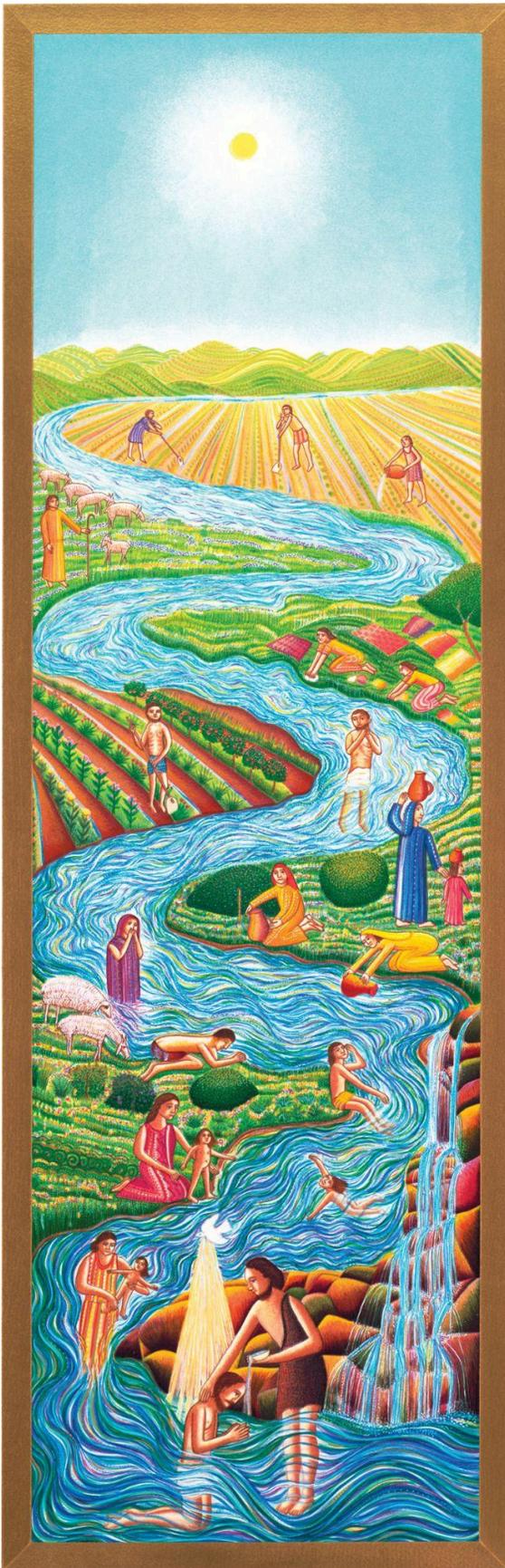


# WILLOW CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 | BAPTISM OF OUR LORD | 10:00AM



## OUR APPROACH TO GOD

*Come, celebrate the love of God in Jesus Christ with us! All are invited to sing and pray and participate in liturgy.*

IF YOU ARE ABLE, WE INVITE YOU TO HONOR GOD BY STANDING.

PRELUDE  
Tom Andrew, Organ

WHEN JESUS CAME TO JORDAN  
FRED PRATT GREEN

WELCOME

REV. LAUREN PATRUS-BETZEL

IF CALL TO WORSHIP

MAREN REID

In the beginning, darkness covered the deep, and God said: Let there be light.

**Through the words of the prophet, the Lord said: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.**

Do not fear, says the Lord; I am with you. I have called you by name; you are mine.

**When Jesus was baptized by John, suddenly the heavens were opened.**

And as Jesus was coming out of the water, the Spirit of God rested on him like a dove.

**And a voice said: You are my beloved; with you I am well pleased.**

The voice of the Lord is over the waters!

**Come, let us worship God!**

IF HYMN #164

DOWN GALILEE'S SLOW ROADWAYS  
DUNSTAN, 1991; HORMAN, 1998

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Merciful God, in baptism you promise forgiveness and new life, making us part of the body of Christ. We confess that we remain preoccupied with ourselves and separated from one another. We cling to destructive habits, hold grudges and show reluctance to welcome one another. We allow the past to hold us captive. In your loving-kindness, have mercy on us, and free us from sin. Fulfill the promise of our baptism so that we may rise to new life, and live together in grace.**

A PERIOD OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON FROM MATTHEW 3

As a voice from heaven said to Jesus, so, in Christ, God speaks to us,  
**“You are my child, my beloved! I am overjoyed with you!”**  
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!  
**Thanks be to God!**

I GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

I PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May the Peace of Christ be with you; **And also with you.**

**INVITATION TO THE WORD**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT READING

ISAIAH 42:1 - 9

PAGE 1124

The voice of the Lord, powerful and full of majesty. **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

CIVILLA DURFEE MARTIN, 1905; CHARLES H. GABRIEL, 1905

*Elizabeth O’Leary, Contralto*

CHILDREN’S MOMENT

*At this time, children are invited to go downstairs for Sunday School.*

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 3:13 - 17

MATTHEW RALSTON

The Gospel of our Risen Savior. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

PAGE 1499

SERMON

“MUDDY MIDDLE”

**OUR RESPONSE TO SERVE**

I HYMN #821

MY LIFE FLOWS ON

ROBERT LOWRY, 1869

I AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – THE APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

DAY BY DAY

SWEDISH HYMN BY OSCAR AHNFELT

I DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise God all creatures here Below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

I PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and glory forever. Amen.**

I HYMN #543

O CHRIST SURROUND ME

RICHARD BRUXVOORT COLLIGAN, 2004

I CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

CHRIST, WHEN FOR US YOU WERE BAPTIZED

F. BLAND TUCKER

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THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SERVED TODAY!

GREETER: RON MUZZARELLI | LITURGIST: MAREN REID  
USHERS: KATHERINE RALSTON AND MATTHEW RALSTON

**COVER IMAGE** Swanson, John August. *River*, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*,  
a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

Today is **Baptism of Our Lord** Sunday.

Baptism is one of two sacraments in our church (the other is Communion).

St. Augustine wrote: *Sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace*. Celebrating the sacraments are opportunities for the church to see God's grace embodied by one another.

If baptism is something you are interested in, please let Pastor Lauren know.

In the PCUSA, we celebrate baptisms of people of all ages.

The Second Helvetic Confession says this about baptism:

*Baptism was instituted and consecrated by God. First John baptized, who dipped Christ in the water in Jordan. From him it came to the apostles, who also baptized with water.*

*The Lord expressly commanded them to preach the Gospel and to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). And in The Acts, Peter said to the Jews who inquired what they ought to do: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37).*

Plan to stay after worship **today**  
to help **undecorate the church**  
and enjoy our **annual chili cook-off!**

**HYMN NOTES #543 O Christ Surround Me** is our hymn of the month.

Dianne Londo shared these insights about the hymn in the January Streamer:

*“Lorica”. If you live in the world of biology, you’ll think of the hard outer shell surrounding certain microscopic organisms.*

*If you live in the world of AI, it’s the name of a company to protect you when using AI. If we reach into the theological world, it’s a Celtic prayer style seeking God’s protection.*

*The Latin term means breastplate or armor.*

*The author of “O Christ Surround Me”, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, is a student of the Psalms and writes lyrics and melodies that bring old texts into our modern language. Born in 1967 he is a freelance writer who writes modern, singable psalms. While the “lorica” prayer style was seldom written down, this one is based on a prayer attributed to St. Patrick.*

*In this New Year, the psalm reminds us to ask Christ to surround us and protect us as we walk along our life’s path.*

Every Sunday, we join our voices together to affirm what we believe using our denomination’s Book of Confessions or words from Scripture. Today’s affirmation is the **The Apostles’ Creed**. This form of the creed dates back to the 8th Century, and is traditionally used at baptisms to celebrate our connection to Christians from other times and places and our unity in Christ.

**CHURCH HISTORY: POLITICS, PESTILENCE & POSSIBILITY** Wednesdays January 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at 10am

Join us for Adult Bible Study! This month we will focus on church history, and particularly the history surrounding the Reformation and the beginnings of the Protestant Church in England.

Join us next **Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>** for our **Officer Installation** which will take place during the regular worship service at 10am.

Following worship, all currently serving Elders & Deacons are invited to the Officer Planning Party & Lunch in the Fellowship Hall 11:30am - 2pm.

We will have lunch together (reach out to Pastor Lauren to sign up to bring something for our meal) and pray and plan for the upcoming year at Willow Creek.

*The church office will be closed on Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 for Martin Luther King Day.*

**WEEKLY CHURCH CALENDAR**

<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children’s Sunday School, 11a Fellowship & Chili Cook-off & Undecorate the Church
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	6:30p	Beaver Valley Clipper 4-H Club Meeting
<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	6p	Pipe Band
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	10a	Coffee & Church History Adult Bible Study
<b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	10a	Worship with Officer Installation, 10:30a Children’s Sunday School, 11a Fellowship, 11:30a Officer Lunch and Planning, 11:30a Youth Group Kick-Off

**“A Faith Community, Growing Together, Sharing the love of Christ”**

**MINISTERS: ALL MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**

For more information about our staff and volunteers, visit our website.

**The Church Office is open Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 8:30am - 1pm.**

If you’d like to set up a time to visit Pastor Lauren, please reach out to the Church Office.

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Caledonia, Illinois 61011



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