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ONE

A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance
March 2020

News to Know

TMP Singers to Perform for Christian Women's Group

The TMP Singers, under the direction of Kathy Amrein, will "Sing Into Spring" at 7 p.m. Monday, March 9, for the Hays After 5 Christian women's group.

The dinner program will take place at the Rose Garden Banquet Hall, 2250 E. Eighth St.

Also on the program will be inspirational speaker Gayla Hicks of Wichita. Hicks and her husband, Gerald, own Perfect Peace Christian Lifestyle Store in Wichita.

Gayla Hicks attended Oklahoma State University where she majored in business management. She has three children whom she home schools. Her talk is titled "The Path to Perfect Peace."

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

ECMA Board to Meet March 11

The Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) Board of Directors will meet at 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 11, at Unite Common Grounds, 200 E. Eighth.

Presentations to the board must be scheduled in advance with the ECMA president at president@ourecma.com.

Homeless Coalition to Meet March 18

The Hays Homeless Coalition will meet at noon Wednesday, March 18, in the first floor conference room of the Hadley Center, 205 E. Seventh. The group focuses on ways to assist the homeless in Ellis County. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Lenten Prayer Service Scheduled

St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church, 2901 E. 13th, will hold "Lenten Reflections: A Journey Through Prayer, Scripture & Song" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 19. All are invited.

Band 'I Am They' to Perform in Hays

Radio station KPRD will present contemporary Christian band "I Am They" in concert at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, March 22, at Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center.

"I Am They," from Carson City, Nev., formed in 2011. The band consists of five members and is signed to Essential Records. The group's self-titled debut album was released in 2015.

Single advance tickets are \$12. Advance tickets for groups of 10 or more are \$10. Tickets at the door for all individuals are \$15. Advance tickets may be ordered at <https://www.itickets.com/events/443039>.

Healing Kids' Hearts Retreat Coming Up

The 5th Annual Healing Kids' Hearts Retreat will be held from 9:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 28, at Sternberg Museum. Registration deadline is Friday, March 6, at www.cflehope.org/healing-kids-hearts.

The retreat is designed for children ages 7 through 12 who have experienced the loss of a loved one, friend, or special companion. A specially trained adult buddy will guide and support the child throughout the day through a variety of activities that may include creating special keepsakes, drawing, music, scavenger hunts, and small group activities.

Attendance is limited to 20 children. There is no cost for the retreat. The event is sponsored by the Center for Life Experience, Inc., in Hays. More information is available by calling or texting (785) 259-6859 or emailing cfle1@eaglecom.net.

Hospice to Offer Training for New Volunteers

Hospice of Hays Med is seeking volunteers to serve in non-medical capacities. Training for new volunteers will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 16, at the Center for Health Improvement education conference room, 2500 Canterbury Drive.

There is no cost for the training. Those interested in becoming a volunteer may call Tonia Houghton at (785) 623-6200.



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.

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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Guiding Stars

Becky Rogowski

Hays First Presbyterian Church

Epiphany, January 6, is the official end of the 12 days of Christmas. Many Christians celebrate this day by remembering the journey of the Magi. The Magi found their way to Jesus by following a bright heavenly body, usually represented by a star. Many congregations celebrate this day by having "star words" available for their members. Members are invited to choose a word that is meant to "guide" them through the coming year. It seems that, much like New Year's Resolutions, the words can get lost in the shuffle or get tossed by the wayside.

Two years ago, I chose the word "dream." I was shocked to see how often the word crept into my life throughout the six weeks following its entering my life. Why am I only mentioning the six weeks? Take a guess. The beautiful word meant to guide me for the entire year got set aside in the hustle and bustle known as my life. Nobody to blame other than myself. Who knows what other wonders might have occurred had I stayed true to my "focus word."

Last year I missed epiphany

at our church and a friend who pastors a church in Texas gave me the choice of two words she drew out specifically for me. One didn't speak to me whatsoever and the other practically screamed out, "I'm your word!" The word was understand. Numerous things had happened in my personal life the year before that I truly didn't understand. I felt the word chose me and I kept it close at hand the entirety of 2019. When I would start to question something, I'd think of my word. Understand. What exactly was it that I needed to understand? How could I understand more? How could I help others understand? When I was lost or confused. Understand. When I was hurt. Understand. The word kept me grounded and as the year came to a close, I was sad to think I would be moving on from it.

Epiphany 2020. I carefully prepared 200 words for our congregation to choose from. I was once again planning to be away from worship that particular Sunday, but I wanted to choose from this set of words. There were several that "spoke" to me, but I kept coming back to the word "REFRESH." In the past several months, I had become

overwhelmed with work, school, being a mom, being a daughter, being a committee member, etc. I wasn't spending enough time on self-care and meeting my own needs. I wasn't saying "no" when "no" could serve as an answer. I wasn't saying "yes" to the single-most important person in my life.

I am fully embracing the word "REFRESH" this year and it comes up in conversations and discussions I have with others. I didn't want to rely on seeing it next to my computer or next to my bed. I needed this particular word to be much closer to me at all times. I've had it made into a bracelet as a constant reminder to stay refreshed.

If you have not chosen a word to guide you for the year, it's not too late - and it just might change your life in ways you can't imagine yet. I have LOTS of words left you can choose from. Call me at Hays First Presbyterian (785-625-2847) or email me at presbychsec@gmail.com. I would love to connect you with a "star word."



Tossing Their Cloaks

Becky Rogowski

Hays First Presbyterian Church

Palm Sunday 2019. The Pastor and Generations in Faith Together Coordinator at Hays First Presbyterian Church had a fleeting thought when reading through the "Palm" scripture. The verse mentions the crowd "tossing their cloaks on the ground." This one simple phrase sparked an idea that went beyond what anyone imagined! Such is God's work, right?

The congregation was asked to bring unused coats, jackets,

and sweaters to church with them to "toss on the ground." The intent was to donate the offerings to Hays' annual coat giveaway that is held in early fall. What happened next could only be described as God putting his hand right into the mix! The lightly attended service (40 members) generated six very large and very full lawn bags of items! There were coats covering the aisle of the church from back to front!

A Facebook post about the event generated 5,000+ views in the first 24 hours! Numerous churches

commented they were saving the idea to try in their own congregations for the following year. The impact of this one quick idea is literally unknown! How blessed we all are!

The congregation of Hays First Presbyterian Church will be doing this again this year and they invite you to join in. If you cannot attend the service that morning, please feel free to drop off items you (or family members) have outgrown or no longer use. It's a perfect time and saves you from storing them!

Why Do You Worry?

Reverend Karen Harvester

Hays Med Chaplain

Jesus asked, "Why do you worry?" This question is found in the Sermon on the Mount as told in the sixth chapter of Matthew. Matthew told this gospel story by collecting all of Jesus' sayings and arranging them in groups of topics as he spoke to his followers. Therefore, this admonishment of Jesus to not be anxious or worried is a teaching for those who believe in and follow Jesus. Fully 10 percent of the Sermon on the Mount is an explanation of why we should not worry. This is an important teaching! Biblical scholars tell us that a majority of what Jesus preached is summed up in chapters 6-8 of

Matthew. So, for Jesus to spend 10 percent of his message on "don't worry," this must be significant.

Jesus seems to be doing more than offering kindly advice here. This is not just a mere suggestion that one should not worry. Jesus is not saying, "Gee, I wish you would not worry so much." He seems to be creating a new commandment: "Thou shall not worry." This is such a serious teaching, occurring throughout the Bible. How many times in scripture are we told not to worry, be anxious, or be afraid? Any guesses? At least 365 times. That is the same number of days in a year. Perhaps it would help us to remember that each morning as we begin our day.

Jesus also explains why we

have no reason to worry. Jesus argues that worry is not necessary. It is needless, it is useless, and it may actually be harmful. Worry does not change the past. The past is past. Worry about the future will not change our tomorrows either. It is a waste of time. Not only that, it has been argued by all but the most die-hard pessimists that the future rarely turns out as bad as our worries anyway. We have all had that experience from time to time. We get ourselves all tied up in knots about something that is going to happen, and then when it is all over we think "that was not as bad as I thought it was going to be."

Jesus offers two teachings in this passage from Matthew on how to overcome worry. One

is to “strive first for the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). Focus your life on God and God’s kingdom. All of our cares in regard to daily living are legitimate concerns, but they should not be our first concern. God is to be first and foremost in our thinking. Put God first and all else falls into

place. Jesus also said, “Do not worry about tomorrow” (v. 34). Live your life one day at a time and worry will not have a foothold.

So, whatever worries may be nagging at you today, take your worry and lay it down at the throne of God through

prayer. Sure, there may be other issues more important to being a faithful disciple than worry, but few are more destructive or disabling than worry. Jesus asked, “Why do you worry?” Placing our cares in God’s hands is the way to inner peace and faithful discipleship.

Feeling Stressed? Me Too

Pastor Kevin Daniels
Hays Christian Church

Do you feel busy lately? I know I do. I have a dozen irons in the fire right now, and I’m left wondering some days how I’m going to get through it all. I have real deadlines in all areas of my life, and they all seem to be due around the same time.

I know I’m not alone.

When I start to get down and overwhelmed with all that I have to do, it’s helpful for me to press pause and reflect on what’s really important. I think about my wife and kids, the blessings I have in family and friends, and the blessings I have related to my occupation and schooling. Most of all, however, I’m thankful that Jesus is walking beside me down this crazy road of life.

Jesus promises to never leave me in my time of need. He promises to stick with me through thick and thin, through times of busyness and times of less stress.

I knew that for a season I would be stretched thin - I am pursuing another master’s degree. I prayed about that decision and discussed it with my family. All were supportive. Honestly, I couldn’t be doing this without the support of my family, friends, and church. Through them, I see Jesus every day. I see his presence when I look into the faces of my wife and children. I feel his love through the hugs of my friends. I sense his support as volunteers step in to help fill in the gaps.

To me, Jesus is not some abstract concept simply to be

thought about and talked about. Jesus is real. He shows me that every day, in the little things. When I get overwhelmed, which honestly has been a lot of times as of late, I stop and think of my Savior. I think about what he did for me at Calvary. I think about the assurances of love and acceptance he gives me. I am flooded with the grace he freely gives. And I see him working through my family and friends to remind me every day how truly blessed I am.

If you’re going through a stressful season, I encourage you to hit the pause button - even if just for a moment - to recognize all the blessings you have in your life, and to remind yourself that Jesus is with you always.



“Knowing that God is faithful, it really helps me to not be captivated by worry. But knowing that He will do what He has said, He will cause it to happen, whatever He has promised, and then it causes me to be less involved in worrying about a situation.” - Josh McDowell