The Window

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

January 2020

WOW, what a year! by Beth Anderson, Elder of Children's Ministry

I just completed my first year as Elder of Childrens' Ministry. WOW, what a year!

God has allowed me to see his vision for our church come alive through not only the kids we work with, but also (and especially!) through the amazing team, whether staff or volunteer. Working with everyone in the Children's Ministry at West Hills is an awesome blessing. Even though I have volunteered in most of these areas over the years, this year has given me a new perspective.

When I look at our Sunday morning program, **Crosswalk**, I see teachers who are so dedicated that they turn down other opportunities because they see what happens with the students on a weekly basis.

"I want my mom to bring me on Sunday morning."

"I want to ask Jesus to come into my heart."

"I have so much fun."

When I look at our **VBS** program that reaches out to our neighbors, I see generations of people working together to make a difference. There are so many volunteers that come together to make this week impactful.

"Can we come to that church on Sunday?"

"They serve the best food; it is my favorite place to eat out!"

"I love to sing and dance and smile."

WEST HILLS GAME NIGHT NERF NIGHT FEBRUARY TEE PARTY MARCH FATHER DAUGHTER DANCE APRIL VBS FAMILY CAMP BACK TO THE OLYMPICS CARNIVAL SEPTEMBER FALL FUN OCTOBER THANKSGIVING FUN NOVEMBER EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS DECEMBER

When I look at our monthly Special Friday activities, I see the intentionality of intergenerational ministry. It is a perfect time to bring children, whether your own, your neighborhood's, or even your grands! You really cannot predict what will happen, but God will definitely use that time.

"This is the best night ever!"

"When can I see those boys again?"

"I didn't know my dad had those dance moves."

"I felt so welcome."

One of the wonderful things about this ministry is that we always have a place for you to volunteer: Jessica is a wonder at finding the best place for you to use your gifts. She sees the big picture and your perfect fit.

Listed here is our schedule of Special Friday events. This is your personal invitation from the Children's Ministry Team to join us for all of them! Come see what it's all about!

I want to have 20/20 vision for what God wants to accomplish this year. Please join me!

A GIFT FROM GOD

January is a great month to initiate change. For many people the month of January is when they go on a diet, stop smoking, begin an exercise class, or join a health club. This change usually occurs in one's personal life, or in the life of a family, but how often do we make a conscious effort to change the way we use the space we have been occupying for so many years? What about the changes you personally could make to protect our planet?

Perhaps you and your family already are, since many of our members shared what they are



currently doing to follow what God has asked us to do: be good caretakers of this earth. Granted, sometimes we think: "I'm only one person, how could I make a difference?" Then we use that line as our excuse not to do anything. You may see yourself in a sea of polluters with little change possible. However,

as the late Billy Graham once pointed out, "Of all people Christians should be the most concerned for the environment. God created our world and entrusted humanity to protect it."

The Bible has quite a bit to say about where God stands on taking care of His creation. (see Genesis 1:26, 1:28, 2:8, 2:15, Leviticus 25:23-24, Numbers 35:33, Psalms 24:1, Revelation 9:4, 11:18) to name just a few passages! Our earth was a gift from God to us, and we need to do our very best to take care of it. No matter what others may choose to do with this wonderful creation, each one of us can make a choice to improve on how we respect this gift God gave to us.

For example, do you leave the water running while you brush your teeth? The less water you use the less runoff and wastewater that eventually ends up in the ocean. Do you buy less plastic and bring reusable shopping bags to the store? When you leave a room do you flip off the light switch or just leave it on? Do you recycle or just throw everything in one trash bag because it's easier—for you maybe, but not for our planet!

Do you crank up your thermostat in the winter wear a sweater or jacket to stay warmer? What about in the summer? Does your air conditioner run constantly, and you could probably leave the butter and milk out on the table since it's so cold, or do you turn it to a temperature that stays the same so it isn't running all the time? Do you use a mulching mower so you won't have so many bags for the city's yard waste, or perhaps you use your leaves and garbage in a compost bin? Perhaps you are the neighbor who just blows the leaves out into the street, thinking they will disappear (and they usually do, into the neighbor's yard!). Some members of our church respect God's gift enough by purchasing a high efficiency furnace, buying solar panels to capture the sun's heat; use no chemicals in their yard or inside their house; support national environmental groups who are cleaning oceans and lakes of plastic bottles, as well as doing many other environmental activities, mainly on a volunteer basis.

There are a number of volunteer activities throughout the world, not only in the United States, to improve our planet. Others who shared their efforts to protect our planet installed low flow faucets and shower heads in order to conserve water, which reflected in their MUD bill! Another said their entire family uses the three R's every day: reduce, reuse, and recycle. He said the family cuts down on what they throw away in order to conserve natural resources and their change occurred when one of their grade school children came home from school talking about all the things they could do to "save the long-lasting light bulbs which have been proven to be energy efficient, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

As you can see there are many steps you can take that will make a difference, whether you live in a huge house or a small apartment. The important thing is to be aware of how you personally, even in the smallest detail, are taking care of this gift God has given to you, and the respect you are showing through your care. You can start with one change, and add on any that you feel you could handle. January is a great month to start.!

January at a Glance

At West Hills our mission statement: On a journey with the living Christ; connecting with God, others and the world, provides us with the framework for how we live our lives. Here are 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 Begins Jan. 5

Youth Sunday School @ 9 a.m. for 7th - 12th grade, lower level, #3O7 Begins Jan. 5

Adult Classes, chapel

Date	9 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
Jan. 5	H2O - Rick Mason	Egypt Presentation - Peg Shirley & Nancy Kehrli
Jan. 12	H2O - Rick Mason	Connecting the Dots: A Faith Dissertation - Julie Burgess
Jan. 19	H2O - Rick Mason	Connecting the Dots: A Faith Dissertation - Julie Burgess
Jan. 26	H2O - Rick Mason	Connecting the Dots: A Faith Dissertation - Julie Burgess

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

Begins Dec. 3O - What on Earth Am I Here for? by Rick Warren. All are welcome to attend this study at Westgate Assisted Living.

Tuesday Men's Bible Study @ 6:30 a.m., conference room

Begins Jan. 7 - Study the sermon scripture for the following Sunday

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

Begins Jan. 8 - Led by Tracy Enholm and Jane Loeck. Studying Psalm 23 by Jennifer Rothschild

Wednesday Night @ West Hills

Begins Jan. 8

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 1-5th grade experience God's love through worship, stories, crafts and games.

Wednesday - The Confirmation Experience on Jan. 15 & 29 @ 6:30 p.m.

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

Begins Jan. 2 - The study of the book of Genesis continues. Every woman welcome to join us!

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Jan. 3 - West Hills Game Night @ 6:00 p.m. - Bring your favorite games and people for an evening of game playing fun for all ages. Lower level check-in area.

Jan. 10 - Parents vs. Students Bowling @ 6:30 p.m. - Join us at Western Bowl for our annual bowling competition! All youth and parents of youth welcome to join!

Jan. 18 - High School retreat - All high school students are invited to come out to Calvin Crest from 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. for a day of fun! Lunch and dinner will be provided! Please bring \$5 in cash with you.

Jan. 26 - Book Sale - The youth will be hosting a book sale during worship in the morning and during Super Supper in the evening. All proceeds will go towards the youth ministry.

Jan. 26 - Super Supper - Dinner @ 6:00 p.m. // Annual meeting @ 6:45 p.m.

CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD

Jan. 16 - Christian Heritage Partnership Night @ 6:OO 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

SPIRITUAL CORRESPONDENCE by Jana Prescott

"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." (Gen 28:16, NIV) Seriously, how often have you not been aware of the Lord? Especially now, during the seasons we just went through, Thanksgiving and Christmas? At first, I was more aware of all the



decorations that were hanging all over the living room than thinking about all the people in Omaha, actually all over this planet, that can't do much more than than give extra hugs to the people they love. Our love goes to our family and friends. I think to be more aware of the Lord being in this place, I need to be more aware of the needs of those around me who are not family and friends.

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did to one of the lease of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

New Year, New Bible Study! We have a number of offerings available; check on page 3 for a full list and start dates.

SCIENCE & THE BIBLE

Germination

A seed must die to produce new life (1 Corinthians 15:36-38) Jesus said "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain (John 12:24). This verse is remarkable confirmation of two of the fundamental concepts of biology: 1) Cells arise only from existing cells. 2) A grain must die to produce more grain. The fallen seed is surrounded by cells from the old body; these supporting

cells "give their lives" to provide nourishment to the inner kernel. Once planted, this inner kernel germinates resulting in much grain.



Calling all Stephen Ministers: Whether
you are active or not, please join us on
Saturday, Jan. 25, for a Stephen Minister
Appreciation Luncheon from noon to
2:00 p.m. Beth Nodes, ombudsman
for long-term care in Omaha will be
presenting. RSVP at gbennett34@cox.
com or 402-810-3750.

Book Review



"The Trial," by Robert Whitlow, is the story of attorney Kent "Mac" McClain who lost his wife and two sons nine years ago in a tragic car accident. After nine years of "survival" Mac is now contemplating suicide. Then he learns of the death of Angela Hightower the daughter of the most wealthy and powerful man

in the town of Dennison Springs.

Although, all evidence evidence points to Peter Thomason as Angela's killer, Mac comes to believe Thomason is being framed, and, as Mac believes, the killer could be someone in Hightower's very own family.

Mac has had a professional run-in before with Hightower and his gang of disreputable attorneys prior to this which left him and his practice in shambles.

Will Mac be successful in defending his client or is he really just fighting his own tormented past?

Author Whitlow is the winner of the prestigious Christy Award for Contemporary Fiction. He has written several best selling legal thrillers set in the south.

Whitlow and his wife live in North Carolina with their four daughters.

The staff would like to **thank** the congregation for the many gift cards we received from you! We love doing ministry with this church body, and appreciate your **abundant generosity!** Thanks again & Happy New Year!



WN@WH Class Offerings:

The women's group will be studying "Entrusted" by Beth Moore. In this study of 2 Timothy, Beth dives into the idea that we were never meant to take this journey of faith alone or in secret. God has entrusted us with the great and mighty gift of the gospel, something too precious and lifegiving to keep to ourselves.

In this Bible study, Beth will encourage you to guard what God has entrusted to you, further His kingdom by sharing Christ with others, and pour into future generations just as Paul once mentored Timothy. Because in this journey of joy and hardship, we need each other to stay the course and live lives of faithfulness. Class facilitated by Leann Schaffer and meets Wednesdays @ 6 p.m.

The co-ed Bible study group will be studying "Everything You Need" by Dr. David Jeremiah. In this study Dr. Jeremiah asserts that God equips all believers with everthing they need! Drawing from 2 Peter 1:3-11, he explores eight critical tools the Lord provides - diligence, virtue, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love - to help you live boldly and confidently. This class is open to everyone and facilitated by Jan Drake, Maralee Gifford and Gloria Zinn. Class meets on Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m. in the conference room on the lower level.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

CARBONARA

This is Rachel Ray's recipe that is a quick and easy meal:



Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 1 pound pasta, mostaccioli or rigatoni 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes 5-6 cloves garlic, chopped ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil ¼ cup pancetta (Italian bacon), chopped ½ cup chicken stock 1 large egg yolk Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. Put a large sauce pot of water on to boil. Add a liberal amount of salt and pasta. Cook to al dente, about 8 minutes.

2. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil and add pancetta. Brown 2 minutes. Add red pepper flakes and garlic and cook 2-3 minutes. Add chicken stock and stir up all the pan drippings.

3. In a separate bowl, beat yolks, then add 1 large ladelful (about ½ cup) of the pasta cooking water. This tempers the eggs and keep them from scrambling.

4. Drain pasta well and add it directly to the skillet with pancetta and oil. Pour the egg mixture over the pasta. Toss rapidly to coat the pasta without cooking the egg.

Remove pan from heat and add a big handful of cheese, pepper and a little salt. Continue to toss and turn the pasta until it soaks up egg mixture and thickens, 1-2 minutes



GOD'S GIFT SHOP

THANK YOU WEST HILLS for your generosity to God's Gift Shop. Through your kindness, thirty-two children from Westgate School received Christmas gifts from our congregation. For the new community in Jeanton, Haiti, a cow, two goats and five chickens were purchased. Also, with the items sold at the God's Gift Shop table an additional check was sent to these mission partners: For His Children - \$246, ChrisWOV - \$353 and Outreach Foundation for Syria - \$305. Thank you for blessing above and beyond families in our community and communities abroad!



DECEMBER Session notes

• Session discussed and practiced the chapter on prayer from Richard Foster's book Celebration of Discipline.

- Session approved the 2020 budget.
- Session approved conducting communion the first Sunday of every month in 2020 (including homebound) and on Maundy Thursday.

• Youth Commitment Sunday in 2020 will be in February.

• Officer training will be held January 17 and 18.

• A gift received from our sister church in Egypt will be presented to the congregation on January 5, 2020.

• Installation/Ordination of the Deacon, Elder, and Nominating class of 2022 will be held January 5, 2020.

HANGING OF THE GREEN SERVICE

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it." In that case, all of the participants in "The Hanging of the Green" must have felt quite rewarded on the evening of Sunday, December 1, 2019. Led by our director of worship and music Kevin Gibson, the presentation of the poinsettias, a family assembling the Nativity scene and the lighting of the special candle, glorious lanterns completing our breathtaking display in the front of the sanctuary were all highlights. This is the second year for the event. The service is based on various decorations and symbols, with music to reflect the splendid meaning of each, along with readings to compliment the presentation. No element of the event was "random," so the sections flowed seamlessly, one into the next. It is no wonder planning begins in October.

To make sure that all plans were successful, we thank decorations coordinator, Peggy Kelley, as well as the vital audio/visual team of Steve Burgess and Matt Huck. Of course the musicians' joyful, magical contributions gave everyone a feeling of Christmas joy. The attendees filed out to enjoy hot cocoa, coffee and cookies. Wonderful compliments and praises were heard throughout the Geneva Lounge. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!









Experience Christmas! by Jessica Scheopner, Director of Family Ministries

West Hills' second annual Experience Christmas event on Friday, December 6, was a wonderful success! Like all our Friday Fun events, Experience Christmas is designed to be an easy invitation for our friends, family, and neighbors to come together and build relationships. Along with VBS, Experience Christmas is one of the events that we use to reach out to our Westgate neighbors to invite them to come and experience God's love and hospitality through the simple gift of making a place for them to create memories with their families and others. Over 13O people of all ages from West Hills, Westgate, and beyond enjoyed this special evening to kick off their preparation for Jesus' birth. This is truly a more-the-merrier event, and we hope you will plan to come as a guest or volunteer to help welcome others in, so we can be even merrier with you there in 2020!



Preparation for this was a tremendous and fun cooperative effort, with volunteers overseeing each of the five stations. Leaders and amazing teams of volunteers prepared to welcome kids of all ages to a gingerbread house station stocked with over fifty homemade gingerbread house kits, a Merry and Bright photo booth, a cookie competition (congrats to Cathy Voshell and her grandchildren!), a manger building project to help families prepare their hearts for Jesus through serving others, and a new addition this year of a craft station with ornaments and candy bowls.

Caregiving Caroling 2019 by Jane Loeck, Elder for Caregiving

According to the Internet the custom of Christmas caroling traces its origins back to 19th century Victorian England when medieval church carols merged with Christian folk music. Carolers would travel from house to house and sing to neighbors spreading tidings of good cheer. The concept of Christmas carols, and spreading them to the community to celebrate Christ's birth is thought to have spread across Europe. Today, many caroling groups sing for charity in churches and neighborhoods. Some historical accounts claim this is rooted in feudal societies when poor citizens would "sing for their supper" in exchange for food or drink. Further reading on the Internet revealed another theory is that carolers traveled door-to-door because they were not originally allowed to perform in churches. Another Internet article says the idea developed in the 16th century, when Anglo-Saxon peasants adapted these pagan customs when they went wassailing, requesting nourishment from their superiors in exchange for singing good tidings. Angels sang carols to announce the birth of Christ. Songs and hymns are divine, no wonder why we sing.



In her God tube devotion Crystal McDowell savs. "Singing rises from the essence of our souls. You don't have to be a trained or gifted singer to raise your hearts and voices to Him in praise. We never know how God will use these singing

testimonies to bring someone to Jesus."

In the cozy and festive Fellowship Hall of West Hills Church, busy helping hands of Caregiving Ambassadors and Deacons worked in harmony to serve a meal to hungry carolers. Christmas carols played in the background to set a festive mood, courtesy of Barb Wooley and Kathy Leach. Unlike the early carolers ours didn't have to sing for their

supper! Hot chili. chicken noodle soup fellowship and warmed souls on a wintry day. Delightful home baked Christmas cookies tempted everyone to stuff themselves.





Children's laughter could be heard while making cards and drawings to be given out when caroling.

On a day straight out of the song "Let it Snow" five teams of caregiving carolers

set out to share the love of Jesus. All warmed up from the festivities we headed out into the winter wonderland. The teams covered various sectors of the city from downtown to west Omaha spreading Christmas cheer and the love of Jesus.

Wendi Meyer said, "The smiles on the faces of the people we visited were worth millions." Stockings generously stuffed with goodies were distributed, large bells jingled in time to the carols and candy canes were munched as voices were raised in song. Many of the caroling recipients sang along with the West Hills carolers.

Julie Burgess mentioned that God was in their midst as voices blended in a multi-generational group. "This is what God does when we gather in his name. He makes community out of strangers and in the joining He is glorified. May it always be so!" said Julie.

At the conclusion of caroling Tom Backer said, "Sign me up for next year."

Jesus was in the midst of caregiving caroling at every stop. One group encountered emergency crews responding to the house where they were about to carol. Instead of singing they gathered on the sidewalk outside of the home to lift their voices in prayer.

This thank you received from Nan Henry expresses how grateful our caroling recipients are:

"I want to thank the people of West Hills for coming to Aksarben Village to serenade, visit and give me the great Christmas sock so full of goodies. Kudos to whoever stocked the sock. I'm a chocoholic so I found lots of goodies. It was great to see so many familiar faces. I don't have a car anymore so I miss coming to church. Thank you for making the season brighter. Everyone sure enjoyed the serenade and visit. Sincerely, Nan Henry"

This is caregiving. This is why we do this event each year. This is the gift of the heart, the gift of Jesus.

I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Psalm 104:33



MOVIE REVIEW

BIBLE TRIVIA QUIZ



Science Confirms the Bible

In this 58 minute DVD, entitled, "Science Confirms the Bible," (now available in the Soul Café) Ken Ham answers the following questions frequently asked by teens in today's world:

- DNA as evidence for the infinite God
- The basics of genetics and natural selection
- as they relate to biblical "kinds"The origin of so-called races
- The truth about Cain's wife
- Evidence for the world wide flood
- The actual time of the Ice Age
- Literal vs. figurative creation days
- •The origin of death

Ken is heard daily on the radio feature Answers with Ken Ham (broadcast on more than 950 stations) and is a frequent guest on national TV talk shows. Since the Creation Museum opened, he has been interviewed on CBS News Sunday Morning, The NBC Nightly News, The PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer, and many other outlets.

> The 2O19 annual report will be available in Geneva Lounge on Sunday, January 19

Plan to join us for the annual **Super Supper** on Sunday, January 26. Dinner @ 6:00 p.m. and Meeting @ 6:45 p.m.

How well do you know the Bible?

1. Which prophet predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? A) Isaiah B) Micah C) Samuel D) Abraham

2. What was the Jewish observance that caused Jesus to go into the temple in Jerusalem and cleanse it?A) Passover B) Yom KippurC) Hanukkah D) Rosh Hashanah

3. To what event in His life did Jesus compare Jonah's stay in the great fish? A) Wilderness temptation B) Being in His mother's wombC) His entombment D) The Garden of Gethsemane experience

4. Jesus gave a blind man sight by anointing his eyes with clay and then telling him to wash his eyes at this place A) well of Jacob B) pool of Siloam C) well of Nazareth D) in a nearby river

5. In which city did God command Jonah to "go and preach"? A) Canaan B) JerusalemC) Nineveh D) Zoar

6. After killing his brother Abel, where did Cain go? A) Nod B) Gog C) Salem D) Hebron

7. Which king committed suicide?

A) Nebuchadnezza B) Saul C) Ahab D) Solomon

8. Who killed an Egyptian and fled to Midian? A) Aaron B) Amos C) Moses D) Obadiah

9. Which city did Joshua destroy? A) Jokneam B) Juttah C) Jebus D) Jericho

10. When the Jewish people left Egypt for the Promised Land, whose bones did they take with them? A) Abraham's B) Isacc's C) Noah's D) Joseph's

11. At which well did Jesus meet the Samaritan woman? A) well of Beersheba B) well of Isaac C) well of Moses D) well of Jacob

12. What was the penalty for not worshipping the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar had built? A) death B) thrown into a fiery furnace

C) thrown into a den of hungry lions

D) banished from the land

(anwsers on the back page)



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Men, Is God Calling You?

John Parsons will share his experience of stepping out in faith when God called him to make life changing decisions.

With humor and humility, John will share how he discerned and responded to God's call to leave his law career in Denver and, with an uncertain path, start the Omaha Street School for at-risk youth.

Saturday, February 8 Check-in 7:45 a.m. Game Day & Lunch 8:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

There will be plenty of "MAN" food - favorite tailgate items and wild game.

Register online at **whcomaha.org** or in Geneva Lounge Sunday mornings beginning January 5.



JANUARY-2020

1-Heidi Fethkenher 2-Carole Burrows Verne DeHaven 3-Nancy Chesire 4-Laura Meyers 5-Elaine Hook Greg Kuhn Shirley Nelson 6-Rick Westcott 8-Liz Pittack Bud Wells 13-Steve Burgess Les Peterson Tom Thompson 14-Grant Thomas 16-Jenny Anderson 19-Sue Krahmer 23-Robyn Curran 24-Trink Traudt 25-Linda Fouts 26-Darlene Burham 28-Jim Love 30-Boyd Dingman Lisa King Jill Nelson Trent Zimmerman 31-Mike Bridgman Priscilla Powell February-2020 1-Linda Lavely 2-Sheryl Overby