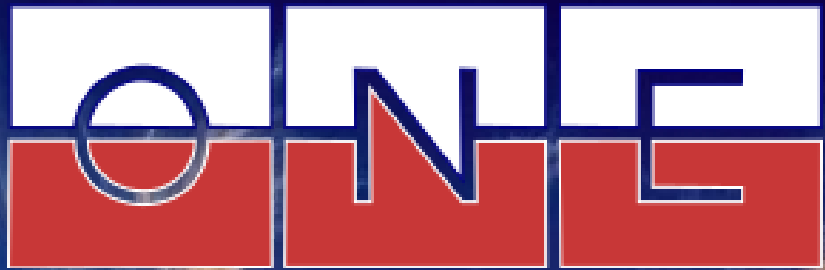


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A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

July 2024

**“LET ALL OUR STEPS BE STEPS  
OF WORSHIP AND ALL OUR  
BREATHS BE PRAISES TO THE  
HOLY GOD WHO LOVES US”  
- BEN HOUCHEN**





Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

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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## Editor's Note:

This month we asked our writers, "With summer comes vacations, how do you worship while traveling?"

## ***Praying Through Music***

### ***Written by:***

***Cheryl Glassman***

Summer is a wonderful time of year! If you live in a warm climate you can travel to the mountains of Colorado to cool off, or vice versa! Many times, travel includes visiting loved ones, relatives, or good friends. It can also include making new friends and seeing wondrous sites.

Whenever I travel, especially to a new destination, I always make a point to locate the nearest church. Entering a new worship space is always so refreshing for me. It can be a source of peace or excitement to see how others create a space for their parishioners to celebrate and worship.

When attending a

service, it is always so nice to hear familiar prayers or songs; however, hearing new songs and prayers opens me up to new avenues to pray! On more than one occasion, I have entered a worship space and listened as a musician rehearsed or prayed through music. I also listen to spiritually based music while driving or relaxing. Regardless of church space or not, prayer is a vital part of the journey!

As I have discovered, music ministry can be a wonderful way to pray. I recently read an article by David Anderson in "Pastoral Music," a publication distributed by the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. David Anderson is past vice-president for church music and senior

editor for GIA Publications (a Catholic music publisher/distributor). He is director of Pastoral Music and Liturgy at Ascension and St. Edmund Parish, Oak Park, Illinois and a candidate for the Doctor of Pastoral Music degree at Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology. He writes:

"Music is the compelling Christian art, matched only by the visual glory of icons and architecture. Just as an icon can be a doorway to the sacred, music can be a pathway to deeper prayer. The power of music to convey prayer to those who listen can also inspire a deeper experience of prayer in those who sing. The members of our music ministry - choir and ensemble singers, cantors, and instrumentalist - know

## ***Praying Through Music (Continued)***

this. I think that most of them intuitively connect music-making, mostly song, with prayer and experience it at prayer. Prayer both sustains and animates our life in God. Prayer is about presence and relationship. Prayer opens us to the continual call and presence of Christ. Prayer and song are like seeds planted in good soil, readying our hearts and bodies to both hear, and live out the Gospel."

Praying with or through music is, for me, so fulfilling.

I have always tried to "breathe in" the music, and let the sounds and words fill me. If possible, I like to take time for silence after singing, playing, or listening to a song. This allows me to appreciate the depth of praying with song. Sometimes I will just open a hymnal and pray the words; like this excerpt from the song "We Are Many Parts" by Marty Haugen. "We are many parts, we are all one body, and the gifts we have we are given to share. May the Spirit of love make us

one indeed; one the love that we share, one our hope in despair, one the cross that we bear."

May your summer be filled with many wondrous moments and may prayer and the presence of Christ fill your hearts wherever you travel.



*Cheryl Glassman is the Director of Music at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.*

## ***Worship and Travel***

***Written by:***

***Rev. Ben Houchen***

Over my life, I've realized that worship is malleable, stretching and adapting beyond its traditional borders, as the spirit also sometimes stretches in new regions, adaptable and fluid as the cultures it traverses. When I travel, I want my worship to have an ever-expanding range that remembers the many ways that transcendence shimmers in every context.

One of the wonderful gifts travel affords is the chance to enter into the cathedrals and chapels that form the heart and soul of so many expressions of faith. Each visit is full of life and variety, like the many colors and smells, the voices high and low, and all the joyful gifts of the various traditions. I find peace in cathedrals full of liturgy, in the bells and prayers of small chapels, and the silence of monastic communities – all allowing me the sense that the God in whom I believe knows no

borders, belongs to no denomination, and is controlled by no religion.

In those moments, I experience in a visceral way what Christians call the ecumenism of the saints, when the foreign language of someone else's liturgy or the strange gestures of a faraway prayer become my own, in the communion of another's expression of their own hunger for God. There is something of Meister Eckhart's idea, that what is there, is God, just as it is here.

## ***Worship and Travel (Continued)***

Over the years, nature too has become both one of the most enduring teachers and a primary place where I experience God. When I travel, I try to give myself time in that natural world - in the mountains, the forests, the ocean - where I can feel again the greatness of God and the intimacy of his making. The loveliness and order of Creation point me to God and invite me into a worshipful awareness of my participation in life's great web. Worship - the heart-felt sense of the mystical presence of God that we

feel - happens for me most often when I am in mute union with the world of natural order.

Worship when I travel is an ongoing, evolving way of experiencing the liturgical calendar: a practice that both follows from and feeds into the contours of my path. When I travel to these many houses of worship, when I go out for pilgrimage and prayer, when I ground down between Earth and heaven, whether in my backyard, at a creek, on the paths at Frontier Park, or seated at my desk, these are all rising acts of worship.

Let us be receptive and allow it to teach us to respond to the Divine Presence, the Sacred, wherever we might happen to meet it. Let all our steps be steps of worship and all our breaths be praises to the holy God who loves us and encompasses everything. Arise, my soul, arise. Arise for worship.



*Rev. Ben Houchen  
is the Priest at St.  
Michael's and St.  
Andrew's  
Episcopal Church  
in Hays.*

## ***Sacred Places***

***Written by:***

***Rev. Cana Moore***

I am not someone who responds well to heat. Historically, I love to spend my summers indoors, near a fan or an air conditioner, out of the sun. I am easily sunburned and am very careful about sunscreen even when I am out of the house for a very short time. Overall, summer is not my favorite season by a long shot.

However, one thing I do

love is traveling. I love to travel in the "off" season, because being a childless woman gives me greater flexibility on travel deals. I enjoy historical sites, important statues, cultural spots, and museums. Almost always at the top of my lists for travel sites are any important religious locations in the area.

Visiting these sites (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, meeting houses, monasteries, and the like) allows me a chance

to take time and reflect. It also gets me beyond my own specific religious tradition and into spaces held as sacred and holy by others- whether fellow Christians or by those seeking to understand their own faiths.

Some people love the outdoors, and a quiet forest path will always be better to them than any grand building. For me, though, visiting a sacred space that was once just a field, a home, or a mountainside,

## ***Sacred Places (Continued)***

gives me the same sense of wonder that others gain from nature. I also love the ways nature offers spiritual space - but I find myself more connected to the idea of a place people have turned to and returned to while seeking spiritual awareness. There is value for me not simply in traditions or communities having a right to exist in a given location, but in the value of a path that was tread before me. Others, like me, while in need of refreshment, found it in this space.

Once, I was traveling to visit with a friend who was teaching abroad in Budapest, Hungary. It was December, and I had plans to visit with her for several days and then go to Venice, Italy, for a time of spiritual reflection. I figured my time in Hungary would be more

self-oriented, sightseeing and such, while my time in Italy would be more focused on discernment and spiritual refreshment.

My first morning in Budapest reminded me of my own dichotomization of this trip, as the first sentence my friend said to me was, "I have four churches and a synagogue on our agenda for today." She knew me well enough to know I would love to see these places and that this trip was a part of my larger spiritual pilgrimage. She didn't draw a line between the two parts of my trip, and I shouldn't have either.

A crucial way I see my traveling, even when I am not going on a pilgrimage or a silent retreat, is to remind me of the larger world and God's care for it.

It also gives me the time to ask a significant question: what makes space sacred? By removing me from my normal routines and responsibilities, I can be reminded that the world and faith are far larger than just me, and any space can be sacred.

There are rituals and systems to make it such, but more important is the ability to see sacredness in every place. No place, town, or location is so mundane that it cannot be used as a space for spiritual reflection, transformed in its ordinariness into something used for growth in our souls.



*The Rev. Cana Moore is the pastor of Hays Christian Church and Gorham Community Church*

## ***Standing Out or Blending In?***

***Written by:***  
***Macey Pfeifer***

Have you ever noticed someone that is not super confident in their words, their choices, their actions, or maybe even themselves?

Are you one of those people? I personally struggle as someone that radiates confidence... especially when it comes to my faith. I was raised as a Catholic and received all the sacraments within the K-8

religion program: Baptism, First Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation.

My family growing up was not active in the church. We attended mass on Christmas Eve, Easter



## ***Standing Out or Blending In? (Continued)***

and went to religion weekly. Now as an adult, I feel that I lack a lot of confidence in my faith. Many of the things I learned as a child, I no longer remember. All the stories and verses of the bible, I sometimes struggle to relate to or recollect. I pray by myself but when in groups of people, I feel hesitant to share out loud. I am shy to begin with so that may be hindering too.

But why is that? God does not want us to hide. He does not want us to hide our faith, our values, our morals, our thoughts, and especially ourselves. So why is it that people struggle to show their faith? Are they embarrassed? Are they questioning their faith? Personally, I think I struggle to talk about my faith simply because I was not raised to be confident in it. It is not that I do not believe or am unsure what I believe in. It is that I feel uncomfortable talking about it, for fear I may say something wrong or not know something.

This is something I can easily fix. I can read the Bible more often and I can read or listen to religious stories. There are a ton of ways nowadays that have

been modernized so that anyone can easily comprehend the Bible stories or verses. I think that a lot of people who fear building their faith think that they have fallen so far behind in their knowledge that it would be easier to just give up.

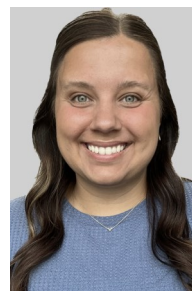
I think that is where a lot of people become lost. They do not know where to turn to or how to get through uncertain situations in their lives. This is when they turn to things that rather hinder themselves than help. They have lost their faith and are unsure how to begin to get it back. I, for one, do not think I have ever lost my faith; it has always been there... it is just sometimes hard for others to see since I hide it so well.

I think that there are a lot of ways that might help me, or someone in a similar situation, feel better and more confident in their faith, like maybe joining a church group or a bible study. Then you will be surrounded by a lot of people that are confident and comfortable in their faith. You can begin to say prayer requests, or even lead a prayer once you have listened to others do

the same a few times. It all depends on your own comfort level. I know for myself that once I hear or see someone else do something a few times, I feel much better about doing it too.

I think there is a lot of unnecessary overthinking when it comes to faith or religion. Someone who may not feel comfortable or confident may read into situations or feel judged quickly. When in reality, people that are strong in their faith do not judge. They know that everyone prays differently, everyone worships differently, and that is okay.

It is OKAY to be different. It is OKAY to not be a replica of everyone else. God put us on this Earth to stand out and not blend in. It is time for me, and maybe you, to be proud of ourselves and our God that gave up His life for us.



*Macey Pfeifer is the Executive Director of First Call for Help.*

# Laundry Love

**Written by:**  
**Macey Pfeifer**

First Call for Help held their first night of Laundry Love on June 20th! Laundry Love is a program that will pay for up to five loads of laundry for a household per month. The program was held at the 27th and Hall St. laundromat in Hays.

Four households were

helped, and 13 loads of laundry were washed and dried for free! Sunflower Bank's main branch is the 2024 sponsor of the Laundry Love program. Volunteers that helped for the first night included four representatives from Sunflower Bank (Rachel, Michelle, Avery, and Cody) and First Call for Help staff, Macey and Laura.

First Call is so excited to be able to offer this program to anyone in the community that may need help. Our goal for July is to help 10 or more households with laundry! Laundry Love will be an ongoing program that will fall on the third Thursday of every month from 4-7pm. The program runs on a first come, first serve basis and funds are capped every month at a certain amount.

*Macey Pfeifer is the Executive Director of First Call for Help.*



*BELOW (left to right): Rachel, Michelle, Avery, and Cody of Sunflower Bank*

*ABOVE (left to right): Macey and Laura of First Call for Help*





**THANK YOU TO ALL THE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT VOLUNTEERED AT THE FOOD DRIVE ON JUNE 15 THAT BENEFITED ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S "FEEDING HAYS" PANTRY AND THE FIRST CALL FOR HELP FOOD PANTRY.**



**IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!**