



# newsletter

Northwest Hills Church  
9334 Fort Street, Omaha NE 68134  
Phone: 402 572-8392  
Fax: 402 572-8394  
www.northwesthills.com

Rev. Alex Wolf, Pastor  
Suzy Parsons, CE Director  
Cheryl Morehouse, Office Administrator

Vol. 52 No. 12  
November 26, 2024

Barb Renicker, Music Director  
Nate & Rita Merriam, Custodians

## December 2024

<b>December 1</b> 	<b>9:30 AM Worship/Communion (No Sunday School)</b> <b>7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH</b>
<b>December 8</b> <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> <i>Poinsettia orders due!</i> 	<b>9:30 AM Worship/Sunday School</b> <b>10:30 AM In Person Annual Meeting—S</b> <b>7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH</b>
<b>December 15</b> <i>Cookie Orders Due!</i> 	<b>9:30 AM Worship/Sunday School</b> <b>CANTATA: "The Ballad of Bethlehem"</b> <b>7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH</b> 
<b>December 22</b> <i>Cookie Pick Up!</i> <i>Christmas Fund Offering</i> 	<b>9:30 AM Worship/Children's Program</b> <b>7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH</b> 
<b>December 24</b> <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> 	<b>3:00 PM Christmas Eve Family Service</b> <b>11:00 PM Christmas Eve Traditional Candlelight Service</b> 
<b>December 25th</b> <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> 	<i>Church Office Closed</i> 
<b>December 29</b> 	<b>9:30 AM Worship (No Sunday School)</b> <b>10:30 AM Finger Food Fest—C</b> <b>7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH</b>

### "The Ballad of Bethlehem" by Choplin

December 15th

For centuries, a ballad has been a musical way to tell a story. Through our music we create moods and pictures to help us rediscover the wonder of the Christmas Story.



### "A Simple Kidz Christmas"

December 22nd



Deadline for articles/information for the monthly newsletter is usually the second Sunday for the next month's newsletter. Thank you in advance for your contributions!



# THANK YOU

Dear ones, to everything there is a season: Hannah Circle will be dissolving as of the first of the year. The ladies want to thank our NWH family for your loving support over the years. One project that will continue is the non-perishable food collection for the Holy Cross Church Food Pantry.



Your continued contributions are blessing those in need who experience food insecurity in our immediate neighborhoods and community. The need was great in 2024, and the need is projected to continue into 2025. Your selfless acts of sharing food with our neighbors makes a lasting impact in ways we may never know on this side of heaven.

The bin for collections is located in the Commons for this year-round support. Thank you for your generosity!

## MISSION & SERVICE DECEMBER PROJECT

The Salvation Army Winter Night Watch brings help directly to the Streets of Omaha. The Midwest winter's frigid temperatures along with snow, ice and wind can make survival a challenge for Omaha's homeless and near-homeless population. Five nights a week between December and February, the Salvation Army's mobile food trucks make multiple stops across the city to distribute hot meals and beverages, as well as winter coats, gloves, hats, socks and blankets to anyone in need. Last year Winter Night Watch provided more than 8,000 meals and hundreds of winter outerwear items to those struggling to survive the harsh winter.



Once again we are supporting our community partner, the Salvation Army, through their Winter Night Watch Program. Hats, gloves, scarves and especially warm COATS are distributed to the homeless living on the streets of Omaha in the coldest of bitter winter months.

Our Northwest Hills Church family has been so generous to donate their gently-used, or even new coats to this cause. We are collecting for women, children, and men. Particularly in need are the larger sizes, XL and up.

Look for the collection boxes in the Commons. Your kindness will truly make a lasting impact on the most unfortunate in our community.

**CRAFTERS!** We're taking a break from the Wednesday craft group during December/January, with plans to reconvene in February.

**RUTH CIRCLE** will have their Christmas luncheon on Sunday, Dec. 1st at 11 AM in the **Fellowship Hall**.

**WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION** Christmas Luncheon will be at 12 noon in the Commons on Thurs., Dec. 5th. All ladies of the church are invited to attend. There is no charge for the event but we do ask a food donation for the food pantry of boxed or canned goods or Little Debbie snack treats. Please join us! If you have any questions, please call Kathleen Hammond at 402-981-3630.

**HANNAH CIRCLE** will have their final Christmas Party at 11:30 AM at Keystone Café on Tuesday, December 17th. We hope to see as many of our great ladies as we can! Thank you for a great run!

**SARAH CIRCLE** will meet as needed. For any questions, call Terri Burrig, 402-659-6913. Look for the Christmas Cookie order in this Newsletter! Orders are due December 15th; pick up is 9-11 AM on Sunday, December 22nd. Thank you for your support!



**MEN'S MINISTRY BREAKFAST:** We look forward to getting together on Saturday, December 7th at 9:00 AM in the Commons. It is a BYOB: "Bring Your Own Breakfast." All men of the church are invited for this great time of fellowship!

**WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY:** We will continue our Wednesday Bible Studies at 10:00 AM in Room 128 on December 4th, 11th, and 18th. We will then take a break for the holidays. We will also not meet during the months of January and February so folks don't have to get out and battle the typical Nebraska winter weather during those notorious months! All are invited to come and fellowship around the precious Word of God for our remaining studies this month!

**CHURCH COUNCIL** will not meet during the month of December.





## MEMORY TREE ORNAMENTS

On November 24th, the memory trees were placed in the Commons area with all the special memory tree ornaments. If you want a special ornament placed on the tree in memory of your loved one, please place the ornament in the basket in a zip lock bag, along with a detailed information sheet about the ornament. A description of the ornament, who gave the ornament, and in whose memory the ornament was given is recorded in a Memory Tree book. This is such a special opportunity for you to remember the loved ones in your life who have passed away. A picture of each ornament and information regarding the ornament has been placed in albums by Jan Jacobsen. After Christmas, the ornaments will be wrapped and stored until displaying next year. Thank you for remembering your loved ones!!

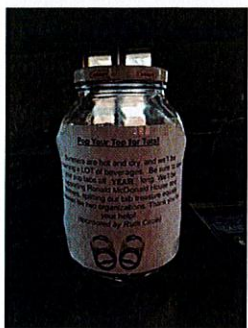
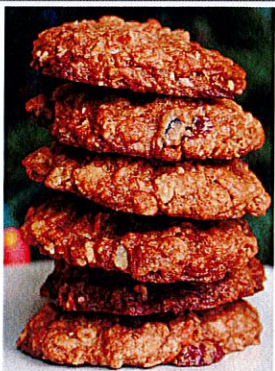
—Sherry Mitchell, Memory Tree Chairman

**2025 GIVING ENVELOPES** will be available for pick up in the Commons December 8th (alpha by last name). If you haven't been assigned a set and would like one, please see Leigh Powell. Thank you for your faithfulness.

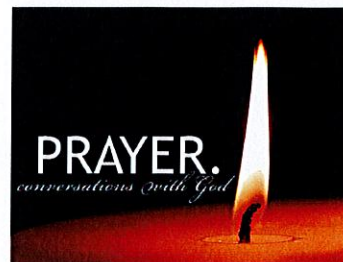


## 2024 Sarah Circle Christmas Cookie Order forms are here!

One is included in this month's Newsletter. Orders are due by Sunday, December 15th. Pick-up date will be Sunday, Dec. 22nd from 9-11 AM in the Commons. Checks are made payable to Sarah Circle. Orders can be submitted by email to: [trumpetvinecraft@aol.com](mailto:trumpetvinecraft@aol.com). For Questions/ and / or orders you can call Terri Burrigat at 402-659-6913 or Jan Jacobsen 402-660-4718. Order form and payment check can also be mailed directly to Jan at 13505 N. 108th Street, Omaha, NE 68142-1313. Thank you for your support!  
(Yummm!)



**POP TABS:** Our pop tab collection was so successful that we've decided to make this a year-round project! Now you can bring your pop tabs to church at your convenience so they don't accumulate in a pile at your home! Look for the big jar in the Commons. Thank you for your participation as we look forward to blessing our community partners – Ronald McDonald House and the Shriners – with our collective accumulation. (Ruth Circle)



Prayer chain requests can be called to Ardell Reuter at 1-918-703-1068 or the church office at (402) 572-8392.

*Thank you for your kind responses regarding updating our prayer list. We are always encouraged to hear when our loved ones are much improved. Please continue to let us know of any changes so that we can update our list and assure that the prayers going out weekly are the most current and urgent needs expressed. Thank you in advance. The ongoing list is below:*

Continued Prayer Requests: Sandy Christopherson, Dianne Hasch (Dianna Cupps' friend), Jeff Walton, Susie Ryan, Cierra Ervin, Kyle Hurt & Jacoby, Marchelle Conrad, Peg Hawkins (friend of Annie Kuti), Steve Swift, Jerrie Wilcox, Tom Vincent, Nikki Heim, Elaine Jenkins, Cindy Key, Joanne Mears, Vicky (Nikki Heim's daughter)

On-Going Cancer Treatment: Mike Lambert, Mary Larson, Patricia Gename (Mary Hinman's daughter), Gail Schroeder, Dave Merriam, Sue Day, Robert Baker, Sharon McNutt (Ruth Negus' friend's sister), Betty Benskin, Judy Intlekofer, Gail Formanack (friend of Bev Ambrosius), Gary Dutton, Vicki Nolan, (Leigh Powell's sister), Ena Nolan, (Leigh Powell's niece), Bill Owens

**"He sent His Word, and healed them"**

— Psalm 107:20

**"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."**

— Isaiah 53:5

**HE HEALED THE ONE  
WHO ARRESTED HIM,  
SERVED THE ONE WHO  
BETRAYED HIM, AND  
LOVED THE WORLD  
WHO CRUCIFIED HIM  
THAT'S MY JESUS**





# FROM PASTOR ALEX WOLF

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

December is here and we're quickly coming to the end of another year. At the end of an event or dinner at a restaurant, you may get a survey asking you to reflect on how things went and what can be improved. As we turn the calendar to 2025, perhaps it would be good for us to survey ourselves as followers of Jesus.

As Christians, we should want to become more and more like Jesus. How can we measure our progress? I suggest asking ourselves four questions based on the apostle Paul's poem from Philippians 2:5-8 describing the life and ministry of Jesus.

1) How much are you willing to give away? In verse 6, Paul writes, "Though he was God, [Jesus] did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges..." (New Living Translation). Have you ever thought about all that Jesus gave up in order to save us? He set aside his heavenly entitlements to become human. What are you willing to set aside in order to do the work God has asked you do?

2) How often do you serve others? In verse 7, Paul writes, "[Jesus] took the humble position of a servant..." Jesus was always serving others: he taught, washed feet, healed the sick, and fed the hungry. Do you look for ways to help and serve those in need?

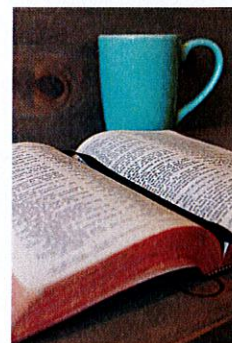
3) How well do you obey God? In verse 8, Paul writes, "When [Jesus] appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God..." Jesus was obedient to what his Father required him to do. Do you do your best to live out what God commands of you?

4) Are you willing to endure hardships? At the end of verse 8, Paul writes, "and [Jesus] died a criminal's death on a cross." The Christian life isn't always easy. Being spiritually mature means we know that we may have to endure difficulties because of our faith. But we can find strength knowing that God can bring good out of our afflictions for ourselves and for others.

I encourage you to reflect on these questions regarding your faith journey through this last year as well as in the year(s) to come. The more we are willing to grow in these areas, the more we will look like Jesus.

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Alex*



## Sermon Topics and Scriptures for December

### December 2024 Sermons

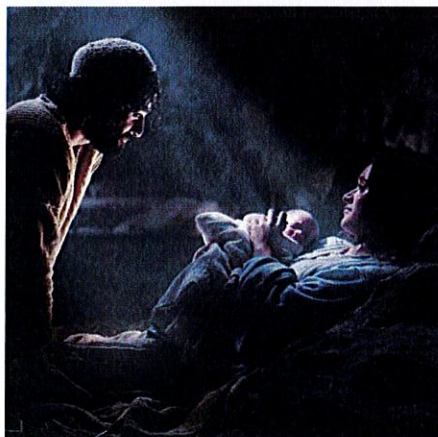
December 1 (First Sunday of Advent) – Luke 21:25-36, "Sign of Things to Come"

December 8 – Luke 3:1-6, "Prepare the Way"

December 15 – Choral Cantata

December 22 – Children's Program

December 29 – Lessons and Carols





**Blue Christmas Service**  
**Saturday, December 21st, 12 PM**

In the midst of all the wonder and celebration of Christmas, it's easy to forget that not everyone is feeling the joy of the season. Whether it's because of illness, a death of a loved one, the loss of a job, strained finances, or tense family situations, the Christmas season can be one of stress and heartache.



If you are in need of some comfort this holiday season, please join us on Saturday, December 21st at 12 noon in the Commons area for a soup lunch and a Blue Christmas service. The purpose of this service is to offer a space to express the sadness, grief, or loss and take it to God, as well as to remember the hope God offers.



Please RSVP to Pastor Alex by Wednesday, December 18th.

-----  
**CRAFTY LADIES!** We are taking a break from getting together on Wednesday afternoons to do crafts for the 2025 October Craft Fair. The plan is to start up again in February, as January can still be a dicey month with unsavory weather challenges of snow accumulation, ice, and frigid temperatures. Brrrr! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Leigh Powell. Thank you all for your active participation and creativity throughout the year!

*Also, a big **THANK YOU** to the wonderful Hannah Circle ladies (and our Northwest Hills family for their contributions) who had collected plastic bags for their project. You all were live savers by sharing the bags so that we could send crafty purchases home with happy customers at the Craft Fair! Such a beautiful example of working together as a team!*

-----

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

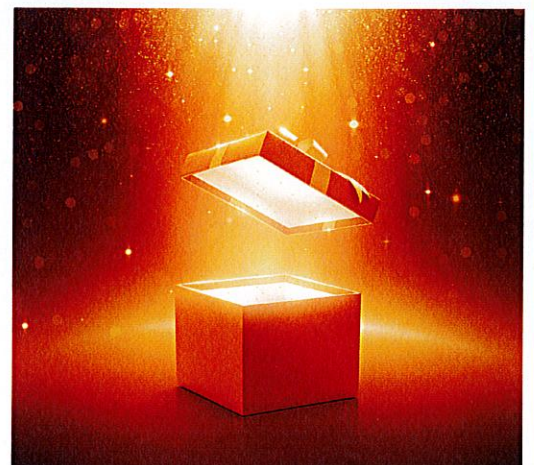
But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.







The **CANASTA CLUB** will meet Thursday, December 21st in the Fellowship Hall. **This will be a pot luck!** Dessert will be provided by Team #10 (Cathy Volkart/Jo Morton) **Plan to arrive in time to start playing by 10:00 AM.** If you have any questions, or would like to join, please contact Deb Shafer at 402-392-0418 or 402-999-1052. We still need subs (men or women). Please contact Ardell Reuter at 1-918-703-1068."

### CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING: Dec. 22nd

The Christmas Fund is a special United Church of Christ offering which provides emergency grants and supplementation of health premiums for active and retired clergy and lay employees in our denomination, as well as Christmas "thank you" gift checks to lower-income retired clergy. The Christmas Fund is managed by the Pension Boards. If you would like to donate to the Christmas Fund, special envelopes will be provided at the church.

### BAD WEATHER

Should very severe weather (dangerous travel and/or frigid temperatures) cause Northwest Hills to cancel a Sunday service, there will be three sources used to communicate a closure to you by 8:00 AM that morning: 1) The three major local television channels (WOWT NBC-6, KMTV-CBS-3, and KETV ABC-7) will have a continually updating scroll of closures at the bottom of the screen. Look for Northwest Hills under "church closures" 2) Facebook post and 3) Email.

Although we would love to see you and fellowship with you at church, please always choose caution and personal safety regarding attendance, even if services are NOT cancelled. If there is a concern regarding walking and driving in the white stuff and frozen patches, we'd rather you be safe and snuggled up at home rather than taking a chance of a fall or accident. We love you and care about you!



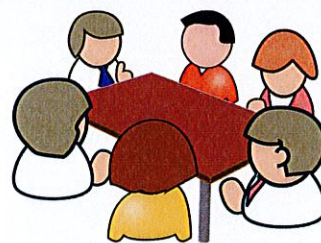
## LADIES MAHONEY WINTER RETREAT

Thursday, January 30th  
through  
Sunday, February 2nd

All women of the church are welcome for a fun and relaxing weekend at Mahoney State Park.

Call Terri Burright at (402) 659-6913 or Jan Jacobsen (402) 660-4718 to make your reservation or if you have any questions.

**ANNUAL MEETING** will occur in person this year! We will meet as a congregation to discuss key issues and vote. The Annual Meeting will be held after the morning service on Sunday, December 8th in the Sanctuary. The agenda will include committee nominations, the 2025 budget and review of the preschool as a mission of the church. The last couple of years we've mailed ballots to your homes, but will hold the meeting live and in person this year. Please make every effort to be present to take part of this important gathering: your voice and vote are valued! Thank you in advance for your thoughtful participation.



### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND HEALTH PLAN OPEN ENROLLMENT

**FINAL LAST DAYS!** – the Medicare Prescription Drug and Health Plans Annual Open Enrollment Period ends **DECEMBER 7!** The 2025 plans' information will be on the Medicare website and the best way to determine how the changes will affect you and determine which plan will be best for you next year is to use Medicare's Plan Finder at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Statewide Senior Health counseling will be providing assistance only via phone due to Covid again this year. Call 402-444-6617 and Volunteers Assisting Seniors will set up a phone appointment. Rick Scofield (who is an official VAS Volunteer) has kindly been helping those in our congregation by phone or in person with their choices. Also, if you're approaching 65 or retirement, Rick can provide Medicare counseling about the decisions you need to make.



**2024 Sarah Circle Christmas Cookie Orders****Orders Due-December 15****Pickup Date-Sunday, December 22**

9:00-11am in Commons Area

**Checks Payable to Sarah Circle**Can be submitted by email to [trumpetvinecraft@aol.com](mailto:trumpetvinecraft@aol.com)

Questions/orders - Call Terri Burright (402)659-6913

or Jan Jacobsen (402)660-4718

13505 N. 108th St.

Omaha, NE 68142

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Price- \$6.50 per dozen, \$3.25 per 1/2 dozen**

	Dozen	Half Dozen	Total
Almond Joy Cookies (Almonds & Coconut)			
Chocolate Chip Cookies			
Coconut Macaroon Cookies			
Cranberry Pistachio Sables			
Cutout Sugar Cookies			
Fudge-Chocolate			
Fudge-Peanut Butter			
Gingersnap Cookies			
Lemon Bars			
M & M Christmas Cookies			
Monster Cookies			
Oatmeal Raisin Cookies			
Peanut Butter Bonbons			
Peanut Butter Cookies			
Peanut Butter Kiss Cookies			
Peanut Clusters			
Scotcheroos (Rice Krispie Bars)			
Snickerdoodle Cookies			
Spritz Cookies			
White Chocolate Macadamia Nut Cookies			
Variety Pack (Our Pick)			

Cranberry Bread (5" x 9" pan)-\$5.00		
Kringle-Almond-\$6.50		
Kringle-Cherry-\$6.50		
Peanut Brittle (1/4 lb.)-\$2.50		
Puppy Chow-\$4.00		

Total Owed		
------------	--	--

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You!**

# DECEMBER 2024



**KIDS QUEST!!**  
**EPIC Youth**  
**PK-High School**



**December 1            No Sunday School.**

**December 8            Play Practice.**

**December 15          Jesus' Birthday Party!**  
**Play Practice**

**Saturday, December 21st 10-11 Practice—S**

**December 22          Christmas Program!**

**December 29          No Sunday School.**

They did it! The Kid's Quest class collected enough money (\$20) from offering to purchase a flock of chickens for Heifer International.

**A BIG thank you to Women's Association for *matching our offering to double our impact!*** Now, the kids voted to purchase a flock of ducks!! Our new goal is \$20!!





# DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<sup>1</sup> 9:30 Worship/Communion (No Sunday School) 10:30 Budget Review-L 11-1 Ruth Circle Christmas Luncheon—FH 7-9 Square Dancing—FH	2 6:45 PM AA Mtg-FH	3 6:30 Bell Choir 7 PM Scouts-FH	4 10 Bible Study—128 6:30 Choir	5 12 noon Women's Assoc. Christmas Luncheon—C	6 9:00 AM Men's BYOB-C 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D	7 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D
8 9:30 Worship/Sunday School 10:30 Annual Mtg.—S 7-9 Square Dancing—FH <i>Poinsettia orders due</i>	9 6:45 PM AA Mtg-FH	10 6:30 Bell Choir 7 PM Scouts-FH	11 10 Bible Study—128 6:30 Choir	12 10-2 Canasta—FH	13 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D	14 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D
15 9:30 Worship/Sunday School CANTATA 7-9 Square Dancing-FH <i>Cookie orders due!</i>	16 6:45 PM AA Mtg-FH	17 11:30AM Keystone Cafe: Hannah Cir. Christmas Luncheon 6:30 Bell Choir 7 PM Scouts-FH	18 10 Bible Study-128 11 Preschool Christmas Program-S 6:30 Choir	19 10-2 Canasta—FH	20 10-11 Children's Program Practice—S 12 noon Blue Christmas—C 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group—19D	21 10-11 Children's Program Practice—S 12 noon Blue Christmas—C 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group—19D
22 9:30 Worship/Sunday School CHILDREN'S PROGRAM 9-11 Cookie Order Pick Up-C 7-9 PM Square Dancing—FH	23 6:45 PM AA Mtg-FH	24 3:00 PM Family Christmas Eve Service 11 PM Christmas Eve Service Traditional	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (Church Office Closed )	26 (Church Office Closed for Christmas Holiday)	27 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D	28 9-11 AM Lambert Prayer Group-19D
29 9:30 Worship (No Sunday School) 10:30 Fellowship—C 7-9 PM Square Dancing-FH	30 6:45 PM AA Mtg-FH	31 7 PM Scouts-FH				S: Sanctuary C: Commons L: Library FH: Fellowship Hall



**NORTHWEST HILLS CHURCH  
9334 FORT STREET  
OMAHA NE 68134**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

<b>NON PROFIT ORG U S POSTAGE PAID OMAHA NE PERMIT NO 369</b>
---

## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

5 Dawne Sobocinski	16 Jodee Mann	21 Layla Meador	29 Deb Shafer
6 Breeyen Svacina	16 Halle Meador	21 Angie Myers	30 Jean Barker
7 James Kohtz	17 Jeff Morton	24 Inga Mehlenbacher	30 Joanne Mears
9 Bernie Hurt	17 Kyle Hurt	24 Doug Roberts	30 Elliott Scofield
10 Corwin Miller	18 Andersen Buckley	26 Mike Mehlenbacher	31 Richard Putzstuck
10 Byron Christensen	20 Gary Kuti	26 Sunny Massa	31 Bev Ambrosius
10 Phyllis Johnson			

## **DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

19 John and Shirley Spencer