

# The Window

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



July 2017

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## The Importance of Community by Carol Isaac

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What does the term “Christian Community” mean? Usually people use this term to refer to Christians in general. When we look at the Bible, it seems to give us two additional perspectives. One is the Greek word for church (*ekklesia*) which refers to an assembly or gathering of people. The early church gathered frequently in homes or public places for fellowship, prayer and worship (Acts 2:42). The Bible also expresses Christian community through the word *koinonia*, a term usually translated as “fellowship.” In Acts 2:42, “they devoted themselves to fellowship.” “And all who believed were together and had all things in common” (v.44). 1 Timothy 4:12 teaches us that the Christian community is not specific to one age group, but consists of all true believers who comprise the family of God.

If we are looking at ways to model Christian community in our current culture, we need look no further than Jesus, who modeled “community” perfectly for his followers. He did this through his teachings, service, character and sacrifice. Once he was crucified and rose again, he spent 40 days with His community of believers, preparing them for the hardships and opportunities to come. He then left them physically, but sent the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to live at a new level of Christian community, while spreading the gospel far and wide.

West Hills Church has been blessed with very relational believers who model Christian community to our City, ministry partners, friends, family, and most importantly, each other. One of the ways this modeling takes place is through our small group ministry –both covenant groups and connection groups. If you would like to

learn more about our small group ministry, or are feeling a need to connect more closely with fellow believers, please feel free to talk with one of the deacons of small groups listed below. They would love to talk “community” with you!

Heather Hipp 402-889-2118  
Steve Seyler 402-331-2941





### Banana Bars from Jan Vermilyea

- ½ cup of butter or Imperial margarine (softened)
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup of buttermilk or (sour milk---place 1 tablespoon of lemon juice in reg. milk)
- ¾ measuring cup and fill with milk) let sit for a few minutes
- 2 ripe bananas (mashed)
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- Chopped nuts (optional)
- Place in a greased jelly roll pan
- Bake at 350 for 30 minutes
- When cool, frost with butter cream or cream cheese frosting
- Top with chopped nuts
- Cream Cheese frosting
- 1 stick of butter or margarine
- 1-8 oz. package of softened cream cheese
- 1 lb. powdered sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- Mix/spread on bars and top with chopped nuts

### 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](mailto:giffordgr@msn.com)

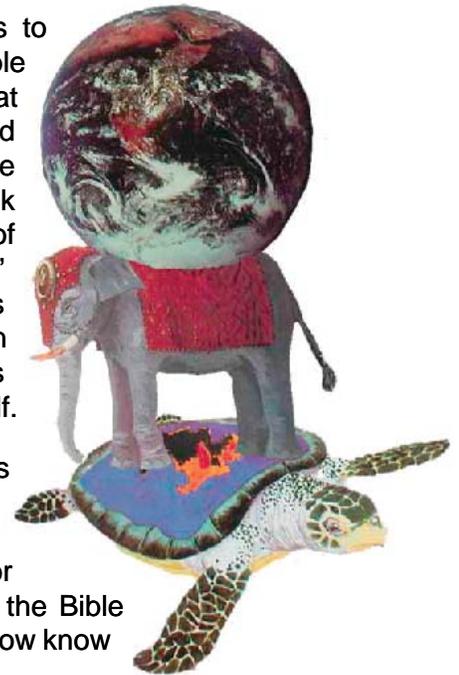
**In the subject line please put "Recipe for Newsletter"**

(she will know it is a safe to open.)

## Science and the Bible

One of the best ways to trust in what the Bible says is to know that God was way ahead of us in the science department. It took scientists hundreds of years to "discover" certain scientific facts that God has known since creation. Let's start with the earth itself.

While early sources declared the earth sat on the back of an elephant or turtle, or was held up by Atlas, the Bible alone stated what we now know to be true:



"He hangs the earth on nothing." - Job 26:7

Or, how about the knowledge that the earth was a circle:

"He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers."-Isaiah 40:22. And people didn't walk off the edge or fall off into space which led scientists to wonder "why not" and to "discover" gravity.

Keep reading the newsletter every month and you will be treated to scientific revelations that prove our God is an amazing creator.

### May 2017 Operating Fund Report

	<i>as of May 31</i>	<i>as of May 31</i>
	<b>YTD Actual</b>	<b>TD Budget</b>
Revenues	\$490,725	\$571,664
Expenses	\$556,461	\$620,954
Surplus/(deficit)	(\$ 65,736)	(\$ 49,290)

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## A Person of Interest - Dr. Lyn Graves

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Dr. Lyn Graves is a long-time member of West Hills. He has a successful business with his associates as an optometrist working with the elderly in nursing homes in a number of states.

In December of 2005, three months after hurricane Katrina hit in Louisiana, Dr. Lyn traveled with his two business partners on a “mini mission trip” to Louisiana to treat the numerous evacuated nursing home residents for their eye care needs. They had been evacuated from damaged or destroyed nursing homes without their glasses, and some

with eye problems, and housed in the hallways of other nursing homes sleeping on cots FEMA had set up in the hallways. It was in these hallways that they cared for these elderly patients for over a week and a half. Little did Lyn realize the turn his life would take when he returned to Omaha.

The day after returning Lyn experienced an infection in his facial nerve causing him to “look like a horror show!” He said one half of his face was “drooping into my lap” and he was in excruciating pain. He sought medical treatment without any relief. As the pain left his face it moved into his hands and feet. He stated 72 joints were inflamed which caused constant pain and he found it difficult to stand or walk. Sitting became the “most comfortable” method for treating his patients, and eventually he needed a handicapped sticker since he could not walk very far.

He found he was unable to “keep up with the normal responsibilities at home,” such as cutting the grass or fixing needed home repairs, so the Graves sold their house and moved into a condominium. Beyond his regular job duties, Lyn found “I couldn’t do much of anything” and needed to move “as little as possible.” Weather changes were especially painful and on a 1-10

pain scale, with 10 being the highest, he stated his pain would stay “at a 10 or 11 for two-three days.” By 2008 he felt these health problems would be with him “for the rest of my life.” No medication seemed to help so he had to reduce his work schedule to two-three days a week.

It was then he decided to work with his physician on prescribing drugs which would “take the edge off of the pain for awhile.” As the drug dosage began to increase due to the need to control the increase in his pain levels, Lyn decided in 2012 to “back off the pain medication when I had reached twenty pills a day!”

Lyn said he had continued praying for healing over the years, and said there were others who were also praying for him, but the chronic pain never ceased its pressure on his life. He had always been active in Boy Scouts, but could no longer continue with the meetings and camping trips. He had also been very involved in hiking, camping and mountain climbing with his four children, but those activities had also come to an end due to the pain.

However, it was during this time in 2012 when God stepped in, using Lyn’s daughter Katie and Pastor Myron Pierce from Bridge Church as His messengers. Katie had been attending Bridge Church’s 4:30 a.m. prayer meetings. She had been urging her father to attend, and on Good Friday, as Lyn heard the front door close as Katie left for the prayer meeting, he thought “this would be a good time to start the Easter Week” and joined Katie at the church.

Although he had continued to pray for release from his pain he never became upset with God. He was depressed going through all the pain without any lasting relief from medical help, and often felt separated from others, but he “concentrated on Jesus’ suffering on the cross as well as seeing others in nursing homes with a lot worse pain than me.” He said he walked “limping” into Bridge Church on that early morning and after taking a seat, was asked by Pastor Pierce why he was limping. He “reluctantly” shared the pain he had been experiencing in his joints, especially his fingers, hands and feet. The pastor held Lyn’s feet and hands while praying over him, and Lyn suddenly experienced “a flow... a melting away leaving my toes and fingers!” He walked out of the church without a limp and over the next two weeks said he continued to experience the flow leaving his toes and feet. His wife walked into their living room with a huge smile watching Lyn being able to freely wiggle his fingers, something he hadn’t been able to do for years.

Although it took several years for his strength to come back into his body, he began returning to his previous life. Hiking, camping, mountain climbing were again experienced with a great deal of happiness. This Father's Day the family enjoyed all the activities they previously enjoyed with their father at Platte River State Park, including a heavy storm which hit the area.

Looking back over the last painful years, Lyn said he is grateful he had the experience. It has given him more insight, especially with his patients who are suffering with pain. He tells them "suffering sucks" as he puts his arm around them or pats them on their shoulders. He finds a look from these patients that he never saw before, "like they know I really understand what they are experiencing." Lyn believes he has more to give than ever before, and also is experiencing more "joy" in his life. He usually takes his backpack with him when traveling to other states for work "so I can experience that state's hikes, mountains and trails." Lyn continues to "marvel at my wellness when I am out backpacking" and appreciates all the things "I took for granted before."

He shared that he "honestly feels like the person that walks away from a plane crash as the lone survivor where 300 people perished." He asks "what did the other 300 do wrong? What did that lone survivor do right?" He reported that after six years with chronic pain he has learned "one simple truth: God is God." He questions whether God is arbitrary, too busy to notice when one of "his little ones suffers," or "has a mean sense of humor." He stated he "doesn't know why I had that crazy pain day and night all those years, but is very grateful God intervened," that "God's Grace and not my actions or goodness led to my healing." Lyn said he doesn't understand, (any more than any of us) why there is suffering in our world. He summarized by saying "I don't need to understand because it won't change the fact: God is God." Thanks for sharing Dr. Lyn.



*"For I know the plans  
I have for you,  
declares the Lord,  
plans to prosper you and not to  
harm you; plans to give you hope  
and a future.*

*Then you will call on Me  
and come and pray to Me,  
and I will listen to you.  
You will seek Me and find Me  
when you seek Me with all your  
heart."*

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)

Father, we come to you with heavy hearts. None of us wanted this to be the place where we would land. We all had looked forward to a new season, a new vision. Father, we want to look up to You. We confess that it is just so tempting to look at each other: to judge, to blame. When tempted to do this, teach us to turn from those thoughts and turn our hearts and minds to You. Pour out Your Spirit upon everyone. Teach us how to call on You and come to You anew in prayer. Give us faith and hope that comes only from You. Teach us how to seek You with our whole heart. Hear us when we cry. Reveal Yourself to us like never before... we need You. We all need You. Amen.

These words are from a friend, and we all need to keep them in our heart, and recall them constantly.

### **Church Family News**

#### **Hospitalized/Recovery**

Bonnie Bender, Joanne Workman

#### **Deaths**

*Prayers of comfort for family and friends of:*

Betty Manna on the loss of her mother, member, Trudy Burns.  
Sherry Reese on the loss of her mother.

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## Jr. High Camp at Como, Colorado by Michael Johnson

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Several West Hills Next Gen students in Jr. High attended camp in Como, Colorado, June 11–16, 2017, along with Next Gen Director Michael Johnson and Elder Julie Anderson. At an elevation of 10,125 feet with a spectacular view students were encouraged to put their faith in Jesus then “Don’t Blink” the theme of the lessons for the week. Besides hearing from God’s Word, everyone had a great week of recreation as well as time to build new or strengthen existing relationships.

Jesus was the main focus of the week and students had a variety of ways to interact with God. Evening chapel services included great times of worship for students and leaders alike. A speaker blessed students with a good message every night explaining how to put our trust into Jesus and to stay a devoted follower and “Don’t Blink” when things get hard. At each chapel, one of the college age staff members of the camp staff also shared their story and answered Jesus’ question “Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15, Mark 8:29, and Luke 9:20). Students were also encouraged to spend solo time with God during morning devotionals. Finally they had a chance to go on several faith journeys in bible adventure times – which included a trip up Mount Baldy, a hike to an historic cemetery nearby, and experiencing a secret church meeting while studying about the oppressed church around the world!

While Jesus was at the center of every event, students had



plenty of time to have fun during recreation times. The hike up the mountain provided a spectacular view. Students learned new games like “9 Square” and had intense gaga ball competitions. There was a fantastic obstacle course and playground fully equipped with a turtle swing! The rock climbing wall on the side of the mountain was not for the faint of

heart (but entirely safe and self-belayed). The biggest highlight was the 50-foot high and 200-yard long zip line course, completed several times by all students and once by Michael and Julie.

Maybe the biggest highlight of the week was how much this group got to bond and reach out to others. As a small group several local students were added to our purple tribe and our college staff student Kurt was

deeply moved by how much God worked from the students growing together and working in his heart. He felt called to work with jr. high students from working with our group. Students shared highs and lows each night after chapel and prayed for one another out loud even when they were not entirely comfortable with that concept. The time in the vans listening to Adventures in Odyssey, playing war or backgammon, and just talking with each other was a great way that relationships were nourished. Finally everyone made it home safe and sound before the awful storms that hit the area when we arrived home.



# High School Camp-The Catalyst by Michael Johnson



In a number of ways high school camp was similar to junior high: same location Camp Como, same theme “Don’t Blink,” many of the same worship songs, and similar activities; however, it was in many ways a very different experience and a huge catalyst for Next Gen. Led by Next Gen Director Michael Johnson, a group of fifteen students, four adult volunteers, and one toddler spent June 18 -23, in Colorado learning about Jesus, how to tell their stories, having a lot of fun, and growing closer to one another.



The theme of “Don’t Blink” after putting your faith in Jesus was still the main emphasis of the teaching throughout the week. All of the leaders from West Hills got to share parts of their stories of walking with Jesus to our students and students were encouraged to figure out how to tell others about Jesus. Some were even bold enough to share their journeys with the rest of the group later in the week. Our group had their own campfire every evening where we could debrief events of the day and share what God was doing. This led to a deeper sense of community with one another.

Recreation times were slightly different. After getting bounced early from a dodgeball tournament, West Hills started a boys vs girls volleyball match that was epic in scale. Ethan N. was the camp-wide carpet ball champion while Spider-tag was an event not to be missed each day. The mountain hike was a challenge. Instead of being mandatory, many students were up to the task and all were surprised to see that Dr. Robert had beaten them all up to the summit, and then he beat them back down, too. Another age related surprise was watching Tim J., age four, going on the zip line course! We also had quite the time on the Arkansas River in Brown’s Canyon going on a whitewater rafting tour. Rule number one was stay in the boat which we were all able to do, albeit there were several close calls.

The coolest part was how much the group had grown together. As we came back we rolled up to the start of VBS, all of the kids who should have been sleeping and tired were up on the east lawn playing games, having a volleyball rematch, and continuing their time of fellowship. Students have been in a tribe together at VBS and especially during dinner time. It is wonderful to see God bringing us all closer in relationship with Him and each other!





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### **NO MAILING OF THE NEWSLETTER!**

In order to be good stewards of West Hills funds we are no longer "mass" mailing the paper copy of the newsletter.

Our newsletter is on our website

<http://www.whcomaha.org/media/newsletters>

A **limited number** of paper copies will be available in the wall racks.

If you do not have access to the website or prefer to have a paper copy mailed, you must notify Charissa Wells.

402-391-8662 X 1020

[charissa@whcomaha.org](mailto:charissa@whcomaha.org)

### YOUR 2017 SESSION

Julie Anderson - Youth  
Marti Bloes - Caregiving  
Kathy Cordes - Westgate Community Partnership  
Mark Hawkins - Worship & Music  
Mike Kelley - Stewardship  
John O'Donovan - Personnel  
Brenton Pyle - Support  
Mary Beth Seyler - Children  
Peg Shirley - Mission  
Trink Traudt - Spiritual Formation  
- Building & Grounds  
- Nominating



## Happy Birthday to ...

### JULY

1-Mitchell Johnson

2-Nancy Anderson

Meredith Dierking

Mark Hawkins

Karen Hollingsworth

Noreen Johnson

Bud Nelson

Linda Schuchmann

3-Jerilyn Frisbie

Alison Kopperud

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

6-David Weaver

7-Nathan Anderson

Rina Degand

Greg Schuchmann

Tim Weller

8-Mike Alfieri

Stephanie Scott

Luis/Michael Sorensen

Ginger Travaille

Jennifer Wohlgemuth

9-Alex Jansen

Kara Lenart

D.J. Long

Phil Oftelie

Mike Overby

Liz Rhodes

10-Lou Dye

Mad Smith

Jim Thomas

11-Jasmine Evans

Levi Fields

Zechariah Fields

Jacob Fraser

Drew James

12-Don Krysl

13-Melissa Sherlock

14-Gloria Grey

Karen Jarvis

15-James Alexander

Lanie DeBrie

Jim Isaac

Krista Pittack

Dave Turner

16-Nancy Anderson

Grace Bailey

John Good, Jr.

Barb Westcott

17-Julie Wollen

18-Joseph Morgensen

Grace Sadler

Susan Smith

Sami Voshell

19-Cosmo Deakins

20-Terry Gadwood

Henry Harrison

Ben Loeck

Kaitlyn Mustard

21-Heather Hipp

Rachel Overby

22-Severin Hansen

Sophie Nutsch

Maggie Petersen

23-Michaella Dunn

Donna Lee Johnson

Janet Laughlin

24-Bennett Bates

Sydney Brun

25-JB Core

Brody Vermilyea

26-Graham Papenfuss

Nathaniel Skalberg

27-Bri Jasso

Taylor Novotny

Joe Robb

Paul Springsted

Carson Tiedie

28-Kevin Davis

Brian Nodes

Bob Sleyster

Sarah Weller

29-Cole Bisson

Sunny Gill

30-Paul Anderson

Jeanette Capps

Sam Carey

Virginia Kurtz

Chris Moats

Jonathan Scheopner

31-Quinn Bates

Brittany Patterson

Kathie Stemm

Emily Zabrowski

**AUGUST**

1-Patti Brownlee

Brayden Gill

2-Hal Capps

Dave O'Dell

3-Steve Reese

Cleo Wells

4-Graycen Boettger

Sandy Jernigan

Alex Narducci

Michael Shirley



www.whcomaha.org  
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## LUNCH ON THE GREEN

Sundays July 2-August 6  
after 11:00 a.m. service

Bring a blanket/chair for a laid  
back time to connect with others

Meet on the NORTH side  
of the building

