

# THE WINDOW

On a journey with the living Christ; connecting with God, others, and the world.

July 2021

## ACTIVE REST by Andy Hamer, Pastor

The Tour de France has begun! I know that not everyone is a fan, so I'll limit my exuberance to just one little aspect of *Le Tour*. It's an ongoing, 21-day race – if a rider doesn't finish one of the days, he's out of the race. This explains why we see riders sustain serious injuries in a crash, and then try to get back on their bikes to finish the day. If they can make it to the end of that day's course, they can rest up and seek medical attention. If they're cleared by the next morning, they get to continue the race.

What does this have to do with the rest of us? Our world has worked through a deeply arduous season. Organizations at every level of society have dealt with serious challenges, and churches are no different. We've been racing hard for a year and half. Now, as we begin to feel the pace ease up, it's time grab some rest, take care of injuries, and prepare to move forward.

Many of you are aware that our Ministry Teams have been engaged in this kind of preparation. We'll have more to share about that next month, but I can already say that the process itself has been a blessing. When we do this type of work in community we often discover more about the direction God is leading us; we notice needs and resources we've missed. Many of us are already starting to feel greater eagerness for the next leg of our church's race!

This may also be a good moment for us to reassess our individual races. As we take stock, what might we discover about our resources and needs? Jesus has an invitation for us in this moment.

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11)

You might notice that Jesus invites us toward active rest. He doesn't tell us to dump our burdens and walk away. Jesus knows that we'll only re-burden ourselves with other unhelpful patterns of living. We're invited to trust Jesus with the sources of our fruitless anxiety and lean into the Kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34). We lay down our burdens so that we can actively follow Him.

Actually, we see this kind of thing from the Tour de France riders. At the end of a 100-mile day of racing, do you know what these riders do when they get off their bikes? They give a few high fives, maybe share a quick story, and then hop on a stationary bike. They're officially resting, but their rest is active. They've got cool down and stretching routines. They need to eat the right fuel, check the mechanics of their bikes, plan some strategy, and spend some time connecting with their teams and others that they love and trust.

Even for us, resting doesn't necessarily mean dropping down on the couch in front of the TV. As we take a collective breath, it's a good time to consider how we might better take up the life Jesus offers. We need to take on the right fuel – have we been neglecting our time spent with God? After such an arduous race we may also need to take care of mental and spiritual injuries we have been ignoring. And what about our devotional routines – worship, study, service, and accountability to a smaller group of people we trust? We all need rest and recovery, but it needs to be life-giving.

As we take a collective breath, we also acknowledge that God is calling us forward. How will we rest up and prepare for our next leg of the race?

## MY WEST HILLS STORY by Rick Mason

Back in the fall of 2005, my life went through a significant season of change. Everything I knew seemed to change in an instant; a divorce, a new job, and quite simply, a change of lifestyle. Things were changing and I couldn't control it. I decided to embrace it and look for something new that would be life giving. I wandered into West Hills Church to explore a faith option. I fully intended to shop around, go from church to church to see what each one was like. Week after week, I kept coming back to West Hills. It just felt right. It felt like home.

In 2010/2011, I met Tracey. I brought her into the West Hills family. We enjoyed our time of worship and attending Sunday classes. We made a comfortable home for us here and we couldn't have been happier to be a part of something so loving.

Well, a few years ago, we got a new pastor and things began to change. Sometimes people don't particularly like change (as I mentioned before). One thing led to another and people started to leave West Hills. I regret to say that Tracey and I were two of those people. We felt everything came crashing down, people fighting, people irritated that we used to do this or that and now we lost our focus.

Well, Tracey and I left without saying a word. It just wasn't for us anymore. We just stewed about it and didn't let on. I didn't even think to turn to leadership to discuss our concerns. We just left. We were looking for newer and better. We went from one church to the next. We finally found a large growing church that seemed to have it all together. A year went by and things were fine, actually quite comfortable. But soon we began to notice that we were just a face in the crowd. No one needed our help. We were going to service and that was our experience for the week. We could have found a way to engage in more, but felt we didn't quite fit in or did not fit some of the small groups who engaged in mission. There was no Sunday school, only rare get-togethers, and quite simply the church was just too big.

Suddenly, we felt God tugging at our hearts. Remember your family at West Hills? We thought about it, but no, we heard people were leaving in droves. Why would we want that?

But the same theme kept coming up. Suddenly, we ran into a West Hills member, then another, then another.... It just kept snowballing. We heard that West Hills was about to call a new pastor. We decided to make a visit. But, would the people of West Hills welcome us back? We wrestled with that for a while. Finally, we made a visit. And to our delight, we felt just as welcome as we were before. But, we were still not convinced. So we setup a meeting with the new pastor, Andy, to make sure he was here for the people and not just another resume builder. We were impressed. He made us feel welcome and made certain that this was the people's church and not his church. We decided to make West Hills our home once again and we are so happy to be back. I sometimes feel the need to put my tail between my legs because we abandoned such a loving group of people. But I don't think there is a single individual who has resented us for our mistake - after all, I believe that is what Christ has instilled in us all - Forgiveness.



Do we regret leaving? Yes and No. Yes, because we left our family without even leaving a note. But no, in that we were able to experience other churches. We were given the ability to discern what is most important in our journey of faith. And although some of the other churches had a lot to offer, we realized one very important thing - church is the people and people are family. Our family worships at West Hills.

Even though West Hills isn't the same as it was many years ago, we now realize that the Spirit led us back to be a part of building something new. To support ministries and missions that will move us where God wants us. Sometimes the Spirit closes a door only to open a new one to a new opportunity.

My hope is that we all realize how important our family connection is here. Change is inevitable, but family can help each other embrace change and strengthen our bonds to one another. I am so glad to be worshipping at West Hills with my family.

## July At A Glance

At West Hills our mission statement . . . On a journey with the living Christ; connecting with God, others and the world, provides us with the framework for how we live our lives. Even though life is different now, and we're connecting in new and different ways, here are notable dates this month in the life of our church.

**Sundays in July - Livestreaming and in-person worship service @ 10 a.m. Post service fellowship outside in the garden area following worship.** For those who won't be joining in-person, you can watch the service at: [whcomaha.org/live](http://whcomaha.org/live)

### **Discipleship Opportunities Sunday Mornings @ 9:00 a.m.:**

- \* Kids Connect Small Groups meeting in-person and outside
- \* Youth 406 Journey Groups meeting in-person and outside
- \* Serendipity Bible study on the book of Acts meeting in-person in the chapel

**YOUTH MONDAY FUNDAYS meet 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (various locations/activities). Contact Luke Burns for info: [luke@whcomaha.org](mailto:luke@whcomaha.org)**

**Wednesdays - Women's Bible study meet at 9:30 a.m. in the chapel. Studying Psalms- Prayers of the Heart by Eugene Peterson**

**Wednesdays - 406 Youth Group meets at 6:30 p.m. in-person and outside**

**July 15 - Sloppy Joe Ministry Drop Off at the church. Come between 10-3 to the north circle drive and drop your cooked sloppy joe meat and buns in the bins located outside. The food will be taken to the Stephen Center to be enjoyed by many!**

**July 30 - August 1 - Family Camp at Camp Calvin Crest. If you haven't registered yet, it will be here before you know it! Go to [whcomaha.org/events](http://whcomaha.org/events) for info and to register today!**

## Whispers, Wiggles, and Wonder in Worship

It is a joy to our West Hills family to gather with all generations to worship Jesus. We believe that God put wiggles and giggles in His small image bearers, and He is neither offended nor distracted by sound and movement, but delights in their presence. So do we! If you find your young child needs a little more space and the cry room is under use, an adult can accompany a child/children to the large room in the nursery. The worship service will be livestreamed and you're welcome to stay until they are ready to step back into worship.

## FRESH by Julie Burgess

As a member of the team traveling with **The Outreach Foundation** to Lebanon, below is a reflection centered around a visit with the **Together for the Family** ministry.

*“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”—Revelation 21:5 (ESV)*

**Fresh.** It is a word we hear on a daily basis on our travels around Lebanon and in our visits with TOF partners here. It modifies the word “money.” Fresh money. Coming from a printing family, I imagine they are speaking of freshly printed bank notes, the ones that come easily from the ATM when we insert our plastic cards and punch in our PINs.

But fresh money here is something different. It is the money that comes to you after the economic crisis began in Lebanon many months ago. If you want old money, the money you deposited and saved in your bank account, you will be found at a loss. Dollars in the bank are restricted for withdrawals, and if you do withdraw them, you will get back the Lebanese equivalent at the old rate, thereby losing up to 90% of their value. If you want them in dollars that you can exchange for this new inflated unofficial rate, you are out of luck. Your money sits in stasis, losing value no matter what you do. Fresh money, especially for an non-government organization like many of the partners here, becomes a new lifeline. This money in some complicated way that we cannot understand is available and at a much more favorable rate.

So **fresh**, like many words today, has been given a new, less attractive meaning. Not wanting to dwell in such a hard place, let us make a list of the more joyful ways we think of for the word *fresh*, and I think in the listing you will discover what we did today: God is still making all things new – *fresh*. His word is trustworthy, and it is true.

We began our day with a drive to the Bekaa Valley. Upon arrival in the Zahle region, we went to the Sarah House campus of Together For the Family, a multi-pronged ministry run by our dear sister Izdihar Kassis, that is serving around 100 Syrian refugee families in this area. It would take an encyclopedia to describe all that is done here, but let us go with this. A campus that two years

ago consisted of two buildings, has grown into a small community. In one there is a dental clinic operating in the morning hours every day, serving five-six children. Dr. Somer says after the children get their teeth cleaned, their smiles open wide



showing their beautiful teeth. *Fresh faces.*

**(Izdihar (on right) with Syrian woman who teaches sewing.)**

On this campus, there are three classrooms, each seating eight students at desks with COVID precautions for distancing, with two shifts per classroom. There is a woodworking/carpentry workshop training twelve boys in two shifts, and making marvelous works as they learn new skills. *Fresh ideas.*

There is so much to tell, like I said, I would need an encyclopedia, so let us move from Zahle to Kerbet Khanafer, a bit farther to the south. Looking across the Litani River from here, you can see the Syrian border and snow on the Golan Heights. But we came to sit with the Aboud family: Rev. Tony, his wife Ramak, and their children, Elias and Elena. Such a gifted family, we sat in the church as they led us in worship songs in English and Arabic. Following this exquisite reminder that through all of this life we raise our praise to the giver of all freshness, we headed for lunch along the river. A constant reminder that this country is in economic freefall (fresh money, remember?), we had an entire restaurant to ourselves. But concentrating on the amazing Lebanese food that refreshed our tired minds and bodies, we enjoyed the breeze blowing in from the open windows. *Fresh air.*

Saying goodbye to the About family, we headed back to Zahle, to the other campus of TFF, where mothers had gathered to attend the graduation of their children from the three-month school program. There was pomp. There was circumstance. There was cake and diplomas and gifts. And more than that, there was singing. Kids and moms together raised their voices in a familiar refrain: Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.



### (Childrens' Graduation Day)

You may pause here for tears like the ones that flowed from Marilyn's eyes, as you know that these are Syrian Muslim families that are served in this place. Jesus loves me, this I know. And they have learned this, too. *A fresh new day.*

What will be *fresh* for them going forward? None of us can know what the future will bring for these families and children, and indeed, if we stop and dwell there, we can get stuck there. What we do know and are humbled and proud to celebrate, is that God is using Together For the Family to make something new, something *fresh*, in this place at this time. He said it. It is true. We can trust it. Here I stand, and cannot be moved.

Please continue to pray for **Together For the Family**, a longtime partner of **The Outreach Foundation**, for **Izdihar, her staff and her board**, and that their coffers will be replenished with fresh money to continue the good work that God has started.

Hello West Hills Church! My husband, Brian, and I were introduced to WHC through Linda and Paul Springsted. Linda invited me to my first women's silent retreat several years ago. I enjoyed



the experience and felt the call to do more of them, so I started becoming a "regular" attending at least twice a year. It is through these retreats that I have gotten to know more wonderful women of WHC (my silent sisters) and discovered the importance of a church community that my husband and I were lacking.

We have found the community here very welcoming. Although we attended WHC prior to the pandemic, our most active period has been during the pandemic. I signed up to receive the newsletter and participated in online worship. It was easy to fit that into our schedule and watch when we couldn't be online for the live streaming service.

I started playing guitar again, and although I have a lot to learn, it was put on my heart to reach out to WHC about playing in church. Kevin responded right away and invited me to join the worship band to learn and play along. He and all the talented musicians were very welcoming. I enjoy being able to learn and worship God in this way.

I've also been participating in InGathering and am excited to continue my involvement there. I think WHC has so much opportunity to rethink, redefine, and educate people about our worship approach and experience.

In addition, I've met some great people playing Pickleball at WHC! How blessed are we having the facilities we do? Just imagine how we can use them for the community and members.

I've been energized by what a small but dedicated number of people can do at WHC and how committed I hear members are—how they want to reach out and grow and expand what we offer to existing members to help them with their faith journey. So many of the activities that WHC members participate in offer the opportunity to interact with potential new members. Brian and I are a perfect example of this!

# VBS 2021: FAMILY STYLE by Erika Hanna, VBS Coordinator

This year's VBS was very 2021: Creative. Unique. And FUN with the Knights of North Castle!

We began planning for VBS back in early spring. Without knowing what the summer would look like, we brainstormed where our focus needed to be. We decided we would concentrate on safety and simplicity. Safety wise, we wanted to be appealing to families no matter where they were at on their comfort level of gatherings. This sparked our idea to move the event outdoors and family style. It was our first time with this approach, and God provided a perfect, sunny (but not too hot) summer day!

From the simplicity standpoint, we knew people were planning for a busier summer than last. We wanted everyone to feel like this could fit into their summer, which sparked us to plan a one-day event on a Saturday morning. This was a first for West Hills VBS, and we were happy to have a lot of positive feedback on this from families and VBS leaders!

Families arrived by 9:00 and were entertained by our very own puppeteer and his sidekick, introducing the theme of a quest for the King's Armor (Hint: See Ephesians 6:10). A musical group lead songs from the curriculum's soundtrack which got the crowd up and moving. After, the families traveled in search of pieces of armor as they traveled from tent to tent. At each tent, they were told an interactive Bible story and played related games. We were happy to have adult and youth leaders use their gifts to tell three important Bible stories and lead games that reinforced the lesson. Others helped welcome, facilitate, and kept things running smoothly throughout the morning and at lunch. The morning ended at lunch time when about 60 participants and 40 leaders met together on the lawn for a picnic lunch, enjoying the stories from the morning's adventure, and knowing the quest for the King's Armor will continue as they continue to open the King's Book!



# INTERVARSITY – WEST HILLS YOUNG ADULT FRIDAY NIGHT FUN

by Jessica Scheopner, Director of Family Ministries



West Hills Church mission partner, **InterVarsity**, and the **West Hills Family Ministries** are teaming up this summer for three evenings of Friday Night Fun at West Hills Church. We had our first gathering on June 25 with a dozen young adults meeting on the upper East parking lot to share refreshments, games, and conversation. We played Nine Square in the Air (a very fun and forgiving game for all ages!), cornhole, and ladderball. The weather was beautiful, the food was delicious, and the chance to meet and talk with one another was terrific. Thanks to Dan and Deb O'Reilly and Terry and Joanne Topolski for bringing and serving the wonderful refreshments!

If you'd like a chance to get to know some of our young adults from West Hills and InterVarsity in a casual and natural way over food, board games and yard games, **YOU ARE INVITED** to join the fun for our gatherings in July and August.

**July 23, 6:30-8:30 Upper East Parking Lot**

**August 13, 6:30-8:30 Upper East Parking Lot**

If you'd like to help with the refreshments or another part of hosting this group of young people, please contact Joanne Topolski (jotopol2001@yahoo.com and include InterVarsity Fun in the subject line) or the church office for more information.

If you have a young adult in your life, please invite them to jump in on one of these upcoming evenings - it's a welcoming, low-key, high fun, diverse group!

# ACTIVELY AND JOYFULLY ENGAGED by Kathy Padilla

On a warm, windy Saturday afternoon at the beginning of June, several of our ministry teams worked together to host a **block party for the Westgate neighborhood**. It was amazing! We had free hot dogs, chips, cookies and sodas. There were lawn games, a photo booth, a bicycle tune-up station and music. And, what is better on a hot summer afternoon than a water slide?

I had my eye on a couple of little girls and their dad. They heard the music and came over to check it out. When they saw the water slide, they went down it a couple of times in their shorts and t-shirts. Then, they quietly left. "I guess they could only stay a few minutes," I thought to myself. But soon, they were back in their swimsuits and flip-flops, carrying towels! They were ready for a good time. When they were finally worn out from sliding, they stopped by the food tent, picked up their food to go and left smiling and calling out their thanks.

I also had my eye on our wonderful volunteers as they joyfully set up tents and chairs, hung up signs, greeted our guests and dropped off donations of pet food and baby formula for our mission partners at Heartland Hope Mission. It was so good to be together, working to serve others. We have missed doing things like that during the long months of pandemic isolation. Although we didn't have a big crowd, this event reminded us of how we like to be as a church family. As our Mission Statement reads, we are "On a journey with the living Christ, connecting with God, others and the world." It felt, in a word, very *normal*. And it gave us a vision for hosting our neighbors more often as we seek to love our neighborhood.



In March, our Session voted to join the PC/USA initiative to identify ourselves as a **Matthew 25 church**. One of the three focuses is: **Building congregational vitality** by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world. If you read Matthew 25 from the Gospel, or read anything about the PC/USA project, you will probably realize that we really have been a Matthew 25 congregation for a very long time. Adopting these focuses will give us access to some helpful resources and make it easier for visitors to understand who we are. So often, we are "actively and joyfully engaged" with our community and the world. And, it deepens our faith. I am praying that we will think of more ways to reach out in love to God, one another and the world as we move into the second half of 2021. And, maybe have another water slide!





We are having a great time volunteering at Heartland Hope Mission. We now have fourteen volunteers who work the third Wednesday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. We sort and hang clothes in the Clothes Closet. But, we also do lots of visiting and clowning around. Come and join us. You can fill your heart with the joy of being a servant in Christ's mission and you can also laugh 'til you cry. Call Peg Shirley if you are interested, 402-980-2650.



## WHAT IS MISSION? by Gloria Zinn

The Mission statement West Hills Church developed in 2017 is: **“On a journey with the living Christ; connecting with God, others and the world.”** In order to clarify what the word Mission means to those who attend West Hills Church, a recent survey was conducted, and the response was not only overwhelming and immediate, but also a variety of opinions. West Hills Church supports, both financially and often physically, seventeen Mission Partners, both locally and internationally. These local partners include **Abide Ministry, Heartland Hope Mission, International Friendship Center, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, North Omaha Good News Bears, Presbyterian Church USA, Young Life, Youth for Christ, Westgate School and Community, and Christian Heritage Foster Care.** There are two International Partners in Ecuador: **For His Children** and **Rev. Rafael Yuquilema.** Our International partner in Haiti is with **The 410 Bridge,** and in Cameroon we partner with **Christian Women of Vision.** We also are Mission Partners with **The Outreach Foundation, an Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.** The final two Mission Partners are with **Scott and Elmarie Parker serving in the Middle East with Presbyterian Church USA** and **The Navigators with Joseph R., a local and International organization.**

A few of the following respondents to the inquiry on mission requested anonymity, but their opinions are still of significant value. **Julie Zimmerman** said when she thinks of Mission she thinks of the church “and me specifically as part of the church, being the hands and feet of Jesus. For me I think about giving back at all levels. Being a servant, as Jesus was, for people in all areas of my life. For example, cleaning my 89 year old mother’s house, and cooking for her is a way I serve in my family. Giving food care packages to the homeless in Omaha is a way I serve our community. My job at OPS where I serve families in many ways is another mission field for me by serving the Omaha community. I also work at the Boys Town Hotline, where I answer crisis calls from all over the country (and occasionally other countries) and is a way I serve our nation. For international service I generally give to our mission partners through the church. So for me



being a Mission Church means serving as Jesus did, in all arenas. I believe our church does this in many ways.”

**Another member** said to her a mission church “is one who reaches out where there is a need. It doesn’t necessarily always mean just outreach to other countries if there is a big need right in one’s own community and/or within the USA. It means helping others with emotional and/or physical comfort: emergency funds, food, shelter, counseling, transportation, yard care in the summer and snow removal in the winter months, as well as sharing Christian values and a message to those who are hurting. I believe actions are as important as conversation. I also think West Hills has done an excellent mission outreach for many years.”

**Beth Nodes** shared that when she thinks of mission she thinks of “outward focus. Not necessarily overseas but serving others.”

**A long-time member of West Hills,** who chose to remain anonymous shared that the main reason she and her husband decided to make West Hills their church “was because of its mission emphasis in following Christ’s command to make disciples. Reaching out to others with love and care locally, nationally and internationally, and supporting those who do, are key factors to a mission church.”

**Maralee Gifford** said that “following Christ’s command to “Love Our Neighbor” every church should be encouraging their congregants to adopt a spirit of caring and giving of ourselves to others. This may involve connecting with organizations or other churches that need physical or monetary help in order for them to care for others in need. It should definitely include encouraging each of us

## WHAT IS MISSION?, continued

to step outside our “comfort zone” and care about the feelings and needs of those with whom we may not always agree or understand.”

**Another long-time member** shared “I have always thought of mission as any community involvement whether it is in Omaha or Haiti, and/or the “good works” of the church. I also believe it would be defined as whatever we have in our church Mission Statement. I believe what we do at Westgate Assisted Living, Westgate School, and picking up the Westgate ladies for church is all part of mission.”

To **Karen Lofgren-Anderson** “mission is part of mission partners. West Hills has many mission partners that we team with by volunteering our time, talent, and treasure. Most importantly, it is first and foremost building relationships with our mission partners so that we understand in which way(s) we can best serve them. Pray for them. Love on them. Be Jesus’ hands and feet.” Another member shared “West Hills is a wonderful Mission Church. They help with the youth, homebound, adults, etc. We send our people to many different places in the world to serve. In Senior Living there are residents here who have no family in Omaha. To call them, bring them food, make sure they get out of their rooms, share Jesus with them, love them up, etc., is a personal mission. Let our light shine wherever God has us.”

**Bill and Barb Spiecker** shared that a Mission Church is one “where a congregation supports funding to organizations that help those in real need, either locally or in other countries. This can be done physically and/or financially. The goal for the congregation is to be really involved with each organization that needs help to reach those they serve through prayer, finances, physical and mental help so that it becomes clear that God is there for them.” Barb recalled from an earlier church they attended that “the church gave half their annual budget to mission.” Barb said that “half of the pledged amounts went to mission and the other half went to church salaries and upkeep. Now that’s a mission church!”

**Karen Jarvis** recalled growing up in the Southwest where the Catholic priests were sent to convert the Native Americans, which made her think of “mission church.” She went on to share “in the context of contemporary churches, I think it

means that they do good works in the community or the world. I still generally think of mission anything (i.e. missionary, mission school, etc.) as an attempt to convert people rather than a genuine desire to just be helpful or do good.”

**Karen Lofgren-Anderson** reminds us in Matthew 25:40: *“The King will reply, truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”*

---

## FAITH EXPLORERS by Heather Hipp

Faith Explorers is an all-ages small group experience connecting with God and one another in His creation. We meet after Sunday worship for a picnic lunch (playground area) and explore a theme with a focused passage from the Bible. Then we head out for a nature walk, exploring one of the local trails. These last few weeks have been so enjoyable being among friends in God’s beautiful area creation. You still have time to join us July 11, 18 & 25 as we explore together!



---

# ON A JOURNEY

by Mary Jirak, Deacon of Groups



I love summer vacations! I love getting the road maps out and deciding which way our travels will take us! Maybe we'll go somewhere we've never been before and where we'll have new experiences and adventures. Or maybe we'll return to that special place we've been time and time again with all its cherished traditions and memories. Especially meaningful are the journeys that have us spending time and reconnecting with family and friends.

At West Hills Church we are on a journey. A journey with God, with each other, and with the bigger world. And to me, this journey is made more meaningful because we are traveling it together; building relationships along the way, teaching and learning from one another, reaching out and caring for each other, praying for one another, and just having fun together!

Your Groups deacons are anxiously anticipating potential journeys coming to West Hills this fall. We have our maps out and we are studying which routes could help us connect more deeply with each other and help us grow in our faith. We have some great resources available and several strong possibilities for study. We may even plan a road trip or two alongside Spiritual Formation! (And we are always available to assist you and your small group in any way we can.)

In the meantime, we hope you'll take part in the many adventures that await you at West Hills this summer. It is *so good* to be able to be back together in person for worship and ministry! Let's continue this journey together!

---

# BIBLE QUIZ

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

1. Which of these men was the son of Abraham?  
A. David B. Ishmael C. Jacob D. Aaron
2. \*Which prophet was fed two meals by an angel?  
A. Joel B. Amos C. Elijah D. Samuel
3. True or False? The Ten Commandments had writing on both sides of the tablets.
4. What man was the father of two of his grandchildren?  
A. Abraham B. Solomon C. David D. Lot
5. Who was the first apostle to be martyred?  
A. James B. Andrew C. Thomas D. Bartholomew
6. Which disciple was the first chosen by Jesus?  
A. John B. James C. Simon Peter D. Andrew
7. \*Who was the last king of Israel?  
A. Hosea B. Solomon C. Josiah D. Ahab
8. Whose name did God change to Israel?  
A. Esau B. Jacob C. Isaac D. Joseph
9. Where in the Bible does it tell the need to give traveling preachers hospitality?  
A. Philippians B. 3 John C. 1 Corinthians D. 2 Thessalonians
10. Who physically led Lot and his family out of Sodom before God destroyed it?  
A. Abraham B. Lot's brother C. Melchizedek D. Two angels
11. When Peter addressed the crowd during the Pentecost, who was the first Old Testament prophet that he quoted?  
A. Joel B. Daniel C. Amos D. Elijah
12. \*What priest trained Moses how to administer justice among the Hebrews?  
A. Aaron B. Melchizedek C. Jethro D. Eleazer

*\*Taken from Bible Trivia by Stephen Lang  
(answers on the back page)*

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

## JUNE *Session notes*

### Pork Piccata with Sautéed Grape Tomatoes



1 lemon  
¼ cup dry seasoned breadcrumbs  
4 (4 oz) center cut pork chops trimmed of fat  
2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons capers, rinsed  
2/3 cup water  
1 pint grape tomatoes  
chopped parsley, optional  
Orzo or rice, optional

Zest lemon and reserve. Cut away excess white pith from lemon and cut into thin slices; seed and halve slices. Spread breadcrumbs on waxed paper; coat chops with breadcrumbs, pressing crumbs firmly into pork.

Heat 1 tablespoon each of oil and butter in large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add pork chops; cook 3 minutes per side, or until golden on outside and barely pink in thickest part. Transfer to a platter. To drippings in skillet, add water and capers and boil 1 minute until liquid is reduced by half. Add lemon slices. Off heat, swirl in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter until melted. Spoon mixture over chops. Cover and keep warm.

Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a medium skillet over high heat. Add tomatoes. Cook 2 minutes, tossing frequently until skins start to split and tomatoes soften. Add to platter. Sprinkle with parsley and serve with orzo or rice if desired.

- Replacing the sanctuary AC unit is on schedule. Currently removing the old unit.

#### Session Approved:

- Allowing people who are fully vaccinated to attend without wearing a mask and to encourage those who are not vaccinated to wear a mask.
- Establishing the two sections of pews on the north side of the sanctuary for people who prefer wearing masks and to be socially distanced.
- Discontinuing registration for worship.
- New Friendship/Prayer Request cards which ushers will hand to worshipers as they enter the sanctuary. One side of the card would be for attendance information, the other side for prayer requests. Worshipers would fill out the card and put completed cards in the collection boxes at the back of the sanctuary.
- Adult events would follow current guidelines. Children/youth/and family events would initiate a "You Pick 2" policy for their events, with event leadership determining which of the two risk reduction measures would be in place for their event.
- Opening all entrances and all restrooms beginning June 20, 2021, if possible.
- The allocation of up to \$7,500 of unbudgeted funds in addition to budgeted funds for asphalt patching and striping of the west and east parking lots, membrane roof patching by White Castle, and interior repair of the membrane roof leak.
- Allow for a communion service to be held during the Family Camp on Sunday, August 1, 2021.

To contact Session, send an email to:  
[clerkofsession@whcomaha.org](mailto:clerkofsession@whcomaha.org)

## MOVIE SUGGESTION



Dove.org announces a 2021 Dove Friendly 90 minute DVD entitled, "I Believe".

The DVD tells the story of 9 year old Brian who has a supernatural encounter with God that sends him on an adventurous quest "to find out more about what Christians believe."

Brian is an intelligent boy growing up in a non-Christian home. However, as he completes a school paper about the Pilgrims, he learns of their faith. Although Brian's parents discourage him, he wants to learn more.

Brian passionately believes in the Word of God, SO he prays for a veteran who is an amputee, and sends a woman home to pray for her blind baby.

Brian's family faces severe tests and trials when a news reporter mocks him regarding his faith. Later Brian is kidnapped by the "mob" which leads to a great miracle for both Brian and his family.

This is a film which focuses on faith and makes you take a stand for God's Word.

Dove.org states, "it is pleased to award our Faith-Friendly Seal for all ages to this inspiring movie."

This movie is NOT intended for very young children BUT it does prove that childlike faith brings about great results.

The cast includes: Matt Lindquist as Brian's father, Wilford Brimley as the pastor of a local church, Jeremy London, as the wounded Marine, and Rowen Smythe as Brian.

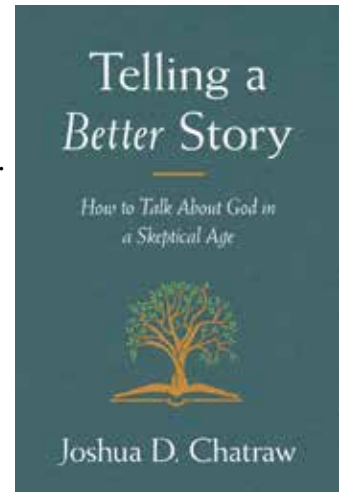
suggested by Debbie Chadwick

## BOOK SUGGESTION

### "Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age" by Joshua D. Chatraw

Apologetics: a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity. —Merriam Webster Dictionary

"Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age" by Joshua D. Chatraw, is a Christianity Today 2021 Book Award Winner: Apologetics and Evangelism.



According to the book, published by Zondervan Reflective:

"The practice of offering reasons for the Christian faith, or apologetics, strikes many unbelievers today as offensive....while Christians...often view apologetics as unsophisticated.

In "Telling a Better Story" the author presents a new and better way to do apologetics, an inside out approach that is...respectful of unbelievers, all the while focused on Jesus."

The book offers chapters on cultural understanding, dealing with difficult issues and presenting Jesus in a holistic, contextual manner.

This book shows effective apologetics for experienced apologists and those new to sharing their faith.

suggested by Debbie Chadwick

## SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

compiled by Maralee Gifford

### The Bible and the Immune System

God, in His infinite wisdom, realized that this human physical body He created would come in contact with “bad guys” while on its earthly journey such as germs, viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites. In order to protect His human creation from these “bad guys,” God built into the physical body something to protect it: the immune system.

Our immune system is comprised of a unique grouping of cells, designed by God, and given the task of identifying and destroying these foreign invaders (“bad guys”) before they can do significant harm to the body. Disease-causing organisms such as those listed above are detected by the immune system, tagged for destruction, and then annihilated by these hungry immune system cells.

Interestingly, the Bible instructs that male babies are to be circumcised on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12). Medical science has now discovered that this is the day that the coagulating factor in the blood, called prothrombin, is the highest. It reaches its peak on the eighth day, then drops. Medical science has also discovered that this is when the human body’s immune system is at its peak protecting the male baby from infection.



Comfort, R 2001 *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible Is Supernatural in Origin*, Bridge-Logos Publishers

## COLLECTING SCHOOL SUPPLIES



School will be starting again soon and our Mission Partners need our help.

**Heartland Hope Mission** is needing *backpacks, binders, water bottles and notebooks*. Their deadline for donations is July 26th.

Our friends at **Westgate Elementary School** also have a long list of supplies that we can help provide. West Hills families have always been so generous in providing help for our Westgate families and hopefully we can continue that support.

We will collect supplies in the red bins at the west and north entrances until August 8. A full list of needed supplies will be in Thursday Thoughts.

**SAVE  
THE DATE!**

**ALL CHURCH  
PICNIC**

**LAKE ZORINSKY**

**Friday, Sept. 24**

**4 - 8 P.M.**



3015 S 82 Avenue  
Omaha, Nebraska 68124  
402-391-8788  
whcomaha.org

---

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



---

**JULY**

2-Bud Nelson  
Noreen Johnson  
Linda Schuchmann  
Nancy Anderson  
3-Alisha Sauer  
Allison Kopperud  
Caitlin O'Hare  
4-Jon Hoeven  
Gavin Wohlgemuth  
7-Greg Schuchmann  
Tim Weller  
8-Ginger Travaille  
Jennifer Wohlgemuth

9-Alex Jansen  
Kara Lenart  
Phil Oftelie  
Mike Overby  
10-Jim Thomas  
11-Jenn Julich  
14-Karen Jarvis  
Andy Hamer  
15-Krista Pittack  
Jim Isaac  
Dave Turner  
16-Barb Westcott  
Grace Bailey

John Good Jr.  
17-Julie Wollen  
20-Terry Gadwood  
21-Caroline Hamer  
Heather Hipp  
22-Maggie Petersen  
23-Michaella Dunn  
Janet Laughlin  
25-Zayne Dozier  
27-Joe Robb  
Paul Springsted  
28-Brian Nodes  
Bob Sleyster

Sarah Weller  
29-Sunny Gill  
30-Jeanette Capps  
Chris Moats  
Jonathan Scheopner  
Virginia Kurtz

**AUGUST**

1-Patti Brownlee  
2-Hal Capps  
3-Steve Reese

*The complete list of August birthdays will be in the August newsletter.*