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Page 14

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Page 9

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December 2024

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NEW RESIDENT churchguide



First Southern Baptist Church

See Inside Back Cover!

Drive Through Living Nativity to be offered



First Lutheran Church at 12th & Fairlawn will offer its annual Drive Through Living Nativity on December 8, 2024, 5:00pm-7:00pm. Any vehicle in the queue at 7pm will be allowed to drive through. The presentation features live actors in each of the 8 scenes depicting the sequence of events in the story of Jesus' birth. Enjoy the live animals (sheep, goats, donkey, camel) from the comfort of your car as well. Guests are loaned an MP3 player with recorded narration. FREE... Our Christmas gift to the community (although donations graciously accepted). The event is supported by over 200 people as actors and "backstage" support.

There Will Be No Cowards in Heaven



By **Clint Decker**

"For such a time as this"

You are sitting at home in your basement mancave scrolling through the news of the day while taking in a football game when all the sudden you smell smoke. It catches your attention and causes you to be distracted for a moment. However, you know your wife is with the kids working on a craft upstairs, so you keep enjoying your time of solitude, that is until you hear screams followed by,

"Honey!!" and then "Daddy, where are you??" At that point you run upstairs only to see the kitchen in flames burning through the second floor where your family is.

It would be absolutely crazy to imagine a parent ignoring something like that. No sane person would just sit in silence allowing a fire to tear through their house and take the lives of their loved ones.

This very hour the house of America is on fire with the seething flames of evil burning up the

Judeo-Christian values our country was founded upon. Meanwhile, while millions of pastors, elected officials, parents and grandparents remain silent, choosing to ignore the blazing inferno.

God and His Word testify against this type of cowardly self-preserving passivism, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to

■ Please see COWARDS page 3

Vallejo selected as next Police Chief



The City of Topeka announced Nov. 20 that Chris Vallejo will serve as the city's next police chief for the Topeka Police Department.

After a nationwide search and an extensive interview process that included public input sessions, community panel interviews, and a public meet and greet, Topeka City Manager Dr. Robert Perez has selected Chris Vallejo to lead the Topeka Police Department.

"After receiving valuable input from our community and stakeholders, I am confident that Chris Vallejo will lead the Topeka Police Department in a positive direction."

■ Please see POLICE page 4

TBC Christmas Light Show Returns

Dazzling Christmas lights, synchronized to LIVE musical performances, all enjoyed from the comfort of your car, and free glowsticks for everyone! It's a family Christmas tradition for thousands of people in northeast Kansas.

Since 2007, the Christmas Light Show at Topeka Bible Church has grown to feature thousands of daz-

zling lights synchronized to LIVE performances of Christmas music by artists you can see through the windows of the building.

Shows begin at 6, 7, 8, and 9 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, December 13, 14, and 15 at the TBC Mulvane Building, 1101 SW Mulvane Street

■ Please see LIGHT SHOW page 4



Sheridan's is custard + food that's a step above!

When you think of Sheridan's, you probably think of delicious, creamy custard treats. But did you know about the huge variety of mouth-watering food items they offer?

From fresh, never-frozen burgers,



to hand-breaded chicken tenders, to home-made pork tenderloin sandwiches and more, the offerings on the food menu are a step above what you might be used to at your typical fast food restaurant.

Cathy Butler, the manager, says the locally-sourced ingredients are fresh, never frozen, and made by hand, by employees who care. She considers the staff more like family than employees.

With meat from Leonard Meat Company, fresh produce from Apple Market, and fresh made buns from the HyVee bakery (made with no preservatives), it's no wonder why the food is so tasty. The beef and chicken are from farm-raised stock, with no growth hormones or antibiotics.

In addition to the many custard delights which are made fresh every morning, such as Sundaes, concretes, cones, shakes and more, the expanded food menu has gone unnoticed by some locals, but the word is



getting out!

Lunch Specials

There is also a lunch special every day for only \$8.50, which includes hand-cut French Fries and a large drink:

Mon. – Chicken Sandwich

Tue. – Steakburger cooked to order

Wed. – Pork Tenderloin

Thu. – Chick Strips, hand made

Fri. – Pork Tenderloin

Sat. – Smoked BBQ Brisket

Sun. – Turkey Burger

Other items on the menu include Salads, Veggie Burgers, Tilapia, Chili, and Nathan's Hot Dogs & Chili Dogs



(100% beef). Truffle Fries are also available – tossed in truffle salt and minced parsley.

Get it to go, eat-in, or pick up at the drive-through

Another thing you may not know is that Sheridan's has an indoor seating area, so you can eat-in, take it to-go, or pick it up at the drive-through.

Some of the favorites on the custard menu include



real fruit and candy mix-ins, such as Dirt & Worms (Oreos & gummy worms), Grant's Grasshopper (Oreo,



chocolate chips & mint) and Dolly's Pie in the Sky (brownies in vanilla custard with marshmallow, hot fudge & cherries). Seasonal offerings include Peppermint Potholes and



Eggnog Shakes.

You might also like to try the delicious smoothies, or a Brainiac Bomb – a blended drink with intense flavors like mango, pina colada or wild berry. These items are often a go-to for the lactose intolerant.

If Gluten is a Problem

The custard is gluten free, as are the hand-cut fries. Gluten-free buns are also available.

The local Sheridan's is owned by Jim and Gay Bauersfeld for over 20 years. Cathy has been the manager for about the last five years, and

brings with her vast knowledge of the restaurant business: her family owned McFarland's Restaurant.

Customer service is a thing at Sheridan's, too. The mostly teenage employees actually smile, and even say "please" and "thank you."

Let them put a smile on your face soon!



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Engaging with Bible, church helps guard against loneliness, American Bible Society finds

Americans who engage with the Bible and church are less likely to experience the loneliness epidemic that is sweeping the nation, the State of the Bible USA 2024 survey from the American Bible Society found.

“In our surveys, we’ve seen many ways that Americans benefit from Bible engagement, and we suspect that it might also help them feel less lonely, so we’re testing a hypothesis,” the survey report said. “If the nation is indeed experiencing an ‘epidemic of loneliness,’ what happens when people form a meaningful relationship with the God they meet in scripture?”

• Among the “Bible disengaged,” defined as those who score less than 70 on the Scripture Engagement Scale that measures the impact and centrality of the Bible on people’s lives based on their responses to a series of questions, 22 percent reported high levels of loneliness while 52 percent experienced moderate loneliness.

• Among the “movable middle,” those who score between 70 and 99 on the Scripture Engagement Scale, 59 percent reported high levels of loneli-



ness and 17 percent experienced moderate loneliness.

• By contrast, a significantly smaller share of “scripture-engaged” respondents with Scripture Engagement scores of 100 or higher reported high (11 percent) and moderate (50 percent) levels of loneliness. The percentage of “scripture-engaged” respondents experiencing low loneliness (38 percent) was much higher than the 25 percent of both the “movable middle” and “Bible disengaged” who said the same.

“This information sets an agenda for anyone connected to Christian

ministry; indeed, for any Christian who cares about young adults,” the report said. “Well over a third of Gen Z women indicate that they are highly lonely. They say no one understands them, that people are ‘around’ them but not ‘with’ them. Our God frequently says, ‘I am with you.’ He knows us better than we know ourselves and still loves us. Psalm 68:6 has a wonderful phrase that applies here: ‘You find families for those who are lonely’. Perhaps God can use us to do that, becoming ‘families’ for lonely people around us.”

longer boys. Girls are no longer girls. Marriage is optional and redefined. Taking life in the womb is a reproductive right. The bodies of women and children are for sale. Gross perversion is mainstream, defended and celebrated. Wrong is right. Evil is good. Immoral is moral. All that was once beautiful is now marred and unrecognizable.

Where are the courageous voices of truth pointing out sin, instructing on what is right and wrong and speaking for the voiceless? Like Queen Esther, the risks of doing such things are very real. Pastors could divide the church, lose some of their congregation, or possibly be fired. Elected officials could lose donors or be removed from office. Parents and others have similar concerns. This puts us at a crossroads. What is the answer? God says, “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” (James 4:17)

We are always divinely commanded to do what is right, no matter the cost. Jesus was our example.

His gospel message confronted the souls of men and women with their evil ways, and called them to turn from their disobedience and believe in Him. Though His enemies sought to silence His powerful voice He ignored their threats. Instead because of love He pressed on with humility, boldness and wisdom. He risked His own life that others might be free, which eventually led to His death on the cross. Three days later, however, good triumphed over evil when Christ gloriously rose from the dead.

Jesus has risen! Do not fear! Stand against the rising tide of evil with the good news of Christ and His resurrection power, so that men and women can be freed from the evil that entangles them.

A prayer for you – Lord God, open our mouths that we would speak words of truth into the darkness. Let us fear nothing but you, and be courageous, standing for all that is beautiful and good. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

C5 Christmas Luncheon to be at West Ridge Mall

The December C5Alive CHRISTMAS Luncheon will be held on the 12th in the Food Court at West Ridge Mall

The program will include some fun Christmas activities and games.

Admission is free, and lunch can be ordered at the food court. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

“POWER” luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month and are open to the public. C5Alive is dedicated to creating

Christian culture in the Capital City, by developing and uniting leaders in community businesses, non-profits and churches.

Upcoming luncheon dates are and January 9 and February 13, 2025.

C5 also hosts other periodic events,

including EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Fun Fair, held on N. Kansas Avenue and at Great Overland Station on the day before Easter.

C5 members may also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations.

C5 is currently holding a membership drive with special incentives for new members. Lower-priced memberships for small and home-based businesses are now available.

Individuals without a business to promote may also join for \$20. A list of current members is available on the website.

For more information about C5Alive, go to www.C5Alive.org, www.facebook.com/C5Alive, or call 785-640-6399.



COWARDS

continued from page 1

the slaughter. If you say, ‘Behold, we did not know this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?’ (Proverbs 24:11-12)

There was once discovered a deceptive plot to slaughter thousands of Jews in a barbaric-genocidal scheme. Mordecai told Queen Esther, his niece, of the imminent bloodshed. She resisted any involvement that would put her own life in danger. However, her uncle spoke sobering truth saying, “If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14-15)

Multitudes are keeping silent as America slowly burns. Boys are no

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Anti-Christian hate crimes on the rise across Europe

Hate crimes against Christians are soaring in Europe. A new report cited 2,444 incidents in 2023, including 232 personal attacks on Christians, ranging from harassment and threats to physical violence.

These incidents took place in countries including France, Germany and the United Kingdom, which experienced some of the highest numbers of recorded incidents. France saw nearly 1,000 anti-Christian hate crimes in 2023. The majority of these attacks, about 90 percent, were aimed at churches and cemeteries. Further, French authorities documented 84 personal attacks on individuals.

The United Kingdom also faced a significant number of incidents, with 702 cases reported in England and Wales between April 2023 and March



2024. This represented a 15 percent increase compared to the previous year. One particularly shocking attack occurred against Javed Nouri, a Christian convert from a Muslim background, who narrowly survived an attempted murder by his roommate, who viewed him as an “apostate who deserved to die.”

Germany witnessed a 105 percent increase in anti-Christian hate crimes, rising from 135 incidents in 2022 to 277 in

2023. However, the German government’s official statistics include only politically motivated hate crimes, excluding vandalism or arson attacks without political motives. There were at least 2,000 cases of damage to Christian places of worship in Germany in 2023, marking a worrying trend of escalating violence against Christian religious institutions across the country.

The most common form of violence was vandalism, accounting for 62 percent of the incidents, including numerous cases involving desecration. Arson attacks made up 10 percent; threats, 8 percent; and physical violence, 7 percent. One case of murder, seven attempted murders and 68 personal attacks on Christians were motivated by anti-Christian bias.

in various roles during his tenure with the Austin Texas Police Department (APD). Vallejo holds a Master of Criminal Justice from Texas State University. During his time as Commander in Training at the APD, Vallejo helped to develop inclusive and diverse training programs and implemented recruitment strategies that resulted in the most diverse cadet class in APD history.

“I am truly honored and excited to serve as your next chief of police,” said Chris Vallejo. “This is the highest privi-

lege, and I am deeply humbled by the trust you have placed in me. In the initial weeks, I look forward to getting to know the dedicated men and women in the Topeka Police Department and building meaningful connections with this incredible community that my family and I are eager to join. Together, we will work to reduce crime, overcome challenges, and create a safer and stronger future for everyone in Topeka.”

Vallejo is expected to start the week of January 20, 2025.

Many Americans don’t understand AI despite using it, research finds

Many Americans lack a general understanding of artificial intelligence and how people already are using AI in their daily lives, new research from Barna Group finds.

“As AI becomes a more common component in the rhythms of daily life, many Americans don’t even realize they’re engaging with it,” Barna CEO David Kinnaman said. “From personalized movie recommendations to predictive text that finishes our thoughts, AI is becoming a companion in the background of everyday tasks. As this technology is increasingly utilized, educating people — especially within faith communities — about its presence and impact will be essential for navigating a future shaped by AI.”

Although two in five U.S. adults say they regularly use technology such as smart home devices, in-device assistants such as Siri and facial recognition, all of which use AI, 57 percent claim to not use AI in their daily lives. Explaining AI can change sentiments to be more favorable. After education, people felt AI to be less concerning, scary and disconnecting.

Researchers also explored the emotional connection between users and generative AI tools. Most U.S. adults make an effort to be polite when interacting with AI tools such as Alexa and Siri or chatbots such as ChatGPT. This might be linked to a belief that respectful interactions with AI can lead to more-



positive experiences, mirroring the social dynamics they apply in human interactions. Among those who use generative AI at least monthly:

Three in four millennials and Gen Xers, along with 65 percent of boomers, try to be polite when asking a question or giving a prompt.

Two in five millennials say “thank you” when AI answers questions.

One in three people feel they are doing something wrong if using an unkind tone of voice.

Among U.S. adults who use digital assistants, one in five believes these tools may be capable of having emotions.

Millennials tend to show the highest levels of respect and dignity, while boomers find that less important.

These trends point to a deeper, more complex reality: Whether consciously or not, people are inclined to humanize AI.

POLICE

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said Dr. Robert Perez. “His proven achievements, including innovative recruitment strategies and impactful community-based initiatives, will elevate the department and strengthen the bond between our officers and the people they serve.”

Chris Vallejo has 30 years of experience in law enforcement, having served

LIGHT SHOW

continued from page 1

What to Expect at the Light Show

• A huge LED screen lets you get “up close” to the live performances as you enjoy the show from the comfort of your car.

• Music is played over your car’s stereo on 89.1 FM

• Free glow sticks for everyone!

• Costumed Christmas characters will be on hand for photo opps in the parking lot.

Load up the family and plan to arrive 30 minutes before your desired performance time. Navigate to 1101 SW Mulvane St. (It is advised to approach from 10th and Mulvane.) Parking lot attendants will guide you into a parking spot, and greeters will help you tune in to the

radio station so you can hear the show. There will be costumed characters on hand for photo ops with the family.

If you can’t make the live shows,

recorded performances can be seen every 30 minutes from 5-10pm starting December 20 through New Year’s Eve. When you arrive, tune to FM 89.1 to hear the show.

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Religious voters made their voices heard

The recent presidential election showed that the path to the White House still runs through America's pews. Donald Trump increased his share of votes from evangelical, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim voters.

"Truth is revealed by God," Alex McFarland, Ph.D., a religion and culture expert, told Fox News this week. "The moral guardrails that hold our society together are not anything contrived by humans, but given by

God. We believe that truth is not something that we make up for ourselves."

According to The Washington Post, the Republican victory is the largest winning margin among Catholics for any candidate since 1972. Nearly 6 in 10 Catholics voted for Trump. As for Evangelicals, it was even more stunning. More than 8 in 10 went for Trump. Even among Jews and Muslims, two groups closely tied

to the Democrat Party, the President-elect gained favor. Trump more than doubled support among Jews while Harris came in third among Muslims, behind both Trump and Jewish third-party candidate Jill Stein.

McFarland said the Kamala Harris campaign seemed to him to trample or dismiss biblical worldviews. "The dictionary definition of a worldview is that it's 'a collection of attitudes, values, stories and expectations about the world around us, which inform our every thought and action,'" he said "Worldview is expressed in ethics, religion, philosophy, scientific beliefs and so on."

As one example, when some atten-



dees of a Wisconsin rally shouted, "Jesus is King," Harris replied, "You're at the wrong rally" and laughed. Yet when Trump's running mate, Vice President-elect J.D. Vance, encountered the same shouts at an event, he answered, "That's right, Jesus is King."

Missed opportunities

Also, Harris declined the invitation given to both presidential candidates to attend the annual Al Smith Dinner, which raises millions for Catholic charities. Trump was there. The Catholic League's Bill Donohue viewed it as a snub to Catholics on a global scale. McFarland quoted Trump as saying, "Let's talk about the things that last forever. The things that unite us. God. Family. Freedom."

In addition, Harris targeted faith-based pregnancy centers and promoted extreme views on abortion, even saying in an interview that as president she would not make any concessions for religious objections to abortion.

In the spring of 2016, McFarland was invited with about 100 other prominent clergy to Trump's office in Manhattan, the same building where Trump descended the elevator to announce his candidacy in 2015.

"Every major evangelical entity you can think of was in this room," he said. "Trump said, 'Look, if I become president, don't you worry about the IRS coming after you. You guys are supposed to tell our nation about right from wrong.' And everybody was like, 'Wow, this guy gets it.'"



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COMPANY WENT OUT OF BUSINESS

Dear Dave,

I'm getting married next month, and my fiancé and I are both following your plan. I'm on Baby Step 3. I make \$65,000 a year and have \$14,000 in my emergency fund. My fiancé made \$90,000 a year, and he's on Baby Step 2 paying off his car loan. He has his beginner emergency fund in place, and we already have \$3,000 set aside for a honeymoon trip. I said he "made" \$90,000, because the company he was working for just went out of business. He's an experienced heating and air technician, and he has already had a few companies reach out with offers or interviews. Do you think we should still go on a honeymoon, or wait until he officially finds another job and things are a little more stable?

Charlotte

Dear Charlotte,

I'm not generally a big fan of spending when someone loses a job. But honestly? I think your situation is a little different than most. I also think you two are different than a lot of folks I talk to. Here's why.

First off, you're both serious about dumping debt and getting control of your finances. That's the big thing. Plus, you make good money, and he will again very soon, based on his prospects and the line of work he's in. On top of all that, you've got a nice pile of cash in the bank. This tells me you're both wise enough and mature enough to know the importance of being on stable ground financially.

Your guy will have another job in a couple of weeks, considering his experience and the fact companies are already reaching out to him. If he's lucky, he might even be able to work a deal that would allow him to start a new job right after the honeymoon. So, I like the future you two are looking at, Charlotte. You have some financial padding, he's in a field that pays well and I'm pretty sure his income is about to be restored.

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding, and God bless you both. Go have a great time on your honeymoon. I hope you two will have long and happy lives together!

— Dave

I'm in a bad spot. I have \$10,000 in debt, lost my job and totaled by car.

Dear Dave,

I'm 20-years old, and I'm in a bad spot. I've been a jerk for the last year, not listening to my parents about anything. Now, I've got over \$10,000 in debt from running up bills on credit cards and writing some bad checks. Two weeks ago, I also lost my job and totaled my car. I'm about to lose my apartment, too, because I don't have the money for rent. A friend of mine said I could stay with him for a while, but I'm really scared. My parents say I created this situation all by myself, and I need to figure out a solution all by myself. Would you please give me some advice? I don't even know where to start.

Justin

Dear Justin,

It sounds like you're about as close to rock bottom as a person can get. I know it's a scary situation, especially for a young person. I've done stupid stuff, too. And the stupid things I did had lots more zeroes on the end than you're looking at right now. So, I've got some good news for you. There's hope! The simple fact that you're looking for help, and have realized the way you've been living is stupid, means you want to change. That's a good thing.

Still, when you do stupid things, you've got to pay what I call "stupid tax." I'm talking about the consequences of your actions. It sounds like you're going to have get two or three jobs, and find a really cheap car that will get you around for a while. If you do this for maybe 12 to 18 months, and live on a very strict monthly budget, you'll probably be able to pay off all that stupid tax you've accumulated.

I think you've also recognized the fact that you left your integrity and self-respect on the sidelines for way too long. That means doing the right things really needs to be a priority from now on. The cool thing about the practical issues you mentioned—finding another permanent place to live, something to drive and paying off the debt—is that all this will get better because you've made a conscious decision to be better. You might want to think about finding and regularly attending a good church, too. Any understanding and caring pastor would be honored to pray with you, and walk with you as you get your life back together and headed in the right direction.

God bless you, Justin. You can do this!

— Dave

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But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream. - Amos 5:24



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Maximizing the Impact of Your Donation to Humanitarian Relief Efforts

By Jim Hanna



Hanna

Most people will be affected by a humanitarian crisis or natural disaster at some point in their lifetime or know someone who is greatly affected. For those that want to help aid in relief efforts, it can be hard to know how best to get involved and make the fullest impact with your support. Here are some tips to guide your approach:

Make a monetary donation. In almost all cases, it's best to give money instead of goods, which have the potential to spoil, go unused or create logistical headaches for the very relief organizations you wish to help. Cash is the most effective and efficient option. Whether it's an online donation, gift by text, or rounding up a purchase at check-out, contributing money may seem impersonal but it empowers the agencies that are doing the work. Cash gifts are quick and flexible, allowing organizations to purchase what is needed, often in bulk, at reduced rates near disaster sites. When supplies are purchased on location, it helps ensure the food is fresh and items are familiar to locals. Buying nearby also supports local businesses as they work to recover from the event.

Seek out trustworthy organizations. Unfortunately, scam artists often see opportunity in the misfortune of others. It's not unusual for counterfeit charities to pop up during a disaster, seeking to capitalize on the public's goodwill. Don't let the dishonesty of a few discourage your inclination to give, but make

sure the charity you donate to is reputable. Look for organizations that have a proven track record and clear mission statement. Review their ratings and financial statements on websites like CharityNavigator.org or GuideStar.org.

Mind your budget and be strategic. Even the most generous among us have a budget when it comes to giving. As you determine how much you plan to donate to relief efforts, consider whether you intend your gift to be a one-time event or an ongoing financial commitment. While a bigger, lump sum donation can go far in helping, particularly at the beginning of a crisis when the need is great, there may also be benefits to spreading out gifts if you intend to be a long-term supporter.

Many major employers in the U.S. give employees the option to have a portion of their regular paychecks donated to causes they care about. And some even offer dollar-for-dollar matches on donations up to a certain dollar amount, which enables employees to double the impact of their gifts. Whatever options are available to you, and however much you're able to give, it's wise to determine whether you want to give all at once or spread out the impact of your generosity over time.

Save on your taxes to give more next time. Donations to a qualified charity may qualify for a tax deduction if you itemize deductions. Keep in mind that there are limits to financial contributions and rules for non-cash donations like property. Talk to your financial advisor and tax professional before making a donation, to map out potential tax

implications and requirements.

Watching major crises or disasters unfold can leave us feeling deeply sad and powerless, but there are ways to help. Consider the above tips to make the greatest impact with your generosity.

Jim Hanna, CFP®, MBA, CKA®, is a Private Wealth Advisor and Certified Kingdom Advisor® with Heart Financial Partners a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Topeka KS. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for over 25 years.

To contact Jim, call (785) 358-6278 x19, 601 S. Kansas Avenue, Topeka, KS 66603, or ameripriseadvisors.com/james.c.hanna.

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james.c.hanna@ampf.com
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opinion

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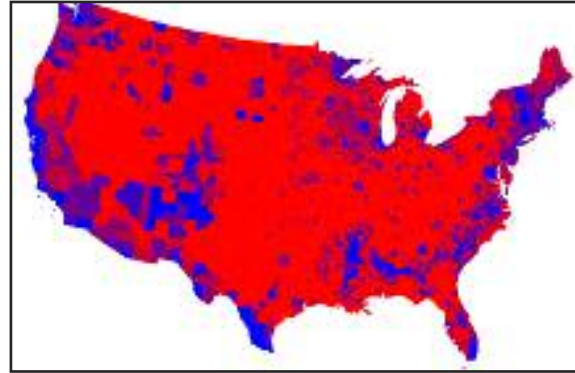
The Importance of the Electoral College

The Electoral College is an important yet very misunderstood part of our federal elections. Most people see it as an extra, complicating step of the election process that we don't need. This viewpoint is very dangerous and misguided.

Without the Electoral College we would be reduced to mob rule, and the outcome of every Federal election would be determined by five or so of the largest cities.

Everyone else's opinion would be disregarded. The Founders of our country and Constitution specifically provided the Electoral College to prevent this from happening. They made it so that the Electoral College votes would be based on which presidential candidate was best suited for the job so that it wouldn't be-

come politicized. This did not work, unfortunately, as the College members mainly vote for the Candidate that had the most votes in the state, but it is still an important step in between our republic and anarchy. The voting by state winners allows for the small-town residents to have as equal a say in the election as the big cities, as the votes are counted by congressional district, not person. There are a couple of exceptions to the winner-take-all system for the states and these are found in the states of Nebraska and Maine. Nebraska gives two of its five votes to the statewide winner, like most



change the outcome in an election, as it could be the last vote needed to secure a victory.

This shows how, while most of a state could be Republican, one large liberal city can change the entire state's voting values. The importance of the Electoral College is not often discussed, and most people are under the impression that we should remove it. Doing so would strip our country of the equality we have for voting, and turn the "elites" in the big cities into the people who run our country.

—Danial Allan, Topeka

metro
VOICE

MANAGING EDITOR



Lee Hartman
LHartman3@cox.net

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Lorraine Jessepe,
Dwight Widaman

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Lee Hartman
785-640-6399
Voice@cox.net

NEWS & FEATURES

Carolyn Cogswell, Rob Mooney,
Alan Goforth, Clint Decker,
Hannah Allen, Dwight Widaman,
Lee Hartman, Lorraine Jessepe

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Joe Boothe, Lee Hartman, Dwight Widaman

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CONTACT INFO

Offices: 2611 SW 17th St. (by appt.)
Correspondence & Payments:
P.O. Box 5724, Topeka, KS 66605
Phone/Fax: 785-235-3340
Voice@cox.net
MetroVoiceNews.com
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America and Babylon



CLINT DECKER
President and
Evangelist
with Great
Awakenings, Inc.

Speaking Truth

We are living in a nation where there are close to 30 million alcoholics, including millions of teenagers. In the last year, nearly 700,000 marriages and families were torn apart by divorce. There were over one million babies that had their lives taken from them inside their mother's womb. There were almost 20,000 of our fellow citizens that were murdered in cold blood in their homes, on the streets or other places. And if that is not enough, upwards of almost 7,000 churches closed their doors. (Image from divers-and-sundry.blogspot.com)

Revelation is a book in the Bible that reveals future judgements to come upon mankind because of their rejection of God and His moral ways. The Bible says, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and de-

testable beast." (Revelation 18:2)

Babylon is the city America has become.

This ancient city is famous for at least three historical points. First, it was the location of the infamous tower of babel where the nations made a failed attempt to build a tower to reach the heavens and become like God. Second, their notorious King Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon into an expansive empire, conquering nation after nation. Third, Nebuchadnezzar led his military to lay siege to Jerusalem, destroying it and capturing its people.

Eventually, Babylon's pride and glory brought about its own downfall. Babylon, which once was a servant of God, became His enemy. And 70 years after it conquered Jerusalem, Babylon fell to its own enemies and was destroyed on the crucible of its own ego.

The historical city of Babylon eventually grew to become a spiritual picture of the godless cities and nations of mankind.

These are places where man joins together with others of like mindedness, to pursue the evil desires of their hearts. The city grows in all things evil and lawless, glorifying itself, feeling as if they are indestructible and god-like.

America is the city of Babylon. We have become a place that operates on man's own corrupt wisdom and knowledge. The evidence is clear. Confusion and chaos abound. Crime, immorality and division exist in neighborhood after neighborhood, while corruption lives in the halls of power.



But there is something important to note. There is another city, one that was built strategically in opposition to the city of man. It is the city of God and was established by the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

This city serves the desires of the Lord God, who is the Creator of heaven and earth. Its citizens have turned from their sin, placed their faith in Christ and walk in holiness and love for one another. The city is marked by truth, service, peace, joy, kindness and much more. The Lord indwells its entire population through His Spirit and

is always with them. Ambassadors from this city go out day by day into the city of man, warning their residents to flee their city. They plead with them to find refuge in the city of God, as each of them once did. Sometimes their message is received, while other times it is rejected.

The city of God continues expanding, bringing hope and rescuing those from the city of man. One day the judgement of God will come and Babylon, the city of man, will fall. Yet in contrast, the city of God, led by Christ the King, will remain forever.

If you are part of the city of man, living for yourself and your own desires, leave at once! Come to the city with a sure foundation, whose builder is God Almighty. Come through His Son and the doors of grace and mercy will be opened to you.

A prayer for you - Lord God, open the eyes of people to see what city they live in. Bring them to flee the city of man and run to the city of God. Let them leave behind their selfish ways and yield to the just and holy ways of their Creator. In Jesus' name. Amen.

—Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Share your comment at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.

Four holiday events set for early December

Four favorite holiday events are set for the first three weeks of December in Shawnee County Parks + Recreation.

Holiday craft fairs are some of Shawnee County Parks + Recreation's most popular events. The Holiday Craft Show returns on Dec. 7 from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Great Overland Station. It features as many as 38 vendor booths with items from personalized children's books to jewelry, holiday décor and food items. Some 1,500 patrons have attended the show in the past. Admission is free.

The 41st annual Children's Shopping Spree will be held at the Garfield Shelter from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Dec. 14. The event fea-

tures handmade crafts and baked goods, all for under \$10. Admission is free. Volunteers are needed



to help children shop and to wrap gifts. Shifts are 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and noon to 3 p.m. Call 785-251-6812 or email Riley Shafer at Riley.Shafer@snco.us.

On December 17, our highly popular Candy Cane Capers returns. Our elves will visit your

house with a sweet surprise, hiding 10 candy canes around your front yard. A goodie bag containing a craft and activity ideas will be left at your door. The fee is \$12 for the first child and \$6 for each additional child. <https://bit.ly/Candy-CaneCapers2024> is the link to sign up. If the delivery address is different from the registration address, please call 785-251-6886. Delivery will be

on Tuesday, December 17 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Back for the fifth year is Old Prairie Town Christmas with fun around every corner. This fun event will take place on December 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Make s'mores at the fire, see Santa in the mansion, help on the railroad hand cart, write a letter to Santa at the depot, take pictures at the giant snow globe selfie station, hear a story read in the school house, hear the history of the first Ward-Meade Christmas and seasonal music and dancing in the church. Families can enjoy shopping for nostalgic gifts or treats in the Mulvane General Store and Potwin Drug Store. Fee is \$5 at the gate.

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Blue Christmas Service offered

Life has so many struggles. Does Christmas seem like an event that might be tough to endure? Prince of Peace Lutheran Church seeks to support those experiencing struggles with a Blue Christmas Worship Service, a service that focuses on the healing touch of the Holy Spirit and the hope found in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a contemplative service with special music, prayers, anointing and the Lord's Supper. Come and receive support by connecting with an understanding community.

When: Sunday, December 8 at 3:00pm

Where: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker Rd, Topeka KS

Additional information: 785-271-0808

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Celebrate the Holidays in Downtown Topeka!

As the Holiday season begins, Downtown is looking better than ever! People are getting in the Christmas Spirit!

Christmas shopping in Downtown Topeka can be fun, with all the unique shops and a bit of nostalgia in the air. It might remind you of a time when shopping was more exciting and personal.

Following are some tidbits from some of your friendly downtown merchants.

Unique Boutique and Gifts

Hunter & Laine, 826 S Kansas Ave, is a locally owned boutique that offers unique items made by local makers and other small businesses. The selection



includes everything from BBQ sauce and freeze-dried candy to beaded ornaments, wallets, jewelry, quality clothing, and pet accessories. It's also kid-friendly and dog-friendly, so you'll find an area for kids to relax and enjoy coloring

pages and activities, while you browse with your furry friend.

"We love to work with local makers and artists by selling items on commission or buying products wholesale." Said Amanda Turner, Hunter & Laine Manager. "By doing so, we can contribute to a unique shopping experience that gives back to the community."

Check out the great assortment of items that will provide you with unique gifts to share with your family and friends this holiday season. Hours are Tuesday-Friday from 10:00-6:00 and Saturday 10:00-4:00.

Taking chocolate to a new level

Owners Nick & Terry Xidis at Hazel Hill Chocolate, 724 S. Kansas Avenue, have been a Downtown staple for years.

Hazel Hill, Terry's grandmother, is a symbol of their dedication to a family tradition of "the best in everything they do." Nick is the third generation chocolatier, and they use only the finest ingredients, chocolate, fresh cream and butter, to produce handmade treats that explode with flavor.

For the last 6 years, Nick has been making handcrafted chocolate from cacao

(coco beans) that import from around the globe. Much like fine wine, each cacao origin produces a unique flavor profile in the finished chocolate.

It's not just Topekans that delight in Hazel Hill chocolates.

"In 2019, three of our handcrafted chocolate bars won bronze in the International Chocolate Awards Americas competition," Nick said. "In 2020 our sea salt caramel won the gold medal in the Chocolate Alliance competition."

There are now over 20 awards and counting! Whatever your preference – handmade chocolate truffles, home-style fudge, crispy-creamy caramel apples or something else – at

Hazel Hill they fashion delightful treats for every palate.

Need a gift basket, gift box, or just a few delicious chocolates to go? They'll take care of all the packing and shipping, too!

When you need a break

For your coffee emergency, go to Juli's Coffee and Bistro – a locally owned, woman owned, Veteran owned and operated coffee shop offering legit house coffee and all manner of espresso drinks.

Juli's features "Made in the USA" coffee grown and roasted in Hawaii, with aloha flavors like toasted coconut,



chocolate and vanilla macadamia nut. Buy a bag to take home!

Local favorites are still available, like the Turkey Lurkey and house made Cranberry Almond Chicken Salad for lunch. Fresh salads, wraps and tasty paninis make it perfect for casual dining. Daily house made specials keep it fresh and exciting.

Check out the menus online at www.juliscoffeeandbistro.com and order online, pay online and then pick up, or use Eatstreet delivery.

New menu items include made from scratch pies! Using recipes handed down for 5 generations, locally sourced small batch and uniquely tasty. Come in for a slice, or order ahead for the holidays: Apple, cherry, pumpkin, pecan, oatmeal, coconut cream, and more!

A little bit of Heaven

Working side-by-side at Cashmere Popcorn, Bill and Angie Anderson's goal is to create a high-quality product in every handcrafted batch of popcorn, and provide it to you with unmatched cus-

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They produce, package and market all the popcorn. With about twenty flavors to choose from, you'll find a little bit of heaven in every bag. Hours are Tuesday-Friday 10-6 and Saturday 10-4.

Cashmere Popcorn would like to wish everyone a Blessed Christmas Season, and thanks for supporting local.

Diamonds are Forever

With the Christmas season in full swing, you'll find many specials and gift ideas at David's Jewelers, 623 S. Kansas -



a family business that has served Topeka for four generations, with over 50 years in business.

Diamond rings, pendants and earrings usually top the list but they also offer vivid colored gemstones in unique settings, watches, clocks, statues and fine crystal.

"Gifts can start at \$20.00 and go from there," said Mitzi from behind the counter at David's. "We will be glad to help you find that special gift for that special someone."

Leather and more

Doug Mingus, owner and designer at Mingus Leather Studio, believes the world needs more beauty and joy: More gifts given and used; More smiles, kindness, and real service; More people doing what they love and sharing it.

His business was born to pursue all these when life presented an unexpected change. He created a place where beautiful handcrafted items, that are designed for life, are celebrated and shared. Immediately when walking into this shop

you will be greeted with the intoxicating smell of leather and a warm, kind welcome from Doug.

It all starts with full grain leather items made in his studio, or from other artisans he has partnered with. Belts, bags, journal covers, catch-all and game trays, wallets, keychains, pouches, purses, and more.



Mingus didn't stop at leather. He partners with George's Pen Creations and has jewelry from Kamama Designs, candle makers like Beauty from Ashes, and other artists. Mingus Leather Studio is a place to find unique, useful and beautiful items that bring a smile, and build businesses and families. There is something for everyone on your gift list here and you may even need to splurge on something for yourself.

Doug also does repairs on all kinds of leather items.

Holiday Memories & Events

Check Out These Upcoming Holiday Events & Activities

While you're making your way around the downtown area, check out all of the new things to look at on both sides of the street

And watch for these downtown events and opportunities during the holiday season:

FIRST FRIDAY ART MARKET – Downtown and NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, fine crafts, flea market items, snacks & beverages, entertainment and more.

FRIDAY NIGHT FUNNIES – Every Friday at Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas. Weekly comedy show is only \$15, or two for \$25.

THE KREADY HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR – Nov. 30, 2pm, TPAC. Bringing back Topeka native and Broadway star, Jeff

Kready, with his wife, Broadway star Nikki Renée Daniels for the 3rd year in a row!

CHOCOLATE NUTCRACKER – Dec. 6, 7:30pm, TPAC. An urban twist on the classic ballet, showcasing a variety of ethnic dances, including hip hop, jazz, African contemporary, lyrical, praise dance and ballet, staged by It Takes a Village Inc.

MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE – Dec. 7, 6-9pm, Downtown Topeka. Lighted parade at 5th & Kansas.

www.topekapartnership.com/gtp-events



NUTCRACKER BALLET – Dec. 13-15 at TPAC. Ballet Midwest's holiday staple. Tickets at TPAC box office, and Barbara's Conservatory of

Dance. www.balletmidwest.net

RED STOCKING BREAKFAST – Dec. 14, 8-10:30am, The Pennant, 915 S. Kansas Ave. Get \$15 tickets in advance at www.kcls.org or \$18 at the door. Children 10 & under eat free. Benefits KCSL's child abuse prevention programs and services.

THE NUTCRACKER BY KANSAS BALLET ACADEMY – Dec. 21-22, TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-234-2787



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Keep an eye out for Santa! He'll be making an appearance now and then in the NOTO Arts District in December!

Christmas sales and displays are everywhere in NOTO this year!

Dia De Los Muertos is a time for community gathering and remembrance, with festivals and events that bring people together. See the full schedule for this special exhibition and companion presentations, which runs October 4 - December

14, at explorenoto.org

First Friday Art Walk hours are 10 am to 9 pm. First Friday Art Walk & Market is the first Friday of every month. The North Topeka Arts District has become an attraction to Art Lovers and History Buffs alike with beautiful scenes of art and history. Entertainment can also be found on First Fridays, at various venues during the artwalk up and down N. Kansas Avenue, as well as streetside ven-



dors. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

You can also visit 3rd Friday's NOTO Night Out! Many Merchants are also open longer hours on Second Saturdays.

For more event information visit explorenoto.org/.

More North Topeka events:

WOODSHED INDOOR MARKET - Sundays 10-3, 1901 N. Kansas Ave.

LIVING NATIVITY - Dec. 1, 2-4pm, Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. Nativity play, petting zoo with sheep, goats, donkey, llama. Hot chocolate & cookies.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS CHAMPIONS LUNCHEON - Dec. 3, 12-2pm, Garfield Shelter, 1600 NE Quincy St. Honoring individuals, families, and organizations that have made an outstanding impact on the lives of athletes and the community. For more information, contact Ashley Pippin at pippina@soks.org

GOLDEN RULE LODGE PANCAKE BREAKFAST - Dec. 7, 8:30-10:30am; 909 NW Lyman Rd. \$5 donation/person suggested. Tim McCoy, tim.handles.homes@gmail.com

HOLIDAY CRAFT SHOW - Dec. 7, 9-3, Great Overland Station. Shop homemade, local goods. Free adm.

SENIORS PITCH CLUB - Every Tuesday 1 pm at Garfield Community Center. First visit free then a dollar per visit for coffee and replacement cards

SUNRISE OPTIMIST CLUB - Every Tue., 6:30am, Sunrise Optimist Complex, 720 NW 50th St. 246-1291.

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS - Every Wed., 10:45 bible study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren,

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The Area's Most Complete Guide to the Family-Friendly Events You Want to See!

the events calendar

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CONCERTS

KANSAS PRAIRIE PICKERS – Fourth Sun. ea. Month, 1pm, Auburn Community Center. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes. Concessions available

GRAND OTTAWA OPRY – 2nd & 4th Saturday, 5:30PM-pre-show, 6PM showtime, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S Hickory, Ottawa. Tickets are \$15 and only at the door. Ph. 785-241-6762, email grandootpry@gmail.com. GrandOttawaOpry.com

"PICKIN' ON THE PRAIRIE", a FREE Acoustic Jam at the Old Prairie Town every Sunday from 1-3pm at the historic Potwin Drugstore.

THE KREADY HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR – Nov. 30, 2pm, TPAC. Bringing back Topeka native and Broadway star, Jeff Kready, with his wife, Broadway star Nikki Renée Daniels

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

HARVESTER'S PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS – every second Sat., takes place at Christian Lord Ministries, 2421 SE California. Call 266-4979.

HOPE HOUSE FREE COMMUNITY CLOTHING BANK – Wed. 6-8pm and Sat. 12-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland

HARVESTER FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 2nd Saturday each month, 1:30-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland

FIRST SATURDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET – 7:30 AM – 10:00 AM, Shawnee Heights UMC, 6020 SE 44th

INSIDE OUT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH – Every Sunday 12pm service; Every Tuesday 7:30pm service. Location: 2409 NE Division St.. For info: 785-380-7031 or io@insideoutinc.net or www.insideoutinc.net

KIDS FOR JESUS! – Wednesday's 7 - 8pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your friends, family, neighbors, enemies! For info: 785-266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

MID-WEEK PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY – Wednesday's, 7-8pm, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. You are invited! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

LOL "LADIES OF LAKEVIEW" – Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Monthly Women's Ministry Events! (Cooking, Crafts, Outreach, Bible Study, Fellowship!) Call the church office for info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

ROOTED CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP, Colosians 2:6-7. Monday's 12-4pm. Cooking class for 4th graders & older at noon. Call the Church Office for more information. Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Church: (785) 266-3247. Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

PANCAKE FEED & SILENT AUCTION – Dec. 7, 7-11am, Lowman UMC, 4101 SW 15th. Pancakes, biscuits & gravy, OJ, milk, coffee - \$7. Bread Braid sales on site with delivery before Christmas

ANNUAL GERMAN DINNER – Dec. 8, 5-7pm. Congregational Church, 1701 SW Collins Ave.

THE THIRD THURSDAY JESUS AND ME -- OR "I.A.M." -- SESSION will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Dec. 19, at Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N.

Kansas Ave. A "lite" dinner will be served before the program, which is for children, youths and families.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – Dec. 22, 11am, Fellowship Hi-Crest, 455 SW Golf Park Blvd.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, 2 p.m., Dec. 24, Oakland United Methodist Church, 801 N.E. Chester Ave.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, 4 p.m., Dec. 24, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE, 4 p.m., Dec. 31, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

SENIORS NUTRITIONAL LUNCH – Weekdays, except holidays, at noon at Auburn Civic Center, 1020 N. Washington Street. Minimal cost per person. Reservations/cancellations required 24 hours in advance by calling Meals on Wheels of Jefferson & Shawnee Co. at 295-3980. Each meal includes 1% milk & sugar-free items for diabetics. 215- 0064.

MEDICARE MONDAYS – First Mon. ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library, 1515 SW 10th. Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging offers Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or nhoni@tsclp.org

COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING – Thursdays 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Info: Edwina 379-9538, 478-4760.

FIRST FRIDAY ART MARKET – Downtown and NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, fine crafts, flea market items, snacks, beverages, entertainment and more.

TOPEKA ACAPPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS –Topeka Acappella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four-part acappella harmonies.

Topeka Acappella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Cindy Patton: 785-640-7403

HARVESTERS MOBILE FOOD PANTRY, 1st & 3rd Sat, 2-3pm, Shawnee Heights UMC parking lot.

FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 4th Tue. thru Nov., 9am, 1231 NW Eugene St. Randel Ministries, Inc., in partnership with Harvesters and Family of God Church will have its monthly food distribution. No ID or proof of income required, first come first served. Distributing fresh produce and other items to families in need. 785-234-1111. RandelMinistries.com

TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS – 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.

OPEN INDOOR COURT PICKLEBALL – Sundays at 4pm, Berryton United Methodist Church (7010 SE Berryton Rd. All ages and abilities welcome.

SENIORS PITCH CLUB – Every Tuesday 1 pm at Garfield Community Center. First visit free then a dollar per visit for coffee and replacement cards ...

WOODSHED MARKET – Sun. 10-3, 1901 N. Kansas Ave.

FAMILY NIGHT AT COSMOS COURT – Tuesdays, 5pm, Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas Ave. Pizza, salads, hot dogs, nachos, soup and more! Get a 16" Pizza, 2 side salads, and 4 cups of ice cream for only \$30! Also table games, etc.

SLI FESTIVAL OF TREES – Nov. 26- Dec. 2, 10am-6pm, Fairlawn Plaza Mall. Wonderfully decorated trees and a silent auction.

240 CHRISTMAS TREES & ORNAMENT DISPLAY – Nov. 1-Jan. 1, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat., & 1-5pm Sun. at Territorial Capital Museum, 640 E. Woodson,

Lecompton. Over 240 Christmas Trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme décor – including turn of the century and WW II era decorations, a barb-wire tree and feather trees. Also tour Constitution Hall, a National Landmark 785-887-6148. lecomptonkansas.com

TARC's WINTER WONDERLAND – Nov. 27-Dec. 31, Sun-Thu: 6-9pm; Fri-Sat 6-10. Lake Shawnee, 3435 SE East Edge Rd. View dazzling holiday light displays, featuring one million lights, while winding through a 2-mile scenic drive. Advanced Tickets are available: TARC, 2701 SW Randolph. 785.506-8720. Winterwonderlandtopeka.com

KNIGHTS OF LIGHTS HOLIDAY FESTIVAL – Nov. 29 – Dec. 31, Fridays & Saturdays – 5:30pm – 10pm; Sundays – 5:30pm – 9pm; PLUS December 23 & 24, 30 & 31st 5:30pm – 9pm; AND New Year's Eve Party 10:00pm – 1:00am. Stroll through a Renaissance wonderland with lights, shopping, food, entertainment, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and

more! Glow in the dark putt putt, train rides, & snowball fights! (Free tickets available from Metro Voice for advertisers & donors: email voice@cox.net)

THE KREADY HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR – Nov. 30, 2pm, TPAC. Bringing back Topeka native and Broadway star, Jeff Kready, with his wife, Broadway star Nikki Renée Daniels

SEASON OF LIGHTS – Nov. 30, 4-7pm, Wamego. Carriage rides and hot chocolate too.

SHOP SMALL FOR A BIG CHRISTMAS – Nov. 30, 9-3, 1701 SW Collins. Least of These Ministries is bringing vendors together to help you wrap up your gift list - and help them bless others by bringing donations. Call 785-422-8171 or email leastoftheseministries-matt2540@gmail.com

LIVING NATIVITY – Dec. 1, 2-4pm, Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. Nativity play, petting zoo with sheep, goats, donkey, llama. Hot chocolate &

Visit Historic Lecompton and see the **LARGEST Christmas Trees and Ornaments**

DISPLAY in the Midwest!

Open Nov. 1 to Jan. 1 • Mon. - Sat.: 10am to 4pm • Sun.: 1 - 5pm

Over 240 trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme décor – including turn-of-the-century and WW I-era decorations, a barb-wire tree, feather trees, and many more unique decorations!



Christmas Vespers
Dec. 8, 2pm



While there, tour

- Constitution Hall
- Territorial Capital Museum
- National Landmarks

**HISTORIC
LECOMPTON**

Civil War
Birth Place

Where Slavery
Began to Die

Kansas & National Historic Landmarks

Lecompton Turnpike Exit • 10 miles East of Topeka on U.S. 40 & 24

www.LecomptonKansas.com

C5 Alive Developing and Uniting
Christian Leadership
• Business • Non-profits • Churches

Membership open to all Christian businesses, non-profits, churches & individuals!
Luncheons & Tradeshows & other events open to the general public!

C5Alive POWER Luncheons are held 2nd Thur. each mo.

Dec. 12, 11:30-1: "CHRISTMAS" Luncheon
at West Ridge Mall Food Court. Featuring
Christmas fun activities!
Free Admission; Lunch available
from food court. Open to the public.
RSVP to info@C5Alive.org

Save the Dates!
• Jan 9: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
• Feb 8: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

For info: www.C5Alive.org or Facebook.com/C5Alive

cookies.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS KANSAS CHAMPIONS LUNCHEON — Dec. 3, 12-2pm, Garfield Shelter, 1600 NE Quincy St. Honoring individuals, families, and organizations that have made an outstanding impact on the lives of athletes and the community. For more information, contact Ashley Pippin at pippina@soks.org

CHOCOLATE NUTCRACKER — Dec. 6, 7:30pm, TPAC. An urban twist on the classic ballet, showcasing a variety of ethnic dances, including hip hop, jazz, African contemporary, lyrical, praise dance and ballet, staged by It Takes a Village Inc.

FIRST FRIDAY COOKIE WALK — Dec. 6, 5-8pm. Bring a box & collect cookies from participating downtown locations on S. Kansas Ave.

GOLDEN RULE LODGE PANCAKE BREAKFAST — Dec. 7, 8:30-10:30am; 909 NW Lyman Rd. \$5 donation/person suggested. Tim McCoy, tim.handles.homes@gmail.com

GARY'S BERRIES — SANTA'S ACRES — Dec. 7-30, at 5991 17th Street, Grantville, KS 66429, off of Highway 24. Christmas characters such as Santa and the Grinch, nearly one million lights, plenty of food

items (like fudge, donuts, kettle corn and more), shopping and more. Meet Santa. garysfarmfest.com or call (785) 246-0800.

LAWRENCE OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PARADE — Dec. 7, 11am, Downtown Lawrence. Authentic horse-drawn carriages parading down Massachusetts Street is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season. Cozy up with hot cocoa and blankets. Feel the true holiday spirit while watching dozens of beautiful horses and wagons adorned in garland and bells

HOLIDAY CRAFT SHOW — Dec. 7, 9-3, Great Overland Station. Shop homemade, local goods. Free adm.

BREAKFAST IN BETHLEHEM — Dec. 7, 9-11am, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame. Breakfast & interactive stations for fun activities. Free.

TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS — Dec. 7, 11-2, HyVee, 29th & Wanamaker. Free samples on holiday appetizers, entrees, side dishes, desserts and more.

WING FLING — Dec. 7, 1pm, Vail Events Ctr. Wings, beer and music by Jack Wagoneers.

SILVER LAKE SMALL TOWN CHRISTMAS — Dec. 7, 3-6pm, Community Center, 404 E. Lake St. Hot chocolate, coffee, cookies, Christmas Movie, photo opps &

fun activities.

SANTA PAWS — Dec. 7, 11:30-3:30, HHHS, 5720 SW 21st. Santa & Grinch pics, with pets. Vendor village, too. Plus bake sale.

MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE & TREE LIGHTING — Dec. 7, parade at 6, other activities at 4, Downtown Topeka. Lighted parade at 5th & Kansas. Before the parade, families are invited to Energy Plaza for fun festivities, starting at 4pm: inflatables, Christmas carols, food trucks and more

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE — Dec. 8, 3pm, Prince of Peace Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker. A service that focuses on the healing touch of the Holy Spirit and the hope found in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a contemplative service with special music, prayers, anointing and the Lord's Supper. 785-271-0808

DRIVE THROUGH LIVING NATIVITY — Dec. 8, 5-7pm, First Lutheran Church at 12th & Fairlawn. Any vehicle in the queue at 7pm will be allowed to drive through. The presentation features live actors in each of the 8 scenes depicting the sequence of events in the story of Jesus' birth. Enjoy the live animals (sheep, goats, donkey, camel) from the comfort of your car as well. Guests are loaned an MP3 player with recorded narration. FREE. over 200 people as actors and "backstage" support. For information, call 785-272-5302.

SHAWNEE CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS... GOODNESS AND LIGHT — Dec. 10, 7pm; White Concert Hall, Washburn University. Free admission, donations gratefully appreciated. Sponsored by Kansas Secured Title. Thank you to Washburn University; Debbie Stanton, joinscs@shawneechoral.com, #319-333-9309, www.shawneechoral.com

C5Alive "CHRISTMAS" LUNCHEON — Dec. 12, 11:30-1, at West Ridge Mall in the food court. Featuring Christmas activities and fun! Free admission. Meals available from several restaurants there. Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org so we know how many to expect. Open to the public - bring a friend! SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, Jan. 9, 11:30-1.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW — Dec. 13-15, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane St. Dazzling light displays synchronized to live performances of Christmas music as you enjoy the show from the comfort of your car. Music is played over your car's stereo. Price: Free, 30 minutes long. 785-234-5545

NUTCRACKER BALLET — Dec. 13-15 at TPAC. Ballet Midwest's holiday staple. Tickets at TPAC box office, and Barbara's Conservatory of Dance. www.ballet-midwest.net

HOLIDAY GLOW — Dec. 14, 5-6pm, Great Plains Balloon Club at Lake Shawnee's Tinman Circle. Contact: Lori Hutchinson, GPBC President gpbcpres@gmail.com

HOLIDAY CRAFT AND BAKE SALE — Dec. 14, 9-2, 5221 SW West Dr.

SENT PICTURES WITH SANTA & HEALTH FAIR — Dec. 14, 9-11am, 455 SE Golf Park Blvd. Healthcare services, shopping for gifts, wrapping and more. SNCO Health Dept, GraceMed, Adventure Dental & more will be there!

RED STOCKING BREAKFAST — Dec. 14, 8-10:30am, The Pennant, 915 S. Kansas Ave. Get \$15 tickets in advance at www.kcls.org or \$18 at the door. Children 10 & under eat free. Benefits KCSL's child abuse prevention programs and services.

UGLY SWEATER CHRISTMAS PARTY — Dec. 14, 5pm, Resilience Training, 301 SE 53rd. Collecting winter clothes and toiletries for KVC.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK — Dec. 20-21, 10-4, Sugar Creek Country Store, 505 St. Bertrand, St. Mary's. over 35 varieties to choose from.

OLD PRAIRIE TOWN CHRISTMAS — Dec. 21, 10am-2pm, 199 NW Filmore. Old Prairie Town will be filled with activities: s'mores, help an elf on the railroad hand cart, write a letter to Santa at the depot, take pictures with Santa in the Mansion, enjoy music and dance in the Everest Church, make an ornament to take home and hear a story in the school house. Families can enjoy shopping for nostalgic gifts or treats in the Mulvane General Store and Potwin Drug Store as well. Warm beverages can be purchased. \$5

per person

THE NUTCRACKER BY KANSAS BALLET ACADEMY — Dec. 21-22, TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-234-2787

TOPEKA FARM SHOW — Jan. 7-9, Vail Events Ctr

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CHRISTIAN WRITERS GROUP OF TOPEKA -1st & third Mondays, 7pm at the Hughes Room 205 of the Topeka Library. Workshop for aspiring writers. Each participant is asked to bring five copies of a two page type written sample of a work in progress. After reading the pages aloud each participant is allowed an equal number of positive and negative comments offered in a spirit of helpfulness. If you would like to read something email Charles at jccccc@gmail.com

CRAFTY, SKILLED OR CREATIVE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to develop outdoor lighted displays at Ward Meade Park events. Contact Elsie, 785-256-2920.

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA MEETING - Join other concerned people to pray and unite in action for Shawnee Co. and our Nation. For info about monthly meetings: 785-260-5659 or ks.cwfa.org.

THE HEAT — FREE fitness classes for the community. Located at Florence Crittenton Services Center for Integrative Health, 5423 SW 7th. www.flocritkanssas.org

DEAF WORSHIP SERVICE — 3rd Sun., 3pm, Faith Lutheran Church, 17th & Gage. Also, every Sun. 9:30am service is interpreted.

TAI CHI FOR HEALTH — Mon. 10-11 at Lowman United Methodist Church and Thu. 9:30-10:30 at Topeka Zoo. No training needed, just watch & follow. Contact Madon Daily at 505-424-8989 or madondalley@gmail.com. To Join from Home via

Zoom, contact Madon for the Zoom link.

PICKLEBALL — Mon. & Wed, 1-3pm, First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar Ave. Park on West Side, where the gym is located. Contact Dave Mathias, davemathias@sbcglobal.net, or Betsy Thompson, betsythompson@gmail.com.

SHEPHERD'S CENTER BOOK CLUB — 1st & 3rd Mon. 2-4pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1275 SW Boswell Ave. Call: 785-249-3258 or email shepherdstopeka@yahoo.com for the book of study.

SMS - STRENGTH, MOBILITY, STABILITY EXERCISE GROUP (SMS) Mon. 9-9:30am, Arbor Court, 4200 SW Drury Lane. Tue. & Thu. 9-9:30am, Rosehill Place, 3600 SW Gage Blvd # 97. Tue & Thu, 10-10:45, Grace UMC, 2627 SW Western Ave. Call Anne Crawford at 785-273-4527 or email anne.crawford@cox.net.

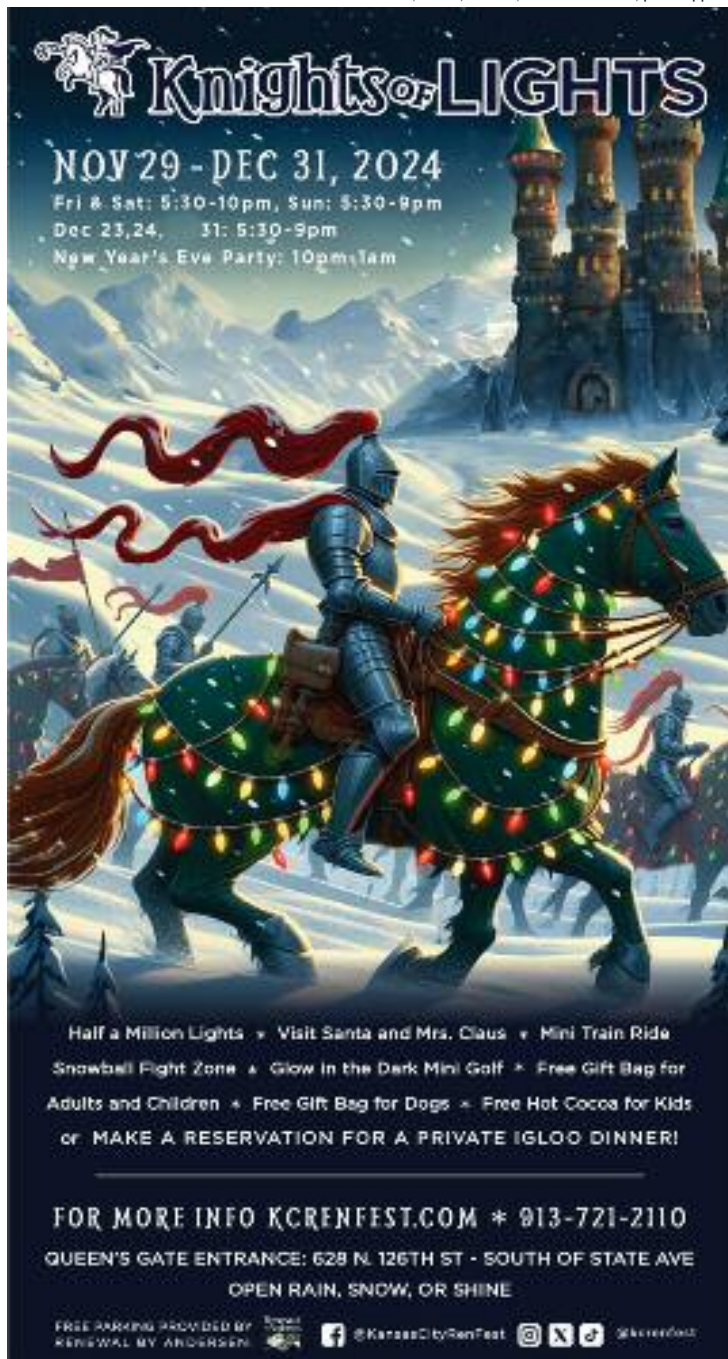
SENIOR FIT & FUN PROGRAM - every Mon., Wed., & Fri., 1:30pm, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Place (US Hwy 75 & NW 46th St.) 785-286-0601 or office rhcctopeka.org

TOPEKA LIONS CLUB — 1st Mondays at Noon - 1 pm at The Capper Foundation, 3500 SW 10th Ave. Park on the North side. RSVP by Fri. for lunch/pay at the meeting. Visitors welcome. TopekaLions.org/contact-us to make reservations. WE SERVE!

BOY'S TRAIL LIFE & AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROUPE'S — Every Mon. 6pm, Cornerstone Comm. Ch., 7620 SW 21st. Faith-based scouting programs, age 5-18. Register: cornerstonetopeka.com. 478-2929.

TOPEKA NEEDLEWORK GUILD — Every Mon. (except holidays) 9a-11a in the Menninger Room of the Topeka Public Library. Bring a project to work on as we share our needleworking skills and ideas. All are welcome

CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP - Monday's, 1-

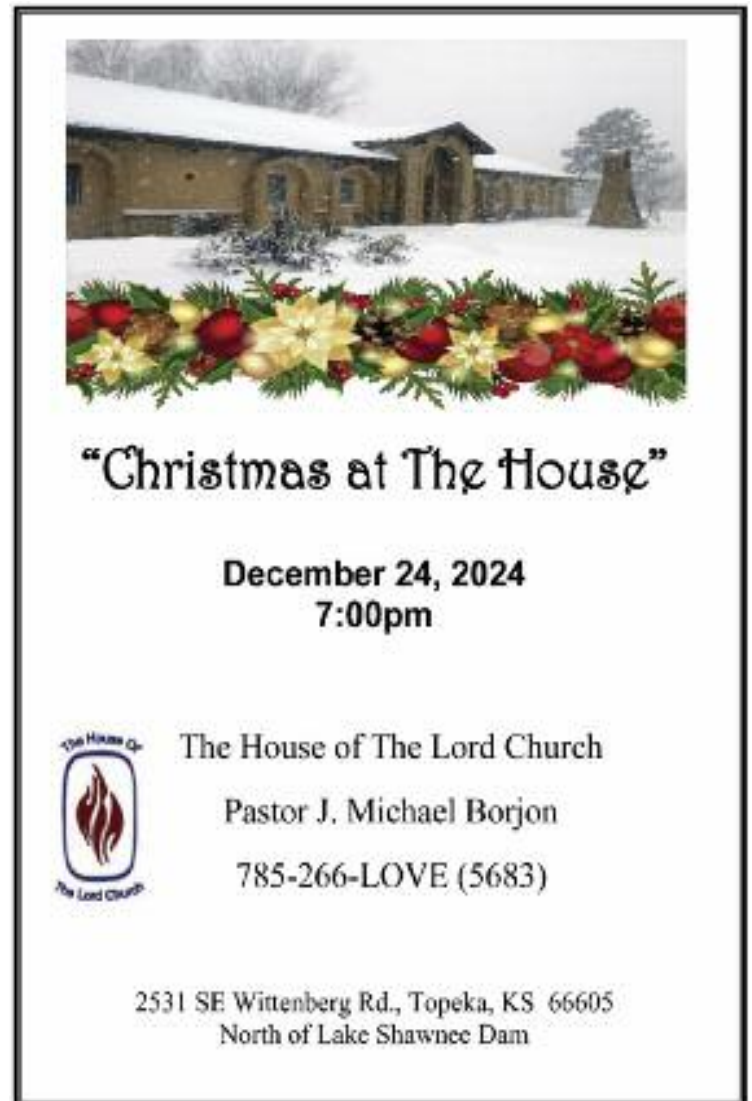


Knights of LIGHTS
NOV 29 - DEC 31, 2024
Fri & Sat: 5:30-10pm, Sun: 3:30-8pm
Dec 23, 24, 31: 5:30-9pm
New Year's Eve Party: 10pm-1am

Half a Million Lights • Visit Santa and Mrs. Claus • Mini Train Ride
Snowball Fight Zone • Glow In the Dark Mini Golf • Free Gift Bag for Adults and Children • Free Gift Bag for Dogs • Free Hot Cocoa for Kids
or MAKE A RESERVATION FOR A PRIVATE IGLOO DINNER!

FOR MORE INFO KCFEST.COM * 913-721-2110
QUEEN'S GATE ENTRANCE: 628 N. 126TH ST - SOUTH OF STATE AVE
OPEN RAIN, SNOW, OR SHINE

FREE PARKING PROVIDED BY KANSAS CITY BY RENT A CAR



"Christmas at The House"
December 24, 2024
7:00pm

The House of The Lord Church
Pastor J. Michael Borjon
785-266-LOVE (5683)

2531 SE Wittenberg Rd., Topeka, KS 66605
North of Lake Shawnee Dam

4pm, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

SENIOR ADULT EXERCISE CLASS - Tuesday's 10am, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. All exercises will be done from a chair, will help you get up out of a chair, & climb stairs safely! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

TOPEKA LINCOLN CLUB - 1st Mondays at Noon - 1 pm at The Capper Foundation, 3500 SW 10th Ave. Park on the North side. RSVP by Fri. for lunch/pay at the meeting. Visitors welcome. TopekaLions.org/contact-us to make reservations. WE SERVE!

SUNRISE OPTIMIST CLUB - Every Tue., 6:30am, Sunrise Optimist Complex, 720 NW 50th St. 246-1291.

NARVE (Nat'l Assn of Railroad Veteran Employee) - 2nd Tuesday each month at 9:30AM @ Museum of the Kansas National Guard, 125 SE Airport Dr, Topeka

MENNINGER BIBLE CLASSES - Tuesdays 11am-12:30. Amerus Room, YWCA, 225 West 12th. A new study group for Year One of Flo Menninger's course on Four Years through the Bible. Read and discuss Genesis through First Kings. Nominal charge for materials. For info call the YWCA at 233-1750 or Clara Gamache at 785-408-5433. (The Bible study is also taught on Sat. mornings on 101.5 FM radio.)

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES Aerie 4319: 1st & 3rd Tue. 7pm; Auxiliary: 1st & 4th Tue. 6pm, 2941 SE Fremont Street. An international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope. www.foe.com 785-266-7307

DUPLICATE BRIDGE - Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:30PM at The Woman's Club of Topeka, 5221 SW West Dr. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett play duplicate

bridge! It is great for your brain health. For additional information email janescola@hotmail.com.

O.W.L.S. (Older Wise Loving Saints) - meets the second Tuesday of the month. Location varies and can be found at www.faithfamilylife.com

MAP GROUP (MEMOIRS, ANCESTRY, PHOTOS) - VIA ZOOM - 4th Wed. 10-11:30am. Contact Rich McReynolds at rim4017@gmail.com. Via Zoom link

FAMILY HISTORY WRITING GROUP - 2nd Wed. 10-11:30am, Lowman United Methodist Church, room 12. Do you have great family stories to tell and want to pass them down to the next generation but don't know where to start? shepherdstopeka@yahoo.com

S.W.A.G. (Spiritual Warriors Anointed by God) youth group - Wed at 7:00 p.m. 3710 NW Topeka Blvd.

AWANA - Every Wed., 6-8pm, First Southern Baptist Church, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 272-0443.

AWANA - Every Wed., 6:30pm, Bethel Baptist Church, 4011 N. Kansas Ave. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 286-0467.

AWANA - Every Wed., 6:30-8pm, Auburn Christian Church. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 256-2515.

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS - Every Wed., 10:45 Bible Study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. (1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. Free will donations accepted. For info: 785-224-8803 or vip@topekanorthoutreach.org.

STUDENT IMPACT - Every Wed., 6-8pm, First Southern Baptist, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Youth games, teaching, worship, small groups. For info: 272-0443.

CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE - Every Thurs. 7-9pm, First Southern Baptist, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Worship for college students.

TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB - 3rd Thursdays at 7pm at Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco. Social gathering, guests welcome. Topekalions.org

TOPEKA COSMOPOLITAN CLUB: The Club that fights Diabetes -- Meetings: first three Thursdays of every month, 12 noon, at the Topeka Country Club.

INTENTIONAL MOM - 1st & 3rd Thurs., 9-11:30am, Topeka Bible Church Auditorium, 1135 SW College. For all moms, helping to be intentional! 234-5545.

OPERATION BACKPACK - 1st Thurs., 6pm, Indian Creek Elementary School, 4303 NE Indian Creek

Rd. Volunteers assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. No assembly in August. Sponsored by Topeka North Outreach: 286-1370.

LINE DANCING - 2nd & 4th Thu. 1:30-3:30 at First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar Ave. Contact Karen Botkin at 785-945-6785 or Jim Baer at 785-256-2432 or jimbaer73@gmail.com to register.

BRIDGE GROUP - 1st & 3rd Thu. 1-3:30pm, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th St. To play, arrangements must be made by Mon. 5pm with Joan Arterburn at 408-5174.

TOPEKA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - 4th Thurs., 7pm, Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th St. No program in Nov. or Dec. Promotes & stimulates the education, knowledge & interest of the membership & the public in family history, genealogical records & research. 233-5762 or tgstopeka.org.

KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP - 3rd Thu., 11:30am-1pm via Zoom. Christian financial professionals: financial planners, accountants, attorney's & insurance agents invited. For info: kingdomadvisors.org or Jim Hanna, james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 785.357.6278 x19.

TOPEKA (Downtown) OPTIMIST CLUB - Every Fri., noon. Serving the youth of Topeka. Anyone welcome. For info: 272-1099 or fostern60@yahoo.com.

A GOOD YARN CLUB - 2nd & 4th Sat., 9-11am, Wanamaker Rd Baptist Church, 2700 SW Wanamaker. Doing Good for Others: Knitting & Crocheting for Local Charities, free yarn, needles, hooks & patterns. All are welcome. Info: Anne, 785-272-9249 or kittens812@sbcglobal.net

TOPEKA GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY - 4th Fridays, 7:15pm, 1st Congressional Church, 1701 SW Collins.

BIBLE QUIZZING - 1st Sat. Learn God's Word & have fun with area Christian youth age 9-19. YFC/YEA style quizzing & rules. 913-593-6427 or biblequizzing.org.

MONTHLY SCORE MEETING - 1st Sat., 8-9:30am, Washburn Tech, 5724 SW Huntoon (enter east doors facing Huntoon). No RSVP or fee is required. Small business owners are invited to a Breakfast Roundtable discussion with members of SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). Info: 234-3049.

TOPEKA GREAT LIGHT AGLOW - For info contact Vickie Lynch at greatlighttopeka@gmail.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

HOPE AND HEALING ACADEMY harnesses the power of horses to transform the human spirit. For info: 785-

224-4232 or www.hopeandhealingacademy.com.

OVERCOMER'S OUTREACH ANONYMOUS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP - Mondays 6:30-7:30pm, at Be Filled Of South Topeka, 200 Airport Rd, Bldg. 818 Suite 1. Led by Pastor Bill Ritchey, 785-817-2802

BINDING UP THE BROKEN HEARTED - Sessions offered for women who suffer from the after-effects of abortion. All the women who lead these sessions have had an abortion and have received healing from God's Word. For info, contact local Healing Hearts representative Shelly Brush, First Southern Baptist Church at shelly.b@healinghearts.org. All communication is confidential and secure.

MIDLAND CARE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS: Building A, 200 SW Frazier Circle; Every Mon., 4-5pm: 12 Week Adult Group for Recent Loss - 1st and 3rd Thu., 10:30am & 5:30pm—Ongoing Adult Group - 1st and 3rd Thu., 5:30pm: Ongoing Young Adult Group (4-18 years of age) For All Groups: Call for start dates and info packet. Group and individual grief support available upon request. Info: 785-232-2044 ext.341

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS - Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides an opportunity for caregivers to get together and share their ideas and feelings. 2nd Monday, 3:30pm, Topeka public library, Anton Rm. 3rd Friday, 12 noon, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka

ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT - Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Kay Lyn at KLCarlson20@cox.net.

AL-ANON is a support group for families and friends of alcoholics. For information on meetings in the Topeka area email ais-topeka@kansas-al-anon.org or 785-215-1045. All correspondence confidential

PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY - Men struggling with pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/ accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted Roberts. For info: 249-9509. All inquiries confidential.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUPS - Monthly support group meetings for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. All of our programs have moved from in-person to virtual.

Caregiver support group via Skype 9:30am every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

Caregiver Support Group via Google Hangouts, 4:30pm every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP - 4th Mon. in Formation classroom at Most Pure Heart of Mary, 17th & Stone. Discussion starts 7pm; fellowship & refreshments 8:30. 785-272-4895

CAREGIVERS GROUP - Caring Hearts of Hope meet 2nd & 4th Tuesdays 5:30-6:30pm at Highland Heights Christian Church. Encouragement in God's word and prayer as well as conversation and sharing, open to all those who care for others with illnesses such as Alzheimers, dementia, cancer or other debilitating illnesses or injuries. For info: "Weekly Class List" at www.highlandheightsscc.com or call 785-379-5642.

FIBROMYALGIA & CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP - 2nd Tue., 7-9pm. First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. For info: Randy at 785-969-4038 or TopekaCFS@outlook.com.

GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP - 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room, St. Francis Hosp., 1700 SW 7th. For info: Sharla, 286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.

GRIEF SUPPORT - Sponsored by Heartland Hospice for those dealing with death or major loss: 1st Mon., 5:30-7:30pm, Individual appointments; other times are available. Call Terry at (785)230-6730. 3rd Thurs., 11am, Lunch After Loss, Paisano's Ristorante, Fleming Place, SW 10th & Gage Blvd., For reservations or info: 785-271-6500.

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“Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.” brings heroic, complex life to big screen

Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived a life that echoes in eternity. Despite being executed by the Nazi regime at age 39, Christians continue to be inspired and challenged by the books he wrote, such as “The Cost of Discipleship,” and his example of courage and faithfulness.

“Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.” a new feature film from Angel Studios, will open in theaters on November 22. The title itself suggests the many facets of a man who put his faith into action, as the studio describes the movie:

When a pacifist is called to a political act that could change the course of history, how will a man of honor respond? This is the true story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a man who preached love while plotting the assassination of an evil tyrant. With world-shattering stakes, Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin. raises the question, how far will you go to stand up for what’s right?

Angel Studios, the company behind such films as last summer’s “Sound of Freedom,” has an impressive track record of spiritual integrity and box-office success. Bonhoeffer gave writer-director Todd Komarnicki a rich, complex subject to develop. Not even Hollywood could dream up a character who was both a pacifist pastor and part of a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

“Encountering Dietrich Bonhoeffer and being honored with



the opportunity to share his thrilling story with the world has been a singular privilege,” Komarnicki told “Deadline.” “Dietrich’s message of peace and courage is as urgent as it was in 1945.”

Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran theologian and pastor, was a strong advocate of ecumenism and a leader in what was known as the confessing church. This movement for revival within German Protestant churches developed during the 1930s from their resistance to Hitler’s attempt to make the churches an instrument of Nazi propaganda and politics.

The movie traces the life of Bonhoeffer (convincingly portrayed by Jonas Dassler) from his childhood in Germany through Union Seminary in New York City, the development of his social conscience and the fateful decision that would lead to a Nazi prison camp and ultimately, his death by hanging.

“There has never been a time in history where we needed to be reminded of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer more than today,” said Jordan Harmon, president

of Angel Studios “The Angel Guild has shown, time and again, that true stories of heroism resonate and remind us of the power of the human spirit.”

The movie faithfully tells the story of the impact that one man had in the face of evil and the influence it continues to have today. Bonhoeffer’s life is best summed up on one of his most famous quotes: “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

“Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.” offers a thoughtful, engaging alternative to overeating or binging on football over Thanksgiving weekend. It is rated PG-13 for violent content, thematic elements and some smoking, and has a running time of two hours and 15 minutes.

For more information and to view the trailer, visit www.angel.com/movies/bonhoeffer. A good source to learn more about the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is the book “Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy” by Eric Metaxas, which is available from most online retailers and bookstores.

Lauren Daigle’s Original Song Featured in New Bonhoeffer Film

Christian singer Lauren Daigle’s new song “Then I Will” is featured in the movie “Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Spy, Assassin,” which opened to positive reviews in theaters November 22.

The movie tells the gripping and emotional story of German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis in 1945 for his resistance to the Holocaust.

Daigle says she was inspired by Eric Metaxas’ biography “Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy,” which won Christian Book of the Year in 2011. “When I read the book ‘Bonhoeffer,’ I never expected to one day write a song for the film adaptation of it,” Daigle wrote on X. Her song, available now on streaming platforms, reflects Bonhoeffer’s surrender to God’s will, even in the face of death.

“I immediately said ‘Yes!’ when approached about joining the project,” Daigle said, adding she was thrilled to be included. “Bonhoeffer’s unwavering faith and commitment to stand up for the vulnerable and speak truth to evil is a challenge to us all. Are we willing to die for our neighbor?”

The film is produced by Angel Studios, which also produces “The Chosen” and is becoming a Hollywood powerhouse that currently reaches hundreds of millions of people. “We knew Lauren would capture Bonhoeffer’s heart with her music,” said producer Camille Kamouris.

Writer and director Todd Komarnicki



praised Daigle’s contribution, saying, “Life is just better with maximum Lauren Daigle in it. She shines from the inside out and illuminates with utter poignancy the truth of this movie’s message.”

Komarnicki believes Bonhoeffer’s message remains relevant today. It comes as hate crimes against Christians and Jews skyrocket around the world, with Europe seeing the sharpest increase. “This story challenges us to think about who we are, what we stand for, and what it means to live by grace rather than judgment,” he said.

Born in 1906, Bonhoeffer became a symbol of defiance against moral compromise. Despite a promising future in the German church, he publicly denounced Hitler as early as 1933 and condemned the church’s collaboration with the Nazi regime. His belief that “silence in the face of evil is itself evil” guided his resistance efforts, ultimately leading to his martyrdom.

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Our family cherished memories at Silver Dollar City's Old Time Christmas

When my family suggested we skip the summer weekend at the lake and enjoy Silver Dollar City during the Christmas season, I didn't hesitate.

This wasn't just any theme park to me—it was a piece of our family's lore. We used to bring the kids here every year when they were little through their college years. When they were young, life was a bit simpler and the biggest decision of the day was whether we started with rides or Fanny's Famous Funnel Cakes. Now the kids are grown, with busy work and travel schedules or families of their own, but stepping into Silver Dollar City always feels like turning back the clock.

From the moment we walked in, I was struck by the sheer magic of the place. The park is draped in 6.5 million twinkling Christmas lights—a number so staggering it's hard to wrap your head around. Every tree, building, and lamppost seemed to sparkle, and when we wandered into Midtown, the canopy of lights was so breathtaking in the evening I had to stop and just take it in. Anita squeezed my hand and said, "This is exactly how I always remember it." No wonder it has again been named the nation's best Christmas-themed park this year.

The rides, of course, were calling. We've always loved Fire in the Hole and this year, it had been completely redesigned and moved to a much larger space. It's still got that nostalgic charm but it's larger, with more scenes of Baldnobbers and firefighters and you still get the iconic conversation between Sadie and her husband Red. "Red Flanders," she says as the house burns, "you come back in here and put on your pants." Red responds as you see his long legs in red longjohns sticking out a window as he escapes on a ladder, "Well Sadie, I ain't got no pants no more. The dang Baldmobbers stole em!" That always makes me chuckle.

But some things on the attraction have changed. The coaster is smoother, a bit faster, and more immersive. Our family doesn't just ride it once, we ride it multiple times! Each time is an opportunity to catch something new—a sound effect, a flicker of fire, or a twist we didn't expect. One thing we did expect is the big drop at the end and the splash of water. My daughter Emma exclaimed it's better than ever.

My daughter Hannah, who was my rollercoaster "buddy" on this trip, dared me to try the Time Traveler again—"For



old times' sake," she said. I know I had ridden it before when she was young but I had forgotten the coaster thrill it provided. Halfway through the biggest drop, I thought maybe I was getting too old for that kind of excitement. As the wind pelted our faces, I turned and yelled, "I don't remember thiiiiiiiiis," as we continued to plummet laughing all the way.

When I got off, wobbling like I had just found my legs, Hannah was laughing and asking "Do you remember it now, Dad?" After that, Hannah and I tried several others. The experience was similarly thrilling on Powder Keg and we were the last group to ride before the incoming misty weather caused it to be paused for a few hours.

As we strolled through the park we caught the mid-afternoon production of A Dickens' Christmas Carol, and let me tell you—this wasn't your average theme park show. The sets were stunning, with intricate details that transported us straight to Victorian England. The singing? Broadway quality. And the acting was so good that you feel you're a part of the story. Anita whispered that it could rival any touring production, and I had to agree. At the end of the show, we experienced our first snowfall of the season—inside. We both walked out humming Christmas carols. We were officially in the season!

Nearby is the 51-year-old Frontier Fa-La-La Follies in the Silver Dollar Saloon and it never disappoints. I was excited for our little grandson to see it because I knew he could easily handle its 30-minute length. The show is extremely popular with families and kids of all ages. As the cast recreates their 1880-themed saloon with Bart and the girls bantering back and forth, hilarity ensues. The end is touching, as the real meaning of the season is clearly shared with the audience.

Other productions in the park include

"Christmas to Remember," featuring the Spoken 4 Quartet singing stirring melodies. Another is "Coming Home for Christmas" with a young ensemble of 14 singers and dancers and a 4-piece band. I was particularly moved by the performance of Nadia Cole in the Gazebo next to the towering Christmas tree. She's an international gospel/R&B recording artist with a powerful voice jazzing up the place with classic Christmas favorites. You can catch her at one of six times each day.

In the evening, as the Christmas lights became dazzlingly bright throughout the park we hopped on the Frisco Silver Dollar Train, which was more my speed. The conductor made sure to stop where "grandpa" shared the nativity story in a way that reminded me of when our kids would sit wide-eyed, soaking in every word. Heck, I was hanging on his every word. Our three-year-old grandson was mesmerized by the illuminated and intricately painted nativity figures, some of which were 12 feet tall.

After our ride through the park and the wildness that surrounds it, we returned to the train station. We made our way to the giant Christmas tree, an 8-story masterpiece that's the heart of the celebration in Towne Square. Every 20 minutes, it puts on a light and music show that's so well-choreographed it could compete with anything you'd see at Rockefeller Center. When they played Silent Night, I'll admit, my eyes got a little misty. Anita and our family didn't say anything—she just smiled knowingly and nudged me. I'm known in the family for being very sentimental.

Crowds lined Main Street from one end of the park to the other for two scheduled Christmas parades. Kids were awed by this musical procession of costumed characters and illuminated floats. It takes place twice daily at 6 and 8pm.

But don't think you have to enjoy rides

Netflix attacked for casting Jew to play Mary

Netflix is under fire over its new biblical drama "Mary."

Their egregious offense, according to the left? They've hired Israeli Jews to play... Jews. Social media erupted this week after the trailer was released with calls for boycotts revealing an astounding ignorance of the Bible and history.

The production features 21-year-old Noa Cohen as Mary, plus Ori Pfeffer, and Ido Tako. Most of the hate has been directed towards Cohen's portrayal of Mary, mother of Jesus, despite clear biblical record outlining the Jewish lineage of Jesus connecting him and his mother to King David.

The film also features Academy Award winner Anthony Hopkins as King Herod leading a gripping and "murderous hunt" of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

Much of the hate has come from Palestinian activists who wrongly assert the term Palestinian is religious as that Mary and Jesus were Palestinians. As Israeli news outlets have quoted historians. "Palestinian is not a religious identity, and the figures depicted were Jews," reports Israel Hayom.

One post claimed Jesus was born in Gaza, stating Netflix thought it was a good idea to cast a Jew to play Mother Mary like [they] aren't bombing the



homeland of Jesus."

Interviewed about his choice of actors in the lead roles, director D.J. Caruso told Entertainment Weekly that it was "important to us that Mary, along with most of our primary cast, be selected from Israel to ensure authenticity."

Jews came to the film's defense on social media, asking who else but a Jew could depict Mary?

Caruso says he dealt honestly with the story and its biblical accuracy surrounding the details of the birth of Jesus through the film's writing and production. It was done with "great care" to create "a story that feels both sacred and modern."

Media outlets report that the arcane response to the new film has devolved into death threats against the actors. Protesters are also calling for a boycott.

The film will be released on Netflix December 6.

to enjoy Silver Dollar City. The place is filled with craftsmen and women at work making amazing things. You can watch candy being made (and sample it fresh), lathe and woodworking experts and glass blowers, candle makers, leather workers, and potters. I always enjoy the Wilderness Road Blacksmith shop and demonstrations. Prices are reasonable and you can take something personalized home that day.

Of course, no visit to Silver Dollar City is complete without indulging in the food. From pizzas the size of a hubcap to skillet bowls and kettle chips and creamy hot cocoa, you won't be disappointed. My go-to is the pork rinds. These days, they can come drizzled in cheese. Yum.

A few tips for anyone planning a trip before the season ends Dec. 30: The park isn't too busy right when it opens, so it's a great time to hit your favorite rides without long waits. But the real magic happens after 5:30 p.m. That's when the coming dusk is accentuated by the beauty of the lights. After 8:30 pm, the crowds thin and you can practically walk onto the rides. We rode Fire in the Hole again just before closing and it was like having the park all to ourselves.

By the end of the night, we found ourselves standing under the canopy of lights in Midtown. The glow of those millions of twinkling bulbs surrounded us, just like it had all those years ago. I turned to Anita and said, "This is exactly what we needed." We had had a busy fall taking a group of people to Greece and Turkey on a tour and catching up with work afterwards. She knows I love Christmas so she laughed in her Anita laugh and replied, "But we're not decorating for Christmas until after Thanksgiving."

On the drive back, I couldn't stop thinking about the memories we'd made here—then and now with our family back together, including our sons-in-law Mason and Justin and grandson. Silver Dollar City and its Old Time Christmas isn't just a theme park; it's a time capsule. Every visit takes me back to those years when the kids were small, life was loud and messy, and every moment felt like an adventure.

Even now, with our kids creating traditions of their own, it still feels like magic. And yes, I'd do it all over again—even the Time Traveler.

—Dwight Widaman is editor of Metro-voiceneews.com



3 Trends for Improving Home Design and Function

Whether you're looking to refresh your space or planning a major home renovation, staying current with design trends enhances comfort and style and also boosts your house's value.

As modern home design continues to evolve, trends are increasingly shifting toward long-term movements focused on versatility, sustainability and innovation. By embracing these elements in your 2025 updates, with these ideas from the experts at Westlake Royal Building Products – a leader throughout North America in innovation, design and production of high-quality, low-maintenance exterior and interior building products including siding, trim, mouldings, roofing, stone, windows, outdoor living and more – you can ensure your living space remains stylish and functional for years to come.

Incorporate Versatile Designs

Because homeowners' tastes are continuously evolving, it's important to take

an adaptable design approach when creating indoor and outdoor spaces. Using products that offer exceptional design versatility, including siding, trim, stone, roofing and other exterior elements, can allow your upgrades to transcend fleeting trends and maintain their relevance and appeal over time.

Similarly, homebuyers are moving away from cookie-cutter designs, seeking bold aesthetics that enhance curb appeal and distinguish their homes from others on the block. This shift toward personalized spaces that reflect individual tastes requires mixing textures, finishes and colors to transform both exteriors and interiors to create visually dynamic and unique looks. Blending materials like brick with vinyl siding, stone with wood or modern siding with rustic stone veneer can add depth and character to facades.

Choose Eco-Friendly Design

Homeowners are increasingly fo-



cused on sustainable and eco-friendly home designs to reduce their environmental impact, save on energy costs and create healthier living spaces. Complementing this trend, biophilic design is also gaining momentum as it seeks to strengthen the connection between indoor environments and nature. This approach goes beyond simply adding greenery, focusing on the use of natural light, improved ventilation and materials that mimic organic patterns and textures. Features like large windows, living walls and the use of natural materials, such as wood and stone, have become popular choices, blending sustainability with a deeper connection to the natural world.

Eco-friendly materials that use fewer raw materials, generate smaller carbon footprints and conserve water play a vital role in sustainable design and are in high demand. For example, reclaimed wood, recycled metal and low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints are popular choices due to their reduced environmental impact. Innovative products can also help reduce energy consumption like US Tile Clay Roofing, which is naturally reflective, 100% recyclable and, when paired with a cool roof system, can save homeowners up to 22% per year on heating and cooling costs compared to a standard composition asphalt shingle roof.

Seek, Innovative Solutions

Driven by the evolving needs of homeowners, modular and easy-install

systems, like panelized stone siding, are gaining popularity due to their ability to simplify installation while mimicking traditional materials such as stone or wood. These functional systems save time and can empower homeowners to

tackle projects themselves.

In addition, the rising frequency of severe weather events is increasing demand for smart, weather-resistant materials that enhance homes' aesthetic appeal and offer superior protection.

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sports

Saints LB Supports Homeless, Trafficking Shelter: 'It's a Calling'



New Orleans Saints linebacker Demario Davis has been named the NFLPA Community MVP for Week 8.

Davis received this honor after he upgraded "every bed at Covenant House in New Orleans, a shelter that helps youth in need overcome homelessness and human trafficking," NFLPA.com reported.

"Thank you, NFLPA, for recognizing the work I've done with not only Covenant House, but the work Devoted Dreamers has been doing every year since being founded in 2013," Davis said of the honor. "My drive to give back comes from a place of deep empathy and love – knowing that, through service, we can stand in the gap for those who feel forgotten, heal broken spirits and build a legacy of hope."

"Covenant House is the largest, primarily privately funded charity in North and Central America providing immediate and long-term support for young people facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking," a website description of the charity reads.

Davis shared a video of the outreach project on his social media and captioned the post, "A small act of kindness can have a large impact in someone else's life."

"It's not just about creating change today, but inspiring a ripple effect of compassion that will open doors and ignite possibilities for

generations to come," Davis told the NFLPA. "This work isn't just a mission; it's a calling to leave the world better than we found it."

Davis decided to donate the 100 beds to The Covenant House as a way to pay forward his 100th consecutive start for the New Orleans Saints.

On top of his upgrade to the house, "the NFLPA will donate \$10,000 to his foundation or charity of choice."

—movieguide.org

From homelessness to Alabama A&M, guard Darius Ford aims to 'serve Him'

Darius Ford, a guard on the Alabama A&M basketball team, is a Fort Worth, Texas, native through and through. So how did he end up with the Bulldogs? Well, his journey to Huntsville, Alabama, has been anything but typical.

Growing up with three younger siblings, Ford faced significant challenges, including homelessness. His early years were marked by instability as he and his family moved from place to place.

"For the majority of my life, I experienced a lot of traumatic experiences that not only shaped me into who I am, but allowed me to learn more about life and people," Ford recently told Sports Spectrum. "One of the biggest things that shaped me was battling homelessness as a child. I remember staying with relatives and staying in motels just to have a place to rest at night. The journey of navigating through that experience was a lot to bear at times, but it has brought myself and my family closer through an unbreakable bond."

"On my 16th birthday, I remember acknowledging what a marker it was to be 16 and how you are supposed to be elated at this age marker. I was excited the whole day of just making it this far," Ford said. "Later that evening, I remember stepping out of the car looking at a motel that we had to stay in for that night. I instantly felt defeated and felt like there was nothing I could do to get out of this.



"I cried myself to bed the whole night, crying tears of regret and sorrow, feeling helpless in every way. Before I went to sleep, I asked God if He could get me out of this, I would serve Him for the rest of my life."

God answered Ford's prayer, and His answer came through basketball.

Ford was determined to play in college, but it seemed more like a closed door than an answered prayer at first. Upon his graduation from high school, there were no more roster spots for the 2020-21 season at TCU (in Fort Worth)

due to COVID-19. However, he was offered the opportunity to be a manager that season, and he jumped at the chance. He became a first-generation college student.

As a manager, Ford worked tirelessly at every task assigned to him while also constantly working on his own game so he could earn a roster spot the following season. Early mornings and late nights in the gym, in addition to being a student during COVID, were a lot to bear, but he remained determined to realize his dream of becoming a Division-I college basketball player.

He was a walk-on for the Horned Frogs in 2021-22, and for three years he donned the purple and white. In those three years, he made three consecutive March Madness appearances, spearheaded a clothing drive resulting in more than 1,000 items of clothing being donated to a local community center, and he created the Darius Ford Change Maker Scholarship, awarded to a high school student in the community.

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How Women Can Break the Cycle of Spiraling Before Bedtime

Sleep is a priority for holistic health, but many women aren't getting enough of it. Not only does it affect your overall health, but stress-related sleep loss also makes it difficult to maintain focus and energy throughout the day.

Nearly half (45%) of women ages 40-60 lose more than two hours of sleep each night due to spiraling thoughts with 10% reporting losing more than four hours of sleep, according to Natrol's Sleep Spiral Survey, revealing challenges women in this age range face for achieving quality sleep.

"Busy women often struggle with sleep due to lingering stress and anxiety from managing work, family and personal responsibilities, which can lead to spiraling thoughts, keeping the mind active at night," said Dr. Shelby Harris, a sleep expert and director of sleep at Sleepopolis.

According to survey participants, personal finances are the top sleep disruptor, with 50% of women citing concerns over money as the primary reason they can't fall asleep most nights. Additionally, 45% of women cite anxiety

about the future often keeping them from falling asleep.

Seasonal factors can also impact a good night's rest. The holiday season is the most challenging time for sleep, with 51% of women experiencing increased late-night thoughts during this period.

Understanding the cause of your sleep disruption is an important step toward improving your sleeping habits, especially since 1 in 3 women have more difficulty sleeping now than they did one year ago.

Regain control of your sleep with these tips:

Set the scene for sleep. Harris recommends updating your sleep environment for better results.

"Avoid bright light and limit screen time at least an hour before bed and focus on creating a cozy sleep environment that suits your needs for quality rest," she said. "Choose comfortable bedding, set the room to a cool temperature and incorporate soothing sounds like a white noise machine or fan

to set yourself up for a good night's sleep."

Establish a consistent bedtime routine. You can teach your body to anticipate bedtime and ease into better sleep. Begin preparing for bed at the same time each night and go through the same ritual. That might include grooming and self-care habits to help you wind down for the night.

Consider a sleep aid supplement. Many women (1 in 4) often simply give up trying to fall asleep when experiencing spiraling thoughts, with 89% at least occasionally giving up on sleep altogether and choosing to get out of bed. Melatonin supplements can help calm the mind before bed so you can fall asleep faster and stay asleep.† Consider Natrol's selection of drug-free Melatonin Gummies, which can help manage occasional sleep disruptions and support quality sleep.

Take steps to manage stress. Prioritizing stress relief can benefit your overall health along with helping you get better rest. Engaging in relaxing activities like reading, meditating or listening to music can be especially helpful in the evening to clear and soothe your mind before you head for bed.

Harris recommends talking with your doctor if you've tried various sleep hygiene strategies and find you're still struggling to get restorative sleep.

"You can discuss whether a sleep aid such as melatonin is appropriate for you and align on the right amount and timing to address your sleep concerns," she said.

Find more ideas to support better sleep health at Natrol.com.

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Prepare Yourself for Cooler Weather



Although cold weather isn't directly to blame when you get sick, it creates an environment that makes it easier for germs and illnesses to thrive. In fact, understanding how cooler temperatures affect your chances of getting sick may be your best approach for preventive care.

Despite the old adage that "you'll catch your death of cold," the cold itself doesn't cause illness. More accurately, the cold is more hospitable to viruses, making it easier for them to spread. While you can't control Mother Nature, you can take steps to protect your health when temperatures drop.

Protect Your Immune System

A weakened immune system makes it harder for your body to ward off intru-

sive germs. If you're otherwise healthy, protecting your immune system can be as simple as stepping up typical healthy habits, like eating plenty of nutrient-rich produce, getting enough sleep and exercising. Managing stress and limiting alcohol consumption are also helpful in managing your body's immune response.

If your immune system is compromised by an underlying condition, talk with your doctor about what you can do to add an extra layer of protection during the cooler months, including any vaccines that may help boost immunity.

Combat Congestion

Cool, dry conditions can wreak havoc on your nasal passages, drying them out and reducing the protective layer of mucus that helps fight infection. Sinus pressure and congestion are often some of the first warning signs you're coming down with something.

To treat your congestion symptoms, you can use a non-medicated option like Mucinex Sinus Saline Spray.

This is the first-ever saline product with a nozzle that lets you switch between two spray pressures. The "gentle mist" helps clear everyday congestion and soothes the nose while the "power jet" helps clear tough nasal congestion often associated with colds. An added benefit is that the product can be used for children 2 years of age and older on the gentle mist setting and children 6 years of age and older on the power jet mode.

Spend Time Outdoors

People naturally spend more time indoors when temperatures drop, but there are some benefits to getting outdoors. Sunlight is a natural source of vitamin D, which plays a pivotal role in immunity. Sunlight also triggers the body to produce serotonin, which boosts your mood, and multiple studies show a strong correlation between mental and physical health.

Fresh air and exercise are also good for your overall health, and exposure to daylight can help keep your circadian rhythms regulated, which in turn promotes better sleep. What's more, acute exposure to cold can trigger your body to produce infection-fighting cells, so you're less prone to illness.

Practice Good Hygiene

The everyday act of washing your hands can play a big role in preventing illness, especially after you spend time in public places. While out and about, you likely come in contact with many surfaces others may have touched, including door handles, shopping carts, touch screens and menus. Make a habit of wiping down surfaces you touch frequently, such as your keyboard and phone, with disinfectant wipes.

Stay Hydrated

Keeping your body well-hydrated throughout the day can help ensure all your body's systems are functioning as they should. If you're dehydrated, your body can't use the nutrients you consume properly, which affects your immunity. In addition, drinking plenty of water helps flush toxins out of the body before they can cause an infection.

Find more practical tips and products to help manage your health during the colder months at Mucinex.com.

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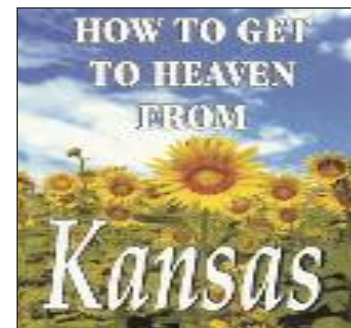
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More important than living in KANSAS is where you will live forever. Just as you would look at a map of KANSAS to find your way, so you must look at the Bible to find your way to heaven. The Bible says, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6). Jesus is the only way to Heaven and He gave these directions on getting there.

1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Sin brings both physical & spiritual death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. 20:14).

2. Realize Jesus paid the penalty. Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection provided a way for you to go to heaven and restore your relationship with God. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). Since Jesus, God's Son, was the only One who could pay for our sin, He is the only Way to Heaven.

3. Repent of your sin and receive Jesus as your Savior. In order to go to Heaven from KANSAS, or anywhere else, you must accept Christ by calling on Him in prayer. He tells us in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Use the following prayer, or one similar to it, to receive Him now:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe that you died and rose again for me. Please forgive me of my sin, become Lord of my life, and take me to heaven when I die. I am trusting you completely, and in nothing I can do. Thank you Jesus! Amen.



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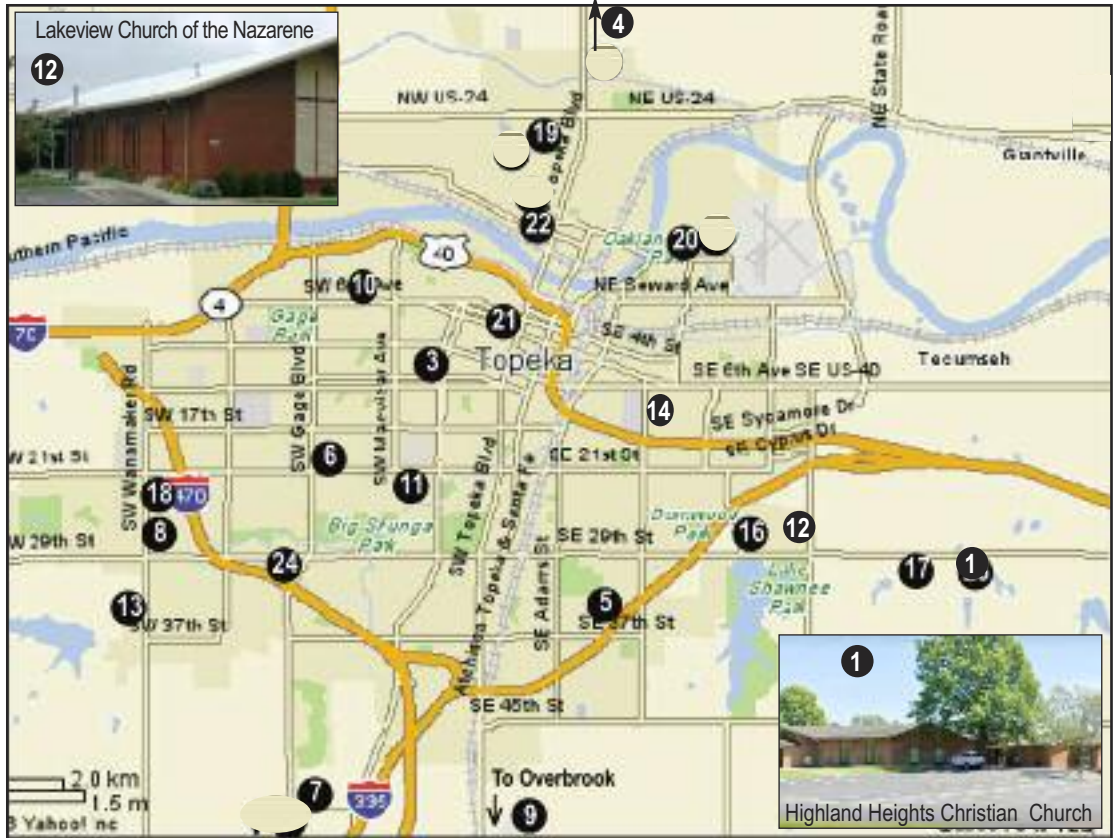
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Finding faith in “The Nutcracker,” a Christmas classic

The popularity of the ballet “The Nutcracker” skyrockets during Advent and the Christmas season because of its pageantry, dancing, and timeless classical music. But have you ever wondered what the story is really all about? If so, you’re not alone.

The story is much clearer, says the Reverend Matt Rawle, the lead pastor at Asbury United Methodist Church in Bossier City, Louisiana, if we use a “lens of faith” to look more closely at the characters and the action.

The story actually resonates with strong parallels to our faith and helps us prepare for Christmas, Rawle writes in his book on the subject.

We can see many parallels to our faith in what happens to the characters. Clara, the main character, is at that “in between” age and always waiting: waiting to grow older, waiting for someone, waiting to understand the world. She is loved dearly by her peculiar godfather who gives her a special gift – the Nutcracker. After the Nutcracker later comes to life, he battles the evil Mouse King, only to die in battle. However, the loving godfather resurrects the Nutcracker, who then takes Clara to his kingdom to the acclaim of many who have awaited his return.

Sound familiar?

“The Gift of the Nutcracker explores (many) Christian themes throughout the four chapters,” writes Rawle, “each focusing on a particular character from the story. In turn, each chapter applies the lessons learned from the story to help us better understand our walk as Christians and relationship with Christ.”

Like Clara, we Christians understand what it’s like to live in an “in between” time of life. We live in this world, raise families, enjoy traditions, and celebrate holidays and holy days. Yet Paul encourages us to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” (Romans 12:2). Like Clara, we find that it is often in these periods of waiting that we see the most growth in our lives.

Or consider Drosselmeir, Clara’s peculiar godfather, who gives her the Nutcracker. He also produces a puppet show that foreshadows future events, though it doesn’t disclose everything that will hap-



pen. If we are watching the play for the first time, we may not know this. But if once we have seen the play in its entirety, we know what events lie ahead.

Similarly, the Scripture passages during Advent foretell the coming of the Messiah, God’s gift of his only begotten son. We know now that Jesus is the King of Kings, but people in the first century did not know the full story. “Scripture didn’t tell us everything we want to

but what about us? Do we truly feel peace and the hope for a new life by realizing that God will never abandon us?

The final section of the book deals with the Nutcracker, whom Rawle calls “the greatest gift.” When Clara receives the Nutcracker at the Christmas party, she doesn’t know what to think about the gift. It wasn’t something that she wanted, but she found out later that it was a gift that she needed.

know,” writes Rawle, “but it does reveal everything that we need.”

The third section of the book looks at the Mouse King, the villain of the story. We’re not quite sure who he is or why he wants to battle the Nutcracker, but Clara fears him from the start.

Are there times when fear and suspicion are the dominant feelings in our day? Are we constantly fighting battles, both real and perceived ones, throughout the day? Clara finds comfort when the Nutcracker is by her side,

In one sense, Jesus is the gift we wanted, but we are surprised to find that he is also the gift we need. Jesus calls us all to turn the other cheek, welcome our neighbor, feed and clothe the poor, even carry his cross. If we are to welcome the Christ child into our lives at Christmas, we must also embody his teachings and act more like Jesus during the rest of the year.

Rawle summarizes the connections between the story and our faith journey in this way: “Much like our journey as Christians, Clara’s story is one that begins with uncertainty, fear, and struggle, yet ends with comfort, hope, and joy. Both The Nutcracker and the Advent story unfold just as we know they will, but without the hope and anticipation that always accompany both the dance and the season.”

So the next time you attend a live performance of The Nutcracker, or watch it on TV, be sure to use a “lens of faith” and walk with Christ alongside Clara and the Nutcracker.

—Christopher Fenoglio is the managing editor of UMC.org and writes regularly about books, films, and popular culture. Contact him by email or at 615-312-3734.

48 Years of The Nutcracker: Ballet Midwest’s Annual Production

Symbolizing good luck and their ability to frighten away malevolent spirits, nutcrackers have long symbolized another thing for many people... the Christmas season. Based loosely on E.T.A. Hoffman’s fantasy story “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” the plot of the annual holiday ballet program depicts a girl whose new beloved Christmas gift of a wooden nutcracker that comes to life on Christmas Eve to battle against the evil Mouse King.

Make the Nutcracker ballet a part of your holiday must-dos and watch this unique story transform on the stage during the 48th annual Ballet Midwest Nutcracker, December 13-15, at the Topeka Performing Arts Center.

At the start of the show, the stage is set as a Victorian Christmas party with boys and girls running around with holiday glee. The merry crew are led into mischief by Fritz, who makes it his mission to torture his older sister, Clara, and the special gift from her mysterious godfather: a Nutcracker.

Falling asleep that very evening, Clara dreams of her darling Nutcracker, her very own night, battling evil against the



wicked Mouse King. Victorious, Clara and her Nutcracker (now a handsome prince) travel through snow-covered fields, to cascades of flowers and through the sugar plum-filled Kingdom of Sweets, where dancers take to the stage representing different countries (and their corresponding treats!) throughout the second part of the show.

Ballet Midwest Company and Junior Company dancers are primary players

on stage, but the cast includes both adults and children from the local community. Ages 3 to ageless make up the full cast of almost 200 dancers.

Ballet Midwest’s Nutcracker Ballet is a holiday staple and will be performed live at TPAC, Friday, December 13th at 7:30 pm, Saturday, December 14th at 1:30 pm and 7:30 pm and Sunday, December 15th at 1:30 pm.

Ticket prices are \$25 for adults, \$22

for seniors 55 and older, and \$16 for students 18 and younger. A family pack of two adult and two student tickets is \$60. Tickets can be purchased in person at the TPAC box office, from cast members, and at Barbara’s Conservatory of Dance.

For more information visit www.balletmidwest.net.

Fun Facts:

• All local talent! All the dancers involved are trained right here in North-

east Kansas. Many grow up performing in the Nutcracker every year with dreams of the day they perform the lead roles in the production.

• It’s the longest running Nutcracker in Northeast Kansas.

• Terrific lighting and theatrical effects to behold – smoking cannons, lighting flashes, growing sets, falling snow and more.

• Costumes are stunning! The level of detail with Victorian lace and sequins makes the dancers shine on stage.

• Christmas tree grows over 20 feet in front of your eyes.

• Acting plays a major role in the production – Shannon Reilly (Topeka Civic Theatre’s Artistic Director) consistently creates magic on stage as Clara’s godfather. Each cast member similarly strives to bring out the best in their role, whether scary or stunning, magical or mysterious.

• Incredible pas de deux (dance of two) to view: enjoy watching strong men lift ladies overhead, allowing them to gracefully hover in the air, spin with precision and glide through space.