



STREAM

Willow Creek Presbyterian Church of Argyle

7300 Belvidere Road

Caledonia, Illinois 61011

815-885-3455

March 2021

"A Faith Community, Growing Together, Sharing the love of Christ"

A lot of you have asked how we're enjoying our first northern Illinois winter. It is certainly the winteriest winter Scott and I have ever experienced, and very different from Oakland's typical 60 degrees.

But we have truly enjoyed it. The snow has been beautiful, and we haven't minded the cold. In fact, I much prefer the cold weather to summer's heat and humidity.

As we've learned a little of what winter is like in our new home, I read a book that felt relevant: *Wintering*, by Katherine May. The author uses the winter season as a metaphor for how we can learn and grow during seasons of restriction and limitation, and how we can embrace the opportunity to hibernate, in a sense, as other animals do. I found her reflections particularly insightful as the end of this winter coincides with the end of some of our local pandemic restrictions.

It is no coincidence that these opportunities to emerge also happen as we continue our Lenten journey. It is no coincidence that the tentative beginning of spring coincides with the season of preparation for Christ's death and resurrection. Our landscape is currently marked by frosty white and will soon be grey and brown and then, one day, we'll awaken to the green of new growth. It happens every year and yet it is a relief every year - a breath of fresh spring air and sunshine as we emerge from our various winters and greet the promise of new beginnings once again.

There's something to be said for this annual occurrence that always feels new. It is connected to the promises of God that are always being made new. This Lent, we keep encountering Scripture about God's covenant promises, with our ancestors as well as us. These covenant passages remind us that the God's promises are always true, but newly engaged in different seasons in our own lives. A promise we read last year on March 1st will feel very different this year on March 1st - not because the promise has changed, but because we have changed.

I hope we find space in our eagerness to return to pause and consider how winter - the season, and the long winter of pandemic - has changed us. One of the best ways I know to cultivate space for noticing is by lingering over Scripture, particularly when we return to familiar passages, like many of the Lenten passages this year. When we read something we thought was familiar and encounter in it new revelation, it is a chance to see how we have grown.

This is my hope and prayer for each of us - that we will allow the fullness of all that has happened to shape who we are as individuals and as a church. Some things about Willow Creek will always remain the same - that we are and always have been a beacon of light to this community. And yet, to be a beacon now means something different than it did 175 years ago. The core truth remains, but there is space for us to reimagine *how* to shine brightly here and now. As we ask God to show us how to be Christlike neighbors, we might hear God telling us to start with noticing who we have become throughout winter, before moving to the springtime actions of planting and cultivating our hopes.

Pastor Lauren

Hybrid Worship

We have returned to hybrid worship! Our local public health guidance allows for 50 folks in our sanctuary, and so if you feel comfortable, you are welcome to join us in person for worship on Sunday mornings at 10am. You are also welcome to continue worshipping virtually - we will continue to post videos of our worship services, and the link and bulletin will continue to be emailed out each week.

Per current public health guidelines, we will wear masks in the building at all times, practice social distancing between households, and we will not be able to sing or recite together. Our hope is that these restrictions are temporary.

If you do choose to join us for worship in person, we ask that you sign our updated WCPC Covid-19 Waiver.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask! Call the church office or email Lauren@WillowCreekPC.org.



Holy Week March 28th - April 4th

We walk Lent - a season of promise - in anticipation of Holy Week, when we will pause to remember Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, the sadness of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and the hallelujah joy of Resurrection Sunday.

Be on the lookout for details on how we will observe Holy Week as a church family this year.

Preparing for Baby Betzel!

Pastor Lauren and Scott are expecting their first baby on April 10th!

The Finance/Personnel/Endowments Committee and the Session discussed Pastor Lauren's parental leave during the month of February. We were guided by Blackhawk Presbytery's Family Leave Policy which was included in Pastor Lauren's Terms of Call.

Pastor Lauren will have **8 weeks** of full maternity leave, **tentatively beginning April 10th**. During those 8 weeks of full leave, Pastor Lauren will be unavailable for any church business - she will not preach or lead worship, she will not attend meetings, she will be unavailable for pastoral care, etc. Then, Pastor Lauren will use accrued vacation to have **4 weeks of part-time leave**. During these 4 weeks, she will preach and be available for all pastoral care needs.

During those first 8 weeks of full leave, we will welcome a familiar face and voice back to our pulpit! **Pastor David Jones** has agreed to preach, moderate Session and be available for pastoral care emergencies during the 8 weeks of full leave. We anticipate welcoming Pastor Dave on Sunday, April 11th (but he is available to start earlier if that becomes necessary).

While we are all excited about Baby Betzel, as well as excited that many of the pandemic restrictions are lessening, there is still a great deal of uncertainty around the coronavirus and newborns. We ask that the Betzel Family's need for privacy as well as their need to practice the utmost caution be honored during these first few months. We will have many years to get to know this new addition to our Willow Creek family, and appreciate everyone's patience.

Mike Landi (F/P/E Chair), Maren Reid (Clerk of Session), and Pastor Lauren



**Join us the first Sunday of the month at 11:30am for fellowship!
(March 7, 2021) we'll meet on Zoom.**

Join us the first Sunday of the month at 11:30am for fellowship! Sunday, March 7th we'll meet on Zoom. The link will be in your weekly updates email. If you have any questions about Zoom, let Pastor Lauren know! We'd love for you to join us for this time of conversation and fellowship.

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

We will meet in person - kid's will be invited to Sunday school after the Scripture reading.
Be on the lookout for which dates we'll meet!



Did you know we have a temporary **Labyrinth** in our Fellowship Hall? While we are working very hard to honor all public health guidelines, and cannot have regular fellowship at this time, you *are* invited to take a few moments to talk with labyrinth anytime you're in the building. It will be available for at least a few more weeks.

A labyrinth has a clear path in and out, which makes it different from a maze. In the Middle Ages, labyrinths were used as a way for people to participate in a pilgrimage without the expense or time required in actually going to another place. Labyrinths were created on the floors of cathedrals to help draw people into meditation.

The path of the labyrinth will become clear as you walk. Traditionally, a labyrinth walk is done in silence.

This is a two-way path, and everyone has their own speed. You might meet others along your way. We simply request that you keep silence and don't demand the attention of anyone you pass - each individual is on their own personal prayer journey.

(Silence can be hard for people of all ages! But I encourage you to take on the challenge. Notice what happens if you do this walk all by yourself, without talking about it. *If* no one else is around and you want to run the labyrinth or approach it more playfully - go for it! Just be mindful of others.)



Dear Faithful Friends,

Following is a record of your gifts to Special Offerings from the week ending December 5, 2020, through week ending January 2, 2021: on 12/14/2020, \$213.57 for the Peace & Global Witness Offering. Your Congregation's giving when combined with that of others, will share the love of Christ with those in need. We look back in gratitude, for the ways the Church has been faithful to its calling despite the incredible challenges of 2020. These gifts mean so much more than the dollars that are given, and represent lives being changed. We look forward to supporting you and your congregation in deepening partnerships with those in need and throughout the whole church, together.

With gratitude for your partnership, and prayers for continued grace and boldness in your ministry.

Sincerely, Bryce Wiebe



To my Willow Creek friends,

Nearly seven years ago I was in search for a part-time job. What I found at Willow Creek was so much more. As these years have passed, you have shared in many of my family milestones and I will always remember my time here fondly.

As I retire, I have been overwhelmed by your cards, emails, sweet sentiments, kindness and generosity! I will miss you!

Signing off as your secretary! Blessings to all!
Carol

Hello,

I wanted to introduce myself, my name is Peggy Knoepfle. I would like to say thank you for allowing me to become the Secretary in your church. I have already met a few of you and I know that working here will be a blessing for me, as I hope I will be for you. I live in Belvidere and have always drove past your beautiful church wondering about you and what the inside looked like. So I am thrilled to not only do that but to work here as well. God is Good!



faith and **finances**

Per Capita

Please submit your Per Capita prior to December 1, 2021 in order to meet the Blackhawk Presbytery Deadline.

Bank Draft

A Bank Draft is an easy way to give monthly. Many of our members have chosen this method. Several advantages include: no church weekly giving envelopes, no need to write checks, no handling by the Church Financial Secretaries & there are no fees. Please contact our bookkeeper Diane VanVleet at the church for assistance to set up a bank draft.

Online Giving

Through the website: willowcreekpc.org, click on the "Giving" or "Make a Donation" tabs and follow the instructions. This is a very simple method to give. There is a 2% fee per dollar amount on each transaction. On a gift of \$50 the fee would be \$1. If this is a recurring gift, and you would like to avoid the fees the church pays you may want to consider a bank draft.

Church Envelopes

This is a traditional method of giving. Church envelopes are generated for you and used to give weekly gifts. If you wish to receive or discontinue receiving a box of envelopes, please notify the church office.



Hello Willow Creek Friends, I am so pleased that we will be meeting in person again. Even though there will be restrictions, we will still be able to worship together.

Congregational hymn singing will not be allowed yet, so Pastor Lauren and I have formed a bit of a plan. Whoever is doing special music that Sunday will play and sing the hymns. This way folks can sing along in their minds, or, if you are worshiping via computer, you can certainly sing along from the safety of your home.

March's special music schedule includes Renee O'Dell, Jim Burright (guitar and baritone), Lucas Greenlee and yours truly.

Yesterday I finalized the music for Easter Sunday. It was a bit of a challenge since there will be no singing, but it will be very joyous, with bells, violin, and organ and piano.


The days are getting longer. We will be in our church again. Sing Alleluia!

Liz

WCPC LENTEN STUDY 2021

COVENANT(S)

WEDNESDAYS @ 6:30 PM
FEB. 24TH - MARCH 24TH



"God said:
"When the rainbow is in the clouds,
I will see it and remember the
everlasting covenant
between you and me."
- Genesis 9:16

Perhaps you've heard the word "covenant" before and wondered: "What does that even mean?" We might hear this word at a wedding or occasionally in Scripture readings, but it's not a word we usually use in our daily lives. It happens to come up a *lot* in the lectionary this Lent, so it seemed like a good opportunity to learn more about it together. We will explore the first covenants found in Scripture, what "covenant" means, and how ancient covenants continue to shape our faith today.

We will meet on Wednesday evenings in Lent (Through March 24th) at 6:30pm. If possible, we will meet in person in the Fellowship Hall (and offer a Zoom link for those who would rather participate that way).

Keep an eye on your updates email for whether or not we will be able to meet in person, or only on Zoom. This study is designed for adult learners.



Our Lenten devotionals this year are called "Where Your Heart Is".

Here is a note from the creator of the devotionals, Illustrated Ministry:

“Our theme’s inspiration comes from Jesus’ teaching about storing treasures in his Sermon on the Mount. This Lent, we invite you to explore the many treasures you have in your life...By exploring Gospel passages about treasures and matters of the heart, we

invite you to wonder more deeply about what kinds of treasure matter, why we store treasures, and the power these treasures have in our lives.

We encourage you to explore how these ideas and themes influence how you view God, your faith, and the world. This Lenten devotional is written to be used individually or as a household, and is for all ages.

So grab a pen, some crayons or colored pencils, and start working through the devotional.”

You can pick up printed devotionals at church or let the church office know if you would prefer the digital version emailed to you or a printed version mailed or delivered to you.

March 2021 All Church Calendar

Tue 3/2	6:30 pm	Session Meeting
Wed 3/3	6:30 pm	Lenten Study
Sun 3/7	10:00 am	Hybrid Worship; Communion; Special Music – Renee O’Dell
	11:30 am	Zoom Coffee Fellowship
Wed 3/10	6:30 pm	Lenten Study
Sun 3/14	10:00 am	Hybrid Worship; Special Music – James Burright, Guitar
Mon 3/15	---	Easter Flower Orders due to Church Office
Tue 3/16	8:00 am	Buildings and Grounds Meeting in Fellowship Hall
	6:00 pm	Music and Worship Meeting
Wed 3/17	6:30 pm	Lenten Study
Fri 3/19	---	Streamer Articles Due to Church Office
Sun 3/21	10:00 am	Hybrid Worship; Special Music – Lucas Greenlee, Pipes
Wed 3/24	6:30 pm	Lenten Study
Sun 3/28	10:00 am	Hybrid Worship; Special Music – Elizabeth O’Leary

Attention High School Seniors

The Flora McEachran Scholarship Fund



If you are interested in applying for the Flora McEachran Scholarship, please submit a letter to the Clerk of Session, Maren Reid, stating your intent to apply for the Flora McEachren Willow Creek Presbyterian Church Scholarship. The letter should include the name of the college or secondary school you are planning to attend and your field of study, if you have decided. You may also wish to include information about yourself including activities,

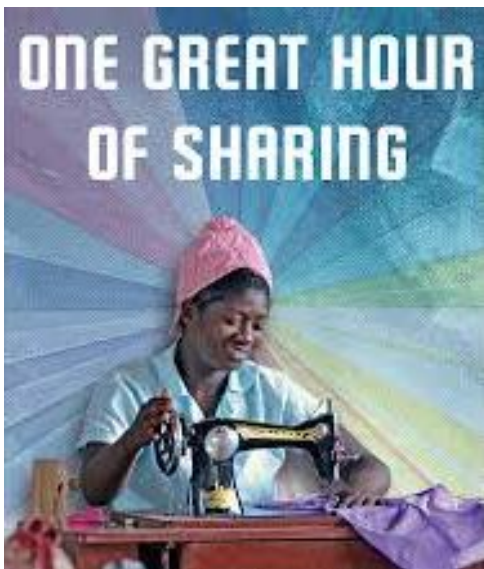
community service, etc... Please mail the letter to the church office. (Maren Reid, Clerk of Session, Willow Creek Presbyterian Church, 7300 Belvidere Road, Caledonia, IL 61011) This is a one-time grant with a maximum of \$500. Prior to the September 30 Scholarship disbursement, recipients chosen for the scholarship will need to show proof of enrollment in a course of basic study or training beyond high school.

WCPC Operating Statistics

WCPC Operating Statistics		
	January 2021	Year-to-Date
Income	7,158.16	7,158.16
Expenses	12,315.55	12,315.55
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Excess/(Deficit)	(5,157.39)	(5,157.39)



As our finances show, January was a rough month all the way around. We either fell off the wagon, or never got on in the first place. It makes the rest of our year a challenge to overcome as we slowly crawl out of the hole we created. However, we are thankful for what we have and grateful for our Church family and friends. Thank you for your support. Stay safe.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING Sunday April 4th

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The three programs supported by ONE GREAT Hour of Sharing --- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and self-Development of People --- all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Received during the season of Lent (February 17 – April 4), each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. **In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.**

One Great Hour of Sharing makes a difference in the world.



During this pandemic time, the church office is closed. Please email the church office at willowcreekchrch@aol.com.

In case of emergency members should contact:

Pastor Lauren Patrus-Betzel 678-230-7549 or
Maren Reid (Clerk of Session) 815-978-5307 or
Jim Hall (Chairperson of Deacons) 815-633-1784

"Change for Change Sunday"

Each **Second Sunday** of the month will be "**Change for Change Sunday**". We have pledged to raise our children in the faith. The children have taken the lead in this mission project. They have given us the opportunity to show, surround and saturate them in the Gospel value of generosity.

Please mail your offering check to the church and indicate in the "memo" Change for Change. Thank you for your support!





The 175th Anniversary Celebration will be postponed until we can gather in full again. If you would like to contribute to the 175th Anniversary Celebration, **please mail your offering check to the church and indicate in the “memo” 175th Anniversary.**



Willow Creek Presbyterian Church of Argyle
@willowcreekpc



@willowcreekpcargyle
Willow Creek PC of Argyle
We are a faith community growing together sharing the love of Christ. We gather to worship, deepen our bonds, and grow in Christ serving others.

Check out the latest photos and events on our Facebook and Instagram pages!
<https://www.facebook.com/willowcreekpc>
<https://www.instagram.com/willowcreekpcargyle/>

Miss a Worship service?
Check out recordings on Willow Creek's new YouTube channel!



Come Learn, Worship and Share with us every Sunday

Adult Sunday School 9:00am	Worship 10:00am	Worship 11:00am
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search: Willow Creek Presbyterian Church of Argyle

Easter Flower Order Form



Would you like to order an Easter Flower in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person? The cost is \$12.50 each. You may take your flower home or donate it. Leftover plants will be delivered to the elderly and infirm by the Deacons. 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 March 15.**

Type of Flower _____ Quantity _____

(Indicate Easter Lily, Tulip, Daffodil, or Hyacinth)

In Loving 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: Easter Flowers.