

# The Window

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



December 2017

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## Interim Pastor by Deena Candler

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I never planned to go into ministry. My plan was to go into international development in the private sector in Latin America. But during my senior year of college a few people said they thought I should go to seminary. I thought it was a ridiculous idea. But at their urging I initially went for just one year—with the thought that I would never regret having a year of seminary no matter what I ended up doing in life. And then it happened. One day during that first year of seminary I was walking home. I was thinking about the parable of the talents (read it in Matthew 25:14-30). As I was in the middle of Edge Hill Road in Princeton, New Jersey it hit me: I, too, had gifts...and it would be a sin to bury them. I knew then that I was headed to two more years of seminary and ordained ministry.

As you know, there have been changes at West Hills Church during the past year. When I returned from sabbatical I was approached and asked to consider serving as the Interim Pastor. I said 'no'—that I did not think it was the right thing to do. I was asked to pray about it and said I would—assuming the answer would be 'no.' I headed off to St. Benedict's Center the following weekend to lead the women's silent retreat. I was walking around the lake at St. Ben's and praying, and suddenly I was not on the path around the lake, but back on Edge Hill Road in Princeton, New Jersey...reminded again that I had gifts, and it would be a sin to bury them.

That however, did not stop me from saying 'no' two more times. And then God brought me the image of Moses. Moses—who told God 'no' three times when God called him to return to Egypt with a big mission. (Read it in Exodus 3-4). I knew what the answer was—which was to agree to serve as the Interim Pastor of West Hills Church. At the direction of our Session, I attended Interim Ministry Training in November.

I love West Hills. As of January 1, 2018, I will have served you as Associate Pastor of Caregiving for twenty years. During these years we have been through a lot together. This January 1 will mark a new phase of our journey. My job will no longer be Pastor of Caregiving, and it will be different from that of a Senior Pastor. The primary developmental tasks of an Interim Pastor are to work with the congregation to:

1. Come to terms with history (heritage)
2. Discover a new congregational identity (mission)
3. Facilitate shifts in lay leadership and changes in congregational power structures (leadership)
4. Rethinking and renewing denominational linkages (connections)
5. Prepare for new pastoral leadership and a new future (future)

In addition, I will be responsible for the general tasks of ministry: leading staff, preaching and leading worship, weddings, funerals, and administration of the sacraments.

### **You may have questions:**

Who will be responsible for Caregiving Ministry? I will be working with the Session to do a search for someone who will be hired for this ministry area. The Director of Caregiving Ministry will also oversee the Coordinator of Mission and the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation. I will continue to do some care and calling, but the bulk of what has taken place in caregiving will fall to this new person.

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What about Rev. Bill Bowers? We have been so fortunate to have Bill serving as our Bridge Pastor during this gap time. He loves West Hills and has helped us so much. He remains as our Head of Staff until December 31. I am so grateful for all that he has done.

When will there be a Pastor Nominating Committee? During in between times we are often anxious to move on. As I help us to move through those five developmental tasks, I will be working with the Session and others including the Presbytery to discern the right time to begin. A Pastor Nominating Committee is nominated by the Church Nominating Committee and then elected by the congregation. They then begin the process of searching and determining the right person to serve West Hills in the future.

What will Deena do when a new Senior Pastor is called? As Associate Pastor, my call has been from the congregation. You elected me and renewed my call each year. An Interim Pastor is different. An Interim is a contract position that is offered by the Session for a specific period of time. My new contract says that I will serve from January 1 – December 31, 2018. It is renewable after that time period if both parties wish. This means that my service as Associate Pastor will end effective December 31, 2017. It also means that when a new Senior Pastor arrives and my service as Interim is over that my time in ministry at West Hills is over as well. It is part of the way our Presbyterian system works, and I think it is a good system. Please know that I have prayed about this, and have great peace about it. I believe it will allow the opportunity for yet more good change to come for West Hills.

What can I do? Frankly, I hope you are asking this question. This has been a tough chapter in our history. There are wounds in this present chapter and healing to take place. But it is time for healing, forgiveness and renewal. God wants us to move forward in His mission...and He has great plans for the future. Here is what you can do: if there is someone with whom you need to make peace, do it. Speak openly and kindly. Ask for forgiveness when necessary. Avoid gossip (which is talking about someone rather than to someone). Pray—for me, for the Session, for this church—that we will keep Christ at the center, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be in accordance with God's will. Finally—step up. We need you. And Christ is calling you. What are your gifts? Where can you serve? Trust me—but even more, trust God: He has some amazing things ahead for this church, and you do not want to miss being a part of it.

Where am I in this journey? Frankly, I am scared. Scared about the unknowns and my untested abilities. And honestly, I think that puts me in a good place. I told you when I returned from sabbatical that I have no red cape. But people who have red capes don't have to trust in the Holy Spirit. Being a little scared is good—because it is in those times that we know we cannot depend on our own abilities alone—but must absolutely seek God and His empowerment. I find myself in good stead with Moses and so many others who were afraid, but who heard the same promise from God: "I will be with you." And even more than fear, I feel gratitude: for this wonderful church, for all of you, and the opportunity for all of us together to be...on the journey with the living Christ.

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## Spiritual Correspondence

by Jana Prescott

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What part of your day was a total wipeout? (thanks to McDonalds napkins)?

Certainly not my Thanksgiving! How was your Thanksgiving? Were you thankful for: family, friends, church, mission work, near and far? For help you receive every day from Christ?

I'm sure you also made new friends! Where is Christ in your friendship? A little baby? A teenager? A thirty-three year old man about to be crucified? Or maybe a

miracle worker about to rise from the dead?!

Christmas is His time in our calendar for birth: definitely for His birth, but how about for the birth of new actions each of us needs to use for Him in our lives? Christmas is a time we can all use to rejoice that the baby Jesus grew up to be Christ in our heart, where we can pray for His grace and peace as we hand out joy in this season!

Which part of your day made you thankful?

1 Thessalonians 5:17-

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

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## Fall Back-Pancake Breakfast

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What better smell is there in the morning than pancakes cooking? It makes you want to jump out of bed and dish up a large stack with delicious sweet syrup running down the sides. Yummmm!! Every year, for "more years than I can remember" Tom Pittack said, "we have been cooking pancakes on 'Daylight Saving Sunday,' which is a great time for the people who forgot to change their clocks and showed up early for church to eat pancakes." This year about 200 – 250 breakfasts were served on November 5, and most of those were served before 9:30 a.m. The band members, according to Tom, are usually down eating pancakes between services.

Tom said about a dozen men from the church arrive early to help set up the breakfast, serve, clean up and just make sure "everything runs smoothly." They can always use more help, which makes the work much easier. He shared that one former church member, who hasn't been attending West Hills lately even showed up to help "and it was so great to see him again."

This has been such a wonderful West Hills tradition for so many years that it would be difficult to ignore, especially if you are sitting in church and the whiff of pancakes begins to penetrate the sanctuary. Several members said it was hard to concentrate on the sermon and they found their "mouths watering" during the early service in anticipation of a delicious plate of pancakes waiting downstairs."

According to Tom, the pancake breakfast is a "tune up for our biggest event, Men's Game Day, that will be on January 20, 2018." The men will be prepping and cooking for a couple of days to serve many West Hills mission partners, as well as the men (young and old) from West Hills, "a great meal with lots of wild game." If you are interested in helping out please contact Tom at 402-880-4987, "we can always use more men to help us, and it is a great way to really get to know one another," Tom shared.

# "Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem Dry Bones..." - Part 1

*"I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life.." Ez 37:14* by Patti and Ron Gatzke

I (Ron) first felt called to "go and see" what the Lord was doing in Egypt just as the shepherds were compelled to "go to Bethlehem and see" after their encounter with the heavenly host on that hillside above Bethlehem on that first Christmas Eve. I went and saw the Evangelical (Presbyterian) church in Egypt wrestling with its call in 2008; should it remain inwardly focused (as it had after foreign missionaries were asked to leave Egypt in the early 1950's) protecting and insulating itself from an increasingly hostile Islamic and Coptic society, or should it heed the call of Christ to move beyond its comfort zone to share the good news of Jesus Christ? Kasr el-Dhobara, the largest evangelical church in 2008, was challenging the Synod of the Nile to embrace the call to be



more missional and show the love of Christ. After conducting a major study, the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo (ETSC) identified 150 churches without pastors that were in danger of closing—permanently. They urged the Synod of the Nile to take up the challenge and as a first step, established a lay-pastor training program as a way to provide pastors for these vulnerable churches.

Nine years later, I can attest the Holy Spirit is mightily at work in Egypt and the results are amazing. Not only are there now fewer than fifty-eight churches without pastors, 106 new fellowships and churches have been started in the last six years. Behind these results are many new 'servant' pastors that over the last ten years have assumed a strong missional mind set. Last month Patti and I, on our first mission trip together, saw first hand how the Holy Spirit is moving at the seminary, in the synod and among the many young pastors and their churches and fellowships. We were part of a fifteen-member team of Americans led by Marilyn Borst and Tom Widmer of The Outreach Foundation. Below we will share some stories with you to show our mission dollars are having an impact in Egypt and also to encourage and excite you about what is possible for West Hills when our focus is on Jesus. When we hearken to the Spirit's will, dream big, pray without ceasing and take an active role in sharing and living the good news of Jesus' redemptive work, we can have a positive impact on our respective communities.

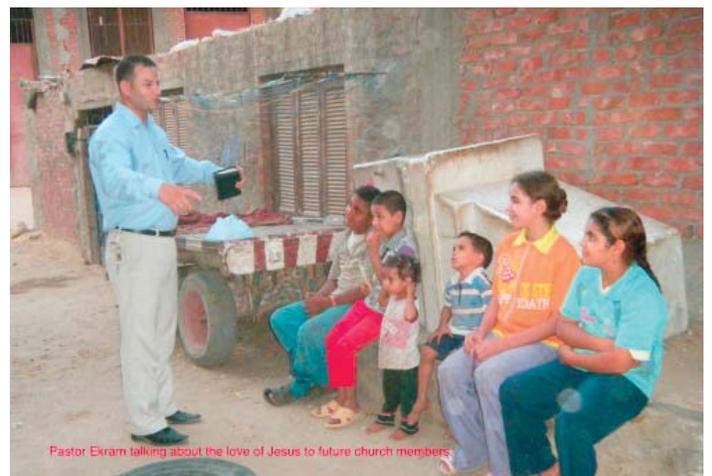
First I (Ron) would like to tell you about a 32-yr. old seminarian, Andrew, whom I met on my first day in Cairo. He is from Beni-Suef, 90 miles south of Cairo, and is in his second year of the M-Div program. Hearing God's call to "live on the Bible," Andrew not only left a lucrative job as an aviation engineer, he also risked losing the

love of his life in the process. He is married now and they have a ten-month old son, but as a full time seminary student, he is financially stressed, sees his family infrequently and fears that his son will not know him. Andrew wrestles with his decision daily, but his call and faith in Jesus keeps him grounded. To give you a hint of how influential Jesus is in his life, consider this story



Andrew shared about his time in the army: during Ramadan, the Muslim soldiers in his outfit fasted all month from dawn to dusk as prescribed by their Islamic faith. This caused a crisis of faith for him, but after much prayer, he agreed to join the other soldiers in their fast. When asked by his fellow soldiers why he fasted, he stated that he did it of his own free will and out of his love for Jesus and for them. He became a highly respected member in his outfit. Pray for Andrew and his family that he will not let the cares of this world turn him aside. The future of the church and Egypt depends on men and women bearing the likeness of Jesus as they minister to their congregations and their communities.

Later that first day, we received a presentation from the Pastoral Outreach and Mission Committee (POMC) created by the Synod of the Nile several years ago to organize, fund and oversee church renewal and new church development. After the presentation we heard the stories of nine pastor/evangelists—trained ministers appointed by the synod to serve as church planters for the "unorganized" church. When one of these fellowships has thirty members it can organize as a church of the Synod of the Nile. There are currently thirty-five of these.



I (Patti) was moved by the story of Pastor Ekram Atta and the Moassat al Zakar fellowship. He was quite a charismatic, energetic young man whose passion for sharing the love of Christ was contagious. Shortly after graduating in 2013, he started his ministry

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Our recipe this month is from **Jan Vermilyea** who brought this wonderful Stuffed Pepper Soup she served at the Special Saturday Luncheon.

#### STUFFED PEPPER SOUP

- 1 - 2 cups diced green peppers
- 2 cups long grain white rice cooked or 2 cups minute rice
- 2 cups hamburger (cooked and drained)
- 2 quarts of water or beef broth
- 1 can 28 oz. diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 beef bouillion cubes
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper



Mix all together - bring to a boil, simmer 30 to 40 minutes. Leave cover on and let sit for 10 minutes more.

#### 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?

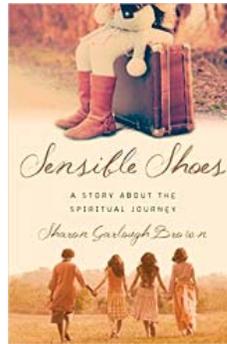
Please send your recipes to Maralee Gifford:

[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.)

#### DID YOU KNOW?

You can read "The Window" newsletter, see the weekly bulletins, and listen to past sermons, ALL on our website? Great information on events available. Check it out at: [www.whcomaha.org](http://www.whcomaha.org)



The book **Sensible Shoes** by Sharon Garlough Brown is the first in a four book series about the spiritual journey of four women.

These women find themselves on a journey of a lifetime, as a retreat center becomes the back drop of their individual stories, spiritual practice, and mutual support.

We come to know the characters and their problems as:

Hannah – A pastor who is exhausted.

Meg – a widow.

Mara- a woman in a difficult marriage.

Charissa- a graduate student who wants it all.

According to InterVarsity press, readers will be taken into a new understanding of key spiritual concepts and find tangible support for their deepening relationship with God.

The additional three books in the series are:

2) Two Steps Forward: A Story of Persevering in Hope

3) Barefoot: A Study of Surrender to God

4) An Extra Mile: A Story of Embracing God's Call

Author Sharon Garlough Brown is a graduate of Smith College and has a MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary. In addition, she is spiritual director and cofounder of Abiding Way Ministries.

#### CHILI COOK OFF WINNER - SCOTTISH CHILI DEENA CANDLER

At the chili cook off in October, this recipe won over some other very delicious entrants. "I got this recipe from Bernice Larson who was the financial secretary at the first church I served in Minnetonka, Minnesota. When we had our chili and caroling event there every December, Bernice would make a huge vat of this chili for all of us. Bernice was Norwegian Lutheran, so I have no idea why it is called Scottish Chili."

1 - 28 oz. can tomato pieces

2 - 17 oz. cans whole kernel corn (or use frozen)

1 - 30 oz. can red kidney beans

¾ lb. sliced bacon

1 lb. ground beef

1 ¼ cup chopped onions

Brown ground beef with the onions. Cut bacon into 1 ½" pieces and brown. Combine all ingredients. Do not drain the vegetables.

Bake at 350 degrees for 2 hours or until liquids are cooked down to thicken.

(Salt, pepper and spices as you desire)

Top off with grated cheese, sour cream, or fritos if you wish.

## CRC by Daniel Patrick O'Reilly

Well, hello fellow West Hillians. When you've come to church in the last few months, you may have noticed a drop in attendance. So, what is happening, what has caused this, what are we doing to remedy the problem, where are we headed? Lots of questions. Few answers. And thus the CRC was born. CRC? Chicago Rabbinical Council? Colorado Resource Corporation? No, your CRC is the Congregational Relations Committee.

**Congregational Relations Committee (CRC)**

**Your committee consists of:**

- + Tom Backer
- + Louie Harrison
- + Dan O'Reilly
- + Kathy Padilla
- + Linda Schuchmann
- + Laressa Tromler

Contact the committee by email:  
[crc@whcomaha.org](mailto:crc@whcomaha.org)



Our vision/purpose is to: Led by God's grace and love, we will care for the heart of all people attending West Hills Church. We are committed to listen, pray, and hold all concerns in confidence. We will seek to facilitate unity, improve communication, and lead all to believe in the future of West Hills Church focused on Jesus Christ.

What is the future of West Hills? Is there hope? To quote George Armstrong Custer, "victory is just over the next hill." Wait, that's a bad analogy. If you've been to services in the last few weeks, you've heard testimonies from Lloyd Woodworth, John Good and pastor Osmar of Familia de Dios. All the testimonies were powerful, uplifting and demonstrated the impact (past, current and future) that West Hills can have. They were very hopeful.

Pastor Derek used to quote John 15:5 at the beginning of each sermon. *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* It feels like we are going through a season of pruning.

Several years ago Pastor George Moore preached on **The Confusing Path of Living for God**. I printed out the major points and have them framed and hanging on my bathroom wall. With the turmoil, hurt and confusion that our church has gone through, I thought some of his thoughts were appropriate here and now.

***When the world wounds me (and it will), these wounds can be what God will use to make me more like Jesus because the world wounded him and by his wounds we are healed. It is not about me, it is about God's plan. God is good and God loves us. Because of Jesus, we can trust God in the confusing and difficult times. Following Jesus will lead to sacrifice and suffering. There is no way around that. So I boldly live and will boldly trust. Believing that my obedience to God's will, even in the painful and confusing times, will work for His purpose and His glory.***

Does the CRC have all the answers? Of course not. You heard the official CRC purpose above. The unofficial purpose of the committee is to facilitate healing and reconciliation and simply be present and listen. My challenge and prayer would be for everyone at West Hills to get involved. So, how can I participate in healing you ask? It doesn't have to be anything big. You don't have to be a Bible scholar or ordained minister. Simply greet someone as they come into church. Tell them we are glad to see them and glad they are here. Maybe something as simple as a smile. Be Jesus to them.

When asked what was the most important commandment, Jesus said to love God and love your neighbor. This isn't rocket science. It's about relationships; How we relate to God and how we relate to each other. West Hills provides a great opportunity for relationships. It would be easy to look around at the empty pews, throw our hands up in frustration and give up. It's easy to dwell on the negative. Or. Are we bold enough to take advantage of this opportunity in the life of our church to move our church forward into a brighter future?

If you have a question, idea, suggestion, or simply would like to talk, your CRC would love to hear from you. Talk to us individually or send us an e-mail at [crc@whcomaha.org](mailto:crc@whcomaha.org). See you in church.



## It's Chili & Caroling time!

Most of us are now counting the days until Christmas, but as a way to prepare your heart for this most glorious of days, everyone is invited to participate in "Chili and Caroling" immediately following the 11:00 a.m. service on December 10.

Who doesn't like to eat, enjoy the company of church family members, and make a joyful noise to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, and this event combines all of these activities and much more. As God uses you to share the good news of Christmas, you will be truly blessed!

ALL last minute participants will be warmly welcomed. Please come to Fellowship Hall (LL) and join us for soup and we will divide up into groups.



# Neighbors by Les Peterson, Deacon-Stephen Ministry

What have your experiences been with neighbors? My experience with neighbors has been both good and bad. I am sure all of us can share some stories. Some of them we never forget based on how we were treated. We have experienced new neighbors, loving neighbors that we will never forget, and yes even those that we wish we could forget.

For me, I grew up on a farm outside of Plattsmouth, Nebraska during the 60's and 70's. The closest neighbor was a mile away from our home. Even though we did not live close, my parents knew all of them. A small community, we knew everyone and their entire family. We went to school together in a one room school house, grades K-8 all in one room, there were probably 20 of us.

Whenever there was a problem, there was a neighbor you could call to help. If your cattle or hogs got outside the fence and you needed someone to help corral them, they were there to help. All of us kids were the work force for our neighbors whenever they needed a helping hand with any of the farm chores.

We had telephones called a party line, so we even shared the phone, except for when my sister used it too much, then we were forced to get a private line just for her. Glad we don't have those problems with phones today.

Moving to town in Plattsmouth and later to Omaha, I have had different experiences with neighbors. I don't know everyone, I know those that live closest to us, but not everyone in the neighborhood like we did on the farm. Even though we were spread out, we had the life on the farm in common. We were in clubs together, children in 4H Clubs, and adults as leaders of those clubs.

Our mother, grandmother, and aunts belonged to a club with many of our farm friends. They met every month at someone's home and took turns being the host. They would do quilts, plan holiday activities, and yes, catch up on the gossip of the day. The host served punch, coffee, mints, cake, and pie. It was like a baby or wedding shower every month. I refer to this club as the beginning of today's social network, only it was in person, face to face, instead of texting back and forth. Members shared what was on their mind, they listened to each other and counseled each other.

Today, we have Nextdoor social media website for our neighborhoods. The Westgate Next Door site has been active along with a Neighborhood Association that meets at West Hills once a month. It is a great thing to have and I have met some neighbors I did not know at the meetings.

Now, it still makes me question why I knew most everyone in Plattsmouth, but I don't know everyone in Westgate where I live, work and worship at West Hills. I lived in Plattsmouth for thirty-two years and have lived in Westgate for twenty-nine years so about the same amount of time. So, why don't I know everyone?

Why am I sharing this with you: well it made me think of the question, "Just who IS my neighbor?"

I think the challenge is based in scripture, 1John 4 19-20, you should love your neighbor as yourself.

I guess that means that we are all neighbors in God's eyes. Now, I know that everyone is my neighbor, but do I love them?

How do you love that neighbor that constantly has their music too loud, they are up at all hours of the night, they take short cuts by walking across your plush green lawn, they cut you off in traffic,

they speed, they don't signal, and they don't even say hello. Or, the one that has a dog that barks all night or complains about your dog that is so special to you, that they could not possibly be keeping anyone else awake.

Well, I think I found some answers reading "These Days" on October 26. It goes like this:

My church family has a Stephen Ministries program. Those members who volunteer to become a Stephen Minister are unique in their ability to listen and care for people who have many challenges in their lives. It matters not who the person is: the neighbor they care for is anyone in need. If one loves God, then there is only one response, and that is to love our neighbor. You can't have one without the other.

"We love because God first loved us. Those who say, "I love God and hate their brothers or sisters are liars for those who do not love a brother or sister they have seen, cannot love God who they have not seen. Remember 1John 4 19-20. "You should love your neighbor as yourself."

"Perhaps we all need to ask ourselves how we really feel about ourselves. How is it possible to love our neighbor if we have so very little love for ourselves?"

I would say we, as Christians, love ourselves, so loving our neighbors (brothers and sisters) as ourselves should not be hard. Next time you have a chance to talk with a neighbor, I would encourage you to do so, they may have something to say that you want to hear if you will listen.

We know that Jesus loves us. He knows our names. He may be calling you now if you are listening.

This Christmas season, wish your neighbor a merry christmas and listen for their reply you may find that you will have the opportunity to love them even more in the New Year.

## OCTOBER OPERATING FUND REPORT

### COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR:

	as of Oct. 31st 2016 YTD Actual	as of Oct. 31st 2017 YTD Actual	over/(under) Prior Year
Revenues	\$ 952,125	\$ 941,816	\$ (10,309)
Expenses	\$ 1,122,654	\$ 1,090,845	\$ (31,809)
surplus/(deficit)	\$ (170,529)	\$ (149,029)	

### COMPARED TO BUDGET:

	as of Oct. 31st 2017 YTD Budget	as of Oct. 31st 2017 YTD Actual	over/(under) Budget
Revenues	\$ 1,056,622	\$ 941,816	\$ (114,806)
Expenses	\$ 1,185,410	\$ 1,090,845	\$ (94,565)
surplus/(deficit)	\$ (128,788)	\$ (149,029)	

Questions? Please contact Mike Alfieri @ (402) 391-8788 ext. 1008

in Moassat with the children. Several days a week he would hang around the street where he hoped to start a church, talking and playing with the children. He would play soccer and other games, help with homework and just talk with them about their lives. He did bring some candy with him to give out while he told the children stories about Jesus and his love for all. His connection with the children spread to their parents and others in the community. He started helping them find medical services and other resources. People of all faith traditions, Coptic, Evangelical and Muslim, trusted him as he shared the love of Jesus and spent time with them. The first church meeting was held in January 2014 with thirty people. Now he is working with over 200 families. The church has purchased land and completed two floors of their five-story building. The ground floor is a clinic and the first floor is a large event center; the second and third floors are not yet completed, but when they are they will accommodate church services, Sunday School and a daycare. Due to Ekram's focus on community service and showing the love of Christ, he has met little resistance and gives God the glory for this positive addition to the Moassat community.

On our second day we journeyed fifty-three miles north of Cairo to the city of Zagazig in the Nile delta region. This region is a hotbed of "Salafist" activity. (Salafism is an ultraconservative reform movement within Sunni Islam that rejects modernity and innovation.) The Zagazig church was established in 1904 in the "land of Goshen" that is now home to seven million people. Like many of the Presbyterian churches in Egypt, a key component of the Zagazig ministry was a school which at its height educated as many as 352 primary and secondary Christian and Muslim children. However, the church-operated school closed twenty years ago when the church elders refused a government request that the church build a mosque inside the school to accommodate its Muslim students. Its closure was a big blow to the community. Many churches and other schools disappeared during this time as well.



Rev. Wa'el Nashat, a recent graduate of ETSC, now leads this church with a grand vision from God to rebuild the church's presence in Zagazig and surrounding areas. This vision includes re-establishing and rebuilding the school where English will be taught



and Jesus glorified. Secondly the vision includes establishing the church as a positive change agent in their community. The church is praying to secure a large piece of real estate where the church would first build an elder care facility and then a school. They would then follow with a medical clinic and finally a new church. By building an elder care

facility first and the church last, they would not be subject to many of the restrictions on school and church building they were under previously. What resourcefulness!

In the meantime, the Holy Spirit through Pastor Wa'el has energized the congregation to do what they can with the limited resources available. Despite an old church building in great need of repair, Pastor Wa'el and his flock are focusing their efforts beyond their walls and engaging their community in a number of ways. In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, they organized special values training for Christian and Muslim teachers with the goal of teaching students how to love and respect others. This summer they also invited their Muslim neighbors to join them at the church for a Ramadan breakfast meal and then later they celebrated the breaking of the fast together in song; 400 people of all faiths responded to the invitation with many expressing the sentiment, "This is our church!" The church youth have created "One Way" to build relationships and share the gospel through sport. We viewed a video of this group going into a poor neighborhood where decent play areas are scarce; they set up a sports venue on a rooftop of all places. All sorts of games were available so all could participate and Jesus was shared with them. Finally we met the servant Vivianne who heads up a nine-person mercy ministry team. This team focuses on the needs of the neighbors (Christian and Muslim) around the church; they go to their homes to listen and help them with practical, spiritual, emotional, family, health and physical needs and once they get to know them, they invite them to come to church to hear the gospel. Pray that Pastor Wa'el's grand vision will be realized and that he does not burn out.



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## SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

The Bible tells us our bodies are made from dust of the ground. Genesis 2:7 "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Genesis 3:19 "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Scientists have discovered that the human body is comprised of some 28 base and trace elements - all of which are found in the earth.



### Contact for all Elders [session@whcomaha.org](mailto:session@whcomaha.org)

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

**Congregational Relations Committee**  
[crc@whcomaha.org](mailto:crc@whcomaha.org)

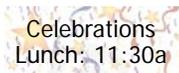
Services: 8:15, 9:30 & 11 a.m.

Nursery: 9:10a-noon

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

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

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
<p>November 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>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</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			<p>January 2018</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							<p>1</p> <p> Celebrations Lunch: 11:30a</p> <p>AA Ann. Event: 7:30p* Al-Anon: new 7:30 &amp; reg. 8p*</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>Christmas Concert Rehearsal: 9a</b></p> <p><b>Arabic Fellowship Service: 5:30p*</b></p>
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<p>First Sunday in Advent <b>3</b></p> <p> Christmas Program One Service 10:00a</p> <p><b>Familia De Dios: 2-4p*</b></p> <p><b>Next Gen Worship: 7p</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Newsletter Writing Team: 11:30a</p> <p>Worship Team: 6p</p> <p>BSF: 6:40p</p> <p>AA mtg: 8p*</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Men's Bible Study 6:30a*</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Choir Rehearsal: 6:30p*</p> <p><b>Youth Band Rehearsal: 8p*</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Women's Bible 9:15a</p> <p>Al-Anon 12p*</p> <p><b>Good News Bears Christmas Wrapping Party: 5:45p</b></p> <p>Financial Peace: 6:30p</p> <p>Capernaum-Young Life: 7p</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>InterVarsity Progressive Dinner</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>FDD Christmas Dinner: 5p</b></p> <p><b>Omaha Community Concert: 6p</b></p>																																																																																				
<p>Chili &amp; Caroling 12 p.m. <b>10</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>Next Gen Worship: 7p</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>BSF: 6:40p</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Worship Team: 6p</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Women's Bible 9:15a</p> <p>Financial Peace: 6:30p</p> <p>Capernaum-Young Life: 7p</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>FDD-Leadership Dinner: 6p</b></p>																																																																																				
<p><b>17</b></p> <p>Congregational Meeting 10:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Next Gen Worship: 7p</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Session: 7p</p> <p>Worship Team: 6p</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>NO Women's Bible</p> <p>Siena Francis House sloppy joe pick up: 9:30a </p> <p>First Day of Winter</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>																																																																																				
<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Eve Day 10:00 a.m. (1 service)</b></p> <p><b>5:30 &amp; 7:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>OFFICE CLOSED 25</b></p> <p></p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Worship Team: 6p</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>NO Women's Bible</p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>																																																																																				
<p><b>31</b></p> <p><b>Healing Service: 9:30 &amp; 11:00</b></p> <p><b>FDD - New Year's Eve Celebration: 8p</b></p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>																																																																																										

## Happy Birthday to ...

### DECEMBER

1-Zoe Dozier  
Candy Glasgow  
Riley Kelley  
Stacey Mielke  
Nicole Tromler  
2-Steve Woodworth  
3-Kelsey Beles  
4-Bruce Hawkins  
5-Wayne Moore  
Millie Woodcock  
6-Sue Carson  
Jan Duffy  
7-Kay Hothan  
Isabel Mercer  
8-Auburn Korf  
Jim Sadler  
9-Tatum Gardella  
Pattie Mininni  
Brian Myers  
Adam Olson  
Gary Radil  
Stacy Rafferty  
Joanne Topolski  
10-Dante Camper  
Rowan Meyer  
CJ Young  
11-Branden O'Hare  
Mary Turner  
Tatem Ulane  
12-Charley Kathman  
Doug Miller

13-Dale Hawkins  
Jan Pokorny  
14-Corey Barnes  
Henry Keeling  
15-Allison Johnson  
Ethan Litton  
Eddie Nelson  
16-Bill Jansen  
Taylor Jones  
Bre Weaver  
17-Declan Buss  
Jackson James  
Molly Rogers  
Jason Scheopner  
18-Lynn Burns  
Sean Davis  
Sidney Pecha  
Jonathan Rafferty  
Lauren Vanhessche  
Daniel Woodworth  
19-Julie Burgess  
20-Matt Jansen  
Judy Pagel  
Terry Sedivy  
22-Michael Backer  
Randy Hess  
23-Doug Saitta  
24-Laura Anderson  
25-Renee Johnson  
26-Jude Pyle  
27-Ben Morgensen

28-Bev Eckhoff  
Blake Fisher  
Erik Mercer  
Rick Schieuer  
29-Cami Kotouc  
John Nelson  
Katie Olson  
Nathan Reynolds  
Mark Zimmerman  
30-Bev Nichols  
Christina Pyle  
Rachel Voshell  
31-Louie Harrison  
Elana McGill

### JANUARY

1-Katie Best  
Heidi Fethkenher  
2-Dave Anderson  
Carole Burrows  
Verne DeHaven  
Jessica Evans  
Mark Zoll  
3-Nancy Chesire  
Jennie Harrison  
Nicholl Suter  
4-B. Gratton  
Laura Meyers  
5-Elaine Hook  
Greg Kuhn  
Shirley Nelson



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

## CHRISTMAS GIVING

This year's featured giving opportunities for our mission partners includes:



Maliarette, Haiti / The 410 Bridge  
Westgate family sponsorship  
Abide/Better Together Christmas Store  
InterVarsity-Progressive Dinner

View the "Christmas Give & Go Catalog" for more information on each opportunity AND visit our display in Geneva Lounge by December 10

