



STREAMER

Willow Creek Church of Argyle
7300 Belvidere Road
Caledonia, Illinois 61011
815-885-3455
January 2022

A Faith Community, Growing Together, Sharing the Love of Christ

Dear Willow Creek Church Family,

Happy 2022! I was looking back at last year's January Streamer, and I noticed that I started out with a hope that "our days of social distancing and remote worship are coming to an end."

Well, sort of? What's really different between this New Year's and last? And what's really still the same?

Years ago, I traveled to Turkey with a friend and we visited a bazaar where she found the perfect gift for her three nieces, adorable little dolls in traditional dress. She wanted to give them each the same doll, and we looked and looked and finally found two that were identical, but could not find a third one. The seller of the dolls was eager for us to buy, and kept offering different alternatives, holding out the two identical dolls and a third one that didn't match, saying: "See? Same!"

And we would laugh and shake our heads and say: "No, this one is different."

He just shrugged, and pointing at each doll, said: "Same, same, different. All the same!"

She finally decided to get her nieces three different dolls, but for years afterward that phrase would come back to us; "Same, same, different." It was surprisingly useful - whether regarding situations we faced as teachers, or other aspects of our lives. We would encounter a student who posed really similar challenges to a student from the previous year, and we would sigh and say: "Same, same, different." It became shorthand for remembering, as Scripture says, that there is "nothing new under the sun," and for remembering that whatever challenges we thought were external often returned in a slightly different form to show us we actually had a lot to learn about ourselves.

Same, same, different is how I feel as we face another year whose beginning is marked by some covid uncertainty. There is *much* that is different, of course! I rejoice that we got to have our traditional Christmas Eve service, and sing together as we lit candles and contemplated the holiest of nights. I rejoice at the comfort many of us have found in vaccines. I rejoice that many of us were able to celebrate the season with loved ones. There is much that is different, and I am grateful for the many blessings and returns we experienced in 2021.

And yet - there is much that is the same. The headlines feel a little too familiar, which just adds to the confusion - is this the same threat as before? Or is it different? Is it *substantially* different? How worried should I be?

And *that* is what feels the same - the uncertainty.

This is also the same: our endlessly loving, eternal, sovereign God. We mark time by hours, days, weeks, months, years - and so, this turning of the calendar feels like a moment when things should be markedly different.

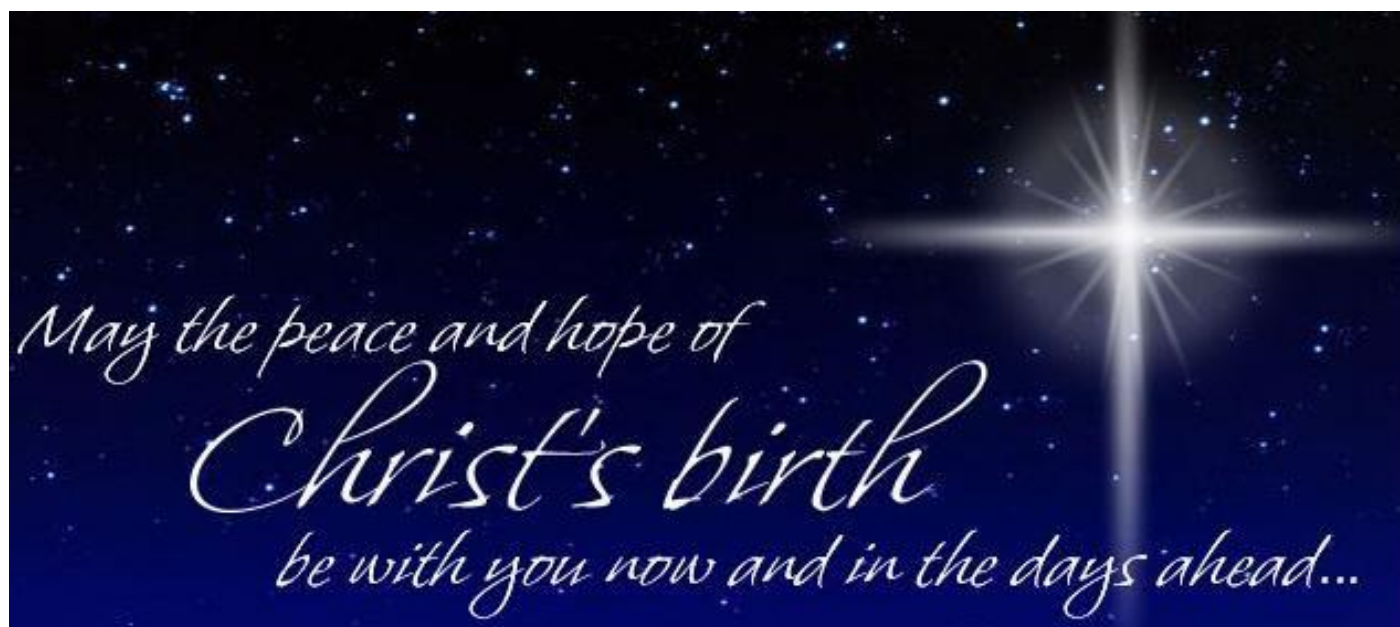
But for God, a day is like a thousand years. That does not bring me great comfort when I feel impatient! But if I can manage to take a few deep breaths and consider the vastness of God, if I can try to make sense of eternity, I am comforted to remember that none of these uncertainties are uncertain for God - God has not been surprised at a single turn in this pandemic.

Meanwhile, I think back to how my friend and I used, "same, same, different," to remember that new versions of old challenges often arose so that we could learn more about ourselves, so that we could grow. I am *trying* to bring that attitude to the things that feel the same this New Year. While rejoicing about what is *not* the same, as I consider the things that feel the same, what might I have to learn this time, as an experience that is just a little different elicits the same response in me? What is God teaching me this time?

In Christ,

Pastor Lauren

A huge thanks to everyone who helped make Advent and Christmas wonderful at Willow Creek! Thank you to the musicians, readers, children and their pageant directors, decorators and un-decorators, cookie bakers and cookie buyers... thank you one and all! What a Merry Christmas we had, and what a wonderful New Year we have to look forward to!



Also, we want to thank everyone for your thoughtfulness, well wishes, and Christmas joy! The wonderful gratitude bags with notes, cards, and gifts were so appreciated!

Thanks again ~ Your WCPC Staff,

Tom Andrew, Christa Dennis, Stephanie Konen, Dianne Londo, Elizabeth O'Leary, Caryn Smith, Diane Van Vleet, & Pastor Lauren

Dear Willow Creek Friends,

Here is the music line up for the five Sundays of January:

- ☆ January 2nd - Tom is off. I will be playing and the music is still TBA. We are celebrating Epiphany on this day, so I hope to have some appropriate music and participants. Stay tuned!
- ☆ January 9th - Two friends and I are doing something very special. Johannes Brahms' "Sacred Lullaby" for contralto, viola, and piano will be performed by yours truly, Bill Zartman and Deborah Dunnavan. It is a very beautiful piece, which incorporates a tune, which many of you will know.
- ☆ January 16th - John Harden, vocalist
- ☆ January 23rd - Renee O'Dell, soprano
- ☆ January 30th - Tom Andrew, keyboard

Let's hope the great weather continues throughout the holiday! Have a blessed New Year!

See you in church,

Elizabeth

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

Sunday, January 9th, 16th, & 23rd @ 10:30 AM

We will meet in person. Children can go down to Sunday school after the scripture reading.

**YOUTH
GROUP**

Schedule for Youth Group

January 9 th	11:00 AM	Un-Decorating Party & Potluck
January 16 th	11:30 AM-12:30 PM	Games & Lesson
January 30 th	11:30 AM-12:30 PM	Games & Lesson

November was an amazing month for Willow Creek! Giving by the congregation exceeded the expenses of the church by roughly \$3,900.00. We are currently in the black for overall income versus expenses on the year. Have a safe holiday and enjoy the time with loved ones. Please continue to give online or mail in your donation, every bit helps.



**Thanks
for Your
Support!**

WCPC Operating Statistics

	October 2021	Year-to-Date
Income	13,764.62	130,679.57
Expenses	<u>10,987.66</u>	<u>125,581.74</u>
Excess/(Deficit)	\$ 2,776.96	\$ 5,097.83

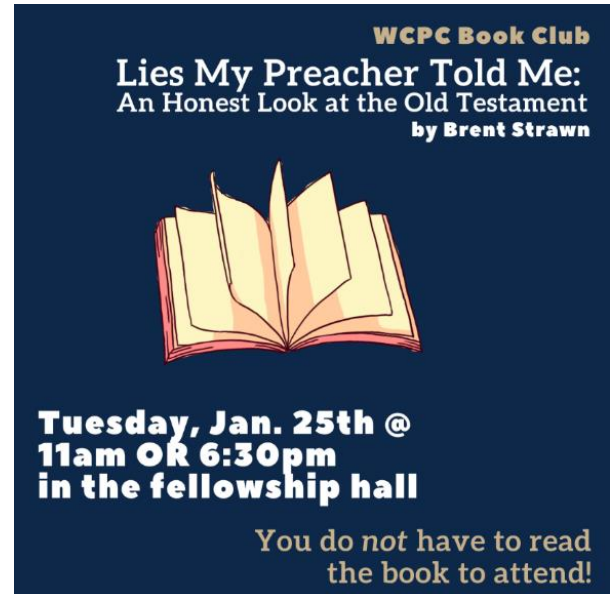


Un-decorating Party

On Sunday, January 9th we will un-decorate the church. A crockpot potluck will follow and end with a birthday cake for Jesus! Bring your favorite crockpot recipe. Rolls, crackers, drinks, and table settings will be provided. Please come and join us!

Thank you,
Worship & Music Committee

WCPC Book Club



All Church Calendar January 2022

Sun., 1/2	10:00 AM	Worship
Tues., 1/4	6:30 PM	Session Meeting
Sun., 1/9	10:00 AM	Worship
		<i>"Change for Change Sunday"</i>
	10:30 AM	Children's Sunday School & <i>Birthday Party for Jesus</i>
	Afterwards	<i>Un-decorating Party & Potluck</i>
Mon., 1/10	10:00 AM	Deacons' Meeting
Sun., 1/16	10:00 AM	Worship
	10:30 AM	Children's Sunday School
	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Youth Group – Games & Lessons
Fri., 1/21	Today	Streamer Articles Due to Caryn
Sun., 1/23	10:00 AM	Worship – <i>Ordination & Installation of New Officers</i>
	10:30 AM	Children's Sunday School
	11:30 AM - 2:00 PM	<i>New Officer's Training</i>
Tues., 1/25	11:00 AM ^O R 6:30 PM	WCPC Book Club, Lies My Preacher Told Me
Sun., 1/30	10:00 AM	Worship – <i>Rev. Eric Heinekamp, Guest Preacher</i>
	11:15 AM	Finance & Personnel/Endowment Committee Meeting
	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Youth Group – Games & Lessons



Pastor Lauren will be taking a few days of vacation at the end of January. Rev. Eric Heinekamp, our Blackhawk Presbytery's Transformational General Presbyter and Stated Clerk, will be preaching and leading worship on Sunday, January 30, 2022!

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 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 (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.



New Member Class

Are you interested in learning more about becoming a member of Willow Creek Presbyterian Church? Join us on Sunday, Feb. 13th*!

We will explore what membership means, the Presbyterian denomination, the history of Willow Creek, and we will spend some time dreaming about the future of Willow Creek. We will also fellowship, enjoy lunch, and get to know one another a bit better.

This class is simply an opportunity to learn more about membership, so bring all of your questions! After the 13th, you can decide whether or not you want to join.

Let me know if you have any questions! I hope to see you on the 13th!

Pastor Lauren



Sunday, Feb. 13, 2022
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

*Lunch will be provided following all public health guidance - we will be able to eat at a safe distance from one another and will keep our masks on for the rest of our time together. We will make decisions about what is most safe on the 13th depending on what the current public health situation is at that time.

Chalking of Doors

Pick up your chalk at church and dedicate your new year to God and ask His blessing on everyone who lives, works, and visits your home! Use the chalk on your front door (or anywhere around it) and write the below:

You might be asking what is 20 + C + M + B + 22?

20 22 = 2022 (Our New Year)

C M B = Initials of **C**aspar, **M**alchior, and **B**althazar (Magi) *and/or* “**C**hristus **M**ansionem **B**enedicat,” which is Latin and means, “May Christ Bless the House”

+ **+** **+** = Three crosses *and/or* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Please feel free to use this blessing: *God of doors and homes, bless this home this year and every year. Bless all who come and go through this door, both those who live here and those who visit. May all who enter through this door come in peace and bring joy. May all who come to this door find welcome and love. May the love and joy in this home overflow and spread into the community and the world. And may Jesus Christ watch over us all. Amen.*

😊 **Happy Chalking** 😊



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