



# ONE

## **INSIDE:**

- + The Creation Narrative
- + ECMA News

A publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance September 2017

# A world designed by our heavenly Father

Welcome to the September issue of ONE!

This month is a special issue dedicated to the creation narrative found in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Though there are many issues regarding the creation story, and many theories as to how all that is



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came to be, what Christ-followers can generally agree on is that God is the one who did the creating.

Welcome

All that we see around us is not the product of random chance, but is a precisely formed world designed by our heavenly Father.

As you read the articles this month, my

hope is that you'll be blessed by considering what it means for all of us to have been created by God.

Blessings,

Kevin Daniels  
ONE Advisory Board Chair

## 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](mailto: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.

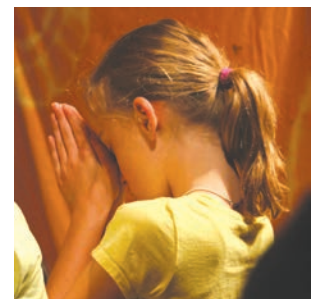
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## ON THE COVER

A young girl kneels in prayer during Vacation Bible School at First United Methodist Church.

Photo by Jolie Green, HDN.



## News to know

### VINTAGE BASEBALL GAME ON TAP

Historic Fort Hays will be featuring a vintage baseball game and presentation at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26. Mark Eberle, a program specialist at Fort Hays State University, will discuss "Kansas Baseball 1858-1941" prior to the game. Both events are free and open to the public. Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and umbrellas. The fort is located at 1472 Highway 183 Alternate.

### EWTN HOST TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL BANQUET

Brian Patrick, host on the Eternal Word Television and Radio Network (EWTN), will be the featured speaker at Divine Mercy Radio's annual banquet. It will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, in the Little Theatre of Holy Family Elementary, 1800 Milner in Hays.



His talk is titled, "Mercy in Motion."

Patrick will share his personal experience of God's mercy and discuss some of the interesting people he has interviewed over the years. He has been in the radio-TV field for nearly 45 years.

"It will be a different talk than we've had in the past," Donetta Robben, executive director of Divine Mercy Radio, said. "When we hear these personal stories, it makes us realize how God is working in our own lives."

Currently Patrick is co-host of EWTN's "Morning Glory," which airs at 7 a.m. Monday through Friday on KVDM in Hays and KRTT in Great Bend, both at 88.1 FM. He is the former news anchor of EWTN's "News Nightly" and the former host of the "Sonrise Morning Show."

Tickets for the banquet are \$50 and are available online at [dvmercy.com](http://dvmercy.com), by calling the radio studio at (785) 621-4110 or by coming to the station at 108 E. 12th St. in Hays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### MOMS PLANNING MEETING SEPT. 9

Hays Area Mothers of PreSchoolers (MOPS) will have their first fall meeting from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, at Messiah Lutheran Church, 2000 Main in Hays. MOPS is a group for mothers of children ages conception through kindergarten. Call Janine Mallardi at (620) 795-2008 for more information.

### TODDLERS WILL TAKE TO FASHION RUNWAY

While style shows featuring fashions for teens and adults aren't unusual in Hays, one featuring the latest in fashions for toddlers just might be.

Miranda Schmeidler and Heather Younger, both of Victoria, will be showing off the clothing they design and sell for preschoolers, with models ranging in age from 2 to 5. The style show will be part of the Hays After 5 Christian

women's program for September.

Schmeidler owns In Style Baby Legs, which features jeans, shorts and jackets in distressed denim. Younger owns Stellar Creations LLC; she puts vinyl lettering and other designs on T-shirts and hats. Both at-home businesses are on Facebook.

The style show and dinner program will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 11, at the Rose Garden Banquet Hall, 2250 E. Eighth St. in Hays.

Also on the agenda will be inspirational speaker P.J. Click of Glenwood Springs, Colo. Click, who admits to being perpetually afflicted with "Bronco Mania," likens her life to a football game. "After being tackled by life, you have to get right back up," she says. "It's all about life—whether you like sports or not."

Cost is \$12.50. Reservations are due by Thursday, Sept. 7, to [nocheart-nurse@yahoo.com](mailto:nocheart-nurse@yahoo.com) or to (785) 202-1036. Hays After 5 is affiliated with Stonecroft Ministry of Overland Park.

### MARRIAGE LIVE PRESENTED AT LIBERTY FOURSQUARE

Liberty Foursquare Church is offering a relationship study course for marriages called Marriage Live on Sunday nights Sept. 17 to Oct. 22. The course will conclude with an all-day retreat Saturday, Oct. 28. Enrollment deadline is Sept. 10. Call (785) 625-6245 for more information.

# We need God's mercy still today

Welcome to the Bible Reading plan for September. We have some amazing books to traverse this month.

Our Old Testament readings will launch us into the book of Ezekiel. We will stay in Ezekiel until mid-November. For me, the prophetic books of the Old Testament are easy to get bogged down in; so many warnings, so many problems, and such a stubborn people who never seem to change. Ezekiel's ministry overlaps a few of the years Jeremiah's ministry. Although



**Bible Reading Plan**  
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their words seem similar, Ezekiel seems to include more visions and dreams. Some theologians call this book the "Old Testament Acts of the Holy Spirit." As I'm continuing to read through these books this year I'm reminded of how long-suffering God is. His patience, mercy, and desire to hold back inevitable trouble is so amazing. Ezekiel's message is often one of hope, and eventual restoration. I think we need God's mercy as much today as in the days that Ezekiel wrote these words.

Our New Testament readings from

September		
1.....Weekend Review	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Thes 2	18.....Ezek 11
2&3.....Weekend Review	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Thes 3	19.....Ezek 12
4.....Ezek 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Thes 4	20.....Ezek 13
5.....Ezek 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Thes 5	21.....Ezek 14
6.....Ezek 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Thes 1	22.....Ezek 15
7.....Ezek 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Thes 2	23&24.....Weekend Review
8.....Ezek 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Thes 3	25.....Ezek 16
9&10.....Weekend Review	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Cor 1	26.....Ezek 17
11.....Ezek 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Cor 2	27.....Ezek 18
12.....Ezek 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Cor 3	28.....Ezek 19
13.....Ezek 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Cor 4	29.....Ezek 20
14.....Ezek 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Cor 5	30.....Weekend Review
15.....Ezek 10		
16&17.....Weekend Review		

now until the end of the year will be taking us through the writings of the Apostle Paul.

The letters he wrote to the churches of the first century are filled with practical counsel and essential doctrine. Most theologians agree that

these books were the first texts that were circulated through the budding new churches.

Let the Holy Spirit install a new passion for His Kingdom as you read through these fantastic books. Keep reading!

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# 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth'

"In the beginning God..." That's how the God's revelation to us begins. It begins with God. God has always existed, and He does not have a beginning nor an end. He is ever-present, and as these next verses prove, all-powerful.

God creates the world and everything in it out of nothing. Theologians use the term "ex nihilo", a Latin phrase meaning "out of nothing." God didn't come upon some matter floating in the universe and decide to form it into something new. He simply spoke the matter into existence. By the power of His words creation came into being. No one at any time, in any space, can create "ex



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nihilo", for everything we create starts with something. All the matter that exists in the world is already here. We can manipulate it to create some amazing things, but we are creating from something, not from nothing.

That power to create from nothing is unique to God, but the power to create from something given by God, that power is shared with us all. We have all been given gifts by our Creator which we are to use to create. That desire to create is God-inspired and deep in our nature, I would argue as part of the image of God living in each of us.

The act of creating something can be awe-inspiring. Consider the artist, the singer, the writer, the craftsman,

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

the mechanic, the factory worker. All of us create something in our own way.

And our creation doesn't have to be a physical object. Perhaps our creation is a relationship, characterized by the most valuable treasure: love.

The greatest commandments are to love God and love others. How are you creating that love today?

As I look around the world and see the hatred being spewed from all sides, I wonder how as a follower of Christ we can create love. Creating love is a sacrifice — it's not just an emotion — it is also a decision. A decision to stick together when times get tough. A decision to fight for those who can't defend

themselves. A decision to stand up for those who are oppressed.

Love takes action. You cannot love someone in words only — it takes more than that. We see this through Christ himself. Throughout his ministry he said that he loved the people, but he showed them through his compassionate acts of healing, mercy, and kindness. He demonstrated his love ultimately for all humanity through his death on the cross.

Jesus loves you, and he demonstrated that love by dying for you. What greater love does a person have than to lay his life down for a friend? (John 15:13) Jesus laid his life down for you — demonstrating his love.

Are you following in God's steps, creating love wherever you go? Hopefully we all are seeking to create love in all time and in all space.

## 'And God said, 'Let there be light...'

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Scholars have debated many things in this one tiny and seemingly simplistic phrase. Who is God talking to? There aren't animals or people yet. Is He speaking out loud? Why does He need light if nothing else exists yet? Is it possible that God was speaking into a void and commanding light to come into being? He is powerful and mighty like that, so maybe! We do know that the very IDEA of light existed first in God's mind.

Exactly what type of light is He commanding into existence? Certainly not light bulbs! In this particular verse, it isn't even referring to sunlight. That happens on day four if you keep reading! Light is often used as a metaphor in the Bible. The word illumination has to do with bringing things into the light. Jesus himself (much later) is "the

light of the world" (John 8:12). Some even believe that maybe in this particular phrase God isn't really addressing the light and turning anything "on". He's simply creating light — ordering it to exist.

God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. Is it also possible that the "light" was something divine and holy and that "dark" was more hellish? This light is quite likely a wonderful picture of what He does in every heart that trusts in Christ. There is no need to walk in the darkness of sin and death; in Christ, we "will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

We are left to wonder with this phrase if the physical light God created was the reason He could tell that what he created was good. Again, the light at this point of the creation story is not

*3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

the sunlight we come to typically call "light". This light exists from the heavenly bodies, even though we have not been told of the heavens yet, perhaps this light is the source of the heavenly bodies' light.

What does God consider good? If we take it back to the original Hebrew, we could explain it by saying that before God even really starts creating heaven and earth, He sets a mandate, "Let it be light." He sets the purpose and meaning of everything about to be created: That it should become light. This would explain why, after He creates each thing, he looks at it and "sees that it is good." It is good because each piece of creation has its own unique way to shine light.

God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning —

the first day.

What does it mean by separating the light and dark? I've alluded to what it might mean. It could also mean that He put in place the aspect of periodicity, the element of time. Separating light from the darkness requires that one segment or period has light while another segment or period has darkness.

This means to alternate light with darkness, in effect putting in place the effect of time. A can of worms can be opened if scientists and biblical scholars debate the creation story. Science is based on causal relationships and to dispel this part of the story would indicate (on science) that humans and life itself had no original "cause". The physical world simply cannot be accidental.

As Christians, we much prefer to think that our Almighty Father began this whole thing we call life. He created each and every piece of it, each unique and each with a special purpose. He knew us before we were created. HE created it all and HE created us.



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# And God said 'Let there be a vault...'

What do you call two straight days of rain in Seattle? A weekend.

What does Daylight Savings Time mean in Seattle? An extra hour of rain.

Perhaps in a Pacific Northwest city like Seattle, jokes can be made about an abundance

of rainfall. Not so in the Central Plains. One jokester quips, "Remember the story about the great flood in the Bible? Well, around Ellis County, Kansas we got an inch and a half."

In a region with a semi-arid climate and a heavy economic dependence on agricultural commodities, there is awareness of what a tremendous natural resource water is and of our dependence on this resource. Moisture is vital to agriculture. Agricultural science is able to do a lot utilizing technology, including irrigation, to increase production, but sci-



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ence hasn't quite figured out how to produce regular precipitation so that there is always adequate subsoil moisture and full stock ponds. The best efforts are powerless to renew valuable water resources consistently. Thus conservation measures are necessary to protect and sustain water supplies.

With a little reflection, our reliance on water may serve as a meaningful reminder of the contingent nature of human existence. We humans are not self-created. We humans are not self-sustaining. We humans are not self-sufficient. We humans are creatures created by a Creator. Our lives are thus dependent on a Higher Power. This Higher Power is self-created, self-sustaining, self-sufficient, and the cause of human existence.

In the Book of Genesis, Scripture reveals who the Higher Power is. God is the giver of life itself and all that sustains life. It is God who creates the earth and sky.

*6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.*

It is through God's creative action that we have the water that falls from heaven and the water that flows on and under the earth; the water necessary for life.

Therefore, we conclude that human existence is contingent in nature. This is not a bad condition. Consideration of our contingent nature humbles us and deepens our trust in our Creator's goodness. Scripture reveals that God is good indeed. For one thing, God has provided us with earth, sky, and water. Thus water conservation, for example, can be seen as a cherishing of God's gift as well as a practical response to a shortage of this resource. There is something essentially human about receiving and nurturing the gifts of creation on which we depend as human creatures.

While it may be unsettling to con-

template, the truth is, life is fragile. A prolonged draught such as is frequently experienced in the Central Plains reminds us of this truth. Fragility increases value. The fragility of water resources, for example, increases the value of these resources. Human life is all the more valuable because of its fragility. God values us frail creatures. God provides the earth, sky, and water as life sustaining gifts to a fragile humankind. We are dependent on these gifts.

In conclusion, it is God who both creates and sustains life. The good news is that God is extravagantly good, loving, and merciful to us vulnerable creatures. God provides for all.

The rain falls on the fields of the unjust as well as the fields of the just. It is those who see their need for God who discover a deepening sense of humility and trust in the face of human frailty and contingency. They find comfort and meaning in the revelation that a merciful God is the Creator of heaven and earth and the giver of the gift of water.

## 'Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place ...'

I grew up on the shore of Lake Superior, a vast, wild fresh water sea. Perhaps that is why I have always been drawn to places where untamed water collides with land.

There is vitality in the air, so rich you can taste the freshness. Presque Isle Park in Marquette contains a magma flow into the Lake known as Black Rocks that is 1.7 billion years old. Ancient cliffs, fine

sand and pebbled beaches witness to the power of wind and waves, storm and ice to continually sculpt the land. Wherever land meets living water, from the very beginning each new day reveals a new creation. From the beginning, to beyond our keeping of time, God created and saw that it was good.



**The Rev. Celeste Lasich**

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Millions of years ago the plains of Kansas were covered by the deep and fruitful Western Interior Seaway. I often imagine the surprise of those first farmers as their plows unearthed astonishing fossil remains of sea life. All the life that was left behind produced the limestone and soil, land for grazing and vegetation. The rhythm of seed bearing plants and trees, as well as the animals that are sustained by the land are also

part of that cycle of re-creation. So many gifts of the earth, each according to their own kind. And God saw that it was good.

The poetry of Genesis reminds us that there are two kinds of time in the Bible. Our counting time of seconds, minutes, hours, days and years is called

*9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.*

chronos. God's time, which is immeasurable, is called kronos. Genesis is all about kronos time, God's perfect time, never limited or defined by our chronological systems. In God's time, creation flows from the simple to the complex, each element adding its uniqueness as part of a greater whole.

Genesis reminds us that God is all about beginnings and goodness. God

has set life abundant in motion. We, here and now, are recipients of God's priceless gifts of creation, given in love. The world we live in is a gift to be used with care, as we are simply stewards of the goodness of creation for all the generations to come.

In the church I serve, we follow the Narrative Lectionary, a four year cycle focused on one significant story each week.

I appreciate that as part of this lectionary every Fall we begin again in Genesis. As the summer ends and we transition back to the rhythm of school and program year, I am grateful anew for the gift of this world in all its wonder and mystery, and for the opportunity to remember together that God formed everything in creation in love and called it good.

May we see the goodness of this world with God's eyes and live each day in grace and gratitude.

# 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky'

Each day of creation builds on the previous day. The Lord God created light to scatter the darkness of the empty world. Sky was created to provide an atmosphere for the world. Next came the dry ground (land) separated from the waters (seas). These three days of creation led to the next level of God's precise creation. The next days of creation continue with greater detail concerning the Lord's work.

Have you ever wondered why the Lord waited until the fourth day to create the sun and the moon and the stars? We are given the answer to that question in these verses. First the Lord said the lights in the sky were "to separate the day from the night." The fixed periods of day and night that we enjoy were created on this fourth day. The day was for work and growing. The night for rest.

"God saw that it was good."

There was another reason for the moon and the sun to divide the night from the day. "...let them serve as markers to indicate seasons, days and years." The people of the Bible lived by a lunar calendar.

Their months were marked by the changes in the phases of the moon. This was much simpler than our modern calendar of 12 months with varying numbers of days. The

days added up to months. The lunar months indicated different seasons. The seasons turned into years. "God saw that it was good."

One more reason for the sun and the moon is explained: "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." It is interesting that the Lord God Almighty uses this similar phrase twice. The sun and the moon serve as reminders to man and

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## 'Let the water teem with living creatures'

On the fifth day of Creation Week, the earth was ready to support animal life. God had already made water, soil, air, and plants and fruits for food. He had also created the sun to give light and warmth. Now it was time for God to create Earth's first inhabitants—the animals that live in the sea and those that fly in the air. He simply commanded them all to come into being, and they did!

God designed birds to fly, and fish to swim and they are both created to thrive in their respective environments. The creatures made on Day 5 are the first creatures blessed by God. God declares this work good. Humans, who God formed on the sixth day of creation, are placed in authority over the earth and over all the other creatures. Humans

have, with their God given authority and creativity, invented things like airplanes and space shuttles, scuba gear and submarines. However, all are counterfeit constructions, inferior to the perfectly designed gill of a fish or a feather on a wing created on the fifth

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

day. Humanity's attempt to duplicate God's creation, though admirable, is imperfect and will always be unnatural. God designed us humans differently from the other living things and if we try to exist for very long outside of our own natural environment we will eventually sink, not swim, plummet not soar.

The next time you look at the variety and diversity of any living, breathing thing, remember that God created it like humanity, to be fruitful and multiply, and that God calls this special part of creation good.



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14 God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night, and let them serve as markers to indicate seasons, days, and years. 15 Let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth," and it was so. 16 God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set these lights in place in the expanse of the sky to provide light for the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. 19 There was evening and there was morning—the fourth day. [(Evangelical Heritage Version) www.wartburg-project.org]

woman that no matter how hard they might try or wish they cannot change the length of the day or of the night. By the way the word used for day is the same word used in the rest of Scripture to indicate what we know as a day (and night = 24 hours). God's created sun ruled the day. God's created moon ruled the

night. Not man or woman. "God saw that it was good."

Have you ever tried to count the stars? How many did you count? Today's scientists still do not agree on an accurate estimate of the how many stars there are in the universe. The wonders and beauty of the heaven are summed in a single sentence: "He also made the stars." The short, simple statements in Scripture are often filled with profound meanings. The Lord knows far more about the stars than we can imagine. "He counts the number of the stars; he gives names to all of them. Our Lord is great, vast in power; his understanding is infinite" [(Psalm 147:4, 5) CSB]. Our Lord knows the number of stars. God has even named all the stars! Some do not even agree about the number of planets.

"God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning—the fourth day."



DISCOVER GOD'S ORIGINAL  
DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE.

## Coming to Hays for the First Time: Cleansing Stream Marriage Ministry!

Cleansing Stream is pleased to announce the release of our marriage program and live event, titled *Marriage Live*. This is truly a relationship study course in every sense of the word. *Marriage Live* addresses challenges faced in marriage today. With our foundational approach to Biblical principles, Cleansing Stream has heard the Heart of the Father and created a seminar experience that married couples can complete together. The six session series begins Sunday, September 17, and will conclude with an all-day retreat on Saturday, October 28 at Liberty Foursquare Church.

**ENROLLMENT  
DEADLINE IS  
SEPTEMBER 10**

**Liberty Foursquare Church**

For more information, or to enroll, call the church at 785-625-6245, or email us a [libertyis@ruraltel.net](mailto:libertyis@ruraltel.net)

# 'Let the land produce living creatures...'

Diversity is spoken almost as a dirty word on some TV programs and when typed in some social media posts these days, but it has always been a favorite word of mine. After all, "Variety is the spice of life," they say. But what about that other idiom that says, "Birds of a feather flock together"?

In these verses from Genesis, God calls forth various animals, but each according to its own kind. Some people use these verses to argue for separation and segregation. I disagree. I think what God does not say is just as important what he does say. God does not say that these animals should stay put in their groupings according to their kinds. Sure, some animals are indigenous to certain regions, but there are always interactions among animals of different types. I think specifically of the Egyptian plover birds that clean the teeth of crocodiles,

and escape unscathed. If you consider crocodiles as animals that crawled upon the earth, these two animals were not even created on the same day! Yet, without each other they would likely starve.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines diversity as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements." Why would God have the land produce different kinds of animals, plants, etc. if God did not value diversity? Do we learn new skills by continuing to do the same thing? Can we truly understand another culture when only hearing voices that are a part of our own culture? God knew that humans were adaptable, inquisitive, and capable of appreciating all the good creations he brought forth for them to watch over. He knew we would get bored of the same old thing, and so provided much variety for us to

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24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

discover, in hopes of keeping us out of trouble (but that's another story).

The Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) works to bring together Christians from throughout our community who do not agree on every theological point. I believe the differing views shown in ONE can help shape and solidify one's personal beliefs. If we shunned diversity among Christians in our community, the ECMA would not exist to do the wonderful work it does. By presenting divergent points of view, we are brought closer to God through

continued learning, interaction, and experiences. In my opinion, this "learning through diversity" can apply to many topics.

Seeking—even embracing—diversity can be difficult and uncomfortable. It means getting outside of your comfort zone. It also means truly understanding your own beliefs. You cannot engage in a discussion of opinions without having one first. When someone questions what you think, or presents an idea that is at odds with your own, you can only grow.

When we put ourselves in a vacuum of ideas, where the only opinions we find are those we agree with, we only do a disservice to ourselves. Like a plant that outgrows its pot, and stops flowering, or begins to wilt, we shut ourselves away from all that God has given us to discover. God created diversity. "And God saw that it was good." Who are we to disagree?

# 'Let us make mankind in our image'

I reread Genesis 1:26-27 last night and I pondered about it during a night of fitful sleep. I wondered what God truly meant when God created us in the 'imago Dei', or image of God. When I awoke this morning and looked in the mirror I thought, "Holy Smoke, God, if I'm created in your image, you're really looking old!"

But I may have missed God's point... As I pondered that thought, a light



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came on and I was struck by the thought that what the 'imago Dei' might really mean is that we are created to be people who we are spiritually, intellectually, and morally called to be like God.

Inasmuch, I am also struck with awe as I once again read this

part of the creation story of God's intent for humankind. To me, the statement of "Let us make humankind in our image..." may be one of the most important clues to understanding the relationship that God and humanity were to have, as God created humankind in God's own image. Questions abound, as I consider this

prospect, but maybe the most important one is this: "If we are made

in the image God, how are we doing?"

As the world unfolds around me, an easy judgement is that humanity has lost its way, and is not truly reflecting this image of God. I lament about how far we've fallen. I'm concerned about

so many things as I consider this. It seems like our society and world has too often forsaken this important part of who we are created to be for something, well, darker and more sinister. Looking at the darkness, I feel a sense of helplessness and hopelessness as I look at all of the evil that is being done in the world today, sometimes in God's Name...and I struggle to see the image of God reflected because it's so difficult to see in the dark. It seems the world... and humankind... can be a dark place and people sometimes.

But we are not a people created to be without hope or help, and just as a single lighted candle can chase away the darkness, the light of the same God that created us is the God that remains with us. While we may not be able to change all of the evil that

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

goes on in the world, each of us might be able to be a light against the darkness. Each then, are able to affect the world around us in the 'imago Dei' individually... each one of us reflecting the light of God's love. So maybe the more important question is, "Am I reflecting and illuminating the world in the image of God?"

Only in that way could we possibly become the stewards of the other living things this earth provides, for they, too, need light to live. We are delineated apart

from the animal world where the 'law of the jungle' or that idea that the strong dominate the weak and powerless, to a higher calling telling us that the true nature of God is the light of grace and mercy, combined with the light of wisdom and love, and that we are made to fulfill that calling with the light of grace and mercy, wisdom, and love as humankind.

So let your light shine, so that others might not see the darkness, but be drawn to the light of the 'imago Dei', the image of God that is within you!

*Creator God,  
May your light shine within  
each of us this and every day, as  
we reflect your image into the  
world.*

*In Jesus Holy Name,  
Amen!*

# 'Be fruitful and increase in number'

Our Father God is speaking words that will affect all humankind. In Genesis, the book of beginnings, we see how God intended creation to function forever. Some call that truth the Law of First Mention. If we want to know how God wants things to function, we go to the first time it was mentioned in the Bible; that truth will carry itself throughout the entire Bible.

God tells us in Genesis about family and we should set ours up accordingly. My thinking is that if we are to walk clothed in God's favor, we would be wise to trust His way and not ours. God brought man and woman together and BLESSED them and told them to "be fruitful and increase in

number, fill the earth and subdue it." He then told humankind, Adam and Eve, to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the ground."

God went on to say, "I'll provide everything you need to eat and it will reproduce after its own kind so that there will be more than enough." Have you thought about this? The Blessing God spoke over Adam and Eve has been extended

through Jesus to us, and gives us more than enough provision through and by the Blessing of God. God did not create this earth to run out.

Our Heavenly Father's intention from the beginning is that we live through the supply of His Blessing,

and that means we should live life His way. "The blessing of the Lord makes one rich and He adds no sorrow to it." None of us are perfect and that is why we need a Savior. God's blessing flows through His Son Jesus Christ. "My God shall also abundantly fill every nook and cranny to overflowing in all areas or your lives. The wealth of his dream come true in Christ Jesus measures His generosity towards you!" [(Philippians 4:19) Mirror]

God looked at His blessing and provision provided to humankind and by His Word said, "...it was very good." Have you ever asked yourself this question: If God intended that my life be BLESSED, why does it seem my life is anything but Blessed nor is it even close to being 'very good?' There could be many reasons, but I think the biggest

*28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

*29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.*

*31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

challenge one may have is simply believing that our Father God meant what He said. And according to the Law of First Mention in Genesis...He calls us blessed!

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### St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church

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

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Sunday at 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Daily Mass - Wednesday, and Friday at 7:00 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](http://www.ihm-church.com)

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## *The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed*

When you look at your calendar, what is the first day of the week, Sunday or Monday? In my personal calendar I prefer to have Monday as the first day of the week. I like this setup as I see my week leading up to Sunday, rather than Saturday. But it does cause some people confusion when they look at my calendar and are not used to seeing Monday as the first day of the week. As I was preparing to write this month's article, I realized that my calendar is laid out like the creation narrative.

In the Christian tradition, one could say that God began creating on "Monday," whatever you consider a "day" to be. And finished the work of creation on Saturday. Thus, leaving Sunday to be the day of rest, the day made holy.

The 10 Commandments also talk about honoring the Sabbath. Exodus 20:8-11 says, "Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. Six days you may work and do all your tasks, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. Because the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Honoring the Sabbath is import-

*Genesis 2:1-3 Common English Bible (CEB)*  
1 The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed. 2 On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. 3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.

ant. In honoring the day that God made holy, one honors God and self. Earlier in the creation narrative, we



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heard that we as humans were created in the image of God. Therefore, I believe that in honoring God, creation - all of it - even the day of rest, we are honoring God and ourselves as being created in the image of God.

One of the ways that I honor the Sabbath is making sure that I take time for myself; that I take a day off. As a pastor, one of my main days at work is Sunday, the day that many other people have off. Therefore, I have a different day off to honor my own Sabbath time. In addition, if something does come up and I am not able to take my rest time, I make sure to make it up.

That being all said, how do you rest? How do you honor the day that God created as holy?

How do you take time for yourself, so that you are well rested in order to care for the rest of creation? Remember, "put on your own mask before helping others" - you are no good to others if you are not taking care of yourself.

## Vacation Bible School



Children at **North Oak Community Church** learned that the Bible is the “coolest” book on the planet. Stories were shared from the life of Paul, Mary & Martha, the Gospel Message and more. Friday night was a Family Night to share and celebrate what the children learned with a short program, snacks, games, and fellowship afterward.

There were 165 children registered from the nursery through 8th grade. The average daily attendance was 146 children.

The mission project was to raise money for World Shine Ministries in Uganda, Africa. More than \$3,600 was raised with part of the proceeds going to a ministry called, “Happy Feet” to purchase shoes for children that go without. The other

portion will go to students who are without uniforms. World Shine will purchase fabric and materials to give to their seamstresses in their tailoring class to make as many uniforms as they can. “For every \$500 raised, the children were able to “Pie a Pastor.” They watched a pastor get pied at the closing assembly. From the amount received, we were able to pie the VBS Directors, a teacher, and the mission project leader!

There were 3 children that accepted Jesus as their Savior. North Oak also was able to give 10 Bibles to children that did not have one in their home to read. The church was able to connect with many children that did not have a church home already! It was a wonderful week!



**Hays Christian Church** had celebrated another fantastic year of Vacation Bible School at the closing program, picnic, and water slide on Sunday, July 16. Many families came to watch the children sing the great VBS songs and hear more about what took place during the week.

This year’s theme was Maker Fun Factory by Group Publishing. The focus of the week was teaching kids that God wonderfully and perfectly created them for a purpose. There were games,

snacks, Bible lessons, and crafts each night. Teens enjoyed a special teen time each evening, where those 6th through 12th grade students got to dig deeper into the VBS themes. The teens also served the younger children earlier in the evening. It was a great service opportunity for them.

The church would like to thank its wonderful volunteers and church family who helped make this a great year to be a part of Hays Christian Church’s Vacation Bible School!



# Can we 'never grow up?'

One of the signs that a person has grown up is the ability to give up the immaturity of selfish thinking. We like to feel good about the way we live, and in order to cross the threshold of maturity, we have to give up some of our selfish feelings. Thomas the Apostle was certain that Jesus could not rise from the dead. In John's Gospel he makes it very clear that he was not going to give up his own selfish certitude, even though his friends told him otherwise.

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here

and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:24-29).



Message at the Top

**Fr. Mike Scully**  
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Luckily, Thomas was finally able to grow up, and cast aside part of his selfishness.

It is selfishness that the lady in the song "Stay" is showing as she wants the good feelings of the relationship with a friend. She admits that she knows that she has to grow up, but in this one instance of the desire to feel good, she is not willing to grow. Because it was difficult, she chose not to accept the challenge. She preferred her own way.

"You've got to make it on your own, but we don't have to grow up. We can stay forever young, living on my sofa, drinking rum and cola underneath the

rising sun. All you have to do is stay a minute." She knows that she needs to grow up, but she is not willing to do that because she would have to let him go.

To grow up is not an easy task. We have been "given to" all of our years beginning with our very birth. Those who love us have constantly given us what we need, and because of our prosperity, we have often been given even what we do not need. Those who care about us have found out what we want, and have tried to satisfy our every desire. It is no wonder that the lady in the song wanted to stay "forever young."

Then we are asked to change. We are asked to begin giving of ourselves, being more aware of others and their desires.

## THE GOSPELS IN FATHER MIKE'S TOP 5 as of Aug. 15

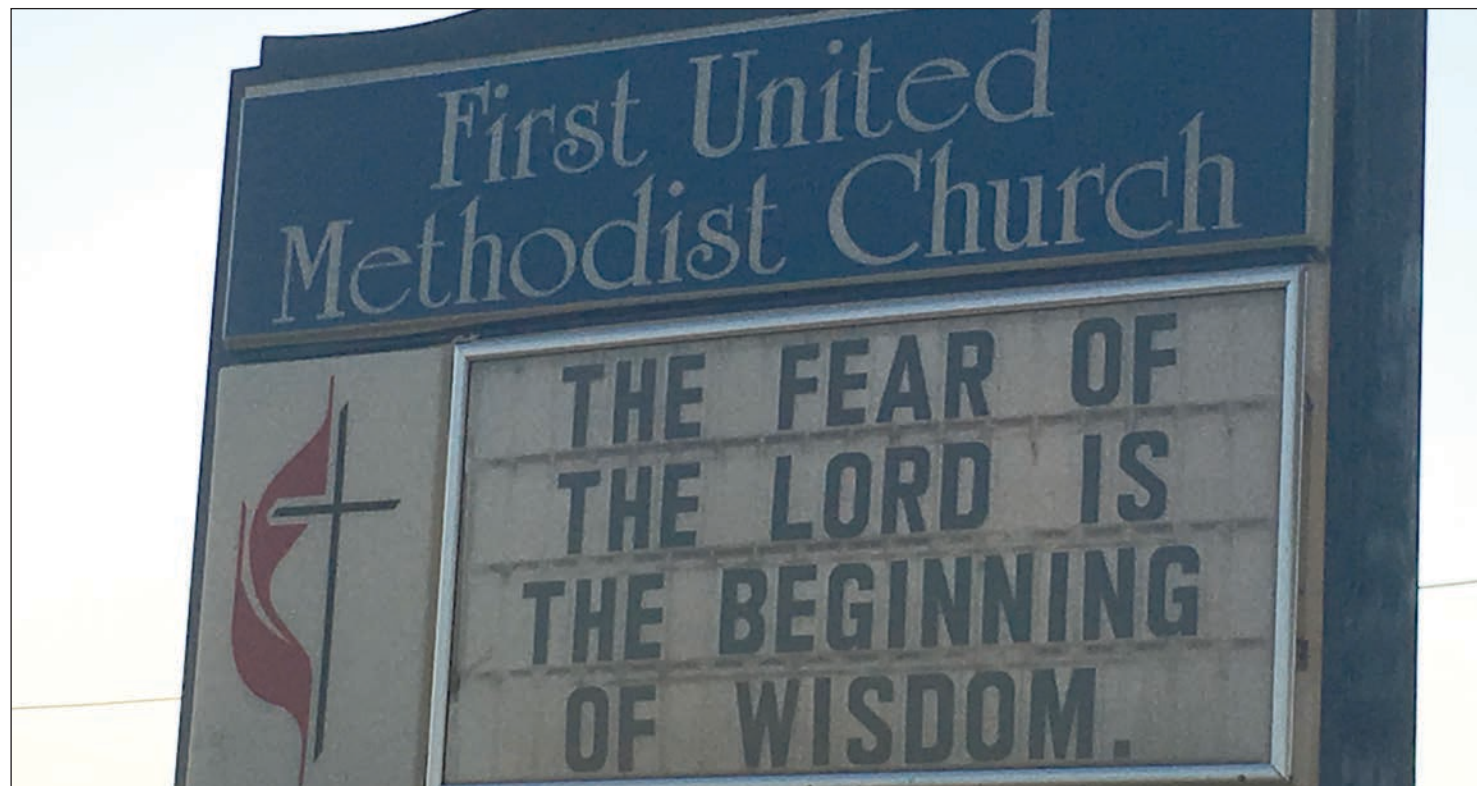
- 1 - "Believer" / Imagine Dragons Matthew 2:33-35
- 2 - "Something Just Like This" The Chainsmokers f/ Coldplay Luke 23:39-43
- 3 - "Stay" / Zedd f/ Alessia Cara John 20:24-29
- 4 - "There's Nothing Holdin' Me Back" / Shawn Mendes John 17:16-26
- 5 - "Shape of You" / Ed Sheeran John 3:14-16

It is difficult because we are not "used to" doing it. To continue to seek what we want is really an easy pattern to adopt. As the lady in the song, we know that we should grow up, but we do not want to. We are "programmed" to take, and not to give.


Thomas the Apostle had to give up his selfish attitude and apologize to his Master. We must understand that in our lives there are many moments in which we must give up our own selfishness.

Good and gracious God, Your Son must remind us that we tend to be selfish in the way that we live. Give us the grace to grow into maturity a little more in our lives by giving up the selfishness that controls us. Be with us, we pray.

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