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VOLUME 9 • NUMBER 4

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NEW RESIDENT churchguide

First Southern Baptist Church

See inside back cover!

New survey: Kansans remain misinformed about K-12 finance

While the election ads have stopped, Kansans remain deeply misinformed about the true state of the Kansas budget and K-12 finance. Kansas Policy Institute has released a public opinion survey from SurveyUSA that takes the pulse of Kansas voters. The results highlight several of the issues facing the state as the legislature looks to convene early next year.

"It is impossible for citizens to develop informed opinions on education funding and state budget issues without accurate information," said KPI president Dave Trabert. "We continue to see that citizens who are accu-

"The focus needs to shift to getting more of the record-setting funding into classrooms where it will best help students."

rately informed on K-12 funding have significantly different opinions than those who believe school funding is much lower than reality.

"Kansans are providing record funding levels, that also exceed adjustments for enrollment and inflation over the last ten years, but outcomes on independent national assessments

■ Please see K-12 page 3

Celebrating the Giver of all Life

Merry Christmas

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

LUKE 2:11

See our Christmas Guide! PAGE 8

HomeStrong, Bank of America donate house to veteran

This Thanksgiving will be extra special for retired Lance Cpl. Brady Anderson. He and wife Sarah received the keys to their newly renovated home in Topeka the weekend before Thanksgiving. Their two-month-old son also met his grandparents for the first time. The home was donated mortgage-free by HomeStrong USA in partnership with Bank of America.

Anderson joined the U.S. Marine Corps and trained as a Signals Intelligence Analyst. During the past two years of service, Anderson has seen his family twice, once to get married. He officially retired last week and is looking forward to spending more time with this family.

As part of Bank of America's efforts to help revitalize communities and support the housing needs of those who have served and sacrificed for our nation, the company has donated more than 1,600 homes nationwide to military veteran-support charities and other nonprofit, community-based

organizations. This donation is made possible through a partnership with HomeStrong USA, which works with financial institutions such as Bank of America to support its HomeStrong's Heroes Program. To learn more about Bank of America's support of our service members and veterans, visit bankofamerica.com/militarysupport.

HomeStrong USA is a nonprofit community development organiza-

tion with a mission to increase vitality and stability of communities across the nation by promoting successful home ownership through education and counseling, the creation of innovative affordable housing opportunities, and providing resources to local nonprofit counseling agencies. For more information on HomeStrong USA and their programs, visit www.homestrongusa.org



A CHRISTIAN SHOPPING LIST

As you "shop" this year for the gifts you want to give to the special people in your life, please consider giving the following gifts to people as listed below. These are Biblical gifts. Check them one by one as you give them. These are gifts that will truly keep on giving and will last for eternity.

- **The gift of forgiveness** (Mt. 6:14-15, 18:21-35, Luke 6:36-38).

Pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you someone who needs your forgiveness or maybe someone who might need to forgive you. Take the steps to make that happen. This is of tremendous spiritual importance.

- **The gift of private prayer** (1 Sam. 12:23, Mt. 6:6).

Think about someone who really needs the Lord in some way. Maybe they are not saved. Maybe they are under a tremendous load or carry a heavy burden. They may be enduring relentless satanic attack. What a wonderful gift... to offer prayer on their behalf. A total of one hour before Christmas (just on their behalf) will make a difference.

- **The gift of a generous deed or act of kindness. Making sure to do it in such a way that they will not know from whom it came** (Mt. 6:1-5).

You aren't giving or doing this to be thanked, praised or recognized; but to bring glory to the Lord and store up a reward in heaven.

- **The gift of an act of ministry** (Mt. 10:7-8).

Such a spiritual principle: "Freely you have received, freely give." Let the Lord be your guide as you minister to someone in need. The difference between this and the gift immediately above is that you go and do openly. Let them see and know who it is that is ministering to them. This is a testimony and a witness.

- **The gift of a note/call/visit to three people** (Mt. 25:31-40).

1. Someone in a nursing home (find out who's there)

2. Someone who is going through, or has gone through, a very difficult experience within this past year

3. A friend or relative who for much too long has needed to hear from you

- **The gift of an act of love for an "enemy"** (Mt. 5:43-48).

You decide who, and what to do. You will know.

WHICH COMPANIES MADE THE NAUGHTY LIST THIS CHRISTMAS?

Have you grown sick and tired of national retail chains bowing to the very small anti-Christmas minority?

If so, then take a good look at the list below, and use it to fight back when you do your Christmas shopping!

The American Family Association has released their annual "Naughty-or-Nice" list that categorizes retailers and how they approach the Christmas season.

Some of the names that made the "nice" list are well known companies such as Walmart, J.C. Penney, Kmart, and Macy's. Others fell into a "marginal" list, meaning that they rarely or infrequently

referred to Christmas, including Best Buy, CVS Pharmacy, Walgreens and Whole Foods.

American Family Association reviewed up to four areas to determine if a company was "Christmas-friendly" in their advertising: print media (newspaper inserts), broadcast media (radio/television), website and/or personal visits to the store. If a company's ad has references to items associated with Christmas (trees, wreaths, lights, etc.), it was considered as an attempt to reach "Christmas" shoppers.

If a company has items associated

with Christmas, but did not use the word "Christmas," then the company is considered as censoring "Christmas."

AFA continually updates the list, so check afa.net for updates.

Want to report a company? Send your detailed report to christmas@afa.net. Note: AFA does not list local or regional companies. Only nationally-recognized companies will be listed. This list only reflects a company's "Christmas" advertising and does not take into account other corporate policies AFA may not agree with.



AFA's 2013 listing of top retailers and how they recognize Christmas

Companies in All CAPS and bold enthusiastically acknowledge Christmas

Companies FOR "Christmas"

ACE Hardware
Amazon.com
Banana Republic
Bass Pro Shops
Bed Bath & Beyond
BELK
Big Lots
Books-A-Million
Cabella's
Dick's Sporting Goods
Dillard's
Dollar General
Gap Stores
Hallmark
Hancock Fabrics
HOBBY LOBBY
Home Depot
Hy-Vee

JC Penney
JoAnn Fabrics & Crafts
Kmart
Kohl's
Kroger
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L.L. Bean
Menard's
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Old Navy
Pier One Imports
QVC.com
Sam's Club
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Target
TJ Maxx
Toys R Us
WAL-MART

Companies marginal on "Christmas"

Academy Sports
Best Buy
Bath & Body Works
CVS Pharmacy
Radio Shack
Starbucks
True Value
Walgreens

Companies AGAINST "Christmas"

Barnes & Noble
Family Dollar
Foot Locker
Limited Brands
Maurice's
Office Depot
PetSmart
Staples
Victoria's Secret



GIFTS

by **Jessica S. Hosman**

When I look at a manger scene and reflect upon the Christ child so delicately placed in hay, humility is the word that first comes to mind. Jesus' entrance wasn't grand by the world's standards, but indeed it was grander than the world could ever know.

Jesus' birth changed the course of eternity. His life is a gift greater than any wrapped up with a bow. It's the gift that assures we don't have to walk through any of the hardships of life alone; the gift that removes our burdens and dries our tears. When we receive Him – and embrace this great gift – we begin to recognize that our lives are gifts as well.

What does that look like?

I often reflect upon the life of my son who God daily uses to teach me more than I ever dreamed possible. To me, Zechariah is a treasure – a true gift from God to me. He's not perfect by any stretch of the imagination. He still loves to get his own way, throws temper tantrums when he doesn't, and often loves to become defiant in the most awkward (and embarrassing) of places... but I don't love him any less. Even in the midst of his most horrific of days, he's still one of the most precious gifts I've ever received. One Sunday afternoon as I tucked him in for his nap, I thanked him for doing such a good job at church that morning. As he remembered a three-second mistake he had made, he solemnly replied, "But I talked loudly during church today, Mommy." Because of his mess-up, he couldn't comprehend why I would still

pat him on the back and tell him thanks. Most of us are the same way with God. We see the many areas in which we fall short and fail to comprehend that we're still seen as valuable and loved in spite of. When Jesus was humbly placed upon a bed of hay, He wasn't trying to change the world – He just did. Zechariah doesn't try to make me love him or think the world of him – I just do. You might not live your life trying to be a treasured gift – but you are. There is only one Jesus Christ... one Savior who can reach into the darkest places of our lives and pull out treasure we've never seen, one Redeemer who can take our past and turn it into something brilliant and new, one Friend who will love us despite our deepest faults and never leave our side. I'm grateful beyond words for that greatest gift, but I'm also thankful for you. Maybe I've never met you in person. Maybe you, like Zechariah, still run away and throw fits when you don't get your way. But that doesn't alter truth or cause your value to diminish or worth to cease. You're still loved and an irreplaceable gift to this world simply because you're you.

This Christmas season the incredible gift of Jesus Christ is placed before you, and then placed into your hands for others to receive. It's never too late to open that gift... and it's never too late to embrace the miraculous wonder He's created you to be in this world. You are valuable, you are treasured, you are a gift and you are loved.



Jessica Hosman



Survey: Kansans want more efficiency in government before tax increases

WichitaLiberty.org - A survey of Kansas voters finds that Kansans believe government is not operating efficiently. They also believe government should pursue efficiency savings, focus on core functions, and spend unnecessary cash reserves before cutting services or raising taxes.

This month Kansas Policy Institute produced a survey asking registered voters in Kansas questions on the topic of school spending. The final four questions asked voters' opinion of government efficiency and how government should respond to budgetary issues.

Question 9 asked this: "How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: Kansas state government operates pretty efficiently and makes effective use of my tax dollars." As you can see in the nearby table and chart, 31 percent of voters agreed with this statement. 65 percent disagreed, including 39 percent who said they strongly disagree with the statement. That was the most common response.

In question 10, the current survey of Kansas voters asked "How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: Kansas state government could run 5% to 10% more efficiently than it does now." 74 percent of respondents

agreed to some extent, with 42 percent indicating they strongly agree. Only six percent strongly disagreed.


Question 11 asked voters how Kansas state government should react to an unbalanced budget: "How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: I believe the Kansas state government should pursue efficiency savings, focus on core functions, and spend unnecessary cash reserves before raising taxes and/or cutting government functions." 68 percent agreed with this statement, with 40

percent strongly agreeing. 24 percent disagreed.

Question 12 asked voters how to fix Kansas state budget problems: "What would be the single best way to fix state budget problems? Increasing the income tax? Increasing the sales tax? Cutting spending, even if it means reduced services? Or reducing spending by providing services more efficiently?"

More information on the survey can be found at www.kansaspolicy.org


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K-12

continued from page 1

are relatively unchanged. It will always cost a lot of money to provide public education but the data shows that it's how the money is spent that matters - not how much. 'Just spend more' is about funding institutions. The focus needs to shift to getting more of the record-setting funding into classrooms where it will best help students."

The emphasis on getting more money to classrooms is a priority for citizens; 74% of respondents believe outside-the-classroom functions should be provided more efficiently on a regionalized basis, with savings put into classrooms. Other keys findings in the poll;

• Only 7% correctly said that total per-pupil funding has increased more than 5% over the last four years;

• 66% of the respondents who correctly identified the total per-pupil amount spent on K-12 education ARE NOT willing to personally pay higher taxes to spend more on education;

• 68% of respondents agreed with

the statement, "I believe the Kansas state government should pursue efficiency savings, focus on core functions, and spend unnecessary cash reserves before raising taxes and/or cutting government functions;"

• 54% want to reduce spending via efficiencies to solve any state budget problems; 14% would rather reduce spending even it means a reduction in service and only 26% want higher income or sales taxes.

• 74% believe state government could operate 5% to 10% more efficiently; 74% of government employees in the survey also agreed that government can operate more efficiently.

Trabert concluded with, "Legislators and citizens cannot make good decisions about the challenges facing the state without good information. This survey confirms what we've known previously - Kansans are being misinformed and that cannot lead to good decision making. We encourage legislators and others to honestly examine facts without political bias. No finger pointing...no attempts to score political points...and no shading the facts...just civil discussion of the issues and facts."

Chaplain's Corner Uncommon Prayers



Fred S. Hollomon

Chaplain Emeritus
Kansas Senate

Prayers like this may be found in my Book of Uncommon Prayers at Book Boutique at the Library, Wolfe's Camera Shop, the State Capital, and my Web site, fsh-kschap.org

Heavenly Father,

It was the month of December
And all through our town,
People were stirring
With seldom a frown.

Most folks were smiling
As they visited the stores,
And walk out loaded
Through people packed doors.

But the happiest of all
Seemed to be,
Those who were singing
At the Christmas tree.

Because it isn't Santa
Who received the celebration,
It was Jesus our Savior
Who purchased our salvation.
Thank You God!

**I Pray in the Name of Jesus Christ
AMEN**

Topeka Selected as one of America's Best Cities for Global Trade

Supply-chain space is in demand, and that's no surprise given the momentum of America's exporters. As of 2013, U.S. exports reached an annual all-time high for the fourth consecutive year; in 2012, 29 states set new records for exports; 16 states achieved record exports in 2013.

And as exports grow, so do exporters. The site-selection process naturally follows, as these companies look for strategic locations from which to grow their global reach.

Global Trade Magazine's third annual "Best Cities for Global Trade" report offers 10 needs-oriented and relevant categories and looks at 10 cities in each that exporters should consider. Topeka is listed in the category of "Export Assistance."

The report is a collection of helpful tips to consider when looking for a great business environment, a well-educated or skilled workforce, a globally minded city or assistance with site-selection process.

The complete report can be found at GlobalTradeMag.com.




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newsbriefs



THIS IS YOUR TEENAGER'S BRAIN ON SUGAR

Too much sugar could be bad for your brain and your memory, especially for teenagers.

A new study from the University of Southern California found sugar led to problems with memory and inflammation of the brain in juvenile rats.

"The brain is especially vulnerable to dietary influences during critical periods of development, like adolescence," said Scott Kanoski, corresponding author of the study and an assistant professor at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. He added a diet high in sugar could not only mean gaining weight, but could hurt your brain as well.



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Remembering the troops

by **John Potter** | Military Chaplain



There are certain times on the calendar when memories of past deployments run strong. December often makes me mindful of my time overseas.

You are united with your unit as everyone has a job to perform. You are also united in the hardships and difficulties of being separated from those you love.

December is a tough time to be separated from family and friends. You miss the traditional family practices and customs like putting up the Christmas tree.



You miss the favorite food and dishes that made this particular time of year memorable. You miss the gift exchanges. But you also miss the church gatherings, Christmas pageants, and special worship services. They are the times and events that keep us strong in faith.

When service members are deployed, we are able to receive packages in the mail. Uncle Sam will serve us a meal with all the special fixings. Folks will decorate an office or work station with a snowman, reindeer, or Christmas lights. But missing church services as a family

always proved to be a hardship for Soldiers to overcome, no matter where you were stationed.

This Christmas, 86,000 Soldiers will be forward deployed across the globe. They will be overseas and away from their loved ones. They will be working in guard towers. They will be flying helicopters. They will be driving tanks. They will be constructing buildings, bridges, and roadways. They will be aiding hospital patients.

As we gather in churches across America, let us remember those who are deployed around the globe.

Pray for our service members this month. Lift them up as they perform their daily duties away from home and in harm's way. Pray for their families as they celebrate Christmas with an empty chair at the table and the heartache that can bring. Pray for God to bring our warriors home safely and for families to heal when they are reunited. Pray that they can gather next December and celebrate the birth of Christ as a family one more time.

Local Market Reopens in New Location

Kenny Ralph has relocated his indoor market, Kenny's Got One, at 433 SW 32nd Terrace. It is right behind the Wendy's on South Topeka Blvd.

Ralph had some problems with city permits and other requirements at a previous location where he first tried to reopen, so he finally secured the current building. His new location has much more display space than before, with two full floors of merchandise set up for easy



browsing.

His inventory includes furniture, appliances, electronics, musical instruments, sporting goods, DVDs, jewelry, bicycles, toys, games, tools, etc. He also has a lot of gardening equipment, including lawn tractors, as well as boats and motorcycles. Many antiques can also be found throughout the store.

"I really do have at least one of almost everything," Ralph said.

Ralph says his merchandise comes in a wide range of prices, but generally is



less expensive to purchase than in other places. It is his hope that Topekans will support his locally owned business and help him overcome the financial setback he incurred due to the problems he experienced with the first building he purchased.

"I hope they will come in and check the place out," Ralph said. "I know they will find something they need, and I can save them some money."

Hours are 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. For more information, call 785-246-6455.

Avoid the holiday stress



Mitch Temple | Focus on the Family

While "dashing through the snow" could be written today as "speeding down the interstate to the mall," both statements sound stressful to me.

With the arrival of the holidays, many of us experience an odd mixture of excitement and dread as we prepare to celebrate the season.

We get excited about the lights, shopping and Christmas dinner with family, but we also fear the stress that past holidays have taught us to expect.

From previous family misunderstandings and hurt feelings to scheduling conflicts, tight finances and the wear and tear on the body, holidays have a way of taking their toll on us.

I have found that the best way to lessen the stress of the holidays is to be prepared.

1. Recognize stress triggers ahead of time, and plan to minimize their impact. For example: Realize that you will get several invitations to holiday parties, events or service opportunities, and limit the number of events you will

commit to before the invitations come.

2. Create a holiday budget together. Commit to sticking to the budget no matter how great the sales are!

3. Try to resolve extended family issues before holiday gatherings, if possible. Sit down and discuss the problems rather than ignore them.

4. Commit to dealing with spousal conflict after the emotion has died down: "Honey, we are both tired. Let's not try to solve this now. Let's talk in the morning over coffee." Use common sense, and be disciplined enough to handle conflict in the right way.

5. Schedule time for each other: Go to bed at a decent hour. Exercise or take a walk. Protect your "together" time.

Most of all, remember what this time of year is all about: "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people... a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11, NIV).

That is a great reason to slow down, be thankful and be at peace this Christmas season.

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GETTING PAST HOLIDAYS AFTER A LIFE CHANGE

During Christmas, we're constantly thinking of others. But if you've experienced a big move, a job loss, a divorce or a death in the family, take some time to care for yourself this season.

Loss and life change are hard at any time of year. But they can be particularly tough during the holidays.

So if you find yourself struggling to face the demands of the season, give yourself some grace. You've been through a lot. Here are four ways to ease into the holiday hustle after a big life transition.

1. Don't make any quick decisions.

If you've just married or think you've found the perfect house, it can be tempting to rush into homeownership or a new house right away. But if your old place doesn't sell quickly, you could end up juggling two mortgages for Christmas. Or, if you've suffered a financial setback after a divorce or death, you may want to dip into your 401(k) to cover gifts and travel expenses. But you could lose up to 40% of your savings in penalties by cashing out early.

When our emotions are fragile, we tend to make impulsive decisions, and those decisions tend to cause more stress for us in the long run. So take some time to heal before you make any big moves with your money. It's better to cut back temporarily than to pay for your regrets for years to come.

2. Skip the stress, but keep a few traditions.

Seeing all those happy families at the mall can feel like torture if you've just lost a loved one. But don't let that keep you holed up in your house for months. It's important to get out and still enjoy a few of your favorite holiday traditions.

If you're not up to Christmas shopping, or if you really can't afford it right now, that's okay. No one will think any less of you. But make an effort to keep some family traditions intact. Decorate your tree or watch a movie marathon. You may not feel enthusiastic about these activities now, but they can help bring back some much-needed cheer to your life.

3. Surround yourself with people who care.

Explaining your job loss to every second, third and fourth cousin on your Dad's side is the last thing you want to do right now. So if you've recently been laid off, forget the pressure to crisscross the United States to visit distant relatives. Now is not the time to keep up appearances.

Instead, surround yourself with the family and friends who love you most. These are the people who can shut up and listen or step in and help. So pick your support system carefully and allow yourself to lean on them during the holidays.

4. Talk with professionals who can help.

Close friends and family members are crucial for support, but you may need to go a step further and find a counselor or pastor to help you move



DAVE RAMSEY

Financial author, radio host, television personality, and motivational speaker



forward and heal. Make sure you find someone you can trust then commit to weekly or monthly sessions with them as soon as possible.

And if you have some huge financial decisions to make, get professional financial advice. Again, this is not your well-meaning aunt or friend—this is someone who knows how to guide you through the difficult twists and turns of financial transition.

There's nothing harder than an



abrupt life change during the holidays. So if you're struggling to just make it through the season, don't force it.

Give yourself permission to slow down, take a break, and find the support you need. And remember, a new year is just around the corner.

Starts: Jan 8th at 7:00pm
(785) 266-6263

785-841-5446 (phone)

Lawrence Wesleyan Church
3705 Clinton Parkway, Lawrence, KS
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After having been trapped in contract after contact, Rewards Wireless owner Dave Fowler found there were better options in the cell phone industry that could save his family thousands of dollars every year. Seeing how much this helped his family, later that year Dave opened Rewards Wireless as a way to

help those in the Topeka area experience the same savings they had. With the national average on cell phone bills being



over \$90 per line customers of Rewards Wireless see an average savings of \$100-200 per month per household.

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3 SPIRITUAL TIPS FOR STAYING SANE THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

As the holiday season winds up for its last big week before Christmas, here are a few spiritual tips to help you remember what the season's all about. This is part one of a two-part article.

1. The reason for the season.

I don't care what religious denomination you call your own. The holidays are always about giving and giving back, which — if you really think about it — is the cornerstone of every thriving belief system.

For me, giving has a very specific look. It starts with hour after hour spent poring over the gift lists my wife and I have compiled, followed by standing in line after line at toy stores, department stores, and jewelry shops all over the city.

It culminates in a midnight attempt to get all of my kids' gifts assembled while they sleep. My children still believe in Santa Claus, and I support the lie by ingesting cup after cup of hot coffee while grunting at poorly drawn assembly instructions.

But it all begins with remembering my first Christmas home for the holidays. I had been in rehab for a year and came home penniless, with no gifts. The only thing I had to offer my family was a handwritten letter, asking them to forgive my transgressions and walk with me as I undertook my arduous journey out from the nightmare of addiction and back into the waking world.

Needless to say, there wasn't a dry eye in the house (my own included), but the love and support they gave me have helped me to remember, down through the years, that whether it be toys, baubles or love, the real gift is in the giving, not the receiving.

2. Have an attitude of gratitude.

It's easy to lose sight of the important things in life. If you turn on the television, you are bombarded with commercials that tell you that only this product or that product can make you happy. But although things are nice, they aren't what you need



to feel good about yourself. They certainly aren't what you need to feel happy.

Case in point? I have a friend who discovered several malignant lumps in her right breast. It was a horrifying discovery, to say the least, but it was compounded by the doctor saying that the breast had to go. Her insurance, the doctor reported, would cover the cost of a double mastectomy, and — if she opted to lose both breasts — plastic surgery would afford her two new breasts that would never sag with age.

Still, I couldn't bring myself to buy into her optimism; I figured there had to be more to her dilemma than just a round of

chemo and some plastic surgery. When we were alone, I asked her if she were frightened. "I'm scared out of my mind," she said, "but I've got two toddlers to raise. They can take my breasts if it means I'll live to see them graduate and get married. They can take my breasts if I get to stay and love them. It's such a small price to pay for staying alive."

We talked a little more, but after she was gone, I thought about my own burgeoning family and my heart broke with gratitude at the sounds of my children's laughter. "You okay, sweetie?" my wife will sometimes ask when she sees me adoring our kids. And I usually take her hand in mine and kiss her gently on the cheek. "I'm fine," I tell her, but I'm not. A lot of the time, I'm scared. I don't want to lose any of them. I'm most grateful for family.

I think that's the work you need most to do when the holidays get you down in the dumps. You need to find a quiet place and figure out what

you are most grateful for, and hold onto it, whatever it is, even if it's just the knowledge of where to find food when you're hungry, because I've been there, too. The holidays are more than just Santa Claus and menorahs. The holidays are about finding your center in the eye of the storm. The quickest means to that end is always gratitude.

3. Never forget their names.

This is one of my favorites. It's part of a quote made by President John F. Kennedy that reads, "Forgive your enemies, but

never forget their names." It's a great one for people dreading the trip home for the holidays. Because, you see, the lie we were spoon-fed while we were growing up was that families needed to be and act a certain way and, when ours did not, we felt short-changed or betrayed.

No one told us that "Father Knows Best" was just a television show and that "The Cosby Show" was actually just a bunch of writers sitting in a room playing make-believe. We saw these things and, although we found them entertaining, the truth of the matter is that a lot of what we were exposed to did little more than amplify how dysfunctional our families really were.

The fact remains that our parents weren't given owner's manuals when we were born — they didn't know what they were doing. They were just men and women who found themselves saddled with children (tiny people, actually) that society demanded they care for in a specific way. Can you imagine the pressure? And, if not, then try to imagine raising your own children without the advent of play dates and the many support systems we've integrated into our culture today. You'll see how easy it is to forgive our parents for being insensitive. They didn't know what they were doing. A lot of what they did to us had already been done to them; they didn't have any resources.

The trick to forgiving your family lies in acknowledging, first and foremost, that you are an adult now, and that you are capable of making your own decisions that have nothing to do with the insanity you grew up around. We call this individualization, and it happens when you develop the ego-strength to withstand exposure to other people without letting that exposure affect the core of your decision-making process. Is your dad domineering or controlling? Is your mother passive-aggressive? So what? In and of yourself, you are perfect, and everything is unfolding as it should. Liking your relatives and forgiving them go hand in hand.

The trick to forgiving your family lies in acknowledging, first and foremost, that you are an adult now, and that you are capable of making your own decisions that have nothing to do with the insanity you grew up around.

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

hopefortoday

Clay Center, Kan. — What is the heart of Christmas? Is it the children, helping the less fortunate or being with family? Also, what is the significance of the baby Jesus in a manger that we observe in holiday plays and hear about in Christmas carols? Is it just a nice seasonal story or does it mean something?

Words like the Incarnation, Virgin

Birth and Immaculate Conception do not show up in most Christmas cards but these words contain the heart of the season. World history uses them to describe only one person — the birth of Jesus.

The Scriptures declare Jesus existed in heaven from eternity as God the Son. Then one day, through a carefully crafted plan, God the Father sent His willing Son from heaven to earth. He took the form of a seed that was implanted by His Holy Spirit into a specially chosen young woman — Mary. She was pure, having never lain with a man.

The news of her approaching pregnancy did not come from a doctor but an angel. He said "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son" (Luke 1:30-31). Soon she



conceived by the hand of God and months later, a host of angels announced the birth of this miracle baby to a lost world.

This extraordinary historical account has its share of skeptics. Some argue it is biologically impossible. Others doubt, calling it a myth equal to the stories of Greek mythology. God's miracles have their critics because they cannot be explained in a classroom, under a microscope or on a calculator. If they could, they would not be miracles.

Why was this virgin birth necessary? First, for the forgiveness of our sins. We carry the weight of our guilt and shame every day. It is a heavy load. Yet, only one man is the vessel by which forgiveness can come — Jesus. His Deity from conception made it possible.

Second, in order to show us the way. Jesus could have descended from heaven and bypassed a birth. Instead, He chose to enter our world as a baby becoming one of us. He took on our weaknesses and was subjected to our temptations. Then through His eventual death and resurrection He showed us we can overcome through trust in Him. He became our way to victory.

The heart of Christmas is Jesus. His miraculous virgin birth is our triumph. May Jesus be your HOPE FOR

Clint Decker is President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc. Contact him at cdecker@greatawakenings.org.



THE CHRISTMAS STORY FROM LUKE

What's Christmas without the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? He is the true meaning behind the reason we celebrate this special occasion. Now you can read the biblical account yourself.

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's already in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true." And then the angel left.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "You are blessed by God above all other women, and your child is blessed. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! When you came in and greeted me, my baby jumped for joy the instant I heard your voice! You are blessed, because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise

Mary responded, "Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl. And now generation after generation will call me blessed. For he, the Mighty One, is holy, and he has done great things for me. His mercy goes on from generation to

"You are blessed by God above all other women, and your child is blessed. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me!"

generation, To all who fear him. His mighty arm does tremendous things! How he scatters the proud and haughty ones! He has taken princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. And how he has helped his servant Israel! He has not forgotten his promise to be merciful. For he promised our ancestors — Abraham and his children — To be merciful to them forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

The Birth of Jesus

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be

taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiance, who was obviously pregnant by this time.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors."

in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

The Shepherds and Angels

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the



Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior — yes, the Messiah, the Lord — has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him:

You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others — the armies of heaven — praising God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors."

■ Please see STORY page 20

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Fun for all ages

by **Lynne Thompson**

Regardless of age, it transports us back to our childhood: tinsel on the tree, stockings hung by the fireplace, colorful packages needing to be shaken, and traditional celebrations with faithful friends and relatives. For our children, this holiday is still being written upon their future memories.

This is why we as parents need to make sure that what they remember is packaged in precious truths about how God's love reached out to a dying world, one silent night in a town called Bethlehem. How shepherds watching their flocks received a surprise visit from heavenly creatures, showing that God is for everyone, regardless of their social stature. How angels announced peace for mankind, proving that our Intelligent Designer isn't the kind to create things and then walk away. How good news about our savior spread throughout the world, explaining why we still celebrate today. So this Christmas, as you reveal the greatest love story ever told, try these fun-filled age-appropriate activities that will direct children, and adults, back to the true meaning of the holiday.

Ages 0-3

- In order to avoid making Christmas a "don't touch holiday" for little ones, give them fun things they can touch. Move glass ornaments and lights up to higher branches on the Christmas tree, and help your child make fun decorations for the bottom.

- String pieces of colored tissue paper cut into squares onto shoestrings to hang as garland. Use glitter for paper ornaments.

- Mold a nativity scene from clay dough



and display in a prominent place.

Ages 4-7

- Help your little ones focus on others this season by making use of Christmas cards received in the mail. Pick one each night and pray together for that family.

- Start a family tradition by picking out a new holiday picture book to read each Christmas Eve, such as *The Crippled Lamb* or *The Christmas Rose*.

Ages 8-12

- Ring in an international Christmas by assigning a country to each child to report about how that country celebrates the holiday. He or she can share a seasonal dish, song or folkdance. Then pray for the people of that culture understand God's love.

Ages 13-18

- This age group is old enough to bundle up and go caroling. During each visit allow for a few seasonal songs and readings from the scriptures proclaiming the birth of the newborn king. Besides visiting the neighbors, stop by the local convalescent home, hospital, or homeless shelter.

All Ages

- There are fun Advent calendars on the market, some with doors that open and play songs, others that hide chocolate candies or other treats. Others offer daily Scripture readings, stories, crafts, Christmas carols, recipes, and more!

Give your family gifts without measure

Whether your kids are home from college, or just elementary school, Christmas is the perfect holiday to spend extra time together as a family. Here are a few suggestions if you are at a loss for what to do.

1. Free day at local museum - Make it a personal trip by going online and researching your favorite exhibit. When your family visits the museum, educate each other and make it a private museum tour. Have a scavenger hunt by looking for masterpieces showing the Christ Child and various characters from the Christmas story. End your hunt with treats in the Rozzelle Court.

2. Make a family movie - Facebook is just one of many sites where you can upload a family movie or Christmas greeting. You don't even need a fancy camera—just use your phone! This will be a step above typical online greeting cards with a great personal touch.

3. Bake Christmas cookies for neighbors - Don't keep family recipes to yourself! Find your favorite cookie recipe and tweak it a little to make it your family's own secret recipe. Bake cookies together, where every person has a role, e.g. the measurer, the mixer, the baker, the quality-controller (usually dad) and the packer.

4. Make your home a fancy restaurant - Eating out can be special, but do we have to go out to have a special meal? Why not dress up for a special night at home? Print the menu, light some candles, and make dinner special with everyone sitting around the table. Tip the chef by telling them the thing you love most about them.

5. Movie night at home - Instead of

spending \$12 a ticket to take the family to the movies, plus the cost of popcorn, soda, and candy, watch your favorite holiday movie at home and start a family tradition. If your movie selection at home is deficient,



try the library plus Netflix has a great selection. Have little ones? Be creative. If you are watching *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, dress up as "Whoville" citizens and eat "roast beast" for dinner.



Hillbilly teeth in the Christmas stockings make for hilarious memories.

6. Board game championship - Be careful here, some family members are quite competitive. They should never play certain

■ Please see GIFTS page 17

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Celebrate Christmas in Downtown Topeka!

As we enter the Christmas Holiday season, construction on Phase One is winding up downtown and people are getting in the Holiday mood.

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, more personal, and less of a chore. Following are some tidbits from some of your friendly downtown merchants. Why not take a

trip downtown and visit them? You might even run into Norman the Nutcracker! He will be showing up downtown from time to time between now and Dec. 24.

lots of children's clothing and dancewear. They are having a Big Holiday Sale with big discounts throughout the entire store! What a great way for mothers & daughters to bond during the holiday shopping season! More info about both stores can be found at MaricelsCloset.com.

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NikNaks and more

C and J NikNaks is a custom gift store located at 929 S. Kansas Avenue. Owners Jessica Doby and her mother Christine Thomas provide personalized or pre-constructed and themed gift baskets, fashion items, hand crafted diaper cakes, natural soaps, custom knit items made to order. One of their biggest movers is their custom pillow line.

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"You feel most confident in your favorite outfit." Maricel Wilson says. "I want you to feel that confidence every time you set foot out the door. Get another opinion with personalized fashion advice, and find a stylish solution for your next outing."

Maricel has also opened another store, N V ME FASHION, at 729 S. Kansas Ave. It caters to mothers and daughters and has

Get a souvenir!

Ginny's Gift Shop, at 929 S Kansas, is a quaint little shop that has some great "KANSAS" items for Christmas gifts for family or friends. Ginny, the owner, also features T-shirts, jewelry, Wizard of Oz items, shot glasses, cards of all kinds, and a selection of KU & K-State mugs & other items.



Sign up for a class!

Kymm Hughes, owner of Prairie Glass Studio at 110 SE 8th Ave., hears this daily and is happily surprised when new customers walk through the doors of her retail and working studio and express their delight. Kymm would like to invite anyone who has not visited the studio to drop by and experience this season's hol-

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If you can't get enough football in the fall and winter, stop in at the Kansas Koyotes headquarters at 123 SW 6th Street and pick up some season tickets for their spring season, for you or for a gift. they also have plenty of Koyotes apparel and other gear for the sports enthusiast.

Don't stop there!

There's plenty more to discover in Downtown Topeka!

And keep an eye out for Norman!

While you're making your way around the downtown area, check out the progress on the east side. Many of the renovations are well under way or completed. And watch for these special events coming up:

NOON NOELS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- December 3, 10, & 17, First Presbyterian Church, 817 SW Harrison. Come worship with music from local high school choirs at noon; Lunch serving at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. for \$5. 233-9601 www.fpctopeka.org

FAMILY FILM FESTIVAL - Dec. 13, 1-6pm. Quincy St Conference & Event Center, 707 SE Quincy, Suite 300. 3 Classic Christmas movies for \$5. Bag of popcorn and drink included. Bring your own chair. The films are - The Christmas That Almost Wasn't(1966) - Santa Claus Conquers the Martians (1964) - The Snow Queen (1957)

BALLET MIDWEST PRESENTS THE NUTCRACKER - Dec. 12, 8pm; Dec. 13, 2pm & 8pm; Dec. 14, 2pm. Topeka Performing Arts Center. Tickets \$18 Adult, \$14 Senior, \$10 Youth 18 & under, \$50 Family 4-pack (2 adult, 2 youth) 234-2787, www.tpactix.org

KANSAS BALLET PRESENTS THE NUTCRACKER LIVE ORCHESTRA - Dec. 20, 7pm & Dec. 12, 1pm. Topeka Performing Arts Center, 214 SE 8th, Topeka. Tickets \$20.00 Adult, \$15 Senior, \$12 Youth 12 and under. 234-2787, www.tpactix.org

UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER CONTEST - Dec. 5, 5-8pm. Downtown. Ugly Christmas sweaters take over downtown for the First Friday Art Walk. Prize drawings will be held at each participating location.

GOD GETS THE GLORY - Dec. 6, 7-8pm. TPAC, 214 SE 8th Ave. Come celebrate the true reason for the Christmas season with a beautiful night of music and dance sure to delight all ages.

kinds of new, used and rare books at Creative Corners Gallery, as well as antiques and gifts. They also have a writer's space in the loft, providing a neutral space for writers to hone their craft.



Downtown Convenience!

You'll find it at the BP at 6th & Quincy. From gas for your car to lunch at the 6th Street Deli, you'll find what you need there to fill your everyday needs!

Diamonds are Forever

With the holidays approaching, 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. Diamond rings, pendants and earrings usually top the list but they also offer vivid colored gem-

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The studio and showroom of SS Design Concepts is located in The Elective gallery at 900 N. Topeka Boulevard in NOTO. In addition to the full line of beautiful stainless steel designs, the gallery features a wide range of fine art pieces and unique hand-made crafts from local and regional artists, making The Elective a "must see" destination as you shop for those special gifts, or the perfect highlight for your home.

SS Design Concepts celebrates and supports the Topeka arts community and our vibrant hometown creative culture.

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THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING IS BOTH INSPIRATIONAL, DEPRESSING

moviereview

by Adam R. Holtz

What if there was one master equation that explained, well, everything? For genius Cambridge doctoral candidate Stephen Hawking, the dogged pursuit of such an equation occupies his every waking moment.

Until, that is, Stephen's world of theoretical physics gets rocked by something that's not theoretical in the least: a pretty young woman named Jane Wilde.

And then it's rocked again.

No sooner has the young couple's love begun to blossom than Stephen is stricken with a terrible disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, which is also called Lou Gehrig's disease. After a spinal tap, Stephen's doctor delivers the somber prognosis: a life expectancy of just two years, most of which will be consumed by the devastating ravages of the disease as Stephen inexorably loses control of all his muscle functions.

In the wake of that ominous diagnosis, he tells Jane simply, "Go." But she'll hear none of that. Not from Stephen, nor from her father, who warns her, "The weight of science is against you. And this will not be a fight, Jane. This is going to be a very heavy defeat, for all of us."

"I don't look like a terribly strong person," Jane replies fiercely. "But I love him, and he loves me. We're going to fight this illness together."

And so they do, getting married soon after.

As Stephen's condition worsens, Jane attends to his every need ... and manages

film411

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

STARS: Eddie Redmayne, Felicity Jones, Tom Prior, Sophie Perry, Finlay Wright-Stephens

DIRECTOR: James Marsh

RATED: R

to raise the couple's three children to boot.

But the burden of such heroic caretaking takes its inevitable toll on Jane, and her resolve to "fight this illness together" begins to buckle—especially as she begins to develop a friendship with her choir director at church, a soft-spoken, lonely widower named Jonathan.

The Theory of Everything is, in some significant ways, a deeply inspirational story. As Stephen Hawking slips ever deeper into the awful grip of ALS, he's determined to keep working, keep going, keep thinking. His first question when his doctor describes the disease is how it will affect his mind. "What about the brain?" he asks, and he learns that his mind will be one of the few things that's not affected by the affliction. And apart from a fit of anger right after his diagnosis, Stephen never sees himself as a victim who should be treated with pity.

The film powerfully illustrates the dignity and value of a life, even (especially) one that's so devastatingly impacted by disease. But Jane fiercely rejects that

notion of "pulling the plug" and fights to keep her husband alive. Indeed, she tenderly and sacrificially serves his every need for decades.

Stephen and Jane are no more than a couple of minutes into their first conversation when the subject of God comes up. And it turns out that the two are on opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of what they believe spiritually. Stephen quips that he's a cosmologist. When Jane asks what that means, he replies, "It's a kind of religion for intelligent atheists." Stephen's mildly dismayed that Jane is a member of the Church of England, but he more or less laughs it off.

As the film progresses, Stephen's beliefs get fleshed out more fully. He says, "I have a slight problem

with the whole celestial dictator premise." He's dismissive of Einstein's famous statement, "God doesn't play dice with the universe." Au contraire, Stephen replies, "He not only plays with dice, he throws them where you can't find them." Elsewhere he says that a physicist can't allow his work to be muddled by belief in a supernatural creator.

At one point Stephen thinks he's figured out an equation indicating that time had a definite beginning. But if there was a beginning, both Jane and Jonathan say, that opens the door for the idea of creation and of a creator God. Jane quotes from Genesis 1 as the couple looks at an expanse of stars in the night sky. She's thrilled when Stephen seemingly bends a fraction in his unbelief by talking in his



book about knowing "the mind of God." Stephen ultimately amends his beliefs about the universe to say that there is no beginning, that the universe has always existed. It's a statement, Jonathan rightly surmises, that demands "the death of God."

It's a rare thing for a movie to feel incredibly inspiring and yet deeply depressing all at once.

You can't help but be moved by Stephen Hawking's valiant struggle against the terrible toll ALS takes on him (by way of actor Eddie Redmayne's remarkable, Oscar-worthy portrayal of the man's physical suffering). Even as Stephen's body wastes away, his mind is active and alert, utterly given to the questions about the universe and life that transfix him.

Equally inspiring, at least for a time, is Jane Hawking's care for her husband. For years, she's a model of perseverance and love, compassionately laying down virtually everything in her life to serve her husband's vast needs.

But despite the very best of intentions, both Jane and Stephen stray from their marriage vows. The film seeks to help us

understand how such an outcome might occur, and neither is portrayed as a villain or a cheater. Instead, they're just two people whose ability to cope with Stephen's illness together reaches the breaking point.

Even more depressing, I'd suggest, are the deeper implications of Professor Hawking's life philosophy. On the surface, his saying, "While there is life, there is hope," might seem powerfully motivating. And on one level it is: While we still have breath, we can always hope for the best outcomes in the struggles we all face.

But digging under the skin a bit, in the way that Stephen's beliefs and his unbelief ask us to, we find that it also confronts us with this fierce fiction: that when life ends, there is no hope. That, of course, is consistent with Hawking's atheistic beliefs. And, of course, it doesn't come close to lining up with the hope God so freely gives us. Stephen's refusal to welcome God into his cosmological world leaves us with the dire dogma that we're nothing but smart monkeys circling an insignificant star. There's no meaning in either our faithfulness or our betrayals. Our success or suffering. Dying from or living with ALS.

Grab some popcorn, enjoy these festive holiday features

"A Charlie Brown Christmas"

(1965)

The Peanuts gang searches for the true meaning of Christmas in this half-hour animated treasure.



It features funny dialogue, charismatic voice performances and an award-winning jazzy score by Vince Guaraldi. And how often do you hear cartoon heroes quoting from the gospel of Luke, proclaiming the Christ-child as the Messiah?

"The Nativity Story"

(2006)

Keisha Castle-Hughes and Oscar Isaac star as Mary



and Joseph in the retelling of the birth of Christ. The filmmakers worked hard to ensure that The Nativity Story was both historically and biblically accurate. There were several Christians involved, such as screenwriter Mike Rich and producer Wyck Godfrey, and a wide spectrum of Christian New Testament scholars and historians were involved in the pre-pro-

duction process. Rated PG (for some violent content).

"The Little Drummer Boy"

(1968)

The moving seasonal song comes to animated life in this 30-minute claymation parable with the highly-capable voices of Greer Garson, Jose Ferrer and Teddy Eccles. Puts present-giving into perspective.



"Three Godfathers"

(1948)

John Wayne stars in this Western morality tale about three outlaws who come across a dying woman and her newborn baby. The symbolism between the Christ-child and this newborn baby has a redemptive effect on the three bandits. Unrated.

"The Gathering"

(1977)

Ed Asner and Maureen Stapleton star in this Emmy-winning TV movie focused on a dying man's efforts to reunite his family. It reinforces the importance of family and presents positive Christian



images, including a believable prayer and the Scripture reading of Jesus' birth. Unrated.

"The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey"

(2007)

Tom Berenger, Joely Richardson. A mysterious recluse also happens to be the best woodcarver in the valley. Slowly, the woodcarver finds his world transformed by a young boy and his mother who have asked him to carve a yuletide scene. Positive messages, including a respect for God and Christ (prayers are spoken, church is attended and the main characters acknowledge the birth of Christ). Unrated.

"The Fourth Wiseman"

(1985)

The Fourth Wiseman" (1985) Martin Sheen stars as a devout man searching for the Messiah in order to give valuable treasures. But one by one he sells his priceless gifts to help the needy. Full of compassion and illustrations of how our Lord would have us treat our fellow man. Unrated.



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'TIS THE SEASON FOR CHRISTMAS MUSIC

In the spirit of Christmas, I wanted to list a few of the Christmas albums my family enjoy and consider classics. Some are truly time tested and traditional, while a few are a bit more recent and contemporary; all of them, however, share the joy of Jesus' love and the beauty of the season. If you don't already have some of these, may I recommend you go out and find them for your tradition, too?

Selah's "Rose of Bethlehem" is an album not to be missed this time of year. Combining the trio's soothing and soulful voices with some of the greatest songs of Christmas, the message of God's love is clear on this disc. Even Dolly Parton does a cameo on her "Once Upon a Christmas!" Beautiful.

"It's Christmas Time" Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, and Frank Sinatra is a great collection of songs from when my parents were kids. This particular version also has radio show performances, which brings with it a historical vibe that is just plain classy. Add the soothing voices of Nat, Bing, and the explosive



Sinatra and you've got a great listen. We like to play this one loud in the car!

Amy Grant "Home For Christmas" Is an album I remember getting on cassette (if you don't know what a cassette is, ask your parents) one Christmas Eve and listening to it all the way to our grandparents house, eight hours away. Grant's husky voice works seamlessly with many of the classic carols she sings on here, and her rendition of "Breath of Heaven" is heart wrenching and stirring.

Michael Crawford's the voice of Phantom of the Opera, and lends an amazing vocal talent on his "A Christmas

Album." Collecting traditional favorites and some contemporary songs, the album is a wonderful showcase of Crawford's skills. I'm almost embarrassed to admit it, but by the end of his version of 'O Holy Night' I have chills and am so moved by the range of his voice I come close to tears... and I've heard the song many, many times!

MercyMe "The Christmas Sessions" is another modern take on some Christmas traditionals. Described by singer Bart Millard as "the most 'rock' album we've done," it may not be what some of you are looking for. But the singing and music are great and these guys know how to put out some catchy tunes, all while celebrating the birth of our Savior.

Would the Christmas season be complete without Andy Williams "Merry Christmas" playing on the television and the radio? Probably his most remembered seasonal song "It's the Most

Wonderful Time of the Year" is still played throughout December, whether inviting everyone to Branson, or simply offering a cheerful reminder. My favorite, however, has always been "Do You Hear What I Hear."

Even as a child, when my dad would pull out the LP and put it on the turn table, I would belt that song out for everyone to hear. Now, when I listen to the song, I'm reminded of a gentler, more fanciful time, but also reminded of the meaning of the song; Jesus is here and He has come to save.

I hope it's been a good year for you, as it's been one of challenges and growth for us. God teaches us so many amazing things in this life, especially about His grace.

We also celebrate His immense love for us this time of year as we are reminded of the amazing gift He gave us by lowering Himself to walk among us and teach us. Merry CHRISTmas, indeed!
God bless you all!



GIFTS

continued from page 9

games that cause controversy, like Risk for example. Announce your family's annual scrabble (or other board game) game for the holidays. Make the championship real



by printing rules, game brackets, certificates for winners, and play "home" and "away" games where each family member can host one in their own room.

7. Donate clothes to the local thrift store - Spend an evening helping every family members find one of two things to take to the neighborhood thrift store. Giving together as a family makes the holiday special. Take your family's secret cookie recipe and hot chocolate in a flask and sip as you drive to the thrift store. Take the long way home and enjoy the lights.

8. Take goofy photos - Purchase "hillbilly teeth" as a gag for all of the stockings. The photos will live in infamy. From dress-up clothes to re-enactments of historical photos, kids will enjoy letting go for the camera. Best to try this when the kids are younger. As they become teens, they're much less likely to allow for such permanent historical record of such goofiness!

9. Watch old family videos - We all seem to take a lot of family videos at Christmas and other holidays but when do we really re-watch them? Get them all out for an evening of videos spanning back to when the kids were young. Everyone will roar with laughter. Sad thing is about videos, dad is usually left out unless someone else is holding the camera. Make sure to include dad in your videos this Christmas!

10. Take a day off and give the gift of time to your child - Finally, the best gift you can give is that of time. Take a day off, turn off your cell phone, put away the tablet and spend the entire day with your child. No plans, just total enjoyment. Take lots of pictures and view them before you go to bed. You're guaranteed a smile.

Whatever you do, even as patience sometimes wears thin with the kids over the long break, the time spent together at Christmas, is never wasted.

COLLECTION OF LETTERS, A CLASSIC FOR ANY BOOKSHELF

Called an "unparalleled classic", The Practice of the Presence of God has moved readers for centuries. In this admired collection of letters dating

back to the 1600s, author Brother Lawrence (born Nicholas Herman) pens spiritually convicting passages, sharing his insights about the loving

presence of Almighty God.

Even today, Christian readers open Brother Lawrence's letters to glean understanding of the majesty and blessing of God in our everyday lives. A quick review of the book's comments page on goodreads.com reveals The

in his own words:

"If I dare use the expression, I should choose to call this state the bosom of God, for the inexpressible sweetness which I taste and experience there." - Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

God remains, in some ways, a mystery, even to the most veteran of believers. Thus, His glory-filled presence yields such great curiosity in those of us who wonder.

If you're curious, as I am, there's good news. Brother Lawrence's entire book is available to read online for free. Open the book and delve into what this consecrated man of God realized about the tangible manifestation of our Heavenly Father.



Practice of the Presence of God's current impact. Goodreads.com reviewers, numbering almost 17,200, rate the book 4.3 stars out of 5, saying it's "a gem", "one of the best books I ever read", and "amazing, beautiful".

In the 1895 publication of Brother Lawrence's work, Holiness movement author Hannah Whitall Smith introduces the Catholic monk to readers as one who was "not troubled with any theological difficulties or doctrinal dilemmas. For him these did not exist. His one single aim was to bring about a conscious personal union between himself and God, and he took the shortest cut he could find to accomplish it. The result can best be described

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BrewsterConnect program provides benefits to those still living at home

Brewster Place is changing the name of its Brewster at Home program to BrewsterConnect. Brewster at Home has been Brewster's program to enable those not living at Brewster Place to enjoy the social, wellness, fitness and educational programs that residents enjoy, plus take advantage of Brewster's transportation and list of vetted ven-

BrewsterConnect

dors to enable them to continue living successfully in their home.

With the name change, current members will not notice any changes to their memberships.

The reason for the name change is because it better reflects the purpose and mission of the program. With a membership in BrewsterConnect, beginning as low as \$39 per month, seniors can:

- Get Connected to Brewster's incredible offerings of wellness and exercise programs.

- Get Connected to Brewster Place for trips, social and cultural events and educational seminars.

- Get Connected to Brewster's

network of trusted service providers—including home health, housekeeping, home repairs, meal delivery, lawn care and computer assistance.

- Get Connected with transportation to activities at Brewster Place,

plus shopping trips and doctor's appointments. Brewster's transportation can even zip you off to the airport in Kansas City.

"BrewsterConnect members have access to all activities on campus, fitness classes and wellness education, arts and crafts classes and studio time, and attending our varied list of off campus day trips," says Eileen McGivern, Brewster's director of BrewsterConnect. "Members have access to transportation, technology to stay safe at home as well as medication reminders. Members also have access to our preferred vendor list of services, many of

whom provide a discount to BrewsterConnect members for their services." The holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year for everyone. BrewsterConnect receives many calls from adult children who have visited parents during the holidays and are concerned about them. For example:

"Mom isn't as active as before and I am concerned about her balance and falls."

"Dad doesn't have the connections with people since he retired and seems isolated."

"Who would you recommend to make some changes to my par-



ents' home to make it safer and more accessible?"

"I have heard that Brewster has transportation to the Symphony and Topeka Civic Theater -- my parents hate to drive at night."

If you are asking some of these same questions about your parents, you might consider a mem-

bership to BrewsterConnect. If you would like more information or find out how to become a member, you may reach BrewsterConnect at 274-3303. You can also access further information about the program online at www.brewsterconnect.org.

What a Holiday Visit Can Reveal About Your Aging Parent's Health

If you're a long distance caregiver, you may be planning a visit to check in on your aging loved ones. This visit is, perhaps, the first opportunity in several months that you'll have to personally observe them.

If you've relied on regular telephone conversations and assessments by other closer-living relatives to gauge their well being, the upcoming holiday visit may be revealing. Absence - even for a short period - often allows us to observe a situation through new eyes. I know, I've been there myself.

I lived 200 miles from my mother who lived alone after my father passed away. Shortly thereafter, mom started showing signs of a decline. To honor her wishes by staying in her own home, I needed to know when it was time to bring in outside help.

I kept a close eye on the following areas during each visit:

Physical Changes

Was she losing or gaining weight? Was she sleeping too much? Was she sleeping too little? How was her balance? Was she walking with any discomfort, or was she unsteady on her feet? (Note: certain medications can cause joint or muscle issues.) When there were concerns, I made sure they were addressed with her primary care doctor. If I noticed any sudden odd

behavior, I quickly checked with her doctor to see if it was a urinary tract infection (UTI); very prevalent in elders and easily resolved with antibiotics.

Emotional Well-Being

I took notice of whether she was still engaged in her normal routines, such

as grocery shopping, preparing meals, basic housekeeping, reading the newspaper and personal hygiene. Was she still socially engaged with friends and family? Still going to church on Saturday? Still seeing the hairdresser on Friday? Once there were obvious

signs of decline in these daily activities, I knew it was time to seek outside help with a home health aide. Luckily, I was able to get an excellent referral from a relative.



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How to Find the Right Home Health Care Agency

Marilyn is a 72-year-old widow who recently underwent heart angioplasty surgery. She is preparing to leave the hospital soon. But recovering from open-heart surgery is a long process, and her family knows she will need continued medical assistance once she gets home. The family must find a reputable home health care agency that can provide licensed nurses as well as aides to tend to Marilyn on a daily basis.

Finding the right agency can be a daunting task, but not impossible, says Tilly Gambill, Manager of Marketing and Communications for the American Association for Homecare.

"People often receive home health services following a hospitalization or care in other care settings. Often the hospital discharge planner or social worker provides information on home health agencies," Gambill says. "Ask the hospital for a list of home health care agencies in your community. In some communities, there may be fewer available agencies. Physicians, friends, and family can recommend home health agencies, as well."

The family got 2 references from



the hospital and one from a family friend whose father with hypertension and diabetes receives home care services weekly.

To help them select the right home health care provider and aide, the National Association for Home Care suggests asking the following questions:

Questions to Ask a Home Care Provider

- What are the qualifications and experience?
- How long has the agency been in business?
- Is the agency evaluated and accredited by a governing agency such as The Joint Commission's Home Care Accreditation Program?
- Is the agency licensed by the state?
- Can the agency provide references? Ask for a list of doctors, hospital discharge planners and former clients who have experience

with the agency.

How does the agency protect client confidentiality?

- Is the agency inspected by any outside organization? May I see the results of the last inspection?
- Does the agency perform a customer satisfaction survey? May I see the results of the last survey?

Questions to Ask Caregivers

- What are the credentials of the caregivers who work for the agency?
- How does the agency select and train caregivers?
- Do caregivers work directly for the agency? How are they supervised?
- Are caregivers subject to criminal background checks?
- Will the same caregiver be sent to my home for each visit?
- Are nurses or therapists required to evaluate the patient's home care needs?
- If so, what does this entail?
- Do they consult the patient's physicians and family members?
- Is the patient's course of treatment documented, detailing the specific tasks to be carried out by each caregiver?
- Will the agency schedule care at any time of the day or night that my physician says is necessary?

Can the agency provide me with written information about the rights and responsibilities of the providers, patients and caregivers?

Whom should I call with questions or complaints? How will the agency respond?

Questions About Services Provided

- Can the agency provide me with written information about the services available?
- Is there a written plan of care for each patient?
- Does the agency involve the patient and caregivers in designing this plan and educate them about the care provided?
- How does the agency respond to emergencies? How long does it take to respond to calls?
- Will the agency help me find other community services such as Meals on Wheels or homemakers

services — or help find medical equipment I may need?

Questions About Expenses

Many people have questions regarding how to pay for home care. Be sure you ask the agencies you speak with the following questions to find out how you can pay for the expenses you will incur:

- Is the agency certified by Medicare?

Is the agency approved or accepted by my parent's insurance plan or supplemental insurance?

How does the agency handle expenses and billing?

Does the agency provide detailed explanations of all the costs associated with home care?

Does the agency offer any resources toward financial assistance?

senior news briefs

BINGO - Nov. 1, 3pm, Fairlawn Heights Assisted Living, 5400 SW 7th. 0272-6880.

LIFEFEEST - Dec. 4, 10am-12:30pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Seniors ministering to seniors - celebrating with fellowship, fun, food, learning & entertainment. Featuring WRHS Chorus "This Generation." If transportation is needed, call 354-4994 or 478-1729

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

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS - Every Fri., Noon, North Topeka Baptist Church, 123 NW Gordon. FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. For Info: 286-1370.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE - Dec. 5, 9-4, & Dec. 6, 9-12 in Manchester Lodge, Rm 106 on Aldersgate main campus, 7220 SW Asbury Dr. Aldersgate residents offer for sale a large selection of unique hand-crafted items, perfect for holiday giving. Greeting cards, silk flowers, hand-painted scarves, lanyards, holiday decor, Christmas stockings and more! 478-9440

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

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Knocking On Heaven's Door by Fakes/Blaze

sports

Koyotes look to new season

The Kansas Koyotes have announced their 2015 Home Game Schedule, and it includes teams from Illinois, Texas, Minnesota and Kansas City.

"This promises to be the most exciting season in Koyotes history," said Nick Baumgartner, owner of the Koyotes.

"With new player signings, including Quarterback Kyle Cool and Receiver Joshua Black, the Koyotes offense will be putting up points at a record pace."

The Koyotes have big changes scheduled off the field for 2015 as well. Lots of new contests with big prizes are going to keep the excitement going all four quarters, according to Baumgartner.

Season tickets are on sale now with a special discount for early orders. Call (785) 200-8800 to order, or for more information about tickets, the schedule or Koyotes gear.



Nick Baumgartner welcomes the newest receiver for the Koyotes, Joshua Black

2015 Home Schedule

April 11, 2015 - Minnesota Flames - 7:05 PM
 April 25, 2015 - Oak Park (IL) Sharks - 7:05 PM
 May 2, 2015 - Chicago (IL) Assassins - 7:05 PM
 May 23, 2015 - Kearney (NE) Hawks - 7:05 PM
 May 31, 2015 - Kansas City (MO) Marshals - 7:05 PM
 June 6, 2015 - Windy City (IL) Ravens - 7:05 PM
 June 20, 2015 - North Texas Crunch - 7:05 PM
 July 11, 2015 - Minnesota Flames - 7:05 PM

www.kansaskoyotes.com

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Offer expires 12/31/14
 To receive T-Shirts prior to Christmas payment MUST be received by Saturday, 12/13/14
 Adult T-Shirt Sizes: S-XXL; Kids Sizes: S-XL

CALL (785) 383 4965

STORY

continued from page 9

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Come on, let's go to Bethlehem!" Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. Then the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.

Jesus is Presented in the Temple

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Then it was time for the purification

FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

by Rob Mooney

I volunteered to coach my son's youth basketball team this season and it has been quite the adventure. Don't get me wrong, I love working with this group of 5th grade boys. They are improving each and every week and I couldn't be happier with the way they listen and learn.

This past week I missed a great teaching opportunity for the simple fact that I didn't see the play. That's not entirely true. I saw the play but I did not see what transpired directly after the play. As a matter of fact, I didn't even know about it until after the game was over.

Here is a quick description of what happened. A player on the opposing team stole a ball and went down court with one of my players trailing him the entire way. When he went in for the layup, my player fouled him by giving him a forearm in his back. Obviously, the boy missed the shot and landed on the ground. After I saw the forearm and the fall, I immediately turned to look down my bench for a replacement player. I wanted to pull the player out who committed the foul so he could calm down a bit.

Here is where it gets interesting. As I'm looking at my bench, which was only for about 5 seconds, the referee grabbed my player by the arm in such a way that the boys head snapped back and proceeded to send him to the bench. Obviously, I heard about it after the game from multiple people and I was shocked and appalled at the same time. Maybe it was divine intervention that I didn't see what had happened because I probably would have been kicked out of the game.

The fact of the matter is this, when someone is working with youth, be it in sports, at school or at church, there is no

reason to grab someone. Let me step back a minute. Unless the youth brandishes a weapon of some sort, there is NEVER a reason to grab them. Like it or not, youth look up to the adults in their lives and they look to them for guidance. I understand that many youth don't have positive role models in their lives and this is where youth workers come into play.

As a coach, a junior church worker, a bus captain for one of our church's bus routes, youth look to me. How I act and respond to different scenarios will go a long way in influencing the youth God has entrusted me with. That is how we have to look at it. God has put these kids into our care. We MUST teach them properly. We must show them how responsible adults act. We MUST show them what being a Christian is about. So that's the question. When people look at you, do they see Christ or do they see something else? Do you live your life for Christ on Sundays only or do you live for Him all of the time? If they see you on Tuesday, are you the same person you are on Sunday? If not, you're a hypocrite.

Each person has a circle of influence and it's up to us as to how we will influence those people. Are we influencing for good or for evil?

This referee was wrong in the way he handled the situation. Did he mean to hurt the boy? No, I don't believe that for a minute. Did his actions hurt the boy? Sure did. He was ok physically, but he was very embarrassed and he refused to go back in the game when I asked him about it.

Be careful what you say and do because, like it or not, you are being watched and you do have an influence on people, even if you don't realize it.

offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord." So they offered a sacrifice according to what was required in the law of the Lord — "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom beyond his years, and God placed his special favor upon him.

—Taken from The Book, Luke chapters 1:26-2:40.

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Four Tips to Make Home Maintenance Easier

(Family Features) Some home maintenance jobs require a significant investment of time and specialized equipment, but there are many projects you can accomplish efficiently with basic tools and the right approach. Follow these tips to get started:

Update your toolbox. Take inventory to ensure your collection is complete, and replace dam-

aged or rusted tools. Your toolbox is also a good place to store common repair items such as adhesive. For quick, fuss-free fixes with no dry time, ditch traditional glue for Glue Dots. The double-sided adhesives bond instantly to virtually any surface with no mess and let you skip using clamps.

Get ahead of potential problems. For example, have a plunger



on hand to prevent clogged sinks and toilets from causing water damage, and keep gutters and filters clean to prevent structural damage or fire. You can also protect your home and valuables from damage by using adhesive to secure precious items from getting knocked over, and protect floors from traffic damage by securing rugs and felt pads to furniture.

Take a helping hand. Most phones have levels and flashlights that can help with minor jobs, and your phone's calendar can be set with recurring reminders so that you'll never miss a maintenance date. In addition, find creative ways to make tasks easier. It can be tough to keep items in place while nailing or screwing into walls or ceilings, or installing features such as under-cabinet lighting. Glue Dots are a handy solution that won't damage the surface, don't expand and won't make a mess.

Get organized. Daily home maintenance tasks like cleaning are easier when they are done along the way rather than letting them pile up, creating a bigger job. Store everyday needs in each room, or on each floor. For maximum efficiency, keep cleaning supplies in both the bath and the kitchen, and a broom and vacuum on each floor.

Making sure you have the right tools on hand and taking preventive steps to

get ahead of potential problems will make minor home repair jobs quick and easy so you can get back to enjoying the comforts of your home.

For additional DIY home repair tips, visit www.GlueDots.com.





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Happy Holidays from Jackson's

Annette's Tip:
 With decent weather forecast, now would be a good time to remove excess leaves from the perennial beds and add mulch if needed. While leaves can provide good insulation for the soil, a heavy layer can also smother perennials if the leaves get wet and matted.
 -- Now is also a good time to plant trees if the ground has not frozen. The prices are lower and root development can occur to reduce watering needs next year.
 -- Mulch strawberries now with wheat straw if you have not done so already.
 -- Roses can be pruned at this time and mound up the hybrid tea and fortibunda roses with compost or top soil

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www.greatIAMchurch.com

2. CHRISTIAN CAVALRY MINISTRIES INT.
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1-800-673-3633
www.church4bikers.org

3. TOPEKA BIBLE CHURCH
1101 SW Mulvane St., Topeka
785-234-5545
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Sunday School & Bible Studies:
9:30 & 11am
www.discovertbc.com

4. NORTHLAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH
3102 NW opeka Blvd., Topeka
286-1204
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www.northlandcctopeka.org

5. FAIRLAWN CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
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Sunday Worship 9:15 am & 10:50 am
Sunday Youth Group 10:50am
Adult & Children's Sun. School 9:15 & 10:50am
Sun. Eve Youth Activities 6pm

New Resident Church Guide

6. FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST
1912 SW Gage, Topeka, KS
272-0443 www.fsbctopeka.org
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8:30 AM Traditional Worship
9:45 AM Bible study--all ages
11 AM Contemporary Worship

7. TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH
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~ Sunday School for all ages ~
4500 SW Gage Blvd., Topeka
785-862-0988
www.topekabaptist.org

8. WANAMAKER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH
"Being and making disciples of Jesus Christ by the power of the Gospel, to the glory of God"
2700 SW Wanamaker Rd., Topeka
(785) 272-9323 www.wrbctopeka.com
Traditional Sunday Worship 10:30am & 6pm
Sunday School 9am • Wed. Prayer 7pm

9. GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
310 E 8th St (E. US 56 Hwy)
Overbrook, KS; 785-665-7117
Elvin Dillard, Senior Pastor
Sunday School 9 am; Worship 10 am
www.gccinoverbrook.com
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10. LORD'S HOUSE CHURCH
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Pastor Marilyn Hahn McGinnis
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www.kawriverkeruv.com
Questions? kawriverfordshouse@att.net

12. BUCK CREEK COUNTRY CHURCH
Meeting at Buck Creek School House
5 mi. east of Perry on Hwy 24, 13th & Phillips Rd.
Childrens Sunday School - 8:30 a.m.

Worship Service - 9:00 a.m.
Contacts: Logan Barnett 785-597-5498,
Scott Bond 423-0406, Jack Snavelly 760-3513

13. WANAMAKER WOODS NAZARENE
Serving Christ - Loving People
3501 SW Wanamaker Rd • 273-2248
Dr. L.D. Holmes, Sr. Pastor
www.wwnaz.org

Sun. Worship: 9am (Hymns) & 11 am
Children's Worship 9 & 11 am
Sunday School 10 am, all ages
Sun. Evening Various Children's Programs
6 pm Life Groups; 6:30 pm Teen Service
Wed. 6:30 pm Adult & Teen Life Groups
Wed. 6:30 pm Kids University
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15. OAKLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
801 NE Chester, Topeka, KS 66616
235-1010 • oumc@att.net
Shawn O'Trimble, Pastor
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Children's worship time 10:30am
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J. Michael Borjon, Pastor

17. HIGHLAND HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Sunday Services: 8:30 and 10:00 AM
785-379-5642
Jars of Clay Children's Center now open
Taking registrations: 785-379-9098
2930 SE Tecumseh Road
Tecumseh, Kansas 66542



18. SOUTHWEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
5747 SW Huntoon • 785-272-0564
Contemporary Service 9:30 am
Traditional Service 10:45 am
Youth Group (Teens) 3 pm Sunday
Wed. Prayer & Bible Study 6:30 pm

19. SEAMAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
Independent Christ-Centered Bible Church
2036 NW Taylor, Topeka, KS
354-8777 • www.seamanchurch.com
Adult Sunday School - Sun. 9:30am
Sunday Worship: 10:30am
Children's Sunday School: 10:30am
Youth group 1st & 3rd Sundays 4-6pm
Pastor Jack Belland

20. HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Dale Stockburger
801 NE Poplar St.,
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785-506-4594
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21. HARVEST FAMILY FELLOWSHIP
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1800 SE 21st Street • 785-220-5418
Pastor Rey Rodriguez
Sun. Worship 10 am
www.topekaharvest.vpweb.com

22. NEW CITY LIFE CHURCH
5221 SW West Drive
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Sunday Services - 10:00 am
Pastor Kathy Crofford
23. EAST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
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AWANA Sunday at 5:45 p.m.
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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Caring Pregnancy Options has some openings for volunteers. Please call 785-249-6130 for info or stop by our office, 2041 SW McAlister Ave, Mon - Thur 10-5. Ask for Kathy Hart.

FEMALE ROOMMATE - Busy career woman

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OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE - Executive Suites available at College Park Office Suites, 2611 SW 17th. Shared lobby, workspace, break-room, etc. From \$150-\$300 per month. Virtual offices also available. Call 430-1567 or email info@collegeparktopeka.com

MASSAGE FOR HEALTH - Massage by Anne Murphy: Swedish, Sports, Deep Massage. \$70/hr. Call 272-5755. New Clients Welcome! Relax and enjoy!

GOLF CLUB FOR SALE - New 2013 model Cleveland Driver SL 290, 10.5 Degree, regular flex shaft. Retail \$339, asking \$99. 640-6399

PROPERTY MANAGER - Christians for Life is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of Property Manager for the Heart of America Memorial Wall for the Unborn.

KANGAROO GOLF CART FOR SALE - Self-propelled push cart for your golf bag. Kangaroo Hillcrest model. \$1100 new, asking \$75. Needs new battery. Call 640-6399.

VOLUNTEER WRITERS NEEDED - Metro Voice needs volunteer writers or interns who can serve as area correspondents for church and community news around the metro area. Call 235-3340 or email voice@cox.net. Some perks involved.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Metro Voice needs volunteers to help distribute papers to churches and other locations in Topeka. Call 235-3340 or email voice@cox.net. Some perks involved.

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A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION OF THE METRO VOICE! CALL 235-3340 TO BE FEATURED ON THIS PAGE!

Crazy Bob adds solid wood cabinets to offerings

Topeka KS - For immediate release, Kansas Furniture Mart is proud to announce a partnership with a major cabinet manufacturer. Soon Kansas Furniture Mart will be offering solid wood high end cabinets at a fraction of the price of many retail outlets.

These cabinets feature solid wood construction, dove tailed drawers, soft close drawers and American made craftsmanship. In addition to cabinets, thousands of assorted window treatments will also be available.

Kansas Furniture Mart feels that, along with its full line of home furnishings, these staples are a perfect fit.

"Our ever expanding line shows

our commitment to our customers needs," said Kansas Furniture Mart owner Bob Goodall.

Kansas Furniture Mart also showcases sofa and loveseat combinations for only \$699! Manufactured in Tupelo Mississippi, this fine furniture is a great value and comes in colors to match any décor!

Kansas Furniture Mart is the home of the \$199 queen pillow top set! KFM's offers financing catered to every need. If your credit is perfect or a little bruised we can help. Check out our new look at 4547 SW Topeka Blvd.



Get BBQ and more at new South-side Restaurant

The new Southern Star Cafe, at 5900 S.W. Topeka Blvd., is locally owned by Topeka restaurateur Mark Janice. The a barbecue-oriented restaurant features an open, airy and family-friendly atmosphere, and is open for lunch and dinner six days a week.

"We offer high-quality, St. Louis-style ribs, as well as brisket, ham and turkey," Janice said.

The Southern Star also offers hand-breaded Chicken Fried Steak, chicken tenders, burgers and salads. Janice says meats are smoked daily at the restaurant for a fresher product.

"Our goal is to serve great food at a great price," Janice said. "We're a little out of the way, but it's worth the drive!"



Janice has worked in the food service industry for 16 years in Topeka (most recently on Wanamaker),

Early reviews have been good for this new locally-owned restaurant. Hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

Janice offers custom catering

as well, and also purchased a brand new mobile food trailer in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., earlier this year. It is equipped with a full kitchen and will be used at various events around the city in the coming year.

You can call ahead if you like, at 862-7427, or email the restaurant at the-southernstarcafe@gmail.com. The website is www.thesouthernstarcafe.com. The Southern Star Cafe can also be found on facebook.



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