

ONE

A publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance **April 2016**

INSIDE:

- + Being part of a church
- + The Living Last Supper
- + **ONE** coloring contest



Why is it important to be involved?

With all of the competing options and claims on our lives, it can be increasingly tempting to opt out of church. After all, sermons from acclaimed preachers are available online, ready when you want them, without ever having to sing a song you don't like or being pressured to greet someone who gets on your nerves. So why go to church? The ONE advisory team of Pastors Kevin Daniels, Steve Dinkel, and Marie Sager posed the question to our writers "Why is it important to be involved in a local church community?" I wonder how you might answer that question? Does the local church matter? As someone who has committed her life to building up local churches, the answer



for me is an emphatic "yes!" perhaps now more than ever. What does church community provide that you can't get online, from a civic group, or from nature?

Recently the ECMA responded to the tragedy of the downtown trench collapse with a community candlelight service of prayer and remembrance. This community knows the grief and loss of Good Friday. We also know and trust the power of the Resurrection.

We are grateful to be part of a community in which church and civic leaders joined together in this outpouring of compassion. When tragedy strikes it becomes even more evident that God formed and intended us for community. Burdens are shared and grief

is lightened in the prayers and support of community. The practice of grace and gratitude that grows in church community strengthens us throughout our life. We should not wait until tragedy falls to begin to practice a life giving faith. Even so, today is always a good time to start or to recommit to a local church.

The churches of the Ellis Country Ministerial Alliance are committed to the encouragement and betterment of our community. We each worship and serve God in our own unique ways. We are united in our commitment to work together for good and for God. The sponsoring churches of ONE invite you in this Easter season to experience the gift and blessing of our local churches. We hope that you will be inspired and convicted to commit or recommit to a local church. May you know the healing mercy and grace of God who became flesh in Jesus Christ.

RECIPE

BACON AND EGGS CANDY

Ingredients: thin stick pretzels, white chocolate chips (or almond bark), yellow M&M's

Directions:

1. Place pretzel sticks on waxed paper in groups of two, leaving a small space between each, touching at one end is fine.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, heat vanilla chips at 70 percent power until melted; stir until smooth.
3. Drop by tablespoonfuls over each pair of pretzel sticks.
4. For "yolks," place one or two M&M's in the center of each "egg."

Yield: about 3.5 dozen.

History: The story starts many years ago when mom found the recipe in a magazine. Like many families, we are spread out over the country, but one year we were together at Easter. Mom decided it would be fun for my five- and six-year old nieces to make Bacon and Eggs; we had a blast...a blast that has continued for more than 30 years. A few years later, mom decided to take the Bacon and Eggs to her church's Easter breakfast. I helped her make them and brought some of them back for the Easter breakfast at Trinity Lutheran Church. It became a tradition that I make them every year...except for one when I was

out of town, and boy, did I hear about it from a couple of kids when I returned. Since that missing year, I make sure that my Bacon and Eggs are on the counter!

Things I've learned over the years:

- Just like us, no egg is perfect. Don't sweat it if the "white" isn't perfectly shaped or if the "yolk" isn't centered.
- The longest part of this process is picking out the yellow M&M's. I don't like to use the pastel M&M's because the yellow ones don't look like real egg yolks (they are too pale.) Sometimes we are not strong enough in our faith.
- Placing the pretzels close together is key; otherwise, they spread out too far when you put the chocolate on top. Start from one side and go across the pretzels. If they do spread out too far, push the pretzel back into the chocolate and then smooth it out – refer to #1 above. When we get too far from God, we also need a push back into the "chocolate."
- Leftover pretzels, M&M's, and unmelted chocolate chips can be mixed with other things to make a party/trail mix. (See what type of cereal you have on hand, add some raisins/nuts, etc.) Isn't church the mixing of all of the different groups and "flavors" within our communities? I wanna be the nut!
- One of our church members made "Green Eggs and Ham" by using the waffle pretzels and the Green M&M's. Creativity in God's creation knows no bounds...and when given green M&M's make Green Eggs and Ham.

Submitted by LeAnn Stoppel (Trinity Lutheran Church)

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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 9, Issue 2

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On the cover:

Jesus, portrayed by Rob Scott, washes the feet of his disciples in a scene from the play "The Living Last Supper" on March 12 at Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center in Hays.
Photo by Jolie Green, Hays Daily News

Ask the Lord to help you find a church

Greg Laurie is the Bible teacher of A New Beginning, a Bible teaching program aired on KPRD 88.9 FM around 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. He had some interesting thoughts on how going to a local church affects him. "When we glorify God in church with other believers, it gives us perspective. When I isolate myself from other believers I lose perspective. I can become fearful, confused, angry, and even bitter."

My wife and daughters have enjoyed attending and being a part of the local church. Our oldest daughter gets so excited about going to Sunday School, seeing all her friends, listening to the lesson, and going down the slide in the

nursery. Every week she asks if we are going to go to church and if, for some reason, we can't make it, she instantly breaks down in tears.

In the church we have found fellowship, community, and people who struggle in the same areas we do. We have found the church to be a huge blessing in our walk with Christ. It says in Hebrews 10:24-25 "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"

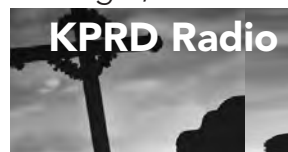
I can say without a doubt that as we go to church and get more involved with the church, God is strengthening my walk with Him. My wife and our daughters are also growing in Him. I can also say without a doubt that when we neglect going to church for a short time, I see the opposite.

I know it can be tempting to walk away from the church when we are hurt by others or when we disagree

about a certain tradition, but I also know that by being in church our walk with Christ grows and God gives us wisdom, guidance, and comfort, particularly in the deep valleys and struggles we go through. When we regularly attend church, God gives us revelations through the sermons from our pastor, the opportunity to minister to others, rich fellowship, and close friends. Plus, we collectively, as a church body, get to be God's light to the world, pointing the world towards Him.

If you are not attending a local church, seek the Lord, ask Him to help you find a church where you hear His Word taught, enjoy fellowship with fellow believers, and can serve.

David Kumer,
Manager, Co-Host



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Church showed me hope for the future

I was a few years out of college, on my own, and working two jobs. At that point in my life, single and busy with a variety of activities, church was not really in my plans. I had other things to do with that time. I was a good person, already doing good things for the community. Why should I take my time to be part of a local church community? However, the man I wanted to spend some of that time with was faithfully in church every Sunday. I wanted to spend time with the guy (so much so that we have been married for 27 years and counting) so I made time to be with him at church.

Over time, showing up and becoming part of that life, I came to see local church community is one of the only places in our present culture where people of diverse ages, backgrounds, educational levels, vocations, and political opinions willingly come together for a purpose higher and deeper than their own comfort or personal interests. Local church was the place where I first practiced the Way of Jesus under the mentorship of people who lived their faith every day, with

joy, conviction, and humility. I learned the power of prayer and trusting God.

I was skeptical at first but became convicted that God made us for community to be the Body of Christ. I suppose I can worship God totally on my own, independent of God's people. But honestly, what then am I worshipping? Church was the place where I recognized I could regularly share meals and serve beside people with whom I agreed about virtually nothing, save that we were brother and sister in Christ. And that commonality was enough.

In every local church I have been a part of, there has been space for people to talk honestly and even passionately about things they disagree about, while remembering that what connects them in Christ is more powerful than any division. I know that is not true everywhere. God knows that churches

and church people are not perfect. Our insider fights create horrible pain and damage. If churches were solely defined by the worst of our behavior then none could stand. Of course that is true of the human condition. In my tradition, each week we confess the

very real and damaging ways we fall short of God's desires for us and our world and our need for redemption and reconciliation. Those are not just words. When we pay attention, those prayers change our lives.

With all the divisions in our culture, where else do university professors and high school graduates know each other and work side by side on a mission project or to prepare a funeral meal? Where else do we share the joys and the pains of our lives and know they are held in love and healing compassion? In a time when so many activities are segregated by age, or income or interest, church is one of the only places

where loving relationships not limited to nuclear families cross generations and endure for generations.

The world is broken. Beautiful and terrible things happen. I knew that long before I ever became part of a local church. The local church showed me hope for the future that was beyond my needing to be busy enough, righteous enough, or to have all the answers. In and through these flawed and all too human congregations, I glimpsed God's empowering Spirit of grace and peace transforming lives and the world. In local churches I have witnessed Light that the darkness cannot overcome. In unlikely churches and through unlikely people, I have come to know and trust that even out of death and despair, God is bringing new life. The power of resurrection promises became flesh in the Body of Christ, the church and so I do not need to be afraid, no matter what may come. Ecclesia — the Greek word translated as church — truly means the people of God gather and are sent out by the power of the Holy Spirit to love and to serve.



The Rev.
Celeste Lasich

First
Presbyterian

Spring distractions tough to overcome

Welcome to the April Bible reading plan. We are now entering my most challenging season for staying on the reading plan. Spring always adds a number of tasks to my list. Usually there is yard work, some home maintenance, a busy church/school schedule, and the desire to get outside and enjoy the weather.

If I'm not intentional, my Bible study and prayer time will get reassigned. To overcome this temptation I remember a promise from Jesus found in Matthew 6:33 (NLT) "Seek the Kingdom of

God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." Each day as I study the Bible I find new principles and ideas that help me navigate life better, and amazingly, all of the tasks get done too. I'm always amazed how well life goes when I put God and His Kingdom first. This month's ONE magazine theme is discussing

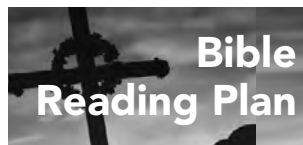
why it is important to be part of a Church Body. I have found that studying the Bible in community is as important as studying it individually. God's plan for our life includes individual and corporate practices. And all of them are good for us!

Our Old Testament readings are challenging! Leviticus and Numbers can be-

come mundane and boring if you don't intentionally watch for a nugget as you read. The community practices necessary for fellowship with God spelled out in the Old Covenant

were exhaustive, and difficult at best. We are currently finishing a building renovation at our church. As I'm reading through Leviticus I think we have it pretty good. Thinking of making provisions for animal sacrifice in a building renovation would be interesting! Keep on reading and don't give up, the Holy Spirit will teach you some-

Pastor Steve Dinkel,
Liberty Foursquare
Church



Bible
Reading Plan

April

1.....	Leviticus 21	1 Cor. 6
2&3.....	Weekend Review	
4.....	Leviticus 22	1 Cor. 7
5.....	Leviticus 23	1 Cor. 8
6.....	Leviticus 24	1 Cor. 9
7.....	Leviticus 25	1 Cor. 10
8.....	Leviticus 26	1 Cor. 11
9&10.....	Weekend Review	
11.....	Leviticus 27	1 Cor. 12
12.....	Numbers 1	1 Cor. 13
13.....	Numbers 2	1 Cor. 14
14.....	Numbers 3	1 Cor. 15
15.....	Numbers 4	1 Cor. 16
16&17.....	Weekend Review	

18.....	Numbers 5	2 Cor. 1
19.....	Numbers 6	2 Cor. 2
20.....	Numbers 7	2 Cor. 3
21.....	Numbers 8	2 Cor. 4
22.....	Numbers 9	2 Cor. 5
23&24.....	Weekend Review	
25.....	Numbers 10	2 Cor. 6
26.....	Numbers 11	2 Cor. 7
27.....	Numbers 12	2 Cor. 8
28.....	Numbers 13	2 Cor. 9
29.....	Numbers 14	2 Cor. 10
30.....	Weekend Review	

thing as you continue.

Our New Testament readings will proceed through the Apostle Paul's letters to the Church at Corinth. First and Second Corinthians are two of my favorite New Testament books. These books communicate God's Kingdom practices "in the now". Each person is important; each person has a place, and a part in what God is doing today. Paul addresses the necessity of community, and addresses the challenges and problems of community at the same

time. Read these books thoroughly and make good notes. These books always encourage me!

Speaking of community, please join us for the dedication and open house of our renovated facility at 400 East 7th this month. We are so excited to have a new place to worship and a new neighborhood to love. Plus, I have a special gift for each of you who read through the Bible with me. Just bring your ONE magazine along and let me know you are a reader! Read on!

We are TLC, we are family

The importance of a church family is a topic I touched on in last May's ONE. For that issue I was supposed to write about a woman of faith who had influenced my life, but there were so many shining examples from Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) that I just had to talk about all the women of TLC who had influenced me over the years! While that article did highlight the many opportunities afforded women at TLC, it also touched on my long-time connection to TLC. It might be all too familiar for some of you, or a radical idea, but I've been coming to Trinity since I was an infant, and I still love it.

I've been baptized, confirmed, and even employed by TLC, and while Pastors, other leadership, and even the building itself have changed throughout the years, the caring, support, and faithfulness of TLC's members have not. There is always someone who genuinely cares how your week

has gone. Someone who asks if you are okay when you've missed a few weeks. Someone who says, "You did a great job singing today," or "I think you'd be a real asset to this committee—have you thought about coming to a meeting?" This kind of being noticed and appreciated has always resounded throughout TLC for me.



Anna
Towns

It has also been great to see my family as part of this larger church family. Having my mom as a strong example of Christian faith, and seeing her involvement and empowerment through teaching Sunday School, sponsoring my youth group, reading and assisting during worship, and holding leadership positions within the church has been awesome. It has allowed me to witness

the power of connecting in a church community, and now I enjoy that connection myself.

Something else that ties this community together is TLC's

long history in Hays. We have members today whose parents were founding members back in 1879. And those founding families' kids and grandkids are still members right now, 137 years later. This long history shows TLC's ability to grow and adapt because of a membership consisting of deep roots as well as new buds.

In our more recent past, we have made it our mission to be an "action-based church in the community." This outward statement of getting involved has meant some changes. We host BBQs as community fundraisers, we have several groups that use the church as a meeting place, we collect items to support the Hays High School food pantry and the Community Assistance Center, we make quilts for Lutheran World Relief, etc.

Sure, what our oldest matriarch loves about church might not be what draws in the new young college student, but there is still a community with a bright smile waiting to welcome them both, and a great mix of traditional and progressive to satisfy everyone's needs.



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



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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

COLORING CONTEST

ONE is sponsoring a coloring contest in an upcoming issue with the theme "Faith like a child." The deadline for submission is April 11. The winner of the contest will have the artwork appear on the cover of the May issue of ONE. Participants should put their name, age, grade and church on the back of their submission.

Participants will answer in their artwork "How do you express your faith?" Submissions can be dropped off at your church or at The Hays Daily News, 507 Main.

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WHY PEOPLE AREN'T GOING TO CHURCH

Church attendance in America is declining. Each year more than 4,000 churches close their doors, compared to only about 1,000 churches that start. Half of the churches did not add any new members to their ranks between 2010 and 2012.

When asked about church attendance, 43% of Americans say that they attend church regularly. In actuality, though, only 18.7% of the population is in church on a given weekend.

Why is that? Why is church attendance dropping?

THE CHURCHLESS

First, let's look at a group researchers describe as "churchless." The churchless are those individuals who have not attended a church in the past 6 months, other than for a special ceremony or service (such as a wedding, funeral, or baptism). As of 2014, there are 114 million adults who fit that description. Add to that roughly 42 million teens and children, and you come up with 156 million churchless in America. If those churchless were to make up their own nation, it would be the 8th most populous country in the world. Over the past decade there has been a more than 30% increase in churchless individuals. That's an increase of 38 million people — more than the population of Canada.

Of the churchless, however, 62% of them identify themselves as Christians. More than one-third (34%) describe themselves as "deeply spiritual," and 4 in 10 (41%) say that they "strongly agree" that their religious faith is important to them today.

Only about one-quarter of the churchless have never attended church (except for a special service) in their lifetime. 77% of them do have firsthand experience with church and have chosen to leave the church for some reason.

Much research has been done on why women, in particular, are leaving the church. This is largely due to the fact that while in 2003, 60% of the churchless were men, in 2015 only 54% were men. That means that what was a 20 point gap has been reduced to an 8 point gap.

Obviously choosing to attend a church or not is a fiercely personal decision and there are many reasons why a person might make that choice. There are, however, some common characteristics and responses.

BUSYNESS

Busyness is a common reason why people do not attend church. 72% of women feel stressed out, 58% state they are tired, and 48% say they are overcommitted. These percentages are even higher for women who have children living at home. Even amidst all this busyness, nearly 9 in 10 women say that they want to improve in at least one area in their life. The area they most cite as wanting to improve is church (22%). That seems to indicate that while there is a desire for church in their lives, they are simply being pulled in too many directions. Their top time commitments are family relationships (44%), work or career (31%), personal time/development (13%), friendships (7%), and finally, church or religious

activities (5%).

For those of us who want church attendance to increase, we must remember that when we ask someone to make church a priority, we are also asking them to give up something else in their life. 68% of women say their top priority is their family relationships. Church is a distant second at 11%.

Sadly, when women do attend church, fewer than half indicated receiving ANY emotional support from the people at their church. Only 17% said that they feel "very supported." Less than a quarter (23%) say that they feel "somewhat supported." Nearly half (43%) say that they feel no support at church at all. This begs the questions, 1) if women are not feeling emotionally supported at church, where are they finding that support? and 2) how can the church do better?

The studies on men leaving the church that I was able to find are unreliable at best. David Murrow, author of "Why Men Hate Going to Church," says, "When Christ called disciples, he did not say, 'Come, have a personal relationship with me.' No, he simply said, 'Follow me.' Hear the difference? Follow me suggests a mission. A goal. But a personal relationship with Jesus suggests we're headed to Starbucks for some couple time." This focus on the relationship rather than the mission is one reason Murrow cites for men not

being interested in church.

That being said, the four major reasons people say that they don't attend church are:

"I feel judged."

"I don't want to be lectured."

"Christians are a bunch of hypocrites."

"Your God is irrelevant to my life."

Let's briefly look at each of those reasons.

I FEEL JUDGED

A whopping 87% of Americans label Christians as judgmental. Most people view the church as critical, disapproving, and condemning. One way the church inadvertently adds to this view is by seeming to take the 10 Commandments and expanding them. When the church takes on the role of judge for the culture and everyone in it, the church misses its mission. It becomes more like a police station than a church. If you think that it couldn't happen in your church, listen to this account a woman gave about taking her kids to a Vacation Bible School program in her local town, as recorded Thom & Joani Schultz's book "Why People Don't Go to Church Anymore:"

"Today I picked up our two young kids from Vacation Bible School at a nearby church. I asked them what they learned. Without hesitation they said, 'When you're in a line, walk, don't talk. Look straight ahead and don't play around. When you get inside, sit quietly and don't talk or move.' Hoping for something a little deeper, I asked if they had learned anything else. 'Yes,' they said. 'If you get up to go to the bathroom, you have to sit in the back and can't get back

with your friends."

Is that what we really want our children picking up from us? One way to check if this culture is prevalent at your church is to look at your signage. Are there more signs about keeping the buildings nice and clean (such as "no coffee in the sanctuary," "no food in the gym," or the like), or are there more signs that are helpful and welcoming to guests? When we focus on the buildings and grounds, we miss the opportunity to focus on doing ministry and actually loving people. Carpets can be replaced, people cannot be. What's more important?

Shultz says that to combat judgment, we have to have "Radical Hospitality." When we meet someone is our first reaction judgment, or is it a genuine desire to know them and their story? Radical hospitality is learning to love one another — not just those we like being around, who look like us and sound like us — but truly loving all individuals as they are, created in the image of God.

1 Corinthians 13 is the familiar love passage, making its appearance at many weddings. But the context of 1 Corinthians 13 is a church setting. These characteristics of love should be evidenced in how we live in our churches and with our neighbors, not just with those we choose. If you look at the description of love in this passage, can you say that it characterizes your church family? If not, then we have some work to do.

I DON'T WANT TO BE LECTURED

Here are two important stats to consider when talking about this point: 1) People remember 10% of oral communication after 72 hours. If you add an image, the retention rate is 65%; and 2) Most people (61%) say that they cannot recall gaining any spiritual insights the last time they attended church.

Yet this issue is one that many are reluctant to address or even admit is a problem. The church, and in general, education, has long been built around the lecture. It's the way it has been done for centuries or more, and many are reticent to change it. But if that's a reason people are truly not coming to church, maybe it's something that we should look at.

One reason lectures are not as effective in today's culture as they were in the past is that we live in an age where people want input and dialogue. When you read news stories on Facebook, there is a place for you to comment. Twitter allows you to direct tweet your favorite author or speaker. Blogs have response sections that are littered with people who want to have a voice. Wikipedia is the ultimate in dialogue, as the content on the encyclopedia is user-generated. For better or worse, that's the world we live in. People want to have a voice.

Yet when an individual attends church, what do we do? We have a person standing up front with a microphone telling people (whom he or she doesn't necessarily know that well) how to think and act. There's no opportunity for questions or push back. It's a one-way conversation, and that's not what people are used to or necessarily looking for. And



Pastor
Kevin Daniels

people in general are not just looking for more information. If they just wanted information they would Google it. When people come to church they are looking for something more.

So what is the solution? I wish I had a good one. If we look back to Jesus, we see him engaging with his listeners in a variety of ways, and having genuine conversations with them. What I have been doing is trying to make my message more of a conversation. I will ask questions during the message and solicit responses from people. I also have people turn to a partner or small group and answer questions during the message time. Sometimes I'll have them write something down in a type of journal entry. I even had people text me during the sermon one Sunday. The idea is to emphasize the point that I'm no better than anyone else just because my spiritual gift happens to be more up front than others. Yes, I have studied, planned, and prepared, but I still don't have it 100% right 100% of the time. I need others in the body of Christ to be able to participate.

CHRISTIANS ARE A BUNCH OF HYPOCRITES

A whopping 85% of Americans make this claim about Christians. This is not just talking about behaviors — it is the sense that church leaders act as if they have arrived, have all the answers, and only want to tell other people what to do. It's not just about saying one thing and doing another — it's also the arrogance of many Christians to believe that they have all the right answers.

Shultz says that the answer to this claim is "Genuine Humility." Genuine humility admits that we don't have all the answers and that we can learn something from others. We have to realize that on most issues, there are good, God-fearing, Jesus-following people on all sides of the debate. You can't just pick and choose issues and make them litmus tests for the faith. The only test of faith is who do you say Jesus is and do you follow him? That's the basic litmus test. Stances on many hot button issues, such as abortion, gay marriage, and politics are not part of the gospel message. Certainly our faith informs our views on those issues in major ways, but we can't just handily dismiss people who hold opposing views as being "non-Christians." Yes, we have prayed, studied, and thought through our opinions, but guess what, so have people on the other side of the aisle! We have to stop fighting! We have to start acknowledging that we can still love one another and yet disagree on issues that are important to us. That's one of the great things about the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance. You'll find churches in Ellis County that fall across a broad spectrum of beliefs on all of the hot button issues of our day. Yet we can still come together to fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ because we agree on the major issue: who is Jesus?

43% of people say that when it comes to important issues, they have no one or only one person that they can discuss them with. That number has nearly tripled over the past 20 years. Shouldn't the church be a place where people can safely have conversations, free from judgment and ridicule? We need to do our part by loving people unconditionally with the love of Jesus. That includes having dialogue and relationships with people who believe differently than we do.

SEE **CHURCH, 10**

Ellis County Spotlight: Why do you or don't you attend church?

I recently asked many of my friends (via Facebook message) to answer a few questions about why they do or do not attend church. All of the friends I asked live in Ellis County. Churches represented (though not necessarily quoted) include Immaculate Heart of Mary, North Oak Community, Celebration Community, First Baptist, Hays First United Methodist, Gorham Community, and my home church, Hays Christian. I asked many others, but these are the people who responded.

You'll see below that there are some common themes. People who are attending church generally are looking for a sense of belonging — a meaningful relationship — with other people. They are looking for others who can support them and are looking for a place of inclusion as opposed to judgment.

Another theme is that worship centers them and starts their week off right. It provides an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit's presence can be felt and where they are prepared for what may come in the weeks and months ahead.

The two individuals who do not attend church both have a church background. Though they left for different reasons, they both arrive at the same conclusion — church attendance is not necessary. Both men have a high value for spirituality, but they express it in a way that is personal.

One of the men (Bryan) identifies himself as close to Buddhist in practice, the other identifies as a Christian. For the Buddhist, he doesn't believe that God/gods exist. He doesn't see the benefit of organized religion and doesn't like it when people judge him for choices he has made. While he says this, he also says that he's not offended if people invite him to church; he just wants people to not judge him for his views. He wants to be respected for his beliefs, but is open to having civil conversations about faith.

For the other man (Warren), he believes that spirituality is important, but that it's not necessary to be a part of a local community of believers. He understands and believes the basic gospel message of Jesus dying on the cross for his sins, but doesn't believe that a formal church gathering has to be a part of his life.

Here are some of the direct quotes from some of

the individuals I asked:

Why do you attend church?

I love learning about God. I do not know everything there is to know about Him, and a lot of times, it gets overwhelming trying to learn on my own. I also love the atmosphere and the immense support and acceptance that you get from a body of believers. Attending church is very important so that you can equip yourself for any battles you may face in life. I like to think of it like this: You wouldn't go to war without weapons and protection, so why would you face the world and all its troubles without the protection and comfort of God's word? — Emma Henry, North Oak Community

I think that we were designed for community in which we can have that accountability and loving support from its members. Another reason that I choose to attend church is because it gives God another opportunity to speak directly to my heart and teach me

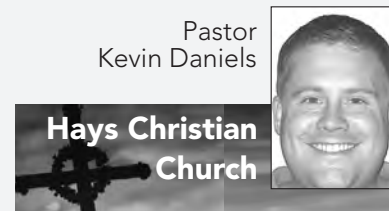
something new in my walk with Christ. Having a church home gives me a sense of belonging and I genuinely look forward to attending and hearing God's message and seeing people that I love. For me, church is a safe place where I won't be judged for my past and I have people there who will lift me up instead of tearing me down. Overall, I feel at peace when I attend church. — Briana Huser, Celebration Community

It is the start of my week. It is what completes me. I try to learn something new in Scripture or at least reinforce what knowledge I do know of Jesus and the Bible.

I have made friends there and I truly do care about them. I have a good support system at my church and they are my family. I am very glad that they are there when my road gets a bit rough because life does happen. In the end when I do have trials and rough spots I am stronger in my faith because my church my family has helped me. — Carolyn Smith, Hays Christian

I go to church to remind myself that God is King, the Father, the Creator of everything and I am created in His image. Worship reminds me that I am part of an eternal family.

Pastor
Kevin Daniels



SEE **WHY, 11**

CHURCH, FROM 9

YOUR GOD IS IRRELEVANT TO MY LIFE

When you study church growth, there's a saying: "It's all about Sunday." But that is a flawed way of looking at the Christian life! Sunday is one hour in the week; what about the other 167 hours?

Statistically, the way Christ-followers and non-Christ-followers are living is not much different. We are all spending our money on the same things, using our time the same way, and share similar priorities. Sure there are some small differences in some categories, but in general terms there's not much difference.

Since that is the case, one might ask why following Christ is important. If following Jesus doesn't change the way you live your life, then why bother? Is it really all that important?

People want to know that God is relevant. They want to know that the power of the Holy Spirit actually changes us for the better. And they want to know that when they attend a church service they will sense the power of God. It boils down to wanting to see results! Barna comments, "Our studies consistently show a large majority of people leave their church's service without feeling as though they have connected with God. If those who regularly attend depart with such disappointment and confusion, what must it be

like for those who are new to the church adventure?" We must do better, both corporately and individually.

Our lives should be changed by our relationship and commitment to Christ. There should be a difference in how we live, how we spend our money, and our priorities. We are supposedly changed by the power of God, but we're living as if we're slaves to the world – just like everyone else! Paul tells us to be "transformed by the renewing of our minds" – to be changed by the power of God's Spirit. Our lives should look differently than the lives of those who don't follow God.

Being able to identify where God is at work in our lives is sometimes difficult. We go through life moving from one activity to the other without having time to stop and reflect on what God has done for us. If we don't pause to reflect on these things, however, we miss an opportunity to share with others how God is working in our lives; we miss the opportunity to share our personal testimony of God's faithfulness. People genuinely want to know that your faith makes a difference – so take time to examine your life so that you can appreciate and share those incidences that God has moved for you or through you. Try keeping a prayer journal and writing down what you're praying for and then how God answers those prayers. Then you'll have a written record of

God's faithfulness.

NOW WHAT?

There are many reasons why people don't attend church. We've touched on the four big ones. The question now is what will you do with this information? How will this information change the way you and your church operates? Our message is the same, but our methods must change in order to reach the culture around us. If we truly want to reach people with the gospel message, then we must stop lamenting about how bad the culture is, and start asking ourselves how we can adapt and change to help people come to Christ? We must never compromise the message of Christ, but we must make sure that what we're holding so tightly to is not just our traditions and personal preferences.

On page 9, you can read about why some people in Ellis County attend church, and hear from a couple of people who don't attend church. You'll hear some of these themes in all of the responses.

Sources: "Churchless" by George Barna, "Why Men Hate Going to Church" by David Murrow, "Church Refugees" by Josh Packard, "Why Nobody Wants to go to Church Anymore" by Thom & Joani Schultz, Various blogs and articles on: barna.org, group.com/refresh-the-church/blog, and thedones.com.

SEEK JUSTICE - LOVE MERCY

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 - From the State of Kansas Office of Attorney General & Kathy Regehr, Human Trafficking Task Force
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WHY, FROM 9

I feel connected to the saints that have gone before and the saints that are all around me. Worship encourages and strengthens me for the tasks of the coming week. Worship reminds me to be a reflection of the Light of God, given to me by grace, so that I may see others as Jesus saw them and serve others in humbleness and love. Worship gives me new tools and sharpens old ones that are important for life's journey and helps me to discard the things that are unnecessary. Following worship, I feel reoriented to the center of it all and refreshed. Worship changes me into what I was meant to be, reminds me that I am loved by God, forgiven through Jesus, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit. Worship cultivates my spirit! – Johnny Matlock, Hays First United Methodist

Why do you attend your current church?

I like the traditional worship of the Baptist church. I like the family centered atmosphere and fellowship. It feels like home. – Kelly Flaska, First Baptist

The people are extremely welcoming and loving, and the teachers and pastors teach according to the Word of God. – Caleb Pfeifer, North Oak Community

We attend Hays Christian Church because it feels like family and we feel like we belong in this church. The first

day we walked in there a little over a year ago we were welcomed with open arms. The Holy Spirit feels present. – Doug & Tina Dix, Hays Christian

I attend Gorham Community Church because it is an intimate (30-40 people), Bible-based, Jesus-focused church. It is affiliated with the UCC which is an inclusive organization. The majority of the congregation is involved in and has a say in the direction of the church; there are very few spectators. The Pastor is one voice among us guiding us without forcing her own agenda upon us. Members are valued for who they are, not what they can do for the church. – Vicki Albrecht, Gorham Community

The people are friendly and genuine. It is important to us for our children to learn about God and grow closer as a family. Also to be around others who will have a positive influence in the lives of all four of us. Hays Christian Church's congregation is a group of very nonjudgmental people who accept others as they are and that is very important to me. – Justin McCall, Hays Christian

Why don't you attend church?

I currently don't attend church. My family splitting up is the reason. While I am confident that I would be

welcome to attend, I would not want to make anyone uncomfortable, including myself. My personal beliefs are that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and I accept him as my Lord and Savior. Church is a place where I can reflect on that fact, but it isn't the only place I can do that. I believe that Jesus understands why I do not attend church, and he is perfectly fine with it. – Warren Smith

I do not attend church because I do not believe in (a) god(s). 2. My spirituality/ beliefs would best compare to Buddhism. I was raised Presbyterian/Methodist. I have explored and attempted to practice Christianity, Paganism, Wiccan, and Buddhism. At this point in my life I feel that all humans are connected on a universal level. I have issues with religion in how I have seen it used. However, despite my personal opinions, I would say I have no right to condemn another for what they believe. I would hope that the same courtesy would be extended to me as well. I have no problem with anyone questioning my "faith" or belief. My disgruntlement comes with people who attempt to "convert" non-believers. This should not be confused with me having an issue with someone saying come to a church service with me. – Bryan Snyder-Brown



Liberty Foursquare Church

400 East 7th • Hays, Kansas 67601

Please Join Us!

Building Dedication & Open House

Sunday, April 17th

Dedication Service at 10:00 AM

Open House from 2:00 – 4:00 PM



JOLIE GREEN, jgreen@dailynews.net

Actors freeze in the position of Leonardo da Vinci's painting "The Last Supper" during a performance of the play "The Living Last Supper" on March 12 at Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center in Hays.

An Easter reminder

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

With Easter just around the corner, crowds gathered during the weekend to take in a visual reminder of what the holiday is about.

"The Living Last Supper," a drama written by Dr. Ruth Vaughn and directed by Naomi Jantz, Minneola, depicts the last day of Jesus' life.

The Bucklin Area Ministerial Alliance teamed with the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance to bring the performance back to Hays, which took place at Fort Hays State University's Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center on March 12 to 13.

"She felt like God asked her to put on the drama and be a ministry to others," Deanna Carrick said of Jantz, her mother. "It's a fulfillment for her to do this as a ministry."

Jantz said she and her husband, Orlando, who died a few years ago, wanted to take part in creating a discipleship among men, and that is how the show first

began approximately 25 years ago.

"We wanted a community effort, and that's how it developed — bringing community men together, from about five or six different churches and from all walks of life," she said. "There's only four women that participate, and the rest are men."

The couple's goal was to make a direct, spiritual impact on the actors, and to put on a performance that influenced the audience, as well.

"What it has done for the men in the drama is so amazing. You hear them share what God has done for them in their lives because of participating," she said. "It has done so much for them, personally, and that's what my husband and I wanted."

The drama's cast and staff represented several southwest Kansas churches from towns such as Bucklin, Cimmaron, Dodge City and Kingsdown.

Throughout the performance and during a concert beforehand, musical entertainment was provided by the Daybreak Quartet and professional concert pianist Greg Howlett, both from Atlanta.

Scenes surrounded events that took place around the time of Jesus' death, including the upper room, the washing of feet, the last supper, Judas being revealed as a traitor, Jesus in the garden, and his resurrection from the tomb.

A unique feature was the two times actors depicting Jesus and his disciples froze into a still position, creating a visual representation of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of "The Last Supper."

"I went to Fort Hays, so I think it's great they are putting this on here," said LoAnn McCray, Hays, who attended with her Christian singles group. "It's good to get together with your brothers and sisters in the Lord."

Carrick said she believed if someone in attendance did not have a relationship with God, this drama could enlighten them and open their eyes.

"It's a good reminder around Easter of what God has done for us," she said. "He did come to the world to save us from our sins, and that's what this drama shows."



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Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

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Can be picked up at the following locations:

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

St. Nicholas of Myra Church
Hays Christian Church
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
HMC Chapel
North Oak Community Church
First United Methodist Church
Trinity Lutheran Church

Youth Spotlight

By MIKE KESSINGER
newsroom@dailynews.net

The purpose of the Westview Church youth ministry group R3 is all within its title.

Restore. Refresh. Renew.

It's the message Westview Associate Pastor Tim Nunnery delivers to the church's youth ministry group for middle school through high school students every Wednesday night. It's a message Nunnery said is a way for them to hold God in their soul and believe in his word.

"I preached the Gospel, and that's what I'm bringing to them," he said. "We just try to put it on their level as far as faith is concerned. I believe that they are responding to it very well."

The Westview Youth ministry group started in 2000, and Nunnery, one of the church's three associate pastors under Pastor Wes Oakley, has led R3 since 2007. It's been a process that has grown and held stability through the years. The Wednesday service usually includes anywhere from 45 to 50 students. It's a service Nunnery said is just about getting the message of God to the group members. Many of them are not members of the church. It's a part that Nunnery said they all embrace in that it's just about getting the youth involved in the church atmosphere.

"Serving now is very important in the body of Christ," Nunnery said. "It's also a challenge to get them to stay committed to that. (Youth) have so many activities going on, but they are serving in the church."

During their time together on Wednesdays, Nunnery said they do exercises like games, but also he said it's a time for the youth to just talk, sing, worship and pray. The group is also about services they can provide, not just for the church, but out in the community.

One of the activities group members will do is help with whatever

Restore. Refresh. Renew



COURTESY PHOTOS

they can at Mary Elizabeth Maternity Home. Nunnery said group members will go around and mow yards and just do their part to help clean up. In October, R3 members take part in picking up canned food from designated places around the county and deliver them to the Community Assistance Center for Hays and Ellis County.

In July, group members take part in traveling to Oklahoma to attend Camp Awakening, which is put on by Faith Christian Fellowship. They also do an overnight group lock-in the fall.

"I believe they are understanding it," Nunnery said of what the ministry teaches the students. "I teach faith a lot because without it, the Bible says its impossible to please God. So, when I teach something else, I teach faith and how we're suppose to depend upon what his word says and what he's leading us to do."



Five reasons to be a part of a church family

While becoming a Christian means committing yourself to Christ, I believe it also means committing yourself to a body of believers with whom we can practice the over forty “one-another’s” we find in the New Testament directed to the church. (Love one another, serve one another, pray for one another...etc)

The Apostle Paul mentions two different types of commitment in 2nd Corinthians 8:5 “First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God’s will, they gave themselves to us as well” (GN). Think about that. We are to give ourselves to one another after we give ourselves to the Lord. Now THAT is what a church is all about. Here are

five reasons I heard Rick Warren speak about as to why you and I need a church family.

I need others to walk with me to help me grow spiritually.

Pastor
Kyle Ermoian

Celebration
Community
Church



The Bible says “Just as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord...so walk in him.” Colossians 2:6- 7 (ESV). The Bible often calls your spiritual life, “your walk”, but one of the important things is that God never

intended for you to walk through life alone. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, “Two people are better than one because... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up”.

I need others to work with me to help me serve Him.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2:10, “God made us to do good works, which he planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.” Have you ever seen the movie, “Witness,” where an Amish community builds a barn in one day? The whole community turns out together to accomplish a unified goal. Everybody does a little bit and the project is done well and in record time.

I need others to watch out for me.

We all need people in our lives that will defend, protect, and stand up for me when I need somebody to help me stay on track. Philippians 2:4 says “Look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own.” As Christians we have a common enemy, the devil who, like a lion, looks for the weak and isolated to pounce upon. As a church family we are to watch out for each other’s backs.

I need others to weep with me.

We all need people who are going to be there in the inevitable crises of life.

There are many situations in life that no one should ever have to go through alone. We were not meant to face the crises of life alone. God’s word says that His plan is for you to surround yourself with a group of believers who are committed to you. The Bible says “You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other.” 1 Peter 3:8.

I need to make willing sacrifices for others.

Did you notice the shift from what we need from others to what we need to do for others? A sign of spiritual maturity is a willingness to sacrifice our own convenience for the greater good.

When it comes to being a part of a church you were not created to be a spectator sitting in the stands or watching the game of life on T.V. but rather a pivotal player on the field for the greatest team of all... Christ’s church.

We’re Better Together!

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Celebration Community Church Hays WOMEN’S CONFERENCE 2016

April 8th: Registration at 5:30pm; Session 1 at 7pm
April 9th: Breakfast at 8am; Session 1 at 9am

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:10



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Child-care not provided

Celebration Community Church is located on the hill above I-70 at exit 157
Email: womens@celebratejesus.org
785-625-5483

ELLIS COUNTY HOLY WEEK SERVICES

For Church Locations or Contact Information, visit ourecma.com.

Celebration Community

3/27 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. Community Easter Service at Beach-Schmidt Performing Arts Center at FHSU

Ellis United Methodist

3/25 7 p.m. Good Friday Service
3/27 11 a.m. Easter Service

Hays Christian

3/27 7:15 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service @ Fort Hays Memorial Gardens
3/27 10:45 a.m. Easter Sunday Worship with egg hunt to follow

Hays First Presbyterian

3/27 10 a.m. Easter Cantata “Touched By the Christ” by Lloyd Larson

Liberty Foursquare

3/25 City prayer drive/walk
3/27 Sunday breakfast 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Easter Sunday worship at 10 a.m.

Messiah Lutheran

3/25 7 p.m. Good Friday Service
3/26 7 p.m.-Midnight Vigil of Easter
3/27 9:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Worship with brunch and egg hunt to follow

St. Michael’s Episcopal

3/25 5:15 p.m. Good Friday (Stations of the Cross)
3/27 9:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Worship

Trinity Lutheran

3/25 7 p.m. Good Friday Service of Light and Darkness
3/27 9 a.m. Easter Potluck Breakfast
3/27 10:15 a.m. Easter Worship Service

Westview

3/27 8:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Services “Let the Son Rise in Your Heart”

Catholic Services

Friday, March 25- Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion
3/25 Noon Munjor – Good Friday Service
3/25 12:05 p.m. St. Joseph – Stations
3/25 1 p.m. IHM – Good Friday Service
3/25 1 p.m. Schoenchen – Good Friday Service
3/25 1 p.m. St. Joseph – Good Friday Service
3/25 2:30 p.m. Catharine – Good Friday Service
3/25 3 p.m. St. Mary’s Ellis – Good Friday Service
3/25 3 p.m. St. Nicholas – CYO Stations
3/25 4:45 p.m. Comeau Catholic Campus Center – Good Friday Service
3/25 6:30 p.m. IHM – Good Friday Service (Spanish)
3/25 7 p.m. St. Nicholas – Good Friday Service
3/25 8:30 p.m. IHM - Living Stations

Saturday, March 26 - Holy Saturday
3/26 8:30 p.m. IHM - Holy Saturday - NO 5pm Mass
3/26 8:30 p.m. Munjor - Holy Saturday
3/26 8:30 p.m. St. Joseph – Holy Saturday Mass
3/26 8:30 p.m. St. Nicholas – Easter Vigil
3/26 TBD (After Sundown) St. Mary’s Ellis – Easter Vigil

Sunday, March 27 - Easter
3/27 7:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. St. Joseph
3/27 8 a.m. Catharine
3/27 8 a.m., 10 a.m. & 12 p.m. (Spanish Mass) IHM - NO 6 p.m. Mass
3/27 8 a.m. Munjor
3/27 9 a.m. Comeau Catholic Campus Center - NO 6 p.m. Mass
3/27 9 a.m. Schoenchen
3/27 9 a.m. St. Mary’s Ellis
3/27 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. St. Nicholas
3/27 10:30 a.m. Antonino

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 Life Groups
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 400 E. 7th 625-6245
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 Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
 12th & Fort 625-9454

Iglesia Hispana Bautista
 Pastora Lory Herrick
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 Sunday Domingos 3:00 p.m.
 Nursery Available
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 call the church or 625-0094
 22nd & Marshall 625-3100
 www.hayschristianchurch.org

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 Sunday Mass: 10:00 a.m.
 Eucharistic Adoration
 Thursdays:
 7:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 in St. Fidelis Church behind the main altar
 St. Ann, Walker
 Sat. Mass: 6:30 p.m. Nov. thru April
 Sun. Mass: 7:30 a.m. May thru Oct.
 St. Boniface, Vincent
 Sun. Mass: 8:45 a.m.
 Fr. John Schmeidler
 735-2777
 fidelis@ruraltel.net
 www.stfidelischurch.com

**ST. JOHN'S
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(ELCA)**

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Sunday Worship with Holy
 Communion: 10:30 a.m.

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 Assoc. Pastor Tim Nunnery
 Assoc. Pastor Brandon Prough
 Assoc. Pastor Jeremy McGuire
 Sunday Adult & Children's Church
 10:30 a.m.
 Tues. R3 Live College, 8:30 p.m.
 Wed. R3 Youth, 7:00 p.m.
 Wed. Elevate Kids & Midweek Adult
 Service, 7:00 p.m.
 3000 W. 41st St 785-625-6359
 www.westviewchurch.tv

**MESSIAH
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
(LCMS)**

Pastor Rocco Mallardi
 Traditional Worship: 8:30 a.m.
 Study Hour: 9:45 a.m.
 Contemporary Worship: 11:00 a.m.
 (Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays)
 Lutheran Hour: Sunday 7:30 a.m.
 KHAZ FM 99.5
 e-mail: messiahsec@ruraltel.net
 2000 Main 625-2057
 www.messiahlutheranhays.com

**FIRST UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Rev. Mike Rose, Sr. Pastor
 Rev. Dr. Alice Koech, Assoc. Pastor
 & Youth Pastor
 Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
 Sunday Service: 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.
 10:45 a.m. Service Broadcast
 on KAYS 1400 AM
 WOW Worship on Wednesdays:
 Meal 5 to 6 pm
 Children/Youth/Adult Programs
 6:15-7:15 pm
 305 W. 7th 625-3408

**ST. MICHAEL'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH**

Rev. Harvey Hillin
 Sunday Holy Eucharist
 9:30 a.m.
 Evening Prayer
 Wednesdays 5:15 p.m.
 2900 Canal Blvd. 628-8442
 stmichaelshays@gmail.com

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 Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
 Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
 Sunday Adult Bible Study
 6:00 p.m.
 Sunday King's Kids 6:00 p.m.
 Wed. Devotion/Prayer 7:00 p.m.
 29th & Indian Trail 625-9500
 www.hayscornerstonesbc.com

**TRINITY
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
(ELCA)**

The Rev. Marie Sager
 2703 Fort St. 785-625-2044
 Sunday 10:15 a.m.
 (Holy Communion
 is Celebrated Every Sunday)
 Fellowship Following Worship
 www.trinityhays.org
 tlchays@eaglecom.net

**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

The Rev. Celeste Lasich
 Nursery available
 Sunday Worship: 10 a.m.
 Adult Study Group: 11 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour: 11 a.m.
 Youth Group Sun. evenings
 www.haysfpc.org
 pastorcelestehays@gmail.com
 2900 Hall 625-2847

**NORTH OAK
COMMUNITY
CHURCH**

Pastor Ken Ediger
 Associate Pastor John Wiker
 Youth Pastor Jeff Neher
 Worship Service:
 8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.
 Sunday School: 9:50 a.m.
 Nursery &
 Children's Church Available
 Wed. K-12 programs
 3000 Oak 785-628-8887
 www.northoak.net