

The Window

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



June 2017

Does Mainline Christianity Only Have 23 Easters Left?

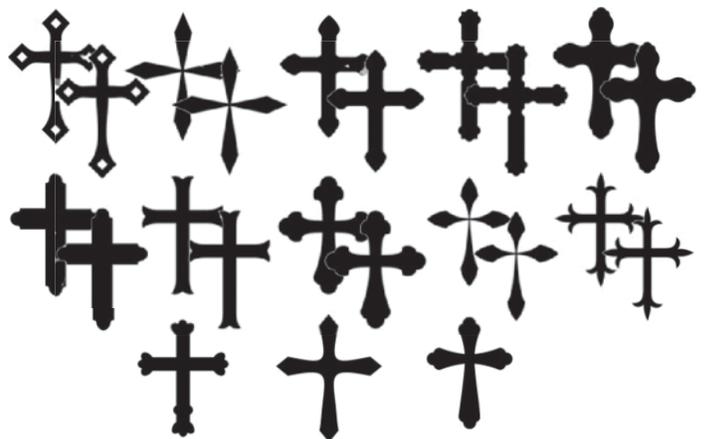
by Derek Richman, Pastor

At the beginning of May I read an article that scared me. The article was written by Ed Stetzer. Ed Stetzer holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair at Wheaton College and is the executive director of the Billy Graham Center there. The article was published in the Washington Post on April 28, 2017. You may read the full article by typing in this link into your web browser: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/04/28/if-it-doesnt-stem-its-decline-mainline-protestantism-has-just-23-easters-left/?utm_term=.b8119e327699.

The basic thesis of the article is that if current trends continue, mainline Christianity only has 23 Easters left. Stetzer points out that trend lines which track mainline protestant attendance and mainline protestant self-identification will cross in 2039. In Stetzer's opinion that will mean the end of mainline denominations in America.

According to Stetzer the main reason for the decline in mainline denominations is due to the abandonment of the central orthodox beliefs of Christianity. Stetzer concludes that when churches stop declaring basic Christian tenets such as: the authority of the Bible, the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the physical resurrection of Jesus then the church is no longer attractive to people and will slowly decline. Stetzer indicates there are other reasons for the decline but theology is the most important reason.

Stetzer's article should cause us some concern and introspection but I do not believe that 2039 will see the end of mainline denominations. However, it should serve as a call to all of us to know our Bibles and tell others the Good News of Jesus Christ.





This month Julie Anderson has supplied her “go to” recipe for taco soup. Julie says this is an incredibly easy recipe. She uses it on days she knows she is going to be busy and especially on days when the family’s dinner time is “hit or miss.”

TACO SOUP

- 1 can black beans, undrained
- 1 jar salsa (about 2 cups) (you can determine the hotness)
- 1 can red beans, undrained
- 1 can corn, drained
- 1 can diced tomatoes with juice
- 1-2 chicken breasts, whole or cut up

Put all ingredients in crock pot in the morning. Cook on LOW 6-10 hours. Can be served with cheese or sour cream.



Have a Recipe to Share?

With both parents working these days it's difficult to come up with a healthy dinner after work.

Do you have a recipe for an easy-to-prepare meal?

Please send your recipes to Maralee Gifford:

giffordgr@msn.com

In the subject line please put “Recipe for Newsletter” (she will know it is a safe to open.)

What Is ... The Casserole Ministry

Need a meal when Mom or Dad (as the case may be) is too sick to fix dinner? Need a meal when you bring a new baby home or maybe when the main chef of the household is in the hospital?

The place to come is the freezer in the West Hills main kitchen. There is a special shelf marked “Casserole Ministry” where you can choose from already made casseroles, fruit cups and sweet breads. Each casserole feeds two people and more can be taken if your family is larger. You can choose between lasagna toss, chicken tetrazinni, ham/mac n cheese, or chicken/green bean casserole.



There are about twenty five ladies that take turns getting together two–four times a year and put together 20-30 dinners at a time. They love it when they can help people through a difficult time by providing a meal. Just sign out your meal on the front door of the freezer so the ladies can keep track. While you’re at it take a look at a picture (also on the freezer) of the last group of ladies who prepared the meals.

A big “thank you” to all the ladies who are part of this ministry. These meals come in handy at times when families are in need of some helping hands.

Are you interested in joining this ministry? Please contact Heather Hipp, all willing hands are welcome.

April 2017 Operating Fund Report		
	<i>as of April 30</i>	<i>as of April 30</i>
	YTD Actual	TD Budget
Revenues	\$371,612	\$418,080
Expenses	\$408,437	\$476,516
Surplus/(deficit)	(\$ 36,825)	(\$ 58,436)

Women's Silent Retreat

A "30 something" offered this comment from her first silent retreat: "The thought of spending a weekend in silence with a bunch of women was not my idea of how to spend my free time. I felt I could connect with Jesus on my own time and there was no need to drive to Schuyler, Nebr. at the Benedict Center to meet with Jesus! I knew my job, family, housework, etc., often got in the way of spending the quality time I wanted in seeking



Jesus' guidance and counsel, but I kept telling myself I would find that time at home. However, I had a good friend who had gone on the retreat before and was really pushing me to join her this time, so I went. At the end of the retreat, and even throughout the weeks and months following the retreat, I continued to think how wrong I was in thinking I would find the time to connect with the one person who loved me unconditionally, who I needed to share uninterrupted time without all the noise. What I needed in my walk with Jesus and in my own spiritual growth in my faith, I found in that silent weekend with Jesus."

The annual summer silent retreat is scheduled for June 23-25 at the Benedict Center outside of Schuyler, Nebr. and is open to all women, whether you attend West Hills Church or not. This retreat is a wonderful way to meet with Jesus in an environment that is not filled with all the noise our lives are often subjected to day after day. If you have had the pleasure of spending time with Jesus in a weekend of silence than you know how special that time was. If you have never taken the opportunity to give yourself this very special gift, then here is your chance. There is a limited

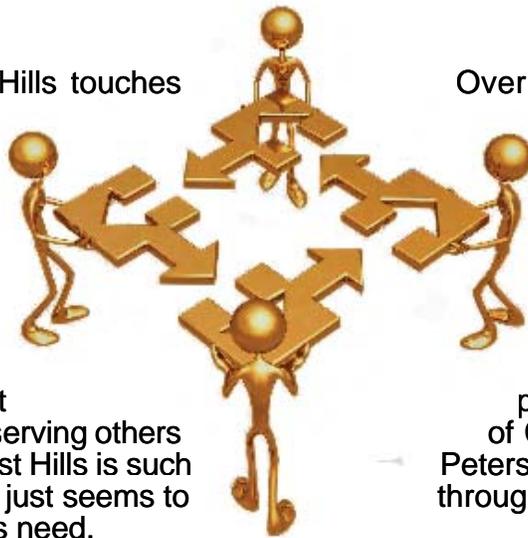
number of rooms available, you do not share a room insuring you of your silence, so register as soon as possible. Registration began on May 21, in the Geneva Lounge, and the cost is \$125, which includes your three meals on Saturday and breakfast Sunday morning. There are scholarships available for anyone who feels the cost is prohibitive at this time. Our theme for this retreat is "Letting Go", and there will be several teaching sessions available for those interested in attending, but those are optional. The main goal of the retreat is to give you the opportunity to connect with Jesus, giving Him your full attention for a whole weekend of a level of awareness you may have never experienced before. Won't you join us? If you have any questions, including the need for a ride, contact one of the retreat leaders, Tracy Enholm: 402-289-1595 or email: huskerTracy@cox.net, or Gloria Zinn: 402-393-2843 or email gbenett34@cox.net.



To the Thursday Morning Bible Group:
Ladies, thank you for your generous gift! It has been our pleasure to teach this year, and you are all our gift!
Deena, Jackie, Lou and Gloria

Relational Connection by Judy Nelson

Caregiving Ministry at West Hills touches the lives of a significant portion of our congregation on a regular basis. This includes Connection Groups, Stephen Ministers, Practical Needs and Caregiving Ambassadors. Twelve deacons lead in these four areas under Pastor Deena's oversight. West Hills is a loving, caring congregation that has a long history of effectively serving others without fanfare. The DNA of West Hills is such that serving one another in love just seems to flow whenever/wherever there is need.



Over the past year we have trained several new CA's. Throughout the year we provide continuing education, encouragement, and opportunities for sharing. We invite you, men and women of all ages, to explore opportunities to serve as a Caregiving Ambassador. If you would like to know more, please contact one of the Deacons of Caregiving Ambassadors: Donna Peterson, Patti Brownlee or Judy Nelson through the church office.

On the last Sunday of April, Caregiving Ambassadors hosted a "Meet and Greet Reception" in Fellowship Hall. Some of our guests met their Caregiving Ambassadors for the first time; they all enjoyed refreshments and conversation with others who are part of the CA flock. It was a time to celebrate our connection to one another.

Why is caregiving important at West Hills? We want to live our lives relationally within the larger church community. Connection Groups have brought together new and long-time members to grow in friendship, to grow deeper in faith, and to serve others in new ways. Not everyone is able or perhaps interested in participating in a Connection Group for a myriad of reasons; health, schedules, transportation, or other constraints. We have a way to extend connectational and relational care to every member of the congregation. Our 23 Caregiving Ambassadors each contact from 7-10 family units by phone, email, notes, or personal visits. It is our goal that every member of West Hills Church be connected with at least one person, even one they might not otherwise know, and with whom they can share joys, concerns, and friendship. With permission, Caregiving Ambassadors let our pastors know of special needs. Someone may be anticipating surgery and would love to have a pastoral call. There may have been a serious diagnosis or a death in the family, or another particular need. We can also provide information about Stephen Ministry so they can be confidentially linked to a Stephen Minister.

We may forget about the meals lovingly prepared and frozen in the kitchen at West Hills, but our Practical Needs Team enables us to extend our care at a time of need in a way that almost seems too simple!

Caregiving Ambassadors are often first responders to fellow church members.



Spiritual Correspondence

by Jana Prescott



What is fear? (March 5 - God Calling, by Two Listeners) Being afraid of the dark? Being afraid of thunder? Having an unpleasant emotion? How about being afraid of Jesus? No one needs to be, but I think that happens to all of us at some time. I know it happens to me, way too often. How can any of us be so hard on ourselves if we have accepted the fact that Jesus loves us and can take our problems and turn them into something good; something we can accept and use? Think about this. What can you do that will show others you love Jesus? Serve Jesus? I don't think you need to let everyone know by word of mouth that you're serving Jesus. I wouldn't, for my fear of speaking. But I do love to serve Him, and I'm praying that the people who are around me will see Him inside of me, where I know He is.

Scripture states the only thing we can demand of God is: "Thy will be done!" (March 5: Footprints calendar)

For VBS, we use a number of common household items that you may have on hand or in storage. We would greatly appreciate you loaning the following items to help us get ready for active learning, game playing, craft-making, Bible-experiencing good times.

Please come!

Volunteers needed and come for dinner and fellowship!

Borrowed Items – please label with your name and phone number and/or email address so we may return your items

Handheld, folding fan

Red rope

Yellow or straw-colored or straw-print tablecloth, curtain, or shower curtain

Plastic greenery, dried or silk plants

Rope lights, white and colored

Flashlight, lantern-style

Bungee cords, 18", 20", 30"

100% wool scarves or cloth

Small string of battery-operated LED lights

Leaf blower

Balloon pump

Small, round baskets to represent a nest

Towels

Oscillating sprinkler

Flashlights

5-gallon buckets (please be sure to label if you'd like it returned)

1-gallon buckets or large sand pails

Artificial food



At Maker FunFactory, we will use a vast quantity of odds and ends as we play games and make crafts. Maybe you can rescue some treasures from recycling or the donation pile or you might run across a sale at the craft store. Please help us repurpose recyclables in a way that helps kids and families grow in understanding that we are each created by God, built for a unique purpose!

Carpet squares (or remnant that can be cut into squares)

5 gallon buckets (will have a hole drilled in the bottom)

Balloons, 7" and 9" any color

Clear plastic shower curtain

Coffee cans, lemonade cans or similar (plastic, cardboard or metal)

Pool noodles

Clean soup/vegetable cans, (lids removed with a smooth edge if possible)

Toilet paper tubes

Paper towel tubes

Bottle tops of all sizes

Small magnets

Aleene's craft glue

Chenille wires (a.k.a. pipe cleaners) of all colors and sizes

Slinkys



Servant Saturday

by Caitlin O'Hare, Director of Mission Ministry



What is the Kingdom of God really like? Jesus teaches about it many times during his ministry on earth. It is the rule and reign of God everywhere. In God's Kingdom everything which is broken is

made new, reconciled, redeemed, restored. The church, the people of God, can give foretastes of what this will be like to our neighbors, our communities, and to the world. One of the ways we do this at West Hills is through serving the neighbors that live around our building.

In the Kingdom of God the poor are helped, the widows are cared for, the lonely are visited, the sick are comforted. More accurately, there will be no poverty, no loneliness, no sickness. We can bring a preview of the Kingdom to our neighbors by serving them in the name of Jesus. Jesus entered into people's lives with grace and truth, his demonstration of the good news of the gospel gave credit to his proclamation. We serve not out of obligation, but out of gratitude and joy. Gratitude that while we were still sinners Jesus died for us, received the punishment for our sins, was resurrected, and we are now free.

This year for Servant Saturday we served twenty-four different households in the Westgate neighborhood, and one family from West Hills.

We raked leaves, cleared flower beds, cleaned windows, checked gutters, planted flowers, mulched, painted, and more! We always offer to



pray with them before we leave and most accept.

On the same morning we also sent a team to serve our friends in the Skinner East neighborhood. In conjunction with the City of Omaha's Spring clean-up, we hauled unwanted items to the waiting dumpsters, mowed lawns, and beautified the neighborhood with help from our Lighthouse family, Brendan and Alee George.

There are times in our lives when we experience "thin places," where the veil between God's Kingdom

and the world seems nearly transparent; where we can almost imagine what it will be like when there is no longer a separation between God and his creation. When we love our neighbors we help them experience the love of God. Thank you to all who served!

Bicycle Tune-Up at Westgate School



When I was a child I spent countless summer hours riding my bicycle around our neighborhood. Riding my bike to my friends' houses, to the pool, to the park, to Grandma's, was the best. Having a bicycle was freedom. I don't think too much has changed.

On May 2, several gentlemen from West Hills coordinated and served at a bike tune-up event for Westgate Elementary School to help the kids of our community prepare their bikes for summer. Led by Tom Pittack, the men oiled bike chains, filled tires with air, and performed other simple repairs to make sure kids had a fun and safe summer on their bikes.

Thank you to Tom Pittack, Rick Schieuer, Tim Weller, and Rick Martinson for serving the families of our community in this way! We are blessed to be a blessing.





First Sunday of each month.

Services: 8:15, 9:30 & 11 a.m.

Nursery: 9:10a-noon

Kids Church: 9:10a-10:30a

Jr./Sr. High SS: 9:30a-10:30a

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																		
<p>May 2017</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							1	2	3								
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	Sunday Bulletin Copy Due On Mondays*			Al-Anon 12p* Women's Leadership: 12p	AA mtg: 7:30p Al-Anon: new 7:30 & reg. 8p	Arabic Fellowship Service: 5:30p*																																																		
VBS Training: 11:45-2:30p Familia De Dios: 1-4p* Next Gen Worship: 6:30p The Story chapter 20	4	5	6	7	8	9	10																																																	
	Newsletter Writing Team: 11:30a AA mtg: 8p*	Men's Bible Study 6:30a* Arts for All: 5, 6 & 7p Get Connected Class: 6p Worship Team: 6p NO InGathering	Women's Bible 9:15a WNC-Wed. Night Connect Dinner: 5:30p Connection Groups, choir, children/youth worship team, nursery care: 6:30p VBS Ldr. Training: 5:45		Celebrations Lunch: 11:30a AA Ann. Event: 7:30p Al-Anon: new 7:30 & reg. 8p	Abide Block Party 9 a.m.																																																		
VBS Training: 11:45-2:30p Jr. High Camp Next Gen Worship: 6:30p chapter 21	11	12	13	14	15	16	17																																																	
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Father's Day	18	19	20	21	22	23	24																																																	
Sr. High Camp		Arts for All: 5, 6 & 7p Worship Team: 6p Session: 7p	Women's Bible 9:15a VBS Ldr. Training: 5:45 Bicycle Trip/Papio Trail: 6p Financial Peace class: 6p Choir Rehearsal: 6:30p		Sr. High Camp	Women's Silent Retreat St. Benedict Center Schuyler, Nebraska AA Ann. Event: 7:30p Al-Anon: new 7:30 & reg. 8p																																																		
Summer Sermon Series Elders Listening Sessions: 9:30 chapel 11:00 Sr. High Room VBS: dinner 5-5:45p activities and classes 6-8:30p Summer Sermon Series	25	26	27	28	29	30	<p>July 2017</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
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		Worship Team: 6p Westgate Neighborhood Meeting: 6:30 p.m.	Women's Bible 9:15a Choir Rehearsal: 6:30p Next Gen College: 6:30p	VBS: dinner 5-5:45p activities and classes 6-8:30p	AA Ann. Event: 7:30p Al-Anon: new 7:30 & reg. 8p																																																			

Happy Birthday to ...

JUNE

1-Beth Anderson
Alyssa DeClue
Isaiah Miller
Kim Sedivy
Ryan Turner
2-Debra Chadwick
3-David Lucks
Gabiella Minahan
4-Collette Schmidtke
Rhona Yetts
5-Everly Hanna
Jo Kohrt
6-Erin Blocker
7-Aidan McKenna
Jane Noden
Jan Nowling
Michael Wohlgemuth
8-Colin Leslie
9-Rosemary Frandeen
10-Warren Powell
Joshua Thompson
11-Nick Gratton
Andy Jansen
Macy Moore
René Padilla
Rich Schmidt
12-David Cook
Kathy Leach
Lake Meyer
13-Gabrielle Burns
Jozef Schmidtke
14-Penelope Cosgrove
15-Alyssa Curran
Linda Springsted

17-Sue Balkovec
Joey Laughlin
Tessa Overby
Jeff Saar
18-Maggie Hake
Amanda Huck
Aryn Huck
19-Kara DeHaven
Roger Harned
20-Paula Ashford
Scarlet Caniglia
21-Ashley Delaney
Jan Vermilyea
22-Debb Andersen
Jack Johnson
Evelyn Peck
23-Jordan Schaffer
24-Lois Crinklaw
Mark Kriglstein
Joan Livingston
25-Henry Burke
26-Mark Jacobsen
Mary Beth Seyler
27-Jerrian Hawkins
Linda Nodes
28-Jacob Gibbons
Rob Laughlin
Stan Owens
Mary Wistrom
29-Macayla Core
Deb Johnson
Jane Power
Josh Sauer
Tobias Thorberg
Terry Topolski

30-Gavin Mielke
Steve Nowling

JULY

1-Mitchell Johnson
2-Nancy Anderson
Meredith Dierking
Mark Hawkins
Karen Hollingsworth
Noreen Johnson
Bud Nelson
Linda Schuchmann
3-Jerilyn Frisbie
Alison Kopperud
Tessa Lane
Caitlin O'Hare
Mary Rice
Alisha Sauer
Dana Zoll
4-Jon Hoeven
Terra Swan
Gavin Wohlgemuth
5-Lauren Dostal
Maura Ellison
Michael Gerbeling
Emily Lenart



www.whcomaha.org
West Hills Church
3015 South 82nd Avenue
Omaha NE 68124-3291
402-391-8788



West Hills Vacation Bible School

NEW TIME!

Sunday • June 25 - Thursday • June 29

Family Dinner - 5:00-5:45 p.m.

Fun Factory - 6:00-8:30 p.m.