



ONE

INSIDE:
+ Vacation Bible School
+ ECMA News

A publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance July 2019

Welcome: Meet the disciples

Dear ONE Reader,

This month, each writer is going to be sharing about a specific disciple of Jesus. In sharing about these disciples, it is hoped that we can learn more about what it means to truly follow Jesus. Even in discussing Judas, the disciple who ultimately betrayed Jesus, we can learn more about what it means to falter in our faith.

Pastor Celeste Lasich has contributed a wonderful article about Mary of Magdala, reminding us that though women



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aren't found in any "official" lists of the disciples, women were amongst Jesus' most faithful and trusted followers.

Regardless of our particular denominational affiliations, we come

together as brothers and sisters of the faith to celebrate our common goal: to be a true follower of Jesus. With that in mind, I invite you to read the stories of Jesus' closest companions in this month's issue of ONE.

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@ourecma.com

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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News to know

Revival services scheduled June 28-29

"Fire in the Heartland," described as an old-fashioned tent revival, will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, June 28, and 9 a.m. Saturday, June 29, in Building 153 at Exit 153 (Yocemento) off I-70.

Organizers say the location will be well marked with signs. Pastor Darrell Sutton will be speaking at both services.

Patriotic program to honor military women, first responders

Vocalist JoLeen Cunningham will be performing a program of patriotic songs at the Hays After 5 Christian women's meeting on Monday, July 8.

The dinner program will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Rose Garden Banquet Hall, 2350 E. Eighth St.

Women who are active duty military, in the National Guard, or military veterans will be honored at the meeting, along with women who serve as first responders with police, fire or ambulance services.

Also on the program will be inspirational speaker Valerie Barkley of Topeka. Barkley, a wife, mom, and sixth grade teacher, says that "even with the busyness of teaching, home responsibilities and other activities that creep in, there is still time to walk with joy."

Barkley will be selling her book, "Harvesting Hollywood," at the event.

Cost of the dinner program is \$12.50. Reservations are due by Thursday, July 4, to daisymae0917@yahoo.com or to (785) 202-1036. Hays After 5 is affiliated with Stonecroft Ministry of Overland Park.

'Backpacks for Kids' taking applications

First Call for Help is accepting applications from Ellis County families for "Backpacks for Kids." Free school backpacks are available to families who meet the income guidelines and have a child entering grades pre-K through high school in the fall, said Laura Shoaff, project coordinator.

The backpacks are filled with school supplies and personal hygiene items. The registration deadline is Monday, July 22. Families may register by phone at (785) 623-2800 or online at <http://firstcallelliscounty.com/Backpacks-for-Kids>.

Backpacks will be distributed from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Aug. 1 at the National Guard Armory, 200 Main.

Shoaff said she needs volunteers to help fill the backpacks and to assist with the distribution. Interested individuals are asked to call her at the above number. Last year 657 backpacks were distributed, and Shoaff said she is expecting a similar number this year.

Those wishing to donate items are asked to purchase from the following

list:

3x3 Post-It Sticky Notes (any color), small headphones/earbuds, combination locks, 8-10 pack Crayola Washable Classic Color Markers, 24-pack crayons, one-inch 3-ring binders, 12-pack colored pencils, glue sticks (no gel), one-subject spiral notebooks (wide and college ruled), white liquid glue (4-oz. Elmers), two-pocket folders, large pink erasers, notebook paper (wide and college ruled), tab index folders, plastic school boxes or pencil bags, watercolor paints (primary colors), highlighters and dry erase markers, composition notebooks, pointed scissors, #2 yellow pencils, shampoo, deodorant, bar soap, new backpacks (no wheels).

These items may be brought to the First Call for Help office, 607 E. 13th, weekdays during regular business hours, or people may mail monetary donations to the same address.

"We appreciate the support of our community and churches that help make 'Backpacks For Kids' possible," Shoaff said.

'Community Threads' seeking donations

The Hays Public Library, 1205 Main, is accepting donations for its "Community Threads" program through Aug. 1.

Patrons of all ages may browse through the donated items from 9 a.m.

SEE NEWS, 8

Churches set Vacation Bible School dates

Hays Christian Church, 1318 E. 22nd

Nightly Monday, July 8, through Friday, July 12, with a closing program and picnic on Sunday morning, July 14. Theme: "Hero Headquarters." 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. for children ages 3 through incoming 5th graders. From 9 to 10 p.m. for those entering grades 6 through 12. Register online at www.hayschristianchurch.org.

First United Methodist Church, 305 W. Seventh

5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 15, through Thursday, July 18. Theme: "To Mars and Beyond." For children completing pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Register online through the church's Facebook page or its website, www.haysfumc.com.

Messiah Lutheran Church, 2000 Main

5:30 to 8:10 p.m. Sunday, July 21, through Thursday, July 25. Theme: "Miraculous Mission: Jesus Saves the World." For ages 4 through incoming 6th graders. There will be a potluck dinner at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, July 25, at the church, followed by a pool party at the Hays Aquatic Park, Fourth and Main. Register online at www.messiahlutheranahms.com.



Students and leaders sing and dance to praise God during Hays Christian Church's Vacation Bible School in 2018.

Andrew:

The disciple with a magnetic personality

"Andrew. Oh! You're Simon Peter's brother, aren't you?"

One wonders how often Andrew heard that. The gospel writer, John, introduces him as "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother" (John 1:40). Talk about living in the shadow of a well-known, "celebrity" sibling.

Andrew is mentioned by name 13 times in the New Testament. In seven of those, he's specifically identified as Peter's brother. Peter, on the other hand, is mentioned over 150 times in the New Testament.

In the beginning Andrew had the more impressive resume. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist.

He was also one of Jesus' very first disciples (John 1:35-40). Andrew had met Jesus and was so impressed he brought Peter. Impulsively, Simon Peter signed on (John 1:41-42). And immediately, Peter seemed to take center stage as Jesus changes his name from Simon to Cephas (Peter), the rock. Before Peter said or did anything, Jesus made it clear that his plans for Peter were

different from Andrew. But never mind, Andrew did what he was destined to do, introducing others to Jesus.

Jesus' call to the fisherman brothers Andrew and Peter was, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-20). The fact that Andrew did indeed become a successful fisher of men as Jesus had promised is borne out by the fact that each of the three occasions in which Andrew

is mentioned in Scripture, he was engaged in introducing others to Jesus. First, he had the supreme joy of introducing his brother Peter to

the Lord; then he introduced the boy with the five loaves and two fishes (John 6:8-9); and finally, he introduced the Greeks to the Lord (John 12:20-22). Andrew did not rank with Paul or his own brother Peter. We are not told that he ever preached a sermon, but he led Peter to Christ. Peter preached many sermons, but there would

have been no sermons from him had it not been for the faithful, personal inviting work of Andrew.

Peter was God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for [him] to do" (Ephesians 2:10). Christianity knows Peter well because God gave him a lot of press in the pages of biblical history. But Andrew was equally God's workmanship. He too was created in Christ Jesus for good works. It's just that God chose not to give Andrew the public prominence. He did the good that God prepared for him to do, faithfully, diligently, in the shadow of his more celebrated brother, Peter.

Most likely Andrew's first mentor trained him well. John the Baptist, the great forerunner of Jesus, taught that "a [person] can only receive what is given him from heaven" (John 3:27). John had seen Jesus' rise and his own decline in prominence and said with joy-filled faith, "He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3:30). And that is the cry of every true disciple. This whole thing isn't

about our prominence at all. It's about Jesus' prominence. Like the disciples (Mark 9:33-34) we tend to lose sight of this easily.

It is the Spirit of God who "gives [gifts and ministry roles] to each one, just as he determines" (1 Corinthians 12:11). He totally designs our place in his kingdom story, and he knows what he is doing. We can trust him.

Today, be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5) and be faithful with what you have been given (Matthew 25:21). Humble yourself under God's mighty hand, trusting that he will exalt you at the proper time and in the proper way (1 Peter 5:6).

Be like Andrew. This shadow-servant was faithful, obedient, responsive, trusted, willing, and courageous. Tradition says that he continued to introduce people to the good news of Jesus and plant churches until he was martyred by crucifixion in the AD 60's.

Let us serve in the "shadows" God places us with that same joy-filled, overcoming faith.



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Judas Iscariot: The trusted outsider

Judas Iscariot. His name appears last in all of biblical lists of disciples, except in Acts 1, where he is excluded. Every time we encounter this Judas in the Bible, his betrayal of Jesus is mentioned. Some may say he is the biggest failure – that he betrayed Jesus for money. But nevertheless, Jesus chose him to be with him as a disciple.

Judas' name is a form of Judah, meaning "Jehovah [or God] leads." This name is somewhat ironic, in that it seems that God is not always directing Judas. In Luke 22:3-6, we read that Satan entered Judas right before he talks with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray Jesus to them. His surname, Iscariot, tells us where he is from. The name comes from the Hebrew word *ish* ("man") and the name of a town, Kerioth. So, his surname means "man of Kerioth." This is also important to note, as he was apparently the only disciple who did not come from the area in and around Galilee. As somewhat of an outsider,

he was still able to gain the other disciples' trust, and became the treasurer of the group, even though he used his position to steal money.

Regardless that Judas was an "outsider," he was similar enough to the other disciples. When Jesus predicted that one of the twelve would betray him, no one immediately pointed the finger at Judas (Matthew 26:22-23).



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However, even from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus knew that Judas would betray him (John 6:64).

That being said, the Gospel of Matthew is the only Gospel to continue the story of Judas after the scene of Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Having realized he

made a big mistake in handing Jesus over, Judas tries to make things right. He goes to the chief priest and elders acknowledging his sin and returning the thirty silver coins he was given to betray Jesus (Matthew 27:4). However, the author of the Gospel of Matthew seems to hold Judas up as an example of failed discipleship. But this makes me wonder, why is his action of naming he has sinned and returning the money so bad? Do not many of us daily ask for forgiveness? As humans we sin; we are not perfect. We strive to continue to live each day in and for the kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, the story of Judas, his betrayal, naming of sin, and death is not just a tragic story. The life and death of Judas Iscariot also teaches us about forgiveness. Unlike Peter, Judas did not return to the other disciples after denying knowing Jesus, where forgiveness abounds, but instead dies alone.

As mentioned earlier, Jesus knew Judas' heart. Jesus knew that Judas

would betray him, and still, Jesus chose to have him by his side during ministry. This is one example of Jesus living into what he taught throughout his ministry. Matthew 5:43-44 (NRSV) says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Here one could say that Jesus really is loving his enemy; he is taking him under his wing and including him in his inner circle. Jesus not only talks of inclusive love but walks what he says by inviting this "outsider" into the inmost of holy of places - next to Jesus as a disciple. Even in the midst of Judas' betrayal, Jesus never shows Judas anything other than kindness. Jesus tells Judas to do what he needs to do quickly (John 13:27), knowing it must be done so that he may suffer, be killed, and on the third day rise again all to show Jesus' inclusive love to the world... even to Judas Iscariot.

Bible reading plan: planting seeds in your heart

Greetings Bible Readers! Summer is upon us and it won't be long until the wheat is ready to harvest. This can also be spiritual harvest season if we allow the Holy Spirit to plant His word in our hearts! There are many good seeds in this month's readings; seeds that can produce a great harvest of good things.

For our Old Testament readings, we will finish reading the book of Deuteronomy and begin Joshua. Israel is now under new leadership and moving into the

Promised Land. The narrative makes for some great reading!

Our New Testament readings will finish the letters written by the Apostle Paul. We will complete 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus. Then we will begin reading the Gospel of Matthew. This

Gospel is written to the Jewish Christians, filled with covenant language, and emphasizes Jesus' fulfillment of Scripture. Expect the Holy Spirit to plant seeds of God's

wisdom deep into your heart, that you may enjoy a ripe harvest of God's best. Read on!



Bible Reading Plan
Pastor Steve Dinkel
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JULY

1	Deut. 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy 4	17	Deut. 34	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 2
2	Deut. 23	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy 5	18	Joshua 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 3
3	Deut. 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy 6	19	Joshua 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 4
4	Deut. 25		20 & 21 Weekend Review		
5	Deut. 26	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus 1	22	Joshua 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 5
6 & 7 Weekend Review			23	Joshua 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 6
8	Deut. 27	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus 2	24	Joshua 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 7
9	Deut. 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus 3	25	Joshua 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 8
10	Deut. 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Timothy 1	26	Joshua 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 9
11	Deut. 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Timothy 2	27 & 28 Weekend Review		
12	Deut. 31	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Timothy 3	29	Joshua 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 10
13 & 14 Weekend Review			30	Joshua 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 11
15	Deut. 32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Timothy 4	31	Joshua 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 12
16	Deut. 33	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 1			

Thomas:

Much more than a doubter

As we read about the disciple, Thomas, from the 20th chapter of John, we see a man blinded by grief and doubt. Jesus, his Lord and Savior, the man Thomas had followed for three years was dead. Then a few days later, Peter and some of the rest of the disciples came to him with a startling announcement, "We have seen the Lord. Jesus is alive." As much as he wanted to believe it, Thomas just was not buying it. We can just hear him talking with the other disciples. "I saw him on that cross. They pierced his body with a spear. I saw his dead body. Unless I can see the nail marks in his hands and the hole in his side, I cannot believe that Jesus is alive!" Because of those words, this disciple has been saddled throughout Christian history with the name, "Doubting Thomas." It's hard to find fault with Thomas. When you think about it, this disciple is really more like each of us than we care to admit. For Thomas, and for us, believing does not often happen without hard proof.

Fortunately for Thomas, Jesus is willing to provide the evidence he demands. A week after the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples and says to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." The visible proof that Jesus was alive is undeniable. And what does Thomas do? He cries out, "My Lord and my God!" Some biblical scholars call this single sentence the climax of the gospel of John. "My Lord and My God!" Here, Thomas is making one of the first Christian confessions of faith.

But Jesus isn't finished with

Thomas yet. He says, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." So, Jesus wants Thomas and the other disciples to know that there are going to be times in life when believing cannot depend on evidence one can see. In his conversation with Thomas, Jesus is challenging him and us to make a leap of faith, to leap without looking. Jesus is calling each of us to believe in him based on the good news of the Gospel, not by what we can see with our own eyes.

Thomas sought and found the reassurance he needed to prove that the man standing before him was his risen Lord. But let us offer to Thomas the same grace we should extend to ourselves and others in times of doubt. Those struggles in life do happen. However, we also need to remember that Thomas often showed moments of great faith. When Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick in Bethany and he told his disciples that they were going there, many protested. "People want to kill you there, Jesus. Let's just not go there." But what disciple spoke up and said he was willing to follow Jesus to Bethany? Yes, it was Thomas, who replied, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." These are not the words of a chronic doubter. Christian tradition teaches that Thomas eventually took the good news of Jesus Christ all the way to what is now present day India. There he died for his faith.

The story of Thomas teaches us that faith is based on God's word and the good news of Jesus Christ. Faith is not limited to what we can

see with our eyes. Faith is believing in the unseen possibilities for a future that we cannot see. Faith is

trusting that God will walk with us, guiding us along life's journey.



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Mary of Magdala: Apostle to the Apostles

Rev Celeste Lasich
Hays First Presbyterian Church

An overview of Jesus' disciples feels incomplete without including Mary who was known as Magdalene. She among all of Jesus' followers is uniquely named as present at Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. She is the one to whom Jesus first revealed himself after his resurrection. Mary is the one whom Jesus chose to "go and tell" the men that the Lord had risen just as he had told them. She is the "Apostle to the Apostles".

It is important in our time to name and lift up Mary's role as a disciple and her legacy of faithfulness because frankly she has been burdened with a bad and undeserved reputation starting in the Middle Ages. That was when church fathers lumped together many women named Mary and explained away her constant presence at Jesus' side by calling her a prostitute

and repentant sinner. Women's testimony was not even admissible in trial without a corroborating male witness and yet, Jesus entrusted his world-changing resurrection announcement to her. I believe Jesus knew exactly what he was doing when he chose Mary. He knew her faith, her courage, and her commitment to his Way of radical love, and mercy and shalom.

In spite of what many Christians grew up hearing in church, there is no biblical evidence that Mary of Magdala was a prostitute or public sinner. She is mentioned 12 times in the New Testament—making her the second most mentioned woman, after Mary, the mother of Jesus. She is named as one Jesus freed from seven demons, so perhaps she knew in Jesus the life changing power of acceptance and healing love. Most references to Mary are found in the Crucifixion and empty tomb narratives, where she is portrayed as a loyal disciple at the foot of

the cross and as one of the first witnesses to the Resurrection.

Unlike other women in the Bible, Mary of Magdala is not identified in relation to another person; she is not anyone's mother, wife, or sister. Instead, she is called Mary of Magdala, a city that was in that time the center of commercial fishing on the northwest bank of the Sea of Galilee. Magdala was also known for its cosmetics and perfumes so perhaps that was the source of her independent income. She is named as one among several independent women who traveled with and financially supported Jesus' ministry. These female followers of Jesus became central when everything started to fall apart. While the men fled, the women remained faithful and present. The Gospels tell us they were led by Mary of Magdala whose legacy of faith, commitment, and prophetic witness endures today.



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Simon the Zealot: Champion against oppression

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If you don't know much about Simon the Zealot who is differentiated from Simon Peter, the Rock on whom Jesus said he would build his church, you are in good company. He is listed among the disciples in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as well as the book of Acts. The only Biblical mentions of him are his name; nothing about his occupation, hometown, or family relationships.

There are conflicting opinions even about the reason behind why he is called "Zealot." We do know that the Zealot movement in Judea was a Jewish freedom movement against the tyranny of

Roman occupation. He may also have been called Zealot because he was zealous or passionately devoted to keeping the Law of Moses. The Zealot movement was also passionate about the Law, and saw Roman occupation as a form of enforced idolatry that required the Caesars to be worshiped as gods.

The better known Disciples had already been claimed when I agreed to write on one. Among those remaining I honestly decided to write on Simon mostly because his big scene in "Jesus Christ Superstar" is one of my favorites. In the movie "Jesus Christ Superstar," Simon is the one who keeps trying to get Jesus to directly preach against the power of Rome. His titled zeal for

freeing the people from Roman oppression resonates for me. While the gospel is not partisan – not on the side of any political party or system then or now – the Bible certainly is political in that politics are about how humans make decisions about their life together. God who created the world and called it good desires humans to flourish in community. Oppression and tyranny, then and now, are in opposition to God's Kingdom of Heaven values of love, compassion, mercy, and justice that Jesus taught and lived.

The little that is written about Simon is filled with conflicting information. In the absence of biblical back up, later traditions tell a number of fascinating

stories. Simon is often associated with St. Jude as an evangelizing team. One widespread tradition is that after evangelizing in Egypt Simon joined Jude in Persia or Armenia or Beirut Lebanon where both were martyred in 65 AD. This version is the one found in a book called "The Golden Legend," a collection of stories of lives of the saints that was widely read in late medieval Europe. More than a thousand manuscripts of the text have survived. Some traditions list Simon as the second Bishop of Jerusalem. In art, Simon has the identifying attribute of a saw because he was traditionally believed to have been martyred by being sawn in half. He is the patron saint of leather tanners and wood cutters.

Simon Peter: Faithful yet flawed

“As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” – Mark 1:16-18

I love the Disciple we know as Simon Peter because he represents the faith of so many of us. Faithful but flawed, he was the common fisherman who was called by Jesus on the Galilean seashore to follow him and help him fish for people. Simon and his brother Andrew would ‘immediately leave their nets and follow him,’ becoming the first disciples of Jesus. In Mark’s account, after the temptation of Jesus, he would have been traveling on the seashore of the northwest part of the Sea of Galilee, going to the fishing village of Capernaum. Capernaum was where Simon Peter called home and it is thought that Jesus would have stayed with Simon Peter and his family as he began his ministry in Galilee. One of the first miracles that Jesus performed was to heal Simon Peter’s sick mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31) and it is thought that the house where Jesus did much of

his ministry belonged to Simon Peter.

Simon Peter was the brash fisherman who when the twelve disciples were battling a huge storm in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, would see Jesus walking on water. While the others cowered in the boat at this amazing sight, Peter would call out to Jesus saying, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come out on the water.” Jesus responded “Come.” And Simon Peter got out of the boat and as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus, he walked on

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the water. The trouble was, Simon Peter, saw the wind and waves and his faith began to waiver, and he began to sink. Simon had the good sense to cry out to Jesus, “Lord, save me!” and Jesus did just that, reaching out his

hand. He gathered the sinking Simon in, and walked him into the boat, safe and sound (Matthew 14:22-33).

So, it should not come as a surprise, that when Jesus took the Disciples from Capernaum about 100 miles north to Caesarea Philippi and asked them, “Who do you say that I am?” It would be Simon who would answer “You are the Messiah.” Jesus would respond, “Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah! ... And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:13-20). It was here that Simon would become Peter and would be the one who would both deny Christ and then be affirmed by Christ to spread the Good News.

It would be Peter who would boldly share the Good News when the day of Pentecost came (Acts 2). And it would be Peter to whom the Spirit of God revealed that the unclean Gentiles would be able to receive the Good News and would become a part of Christ’s *kingdom* and kingdom.

I love the Disciple we know as Simon Peter. We are here today because of his flawed faithfulness. And we are affirmed in our own faith journeys because of it.

Bay Area churches are building housing in God’s backyard

By Marisa Kendall
The Mercury News

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. - There’s a new acronym floating in the alphabet soup of California housing parlance: YIGBY, or “yes in God’s backyard.”

Congregations in the Bay Area and beyond are taking steps to build affordable housing on their properties to shelter some of the many local residents who can’t pay the region’s sky-high rents. Housing advocates and religious leaders hope the movement for faith-built housing - christened “YIGBY” by a group in San Diego as a play on “not in my backyard,” or “NIMBY” - will open up new properties for development and pad the Bay Area’s depleted housing stock with

hundreds of new units.

Playing developer can be daunting for a congregation that has no experience navigating the lengthy permitting processes or the backlash that can come from neighbors. But for many, it seemed like the obvious, and godly, way to help those struggling with homelessness or unstable housing situations.

“We just knew we had to do something, and this was something we could do,” said Donna Colombo, executive director of the Trinity Center, the non-profit connected with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek. “We could build housing for people who have nothing.”

St. Paul’s is wrapping up construction of 44 affordable apartments on its prop-

erty and plans to start moving residents in as early as November. The apartment building is going up next door to the church, replacing two structures the congregation formerly used to provide day-time services to the homeless. Half of the apartments will be for renters with Section 8 vouchers, and all will have varying income caps. Most will be for renters making between about \$26,000 and \$35,000 a year - equal to 30 to 40% of the area median income for a single-person household. Renters will pay between \$759 and \$1,302 a month, or one-third of their income.

St. Paul’s leased its land to developer Resources for Community Development, rather than selling it, so the church could retain some control over the project. The

apartment building, dubbed St. Paul’s Commons, cost about \$23 million to build and was funded through a combination of city, county and federal dollars, as well as private loans. It already has received more than 5,000 applications.

Experts say places of worship can make ideal sites for affordable housing. Many congregations have owned their land for decades and now are sitting on large properties worth a small fortune. At the same time, some congregations are shrinking as high housing prices force members to move to cheaper areas. The result is chunks of prime but under-utilized real estate - half-empty sanctuaries, vacant auxiliary buildings and bare-

Thaddeus: A zealous follower of Jesus

I chose the disciple Thaddeus because he was rather unfamiliar to me, other than by name. In doing a bit of research, I quickly found out why he was unfamiliar to me. There is not much information on him and what exists is somewhat conflicting.

According to BibleInfo.com, Thaddeus was also known as Jude or Judas (not the Judas we are most familiar with). He was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee. Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia and died a martyr in Persia.

Jerome called Jude “Trinomious” which means “a man with three names.” In Mark 3:18 he is called Thaddeus. In Matthew 10:3 he is called Lebbeus. His surname was Thaddeus. In Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 he is called Judas the brother of James. Judas Thaddeus also was called Judas the Zealot.

By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People. In the New Testament records (John 14:22) he asked Jesus at the Last Supper, “But Lord,



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why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Judas Thaddeus was interested in making Christ known to the world. Not as a Suffering Savior, however, but as ruling King. We can see plainly from the answer Jesus gave him, that the way of power can never be substituted for the way of love.

It is said that Jude went to preach the gospel in Edessa near the Euphrates River. There he healed many and many believed in the name of the Master. Jude went from there to preach the Gospel in other places. He was killed with arrows at Ararat. The chosen symbol for him is the ship because he was a missionary thought to be a fisherman.

We know that Thaddeus learned the gospel from Jesus as he loyally served Jesus despite hardship and persecution. However, like most of the other disciples, Thaddeus abandoned Jesus during his trial and crucifixion.

It is not clear at what point Thaddeus decided to follow Jesus. If we consider Thaddeus as a real human being and not just some character on a few pages of the

Bible, we should consider the fact he was likely related to Jesus. He and Jesus probably attended many of the same events that other family members did. Think wedding...a certain miracle where Jesus turned water into wine when the wine ran out? Ring a bell? Thaddeus likely saw this take place, even though the Bible doesn't specifically call our attention to it happening. Events definitely should have put him there. He likely saw some miracles be performed and witnessed baptisms. Again, it isn't clear when he decided to become a follower of Jesus, but when he did, he did so faithfully.

What can we learn about human nature and also from God because of Thaddeus? I think we need to be open to our circumstances and our environment. God puts us exactly where we are meant to be. We may not get a clear, “Hey, I'm having you do whatever for this specific reason because it's going to lead to this other thing.” God doesn't exactly work like that. At some point as we make choices, things become clear and our paths and purposes begin to make sense. I think Thaddeus' circumstances put him in a position to appreciate Jesus and then to follow him. He was open to this as we should also be willing to follow and be led.

News, from 2

to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10, in the Schmidt Gallery. “All items will be available free of charge, and there is no limit to the number of items one can take,” according to a library news release.

Accepted donations include “gently used” clothing, shoes, robes, coats, hats, gloves and jewelry. Items that will not be accepted include undergarments, damaged or dirty clothing, broken accessories and household goods. Items will be organized by the library staff.

Items may be dropped off at the library during regular business hours.

Registration open for FHSU's fall picnic

Registration is open for organizations, including churches, who would like a table at the Fort Hays State University 2019 Back to School Picnic. It is scheduled from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, on the FHSU

Quad.

There is no registration fee for non-profit organizations; the fee is \$50 for a for-profit business.

“The picnic is your first opportunity to effectively gain awareness for your organization and the services it provides,” a news release from the Center for Student Involvement stated. More information and a registration form are available at <http://www.fhsu.edu/csi/picnic>.

Questions may be directed to (785) 628-4664 or csi@fhsu.edu

FHSU to offer class on World Religions

The Department of Philosophy at Fort Hays State University will be offering a class on World Religions in the fall.

The on-campus class, Phil 179, will focus on Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confu-

cianism, and Daoism. It will meet from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays starting Tuesday, Aug. 20, and running through Thursday, Dec. 12.

Rob Byer, assistant professor, will be the instructor. He said the class will focus on such topics as: What is a religion? What are different religious doctrines, and what are the historical beginnings of religion?

The class may be taken for three hours of college credit, at a cost of around \$515. Or, Byer said, he is willing to allow people to audit the class for free.

“If someone is interested in attending, doing the reading, and joining in on the discussion, but doesn't need or want credit and doesn't need or want to do assessments related to the course, then auditing would be a fine option,” he said. Cost of the book is around \$15.

Registration deadline is Aug. 7. More information is available by contacting Byer at srbyer@fhsu.edu or (785) 628-4727.

God's backyard, from 7

ly-used parking lots.

Faced with that realization, East Palo Alto city leaders convened a meeting of local churches in October to discuss turning some of their under-used land into housing. Of the 80 churches in the city, about 35 sent representatives, said Patrick Heisinger, the city's community development director. Now two of those congregations are in talks with developers.

"We're really working hard to stop the hemorrhaging of gentrification in East Palo Alto," he said. "So if there's a way to preserve churches ... as well as building more affordable housing for folks in our community to live, I feel like it's a win-win."

To make sure a deal really is a win for the congregation, many religious leaders are turning to developer and real estate consultant Landis Graden with Dublin-based DCG Strategies. Graden specializes in helping congregations downsize or find new sanctuaries. But over the past few years, more Bay Area congregations have come to him with the idea of building housing. He's now working with four on residential development plans - including a Methodist Church in San Jose that wants to build a seven- or eight-story apartment building on its property - and is in early discussions with five or six more.

"We're really, really busy," Graden said.

Not all church property can easily be turned into housing, said Kathleen Piraino, executive director of The Episcopal Impact Fund, which worked with St. Paul's on its housing project. Their lots might not be zoned for residential development - or zoned only for a few homes - which means the congregation would need to appeal to city officials to change the property's designation.

"It's rare to have the combination of the church being excited and saying this is their mission, and have the property be suitable," Piraino said. "We had a number of congregations that were really excited and then got the word from DCG that nothing probably was feasible there."

Affordable housing development can be fraught, as it is challenging to fund, can be tough to get approved and often prompts a backlash from neighbors. But

doing it on church land can be especially difficult because it's an idea people aren't used to - and navigating a church's hierarchy to get the proper approval from the top often is complicated. It took Colombo two and a half years to convince her congregation that they should build housing on St. Paul's property. And then they had to get the Episcopal Diocese of California to sign off on the plans.

Local ordinances also must be considered. Clairemont Lutheran Church in San Diego has been trying for years to build housing on its parking lot but has run into roadblocks, including a rule that dictates how much parking space a church must have per pew.

State Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, D-Oakland, hopes to tackle that issue next year, possibly by introducing a bill that would loosen parking requirements for religious organizations.

"We have all these willing participants who want to build this housing," she said. "We have to figure out a way to do it."

Other churches are taking advantage of existing laws designed to streamline housing production. All Souls Episcopal Parish in Berkeley faced backlash from a handful of neighbors when it proposed tearing down an apartment building it owns next to its church and replacing it with 35 affordable studio apartments for seniors. So All Souls invoked SB 35, a state law passed in 2017 to allow for certain residential projects to move more quickly. The congregation plans to break ground early next year on the \$25 million project. So far, the congregation has received \$6 million from the city and \$5 million from the county and hopes to find the rest from federal tax credits and state funds.

Meanwhile, the nondenominational Friendship Christian Center in West Oakland plans to raze its church and build a new one side-by-side with 50 affordable apartments for seniors. The congregation got approval earlier this year - after three years of working with the city - and plans to break ground in January.

"We felt that we didn't need a lightning bolt from heaven to let us know what the direction should be," said Senior Pastor Gerald Agee. "We have to be creative in these times."

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Supreme Court says 40-foot Maryland cross can stand as war memorial

By David G. Savage
Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said recently the Constitution did not require tearing down historic monuments just because they featured religious symbols, such as crosses or the Ten Commandments.

In a 7-2 decision, the high court upheld the display of a nearly century-old, 40-foot cross that sits on public land at a busy Maryland intersection just a few miles east of Capitol Hill.

The justices ruled that the World War I-era monument, known as the Peace Cross, could stand as a war memorial honoring local soldiers and was not an unconstitutional promotion of a favored religion.

The case posed the first test of church-state separation since President Donald

Trump's two appointees joined the court. But Thursday's decision did not chart a new, more conservative course on religion. Instead, the justices, including two liberals, stressed the importance of history and tradition. As a result, their opinion does not offer encouragement to local and state officials to erect new religious displays on public property.

Speaking for the court, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. said the Maryland cross was erected in 1925 as a tribute to 49 soldiers who died in World War I, and it can be upheld because it serves many purposes.

"The cross is undoubtedly a Christian symbol," he said in American Legion vs. American Humanist Association. "But that fact should not blind us to everything else that the Bladensburg Cross has come to represent. For some, that monument

is a symbolic resting place for ancestors who never returned home. For others, it is a place for the community to gather and honor all veterans and their sacrifices for the nation."

The age of the monument was a key factor, he said. "Retaining established, religiously expressive monuments, symbols and practices is quite different from erecting or adopting new ones," Alito said. "The passage of time gives rise to a strong presumption of constitutionality."

Justices Stephen G. Breyer and Elena Kagan, two of the court's liberals, concurred in the outcome. Breyer said the decision upholding "the Peace Cross poses no real threat to the values the Establishment Clause serves." The First Amendment forbids "an establishment of religion" by the government, and it has been understood to bar an official preference for one religion.

"I fully agree with the court's reasons for allowing the Bladensburg Peace Cross to remain as it is," Kagan wrote. The court's "opinion shows sensitivity to and respect for this nation's pluralism, and the values of neutrality and inclusion that the First Amendment demands."

The outcome closely tracks Breyer's lone view from 2005 when the court ruled on two cases involving the Ten Commandments. He joined a 5-4 ruling with the liberals to block Kentucky officials from prominently posting the Ten Commandments in government offices. But he then joined a 5-4 conservative ruling that preserved a nearly 50-year-old granite monument that stood almost unnoticed on the grounds of the Texas state Capitol. Tearing down the old monument would be seen as reflecting a "hostility toward religion," Breyer said then in a comment quoted by Alito.



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