

## THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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### VP holds bake sale and meeting

Vision With A Purpose held a very successful Bake Sale Friday, June 15, at the Robert Lee State Bank. There was great support from the community and all the baked goods were sold out early.

That same afternoon an executive board meeting was held at the new VP headquarters on Austin Sreet where officers discussed organizational ideas since our group is growing and facing new demands.

That evening at 7pm Terry and Nancy Clark provided a “Praise and Worship” service in the upstairs ballroom at VP. Light refreshments were served to the enthusiastic audience.

VP’s next meeting will be held at their newly remodeled building on Austin Street. All are welcome to come see what VP is all about and to understand what all they do for the community of Robert Lee.

### Eating Without Agendas

by James M. Decker

Last time, I wrote about the unifying power of food, as expressed by the late Anthony Bourdain. Mr. Bourdain said that a shared meal can “break barriers, challenge assumptions, and build bridges,” that there is no better way for people to understand each other than over a meal together.

In 2015, the people of Charleston, South Carolina, showed the power of a meal through the Nat Fuller Feast. Nat Fuller was a freed slave who operated a popular fine-dining restaurant in Charleston. In 1865, just after the end of the War Between the States, he organized a “reconciliation feast” in which he invited the elite of the city, from all races, to sit at the same table, enjoy a high-class dinner, and just talk to one another. In what must have been a surreal moment, newly-freed slaves, powerful antebellum figures, and Union generals dined together and toasted to freedom.

According to University of South Carolina professor David Shields, Fuller “knew well the symbolism” of these parties sharing a table and performing rites of civility together. Shields became familiar with this dinner while researching a book on the food of South Carolina’s Low Country. In 2015, he floated the idea of reenacting this dinner as part of Charleston’s memorials

to the 150th anniversary of the War’s end. True to the original dinner, 80 invited guests representing all groups and demographics in Charleston dined together on a historically accurate menu similar to the food served at the original Reconciliation Feast. This dinner occurred amidst recent racial tension in the city and offered an opportunity for diners to reflect and discuss the opportunities to reconcile.

Other Southern cities, from across South Carolina and all the way to Shreveport, Louisiana, have since staged their own reconciliation dinners. Inspired by Charleston’s Nat Fuller Feast, these dinners have had the same purpose: to bring together a diverse group of diners from across their communities, to share a meal and conversation. Chef Hardette Harrison, organizer of the Shreveport dinner, said “We don’t want people to debate or argue. We just want them to sit down and eat, with no agenda, and just talk about whatever comes to their minds, in the spirit of reconciliation.”

I first read these stories a couple of years ago, but re-reading them ignites ideas anew. What could our rural communities accomplish with similar dinners? Even if there’s no immediate, apparent tension in the community, there are still gaps to be bridged. Lingering worries about motivations, or absence of trust in leaders may prevent the community from truly uniting as one. How better to overcome those concerns than sharing a table together?

As I’ve written many times, our rural communities will not survive and thrive into the future without our people working together for the community’s big picture. Perhaps our best way to establish unity is over a meal of reconciliation, conversation, and hopefulness.

*James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming “West of 98” podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.*

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## Area Churches

### Invite You to Worship

#### Bronte

##### Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346  
118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
Preacher David Lewis  
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm  
**Central Baptist Church**  
324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
(325) 473-4811  
Dale Patterson, Pastor  
Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
11 am & 5 pm Worship

##### First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte  
(325) 473-2331 • Pastor Lee Bevly  
Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,  
10:55 am Worship, 6 pm Bible  
Study & Worship  
Wednesday 6 pm RA’s & GA’s,  
6:30 pm Youth & Adults  
**First United Methodist Church**  
Corner of Washington & Holmes  
Bronte  
(325) 473-3281  
Rev. Everett Boyce, Pastor  
Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School  
11:00 am Worship

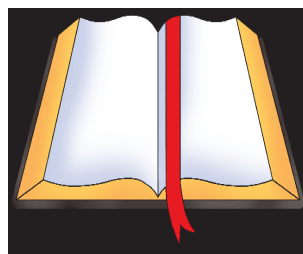
##### Forgiven Ministries

117 W. Main, Bronte  
Russ Frasier, Pastor  
Sun. 10 am  
Tuesday 6 pm Table Time  
**St. James Catholic Church**  
215 N. Washington, Bronte  
(325) 365-2687  
Rev. Yesu Mulakaleti, Jr., Pastor  
Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am  
**4C Cowboy Church**  
Texas Theater, Downtown Bronte  
Pastor James Brunson  
Sunday, 10:30 am

#### Coke County

##### Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of  
Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy  
(325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor  
www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com  
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
11 am & 7 pm, Worship



#### Robert Lee

##### Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin  
Robert Lee, John Fiore, Pastor  
Sun. 10 am Sunday School, 11 am  
Worship, Wed 5:30 pm Bible Study  
**Emmanuel Pentecostal**  
PO Box 683 • I019 Colorado City Hwy  
Pastor Kevin Millstid 453-2360  
Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm  
**First United Methodist Church**  
PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne  
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417  
Cyndi Weidner, Pastor  
Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
11 am Worship, 5 pm Choir Practice

##### Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee  
Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School  
11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm  
**Southside Church of Christ**  
PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176  
Recardo Reyes, Preacher  
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
11 am & 6 pm, Worship  
Wed. 6 pm, Worship

##### Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508  
9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee  
(325) 453-2685, (806) 543-2118 or  
(325) 473-1053  
Services: Sun. 10 am  
**Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church**  
601 W. 10th, Robert Lee  
(325) 365-2687

Rev. Yesu Mulakaleti, Pastor

Saturday Vigil Mass 5 pm

##### Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th  
(325) 453-2724  
Danny White, Pastor  
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
11 am & 7 pm, Worship  
Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting

##### Victory Assembly of God

(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638  
6th & Houston, Robert Lee  
Rev. Irving Smith, Pastor  
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship  
Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

#### Tennyson

##### Tennyson Baptist Church

Hwy 277 • Tennyson  
(325) 473-2040  
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
11:00 am & 6 pm, Worship  
Wed. 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting