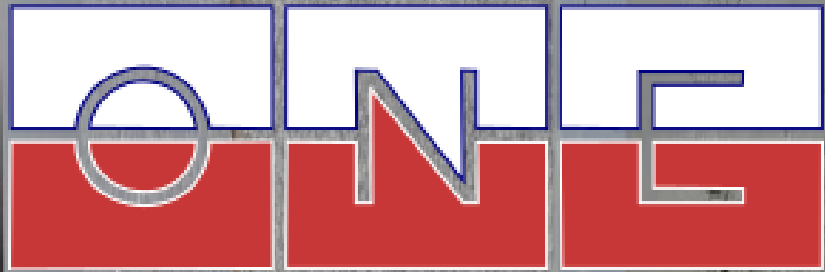


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August 2025





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.

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Topic Articles

***Editor's Note:** ONE is published monthly by the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA). We asked our writers, "How does Jesus' example lead us to show respect and grace for our neighbors with different views, opinions, or faith journeys?"*

Civility, Respect, and Loving Your Neighbor

Written by:

Rev. Cana Moore

This summer at Hays Christian Church, my congregation, we are studying the book of Acts and focusing on the theme of loving our neighbor under the banner of the Summer of Love. Our goal with this is to engage our children in their Summer Sunday VBS and our grown-ups in their sermon series on what it means to live in Christian community and love one another and those who are around us.

With this, we have a focused food drive for our Blessings Box (at 1318 E 22nd St, open 24/7) to remind us of what it means to express love for our neighbors who may struggle with food insecurity.

We do this not in a vacuum, but inspired by the work at Feeding Hays at St Michael's Episcopal; the food boxes at First Presbyterian Church, St Nick's Catholic Church, and North Oak Community Church; and the many helping agencies in this town who provide food to those who may need support.

I am so grateful for the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance. To have a group of Christian ministers of many kinds working together with a common purpose is inspiring and encouraging. It also reminds our churches and spiritual communities that at our core, the priority of loving our neighbors is the priority of Christians and we can all agree on Christ.

To live like Christ is to desire increasing connection to one another because it shows our dedication to Christ. 1 John reminds us over and over again that love is of God, and to love one another is of God. This can be shown in many ways in our churches and in our wider community, but it should be the defining feature: love.

And love for one another requires a level of respect for difference. This can be the most challenging part for many who grew up in Christian communities who focused on their spiritual purity alone. If this was you, you are not alone - but this emphasis is only ever able to be partially true, right, and fruitful in a Christian life. This is because Jesus already told us that all the laws of

Civility, Respect, and Loving Your Neighbor (Continued)

Godly living flow from the instruction to love one another. When Jesus quotes this, he is quoting in agreement with the Rabbis of his time. That is true interfaith cooperation!

We also know that our God -who-is-Love welcomes and in fact creates diversity of nature and of perspective. I believe that Christians are fulfilling the will of God when we as churches or communities exist in different places on the theological map and yet can work together for the greater good of our towns and neighbors.

We can see this in the disciples of Jesus, who had many different skillsets and backgrounds, some of which were in opposition to each other! But Jesus did not ask

them to erase their perspectives. Jesus knew that they would be able to reach and focus on different elements of Christian living BECAUSE of their diversity... not in spite of it.

Unity is not uniformity, and Christian churches or communities are at their best when they focus on what God has called THEIR church to do, according to their gifting, skills, and limitations. Unity in Christian faith can be achieved by bringing our whole selves and whole gifts to the table to share as a larger faith community.

The truth is that in Christian living, we have no true enemies. Jesus teaches us in the story of the Good Samaritan that we who call on the name of Christ have only

neighbors. Each person- Christian and non-Christian, American and international, my denomination and your denomination, people who love you and people who hate you- is made in God's image and loved by God and therefore is someone who we should treat as such. We do not get to make enemies out of those God has called beloved children. And our work as a community to embrace differences is part of how we can live out that calling in the world.



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

Faith Works

Written by:
Rick Claiborn

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me,"
John 17:22-23 (NIV).

Back in the day a friend started a ministry he just

called "Faith Works." The concept was simple, see something, do something. Projects ranged from helping a neighbor mow their lawn, to small repairs on a house, whatever the need we saw, that is what we tried to do.

One day he called and asked if I wanted to help replace a roof on a house about 25 miles south of us. Off we went one Saturday

morning. This was back in the day when I could actually do physical work without injuring myself. I had replaced a roof before. I was confident. How bad could it be?

What we discovered was a roof that indeed needed to be replaced, because a very large tree had fallen and had not only hit the house, but it also drove branches the size of most whole trees through

Faith Works (Continued)

the roof, into the attic and straight down into the kitchen. "Replace" the roof was accurate.

We had help. There were other men there. The owner of the house happened to be the preacher at a small local church so some men from his church were there. But the storm that dropped a tree on his house, also dropped trees on other houses in their town. People all over that small town were busy digging out.

We worked like crazy people that day. The work was hard and heavy and trying to extract a tree from a house probably calls for a little skill in that area. We didn't have any of that. We got it done anyway.

Keep in mind this roof was destroyed. We had to cut the tree out, then cut parts of the roof off, then remove the trusses. When the demolition was done the floor of the attic was the only thing left. We replaced all the trusses, the sheathing and finally the shingles. This type of work also usually calls for some skill in that area. We didn't have

any of that either. We just worked our tails off. It was one of the best projects we ever did.

I mentioned the owner was a preacher. I never asked him which church. He never asked me which church I attended. We talked throughout the day about our families and our journeys in life. I always think of it as "Where have you been, where are you now and how did God get you here?" There was a lot of informal testimony going on that day. Dead tired men sitting on a roof tend to either clash or bond. That day we bonded. There was a lot of love on that roof.

Some of the churches represented that day have differences in how they live out their faith and what they believe. That day we never thought about different approaches, theology, or doctrine. In some settings those topics have a purpose, in some cases they should not matter. If you encounter a brother with a tree sticking out of his house, you should probably pick up a hammer and love him.

Reflection Questions:

There were people helping who did not attend any church. Did they see anything that looked like Jesus in us?

Jesus said we should have "eyes to see and ears to hear." Does He only want us to see people who act and think like us, or does He primarily want us to see people He has placed in our path, no matter who they are?

Challenge:

If you are actively keeping your "eyes to see" open, you will see people who need Jesus. Filtering all of the noise this world creates is difficult, but if we start with the premise that Jesus loves everyone we ever meet as much as He loves us, then just faith works.



Rick Claiborn is a longtime resident of Hays who loves Jesus and is a member of High Plains Baptist Church.

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. " — John 17:22-23

Saying Farewell

Rev. Jon Anderson

Rev. Jon Anderson retired after 40 years of ministry! He was the Pastor of Prairie Faith Shared Ministry (PFSM) that became official in 2003. He had three congregations he pastored. They included St. John's Lutheran Church in rural Ellis, Emanuel Lutheran Church in rural Ogallah, and Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the town of Wakeeney.

He has been serving the same congregations for 30 years and he states he "is in the best place I've ever been." Rev. Jon has fond memories of the people, fond memories of all the times he shared the gospel, and now he bids them a fond farewell.

The PFSM celebrated his retirement and also his birthday (Happy 70th) on June 16th. It began with a joint service at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. A meal followed along with music by the Hays High Plains Barbershop Chorus in which Rev. Jon is a member. Enjoy your retirement, Rev. Jon!



Rev. Cana Moore



Rev. Cana Moore came to Kansas from Long Island, New York. When she began looking for a place to share her faith and passion for God she met the steering committee at Hays Christian Church and stated that she connected with the church community and found them irresistible.

She has since then been the Pastor of Hays Christian Church and Gorham Community Church for over five years. She is a true servant of God and will be missed.

Her final day will be August 10, 2025. Good luck Rev. Cana!

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

- Jeremiah 29:11

Benefit Raises Money for 3-Year-Old with Cerebral Palsy

Written by:

Linn Ann Huntington

Her blond ponytail bouncing, 3-year-old Emersyn Rice was busy crawling and playing with the other children who attended the June 28 benefit breakfast at Hays First United Methodist Church.

Four generations of Emersyn's family and their friends attended the three-hour come-and-go breakfast to help raise money for Emersyn's care. If she knew she was the star attraction, Emersyn never let on. She was too busy laughing and having fun.

Emersyn, daughter of Jessie and Talon Rice, formerly of Hays, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy in April 2024. She is their only child.

Jessie said she and her husband met while they were both students at Fort Hays State University. Jessie grew up in Hays, and they decided to remain in Hays after their marriage. Talon was a Hays firefighter. Jessie worked at Fort Hays State University.

Emersyn was born in Wichita in October 2021 at 26 weeks gestation. She remained in the NICU at Wesley Medical Center for four months. Jessie stayed at the Ronald McDonald House nearby.



The Rice family (left to right): Talon, Emersyn, and Jessie

After Emersyn came home to Hays in February 2022, she was treated by Dr. Michelle Pope, a pediatrician at Hays Medical Center. It was Dr. Pope who referred the Rices to Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. Dr. Pope was one of those who attended the benefit.

Emersyn underwent a brain scan at age 1, which revealed some significant problems. At that time, the family was taking Emersyn once a week to Wichita for therapy.

"In 2023 we realized we needed to move to get Emersyn closer to therapy and the resources she needed," Jessie said.

After Talon accepted a job offer with the Olathe Fire

Department, the family moved to Tonganoxie. "We chose a small town for our family," Jessie said, "because we wanted the same small-town environment as Hays." Since then, other family members have also moved from Hays to Tonganoxie to help care for Emersyn.

Jessie works remotely as an accounting specialist for the University of Kansas. She drives Emersyn to Kansas City three times a week for therapy. While Emersyn gets her treatment, Jessie works remotely using her laptop. Emersyn sees seven specialists at Children's Mercy.

She also receives treatment from Ability KC, a rehab facility that works with children who

Benefit Raises Money for 3-Year-Old (Continued)

have developmental problems, as well as adult stroke victims.

One of the things Emersyn loves the most is getting in the water and doing "aqua therapy" with her occupational therapist, Jessie said.

After turning 3 last October, Emersyn also began attending pre-school five days a week in a special education classroom at Tonganoxie Elementary School. Her pre-school teacher, Kacy Marxen, and her family made the 3 ½-hour drive to Hays for the benefit.

The event was organized by Lisa Gagnon, one of Emersyn's nurses at HaysMed. Gagnon of Victoria has remained in touch with the Rice family. Gagnon retired last November and began organizing the fundraiser in February, assisted by her daughter, Corrina Dreiling.

"I saw some posts the Jessie had made (on Facebook), and I realized they probably needed help," Gagnon said. "At first Jessie said, 'Other people need this more than we do.' That's just the kind of people they are. But they prayed about it, and they decided to go ahead with this," Gagnon said.

The church donated its kitchen and fellowship hall. Brenton and Andrea Hoffman

donated and prepared all of the food for the event. Brenton said they prepared enough biscuits and gravy, sausage links, scrambled eggs, hash browns, and pancakes for 200 people.

For the Rices, coming back to the event at Hays First United Methodist Church was indeed coming home. This was the church Jessie grew up in, the church where she and Talon were married, and the church where Emersyn was baptized.

While the Rices' health insurance covers many medical expenses, Jessie said they have set up an account for Emersyn through Kansas ABLE, a special savings account that handles "truly all things medical and other expenses for a special needs child," Jessie said.

This includes travel expenses, medical and therapy co-pays, over-the-counter iron supplements and other vitamins, diapers, wipes, special shoes, and other out-of-pocket expenses. As an example, Jessie said Emersyn developed RSV, a respiratory ailment, in February and was hospitalized for several days. The family's co-pay was \$3,000 just for that one hospital stay, Jessie said.

Emersyn does not qualify for Medicaid because of the Rices' income. She cannot

apply for Social Security and Medicare benefits until she turns 18, which is still a long time off.

Those who would like to contribute to Emersyn's Kansas ABLE account may go to <http://www.ugiftable.com> and type in Emersyn's special code, T4G-V3K.

Jessie described her daughter as "a real sweetheart. She brings a lot of happiness to others." Emersyn loves cheering on her cousins at their sporting events, she loves music—particularly the group ABBA and the musical "Mama Mia." She loves books and is particularly fond of tacos, Jessie said.

"We have been on this medical journey for some time, and we are very grateful for those who have been with us all along the way," Jessie said. "We are still on a marathon with Emersyn, and we have learned it is OK to ask for help."

More information about the special Kansas ABLE savings account is available at <https://savewithable.com/ks/home.html>.



Linn Ann Huntington of Hays is a professional writer and retired professor. She attends North Oak Community Church.

Opportunities to Serve

Board Members for Feeding Hays

We're reaching out from Feeding Hays because we're looking for passionate folks to join our board of directors. You are invited to a prospective board of directors meeting on Sunday, September 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 2900 Canal Blvd., Hays.

Why join the board of Feeding Hays? Well, are you aware that 39% of Ellis County residents are working and yet are living BELOW the poverty level*. Feeding Hays is dedicated to combating food insecurity right here in our community. We do this by providing free, weekly, hot meals, donating to USD489 student lunch debt account and providing food through our pantry. It's incredibly rewarding work, and we see the positive impact every day. We have provided over 4,000 meals and donated over \$2,500 towards student lunch debt in the past 12 months.

As we move towards the next phase of growth, creating a stable and committed board plays a crucial role in guiding our efforts, helping us make important decisions, and meeting our goals for the future of Feeding Hays. We're a friendly, dedicated group, and we believe that a diverse range of voices makes us stronger. You don't need prior board experience – just a desire to help your neighbors and time to contribute.

If you've been looking for a way to make a real difference in Hays, this could be a fantastic opportunity. We're especially interested in people who are enthusiastic, have fresh ideas, and are ready to roll up their sleeves to support our mission.

Interested in learning more? Please plan to join us Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025, at at 6:30 p.m. and email MAPFeedingHays@gmail.com or call/text Ben Houchen at 785-259-2851.

Thanks for considering joining us in the fight against food insecurity in Hays!

Warmly, The Feeding Hays Team



Backpack for Kids Distribution



First Call for Help is searching for volunteers to help with their 29th annual Backpacks for Kids distribution days. This will be held on Thursday, August 7th from 7am-6pm and Friday, August 8th from 8am-1pm. The event will be located at the Hays Recreation Commission this year in the Leisure Center. The entrance is on the Southwest side of the building. If you are looking to volunteer, you can call 785-623-2800 to check out available times and sign up!

Ecumenical Events

August 3: Summer of Love Sunday VBS & Blessing Box Food Drive, 11 am at Hays Christian Church (1318 E. 22nd).

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

August 6: Old Testament Bible Study, 12:50 pm at Epworth Towers Community Room (2800 Augusta Lane).

August 7: Backpack for Kids distribution for registered kids, 7am-6pm at Hays Recreation Commission (1105 Canterbury). To register, go to www.firstcallelliscounty.com or call (785)623-2800.

August 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.

August 8: Backpack for Kids distribution for non-registered kids, 8am-1pm at Hays Recreation Commission, (1105 Canterbury).

To register, go to www.firstcallelliscounty.com or call (785)623-2800.

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

August 12: Phoebe's Women's Group Meeting & Annual Salad Supper. 7pm at Hays Christian Church (1318 E, 22nd).

August 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.

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

August 21: Laundry Love by First Call for Help, 4 - 6pm at 27th and Hall St. as Laundromat. Up to 5 free loads of laundry per household per month

August 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.

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

August 27: Men's Study on "C.S. Lewis: The Most Reluctant Convert". 6:30 pm at Hays Christian Church (1318 E. 22nd).

August 28: 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.

September 2: Text Study, 10:30am at Trinity Lutheran Church (2703 Fort).

September 4: 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.





On July 4th, the First Baptist Church of Hays hosted the First Baptist Church of Athens, TX. They stayed with them one night on their way to serve on a mission trip to South Dakota. This is the third year the First Baptist Church of Hays was able to serve them as they serve others.

Nex-Tech Wireless and Nex-Tech of Hays had a very successful supply drive for Backpack for Kids on Wednesday July 16th. A big thanks to them and everyone who donated to make it a success. Your support and helping First Call for Help to serve students in need within our community is appreciated!



The sixth annual Tour die Kallellen-Tour of the Chapels-took place on Saturday, July 12. Bikes took off from the Hays Municipal Park. Pictured is Kathy Rome, who helps organize this event, leading a group to Munjor.



St. Nicholas of Myra sponsored a pilgrimage to St. Paul's Parish in Angelus, KS on July 20th. About 40 people caravanned to the small town of Angelus. While at St. Paul's, there was Mass followed by a short program, the history of Angelus, lunch, conversation, and a rosary.

