

**Christmas with
Denver and
the Mile High
Orchestra
DEC. 20**



Concerts & Events | PAGE 13



Keep kids healthy | PAGE 21

CELEBRATING FAITH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN KANSAS CITY

VOLUME 26 • NUMBER 12

December 2015

FREE—TAKE ONE!

Monkey business in Kansas voting machines?

The Wichita Eagle reports that a mathematician at Wichita State University who wanted to check the accuracy of some Kansas voting machines after finding odd patterns in election returns is meeting resistance from government officials.

Dr. Beth Clarkson, a certified quality engineer with a doctorate in statistics, said her calculations from the November 2014 election showed enough patterns to suspect that "some voting systems were being sabotaged."



Sedgewick County election officials refused to allow the computer records to be part of a recount and told her that to get paper recordings of votes, she would have to go to court and fight for them, said Clarkson, who is also the chief statistician for WSU's National Institute for Aviation Research.

She filed a lawsuit against election and Republican state officials earlier this year, asking for access to the paper records that voting machines record each time someone votes. The record does not identify the voter.

The lawsuit is pending and, so far, the state has not released the records.

A Toy, a Prayer and a Hug



Shirley Brookens, Linda
and Tim Elliott at their
Christmas Aglow shop
in Pleasant Hill

RURAL AND SUBURBAN EFFORTS HELP PARENTS AT CHRISTMAS

Dwight Widaman | Metro Voice

Thousands of Kansas City-area parents didn't participate in Black Friday this year. It wasn't a mass protest. There were no rallies against capitalism, or the one percent. No protests over wages or workers'

rights. They just didn't have the money for the year's most frenzied shopping day—or Chrismtas shopping on any day for that matter.

Yet these parents from Cass County to Johnson County, Kan., to Kansas City's northland, who found themselves without a job this year, or under a pile of

medical bills, or dealing with a recent divorce, will still be able to provide gifts to their kids. Children whose parents have fallen on hard times will awaken Christmas morning brimming with the same excitement and expectation that kids everywhere experience.

■ See **HELP** page 22

CHARLES DICKENS LIVES THROUGH GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON

by **Alan Goforth** | Metro Voice



As Christmas stories go, the one in the second chapter of Luke is hard to beat. However, "A Christmas Carol", written by Charles Dickens in 1843, continues to captivate readers and touch lives today.

"It's a simple story that touches the human spirit in a very positive way," said actor Gerald Dickens, the great-great grandson of Charles. "Just look around you and be a part of your workplace, your family, your society, your world. Be a positive part of it, not a dis-

ruptive influence. Whatever is going on in society — and goodness knows we need it at the moment — you can always be a positive part of what is around you."

Dickens was in the area in late November for several performances of his one-man show of "A Christmas Carol".

"The Mid-Continent Public Library is my longest-standing booking," he said. "I was downtown for a Dickens fair in 1995 and had some free time before a show in Dallas, so they asked me to perform at several of their branches. I have been coming back every single

year."

Charles Dickens wrote the book to pay off a debt, and it was an immediate success. The legacy has lived on through his descendants.

"I was always aware that Dickens was a big feature in my life, because my father was a very keen Dickens scholar," Gerald Dickens said. "The house was always filled with books, and he was always delivering speeches, writing articles and that sort of thing."

Dickens started a repertory theater in London that performs adaptations of a

■ See **DICKENS** page 2

Lee's Summit teenager debuts album to benefit School of Worship

by **Metro Voice Staff**

A local high school student has gathered many of Kansas City's most talented musicians and worship artists for a music project.

Samuel Noel launched his "Mighty King" album November 14 with a party and concert. Noel, who is 17, wrote or co-wrote the songs on the album, which is produced by his company, "Harmony of Heaven" LLC. The project includes 43 artists from the Kansas City metro area, such as KC Christian Music Blues Artist of the Year, Daniel Trublu Gray and well known local Gospel singer Satara Brown. Ryan Keeler, a singer from Nashville also contributed to the project.

"The heart of this project is to bring honor to the Living God-the Mighty King, to unify the Christian music community in the Kansas City area and launch a culture changing message and sound that touches the nations," says Noel. "Net proceeds for this CD project go to benefit World Revival School of Worship in Kansas City."

Daniel Trublu Gray, Kansas City's Christian Blues Artist of the Year in 2014 and 2015, worked with Noel on the project. "What an amazing honor and thrill it has been to work with Samuel Noel on the Mighty King project," says Gray. "From the early meetings, as he shared his vision with me followed by our private sessions, as we discussed guitar technique and musical arrangements, the group meetings



Samuel Noel

with the many wonderful artists involved and finally throughout the actual recording process, I watched as a high-school kid with a vision grew into a young man with not only an exceptional talent for song writing but a true wisdom in leadership and administration guided by a heart for God that is pure and genuine."

World Revival Church worship leader and former Integrity Music recording artist Eric Nuzum Thomason added, "It's not every day you come across a young man that throws himself into something whole-heartedly. I'm very proud of Sammy in that he has rounded up 43 different singers and musicians to showcase their talent and bring honor to the Lord."

i moreinformation

visit www.mightyking.org.
Or call **Harmony of Heaven**
816-799-1329.

Serving college kids at Christmas break

College students returning for winter break often long to reconnect with old friends, their former youth leaders, and others in the church who were an important part of their faith development. That is not always as easy as it sounds.

After years of being active in your church they are no longer part of the youth ministry, and not ready for adult ministries yet. So how can churches minister to their college students when they return for break?

Host a youth group reunion

Opportunities for young adults to be together are important during this time, and planning a youth group reunion or young adult Christmas party will give old friends time to reminisce and catch up.

Evy Nickerson, youth leader of Northside United Methodist Church in Brewster, Mass., held one for her former students during Thanksgiving break this year.

She invited all those who had graduated from the youth group in the last 10 years to a local restaurant for a night of memories. A slideshow of pictures from their youth group years was presented, some of their regular chaperones and Sunday school teachers were there, and each alumnus had an opportunity to talk about life after high school.

"Everyone had a great time," Nickerson reported, "and we planned to have another dinner."

Have a young-adult service

A group service project is not only a great ministry to the community, but



Evy Nickerson enjoyed this year's youth group reunion with some of her alumni. Photo courtesy Evy Nickerson.

"After years of being active in your church, they are no longer part of the youth ministry, and not ready for adult ministries yet."

also provides opportunities for the young adults in your church to spend time together. Arrange a time for them to serve together. They might volunteer with a local service organization or deliver gifts and meals to people in need. The young adults and the people they serve will be blessed.

Invite students to serve

While they are worshiping with you, invite your students to serve as guest musicians, liturgists, soloists, choir members, ushers, greeters, and the like. You will be giving them an opportunity to use their gifts again, something they might not have an opportunity to do at college. As a bonus, it also makes them visible to the largest number of congregants, who will then be more

likely to greet them and welcome them back to church.

Send them back with a gift and a prayer

Give the students a gift that lets them know their home church is thinking about them while they are away at school. For example, ask members of your congregation to crochet or knit prayer shawls or blankets for each of them. Then have your pastor, youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, and others, pray over the blankets before presenting them to the students. Not only will the shawls keep them warm, but they will also cover them with prayer — even when they are away.

Plan how to stay connected in spring

Many churches are good at staying connected to college students in the fall, but fewer continue those ministries in the spring. Plan now to send more "survival kits" in March or April and get ready to welcome the students back to church this summer!

—Joe Iovino works for UMC.org
United Methodist Communications.

INVENTORY REDUCTION SALE



CHURCH • SCHOOL • PUPPET & DRAMA TEAMS • ORGANIZATIONS

Moving out of our warehouse and we are offering great prices on: Full Body, Rod Arm and Hand Puppets including Animals, Characters, Biblical, Backlight, Drama & Puppet Scripts, Puppet Musicals, Christian Teaching Units, New Neon & Colored Gloves

www.thepuppetfactory.com

Click on: Inventory Reductions Sale

Need help with your order? Call:
785-286-6800 • Sale Ends Dec. 20th 2015

Every child deserves a loving, caring home. A family they can call their own.
A place where they belong. With people who will be there for them always.



Adopt Kansas Kids



• www.adoptKSkids.org • 877-457-5430

Adopt Kansas Kids works to connect foster and approved adoptive families with children throughout Kansas who need adoption. This service is provided by the Kansas Children's Service League through a contract with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

DICKENS

continued from page 1

As Christmas stories go, the one in the second chapter of Luke is hard to beat. However, "A Christmas Carol", written by Charles Dickens in 1843, continues to captivate readers and touch lives today.

"It's a simple story that touches the human spirit in a very positive way," said actor Gerald Dickens, the great-great grandson of Charles. "Just look around you and be a part of your workplace, your family, your society, your world. Be a positive part of it, not a disruptive influence. Whatever is going on in society — and goodness knows we need it at the moment — you can always be a positive part of what is around you."

Dickens was in the area in late November for several performances of his one-man show of "A Christmas Carol".

"The Mid-Continent Public Library is my longest-standing booking," he said. "I was downtown for a Dickens fair in 1995 and had some free time before a show in Dallas, so they asked me to perform at several of their branches. I have been coming back every single year."

Charles Dickens wrote the book to pay off a debt, and it was an immediate success. The legacy has lived on through his descendants.

"I was always aware that Dickens was a big feature in my life, because my father was a very keen Dickens scholar," Gerald Dickens said. "The house was always filled with books, and he was always delivering speeches, writing articles and that sort of thing."

Dickens started a repertory theater in London that performs adaptations of a dozen of his great-great grandfather's books. He started his one-man show of "A Christmas Carol" in 1993. It never gets old for him or his audiences.

"There is so much energy story in the story that it engages you every time you perform," he said. "It's always living. It's always breathing. It never becomes difficult but is always exiting."

Although his local performances are concluded for the year, it's hard to miss the many film adaptations on television throughout December. Dickens has a few favorites.

"Of course, the Alastair Sim version



i moreinformation

For more information, please
visit www.gerald Dickens.com

Park Hill Christian Church to give away money in reverse offering

A local church has a fun and unique way to help local organizations. Each Sunday morning service between Nov. 29 and Dec. 27, Park Hill Christian Church in Kansas City, will give away \$7,500 to non-profit organizations, and the recipients will be chosen by individuals randomly selected during the 9 a.m. worship services. Along with a worship bulletin you will receive a raffle ticket and a list containing over 30 non-profit organizations.

Here's how it works. Early in the service on each of these five Sundays, 10 raffle tickets will be drawn, and the holders of those tickets will choose any organization from the list. Each selected non-profit will receive a \$150 check for their ongoing work. There is no limit to how many times an organization can be chosen. A particular person can have his or her ticket chosen on more than one Sunday. Every person present in worship on these Sundays is eligible, and a separate ticket will be issued for each member of a family each Sunday. The only eligibility requirement is being present.

"If people hear the words 'church,' 'worship,' and 'offering,' I have no doubt they automatically think about giving money to the church, to the institution. During the holiday season, we'll be flipping that script and doing a little of the reverse," said Rev. Robert Fugarino, pastor of Park Hill CC. "And, it makes



Park Hill's Rev. Robert Fugarino

sense. As followers of Jesus, we are following someone who was known not for collecting money for himself, but for giving good things away. Jesus gave away food to the hungry, healing to the broken, and the love of God to the all sorts of people. And besides all of that, the Reverse Offering will be fun."

Organizations will include The Alzheimer's Association, Family Promise of the Northland, Girls on the Run, The Fuller Center, and many others.

Park Hill (Disciples of Christ) is located at 6601 NW 72nd St. in Kansas City, Mo.

newsbriefs



High court will hear nonprofit Obamacare cases

(WNS)--On Nov. 6 the U.S. Supreme Court surprised nonprofits challenging the contraceptive and abortifacient mandate by granting all seven of their petitions a hearing. The court will consolidate the seven cases into one argument, considering whether the mandate is an intolerable burden on nonprofits as it was for the for-profit companies in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*.

This is a remarkable turn of events, after nonprofits had a losing streak at the circuit level and fretted about getting their cases before the high court. Churches are fully exempt from the mandate, but the federal government has a special regulation for nonprofits who object to the mandate on religious grounds.

The regulation attempts to provide the objectionable drugs through indirect funding mechanisms: The nonprofit signs a form for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), stating its objection and naming its insurance provider. Then HHS arranges coverage of the objectionable drugs for the nonprofits' employees through the insurer or a third party.

Hulu refuses to run ads linking Planned Parenthood, abortion

(WNS)--Online streaming service Hulu has refused to air commercials produced by Students for Life of America (SFLA) that encourage women to seek health care somewhere other than Planned Parenthood. In an attempt to reach women who might not normally see pro-life material, SFLA created two ads that note Planned Parenthood's close association with abortion and refer women to a federally funded health care center, of which there are more than 13,000 across the country. The ads target women unsure about abortion but wary of pro-life organizations. SFLA wanted the ads to function like a public service announcement, instead of a "pro-life vs. pro-choice" campaign. SFLA first discussed advertising with a Hulu representative in May. In early June, Hulu sent SFLA a proposal—including prices—to reach its target audience. But when SFLA submitted the ads in October, Hulu refused to accept them. "Unfortunately we can't accept ads that surround issues like this. We've run it past our ad standards team and it does not fit with the environment," a Hulu account executive told SFLA, adding Hulu doesn't accept ads related to guns, gambling, marijuana, or abortion.



States improve efforts to punish traffickers and rescue victims

(WNS)--When the advocacy group Shared Hope released its first report card on efforts to combat sex trafficking of America's children, 26 states received a failing grade. This year's report card, was a surprise to Shared Hope founder, Linda Smith. "I was excited there were no Fs," Smith said. "In 2011, we had 26 states with failing grades—so many



places in the United States that could be scary places for our children."

In addition to no Fs, more than half the states earned either an A or a B. The Protected Innocence Challenge assigns A through F letter grades to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It evaluates states on critical elements in the fight against sex trafficking of minors, including special criminal provisions for the men who buy children and legal and restorative services for their victims.

Help a pregnant teen this Christmas



There's no need for a teen to be alone at Christmas. Mother's Refuge gives young ladies an opportunity to deliver their babies in a safe, loving home and prepares them for a life of independence and success.

Phone 816.353-8070 to support life, moms and babies.
For information visit us at www.MothersRefuge.org
Mail Donations to:
14400 E. 42nd St. S., Ste 220 • Independence, MO 64055

newsbriefs

Congo releases a small fraction of adopted children to families



(WNS)--Dozens of children stuck in halted adoptions in the Democratic Republic of Congo are now authorized to leave the country after two years of waiting, according to an announcement by Congolese officials Nov. 2. In September 2013, Congo's government suddenly froze all international adoptions by refusing to issue any exit permits for adopted children. The halt left hundreds of families in limbo, some with finalized adoptions whose children were unable to leave the country and others stuck in the middle of the adoption process. The exit permit is required to take the children through airport security as they leave the country. Last Monday's announcement is the first action by the Congolese government in months.

Government officials announced they would grant exit permits to 72 adopted children, 69 with completed paperwork and three with serious medical conditions. The released children will travel to new homes in Italy, Belgium, Canada, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the

United States.

Nearly 1,000 adoptive families, almost half of them American, remain stuck in the system, and there is little hope those cases will proceed quickly.

Justice is rare for Christian women raped in Pakistan

(WNS)--Two Muslim men accused of raping Pakistani Christian sisters Sherish and Farzana were acquitted in October, an all too common outcome for rape trials in the Islamic nation. The teenage girls from the village of Jaranwala were abducted and raped in November 2014. They recognized their attackers as young Muslim men from the area and reported the assault, according to Morning Star News (MSN). Seeking punishment for their attackers meant danger for the entire family. Even before trial, they were threatened with death and attackers sprayed their home with gunfire. Now that the trial is over, their father thinks they're in greater danger, and the girls have been relocated for safety. "We didn't get justice," their father told the British Pakistani Christian Association.



Sherish and Farzana

Why do so many jihadists come from one small Belgian neighborhood?

by Anna K. Poole

(WNS)--As Parisian police continue to probe the Nov. 13 terror attacks that killed 129 people and wounded hundreds more, a small Belgian borough has emerged as a breeding ground for radicalized Islamic militants.

Of the seven arrests made in connection to the Paris attacks, three took place in Molenbeek, a Muslim-majority migrant neighborhood in Brussels. The Monday after the attacks, French officials identified Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who grew up in Molenbeek, as the presumed mastermind of the attacks.

In recent years, Molenbeek's reputation as a preeminent jihadist hotbed has flourished.

A recent Guardian report lists a string of terror attacks—the 2004 Madrid bombing, last year's Jewish museum murders in Belgium, and this summer's foiled Paris-Amsterdam train attack—that all link back to Molenbeek.

"Molenbeek is a pit stop for radicals and criminals of all sorts," said Itinera Institute's Bilal Benyaich. "It's a place where you can disappear."

Aside from the convenient camouflage, the region lures Islamic radicals with black market weaponry. A recent Reuters report highlights Belgium's burgeoning arms market.

"With the right connections, it's quite easy to find illegal weapons in Belgium," said Nils Duquet, a researcher at the Flemish Peace Institute.

Molenbeek has soaked up so many



Muslim women in Molenbeek pay respect to Paris victims.

waves of migrants in recent decades that its Belgian identity has all but washed away.

A melting pot of Islamic influences, eight out of 10 Molenbeek inhabitants are of Moroccan descent, and mosques outnumber churches 4 to 1. In years past, genocide-fleeing Rwandans settled there, followed by refugees from the former Yugoslavia and other war-torn parts of the world. With a nearly 40 percent unemployment rate, the impoverished enclave is home to restive youth eager to take up a cause.

But some say Molenbeek's reputation as an Islamist incubator is overblown. Brussels Mayor Francoise Schepmans admits a sliver of the area's Muslim population has gone radical in recent years, but insists it's nothing serious.

"I've been living here for 50 years," Schepmans said. "It's not a nest of terrorism."

According to a recent Los Angeles

Times report, Molenbeek residents say they live in an ordinary European town, populated with moderates and average people.

"Molenbeek is a victim of media stereotyping," said Kenza Yacoubi, a local socialist councilwoman whose parents were Moroccan immigrants. "With the lack of work here and other problems, it can happen that someone comes along and leads young men astray. ... But this is a very tiny minority and should not taint the entire district."

Whether or not the accusations about Molenbeek prove credible, Belgium's link to Islamic violence is substantial. While only 5 percent of the nation's 11 million inhabitants are Muslim, Belgium is the biggest conduit of fighters to the conflict in Syria. According to The Wall Street Journal, Belgium's Interior Ministry estimates about 270 of its citizens are currently living in Syria, with numbers climbing each month.

CULVER-STOCKTON COLLEGE ONLINE

////////////////////
CULVER.EDU/ONLINE

"WE'VE BEEN CONSIDERING OUR MASTER'S FOR A WHILE AND WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE EXCEPT ONLINE, BECAUSE IT'S HARD TO ATTEND CLASSES WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE LITTLE ONES."

MATTHEW BAINBRIDGE,
CURRENT MBA STUDENT



YOUR CHOICES:

UNDERGRADUATE

Accountancy, B.S.
Business Administration, B.S.
Criminal Justice, B.S., B.A.A.S.
Marketing, B.S.
Sport Management, B.S.

GRADUATE

Master of Business Administration
Degree tracks offered in:
Accounting & Finance
Management

FAST FACTS:

- Courses Entirely Online
- Convenient 8-Week Terms
- Year-Round Start Dates
- Career Planning & Placement Services

NEXT SESSION STARTS IN JANUARY! (800) 537-1883

ONLINE@CULVER.EDU

Story touches hearts- Readers make Christmas wish possible for teen

by **Chad Puckett**

The Christmas story to many teens can feel distant—like something that only happened 2,000 years ago. But for Grace, a resident of the Show-Me Christian Youth Home in central Missouri, the story of God's unconditional love through the gift of His son became very personal this year when three strangers entered her life, each bringing their humble gifts to honor God. Together they provided something extravagant and healing for one of His children. Grace's story, shared on the front page of the December edition of Metro Voice, united these individuals, who by their steps of faith each found their own powerful, personal joy and healing through the opportunity to share their best for Grace's future.

Grace has a smile this year.



"Am I Worth Anything?"

Grace had every reason to have con-

fidence in herself: she's intelligent, athletic, pretty, and likeable. But she had a hard time seeing the good in herself be-

cause her past has distorted her understanding of her value and worth. "I grew up in a place where everyone cared about themselves: my biological parents only cared about drugs and alcohol. They didn't care about their kids," Grace reflected. "When you hear most of your life that you are going to end up like your parents in jail, that you are not going to make it in life," said Grace. "You doubt everything about yourself and think, 'Am I worth anything?'"

The Metro Voice story shared that, after her parents' incarceration when she was four, Grace and her sisters bounced around foster homes. When they finally found a family to adopt them, she thought her nightmare was over. Unfortunately, the years of hurt made it impossible for her trust these new parents; she was too angry to accept their love.

She needed additional help.

At age 11, Grace came to Show-Me. She was angry and didn't trust anyone, especially adults. "I was frustrated, mostly stuck on the question, 'Why did this happen? Why me?'" As she was welcomed into a warm, loving family with layers of support, Grace started to heal. She rebuilt significant parts of life on a firm foundation. She accepted Christ and finally let her anger go, realizing that God redeems the hurts of our past.

The last paragraph the Metro Voice story revealed that Grace hated to smile because of her teeth. More than just a cosmetic issue, for Grace, her teeth represented a deeper emotional wound, one that needed to be addressed.

Desperate, Grace asked her houseparents last year that instead of receiving

■ See **TEEN'S WISH** page 6

newsbriefs



More evangelicals show openness to death penalty debate

(WNS)--Evangelicals and political conservatives are increasingly shifting to more neutral positions on the death penalty. In early October the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) revised its 1973 statement that favored the death penalty as a punishment for heinous murders.

The NAE noted many evangelical leaders "have made a biblical and theological case either against the death penalty or against its continued use in a society where biblical standards of justice are difficult to reach." Rather than turning about-face and opposing the death penalty, the NAE statement said the group affirms "both streams of Christian ethical thought." In other words, there's room for debate.

The NAE serves as a resource and advocacy group for more than 45,000 churches in the United States. Its policy shift on the death penalty comes at a time when all aspects of capital punishment in the United States are under scrutiny.

Parents stunting children's growth

(WNS)--Many parents have lamented their children growing up, with a joking wish they would stay "little" forever. But when Mark and Jenn Hooper asked pediatric endocrinologist Paul Hofman to stunt their disabled 6-year-old daughter's growth, they were quite serious.

The Hoopers' case is getting attention now as parents in the United States and elsewhere are looking to growth attenuation therapy as a way to make it easier to care for their disabled children. Charley Hooper, now 10, will remain just 4-foot-3-inches tall for the rest of her life.

While disability advocates say stunting Charley's growth is a violation of her human rights, her parents insist the treatment improved her quality of life.



Jenn and Mark Hooper have had to make tough medical decisions on behalf of their daughter Charley who is severely disabled.

Proposed Iraqi law would force some children to become Muslim



by **Julia A. Seymour**

(WNS)--Religious minority groups in Iraq are protesting a new law that would force some children to become Muslim.

Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako of Baghdad urged Iraqi President Fuad Masum to reject the recently passed national charter, which could take religious freedom away from children and teenagers, the Catholic News Agency reported. Chaldean Catholics, Yazidis, Mandaean, Kakai, and Bahai minorities all opposed the charter. Many protested on Nov. 4, according to the Assyrian International News Agency.

One article of the legislation states that children under 18 years old would have to become Muslim if their fathers convert to Islam or their mothers marry a Muslim man, according to Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

In a Nov. 6, meeting, Sako urged Masum to veto the charter because the law would violate religious rights enshrined in the Iraqi constitution.

"We want to assert the principle that the child should keep their religious affiliation, so that he or she can

freely decide their faith, according to belief, when they come of age," Sako said in statements published online. "After all, religion is a matter which concerns only the relationship between God and man, and should not be bound by any obligations."

Emily Fuentes, a spokeswoman for Open Doors, said the new law also would violate international standards for religious freedom and conscience.

The United Nations recently affirmed the religious rights of children in a report delivered by Heiner Bielefeldt, special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

"Every individual child is a rights holder in his or her own capacity as recognized in Article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child," Bielefeldt noted.

"The interests of parents and children are not necessarily identical, including in the area of freedom of religion or belief," the report went on to say.

The report condemned violations of the religious rights of children through any means, including forced marriages and forced conversions.

Because there is often government

■ See **IRAQI** page 6

Bacon
FINANCIAL ADVISORS
An Independent Firm

Building Relationships
on trust and clear communication

Call today for a Free Confidential Consultation

www.BaconFA.com

elp Bank America's
Endorsed
Local Providers

600 SW Jefferson, Suite 208 • Lee's Summit, MO 64063
816.246.8450

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC



18TH ANNUAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & COLLEGE EXPO

Saturday, March 5
9:30am – 2pm

At Colonial Presbyterian Church
9500 Wornall, KCMO

25 K–12 Schools, Homeschool
50 Colleges from 15 States!
Watch for more details!

Plus, FREE SEMINARS:

- K-12 Options: Parent Panel Discussion
- Homeschooling 101
- The Journey: Preparing for College
- Finding the Most Financial Aid With FAFSA

Free!

metro
VOICE

Brought to You by the National
Award-Winning Metro Voice Newspaper.
Celebrating Faith, Family and Community
for Over a Quarter Century.

816-524-4522 • #K12KExpo #KCCollegeExpo • MetroVoiceNews.com

TEEN'S WISH

continued from page 5

Christmas gifts, could she get money so she could fix her teeth. But, it seemed only a dream because resources for orthodontic work simply isn't a luxury Show-Me can afford. The request was never verbalized to any supporters, but the Spirit was working in the hearts of some very caring contributors.

Three Angels Unite to Find a Smile

After hearing about Grace, Metro Voice ran the front-page story in the December edition. Unknown to each, three different families were touched by this story and compelled to take a step of faith to try to do something to get Grace braces. An unofficial "Braces for Grace" effort began.

The first to respond was Mike and Linda Thompson. They developed a deep connection with the children at Show-Me following the death of their son, Zach. Linda felt the Spirit tugging, "I related to her at that moment as a teenage girl. I saw her as beautiful, but she looks in the mirror and sees the flaws. And I thought, 'Let's fix it!'"

The total cost fell beyond their budget, but Linda was determined. Around the same time, an anonymous family had read the same story and stepped forward wanting to help. The final piece was when a local orthodontist, Dr. Spencer, heard about the need and offered to significantly reduce the cost of services.

Linda commented, "I simply asked God what I could do, then God had things fall into place. Your own resources are going to fall short, God makes up the gap through the generosity of His people. It's not important that Grace remembers my name, but that there were people that cared about her and saw God's value in her before she did. I hope the same for each of the kids at Show-Me."

The anonymous donors shared their thoughts as well:

"Last year, we had the opportunity to attend a promotion for Show-Me. Curious to learn more about this ministry we checked their Facebook page and found a link to a beautiful story 'Grace-filled Christmas' from The

Metro Voice."

They say their hearts were touched to read the story of Grace's life. "With tears falling down our cheeks, we read about her challenges and heart wounds," they shared. "Thrilled that she had found a loving home and was thriving with her family, school, and art, what really touched our hearts and compelled us to act was to read about her smile. We knew that God wanted us to take a step of faith and find a way to fund braces for Grace."

With a copy of the Metro Voice's article, they met at Dr. Spencer's office and shared how they wanted to be a part of operation "Braces for Grace."

"We felt our mission was to do something in a tangible way that would let Grace undoubtedly know that God knows the intricate details of our lives

and that He has a plan and purpose for hers."

Not only did He rescue and restore her through the ministry of Show-Me, they said, but He saw the cry of her heart and did what God does best, used His people for His purposes.

"We hope that the message in this story is that first Grace knows how much God loves her and that she is an inspiration to many."

Grace doesn't hide her smile anymore. Grace's braces became a reality this past year.

When she looks at her teeth, she sees how her loving, heavenly Father coordinated His caring family to make sure she would have plenty of reasons to smile. She grows in confidence every day, thanks to layers of support and love received from Show-Me and from each contributor who makes her home there possible. Her smile is a reminder that she doesn't always have to know the "why" because she can trust that God is always working through His people, many of whom she will never know their name, to go above and beyond to invest in her life and future. As Grace put it, "when someone does something for you, like the braces, that's unconditional love. It means I am not in darkness where light can't shine. There is a purpose for everything. You just have to wait, gotta listen for God to tell us."

To read the original story, visit metrovoicenews.com and search Grace-filled Christmas.

IRAQI

continued from page 5

or community pressure not to convert to any other religion in Muslim countries, the Iraqi law "puts the children in a corner," Fuentes said.

"Even if they think, 'Okay, I'll be Muslim now because it's legal and switch when I'm 18,' they can't really do that," she said.

Although Fuentes couldn't assess how the law might be applied in Iraq, she said it might affect custody disputes. In other countries with Islamic governments or Sharia law, a man who converts to Islam and divorces his non-Muslim wife gets

custody of their children.

Christians have been victimized by laws like this in other Muslim countries. Under Sharia law in Sudan, Meriam Ibrahim was considered a Muslim based on her absent father's religion. That enabled authorities to imprison her for "adultery," because she married a Christian, and apostasy for "converting" to Christianity. International pressure eventually led to her release.

Chaldean leaders in Iraq predict the new charter will accelerate the country's Christian exodus, if enacted, CNA reported. Thousands have already fled the country because of persecution and threats from ISIS.



DO YOU NEED A VISIT FROM THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS?

by **Doug Trouten**

Marley was dead.

That's an odd way to begin a Christmas story, but it's how Charles Dickens opens "A Christmas Carol." Written to pay off a debt, the story of Scrooge being haunted by three ghosts is one of the world's most enduring Christmas tales – perhaps second only to the original story of Christmas (the one with the wise men and shepherds).

The story is universally known, having been played out in dozens of movies and TV specials. (Some insist that the 1938 film with Reginald Owen is the definitive version, while purists like myself prefer the 1962 version with Mr. Magoo in the lead role.) Ebenezer Scrooge, who cares more about money than people, is visited by three spirits – the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come – who show him the error of his ways.

You're almost certainly not a Scrooge – but a bit of the old "Bah Humbug" can creep into any Christian's life each year as the commercial and social demands of the Christmas season threaten to obscure the quiet birth of that special baby so long ago. Perhaps what's needed is a Christmas Carol of your own – an encounter with past, present and future that will bring you back to your very own point of "God bless us, every one."

Let's begin.

The Ghost of Christmas Past

In the Dickens tale, the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on a tour of the happiest and saddest moment from his past life.

Even without a ghostly escort, you're likely to have plenty of memories – both happy and sad – associated with Christmas.

Maybe your ghost of Christmas past is a particularly good memory that stands as an impossible standard toward which you strive, year after year, without success. The happiness of a childhood Christmas may seem forever elusive – if only because you just don't get that excited about Legos today.

On the flip side, the memory of a sad or disappointing Christmas can push us into overdrive, making us spend too much, plan too much and take on too much in an effort to achieve a perfection that is not possible in this life.

The challenge of trying to live up to your best Christmas memories – or avoid a repeat of your worst ones – can

rob your current Christmas celebration of its joy.

One way to move past this kind of haunting based on years gone by is to take a good look at your ghosts in the light of day. Looking at your childhood memories with adult eyes can give you a new appreciation for your parents. And if you try to make a realistic appraisal you may find that the perfect Christmas of your childhood wasn't flawless, and that the disappointing Christmas wasn't a psyche-scarring horror.

In fact, those may have been fairly ordinary Christmases, and what set them apart was the way you and others reacted to them. No amount of gingerbread and eggnog can bring happiness to a person who is determined to cling to their "Bah, Humbug!" And no culinary or gift-related disaster can steal the contentment away from a person who has truly decided to bask in the simple joys of the season.

The Ghost of Christmas Present

Dickens has the Ghost of Christmas Present show Scrooge the meager celebrations of the Cratchitt family, including the plight of their crippled son, Tiny Tim. Despite their struggles, they're still happy – a truth that astonishes Scrooge. It's good to remember that we don't have to be overwhelmed by our circumstances. God is faithful, and like then Apostle Paul we can learn to be content

regardless of our situation.

The Ghost of Christmas Present also reminds us that being aware of the struggles faced by others and doing something about it -- perhaps by supporting the good work of an organization like the Salvation Army or World Vision – can bring a new depth to your Christmas joy.

But it's another kind of "Christmas present" that often trips us up – the Christmas presents we give to one another. The simple act of gift giving often isn't so simple after all. We wind up giving gifts we can't afford, trying to prove our love or buy the love of others, or letting fear that our gift will somehow be inadequate steal the joy that is inherent in the act of giving to another.

To deal with this particular ghost, it's good to think a bit about what a gift is really for. Do we give somebody a gift to provide something they're not able to purchase themselves? Not usually. Do we give it to prove that we love them? Well, if they don't already know this it's unlikely that anything you can tie up with a bow will get the point across. Then how about to buy their love? Try this, and you'll soon learn what the Beatles already know: "Can't buy me love."

The most impersonal gift exchange imaginable would involve family members exchanging \$20 bills with one another. But even a personal hand-made gift can be a dud if, for instance, it reflects your Aunt Sally's love for knitting



rather than your love for sweaters.

The very best gifts – large and small – all convey this important message: "I know you." A great gift lets the recipient know that you care enough to know something about their interests, their hobbies, their passions, their likes and dislikes. A great gift says, "I know you

love this kind of music, so I think you'll enjoy this," or "I know you enjoy this hobby, so this might come in handy."

We were created for fellowship with God, and are designed to be completely known by our Creator. The hunger to be known is planted deep inside of us, and

■ See GHOSTS page 12



Christian paint parties to encourage and uplift

by **Sharon Jeffus**

As the Christmas season is here, we are all looking for things to do with our children that point to the Savior and the message of the season. Parents are always looking for activities that children can share with family and give as gifts.

Paint parties are getting more popular all the time. In the secular world, paint parties are very popular for young and old. It is a time when you can enjoy fellowship with friends and create a memorable keepsake.

The wine industry partners with artists to host "sip and paint parties" where friends finish a painting together and take home a painting that they have created. A good Christian alternative and outreach is to have or host a paint party. It is perfect for a Bible study or youth group project. It is also an excellent outreach to bring people into a Christian atmosphere and also incorporate some encouraging scripture to go along with the art. You can create your own party with a simple idea that rein-



forces a spiritual concept.

A wonderful Christmas activity for children is to have a paint party with their friends. Choose a simple image symbolic of the Christmas season, and provide canvas and paints and let the fun begin. When a step-by-step painting lesson is given to ensure quick success, children can have something they have created to treasure, and also have a part of themselves to give as a gift. This is especially precious for children. A paint

party is always a good time to give a brief spiritual lesson that can be shared with others. Sharon Jeffus has created a series of spiritually uplifting paintings that are easy to do and can encourage and bless others. You can use them as a gift, or enjoy them in your very own home. The paintings are created on old wood or canvas. There are four parties in all. In each two-to-three hour session, two paintings with a theme are created. The techniques are very easy and splendid results occur. The first theme has painters painting a beautiful sunset.

The second landscape is in colors of blues and greens. The sunset is in colors of orange, red and yellow. The theme is "Be Still and Know that I AM God." In the world we live in today, this portion of scripture helps us to affirm that God is in control.

No amount of hurrying and scurrying around can change the fact that our father is there watching over us. When we look at the beauty of nature, we can truly sense that God is in control. God gives us the gift of a beautiful mountain



scene or a lovely sunset to help our soul know to "Be Still. A snow scene can also create a "Be Still" theme.

This summer a mission group from Michigan did a party to remember their mission trip with paintings that depicted the theme.

Another ladies prayer group had an outreach, and some grandmas brought their grandchildren.

In doing the paintings on old barn wood, painters can decide to either use the borders showing the old wood as a frame, or cover the entire piece of wood. The different wood grains add interesting textures to the finished pictures. Cardboard can even be used if covered with white acrylic paint first.

The second optional theme is "The righteous are as bold as a lion;" in

Proverbs 28:1 and Isaiah 40:31,

"They will mount up with wings as eagles. In each party session, basic techniques are taught that give students maximum success. "The third party subject is "You Must be Born Again." Students do butterflies and flowers.

The third topic is "The Glory of God in the Heavens." A Bible study goes along with each class. "I would love to train people in how to do the painting for these parties and Bible study." Schedule a paint party for your church or Bible study today.

Go to visualmanna.com for more information. If you are interested in hosting one of these paint parties or learning how to do it, contact Sharon Jeffus at visualmanna@gmail.com or call at 573-453-6364.

GOD IS STILL WITH US

by **Doug Trouten**

There's nothing peaceful about childbirth.

I know this, because I live in a different time than my father did. Back when I was born -- a time modern fathers refer to as "the good old days" -- the father's role in the birthing process was fairly simple. There was the getting-things-started role, and the mad-drive-to-the-hospital role. Both of these were readily embraced by fathers-to-be.

At the hospital, the father sat in a waiting room while medical professionals did mysterious things. Prissy's plaintive cry in "Gone With the Wind" -- "I don't know nothin' 'bout birthing babies!" -- could be happily echoed by yesterday's fathers. (I have a booklet from the hospital where I was born

which informed parents, "The father will be allowed to hold the baby one time during the week.")

Today, that's all changed. There are prenatal classes for prospective parents, during which fathers learn to say useful things during labor, such as, "Don't forget your breathing," and "Pant-blow! Pant-blow!" Women have given birth for millennia without having anybody nearby to shout "Pant-blow!" in their ears. But this isn't about what's needed for childbirth -- it's about inventing jobs for the father. Today's father is also asked to cut the umbilical cord. You'd think anything involving tissue and scissors would be left to doctors, but no.

As a father of three I've been on the receiving end of this campaign to make the birthing process as uncomfortable for fathers as possible. It's simply not



Candles at Paris memorials will glitter along with Christmas lights this year

possible to make it as bad for fathers as it is for mothers, but they're doing what they can. Because I've been in on three live births, I know that even with modern drugs there's plenty of pain involved. When God told Eve "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children," He

■ See PEACE page 17

Christmas at NORTHLAND CATHEDRAL

Children's Christmas Musical
An Out-of-the-Box Christmas
December 13, at 10:45 a.m.

Service of Remembrance
December 13, at 6:00 p.m.

Sounds of Christmas Concert
by the Cathedral Choir & Orchestra
December 20, at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
at 6:00 p.m.

Northland Cathedral

J. Lowell Harrup, Pastor
101 NW 99th St., Kansas City, MO 64155
Hwy 169 & TiffanySprings Pkwy.

For additional information on these and our other services,
visit our website: www.northlandcathedral.org

Sunday Services: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m.

CHRISTMAS with DENVER & THE MILE HIGH ORCHESTRA



SUNDAY, DEC 20

10:00AM AT

WORLD REVIVAL CHURCH

Dove-Award winning *Denver and the Mile High Orchestra* will be performing at a special Christmas service Sunday, December 20th at World Revival Church.

Denver delights audiences of all ages by continuing to push the artistic envelope on Christian music. With thier exciting new take on old classics and hymns, *Denver and the Mile High Orchestra* continues to live up to what they feel they were called to be -- an inspiration for the whole family.

FREE ADMISSION

WORLD REVIVAL CHURCH

9900 VIEW HIGH DRIVE KANSAS CITY, MO 64134
816.763.0708 • WORLDREVIVALCHURCH.COM

WHEN GRIEF FILLS YOUR HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can be particularly difficult for people who are grieving. As the whole world seems wrapped up with joy and frivolity, the bereaved person can feel out of place.

Here are some ideas for you, a friend or loved one to help make the holidays of these suggestions are based on experiences of other bereaved persons.

■ Understand and communicate to those around you that this year is different as a result of your loss. You will exhaust yourself if you try to pretend nothing has changed.

■ Decide how much of your normal holiday routine you feel up to doing this year. It is okay to alter your traditions.

■ Consider having a family meeting to discuss your wishes and plans as well as theirs. Remember that if others are grieving, they will have ways in which they want to handle things too. Try to respect one another's ideas and be gentle with each other. Let children and teens find a way to participate.

■ Decide how you would like to honor your loved one's life during the holidays. Create a special place with the person's picture, memorable objects, tree branches, candles or other special touches. Light a candle in this place or wherever the fam-



ily is gathered as a symbol of your love and memories.

■ Some people find volunteer work satisfying; others make donations or buy gifts for others in their loved one's name. Giving can be very satisfying and healing.

■ Allow yourself time to think about and to acknowledge your feelings. It is important to pace yourself during the holidays by finding a balance between time alone and time with others.

■ Plan something to look forward to after the new year begins. This may help lessen the post-holiday letdown and

will be a way to focus on the future.

Remember that some people prefer to do something very different, like traveling during the holidays, while others prefer to preserve tradition. Do whatever you think will work for you.

“Some people find volunteer work satisfying; others make donations or buy gifts for others in their loved one's name. Giving can be very satisfying and healing.”

Christmas traditions

FRANCE

Christmas Traditions in France begin on December 5, which is St. Nicholas Eve, but Christmas Eve is the most special time. Church bells ring and voices sing French carols, called noels. On Christmas Day, families go to church and then enjoy an abundant feast of wonderful dishes, ending with the traditional buche de Noel, a rich buttercream-filled cake shaped and frosted to look like a Yule log.

MEXICO

The weather is warm and mild in Mexico during the Christmas season. Families shop for gifts, ornaments, and good things to eat in the market stalls, called puestos. They decorate their homes with lilies and evergreens. Family members cut intricate designs in brown paper bags to make lanterns, or farolitos. They place a candle inside and then set the farolitos along sidewalks, on window sills, and on rooftops and outdoor walls to illuminate the community with the spirit of Christmas.

DOES GOD EXIST? WHAT ABOUT EVOLUTION? DARWIN RIGHT? HOW CAN I OWE GOD? ALLOW SUFFERING AND DEATH? WHAT ABOUT THE AGE OF THE EARTH? DO DATING METHODS FROM THE EARTH IS MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD? WAS GAIN'S WIFE HOW DO I KNOW? ALL THE ANIMALS ON THE ARK? ARE THERE REALLY A WORLD WIDE FLOODS? DOES ANYTHING REALLY HAPPEN? SCIENTIST BELIEVE IN CREATION ARE LINKS ONLY A DAY? ARE THERE REALLY MISSING MILLIONS OF YEARS? SELECTION IN THE GOS? WHAT ABOUT DISTANT? EVOLUTION? WHAT ABOUT THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MONKEY AND HUMAN DNA? WHAT ABOUT THE ICE AGE? WAS ADAM AND EVE REAL PEOPLE WHO CARES WHAT I BELIEVE? ASKING: DRIVING: DON'T KNOW: BURNING: TAKE: MANY: MILLIONS OF YEARS: TO GET TO WHERE ABOUT: CREATION?

ARE YOU READY  WITH ANSWERS?

Sunday January 24, 2016
9:30am Creation and the War of the Worldviews
How Big is God?

Shane Cessna - CMI speaker

Blue Ridge Bible Church
8524 Blue Ridge Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64138

 CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
Creation resources available
CREATION.com

CMI-US • PO BOX 350 • POWDER SPRINGS GA 30127 • 800-8191-CMI

DRAMATIC TRUTH BALLET THEATRE PRESENTS



THE MYSTERY OF
Christmas

DECEMBER 18-20, 2015
GOPPERT THEATRE AT AVILA UNIVERSITY
DRAMATICTRUTH.ORG

THE NUTCRACKER THAT TELLS THE TRUE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

GREAT IDEAS FOR NEW CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

by **Sabrina Beasley McDonald**

The children came up with a list. When they were finished, Dan asked them why they thought the Gaffney family kept these traditions. And that led to the following dialogue with his 4-year-old son, Joel:

"Why do you think we celebrate Christmas as a holiday?" Dan asked.

"Because God needs a Christmas tree ... and presents," Joel replied.

Joel was sure he knew this one, "Uh, because the electricity goes out."

"And what about the house? Why do we decorate it for Christmas?" Dan asked.

"So we don't get snow on our house," Joel said. "Because if there's snow on the roof we'll slip off when we try to put the decorations up!"

Why are Christmas traditions important?

We laugh at the logic of a 4-year-old, but honestly, Joel's words do challenge us to think about the traditions many of



us maintain during the Christmas holidays—the dinners, the decorations, and the gifts. Perhaps there is something more—some additional traditions that would bring more meaning to your holidays and make Christ the true center of Christmas.

Traditions are powerful for a family. For one thing, they bring families closer

together. By nature, traditions take time and commitment. This time together helps you make new memories while also remembering the past. Traditions remind us to stop the busy cycle of life long enough to reconnect and build bonds.

But the ones that are most affected by traditions are children. "Children love rituals," says Martin V. Cohen, Ph.D., associate director of the Marital and Family Therapy Clinic at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical. "Children find a certain security and solace in something that gives a sense of belonging and comfort. Kids find rituals fascinating—artistically, spiritually, and emotionally."

They find a sense of awe in the holidays, giving them a picture not only of family bonding, but also of the importance of Christ—the celebration of His majesty.

Traditions create legacy

Traditions are a great way to pass down family values to children who will in turn, pass them on to their children and so on. Just as God told the Jews in Deuteronomy 11:18-20:

"You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them

■ sidenote

Traditions recommended by the public

In a past issue of a FamilyLife publication, they asked readers to send them family traditions that keep Christ as the center of their celebrations. Here are a few of their favorites.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!

A number of readers suggested a variation on this idea. Kim of Burnsville, North Carolina, wrote: I come from a long line of pagans, and we spend Christmas day with all of them. So my husband and I have established Christmas Eve as our time for celebrating the birth of Christ with our two boys, ages 3 and 5. We have a dinner together followed by the lighting of the Christ candle on our nativity wreath, and then Daddy reads the Scripture account of Jesus' birth. After that we have a birthday cake for Jesus. The cake is chocolate, representing sin. It's filled with cherry pie filling, representing the blood of Jesus, and it's covered with white frosting which represents our new life in Christ.

MOVING NATIVITY

One of the things we do in the days before Christmas is place our nativity figures all over the house. The empty manger is placed under the Christmas tree. As the days get closer to Christmas, the figures are moved closer to the manger. The first thing my kids open on Christmas morning is a wrapped baby Jesus to remind them that Jesus is the best gift we can ever receive! —Yvonne Reynolds, Patterson

A HARD FLOOR

We realized that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus did not have it easy that first Christmas, and we wanted to remember that. Each Christmas Eve we give up our beds and sleep on the floor together to remember what they must have endured. Our children are young enough at this point that they think it is fun and different, while we often feel it in our older backs. Each year they understand a little more the sacrifice that Mary and Joseph made, and at the same time we do enjoy the cozy family time.



Bingham-Waggoner Estate

Join Us Through December 30



Twilight Tour Dec. 6!
(Closed December 23, 24, 25)
10 A.M. to 4 P.M. - M-Sat.
1 P.M. to 4 P.M. - Sunday
Adults: \$5 • Youth 6-16: \$2
816-461-3491

313 West Pacific, Independence, MO • www.bwestate.org

when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates ..."

When used properly, traditions are a great way to pass down stories of faith and customs through the generations. As children interact with their senses—the feeling of the prickly needles and the smells of the evergreens and the sounds of caroling—parents should remind them of the meaning of these traditions. The evergreen tree is a reminder of the cross and the everlasting life of Christ,

and the sounds of caroling are the proclamation of rejoicing.

Traditions are symbolic

Perhaps the most important purpose of traditions in the Christian community is to remind us of Christ Himself. This is most obvious in the symbol of communion. In Luke 22:19, we find Jesus leading the disciples in the first communion. At the end of this verse, He says, "... Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, we have Christmas traditions that remind us of Christ. The nativity reminds us that God came as a man in the flesh to take away the sins of the world, and gifts repeat the story of the three wise men that came to adore the Christ child.

Starting family traditions

It may sound strange, but Christmas traditions don't have to be ... well ... traditional. You can start new activities that bring meaning to your holidays and build a legacy for your family. Perhaps you came from a family of non-believers, and you have never celebrated traditions that were based on Christ. Or perhaps you have found that your current traditions have no meaning for your family.

This year, we have compiled ideas for new traditions, some from *FamilyLife* and some from our readers.

1. *What Does God Want for Christmas?* The Christmas holiday is really just a part of the gospel story—God came as the man, Jesus, in the flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' birth sig-

Christmas
at Colonial

Worship Fully
Spend Less
Give More
Love All

What are you waiting for this Advent season?
Reconnect with the true meaning
of Christmas at Colonial.

advent.colonialkc.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Overland Park, KS
12501 W. 137th St., OPKS

3:00, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Kansas City, MO
9500 Wornall Road, KCMO

5:00 and 10:00 p.m.



Colonial Presbyterian Church, EPC
Encounter God • Grow With Others • Impact People
colonialkc.org

Metro Voice readers share their favorite Christmas memories

A Gift that Keeps on Giving – HOPE!

By Dan Erickson
Lee's Summit, Mo.

Growing up as a missionary kid on an Indian reservation had some interesting challenges. One responsibility that fell on my three brothers and me was to ride along with our dad when he transported those with no cars to and from church. Our job was to help people out of the van and escort them to their homes. Few houses on the reservation had electricity at that time, so it was important to make sure they arrived safely.

One Christmas Eve, when a glance at the sky was the only weather forecast necessary, we tried to outrun a fierce snowstorm. I was the son on duty that night.



We worked quickly, but by the time we had loaded the people into the van, the snow had started. As the snow continued falling, the night became darker and darker, and the dirt road

we drove in on completely disappeared under a white blanket.

On our return to the church, the snowfall increased, and so did my fear. This was no "white Christmas" – it was a blizzard. My dad could not tell where the road was, much less where we were on it. Finally, he shut off the engine, looked me and said, "We're going to have to leave the van and walk." It is one thing to drive on dirt roads in a snowstorm, but to walk? I thought it was crazy, but I also knew we had no other choice.

As we began our dreadful journey, my dad prayed for protection and clear direction. I was just praying we wouldn't freeze to death. He knew that as long as we did not end up in the sagebrush, we would be walking on the right path. Dad kept trying to encourage me by saying calmly, "Stay close to me and look for the light, look for the light."

When our makeshift church was constructed out of logs and plywood, a cross with a light was put on the roof. He wanted the light to continually shine from the cross throughout the darkness of the reservation. That light was to be a beacon of hope for those who were lost.

As we trudged through the snow I tried to be brave, but I was scared. I think my dad must have sensed my fear because he drew close and put his arm around me. I don't know if I felt any warmer, but his arm around me was comforting nevertheless. He kept saying, "It's going to be OK. Stay close to me and keep looking for the light." He was attempting to give me hope in the midst of the storm.

After what seemed like hours, we glimpsed a tiny beam of light from that old rugged cross breaking through the storm. Now my father said to me, "Keep moving toward the light! Keep your eyes on the light." I noticed that as I got closer to the cross that the light got brighter, my walk got swifter, my body got warmer and my heart found hope and peace. It wasn't long before we were running toward the light and we found the warmth of a safe

haven. We laughed with relief and joy.

Life will bring opportunities and challenges of all kinds. Some we can control and others we can't. Christmas represents hope, like the light on the old cross. As the shepherds did so many years ago, we must learn to look to the light found in Jesus Christ who was once wrapped in humanity but is now preparing a place for us. The hope, peace and joy of life are found in the Christ of Christmas. Our Father in Heaven will never give up on us or forsake us. We can trust He knows the way.

If you are part of the light you are to bring hope to a world that can't see the light. HOPE stands for "Helping Others Pursue Eternity." We need to wrap our arms around people in our lives and point them to the light found in Jesus Christ during this Christmas season. Only then can they imagine the reason for the season!

Christmas reminds me what God has done

By Dan Jeanes
Independence, Mo.

As many might, I have quite a few fond memories of Christmas. Driving through the snowstorms we'd run into when travelling from Northern Virginia to Massachusetts on Christmas Eve, Dad would drive well below the speed limit, and we'd often wait for hours in traffic while the streets were cleared. I also remember waking up with my brothers in my grandparents' home, on Christmas morning, to discover the living room had been turned into a micro-world of Star Wars, complete with posed figures and



grand space ships.

Even before we'd leave our home, I recall LPs placed on the turntable and listening to the likes of Andy Williams and Bing Crosby, singing about their grand memories of Christmas' past, and dreaming of White Christmases. To this day, Williams' rendition of Do You Hear What I Hear is in regular rotation (now either on CD or MP3, depending on where we are). Amy Grant's early Christmas albums have also been ones I've cherished.

Now, I'm not able to get back east as much as I might like; my grandparents have all passed on, except one, and my wife and I attempt to create memorable celebrations with our kids. We look back on the last decade since our daughter first made her presence known, and remember so many little fun things we've been able to do with her and her brother. We also look forward to when their other brother and sister will be with us (from Sierra Leone), and we wonder how they'll handle the mid-western winters; many of them, over there, wear winter coats when the weather gets below seventy-five degrees!

My wife's parents live nearby and we get to spend quality time with them for the holiday, and my parents will be travelling later this month to also visit. My kids are of the age now where they recall their own memories in their brief lives, but oh, what memories they are! God has blessed us in so many ways, even as we see the trials of His blessings. Every year at this time, I'm reminded of all He has done.

Thank You, Baby Jesus

By Lynda Randle
Kansas City, Mo.

Christmas was always a very special time in our family, and it still is. We were very blessed as children to have a mom and dad who loved us very much and each other dearly. We may not have had a lot of money, but we did have a lot of love.

I can remember one Christmas morning in particular. I was up at the crack (and I mean the crack!) of dawn. I couldn't get downstairs to our tree fast enough,

but it was with mixed emotions.

You see, there was this one doll baby that I really wanted – 'Baby Alive'. She was, at that time, my hearts only desire. She was all I wanted for Christmas. When I told my parents about her a few weeks earlier, they told me our Christmas budget was really small, and because they were six children in our home, we might not be able to have certain things. I certainly understood the financial position we were in at that time—or did I? You see, I still hoped for a miracle somehow—that just maybe they could get enough money so that I could have my special doll.

Well, I am happy to report over 30 years later that when I got to the tree that morning my sweet Baby Alive doll was nestled safely below. To this day I still



don't know how it happened, but it did and I am grateful. What a beautiful Christmas morning it was!

There was another beautiful Christmas morning that changed the entire course of history, and the gift of that morning is still changing history and live today. Unlike my doll, that only brought me temporary pleasures, Jesus, the everlasting Prince of Peace was truly the best Gift my parents ever gave to me and I'm eternally grateful.

So may this Christmas be the most beautiful and memorable morn ever, even if you don't get the gift you so desire. Just know that the best Gift of all is still waiting to be unwrapped. Receive him today, my friend.

He Always Carved the Turkey

By Karen Morerod

He always carved the turkey. Daddy did.

At his house, Mom would call him into

■ See MEMORIES page 12

FeedKCNow.org

"Where hunger ends, **HOPE** begins."

Visit **FeedKCNow.org**

CITY UNION MISSION
YOUR CITY YOUR MISSION

DAYTON MOORE
General Manager
Kansas City Royals

Sunday December 13

**8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.
and 6:00 p.m.**

Colonial Presbyterian Church
Overland Park Campus
12501 West 137th Street

FREE ADMISSION. Unwrapped gifts of toys or monetary donations for the less fortunate will be collected but is not mandatory for attendance. Childcare available at all services for infants and toddlers.

More information online
manger.colonialkc.org

Colonial Presbyterian Church, EPC
Encounter God · Grow With Others · Impact People
colonialkc.org

An Extraordinary Night

An honest conversation and dramatic presentation of the truth of Christmas as seen through the eyes of a contemporary family.

MESSAGE OF A MANGER

by **Tommy Boland**

Have you ever considered why our Lord was born in a manger and not a magnificent palace? Well, this month I would like you to consider, actually marinate if you will, in the message of a manger, and see if God does not meet you in your place of deepest need and shower upon you glad tidings of great joy.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7 KJV).

As pastor of The Cross, we are preparing to celebrate our third Christmas together as a church family. There is great excitement throughout our campus, but make no mistake, there is also great pain for many who are reminded during Christmas season of the loss of loved ones. I not only consider it a great privilege to minister to people



through this season on both ends of the spectrum, but I too am the recipient of ministry myself from our family of faith. Last Christmas season Mama Boland went home to be with our Lord and a few years before, my dad went home in the afternoon of Christmas day. So I know from personal experience both the joy and pain the Christmas season can bring. And this is why the message of a manger is so important to share. Let's take a look at three reasons why.

1. Approachability: If Jesus had been born in a magnificent palace, only those of noble birth would have had access to

Him. But to be born in a lowly manger makes this Christ child approachable to all who will come to Him. You do not need to be born into a high society to approach Him. You do not need to be born into a family of princely pedigree to approach Him. You do not need to be born on the right side of the tracks (wherever that is to be found) to approach Him. You need only to be born again (John 3:3) by grace through faith to approach this baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. His approachability leads us now to His accessibility

2. Accessibility: The only guards posted about the Christ child had four legs. There were no palace guards to keep out the riff raff. There were no palace gates to bar the way to Him. The angel made the first announcement of the birth of Jesus to shepherds, who were among the most despised social groups in Judea. These shepherds were both religious and social outcasts and barred from worship in the Temple. No respectable Jew would have anything to do with these unsavory individuals. To be sure, they would not have had access to Jesus had he been born in a palace, but in a manger, they were welcomed.

From just a cursory glance through the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus from the cradle to the cross, we see that it was the unwanted and the undesirable who were welcomed with open arms by Jesus. Unsavory shepherds, unscrupulous tax collectors and unwanted sinners were welcomed by Jesus. The sick were welcomed. The broken hearted were welcomed. The hurting and downcast were welcomed. The poor were welcomed. The foolish were welcomed. The “good thief” dying on a cross was welcomed. His accessibility leads us to His availability.

3. Availability: As comforting as the first two categories of approachability and accessibility are, availability is the summon bonum — the highest good. What good would approachability and

■ See MANGER page 17

TRADITIONS

continued from page 10

nifies God's grace and love for His people. Make a list of what God is asking of each of us and place under the tree.

2. Use decorations to tell about the entire life of Christ. Christmas is a time that usually emphasizes the birth of Jesus, but decorations can also celebrate the remainder of His life on earth. In addition to the basic nativity set, angels, and stars, you may want to include crosses and verses that talk about the life of Jesus.

3. Fast a meal. In America, Christmas includes a large focus on food. This year, during the week before Christmas, give up a meal and pray during that time for the poor, hungry, and spiritually lost in the world.

4. Watch a movie that remembers the life of Christ. There are several good films that focus on the birth, death, and life of Christ. We recommend

Jesus of Nazareth, the film, Jesus, or for mature audiences, The Passion of the Christ. Or for a change of pace, try Ben Hur, a movie that begins with Jesus' birth and ends with His death, and tells the story of a man who was transformed by His love and forgiveness.

By watching movies that focus on other aspects of the life of Jesus, the Christmas celebration of His birth is put into proper perspective. This can be an excellent opportunity to talk to your children about why Christ had to come in the form of a child.

5. Share stories about how God has worked in your life. Have you ever told your children the story of your salvation? How about your spouse? While the family is together during the holidays, use the time to share your personal stories about faith, redemption, and life change. Also, reflect on the previous year and talk about how you have grown in your faith individually and as a family.

GHOSTS

continued from page 7

a thoughtful gift that meets that need has a value that goes far beyond its price tag.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

The third spirit to visit Scrooge shows him a frightening vision of the future. Modern Christmas shoppers can face their own “Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come” if they break out their credit cards to buy gifts they can't afford. If you want to avoid being haunted by the ghost of this Christmas for months to come, put away the plastic and focus on thoughtful gifts that you can afford.

Credit card spending isn't the only way we borrow trouble at Christmas time. Family gatherings can quickly move from joyful to wistful if you start playing the “This is probably the last Christmas that we'll ever...” game. Parents whose children are growing sooner or later have to face the fact that at some point it won't work to have the whole family together. Families with aging loved ones must cope with the knowledge that each Christmas might be the last for Grandma or Grandpa.

Change is a part of life, but particularly at Christmas time we like to cling to tradition. Don't let the cares of tomorrow rob the joys of today. Leave

tomorrow's sorrows for tomorrow.

The real Christmas Carol – remember, reflect, realize

Of course, the best way to deal with these ghosts is to focus your attention on the real Christmas story – one that has a stable instead of a counting house, and wise men instead of spirits.

For the ghost of Christmas past, remember the tiny baby in the manger. Remember that God cared enough to send His very best – and to send Him in a package we could understand and relate to.

For the ghost of Christmas present, reflect on the role Jesus plays in your life today. Remember that the babe of Bethlehem is alive today, and working through His people. Jesus was called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us,” and that's a truth that continues to this day.

And for the ghost of Christmas yet to come, realize that even as we're remembering Jesus quietly slipping into the world more than 2,000 years ago, we can also look forward to a significantly more noticeable return someday. Jesus came once, and He's coming again. That's more than enough reason to be merry this Christmas.

Dr. Doug Trouten teaches communication at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul, and is the former executive director of the Evangelical Press Association.

MEMORIES

continued from page 11

the kitchen. And he'd start carving away.

If Christmas dinner was at my house, I'd asked him to do the honors. He'd even bring his own weapon – the reliable electric knife. And I was right there by his side. I always got the first pinch of white meat.

He will not be carving this year. This is our first Christmas without Daddy. He went to be with Jesus eight months ago.

Maybe I'm making a bigger deal out of this than I should – or maybe there is a bigger deal inside this memory.

The bigger deal is the truth that most of us have experienced in our lives. And

that deal is: you never know when it will be the last.

• The last good-bye

• The last birthday celebration

• The last conversation about that topic they

were so passionate about

• The last opportunity to forgive someone

• The last time to just listen

The lessons are there too:

• Make the most of every minute.

• Say it when you can.

• Take time to listen.


Lessons are nice. But sometimes lessons leave me feeling empty.

So, this Christmas, I am abundantly grateful for HOPE. And not the “Oh I hope so...” hope. Or a “maybe so” hope. It's a hope that I find in scripture.

We are told in First Thessalonians that, at an amazing time, Jesus will raise those who have already left this earth – and then “we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

Daddy liked to talk about that time and he would probably ask if you were ready for it.

So this Christmas, even though Daddy's not carving the turkey, I'll hang my heart on the promise of God – and that will be my hope.

Unto Us

A Nativity Musical

Come with fresh eyes and celebrate the miracle of redeeming grace, and a Savior who is called Jesus, Immanuel, God With Us.

Sunday December 13
9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Colonial Presbyterian Church
Kansas City Campus
9500 Wornall Road

FREE ADMISSION. Unwrapped gifts of toys or monetary donations for the less fortunate will be collected but is not mandatory for attendance. Childcare available at all services for infants and toddlers.

More information online
manger.colonialkc.org

Colonial Presbyterian Church, EPC
Encounter God · Grow With Others · Impact People
colonialkc.org

Kansas City's most complete guide to the events and concerts you want to see!

the events calendar

Compiled by Anita Widaman

Submit Your Events Online for FREE! Visit www.metrovoicenews.com

FREE LISTINGS in the Metro Voice Calendar!

Metro Voice, PO Box 1114
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
metrovoicecalendar@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE: Your item must be in by the 3rd Wednesday of each month for following month's issue.

Family Events, Christian Concerts, Theatre, Youth Events, Meetings, Clubs, Bible Studies, Family Fun, Speakers and More!

CHRISTMAS

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER. December 2, 9 & 16; 6:30 pm. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7851 W. 119th St., Overland Park, KS.

AMONG US. December 4, 7:00 pm & 5, 5:00 pm. Central Church of the Nazarene, 12600 W. 87th St. Pkwy., Lenexa, KS 66215. An intergenerational telling of the Christmas story through the arts. This is an evening that you and your family will not want to miss this Christmas season. 913-541-2600.

WALK THRU BETHLEHEM. December 4-6, 6:00 pm. Church of the Open Door, 4800 S. 20th St., Leavenworth, KS 66048. Experience an interactive walk through ancient Bethlehem and learn about the birth and life of Jesus Christ. 913-727-5006.

HEART OF AMERICA CHRISTMAS PAGEANT. December 4, 7:00 pm; December 5, 3:30 pm & 7:00 pm; December 6, 3:30 pm; December 11, 7:00 pm; December 12, 3:30 pm & 7:00 pm; December 13, 3:30 pm. First Baptist Church Raytown, 10500 E. 350 Hwy., Raytown, MO 64138. 816-353-1994.

A CHRISTMAS EXCLAMATION! December 6, 6:30 pm. Grace Covenant Presbyterian, 11100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210. A Christmas concert of carols presented by 3 children/youth choirs & 4 hand bell choirs. The congregation get in on the singing, too. 913-345-1256.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA. December 6, 10:10 am. Pisgah Baptist Church, 112 Pisgah Dr., Excelsior Springs, MO 64024. Christmas Cantata, "Joy! Unspeakable Joy!" Celebrate the wonder of His birth. 816-630-5121.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS SERVICE. December 6, 6:00 pm. Cowen Memorial Auditorium, 7401 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66204. Come celebrate the birth of Christ with this special candlelight Christmas service at Kansas Christian College. We'll have special music, scripture readings, great fellowship and plenty of cookies! Join us for this special evening of worship honoring the birth of Christ! 913-647-8729.

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT. December 6, 6:30 pm. Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 13145 Blackbob Rd., Olathe, KS 66062. 913-780-6023.

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER. December 11 & 12, 7:00 pm. Graceway, 5460 Blue Ridge Cut-Off, Kansas City, MO. Free. Join us at 6:00 pm in our lobby where your kids will have a chance to see Santa, and get a free picture with him! Light refreshments will be served along with some fun, family-friendly activities. 816-358-1515.

ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS. December 12, 7:00 pm. Immaculate Conception Cathedral, 416 W. 15th St., Kansas City, MO 64105. The Annual Advent Lessons and Carols with the Cathedral Scholar Cantorum choir and Dr. Mario Pearson, director and organist. 816-842-0416.

SONGS OF THE SEASON. December 13, 11:00 am. Grace Covenant Presbyterian, 11100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210. Presented in worship, our Praise Team will share their songs at 8:50 am and our Chancel Choir will share choral anthems at 11:05 am. 913-345-1256.

UNTO US A NATIVITY MUSICAL. December 13, 9:00 am & 11:00 am. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 816-942-3272.

AN EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY NIGHT. December 13, 8:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am and 6:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 12501 W. 137th St., Overland Park, KS. Free Admission. Unwrapped gifts of toys or monetary donations for the less fortunate will be collected but is not mandatory for attendance. Child-care available at all services for infants and toddlers. An honest conversation and dramatic presentation of the truth of Christmas as seen through the eyes of a contemporary family.

CROWN POINTE CHRISTMAS. December 13, 10:00 am. Crown Pointe Church, 5950 NW Lakewood Way,



Lee's Summit, MO 64064. A Christmas celebration for the whole family. Includes a variety of great music and a dramatic telling of the Christmas story. 816-795-8777.

CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS. December 13, 6:00 pm. Church of the Nazarene, 2020 E. Sheridan, Olathe, KS 66062. A performance of your favorite Christmas carols led by the choir and orchestra. 913-764-4575.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE. Dec. 13, 6 p.m. Northland Cathedral, 101 NW 99th Street, KCMO. 816-455-2555

A TREE LOT CHRISTMAS. December 18, 7:00 pm & December 20, 10:30 am. Heart of America Church, 7600 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64138. Christmas musical program. 816-356-6380.

CHRISTMAS WITH DENVER AND THE MILE HIGH ORCHESTRA. December 20, 10:00 am. World Revival Church, 9900 View High Dr., Kansas City, MO 64134. This will be a free event, so invite your friends and family! A special Christmas service at World Revival Church. 816-763-0708.

FELLOWSHIP FAMILY CHRISTMAS. December 20, 6:00 pm. Fellowship Greenwood, 1601 W. Main St., Greenwood, MO 64034. A free classic shared family event that will highlight the Christmas story, engage each member of the family in creating a Christmas craft, a family photo opportunity, Christmas cookies and each family receive a copy of "The Night Before the Real Christmas. 816-984-8300

A TREE LOT CHRISTMAS. December 20, 6:00 pm.

Fort Osage Church of the Nazarene, 19333 E. 24 Hwy., Independence, MO 64056. A Christmas musical sure to delight the young and old! Followed by a fundraiser reception downstairs in the fellowship hall! All are invited. 816-796-5879.

MAYHEM IN BETHLEHEM CHRISTMAS MUSICAL. December 20, 3 & 6 p.m. Timothy Lutheran Ministries, 301 SW Wyatt Road, Blue Springs 64014 816.228.5300

SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS CONCERT. Dec. 20, 6 p.m. Northland Cathedral, 101 NW 99th Street, KCMO. Cathedral Choir & Orchestra. 816-455-2555

COMMUNION SERVICE FOR THE LONGEST NIGHT. December 22, 10:30 am. Avondale United Methodist Church, 3101 NE Winn Rd., Kansas City, MO. 816-452-3518.

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. Dec. 24, 6 p.m. Northland Cathedral, 101 NW 99th Street, KCMO. 816-455-2555

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. Dec. 24, 10 p.m. Red Bridge Baptist Church, 4901 E. Red Bridge Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64137. (816) 761-1194

FREE TOYS & FOOD GIVEAWAY/CAROL NIGHT. December 23, 6:00 pm. Wisdom Assembly, 11225 Colorado Ave., Kansas City, MO 64137. Sponsored by Wisdom Assembly. Come share in the joy & spirit of Christmas on our Christmas Carol Night. We will also be giving away free food packs & kids' toys to families. Your child must be present to get free toys. A night of awesome music and giveaways! Everyone's invited!

816-761-9473.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES. December 24, 4:30 pm (focused on children) & 7:30 pm (including the Bell Choir). Avondale United Methodist Church, 3101 NE Winn Rd., Kansas City, MO. 816-452-3518.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES. December 24, 6:00 pm. Fort Osage Church of the Nazarene, 19333 E. 24 Hwy., Independence, MO 64056. All are welcome! 816-796-5879.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. December 24, 5:00 pm. College Church of the Nazarene, 2020 E. Sheridan, Olathe, KS 66062. Come join us for a family friendly, candlelight Christmas celebration! All are welcome! 913-764-4575.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES. Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Cross-Way Bible Church, 701 NW Woods Chapel Road, Blue Springs, MO. (816) 228-1411

CHRISTMAS EVE AT CORNERSTONE. December 24, 5:00 & 6:30 pm. Cornerstone Church, 301 SE AA Hwy., Blue Springs, MO 64014. 816-228-1979.

REGIFTING THE GIFT, CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. December 24, 1:00 pm, 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm. Independence First United Methodist Church, 400 W. Maple Ave., Independence, MO 64050. 816-254-6900.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. December 24, 3:00 pm & 5:00 pm. Fellowship Greenwood, 1601 W. Main St., Greenwood, MO 64034. Join us for a traditional candle lighting service celebrating the birth of Jesus as we rejoice over God giving us the greatest gift, His Son, our Savior. 816-984-8300.

CHRISTMAS AT COLONIAL CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES. December 24, 3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 12501 W. 137th St., Overland Park, KS. December 24, 5:00 & 10:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO. advent.colonialkc.org.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP. December 24; 1:30, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00 & 10:00 pm. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7851 W. 119th St., Overland Park, KS. Family Services (geared for families with young kids with a shorter message, special kid-appropriate lights instead of candles, and familiar music), 1:30 pm. Traditional Service; 3:00, 5:00 and 10:00 pm. Contemporary Worship and Praise Band, 7:00 pm.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE. December 25, 10:00 am. Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 13145 Blackbob Rd., Olathe, KS 66062. 913-780-6023.

ANNUAL SHUT IN/CONSECRATION. December 26, 9:00 pm. Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln St., Topeka, KS. During this service, there will be teaching classes, testimonies, prayer and praise and worship, reflecting on our awesome God, and all that He has done for us throughout the year! You are welcome to stay throughout the night, or to just drop in for a while. 785-234-1835.

"WATCH NIGHT SERVICES" NEW YEAR'S EVE. December 31, 9:00 pm. Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln St., Topeka, KS. This night, we will continue in

■ calendar continued on next page

Alpha Christian Children's Home & School
www.alphachristianchildrenshome.com

WHAT WE DO:

1. Share Christ to offer hope and healing
2. Provide a Christian family safe haven
3. Help the kids get caught up in school

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Pray
2. Volunteer
3. Refer children to us
4. Give money or food to help us serve kids at no charge

Find out more by calling
785-597-5235
Located an Hour W of KC
15017 27th Street
PO Box 727
Perry, Kansas 66073

*— The Best —
Fine Dining Experience
on Wheels*

**Kansas Belle
DINNER TRAIN**

**TAKE A NOSTALGIC TRIP
BACK TO THE 1940'S.**
Whether it's a romantic Saturday night or a casual Sunday afternoon with the family, you'll experience beautiful scenery on a round trip departing from the Baldwin City Depot. You may also enjoy an optional murder mystery, WWI USO show or a melodrama.

By Reservation 785-594-8505 | 1-800-942-7245
kansasbelle.com

reflections of 2015, testimonies, prayer, and praise and worship! Everyone is encouraged to come on out and celebrate our Lord with us, as we "Welcome in the New Year with Great Expectations! 785-234-1835.

CONCERTS

PHIL & PAM MORGAN'S CHRISTMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. December 1, 7:00 pm. Rutladers Outpost Cowboy Church, 33565 Metcalf Rd., Louisburg, KS. December 4, 7:00 pm. First Baptist Church, 11400 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, KS. December 6, 7:00 pm. Paola Community Center, 905 E. Wea St., Paola, KS. December 7, 6:30 pm. Christ United Methodist Church, 14506 E. 39th St., Independence, MO. December 11, 7:00 pm. First Baptist Church, 2 NE Douglas, Lee's Summit, MO.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH. December 4, 7:30 pm. Graceway Church, 5460 Blue Ridge Cut-Off, Kansas City, MO. Sponsored by Calvary Bible College. www.calvary.edu. 816-358-1515.

MASTERWORKS CHORUS. December 4, 7:30 pm. Graceway Church, 5460 Blue Ridge Cut-Off, Kansas City, MO 64133. 816-358-1515.

ISAAC CATES & ORDAINED IN CONCERT. December 5, 7:00 pm. Graceway Church, 5460 Blue Ridge Cut-Off, Kansas City, MO. 816-358-1515.

CHRISTMAS. December 6, 6:00 pm. Blue Springs Assembly, 2501 NE Duncan Rd., Blue Springs, MO 64029. Featuring Guy Penrod in concert. 816-847-0200.

K-LOVE CHRISTMAS 2015. December 12, 7:00 pm. Sheffield Family Life Center, 5700 Winner Rd., Kansas City, MO 64127.

EMMANUEL: CHRISTMAS IN CONCERT. December 12, 6:00 pm. Countryside Baptist Church, 14150 W. 175th St., Olathe, KS 66062. Tickets are \$8 and must



DEC 20 CHRISTMAS WITH DENVER AND THE MILE HIGH ORCHESTRA. 10:00 AM., WORLD REVIVAL CHURCH, 9900 VIEW HIGH DR., KANSAS CITY, MO

be purchased in advanced. This unique and beautiful presentation opens with performances from Greenleaf music students and segues into a dramatic retelling of the Christmas story through dance, choral pieces, and narration. Doors open at 5:30 pm.

ALL THEE ABOVE. December 13, 4:00 pm. Independence First United Methodist Church, 400 W. Maple Ave., Independence, MO 64050. Free Southern Gospel Christmas concert. Light refreshments served afterwards. 816-254-6900.

EVERYTHING CHRISTMAS. December 13, 7:00 pm. Nativity of Mary Catholic Church, 10017 E. 36th Terr., Independence, MO 64052. Presented by Jacomo Chorale.

CHRISTMAS WITH DENVER AND THE MILE HIGH ORCHESTRA. December 20, 10:00 am. World Revival Church, 9900 View High Dr., Kansas City, MO 64134. This is a free event, so invite your friends and family! A special Christmas service with World Revival Church. 816-763-0708.

Abiding Faith Baptist Church and Mission

Sundays: 9:00 am-Devotion • 9:30 am-Sunday School • 10:45 am-Worship | Wednesdays: 7:00 pm-Bible Study for Adults/Youth

(816) 427-2330 • 8524 Blue Ridge Blvd • Kansas City, MO • www.abidingfaithbcm.com

The staff and volunteers of Returning Glory want to Thank You for your support and prayers; and for entrusting the hearts of your children to us and our "teachers" — the horses. The ranch is quiet now with the horses enjoying just being a horse, maybe even another snow day!

We ask for your continued prayer for 2016 and the plans the Father has for Returning Glory.

We pray for you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed 2016.

Returning Glory
equine assisted learning center
www.returningglory.com
816.223.9662

FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI. December 20, 6:00 pm. Smith Cotton Jr. High School, 312 W. Broadway, Sedalia, MO 65301. Balcony seating \$20. Floor seating \$25. Special guest Shawn Groves.

HOPE. December 20, 5:00 pm. Lenexa Baptist Church, 15320 W 87th St. Parkway, Lenexa, KS 66219. 913-599-6447.

C DAVID SMART. December 24. Olathe Bible Church, 13700 W. 151st St., Olathe, KS.

NEW YEARS EVE GOSPEL SINGING. December 31, 6:00 pm-12:00 am. Calvary Baptist Church, 900 NW 22nd St., Blue Springs, MO 64015. 816-228-5540.

SWEET SPIRIT AND FRIENDS GOSPEL SING. January 16, 6:00 pm (food) 7:00 pm (music). Moment of Truth Bible Baptist, 310 Randolph Rd., Claycomo, MO 64119. Sponsored by Sweet Spirit & Friends Ministries. We have a SURPRISE guest that night! Come on by and bring a friend.

SOUTHERN GOSPEL (CALL FOR GROUPS)

ALPHA OMEGA CHRISTIAN MUSIC ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING, PRAYER, DEVOTION, POTLUCK AND JAM. FIRST FRIDAY, 7pm. 10035 E. Westport Rd., Indep., MO 64052.

MO-KAN GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION POTLUCK AND JAM. FOURTH FRIDAY (except for Nov. & Dec. when we meet on the 3rd Fri.). Northland Christian Church, 6120 NE 48th St., KCMO. 913-432-0359.

PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE CHURCH. SECOND SATURDAY, 6pm. 341 S. 72nd St., Kansas City, KS 66111. Praise and Worship songs of Zion. 913-334-1009.

CGMA NW MO CHAPTER MEETING, GOSPEL MUSIC AND POTLUCK. SECOND SATURDAY. Faith Assembly of God Church, South 13 Hwy, Polo, MO. Travel North on I-35 North, go North of Liberty to the Polo/Lathrop Exit. Turn right onto 116 Hwy. Go 12 miles to 13 Hwy. Turn left and go ¼ mile. pegcla@msn.com.

MOMENT OF TRUTH BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH. THIRD SATURDAY in January, May, September & October, 7pm. 310 Randolph Rd., Claycomo, MO. Gospel music sing. 816-452-4426.

RADIANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD. LAST SUNDAY, 6:30 p.m. Hwy. 33, Kearney, MO. Open mike. Gospel sing.

GOSPEL JAMBOREE. SECOND THURSDAY, 7 p.m. Life Christian Center, 1650 E Langsford Road, Lee's Summit, MO. 816-878-4694.

PARADISE BAPTIST CHURCH. SECOND SUNDAY, 6 p.m. Pot luck dinner at 5 p.m. Paradise Missouri. 816-

591-1020.

CLASSES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. Lee's Summit, Independence and Belton, MO. We are seeking a support group facilitator in your area. If interested, contact Yvonne at 913-384-4673 or email info@fibrocoalition.org.

CAREER SKILLS & CONNECTIONS. Jewish Community Center of Greater KC, 5801 W. 115th St., Overland Park, KS. Sponsored by Jewish Family Services. Helps those who are unemployed and underemployed in the community find jobs. Services include: Monday morning coffee club, Individualized career coaching, Resume development, Cover letter writing, LinkedIn profile development, Networking skills, Interviewing skills, Mock interviews, Job search strategies, Salary negotiations, Connections to jobs and employers. 913-730-1449.

AVOID PROBATE. December 1, 7:00 pm. Lewis Living Trust Center. 700 NE Langsford, Lee's Summit, MO 64063. 816-524-3200.

JEWISH COMMUNITY TEFILAT SHALOM: A SERV-

JAN 11 HER CHOICE TO HEAL CLASS. IF NOT FOR GRACE. WWW.INFG.ORG.

ICE OF COMFORT AND PEACE. December 3, 6:30 pm. Village Shalom, 5500 W. 123rd St., Overland Park, KS 66209. Sponsored by Jewish Family Services. This sacred and supportive time offers spiritual healing and

■ calendar continued on next page

Make A Difference for eternity in the life of a child
Pray • Refer • Volunteer • Give

Offering children in need:

- Traditional family settings
- A Christ-centered environment & education
- Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC)
- Their own "Path to Purpose"

Show-Me Christian Youth Home

660-347-5982 | www.showmekids.org
lovegrows@showmekids.org

ECFA

life 88.5

peace FAMILY Music Fun Listener Supported Community Joy Relationship New Information Traf

Kansas City's Home for Christian Music

Uplifting LOVE Encouragement Weather COMFORT

renewal for every stage of life. Our contemporary services includes prayer, song, readings and personal reflection. All are welcome. 913-327-8250.

GOOD NEWS CLUB TRAINING. December 5, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church, 3634 Brooklyn Ave., Kansas City, MO. Sponsored by Child Evangelism Fellowship. Seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity while the door is still open to teach God's word and introduce children to Jesus in an after-school Good News Club! 816-358-1138.

LIVING A GOOD LIFE...DYING A GOOD DEATH. December 6, 10:00-11:30 am. Jewish Community Campus, 5801 W. 115th St., Overland Park, KS 66211. Sponsored by Jewish Family Services. This workshop will address: Hospice and how it works, How a geriatrician can help a patient and their family, Nursing home care vs. homestay care, Caregiver responsibilities and when it's time to get additional assistance, How to advocate for your loved one, Personal caregiver insight. 913-327-8259.

DR. ROBERT COLLINS: ISRAEL & PROPHECY. December 6, 6:00 pm. Calvary Baptist Church, 900 NW 22nd St., Blue Springs, MO 64015. 816-228-5540.

REFRESH CONFERENCE. December 6-9, various times. Lifegate Church, 1525 S. Noland Rd., Independence, MO 64055. Speakers include: Pastor Jamin Becker, Pastor Matt Austin and Pastor Josh Hart.

AGLOW'S JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. December 9, 9:30 am. Grandview Assembly of God Building, 12400 Grandview Rd., Grandview, MO 64030. Sponsored by South Kansas City Lighthouse Aglow. The theme for our Christmas meeting, with speaker, Donna Morgan. This will be our annual Christmas luncheon, everyone please bring a salad. 816-540-2590.



THROUGH JAN 3 **A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS. THE COTERIE THEATRE, 2450 GRAND BLVD., KANSAS CITY, MO 64108. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 816-474-6552.**

CLASSICAL CONVERSATIONS EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION EVENT. December 14, 1:00-2:15 pm. Nall Avenue Baptist Church, 6701 Nall Ave., Prairie Village, KS. aprilshawnecc@gmail.com.

AVOID PROBATE. December 17, 7:00 pm. Lewis Living Trust Center. 700 NE Langsford, Lee's Summit, MO 64063. 816-524-3200.

HAYESOD, THE FOUNDATION. January 10, 5:00-7:30 pm. \$30 individual, \$50 couple. Sponsored by Or HaOlam Messianic Congregation. What are the foundations of the Messianic Jewish faith? What does it mean that

faith in Yeshua (Jesus) has Jewish roots? What are the differences between Messianic Judaism, Christianity, and non-Messianic Judaism? Contact Jim Templar. 913-383-8448.

HER CHOICE TO HEAL CLASS. January 11. Are you looking for peace after experiencing abortion? If Not For Grace Ministries is here to help. Join us for our 9-week Bible-based Her Choice to Heal Class. jedlund@inf.org.

ROMANTIC GETAWAY. January 17-18. Chateau Avalon, Kansas City, KS. Marriage teaching with Roger & Laureen Traver. MountainTopMarriages.org. 913-780-3423.

CREATION CONFERENCE. Jan. 24, 9:30: Creation and the War of the Worldviews. 11:00: How Big is God? Blue Ridge Bible Church, 8524 Blue Ridge Blvd, KCMO. Presented by Creation Ministries Int. Speaker, Shane Cessna. 816-353-8053.

THE ARISE 2016 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE. January 28-31. Sponsored by World Revival Church. Pastor Kathy Gray and various speakers. More details to come. Come and grow in your identity and influence as an anointed warrior women of God. 816-763-0708

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS
INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 606 Gladstone Blvd., Kansas City, Jackson



THROUGH MAY 1 **DA VINCI: THE EXHIBITION. TUESDAY-THURSDAY, 10 AM TO 5 PM; FRIDAY-SATURDAY, 10 AM TO 6 PM; SUNDAY, 12 PM-5 PM. UNION STATION, 30 W. PERSHING RD., KANSAS CITY, MO**

County, MO was officially entered in the National Registration of Historic Places.

GIVING TUESDAY WITH UNBOUND. December 1, 5:00 pm. 412 Nichols Rd., Kansas City, MO 64112. On Tuesday, December 1, from 5-7 pm, Kendra Scott will be at the Country Club Plaza store in Kansas City. 20% of purchases will be donated to Unbound Education. Enter to win a handmade piece of jewelry created by the mother of an Unbound sponsored child in Kenya. 913-384-6500.

TWC'S CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE. December 3, 5:00-8:00 pm. The Women's Clinic of Kansas City, 815 N. Noland Rd., Independence, MO 64050 or 11904 Blue Ridge Blvd., Grandview, MO 64030.

COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION. December 5, 5:00 pm. Koinonia Bible Church, 7020 Richmond Ave., Kansas City, MO 64133. Sponsored by S.I.S.T.E.R.S. United of Kansas City. Event for the young girls and ladies in the community. A chance to meet the ladies of S.I.S.T.E.R.S. and to hear our testimonies as well as other. 816-388-0013.

COUNTRY STORE AND AUCTION. December 5, 8:00 am. Cowen Memorial Auditorium, 7401 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66204. Come on out to the annual Country Store and Auction at Kansas City Christian College and Overland Christian Schools! Find items for your Christmas list and contribute to a good cause at

the same time. 913-647-8729.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE. December 10, 4:00 pm & December 13, 1:00 pm. Mother's Refuge, 3721 Delridge, Independence, MO 64055. Please come enjoy cookies and coco with our young moms and babies. Enjoy our new home. 816-353-8070.

COOKIE EXCHANGE. December 12, 9:30 a.m. Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 13145 S. Blackbob Road, Olathe, KS 66062. 913-780-6023.

A TIME TO REMEMBER. December 13, 6:00 pm. Fort Osage Church of the Nazarene, 19333 E. 24 Hwy., Independence, MO 64056. Remembering loved ones who have passed away and honoring them through the Christmas season. 816-796-5879.

PRAYER VIGIL. January 22, 12:00 pm. Illus Davis Plaza, 400 E. 9th St., Kansas City, MO 64141. Sponsored by Missouri Right to Life-Western Region. Join the Prayer Vigil for the unborn and for the Marchers in Washington assembling at the Illus Davis Plaza, 400 E. 9th St. (across from the Federal Courthouse). We will gather with Ecumenical groups of pastors and pro-life workers in prayer. The Vigil will begin at 12 noon and end at 1:00 pm. 816-353-4113.

RALLY, LEARN, PRAY & MARCH FOR LIFE! January 22. Capitol, Topeka, KS. Sponsored by Kansans for Life.

■ calendar continued on next page

Ascension Lutheran Church 4900 Blue Ridge Blvd
Kansas City, MO
Phone: 358-1919

Join us for worship each week.
Sunday Morning Worship 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School and Bible Study 9:30 a.m.

The church is hosting walkers: 7:00 - 10:00 am, Monday through Friday.

We hope to see you!

Missouri Right to Life Western Region

Our Mission is to protect life from conception until natural death. We do this by education, legislation and activation.

9504 E. 63rd St. Suite 103
Kansas City, MO 64133
816-353-4113
www.mrlWesternRegion.org

January 22nd
March for Life Washington, DC
Prayer Vigil
Federal Courthouse, KCMO
Noon to 1:00 pm

Annual May Golf Tourney
13th Annual Golf Tournament
Watch for details!



Let all guests be welcomed as Christ •
Conception Abbey
The Benedictine Monks of
Conception Abbey welcome over
10,000 guests each year. Whether
you come for a personal retreat,
directed retreat, workshop, or just
to get away we hope that after one
visit, you'll never be a stranger to
Conception Abbey.

The Abbey Guest Center
Conception Abbey
P.O. Box 501
37174 State Hwy V.V.
Conception, MO 64433
(660) 944-2809
guests@conception.edu
www.conceptionabbey.org



Built in Kansas City. For Kansas City Families.

Kansas City Personalities
Mornings w/ Melony & Wayne
Afternoons w/ Don Godman
Local News, Weather & Traffic

Kansas City Difference Makers
Prayer Works
Drive Thru Difference
Christian Business Network

Life885.com
life 88.5

785-383-8636.

MARCH FOR LIFE 2016. January 22. www.MarchForLife.org.**8TH ANNUAL ST. MONICA MARDI GRAS FUNDRAISER.** Jan. 30, 5 p.m. The St. Monica Catholic Church, 1616 Paseo Boulevard, Kansas City, MO 64108. Celebrate the Mardi Gras Season here locally for their parishioners and community members, in an effort to upgrade the church property and general improvements of the facility and programs focused on youth. \$40 day of event. 913-226-2085**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & COLLEGE EXPO.** March 5, 9:30 am-2:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall, Kansas City, MO. 816-524-4522.**2016 LOBBY DAY.** April 5, Capital, Jefferson City, MO. Sponsored by Missouri Right to Life. Hope to see many pro-lifers there. More info to come. 816-353-4113.**FINE ARTS****THE 12 DAYS OF SCHTICKMAS!** Martin City Melodrama, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. 913-642-7576.**CHRISTMAS IN SONG.** Through December 24. Quality Hill Playhouse, 303 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO. \$36 tickets. The production features a signature blend of sacred and secular Christmas songs. 816-421-1700.**A CHRISTMAS CAROL.** Through December 24. Spencer Theatre, 4949 Cherry St., Kansas City, MO 64110. 816-235-1453.**A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS.** Through January 3. The Coterie Theatre, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. 816-474-6552.**HANDEL'S MESSIAH.** December 3, 7:00 pm; December 4, 8:00 pm; December 5, 8:00 pm; December 6, 2:00 pm. Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center, 1601 Broad-

way, Kansas City, MO. The Independence Messiah Choir joins with the Symphony and Symphony Chorus. 816-994-7222.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE RADIO PLAY. December 4, 7:00 pm & December 5, 2:00 pm & 6:00 pm. Paola Community Center, 905 E. Wea St., Paola, KS 66071. Tickets at the door, adults \$9, kids \$7, seniors \$5. Presented by Cornerstone Performing Arts. Join us for a fun radio play in the beautiful Schwartz Family Theatre. 913-605-0311.**THE NATIVITY.** December 4, 10:00 am (school performance) & 7:00 pm; December 5, 2:00 pm & 5:00 pm; December 6, 3:00 pm. Grace Holy Trinity Cathedral, 415 W. 13th St., Kansas City, MO. Presented by Paul Mesner Puppets. A cast of over forty puppeteers bring these larger-than-life Biblical characters to life. www.paulmesnerpuppets.org. 816-756-3500.**THE VALLEY HAVEN CHRISTMAS SHOW.** December 4, 7:00 pm & December 5, 4:00 & 7:00 pm. Green-

leaf Performing Arts Academy, 19976 W. 162nd St., Olathe, KS 66062. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. As a group of elderly people wait for visitors on Christmas Eve, they discover some surprises about themselves—and the season they're waiting to celebrate. This warm and witty one-act is presented by the Greenleaf Theatre Corps. 913-397-7071.

CONSERVATORY CHOIRS: A SEASON FOR GIVING. December 5, 7:30 pm. Visitation Catholic Church, 5141 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64113. Free. Benefit the Harvesters Community Food Network. Non-perishable food items and monetary contributions to Harvesters will be accepted.**NUTCRACKER.** December 5-24. Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, 1601 Broadway Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. An all new production of this favorite holiday classic. 816-931-8993.**A SWINGING KANSAS CITY CHRISTMAS!** December 8, 7:00 pm early show. Kauffman Center, 1601

Broadway, Kansas City, MO. Presented by The Kansas City Jazz Orchestra. Featuring singer/composer Ann Hampton Callaway.

A SPECTACULAR CHRISTMAS SHOW. December 11-23. Musical Theater Heritage, Crown Center, 2405 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO. 816-221-6987.**OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO.** December 13, 2:30 pm & 4:30 pm. Park Hill South High School, 4500 NW River Park Dr., Kansas City, MO 64153. Presented by The Northland Symphony Orchestra. 816-945-2436.**THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS.** December 18-20. Avila University, Goppert Theatre, 11901 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64145. The Nutcracker that tells the true story of Christmas. Dramatictruth.org.**FAMILY OUTINGS****DA VINCI: THE EXHIBITION.** Through May 1, 2016. Tuesday-Thursday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm; Friday-Saturday, 10:00 am-6:00 pm; Sunday, 12:00-5:00 pm. Union Station, 30 W. Pershing Rd., Kansas City, MO 64108. Featuring more than 65 fully built life-size inventions, more than 20 fine art studies and dozens of stunning displays, guests will learn the complex beginnings and lifetime achievements of Da Vinci through his discoveries in art, engineering, flight, hydraulics, music, light and more.**KNIT-IN.** December 5, 9:30 am. National World War I Museum and Memorial, 100 W. 26th St., Kansas City, MO 64108. RSVP by Nov. 30 to receive a free sack lunch. Needle away the day in our special December installment of Mrs. Wilson's Knitting Circle! This 2 ½ hour gathering, with beverages and treats, is a time to share cheer and get together. Looking for a way to give this season? Find out about our veterans/troops knitting projects. Bring your own project or start a new one. BYONY (bring your own needles & yarn).

Let me make the *best* of your time.

Alan R. Jones, CPA

406 N. Foxridge Drive
Raymore, MO
816-331-2232
alanjonescpa@hotmail.com

Member AICPA



1 in 3 women needs a safe, confidential place to share the pain and loss abortion has caused in their life.

Her Choice to Heal classes begin January 2016.

If Not For Grace

816.847.2911 | info@infg.org | www.infg.org



"Romantic Getaway" in Kansas City
Presented by Mountain Top Marriages

Ready for a treat? Enjoy an elaborate "theme room" and relax in your own private two person Jacuzzi bath. Enjoy complimentary chilled cider plus a full breakfast delivered to your room! Then on either side of your romantic evening enjoy marriage teaching with Roger and Laureen Traver!

Sunday and Monday Jan. 17 & 18, 2016
Chateau Avalon
Across from The Legends in Kansas City, Kan.
Just \$152 per couple for the complete package

Info: 913-780-3423 or 913-636-9481 • MountainTopMarriages.org



Quality Christian Talk Radio

92.3FM 760AM 101.5FM

BOTT RADIO NETWORK

BroadcastMinistries Find Stations Nationwide, Download Apps, Listen Live, Worldwide • bottradionet.com



(from left) Jim Day, Focus On The Family; Chuck Swindoll, Insight For Living; John MacArthur, Grace To You; June Hunt, Hope In The Night; Alister Begg, Truth For Life; Tony Evans, The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans; James MacDonald, Walk in The Word; David Jeremiah, Turning Point; Adrian Rogers, Live With Faith; Crawford Loritts, Legacy Moment; And More! Visit BRN Online for Program Schedule.

the YMCA FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT® FOR HEALTHY LIVING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A COSMIC NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

YMCA TROUT LODGE
December 26-January 3

We put families first with year round activities that will keep your family busy for days. Then on New Year's Eve, join us for blacklight bingo, carnival games, crafts for the kids, dance party & midnight buffet. And no celebration would be complete without a fireworks display over our huge private lake! Make your reservation today! We are located only 90 minutes south of St. Louis.

Archery, Rifle & Shooting Sports • High Adventure • Arts & Crafts Nature Center • Campfire • Horseback Riding • and much more!

TROUT LODGE NEW YEAR'S SPECIAL!
Stay 3 nights, get the 4th night FREE!

888-FUN-YMCA • ymcaoftheoarks.org



WINTER CAMP

YMCA CAMP LAKEWOOD

DEC 27-30! For kids 7-17, this camp is perfect for a winter break blast. For only \$195, including lodging, meals & activities, this is the perfect holiday gift. For more information visit us online or call 888-FUN-YMCA.

Archery & Rifle • Climbing tower • Arts & Crafts • Nature Center Hockey • Bobsled Race • Campfire • Trail ride & more!



Your degree.
Your ministry.
Your schedule.

KANSAS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE ONLINE

Visit www.kansaschristian.edu for information on how to earn your religion degree online on your schedule! Or email our recruiter directly with your questions. Mention code MV2015 to receive a promotional enrollment credit!

Email: online@kansaschristian.edu
Call: 913 722 0272
Web: www.kansaschristian.edu
Tweet: @KCC_Online



MANGER

continued from page 12

accessibility be if Jesus did not make Himself available?

It should be easy to see that the message of the manger shouts of the availability.

He was available to all who would come unto Him from the cradle to the

cross. But that's not the end of the story. The cradle led to the cross and the cross led to a grave that held Him for three days.

But on that third day, a dead man got up and walked out and is available right now for all who will come unto Him, by grace through faith, and receive Him as both Lord and Savior.

"But from now on the Son of Man

will be seated in the place of power at God's right hand" (Luke 22:69 NLT).

Regardless of where this finds you this Christmas season, whether it be "white" or a bit "blue," marinate on the message of the manger, and the One who is approachable, accessible, and available will meet you in your deepest place of need.

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I

will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT).

I pray you have a blessed Christmas season and that your heart will be moved and ministered to by the miracle and majesty of the message of the manger and the truth about this prom-

ised Messiah who is always approachable, accessible, and available to EVERYONE (including YOU) who will seek Him out 24/7. He wanted me to tell you this.

This is the gospel. This is grace for your race. Never forget that...Amen!

Tommy Boland is senior pastor of Cross Community Church in Deerfield Beach, Fla. tommyboland.com.

PEACE

continued from page 8

wasn't kidding. It's a painful, noisy, violent process to come into this world.

The reality of childbirth is far removed from our typical picture of Christmas. Our images of the birth of Christ are colored by nativity sets and Christmas carols. The still figures sit around the manger, gazing silently at the serene mother and child. "The little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes," we sing. It all seems so peaceful, so quiet, and so far removed from our world.

Today, our world is at war with those who desire our destruction. In Paris, thousands are facing a Christmas without loved ones -- without husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons and daughters. Thousands more in the U.S. will spend Christmas wondering about the safety of relatives in the armed forces, who are working around the world to root out the source of so much evil and hatred.

Around the world, ISIS and its ideological brothers-in-arms are working to kill or forcibly convert those whose allegiance is to that tiny baby born so long ago in Bethlehem. Radical groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad will accept nothing less than the destruction of the Jewish state.

The peace of that first Christmas seems impossible to recapture. But let me suggest that this is because it never existed in the first place.

The Israel into which Jesus was born was under Roman military occupation, not a nation at peace.

The long journey, the shame of an unwed pregnancy, and the lack of room at the inn would have made an already-difficult situation even harder for Mary and Joseph.

The fact that the inn was full suggests a busy, noisy place. And although they all come together in your nativity set, it's clear that neither the wise men nor the shepherds were there to witness Christ's birth. Far away from family and friends,

Mary gave birth to the savior of mankind surrounded by dirt and noise, conflict and agony. There was nothing silent about that night.

And that's the great message of Christmas. It's not that Christ takes us away into His perfect, orderly world. It's that He comes to us wherever we are, enters our difficult circumstances, and makes our lives different just by being there. In times of struggle and times of peace, in surroundings pleasant and unpleasant, in trying circumstances as well as good times -- the meaning of Emmanuel is the same: "God with us."

Someday there will be peace on earth, and good will toward men. But thanks to Jesus, we don't have to wait until then to have a merry Christmas.

—Dr. Doug Trouten teaches communication at the University of Northwestern — St. Paul, and is the former executive director of the Evangelical Press Association





**Become a Friend of Heartland Habitat
and support our Christian housing ministry.
For just \$25, you can help build a home!**

Your \$25 will purchase:

- 8 2x4's for construction
- A gallon of paint
- Flowers for the garden
- 2 window shades
- The front door lock-set
- Light fixture for the children's bedroom
- Electric outlet covers for the entire house



**Call 816-468-7190 and 913-342-3047
or visit www.heartlandhabitat.org**

LIKE US! FACEBOOK.COM/METRO VOICE NEWS



(816) 220-3714
Fully Insured
SAVE 10%
Custom HOLIDAY LIGHTING
WITH THIS AD
www.cuttingedgelawn.net

Bringing Christian Excellence to all the World

BARCLAY COLLEGE ONLINE



- ❖ Biblical Studies
- ❖ Business Management
- ❖ Christian Ministry Leadership
- ❖ Psychology
- ❖ Associate Degree

Apply Online at barclaycollege.edu/apply

APPLY TODAY!

DISTANCELEARNING@BARCLAYCOLLEGE.EDU
800.862.0226 - WWW.BARCLAYCOLLEGE.EDU - HAVILAND, KS

New Classes Begin Every Six Weeks

Bringing Excellence
To All The World

entertainment

MOVIES, BOOKS, MUSIC & MORE!

Grab some popcorn and hot chocolate and enjoy these Christmas-themed movies

entertainment

by **Dwight Widaman**

Metro Voice has been sharing Christmas movie classic suggestions for over 20 years. It usually includes time-worn favorites like *It's A Wonderful Life* and *White Christmas* (the Widaman family favorite). This year we present more recent releases that have become popular with millions of families. Our favorite is still *The Nativity Story*.

There's something about the combination of a cold Midwestern December evening, a roaring fire, popcorn, hot chocolate, and the Christmas season that makes family movie night extra inviting. Here are six favorite Christmas and Christmas-themed films that are sure to appeal to Christian families. Not only do these Christian-themed movies make great Christmas gifts, they also create an opportunity for a memorable family tradition during the holiday season. While none are currently available on Netflix or Amazon Prime for streaming (they may be added after press time), some, like *The Nativity Story*, are available for purchase at LifeWay or online and may be available for check-out at your library.

The Nativity Story (2006)

Just after seeing the film, contributing writer Jack Zavada had this to say about *The Nativity Story*, "It was beautifully made. I enjoyed seeing what everyday life was like in Nazareth, the stone houses, people working in the fields, making clothing, tending animals. The costumes were beautifully done—so much more authentic than a lot of Hollywood Bible epics from the 50s and 60s ... In every respect it was a sensitive, loving treatment of this story." *The Nativity Story* is at the top of my list, first because it truly tells "the Christmas story," but also for its superior quality and enduring holiday appeal. The film has received the highest rating (5) from The Dove Foundation and is sure to become a family Christmas classic.



The Ultimate Gift (2007)

An extremely wise and wealthy grandfather gives his shallow, spoiled grandson the ultimate inheritance. In *The Ultimate Gift*, Jason Stevens, played by Drew Fuller, learns there's more to life than money. Instead of the expected cash windfall, "Red"



Stevens (James Garner) has prepared 12 gifts to be given after his death to his grandson. The series of gifts, leading up to the ultimate gift, take Jason on a challenging journey of personal growth and self-discovery. With its aim toward inspiration and spiritual entertainment, this film hits the ultimate target. The *Ultimate Gift* is produced by the FoxFaith label designed to bring high-quality entertainment to faith-based audiences.

The Note (2007)

While investigating a deadly plane crash, a newspaper reporter recovers a hurriedly written note—apparently left behind by one of the crash victims. With her life about to be forever changed, journalist Peyton MacGruder (Genie Francis) sets out on an emotional journey determined to find the note's intended recipient and deliver the heartfelt message in time for Christmas. Based on Christian writer Angela Hunt's novel by the same name, this touching drama ranked third in all-time ratings as a Hallmark Channel Original movie. *The Note* has also been awarded a 4-Dove family rating by the The Dove Foundation. If you've forgotten that miracles still come true, this story offers a warm and hope filled reminder.



The Chronicles of



Family-Teaching Couples Help Kids Picture a Better Life

Boys Town Offers:

- Extensive training and support
- \$50,400/year plus excellent benefits package
- Rent free, utilities paid, and company vehicle
- Nationally recognized program
- The opportunity to change the lives of youth
- Earn college credit while you work

For more information visit boystown.org/careers or contact ltrecruiter@boystown.org today!



Join the TOWN

Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (2005)

Four young adventurers: Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter—while playing 'hide-and-seek' in the country home of an old professor, stumble upon a magical wardrobe that transports them to a place they never dreamed existed. Stepping through the wardrobe door, they depart World War II London for the spectacular "alternate universe" known as Narnia an enchanted realm inhabited by talking animals and mythological creatures. Narnia reflects the struggles, hopes and moral dilemmas of our own life, and this motion picture re-creation faithfully conveys the original story's eternal symbolism and biblical themes. Viewers will discover that Narnia, a picture of the spiritual kingdom, is much more than just fantasy or fairy tale.



The Polar Express (2004)

Kim Jones, About.com's expert in Christian music predicted in her review of *The Polar Express* that this film is destined to become the *It's A Wonderful Life* for this generation. "The Polar Express" is a touching story about a boy who has started to 'grow out of' his belief in Santa until one magical Christ-

mas Eve, when he boards the train that takes him to the North Pole. Produced using 'performance capture,' which accurately translates live performances into all-digital characters, the animation is so life-like that it's almost eerie." Based on Chris Van Allsburg's children's book bearing the same name, this story is already a modern-day holiday classic.



Dickens must have been rolling in his grave ... with laughter. That's when Walt Disney Studios and Jim Henson Productions released *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, a song-filled celebration of kindness and virtue. In fact, Dickens' classic tale of a miser's redemption has never featured more warmth, wit or off-the-wall characters." My family would agree! Several years ago my husband started the silly custom of watching *The Muppet Christmas Carol* with our family on Thanksgiving Day. For some reason the tradition stuck with us and we look forward to it each year. We even tried a different movie once, but it just wasn't the same.



The Muppet Christmas Carol (1993)

This movie is pure holiday fun, muppet style. In his *PluggedInOnline* review, Bob Smithouser said, "In 1993, Charles

RED BRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

4901 E. Red Bridge Road
KCMO 64137
(corner of Red Bridge & Grandview Roads)
816-781-1194 www.redbridgebaptist.org

Red Bridge Baptist Church – For those desiring a substantial church life!

- Savior-Sensitive!
- Conservative in Theology!
- Wholesome in Ministry!
- Traditional in Worship!
- Expository Preaching!
- Missions-Minded! • Emphasizing the Great Hymns of the Faith!
- Full A/WANA Program (including JV & Varsity!)

Greater Pentecostal Temple

SERVICES

Wednesday

Intercessory Prayer 5:00 PM
Evangelistic (Vesper) Service 6:30 PM
Evening Bible Study 7:00 PM
Youth Department Meeting 7:00 PM

Sunday

Intercessory Prayer 8:00 AM
Sunday School
Relationship Class 9:00 AM
Praise & Worship 10:00 AM

Bishop Marvin E. Donaldson
Pastor

864 Splitlog Avenue • Kansas City, Kansas 66101 • (913) 371-4667

The LIGHT House

Working to ensure every human heart is cherished... within the womb and within strong families

Pregnant? Scared? Need Support? We Can Help!

24/7 Hope Line:
816-916-4434
lighthousekc.org

'War Room' releases to DVD on Dec. 22

by **Dwight Widaman**

Prayer is a powerful weapon! That's the truth in this fall's #1 Christian film release—War Room. For several weeks it was also the top movie in the entire nation.

Just in time for Christmas, the film releases to DVD Dec. 22. While several different releases are available, check out those at your local Christian bookstore like Beacon Bible in Belton or Lifeway Christian Resources. Christian retailers will have DVDs with special features (see below).

War Room is a compelling drama with humor and heart that explores the power that prayer can have on marriages, parenting, careers, friendships, and every other area of our lives.

Tony (T.C. Stallings) and Elizabeth (Priscilla Shirer) Jordan have it all—great jobs, a beautiful daughter, and their dream house. But appearances can be deceiving. Tony and Elizabeth Jordan's



world is actually crumbling under the strain of a failing marriage. While Tony basks in his professional success and

flirts with temptation, Elizabeth resigns herself to increasing bitterness. But their lives take an unexpected turn when Elizabeth meets her newest client, Miss Clara (Karen Abercrombie), and is challenged to establish a "war room" and a battle plan of prayer for her family. As Elizabeth tries to fight for her family,

Tony's hidden struggles come to light. Tony must decide if he will make

amends to his family and prove Miss Clara's wisdom that victories don't come by accident.

Special releases:

- Bloopers and Outtakes
- Deleted Scenes
- Commentary with the Kendricks

Featurettes:

- "The Making of WAR ROOM"
- "WAR ROOM in 60 Seconds"
- "The Heart of War Room"
- "The Church On Its Knees"
- "Investing In the Next Generation"
- "The Art of Jumping Rope"
- "From Auditioning to Acting"
- "Modern Day Miss Clara"
- "Behind the Scenes: Color Grading"
- "A Pastor's Call to Prayer"
- "Warrior" music video by Steven Curtis Chapman

Exclusive Features:

(on products available only to the Christian Bookstore market)

- Stephen Kendrick Devotion
- Alex Kendrick Devotion
- Featurettes: including: "Wall of Remembrance" and "Redemption For the Mitchell Home"



The only album you need

by **Andy Walton**

Christmas songs in October? That's what I thought two months ago. Usually I'd be the first to complain. There's nothing worse than popping into a shop that's belting out seasonal music weeks before Advent even begins. But in the case of Rend Collective I made an exception. Their Christmas album was initially released last year, but got a re-release in October, only a couple of months after their fourth album proper—As Family We Go. But by getting it out there early, their fresh arrangements of classic carols and Christmas songs will

be accessible to worship leaders around the world—who should welcome this wonderful collection.

Recorded mostly in their trademark upbeat folk style, the majority of songs here will be familiar. Some are designed to get a Christmas party started—such as the brilliantly frenetic Ding Dong Merrily on High or their jaunty take on Joy to the World.

There are calmer, more worshipful moments as well, though. O Come All Ye Faithful is replete with beautiful harmonies and O Holy Night (a tough track to cover well) is packed with

■ See ALBUM page 20

HEART OF AMERICA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE & THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Accredited Degrees: Associate - Doctorate;
Bible; Pastoral Studies; Christian Counseling,
Church Administration, Christian Education

www.heartofamericaministries.com
Email: info@heartofamericaministries.com

FIORELLA'S JACK STACK BARBECUE

AN EXPERIENCE
BEYOND YOUR
EXPECTATION

[facebook.com/jackstackbbq](https://www.facebook.com/jackstackbbq)

[twitter@jackstackbbq](https://twitter.com/jackstackbbq)

[Instagram@jackstackbbq](https://www.instagram.com/jackstackbbq)

MARTIN CITY
135th & Holmes Rd.
(816) 942-9141

OVERLAND PARK
95th & Mercalf Ave.
(913) 385-7427

COUNTRY CLUB PLAZA
Wyandotte & Ward Pkwy
(816) 531-7427

FREIGHT HOUSE
22nd & Wyandotte
(816) 472-7427

SUMMIT WOODS CROSSING
50 Hwy & NW Pryor Road
(816) 621-7427
Opening Spring 2015

Families Make the Difference

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment. When a child's family is not able to provide for that child, a foster or adoptive family can. You can make a difference by becoming a "family" for a hurting child. You can also make a difference by providing support for foster or adoptive families.

MBCH Children and Family Ministries and its affiliate The LIGHT House offer a variety of Christian foster care and adoption services.



For information:
call 800.264.6224

or visit us at

www.mbchcfm.org

Family
Owned &
Operated!



Dairy Queen

Orange Julius®

Just in Time for the Christmas Season!
Candy Cane Oreo Blizzard
Merry Christmas to Our Customers!

1900 SW 7 Hwy in Blue Springs
(1/2 miles south of 40 Hwy) 228-1711

14420 E. 40 Hwy
(Noland Rd. in Independence) 478-8060

11904 Shawnee Mission Parkway, Shawnee, KS
Ph. 913-962-5151. Come see us!

Get into holiday spirit with exciting, new releases

Wow, it's already that time of year, isn't it? A time of reflection, a time of lights, a time of cloudy breath and migrations south. Memories are founded in the cool epochs of our mind, from family who are no longer with us, to sharing new memories with kids and grandkids.

It's also a time to remember our Savior; a time of thanksgiving and celebration.

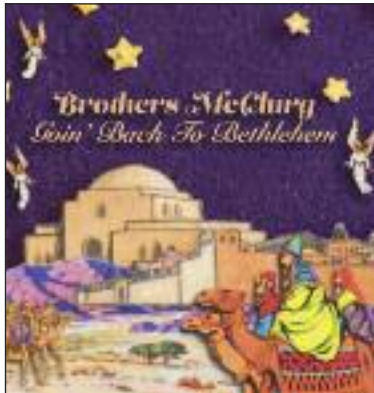
Fortunately, for anyone looking for some new music for the Christmas time of year, there is a large selection of new



D.C. JEANES
Metro Voice
music critic

musicscene

releases coming out this year. First off,



there is a new offering from the Brothers McClurg.

"Goin' Back to Bethlehem" is the Brother's latest, and it's sure to include a great mix of traditional Christmas songs with their own variety of southern charm.

Also up for grabs is producer/songwriter Vernon Hill's new Christmas Album, Great Joy.

Available on iTunes and Amazon, the release will feature singles "Glory to



God" (with Taylor Simone-Butts) and "Great Joy" (with LaVarn Gordon). Vernon is known for writing songs for the popular Songs from His Presence (featuring Billboard Christian Soft AC Most Added Chart single "In Your Presence") and recently released Worship EP Unshaken.

Christmas Is Here By: American Idol alum Danny Gokey – who also auditioned for the show in Kansas City – has also released a new Christmas offering,

Christmas Is Here. Cited by CCM Magazine's Kevin Sparkman says, "Christmas may be here, but Danny Gokey's vocals are always in season" while other critics have mentioned "well done, Danny, for such a poignant, powerful and prolific Christmas album."

Fan favorite and multi-award winning artists such as Chris Tomlin (Adore: Christmas Songs of Worship by Chris Tomlin, Mercyme (It's Christmas!), Laura Story (God With Us), Gaither Vocal Band (Christmas Collection), and Steven Curtis Chapman (Christmas Hymns). There are also some unique favorites being released by Pentatonix (That's Christmas) and Keith and Kristyn Getty (Joy – And Irish Christmas live).

There is obviously a plethora of great holiday music out there, and these are just some of the latest releases to consider while celebrating with friends and family, and remembering the birth of our risen Savior!

Merry Christmas!

Just a few miles away from the congested and rowdy crowds, Living Waters offers secluded float trips in Central Missouri. Less paddling, less dragging, none of the drunken stupor... this is a river experience that will set your retreat apart... families, church groups and scouts.

Living Waters

877-851-8158 (toll free) • www.john738.com

HaYesod
THE FOUNDATION

Beginning on Sunday, January 10, 2016 5-7:30 P.M.

*HaYesod, The Foundation – What are the foundations of the Messianic Jewish faith? What does it mean that faith in Yeshua (Jesus) has Jewish Roots? What are the differences between Messianic Judaism, Christianity, and non-Messianic Judaism? What is our relationship to the Land of Israel, the People of Israel and the Scriptures of Israel? What is the Torah and what did Yeshua and the Apostle Sha'ul (Paul) teach about being a disciple of Yeshua? These and other questions about our spiritual foundation are explored in a ten week session utilizing the HaYesod course developed by "First Fruits of Zion" (FFOZ) a Messianic Jewish educational ministry. This study uses both a work book and DVD videos to explore the foundations of our faith with teachings produced at the FFOZ headquarters in the US and also from the Land of Israel. \$30 individual; \$50 couple. Location to be determined based on enrollment; **deadline to enroll is December 20.** Contact: Jim Templer at jtempler53@yahoo.com.*

Or HaOlam Messianic Congregation
K'hee-iah M'ches-ahet Or HaOlam קהילת משיחית אור העולם
(The perfect solution for inter-faith marriages!)
Meeting at 7029 W 74th St, Overland Park, KS (just east of Metcalf Ave)
Rabbi Shmuel Wolkenfeld – rabbi@orhasolam.com – orhasolam.com – 913-383-8448

ALBUM

continued from page 19

sleigh bells and other nice touches. Their version of Joyful, Joyful is mashed up with the refrain from O Come, O Come Emmanuel – and it works well.

The surprising feature at the heart of the album is two covers of contemporary secular songs that have been retold by Rend as Christmas anthems. And they pull it off perfectly. First, the cover of Shining Light by their fellow Northern

Irish band Ash is a triumph. Already a brilliant pop song, Rend infuse it with a new lease of life via some rewritten lyrics about the birth of Jesus. A second surprising cover version comes in the form of the penultimate track on the album – Shakin' Stevens' 1985 classic Merry Christmas Everybody. Complete with banjo solo, the joy spills out on this version – the fun the band is having is obvious and infectious. It's a radio staple at Christmas time and popular wisdom says you can't top the original – but they've

given it a good go and made it their own – with the last line being "From Rend Collective, Merry Christmas Everyone!"



The final track of the album uses the melody to Auld Lang Syne with different lyrics – entitled For All That You Have Done.

This would work well as the soundtrack of your Christmas party, in the run-up to a Carol service at church or indeed as the soundtrack to unwrapping presents with the family on the day itself. It's the perfect mix of seasonal spirit, without being cheesy or too close to a novelty Christmas record.

If you only buy one Christmas album this year – make sure it's this one. It's sure to be the best one out there.

PROTECT YOUR WORLD
AUTO • HOME • LIFE • RETIREMENT

Allstate
You're in good hands.
Auto Home Life Retirement

Allen Walden
816-875-4927
1493 SW Market St.
Lee's Summit, MO 64081
allenwalden@allstate.com

Insurance and discounts subject to terms, conditions and availability. Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Co., Allstate Vehicle and Property Insurance Co., Allstate Indemnity Co., Life Insurance and annuities issued by Lincoln Benefit Life Company, Lincoln, NE; Allstate Life Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL; or New York, Allstate Life Insurance Company of New York, Hightstown, NJ; Northbrook, IL. © 2015 Allstate Insurance Co.

POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING

KLOVE 97.3

KLOVE RACING

KNOWLEDGE TO FUEL YOUR LIFE

Play online at **KLOVERACING.com**

KLOVERADIO **KLOVEKANSASCITY** **KLOVEKANSASCITY**

Families Make the Difference

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment. When a child's family is not able to provide that for a child, a foster family can.

In Missouri a foster parent

- must be at least 21 years of age
- may be single or married
- must complete training and licensing process (offered at no charge through MBCH Children & Family Ministries)

You can make a difference by becoming "family" for a hurting child.

MBCH Children and Family Ministries is an affiliate of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home

For more information, call (816) 795-8878 or visit www.mbch.org

health & wellness



VAUGHN LAWRENCE
Owner, Spiritual Health

designed for health

HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

So how many times have we read about eating healthier around the holidays and get all prepped for New Year's resolutions to exercise, lose weight and feel better; then found ourselves in March still eating pumpkin pie for breakfast? If so, this article will hopefully give you some good ideas that maybe you haven't heard before

to land you in January with your eyes on health and healing.

■ Make an eating plan for the holidays and stick to it with an accountability partner: As a health practitioner, I have these conversations with people every day. The goal is success, not feelings of condemnation and failure, especially if you're trying to restore your health. Make a plan with a friend, your spouse or roommate and hold each other accountable. It works much better! So what are your goals for the holidays? Here are some ideas:

■ Choose the good over the bad: Every Christmas feast is just that, a feast! Believe it or not there are lots of incredibly good, healthy choices and there are of course all the bad ones. Choose the good and feel happy about your good self-control. If you can stick to the turkey, vegetables and fruit for the majority of your meal, you will feel much better.

■ Avoid the breads, rolls and baked goods: Yes, this could be a toughie, but the processed grains are truly what makes us feel worst after meals. Being hard to digest, this causes the bloating, gas, sore stomachs, extreme fatigue and brain fog of the post-holiday meal blues.

■ Choose to have ONE exception: This works great for many people. Can't resist grandma's pumpkin pie or the apple pie with vanilla ice cream? Choose to have ONE dessert and stick to it. If you do that, you still are successful. If you say you will eat no dessert, and proceed to cave into

...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God...



eating two or three, here comes the feelings of guilt and all the baggage along with it.

■ Make Christmas the exception, not the entire month: Ok, this is a huge one. If you indulge on Christmas day, you may not feel great for a day or two. If you indulge for the ENTIRE MONTH, you could set yourself way back on your health journey. Choose wisely!

■ Change Your Perspective for 2016 in December: Hit the ground running January 1st by thinking through your health goals and how to honor the Lord with your body in December. I know ideas on nutrition and health can be confusing and filled with mixture of truths and non-truths. Here are some ideas from a Christian perspective.

Health is found in the scriptures: When choosing what to eat, honor God. God is Genesis 1:29, eating His creations of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, fish, eggs, etc. This brings life. It is not consuming soda, candy, cheez-its, doritos, pizza, pop tarts, fast food and the thousands of other man-made items that damage the body. If Christians never wake up to the truth that what we eat matters, we will continue to live in bondage to sickness and disease.

Live for God and others, not for yourself: When we live an indulgent lifestyle, with food, entertainment or anything else, we are choosing self. When we eat excessively, and eat all the wrong things, and we know it, we are choosing self. Maybe this year you choose God and others. Health in the body brings FREEDOM to live for God and serve others! Sickness and disease in the body is bondage that cuts short our purposes that God would have for us.

Set realistic goals based on God's design: There are many ways to heal the body and in January's issue we will focus on some specific ways to get back in line with how God created our bodies to function. Ask the Lord where He would have you focus your lifestyle changes.

Health truly comes from choosing God and the things of God. There is no way around this. May we choose with wisdom to love God, love ourselves and love others by aligning with the source of all truth, the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

—Vaughn Lawrence is a natural health care practitioner, herbalist and owner of Spirit of Health who lives by their motto: "We Love God. We Love People. We Love Health. www.spiritofhealthkc.com

Dentistry For the Family

Eugene F. Anderson, D.D.S.
13010 Fuller Ave.
Grandview, MO 64030
816-966-0202
www.efadds.com
8:00 - 5:00 • Closed Fridays
Serving the S. Metro area for 32 years.



We listen...and treat you like family.

"Do to others as you would have them do to you." — Luke 6:31



Pleasant Hill Chiropractic



Dr. Corey Piva

EXPERIENCED • CARING • EFFECTIVE

Chiropractic • Acupuncture • Laser Therapy
• Nutritional Supplements • Massage Therapy
• Sports Injuries • Computerized X-Ray
• Spinal Decompression • Reflexology

816-540-8932
1805 N. 7 Highway.
Pleasant Hill, MO
pleasanthillchiropractic.net



A NEW KIND OF HEALTH STORE

Our store offers you a family friendly experience where you can find the lowest prices on your health supplements in Kansas City, even comparable to the internet.

We believe God created all things perfectly and we want to honor His creation, all our products are as natural and close to the way He created them.

Please join us for a cup of complimentary tea and browse through our selection of bulk herbs, teas, superfoods, healthy snacks and whole food supplements.

Located one block east of Interstate 49 on Main Street in Grandview, MO. We can't wait to meet you!

**10% Off
ENTIRE
purchase!
Mention Ad.**



Healing by Design Series (A-Z through every disease condition from a Biblical viewpoint)—
Mondays, 11am — 12 Noon. On-going

Herbal Remedies Series—Thursdays, 11am— on-going
Tea Time with Vaughn—First Saturday of each month

816-492-5648
5901 Main St., Grandview
www.spiritofhealthkc.com

STORE HOURS:
10 am — 7 pm Monday — Friday
10 am — 4 pm Saturday

Why Wise Families Plan

To learn why visit www.lewislivingtrust.com

FREE Estate Planning Seminar

Avoid Probate • Maximize Your Tax Protection
• Preserve Family Harmony



Bill Lewis

**NO COST
NO OBLIGATION**

Tuesday, Dec. 1
Thursday, Dec. 17



For reservations call: 816-524-3200
LewisLivingTrust.com • 700 NE Langsford Rd., Lee's Summit

HELP

continued from page 1

Thousands of Kansas City-area parents didn't participate in Black Friday this year. It wasn't a mass protest. There were no rallies against capitalism, or the one percent. No protests over wages or workers' rights. They just didn't have the money for the year's most frenzied shopping day—or Christmas shopping on any day for that matter.

Yet these parents from Cass County to Johnson County, Kan., to Kansas City's northland, who found themselves without a job this year, or under a pile of medical bills, or dealing with a recent divorce, will still be able to provide gifts to their kids. Children whose parents have fallen on hard times will awaken Christmas morning brimming with the same excitement and expectation that kids everywhere experience. And it's all thanks to the efforts of countless volunteers and numerous organizations that open special Christmas "stores".

This isn't the Johnson County you know

Johnson County is the richest county in Kansas, yet you may not realize it from the number of parents streaming in to the Johnson County Christmas Bureau for help.

Founded in 1960, the bureau serves a growing number of both unemployed and working poor.

Such need seems incongruous to those with a preconception of Johnson County Kansas. Larry Bigus says that if Johnson County's poor were considered a "city" it would be the fastest growing city in all of Kansas.

Johnson County. For real?

"Yes," says Bigus, executive director of the bureau, explaining that the reason people seek help varies tremendously. "Families that come to shop usually have some level of college education if not a degree. Or they have health problem, loss of job, major car repair or reduced work hours as a result of the Affordable Care Act meant to help families afford health insurance."

For many of these families, it's the first time they've sought help and they are grateful for the assistance.

"Parents are always so appreciative," states Bigus. "It makes a real difference in the family dynamic and provides a much-needed emotional benefit to the parent as well."

Bigus says that in addition to toys, parents can pick up items such as diapers and even ingredients for a chicken Christmas dinner and much more. "Parents can receive enough food to feed their children for three to four days, plus winter coats."

In addition to toys, the greatest need is warm winter coats for children. "We're always short of winter coats and it is so painful to see the look on a mom or dad's face when we run out of coats," he said.

This year the shop will be open Dec. 3–12. Last year, the effort assisted 3560 families (14,000 people) and as of late November, 3,200 families had already made appointments.

If you can donate toys, food or coats, drop them off inside Metcalf South mall. Donations are accepted through the end of the Christmas season. For info visit jccb.org.

Rural Kansas City feels the pinch, too

The need in Cass County, Mo. is not too different than that in Kansas. The counties share not only a border at the state line but also growing numbers of working poor.

One family has made it their cause to help kids with gifts and the parents with prayer.

Christmas Aglow is an outreach started by Pleasant Hill resident Tim Elliott, 80, and his wife Linda, 77. Their goal is to make sure that Cass County children have some gifts come Christmas morning.

For Tim, it's a simple proposition. "I just want to help these kids have a good Christmas," he shared, sitting at the wrapping station of their little store.

And little it is though it belies that fact that hundreds of parents



will pass through in the next few weeks. The building, a converted carport from their home, has recently been expanded to an additional Christmas "shoppe" next door. From the outside it looks like a cute little boutique. Inside the shelves are lined with donated toys, wrapping and bows.

The toys are collected during the year with the help of their five adult children, grandchildren and others. Retailers like Walmart get in on the outreach donating toys and providing volunteers like Tilman Kauffman who donated over 500 Matchbox toy cars. Coffman works at the Walmart distribution center south of Harrisonville.

The family and community spirit are what has kept the effort going the last decade.

But what prompts a family to be so dedicated? For Tim it was personal experience growing up in the country.

"We lived on a farm and really didn't have anything. If we wanted a toy for Christmas we had to make it," said Tim. "I would cobble together scrap wood and some wheels and make a wagon—not a little wagon but a big one which I would hook up to the horses and take off across the fields."

"We never had store-bought" he says.

Last year Christmas Aglow made Christmas possible for 325 kids and they're on track to reach more than that this year.

"Every year we just seem to

have more and more people seeking help," she says. "We don't have any other qualification other than they live in Cass County. Other than that there are no questions asked."

of the Pleasant Hill Bank locations. For info email Christmasaglow@yahoo.com or visit their Facebook page.

It's the Northland, not the North Pole

With the roar of jet engines overhead arriving at and leaving KCI, shoppers in the Northland are usually too busy to notice. But while the metro's most northern residents may have grown accustomed to the sound of jets, they still notice their neighbors who need a little help.

Since 1988, the Northland Christmas Store has been providing food and gifts to the area's more needy families. The outreach is a combined effort of many Clay County churches, organizations, and individuals to provide a happy and dignified Christmas season for families caught in transition.

"We are seeing about the same number this year as last" says Bill Turnage, chair of Northland Christmas Store, "but it has been a steady increase over the last few years."

To obtain assistance, families in Clay County either make application through various agencies and churches or are identified as needy by concerned individuals, service organizations, schools, etc. All clients of the Northland Christmas Store are screened by the Northland Christmas Bureau and Metropolitan Ministries, as to their need for assistance.

Turnage says they've had situations when parents who were helped in the past come back years later to help others themselves. "I volunteered this year because once when I needed help, you were there," is a familiar comment he hears.

In 2014 they assisted 343 families that totaled 2,000 people. In addition 240 homebound individuals were helped.

Turnage says the volunteers get as much out of it as those that are helped. "Volunteers find it uplifting to be able to serve others," he says. "Even though we just see each parent briefly, we realize there is a story behind each one." Volunteers will pray with people when the opportunity arises

From Heart to Home
Infant Adoption Program

An adoption agency you can trust.

For over 120 years, adoption has been a core service throughout KCSL's history. Let us help fulfill your dream of having a child.

Kansas Children's Service League
877-581-5437 • www.kcsll.org

BRUSHLESS AUTOMATIC WASH featuring **ZERO SPOT RINSE**

Self-Service Bays with **BUSTER BRUSH** and **Detail Areas**

OTTO CAR WASHES

Open 24 Hours
Major Credit Cards Accepted
4 KC Metro & 2 Topcon Locations

8609 E 63rd St. Just east of I-435
6545 Troost Just south of Meyer Blvd
920 E 23rd St. Just east of National
2163 NW 7 Hwy Just north of I-70

UNLIMITED CAR WASHING available at our **BLUE SPRINGS LOCATION**
www.ottocarwashes.com

Relax. Rediscover. Reconnect.
at Brandon's Award-Winning Hotels

Myer Hotels offers six of the best Brandon hotels featuring Comfort Inns, Best Westerns & Holiday Inn Express. Enjoy our indoor pool, hot tub, free hot breakfast, free Wi-Fi, ticket service and more. Christian owned and operated. Call us today or visit us online at MyerHotels.com.

1-877-ITSATRIP (437-2874)

SAVE 15% per room per night. Present this ad to get the Preferred Value Rate.

Subject to availability. Not valid with other discounts, holiday weekends or special events. Code: PVR

OTTO SERVICE
YOUR HONDA & ACURA EXPERTS
FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED
SERVICING HONDA & ACURA AUTOMOBILES SINCE 1977

New Customers receive \$15 off their first visit (oil changes excluded).

816.358.4454
WWW.OTTOSERVICEKC.COM
9301 BLUE RIDGE BLVD.
KANSAS CITY, MO, 64138

Find us on **Facebook**

After Hours Drop Off

Big to BIGGER.
NOW OPEN

530 N. 7 Hwy • Blue Springs • 229-3108
(In front of Hobby Lobby)

Black Angus Burgers • Blue Plate Specials
Sandwiches • Big Salads • Breakfast All Day

Every Wed. Seniors Get a 20% Discount!
Monday thru Saturday: 6:30 am to 2:30 pm
Sunday: 7:30 am to 2:30 pm

The Big Biscuit
Eat Big, Live a Full Life.

16506 East 40 Highway
Independence, MO
816-478-6958

opinion

dwright@metrovoicenews.com

SHARE YOUR OPINION WITH US. IT'S EASY!

dwright@metrovoicenews.com • twitter.com/metrovoice

facebook.com/metrovoicenews

What would Jesus have us do about Syrian refugees?



VERONICA NEFFINGER
Editor of ChristianHeadlines.com

viewpoint

Is there room for both compassion AND security?

If you have been on social media at all in recent weeks, you have likely seen the oftentimes heated debate of how to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Especially as Christians, we face a tough dilemma: do we extend compassion or do we focus on protecting our own security--and are the two mutually exclusive?

These are questions that do not have easy answers. In fact, some of the articles out there on this issue are themselves meant to be thought-provoking pieces, rather than concrete opinions.

Bobby Ross Jr.'s article "Would Jesus Take in Syrian Refugees?": Washington Post Asks the Right Question," does not provide readers with an answer to the dilemma, but it does put us on the right track, which is first asking the right questions.

As Christians who live in America, we face perhaps a particular dilemma. Our patriotic and America-centric ideology is often so enmeshed with our Christian theology that we no longer



know how to extricate the two.

Therefore, in order to begin to offer an insightful and wise opinion on the Syrian refugees issue, we must first take the necessary time to research, ponder, and prayerfully consider what Jesus requires of us in such a situation.

Ross applauds the Washington Post article for asking what he has called "the right question."

"Would Jesus take in Syrian refugees?" asks author of the article, Michelle Boorstein.

"The question is particularly complicated for conservative Christians, who have become increasingly concerned in the last few years about the plight of Christians in the Middle East and simultaneously are often the most guarded about border security and increased immigration," she continues.

A good place (the best place) to start in seeking God's will in the Syrian refugee crisis is God's word itself.

A Relevant article offers 12 Bible passages that speak to God's commanded response to refugees and foreigners.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 sounds almost shockingly fitting to the present case: "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."

If we substitute Egypt for wherever our ancestors came from, whether they arrived with the Pilgrims or came over on Ellis Island, or perhaps even as slaves from Africa, this verse will likely hit home.

In all of this discussion, as Christians we must seek to go beyond gut reactions and to reach for truth. We are unlikely to achieve a "lightbulb" moment of epiphany with a neatly presented answer, but we are still called to "not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;

love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding" (Proverbs 4:6-7).

Neither peripheral compassion or peripheral anger will put us on the path to making an informed decision in this crisis.

Ross says of prominent evangelical author Johnnie Moore, "Despite his focus on saving Christian refugees, he called it 'entirely reasonable' to pause immigration from Syria to review the process of screening applicants."

Those like Ross and Moore suggest that there is room on this issue both for considering national security and for extending compassion. Our involved and strenuous task now is to determine the best course to maintain and achieve both.

—Veronica Neffinger is the editor of ChristianHeadlines.com

metro VOICE

PUBLISHERS

Dwight & Anita Widaman

MANAGING EDITOR



Dwight Widaman

dwright@metrovoicenews.com

COMMUNITY EVENTS EDITOR



Anita Widaman

Metrovoicecalendar@gmail.com

EDITORIAL SUPPORT

Contributing Editors: Dan Jeanes, Kharissa Forte, Alan Goforth.

Metro Voice © 2015, is an award-winning newspaper published monthly by Widaman Communications, Inc. MV is available primarily by mailed, bulk and subscription distribution to the congregations of 700 churches, colleges, bookstores, libraries, businesses and other locations. Complimentary distribution is available as a service to the community. Individual subscriptions are available for a donation of \$25 per year. Postage is First Class. Written materials submitted to MV become property of Widaman Communications. The content of this publication, including all stories, advertising or other graphic symbols, may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form for commercial purposes or added to any web site without the express permission of Widaman Communications. Advertising in MV is open to anyone wishing to reach the Christian community. MV reserves the right to refuse any advertising deemed unsuitable.

Metro Voice is a charter member of the Christian Newspaper Association, Fellowship of Christian Newspapers, Midwest Christian Media Association and member of the Evangelical Press Association



MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 1114
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

OFFICES

816.524.4522 | Fax: 816.282.0010
email: dwright@metrovoicenews.com
Calendar:
metrovoicecalendar@gmail.com
Web: metrovoicenews.com
facebook.com/metrovoicenews
twitter.com/metrovoice

Christmas: The War on Jesus



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

hopefortoday

Clay Center, Kan. — Every Christmas we do the "Holiday Hustle and Bustle" two-step and may experience the "Christmas Blues" along with a good mix of some "Christmas Family Conflict." But there is one more feature to the "most wonderful time of the year," the war on Jesus. Some may say the war on Christmas, but if we are honest, it is really about Jesus.

"It's Beginning to Look a lot Like Christmas . . . Mythicism's in the Air" was the title of a column that caught my attention, written by Dr. John

Dixon. He is a professor at the University of Sydney teaching a class on the historical Jesus.

Mythicism or the Jesus Myth is a teaching that advocates Jesus never existed. The majority of religious scholars reject the legitimacy of their arguments since there is such widespread consensus for His existence.

However, this arena of thought is growing in influence and fighting for an academic spot at the table. During Christmas and Easter we often see these mythicist-driven attacks on Jesus.

When looking for evidence for the historical Jesus, eye witness accounts are the most valuable. They are prized above second-hand testimonies, of which there are several in and outside of the Biblical record. However, the only place that contains first-hand accounts of Jesus is the Bible itself.

Matthew wrote of meeting Jesus in third person saying, "As Jesus passed on



from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him" (Matt. 9:9). Paul records his statement writing, "[Jesus] appeared to me also" (1 Cor. 15:8). And Peter recounts his experience saying he was "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Pet. 5:1).

For centuries skeptics have put these

eyewitness accounts on the anvil of doubt. Yet examination after examination has proven their testimonies were reliable.

Our eyewitness accounts I have left out. How do you explain millions of people over the last 2,000 years who have given testimony of being transformed by Jesus? Many have never met each other, lived in different centuries and on different continents and spoken different languages. How could they have conspired together? I argue that every soul who has been born again by the living Christ is a legitimate and definitive source of evidence that proves Jesus is real and alive!

Come on, all doubters and skeptics! Come to the empty manger, cross and tomb. You will not find Him there but you can find Him on your knees when you cry out from the depths of your soul to know Him. There you will see Him in all His glory and be able to give your own eye witness account.

Clint Decker is President & Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc. cdecker@greatawakenings.org

Arise 2016

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

JANUARY 28-31, 2016

WORLD REVIVAL CHURCH OF KANSAS CITY

SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING! NOW IT SPRINGS UP...
ISAIAH 43:19

ARISE 2016....
& Begin
Again

Ladies of Metro Kansas City! You are invited to join Kathy Gray and women from around the world for a girls' weekend full of inspiration and new beginnings.

God wants you to Begin Again! Forget your past and experience restoration of joy, hope and purpose. ARISE and Begin Again together in Kansas City!



KATHY GRAY

Kathy Gray is a leading female voice of revival in the world today. Her preaching is bold and characterized by an anointing that breaks yokes and brings freedom to many worldwide. Her testimony of God's reviving power has sparked transformation for thousands.

PRIVATE LUNCH WITH KATHY!

Women in ministry call 1.877.804.5433 or email info@wrckc.com to signup!



SATARA BROWN GLASCO

WORLD REVIVAL CHURCH



MELANIE FIELDS

RUN WITH FIRE MINISTRIES



SPECIAL WORSHIP WITH ROY FIELDS

RUN WITH FIRE MINISTRIES

Register today at arise.worldrevivalchurch.com

Individual, group and streaming registrations available. Use promo code "arise21" for a special discount.

World Revival Church • 9900 View High Drive, Kansas City, MO 64134