

# S T R E A M E R

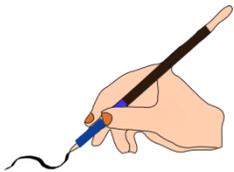
Willow Creek Presbyterian Church of Argyle

7300 Belvidere Road

Caledonia, Illinois 61011

815-885-3455

December 2015



*from the Pastor's Pen:*

During Advent we anticipate and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. In modern-day culture, Christmas has become a season of consumption. As Christmas approaches we face many choices regarding shopping, schedules and more. In addition to consumer dilemmas we are faced with spiritual dilemmas. On one hand we want to observe Advent and wait for the Christ child; on the other we want to shop and wrap and bake and run ourselves ragged with all the trimmings. As Presbyterians, our Reformed faith can help us celebrate the birth of Christ in more meaningful ways than the mainstream consumer culture provides.

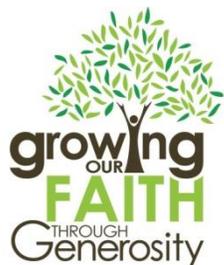
We can choose to shape our seasonal celebrations and share meaningful traditions centered on the true meaning of Christmas. Prepare for the holiday by simplifying life, incorporating prayers, giving alternative gifts and even serving sustainable foods.

Our scripture and tradition call us to care for the our environment so that all may live. God cares deeply for all of creation and seeks to preserve the diversity of life. Scriptures teach that Jesus came into the world as an immigrant and lived his early life as a refugee. He grew to teach justice, healing and hope, and Jesus calls us to follow his lifestyle. We are called by God in Christ to bring good news, to proclaim release, to live as followers of the Way.

Being Reformed (and always reforming) means evaluating our lifestyle choices and our holiday traditions. Adopting changes for individual and congregational lifestyle integrity witnesses to our faith in Jesus Christ and our stewardship of all of God's creation. Share the love of Christ with others by being a living witness this season. Regardless of how you choose to celebrate Christmas this year, I hope you will have a life-giving, simple, and Christ-centered holiday season.

Peace and Joy,  
Pastor Judith





## **STEWARDSHIP FOR 2016**

In preparation for writing this article, we decided to do an online search.  
We entered:

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP IN TODAY'S ECONOMY

and up popped:

**“GOOD FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP PART OF GOD’S ECONOMY”**

*Whoa!!!*

So, we asked ourselves, “What is God’s plan, and how can we participate in it?” In God’s economy, stewardship begins with a generous heart that puts into practice what Scripture describes as “sowing and reaping.” We sow our time, gifts and wisdom.

As Christians we should always be looking for reasons to give rather than looking for ways not to give.

Certainly, in these days and times of OUR CHURCH, there are numerous reasons to give: a negative monthly cash-flow, donations down this year over last year, having to borrow from reserves to cover our day-to-day operating expenses, and so on.

Please carefully consider what role you might play in the coming year and fill the stewardship forms out that are being made available.

Remember, when we give, there is something miraculous about it that in turn not only meets the needs of the church, it also honors God!

As we are learning from our New Beginnings curriculum, “It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a church in the world. God is on the move, and the church is always catching up to God.” With our pledges of time, talents, and treasures, we strive to catch up to what God is doing in the world through our church.

We want you to remember that your gift funds a ministry that changes lives. Thank you for being a part of the Willow Creek Presbyterian Church family and helping us to strive toward the vision God is giving us.

In Christ,  
The Mission, Membership and Stewardship Committee

(The MMS Committee and its meetings are always open to all participants of worship at WCPC!)

We thank all who have signed up to host Fellowship on Sunday mornings. We hope you will also help us provide refreshments on the blank Sundays. When you are baking at home, bake extra for the church. We will “Bank Baked Goods” in the freezer (labeled & dated) and get them out for Fellowship whenever we have a blank Sunday.





# Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

## December 5, 2015

What a Joy!! What a Blessing.....to be in a position to be able to assist a family in need! This is just what happened recently at Willow Creek Presbyterian Church when we learned of a mother with three small children who were in a dire economic and domestic abuse situation... father in jail, being evicted from their residence, unable to pay the bill to get furnishings out of storage and stranded in Rockford. The Mission Committee was able to settle her storage bill and secure lodging until the mother was able to move her family to Utah where she had family to help turn her life around. Just a week before Willow Creek stepped up, this defeated mother said, "my life just can't be any worse". This rescue was made possible with funds from our "Families in Need Fund" which is totally dependent upon our **Annual Christmas Cookie Walk**.

And what more fun and yummy a way to fund a worthy cause than by sharing cookie baking and unique decorating talents with each other and the community. In just a few weeks the aroma of vanilla, chocolate and cinnamon will be floating throughout Caledonia. We know everybody will want to be involved, so here are the details:

Every WCPC family can expect to be contacted by phone and asked to contribute homemade and decorated Christmas cookies. Those unable to bake may wish to team up with others for a baking/decorating party. Willow Creek has become well-known for our beautiful and delicious cookies and it's even been said that our cookie walk is the best in the area.....so, now we have a reputation to live up to!! We would, again, like to have a table or two of Christmas cookies from other lands and a table dedicated to delectables for people with special dietetic needs (such as nut or gluten intolerance). Cookies can be brought to the church on Friday, December 4 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. While donations in lieu of cookies are welcome to offset cost of supplies, the primary need is for cookies so that we have adequate product for a successful event.

As has become customary, visitors can take a break from cookie shopping to visit our little coffee shop and chat with friends over sweets and coffee/tea/wassail.

We are looking forward to another successful Christmas Cookie Walk and when we are needed to provide assistance for another Family in Need, we'll be ready!



**Sunday, December 13 will be Special Music Christmas Sunday.** Our Christmas Cantata will be on December 13 during worship. Come to see Mary and Joseph, shepherds, angels and wise men and even a few manger animals. Come to hear beautiful Christmas music sung by the Chancel Choir, Young People's Choir and the children. Come to hear Christmas scripture. We hope to see you all in church!

**Sunday Dec 6**

Chancel Choir rehearsal 8:30  
Children join at 8:50 to rehearse for Cantata  
Special music for worship



**Sunday Dec 13**

Chancel Choir rehearsal 8:30  
Children join at 8:50(or time TBA) for dress rehearsal for Cantata  
Christmas Cantata, children and adults, for worship

**Sunday, Dec 20**

Bells play for worship

**Sunday, December 27**

9:00 Chancel Choir rehearsal  
Chancel Choir sings for Worship

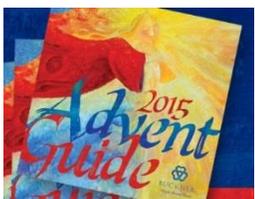


**Bell Choir Rehearsal:**

Thursday, December 3, 10, & 17 @ 6:45 pm

**Save the Date:**

Sunday, February 14, 3:00 at Willow Creek  
A Valentine's Concert featuring:  
Tom Andrew, keyboard; John Harden and  
Elizabeth LaGrande O'Leary, vocalists  
More details to follow!



**WCPC is happy to provide an Advent Devotional Guide for each family.** The guide includes a scripture and devotional reading for each day of Advent. The Advent Devotional Guides are located near the bulletin boards in Fellowship Hall.



Prayers of thanks...I have been so overwhelmed with all of your prayers, support and comfort I have received following the death of Ron, your cards and notes have sustained me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Ron loved Willow Creek and especially Bible Study.

We were so happy that we had the opportunity to see many of you this summer at the Worship Service at Rock Cut State Park. Ron was always happy if there was plenty of food. And, there was an abundance of food at the potluck following the service. God love you All....Blessings and Hugs, Barb Johnson



The Deacon Committee has DVD recordings of our church services. If you or a family member is interested, please take advantage of this service. The DVDs and player can be checked out by our church secretary. For more information, please contact Phyllis Cummings @ 815-654-1923.

## Willow Creek Youth Group

**Sunday, Dec. 6, 1-3 pm – Games & Lesson**

**Saturday, Dec. 19, 4:30-8:30 pm – Progressive Dinner/Toy Drive**

**January – Spaghetti Dinner/Auction to raise money for Presbyterian Youth Triennium**

**July 18-23, 32016 – Presbyterian Youth Triennium (PYT)**



**No Sunday School on the Following Dates:  
December 20 & 27**



### **Sunday School Upcoming Dates:**

**Sunday, January 3** – Wear your pajamas! We will watch a movie.

**Sunday, January 10** – Regular Sunday School, followed by the Birthday Party for Jesus during Fellowship hour with the entire congregation.

There will be a birthday cake and some birthday party games. Please bring a present for Baby Jesus (items for the Babies in Need Closet).

**2016 Contribution Envelopes are available in the Fellowship Hall. If you did not get a box, but would like one please let us know.**





### Martha Ruth Circle

Tuesday, Dec. 1, 9:30 am @ Stockholm Inn (combined Nov/Dec meeting)

Please bring an item for the "Babies in Need" Closet.

**All Ladies are Welcome!**

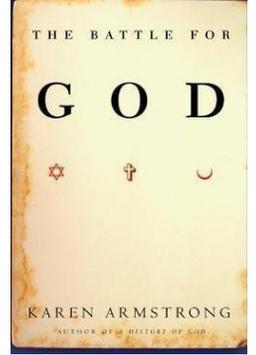
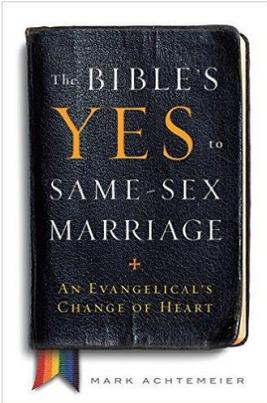
### Book Study Group

**December 9 @ Mary's Market**

**6 pm (some come @ 7) to 8:30 pm**

We will discuss Evangelical Professor Mark Achtemeier's book, *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*. Pick-up your book in Fellowship Hall.

We will also be reading Karen Armstrong's book, *The Battle for God*, with discussions to start in January. One book left in Fellowship Hall. There is time to order more.



### Mariners Christmas Luncheon

Tuesday, December 15 @ 11:30 am

Tavern on Clark

Contact Nettie Parker 815-885-8005 for Reservations

**All are Welcome!**



**Mark your calendars for January 3** when we'll have an undecorating party after church and, when all work is done, enjoy a light lunch/refreshments.



"From naval gazing to getting in the mix of it and acting out our faith,"\* what an apt description of this process! It has proven harder for some than others to move from focusing on ourselves to listening for how God is calling us to go out into the world. More than once, conversations have turned towards complaints and "problem solving," but that is not our purpose. Group leaders have faithfully led us to stretch and grow into disciples, recognizing what we have been given, what we do best, and what our community most needs. A new understanding of our Christian identity and purpose is emerging, and this can be scary, especially for those in our church family who have not been a part of the conversation.

As we choose our new beginning and begin to implement new ways, I hope to help translate the experience through conversations with anyone who is concerned or feels left out. Several New Beginnings pastors have begun to keep "office hours" in the community for this purpose. Look for my new coffee shop schedule in next year's bulletins and Streamers. If you have a favorite coffee shop "office" to suggest, let me know!

# *The Season of Advent*



## **Cookie Walk**

### **Cookie Walk**

Sat., December 5



### **Second Sunday of Advent**

Sun, December 6



### **Third Sunday of Advent**

#### **Young People's & Chancel Choir Cantata**

Sunday, December 13



### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

#### **Christmas Joy Offering**

Sunday, December 20



### **Christmas Eve**

Thursday, December 24

9:30 pm Carols & Music

10:00 pm Candlelight Service



**Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to the Willow Creek Congregation from the staff,**

*Stephanie Konen, Preschool Director/Teacher  
& Cleaning Service*

*Doris Pacek, Cleaning Service*

*Diane Van Vleet, Bookkeeper*

*Carol Nevicosi, Secretary*



GIVE A GIFT OF  
**GREAT PROMISE.**

When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering, you are faithfully keeping those promises by supporting church workers through assistance in their time of need and cultivating racial ethnic education and leadership development.

With your generosity, we can continue to make and keep these meaningful promises with life-changing potential.

Please give today.



**Christmas Joy Offering, Sunday, December 20**



**Help them GO!** PYT is a life giving, life changing, faith moving experience! As the world changes, society shifts – and the church expands – the need for vibrant young Presbyterians grows. Help your young people **GO** to the next great place in their faith! Watch for our upcoming fundraisers this year!

NOTE: We'll spend the night at Stronghold on **July 18<sup>th</sup>**. PYT is for high school age youth, incoming freshmen to graduated seniors.



**WCPC Operating Statistics  
October, 2015**

Income	9,249.00
Expenses	12,067.00
Previous Month - Excess/(Deficit)	(2,766.00)

## December 2015 All Church Calendar

Tue 12/1	---	Call in Poinsettia Orders to Pepper Creek
	9:30 am	Martha Ruth Circle @ Stockholm Inn
Thu 12/3	6:45 pm	Bell Rehearsal
Fri 12/4	8:00am-8:00pm	Cookie Walk Drop-off
Sat 12/5	9:00 am	Cookie Walk
Sun 12/6	8:30 am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Children join @ 8:50 to rehearse for Cantata)
	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:00 am	Worship with Communion by Intinction; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent
	11:00 am	Fellowship
	1:00-3:00 pm	Youth Group Games & Lesson
Mon 12/7	9:15am-4:30pm	Pastor @ Stronghold
	<b>7:00-9:00 pm</b>	<b>Session &amp; Deacon Christmas Gathering</b>
Wed 12/9	7/9:00 pm-8:30 pm	Book Study Review @ Mary's Market
Thu 12/10	6:45 pm	Bell Rehearsal
Fri 12/11	---	Poinsettias Delivered
Sat 12/12	<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>Music &amp; Worship Meeting</b>
Sun 12/13	8:30 am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Children join @ 8:50 (or time TBA) for dress rehearsal for Cantata)
	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:00 am	Worship with Communion by Intinction; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent; Christmas Cantata
	11:00 am	Fellowship
Mon 12/14	<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Mission/Membership/Stewardship Meeting</b>
Tue 12/15	<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>Building &amp; Grounds Meeting</b>
	11:30	Mariners Christmas Luncheon @ Tavern on Clark
Wed 12/16	11:30 am	Presby Lunch
Thu 12/17	6:45 pm	Bell Rehearsal
Fri 12/18	---	No Preschool – Winter Break thru 1/3/16
Sat 12/19	4:30-8:30pm	Youth Group- Progressive Dinner/Toy Drive
Sun 12/20	10:00 am	Worship with Communion by Intinction; 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent; Bells Ring; Christmas Joy Offering
	11:00 am	Fellowship
Thu 12/24	---	Christmas Eve – Church Office Closed
	9:30 pm	Carols and Christmas Music
	10:00 pm	Christmas Eve Worship with Communion by Intinction
Fri 12/25	---	Christmas Day – Church Office Closed
Sun 12/27	9:00 am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
	10:00 am	Worship; Baptism of Morgan Marie Schlie
	11:00 am	Fellowship
Mon 12/28-Sat 1/2/16		Pastor Vacation
Thur 12/31	---	New Year's Eve – Church Office Closed
Sun 1/3	11:00 am	Church Undecorating Party After Church
Sat 1/9	TBD	Session Retreat – location TBD
Sun 1/10	11:00 am	Birthday Party for Jesus during Fellowship; Christian Ed – decorating & games; Mission of the Month-Babies in Need
Sun 1/17	TBD	Youth Spaghetti Lunch & Auction to raise money for Prebyterian Youth Triennium

## Parish Nurse Notes

I found an interesting article from Creation Health that I would like to share with you. It's an article from the 1906 holiday edition of *Vibrant Life* magazine. Though written more than 100 years ago, it has a good, old fashioned message about health and happiness that stands the test of time...As we celebrate Jesus' birth and His impact on our world, we might benefit from remembering that He "came that they might have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows.") May your heart overflow...w/ peace, joy, gratitude, love...

### **Why Not Be Happy?**

Certainly, why not? You have everything in this big, wide world to make you happy. Nothing is lacking. It is all here yet. And if you still desire love, peace, and happiness, go to work and win some. If looked at properly, this is really quite a nice, good, kind, and beautiful world. If you don't believe it, there is something foolish troubling your heart, mind, conscience, or eyesight...

By all means, improve your health first of all. You cannot be happy unless you are healthy. If the organs in your body are playing inharmoniously, the discord will naturally make you miserable; and in order to make them play sweetly, you must tune them up with some common-sense health principles...

If your health is good, but you are suffering with a nervous temperament, you can become happy by cultivating peace... Spend as much time as possible out of doors. Ramble off with yourself, occasionally. Cultivate all the nice, peaceful people you can find. If you can't find any, attract some by being peaceful yourself. And if you are forced to live with warlike folk, refuse to be squelched (that is, don't give up being and doing good)...

Maybe you are unhappy because you are sensitive and notice things that do not exist, too much. In this case, perhaps more than in any other, you need to cultivate common sense; it is the leading way out of your difficulty...

Try to realize, dear one, that the folk with whom you come in contact each day, do not spend their time in studying up ways to hurt your feelings. They are really too busy doing other, nobler things to give you so much attention...

Go to work at once, dear child, and see if you do not improve. Your task may be as simple as carrying flowers and books to the sick. But even that will help greatly...

## Poinsettia Order Form

Would you like to order a Poinsettia in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person? The cost is \$10.00 each, and they are available in white, pink or red. You may take your poinsettia home, or donate it for the Deacons to deliver to the elderly and infirm. Please fill out this form and drop it in the collection plate on Sunday morning or mail it to the church.



**The deadline to order is Monday, November 30.**

Type of Flower \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Name as you wish it to appear in the bulletin: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please make checks payable to Willow Creek Presbyterian Church, with memo: Poinsettia***

Flowers not picked up prior to Sunday, January 3rd will be delivered  
by the Church Deacons to the elderly and infirmed.