

# The Window

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

March 2020

## A Bud On The Cross by Andy Hamer, Pastor

Have you ever had a teacher or mentor give you a long look? This type of look says, "I'll keep listening to you, but you are *way* out of your depth here." It's a heavy gaze that goes on a bit too long and is often followed by a few simple and life changing words. I sense that God sometimes leans into us this way. The weight of his gaze and the truth of the Spirit's words sink deep. Surprisingly, all this heaviness can be a precursor to new freedom and joy. The downward and inward path often blossoms upwards and outwards.

2000 years ago Jesus started a salvation *movement*. His work wasn't 'one and done', but a process of snatching life from what is dead. Jesus' first followers wrote about their own experiences in pursuing this journey of salvation. We too may be surprised by new roads that lay just beyond our cul-de-sac lives. Over time we develop, life pushes us into new situations, and the world around us changes. Some of the things we 'knew', and some of the ways we were, unravel in the life we live today. God loves us too much to leave us where we are.

Lent is a perfect season to explore this path of renewal. It is a cross-path; a path that goes from life, to death, and on to resurrection. We pray and reflect. We explore our own depths while holding the hand of the Father. Are there ideas or ways of being that I need to grow out of? What is no longer helpful to me? What needs to die in me so that I can live in new ways? These are heavy questions, but sometimes our God lovingly guides us towards them.

We can find similar questions waiting for us in our shared life. As our congregation seeks a path forward, we should consider this pattern of living, dying, and rising. Can we identify where our current practices live true to the Kingdom of God? Will reflection reveal that we need to shed the weight of some misconceptions? Might we discover a once rich practice that is no longer helpful to us? Where is new life shaking loose,

sprouting in unlikely places, fighting to emerge? What might God tell us about our future as we reflect deeply on our present?

During Lent I hope to make time to explore what life, death, and resurrection mean to me at this particular moment. Likewise, we have the opportunity this spring as a family of faith to think, pray, and discuss these questions. They are weighty questions, but there is something freeing in the asking. Over the last few weeks I have watched and listened to individuals and ministry teams shake off some of the cold from recent years. They seem to be relaxing their roots deeper into our faith, standing up straighter in the winds of our world, and, if you look closely, you can just see the forming buds of new growth.



### Listening Sessions

Are you interested in discussing what God is doing in our communal life? Do you have questions, ideas, concerns? Let's talk! Over the next couple of weeks, we've set up four opportunities to listen and to share as a community. I look forward to seeing you at one!

Sunday March 15th or 22nd at 8:00AM in the chapel or 11:35AM in the sanctuary.

## Growing Season by Kathy Padilla, Elder for Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

When I was a kid, my parents would make us stand with our backs pressed against a wall in the laundry room. They would take the yard stick that hung on a nail there and level it on the tops of our heads and mark with a pencil where it touched the wall. Then they would write our names and the date next to the measurement. This was our family growth chart, and I bet you had one too! Everyone was interested in how much we were growing and it seemed important to measure it and keep a record.



But then, the kids are grown. We finish our formal education and move out. We enter the working world, get our own place and maybe start a family. The old growth chart gets painted over and the focus turns to the new generation of children. A new season has begun.

We do such a wonderful job here at West Hills of tending to the spiritual development of our children. Adults of all ages are actively involved in loving and teaching our young people. It is important and necessary.

It is also important and necessary to tend to the spiritual development of all adults. Some of us have been following Jesus for a long time; some are new to the journey. And while gathering together on Sunday mornings to worship together, hear preaching from the word of God, and fellowship with and serve one another is life-giving, that hour or two we spend together "in church" is likely not enough to supply all our spiritual growth needs.

Jesus followers who are far wiser than I am have, since the days of Peter and Paul, encouraged Christians to grow in intimacy with Christ through deep study of scripture, different forms of prayer, acts of love and service toward others, and silence and solitude, among other practices.

Some in our congregation set aside time to participate in Bible Study Fellowship or Community Bible Study, or other such groups. This helps them to go deeply into the texts and see what the writers were experiencing and what message they were trying to convey. Understanding the text in this way can lead to transformation of our thinking and habits. It can change us!

Ephesians 6:18 says "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

Does this make you curious to know what kinds of prayers you might not know about? In different eras, Christians have prayed in different ways. Have you walked a labyrinth? Or read a book on prayer by someone like Richard Foster or C.S. Lewis, or even the Common Book of Prayer? As a child I learned to pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep..." but I am grateful to have matured in my prayer life through reading and practice.

We have made being in mission to the world, from our neighborhood to distant lands, a part of our everyday life together at West Hills. I will bet you can think of dozens of examples of people, no matter their age, ability or financial circumstances, who regularly love and serve our fellowship and also regularly volunteer with our mission efforts. Is there a mission field that is calling you? Is it your neighborhood, book club, co-workers or other situation where you encounter the needs of the world and could show God's love?

An important development in my life has been the practice of silence and solitude. As a busy extrovert, active in the world, I have found that drawing away to be alone with Jesus soothes my weary soul. For ten years I have scheduled regular time to be silent in a secluded space to listen for God's voice. The "unraveled" parts of me gets knitted back together in these hours of quiet contemplation.

So, what would it be like if we laid out a yearly plan for spiritual growth? Suppose we had as a goal some development in each of the four areas I mentioned above: scripture study, prayer, service/mission, and silence and solitude? This would make for a balanced "spiritual diet," wouldn't it? Take a deep dive into a book of the Bible for a month or two, then read a book about prayer and try some different ways of praying, serve for a time outside the comfort zone, and for a month or so, spend some time each day in silence. At the end of the year, we can take measure of what we have learned and how we have grown spiritually.

As the elder for Spiritual Formation and Discipleship, I am honored to work with volunteers who create opportunities for spiritual growth. We have numerous Bible studies on offer every week. There are classes for adults at 9:00 and 10:30 on Sunday mornings. Our seniors, women and men's ministries are always creating events that draw people together. We have materials and resources in our various libraries. And we are blessed in Omaha to have many beautiful, quiet spaces to find solitude. I would love to visit with you about trying some of these things. Spring will soon be here. **Let's grow!**

# March & April 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 some ways you can connect!

## CONNECTING WITH GOD

### SUNDAY MORNINGS:

Identical Worship Services @ 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Children's Crosswalk @ 8:45 a.m. for ages 4 years - 6th grade, lower level

Youth Sunday School @ 9 a.m. for 7th - 12th grade, lower level, #307

Discipleship Classes, chapel. New classes have begun for Lent; all are welcome!

Date	9 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
March 1 - April 5	The Walk by Adam Hamilton - Kathy Padilla	Jesus by Max Lucado - Jim Isaac

**Monday Co-ed Bible study @ 10:00 a.m., 3030 S 80 Street, 2nd flr.**

The God You May Not Know by Dr. David Jeremiah. All are welcome to attend this study at Westgate Assisted Living.

**Tuesday Men's Bible Study @ 6:30 a.m., large conference room (lower level)**

Study the sermon scripture for the following Sunday

**Wednesday Women's Morning Bible Study @ 9:15 a.m., chapel**

Led by Tracy Enholm and Jane Loeck. Studying Psalm 23 by Jennifer Rothschild

**Wednesday Night @ West Hills**

Now - March 18

Buffet dinner served 5:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. Cost: \$3 for 6 yrs. and older, \$1.50 for 5 yrs. and under

Women's study @ 6 p.m. - Entrusted by Beth Moore

Co-ed study @ 6:30 p.m. - Everything You Need by Dr. David Jeremiah

406 Youth @ 6:30 p.m. - Identity: Who Does God Say I Am?

Kids Connect @ 6:30 p.m. - Kids and parents 1st-5th grade experience God's love through worship, stories, crafts and games.

**Wednesday - The Confirmation Experience - March 3, 18, April 1 & 15 @ 6:30 p.m.**

**Thursday Women's Morning Bible study @ 9:30 a.m., chapel**

The study of the book of Genesis continues. Every woman welcome to join us!

**Now - April 10 - The Waiting Room - A Lenten Prayer Experience.** Open regular church hours during Lent. Located in the JAM room, lower level # 138

**March 8 - Worship and Installation Service for Andy Hamer @ 2:30 p.m.**

A light reception in Geneva Lounge will follow the service.

**April 6 - 10 - Journey to the Cross - You're invited to this** come-and-go display during Holy Week that is designed to help participants of all ages reflect on the events that led up to the death of Christ.

**April 9 - Maundy Thursday Service @ 7:00 p.m.** Fellowship meal served 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

**April 10 - Good Friday Service @ 12:00 p.m.**

**April 12 - Easter Worship Services @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.**

**April 19 - Confirmation**

## CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

**March 6 - Tee Party - A Night of Mini Golf @ 6:00 p.m.**

**March 13 - Celebrations @ 11:30 a.m.** Wear GREEN and feel a-little-bit Irish with us! The Omaha Dancing Grannies will be performing a number of tap dance routines.

**March 13 - Youth Neon Night from 6:30 - 11:30 p.m.** Neon night starts with dinner at the church followed by a neon dance party at 7:00. Wear wild and bright colored clothes and bring anything that glows in the dark! The dance will go until 8:30. After the dance, we will go into the basement and play glow in the dark games until 11:30 pm.

**March 15 - April 5 - Experience The Journey! New Member Class.**

A 4-week experience exploring West Hills' beliefs, values and mission. Sign-up at [whcomaha.org](http://whcomaha.org)

**April 4 - Women's Special Saturday @ 10 a.m.** Kim Stokely will be joining us portraying different women from the Bible.

**April 4 - Father-Daughter Dance @ 6 p.m.**

## CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD

**March 9 - Westgate Staff Conference Meal @ 3:00 p.m.** - West Hills will provide a taco bar for the teachers during parent/teacher conferences. Sign-up to provide part of the meal.

**March 19 - Christian Heritage Foster Care Group Training @ 6:00 p.m.** - Come volunteer to play with kids or come to learn the whys and hows of connected communication strategies for kids and teens. RSVP to [jessica@whcomaha.org](mailto:jessica@whcomaha.org)

**April 5 & 19 - 410 Bridge Day**

**May 5 - Servant Sunday**



### **Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus**

*A few questions to visit during the Lenten season:*

- In what ways can you become more Christ-like?
- Is there something God is calling you to give up during Lent, which would free you to focus more on Jesus?
- Is there something you could add to your life that would help you fix your gaze on Jesus?
- How can you use your gifts and talents to help someone else see Jesus during this Lenten season?



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# HOMEBOUND COMMUNION & TRANSPORTATION

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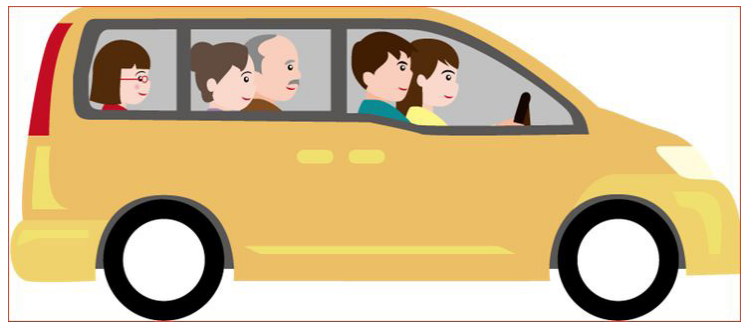
by Ted Tromler, Deacon of Practical Needs

Hi West Hills members and friends,

I'm one of the deacons here and my area of focus is Practical Needs. This is my second opportunity and honor to serve as a deacon and this current assignment has been very rewarding and a little challenging at times. According to my Internet quest for a good definition of the role of a deacon in the church, a deacon is a servant-leader who ministers to the physical needs of church members. That is a really good way to describe the main responsibility of being a deacon. As far as the Practical Needs part of the assignment, I am responsible for coordinating Home Bound Communion and transportation needs.

Home Bound Communion (HBC) has a very special place in my heart. An ordained elder or deacon is able to administer the elements of Holy Communion to members and friends of the church who are not able to attend regular services. My wife, Laressa, and I have been serving HBC off and on for over twenty years.

We had the honor of serving Ray Wistrom for around eight of those years. Ray passed away over two years ago and we still miss him and his family. Ray moved around quite a bit and we became familiar with many of the assisted living facilities around Omaha and ultimately in Fremont. It was a bit of a drive but seeing Ray was always a rewarding experience. One particular experience with Ray was really memorable. He was living in the Florence Home at the time and we arrived to share Communion with him after church. We went to one of the recreation rooms so we could all sit around a table. A gentleman in a wheelchair rolled up and asked what we were doing. I told him we were about to share Communion and asked if he would like to join us. He looked a little hesitant and then he said "I'm Jewish, does that matter?" I said he was welcome to join us if he wanted to. He looked at us and was quiet for a couple seconds and then said "Eh, what could it hurt?" He stayed and talked to us for the rest of our visit. Serving HBC is one of those things you do where you end feeling like you are getting ministered to by the people you are serving.



The second of my responsibilities is transportation. Currently we transport up to four ladies who live at Westgate Assisted Living to and from the 9:00 a.m. service each Sunday. There are four volunteers so each of us transports the ladies once (sometimes twice) a month. Just like HBC, the ladies we transport are such wonderful people and always so appreciative of us that we end up feeling like they are ministering to us.

The central theme of my two deacon responsibilities is, of course, serving. There is another observation I would like to share with you; the people we are serving were, in many cases, serving the elderly of their generation. If you haven't had the honor of serving as an elder or a deacon, or at one of our community outreach activities, please consider doing this. We all may need the services of HBC or transportation at some point in our future. Think of it as paying it forward. It's the kind of investment that pays dividends sooner and later. If you would like to know more about Home Bound Communion or transportation or know someone who needs these services, please contact me at [tedlaressa@msn.com](mailto:tedlaressa@msn.com).

God Bless!



### Love Comes Softly

Available for checkout in the Soul Café is a series of books by religious author Janette Oke.

Oke has made significant contributions to the religious book industry. Her novels have sold over thirty million copies and she is the recipient of the ECPA President's Award, the

CBA Life Impact Award, the Bold Medallion, and the Christy Award.

The first in the series, *Love Comes Softly*, focuses on main characters Marty and Clem.

Written in the era of the *Little House on the Prairie* books, Marty and Clem head west with their future ahead of them to build a new home in a new land.

After they arrive, and have chosen a location for their new home, an accident claims Clem's life leaving Marty alone and pregnant.

This first book, in the eight books series, is devoted to courage, faith and love. The series has become a Christian literature classic and has been made into a series of Hallmark programs.

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## SCIENCE & THE BIBLE

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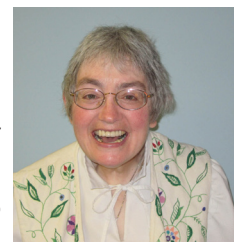
Joy and gladness understood (Acts 14:17).  
"17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by

giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

Evolution cannot explain emotions. Matter and energy do not feel. Scripture explains that God places gladness in our hearts (Psalm 4:7), " Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound."

And ultimate joy is found only in our Creator's presence - "in Your presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

God Calling, by Lacie Stevens and Patti Velasquez: "When you find yourself helpless, you must turn to Me. In knowing Me, your faith grows. And that faith is all you need for My power to work." Helpless? I'm sure we all have that feeling of helplessness. It's a feeling I basically live with constantly. How about you? I'm so glad Jesus is my Right Hand Man, leading me all the places where I'm afraid to go alone, which is basically any place where He isn't. And the only places where He isn't invited are those places I have forgotten to ask Him to join me. *Jesus Calling*, by Sarah Young: "Actually, My Light shines on every situation you will ever face. Live radically by expanding your focus to include Me in all your moments. Let nothing hide your search for Me."



## VOLUNTEER OPPS!

There are several opportunities to serve at West Hills. This month, we are highlighting these ministry areas.

**SOUND/MEDIA:** Run sound or media on Sunday mornings. Training available. Contact [kevin@whcomaha.org](mailto:kevin@whcomaha.org)

**PRAY GARDEN:** Do you love to be outside in the garden? West Hills is in need of more hands to help in the gardens around the church building. If you are able to serve in this capacity and have some time to offer, please contact John Good at 402-960-1231. Any amount of time you can provide is appreciated!

**GREETERS:** Making people feel welcome is such an important . At West Hills, we like to greet people as they enter our doors and give direction to those new to us. This is a wonderful and very easy way to serve the church. If you would like to be a part of this group, please contact Wendi Meyer at: [wendimeyer52@gmail.com](mailto:wendimeyer52@gmail.com)

## Legacy of the Call - Part One by Judy Nelson

When I was asked recently to write about my missionary grandparents (Frank and Elsie Throop) and their legacy, I realized I did not really know what their day-to-day missionary life was like. I wish I could have known them into adulthood. Elsie died when I was just six months old, and Grandpa Frank died twelve years later. He lived in Ohio and I saw him about once a year. I loved him but never asked him about being a missionary or living in China. My dad's stories about growing up in China (birth until age fourteen) were more about Chinese culture, customs and superstition, being bi-lingual and the battles among warlords.

Following high school graduation, Frank worked with the American Sunday School Union organizing Sunday Schools. He confided in his pastor that he thought he was being called to the Christian ministry. His pastor urged him to apply to Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., which he could not afford. He passed an examination for a teaching certificate, taught for two years for \$40.00 per month, and saved \$180.00 for college tuition. During his junior year he was provided opportunities to serve three small churches without pastors (all over 100 miles from St. Paul) and two churches his senior year. After graduation, he entered seminary in Chicago. While there he served a mission church and was a student volunteer for the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. He met Elsie that summer when he was a student supply preacher in her hometown church. They were married a year later, and Frank was ordained to the Gospel Ministry. He and Elsie had hoped to serve in Korea, but the Board of Foreign Missions appointed them as missionaries to Soochow (Suzhou) China.

In August 1909, they boarded a steamer for the 26-day voyage to China. They spent their first year learning Chinese with a tutor. After intensive language study and practice, Frank was assigned to identify and help meet needs of rural churches near Soochow. One pastor needed a donkey to get around his parish. Frank contacted the mission treasurer, who provided the \$40 necessary for the purchase. He helped churches solve problems and plan for the future. Beginning in 1908, Frank maintained records in his Pastor's Register of preaching occasions--October 10, at the mission

English service, "It was a new experience to preach to missionaries." In January, "My first sermon in Chinese". Frank taught mathematics and Elsie taught English at the Vincent Miller Academy; they also homeschooled their children.



Frank and Elsie Throop

Frank was a member of the team that translated the New Testament into the Wu dialect. Local students asked Frank to teach them English. Soon 95 students were attending two-hour classes in English, math and Bible. When Frank developed a serious health issue, physicians recommended that he go to the Mayo clinic. Students of the Class of 1922 sent a gift with him and these words:

"To Asia across the deep ocean from afar  
Stoically, diligently spreading the gospel under  
illness

Surely, surely, speedy recovery to our blessed  
saint

Raising our heads with reverence to our great  
master."

One year later, the family returned to Soochow. War lords were engaged in battle and loaded the injured and dead on barges they sent up to the city. Frank and some other missionaries served as a Red Cross team to arrange transportation of wounded soldiers to cooperating hospitals. "The wounded men came from the front on

## Legacy of the Call - Part One

continued, by Judy Nelson

barges where they were stacked like cord wood. Sometimes a dead man would be at the top of the pile and living ones underneath him." Frank was also called upon by the mayor of Soochow to be part of an official delegation that met with a general who intended to attack the city, and later to go with a delegation to another general who was threatening the city. City leaders credited Frank with saving Soochow from military disaster. In 1925 Elsie contracted a virulent tropical disease. The family of six returned to the United States. Upon arrival at Seattle, Frank received a telegram from Central Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio. They had supported Frank as a missionary for sixteen years and were now inviting him to become their new pastor. He humbly declined, saying he had never really served as a pastor. The church persisted and in March 1926, he began his 25-year-long pastorate there until he retired at age 70.

*Look for the continuation to this families' story in the April newsletter.*

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## Youth Book Sale



If you walked into our Geneva Lounge over last month, you would have been amazed by the mountains of books, CDs and DVDs stacked high on tables, like like literary Mt. Everests! WHC member Anita Evans had to downsize her home upon moving to an apartment, and looking at her private

library of beloved books, she knew that she needed to part with many of them, even those she considered treasured friends throughout the years. Anita decided to donate her abundance of publications and written works to the West Hills Youth Group through Youth and Young Adult Coordinator Luke Burns. A wealth of captivating titles were also given by Heartland Hope Mission.

## Youth Book Sale, continued

For two Sundays in a row, our energetic and engaged young people showed ownership of this wonderful event. The group collected over \$1,000 which was divided into two donations; \$620 went to Siena Francis House and \$380 went to our mission partner, Christian Women of Vision in Cameroon, Africa.



Specifically, the money will go to Gilbert Kimbi (6th grader) to support his "football" training. If he is selected and gets into football school, he will train as a professional junior footballer. This will help him have a job in the future.

As I visited with the students, they shared their own favorite genres: fantasy, sports, nature, futuristic, history and historical fiction as well as biographies. An enthusiastic thumbs up came from all of them when someone mentioned *The Outsiders*, a favorite written by S.E. Hinton. It was soon discovered that the kids had read some of the same novels at school, some required and some personal choices. What a terrific way to discover connections in their group and promote impromptu discussions.

As a former educator of over three decades, it did my old teacher heart good to see so many people making purchases. I was delighted for Luke Burns and the amazing youth group, the charities, the congregation and especially for Anita, knowing her books are now in safekeeping. I truly hoped that a great share of these books would, for a time at least, replace the hours some folks spend looking at screens and phones. I actually love seeing the books in my den, with their myriad of spines and covers and titles...they are among my special treasures on different shelves. Cozy friends like *Black Beauty*, *Heidi*, *David Copperfield* and more still invite me to revisit them.

I believe that C.S. Lewis said it so well, "You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me."

Blessings and happy reading.



# BIBLE TRIVIA QUIZ

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

1. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to the Philippians? A. In Antioch B. In a synagogue in Corinth C. In prison D. In Jerusalem
2. Which sea is Philippi located near? A. Caspian B. Mediterranean C. Ionian D. Aegean
3. What was the approximate year that Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians? A. 35 AD B. 61 AD C. 55 AD D. 45 AD
4. Who was with Paul when he wrote his letter to the Philippians? A. Peter B. John C. Luke D. Timothy
5. What was the main reason Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians? A. To thank them for remaining faithful to their new church B. To thank them for the gifts they sent him C. To ask them to send warm blankets to him D. To tell them that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone
6. The dominant theme in Paul's letter to the Philippians is A. Joy B. Faith C. Love D. Friendship
7. Which two desires did Paul identify as being "torn between" in Philippians 1:23? A. Wanting to start another church or wanting to visit the ones he already started B. Wanting to die or wanting to live C. Wanting to find more companions or wanting to see the companions he once had D. Wanting to travel across the world preaching the Word or wanting to stay where he was
8. Paul felt being in prison was A. Stopping the spreading of the Word B. An unfair treatment since he was a citizen of Rome C. Giving him the opportunity to preach the Word D. A huge waste of his time
9. In his letter to the Philippians Paul tells them to stay away from A. Rich food and strong drink B. False teachers and snake charmers C. Swearing and attacking D. Complaining and arguing
10. In Paul's letter to the Philippians who did he immediately return to them? A. Epaphroditus B. Timothy C. Peter D. Luke

11. Which was the first church established on the European continent? A. Corinth B. Thessalonica C. Philippi D. Amphipolis

12. Why was Paul concerned with the two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who were members of the church in Philippi? A. Because they wanted to become preachers B. Because they both wanted to marry the same man C. Because they decided to quit the church D. Because they had disagreements

*(answers on the back page)*



## Women's Special Saturday

**April 4**

**10 a.m.-12 p.m.**

We are excited to have  
Kim Stockely join us with  
musical illustrations of  
Biblical Women

*Join us to see **which** leading  
ladies show up to share their  
historic stories.*

# HOLY WEEK @ WEST HILLS



Children are invited to participate in worship by being part of the special processional of waving palm branches in remembrance of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem - Sunday, April 5.



This come-and-go display is designed to help participants of all ages reflect on the events that led up to the crucifixion of Christ. There will be several "stations" that help capture the range of emotions that are connected with Holy Week. This experience which includes a mix of art, meditations, music, and hands-on activities, was designed for our own journey to the cross. Monday, April 6 - Sunday, April 12



This service begins with quiet reflection as we prepare our hearts and mind to the retelling of the final days of Jesus' life. We will do this through scripture, congregational songs, musical meditations, art, and the Lord's Supper. Prior to this service, a fellowship meal will be served at 5:30 pm. - Thursday, April 9.



This midday service of reflection is based on The Seven Last Words of Christ and it will incorporate scripture, music, and art. To accommodate folks that may wish to attend who are working, this service is at 12:00 noon and will last approximately 45 minutes - Friday, April 10.



Hallelujah, He Has Risen! Join with us for worship on Easter Sunday, April 12, as we worship the Risen Savior!

# Stephen Ministry at West Hills



## STEPHEN MINISTRY

In the 1970s West Hills Church was very involved in caring for those in a very growing congregation who were facing various life problems such as divorce, job loss, death in the family, etc. Pastors Den Denning and Dick Meyer decided to bring to West Hills a very successful program, started by Dr. Kenneth Haugh in 1975, a pastor and clinical psychologist at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Mo., called Stephen Ministers. Dr. Haugh's plan was to train committed ministers, church staff, and lay persons who would return to their churches as trained Stephen Minister Leaders, and train others to become Stephen Ministers. So, forty years ago in 1980 the Stephen Minister program was initiated at West Hills Church. Since that time hundreds of dedicated men and women have completed the Stephen Minister Training Program at West Hills, taught by over thirty-five trained Leaders who participated in Dr. Haugh's week long Leadership Training Program offered throughout the country. After someone has completed the fifty-hour Stephen Ministry Training Program offered at West Hills, and received their commission as a Stephen Minister, they are linked, or assigned, to their first care receiver...someone who has requested help from a Stephen Minister. These linkings are highly confidential and are not shared with anyone else.

On January 26 a Stephen Minister recognition luncheon was held at West Hills, and many of those "early Stephen Minister pioneers" were in attendance, as well as a number of current Stephen Ministers. This proved to be a very noisy reunion and the hugs and greetings echoed throughout Fellowship Hall. Beth Nodes, Long-term Care

Ombudsman for Nebraska, presented to the Stephen Ministers her role and experiences as an advocate for patients in long-term care facilities in Nebraska. From the number of questions asked it appeared a strong topic of interest to all those present. This very important luncheon could not have been so successful without the help of Stephen Ministers Bill Spiecker, Les Peterson, Cathy Voshell, Anita Evans and Gloria Zinn.

If you have an interest in becoming a Stephen Minister, or would like to be linked with a Stephen Minister for any problem you or someone you know is facing, please feel free to contact any of the Stephen Minister Deacons listed below. We would be happy to offer any information you may be seeking, either becoming a Stephen Minister or being linked with a Stephen Minister. We are here for you.

Bill Spiecker bill.spiecker@gmail.com (402)677-4437

Cathy Voshell richcat85@cox.net (402)301-9434

Gloria Zinn gbennett34@cox.net (402)810-3750

## FEBRUARY *Session notes*

- Information Coffee - March 1, 2020
- New Member Class - Sundays, Mar. 15-April 5, 2020 Noon - 2:00 p.m. Lunch provided
- Hospitality Team - Appreciation Luncheon and Training Sunday, April 26 Noon - 2:00 p.m.
- New Congregational Emergency Fund Review Committee established.
- New Memorial Fund Review Committee established.
- Accepted Communication Assistant job description.
- Accepted job description for an Associate Pastor.

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## The Waiting Room - Prayer Experience for Lent by Jessica Scheopner

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About fifteen years ago, I was meeting regularly with a small group of young moms from West Hills. One evening, we took a field trip to another church that had an on-going interactive prayer room. It was eye-opening for me - a kind of thin space to meet with the Lord. Over the course of several years, I went back there several times alone and with different friends and family members.

A few years later, the West Hills worship team was part of a city-wide interactive prayer room called 168. 168 was a one-time 24/7 hands-on prayer room that was open for exactly one week on Saddle Creek Road with live worship music for all 168 hours of the prayer room. It was planned and explained as a time for people of all ages from churches all across the metro area to come and pray for our community, for our city, for our nation, for our world. I couldn't wait to be part of this, so I took our three young children, and we were blessed. In fact, I took them several times during that week because it was a different experience each time. We didn't do all the stations, and we didn't always stay long, but it was impactful to each of us in our own way.

Last year, West Hills opened our own first interactive prayer room. Be Still was a prayer room experience that had been written by another church; they gifted us the directions and visuals to implement it in our own church. It had about ten prayer stations designed to help people pause and reflect on God and their relationship with Him. It was open throughout Lent 2019, and if you didn't get a chance to experience Be Still, we have good news! Even as we were preparing West Hills' first hands-on prayer room last February, we started dreaming of and praying about the next one, asking what experiences and scripture the Lord might want us to explore.

This Lent, you are invited to come to The Waiting Room. It is our hope that this will be a thin space for you to reflect on God's Word. The eleven prayer stations walk through Psalm 40 with guided questions and experiences, but you are also welcome to use The Waiting Room in your own creative way during this season of contemplation and preparation. This is an ever-changing encounter that is designed with all ages of God's people in mind. Like with a membership to the zoo, you are welcome to come as often as you please for as long or as short a time as you wish. Because God's word is living and active, it will never be the same experience twice! The Waiting Room is open to all whenever the church is open, and by appointment ([jessica@whcomaha.org](mailto:jessica@whcomaha.org)) in Room 138 (JAM Room) on the Lower Level. Follow the signs! If you know someone (or a group of people) who aren't connected to West Hills but would enjoy a space like this, please invite them. My small group was richly blessed by being invited into another church's prayer room years ago, and at West Hills, we know that we are blessed to be a blessing.



## MOVIE REVIEW



A new video, now available in the Soul Café, is entitled "Same Kind of Different as Me."

This two hour DVD, is based on the New York Times bestseller by the same name, and was written by Ron Hall. This inspiring, true story is the story of Ron Hall (Greg Kinnear) a successful art dealer and his wife Debbie (Academy Award winner Renee Zellweger).

Together the couple live, what is viewed by many, as the perfect life. But Ron has lost his moral compass. After Ron's affair, his confession and a dream it takes a homeless man (Djimon Hounsou) to lead them on a journey which builds a lasting bond between the three. Together they learn that just a simple act of kindness can move mountains. This movie has received the Dove Award .

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

For a fancy dessert try this Oreo Fluff dessert in wine or water glasses:

### OREO Fluff

1 (3.4 oz) box white chocolate instant pudding, just the mix.

2 cups milk

1 (8 oz) container cool whip, thawed to room temperature.

1 pkg. Double Stuffed Oreos, crushed

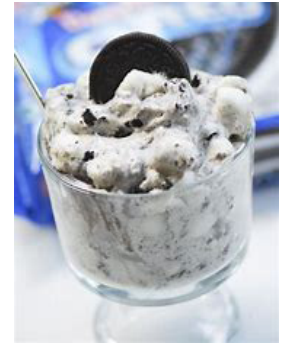
2 cups mini marshmallows

In a large bowl, whisk pudding mix and milk together for 2 minutes.

Stir in thawed Cool Whip, crushed Oreos and mini marshmallows.

Put in one large bowl or in separate fancy glasses.

Store in fridge until ready to eat and serve.



## SOUP SUPER SUPPER & "THE WESTYS"



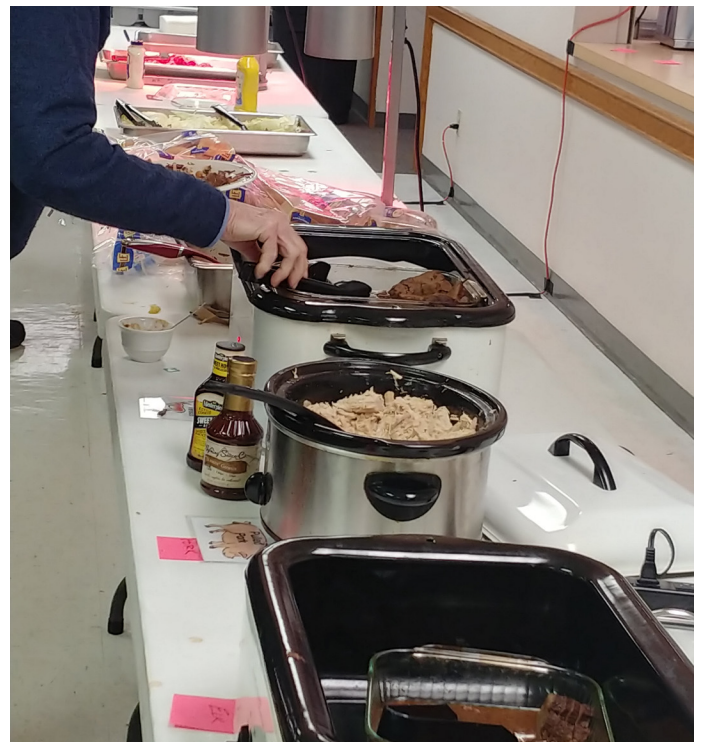
## Men's Game Day by Daniel Patrick O'Reilly

Well, hello fellow West Hillians. If you came to church on Saturday morning February 8, you would have seen 100 men eating bare.... Wait, that's not right. In fact, that would be downright emBARrassing (see what I did there?). Not to mention the horrors if you spilled hot elk stew in your lap. What I meant to say is, you would have seen 100 men eating bear. Yes, it was men's game day.

Nearly 100 men from across the metro, not just West Hills, came for prayer, worship, singing, food, fellowship, friendship and... trying to discern God's call! John Parsons, of Omaha Street School fame, was our featured speaker. John shared his story from Colorado lawyer to founding the Omaha Street School to his life today. He was a man with great stories and a desire to serve God. And he was willing to be vulnerable and admit that sometimes he was confused about what exactly God wanted from him. John's experiences and insights were encouraging and helpful to those of us wanting to discern God's call in our lives.

After John spoke, we broke into small groups and asked some questions related to his talk. How do we build a foundation secure enough to respond to God's call? What resources can we call on when God gives us a nudge? What are roadblocks we face? Soul searching questions for us to chew on. And speaking of chewing, finally, the feast. Enough food to feed an army. Duck, deer, elk, goose, bear, salmon and many domestic dishes, too.

Almost 100 men were served by numerous volunteers. A big thank you to Tom Pittack for organizing said volunteers into the well-oiled machine involved in the prep, execution and clean up for this event. Watch for future events sponsored by the men's ministry moving our church forward into a bright future. See you in church.



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## Mission Partner - Young Life

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Mission partner, Young Life, is having a garage sale to raise funds to send kids to camp. There is an opportunity to donate items and/or to “shop” the sale. If you feel led to participate, please contact the Young Life folks listed.

# Garage Sale



We are looking for these items in Good Condition:  
Furniture, electronics, small appliances, household items,  
Jewelry, clothing (limit 1 bag), and anything that will sell!

Or donate a baked sale item to sell!

**WHY:** To raise \$\$ for kids and leaders to go to camp

**WHERE:** 17609 T Street, Omaha, NE 68135  
(Right across the street from Millard West High School)

**WHEN:** April 30 – May 2 (Thurs, Fri. & Sat.)  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Donation drop off at sale location:**

Sat., April 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 4 pm

Sun., April 26<sup>th</sup> from noon - 4 pm

Contact Kathleen (402-237-9297) or Judy (402-981-7560)

If you have questions or need help with donation pick up

All proceeds will go to Omaha Metro Young Life Camp Fund

*PLEASE HELP REACH TEENS WITH GOD'S LOVE BY SUPPORTING THIS EVENT!!*



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Sermon Series:**  
**The Cross - Path to Transformation**

3/8/20  
 Matthew 16:21-26  
 Questions We Can't Escape

3/15/20  
 Matthew 16:21-26  
 The Valley

3/22/20  
 Matthew 16:21-26  
 Finding New Life



**MARCH**

- 1-Dwight Rickard
- 5-Jan Richardson
- 6-Cammy Bridgman
- 7-Rick Wollen
- 8-John Good Sr.  
Jane Loeck
- 9-Johnny Dunn
- 10-Tim Briggs
- 11-Alex Picavet
- 12-Cathy Burgess  
Jeff DeHaven
- Kathy Padilla
- 13-Kathy Kerkhove
- 15-Peggy Thomas
- 19-Chris Neil

- 21-Kathy Cordes  
John Pittack
- Verlan Rumbaugh
- 22-Steve Brownlee  
Kathy Myers
- 25-Kevin Wagaman
- 26-Lydia Ross
- 27-Joyce Blatny
- 30-Sherrie DeHaven  
Nathan Turner

**APRIL**

- 1-Ron Wells
- 3-Brody Anderson  
Connie Huck
- 4-Doug Thomas