

A NOTE FROM PASTOR LAUREN A few weeks ago was one of my favorite Sundays of the year - the installation of our Elders and Deacons. This is a day when we emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit *and* our commitment to *the priesthood of all believers*.

Presbyterians seek to be non-hierarchical. We do not have authority figures over our clergy (like bishops in other denominations) who decide who a church's Pastor should be. Instead, the congregation decides who you call as your Pastor to *join* you in ministry alongside church officers and congregation members.

Printed on the back of our bulletin each week is the phrase "*Ministers: all members of the body of Christ.*" This is our consistent reminder that if ministry needs to be done, it is up to all of us to respond to God's call.

We also live out our commitment to the priesthood of all believers through calling, ordaining and installing folks to the different ordered ministries of our church.

Within the PCUSA, someone could be called to serve as a Deacon in the ministry of Compassion and Service, or someone could be called to the ministry of Elder - either a Ruling Elder, like the folks who serve on our Session in the ministry of Discernment and Governance, or a Teaching Elder, like me, also known as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament.

As a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, I have been ordained to serve *the* church, and installed to serve *this* church for however long you and I believe God is calling us into ministry together (and I hope it's a very long time!).

To be ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, these requirements must be met: earn a Masters of Divinity, pass five ordination exams, and complete two internships (usually one in a church and another as a hospital chaplain). After completing these steps and being approved by their Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, a candidate can seek a pastoral call. Only once a church has called the candidate can they officially complete their final examination on the floor of Presbytery. The Presbytery of San Francisco (where I was examined) refers to this step as "Trials for Ordination". Thankfully, it was not nearly as tortuous as that sounds! But it was thorough, with presbyters asking detailed questions about my faith and theology. It's nerve-wracking, but a good and healthy process.

Our denomination has always been committed *both* to a highly educated clergy *and* to the priesthood of all believers. We deeply believe that God can and does speak and work through anyone. There is no seminary degree required to sit at the bedside of someone who is sick and pray with them, or to read Scripture on a Sunday morning, or to bring a meal to someone in need, or even to write and preach a sermon!

And also, for centuries we have held on to our belief that the church is blessed when some have the chance to deeply study Scripture, Biblical languages, church history, theology, ethics and more. The church is blessed when individuals bring that learning into pulpits and congregations. But we do not believe those folks are the only ones who can minister, or even be called "Pastor". One of my favorite things about our denomination is the way we've responded to the Spirit at work in the lives of some Ruling Elders and encouraged them to receive additional education and training to become a "Commissioned Ruling Elder", also known as a "Commissioned Pastor."

Under the guidance of the Presbytery, these folks can be Commissioned to serve a particular congregation in a particular way, like how Pastor Tanya has been commissioned to serve here!

Pastor Tanya was first called, ordained and installed as a Ruling Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Then, discerning a call to pastoral ministry, she took seminary classes and worked in covenant with the Presbytery for a season of preparation for ministry. She was Certified ready for a Commission, and the First Presbyterian Church of Marengo called her to be their Commissioned Pastor. She was installed as their Pastor, and served there for seven years until she retired. Any of you who have gotten to know Pastor Tanya would agree - she doesn't have "retired" energy!

When the Muzzarellis began attending Willow Creek in February of 2022, I was delighted to learn Tanya was interested in continuing to use her gifts and training for pastoral ministry. In June of that year, the Session officially entered a covenant with her and the Presbytery which commissions her to particular Pastoral responsibilities like worship leadership. This covenant is renewed annually, and this year Tanya and I realized we haven't paused to explain her role at Willow Creek in quite some time, so I decided to do that here in the Streamer.

Pastor Tanya is a wonderful blessing to our congregation - both because of her willingness to use her gifts for worship leadership, and her embodiment of the unique commitments of our denomination. Not too many congregations have Deacons, Ruling Elders, a Commissioned Pastor and a Minister of Word and Sacrament. But Willow Creek does! And this is part of what we celebrated a few weeks ago on Officer Installation Sunday.

In 1845, the charter members of Willow Creek chose to be an "Old School" congregation. "Old School" churches only called pastors who had been educated and trained in the "old school" ways - a difficult ideal to hold on the edge of the frontier! But they did hold it, and we continue to hold it as well - a belief that it benefits the church to have a Minister of Word and Sacrament, and also, the church is blessed by the many other ways that God can shape us for ministry, and the church is certainly blessed by the many folks who say "yes" to leading through serving in the various Ordered Ministries. Praise be to God! It's good to be Presbyterian.

SESSION SUMMARY The Session of Willow Creek Presbyterian Church of Argyle met on January 6, 2026 for the regularly stated meeting. The meeting opened at 6:30pm with prayer and devotions. In attendance were: Pastor Lauren Patrus-Betzel (Moderator), Karli Rankin, Katherine Ralston, Rebekah Landi (Clerk), Tom Andrew, Lon Clark, Molly Shipton, Pat Nortch, and Jeff Cummings. Cindy Nelson was excused. A quorum was declared. The following actions were taken:

1. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Oct and Nov financial report. The motion passed.
2. A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget as presented from Finance and Personnel. The motion passed.
3. Consent agenda was received and approved as stated.
4. A motion was moved and seconded to call the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 15, 2026 for the purpose of receiving the 2025 Annual Report and the 2026 budget. The motion was approved.
5. A motion was made and seconded to approve communion for 1/4/26 and 2/1/26. The motion was approved.
6. A motion was made and seconded to approve WCPC's covenant with Pastor Tanya. The motion passed.
7. A motion was made to approve a memorial bench to be put in honor of Don Rogers. The motion passed.

WCPC OPERATING STATISTICS We will have both December's & January's numbers available on the March Streamer. Thank you for your cooperation.

FIRESIDE ROOM The room off of the kitchen will be painted soon, and then new flooring will be put down. Eventually, this will become a church "living room" where the Youth Group, Bible studies and committees can meet, and where families can gather for weddings and funerals. We are excited to soon offer more space where our church family can fellowship.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Sunday 1 st	10a	Worship, 11a Fellowship, 11:15a F/P/E, 11:30 Youth Group, 11:30a Deacon's Meeting
Tuesday 3 rd	6p	Pipe Band, 6:30p Session
Wednesday 4 th	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant
Thursday 5 th	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Sunday 8 th	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children's Sunday School, 11a Fellowship - Super Bowl Sundae
Monday 9 th	6:30p	Beaver Valley Clippers 4-H Meeting
Tuesday 10 th	6p	Pipe Band
Thursday 12 th	6p	Bell Rehearsal
Friday 13 th		Argyle Preschool Valentines Day Party
Sunday 15 th	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children's Sunday School, 11a Fellowship - Annual Meeting & Brownie Bake-Off, 11:30a Youth Group
Monday 16 th		No Argyle Preschool - Presidents' Day
Tuesday 17 th	8a	Buildings & Grounds, 5:30p Music & Worship, 6p Pipe Band
Wednesday 18 th	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant, 6p Ash Wednesday Worship
Thursday 19 th	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal
Friday 20 th		March Streamer Articles Due! 🍀
Sunday 22 nd	10a	Worship, 10:30a Children's Sunday School, 11a Fellowship
Tuesday 24 th	6p	Pipe Band
Thursday 26 th	6p	Bell Choir Rehearsal

DIANNE'S HYMN OF THE MONTH: #727 "THE SERVANT SONG" Richard Gillard, composer of The Servant Song is an Anglican singer/song writer from New Zealand. While not prolific, the body of music he's written speaks to us through scriptural concepts. One of the February scriptures is from Matthew 5, the Beatitudes. Another is Micah 6:8 which asks what the Lord requires of you. Yet another is from Matthew 17, where Jesus is transfigured. In all of these we hear about walking humbly, being blessed by humbleness, and of Jesus himself being humble...even in his greatness and glory. The Servant Song speaks to how we put those scriptures into action through serving one another. It's a James type of faith, one with works attached; one where we're willing to participate in each other's circumstances with supporting love. One where we hold the 'Christlight' for one another in the difficulties of life.

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.

Phone: (815) 885-3455
7300 Belvidere Road
Caledonia, Illinois 61011



Email: office@willowcreekpc.org
Website: www.willowcreekpc.org
Social Media: <https://linktr.ee/wcpcargyle>