



**A NOTE FROM PASTOR LAUREN** As I've been scrolling social media these last few days of 2025, I've noticed a lot of proclamations about the New Year that have a tone of: 2026 better be better than 2025! Instead of the typical resolution energy, it seems the vibe is more of resignation as many are communicating that 2025 was hard. We are a bit wary of turning the page, but feel that we are at the very least more resilient and able to weather what's ahead.

Perhaps this resonates with you, too. 2025 was hard for a lot of us. There was financial hardship and a general sense of stress. There were losses and illnesses and injuries. For many, it was a year of learning just how strong their faith was. If that is you, I hope you know you're not alone. Or perhaps this doesn't resonate with you - 2025 was fantastic, and you aren't too sure what all the fuss is about.

Either way, while our culture generally puts a lot of emphasis on the New Year and the intentions we bring into it, January 1st is not the church's New Year. We are already a month into the new liturgical year, which began with the first Sunday of Advent on November 30, 2025. We have already set our intentions and made resolutions - our intention to follow the light no matter how dimly it flickers in the dark night, and our resolution to live by grace and mercy, like the Christchild born into winter's cold.

Practicing the ancient Advent journey, followed by everlasting Christmas joy every year sets our feet on right paths for the sake of God's name.

Wherever the world's New Year finds you, you have already been found by God. Whatever else we may hope for in the year of our Lord 2026, this we already know for sure: we are God's beloved, accompanied by our Savior, empowered by the Holy Spirit to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. May this be our resolve as we enter gently into the New Year.

**CHALKING OF THE DOORS** You are invited to take chalk home with you and join the ancient practice of chalking your doors for the New Year with CMB + 2026. The letters CMB stand for the names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar) or the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat* (Christ bless this house). Here is a blessing as you chalk your doors:

*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.*

**Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>** plan to stay after worship to help **Undecorate the Church** and enjoy our **Annual Chili Cook-Off!** All are welcome to bring a chili to share or just help with undecorating & enjoy what others bring.

**WHAT A WONDERFUL YEAR IT WAS!** A small look back on what a great year WCPC had!



**CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL** All Preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to join us after the Children’s Moment on Sundays around 10:30am. We will meet on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. See Rebekah, Karli or Molly if you have any questions.

**YOUTH** Youth Group Kick-Off **Sunday, January 18th at 11:30am** while we enjoy “Lunch with Officers” as well as bible skits and fun board games!

**LIVING WITH GRIEF GROUP** Join us on **Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 1pm** for our **Living with Grief Group**. No matter how long you’ve been grieving, or who or what you carry grief for, you are welcome. We will meet on **Second Wednesdays at 1pm**. All are welcome - please consider inviting those who are grieving who are not yet connected to our church.

**WCPC OPERATING STATISTICS** October was well above average for giving at Willow Creek. We are seeing a general improved giving trend over the course of the year, compared to previous years. Our expenses were below average for a Fall month. Currently we are in the red for the year \$12,975.16 Thank you for your continued support of Willow Creek Presbyterian Church.

	<b>October, 2025</b>	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
Income	\$25,094.12	\$141,227.81
Expenses	\$12,497.41	\$154,202.97
Excess/(Deficit)	\$12,596.71	<b>\$(12,975.16)</b>

**A NOTE FROM LIZ O’LEARY** I would like to thank all of the musicians who gave of their time and talent to make our Christmas season so beautiful. We have so much talent in this church! 🎵 Liz

- **Jan 4:** Tom Andrew, Keyboard
- **Jan 11:** Elizabeth O’Leary, Contralto
- **Jan 18:** Ron Muzzarelli, Vocalist
- **Jan 25:** TBA

## JANUARY CALENDAR

Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup>	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant <b>Hello 2026!</b> - Church Office Closed - <b>No</b> Bell Choir Rehearsal
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup>		Church Office Closed
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10a	Worship - Epiphany & Communion with Pastor Tanya, 11a Fellowship, 11:15a Deacons
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup>		<b>Welcome Back Argyle Preschool!</b>
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Pipe Band, 6:30p Session
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children's Sunday School, 11a Fellowship & Chili Cook-off & Undecorate the Church
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Pipe Band
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	10a	Coffee & Church History Adult Bible Study
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	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
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>		<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No Argyle Preschool - Office Open</b>
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	8a	Buildings & Grounds, 5:30p Worship & Music, 6p Pipe Band
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant, 10a Coffee & Church History Adult Bible Study
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children's Sunday School, 11a Fellowship, 11:15a F/P/E
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Pipe Band
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	10a	Coffee & Church History Adult Bible Study
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup>	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal

**ATTENTION STUDENTS \* THE FLORA MCEACHRAN SCHOLARSHIP** is available to any Willow Creek member enrolled in a course of basic study or training beyond high school. Everyone is eligible to receive the scholarship once. If you would like to apply, please submit a letter to the Clerk of Session (Rebekah Landi) through the Church Office. See Pastor Lauren if you have any questions.

**OFFICER ORDINATION, INSTALLATION & TRAINING** On Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, our Elders and Deacons will be installed during our regular worship service at 10am. Make plans to join us in worship for this special occasion. Following worship on the 18<sup>th</sup>, all currently serving Elders and Deacons are invited to have lunch together and pray and plan for the upcoming year. We will meet from 11:30am until no later than 2pm. If you *cannot* attend, please let Pastor Lauren know ([Lauren@WillowCreekPC.org](mailto:Lauren@WillowCreekPC.org) / 678-203-7549).

**COFFEE & CHURCH HISTORY** On Wednesday, 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.

**SESSION SUMMARY** The Session traditionally does not meet for business in December, so there is no report this month.

## DIANNE'S HYMN OF THE MONTH: "O CHRIST SURROUND ME"

#543 *O Christ Surround Me*

"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 protection from God. 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.

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING A LOCAL FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS MERRY & BRIGHT!** Thank you so very much for making another family's Christmas special again this year. This little brick church is filled with such amazing congregants who have the biggest hearts. Thank you again for giving selfishly and graciously!



**THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE CHURCH STAFF** We are beyond grateful for the kindness and generosity you showed through the Gratitude Bag tradition. Thank you for the kind notes and thoughtful gifts. Thank you for being such a wonderful church. We are grateful to serve God here with you. A huge thank you from Your WCPC Staff: Tom Andrew, Stephanie Konen, Elizabeth O'Leary, Emily Monroe, Pastor Tanya Muzzarelli, Pastor Lauren Patrus-Betzel, David Perez-Fernandez, Annie Picken, Lindsey Clark & Diane Van Vleet.

### **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 and Friday from 8:30am - 1pm.** If you'd like to set up a time to visit Pastor Lauren or Pastor Tanya, please reach out to the Church Office.

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