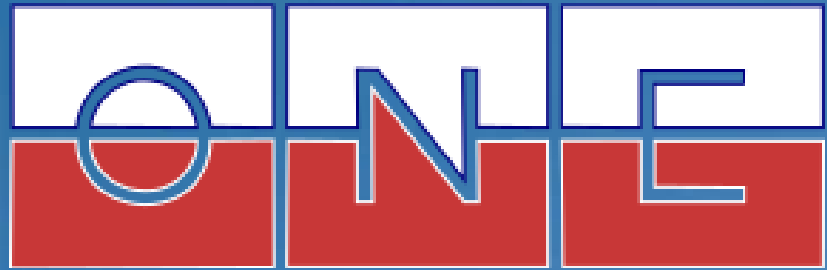


INSIDE:

- + **Mentors & Mentoring**
- + **Get to Know Pastor Ben Houchen**
- + **January Events**



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January 2025





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: January is National Mentoring Month, so we asked our writers to share their experience as a mentor or the impact a mentor had on them.

Marvelous Mechanics of Mentoring

Written by:

Rev. Jonathan E. McCottry Sr.

"So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him," 1 Kings 19:19 (KJV).

It is quite an intriguing phenomenon to understand that a person who is about to move from one position in life to another oftentimes will look for someone who is an adequate duplicate of themselves. This was the experience of Elijah. Knowing that God was about to take him away from his post and his responsibilities presented Elijah with the desire to find someone who could

adequately take his place.

You would think that his search would begin among the schools of the prophets or at some of the intellectual halls of the world at that time. Certainly, his search would involve someone who has had experience, education, and academia. Knowing the experience of Elijah, it would help his new mentee to understand his role and his responsibilities.

It was a discouraging time for prophets to accept the call of God. A man that had consulted with flesh and blood would not be fond of Elijah's mantle, nor willing to wear his coat; yet Elisha cheerfully, and with a great deal of satisfaction, leaves all to accompany him. How noble and committed to the

cause was Elisha who immediately left his oxen and with haste left his earthly responsibilities to follow the prophet Elijah and to embrace the call to his heavenly charge.

From this story we now realize that the call to ministry is not always one from a devout educational background, but rather an earnest and hard-working dedicated individual whose focus and purpose is preparing the people for the Kingdom of God. An honest calling in the world does not at all put us out of the way of our heavenly calling, any more than it did Elisha.

It was here that Elijah gave the same tutoring to Elisha that Moses gave to Joshua and Jesus gave to his

Marvelous Mechanics of Mentoring (Continued)

disciples. Strong mentors will guide the way and show a path of righteousness and holiness that can be followed. They will chart a path and give direction and strength and substance to a young life in need of direction. The service to which Elisha was called was one of directing Israel during a time of turmoil and upheaval.

Today our society has faced the same challenges and circumstances. Worldly leadership is often baseless and empty, and it is at this critical time in our history that there needs to be a refocus of the word of God and its clarity and sincerity. How many people today are victims of a Christless grave because no one showed

them the way to righteousness and truth. Our world today needs mentors who will guide and direct young minds in positive lines of leadership and training. If only misguided youth can be channeled into paths that are positive, instead they are left to only fashion themselves with video games and mind-altering substances that lead them down a path that always carries them to a dead end.

We are living in a critical age and as Christ's subjects we are to be willing to come to Christ at the moment of the call. There should be no coaxing or pleading. We must be compelled by the urgency of the challenge and be drawn to Christ as never before. Elisha came to a

resolution immediately and spared little time in giving a response. He left the security of his parents' home and all he knew from his youth to embrace his new life and experience with God. God will not force us, to carry the gospel against our will; but we must all count the cost and make up our minds to follow Him without reservation.

As we face this new year, let us mentor young minds for eternity.



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

The Greatest Mentor of All

Written by:
Cheryl Glassman

Time sure seems to travel fast, doesn't it? I mean, how can it be the year 2025? How can my children be grown? What will the Kansas weather be like tomorrow - or later today? There will always be questions to be answered,

won't there...but sometimes, we ourselves can become the answer to the question. Can we be the answer to what it means to be an example of Christian leadership, a mentor to others in everyday life?

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show

integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned,"
Titus 2:7-8 (NIV)

I remember starting out as a person wanting to be a nurse. I was 18. My mother was an RN. I watched her meticulously dress in her white pristine nursing uniform, precisely placing

The Greatest Mentor of All (Continued)

her nursing cap on her head, make sure her pins on her uniform were straight, and out the door she would go. I didn't know what she did when she was at the hospital, but I knew it had to be important. It wasn't until many years later when I began to work at the hospital and was approached by nurses Mom had mentored.

Her skill, leadership, patience, and guidance were all brought to my attention. Knowing how much she impacted those she had mentored made it more important for me to provide the same opportunity for others. But could I? There were years of training ahead for me, and many who mentored. It's cool, isn't it, when someone takes the time to really care and grace you with knowledge, patience, skill, and understanding?

It's how a person (like me) can become someone who can help others become leaders and mentors. Sure, there were times I felt inferior or unable to rise to the occasion, but those moments just proved to better me as a person. Setting an example; doing what is good. Mom never

"taught" me how to be a nurse, but her example led me in the right direction. It seems to me, then, that almost every moment can be a chance for us to do the same.

Luke 6:40 (NIV), *"The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher."* My love for theater is no secret. In many ways, it has fulfilled what seems to be my continued quest to help others "be like the teacher." As much as I like to act on stage, the most wondrous moments are when the actors become confident and create the characters. Many times, people have said "I didn't even know it was her (a certain individual) on stage!" When we can give others the opportunity to lift themselves, it can hopefully create in them the desire to help do the same for others.

It is through those around me, whether directed to me or not, I have learned, in my old(er) age, what is truly important. This is true in every direction of life. If we help the needy, provide food to the hungry, serve the downtrodden or disabled, we fulfill what it means to mentor. For me, it's like the

words found in Job 12:12 (NIV), *"Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long-life bring understanding?"* Isn't it that way with our love of Christ? His light is there to shine through each thought, each action and reaction.

His life was the greatest example of mentoring as He created varied courageous, humble, wondrous moments that changed the lives of all who followed him. Some even became leaders and mentors in his name! I personally know many today! I like to think of myself as someone mentored by Christ. I hope his presence shines forth in all I say and all I do, not only as a director of music at church or theater, but as a caregiver, mother, wife, daughter, friend, and grandmother.

May 2025 be a time for all of us to turn to the greatest mentor of all! May we truly become the answer to the question!!



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

Paul, Barnabas and Timothy

Written by:
Rick Claiborn

“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses,” Proverbs 27:6 (NIV).

Many years ago, our church took large groups of men to Promise Keepers Conferences. The trips were powerful. It is hard to avoid the impact on a bus with 50 men. It is even more difficult in a stadium with 15,000 of them. We learned, we grew, and we were challenged.

At one of those conferences, we heard a sermon from Dr. Tony Evans, the Pastor of Oak Cliff Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. He challenged us with a simple idea - every man needs three people in his life: a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy.

Paul represented someone further into a spiritual journey or wise in areas you were not, but someone from whom you can learn. Your Paul also had to be willing. It takes heart work to be someone's Paul.

Timothy represented someone who could learn from you. It was an interesting twist because when you asked a man to be your mentor you were

seeking knowledge or gain. However, you could not wait for your Timothy to seek you out. You had to go find him on purpose, for his gain.

Barnabas was tougher. You needed to find someone who knew you or who loved you but was not necessarily too impressed with you. That sounds funny but the bible says you cannot get to heaven by works alone lest a man could boast. Your Barnabas simply was someone who did not care what you have done, but who was interested in helping you grow spiritually.

Many small groups started as a result of that sermon. Fortunately, I got to be involved in one. In the very back row of the bus on the way home I had two conversations that changed my life. In the first, a man named Kenny sat next to me and quoted Proverbs 27:6 (NIV), *“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”*

I remember it like I am still on the bus. He asked if I trusted him, and I did. He followed that with, “Rick, I love you. But sometimes you are a jacka--. I can help you if you want me to.” Not your normal conversation starter but it started a journey that I

am still on today. I deserved the question then. I am aware of it today in that I still can be hard to be around even though I am not trying to be. My bark is worse than my bite. But barking still can cause people to turn away.

The next conversation was with the man sitting in the seat on the other side of me on that same trip. He asked me to help him. He said, “Rick, I think you are here to save my life.” I learned over time that he meant it. It is absolutely like God to have those two conversations occur side by side. No matter how bad we think we are, God can use us either way.

We started meeting every week. It started with four men. Some men have been in for a while and then not. At its best, this group is completely unimpressed with anything any one of us has done. We agreed to make each other better. We also agreed to come back next week. This, in particular, was important. Someone calling you a jacka-- can hurt. Come back next week and we can work on that.

I have learned that in some areas I can serve as Paul and help another man. In other areas, I need the

Paul, Barnabas and Timothy (Continued)

help, like Timothy. Serving as Barnabas falls to all of us. Every man at that table has done great things at work or in the community, no man at the table cares about that. How is your time with Jesus this week? Are you spending time in His word? When was the last time you helped your wife without expecting something back? Our topics are supposed to be more spiritually based than worldly.

It is rare to have a group of men belly up to the table and talk. We have been meeting for maybe 20 years or so. I know how these men think. When I encounter a situation in life I can hear the advice. Interestingly, all of us tend to come at subjects

from different angles. Together we have a pretty well framed picture of most situations.

After we lost our daughter, every Friday I went there probably looking like a walking wounded heart and I was. They asked nothing of me. They just talked and let me listen. They would not have let go of my family if their own life had depended on it. They are still loving my family through it to this day.

I met my best friends through holding each other accountable to the simple idea that we could help each other in our walk with God.

Reflection Questions:

How often do you have conversations that do not

involve sports, work, or weather? If you cannot think of someone, start praying for God to open a door. He probably will.

Why are we often so afraid of opening the door to someone? We all have victories and defeats.

Challenge:

If you have never done so, reach out to someone you trust. You don't have to commit to 20 years, maybe just start a real conversation and see where it goes.



Rick Claiborn is a longtime resident of Hays who loves Jesus, his wife, and their family.

Leadership Interviews

In Christ, We All Belong

Written by:
Terri Braun

To some, Ben's childhood would not be considered "the norm." He grew up in a Christian home with a dad who was called to do missionary work. As a result, Ben moved frequently from place to place and joked that his "claim to

fame" for a long time was not living in any one house for more than three years, that is until the age of 35. Another challenge of moving around so much is that it was hard to establish any relationships or friends at the schools he attended. Ben stated that he never felt that he quite "fit in."

When he was five years old, Ben announced that he was going to be a pastor; however, his path towards that was anything but straight. He said that his senior school year was "more wild" than he ever thought it would be. This trend continued even when Ben attended his first year at a Christian college. He had a

In Christ, We All Belong (Continued)

major break in his faith and poor choices followed, thus only completing one year at the university.

Ben then made a series of bad choices and chose the world's ways over God's ways, which eventually landed him in a very compromising position. He knew something had to change. Ben called his dad to see if he would be able to come home to Wisconsin. Ben needed grounding and he needed guidance. Despite the path Ben took, he always had the concept of God with him but never quite found a home to go with it at that time.

Through volunteer ministry in Wisconsin, Ben once again found his way back to God. He attended Oak Hills Christian College in Minnesota where he graduated with degrees in Pastoral Leadership and Biblical Theology. He then attended Denver Seminary, where he graduated with degrees in Youth and Family Leadership and Biblical Languages.

While attending Seminary, Ben became a youth pastor at a church in Denver. The church was in one of the "bad areas" of Denver where kids were living on the streets. Ben knew these kids needed community in the church and a safe place to learn about God. He loved working with these youth; however, many suburb parents did not want those "bad kids" to be

with their "good kids." This of course created conflict and pettiness within the church. After five years of battling these obstacles, Ben burnt out. He found himself for the second time in his life walking away from his faith.

He decided to take a break from pastoring and with a series of events ended up in China teaching. Ben's family (wife and 4 kids) were visiting the Philippines when they found out they were being locked out of China due to the COVID outbreak. They moved back to the states with no possessions and had to find a way to make a life again. His family eventually moved to Hays after his wife accepted a job offer at Fort Hays State University.

Now began the search for a place of worship. They attended St Michael's Episcopal Church with Rev. Shay Craig pastoring. Soon the call to serve once again began to ignite within Ben. He had a very candid conversation with Rev. Shay, and she felt that he would be compatible with the church.

Within three months of going to services at St. Michael's, Ben began the process of becoming a pastor. He became a deacon, served in that role for a year, and completed a year of schooling. Ben was ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests for the



Pictured: Pastor Ben Houchen of St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas on Saturday, March 16, 2024. He now serves as the pastor of St. Michael's Episcopal Church and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. It is safe to say that Ben's "claim to fame" is definitely over as he loves his job and the community.

Ben has always had a heart for helping those less fortunate than himself. His passion lies with those whose circumstances have beat them down, those that are lost, and those considered on the "outskirts" of society. There are people of all walks of life who attend St. Michael's church. He has established a ministry, a church, where everyone can "fit-in." People feel welcome as Ben opens his arms and his heart for them, just as Jesus did. Because in Christ, we all belong.

Terri Braun is Editor of ONE Magazine.

Ecumenical Events

January 2: 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.

January 7: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

January 7: Moms In Prayer, 3:45pm at Crosspoint Church (1300 Harvest Rd). See below for additional information

January 8: Making Sense of Martin Luther, 6:30pm at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort). See below for additional information.

January 9: 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.

January 14: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

January 14: Moms In Prayer, 3:45pm at Crosspoint Church (1300 Harvest Rd). See below for additional information.

January 14: AARP Driving Course 9am-1:30pm at St. Nicholas of Myra (2901 E, 13th). See below for more information.

January 15: Making Sense of Martin Luther, 6:30pm at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort). See below for additional information.

January 16: 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.

January 16: Laundry Love by First Call for Help, 4 -6pm at 27th and Hall St. Laundromat. Up to 5 free loads of laundry per household per month.

January 16: AARP Driving Course 9am-1:30pm at Hays Recreation Commission (1105 Canterbury). See below for more information.

January 19: Polka and Popcorn, 1-3pm at St. Nicholas of Myra (2901 E, 13th). No admission charge. See below for additional information.

January 21: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

January 21: Moms In Prayer, 3:45pm at Crosspoint Church (1300 Harvest Rd). See below for additional information.

January 23: 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.

January 28: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort)

January 28: Moms In Prayer, 3:45pm at Crosspoint Church (1300 Harvest Rd). See below for additional information.

January 30: 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.

February 2: Groundhog supper, 5-7pm at St. John Lutheran Church, North of Ellis.

February 4: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort)

February 4: Moms In Prayer, 4:00pm at Crosspoint Church (1300 Harvest Rd). See below for additional information.



Ecumenical Events: Additional Details

Moms in Prayer International Purpose:

- To stand in the gap for our children through prayer.
- To pray that our children will receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, then stand boldly in their faith.
- To pray for teachers and school staff.
- To pray that teachers, administrators, staff, and students would come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- To pray that our schools will be directed by biblical values and high moral standards.
- To be an encouragement and positive support to our schools.
- To provide support and encouragement to moms who carry heavy burdens for their children.



Making Sense of Martin Luther

Join Pastor Brenda Rodger as she leads discussion to "explore how Luther's dynamic understanding of God's life-changing gospel informs day-to-day faith and life in the world today." The book "Making Sense of Martin Luther" by David J. Lose will be used. Even if you can't make it to each meeting, you are encouraged to participate as you are able.

Polka and Popcorn

Whether you like to polka or just like to listen, come on Sunday January 19th from 1-3pm. Wes Windholz and band will be playing and there is no charge at the door. So come and enjoy an afternoon at St. Nicholas of Myra with snacks and entertainment. Open to public.



Who: Wes Windholz

When: Sunday January 19th

Time: 1-3pm

Where: St Nicholas of Myra Parish Hall



AARP Smart Driver Course Comes to Hays

This AARP smart driver course is designed to save you money on auto insurance.

There are two monthly classes in Ellis County in January. The first class is at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church; the second class will be at the Hays Recreation Center. The dates for these classes are January 14, 2025, and the second January 16, 2025; each class will convene from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. There will be a formal 30-minute break, for Q&A and any snack or lunch that you have brought with you.

This course will be instructed by Jonathan E. McCottry, Sr. He can be reached at (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. Bring your check to the Hays Recreation Center at the time of the meeting.

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

NOTICE: Help Needed!



Cold Weather Shelter Needs Volunteers

Ellis County Ministerial Alliance has been hard at work getting everything arranged to open our first Cold Weather Shelter. This will be open to those that are currently sleeping outside or in their vehicles. We are in BIG NEED of volunteer help. Come to a training session and see what it is all about.

No strings attached, if you go through the training and decide that it isn't something you want to commit to, not a problem! Visit <https://www.ourecma.com/hayscoldshelter> for more information or to sign up for training!

Part-time Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Hays, KS

A part-time Pastor position will soon be available for the Presbyterian Church of Hays, KS. As one of the oldest churches in Hays, KS, the congregation numbers hold steady at just under 100 members. The part-time Pastor will have a desire to help and encourage the church members to continue to carry out God's mission for our community. We are looking for individuals who are self-motivated with good communication skills that will engage with and empower our members to discern God's calling.



A few of the responsibilities of the part-time Pastor will include working in concert with congregation members in leading worship, providing pastoral care and moderating session and church activities. The part-time Pastor will also work alongside our part-time administrative assistant and as needed, the part-time Pastor will perform weddings, funerals and baptisms.



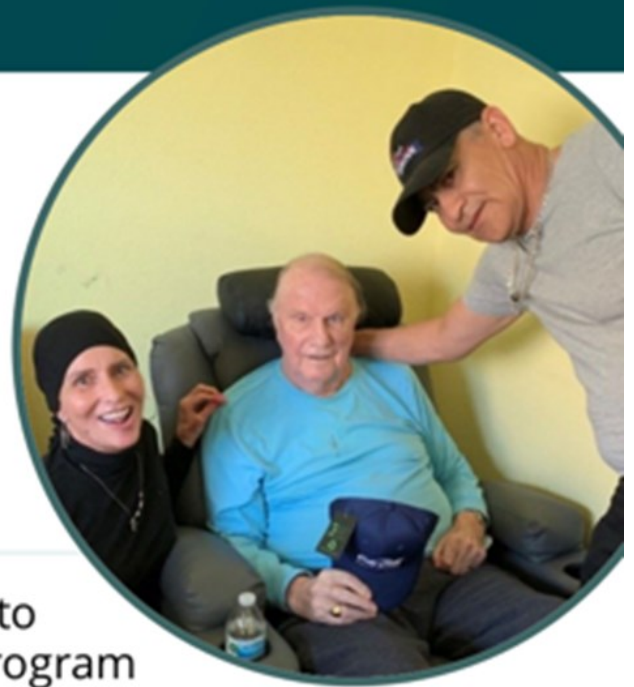
For more information, please contact Melanie Hancock, General Presbyter with the Presbytery of Northern Kansas at 785-825-1654. You can send your resume to Melanie at Presbytery of Northern KS, PO Box 3287, Salina, KS 67402-3287.

You can help Veterans.

Become a Medical Foster Home caregiver.

"[The MFH caregiver] has provided my brother with a loving, caring, safe environment and have given him the best care possible. This is the best home for him."

-Veteran Family Member



You can make a difference. Talk to your VA Medical Foster Home Program Coordinator today to learn how you can become a Medical Foster Home Program caregiver and give back to those who served.

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Learn more about VA's Medical Foster Home program by simply scanning the QR code with your smartphone.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

www.va.gov/geriatrics



A big thank you to the Ellis County Sheriff's Department for loading and unloading over 350 bags of groceries that were given out at the Community Thanksgiving Meal.



What a wonderful way to spend Thanksgiving Day, with community fellowship and good food! Thanks to all the volunteers who helped set up and tear down.

The Hays Community Theater put on the play "A Haunted 'Sort of' Christmas", written by Cheryl Glassman, ECMA President. Local food drive was included as people coming to see the play were asked to bring a canned food. The play itself had humor, twists and turns, and ultimately that Christmas spirit.

