

# THE WINDOW

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

May 2022

## **INEXORABLE SPRING** by Andy Hamer, Pastor

The last few weeks have proven that spring has finally arrived. This change fits hand-in-glove with the season of Easter. As we consider anew the meaning of Jesus' resurrection, we see that drama reflected all around us as the creation blooms back into life. The prophet Isaiah picks up on this theme when he weaves together the hopes of God's people and the way the desert reanimates during the rainy season.

**The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.  
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.**

Isaiah 35:1-2

God is in the business of re-creating. God's aim is to mold us (and the entire universe) back into the rightness we were made for. Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate act of re-creation – defanging death itself in order to open the blossom of eternal life. Just as the greening grass and the smell of flowers sing of spring's unstoppable advance, so Jesus' resurrection is like a trumpet fanfare inaugurating God's restoration of all things.

Of course, this has always been true. We have believed in God's renewing work throughout the last 2 years. Yet now, in this season, more of us seem to actually live as though we believe it. In the last few months, as I watch people interact and hear their stories, I'm reminded of the brilliant little surprises of spring. Even in our church during this season of renewal, we've seen the return of more bible studies, shared meals, men's Game Day, and so many other connection opportunities. We're seeing more faces – and more of those faces! We've been surprised by the simple joys of talking to each other in the halls, of working side by side in the garden, of watching toddlers learn to walk and teenagers affirming their faith. And it's not just about what's returning; this spring season has given rise to new groups, new leadership, new ideas, and new

energy. And, with summer on the horizon, we can look ahead to VBS, to an all-church church mission trip, and to an all-church retreat!

At this point, I can imagine someone saying to me, "Andy, this is Nebraska, and it's barely the middle of May. We could still have some very chilly days." Granted, spring comes in fits and starts. In the same way, each of us takes a slightly different path toward our own renewal. For some of us, grief has been heavy in these last months. We've lost friends, family, and coworkers in Christ. These fresh griefs, added to all the turmoil of recent years, can make it hard to see spring's clear signs.

Our Scriptures provide us with another helpful image. God's people are often pictured as a grapevine and God as the farmer. In many of these passages we find the farmer pruning the vine in order to make it healthier. But grief is a different type of pruning. The loss of loved ones is more comparable to a vine that's been pruned by a spring storm. That type of damage and loss grieves a farmer. Yet with time and care (often in the same season), a farmer may still guide the vine into fruitfulness. Those who are grieving in this time do not grieve alone. The God who cares for us, grieves with us – even as he gradually guides us toward healing.

Spring doesn't arrive everywhere at once. No matter where we are in this season of Easter, our God is always ready to hear and to heal, to redeem and to re-create. As we consider the reality of the resurrection and watch the world bloom around us, we do well to celebrate the renewal unfolding in our communities. Sure, there will always be challenges, and few spring storms may blow through. Yet each bud and blossom is like a tiny banner proclaiming that new life is here to stay – that God's unstoppable creativity will continue to work among us.

# Egyptian Theological Seminary Cairo (ETSC) Update

by Steve Burgess, Elder of Mission

What an honor it was to travel to Egypt this last February! Even though I had made many trips to the Middle East, this was my first trip to Egypt. I was especially excited to visit the theological seminary (ETSC) in Cairo. The seminary has been in existence for over 150 years and is one of West Hill's longest standing mission partners.

In visiting the Middle East, I am always struck by the incredible stories of faithfulness, witness, and love displayed by the Christians there. And I am often reminded of the words of Dr. Ken Bailey in his book "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes." In the introduction, Dr. Bailey makes the following observation:

*"Middle Eastern Christians have been called the forgotten faithful. The world knows that across the centuries there have been Jews and Muslims in the Middle East. For the most part, however, Middle Eastern Christians evaporated from Western consciousness after the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451."*

Dr. Bailey had a long standing connection with Egypt having been born there and serving as a missionary there with his wife in the 1950's and 1960's.

ETSC began in 1863 with classes held on the riverboat Ibis, which sailed up and down the Nile. In 1926, its permanent campus was established in Abbassiya near central Cairo. Today, the seminary has over 500 students (including both on-campus and on-line students). Its mission is to equip and train pastors and leaders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and various churches in Egypt, the Arab world, and Arab communities around the world. In 2003, under the leadership of the then president of the seminary, Dr. Atef Gendy, the seminary began to develop the concept of a program called the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. The basic concept of the Center was to provide a Middle Eastern perspective on the Bible and theology, rather than simply copy the curriculum of western seminaries. In this endeavor, Dr. Gendy was strongly influenced by Kenneth Bailey whom Dr. Gendy visited with in early 2003. Construction of the center began in 2004, and Bailey arrived the following year to give the inaugural lectures. Ultimately, Dr. Bailey donated his own personal library to the center.



Steve Burgess with Rev. Samir Sadak, Chair of the Synod of the Nile Council for Services & Development

When I visited the seminary in February as part of a team from The Outreach Foundation, Dr. Hani Hannah had just recently become the new president of the seminary. Hani, as he prefers to be called (vs. Dr. Hannah), is a delightful man with great energy and a great sense of service. He believes that one of the most important tasks of the seminary is to "help the Church and help students observe where God is working in the world and try to join Him, not the other way around." This approach to service and teaching can be seen throughout Egypt especially in its many social programs and new church planting. While we were in Egypt, we learned of many programs begun to help people deal with the pressures of life; there are programs to help parents deal with raising children, vocational programs to teach new skills, programs to empower women, programs for the handicapped, and the list goes on. Other evidence of this approach were all the new churches being built. I lost track of how many new churches and future church sites we visited.

Everything I encountered in Egypt spoke of a growing and vibrant community of believers. God is indeed at work in the world—especially in Egypt!



Members of The Outreach Foundation praying over the site of a new church at 10th Ramadan

## May 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 May - 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](http://whcomaha.org/live)

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

- \* Crosswalk Kids meeting in-person and in the lower level or outside weather permitting until May 22
- \* Youth 406 JourneyGroups meeting in-person room #307 until May 22
- \* "You Make Me Crazy" weekly study in the chapel until June 5

**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. resumes in-person on May 11 in the chapel for six sessions.** The group is studying Revelation - Extravagant Hope by Margaret Feinberg.

**Wednesday Evenings - 406 Youth Group meets in-person at 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday Evenings - Men's Bible Study at 7 p.m. meeting in-person and via Zoom.**

**Friday Midday - Men's Bible Study at Noon meeting in-person and via Zoom.**

**May 14 - All Church Clean Up & BBQ Lunch 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**May 15 - Local Mission Partner Sunday at 10 a.m.** Our local mission partners will be present to share with us their work in our community. Special guest, Joey McKernan, will provide us with the sermon message. Following the service, join us in the chapel for ABIDE Impact Weekend Q & A

**May 19 - 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!

**May 22 - Youth Commitment Sunday at 10 a.m. and Crossroads Connections at 6 p.m. in the sanctuary with a meal to follow.**

**May 24 - Men's Night Out at 6 p.m. Clancy's Pub, 168th & West Center Road.**

**May 29 - Memorial Sunday at 10 a.m.** is a time to commemorate those individuals that have passed away in the last year. It's a time to grieve together and also to celebrate life and resurrection!

## WHAT'S IN YOUR CONTROL?

by Cathy Voshell, Deacon for  
Stephen Ministry

The words that Pastor Andy shared in the annual report are still resounding in my mind. "2021 emphasized how little we can know and control. Here's something we do know and can control (with God's help). 1. A life-giving relationship with Jesus is central to the healing of all human brokenness. 2. Jesus' essential command—the key to remaining in connection with Him—is living in sacrificial love with others (John 15)."

Stephen ministry is a Christ-centered caring ministry where congregation members are trained and equipped as Stephen ministers to provide high quality care to hurting people within their congregation and community. Stephen ministers are caregivers who acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the cure giver.

Stephen ministers provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation.

Stephen ministers come from all walks of life, but they share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need.

After being matched with a person experiencing a life crisis, the Stephen minister meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. The caring relationship lasts as long as the need for care exists.

If you feel that the Lord is calling you to join this ministry I encourage you to contact either Laura Meyers, 402-490-0974, or me, 402-301-9434.

If you are going through a tough time right now and would benefit from a linking with a Stephen minister please contact Laura Meyers. All calls are highly confidential.

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

## SPIRITUAL CORRESPONDENCE

by Jana Prescott



Have you ever had disagreements with family members: parents, siblings, cousins? I know I have, although anymore, it seems to be much easier to solve those problems in a faster, more peaceful way. How about problems with neighbors...or people at your office? Or thinking about your neighbors, or other people in Omaha, or others that you know in Nebraska, or elsewhere in our country, or anywhere on this planet? I'm sure that many of you can think of various cities, states, countries you have been in, for many reasons: family, business, just for a good vacation, even serving in combat. But have you ever thought about that anywhere you go, you can find Christians? They may not be as you think Christians are known to be, but Christ knows all who love Him, even if we can't see it; and Christ loves everyone who loves Him.

### APRIL *Session notes*

**Session met on April 19, 2022 for their regular monthly meeting:**

- approved a motion that there would be no large group InGathering meetings in June, July & January (individual team meetings may occur as needed).
- voted to accept confirmation students Carson Stoffel and Julianne Gill into membership at West Hills Church.
- the Building and Grounds team is gathering information about repairs that are needed and the related costs.

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



## GETTING TO KNOW ... WEST HILLS' SINGLES PART TWO by Gloria Zinn

Last month The Window highlighted several single and widow/widowed members from our church who shared their "story" with us. This month is a continuation of those members.



**Pat King** and her husband Bob began attending West Hills Church at the 84th & Center Drive-In Theatre shortly after they moved into the Westgate neighborhood. Pat said she was "so anxious for the new church to open that Sunday" in 1959

that she was the first one to step into the new sanctuary (the present Chapel). Pat and Bob raised two children in Westgate, and the church "became my focal point." When I asked Pat what church activities she volunteered for she said, "Honey, you don't have enough paper to write them all down!" Pat and several other women would cook the food for funerals and other church events at their homes since the kitchen at the church was so small and they weren't able to afford all the pots and pans. They also would bring the dishes and silverware from their homes for these events. Eventually they contracted with the Boy Scouts to put on dinners, as well as charging a price for the dinners they served, and eventually made enough money to buy the cutlery needed for these many meals. Pat was also the "go to person" if someone was sick, in the hospital, needed hospice care, etc. She helped elderly members move to retirement centers or smaller homes...and was definitely "the hands and feet of Jesus." In fact, Bob once told her he should pack a suitcase for her to take to church since she was there so much! Pat grew up in Mound City, MO, where she graduated from high school. Attending church from the day she was born until she moved to Omaha was a way of life for Pat. She moved in with her sister and brother-in-law and continued working for the telephone company until she met and married Bob at Wesminister Presbyterian Church in 1947. Pat said she made many lifelong friends at West Hills, "but so many of them are no longer with us". "God," Pat shared, "has always been a stronghold in my life, the One I turn to in times of joy as well as trouble." She remembers how good friends from church were with her when her husband went into the hospital with cancer and died a very

short time later. Pat said "without a strong belief in God and the friends He had given me, I could never have made it through that very difficult time." Pat believes that everyone needs "a strong Christian role model in their life," and her mother was that person. She taught Sunday school and could always quote Bible passages. Pat shared that if you give people your total attention and honesty "they begin to trust you and will share so much with you which helps you help them through their Christian walk." Pat moved from her house in Westgate and currently lives in an apartment at Crown Point, also in Westgate. We have been so fortunate to have such a strong Christian role model at West Hills Church over the years, as many can testify if they ever met Pat. She is often found sitting next to her good friends, Peggy Wheeler and Carolyn Bonner, in the front of the church. Come say hello to this very special lady the next time you're in church!



**Karen Jarvis**, an architect, has lived in Arizona, Germany, and Omaha. When Karen, a single parent, moved to Omaha eleven years ago, with her daughter Rachel, they discovered a wealth of love and support. Almost immediately she became involved in the many volunteer opportunities and Bible classes at West Hills. Rachel also enjoyed Youth Group and the contemporary services she and her mom could share. When Rachel was diagnosed with cancer the church responded with continued prayers, as well as inquiries of her health even today. Karen has gone on a Mission Youth trip to Haiti, volunteered for Servant Sunday, Christmas caroling, trained as a Stephen Minister, participated in a Covenant group, as well as many other areas at West Hills. She is serving on the Spiritual Formation & Discipleship Committee and recently taught a Lenten study. She also participates in "an occasional game of pickleball" she said. Presently Karen is working as an architect for the Corps of Engineers. Karen's favorite Bible verse is 1 Peter 5:10. (Look it up!) She shared that she loves the Biblical references to a solid foundation and that "God is there to support us in our difficulties." Karen is such a wonderful asset to our church family with her

## GETTING TO KNOW . . . WEST HILLS' SINGLES by Gloria Zinn

bright smile, strong faith, and willingness to share her gifts in so many areas of our church.



**Debra Chadwick** moved to Council Bluffs from Creston, Iowa and when she was six years old. Westminster Presbyterian Church became the "home church" until the family moved to Omaha during her college years at UNO. The family eventually joined West Hills Church in 1985. Debra completed the Stephen Ministry Training program and "took advantage of other educational opportunities which helped me grow in my faith." She also volunteered as a Sunday School teacher, Special Buds teacher, Audiovisual team, Westgate School volunteer and a Bible Study teacher at Westgate Assisted Living. Debra also became very involved in Young Life Capernaum and Tri-Faith. She shared that her involvement in Young Life Capernaum "was by far the most rewarding volunteer work of my life. I got a different perspective on life and learned valuable life lessons. The biggest payoff is the love you get back in return, through hugs and smiles." Debra said that it is true what has been said about volunteering: "You get SO much more out of volunteer work than what you put into it." Her Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing, as well as her Master's in Adult Education gave her the needed credentials to become the Director of Education at Richard Young Hospital and Patient Education Coordinator for Methodist Health System. Debra's favorite Bible verse, which has helped her through so many health hospitalizations and while waiting for test results, is 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (Look it up!).



**Angie Arner** moved to Omaha in 1972 and through a friend found her way to West Hills Church in the mid 1980s. She became a member of the church "when the sanctuary was our current chapel and Pastor Meyer would ask us every Sunday to do the West Hills shuffle in order to make room for everyone, so we all moved closer together!" It was obvious that West Hills needed a bigger sanctuary. Angie has had a plethora of volunteer jobs at West Hills: Elder of Body Life, twice as a Caregiving Deacon, and a Caregiving Ambassador. She was on the

Pastor Nominating Committee which brought Deena Candler to West Hills. Angie has also been very active in Women's Ministry as well as the Serendipity Sisters and the Women's Leadership Team. She is the editor of the weekly SHE Mail, which "gives me the opportunity to share faithful reflections stories and more of our Christian life today." Angie shared since she did not have any family in Omaha, "West Hills is my church family, and I am so grateful to have all the love and support I receive from these godly family members." Angie has been journaling for many years, which "has always been an important part of my journey." She said the word "JOY" has become her "life word," and she asks God daily, "where are you calling me to joy today?" Angie's mentor, a teacher from elementary school through high school, was the catalyst which led her toward her college degree in Library Science. She worked in the field for 40 years, in library health care education, retiring in 2012. Her favorite Bible verse is Psalm 139 (look it up!). Angie shared that "God has continued to show me the purpose for my life and I pray, listen, and reflect on what lies ahead." Final note: if you see Angie ask her about the clown, Jelly Bean, "an alias of mine." We are so thankful Angie continues with her Godly service through SHE Mail, and that through a friend over 20 years ago she chose to make her home at West Hills Church. What a wonderful Christian role model God has given to us in Angie.



**Kathryn (Trink) Traudt** was raised by two Presbyterian Sunday School teachers and hasn't missed many Sundays in church since she was 6 weeks old. She moved to Omaha in 1984 and after "trying another Presbyterian church where no one said even as much as a hello to me," she found West Hills Church. A friend was singing in the choir that Sunday and after smiling at Trink, introduced her to a number of members after the service. Trink became very involved with West Hills through Bible Study groups, small groups, and teaching high schoolers. She also volunteered to help with VBS, became a Caregiving Ambassador, provided Homebound Communion to a number of members who are unable to come to church, and served on Session twice. You will still see her singing

## GETTING TO KNOW ...

### WEST HILLS' SINGLES continued

with the Praise Team, something she has done for years. Previously she was an usher, played the handbells, greeted church goers in the morning and ran the media. She is currently at Westgate School as a reading volunteer for 2nd Graders. She has served on the Mission Team and been active with Abide. She also went on two Mission trips, one to China and the other to Brazil. Her sister and brother-in-law have provided this single woman with two "wonderful nieces." Currently Trink is working at American National Bank where she processes car loans. Trink shared that "this fellowship at West Hills has been my mainstay in periods of loss and I have benefitted most from being involved. The more I put myself into the life of our congregation, the more I receive from it." She believes that our society is Biblically illiterate "and I'm striving to be a better Bible student." She said that as she reads both the Old and New Testaments many of her theological questions are answered as she sees God's big picture. What she doesn't understand she leaves to God. Trink finds music "instrumental" in her faith journey as it touches her heart and "hopefully the hearts of others." She doesn't have a particular Bible verse; "too many come to mind." Trink is obviously a very devout Christian who is finding her way through this Christian journey, as she moves through the challenges our world brings into our lives. We love seeing Trink in the front of the church with the wonderful Praise Team, showing the love she has for the church and God through her music and the radiance as she sings to God on Sunday mornings. How lucky we have been that Trink has found a home at West Hills.

## FAMILY FUN VBS!!



### Get ready for ACRES OF FUN!

At West Hills **HayDay VBS**, kids and their adults grow in friendship with Jesus and with one another. This VBS is filled with incredible Bible-learning experiences to see, hear, touch, and act out. Team-building games, cool Bible songs, and multi-sensory Bible adventures are just a few of the activities that help faith flow into real life. (Since everything is hands-on, you might get a little messy. Be sure everyone wears clothes and safe shoes for the fun).

You and your kids will also participate in an outreach project called Projects-With-a-Purpose, that will let our community show Jesus' love to others.

We'll wrap up our weekend of fun with a Sunday Celebration on June 12 for a celebration of Jesus' love you won't want to miss!

So mark these dates on your calendar:

**Friday, June 10 - 5:30-8:30**  
(includes dinner)

**Saturday, June 11 - 9:00-12:00**  
(doughnuts, juice, and coffee)

**Sunday, June 12 - 9:00-12:00**  
(includes lunch)

Sign up at [whcomaha.org](http://whcomaha.org) for a fun weekend of life-changing memory-makers with the kids in your life!

**Invite the kids and families you know.**

***We can't wait to see you at HayDay!***



# WHISPERS & WIGGLES: A Q&A ABOUT WELCOMING THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD INTO WORSHIP

## a Collaboration between the Worship Arts and Family Ministries Teams

For over two years, West Hills has had a single, intentionally blended worship service offered in person and online. Over the past two years, this has become increasingly powerful and precious. We have discovered some special bonds, as well as some challenges that are similar to those of a family. It makes sense: we are all adopted children of God. We are a family of siblings - older, younger, and middle - all gathered in our Father's house each Sunday morning because we love God and want to be together with our family.

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If you have been worshipping in person, you may have noticed some changes in the sanctuary during worship. We wanted to answer some FAQs, and welcome you to send any questions you have to [info@whcomaha.org](mailto:info@whcomaha.org) for our next Q&A. Your name will not be used.

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**Q: Why are more kids at worship than I remember from before?**

**A:** This is a new dynamic in our church family. Until 2020, our worship was divided into two or three worship services with the congregation split across the different times. Some children and teens didn't usually come to worship with their parents because they were in Sunday School while their parents were in worship. Young people who attended both Sunday School and worship were only ever in one of the services, so many folks in our congregation never got to experience worship with the whole spectrum of the family of God. In recent months, kids and their families have been coming for discipleship and friendship at 9:00 followed by 10:00 worship time.

**Q: Why have we added these Nooks and Tables?**



**A:** These nooks - found just under the stairs - are designed to give young children a place where they can quietly engage in age-appropriate activities while they join their church family in the gathered worship time. The nooks have child-sized seating, fidgets, and other quiet toys with seating for

adults nearby. The tables - found at the back of the angled pew sections - are prepared as a place for older children, teens, or adults who would like to see and hear the sermon while keeping their hands moving with a sermon-response prompt or related coloring sheet.

**Q: Why do we need to make these changes?**

**A:** We each worship and learn differently, but overall young people often participate better when their hands are busy doing something or when their bodies are in motion. They may look like they are tuned out, but over time, adults who worship with young people discover how much kids pick up just from being included in this family time. If you watch and listen for kids' taking part, you'll get to see some of this on Sunday mornings.

**Q: Do kids have to use these Nooks and Tables? Do parents have to sit near them?**



**A:** The Nooks and Tables and the Quiet Room adjacent to the sanctuary are a couple of choices available to parents. We want to offer a variety of spaces and ways to welcome children and parents to take part in worship according to their unique needs. If young children are in the Nook or Table area, parents will want

to be nearby so they can help if needed.

**Q: Is the nursery available for families with young children?**

**A:** During the height of COVID, we offered the nursery as a live-stream worship space for a parent to take a child if the Quiet Room was occupied or they needed more space. Thankfully, that season is behind us, and we are working hard to open a traditional staffed nursery ministry for our littlest ones. If you would like to help with this, we are seeking one paid staff person and five volunteers



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## WHISPERS & WIGGLES: A Q&A, continued

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to serve in the nursery once a month. Please email [jessica@whcomaha.org](mailto:jessica@whcomaha.org) to learn more about one of these roles.

**Q: Will my child be a distraction? / Will the kids distract me from listening or worshipping?**

**A:** This is two sides of the same coin, isn't it? Some parents are nervous about their child causing a disruption to someone else. Some adults who aren't used to being around young children may be apprehensive about their ability to concentrate with kids nearby. Some adults are figuring out how to teach their kids how to be part of the church gathered to worship God. This question comes down to what it means to be in a family, and as anyone who has ever been part of a family knows – it's not always simple and smooth. The Bible tells us how God's family should approach these kinds of questions:

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)*

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. (Colossians 3:13)*

**Practically, this means:**

Come to church ready to encounter God together on Sundays in the sanctuary – a kind of sacred family room where God lovingly welcomes all of us to come together in his presence.

Choose your seat wisely – either to be near a kid friendly space or away from it if it will be a distraction for you (or your children, if you prefer they not use it).

Be intentional to meet and talk to the people around you in the pews before or after worship. The better we know each other, the easier it is to extend extra grace when it is needed.

Try some of the ideas for worshipping together found on the Whispers, Wiggles, and Wonder pew cards.

Talk with the staff or elders for Worship Arts, Intergenerational Impact, or Family Ministries about your questions as we gather to worship with the whole church family in the Father's house.

**Q: I get it, but is this really necessary? I didn't have this when I was growing up.**

**A:** We didn't either. Kids and teens were expected to be in the pews with their parents, singing, praying, and doodling or counting the stained-glass windows or the number of times someone cleared their throat. But West Hills has always been a little ahead of the times. Some of the young adults in our congregation can remember another time in our church's history when there was a bookshelf and a rocker under the stairs where they could take a break from the pew and rock and look at pictures.

And - West Hills has a different goal than compelling people to attend church. Studies show that young people who experience a sense of belonging within a faith community continue to practice their faith when they are making their own decisions. ***The ultimate goal is for our young people to be in a life-changing relationship with Jesus, rooted and formed in the loving community of their church family where they - we all - are equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the love of Jesus with others in our daily lives. Is there anything we wouldn't do to achieve that goal?***

## CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION by Luke Burns, Youth & Young Adult Coord.

On Tuesday, April 19 two wonderful youth were confirmed into full membership at West Hills Church! It was a joy to see Carson and Julianne confirm their faith in Jesus Christ after two years of intense Bible study in confirmation class and life application experiences.

This confirmation experience has been a great collaborative effort with our fantastic confirmation mentors Greg Schuchmann, Angie Arner, Marcia O'Donovan, Marti Bloes, and Heather Hipp. These mentors have invested in their mentees by attending confirmation classes, attending their extra-curricular activities; such as ballgames, swim meets, and school plays and by praying for them often. The mentors have also invested time in getting to know their mentees' parents and creating an all-around relationship with them. Thank you, mentors!



Research shows that the more invested our congregation is in the lives of our youth, the more likely they are to feel a sense of community and desire to be part of their church family. We want our youth to be on a journey with the living Christ for as long as they live, and when we partner with them, they get to see first-hand how a Christ-centered adult lives and how God changes everything they do in life. I would like to encourage the congregation to welcome these new members with open arms (as you always do!) and a willingness to engage in getting to know them, because they are great!

We were able to joyfully celebrate our two confirmands on Sunday, April 24, with a special in-service recognition in which they received their personally engraved confirmation Bibles, which has been a tradition at West Hills for decades. The

confirmands wanted to celebrate their special day with Krispy Kreme donuts and gummy bears, so we supplied those delicious treats for the entire congregation to enjoy in the Geneva Lounge after the service.



We emphasize that confirmation at West Hills is not the end of the journey, it is the beginning. Confirmation is not something to cross off a to-do list, but a window into the way in which God's people live their lives. At West Hills Church, we have two primary approaches to confirmation. One, training in biblical literacy by deeply studying the scriptures. Two, unveiling the inner workings of the church so each aspect of ministry can be examined, understood, and appreciated. I believe these two confirmands were able to excel in both of these approaches.

Carson and Julianne, great job these past two years! We, as a church, are celebrating your decision to follow Christ and your commitment to confirm your faith for all to see. Keep going and never stop growing on your journey with Jesus!



### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

1. Who was Israel's first high priest? A. Moses  
B. Samuel C. Aaron D. Eleazar
2. Which of the 12 tribes did God say would be deemed priests? A. Dan B. Levi C. Judah  
D. Benjamin
3. Where did Jesus tell his disciples they could find a donkey and her colt that He would ride on as He entered Jerusalem? A. Jericho  
B. Hebron C. Bethphage D. Emmaus
4. Who did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of following? A. Satan B. John the Baptist  
C. Fallen Angels D. Blasphemers
5. Who was the first apostle to be killed? A. John B. Matthew C. Judas D. James
6. Who did the Roman leader in Galilee think Jesus was? A. Elijah B. John the Baptist  
C. David D. Jeremiah
7. Who did Jesus tell he was "only sent to help God's lost sheep...the people of Israel".  
A. A Gentile woman B. A Eunuch C. A Roman soldier D. A Samaritan woman
8. Which two prophets were at the Transfiguration with Jesus? A. Samuel and Jeremiah B. Elisha and Moses C. Nehemiah and Samuel D. Moses and Elijah
9. When Peter paid the Temple Tax where did he get the money? A. From his mother-in-law B. It miraculously appeared in his pocket after asking Jesus C. Inside the mouth of a fish D. From his brother
10. Who were the wicked farmers Jesus talked about in a parable? A. The unbelievers B. The religious leaders C. The pagans who lived in the area D. The blasphemers
11. Who did Jesus accuse of not knowing the Scriptures? A. His disciples B. His followers C. The women D. The religious leaders
12. \*\*What king of Judah had fourteen wives? A. Abijah B. Aaron C. Uzziah D. Saul

\*\*Ultimate Bible Trivia by Tim Parker

(answers on the back page)

At the center of many gatherings is food. We can't seem to get together without having a meal as part of the experience. I think it gives us a reason to circle round, slow down, and share life with one another. This soup recipe is sure to bring friends and family together and not only feed the body but feed the soul as well.



### Easy Creamy Ham and Broccoli Soup

#### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups small fresh broccoli florets
- 1 cup coarsely chopped ham
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

1. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium. Add onion and garlic; cook until tender. Stir in broth, broccoli, ham, and pepper.
2. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, 8 to 10 minutes or until broccoli is tender.
3. Add cream; heat through. Stir in cheese; heat until melted and smooth. Enjoy!





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**HAYDAY**  
**FAMILY FUN VBS!**  
**JUNE 10-12**  
**REGISTER AT**  
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**MAY**

1-Deena Candler  
2-Ed Leach  
TJ Travaille  
Steve Thedens  
3-Cheryl Havekost  
Haley Wohlgemuth  
4-Dan O'Reilly  
5-Lisa Backer  
Adam DeHaven  
Callie Freeman  
Kathleen Hamer

6-JoAnn Tate  
8-Silas Burns  
12-Pam Thomas  
13-Erika Hanna  
15-Anne Peterson  
18-Milla Papenfuss  
Gloria Zinn  
20-Esther Miller  
21-Theo Burns  
22-Barb Spiecker  
23-Wendi Meyer  
24-Pam Culek

25-Matt Huck  
Deb O'Reilly  
26-Joyce Vana  
Reid Zimmerman  
Spencer Zimmerman  
28-Kennedy Stoffel  
Grace Burns  
31-Jim Porter  
Henrik Hanna

**JUNE**

1-Beth Anderson

Kim Sedivy  
Ryan Turner  
2-Debbie Chadwick  
4-Rhona Yetts  
5-Everly Hanna  
7-Michael Wohlgemuth  
9-Rosemary Frandeen  
10-Warren Powell

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