



ONE

A publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance **September 2015**

INSIDE:

- + New pastor in Ellis, Palco among new faces.
- + Small group church ministry for boys and girls.

Change in life is inevitable

Blessed September. Perhaps, like me, you are struggling with new schedules and routines — your own as well as the calendars of others. Do you ever feel like there is not enough time in the day? One of the challenges of our fast paced life is discerning when to say “yes” and when to say “no.” I love and get energy from so much of what I do in the church I serve, in this community and on behalf of the wider church. No surprise then that there always seems to be things that come up to fit into an already full calendar. And yet, when we can’t say “no” to any requests, we also cannot give a full hearted “yes.”

In times of upheaval and change, we can be overwhelmed with the sense that there is too much to do and not enough time, I

have learned to lean on a simple prayer “God is God and I am not. Thanks Be to God!” It helps me clarify what is mine and what is God’s. My “must do” list, which may include worrying and fussing about matters over which I have no control, quickly gets shorter.

One of the gifts that God has given us is Sabbath — intentional regular time of rest and renewal. It doesn’t have to just happen on Sunday. When I was growing up keeping the Sabbath was often presented more like a punishment — a long boring day of “don’t do anything fun.” But Sabbath is meant to remind us that we can pause our relentless striving and doing to simply rest in God’s care and presence. When I find myself feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities, it is



The Rev.
Celeste Lasich

First
Presbyterian

RECIPE

This is one of my favorite recipes. It brings back fond happy memories for me of my daddy. He loved pie and so do I. The recipe is for Lemon Meringue Pie and also one for Coconut Meringue Pie.

Pie Crust

You may use a purchased crust or make your own.

Lemon Meringue Pie

1 1/2 cups sugar
6 tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
Place in a 2-3 quart pot
Gradually blend in:
1/2 cup cold water
1/2 cup lemon juice
When smooth add,
3 well beaten egg yolks
2 tablespoons butter
Stir constantly and gradually add
1 1/2 cups boiling water
Bring mixture to a full boil, stirring gently. As it begins to thicken, reduce the heat and allow to simmer slowly for one minute. Remove from heat.

Stir in 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel.
Use egg whites to make meringue.

Meringue

Egg whites from 5-6 eggs. I use double egg whites because I like lots of meringue. After you put the meringue on the pie and filling, place it in a 400° oven for 5

to 10 minutes until the Tips brown. Enjoy.

Coconut Meringue Pie

This filling can be used for any cream pie

3/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup plus 2 teaspoons cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon salt
3 large egg yolks, beaten
3 cups milk
1 1/2 tablespoons butter
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Baked pie shell

In a heavy sauce pan combine the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk the ingredients together well. In a medium bowl combine the egg yolks and milk. Whisk into the sugar mixture in the sauce pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and begins to boil. Boil one minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla. Pour the mixture immediately into the pie shell top with whipped cream or meringue. You see above recipe for the meringue. Before you place the coconut meringue pie in the oven to brown, top it with some coconut.

These are my favorite recipes for pies because you add everything at the beginning and it works out much better the pies are creamier and taste better! Enjoy!

*Submitted by Wilma Powers of
Liberty Foursquare Church.*

good to remember that Sabbath is both gift and commandment.

Change is an inevitable part of life. In this edition of ONE you will find reflections on how to cope and even thrive in times of change. We will also meet new clergy who are certainly experiencing a season of change. Our warmest welcome to them and to you who are reading.

On behalf of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance, we pray you find peace and comfort in knowing you are not alone in whatever changes you might be going through. We encourage you to connect with other Christians for prayer and to share the burdens that may be weighing you down. You are not alone. Thanks be to God.

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HOLY HUMOR

A man is talking to God. “God, how long is a million years?”

God answers, “To me, it’s about a minute.”

“God, how much is a million dollars?”

“To me, it’s a penny.”

“God, may I have a penny?”

“Wait a minute.”

SUBMISSIONS

ONE and the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance encourage submissions from ECMA congregations. Photographs, stories, testimonies and other submissions should be directed toward your church leaders or sent via email to one@dailynews.net.

The ECMA advisory board will choose appropriate and timely submissions for publication.

The columns in ONE represent the views of the author.

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On the cover: Tricia North, pastor of United Methodist Church in Ellis and Palco, receives the offering at Sunday’s service from UMC members Margaret Mickelson and Steven Ashbaugh.

GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED BEFORE WE EVEN ASK

Greetings Bible reader. Welcome to the September reading plan. Let me invite all new ONE readers to join us as we read through the Bible. We are using the "Books of the Bible" reading plan from Biblica, which arranges books by audience to help readers understand them better.

Our focus in ONE this month is "navigating change". The Summer season will soon change to Fall, and the cooler weather will remind us that soon we will be inside bundled up for Winter. Just as the seasons change, so do things in our lives, and the principles from the Bible can help us navigate those challenges.

The Old Testament readings for this month will continue through the Prophet

Ezra's writings (1 & 2 Chronicles, and Ezra). These writings were most likely written to remind God's exiled people of the faithful

God who loved them and had a plan for them. Although these books seem to be repetitive of other Old Testament books, it's important to remember that the purpose of these books was to

re-introduce Covenant history to a people who had suffered great change. Remember, they had lost their homeland, and perhaps sight of who they were. Ezra wanted to remind them of the fact that God is a Covenant keeping God and hasn't forgotten the promises He made to them, even amidst all of the change. (A good reminder for us too.)

The New Testament readings will finish



Pastor Steve Dinkel

Bible Reading Plan

September		
1.....	□ Chron. 19	□ Hebrews 7
2.....	□ Chron. 20	□ Hebrews 8
3.....	□ 1 Chron. 21	□ Hebrews 9
4.....	□ 1 Chron. 22	□ Hebrews 10
5 & 6.....	Weekend Review	
7	□ 1 Chron 23	□ Hebrews 11
8.....	□ 1 Chron. 24	□ Hebrews 12
9.....	□ 1 Chron. 25	□ Hebrews 13
10.....	□ 1 Chron. 26	□ James 1
11.....	□ 2 Chron. 1	□ James 2
12 & 13.....	Weekend Review	
14.....	□ 2 Chron. 2	□ James 3
15.....	□ 2 Chron. 3	□ James 4
16.....	□ 2 Chron. 4	□ James 5
17.....	□ 2 Chron. 5	□ Mark 1
18.....	□ 2 Chron. 6	□ Mark 2
19 & 20.....	Weekend Review	
21.....	□ 2 Chron. 7	□ Mark 3
22.....	□ 2 Chron. 8	□ Mark 4
23.....	□ 2 Chron. 9	□ Mark 5
24.....	□ 2 Chron. 10	□ Mark 6
25.....	□ 2 Chron. 11	□ Mark 7
26 & 27.....	Weekend Review	
28.....	□ 2 Chron. 12	□ Mark 8
29.....	□ 2 Chron. 13	□ Mark 9
30.....	□ 2 Chron. 14	□ Mark 10

Hebrews, James, and start in the Gospel of Mark. We will finish reading through the books that were most likely written to a Hebrew audience. The Scripture verses that I claim the most as I navigate unexpected change is found in this month's New Testament readings, James chapter 1. "Count it all joy", and "if any of you lack wisdom", both remind me that God is present in change, and wants to guide me through. Then we

will begin the Gospel of Mark, most likely written for a Roman audience. Some theologians assert that Mark is actually the Apostle Peter's memoirs. The language of this book is somewhat consistent with Peter's personality. Let the passion of this book infect you with an appreciation of the way our God often makes changes in our lives "suddenly". But rest assured, He knows what we need even before we ask. Read on!



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Casting Crowns

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12 reasons why a pastor quit attending sporting events

1. The coach never came to visit me.
2. Every time I went, they asked for money.
3. The people sitting in my row didn't seem very friendly.
4. The seats were very hard.
5. The referees made a decision I didn't agree with.
6. I was sitting with hypocrites — they only came to see what others were wearing!
7. Some games went into overtime, and I was late getting home.
8. The band played some songs I had never heard before.
9. The games are scheduled on my only day to sleep in and run errands.
10. My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.
11. Since I read a book on sports, I feel that I know more than the coaches, anyway.
12. I don't want to take my children because I want them to choose for themselves what sport they like best.

I received the above list on Facebook, and while it is meant to be humorous, it also shines a light on a very important question: Why do we come to church?



Pastor
Kevin Daniels

While the answers may be numerous, I believe it boils down to two important things, the same two important things Jesus said were “most important.” That is, we are to first love God “with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength,” and second, we are to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus says, “No other commandment is greater than these.” (see Mark 12:29-31)

All life, it seems, can be boiled down into loving God and loving others. So if those are the greatest commandments, then it follows that the primary purposes of the church are to love God and love others!

One way we demonstrate our love for God is by worshipping him. One way we worship is through going to church. We sing. We give. We encourage. We learn. All of those things are ways in which we worship corporately. Certainly we can worship on our own, but God's design was for us to gather once a week to worship as one body.

The writer of Hebrews talks about the great advantage we have over Old Testament individuals, in that we have access to God through Christ at any time and at any place (see Hebrews 10:19-23). Many people tell

me that's why they don't come to church — it's not necessary, I'm told. But the Bible goes on to say in the next verses that just because we have that freedom, does not mean that we should skip meeting with one another.

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” - Hebrews 10:24-25

We gather together to encourage and motivate one another — to engage in genuine relationship with one another and to engage in genuine relationships with those who don't know Jesus.

But some may say, well I've never found a church like that; I've never seen a church where the church is acting like the church is supposed to.

Sadly, that's probably a fair statement. No church is functioning fully and perfectly the way God wants it to. That's because the church is made up of sinners — you and me — who screw things up rather frequently. But God did not say be a part of a church only if this is happening and this isn't happening. He commands us to be a part of a church. Period. It is not an option for a disciple of Christ. We are to be part of a local church.

And it's not just for our own benefit! Maybe you are the smile a person needs to see for encouragement. Perhaps your voice will be the voice of love and compassion someone needs to hear. And even if you feel another person doesn't value your attendance, God does! He wants you in church worshipping him! He wants you in community; he wants you to worship together with other believers. If you feel like your local church is missing something, maybe it is... YOU!

So I challenge you: instead of going to church this week saying, “What can I get out of this service?” instead say, “What can I give God and others this weekend at church?” I think you will find that when you come in with the right attitude of service, you will notice God showing up to meet your needs as well. Make a commitment to find a local church that you can be a part of. If there are things that need to be changed, then help be the change! Just don't make excuses for not meeting with other believers — CHURCH just isn't the same without U.

Kevin Daniels is pastor of Hays Christian Church, and if you're looking for a church home, join them at 22nd and Marshall Road at 10:45am this Sunday. It's a small church with a big heart. rev.kevin.daniels@gmail.com.

Team from New Life Center serves at Convoy of Hope

Last month, 10 volunteers from New Life Center prepared to spend a weekend serving on a missions trip — without ever leaving the state of Kansas. The team joined more than 1,000 other volunteers to serve guests of honor at a Convoy of Hope outreach at Bethel Life Center in Wichita.

Convoy of Hope is a faith-based, nonprofit organization that provides disaster response, conducts community outreach events, and directs nutritional programs and sustainability projects. Area churches and organizations joined Convoy of Hope to offer

free goods and services to the local community.

Over 8,000 people were served at this outreach, some lining up before dawn to take advantage of the free services offered through the event. Some of these services included haircuts, immunizations, employment assistance, and receiving shoes and clothing. The team from New Life Center was able to help specifically with handing out backpacks, school supplies, and groceries, offering medical care, taking family portraits, and general crowd assistance.

While many families struggle to provide food and

basic needs for their families, outreaches like this one help alleviate some of those hardships, especially at times of greater need, such as back to school.

“Missions is about thinking outside of ourselves. I'm thankful for those from New Life Center who were able to serve in this outreach, as well as those who supported us financially and through prayer,” said New Life Center Pastor Sabian Chaney. “Our desire is that our local churches and organizations in Hays would be able to come together and serve our community in a similar outreach at some point down the



line.”

New Life Center is grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in this outreach, and

looks forward to participating in more missions experiences, locally and internationally, in the future.

GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME IN ELLIS COUNTY

As we prepare to usher in yet another season of change, a time of gathering harvests from the seeds that were sown, I am reminded of a familiar phrase from Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to plant and a time to pluck what is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, NRSV).

All of creation, it seems, knows that change is coming. The leaves are beginning to change colors and the fields of milo, wheat, and sunflowers are being "plucked up" and gathered.

In his fascinating essay, "There Is a Season," Parker Palmer suggests that seasons is a wise metaphor for the movement of life, a metaphor suggesting that life is neither a battlefield nor a game of chance, but something infinitely richer, more promising, more real. Parker writes, "The notion that our lives are like the eternal cycle of seasons does not deny the struggle or the joy, the loss or the gain, the darkness or the light, but encourages us to embrace it all—and to find in all of it opportunities

for growth."

While Palmer might be right, many of us know all too well that while change may provide opportunities for growth in the form of attending a new school, starting a new career, finishing what we have started, or entering a new phase of our life's journey, often change does not come without a fight. Like it or not, we resist change. Why, I wonder, do we fight so hard to hold back the tide of change, particularly when it is inevitable? Is there something deep within our DNA, a survival mechanism of sorts that kicks

in when we are pushed outside of our normal comfort zones or when others seem to be dictating and controlling the pace of change? Or are we simply afraid to try new things and to open ourselves to new experiences by leaving the homeostasis of the ordinary and the familiar?

As I prepare to embark on another season of change in my life, returning to Wartburg Theological Seminary in Iowa

for a final year of study in preparation for ordained ministry, I leave Ellis County grateful for the numerous seeds that have been scattered by my sisters and brothers in Christ; disciples who have taken seriously their callings to teach, walk with, and uplift leaders for the greater church. And though this past year has flown by, a time of changing seasons punctuated by worship services, pastoral visits, confirmation classes, Bible study gatherings, and my participation in the ECMA, my time here has been a season of my life that I will remember and treasure for years to come.

The fast-approaching season of autumn may help us open ourselves to the new and exciting possibilities that change often brings. "In my own experience of autumn," writes Palmer, "I am rarely aware that seeds are being planted. Instead, my mind is on the fact that the green growth of summer is browning and beginning to die... But as I explore autumn's paradox of dying and seeding, I feel the power of metaphor... On the surface it seemed life was lessening, but silently and lavishly the seeds of new life were always being sown."

Jon Brudvig is Intern Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Ellis

Pastor Jon Brudvig



St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church

2901 E. 13th, Hays, Kansas, Parish Offices:
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Fax: (785) 623-4207, website: www.heartlandparishes.org
Fr. Jarett Konrade

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Saturday at 5 PM

Sunday at 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Daily Mass - Wednesday, and Friday at 7:30 AM

Reconciliation: Saturday at 4:00 PM

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church



Vine Street - Hays, Kansas

Fr. Barry Brinkman, Pastor

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Website: www.ihm-church.com

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Sunday Spanish Mass - 12 PM

Weekday Mass Schedule:

MWF 6:45 AM - TTh 8 AM Wednesday Spanish 6:30 PM

Reconciliation: Saturday 4 PM and Thursday 5 PM



“ASKING QUESTIONS
IS JUST AS IMPORTANT
AS GIVING THE RIGHT
ANSWER.”

TRICIA NORTH, PASTOR
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

AMONG THE NEW FACES

ELLIS — Tricia North looked right at home Sunday morning, greeting school children as they came bouncing down the aisle bubbling with enthusiasm.

This wasn't a school building, and these students were younger than North is accustomed to greeting into her classroom.

Nonetheless, North — just two months on the job as pastor of the United Methodist Church in Ellis and Palco — still relied on her experience as a teacher on this day.

“This time of year, I'm usually getting my room ready for the school year,” she said. “This is different.”

However, if North was nervous, it didn't show as she took charge, even when a technology problem delayed for just a bit the start of the Sunday morning service.

North, one of several new clergy at Ellis County churches who either began their new assignments this summer or will do so in this fall, is in her first assignment as a pastor, period.

But for North, this new vocation is particularly special because she is coming home.

STORY BY DIANE
GASPER-O'BRIEN

PHOTOS BY
JOLIE GREEN

While she attended church in Hays during her growing up years, North grew up on a farm south of Ellis and attended Ellis schools.

She earned bachelor's degrees in English and history with secondary teaching licenses in English and social studies from Fort Hays State University, then got her master's in history from Emporia State University. North then spent the past 12 years as a social studies teacher at Wallace County High School in Sharon Springs.

During that teaching stint, North helped with mission trips and youth groups and felt a calling to the ministry.

"The teachers really encouraged me to get involved in the church," she said.

She declared her interest for candidacy for ministry to her district superintendent in 2014. She officially earned her candidacy last August and started preparing for her licensure process throughout the school year while still teaching in Sharon Springs.

North learned in late April that her first assignment would be to serve the Ellis and Palco congregations.

"We had no idea where she would be assigned," said her mother, Linda North. "We were quite surprised and quite thrilled" when they learned it would be so close to home.

Linda North and her husband, Daryl, raised three children on their farm south of Ellis. Because Linda worked in Hays, they attended the UMC there. Tricia is their middle child, and their only daughter, so Mom is especially happy about the location of her first assignment.

"We're only 12 miles apart," said Linda North, who has attended several of her daughter's services. "We're overwhelmingly proud of her, and so pleased she is in Ellis."

Ditto for the UMC congregation.

"She's a great fit," said Cindy Gaschler, mother of three children ages 8 to 11 years who all grew up attending the UMC in Ellis. "She's got energy and has a love for youth, a positive upbeat gal. And we love that."

It was obvious Sunday that the feeling is mutual with North, who definitely was in her element as she visited with the children during the service and blessed their backpacks and school supplies.

North slipped in some Bible lessons



Pastor Tricia North blesses the children's backpacks for a good school year during the morning service Sunday at United Methodist Church in Ellis.

to the children, paralleling their listening to teachers, to the disciples listening to Jesus.

"Do any of you have any questions?" she asked the youngsters, who were all ears while sitting in a front pew.

Following a short question-and-answer session, North gave them a thought for the day.

"Asking questions is just as important as giving the right answer," she said. "So thank you God for the gift of making mistakes and trying again."

She also told them to ask for God's help when making choices.

"The disciples made a choice to follow Jesus," she said, "and we all have to make a lot of choices."

North is on a mission to let her two

congregations know she made the right choice with her new vocation.

"I really enjoyed being a teacher," she said. "And I think I will find being a pastor rewarding, too."

Earlier this summer, the Hays area began welcoming several other new clergy, who will be featured in future issues of ONE.

New to Hays are two Catholic priests — Father Barry Brinkman, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays, and Father Jarett Konrade, pastor of St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Hays, and St. Francis of Assisi Church, Munjor.

They both were part of a summer transfer of clergy across the Diocese of Salina and started work at their Ellis County parishes in July.

Brinkman also is priest moderator at Hays' two Catholic schools — Thomas More Prep-Marian Junior-Senior High and Holy Family Elementary — and Konrade also is associate campus minister at Fort Hays State's Comeau Catholic Campus Center.

Also new in Hays will be Rocco Mallardi, pastor of the Messiah Lutheran Church in Hays. His last day at his current assignment in Parsons and Oswego will be Aug. 31, and he and his wife, Jeanine, will move to Hays with their four young children ages 1 to 6 years.

Other new pastors yet to be named will serve at two Hays churches: First Baptist, from which Jerry Sprock retired this summer after 26 years, and Trinity Lutheran.

The life we should worry about

The Weeknd's song "Can't Feel My Face" is a song about the emotions of a couple in a relationship. The man knows that the relationship is not what it should be, but he feels good when she is around, and so he wants it. She, on the other hand, tells him not to worry about his feelings, and just allow the relationship to happen. The fact is that he should worry about the relationship because it probably is not what it should be.

"And I know she'll be the death of me; at least we'll both be numb. And she'll always get the best of me, the worst is yet to come. But at least we'll both be beautiful and stay forever young, this I know. She told me, 'Don't worry about it.' She told me, 'Don't worry no more.' We both knew we can't go without it. She told me you'll never be in love. I can't feel my face when I'm with you, but I love it, but I love it."

Jesus knew about "worry" and what we worry about. He told his disciples at one time that they should not worry about the wrong things--material goods. But he said that they should worry about what is more important than material goods in life, namely "life," that is, how they lived and who they chose as a guide.

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass

of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:25-30)

Life was more important than any material good or emotion. Jesus even showed that God manages to take care of animals with their material needs, and therefore never had to "worry."

In many ways, romantic involvement

is nothing more than a desire to feel good on our part, as the man in The Weeknd's song. We get involved and desire to be told not to worry from a friend, when all we want is the good feeling that everything is okay. The man in The Weeknd's song should have worried about the right thing, namely whether his relationship with his girlfriend was something that could bring about life instead of making him feel good.

In the end, we should all be concerned about the things that really matter in life, that is, who we are and who we are becoming by our actions, words and thoughts. Yes, we should worry about important things, and our emotions can "help" guide us to what is important. But, when all we want is the emotion of feeling good, perhaps, as Jesus points out, we should be considering what is "more than" those feelings.

THE GOSPELS IN FR. MIKE'S TOP 5 (as of 8/15/15)

- 1 - "Can't Feel My Face" / The Weeknd Matthew 6:25-30
 - 2 - "Lean On" / Major Lazer f/ DJ Snake & MO John 1:35-42
 - 3 - "Cheerleader" / OMI Matthew 25:31-46
 - 4 - "Uma Thurman" / Fall Out Boy John 1:10-13
 - 5 - "Worth It" / Fifth Harmony f/ Kid Ink Luke 12:6-7
- (see www.frmikescully.com)

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CHANGE!?! BUT I'M A LUTHERAN!

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)

It is a well-known fact among Lutherans that we don't like change. I'm not sure where or when this started (considering our origins were all about changing the practices of 16th century Catholicism), but it did. I've grown up in Trinity Lutheran Church, here in Hays, and I like to pull out that line whenever I'm worrying about making a change. You know, change is fine for other people, “but I'm a Lutheran; we don't like change.”

Maybe it's an excuse or the way we explain holding on to traditions, but whatever the reason, it isn't really true. We started the Protestant movement, split many times into several denominations, and continue to change today. Maybe we'd like it better if we

said we were growing, or going in a new direction, but isn't that just a form of changing?

In 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) issued a Statement on Human Sexuality, which can be found at www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Human-Sexuality. More recently, our Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, co-hosted a webcast about confronting racism (www.elca.org/webcast?_ga=1.168612326.635721654.1271344908). This was in light of the Charleston, South Carolina, shooting, where the shooter was a member of an ELCA Lutheran church, and some of the victims were pastors who'd graduated from

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

Currently, we are in discussion about a Social Statement on Women in Justice. As society changes, we can either grow (read change) with it and discover new sides to our mission and ministry, or stay entrenched in our ways and grow ever-more exclusive. Discussing these important issues helps us not only as individuals, but as a community of faith, to see and hear different perspectives, to delve deeper into our own understanding of scripture, and to move forward together.

We at Trinity, like many other churches in the area, are about to change, again. We are

nearing the end of our Call (Hiring) Process for a new pastor. It's taken about a year and a half, but we hope to announce a newly called pastor soon. Change is inevitable, and as much as we may say, “we don't like change,” it is sometimes just the push we need to reach out to a new demographic, grow our faith or our church, or spread the word to those who need it most.

I personally am looking forward to this opportunity. Even if it means my worship experience will be different, my job will have new challenges (I'm the secretary at Trinity), or my relationships will have to adapt. As a kid, change was scary because I was completely sure the outcome would be bad, but as I've grown up and seen changes turn out well, I've become more open to growth. Even if I can't bring myself to call it what it is — change.

Anna Towns



FAITH BRIEFS

Messiah Lutheran Church is proud to announce and invite the community to the installation of their new pastor, Rocco Mallardi, on Sept. 13, at 3:30pm. A catered supper will follow the service. Please RSVP to the church office at 785-625-2057, or messiahsec@ruraltel.net,

by Sept. 1.

...

Vacation Bible School this year at Messiah Lutheran Church, was a breath of cool air. “Everest; Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power” was an exciting week filled with fun, games,

great food, crafts and learning about God's word. We had an average of 70 kids per night, plus volunteers. Our mission project for this year was Uzima Outreach. We helped Steve Wescot, and his friend Stephen and his goat LeeRoy raise money for an orphanage in Nairo-

bi. We raised over \$2,375.00. Our CIA (Christians in Action) group was also busy! We had an average of 25 kids per night, plus their volunteers. They went and visited shut-ins, cleaned trash up along the highway and made some cool crafts too!

A SIGN OF THE TIMES



A recent sign outside the New Life Center Assembly of God

Youth Spotlight

Jumping right in to youth groups

By **DIANE GASPER-O'BRIEN**
one@dailynews.net

Sometimes a person walks into your office, or your church, or your home, and you know immediately that he or she is the right fit for a particular task.

All of the above happened for Steve Dinkel, pastor at Liberty Foursquare Church in Hays, when his daughter and son-in-law, Molly and Chris Lofstrom, decided to move back to Hays in 2010.

After starting the Royal Rangers and Mpac Girls ministries at his church a few years earlier, Dinkel had several different people in charge of those youth groups.

Then, along came Molly, returning from a three-year stint at Bible School in Tulsa, Okla., with her new husband in tow.

Now, Chris Lofstrom is in charge of the weekly meetings for the youth at Liberty in addition to the Royal Rangers activities.

Royal Rangers is an activity-based, small-group church ministry for boys in grades kindergarten through 12 providing "Christlike character formation and servant leadership development for boys and young men in a highly relational and fun environment."

Mpac Girls is the female version of Royal Rangers and is run by Dinkel's wife, Kathy, who is in charge of children's ministry at Liberty. Also helping out extensively with Mpac Girls is Molly Lofstrom.

Both programs are similar to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and feature an advancement system that includes discipleship, leadership and skills development.

Lofstrom said he enjoys incorporating faith-based activities into group sessions.

Following recreation as a group, the youngsters learn a life skill for approximately 30 minutes, then split into gender specific groups for discussion and questions.

Life skills for boys range from outdoor activities that include camping, survival skills, campfire cooking and rifle marksmanship to car maintenance and home

repair to being a sound technician for church. Girls are introduced to cooking and gardening, home decor, etiquette and mending, crafts, photography and playing a guitar — and they even get a few tips on car maintenance.

"The philosophy does not just teach the scripture but teaches practical skills," said Dinkel, who added that "we wanted to launch something no one else had."

He said everyone involved has been pleased with the results.

"Our goal is to raise useful, capable adults who can care for their families, homes and vehicles and help others around them that need help," Dinkel said.

"We want to raise them to have their own

relationship with God and be able to hear His voice and obey His plan for their lives. We also want the kids to have skills to be a blessing to a local church wherever they go, whether it be running the sound system, planning an event or being part of a missionary team or worship team."

Lofstrom, who grew up in Tulsa and met his future wife at Victory Bible College, fit that mold of leading such a team. He started helping with youth ministry almost right away when he and his wife moved to Hays.

"There was already a youth leader," he said, "so I just helped in any way I could. I was helping with Sunday school, too."

Then when the youth leader position opened up this past spring, "Kathy and Steve both felt I would do well in that position. So I agreed to do it."

The Dinkels and Lofstroms are looking forward to a new school year, one that will culminate a jam-packed year for their family.

The Dinkels' first grandchild, Marcelyn Lofstrom, was born in January. And this will be the first school year that begins at Liberty's newly remodeled church on the corner of Seventh and Allen Streets in Hays.

On a recent Wednesday night, youth dodged water spraying across the front lawn of their new church. In the past,



Jolie Green, jgreen@dailynews.net

From left, Jacob Windholz, Lucas Mader and Tanner Windholz play basketball during the Liberty Foursquare Church Royal Rangers youth ministry group meeting on Aug. 19.



Chris Lofstrom



Courtesy photo

Elena Mader tries to hit Lucas Mader with a water balloon during recreation time of a youth activity event.

youth had no where to scamper outdoors as their main church was located amid a group of businesses in Hays at 120 W. Ninth.

Because of limited room at the Ninth Street location, Liberty youth did meet every Wednesday for their ministries at St. Michael Episcopal Church in Hays.

But it wasn't their own space.

That all changed this January.

"This worked out perfectly," Dinkel said while glancing around the sanctuary that had just received a facelift.

The same is true for his selection of a youth leader.

"He fits in so well with the younger kids," Kathy Dinkel said of the 32-year-old Lofstrom. "He gets right in there with them and plays games, etc."

"This was on my heart," Lofstrom said. "I thought about youth ministry a lot. This was the perfect fit."

And that comes from someone who grew up in a metropolitan area with a population of nearly 400,000.

"We really like the area," he said. "Sometimes we wish we lived in a bigger city, but every time we go back to Tulsa to visit family and friends, we don't feel like that's where we're supposed to be. This is home."



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