

THE WINDOW

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

November 2023

Stewards of His Temple

by Dick Frandeen, Elder for Building and Grounds



Numbers 3:31 They were responsible for taking care of the ark of the covenant law. They took care of the table for the holy bread. They took care of the lampstand and the two altars. They took care of the things used for serving in the sacred tent. They also took care of the inner curtain. In fact, they had to take care of everything connected with the use of all those things.

Hebrews 3:4 Every house is built by someone. But God is the builder of everything.

Your Building and Grounds Ministry Team feels blessed to be able to oversee the care of our facility and we look forward to helping with the restoration and repair needed to best serve and glorify God. With your help, we are also looking to create a welcoming environment for all of you and for all of those that join us in the years to come.

Our restoration effort started over a year ago as the Building and Grounds team began to identify and list those areas that needed to be restored, repaired, or replaced. Those items existed not because we were inattentive or unaware, but because we did not have the resources to address the problems properly. As a result, problem areas were patched and repaired, not completely fixed, which only delayed resolution of the problems. Also, an unexpected failure of a piece of equipment would unfortunately require “borrowing” funds from another ministry or need. That identified the need to establish reserves to cover these unexpected expenses and ongoing maintenance expenses for the next several years.

Seeing what needed to be done led to questions of how we could solve the problems going ahead and no longer defer the solutions. To accomplish that, our Session felt it was necessary to begin planning for a Capital Campaign. As part of that process, our Staff and Ministry Teams were asked to provide their thoughts on other projects and improvements which they felt would enhance our worship, education, and fellowship experiences. Not just for our congregation, but also for those visiting and those living around us in our community.

Fortunately, several additional projects have already been completed. Thanks to a very good insurance policy, we have a completely new roof and gutters that should keep us dry for many years to come. A grant from our Presbytery has allowed us to put in place the Atonement Childcare playground equipment, replace and expand the fencing, and install new ADA compliant sidewalks for better access to our playground area. Finally, we were blessed to receive

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Stewards of His Temple, continued

from anonymous donors the funds necessary to replace a large air conditioning unit that cools a large portion of the lower level.

As our Campaign has progressed over the past couple of months, you have seen how the project list has grown in number, scope, and cost. And you have been given the opportunity to provide your input on which projects and initiatives you feel are the most important for West Hills at this time. We have been encouraged by your interest, your thoughtful questions, and your suggestions. We value your input, and we will use it as our guide when we begin to restore His temple. It is clear that our wonderful facility is important to all of you!

Our prayer is that our Campaign goals will be met so that we can restore our building to be a fresh, bright, welcoming place for all of us and for our visitors and new friends to come. A facility that glorifies God and meets the needs of all who worship and meet here.

Thank you all for your continuing support!

November Table Talk - "Living a Life of Thanks!"

Our next Table Talk is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 28, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. The week before this gathering we will have all celebrated our annual national holiday of Thanksgiving, but at this Table Talk, **Deena Candler** will be discussing thanksgiving based on scripture. Through the "food for thought" that Deena shares and our small group discussion, we will consider how to give thanks when you do and don't feel thankful, and how as Christ's followers, we can exercise the habit/discipline of thanksgiving each and every day of our faith walk. Bottom line - we will learn how thanksgiving moves us closer to God's heart and the incredibly bright future He has prepared for us.

As always, you don't need to sign up for Table Talk. You just show up. If you haven't attended a Table Talk yet, we especially encourage you to come and experience one. The purpose of Table Talk is to draw us closer to God and one another - a purpose that resonates with many of us. A seat at the table will be prepared for YOU!



November At A Glance

At West Hills our mission statement . . . On a journey with the living Christ; connecting with God, others, and the world, provides us with the framework for how we live our lives. Here are notable activities this month in the life of our church, seeking to connect us to God, others, and the world.

Sundays:

- Crosswalk Kids and Youth check-in at 8:50 a.m. in the lower level welcome area.
- Currently, the DVD study called "Fire on the Mountain" is going on at 9 a.m. in the Chapel until November 26. "Why the Nativity?" begins December 3.
- Worship at 10 a.m. is livestreamed and in-person. Following worship, join us for fellowship in Geneva Lounge. For those not attending in-person, we welcome you to watch the service by livestream at: whcomaha.org/live.

Monday Evenings - Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) for Men, Women, and Children/Teens studying the book of John. Preregistration is required, go to: bsfinternational.org

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

Wednesday Mornings:

- Women's Bible study at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel studying a video series where Pastor J.D. Greear walks through the second half of Paul's letter to the church in Rome.

Wednesday Evenings:

- Interactive Worship Space from 6-8 p.m. in the Youth Chapel.
- Women's Bible study at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel studying I and II Thessalonians with a Beth Moore study called "Children of the Day."
- Men's Bible study at 7 p.m. in the large conference room #182.
- Emerging Adults Small Group from 8-9:15 p.m. for anyone 18-30 years of age. This group meets in the Youth Chapel.

Thursday Mornings - Men and Women Bible study meets in the Chapel at 9:30 a.m.

November 11 - Worship Night 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Youth Chapel with open prayer time before and after.

November 16 - Sloppy Joe Ministry drop-off at the church. Come between 9-4 to the north circle drive and drop your cooked sloppy joe meat and hamburger buns in the bins.

November 18-19 - 24-hour Prayer Vigil. Sign up for a 30-minute time slot [here](#) or in Geneva Lounge.

November 19 - Commitment Sunday for 2024 Annual Stewardship and 2024-2026 Capital Campaign.

November 22 - Thanksgiving Eve Service and Pie Fest at 7 p.m. Bring a pie to share!

November 28 - Women's Table Talk from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Gone Fishing

by Rick Mason, Elder for Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

As a young man growing up in Wyoming, I discovered a passion (many thanks to my grandparents) of fishing the crystal blue waters near Pinedale at the base of the glorious Wind River Mountain Range. Every chance I had, I could be found fishing. At first, I had to learn patience, because many a time we went, we got “skunked” (no fish, no bites – except mosquitos). One thing I learned over that time, patience was indeed a virtue. What didn’t work at one point, may just as well work another. But I needed the patience to modify my approach to find the success I was looking for. And most importantly, NEVER GIVE UP. My memory has faded since my fishing days, but I still remember catching my first fish and the JOY that overcame me – I proudly carried that fish up the bank of the pond to show my prize to mom and dad.

I also learned the simple beauty of leaving the “rat race” to enjoy the solitude of “me and nature.” The quiet time which helped me reflect on what was important – there I found the beauty of God’s creation. Realizing the ice cap mountains produced the flowing waters where the fish lived. Understanding the “fishing hole” of where to concentrate the aim of the bait. The mystery of wondering if it was the right place or should I simply move on to other places downstream. Then the satisfaction of finally hooking something and then wondering was it a trout or a white fish or something else. Finally, was it big or small – all that didn’t really matter, just knowing that the art of fishing was bringing me joy.

As I near the end of my commission as Elder of Spiritual Formation and Discipleship, I found that discipling is very much like fishing. A Sunday series we offered this fall called “Go Fish” by Andy Stanley helped me recognize the connection of a passion I lived for and perhaps a passion God wishes we would all undertake. Hence, Jesus making his disciples “fishers of men/women” truly had meaning. Seems easy enough. Just need a pole and place to fish. But suddenly, you realize to be effective, you must study the habits of the fish – in this case, those who have not had the opportunity to learn the Gospel, the Good News Christ brought us.

What is the right bait, what is the proper technique, am I patient, am I truly passionate about God’s call to Go Make Disciples (Matthew 28:17)? I think we make many excuses as to why that doesn’t fit our responsibilities – but quickly find (as Andy Stanley stated) – Fishing for Men/Women brings out the fear in us. Jesus said, plant the seed, water what has been sown, cultivate the crop – each with a different gift we possess, but in the end, it is all fishing – we need to develop a passion to share what we know to be God’s Saving Grace and faithfully share that with others so we can lead them to a community of worship and know that God is the Great I Am. How? Reading the Bible daily, fostering a fellowship of studiers to help discern what makes sense and finally, practicing the techniques learned. If it wasn’t for my grandfather, I would likely have spent much of my time with a twisted line, a snag, or simply lost as to how to start my journey for fish. You can’t effectively learn to fish by reading a book, you need to walk the banks of the river with others that share your journey and passion.

I challenge each of you, whether it be individually or as a small group or family to find the Andy Stanley DVD “Go Fish” (PG-13) and really invest your time in his message. Andy is funny, but has a very strong message each of us should hear. Whether we are old, young, or just in the middle, this message has an impact for each and every one of us. It is clear that God has given us the joy of knowing Him, but with that comes a cost – the cost of investing time to share that joy with others.

Grab your pole, grab your tackle, assess your local “fishing hole” and let’s make our best effort to catch the ones who have been determined to get away.

A Caring Tradition Returns!

by Angie Arner, Deacon of Homebound Ministry

Some traditions have changed or are no longer with us. The West Hills Caregiving Ministry Team wants to return to one sweet tradition. Many activities compete to fill our December calendars, but this event perfectly combines fellowship with service. Everyone is warmly invited to participate in this year's "**Chili and Caroling**" event on **Sunday, December 17**, immediately following the worship service.



What does it look like? Who doesn't like to eat, enjoy the company of church family, and make a joyful noise to celebrate the birthday of Jesus? This event combines all these activities and much more. We will enjoy a bowl of chili/chicken noodle soup with accompanying goodies. After our meal, those in attendance will break into assigned groups and carpool together to sing Christmas carols for church family members who are experiencing special challenges this season. All details will be taken care of so families can just come and enjoy!



The presence of children makes all the difference. Your children/grandchildren are needed to sing, dance, and "jingle some bells." Your child is needed to give out stockings, cards, and hugs. We extend an invitation for you and those you love to participate in this year's event. Not only is this a child-friendly event, but it is also an event which is greatly enriched by the involvement of children.

To help us with planning, you can sign up in Geneva Lounge starting on **Sunday, November 26**, but if you don't sign up and can join us at the last minute, please do so. More details will be coming, but for now, make sure you have "**Chili and Caroling**" on your calendar as a not-to-be missed event! Let's encourage our dear friends who are experiencing challenges this season. As God uses you to share the Good News of Christmas, you will be truly blessed!



"Let the Message about Christ, in all it's richness, fill your lives." Colossians 3:16

October Session Notes

- Session is asking the congregation for continued support for 2023 pledged and non-pledged financial giving as it remains a need to close the year at budgeted level.
- Session suggests the congregation see the articles on Stewardship (October) and Gone Fishing (November).

Session approved the following motions:

- to develop an inclusive task force to explore with individuals and families from our congregation, their experiences of isolation and ways to better care for each other.
- to accept the campaign project priorities as presented.
- to accept the Foundational Goal of 1.1 million dollars and the Faith Goal of 1.5 million dollars.
- to accept the new meeting schedule for InGathering to meet in-Person April through October, using Zoom November through March, and no meetings in January, June, and July.
- to move the December Session meeting ahead one week from 12/19 to 12/12.

Mission Experience - For His Children by Jeff and Esther Smith

Last month while we were touring Ecuador we had the opportunity to be hosted by the staff of For His Children. For His Children has been one of our mission partners for more than 15 years. Esther and I toured the center in Quito and took a beautiful 2-hour ride to tour their newer facility in Latacunga. As part of our program, we interacted with many children (many of whom were previously abused or neglected), spoke to several caregivers and therapists, and truly marveled at the passion and love provided to the children.



Though the organization has a good track record of reuniting children with their families (after extensive counselling) and facilitating adoptions, we were amazed that the home continues to care for young adults who cannot return home or be adopted due to their special needs.

Yes, we had fun (the llama's name is Little Esther) but we also came away very impressed with the work of this mission and glad that our church has been an active supporter of this mission for many years.

To find out more about this incredible organization we would encourage you to visit their website and if God moves you, consider sponsoring one of their children or caregivers. Believe us, it will be appreciated and will go a long way toward providing a better life for some of God's children.

"Why the Nativity?" 3-Week Study by Dr. David Jeremiah

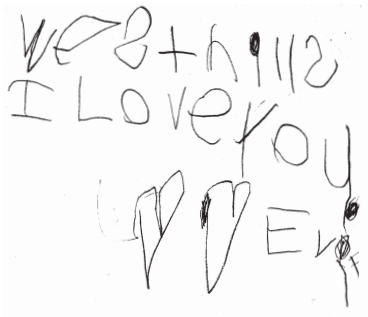
Our Advent study begins at 9 a.m. in the Chapel on December 3, 10, and 17, where we will watch Dr. David Jeremiah's study on "Why the Nativity?"

How do you prepare for the most important event in our world: Jesus' birth? Do you find yourself caught up in all the secular verbiage of wishing everyone a "happy holiday" rather than a "Merry Christmas"? Are you so frazzled by the end of December because of all the baking, shopping, wrapping, decorating, etc., that when you look back at the beginning of the Advent Season, December 3, you can't remember taking any time to prepare your heart and mind?

Come join us to help you prepare for this very special season of remembering and learn all the components that answer the question: "Why the Nativity?" You won't be sorry when the season comes to an end that you took some time to remember.

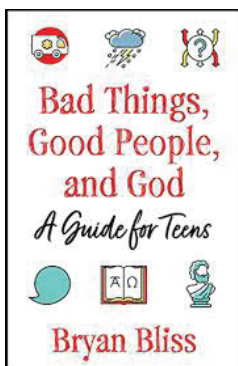
Intergenerational Family by Jessica Scheopner

West Hills is distinct in our long-standing history of bringing people of all ages - the whole family of God - together for worship and fellowship. This isn't common or glamorous, and sometimes it's flat-out messy, but research shows that children and young people who build meaningful, sustained relationships in a faith community are more likely to practice their faith as they enter adulthood. We don't always get to see this happening, and often we don't even see the results, as people move and change churches. But when we do get to see this happening, it's something to celebrate. I often get little glimpses of what this looks like in progress as I hear children and teenagers talking about something this mentor or that congregation member said to them. When we get to know the unique young people in our church family, we extend to them the kind of love God has shown us. From babies to college students, they can sense that they belong, that they are unconditionally loved and accepted. And they reciprocate:



I'm deeply thankful to be part of an intergenerational church family that wants to love one another well and doesn't hesitate to say so.

Book Suggestion by Debbie Chadwick



"Bad Things, Good People, and God: A Guide For Teens", is a new Christian book for young adults.

Published in 2022, this book discusses things teens are dealing with today, such as school shootings, Covid, and polarized politics.

Author Brian Bliss, is a bestselling author who is successful at handling challenging topics for teenagers who don't want just a simple answer. Referencing the Bible, Bliss discusses why bad things happen. He uses biblical stories to help teens with their questions about sin, and suffering.

This 160-page book is a guide for teens to explore, wonder, curse, and find a sense of peace regarding evil.

Bryan Bliss is the author of several young adult novels, including "Parking at the End Times", and "Meet Me Here". Bliss holds an MA in Theology from Vanderbilt Divinity School and an MFA in fiction writing from Seattle Pacific University. In addition to writing, Bliss will soon be ordained as an Episcopal priest.

This book is available in the Soul Café in the Young Adult Section.

WHC Financial Report - Update as of October 31, 2023

		YTD23 Actual	YTD23 Budget	PYTD22 Actual	Over/(Under) 2023 Actual v Budget	2023 Annual Budget
Revenue	Pledged & Unpledged Giving	\$553,015	\$582,000	\$566,383	(\$28,985)	\$740,000
	Building Use*	\$31,972	\$40,000	\$9,546	(\$8,028)	\$50,000
	Ministry Specific**	\$43,858	\$19,457	\$26,133	\$24,401	\$20,117
	Total Operating Revenue	\$628,845	\$641,457	\$602,062	(\$12,612)	\$810,117
Expenses	Total Operating Exps***	\$639,473	\$699,630	\$628,927	(\$60,157)	\$845,117
Operating Surplus (Deficit)		(\$10,628)	(\$58,173)	(\$26,865)	\$47,545	(\$35,000)

2023 EXPENDITURES NOT INCLUDED IN OPERATING BUDGET AMOUNTS SHOWN ABOVE:

2023 Budget - Capital Fund Component for PROPERTY

2023 Annual Budget: **\$30,000**

<i>YTD October Needs/Uses:</i>	Fencing materials for "Outdoor Outreach" playground	\$4,948
	Repair fire sprinkler system leak in Soul Café	\$4,940
	Replace Nursery area 85 gallon electric water heater	\$4,040
	Upgrade/replace church lighting...primarily Sanctuary and gym	\$2,300
	Replace HVAC transformer	\$2,164
	Replace broken/split 3" sewer line	\$2,018
	Rebuild/replace kitchen backflow preventer to meet city codes	\$932
		\$21,342

2023 Unbudgeted/Session Approved Expenditures from Operating & Capital Funds

<i>YTD October Unbudgeted/Session Approved - Operating Fund :</i>		
	"Under Care of Session" reimbursement	\$2,105
		\$2,105
<i>YTD October Unbudgeted/Session Approved - Capital Fund :</i>		
	Capital Campaign - Feasibility Study	\$13,300
	Capital Campaign management - progress payments	\$10,000
		\$23,300

FUND Asset Balances (Net Available):

Operating Fund: \$52,294 / Capital Fund: \$4,185 / Memorial Fund: \$28,245 / Congregational Emergency Fund: \$4,453

Financial impact observations/activities:

* Atonement Child Care lease pro-rated in March, with full lease payments to continue over balance of 2023.

** 2023 actual includes Komarek Trust grant of \$2,575, and Atonement Childcare payment of \$10,795 toward childcare startup costs

*** YTD-Oct cost savings primarily driven by open, and reduced need, personnel positions - \$46,000

With the \$25,000 grant from Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation, phase 1 of our "*Outside Activities for All*" project was completed! Phase I of project included: installation of playground equipment, fencing upgrades, and ADA compliant walkway.

Material and labor delays have pushed out the final steps to complete of our new roof; this includes submitting the final insurance documents for the remaining \$90,000 proceeds. Insurance proceeds have/will cover the entire \$610,000 project!

Replacement of 10-ton HVAC unit that quit working was approved by Session, and completed in July at a cost of \$32,000.

OUR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY!! Thank you to everyone who has participated in all the committees, events, and projects that have been necessary make the campaign a tremendous success! PLEASE plan to attend **Commitment Sunday on November 19!** It will be a time of community and sharing the blessings God has bestowed to each of us!

For questions please reach out to Mike Alfieri (mikea@whcomaha.org / 402-319-8431), or Mike Overby (402-415-8110).

Bible Quiz compiled by Gloria Zinn

1. Which is not one of the names of the 12 Tribes of the Israelites?

A) Issachar B) Naphtali C) Mahalalel D) Zebulun

2. When the Israelites were traveling for 40 years toward the Promised Land, which tribe was responsible for taking down and putting up the Tabernacle?

A) Benjamin B) Levites C) Simeon D) Judah

3. Which book in the Bible was written as a guidebook for holy living for the Israelites?

A) Deuteronomy B) Leviticus
C) Lamentations D) Numbers

4. Why did God kill Aaron's two sons?

A) they sinned by eating the meat left for the priests
B) they disobeyed God's instructions concerning making a different kind of fire
C) they initiated sexual advances toward the Israelite women when they came to pray
D) they lied about their sins by blaming others

5. What river did the Israelites have to cross to enter the Promise Land?

A) Nile B) Euphrates C) Tigris D) Jordan

6. What was the only Israelite tribe that was not given an inheritance?

A) Levi B) Dan C) Judah D) Benjamin

7. Why did God have the Israelites set apart "cities of refuge" in the Promised Land?

A) as places where one could go to worship
B) where the guilty could receive help for their sins
C) as a safe place to go to for someone who committed an accidental murder
D) where the priests lived away from the population

8. As Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against many kings, which king met him and gave him a blessing?

A) King of Sodom B) King of Salem C) King of Elam D) King of Bela

9. Who were the sons of the priest and judge of the Israelites, Eli?

A) Mahlon and Kilian B) Manasseh and Ephraim
C) Shem and Ham D) Hophni and Phinehas

10. Which of Israel's 12 Judges reigned the longest?

A) Gideon B) Ehud C) Deborah D) Othniel

11. Which tribe was Daniel and his three friends members of when they were captured by the Babylonians?

A) Judah B) Asher C) Benjamin D) Simeon

12. What Queen was "forever banished" from the King's presence for refusing to come to a feast he was holding?

A) Queen Athaliah B) Queen Esther
C) Queen Vashti D) Queen Jezebel

**Answers are on the back page.

Mending the Nets Prayer Vigil

Join us in prayer as we ask God to help us discern our time, talents, and treasure that he has provided. May we be united and remain faithful to God's will in what is planned for West Hills next. Members of West Hills will be praying continuously for the 24 hours leading up to our Commitment Sunday, November 19th. If you feel called to pray for our church in this way, please sign-up for a 30-minute slot using [THIS LINK](#), or scan the QR code, or sign-up in Geneva Lounge on Sunday.



SCAN ME

No Tricks, Just Sweet Treats!

by Heather Hipp and Ginny Lakin



On Tuesday morning, October 31, the staff and a few West Hills volunteers had the pure joy of handing out candy to the kids of Atonement Child Care.

The children had started their day wearing pajamas as their Halloween attire and each brought their own decorated "collection" bag to Trick or Treat with the staff. As they started down the hallway they were greeted by a pirate, Anne of Green Gables, two poncho wearing men, a cowboy, a couple non-wearing costume staff and a sweet little dog dressed as a beautiful butterfly, each one with a basket of candy.

The littlest ones were a bit confused about where they were and why but the older, wiser group knew exactly what was happening and thoroughly enjoyed the event!

It's safe to say the adults enjoyed the morning the most and hope to make it an annual event!



Mark your calendar, these events are right around the corner ...

Worship Night *Saturday, November 11*

*Worship and
Guided Prayer
6:30 PM- 7:30 PM*

*Open Worship space
6:00 - 6:30 PM &
7:30 -8:00 PM*

This Saturday, the Worship Night in the Youth Chapel is open to everyone and will consist of worship music and guided prayer from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Come early or stay later for additional time at the interactive prayer stations or on your own in reflection. If you can't get enough of worship on Sunday morning, then this night is for you to worship until your heart is content in the presence of our great God.

It wouldn't be Thanksgiving without our special Thanksgiving Eve Service and Pie Fest! This service is a favorite of many at West Hills. It's a time when friends share from the heart about their earthly journey and how God has touched their lives. The night is rounded out with fellowship and pies galore! You won't want to miss this night of thanksgiving and blessings with your church family.

THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE & PIE FEST

**NOVEMBER 22
7 PM**



cookies & cocoa

ALL-AGES
CHRISTMAS EVENT

**DECEMBER 8
6:30-8**

sign-up at: whcomaha.org

Join us for a night of family fun, snacks, games, music, and decorating cookies to be given as a blessing to someone you love! This event is open to all! Children must be accompanied by at least one adult.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



NOVEMBER

1-Rod Hansen
2-Beckett Dunn
Judy Schnabel
5-Claire Neil
7-Dorthea Brady
Carolyn Reeves
Bruce Workman
8-Hannah Weller
9-Juliana Scheopner

10-Catie Scheopner
11-Denise Dolezal
12-Virginia Pickett
13-Bonnie Aden
Rick Reeves
Ginny Jansen
15-Charissa Wells
19-Jana Prescott
22-Kelly Briggs
23-Mary Jirak

Cheryl Stout
24-Julianne Gill
25-Jeff Smith
26-Kaden Kopperud
Doug Stout
Donna Peterson
27-Tricia Freeman

9-Joanne Topolski
11-Branden O'Hare
15-Eddie Nelson

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

DECEMBER

1-Candy Glasgow
5-Wayne Moore