



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

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

I started writing this newsletter a few days ago, but this morning awoke to the news that Russia has invaded Ukraine. Ukraine is so far from here! I don't know what to offer the people there besides our prayers and I wish that my faith were such that I didn't think of prayer that way, but I confess that I struggle to know what good my little prayer is when I see images of the traffic jam of desperation as Ukrainians flee Kyiv.

I do believe that God hears our prayers and I join you in prayers for peace, even in prayers for justice, in Ukraine and all around God's world.

As I struggle to find the words for my prayer I find myself turning to the Psalm 46:

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; God utters, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.
Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. "Cease striving, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

I am grateful for this reminder that while the nations are in an uproar, while kingdoms totter, all God has to do is make an utterance and the entire earth would melt. God is sovereign and that reminder leads the Psalmist to this peaceful confession, "Cease striving and know that I am God".

This is the balance we walk as followers of Christ - the belief that it is God's activity, not ours, that preserves and promotes peace and justice *and* the belief that pursuing the God of peace and justice necessarily makes us concerned about peace and justice. We trust God and that trust transforms our anxious striving to rooted, calm work for peace.

What work can we do here for the peace of Ukraine? I don't know, but I believe that is a prayer God will answer. Meanwhile, our attention to the conflict there can heighten our awareness of closer conflicts and make us available to work for peace in our homes and neighborhoods. There can always be more peace and we can always be more peaceful.

Praying with you for everyone caught in conflict and fear,

Pastor Lauren

Dear Willow Creek Friends,

Lent is almost upon us and also spring. I'm very tired of wearing boots and hope that I can get shoes out very soon! Here is the lineup for March:

March 6.Joyce and Bill Zartman, bell tree and violin

March 13.Elizabeth O'Leary, contralto

March 20.Dan Holmes, voice and guitar

March 27.Elizabeth O'Leary, piano



Have a blessed Lent,

Elizabeth



rockford rescue mission

Thank you for your congregation's gift to Rockford Rescue Mission. Every day, I have the privilege of witnessing the results of your generosity in action. Faith renewed. Hope restored. And lives transformed by God's amazing grace.

I cherish these blessed moments and wish I could share them all with everyone in your congregation. I commend your church for supporting our ministry, even when you know of only the miracles you read about in our publications or online.

In Luke 14, Jesus say, ". . . when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed." Your financial gifts, kind compassion, and faithful prayers are indeed a banquet for those who hunger for acceptance, independence, and dignity.

Thank you for having faith that Rockford Rescue Mission is meeting the needs of the hungry, homeless, and hurting in Jesus' name. Please know we will continue to be good stewards of your congregation's gifts.

Partners in hope,

Sherry Pitney, Chief Executive Officer



March 2 – April 17, 2022

During the season of Lent, we celebrate that God connects with us through Jesus' resurrection and connects us with "those who have least" — that's how Matthew 25 puts it — and that's what *One Great Hour of Sharing* is all about. Connecting.

Our gifts provide relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. This Lenten season, please give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.

We will collect the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on Palm Sunday (April 7th). There will be info in your bulletins on how to give to this special offering.

Session Summary

Session met on Tuesday, February 1st for our regularly scheduled monthly discussion. A great deal of time was spent outlining our goals and our approach for mission (giving). To ensure focused execution on these goals, a sub-committee was formed and will meet quarterly to plan and prioritize our work.

Session also discussed Per Capita and agreed WCPC funds will not be used to cover our member Per Capita obligations to the Presbytery. As a result the February Streamer required correction, noting we would distribute Per Capita donations quarterly based on donations that have voluntarily been provided by the members.

January was a great month for giving. We doubled the giving of January 2021. Our expenses in January were high as they always are for winter months. We broke even in income versus expenses. We are usually in the hole every January and start off the year in the red. Thank you for your continued support of Willow Creek Presbyterian Church.



WCPC Operating Statistics

	January 2022	Year-to-Date
Income	16,864.30	16,864.30
Expenses	<u>16,837.52</u>	<u>16,837.52</u>
Excess/(Deficit)	\$ 26.78	\$ 26.78

COVID Policy Update

The Session has prayerfully updated our COVID policies here at Willow Creek in consideration of the CDC's most recent recommendations, the change in our state's mask policy, and our ongoing commitment to love our neighbor.

- Masks are optional.
- If you think you may have been exposed or are experiencing any symptoms, we expect that you would choose to wear a mask.
- If you are definitely experiencing COVID symptoms or know you have been exposed, please stay home.
- Please continue to social distance between households.
- We will soon have N95 masks available if you would like to wear one while you're here.

Our worship service remains unchanged at this time (and you are still invited to sing and pray aloud), and we will continue to offer ways to worship online (YouTube and Facebook).

Our COVID Task Force* will continue to evaluate our practices and will keep you updated on any further changes.

Thank you for being patient and loving as we continue to navigate the ongoing pandemic. As always, feel free to reach out with any questions.

Pastor Lauren & WCPC's Session

*The COVID Task Force is Pastor Lauren, Karli Rankin, April Rottman, and Marie Wiersema

Lent is a season

of promise and hope,
of confession and repentance,
of reflection and awareness.

This Lent we will explore the theme ***“These Words Appeared”***. This phrase is from Luke 24:11, when the apostles first hear that the stone has been rolled away. “These words appeared to them to be an idle tale, utter nonsense!” Their honest reaction to the incredible first signs of Resurrection makes me wonder where and how God’s words appear to us today - how often do we hear truth and think of it as nonsense, an idle tale? We are forgiven for thinking such things, and yet, in that forgiveness there is an invitation for us to notice and hold on to those truths a bit more readily.

We begin our Lenten journey of noticing truth a bit more readily on Ash Wednesday (March 2nd). We will offer drive through ashes to any who come through our parking lot at 8:30am and 4:30pm that day. We will have our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall (with the labyrinth) open for anyone who longs for the space and quiet for contemplation. Then we will worship together at 6:30 p.m.

On Sundays in Lent we will be reading Luke’s Gospel and journeying with Jesus from his temptation in the wilderness to the cross and empty tomb. Then, on Thursdays in Lent, we will have our Soup Study on Spiritual Disciplines, meeting at 5:30 p.m. for a simple supper, fellowship, and study together on March 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st and April 7th.

Mark your calendars for a potluck and simple communion service on Maundy Thursday (April 14th) at 6:00 p.m. and stay tuned for more information about Easter Sunday.

Lenten devotionals are available at church.

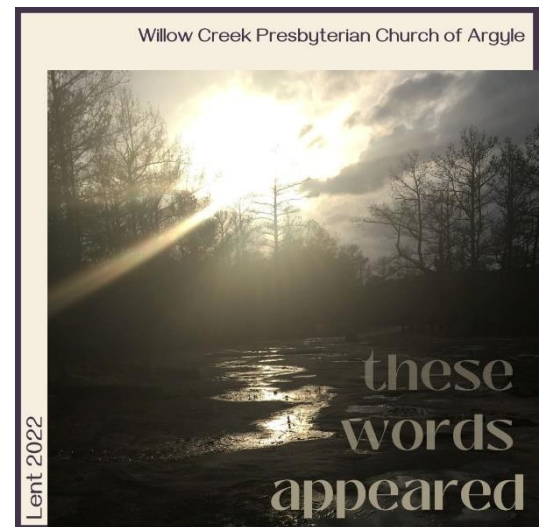
I look forward to walking this season with you,

Pastor Lauren

Mission Update

Our church has been greatly blessed with and through a generous congregation. As we look at our budget, we are compelled to give as God calls us to. Prayerfully, Session has decided to prioritize mission giving in these ways:

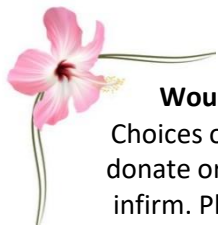
- Participate in our denomination’s special offerings, including One Great Hour of Sharing (Palm Sunday, April 10th); Pentecost (June 5); Peace & Global Witness (World Communion Sunday, October 2, 2022) and Christmas Joy (during Advent).
- Offer regular opportunities for the congregation and community to give *and* serve, using an Acts 1:8 framework, which calls us to be Christ’s witnesses in: 1. “Jerusalem” - right here: Caledonia, Argyle, Boone County; 2. “Judea and Samaria” - our larger region: Illinois and the Midwest; and 3. “and to the ends of the earth” - as our focus expands outward, how can our country and other places around the world experience God’s peace and grace? Also following the Acts 1:8 framework, these are the opportunities to give and serve that we are committing to for the upcoming year:
 - Food Drive for Empower Boone County (Capron), April 27th – May 15th
 - A work project at the church in June – probably June 25th – Save the Date!
 - Boone County Fair Respite Tent, August 9th – 14th
 - CROP Hunger Walk, October 2022
 - Another work project in November – stay tuned for details!
 - Together We Rise Sweet Cases, February 2023



Mark these dates on your calendars and be on the lookout for more details for each of these opportunities!

All Church Calendar – March 2022

Tues., 3/1	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Session Meeting
Wed., 3/2	8:30 AM ^{&} OR 4:30 PM 6:00 PM	Drive-thru Ashes Ash Wednesday Worship in Sanctuary
Sun., 3/6	10:00 AM 10:30 AM 11:00 AM	Worship – First Sunday of Lent & Communion Children’s Sunday School Worship & Music Meeting
Wed., 3/9	10:30 AM 5:00 – 6:30 PM 6:00 PM	Men’s Coffee Confirmation Class Handbell Choir Rehearsal
Thurs., 3/10	5:30 – 7:00 PM	Lenten Soup & Study - <i>Solitude</i>
Sun., 3/13	10:00 AM 10:30 AM 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Worship – Communion <i>“Change for Change Sunday”</i> Children’s Sunday School Youth Group, Games & Lesson @ WCPC
Mon., 3/14	10:00 AM	Deacons’ Meeting
Wed., 3/16	5:00 – 6:30 PM	Confirmation Class @ Culver’s of Roscoe
Thurs., 3/17	5:30 – 7:30 PM	Lenten Soup & Study - <i>Scripture</i>
Fri., 3/18	Today	Streamer Articles due to Caryn
Sat., 3/19	9:00 AM	Silent Retreat @ Stronghold – Meet @ WCPC
Sun., 3/20	10:00 AM 10:30 AM	Worship – Communion Children’s Sunday School
Wed., 3/23	10:30 AM 5:00 – 6:30 PM 6:00 PM	Men’s Coffee Confirmation Class Handbell Choir Rehearsal
Thurs., 3/24	5:30 – 7:00 PM	Lenten Soup & Study - <i>Prayer</i>
Fri., 3/25	6:30 PM – 9:00 PM	Confirmation Class (Meet @ WCPC)
Sun., 3/27	10:00 AM 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Worship – Communion Youth Group, Games & Lesson @ WCPC
Tues., 3/29	8:00 AM	Building & Grounds Meeting
Wed., 3/30	5:00 – 6:30 PM 6:00 PM	Confirmation Class Handbell Choir Rehearsal
Thurs., 3/31	5:30 – 7:00 PM	Lenten Soup & Study – <i>Honoring the Body</i>



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?

Choices of Easter flowers include Easter lily, Tulip, Daffodil, or Hyacinth and the cost is \$13.00 each. You may donate or take your flower(s) home on Easter Sunday. Deacons will deliver leftover flowers 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.

Deadline to order is Monday, March 28, 2022

Type of Flower: _____
(Indicate your choice: Easter Lily, Tulip, Daffodil, or Hyacinth)

Quantity: _____

***NOTE: Please write everything below as you wish it to appear in bulletin**

In Loving Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Donor

Name(s): _____

Please make checks payable to Willow Creek Presbyterian Church with Memo: Easter Flowers



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