

# INSIDE:

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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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## **Topic Articles**

***Editor's Note:** This month we asked our writers, "Why are you thankful or when was there a time that you were thankful for your faith?"*

### **Small Stuff Thanksgiving**

**Written by:**

**Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry Sr.**

Luke 16:10 (KJV) says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: ..."

A poverty-stricken woman was found on Thanksgiving Day eating a dinner that consisted of a piece of bread and a small fish. A minister who visited her spoke in a pitying concern of the poverty of her situation.

The woman with a face shining like the noonday sun, replied, "Do you consider me to be in a situation of poverty?" "My dear preacher," who was showing a deep concern, "Don't you see that the Lord has laid tribute on land and sea to feed me this blessed Thanksgiving Day? My God owns the earth and the cattle upon a thousand hills, and He has given me this special provision and for this meager

blessing I am thankful." Although she ate only bread and herring for Thanksgiving dinner, the God of her salvation was the benefactor. Even though her means were small in the sight of others, she was thankful to her God who was the provider.

We live in this great land of plenty and often we take for granted the little things that God has provided. When I think of the suffering children who have been moved and removed from their homes because of war in Ukraine and The Middle East and when I think of the migrants who are traveling from multiple countries in South America wanting to have a breath of freedom, I am suddenly aware and realize that many of us who have all these blessings overlook the fact that it was the God of our salvation who

brought us thus far.

He has provided for us multiple means where we have money in the bank, cars and homes, food plentiful and there is no thought of missing a meal. However, on the other hand, there are people who are suffering because they do not have any of this world's goods. Let us not take for granted the gifts that we are provided by our God.

As we enter this holiday of Thanksgiving, may we realize that the God that we serve provides many things. May we be aware that it is the little things that should be appreciated. Let us be thankful for the growing of the grass, a fresh cup of water, and show our gratitude for these things that God has provided.

Looking around the world we see starvation, we see war,

## ***Small Stuff Thanksgiving (Continued)***

calamity, famine, pestilences of all kinds and not just in foreign lands, but we have also seen suffering among people in this country. However, even if it's just a small blessing the people of our county have largely been blessed to not have major issues of poverty.

For this reason, we should be thankful to God because were it not for His mercy and

not for His grace, many of us would suffer the same kinds of abject poverty of many in foreign lands. So, as we contemplate this upcoming holiday season may we not only be appreciative that God has been merciful to us, but may we continue to thank him for all His bountiful blessings.

In Ellis County there is little for which to complain because

things could be much worse and for this, we must be thankful.



*Elder Rev.  
Jonathan E.  
McCottry, Sr., is  
Pastor Emeritus of  
the Southwest  
Region Conference  
of Seventh-day  
Adventists*

## ***Transformation of the Heart***

***Written by:  
Terri Braun***

My faith journey has not been without its ebbs and flows. There have been so many mountains climbed, valleys fell into, and winding roads traveled: from belief in Him to disbelief; from doubting Him to hating Him; and back to loving Him more than ever; from darkness to light; to hopelessness to hope; to feeling unworthy to knowing that I am loved.

2014 was one of the hardest years of my life. A thousand negative thoughts swarmed endlessly through my head. They consumed my mind until all I saw was the ugliness inside me and the ugliness of the world. I didn't have the strength to love or care. I didn't even care if I woke up in the morning...

Then the guilt set in because deep inside I knew that I was blessed. I have two kids, a supportive family, a wonderful husband, yet I felt numb. I wanted to feel something, but believed I didn't deserve anything good. I hated myself for not being the person I once was and writhed in self-pity. How could anyone love me? I was not the same wife, daughter, mother, sister, or friend I once was. I felt I had nothing to offer.

I no longer felt any warmth inside me. The darkness turned me cold and the light that once kept that shred of hope and spark alive no longer existed. The numbness of emotions with nothing to hold onto turned to despair. I wandered alone aimlessly in the darkness. I stumbled and fell to the ground; stuck in the dark, afraid to move. I only crawled as I no longer felt the

strength to stand. I feared the day I no longer had the strength to crawl.

I needed help...I needed something to change. I longed for not just a change, but a transformation: a transformation of my heart and how I thought, acted, felt and saw. I sought mental health treatment and started on anti-depressants, but I knew that I still had work to do within. I said, "OK, God, let's do this." And I began to open my hardened heart.

Each day I was faced with a choice: to face my fears with God or do nothing and remain in the darkness. I decided to spend time with Him and soon a sliver of light broke through the darkness and that small ray brought a sense that hope and help was possible. The more time I spent with Him the deeper

## ***Transformation of the Heart (Continued)***

the relationship became. I began to use His strength to conquer the day as I was failing in my own.

So many lessons learned. He taught me that if I listen to the world, negativity can become my very essence if I let it in. But if I choose Christ, I begin to see myself through God's eyes and my perspective of the world and of myself will change. I chose Him.

You see, we are His children. God does not make junk, disappointments, failures, or people that aren't enough. He created you just the way He wanted you. He radically and unconditionally loves you and forgives you, something that is so foreign in this world. He can make

you feel like you are worthwhile...because you are! He takes all those broken pieces and makes something beautiful. You are a child of God. And that is amazing!

What do you choose?

You can continue to believe the world that is full of evil and darkness that tends to look at all of your failures, regrets and poor choices, or you can believe in Jesus and be freed from the chains of negativity and bitterness that hold you down.

Your choice.

Do you choose to live in the light where there is mercy and grace; where you can feel joy and peace despite your circumstances; where you can see the beauty and blessings

in the day; and where there is hope and a warmth of being loved? Or do you want to live in the darkness where hope fades, people fade, love fades, and you are left empty without faith?

Your choice.

There are still days that self-doubt creeps in, but I find that it is just the world trying to wear me down and persuade me to question my faith. But I remember...I am a child of God. And I choose to live in the light, I choose faith, and I choose Christ.



*Terri Braun is the ministry coordinator for St. Nicholas of Myra Church.*

## ***A Heart Full of Life***

***Written by:***  
***Jennifer Klaus***

I sat in the quiet hospital room at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, the beeping machines the only reminder that my baby boy was still with me. It had been 18 months since Joey was born, 18 months of uncertainty, sleepless nights, and prayers. My youngest son had come into the world with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, a rare and severe congenital heart

defect that meant his tiny heart wasn't whole. It was the kind of diagnosis that would shatter anyone's world, but I was learning how to survive in brokenness.

A newly single mother, I was no stranger to struggle. I had two other precious boys at home who needed me, who relied on me, and yet I could barely breathe under the weight of it all. Years ago, I had believed life would turn out differently. I had pictured a

happy marriage, a full family, and a future without fear. But life had unfolded like a series of hard knocks—my marriage crumbled, leaving me alone to raise my sons, and now, Joey's fragile life hung in the balance.

Every doctor's visit came with more uncertainty, more reminders that the odds were stacked against my little boy. Joey had spent his entire life in the hospital, too sick to come home, too fragile to face the outside world. I clung to my

## ***A Heart Full of Life (Continued)***

faith, though it was tested in ways I never thought possible. I prayed constantly, wrestling with guilt and the haunting question: Had this happened because of me? Was my son's suffering a consequence of my own sins?

I often sat by his bedside, feeling the weight of the blame I carried. I thought of the mistakes I'd made in the past, the times I had fallen short, and wondered if Joey's broken heart was some sort of punishment from God. As the days in the hospital turned into weeks and months, my heart grew heavier, and yet, I refused to give in to despair. My faith reassured me there was a reason for everything, even if I couldn't see it now.

One afternoon, after an especially difficult meeting with the doctors, who had given me the grim news that Joey's time was running out, I broke down. I cried out to God, not with polished prayers but with the rawness of a mother's pain. "Why, God? Why him? Why now?" But amidst the tears, I felt something I hadn't expected—peace. It wasn't a loud, booming voice or a sudden miracle. It was a quiet assurance that I was not alone, that Joey's life—however long or short—was a gift, not a punishment.

That night, the decision was made to take Joey home. The doctors had told me to prepare

for the worst, but I was determined to fill his last days with love, not fear. I gathered my two older boys and explained to them that their brother was coming home and that their time together was precious. It was a difficult conversation, but my children, young as they were, seemed to understand. Love and faith had a way of giving clarity where words failed.

Back at home, something remarkable happened. My family, now reunited, lived each day with a renewed sense of purpose. We played, we laughed, we prayed. Every moment felt like a miracle, and while we knew Joey's time was limited, we chose not to focus on that. Instead, we focused on the life in front of us, on the joy we could create each day.

I found myself letting go of the guilt I had carried for so long. I realized that Joey's life was not a reflection of my past sins, but a testament to the beauty of resilience, love, and faith in God. My son's heart may have been broken, but his spirit was whole—and in those final months, Joey taught me more about grace, strength, and the power of living fully than I could have ever imagined.

When Joey passed away, I was devastated, but not destroyed. I held my boys close and felt an unexplainable peace. I had lived through my worst nightmare, but I had also

witnessed the power of God's presence in the darkest times. Joey's life, though short, had left a lasting impact on many hearts. The love he brought into the world was undeniable, and I knew now that it was not a punishment but a profound gift.

My faith, once fragile, had become unshakable. I no longer blamed myself for Joey's condition, but instead saw how God had carried me through the storm, strengthening me in ways I hadn't expected. I had learned to live each day to the fullest, knowing that every moment—every breath—was a gift from above. Joey had shown me that life isn't measured by its length, but by the love and faith with which we live it.

And so, I continued forward, raising my two boys who are now grown men with beautiful children of their own, with the same faith that had carried me through Joey's journey as a reminder that life's greatest gifts often come from the most difficult experiences. I live with a heart full of gratitude, knowing that even in the hardest of circumstances, there is always light, always love, and always hope. Just have faith.



*Jennifer Klaus is a teacher at Hays High School USD 489.*

# Leadership Interviews

## ***Strong Woman, Strong Faith***

**Written by:**

**Terri Braun**

Pastor Cana Moore is no stranger to the hustle and bustle of big city life as she grew up on Long Island, New York. Wait, what ...New York? The question going through some of your minds is, "How did she come to be a Pastor in Hays, Kansas?" Well, she began looking for a place to share her faith and passion for God. During her search, she applied to be Pastor at the Hays Christian Church based on the church's values. She met with the steering committee and stated that she connected with the Church community and found them irresistible, so she gave up her life in New York for it.

Cana and her two siblings were raised with a deep love for God as many in her family were called to serve. Her father is a full-time Pulpit Minister and her mom is a Spiritual Director. She also has a sister, grandpa and several cousins involved in ministry. She jokes that it is "the family business."

She went to college with the intent of obtaining a history degree but continued to nurture her faith by attending Bible studies. One evening at Bible study during a time of silence and contemplation, she heard, "Seminary is the next step" and she felt God was not asking! She obeyed, even though it was not what she had planned and was  $\frac{3}{4}$

of the way done with her degree. The next day she put in her application. She attended Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tennessee and graduated in 2021 with a Master's in Divinity.

While in graduate school, she broke barriers for women attending Harding. She was the first woman Student Body President, first woman Student Body Vice-president, and she was the first woman to be Chapel Organizer. She was only the ninth female in the school's existence to graduate from the school.

Officially, she has been pastoring for five years, beginning her career in West Islip Church of Christ in New York and now serves Hays Christian Church and Gorham Community Church. Unofficially, she has been teaching others about God for 20 years as she began teaching Sunday school at the age of 11 when the Sunday school teacher acknowledged that Cana knew more than he did!

Cana was ordained on August 30, 2024, at Gorham Community Church and is now an Ordained Minister with Kansas Disciples of Christ. Her family was there alongside her to celebrate this occasion. Her sister preached the sermon, and her mother and father placed a handmade stole upon her. Regional leaders from Kansas Disciples were present along with patrons from both of her churches, Hays Christian



Pastor Cana Moore at her ordination at Gorham Community Church.

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Church and Gorham Community Church.

Besides sharing her faith, she is an avid traveler. She has been to three different continents and 20 different countries including Italy, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Romania and Ireland. While abroad she loves to visit religious sites where she reflects on the importance of the site by meditating and acknowledging the work of God at each of these sites.

When talking with Cana, I could just feel the passion she has for her faith and was drawn in. Cana loves to preach and the work and art of preaching. Even though Hays is not that big city she grew up in, she is not planning on leaving anytime soon. She states "I want to make things accessible in people's real, regular lives. People matter because God made them and because I love them. I want things that are good for them even if those things are hard things."

*Terri Braun is Editor of ONE Magazine.*

# Ecumenical Events

**November 2:** Peddler's Fair, 9:00-1:30pm at First United Methodist Church (305 W. 7th). Lunch of chili, hamburger veggie soup, relishes and pie will be available: \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids. The money will be used for missions in our community and abroad.

**November 3:** TMP-M Soup Supper Fundraiser, 4-7pm at the TMP-M Dining Hall (1701 Hall St). Menu is chili, green bean dumpling soup, sandwiches, and cinnamon rolls. Free will offering. Carry out available. Proceeds support classroom and student scholarships.

**November 5:** Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

**November 7:** Feeding Hays, 6:30-7:00pm-to go spaghetti dinner at St. Michael's Episcopal Church (2900 Canal Blvd). To volunteer to help, contact Ben at 785-259-2851.

**November 12:** Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

**November 12:** Indoor Carnival: Homes 4 the Holidays, First Call for Help fundraiser, 4-8pm at Hays Recreational Center. See *below for more information.*

**November 14:** Feeding Hays, 6:30-7:00pm-to go spaghetti dinner at St. Michael's Episcopal Church (2900 Canal Blvd). To volunteer to help, contact Ben at 785-259-2851.

**November 19:** Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort)

**November 21:** "Surviving the Holidays" program, 6-8pm at North Oak Community Church (3000 Oak St). For information or to attend, register by calling Rich Matzke at (785) 650-2946 or email richardmatzke48@gmail.com before November 14, 2024. See *below for more information.*

**November 21:** Laundry Love by First Call for Help, 4-7pm at 27th and Hall St. Laundromat. Up to 5 free loads of laundry per household per month, sponsored by Sunflower Bank.

**November 21:** Feeding Hays, 6:30-7:00pm-to go spaghetti dinner at St. Michael's Episcopal Church (2900 Canal Blvd). To volunteer to help, contact Ben at 785-259-2851.

**November 23:** Cold-Weather Volunteer Training, 9-12pm at First Baptist Church (1111 Fort) Volunteers needed! To sign up for training go to [www.ourecma.com/hayscoldshelter](http://www.ourecma.com/hayscoldshelter).

**November 23:** ECMA Thanksgiving Food Drive, 8-3pm at Walmart and Dillons. Volunteers needed for one hour time slots. Please contact First Call for Help at 785-623-2800 to sign up. Groceries will be distributed to those families in need at the Community Thanksgiving Meal.

**November 26:** Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort)

**November 28:** ECMA Thanksgiving Feast open to the community, 11-1pm at the Kansas National Guard Armory (200 Main St). No registration required. See *below for more information.*

# Ecumenical Events: Additional Details



## Surviving the Holidays

This program will be hosted at North Oak Community Church on November 21st, 6-8PM. It is for those who have lost a loved one in death. It reassures people who are grieving the loss that they are not alone --that help is available. This 2-hour event can offer encouragement and practical advice to navigate the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. It gives insight into what to expect and strength to go on.

For information or to attend, register by calling Rich Matzke at (785) 650-2946 or emailing richardmatzke48@gmail.com before November 14, 2024.

## Indoor Carnival Night: Homes 4 The Holidays

This First Call for Help fundraiser will take place on November 12th, 4-8PM at the Hays Recreation Commission. This event will help to raise money for first month's rent/deposit payments for low-income families/individuals to help get into a home here in Ellis County.

Activities include inflatables, temporary tattoos and games. All children wanting to jump on inflatables/play games/get tatted will need a wristband and socks! Concessions are available for purchase. Price: \$10/wristband OR \$25/family with 3+ kids

Are you a business wanting to sponsor an inflatable or make a donation? We are still looking for support to make this night possible! All donations are tax deductible.

A colorful poster for "HOMES 4 THE HOLIDAYS CARNIVAL NIGHT!". The poster features a central illustration of a red and white striped circus tent. The title "HOMES 4 THE HOLIDAYS" is written in large, bold, red and yellow letters at the top. Below the tent, it says "CARNIVAL NIGHT!" in a yellow banner with a red border. The date and location are "TUESDAY, HAYS REC NOVEMBER 12 1105 CANTERBURY 4:00PM-8:00PM". A yellow starburst graphic contains the pricing: "\$10 ARMBAND \$25 FOR 3 OR MORE KIDS". The poster is decorated with various inflatable games and balloons. At the bottom, there is a list of details: "All proceeds will go towards housing needs for low-income households here in Ellis County. By attending, you can make a world of difference by helping those in need secure a warm place to sleep and celebrate the season with hope and dignity." and "Concessions available for purchase Will only accept cash or Venmo Please wear socks!". A red banner at the bottom says "games, concessions, inflatables, and a raffle". The footer includes logos for "FIRST CALL FOR HELP", "FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM", "info@firstcallelliscounty.com", "785-623-2800", and "HOMES 4 THE HOLIDAYS".



**Ellis County Ministerial Alliance**

# Thanksgiving FEAST

November  
**28**  
11AM - 1PM

Looking to volunteer?  
Call 785-623-2800 to sign-up!



Every household in attendance will be sent home with a bag of groceries!

**FREE MEALS**  
No reservation needed!  
We will serve until we run out of food!

**Kansas National Guard  
200 Main St. - Hays**

If you are elderly, homebound, or disabled you may register for delivery by calling 785-623-2800 (M-F 8:00-12:00 & 1:00-4:30 PM) Limited delivery spots available.



www.ourecma.com

Tax Deductible Donations can be sent to  
ECMA  
PO Box 173  
Hays, KS 67601

## ECMA Community Thanksgiving Feast

The ECMA Community Thanksgiving Feast will be held at the Kansas National Guard Armory from 11-1pm on Thanksgiving Day, November 28. 500 meals are being catered by Union Catering.

There is no registration necessary and is first-come first-serve. Groceries will be distributed at the meal to those families who are in need.

If you would like to volunteer for this event or the food drive on November 23, call First Call for Help at (785) 623-2800.



## Save Money and Even Yourself

You may save money on your insurance by attending this driver safety class. Beginning December 10, 2024, thanks to the generosity for helping individuals in the community, a special thanks should be given to Father Damian of St. Nicholas of Myra for permission to use the facility and Ramona Weigel who has consented to assist in this venture. This class will be a community effort to improve the driving skills of residents of Ellis County. This class is a four- hour course and in class you will receive a 120-page Smart Driver Guidebook that is packed with illustrations, quizzes with answers in the back and resources that will keep you busy reading and learning for weeks to come. There will be a formal 30-minute break, for Q&A and any snack or lunch that you have brought with you. What a deal. You learn something and save money too. Submitted by Jonathan E. McCottry, Sr.



The first seven dates are: December the 10, 2024; January 13, 2025; February 11, 2025; March 10, 2025; April 14, 2025; May 12, 2025; and June 9, 2025.

This course will be instructed by Jonathan E. McCottry, Sr.: (785) 639-2571, jemccsr@gmail.com, or P O Box 923. To reserve a seat please call the Registration number (785-639-2571) or drop by St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church (2901 E 13th Street, Hays, KS 67601) where Ramona Weigel can accept cash, check or money orders – made out to AARP.

Please bring a valid Driver License number and, if applicable, your AARP Membership Card. Cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-Members. Space is limited, seats are available on a first come first serve basis.



On October 3, 2024, Kiwanis Club hosted a Ministerial Appreciation Luncheon at the Rose Garden. This is an annual event where ministry staff from Ellis County are recognized and receive a wonderful meal thanking them for the work they do. They even had entertainment to enjoy afterwards! Thank you, Kiwanis Club!

Another Annual Liver and Onions Meal in the books! Last month, First Baptist Church prepared 64 pounds of liver and 60 pounds of both onions and mashed potatoes. There were 125 meals made, distributed and gone in two hours!



Knights of Columbus were hard at work the weekend of October 4-6 for the Annual Tootsie Roll Drive. This fundraiser helps those individuals with intellectual disabilities.



Rev. Ben Houchen from St. Michael's Episcopal Church and Fr. Fred Gatschet from St. Joseph's Catholic Church both had pet blessings around the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi who is known for his love of animals and nature. He is the patron saint of animals, environment, and merchants.