

ONE

A publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance Feb. 2016

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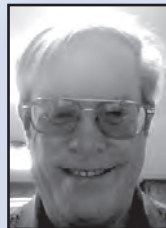
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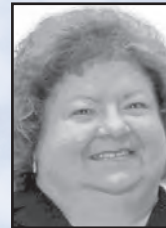
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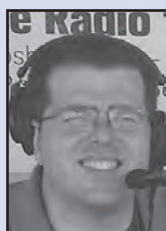
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'Redeem the time'

See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time... - Ephesians 5:16

2016 brings us the gift of an extra day. This year, February will have 29 days rather than its usual 28.

Every four years the calendar adds an additional day. Without that Leap Day addition, over time seasons would shift backwards and we would be celebrating Christmas in the fall and Thanksgiving in the summer. Total confusion.

For most of us, this year's Leap Day could probably be just another harried day in our often too busy lives. The

ONE Advisory Board, Pastors Kevin Daniels, Steve Dinkel and Marie Sager, pondered how this year's extra day might affect how we consider the gift and stewardship of time.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time, *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is calendar and counting time; time that can be precisely measured. We so often experience *chronos* as time that flies by with tasks, appointments and many responsibilities. *Kairos* on the other hand, is the "right or opportune time." *Kairos* is often called God's Time. *Kairos* is time out of time

— suspended time — when we may sense God trying to get our attention, and would be wise to pay attention.

How might we "redeem the time" in this season?

What might shift if we practiced awareness of God's presence, gratitude for the blessing of the time that we have? If we devote prayer and attention to what is vital and life giving, not simply urgent or sensational?

Perhaps you are one who feels time is slipping away for you. Our ECMA churches and leaders would welcome the time to connect you with God's Time in this fast-paced world.

On behalf of the ECMA and the Executive Board, we hope that as you explore the reflections in this edition of ONE, you find ideas and insights that help you to "Redeem the Time."



The Rev. Celeste Lasich

First Presbyterian

RECIPE

CHICKEN N' DRESSING PIE

Ingredients:

- 4 chicken breasts, thawed and cut up into cubes
- ½ cup chopped onion
- salt & pepper
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp sage
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 pkg Stove Top, prepared as directed on box
- 1.5 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Directions:

Season cubed chicken with salt,

pepper, sage. Sauté onions and chicken in sauce pan until chicken begins to brown. Stir milk, soup, sour cream together until smooth, and then add to chicken pieces. Let simmer, prepare Stove Top Stuffing as directed on box. Quickly fold in 1 cup of the shredded cheese to the chicken mixture and pour into a 9 by 13 pan. Spread remaining cheese on top, and then cover with prepared stuffing. Bake about 35 minutes at 375 degrees or until chicken is completely cooked and dressings is golden brown.

Variations: Add mixed vegetables or broccoli to the chicken mixture.

Submitted by: *Immaculate Heart of Mary Church - Parishioner*

HOLY HUMOR

A pastor's wife was preparing pancakes for her young sons.

The boys began to argue over who should get the first pancake. Their mother saw this

as an opportunity for a moral lesson.

"If Jesus were here," she said, "He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'" The older

boy then turned to his brother and said, "You be Jesus."

Submitted by
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church

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Food pick up date: Feb. 20; Hays, Big Creek Crossing, south hallway, 2918 Vine, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call Vickie Rohleder (785) 625-6291 or June Glasgow (800) 998-9436.

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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ONE is the official publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance, which guides its mission, content and theme.

It is produced by The Hays Daily News.
Volume 8, Issue 12
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or find us on Facebook

Since we're not promised tomorrow

There are all kinds of excuses we can make when we really do not want to do something. In one of Jesus' stories, the people invited to a man's festive gathering did not want to go. They gave all kinds of excuses, but the bottom line was they did not want to take the time necessary to visit the occasion.

One of Jesus' fellow guests ... said to him, "Blessed is the one who will dine in the kingdom of God." He replied to him, "A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, everything is now ready.' But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot

come.' The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' The servant reported, 'Sir, your orders have been carried out and still there is room.' The master then ordered the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled. For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner' " (Luke 14:15-24).

Placed in the context of Jesus' Kingdom, the people were invited to the Kingdom, but they chose not to go because they had more important things to do.

Meghan Trainor and John Legend's song "Like I'm Gonna Lose You" is all about a relationship that they are experiencing.

"I'm gonna love you like I'm gonna lose you. I'm gonna hold you like I'm saying goodbye

wherever we're standing. I won't take you for granted 'cause we'll never know when we'll run out of time. In the blink of an eye, you could lose everything; the truth is you never know. I'll make the most of the minutes and love with no regrets. Let's take our time to say what we want, use what we got before it's all gone 'cause we're not promised tomorrow."

They are promising to each other that there will be no excuses offered to get out of the relationship. As they put it, their actions are going to prove that they will never cease the relationship because they will always be with each other. That is, they are "not promised tomorrow" and therefore there is only today. There is only today when the relationship is strong, saying in effect that it will stay that way, always and forever.

The couple in love are saying that their commitment is not a matter of "waiting until something else happens." It is a matter of being so strong that they are not allowing for any conditions, any excuses. It will never be a matter of "I will love you if..." Love will always be an active voice — not conditional. It is saying:

THE GOSPELS IN FR. MIKE'S TOP 5 [as of 1/15/15]

- 1 - "Hello" / Adele, Matthew 18:21-35
- 2 - "Like I'm Gonna Lose You" / Meghan Trainor featuring John Legend, Luke 14:15-24
- 3 - "Stitches" / Shawn Mendes, Luke 22:29-34
- 4 - "Ex's and Oh's" / Elle King, Matthew 5: 37
- 5 - "On My Mind" / Ellie Goulding, Luke 24:27-30

"I will love you. It does not matter what will happen in the future; right now I am committed to doing what we have said. We are not promised tomorrow, so it will always be today, and always be what we say."

There are many applications for the song because all of us are involved in some kind of commitment right now. We are committed to studying or living well or working out some relationship with a friend or in Jesus' story, being accepting of the Kingdom, or being a good married person or, a good unmarried person—whatever ... The point is that no matter who we are or what we are engaged in, the thought of commitment will come up in some way or another.



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Longtime Westview pastor wouldn't change a thing

By MIKE KESSINGER
newsroom@dailynews.net

Pastor Wes Oakley will tell you if there was a poll taken by his high school classmates from Lakin in 1967 on who would go into ministry, his name probably not have received a vote.

Ask him if he would have believed 35 years ago when he and wife Sandra moved their family to Hays if they would still be here, and his answer is no.

Funny how things work out sometimes, but for Oakley, the senior pastor at Westview Church, there's nothing he would change as far as where he and his family are today. It's been a story of stability for Oakley in Hays, and he's happy for the way it's turned out.

"When you go somewhere you never figure you're going to be there a certain amount of time," Oakley said. "Maybe some would do that."

"Hays has been a good community for us. It's probably done more for us than we've done for it."

After moving to Hays in 1981 to become the associate pastor, Oakley moved his family to New Mexico in early 1983. A few months after leaving, he received a call from his old friend, Pastor Jack Johnson, who Oakley worked under at the church. Johnson informed his friend he had resigned from the



COURTESY PHOTO

Wes Oakley, left, and wife Sandra, with grandson Isaiah Nunnery during his collegiate basketball signing.

church and wanted him to come back and be the Senior Pastor at Joy Fellowship (now Westview). At first, Oakley said he and Sandra weren't sure if that is what they wanted, seeing as how it had been just a few months since they had left. Through time to think and pray about the opportunity though, the Oakleys decided to come back. And the rest is history. A history in which Oakley is the longest tenured Pastor, Priest or Minister in Ellis County.

The move back to Hays gave the Oakleys a stable place to raise their five

children and along the way see the culture of the town change. It's something Oakley describes as a lot of change.

"The culture in Hays has changed dramatically since we've been here," Oakley said. "We talk about being here 35 years, it's changed a bunch."

Through the three-and-a-half decades in Hays, there are plenty of things Oakley hasn't tried to change about the church he ministers. He's gone with different approaches as far as being a pastor, but he has always believed in having a strong group of

youth in the church.

Oakley has made it a point to invite young adults and children to the church. Something that has helped the church gain youth attendance and keep them interested is the youth ministry for teenagers. One of Oakley's associate pastor's is his son-in-law, Tim Nunnery, who is an assistant coach on the Hays High School boys' basketball team. He is head of the church's youth program.

"I think we have access to one of the most healthy children's ministries in the community," Oakley said. "I know there are some good churches here that do as well, but we'd put ours up against anybody's."

To have that strong group of youth, Oakley points to the church's high number of young families. It's also been about inviting children out to be part of the youth ministry group that has services Wednesday for middle and high school ages.

"We are really trying to help prepare tomorrow's church by preparing those young kids," Oakley said.

"Those young kids are the future of our church. We learned that a long time ago. We're willing to invest in the kids. Part of being here is trying to help develop and prepare for your tomorrow."

Readings will be rich this month; be encouraged

Welcome to the February Bible reading plan. We've started the New Year off with a bang. The reading assignments have been lengthy but engaging. I hope you've been able to keep up. This month still will be a full month, and equally engaging. Our theme for ONE magazine this month is "redeeming the time."

I can't think of a better way to redeem the time God gives me than to spend time with Him reading His story. March will slow a bit,

so don't give up.

Our Old Testament readings will finish Genesis, and almost all of Exodus. The readings will be rich this month, as we continue to read the story

of God's dealings with us. We learn about faithful and frustrated leadership moments from Moses, but first enjoy Joseph's amazing story. Do you think Joseph would have be-

come the leader he became, without going through his challenges? That's

Pastor Steve Dinkel,
Liberty Foursquare

Bible Reading Plan



| FEBRUARY | | |
|--------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 43-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 22 |
| 2..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 45-46 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23 |
| 3..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 47-48 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 24 |
| 4..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 49-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1 |
| 5..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 1-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 2 |
| 6 & 7..... | Weekend Review | |
| 8..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 3 |
| 9..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 5-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 4 |
| 10..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 7-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5 |
| 11..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 9-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 6 |
| 12..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 11-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7 |
| 13 & 14..... | Weekend Review | |
| 15..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 13-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 8 |
| 16..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 15-16 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9 |
| 17..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 17-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 10 |
| 18..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 19-20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 11 |
| 19..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 21-22 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 12 |
| 20 & 21..... | Weekend Review | |
| 22..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 23-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13 |
| 23..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 25-26 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 14 |
| 24..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 27-28 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15 |
| 25..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 29-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 16 |
| 26..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 31-32 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17 |
| 27-28..... | Weekend Review | |
| 29..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 33-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 18 |

a question we must ask ourselves on occasion too!

Our New Testament readings will finish with the Gospel of Luke and begin the book of Acts. I'm always

amazed God has done such amazing things with such fragile and flawed human beings...there's hope for us!! Enjoy the narrative, and most importantly, be encouraged, God has a plan. Read on!

DOES HABITUAL SPIRITUALITY WORK?

This year is leap year. That means we get one extra day in our calendar, and it got me thinking, what are we supposed to do with it?

I recently saw a television show devote an entire episode to leap year day. One family took the day off from work and school and did only fun, crazy, adventurous things for the day. One person actually had his birthday on Feb. 29, so he had a 10th birthday party.

I don't know that I am going to go all out with a special day of adventure, but I do want to honor the extra time God has given me in some way to worship and praise Him. Each and every day we are to praise God, and this year we get one extra day to do just that. But am I really praising and worshipping God each day of my life? That's a hard question to answer.

You'd think since I am a pastor, the answer would be an easy and hearty yes.

Virtually every day of my life I am involved in some aspect of ministry. Whether that be composing sermons, visiting the sick, calling on members and guests, or studying the Bible, my activities generally have some aspect of ministry and should inherently involve worship of God.

Pastor
Kevin Daniels

Hays Christian
Church



The problem is sometimes I do these things out of habit instead of with admiration and awe for my Creator.

In thinking about this, I think we are all guilty of falling into habitual forms of virtually everything we do. We go through the same routine each morning. We drive the same way to work each day. We may even go to the same place for vacation each year. We get into a routine. And for the most part, we're OK with that. We may even like that. It's comfortable; it works.

The problem with routine is that we can do it without really engaging our

brains or our emotions. We do it almost automatically and don't consciously think about what or why we're doing it. In Mark Batterson's prayer devotion called Draw the Circle, he says that after singing a song 30 times, we stop thinking about the meaning of the words. We sing it out of rote memory, and the conscious thought process we once had with the song is gone. It doesn't mean we don't love the song — it just means we're not thinking about it anymore.

That familiarity and disengagement of our brain's thought processes has some pretty interesting implications for worship on Sunday mornings. It also highlights the need for us to reexamine other areas of our habit-filled life.

Habits, of course, are not bad. They allow us to do things quickly and more easily. But when we allow our spiritual practices to become habit, we are in danger of losing their meaning and true

purpose — connecting with God in a personal way.

My challenge for you (and for me) is to examine your spiritual practices and ensure you're still engaging your mind and your heart when you do them. Are you praying the same prayer you've always prayed? Are you reading the same book? Are you just making donations without really thinking about or praying for the charity you're supporting? If yes, change it up somehow so you can really engage all of your being in the task. Try standing when you pray. Try reading outside, or a new book. Try writing a letter of thanks or support to send with the donation check.

Habits are not a bad thing — but they can become a trap for us when we allow our brains to go on auto-pilot when it comes to matters of faith and practice. Our relationship with God needs to be a matter of the heart and the mind — we must take care not to neglect either.



St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church

2901 E. 13th, Hays, Kansas, Parish Offices:
(785) 628-1446

Fax: (785) 623-4207, website: www.heartlandparishes.org
Fr. Jarett Konrade

Mass Schedule:

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



1805 Vine Street - Hays, Kansas

Fr. Barry Brinkman, Pastor

Parish Office: 785-685-7339

Website: www.ihm-church.com

Weekend Mass Schedule:

Saturday 5 PM - Sunday 8 AM - 10 AM - 6 PM

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

One-on-one with your

MARIE SAGER

PASTOR, TRINITY LUTHERAN



From: Plymouth, Minn.

Favorite Bible passage – 1 John 4: 7-21 *God is Love*

Favorite song: “Live Like You Were Dying” by Tim McGraw.

Favorite food – Chicken Kiev and Mashed Potatoes

Quote that inspires me: “Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.” – Dr. Seuss.

Favorite Biblical figure – Elizabeth (wife of Zechariah, mother of John the Baptist).

Random fact: I have a rubber duck collection

KEN EDIGER

LEAD PASTOR, NORTH OAK COMMUNITY



From: Meade, Kan.

Favorite Bible passage: Colossians 2:6-7

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Gutches

Favorite food: My wife, Rachel's, baked steak

Favorite sports team: KSU football; Kansas City Royals.

Random fact: Personally completed the total restoration of a classic 1950 Chevy that I purchased from my grandfather when he retired from farming.

LORY HERRICK

FIRST BAPTIST HISPANIC



From: New York

Favorite Bible passage: Joshua 1:9

Favorite food: Chinese

Favorite movie: “Faith like Potatoes”

Quote that inspires me: “Nothing is too hard for God.”

Dream vacation: Puerto Rico

Favorite Biblical figure: Deborah

Random fact: I was five months pregnant when I gave birth to my now 10-year-old daughter.

DAVE KISNER

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY & VIA CHRISTI



From: Hays

Favorite Bible passage – Jeremiah 29:11 *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Favorite song: “Live like you were dying” by Tim McGraw.

Favorite place to eat in Ellis County: Peter Mandy's.

Favorite sports team: Kansas Jayhawks

Dream vacation: Italy – Already visited Southern – Dream to visit Northern

Favorite Biblical figure: David

FR. JARETT KONRADE

PASTOR, ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA



From: Abilene, Kan.

Favorite Bible passage: 2 Tim. 1:6

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Gella's

Favorite food: Crab legs

Favorite song: “Alive Again,” Matt Maher

Quote that inspires me: “Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” - C. S. Lewis

Random fact: I can play guitar and sing like Kermit the Frog.

STEVE DINKEL

PASTOR, LIBERTY FOURSQUARE



From: Quinter

Favorite Bible passage: 3 John 2

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Home (I'm married to the best cook in the county.)

Favorite song: “You've Got a Friend”

Quote that inspires me: “Your career is what you are paid for, your calling is what you were made for.” (author unknown)

Dream vacation: To Russia to visit my grandfather's birthplace.

Favorite sports team: Royals

participating ECMA members

KEVIN DANIELS

PASTOR, HAYS CHRISTIAN CHURCH



From: Seattle area

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Jalisco's and The Q.

Favorite food: cheeseburgers, fajitas and pizza

Favorite movie: Hard question! Star Wars, Miracle, Bourne series, Bond movies, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, Elf, The American President

Quote that inspires you: "Just do it." – Nike's paraphrase of James 1:22

Favorite sports team – Seattle Seahawks!!

Dream vacation destination – Disneyland or Washington, D.C., with my family

Favorite Biblical figure – Elijah – I love his showdown with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.

CELESTE LASICH

THE REV., FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



From: Marquette, Mich.

Favorite Bible passage: Micah 6:8

Favorite food: The last fabulous new food I tried.

Favorite song: "Canticle of the Turning"

Quote that inspires me: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dream vacation destination: Back to Scotland and Iona

Favorite Biblical figure: Mary of Magdala

Random fact: I was 5 before I could hear well and spoke (only when I had to) with a lisp.

KYLE ERMOIAN

SENIOR PASTOR, CELEBRATION COMMUNITY



From: "My kind of town Chicago is"

Favorite Bible passage: John 10:10 "I have come that you may have life and to have it abundantly"

Favorite song: "I Don't Want to Gain the Whole World and Lose my Soul" - Toby Mac

Favorite movie: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade or whatever the latest Coen Bros. movie is.

Quote that inspires me: "And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make" - Lennon/McCartney

Favorite sports team: Go Cubs Go!

Random fact: As a 4-year-old, I did a Frank Sinatra impersonation on the Mike Douglas TV show

CASEY ROHLEDER

DEACON, ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL



From: Peoria, Ill.

Favorite Bible passage: Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Gella's

Favorite food: prime rib

Favorite movie: "A League of Their Own"

Quote that inspires me: "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase" Martin Luther King Jr.

Dream vacation destination: Italy

Random fact: I stop flipping channels if I find a Will Ferrell movie. Guilty pleasures.

KAREN HARVESTER

PASTORAL CARE SUPERVISOR, HAYSMED



From: El Dorado, Kan.

Favorite Bible passage: Romans 8:38

Favorite food: Lobster

Favorite movie: Steel Magnolias

Quote that inspires me: "A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for." - William G.T. Shedd

Favorite sports team: Denver Broncos, Wichita State Men's basketball

Random fact: I am also a registered nurse and pastor of Gorham Community Church.

MIKE ROSE

SENIOR PASTOR, FIRST UNITED METHODIST



From: Dodge City, Kan.

Favorite Bible passage: Matthew 28:16-20

Favorite place to dine in Ellis County: Cancun

Favorite song: "Bridge Over Troubled Water"

Quote that inspires me: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can." - John Wesley

Dream vacation destination: U.S. Virgin Islands

Random fact: I've been married to my beloved wife Theresa for more than 40 years.

Finding the faith to fight

By **MAGGIE GEBHARDT**
mgebhardt@dailynews.net

It's been said in an instant someone's life can forever change, so it is wise to live each moment to the fullest, and to be thankful for all one has.

For most, the possibility of an unexpected, tragic turn is hard to imagine. But for Hays Middle School eighth-grader Taylor Weidenhaft, it's just another day in her reality.

It hasn't been a typical school year for the 14-year-old, and it all started in June with a few symptoms she couldn't ignore.

"She was itching all over her body. She would just periodically complain about it, but then it became more and more persistent," Taylor's mother Julie Weidenhaft said.

"We didn't know what it could be at the time, and just thought it was allergies."

Doctors suspected something minor, as well, and put her on antibiotics, but the symptoms remained, sometimes so severe Taylor couldn't sleep.

During a volleyball game, her parents noticed a strange, sluggish side of their daughter that was simply out-of-character.

"I felt like I was getting the flu," Taylor said. "My whole body was just achy. I felt tired and my neck hurt."

Her lymph nodes appeared to be extremely swollen, so Julie took her back to the doctor where she received an ultrasound of her neck. Two lymph nodes were abnormally enlarged — approximately 2.5 centimeters.

Still, no one could seem to grasp the seriousness of the matter, or find a solution.

By September, Taylor had been on several different antibiotics with no improvement, according to her mother.

After doing some independent research, Julie, a nurse at Hays Medical Center, began to wonder about the possibility of lymphoma — a form of cancer of the lymphatic system.

"They finally sent us to Ear, Nose and Throat at Children's Mercy," Julie said.

Lab work and numerous tests still revealed no answers.

Finally, on Nov. 16, Taylor underwent an MRI and surgery so the tissue could be further examined.

"The physician came in and pulled me out of the room prior to taking her back for surgery, which I knew wasn't a good sign," Julie said. "She took me into this little room and said she didn't like the way the MRI looked — it looked suspicious."

The next day, the phone rang, bringing the news that would change a young girl's life forever — Taylor, indeed, had Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

"That was probably the hardest thing I've ever done — telling my kid she has cancer," Julie said as tears filled her eyes.

Taylor's carefree life consumed with her love for school, sports, horses and numerous activities was now on the line. Knowing this, the 14-year-old faced the news head-on, with



NICK SCHWIEN, nschwien@dailynews.net

Taylor Weidenhaft pets her puppy, Hope, while talking about her battle with cancer at the family business, Big Creek Veterinary Services in Hays.

an undeniable and unique strength ignited by her faith, friends, family and community.

Over the last two months, approximately 10 trips have been made to and from Kansas City, where she has been receiving her treatments.

Her positive attitude, sense of humor, and ability to make heavy situations light have helped her along the way.

"If you can take my sass and throw it right back at me, I love it," Taylor said as she laughed. "I keep the doctors on their toes."

A big part of the reason she has been so brave is because even at such a young age, she's faced some of life's toughest obstacles. She lost a dear friend as the result of a car accident a little over a year ago, and Taylor said experiencing that heartbreak changed her outlook on life.

"She was one of my best friends," she said as she wiped tears away. "I would go through all this again if it meant I could get her back."

This appreciation for life has helped guide Taylor, which in turn, has given her family strength.

"Throughout this whole process, her biggest thing was

that she didn't want to be pitied," Julie said. "There are days when she's stronger than me."

Though the eighth-grader tries to remain as positive and strong as possible, some moments, as expected, have challenged her. But even in those moments, she quickly finds her way to the light again, either on her own or with the help of others.

When phases of weakness inevitably make their way in, Taylor's school, friends and family won't let her forget how strong she is.

An example of this was when she began to lose her hair due to treatments. This was a trial for the 14-year-old, but in the midst of the panic and devastation, a friend texted her an inspirational Bible verse just in time to lift her out of the fear.

Taylor's basketball team created a care package for her and designed shirts to wear in support, which eventually were worn by students throughout the entire school. The shirts say, "Fight like a Girl!" on the front, and "Taylor Strong" on the back along with Taylor's basketball number.

"When we first learned she was diagnosed, the girls on the basketball team immediately wanted to do something," said Jessica Dale, Hays Middle School physical education teacher and girls' basketball coach. "We knew we really needed to come together."

Hays native Dan Weller, a band member of the award-winning country music group Florida Georgia Line, visited Taylor in the hospital.

"He stayed and talked with us for about an hour and brought her all kinds of goodies," Julie said. "It was really neat."

The Fort Hays State University women's basketball team has really reached out to Taylor as well, especially guard Paige Lunsford, who regularly checks in with Taylor to see how she is doing.

These are just a few examples of the acts of kindness that have been shown to the Weidenhafts over the last few months.

Looking ahead, "Taylor's Spaghetti Feed" — a community fundraiser — is scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday at Hays VFW, 2106 Vine.

"I'm so thankful for all the support and prayers we've received through all this," Julie said. "We've been overwhelmed by it all."

Recently, Taylor was labeled "in the clear," but still has final treatments, and a long road of precaution ahead.

"I'm still me," Taylor said. "I'm the same old me again and that's what I wanted from the beginning."

Looking forward with faith, she is ready for the fight, and said she's never going to stop battling.

"I know that God is with me and He will help get me through it," she said. "I can never give up."

To follow Taylor's journey, or for additional information, visit the "Pray for Tay" Facebook page.

Youth Spotlight

Youth stay busy at St. Nicholas of Myra

By MIKE KESSINGER
newsroom@dailynews.net

The not too far trips. Sleeping on a gymnasium floor. Sunday evening Bible study. The community work.

As a Catholic Youth Organization sponsor for high school students at St. Nicholas of Myra Church, Bill Meagher has been through it all. It's been an experience for him, and he gets to be a part of the group with his wife, Mandy.

"I enjoy it," Meagher said. "I really like working with young people. It's fun to work with them. It keeps me young."

Asked to join and lead the group seven years ago, working with 25 to 30 high school age students is nothing new to Meagher. A teacher and basketball coach at Thomas More Prep-Marian, many of the church youth group attend the Catholic high school. Meagher said there's a good balance between Hays High and TMP students in the group, but there are certainly years when there's quite a few more from one than the other. This year he said there are more from TMP. Either way, the experience for Meagher and his wife — who have three young children of their own — is one they enjoy having the opportunity to do.

"This is a good group," Meagher said. "They are a very talkative group when we meet. They very much get along and care about each other. They like serving."

Being a part of the community and getting out doing work and activities is a focus of the CYO at St. Nicholas. Meagher said some of the activities and services the group takes part in are the Saints Trick or Treat Faith Formation in October or the Stream Clean.

Once a year, the group will go on what Meagher calls a "Backyard" Mission trip in which they visit a community in Kansas to serve and help in whatever way possible. Whether it's cleaning up an area or doing a house painting, the Missions are done during a week. The group has taken trips to Salina and to smaller communities across



COURTESY PHOTOS

the Northwest part of the state, such as Atwood.

The trip is also when the group will usually camp out in a school gymnasium. It's a time Meagher can bond with the group members outside of the

church and get to know the members a little more.

Once every other year, the CYO will take a trip across the country to the National Conference of Youth Ministry. The conference was in Indianapolis in 2015.

Many youth groups will meet for their bible study or gathering during a week night, but the high school St. Nicholas CYO meets Sunday evenings twice a month at the church's Parish Hall.

Each day is a gift from God

Let's suppose you had a bank account that every morning at 6 a.m. the bank deposited \$86,400 into your account. Like this idea? The one requirement was that you had to spend it all that day. And that when you went to bed at night any of the money you had not spent would be debited back out of the account. What

would you do? I know what you would do, you would spend every stinkin' cent!

That is exactly what God does with you every 24 hours. He gives you 86,400 seconds. God says you can use this any way you want to use it. But at the end of

the day any that's unused or misused or you didn't use, you lose. Like the expression says, "If you don't use it, you lose it." And you're never going to get it back.

Pastor
Kyle Ermoian

**Celebration
Community**



Life is all about time and what you do with it. Life is a sacred trust, a gift from God that you've been given to be used to fulfill the purposes of God. God has a lot to say on the topic.

"Lord, teach us to make the most of our time so that we may grow in wisdom." Psalm 90:12.

God's word says we are to live with a sense of urgency because life is short and we are to use the little time we have

more wisely and for eternal good.

I have a plaque that has sat on my kitchen counter for the last 20 years. It reads:

"This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. What I do today is very important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it.

When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving something in its place I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, not loss — good, not evil. Success, not failure in order that I shall not forget the price I paid for it."

In a letter to the New Testament church at Ephesus the Apostle Paul writes, "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

In reading this I can see God wants

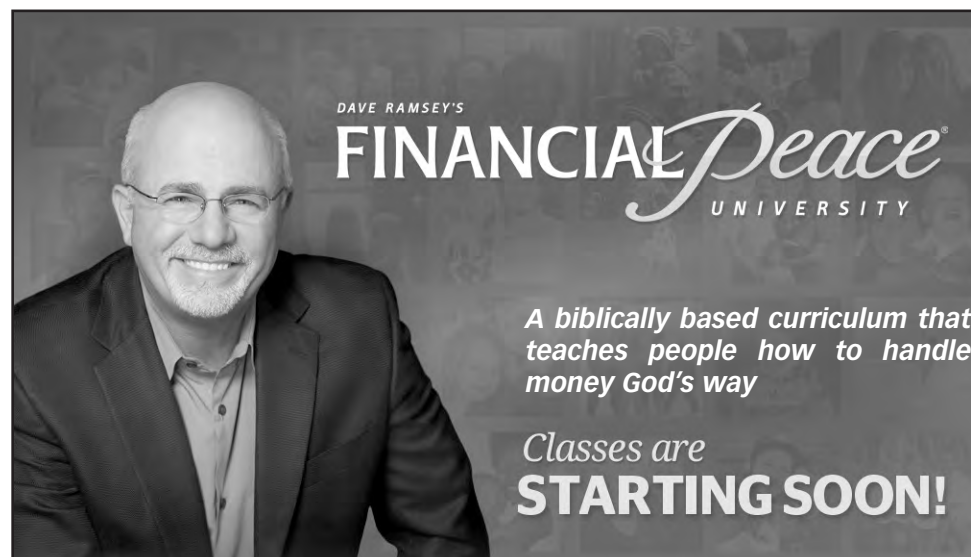
you to use your time wisely because you know the meaning and purpose of life.

If you didn't know the meaning and purpose of life you might think it's whatever I want to do with my time. But you know the meaning and purpose of life, at least I hope you do?

Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission says to us that we are to; "Love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are also to go and make disciples baptizing them and teaching them to obey what Christ commands."

God's word says He wants you to embrace those purposes. He wants you to know the meaning and purpose of life and to let those purposes guide you and determine how you use your time.

Each day we are given is a gift from God. What we do with this day is our gift back to God.



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A recent sign outside First United Methodist Church, Hays.



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Celebration Community Church
Westview Church
Messiah Lutheran Church
First Baptist Church
St. Fidelis Church

St. Nicholas of Myra Church
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Cornerstone Southern Baptist Church
First Presbyterian Church
Thomas More Prep-Marian High School
Messenger
St. John Lutheran Church, Ellis

Eagle Communications
St. Michael's Episcopal Church
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www.libertyis.com

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in St. Fidelis Church behind the main altar
St. Ann, Walker
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Sun. Mass: 7:30 a.m. May thru Oct.
St. Boniface, Vincent
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Fr. John Schmeidler
735-2777
fidelis@ruraltel.net
www.stfidelischurch.com

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Wed. R3 Youth, 7:00 p.m.
Wed. Elevate Kids & Midweek Adult
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3000 W. 41st St 785-625-6359
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