilling it is to be involved with a ministry that is focused on helping other women make both of these connections.

I was born and raised here in Texas, and I love reading, studying the Word, and spending time outdoors hiking and climbing. In 1997 I married my best friend, Stephen, and we now have five children - Harley, Jordan, Kyli, Aubree, and Aria. I absolutely LOVE my crazy crew, they make life such an adventure! I know that they are my first ministry and it has been

through them that God has refined and shaped me.

In my late 30's, my best friend and I decided to start our own business creating and training programs that were focused on greater selfawareness, communication, and team building. So SURGE Team Building was born and it has been such a labor of love that taps right into our passion of helping people grow in all areas of their lives.

I have always known of the Lord, and even convinced myself I was saved for many of my early years. But it was not until I experienced an Encounter God retreat in my 30's that I really began to understand what it meant to have a personal relationship with Jesus. This transformed everything for me - my personal mindset, my marriage, and my family. And it set me on one of the greatest journeys I could imagine.

I am looking forward to our paths crossing this year in UpWord.

See you soon!



**Christine Norwood** - Team Leader & Teaching Director

Need this



**Karen Coolidge** - Shepherd Director

“Bless the LORD, Oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul and forget not all His benefits...”(Psalm 103: 1-2)

Reading Psalm 103 as a brand spankin’ new believer in 1999, I began to understand that my God had given me new life! Not long after, He planted inside of me burning desire to learn the truths of His Word, and then share those truths with those who were lost and hurting, so all could experience freedom just as I had.

In the 20 years since that day, my husband Danny and I raised our 3 children, all of whom are married to spouses we adore, and now have our first grandchild on the way. We moved 6 times, and in those years I served in several volunteer roles in churches and schools. In 2013 I found myself as a 50-year-old believer in Jesus, not knowing the Word of God the way in which I hungered, and with very little ability to study Scripture on my own. So, I did a crazy and scary thing. I enrolled in seminary. Seven glorious, God-filled, challenging years later, I graduated with a Master of Divinity.

But the desire to learn more and more about our God and His Word never ends, right?

It’s for that reason I am thrilled beyond measure to join the UpWord team. This ministry provides the most effective way to connect to and learn from God - through His Word – then adds the benefit of the connections made among women as we dive deep into study, discussion, learning and praying together.

I look forward to serving our beautiful Shepherds, the women who pour into and lead our UpWord ladies. Now and again, you might hear me refer to us as warriors – because that’s what we are. Anytime we wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we are warriors, as together we battle through all obstacles and seek God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. (Ephesians 6:17, Deut. 6:4-6 and Luke 10:27)

I expectantly anticipate God’s answers to our prayers, as we grow closer to Him and each other through our studies, and partner with Him in building His Kingdom in our little city of Katy, Texas, and beyond.

Let’s do this, warriors!



**Tabitha Davis** - Creative Director

Hello UpWord ladies!

My name is Tabitha Davis. I am excited about being a part of the leadership team as your Creative Director this year. I am looking forward to seeing God move, shake, grow and confirm his relationship with us through His Word. It is a privilege and a extra bonus to be able to have a community of ladies in UpWord to grow through each season of my life. Also linking arms beyond the four walls of the church through fellowship, serving, and having fun!

I have been apart of the UpWord community for 3 years now. I have also served on the Creative Team and as a Co Shepherd.

I have been married for 18 years and counting, to my loving husband Corey Davis. We have 5 children (ages 19 to 10) and 3 dogs! Which makes for a busy and praying wife. I have also been involved in ministry work such as Children Church Director, Drama Ministry, Mime Ministry, and Connect Group Ministry.

I love seeing the Word of God come to life through song, art, drama and in truth. The best testimony of someone's life is the one that was lived. My desire is to hear the replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:23)

God is not though with me yet. I'm not perfect. I am still growing, and learning. Sharing the love and gospel of Jesus Christ. I will choice joy, and walk by faith and not by sight. Hoping to see you through the eyes of our Savior.