

THE WINDOW

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

March 2022

A SEASON TO FOLLOW by Andy Hamer, Pastor

At many points in his ministry Jesus invites people to, “follow me”. In first century Judaism, this was the language of education. A rabbi would offer select people the opportunity to learn his interpretations of the Old Testament. More than that, the students would travel or live with the Rabbi in order to understand how he lived out his faith convictions. These students were learning to live their faith; “Follow me,” was an invitation to discipleship. In our time, Jesus might have said, “You’ve been admitted to my school. Come with me, and learn what I have to teach. Let me show you how to live it.”

Our current social media term, “follow”, has some echoes of discipleship. Of course, we don’t commit our lives to someone we “follow” on social media, and there are many reasons to follow someone on social media: friendship, admiration, animosity. Yet, we must acknowledge that the people and institutions we follow affect us, and in some cases, the effects are frequent and significant.

Whom do we follow?

In recent decades lifestyle shifts have made us increasingly plugged-in, tuned-out, overworked, and under-fulfilled. With all the other influences (and “influencers”) bombarding us, it can be challenging to hear the voice of our true Rabbi. If I take an honest look at my own life, I can see this competition for my focus. It’s not that I need to abstain from TV, the internet, or from hanging out with people who haven’t met Jesus. It’s just that I need to regularly touch base with the one I claim guides my values and actions, my hopes and plans. If I want to actually follow Jesus in any kind of real way, I need connection that is frequent and significant.

Whom do I follow?

We might also take this question another way. On the one hand we consider our choices and priorities. On the other hand, we consider the identity of those who influence us. To draw another example from social media, we have discovered

that people don’t always accurately represent themselves online – they aren’t always their “real” selves. This sometimes leads media consumers into misinformation, or to believe that their own lives are less perfect, less worthy. Do we hold similar misconceptions about who Jesus is?

Do we know the One we’re following?

Let’s start with the basics; what about Jesus’ profile picture. A quick Google image search reveals a shocking variety of ideas of what Jesus looks like. This points toward a couple of facts: 1. We don’t know exactly what Jesus looks like, and 2. Most cultures seem to picture Jesus looking a lot like themselves. Okay, looks aren’t everything, so what was Jesus really like? The Gospels describe a fairly complex individual. Even in the last few days before Jesus’ crucifixion we see him challenging the leaders of his nation and then weeping at the death of friend. He approaches Jerusalem “gently” riding on donkey and then later angrily flips over the tables of the Temple money changers. He allows a woman to anoint his feet with perfume and her own hair, and then later humbly washes all of his own disciples’ feet. And that’s just scratching the surface – Jesus himself tells us that he is God’s Son, the bread of life, the Vine, the Good Shepherd, and our friend. Beyond that, have we explored all the dynamics revealed in his teaching, his purpose, and his relationships?

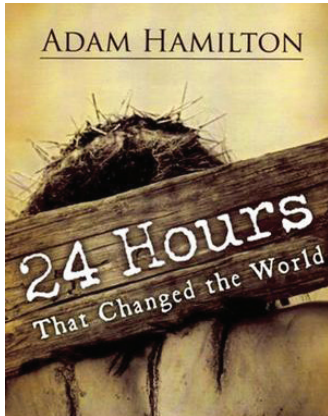
Whom do we follow?

The season of Lent is a great time to be asking these questions. In ancient times, the weeks before Easter were a common time for people to prepare for baptism. For those who had already been baptized, this season was a time to reflect on Jesus’ sacrifice and also on their own commitment to follow Jesus. Could we not all use this? To aid us in this reflection, each Sunday in Lent we’ll consider the, “I am” statements that Jesus makes in John’s Gospel. This Lent I hope you’ll join me in taking a step back to honestly consider whose disciples we’re becoming.

LENTEN DISCIPLESHIP CLASS ON SUNDAY MORNINGS!

SPIRITUAL CORRESPONDENCE

by Jana Prescott



You're invited to a Lenten study on the book "24 Hours That Changed the World" by Adam Hamilton. Join the discussion and examination of the last 24 hours of Jesus' life as we journey through the Lenten season.

The book states, "No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this book, Hamilton will help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion."

This discussion will be facilitated by Karen Jarvis, at 9:00 a.m. in the chapel beginning Sunday, March 6.



I really feel like the Lord told me to share this with all of you. A hymn from our January 9th worship service: "Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God," by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend.

Verse One

**Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see,
Give me the passion for Your purity;
Holy Spirit breathe new life in me.**

I do my best to sing along on the various songs we can join in on most Sundays, and verse 1 of this song spoke right to my heart. The Holy Spirit was telling me loud and clear to do my best to get from Christ the faith I know He has given me, the faith I cannot see; the passion that is leading all of us to the purity He has given us, which is the breath of life in all our hearts. The verse that spoke to me most was verse 1 above. When He starts by telling me, I am whole by following His Call, that word 'whole' has many meanings. To me, it's not referring to my body; it is referring to my life with the Holy Spirit. What does this song do in your heart?

This song has more verses, which you can find either by searching the internet or by contacting Kevin Gibson (kevin@whcomaha.org), and he will gladly send them to you.



Spring Forward
Sunday, March 13

March 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 in March - Livestreaming and in-person worship service @ 10 a.m. Following the service, 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

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

- * Crosswalk Kids meeting in-person and in the lower level
- * Youth 406 JourneyGroups meeting in-person room #307
- * Confirmation students meeting in-person room #406
- * "24 Hours That Changed The World" weekly Lenten study in the chapel

Tuesday Mornings - Men's Bible Study meets at 7:00 a.m. in the chapel in-person and online via Zoom. The group studies the scripture passage for the upcoming Sunday sermon.

Wednesday Mornings - Women's book study at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. This study is on the book "Holding On When You Want To Let Go" by Sheila Walsh

Wednesday Evenings - Women's Small Group meets at 6:00 p.m. in the chapel. This group is studying "The Storm Inside" by Shelia Walsh.

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

Thursday Mornings - This group is Co-Ed! Men and women are invited to join this Bible study at 9:30 a.m. in the chapel. The group uses the Serendipity Bible study method and they are going through the book of Exodus.

March 5 - Youth Neon Night at 6:00 p.m.

March 6 - Mission Connection: Elmarie and Scott Parker presentation on Zoom in the chapel following worship

March 10 - Worship Matters Small Group meets at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

March 13 - Spring Forward! Daylight Saving Time begins

March 17 - Sloppy Joe Ministry Drop Off at the church. Come between 10-4 to the north circle drive and drop your cooked sloppy joe meat and buns in the bins. The food will be taken to the Stephen Center to be enjoyed by many!

March 25 - InterVarsity Fourth Friday Fun at 6:00 p.m.



Lent began on Ash Wednesday (March 2 this year), it is a perfect “excuse” to make a space for your kids to think about God. Lent is a season set aside for considering who God is, who we are, and why we need him. If we are honest with ourselves, the time is marked by repentance and humility. It is a time to consider the cycle of living, dying, and rising as a new creation. It’s heavy.

So why is this a good thing to invite kids into?

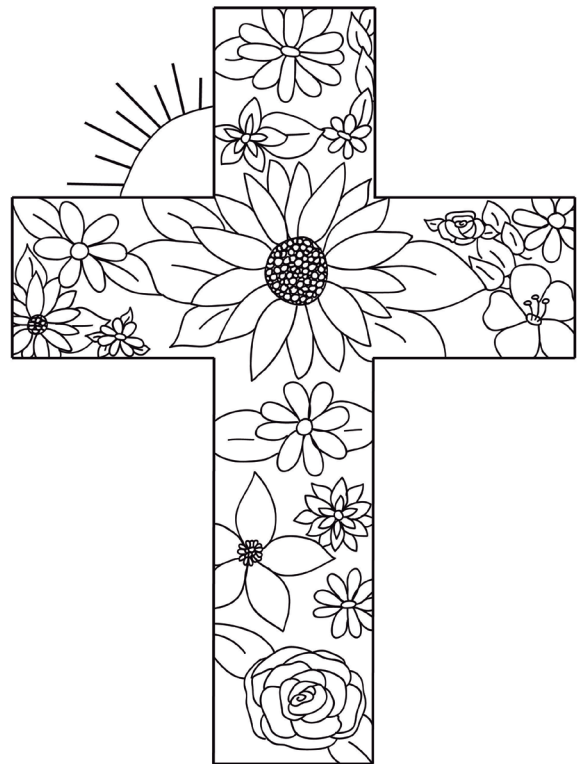
- Children and teens are spiritual beings, and like adults they have a yearning to connect with God at the exact stage they are at now. It won't be the same way next year - for any of us!
- They are already familiar with or learning about the life/death/rise again cycle, and it is on display in nature during the winter/spring that wraps around the time of Lent.
- Kids can read or have the Bible read to them; we can encourage this together.
- They get to practice saying I'm sorry, and experience forgiveness in the safety of the home and the safety of their church family.
- Kids learn best alongside us - how to look outside of themselves, how to pray for and give to others to show God's love. There are many natural chances to practice this together.

What does it look like to lean into Lent in a busy household?

It looks like whatever you can adapt to work for your family! And it doesn't look perfect - our Lenten practices are a reflection of us, and that imperfection is the whole reason we need Lent, Holy Week, and Easter!

- Maybe you take these 40 days to add in some scripture, music and prayer during breakfast or on the drive to school.
- Maybe you have already pinned some ideas. If so, please jump onto the [West Hills parents' FB group](#) and share away!
- Maybe you have a Lenten practice you can let them watch and invite them to participate in at their level. Kids can read scripture, pray, fast, and give in ways that are age-appropriate.

There is no wrong way to do it, but there are small, simple ways you can invite kids into a spiritual journey. Lent is a natural time to make space for people of all ages to ask faith questions and look for answers together in this season.



The name of the **LORD** is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Proverbs 18:10

HOLY WEEK PREVIEW



Be sure to pick up your devotional guide on Sunday, April 3 to journey through Holy Week.



An all-ages walk-through Holy Week experience available April 10 - 15.



On Thursday, April 14, gather for a meal at 5:30 p.m. and then join us for worship at 7:00 p.m.



*A celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Sunday, April 17 at 10 a.m. in-person and by livestream. **He Has Risen, Hallelujah!***

THE WORK OF GOD PERSEVERES

by Michael Backer, Mission Team Member

Despite the great impact of the COVID pandemic, God's work continues to be accomplished all across the world. In Ecuador, West Hills supports two ministries: For His Children (FHC) and Pastor Rafael Yuquilema.

FHC lives out the following mission:

"Believing that all children are created in God's image, For His Children exists as a Christ-centered ministry to homeless children, providing care in a loving and supportive environment, striving to unite them with their biological or adoptive family, and advocating on their behalf to others."

2021 was a crazy year for FHC. In just last year alone, over 44,895 meals were served, 29,200 diapers were changed, and 17,885 bottles were made. Through support from churches all over, they were able to provide personalized care to 51 children at FHC. In addition, three children were reunified with their biological families, and one child met his forever family through adoption. Government lockdowns in 2020 created significant delays in processes for reunification and adoption, which resulted in fewer children joining their biological or adoptive families in 2021. FHC is focused on ensuring every child needing care knows they are created in God's image and deeply loved. By means of trauma-informed caregiving, giving each child a short-term family through FHC while awaiting reunification or adoption, and being a forever family for young adults who have passed the legal age of adoption, each child receives the highest quality care. Above all, their goal is to help the children and staff grow in their knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ.

There is much to look forward to in 2022 for FHC. At the campus in Latacunga, everyone is thrilled about the opening of a new therapy pool (will open soon!). This will allow children to swim and receive therapy onsite, thanks to many generous donors. Also, at Latacunga, they've been able to expand their young adult care by having an occupational caregiver come and assess each young adult's capabilities. This is done with the goal of improving confidence and independence. Finally, with COVID restrictions lifting, everyone is excited about this summer when children from both Quito and Latacunga will be able to play together and create new memories!

THE WORK OF GOD PERSEVERES, continued

In the mountains of central Ecuador, God is at work through the ministry of Pastor Rafael. He and his family focus on ministering to the Quichua youth and families in central Ecuador by organizing and presenting workshops and conferences, carrying out individual family visits, as well as doing couples counseling. I received the following from him in January. The letter was graciously translated by Melinda Vaughn, a mighty servant of God who is the co-founder of FHC and served as co-director for over 25 years.

We are well here - except for our oldest daughter, Elena, who was surprised and robbed by two men in the city of Ambato. Thanks to God, she is ok, but they did steal her bag with all her ID and other papers in it. She is now working on the time-consuming task of replacing everything. Our youngest daughter, Janneth, has finished her studies in the university. We are waiting for news of the date of her graduation ceremony. Things are up in the air with this new wave of Omicron. Perhaps it will be held in February. To you all, we wish you a very happy New Year 2022

Thank you very much for your interest in our ministry here in Ecuador and your email to us, Michael, sent by way of Melinda.

We continue in most of our usual activities - we have added an additional Bible study class just for women, so we now have two. We were hoping to reopen classes and church services with everyone attending physically, but with Omicron, we have not been able to do that. We had started to visit worship centers (churches and churches meeting in homes) in Quito and Guayaquil, as we used to do, but we have had to suspend these visits.

For some years now, we have wanted to build facilities for ministry in the town of Calpi, near the larger city of Riobamba. Again, because of the pandemic, we have suspended our planning. Contributions to our ministry from the local churches have been reduced, as well as financial support for me as pastor. However, we will continue with our online Bible studies for men as well as with the women. The main idea is to lift up the Christ-centered church! We have been holding Bible studies now for three years with the men of various churches and two years ministering to the women's groups. We know

ministering to the women's groups. We know God is mightily at work! We continue to give conferences focused on strengthening the family as well as counseling services. We have others collaborating with us in these online activities. We are thankful for this technology that permits us to continue working for His glory. Our thanks and appreciation overflow for your prayers and the support you send us. We hope that some day in the future we can make that trip to the U.S. as we had started to plan a while back. God knows when the timing is right for that! Once again, thank you very much, dear Sisters and Brothers at West Hills Church. May the Lord bless you all. We will be in touch soon.

*Rafael Yuquilema and family
Together with you, serving our Lord*

COVID shut down so much for such a long time. But it failed to shut down the work of the kingdom of God. **Thanks be to God for that!**

SUPPORT EMERGENCY EFFORTS IN UKRAINE



As hundreds of thousands of refugees flee the Ukraine in search of safety, the Presbytery Church (U.S.A.)'s Disaster Relief program is accepting donations to assist in this emergency. You can make a donation by calling 1-800-872-3283 or by going online to: www.pcusa.org/ukraine22.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU SESSIONS

With prepared questions guiding the conversation in small groups, these **Getting To Know You** sessions held February 20 and 27, were a great success! Folks expressed they enjoyed this time together, meeting face to face, and talking with people they don't normally talk to. It was an opportunity to get to know others on another level. The feedback received was that these sessions need to happen more often, so keep your eye out for future opportunities to follow our current priority of, Go Build Relationships (GBR)!



GETTING TO KNOW . . . WEST HILLS' COUPLES by Gloria Zinn

It has been several years since The Window ran a story on some of the married couples in our church. Since one of the goals this year at West Hills is to build more relationships with one another, we thought the timing would coincide with the Spiritual Formation and Discipleship Committee's offering of gatherings before church to "get to know one another better," which were held in the Chapel on Sunday mornings in February. The following married couples agreed to share some insight into their marriage and their relationship over the years.

Tom and Lisa Backer met over 29 years ago after a church service they both attended in South Africa. They got to know one another better while attending an adult Bible Study group, and they married four years later. Tom was first impressed with Lisa's memory and ability to make and keep long-lasting commitments to people, while Lisa felt Tom's sense of direction added to his capacity to integrate his knowledge with creativity. According to Lisa and Tom, attending church every week and reading a daily devotional and praying together are all strong foundations for their marriage and their two children.



One of the challenges they identified in their marriage was bridging any differences that may have surfaced over the years and persevering through life's many trials. Looking back, they felt less time could have been spent not trying to change one another and more time trying to understand each other. Something that many couples who have been married for many, many years have expressed! Having and raising children together "has been a great blessing," they said.

They both have "adopted" 1 Corinthians 13 as a very important scripture passage in their life and shared that the church has always been part of their marriage "through connecting with wonderful couples and individuals who we came to know through small groups and later as treasured friends." Their advice to couples who are planning to marry is to "marry in a church with members of your congregation present to witness your vows and commit to you and your life as a married couple." Good advice from such a mature and loving couple.

Mark and Julie Zimmerman met when Julie was helping a friend move into an apartment, and Mark "came to our aid" by helping move the furniture.



That was in 1991, and this April, the couple will celebrate their 30th year of marriage. Julie has always been impressed with the fact that "Mark can fix anything, from a toaster to our minivan, as well as the ability to always make me laugh; he is truly a very kind person who would do anything for our family and me. I feel very lucky to have him in my life." According to Mark, Julie "has amazing inner strength and loyalty. We all rely on her."

Church has been an important part of their marriage. After visiting a number of churches, they "landed at West Hills, finding it an amazing church and one where our four children have grown up." They both have been involved with volunteer activities at West Hills and, besides attending weekly church services, also attend classes, which they shared contributed to their Christian growth.

Looking back, Julie and Mark can recall some very challenging times when their four children were under the age of 4! "Thank goodness we were together to support one another," Julie said. "Doing life together was key. Leaning on the other person makes things easier." Even though those times were very busy and trying, "we wouldn't trade them for anything." They are currently witnessing their four adult children with great love and admiration as they move toward their future, and Julie and Mark will become "empty nesters."

The Zimmermans have a favorite shared Bible verse: John 20:21, which is a reminder to them both "that the Father is sending us which relates to our family and the community." Their advice to those who are planning to marry is to love and pray for one another and give grace to each other," especially during those hard times." Julie

GETTING TO KNOW . . . WEST HILLS' COUPLES continued

and Mark find places that inspire them and visit those places together, "we love the mountains," they shared. We are fortunate at West Hills to have such faithful members. Both Mark and Julie are very active members of the Spiritual Formation and Discipleship Committee.

Terry and Marti Bloes found true love through clowning!

For 13 years before they started dating, they developed a strong friendship with their involvement in clowning.



As business partners, their clowning skills were taught to other clowns throughout the country, and with the rewards they both earned in competing with skits and makeup at the regional, national, and international levels, they were each inducted into the Midwest Clown Hall of Fame, all while living 700 miles apart! Terry lived in Nebraska, and Marti lived in Michigan, so for five years, their dating relationship was long-distance until Marti moved to Nebraska.

Terry and Marti not only enjoy entertaining audiences with their clowning skits, but they also enjoy bicycling, brewing beer, flying stunt kites, traveling, and working on home projects together. They shared that their faith in God "is the thread that binds every aspect of our marriage."

Worshipping at West Hills, they said, helped them as individuals, as well as a couple, to stay true to the faith that they each brought into their marriage. They shared that their Bible verse, Ephesians 4:32, "speaks to us in all situations." Terry and Marti have built such a strong marriage and friendship over the



years. The couple celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary last month. Marti is our new Elder serving for Intergenerational Impact.

Al Anderson and Karen Lofgren-Anderson met on a dating site and were married at West Hills Church in 2011. They shared many similar interests: "God, family, music, dancing, the simple things in life," they said, which brought them together. Karen said that Al "is a very talented musician, being able to play any instrument with strings and plays all kinds of music except rap." Karen loves sewing, beginning when she was in elementary school and 4-H. It is her "creative release."

Al and Karen shared that they solve problems in their marriage by talking over issues "calmly and determining a plan of action. We each had gone through enough life before meeting that we pretty much go with the flow. It always works out in the end. God is in control." Al and Karen believe that married couples need a shared belief "in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Dating is also important, "to keep the flame alive, even though married, the pursuit is still on."

They also felt that two-way communication/dialogue on a daily basis was very important, as well as an understanding that couples "are putting 100% into the marriage as each of them has strengths the other does not have. Do little things for each other out of love." Al and Karen shared that "together we have balance in life and we hold each other accountable to be the best person we can be. We are one another's sounding board/reality check." Their favorite Bible verse is Ephesians 6:10-20, which certainly emphasizes their walk with God in their marriage. Karen is currently serving as Elder for Caregiving.

Matt and Connie Huck were listening to music when they met. Matt was with a group of work friends at a bar and noticed Connie, who had gone with a friend to listen to the band. He asked her to dance, and the rest is history.

Connie was impressed that Matt always planned their dates and even had a plan for his future, while Matt found someone who was an excellent



GETTING TO KNOW . . . WEST HILLS' COUPLES continued

listener and conversationalist. Connie was involved with West Hills Church at the time and invited Matt to join her. They were married at West Hills Church over 30 years ago, and eventually, Matt became more involved as a leader in the church, and throughout the years has found an increase in his own walk of faith. Their children have also been involved at West Hills. Connie shared that Matt's strengths have not only been his strong leadership abilities, but also the plans he has made for their family. Connie said she "also feels his strength in the way he takes care of me when I need to be taken care of." Matt shared that Connie is a great mother and "handles whatever I throw at her, letting me do and try different things."

They enjoy being in a small group and often pray together, something they advise newlyweds to do, as well as to love one another "as God loved you." Over the years, the Hucks have shared that they still have fun together after thirty years of marriage "in all that we do." Matt is currently serving as Elder for Stewardship, and Connie is serving as one of two Deacons for Homebound Ministry.

Jason and Jessica Scheopner met when they were freshmen at University of Nebraska at Kearney. They have been married for 27 years and have five children. The couple shared that



"God has woven us together in ways that were better than ours since we didn't ask Him if we should marry, and through the years, we can tell it has all been through grace."

Jessica said that Jason "is a quiet and cheerful morning person and a wonderful gift. His integrity and his notice of and care for the overlooked and vulnerable is one of his strengths." Through the years, Jason learned that Jessica loves to be outdoors, which "has led to some really fun adventures. I also admire Jessica's compassionate heart, deep faith, and tenacity, which has helped

us walk through some difficult times as a couple and a family."

They attended church together in college and when they joined West Hills "found a faith community which has always been important in our marriage and something we have continued to share with our children." They shared that due to their children's variety of needs, they have found it difficult "as well as challenging" to find time to be alone together. However, through the years, they have learned "to communicate clearly our expectations and shared approaches to solving problems."

They believe that West Hills has given them the opportunity to grow in their faith "as well as learn from other church members who are walking out their own faith." Jessica and Jason shared that at West Hills, "we have been cared for, mentored and deeply influenced by wise, skilled, thoughtful, loving people who are following Jesus." Their favorite Bible verse is Romans 8:28. Their advice to couples planning to marry is to "seek God first, serve one another, and seek help during the rough times from a trusted couple, pastor, or counselor." They related what Jessica's grandfather always said to them every time they parted: "Be good to one another." Jessica is currently the Director of Spiritual Formation and Family Ministries for West Hills Church.

SAVE THE DATE

**ABIDE Impact Trip
JULY 8 - 10 OMAHA**
An all-ages experience

**MORE INFORMATION
TO FOLLOW!**

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

1. **Who were Jochebed and Amram?** A. two small towns near Bethlehem B. the parents of Moses C. two important rivers near Jerusalem D. the parents of Samson
2. **What did God tell the Israelites to get rid of before Passover?** A. unclean animals B. any idols C. salt D. yeast
3. **What was the name of Jacob's oldest son?** A. Benjamin B. Simeon C. Reuben D. Joseph
4. **Where was the first Passover held?** A. Egypt B. Canaan C. Jerusalem D. Jericho
5. **Who is credited with writing most of the books in the New Testament?** A. Paul B. John C. Luke D. Matthew
6. **Which judge was also a farmer of grain?** A. Gideon B. Othniel C. Deborah D. Joel
7. **Who was the first man to plant a vineyard?** A. Adam B. Cain C. Enoch D. Noah
8. **What king made a ruling that involved cutting a baby in half?** A. David B. Pharaoh C. Solomon D. Saul
9. **Jesus was crucified at Golgotha. What does that name mean in Hebrew?** A. Place of death B. Place of bones C. Place of sin D. Place of a skull
10. **Elisha told a man to wash in a river 7 times to cure him of what?** A. his demons B. his inability to walk C. his blindness D. his leprosy
11. **Who was Tychicus?** A. The name of Paul's father B. A companion of Paul's C. An important king in the Old Testament D. The father of Saul
12. **Who led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Canaan)?** A. Moses B. Aaron C. Joshua D. Rahab

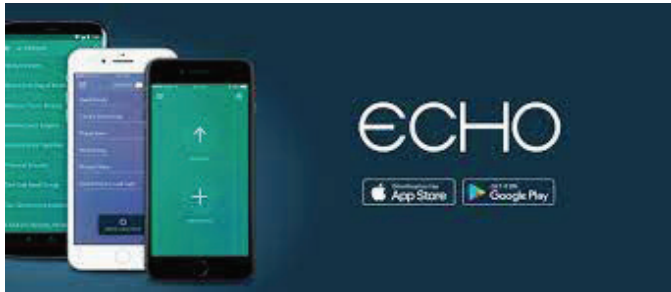
(answers on the back page)

- Session approved the motion to create a team to focus on the use of our facility for both internal and external ministry and for potential revenue-generating opportunities. The team will include the elders from Building and Grounds, Finance, and Intergenerational Impact, along with representation from Mission, Children and Youth, Stewardship, Staff, and individuals from the congregation.
- In a cost-cutting move, we're looking at mowing the church lawn with our own equipment and with a combination of staff and members.
- The elders are reading and discussing the book *Disunity in Christ* by Christena Cleveland.
- Per the Session vote at the August 17, 2021, Meeting, Staff and Ministry Teams are making COVID response decisions as needed. The Mask Requirement will likely shift (in many Ministry Areas) to 'optional' when Omaha's mask mandate expires.

To contact the Session, send an email to:
clerkofsession@whcomaha.org



APP SUGGESTION



The Echo Prayer App is a helpful tool for "Prayer Warriors" of all ages.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18)

Our prayer lives exist to enable us to get closer to God, thereby strengthening our relationship with Him. **The Four Main Purposes of Prayer**, according to "The Gleaner" February 27, 2022, are:

1. Prayer is an act of communication with God "God calls us to pray in order to develop and deepen relationships with Him."
2. Prayer is an act that shows our dependence on God. "It is an admission that we need God's help to live a fruitful and productive life."
3. Prayer is an act of making my requests known to God. "God wants us to ask Him for what we want and need from Him."
4. Prayer is an act of cooperation with God. "Prayer is God's way of letting us partner with Him to accomplish His purposes."

The free Echo app gives you the ability to:

1. Quickly write down a prayer request as it comes to you.
2. Create prayer lists that you can refer to during your daily prayer activity.
3. Be reminded to pray by setting up push notifications or emails to remind you to pray for individuals or even groups of prayers.
4. You can also categorize your prayers with tags, delete old prayers, and mark your answered prayers so that you can remember to thank Him as well.

This free app exists for YOUR prayer life. Why not use it??

For more information about this app, go to echoprayer.com.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

This month's recipe is from Laurayne Hall. It looks super easy and is gluten-free.

Pumpkin Cinnamon Streusel Cake (Gluten-Free)



Ingredients:

- 1 Krusteaz Gluten Free Cinnamon Swirl Crumb Cake
- ½ of 15 oz can of Libby's Pure Pumpkin (replaces oil)
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup water

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Grease/Spray pan - 8 x 8. (Can use 9 x 13 and double the recipe.)

Mix eggs, water, and pumpkin together until well mixed.

Add cake mix and stir until no dry spots.

Pour half of cake mixture in pan.

Cover with half of the included crumb mix.

Layer rest of cake mixture on top and spread evenly over the first layer.

Add remaining crumb mix on top until covered.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar if desired.

Bake 40-50 minutes and test middle with a knife until it comes out clean.

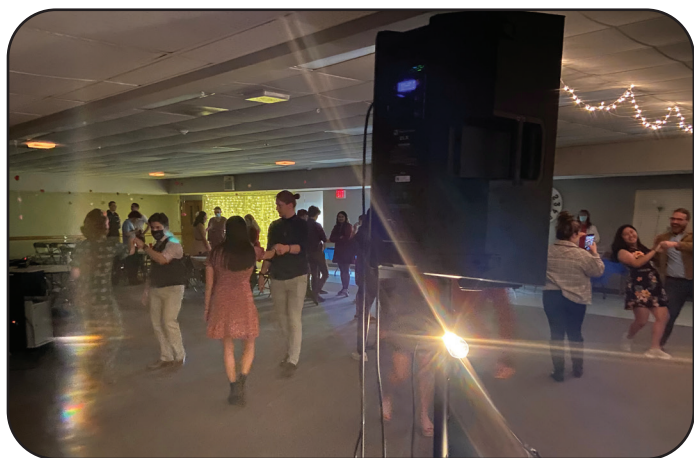
Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.

FOURTH FRIDAYS WITH INTERVARSITY by Joanne Topolski

One of the ways we are participating in mission with InterVarsity is by hosting them for a function on the fourth Friday of the month. Our first event this year was on Friday, February 18th for a Valentines Dance. (Yes I know that was the 3rd Friday...but hooray for being flexible!!)

Between 40-50 Creighton students learned swing dancing in fellowship hall with snacks and drinks provided by West Hills volunteers. (A big THANK YOU to everyone who provided!) They started off a little awkward, but within about 20 minutes they were rock stepping quite well!

InterVarsity is a vibrant campus ministry that establishes and advances witnessing communities of students and faculty. Each month they will plan an event held at West Hills to share with the students they minister to on campus. Along with the use of our facility, we also provide snacks/drinks, and volunteers to serve and clean up. There may also be opportunities to join in their activities—depending on what they are planning each month. If you are interested in helping us partner with InterVarsity, reaching college students at a Fourth Friday event, contact Joanne at jotopol2001@yahoo.com or call the church office at 402-391-8788.



Swing dance practice



The "rock step"!



WH Hostess Team: Trink Traudt & Joanne Topolski

BOOK SUGGESTION

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

by Maralee Gifford

Genesis and the Universe



Science expresses the universe in five terms: time, space, matter, power, and motion. Genesis 1: 1 & 2 perfectly revealed such truths to the Hebrews in 1450 B. C.: "In the beginning (*time*) God created (*power*) the heaven (*space*) and the earth (*matter*) ... And the Spirit of God moved (*motion*) upon the face of the waters." The first thing God tells man is that He controls all aspects of the universe.

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



It's not too early to be thinking about Vacation Bible School! Mark your calendar now for June 10 - 12!



In the book "The Sacred Overlap: Learning to Live Faithfully in the Space Between" by J. R. Briggs, the author uses Jesus' life work to give

the reader an understanding of both evangelism and discipleship in a time, like ours, where polarization exists. Today polarization is prominent in our society and too often lends itself to an "us vs. them" mentality. "The Sacred Overlap" examines life in complex biblical times, just like our world today, while adhering to biblical integrity.

According to the publisher, in this book the author:

- Shares creative ways to engage in God's mission of ministering to those intrigued by Jesus but turned off by the church.
- Explores what it means to be joyful amidst heart-wrenching pain and earthly suffering.
- Models what it means to maintain a posture of convicted civility which emphasizes both grace and truth.

In "The Sacred Overlap," we find that every day Christians are required to live in two separate worlds. One world is heaven and the other earth. Briggs points out that we as Christians must live naturally with both the sacred and the ordinary. In doing this, we become a witness and a disciple.

According to Amazon, J.R. Briggs possesses four passions: following Jesus, equipping and investing in hungry kingdom leaders, growing fruit on other people's trees, and creating good kingdom mischief. In short, his calling is to partner with people who are called to follow Jesus while they lead others.

Briggs has served in pastoral roles in mega-churches for over 15 years. In 2011, he started [Kairos Partnerships](#), an organization committed to serving hungry kingdom leaders through leadership coaching, consulting, speaking, teaching, equipping, and writing.

He lives with his wife, Megan, of 19 years, and his two sons, Carter and Bennett, in Lansdale, PA.

ABIDE'S 2021 HIGHLIGHTS, provided by Joanne Topolski

Thank you West Hills for your ongoing support of Abide and their mission to the inner city by building safer neighborhoods, stronger families and emerging leaders!

BETTER TOGETHER IMPACT 2021

REVITALIZING THE INNER CITY BY BUILDING SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS, STRONGER FAMILIES, AND EMERGING LEADERS



People Impacted through the generosity and dedication of donors and volunteers.

19,622



COMMUNITY



CAMPUS



COLLAB

72

Lighthouses in North Omaha. In 2021 we added 17 new Lighthouses to our community.

47,381

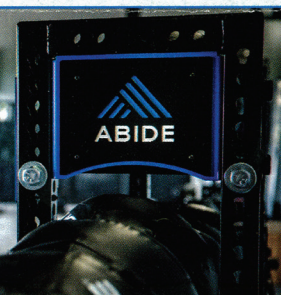
Hours of service from volunteers which equals **\$1.1 million in kind.**

50

Churches and Businesses engaged with our mission.

7

Projects completed this year including our Fitness Center and a new parking lot.



10,659

Hot Meals, Frozen Food, and Pantry Boxes Distributed.

125,336

Diapers given to families in need.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



MARCH

1-Dwight Rickard
5-Jan Richardson
6-Cammy Bridgman
7-Rick Wollen
8-Jane Loeck
John Good Sr.
9-Johnny Dunn
10-Tim Briggs
11-Alex Picavet
Sophia Luethge
12-Cathy Burgess

Kathy Padilla
Jeff DeHaven
13-Kathy Kerkhove
14-Ada O'Hare
15-Peggy Thomas
19-Chris Neil
20-Kevin Gibson
21-JT Pittack
Verlan Rumbaugh
22-Steve Brownlee
Kathy Myers
25-Kevin Wagaman

27-Joyce Blatny
28-Matt Johnson
Liam Madigan
David Naderi
Amelia Olson
30-Sherrie DeHaven
Nathan Turner

APRIL

1-Matthew Bridgman
Ron Wells
3-Brody Anderson

Connie Huck
4-Doug Thomas
5-Tom Pittack
Tim Schaffer
8-Dave Richardson
10-Laurayne Hall
Dylan Gill

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