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A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance  
February 2020



## News to Know

### **CASA schedules Valentine's fundraiser**

CASA of the High Plains will hold its annual Valentine's fundraiser from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Robbins Center on the Fort Hays State University campus.

CASA is short for Court Appointed Special Advocate. When a child enters the foster care system because his or her home is no longer safe, a judge may appoint a committed volunteer to help them. That volunteer is called a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

CASA volunteers are screened and trained and are each assigned to help one child or set of siblings at a time, so they can focus on giving that child or sibling group the individualized advocacy and attention they need.

The fundraiser will include dinner, open bar, and both live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$60 per person or \$420 for a table of eight. Tickets may be purchased online at <https://events.ticketprinting.com/event/2020-Casa-Of-The-High-Plains-Valentines-Dinner-25632>.

More information is available from board member April Terry at [anterry2@fhsu.edu](mailto:anterry2@fhsu.edu).

### **Bone marrow drive seeks volunteer workers**

The Student Health Center at Fort Hays State University will be sponsoring a community-wide bone marrow donor drive on Feb. 6 at FHSU basketball games.

The center is seeking volunteers to help run the "Be the Match" event. Those interested in helping may call the center at (785) 628-4293 or email [armccord@fhsu.edu](mailto:armccord@fhsu.edu).

### **Violinist to perform for After 5 group**

Clara Kachanes, a senior violin performance major at Fort Hays State University, will be performing for the Hays After 5 Christian women's group at their February meeting.

The dinner program will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10, at the Rose Garden Banquet Hall, 2250 E. Eighth.

Also on the program will be inspirational speaker Susan Childers from Chanute. Childers, in her talk titled "The Gift of Change," will discuss her problems with insecurity as a young adult and how she still considers herself a "work in progress."

Cost of the event is \$12.50. Reservations are due by Thursday, Feb. 6, to [daisymae0917@yahoo.com](mailto:daisymae0917@yahoo.com) or to (785) 202-1036.

Hays After 5 is affiliated with Stonecroft Ministry of Overland Park.

### **ECMA Board to meet February 12th**

The Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) Board of Directors will meet at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at the Hadley Center meeting room, 205 E. Seventh. The Ellis County office of the Salvation Army will be hosting the meeting.

Presentations to the board must be scheduled in advance with the ECMA president at [president@ourecma.com](mailto:president@ourecma.com).

### **Church to hold Mardi Gras dinner, dance**

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 1805 Vine, will hold a Mardi Gras dinner and dance on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Activity Center doors will open for social hour at 6 p.m. The meal will be served at 6:45 p.m. The group Solitaire, featuring musician Tim Schumacher of Hays, will provide entertainment.

Tickets are \$25 and include an open bar. Participants must be 21 to enter. Only 150 tickets will be sold. More information is available at (785) 625-7339.



ONE is the official publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) which guides its mission, content, and theme. The ECMA 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](mailto:one@ourecma.com).

The ECMA ONE Advisory Board will choose appropriate and timely submissions for publication. The columns in ONE represent the views of the author.

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### **Advisory Board**

Pastor Dave Buller  
[dbuller@northoak.net](mailto:dbuller@northoak.net)

Linn Ann Huntington  
[lhunting@fhsu.edu](mailto:lhunting@fhsu.edu)

### **Editor**

Pastor Kevin Daniels  
[kevin@hayschristianchurch.org](mailto:kevin@hayschristianchurch.org)

## A Mass Reflection...

**Father Jarett Konrade**

**Saint Nicholas of Myra Church**

**Saint Francis of Assisi**

If we take our Catholic profession of faith to its logical conclusion, then the most important thing that we do on a weekly basis is attend Mass and receive our Lord in the Eucharist. Now, the next question is, why is it so darn difficult to live this reality? So often the urgent things of our lives get in the way of those things that are truly important.

Why is it so easy for us as Catholics to approach Mass as just another "check" on our to-do list for the weekend? There are many prayers we can offer after receiving the Eucharist on the way back to our pews. Sadly, for a number of Catholics, we don't even make it back to the pew; we receive and leave. I still remember when I first heard the comparison about the one man who left Jesus' Last Supper early...hmmm...perhaps it's not completely reasonable to compare all early Mass departures to "Judas," but hopefully it at least gets us thinking about what could possibly be important enough on the schedule to necessitate leaving the "Banquet of our Lord" six or seven minutes

early; before we have been blessed and sent in peace.

Here's a question for reflection, "Why does the Catholic Church place the weight of 'grave sin' upon those who would miss Sunday Mass?" Well, I would like to suggest that it is not the Catholic Church who imposes "grave sin" upon those who miss, but rather "grave sin" or separation from God is the natural consequence of us placing the things and events of this world before our relationship with the Lord of all things.

Imagine a relationship where the lover avoided entering the home of the beloved. Or imagine that you loved someone and were constantly being invited to share in a deeper physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy with them and you chose rather to vacation, to shop, or perhaps watch a football game. How much division might there be in that relationship? Sin is not punishment handed down by the Church, but rather the separation that comes as a

result of our free choice to place "the world" before our relationship with God.

If we use God's gift of free will to choose to be separated from God's invitation to intimacy (the Eucharist) in this life, God allows us the freedom that this choice might resonate into eternity. Why would we desire to spend eternity with a Beloved whose gifts and relationship we chose to ignore during life?

I will be the first to admit that in this life it is extremely difficult to perfectly live out and to completely understand all that we profess and believe about the Mass. However, I have also been given the gift of being able to "taste and see how good the Lord is", through the sacrament of the Eucharist and it tops all that this world has to offer. Let us sincerely pray that we and all of our brothers and sisters in Christ might never grow weary in seeking and learning about this miraculous gift that God gives us in this "one flesh union" with our Lord that is the eternal gift of the Mass.



**"Recognize in this bread what hung  
on the cross, and in this chalice what  
flowed from His side"  
- Saint Augustine of Hippo**



## Reverse Advent at First Presbyterian Church

**Becky Rogowski**

**Hays First Presbyterian Church**

For as many years as I can remember, my family has done a traditional Advent calendar. Ours involves removing a ribbon from a handmade calendar and then receiving a treat each day. One year we had one that had chocolates, another year we had one with drawers that opened with tiny toys inside. My mother gets joy out of filling them and as a child I got the joy of receiving. Now I get the joy of seeing my children receive their daily goodies.

Two years ago, I saw what I thought was a "genius" idea! That was the first time I saw the term "reverse Advent." You start with an empty box or basket and put an item in each day and then at the end, you donate it to a local charity - along the lines of a food bank of your choice.

As a church, First Presbyterian Church in Hays decided to turn this into a church-wide project this Advent season. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, we wanted to put the focus on giving and reaching out. We spoke with two local agencies we partner with on a regular basis to discover what their current needs were. We then explained the process to our congregation.

We offered our congregation the chance to gift

wrap a box the first Sunday of Advent following worship. We sent them home with the "wish list" from First Call for Help and the Salvation Army. The response was amazing! Goodies began to flood in and fill the space under the sanctuary tree. We even had community members learn of it and donate.

The Reverse Advent was definitely a practice in giving and reaching out to others. What seem like simple things to

so many are desperately needed by others. By giving shampoo, soap, and toilet paper to families, you enable them to pay for other priorities - car, taxi, medicines, etc. - the things many of us take for granted in our everyday lives.

This project gave us a chance to be the hands and feet of Jesus and to put our Advent focus on something that could make a difference. So simple and yet so meaningful.

