

THE WINDOW

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

January 2023

“SPEAK” by William Scheopner, Elder of Worship and Music



Whew. Sometimes January can feel like a welcome respite from the busyness of the Christmas season. No more Christmas errands to run. No more Christmas parties to attend. No more travel for a little while.

All those things are good, but it can also feel overwhelming at the moment. And sometimes, during the busyness of the season, we can begin to allow those things to cloud our understanding of what the season of Advent means for us in the church calendar. This advent, working closely with staff and volunteers to plan the Advent worship, I had a unique experience with Advent, one that I'd never had before. In years past, I always thought of Advent as simply the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Sure, they were special and different from other services during the year, but they were still just four free-standing Sundays leading to Christmas Eve.

This year, Advent was different. In my time alone with Jesus, in my time working alongside others to plan the services, in my worship during the week and on Sunday mornings, I came to understand that Advent isn't four individual Sundays, but an interconnected series of worship experiences, helping to prepare our hearts for the glory of Christmas. Each week, Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy took on a new meaning for me as I came to understand them as a matched set, not just four themes.

As I reflect on Advent 2022 and look ahead to what's to come in 2023, I've been struck by the similarities between Advent and Lent. Each of these seasons of the church calendar is a dedicated time to prepare for the coming celebration. Each season represents a longing hope answered in the person of Jesus. Each season represents that ever-present voice of God, speaking in big and small ways, through flawed people. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, the Church will begin to communally prepare our hearts for the sorrow of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and the celebration of Easter Sunday. These forty days – still two months away – will be dedicated time for each of us to reflect. This year, I'll be more aware as I make connections between Advent and Lent, and I hope you will be, too.

I invite you to join me in this time between Advent and Lent in seeking God's voice in preparation for the Lenten season. In the lyrics of Jon Guerra in the song "Speak,"

To the voice that brings the dead to life

To the voice that brought breath to mine

To the voice of heaven's heart, that bids the dark depart and the darkness listens

I'm here to listen

This is my prayer for 2023, with Advent done and Lent yet to come.



*West Hills' women
and their guests...*

Tuesday, Jan. 31
6:30 - 8 pm
Fellowship Hall

Table Topic: Prayer - Kathy Padilla sharing

For many of us, January is a time of year when we reaffirm past commitments and make new commitments. As you consider your 2023 priorities, you are warmly invited to join in Table Talk. This is a new program for West Hills women and their friends with a purpose to draw women closer to God and one another. So far, God's presence and blessing have been felt at each gathering.

Table Talk begins at 6:30 p.m. and always concludes by 8 p.m. Each gathering is a standalone session, so it's fine to attend one or all of the upcoming monthly opportunities. After enjoying some fellowship and a simple dessert, one of our West Hills friends shares some "Food for Thought" on a relevant topic and then a Table Host leads a small group discussion on that subject.

- Tuesday, January 31 – Topic: Prayer, Kathy Padilla sharing
- Tuesday, February 28 – Topic: TBD, Deena Candler sharing
- Tuesday, March 28 – Topic: Friendship, Theresa Hamer sharing
- Tuesday, April 25 – TBD

Attending a Table Talk is one way you can spiritually refresh yourself for what God has in store for you in 2023. You don't need to sign up. A seat at the table will be waiting for you, and we hope you will come!



Sunday, Jan. 29 | Meal @ 6 pm | Meeting @ 6:45 pm

Spiritual Correspondence

by Jana Prescott

"But in keeping with His promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells." (2 Peter 3:13)

Even with winter weather coming slowly but surely, we can joyfully look forward to God's promises. We can look past the weather's promises and look forward to God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth waiting as a glorious place to welcome us: a place that will be filled with everything we need, everything He has made for us! Mountains, valleys, forests, streams... When we get to heaven, we will live with righteousness as our next-door neighbor, helping us to lead others Home with Christ!



"When God Doesn't Fix It"

Wednesday Evening Women's Study

Wednesday, January 18th at 6:30 PM (a new time) we will start a new Women's Spiritual Formation Class called,

"When God Doesn't Fix It" by Laura Story. This five week series will examine the unexpected twist and turns of life and how it can strengthen our relationship with God. To learn more about this and other spiritual formation and discipleship opportunities, please visit whcomaha.org/groups.



January 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. Here are notable activities this month in the life of our church, seeking to connect us to God, others, and the world.

Sundays:

- Crosswalk Kids and Youth check-in begins at 8:50 a.m. in the lower level welcome area.
- Spiritual Formation & Discipleship Class at 9 a.m. in the Chapel on "Generosity - How God's Radical Grace Makes Us Givers" (until February 19)
- Worship @ 10 a.m. is livestreamed and in-person. Following worship, join us for fellowship in Geneva Lounge. For those not attending in-person, we welcome you to watch the service by livestream at: whcomaha.org/live.

Monday Evenings - Open Play Pickleball! A rotational play from 6-8 p.m. Come between 6-7 p.m. to the east entrance. Invite your friends!

Tuesday Mornings - Men's Bible Study meets at 7:00 a.m. in the large conference room #182 in-person. The group studies the scripture passage for the upcoming Sunday sermon.

Wednesday Mornings - Women's Bible study at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel. This group is studying the book of Romans in a DVD format.

Wednesday Evenings:

- Beginning January 18, all women are invited to a new book study on "When God Doesn't Fix It" by Laura Story at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel.
- Men's Bible Study at 7 p.m. in large conference room #182.

Thursday Mornings - Men and women are invited to a Bible Study at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel. This group is studying the Life of the Apostle Paul.

January 15 - Special Session meeting at 11:45 a.m. to approve 2023 budget.

January 17 - Session meets at 6 p.m.

January 19 - Sloppy Joe Ministry Drop Off at the church. Come between 10-4 to the north circle drive and drop your cooked sloppy joe seasoned meat and hamburger buns in the bins. Make as much as you'd like. The food will be taken to the Stephen Center to be enjoyed by many!

January 26 - Men's Night Out at Clancy's on West Center Road & 168 St. Come by any time after 5:30 p.m. for fellowship.

January 29 - Annual Congregational "Super Supper" Meeting. Everyone is invited to a soup/chili meal in Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m. and annual meeting at 6:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

January 31 - Table Talk at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. A time for women to enjoy fellowship and a simple dessert as one of our West Hills friends shares thoughts on a relevant topic and then a Table Host leads a small group discussion on that subject.

WHAT IS STEPHEN MINISTRY?

by Cathy Voshell

Stephen Ministers are members of West Hills Church who receive 50 hours of specialized training to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support to people in our congregation and community who are facing a crisis or who are going through tough times.

Stephen Ministers are known as the “*After People*”. Stephen Ministers are there: *After* the phone call you hoped you’d never get; *after* the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life; *after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you’ve held at bay come crashing in on you; *after* the doctor says, “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing more we can do”; *after* the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, “Welcome to your new home”; *after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away, and the house suddenly feels empty; *after* the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away; *after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible; *after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck; *after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out; *after* a pandemic strikes and you feel overwhelmed.

Stephen Ministers are the “*After People*”. They are ready to come along side you, or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives, and provide comfort and support for as long after as needed.

All of the care that you, or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives, receive is confidential, free, and very helpful. To learn more about receiving care please contact a Stephen Leader: Cathy V., 402-301-9434; Laura M., 402-490-0974; Judy N., 402-639-0467; or Dan O., 402-983-4926.

Book Suggestion

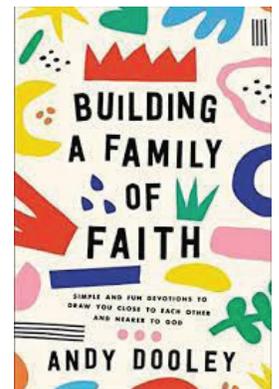
by Debbie Chadwick

According to Christianbook.com, author Andy Dooley has developed a new and vibrant way to “restore the value of family time that is centered around God’s Word” while making it family fun.

This family devotional book will help you introduce devotions to children of all age groups.

When you read this devotional, you will be assisted in:

- 1) Preparing family discussions that surround powerful biblical stories with guided questions regarding God’s Word.
- 2) Beginning family physical activities to get everyone moving around and having fun together.
- 3) Learning to pray together as a family, focusing on your family’s prayer life.



Author Andy Dooley has led young people and their families for over eighteen years via sports, fitness, and ministry.

He is a pastor and the author of “Walk in Faith: 5 Minute Devotions for Teen Guys”. He lives with his wife and four children in Seattle, Washington.

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

by Gloria Zinn



Dr. Jeremiah tells the following story:

A man is walking down the street when he falls into a hole. Hearing his screams for help a minister walks by and throws down a prayer; a physician walks by and throws down a prescription; a friend walks by and jumps into the hole. "Are you stupid?" the man asks his friend. "Now we're both stuck in this hole!" The friend answers, "Yea, but I've been down here before and I know the way out." That is a real friend.

We all go through rough and challenging times, and it is great to have a friend around to share those times with you. Job's friends quietly sat with him for many days, not saying a word. However, after several days of silence, Job's friends blamed him for his situation, berated him, and started giving him advice! When Job tells his friends they are not helping his situation, they continue to give him advice.

We've all been guilty of wanting to "fix" our friend's problems: "if only they would listen and do what we say!!!" But, unless you are asked, giving unsolicited advice instead of comfort can be like pouring salt into an open wound...it stings. The most valuable gift you can give a friend is the comfort and support they need at a critical time. We sometimes let our pride get in the way and offer what we believe to be sound advice and that we are the solution to their problems... how wonderful of us.

You will recall how God dealt with Job's friends: He told them to "shut up"! Good advice. Henri Nouwen has the best definition of a caring friend: "When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is the one who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, has chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares." It is the friend who sends a card of encouragement with a handwritten note without relying on what is written from the card manufacturer, the friend who calls first and then visits the person who has been in a long-term care facility, or the friend dropping off a homemade dinner and dessert to the one who has been homebound for some time.

God's intention of friendship is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13 reminds us that out of "faith, hope, and love... the greatest of these is love." Jesus is the perfect example to follow if we are not sure about how to love someone in true, unselfish friendship. The Bible has provided us with a wide variety of stories on friendships including Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, and Martha, Mary, Lazarus and Jesus. We can take our friendships for granted, but it is crucial to let these friends know how valuable they are in our life. Take a minute today and send a friend a note, or even a text, that reflects your true feelings for this special person; you might even include a Bible verse that highlights friendship (Proverbs 17:17, Proverbs 27:17, John 15:13, Ecclesiastes 4:10)

Become the kind of friend you would want for yourself. That guideline will help you become the best friend you can be.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW YOUR FAITH IN 2023

Sunday Mornings @ 9:00 a.m.

Join us for a DVD study of "Generosity - How God's Radical Grace Makes Us Givers" by Timothy Keller. If you have never experienced a Timothy Keller study, this one is a must. God is calling all of us to experience this journey. According to the Bible, generosity is so much more than just being generous with your money. The source of generosity that is truly radical is a gospel-transformed heart that has received the costly grace of God.

Tuesday Mornings @ 7:00 a.m.

Men's Bible study on the **scripture passage of the upcoming Sunday sermon**. This group meets in-person in the lower level conference room, room #182. This is an ongoing Bible study and all men are welcome to attend. Have questions? Contact the church office at 402-391-8788.

Wednesday Mornings @ 9:30 a.m.

Women's Bible study on the book of **Romans**. All women are welcome to join in on this study weekly in the Chapel. Contact Jane for more information at jaloek@cox.net or #402-415-8474

Wednesday Evenings @ 6:30 p.m.

All West Hill ladies and their guests are invited to take part in a very relevant and meaningful five-week video/book format study beginning January 18 at 6:30 pm in the Chapel. The study is "**When God Doesn't Fix It**" by Laura Story. Leann Schaffer will be leading this study. We hope you will join her and others who have been gathering at this time for many years. Questions? Contact Leann at LS@qualityfirstconst.com.

Wednesday Evenings @ 7:00 p.m.

Men's Bible Study on various books of the Bible. All men are welcome to join this weekly study located in the lower level conference room #182. Have questions? Contact the church office at 402-391-8788.

Thursday Mornings @ 9:30 a.m.

Men and women are welcome to attend this in-depth study on **The Life of the Apostle Paul**. Apart from Jesus, Paul is believed to be the central figure of New Testament Christianity. His epistles (letters) define the church's key doctrines and our understanding of how disciples should live and act. If you are interested in learning more about Paul please join us in the Chapel each Thursday morning, or any Thursday you are able to attend. All people at different places of their faith journey are welcome to attend. Contact Gloria for more information at gbennett34@cox.net



Mark your calendars
for the return of
Community Nights
on February 1!
More information to
follow soon.

COOKIES AND COCOA FUN!

If you missed **Cookies and Cocoa** on December 9, below are a few photos of the games, cookie decorating, and photo station fun that was had by children of all ages. Be sure to join us next year for more sweet fa-la-la-la time together!





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



JANUARY

1-Nancy Chesire
4-Laura Meyers
6-Rick Westcott
13-Steve Burgess
Les Peterson
14-Grant Thomas
19-Olivia Willie
24-Trink Traudt
25-Linda Fouts

27-Rorric Barnes
30-Boyd Dingman
Jill Nelson
Trent Zimmerman
31-Mike Bridgman
Priscilla Powell

FEBRUARY

2-Linda Lavelly
2-Sheryl Overby

6-Steve Dostal
7-Becky Anders
11-Terry Bloes
Ranee Yetts
17-Bridget Backer
18-Sherry Dickey
Wilma Hoeven

The complete list of February birthdays will be in the February newsletter.
