

INSIDE:

+ **Local Resources to Meet Needs in the Community**



A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance
November 2021

A large, dark green Christmas tree is the central focus, heavily decorated with warm white lights, gold and red tinsel, and numerous colorful cards. The cards feature various designs, including a Santa Claus character and the word 'MERRY'. The tree is set in a room with other people and furniture visible in the background.

**HELP IS OUT
THERE!**



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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On the Cover:

The Salvation Army's 2020 Angel Tree is shown at Fuzzy's Taco Shop, 4310 Vine, waiting for people to pick a tag and purchase the requested gift for a child in Ellis County. This year the tree will go up at Fuzzy's the first week of November. See more information on Pages 8 & 9. (Submitted Photo)

Editor's Note:

This month's theme is "Help is out there." The holidays are not always jolly for those dealing with empty stomachs and needing help with other necessities--rent, utilities, prescriptions, clothing, etc. This month's issue is divided into three main sections: Food pantries and blessing boxes, organizations providing other types of assistance, and groups offering support for those dealing with grief this holiday season. It is our hope that you will hold onto this month's issue as a resource guide—for you to utilize if need be, or to prayerfully consider which of these ministries you would like to support during this season of giving.

FOOD PANTRIES & BLESSING BOXES

A number of churches in Ellis County offer indoor food pantries or outdoor blessing boxes. The latter are small all-weather structures holding various types of food and hygiene products that are located outside a church.

The following list represents those churches who responded to the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance's request for information, and they are listed in alphabetical order. If we omitted a church offering this type of assistance, we apologize.

This section lists food pantries and blessing boxes available to everyone in the community. Many public and private schools, including Fort Hays State University, have food pantries that are restricted just to their students, faculty, and staff. So they are not included in this list.

First Presbyterian Church

2900 Hall Street

By Becky Rogowski
Generations in Faith Together
Coordinator

The First Presbyterian

Church is home to a Blessing Box and a Free Little Library. The boxes are located outside near the east driveway to the

church and are open 24/7.

Both were constructed and installed during the stay-at-home phase of COVID-19. It

First Presbyterian Church (Continued)

was the church's hope that both would help people meet some of their needs even while maintaining social distance from one another. Their impact was meant to last beyond, as well.

There are no limitations as to who can use either box. Leave what you can and take what you need. The books vary based on what has been left. The church does take book donations so the box can be filled by church members, as well. It is never empty.

The Blessing Box is for non-perishable items. Anyone in the community is welcome to leave items there that they think others could use. It is not limited to food. Personal hygiene items, diapers, wipes, etc., may also be left at the box.

The church also has a ministry called "Go Cart." The congregation adopts a different local mission each month. Individuals bring items for the mission, and those items are then collectively donated.

Groups supported in the past are: Ana's Gift, Westside School, Options Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Humane Society, USD 489 Food Pantry, Salvation Army, Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center, First Call for Help's Backpacks for Kids, and the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance's Community Thanksgiving Feast.

If you have a group you think the church might like to support, please contact First Presbyterian Church at (785) 625-2847.

Hays Christian Church Blessing Box ***22nd & Marshall Road***

By Rev. Cana Moore
Pastor

Hays Christian Church operates a Blessing Box outside of our church building at the corner of 22nd and Marshall Road. The box is located on the north side of the building, near 22nd Street. There are a few pavers leading up to the box for greater accessibility from the parking lot.

The Blessing Box is intended to function as a small neighborhood pantry, offering items to those who have a need. Primarily, the box contains shelf-stable food such as peanut butter, baking mix or ingredients,

crackers, cereals (hot and cold), canned foods, and boxed meals.

Sometimes the box will have hygiene products such as toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, or menstrual products. You may also find seasonal items such as hand warmers or Easter eggs, when appropriate, or fresh vegetables in the summer.

The box is open 24/7 and is refilled semi-regularly by the church. Anyone who needs food or other items is encouraged to stop by and get whatever they might need, no paperwork required. Additionally, anyone who

wishes to contribute to the stock of the Blessing Box may do so simply by dropping by and adding their contributions to the shelves.



The Blessing Box at Hays Christian Church is located at 22nd and Marshall Road. (Photo by Linn Ann Huntington)

New Life Center Food Pantry, Laundry Service ***1701 East 22nd Street***

By Rev. Sabian Chaney
Pastor

There is not a reason for anyone to go hungry in Hays. There are so many willing churches and non-profits that desire to come along those in need. I personally remember growing up with food insecurity. As kids, we would become very creative at the end of the month. One of our "favorite" meals was

"peanut butter spoons" and potted meat.

My mom, though, would not let us go hungry. We came to know the food pantries of my hometown well. I've walked that road personally, and I know many of us have been touched by need.

At New Life Center we would like to invite those in need of food pantry services to visit us during our regular office hours, 10

a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

We also offer to pay for a load of laundry on the second Tuesday of every month from 6 to 8 p.m. at 8th Street Laundry Services, 225 E. Eighth.

Please check out all of our ministries at newlifecenterhays.com and know that you are loved by Christ and our church.

North Oak Community Church Food Pantry ***3000 Oak Street***

By Tina Maier
Administrative Assistant

North Oak Community Church's Food Pantry is available to everyone in our community from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to noon on Fridays.

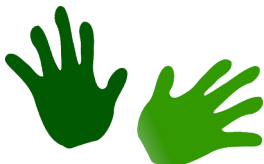
We have several non-

perishable food items available for all ages, along with some infant supplies.

Because the food pantry is in a secure location, those wishing to access the pantry need to call the church office first at (785) 628-8887. Someone from the office will then meet

the person at the church. The church office is located at 3002 Northridge Court, across the street from the church.

Those wishing to donate items to the food pantry are asked to call the number above.



"GOD HAS GIVEN US TWO HANDS, ONE TO RECEIVE WITH AND THE OTHER TO GIVE WITH." - BILLY GRAHAM

St. Joseph's Food Pantry & Diaper Closet ***14th & Ash Streets***

By Renee Michaud
Coordinator

St. Joseph's Food Pantry & Diaper Closet is located in the former Kennedy Middle School Building, which is across the parking lot behind St. Joseph Catholic Church at 14th and Ash Streets.

Our mission is to provide food to those who are in need in Ellis County. The pantry is open from 9 a.m. to noon the first and third Saturdays of the month. Those in need of food support may come as often as they need to throughout the year.

In 2020, a Diaper Closet was added to our Food Pantry service, so anyone in our county who is in

need of diaper support is also welcome.

St. Joseph's Food Pantry opened its doors in January of 2001 and continues into its 21st year of helping our community by means of a very simple check-in process.

Donations of non-perishable food items may be left in the donation barrels located in the same school building by the zero-entry door with the metal sign to guide you. Donations of refrigerated/frozen items may be arranged by contacting Renee Michaud through the St. Joseph Parish Office, (785) 625-7356. Anyone who is interested in volunteering may

contact Michaud at the same number and leave a message.

We are grateful for the spirit of volunteerism in our community and the generosity of those who contribute food items and monetary support. Together we will help meet the needs of those in our county, keeping it a strong and healthy place in which to live.

St. Joseph's Food Pantry & Diaper Closet is an affiliated agency with the Kansas Foodbank. Community safety protocols as directed by our county will be followed.

St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church Food Box ***2901 East 13th Street***

By Cheryl Glassman
Music Director

St Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church has an outdoor food box located at the west end of the

circle drive.

St. Nicholas parishioners donate food items and/or provide monetary donations to

stock the food box. Volunteers from St. Nick's then stock the food box, which is available to anyone in need at any time.

OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

A number of organizations in Ellis County provide a broad range of services. These can include help with rent, utilities, prescriptions, clothing, and lodging. Some also offer food, and one local business offers free meals at certain times each month.

Some of the organizations listed below have set income guidelines for recipients; some don't. They all share one common goal—to provide loving care and assistance to the people of Ellis County. They are listed in alphabetical order.

Breathe Coffeehouse

703B Main Street

By Patrick McGinnis

Owner

Breathe Coffeehouse hosts a free Community Meal every second and fourth Sunday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join us for a home cooked meal and good conversation. It's a great way to make connections and share life and a meal with people in our community.

Our goal is to create an environment where people who care can serve or just engage in a meal with others. We know that people

need more than food, and we believe in being intentional in loving our community. Jesus gave us the example of breaking bread with others, and we believe we can improve our community through the simple act of having a meal together and talking.

Breathe has another opportunity for people to be able to connect and care for one another. Can We Just Talk? meets every Thursday night at Breathe. Our goal is to

open up with other people to share in each other's struggles.

Whether you come from a place of need or because you want to be there for others, we know that talking can make a difference. We all can make an impact if we are willing to commit to talking. We all struggle . . . talking helps.

Breathe Coffeehouse is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday; it is closed on Sundays.

Community Assistance Center

208 East 12th Street

By Laurie Mortinger

Co-Director

The Community Assistance Center provides support for our brothers and sisters in need. It affords an organized

way for individuals to share with or to receive assistance from the community.

We assist Ellis County families or individuals of low or no income, transients, the

homeless, those who are disabled, the elderly, and disaster victims with food, clothing, household items, and furniture. We provide aid not only in times of crisis but throughout the year.

Community Assistance Center (Continued)

In order to receive assistance, recipients must meet the low-income guidelines and live in Ellis County. Potential recipients may apply at the center during business hours. The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please call (785) 625-9110 before arriving so we may inform you as to what documents you will need to provide the center before receiving services.

Clients may receive food boxes six times in a 12-month period. They may shop monthly for clothing and household items. We also provide furniture items at no

cost, depending on what is available.

Christmas food baskets may be requested by any Ellis County resident who meets our income guidelines. Sign-up is Oct. 1 through Nov. 12.

The Community Assistance Center is an incorporated, non-profit organization. The CAC receives no funding from federal, state, or county agencies. At this time, all funding is derived from private and charitable sources.

To help with operating expenses, the Community Assistance Center has garage sales the first and third Tuesdays of each month from

8 to 11 a.m. The public is invited. An added benefit of the garage sales is that they provide an economical source of clothing and household items for the community at large.

The Community Assistance Center has much to be thankful for--the community that supports us both financially and with donations of food, clothing and household items. We are grateful to assist families in our community. Together we can make a difference. Please call the center at the number above if you have any questions.

First Call for Help of Ellis County ***607 East 13th Street***

By Linda Mills
Executive Director

First Call for Help of Ellis County was created through the work of pastors and community leaders who were called on for emergency financial help. The group wanted to reduce duplication of requests and centralize the services that were provided.

First Call for Help offers crisis assistance to Ellis County residents and transients who

are struggling to meet their basic needs. The funding for financial assistance is provided by the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance through its Second Mile Fund.

Emergency financial assistance for rent and utilities is available at First Call, as are hygiene items, diapers, and food, all donated by the community. As staff members work with clients, they discuss budgeting and prioritizing

needs so that future financial assistance may not be needed.

The transient assistance program is designed to assist travelers who are stranded in Hays. Fuel vouchers, bus vouchers and occasionally lodging are provided. First Call for Help also serves as a referral agency to inform and connect people to additional resources in the community.

First Call for Help of Ellis County (Continued)

There are three other programs that benefit the community in a different way:

Backpacks for Kids is a free annual school supply and backpack collection distributed to students in August.

Meals on Wheels are delivered every day by volunteers who pick up the meals at Hays Medical Center and take them to elderly, disabled or homebound individuals. There is a cost involved with this program.

First Step Housing is a transitional housing program

for local residents who are either homeless or being evicted. The focus of this free program is not only to house participants but to help them accomplish goals of working, saving, budgeting and ultimately moving into a place of their own.

First Call for Help of Ellis County is open 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Requests for financial assistance require an appointment, and the phone number is (785) 623-2800. Monetary donations are always welcome at the above address.



Laura Shoaff and Laura Allen with First Call for Help shelve recently donated packages of pasta at First Call for Help, 607 E. 13th. The executive director, Linda Mills, had recently sent out a request for more pasta and canned meat donations, saying, "It's hard to fix a meal for children with just canned vegetables." (Submitted Photo)

The Salvation Army ***203 East 7th Street***

By Julie Smith

Ellis County Coordinator

The Salvation Army in Hays is committed to serving Ellis County residents who are in need of assistance with food, rent, utilities, and prescriptions.

In addition, three different programs are also available--the Paper Pantry, Project Suitcase and Angel Tree. These programs and continual care for the Ellis County community are made possible through generous

donations.

The Paper Pantry is available to low-income individuals and families who are needing personal hygiene products and cleaning supplies. The Paper Pantry is open from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and 1 to 3 p.m. Thursdays at the above location.

Project Suitcase addresses the needs of children in the foster care system. The children are given hope and dignity with a new suitcase

filled with socks, shampoo, a blanket, and other items to help them with the transition of going into foster care.

The Christmas season is made special for clients with the Angel Tree Gift Program, which provides Christmas gifts for children in need.

The Angel Tree sign-up forms are available at the Salvation Army office. Families have until Nov. 23 to apply. After eligible families offer gift ideas for their children, these requests are

The Salvation Army (Continued)

placed on the Angel Tree. Once again, the tree this year will be located at Fuzzy's Taco Shop, 4310 Vine St., beginning the first week of November.

Donors are asked to take a

request from the tree, purchase the item for the child, and return the gift to the designated location by the specified deadline. Volunteers then wrap the gifts and deliver them to the families in time for

Christmas.

The Salvation Army office is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. More information is available at (785) 621-2794.

Trinity Lutheran Church Jana's Closet 27th & Fort Streets

***By Linda C. Collins
Jana's Closet Volunteer***

Jana's Closet, named in honor of the late Jana Mackey, is located inside Trinity Lutheran Church at the corner of 27th and Fort Streets. We provide gently used and new women's clothing free of charge.

We offer a nice variety of clothing, sizes small to 3X. Our inventory ranges from tops, pants, skirts, jackets, dresses, and jeans, to

coats and scarves. In addition, we have a good supply of scrubs for those working in the health care field.

Shoes, socks, bras and leggings, along with personal hygiene products, are also available. All items are free.

Our goal is to share with any woman who may be in need. Going for a job interview or appearing for a court hearing and need a nice outfit? Don't forget to shop

here. A dressing room with mirrors is available for your use while trying on your new outfits.

We do not screen anyone, and there are no questions asked. If you or someone you know needs this service, please call (785) 625-2044, and someone will direct you to our area of sharing. If there is no answer, please leave a message, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Unite Ministry 200 East 8th Street

***By Brandon Nimz
Ministry Leader***

Unite oversees a free store inside The Gamers Guild, 200 E. Eighth, that is open anytime The Gamers Guild is open.

The free store is for people

to donate to, take from, and/or trade with. All items in the free store are free, and we do not issue tax-deductible receipts for items donated as they are not donated to our entity itself, but to anyone who ends up taking the item—the free store

is strictly so the community can help itself out.

The Gamers Guild is open 5 to 10 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and noon to 10 p.m. on Saturdays. Because it is

Unite Ministry (Continued)

closed on some holidays, visitors are encouraged to visit the website at theGamersGuildhays.com for a complete schedule.

Unite Ministry also oversees distributions of commodities from the Federal Emergency Assistance Program. Unlike the free store that anyone can use, this commodity program

requires recipients to earn 130 percent of the federal poverty level or less, and the commodities are distributed at set times.

Full details (including income guidelines and schedule) can be found at UniteHays.com (just click the Hays Commodity Distribution Tab on the website). Besides these direct

assistance programs, we also offer small group Bible studies that are attended by individuals from different denominations and sometimes different belief systems altogether.

More details can be found by contacting Unite Ministry's leader, Brandon Nimz, at Brandon.Nimz@gmail.com or (785) 259-2539.

GRIEF SUPPORT

The holidays can be difficult and lonely for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Family traditions may no longer bring joy—only painful reminders of the hole in one's life. The resulting depression and sadness can be overwhelming.

Ellis County has organizations that provide grief support year round. These groups also offer special, meaningful events during the holiday season. They are listed below in alphabetical order.

Blue Christmas Service

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2900 Canal Boulevard

By Rev. Shay Craig

St. Michael's Episcopal Church Vicar

The truth is that the holiday season is not entirely "holly-jolly" for everyone. The season may be fraught with difficult memories and trigger grief, disappointment, or loneliness.

The Blue Christmas service offers the assurance

that it is "okay to be not okay" and provides some tools to help us navigate the season. This ecumenical church service weaves music, prayer and candlelight to create a space for people who share our ambiguity about the holidays.

We leave armed with vocabulary to talk about our experiences, prayers that validate and affirm our

feelings, resources to help us get through the holidays, and the realization that we are not alone.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church and Trinity Lutheran Church offer this service annually as a ministry to the community. All are welcome and affirmed in God's house.

The service will be at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, at St.

Blue Christmas Service (Continued)

Michael's Episcopal Church,
2900 Canal Blvd. (enter on
29th). Please contact the Rev.
Shay Craig
(rev.shay.craig@gmail.com)
or the Rev. Brenda Rogers,
the pastor at Trinity Lutheran
Church
(pastor@trinityhays.org), for
more information.



Pictured are the three pastors who officiated at the Blue Christmas service in 2020. From left are the Rev. Celeste Lasich, former pastor of First Presbyterian Church; the Rev. Shay Craig, vicar at St. Andrew's and St. Michael's Episcopal Churches; and the Rev. Brenda Roger, pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church. This year's service will again be held at St. Michael's at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5. (Submitted Photo)

Center for Life Experience

103C East 27th Street

***By Dawne Leiker
Board Member***

The holidays can be a difficult time after losing a family member or friend, especially during these last two years due to the pandemic. The Center for Life Experience is a unique Hays organization ready to deal with the issues associated with grief and loss. The center pays special attention to the needs of people in our community during the months of November and December.

At 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 20, the Healing Hearts and Healing Kids' Hearts support groups will host the dedication of the

Children's Holiday Memorial Tree at Jackie Creamer's Dance Studio, 1003 Main St. Anyone is welcome to come and add an ornament to honor a child who has died.

At 1 p.m. that afternoon at the same location, the Healing After Loss and Healing After Loss of Suicide support groups will host the dedication of their memorial tree honoring adults who have died by suicide or other causes. Anyone is welcome to come and bring an ornament or add one that is already available to the tree.

These trees will be up through the holidays and

taken down after Jan. 1, 2022. The Center will hold onto all the ornaments for upcoming years unless a person donating an ornament wants to retrieve it after Jan 1, 2022.

We are grateful to Jackie Creamer's Dance Studio for graciously hosting these events again this year. All are welcome to attend.

Also planned is the candlelight "Service of the Longest Night" at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19th. The location will be announced. For information please contact the center at (785) 259-6859 or cflhope.org.

“Surviving the Holidays” GriefShare Seminar ***North Oak Community Church, 3000 Oak Street***

By LuAnn Walters
GriefShare

“Surviving the Holidays” is a GriefShare program designed to help those who are grieving the death of a loved one to be prepared for the surprising emotions that may hit over the holidays.

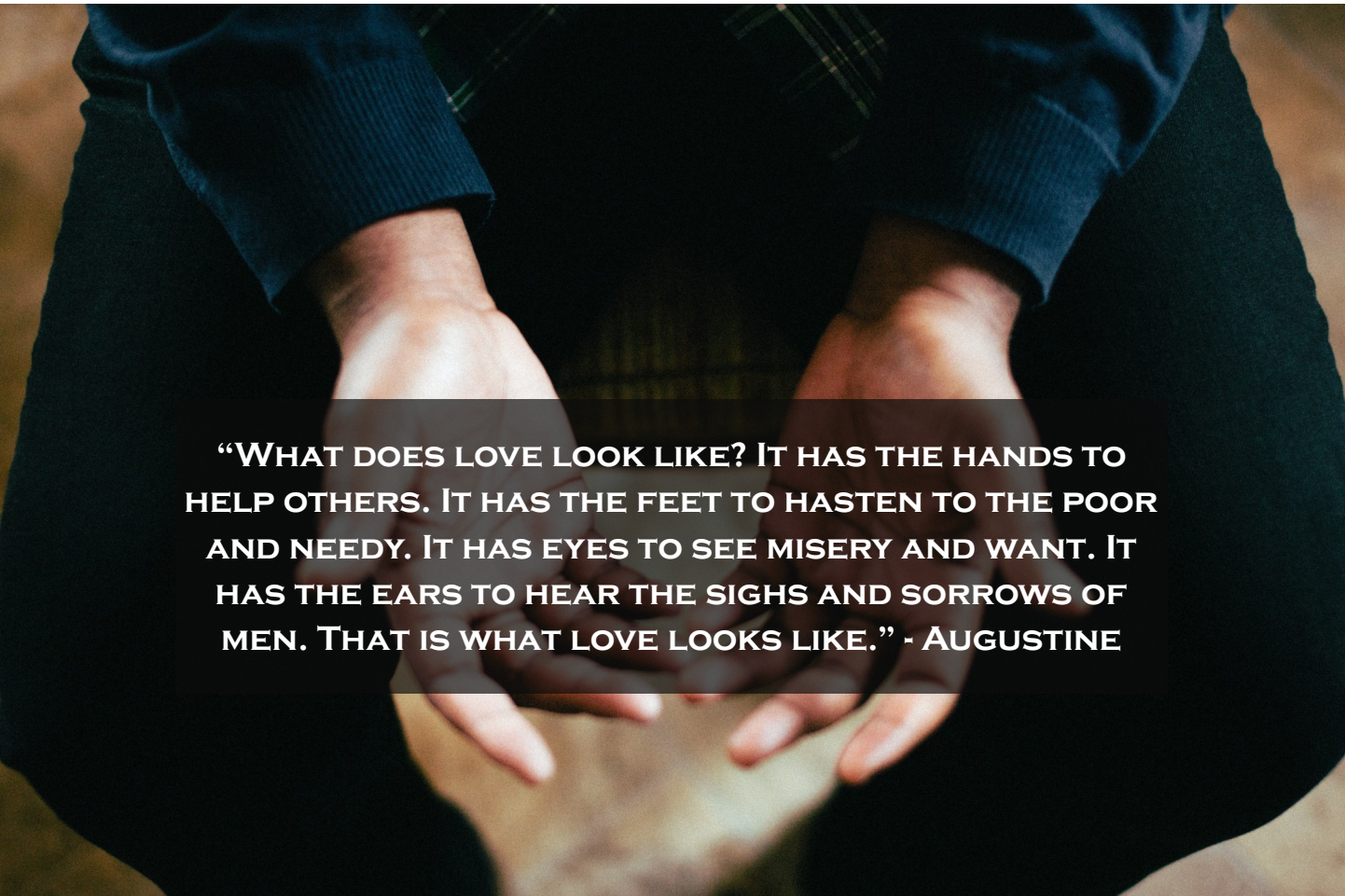
The seminar will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2, at the Worship Center at North Oak

Community Church, 3000 Oak St.

The seminar will help participants discover what to do about traditions, how to handle holiday parties and invitations, and where to find comfort, strength, and hope during this time. The seminar is free, and no registration is required.

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people

who will walk alongside you through one of life’s most difficult experiences, offering healing and hope after the death of a loved one. More information about GriefShare is available at www.griefshare.org/holidays. More information about the event is available from Rich Matzke, (785) 650-2946, or Elaine Goodwin, (720) 215-8460.



“WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE? IT HAS THE HANDS TO HELP OTHERS. IT HAS THE FEET TO HASTEN TO THE POOR AND NEEDY. IT HAS EYES TO SEE MISERY AND WANT. IT HAS THE EARS TO HEAR THE SIGHS AND SORROWS OF MEN. THAT IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE.” - AUGUSTINE