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**NEW RESIDENT churchguide**



Buck Creek Bible Church

*See inside back cover!*

**TNO Praises God for 100,000 Sacks!**

This month marks the 100,000th Weekend Food Sack that has been distributed to hungry children in Topeka through Operation Backpack. Topeka North Outreach, Inc. (TNO) is giving God all the credit for the success of the Operation Backpack Ministry, according to Teresa Gartner, Vice President of TNO.

Weekend Food Sacks are filled with nutritional, single serving- sized, kid-

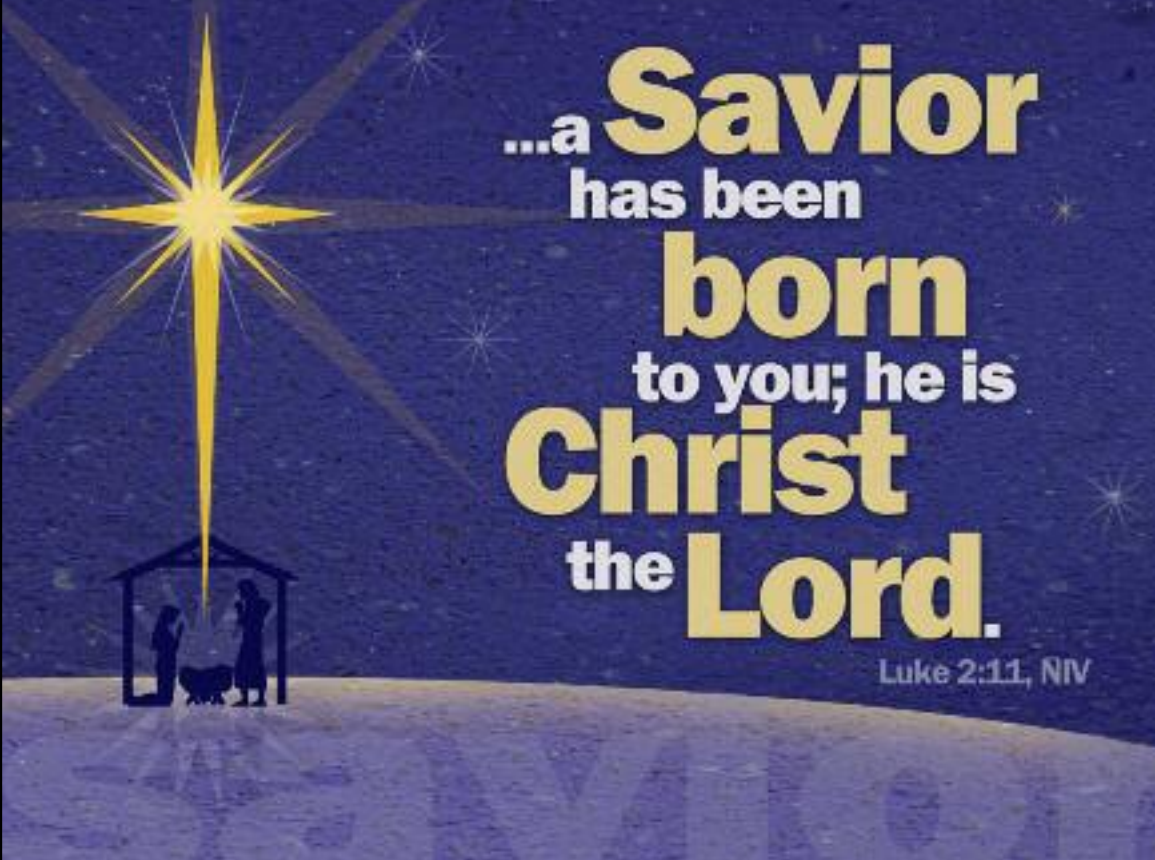


friendly food items that are easy for youth to prepare. Now in its 9th year, the Operation Backpack Ministry currently distributes food sacks to 500 children every Friday, at 9 area schools: Quincy, State Street, Elmont, Logan, Pleasant Hill, Rochester and West Indianola Elementary Schools, Lyman Learning Center and Seaman Middle School. The Weekend Food Sacks provided through Operation Backpack ensure that children have food EVERY day of the week, not just Monday through Friday when school-provided

■ Please see **TNO BACKPACKS** page 3

**...a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.**

Luke 2:11, NIV



**SEE OUR CHRISTMAS GUIDE BEGINNING ON PAGE 8!**

**ADOPT-ONLY PROGRAM ANNOUNCED**



There are currently over 350 children available for adoption in the state of Kansas without an adoptive resource. Most of these children are above the age of eight years old and have moderate to severe developmental/emotional/ behavioral special needs. The Department for Children and Families Services (DCF) saw the need for families who, for whatever reason cannot be foster parents, to still be able to

■ Please see **ADOPT** page 2

**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 2014 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.

**"Am I Worth Anything?"**

Grace had every reason to have confidence in herself: she's intelligent,

Grace has a smile this year.



athletic, pretty, and likeable. But she had a hard time seeing the good in herself because 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 went to Show-Me Children's Home. 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

■ Please see **GRACE** page 4



## WHICH COMPANIES MADE THE NAUGHTY LIST THIS CHRISTMAS?

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

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

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

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

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

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

If a company has items associated

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

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

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



## AFA's 2015 listing of top retailers and how they recognize Christmas

Companies in All CAPS and BOLD enthusiastically acknowledge Christmas

### Companies FOR "Christmas"

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

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

### Companies marginal on "Christmas"

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

### Companies AGAINST "Christmas"

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



## Life Lessons From a Little One

# REVERENCE

by Jessica S. Hosman

My son and I recently visited some outdoor Christmas festivities. Carriage rides, Santa Claus, hot cocoa and lights galore filled the atmosphere and seemed to turn the once ordinary street into a magical wonderland. It wasn't long into our visit that the jolly man walked down the sidewalk and right up to Zechariah for a chat. A mixture of fear and excitement filled his wide eyes and he stood speechless while Santa spoke... truly a memory he's not soon to forget!

The horse-drawn carriage ride was a real treat as well. We rode through the streets to the sound of hooves clanking on the cold ground below and it felt as though we were catapulted backwards in time. We stepped down from the carriage and happily enjoyed the cookies and hot cocoa that were waiting.

It had been a fun and complete night but as we walked to our car something captured Zechariah's attention and a new joy lit up his face that hadn't been apparent before. It was a joy that exceeded his friendly chat with Santa, his awe with the horse ride, and the delight from his favorite treat. He ran up ahead then ushered me to come quickly as he knelt down and exclaimed, "It's Jesus!" There in the middle of the busy sidewalk stood an illuminated nativity scene that most just casually walked by. Yet, my young child wanted to stop in the midst of the

crowd, kneel down and revere.

Year after year it seems as though the busyness of the season just grows. Many get caught up in the race to get everything done, rushing around and absentmindedly passing by the Babe in the manger who once was the focal point of the day. I think back to that day He was born. I'm sure the wise



Jessica Hosman

men and shepherds had plenty on their agendas to attend to. But in spite of, they took the time to come from near and far to worship and reverence the newborn King.

We take a lot of time "preparing" for Christmas. But rather than stopping to kneel at His feet in the process, we often collapse in exhaustion instead. Some of the wise men diligently traveled for years to follow the star, their hope of the promised Messiah. Their focus wasn't on the world's chaos or the obligations they'd yet to complete, it was on finding and worshipping their King. I want to mirror their devotion, diligently searching for Him in every aspect of the season and focusing intently on the hope that leads to Christ. In all things, I want to celebrate and remember Him. I don't want to collapse at the end of the month; I want to stop repetitively throughout to bow down and worship the One whose life has forever changed mine. I want to mimic the wise men. I want to mimic my son. And I never want to be too busy to stop and pay homage to Jesus, my King.



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**Hanover Pancake House...need I say more?**

## ADOPT

continued from page 1

adopt from foster care. DCF gave the Kansas Children's Service League the task of putting together a consortium of agencies willing to represent these families in the process of adoption through foster care. Lifeline Children's Services of Kansas has recently signed on to come along side these families by educating them, writing their adoptive home study, supporting them, and helping to match them with a child/sibling group available for adoption in the Kansas foster care system.

According to Angela Beemer, Communications Coordinator at Lifeline, the hope of Lifeline is not only for children in the Kansas foster care system to have a forever family, but for them to come to know Jesus Christ through the Gospel displayed in these loving Christian homes.

For more information, or to help spread the word to families who may be interested, contact Jenna Parker at jenna.parker@lifelinechild.org or call the Lifeline office at 785-783-4577. The office is located at 4745 NW Hunter's Ridge Circle, Suite C.

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## newsbriefs

### 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

## TNO BACKPACKS

continued from page 1

meals are available.

TNO has been faithful to follow God's leading in developing the Operation Backpack program, Gartner said. This ministry has four goals: 1) Alleviate childhood hunger in Topeka, while heightening awareness of the problem. 2) Prevent health problems associated with childhood food insecurity (i.e., hunger). 3) Reduce financial and emotional stress on low-income parents. 4)

Show and share the love of God through hands-on service.

Many people in the community are not well-informed about childhood hunger. They may realize that it exists in Topeka, but don't begin to understand the magnitude of the problem.

Recent statistics from the Kansas Department of Education website, KSDE.org, are alarming. Over seventy-seven percent (77.4%) of children in Topeka Public Schools USD# 501 fall into the economically disadvantaged category. Many of these children receive free or reduced-price meals during the school

day, but every weekend they are at great risk for hunger. Kids Count Data (for 2015) from kac.org show 54.56% of children in Shawnee County, and 49.97% of children in Kansas participate in the federally funded Free and Reduced Price Lunch Programs.

Operation Backpack, part of TNO's Youth Program, was started because of these statistics. For more than 40 years, TNO has been committed to its mission of "Reaching Up To God, And Out To Our Neighbor In Need With The Love of Christ." Chartered in 1971 as a 501(c)3 non-profit, TNO is an all-volunteer

organization, consisting of 21 churches. TNO shares God's love with people who are struggling by helping to meet some of their basic needs. The organization offers a unique set of services that most other aid agencies do not offer. There are four main programs through which these services are provided: Christmas Adoption, Emergency Assistance, VIP Luncheon, and Youth Ministry — Operation Backpack, School Supplies, Hygiene Ministry.

There are many ways that you can help and get involved:

**PRAYER:** Pray for the people in the community who are in need of TNO's services, and for the organization's continued ability to help them.

**TIME:** Putting together food sacks or hygiene packs, or collecting food items takes just an hour or two a month, the 1st Thursday of every month at Lyman Learning Center, 2032 N. Kansas Ave. at 6 p.m. (You need not be a member of any church to volunteer with TNO.)

**TALENT:** If you have administrative or organizational skills, a strong back, or just a willing heart, you can help plan and administer programs, pick up food items at local grocers, deliver Operation Backpack food sacks to schools, or help with the Christmas adoption event. There are many other volunteer opportunities, none of which require a lifetime commitment.

**TREASURE:** Just \$150 will provide a weekend food sack to an at-risk child for the entire school year! But monetary donations of any size are greatly appreciated and directly help those in need. TNO is an all-volunteer organization; 100% of the money received goes directly to its programs and to the people in need.

For more information about TNO or to volunteer, contact Topeka North Outreach, Inc., 210 NW Menninger Rd., Topeka, KS 66617, or call 785-286-1370, or email youth@topekanorthoutreach.org or to www.topekanorthoutreach.org.

## Serving College Kids at Christmas Break

by Joe Lovino

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 also provides opportunities for



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."**

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 Lovino works for UMC.org United Methodist Communications.

## Chaplain's Corner Uncommon Prayers



Fred S. Hollomon  
Chaplain Emeritus  
Kansas Senate

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

### Heavenly Father,

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

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

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

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

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

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## Christmas, a Season of Change

by **John Potter** | Military Chaplain

Just about everyone loves the Christmas season. While reasons may vary, from hearing a performance of the Halleluiah Chorus to watching snowflakes, people love the Christmas season. It is the arrival of our promised Emmanuel, "God with us." This season also has a funny way of changing people.

Yes, Christmas is the best time of year, but we often forget what it does to us.

Christmas brings out the best in us. No matter where you live, there is an increased effort for people to be kind, caring, and generous. Drivers are more courteous on the roadways. You open the door for someone when their arms are full with shopping bags. Neighbors help each other by raking leaves or shoveling snow off sidewalks. We even tell total strangers "Merry Christmas!"

This spirit of gratitude and grace comes from our Creator. God has demonstrated His love in sending Jesus Christ to earth. We celebrate this per-

fect gift in many ways, but the power of God's love changes us.

We reciprocate the love that God has shared with us, His children. The gift of Jesus is so tremendous that we live in a different way. We choose to be transformed, and in turn, show greater compassion. This beautiful event happens more now than at any other time of the year. Christmas and the celebration of our Savior yield a new and different world, one where people give gifts, adopt orphans, feed the homeless, care for widows, support unemployed veterans, and show compassion to total strangers. In

short, we decide to live out our faith. We put God's plan of grace into action.

As the Christmas holiday approaches, make the decision to be transformed. Reflect the love that God has poured out from heaven through Jesus, the promised Messiah. Demonstrate your faith and share the love that you have received from our Heavenly Father.



## newsbriefs

### 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.

## Former WWE Star Goes From Living in Sin to Kingdom Living

(Charisma News) — Taryn Terrell, aka World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) ring girl/Diva Tiffany, has gone from shame to acceptance in her relationship with God.

Though Terrell had some belief in Jesus before signing on with WWE in 2010, she says she discarded her walk with God in favor of fame.

"I went on the road with WWE for a while and that want to be a Christian sort of went by the wayside," Terrell says in her tes-

timony video. "I lived in sin. I was not a good person. I can say that I am ashamed of who I was in a lot of ways and the decisions that I made, and it was because I wasn't a Christian. A lot of times I thought, 'How am I going to be a Christian? How can I be accepted by God? I have done awful



things. I have not lived as a Christian. I lived as a sinner."

But God stepped in and transformed her life.

"The heaviness of that came upon me and I went to church that next week and my pastor was talking about the same thing, the exact same thing. If God wasn't trying to talk to me, then I don't know anything," she says.

## GRACE

continued from page 1

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 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-

thing 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 [metrovoiceneeds.com](http://metrovoiceneeds.com) and search Grace-filled Christmas.

"We felt our mission was to do some-

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## The Christmas Budget

Christmas is the best. You get to hang stockings, shop for your favorite people, and potluck like a champ. There's no other time of the year quite like it. That's why it's so easy to get carried away with your seasonal shopping!

In fact, last year's annual Gallup poll found that nearly a quarter of Americans anticipated spending \$1,000 or more on Christmas. That's a decent chunk of change for any budget. While it's perfectly okay to spend extra money around the holidays, you don't want to end up with the unwelcome gift of credit card debt come Christmas morning. Here's how you can make your Christmas budget brighter:

### 1. Figure out how much you can spend on Christmas

Let's go ahead and address the question on everyone's mind: How do you figure

out your Christmas budget? Start by figuring out how much you spend on your normal monthly expenses, like gas, utilities, insurance and groceries. Then take a closer look at your flexible spending budget groups like dining out and entertainment money.

If you typically spend \$300 on restaurants in a month, why not cook a few extra meals at home and divert an extra \$200 toward Christmas savings? Or if your personal money is partying it up at \$150, why not hold off (temporarily) and put an extra \$100 into your Christmas stash? Smart budgeting now can free up more money for what you want later—like Christmas presents!

### 2. Divide your Christmas budget into categories

Once you've figured out how much you can spend on Christmas, do some divid-



**DAVE RAMSEY**  
Financial author,  
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motivational speaker

**davesays**

ing. Take your number—let's say \$500—and think over your seasonal expenses. You'll need money for travel (\$50), tree and trimmings (\$50), a few potlucks and parties (\$50), and some extra giving (\$50). Then there's the Big Kahuna: Christmas gifts (\$300).

As long as you plan where your money will go before you spend it, there's no right or wrong way to split up your Christmas budget. Plus, if that Evergreen goes on sale, or you economize on your potluck groceries, that means more money to splurge on your loved ones.

### 3. Write down who you need to buy for

Now that you know exactly how much you can spend on gifts, decide who gets what. Make a list of everyone you'll buy for this year. And we mean everyone—coworkers, church friends, your parents, your kids, your grandkids. Next to each name (or category, if you're budgeting a treat for the office), write a specific dollar amount.

If you don't have enough money to cover everyone on your list, rethink how much you'll spend on each person. Maybe you can agree to only buy for the kids. Or perhaps you can draw names, instead of buying for multiple families. And then there are always baked goods or homemade crafts! Who doesn't love a gift that comes fresh out of the oven or straight from the heart?

### Give yourself the freedom to enjoy

You probably have a lot of great ideas on how to spend your money this season. When you start with a plan, you'll be in control of your Christmas budget long before setting foot into the mall. All you have to do is set up your monthly budget, categorize your Christmas savings, and make your detailed gift list. After that, enjoy your Christmas shopping—because your budget said you could!

### Your wake-up call

#### Dear Dave,

My husband and I are both 50, and we make about \$50,000 a year. We have a little bit of debt, and recently my mother-in-law moved in with us due to health issues. We've always gotten by, but now we're struggling with the additional expense of having her with us. We love her, but we're unsure what to do financially. Do you have any suggestions?

—Jen

#### Dear Jen,

Anytime things get tight and something like that happens, it's your wake-up call. It's the phone ringing, so I'm going to tell you to pick up the phone. It's telling you

that you've been kind of sloppy and disorganized with your finances in the past, but you've made just enough money to get away with it.

Her moving in tightened things up, and that's understandable to a point. But it has shone a spotlight on the fact that you're going to have to start doing a written plan and behaving. Chances are you're going to have to cut back on some stuff, because you've chosen to take care of her. This is an honorable choice and a wonderful thing you're doing, by the way.

With this added responsibility you've taken on—and many Americans are facing the same thing—you're going to find yourselves on one end of the Sandwich Generation. They're sandwiched between taking care of their parents and taking care of their grown kids. And the way you handle it is with a written budget.

The good news is that with a detailed plan, you can analyze whether you need extra income, if you need to cut some expenses or both. You've got to create a little margin to have a clear picture of your future. If you just wander along without a plan, you're going to make a mess out of this, and it's going to get bad fast.

—Dave

### What percentage?

#### Dear Dave,

What percentage of your total net worth should your personal residence be during retirement?

—Sue

#### Dear Sue,

Honestly, I don't have a set percentage for this kind of thing. The larger your net worth, the smaller the percentage would be. Let's say you're worth \$5 million. In this scenario, you wouldn't want to have 50 percent in your home. But if you're worth \$150,000, you're probably going to have more than 50 percent in your home.

So, the smaller your net worth is, the larger the percentage your home will likely be. That's very reasonable, and it's one way you can look at. If you're in the million-dollar range of net worth, I don't think I'd want to have half or more of it in my house.

But I think you see how I'm looking at that. You want to try and have as small a portion as possible, but you also have to have a home that's suitable for your needs.

—Dave





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# opinion

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## 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 pro-

tect 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

## Christmas: The War on Jesus



CLINT  
DECKER

President and  
Evangelist with  
Great  
Awakenings, Inc.

hopefortoday

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.

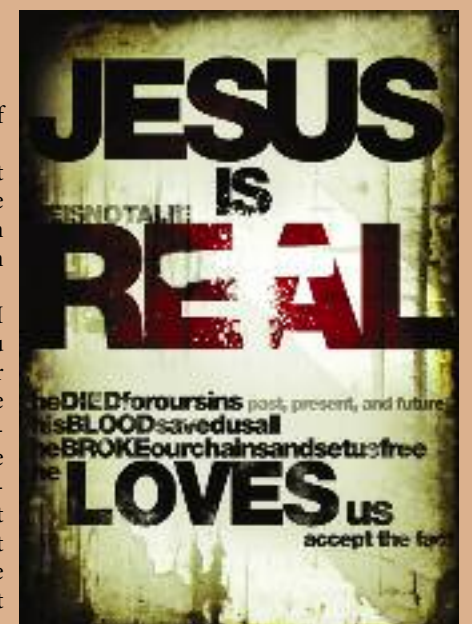
Matthew wrote of meeting Jesus in third person saying, "As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him" (Matt. 9:9). Paul records his statement writing, "[Jesus] appeared to me also" (1 Cor. 15:8). And 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



## An open letter to Churchless Christians

By the Rev. Dave Hintz  
Flint Hills Christian Church

"I love Jesus, I just don't like going to church." So goes the common refrain of the Churchless Christian.

You believe Jesus Christ died for your sins and God raised Him from the dead. You've committed to following Jesus, believe the Bible is the Word of God and even enjoy reading it. But come Sunday morning, you will not be found in a pew; you'll be on a golf course, visiting family or sitting in a comfy chair at home.

Maybe you've had a bad past experience with the church, maybe you work long hours and just want a break. Whatever the reason, though you love Jesus, you don't feel like church is a necessary part of your Christian life.

If you are a Churchless Christian, allow me to challenge you with the following four questions.

### 1. If you've given your whole life to Christ, why are you keeping your Sundays for yourself?

I get it, Sunday morning is a nice time to relax. Though I personally find church attendance both refreshing and invigorating, let's concede that attending church on Sunday morning is a sacrifice. But let's keep it in perspective. Jesus told His followers, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." (Luke 9:23-24).

To state the obvious, carrying your death-cross and giving up your special time on Sunday morning are not exactly comparable. Can someone really be willing to die for Jesus, but unwilling to give up their Sunday mornings for Him? Friend, when Jesus saved you He saved you to be in His service. Part of this service involves strengthening the other servants, which leads to our next question.

### 2. What do you do with the "one another" commands in the Bible?

The New Testament is full of "one another" commands — commands to bear with one another, honor one another, serve one another, teach one another, forgive one another, etc. All of these activities imply active, ongoing membership in a Christian community. The author of Hebrews tells us to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and

all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

"Meet together" speaks of the assembly of the believers. Thus, if you are a Christian, you are directly commanded to continue attending a local assembly of believers in order to give and receive encouragement in the faith. In the verses that follow this passage, we are warned that those who neglect this assembly place their souls in danger, cutting themselves off from God's chosen means to keep us on pilgrim path. This brings us to our next question.

### 3. Who is shepherding your soul?

"The Lord is my Shepherd", you answer, "I shall not want!" True, but do you know how He shepherds us? He appoints qualified under-shepherds to keep watch over the souls of His sheep. "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Church leaders are God's means of feeding and protecting His flock, and they will answer to Him for the souls in their care. If you don't belong to a local assembly, how can a godly leader possibly oversee your soul? And if there is no one to oversee your soul, how can you possibly keep this command to submit to your leaders? Going to church is not optional, and if you are resistant to this idea, that says more about you than you know. This brings us to the final question.

### 4. Can a person truly love Christ without loving His bride?

In Acts 20:28 Paul commissions the leadership of a local congregation to "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."

Each and every local fellowship of true believers has been obtained with the very blood of Jesus. Jesus gave His life and paid the ultimate price to purchase and create the church. Why? Because Jesus loves the church. The church is called the Bride of Christ, it is His treasure and joy. Friend, if you love Jesus, you will love what He loves.

Churchless Christian, if you love God and His Word, you should be convicted by these questions. But don't just be convicted. Sunday is a new day and a new opportunity to break a bad habit. Resolve right now to go to a faithful Bible teaching church, and start loving Jesus by loving His church.

## 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 family 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.

## THE DIFFERENCE GOD MAKES

by Doug Trouten

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 destruc-

tion 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,



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

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.

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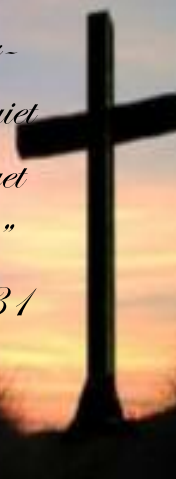


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## DO YOU NEED A VISIT FROM THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS?

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

### The Ghost of Christmas Future

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

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.

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# Readers share favorite Christmas memories

## Christmas reminds me what God has done

By Dan Jeanes

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

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 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.

# 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 buttermilk-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.

## 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

Do you have some favorites? Email us or post on our Facebook page.

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# Celebrate the Holidays in Downtown Topeka!

As we enter the Christmas season, downtown streets have been cleared of barricades and parking stalls are open! People are getting in the Christmas Spirit!

Christmas shopping in Downtown Topeka can be fun, with all the unique shops and a bit of nostalgia in the air. It might remind you of a time when shopping was more exciting, more personal, and less of a chore. Following are some tidbits from some of your friendly downtown merchants. Why not take a trip downtown and visit them?

You might even run into Norman the Nutcracker! He will be showing up downtown from time to time

between now and Dec. 24. You can also track his adventures on Facebook.



### "You'll never leave empty-handed"

That's what Terry, co-owner of Hazel Hill likes to say! Hazel Hill is located at 724 S. Kansas Avenue. Owners Nick & Terry Xidis invest their hearts and hands in fine chocolate and confectionery.

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

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



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

You can also save \$5.00 with the coupon on this page! More info can be found at MaricelsCloset.com.

### Get a gift or sign up for a class

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



made gifts out of glass. It is also a location for classes if artists are interested in glass work.



### Personalized screen printing

You can get those personalized t-shirts you've been wanting at Reliant Apparel, located inside Boho Mojo at 631 S Kansas Avenue. And you can get a discount by mentioning the ad on this page!



### A Full-Service Florist & Gift Shop Downtown

Absolute Design by Brenda, 629 S. Kansas Avenue, offers hand-selected flowers and exquisite designs with d



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# Christmas Memories, Events, & Gift Ideas!

## Check out the Downtown Renovation Progress and all the Holiday Events

elivery throughout the Topeka area. They have an expansive line of gifts, jewelry and home decor for all your holiday and year-round needs.

Save \$5.00 by using the coupon on this page!

You can also order or wire flowers 24 hours a day at the website: [www.absolutedesignbybrenda.com](http://www.absolutedesignbybrenda.com).

### Hair Styling and Day Spa

Irene Redman started Avenue Hair Styling & Day Spa 29 years ago and remains the leader of skilled hair



engineer and spa treatments. Come in for classic haircuts or cutting edge hairstyles. Take a perm to curl your locks or a Brazilian blowout to smooth unruly frizz.

Day Spa services include pedicures, manicures, facials, body wraps and massage. They accommodate individuals and 'girls day' outings. Massages may also accommodate couples. Gift certificates are available. And you can save money with the coupon in her ad in this section!

### Diamonds are Forever



With the Christmas season in full swing, you'll find many specials and gift ideas at David's Jewelers, 623 S. Kansas - a family business that has served Topeka for four generations. Diamond rings, pendants and earrings usually top the list but they also

offer vivid colored gemstones in unique settings, watches, clocks, statues and fine crystal.

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

### Antiques and Collectibles

For new and used antiques and collectibles, check out the Downtown Antiques and Collectibles Mall over at 500 SW Harrison. They have lots of treasures to peruse, and you are sure to find something you've been looking for.

### Personalized Ornaments and Gifts

If you don't find what you want after shopping all the downtown retail stores, You can let your fingers do the walking for the rest of your shopping. Contact Elk Creek Engraving by phone or online to get those personalized gifts you need, such as ornaments, awards and other personalized gifts of all kinds.

Don't stop with this incomplete list! There's plenty more to discover in Downtown Topeka!

And keep an eye out for Norman! You might run into him anywhere!



While you're making your way around the downtown area, check out the progress on both sides of the street -- there are lots of new features! Many of the renovations are well under way or completed. And watch for these downtown events coming up:

**TENTH ANNUAL RESCUE RUN** - Nov. 28, Downtown Topeka. Proceeds benefiting the Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries. Register online at: [www.topekarescuerun.com](http://www.topekarescuerun.com). Volunteers needed: email [volunteer@trmonline.org](mailto:volunteer@trmonline.org) or call 354-1744x393

**MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE** - Nov. 28, 5:30-9pm. Free. Lighting of the tree at 5:30. [downtowntopekainc.com](http://downtowntopekainc.com)

**THE CHOCOLATE NUTCRACKER**, Nov. 28-29, TPAC. Presented by It Takes A Village, Sat. 7pm/Sun. 3pm takes the original Nutcracker and gives it an urban, multicultural twist including a variety of dance styles - Hip-hop, Jazz, African, Praise, Contemporary, Stepping and Ballet featuring Ballet Folklorico De Topeka and the KC Steppers from Kansas City. 785-383-9373

**LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE** - Nov. 30, 6pm, Ramada Downtown. One Night Only Dinner with Les Brown, featuring Les Brown, Dr. Stacie NC Grant, Ruben West, Roland Manny. You will be challenged to aim high, achieve and actively make an impact on the world. You will be forever strengthened and changed. [DinnerWithLes.com](http://DinnerWithLes.com)

**OAK RIDGE BOYS CHRISTMAS** - Nov 30, 7:30-9:30pm, TPAC. Including "Elvira" and "Bobbie Sue" along with your other favorites! Then, after a short intermission, the stage is transformed and it's



Christmas! The trees are decorated, the snow is falling and the Oak Ridge Boys treat you to Christmas favorites. 234-2787  
**NOTO MARKET ON FIRST FRIDAYS** - Dec. 6, NOTO arts district. Enjoy arts, antiques, fine crafts, and flea market items.

**THE NUTCRACKER - PRESENTED BY KANSAS BALLET** - Dec. 19, 7pm & Dec. 20, 1pm, TPAC. Featuring a Live Choir and the Topeka Symphony Orchestra  
**MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER CHRISTMAS TOUR** - Dec 21, 7:30-9:30pm, TPAC

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*Celebrate the Holidays in North Topeka!*  
**Christmas is Special in North Topeka**

The North Topeka area has a lot going on this time of year! Of course, NOTO Arts District has been a hub of activity for a while now, but there are also many other events going on north of the river.

All the stores are decorated for the holidays, Christmas lights are on, and many of the shops are open extended hours.

The holiday spirit is in the air! Here are just a couple of the special events going on in December:

NOTO MARKET ON FIRST FRIDAYS – DEC. 4, NOTO arts dis-



trict. Enjoy arts, antiques, fine crafts, and flea market items, as

well as entertainment.

SANTA ARRIVES ON UNION PACIFIC TRAIN - Dec. 6, 1-3pm, Great Overland Station, 701 North Kansas Avenue. Children can explore the station, ride the mini handcar, have fun balloon twisting, face painting, make a special holiday craft, sing Christmas carols and have their photo taken with Santa. 785-232-5533

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Check out the Christmas Needs list on TRM website  
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# the events calendar

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## CONCERTS

**TOPEKA ACOUSTIC MUSIC JAM** - First Sat. of ea. month, 3-5pm, Potwin Presbyterian Ch (enter south door), 400 S.W. Washburn. Info 286-0227 [hagen1525@gmail.com](mailto:hagen1525@gmail.com).

**OAK RIDGE BOYS CHRISTMAS** - Nov 30, 7:30-9:30pm, TPAC. Including "Elvira" and "Bobbie Sue" along with your other favorites! Then, after a short intermission, the stage is transformed and it's Christmas! The trees are decorated, the snow is falling and the Oak Ridge Boys treat you to Christmas favorites. 785-234-2787

**MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER CHRISTMAS TOUR** - Dec 21, 7:30-9:30pm, TPAC

## SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

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

**FREE WEEKLY COMMUNITY PANCAKE BREAKFAST** - Sundays at 10am sharp, at Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 900 block of NE Oakland, followed by church services at 10:45am with Pastor John Menkvelde - which is in turn followed at noon by The Hope House FREE Community Food & Clothing Banks.

**BINGO AT FAIRLAWN HEIGHTS ASSISTED LIVING** - 3:00PM, 1st Sat. of ea. month. Facilitator: Pastor Carole

**LIFEFEEST** - First Thu. of the month, 10am-12:30pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Seniors ministering to seniors - celebrating with fellowship, fun, food, learning & entertainment. Potluck lunch at noon. Sep 3: the "Jesus" film. If transportation is needed, call 354-4994 or 478-1729

**BAZAAR AND LUNCHEON** - Dec. 4, 10:30am-1pm, St. John's Lutheran Church, 9th & Fillmore. Crafts, gift items, Baked Goods, Sweet Shop, and "The Cookie Walk"

**HOLIDAY COOKIE WALK** - Dec. 12, 9am - 1pm, Potwin Presbyterian Church, 400 SW Washburn Avenue. The cookie Walk will feature a variety of holiday cookies, each guest will be able to select as many cookies as they wish, the box will be weighed and the customer will pay \$6.00 per pound. Proceeds from the cookie walk will be used for youth camp and mission trip scholarships and other youth activities.

**GERMAN LANGUAGE CHRISTMAS SERVICE AND DINNER** - Dec. 13, 4pm, First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. Traditional German Christmas carols will be sung. The service is spoken completely in German with English translations on a viewing screen. The service is followed by a dinner, featuring Sahne Schnitzel (pork tenderloin with a mushroom gravy), spätzle, mashed potatoes and gravy, red cabbage, green beans, salad and dessert. A \$10 per person donation is requested for dinner. (785) 233-1786

**COOKIES & GOODIES SALE** - Dec. 12, 8am -1pm, First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. (785) 233-1786

**FROSTY'S SWEET SHOPPE & CRAFT STORE** - Dec. 12, 9 - 3, Highland Park United Methodist Church, 2914 SE Michigan. Cookies, homemade candy, & bbq pulled pork by the pound, baked goods, crafts, and more. Shirley Steele at 785.267.2101 or 785.249.9615 or [steele-away@cox.net](mailto:steele-away@cox.net)

**DYSART FAMILY CONCERT AND CHRISTMAS BANQUET** - Dec. 20, 7pm, Cornerstone Community Church, 21st & Indian Hills Rd. National Gospel recording artist "The Dysart Family." A love offering will be received. In addition dinner tickets may be purchased for a catered meal starting at 5:30pm. For tickets: (785) 4782929 [www.cornerstonetopeka.com](http://www.cornerstonetopeka.com) [office@cornerstone-topeka.com](mailto:office@cornerstone-topeka.com)

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES** - Dec. 24, 4pm, Family Pageant Service. 11pm Candlelight Service, First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. (785) 233-1786

1786

**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** - Dec. 24, 4:30 & 6pm, First Southern Baptist Church, 19th & Gage. 272-0443. [fsbctopeka.org](http://fsbctopeka.org).

**CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERVICE** - Dec. 24, 6pm, Cornerstone Community Church, 21st & Indian Hills Rd  
**ANNUAL SHUT IN/CONSECRATION** - Dec. 26, 9pm, Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln St. 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. If you plan to stay all night, you are encouraged to bring your pillow and blanket. Just come on in and make yourself at home.

**"WATCH NIGHT SERVICES" NEW YEAR'S EVE** - Dec. 31, 9pm, Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln St. Anyone is welcome! This night, we will continue in 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!"

## SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

**GROWTHCLUB: STRATEGIZE YOUR SUCCESS** - Dec. 3, 8am-4pm, Topeka Country Club. Workshop and 90-day planning. Presented by ActionCOACH business coaching. \$97. Contact 408-5927 or 90DayPlanning.com

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

**MEDICARE MONDAYS** - First Mon. of ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library (Menninger Rm 206), 1515 SW 10th. Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or [nhoni@tscpl.org](mailto:nhoni@tscpl.org)

**WOW - WORKIN' OUT ON WEDNESDAYS** - 5:30 pm every Wed., south steps of the Capitol building. Free, fun and family-friendly. A combination of aerobic & strength training exercises, coupled with a fun line dance to end each experience. [www.makinmoves.com](http://www.makinmoves.com)

**SAFE STREETS COALITION MEETING** - First Wed. of the month, 11:45am-1pm. Great Overland Station. For info: 266-4606 or [jwilson@safestreets.org](mailto:jwilson@safestreets.org)

**NOTO MARKET ON FIRST FRIDAYS** - NOTO arts district. Enjoy arts, antiques, fine crafts, and flea market items.

**SAVING DEATH ROW DOGS ADOPTION BOOTH** - Every Sat., 1am - 2pm, Petco, 1930 SW Wanamaker

**MONTHLY MOOSE MARKET** - Second Saturday, 8am-12pm, Moose Lodge, 1901 N. Kansas Av. Free to shop, \$4 for pancakes. For info: 250-6788

**ALBERT BLOCH: SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST** - Ongoing display at Mulvane Art Museum, 1700 S W College Ave. This exhibition presents very rarely seen works about key events and teachings in Christ's life by internationally known American painter and poet Albert Bloch (1882-1961). These paintings, watercolors and drawings are infused with his deep spirituality.

**TARC'S WINTER WONDERLAND** - Nov. 25-Dec. 31, 6-10pm. Lake Shawnee. View dazzling holiday light displays, featuring one million lights, while winding through a 2-mile scenic drive. Advanced Tickets are available at your Topeka Hy-vee and Educational Credit Union for \$7.00. \$10.00 at the gate suggested donation. 785.232.0597

**TENTH ANNUAL RESCUE RUN** - Nov. 28, Downtown Topeka. Proceeds benefiting the Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries. Register online at: [www.topekarescuerun.com](http://www.topekarescuerun.com). Volunteers needed: email [volunteer@trmonline.org](mailto:volunteer@trmonline.org) or call 354-1744x393

**MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE** - Nov. 28, 5:30-9pm. Free. Lighting of the tree at 5:30. For info: [downtowntopeka.com](http://downtowntopeka.com)

**LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE** - Nov. 30, 6pm, Ramada Downtown. One Night Only Dinner with Les Brown, featuring Les Brown, Dr. Stacie NC Grant, Ruben West, Roland Manny. You will be challenged to aim high, achieve and actively make an impact on the world. You will be forever strengthened and changed. [www.DinnerWithLes.com](http://www.DinnerWithLes.com)

**GRIEF AND LOSS CENTER FAMILY EVENINGS** (adults, teens and children) - Dec. 3 & 10, 6:00pm at Midland Care, 1112 SW 6th Ave. For more info call 785-232-2044 or visit [www.midlandcare.org](http://www.midlandcare.org)

**FESTIVAL OF TREES** - Dec. 3-4, 9am-4pm, Dec. 5, 8am-4pm; Dec. 6, 11am-3pm, Ag Hall. Features trees & wreaths beautifully decorated by talented designers. Enjoy performers from local schools and groups. Holiday décor and gifts for sale. Tickets \$5, seniors \$3, 12 & under free. 233-2566.

**OLD TIME HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS** - Dec. 4 - 12, 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM, Every Friday & Saturday, Old Prairie Town at Ward-Meade Historic Site, 124 NW Fillmore Street. Phone: 785-251-2993

**PICTURES WITH SANTA** - Dec. 5, 10am - 3pm, Topeka Zoo. Have your photograph taken with Santa Claws and a live animal on his sleigh, in the zoos Living Classroom. A variety of live animals will be available. Cost: \$5 785-368-9137

**GRAND REOPENING** - Dec. 5, 1pm, Above All Books & Gifts, 1921 SE Indiana Celebrating Our new location and 11 years of business. (785) 266-6107 [aboveall3632@aol.com](mailto:aboveall3632@aol.com)

**WINGFLING** - Dec. 5, 12pm-4pm, ExpoCentre's Exhibition Hall. A one-day, indoor festival of hot wings, cold drinks, and friendly competition. Local and national restaurants will compete for one of four titles: "WingFling King", "BBQ Wing King", "Twisted Wing King" - each chosen by a panel of judges - or "Top Pop Wing", chosen by the event patrons as the People's Choice. Attendees will have the opportunity to sample as many wings as they desire (one at a time) while enjoying live music, watching sporting events, and playing party games like cornhole, ladder toss, beer pong, etc. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase.

**SANTA ARRIVES ON UNION PACIFIC TRAIN** - Dec. 6, 1-3pm, Great Overland Station, 701 North Kansas Avenue. Children can explore the station, ride the mini handcar, have fun balloon twisting, face painting, make a special holiday craft, sing Christmas carols and have their photo taken with Santa. 785-232-5533

**PUBLIC SKATING AT EXPOCENTRE** - Dec. 6, 4-6pm; Dec. 26, 12:30-2:30 & 9:45-11:45pm; Dec. 27, 4-6pm. \$7 admission. \$3 for skates.

**AUBURN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PARTY** - Dec. 12, 3-6:30pm, Auburn Community Center, 121 W. 11th. Free of charge: children's crafts, bake walk, Santa, balloon animals, face-painting, chili cook-off, chili feed, hayrack ride, and caroling. Donations of gloves, hats and scarves to the YWCA Safety & Empowerment Services and canned food to the Auburn Community Food Pantry. To register a crockpot of chili for the cook-off, call 785-256-7274 by Dec. 5.

**MEMORY TREE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERVICES** - Dec. 13 at 1:00, 2:30 and 4:00pm at Midland Care, 200 SW Frazier Circle. For grieving families. For more info call 785-232-2044 or visit [www.midlandcare.org](http://www.midlandcare.org)

**THE NUTCRACKER - PRESENTED BY KANSAS BALLET** - Dec. 19, 7pm & Dec. 20, 1pm, TPAC. Featuring a Live Choir and the Topeka Symphony Orchestra

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY

### DESTINATIONS

**BROWN V. BOARD NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** - Daily, 9am-5pm, 1515 SE Monroe. Located in the former all-black Monroe School. Free admission. For info: 354-4273 or [www.nps.gov/brvb/](http://www.nps.gov/brvb/)

**CEDAR CREST**, official residence of the KS Governor - Mon., 1pm-3pm, with tours on the half hour, 1 SW Cedar Crest Rd. Free adm. For info: 296-3636.

**COMBAT AIR MUSEUM** - Mon.-Sat., 9:30am-4:30pm;

Sun. noon-4:30pm, Hanger 602, Forbes Field. For info: 862-3303 or [combatairmuseum.org](http://combatairmuseum.org).

**CURTIS HOUSE MUSEUM** - Every Sat., 11am-3pm; by appointment other times, 1101 SW Topeka Blvd. Former mansion of Charles Curtis, 31st Vice President of the US, and the only one of American Indian heritage. Cost \$5. For info: 357-1371 or 597-5380.

**CONSTITUTION HALL** - Wed.-Sat., 9am-5pm; Sun., 1-5pm, National Landmark, Kansas State Historic Site, Civil War History: Famous Leocompton Constitution, 319 Elmore, Leocompton. For info: 887-6520 or [consthall@kshs.org](mailto:consthall@kshs.org); [leocomptonkansas.com](http://leocomptonkansas.com) or [kshs.org/constitutionhall](http://kshs.org/constitutionhall)

**GREAT OVERLAND STATION** - Railroad museum, education center, veterans memorial and more. 701 N. Kansas Avenue. Tue-Sat 10am-4pm; Sun 1-4pm. Closed on Sundays in Jan. & Feb. Adm: \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, \$2 children age 3-12. For info: 232-5533 or [greatoverlandstation.com](http://greatoverlandstation.com).

**HISTORIC RITCHIE HOUSE** - Tour the oldest remaining home in Topeka (built 1856-57). 1116 Madison. Admission free. 10am-2pm; weaving demonstrations, games, food & more.

**HOLLEY MILITARY MUSEUM** - Downtown Ramada Inn. Featuring 5 galleries, named after world leaders. Featuring World War II artifacts, Air Force One exhibit, Kansas War Heroes, Space, Vietnam & more. Cost: Free. 10am-8pm daily.

**KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD MUSEUM** - Forbes Field. For hours & info: 862-1020.

**KANSAS MUSEUM OF HISTORY** - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday, 1 - 5 p.m. Sunday. 6425 SW 6th Avenue. 785-272-8681, [kshs.org/museum](http://kshs.org/museum)

**KANSAS STATE CAPITOL** - Mon.-Fri., 8am-5pm, SW 10th & Jackson St. Tours provided. For info: 296-3966 or [www.kshs.org/capitol](http://www.kshs.org/capitol). Dome Tours M-F 10:30am-4:15pm.

**OLD PRAIRIE TOWN** - 1st & Clay. Open Mon.-Sat., 10am-4pm; Sun. 12-4pm. Daily guided tours: M-F 10am, 12 & 2pm; Sat. & Sun. 12 & 2pm. 368-2441.

**ROEBKE HOUSE MUSEUM** - 216 New York, Holton. For info: 364-4991.

**TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM** - Wed.-Sat., 11am-4pm; Sun., 1-5pm, National Register Site, 3 floors of Civil War and Victorian Artifacts, President Eisenhower's parents' marriage site: 640 E. Woodson Ave., Leocompton. For info: 887-6148 or [lanemuseum@aol.com](mailto:lanemuseum@aol.com) or [leocomptonkansas.com](http://leocomptonkansas.com).

**TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY** - 1515 SW 10th St. Mon.-Fri., 9am-9pm, Sat., 9am-6pm, Sun., 12-9pm. For info: 580-4400.

**TOPEKA ZOO** - Gage Blvd. between 6th & 10th St. Zoo hours 9am-5pm. Birthday Parties available -- choose from two separate party packages; parties last two hours. For info: 368-9180 or [topekazoo.com](http://topekazoo.com).

## FINE ART

**FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK** - 1st Friday of every month at various Topeka galleries. [artsconnecttopeka.org](http://artsconnecttopeka.org).

**BEAUCHAMP'S ART GALLERY** - 3113 SW Huntoon. For info: Bob Swain, 233-0300 or [beauchampsart@cox.net](mailto:beauchampsart@cox.net)

**THE ECLECTIC ART SHOWROOM & STUDIOS** - 900 N.

Seaman Community Church invites you to our  
**Christmas Eve Service**

Thursday, Dec. 24th • 6:00 pm  
2036 NW Taylor • 354-8777

Capital City Christian Chamber of Commerce

Promoting and Supporting:

- Christian Businesses & Organizations
- Excellence in Products & Services
- Christian Values and Ideals

Topeka area business people, united by their faith in Jesus Christ, making a positive impact in our community, through networking and community service

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

- C5Alive POWER Luncheons - (2nd Thur. ea. mo.)
- Dec. 10, 11:30-1 - at Cair Paravel Latin School, 635 SW Clay. Featuring the Madrigals & Christmas fun & games!

Save the Date!  
• Easter Parade & Fun Fest Mar. 26, 2016, in Gage Park. Contact us for vendor space & parade entries!

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/C5Alive](http://facebook.com/C5Alive)  
For info: [www.C5Alive.org](http://www.C5Alive.org) or [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org)

Christmas Eve  
Candlelight  
Service

First Southern Baptist Church  
1912 SW Gage Blvd, Topeka, KS 66604  
785-272-0443 | [fsbctopeka.org](http://fsbctopeka.org)

4:30 pm  
or  
6:00 pm



Kansas in the NOTO Arts District.

**MULVANE ART MUSEUM** – at Washburn University. Free admission, open to the public. For info: 670-1124.

**SIGNS OF LIFE GALLERY** – 722 Massachusetts St., Lawrence. 830-8030 or SignsofLifeGallery.com

**SOUTHWIND GALLERY** – 3074 SW 29th Street, Topeka. 273-5994

**TOPEKA ART GUILD & GALLERY** – Wed.-Sat., 11am-5pm, Fairlawn Plaza. 273-7646 or topekaartguild.org

**MEETINGS & CLASSES**

**C5Alive “CHRISTMAS” LUNCHEON** – Nov. 10, 11:30am-1pm, Cair Paravel Latin School, 635 SW Clay. This month’s Christian Chamber of Commerce luncheon will feature music by The Madrigals and Christmas fun and games!

• Cost: \$10 for C5 members & first-time guests who RSVP, \$12 at the door

• \$15 for non-members & repeat guests.

• Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org, so we know how much food is needed!

Open to the public – Put POWER in your life with great food, great speakers and great company! Invite a friend to join you!

**TOPEKA WOMEN’S CONNECTION LUNCHEON** – Dec. 10, 11:30am, T&SC Public Library, 1515 SW 10th Ave. \$14. RSVPs by Dec. 7 to Ann at 554-3617. Speaker: Nicoel Nasserri speaks on the lasting impact loved ones have in our lives and how she found joy and significance. Susan Pettit Hutton will demonstrate “presents with pizzazz”. Shawnee Heights Choralers will perform beautiful Christmas Music. **DADDY’S GIRLS EMPOWERMENT MEETINGS** - Weekly at various times and locations. Daddy’s Girls\*Inc. is a faith based non-profit organization that encourages young ladies to make wise choices by providing biblically based education and mentoring. Enjoy hanging out with other young ladies striving to reach their highest potential through the power of JESUS CHRIST! Remember: Modest is still the hottest and Virgin is still His standard! Contact us to find a meeting location near you: (785) 969-0491, daddysgirlsincc.com, daddysgirlsincc@gmail.com

**ADULT SINGLES MEETING** - Sunday’s, 6:30 pm, Countryside United Methodist Church parlor, 3221 SW Burlingame Rd., north entrance.

**TOPEKA TREASURE HUNTERS CLUB** - 3rd Sun. of each month, 7pm, Papan’s Landing Senior Center, 618 NW Paramore St. Family Memberships include children & grandchildren up to 18 yrs. A place to meet friends to discuss all aspects of Metal Detecting, club business, plus socializing & entertainment.

**STEP UP – BUILDING THE SMART STEP-FAMILY** – Every Sun. 11am, Northland Christian Church, Room 4, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. Focusing on the challenges facing step-families and blended families. Contact Thomas Munker at 249-3054 for info.

**BIYS TRAIL LIFE & AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROUPS** - Every Mon. 6pm, Cornerstone Comm. Church, 7620 SW 21st. Faith-based scouting programs are kids age 5-18. Register online at cornerstonetopeka.com. 478-2929.

**INNOVATIVE NETWORKING GROUP OF TOPEKA** - every other Wed. 11:20am - 12:30pm. www.INGTopeka.com - go to Event page to see future meetings, locations and register to attend. If you do not like a whole lot of rules and costs, this group is for you!

**CAPITAL CITY NETWORKING GROUP** - every Thur, 7:30am, Jayhawk Tower - www.ccnng-online.com. Membership cost \$37.50 a quarter.

**TIBA NETWORKING GROUP** - 2nd Tues, 11:30a.m.-1 p.m. MUST RSVP: Lunch is \$10. www.topekatiba.org

**I.N.G. WOMAN’S CHAPTER NETWORKING GROUP** - every 2nd Sat., 11am. Bring your business cards, catalogs, a guest and join in the fun! - No fees. INGTopeka.com

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

**ADULT SINGLES MEETING** - Sunday’s, 6:30 pm, Countryside United Methodist Church parlor, 3221 SW Burlingame Rd., north entrance.

**FAMILY EXPERIENCE (FX)** – Every Sun., 6:01pm, Fairlawn Church of Nazarene, 730 Fairlawn Rd. A time of high intensity, action packed, skit mania, worship music all centered around the word of God for 45 minutes. A free family worship event. For info: Emily Moore, 272-6322 or fxthelawn@gmail.com.

**LADIES’ SMALL GROUP** – Every Sun., 6pm, Bethel Baptist Church, 4011 N. Kansas Ave. Studying the book of Esther, using the DVD series “It’s Tough Being a Woman” by Beth Moore. All welcome. Info: 286-0467.

**THE FORCE (Students Taking Action)** – 1st Mon. & 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, Safe Streets, 2209 SW 29th St. A group committed to being alcohol & drug free. Associate with like-minded peers, plan activities & get involved in the community. Youth ages 12-18 are invited. 266-4606.

**HEARTLAND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS** – 2nd Mon., 11:45am-1pm. Promoting neighborhood well-being by mobilizing people, ideas & resources. 233-1365.

**TOPEKA LINCOLN CLUB** – 1st Tue. of month, 7pm,

Topeka Public Library. Discussing our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, and his times. The public is welcome. For info, contact Kirk Nystrom 235-6977.

**CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA (CWA)** – 1st Tue., 9-10am, Public Library, Anton Room (202). Also 3rd Fri., 7-8pm, Public Library, Marvin Auditorium. 861-0422.

**OUR LADY OF THE FAITHFUL** – Every 1st Tues., 6:30pm Mass followed by Dinner, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church. A Catholic group for those in their 20-30s. For info: Michelle Ann 580-3071 or ourladyofthefairful@gmail.com. All events are also posted on Facebook at “OurLadyoftheFaithful.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MACHINE EMBROIDERY CLUB** – 1st Wed., 9am-2:30pm, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th Street (south doors). To teach each other, enjoy fellowship & complete projects. Call Anne 271-1567.

**SAFE STREETS MEETING** – 1st Wed., 11:45am, Golf Park Blvd, 2 blocks west of Adams. Info: 266-4606.

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

**TGIW: “TEACHING GOD’S INFINITE WISDOM” MEN’S STUDY** – Every Wed., 6:15am, Lawrence Wesleyan Church, 3705 Clinton Parkway. Affiliated with CharacterCounts.com. David Scheib, 865-5258 or dvscheib@sunflower.com.

**BIBLE STUDY** - every Thur. 1pm-3pm in the Prayer Rm at Faith Family Life Centre, 3710 NW Topeka Blvd.

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

**LIFE FEST** – 1st Thurs., 10am-12:30pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Celebrate Senior Life. For info: 273-2811.

**OPERATION BACKPACK** – 1st Thurs., 6pm, Lyman Learning Center, Lyman and N. Kansas Ave. Volunteers gather to assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. Sponsored by Topeka North Outreach. For info: 286-1370.

**iMOM** – 1st & 3rd Thurs., 9-11:30am, Topeka Bible Church Fellowship Hall, 1135 SW College. For all moms, helping them to be intentional! For info: 234-5545.

**SINGLES BIBLE STUDY** – 2nd & 4th Thurs., 7pm, Heartland Worship Center Church of God, 1401 NW Harrison. For info: 232-5503.

**FULL GOSPEL BUSINESSMEN’S FELLOWSHIP** – 3rd Thurs., 6pm meal, 7pm meeting, Coyote Canyon, Hunto on & Wanamaker. Kirk Nystrom, 235-6977.

**BIBLES AND BOOTS:** Chapter of Cowboys for Christ Fellowship – 3rd Thurs., 7:30pm, Wamego. Call for location. All welcome, no membership dues, livestock ownership not required. Fellowship & fun! Doug Palmer, Pres. 410-9097, or Dave Boyd, V.P. 364-2779.

**TOPEKA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** – 4th Thurs., 7pm,

Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th St. No program in Nov. or Dec. Promotes & stimulates the education, knowledge & interest of the membership & the public in family history, genealogical records & research. For info: 233-5762 or tgstopeka.org.

**KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP MEETING** – 3rd Thu., 11:30am, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. Christian financial professionals: Financial Planners, Accountants, Attorney’s & Insurance Agents invited to attend. For info: kingdomadvisors.org or Jim Hanna, james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 357-6278 x19.

**TOPEKA (Downtown) OPTIMIST CLUB** – Every Fri., noon, Top of the Tower. Serving the youth of Topeka. Anyone welcome. 272-1099 or fostern60@yahoo.com.

**TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly)** – Every Fri. 8:30 to 10:00 am at 3221 SW Burlingame Road. 800-932-8677. We’re here for support for your weight loss journey. tops.org

**VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS** – Every Fri., Noon, North Topeka Baptist Church, 123 NW Gordon. FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. Free blood pressure checks the last Friday of every month, and birthday celebrations the 4th Friday. For Info: 286-1370.

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

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

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

**TOPEKA LOVE AGLOW** – Once a month on Sat. morning. A time of worship, prayer and encountering God. Call Tawny Barton at 785-409-0232 or Linda Williams at 785-267-0600 for details.

**FREE ENGLISH CLASSES** – Every Sat. 9-10:30am, Central Congregational Church, 1248 SW Buchanan. For info: 235-2376.

**RUSSIAN HOUSE OF PRAYER** – Every Sat., 4pm, Williamstown Assembly of God, 1225 Oak St., Perry/Williamstown. For info: 597-5228.

**SINGLES PLAY CARDS SR.** – 1st Sat., 6-9pm, St. Peter’s UMC, NW 35th & Hwy 75

**SAVING DEATH ROW DOGS ADOPTION & EDUCATION BOOTH** - every Sat. 11am-2pm, Petco, 1930 SW Wanamaker.

**UPPER ROOM COMMUNITY** – second Sat., 10 am, Capitol Building

**SUPPORT GROUPS**

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

**ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS** – A 12-step Restoring Joy recovery journey for women. Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. For info: Kay Lyn, 272-6212.

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS** – for friends & families of alcoholics. For info: 785-409-3072 or topekaalanon.org

**PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY** – Men struggling with pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted Roberts. For info: Hunter Ruch, Topeka Bible Church, 234-5545 or hruch@topekabilechurch.org.

**ALZHEIMER’S SUPPORT GROUPS** – Monthly support group meetings for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia. For info: Alzheimer’s Association, Heart of America Chapter, 271-1844 or email cindy.miller@alz.org.

**“BETRAYED HEART”** support group/Bible study – For women whose husbands struggle with pornography addictions or have had affairs. Videos & workbook will give you hope for your marriage & emotional healing. For info: Jane Goble, 478-9605.

**BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE** – NE Kansas Chapter (B.A.C.A.) 3rd Sun., 4 pm American Legion, 3800 SE Michigan. Open to the public. For info: 817-5801.

**FRIENDS WITH M.S.** – 3rd Mon., 6:30pm, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th St. (Enter East door). A Multiple Sclerosis support group. Donna, 266-7383.

**BOUNCE BACK SELF-HELP** – 3rd Mon., 6:30pm, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th St. For those living with multiple sclerosis. For info: 273-0799.

**INCARCERATED PERSONS & FAMILIES** – 1st Mon., 6:30-7:30pm, YMCA, 421 Van Buren. 286-2329.

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP** – Meets 4th Monday in Formation classroom at Most Pure Heart of Mary, 17th & Stone. Discussion starts at 7pm with fellowship & refreshments at 8:30. For info: Susan 272-4895

**OVERCOMERS OUTREACH** – Every Mon., 7-8:30pm, Wanamaker Woods Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker Rd. A bridge between traditional church and traditional 12 step meetings. 409-9111; www.overcomers@gmail.com.

**GRIEF SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES** – Sponsored by Heartland Hospice for those dealing with death or major loss: 1st Mon., 5:30-7:30pm. Individual appointments; other times are available. Call Terry Frizzell directly at (785)230-6730. 3rd Thurs., 11am, Lunch After Loss, Paisano’s Ristorante, Fleming Place, SW 10th & Gage Blvd., Dutch treat luncheon to meet new friends who have sat where you are sitting. Reservations 271-6500.

**OVEREATERS / UNDEREATERS ANONYMOUS:** MON., 7pm – Westminster Presbyterian, south door, upstairs in Library; 233-6724.

WED., 7pm – St. Francis Hospital meeting room 6, 2nd floor; 234-8020.

SAT. - 9am – St. Francis Hospital meeting room 8, 2nd floor; 862-2326.

For info: 357-8774; sunflowerintergroup.ia.org.

**NAMI TOPEKA** – Every 2nd Tue. 6:45pm, lower level of Valeo, 330 SW Oakley. If door is locked, call 608-1317 to get in. The 1st hour is often a discussion of an impor-

tant topic or video. The 2nd hour is usually a support talk time, w/ separate consumer & family groups. 608-1317.

**OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP** - First Tue. each month at St. Francis Health, 1700 SW 7th St, Meeting Room, 2nd floor, 6-7:30pm. Anyone with an ostomy may attend. The goal is to provide education and ongoing support for individuals with an ostomy. Contact Teresa Kellerman at 785-295-5555 for info.

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

**THE GREATER TOPEKA MULTIPLE MYELOMA** – 3rd Tue., 7-8:30pm, Faith Lutheran Church, 17th St. & Gage Blvd. Open to Multiple Myeloma patients, their family members & friends. Share support, information, & friendship. For info: Donna, 903-918-9553.

**“HEALING AFTER THE SUICIDE OF A LOVED ONE” (“HEAL”)** – or Survivors of Suicide (“SOS”). 1st & 3rd Tue., 7-8:30pm, Pozez Education Center of Stormont Vail Hospital, 1505 SW 8th St. Serving anyone who has lost a loved one by suicide.

**PRISON OUTREACH MINISTRY** – Every Tue., 7-9pm, Topeka Women’s Prison, 815 Rice Rd. Reaching out to those who can’t come in, finding freedom behind bars, inspiring inmates to seek salvation during a difficult time. Providing support & guidance through the Holy Spirit to offer strength. Director: Don Garner. 286-0489 or faithfamilylifeministries@gmail.com.

**GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS** – Every Wed, 7pm, St. Francis Hospital, meeting room #8.

**JAYHAWK AREA AGENCY ON AGING** – 4th Wed., 1pm, Rosehill Place Clubhouse. Monthly support group for caregivers of seniors. For info: 235-1367 ext.30.

**MOMS-IN-TOUCH PRAYER GROUP** – Every Wed., 2:30-3:30pm, Library at Cair Paravel-Latin School. Experience God’s power through prayer as we lift our students, teachers, staff, administrators & board up to the Lord. For info: 357-0369.

**DIVORCECARE PROGRAMS** – locations and times: WED – 6-7:45pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Cost \$15, scholarships available. With children’s AWANA & Youth Groups, and a Boundaries in Dating class, at the same time. The next DC4K session will be in the summer of 2016. For info: 273-2811

WED. – 6:30pm, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane. Cost: \$15. Child care provided. For info: 379-0505 or www.divorcecare.org.

WED. – 6:45 – 8:45pm, Walnut View Christian Church, 3634 SE 37th St. Cost: \$10 registration (scholarships available). Video seminar series featuring some of the nation’s foremost experts on divorce and recovery topics, combined with support group discussion of the materials. Free child care children up to fifth grade. Info: 266-7550 or walnutviewccc@att.net. divorcecare.org.

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**NAMI WASHBURN** — 4th Thurs., 6-8pm, Spirit Building Room, University United Methodist Church, 1621 SW College Ave. NAMI is a student-run, student-led organization that provides mental health support, education, & advocacy in the Washburn University setting. A support group is also available during this time.

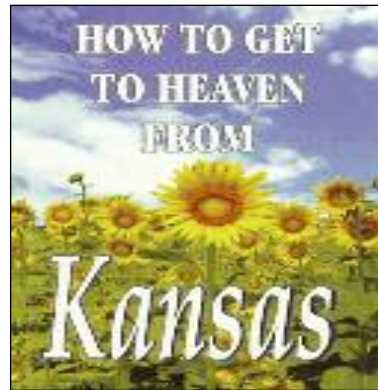
**PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** — 1st Thurs., 7pm, 2nd floor conf. room of the cancer unit at St Francis Hospital. For info: 266-9533.

**NICOTINE ANONYMOUS** — Every Fri., 6:30pm, Town & Country Christian Church Renaissance Room, 4925 SW 29th St., use west door cross red foot bridge. A fellowship of men & women helping each other to live free of nicotine. No fees. 402-321-486; Laboomaha@att.net.

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY** — Every Fri., 6pm, 1912 Gage Blvd. A Christ centered program, based on 8 principles found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Applying these Biblical principles, become free from addictive & dysfunctional behaviors. 220-0017 or crtpeka.org.

**TOPEKA NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUP** — For families & friends who are affected by someone else's narcotic addiction. Every Sat. — 1005 SW 10th, next to Oxford House, noon-1:15 pm. www.naranonmidwest.org

**COVENANT KEEPERS** — 3rd Sat. Group for people who want to see their marriage saved when their spouse wants out. For info: 816-453-0884 or 816-966-0927.



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

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

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

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

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

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## newsbriefs



### High court will hear non-profit 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.

### 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.

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# entertainment

**MOVIES, BOOKS, MUSIC & MORE!**

## SPECTRE: NO ROLE MODEL

### moviereview

by Phil Boatwright

**FILM SYNOPSIS:** A cryptic message from Bond's past sends him on a trail to uncover a sinister organization. While M battles political forces to keep the secret service alive, Bond peels back the layers of deceit to reveal the terrible truth behind SPECTRE.

**REPORTER'S REVIEW:** Craig has been my favorite Bond since Connery. He is the essential 007, cold, professional and of course, stylish. But, he also manages a touch of vulnerability. He's not just a hedonist or a machine. There's that sense that he wants justice for the world and he even shows a bit of caring for the ladies he beds. Like Connery, he can deliver a quip with a suave sharpness that rings true. And though his first three episodes as James

### film411

**STARS:** Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz, Monica Bellucci, Lea Seydoux.

**RATING:** PG-13

**DIRECTOR:** Sam Medez

Bond have been darker and more S&M-violent than previous incarnations, Mr. Craig has breathed depth and verve into this super-secret agent. (this film also contains sadistic violence.) The franchise is a welcome alternative in this day when CGI is normally the star of action/adventure films. It's ruthless action, combined with involving storytelling and stand-alone production values. If you are a fan of Mr. Kiss, Kiss, Bang, Bang, Specter will not disappoint.

Let's face it, James Bond represents a fantasy for both men and women. While

men of conscious don't really want to be that numb or disenfranchised from spiritual matters, we do love the idea of being able to conquer the bad guys while driving an Aston Martin, with every woman desiring to...eh, play backgammon with us. And wherever we go, we'd get to do it in a tux with a kick-it musical score to highlight our every move. That's the appeal for us. And I'm sure the ladies would like to be in his company simply because Bond doesn't wear short pants and he does know how to tie a tie – etc., etc.

This newest installment of her Majesty's best secret agent has an involving plotline that takes from past adventures while keeping the franchise up to date with present day world events. Impressive to look at, it's obvious that the producers have spared no expense. And where would Bond be without a kick-it score! We've got one here!!

The movie is 148 minutes. That's long. That's too long. And of course, there is the sexuality. Though I certainly have nothing against sexuality, we are bombarded with sex in most media venues, giving us the impression that casual sex has no conse-



quences. Sex can bond a couple. Or it can be used merely to satisfy one's own needs. Well, to say anymore would be preaching to my younger readers. Suffice it to say; while James Bond is a fantasy character, he's not much of a role model. Or, shouldn't be.

**RATING:** PG-13

**Content Summary:** Crude Language:

**Obscene Language:** a couple obscenities

and a couple minor expletives. **Profanity:** Two misuses of Christ's name. **Violence:** Lots of action, with heavy doses of brutality and some sadism as the villain is a vengeful sadist. **Sex:** Two very sensual sexual situations. **Nudity:** None **Drugs:** Some drinking, though Bond never ever gets to finish a drink! **Other:** Running Time: 148 min. **Intended Audience:** Mature



## '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 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 contempo-

rary 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.



# 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 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 south-



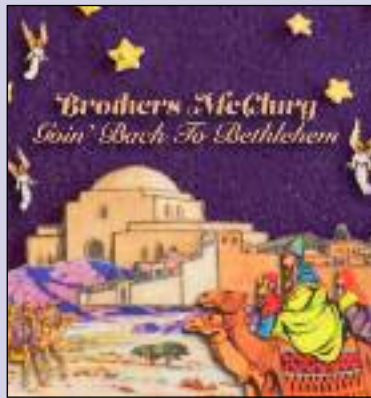
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Also up for grabs is producer/songwriter Vernon Hill's new Christmas Album, *Great Joy*.

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!

## 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 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 Christmas 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.



### The Muppet Christmas Carol

(1993)

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

Charles 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.



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## Retirement Communities: 5 Questions You Should Ask

By Zak Griffith

### Are You Looking For Bingo Or Competitive Tennis On Thursdays?

Retirement communities vary greatly when it comes to age. However, many retirement communities don't vary quite as much when it comes to activities. While it may be hard to get a straight answer by asking a representative what the average age is of their residents, the way they promote their activities will tell you all you need to know. Are the majority of their ads promoting knitting, mahjong, and bridge? Or are they mostly promoting tennis, golf, and bike riding? While finding a community with a mixture of both is ideal, be sure you know which side of the isle you stand on and start your search there.

### Is It A Place Where You'll Find Friends "With The Same Major"?

Many people view retirement living as communities where everyone likes to do the same things together all the time. This could not be more inaccurate. Just because people are the same age doesn't mean they

share the same interests. It is because of this that the idea for affinity retirement communities. There are some retirement communities for artists — like California's Burbank Senior Artists Colony, a rental community with opportunities to engage in visual arts, theater and writing. Or a place based around a specific occupation, like Nalcrest, a community about 70 miles east of Tampa, Florida for retired mail carriers where, no surprise here, no dogs are allowed. If you are heavily involved in a certain lifestyle, affinity communities might be exactly what you are looking for.

### Will You Grow Old Or Stay Young Here?

It's no secret that people who are more active live healthier lives. That is why it is so important to choose a retirement community that will keep you engaged. While you probably don't want to retire in the middle of a major metropolitan area, picking a community out in the middle of nowhere could end up leaving you feeling quite lonely and out of touch. It is important to

choose a community that is close enough to a city or small town that social visits aren't physically taxing or time consuming.

### Will Your Children And Grandchildren Feel Welcome?

While many retirement communities provide swing sets and playgrounds for visiting grandchildren, others limit the number of nights that minors are permitted to sleep over. While this may seem draconian to many grandparents who relish every minute they get to spend with their kids and grandkids, it prevents minors from returning to the nest should they find themselves out of work. It is important to check these policies before you commit to living there.

### Are You Planning For Today And Ignoring Tomorrow?

While you may not be concerned for what will happen in 15 years, it is important to understand that while being active is important now, it may not be then. It is important to ask yourself, "Is this a place that I can still live comfortably after I lose my mobility?" Planning for



the future will prevent a situation where if something happens and you are unable to maintain the active lifestyle you prefer, you won't have to make another move later into a place that is more suitable for a less active lifestyle.

Other questions you might want answers to:

What is the staff/resident ratio?  
What are the eating arrangements? Can you eat with who you want to, and at the time you want to?

Are the operating expenses and

income available for the residents to see? Is there a resident finance committee?

How does the Health Center rate? Does it have five stars in the US News & World Report yearly ratings?

What activities are available? Is there an emphasis on wellness?

What transportation is provided free of charge? What is the cost when it is charged?

How many resident committees? Through committees, you have input as to what you would desire in your Community.

## Tips for Starting a Second Career in Retirement

You've worked hard throughout your career, doing what needed to be done to pay the bills and put the kids through school. Now the kids are out of the house and you're considering downsizing. You don't want to work 60+ hours a week anymore, and you're OK taking a pay cut to get there.

You're not alone.

The fact is that millions of retirees are veering from the expected retirement routine — golf, garden, rinse and repeat — and launching a second career in their 60s, 70s and even

80s. A whopping 74 percent of workers plan to get a new job after they retire, according to the annual retirement expectations survey by the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

Here are some things to consider as you move towards that next chapter of your career:

Define your passions

For most people, a second career in retirement is about generating income and doing something they enjoy. So you owe it to yourself to consider your passions and how

they may translate into a potential career. Start by brainstorming answers to these questions:

- What activities make you feel most energized?
- What do you enjoy doing so much that you lose track of time?
- If money didn't matter, what would you do with your days?
- Do you have any talents or things you create that you share with loved ones?
- Do you have a unique or unusual idea you could turn into a money maker?

Once you've chosen an area to pursue, it's important to immerse yourself in industry news and terminology. The easiest way to start is online. Create Google News alerts using industry-specific terms or organizations' names to receive relevant articles; identify major organizations associated with your cause and join them; and subscribe to industry-specific online newsletters, blogs and Twitter feeds.

Be prepared for a long ride. The average American in an encore career takes 18 months to make the transition, and 67 percent of those

folks had reduced or zero income during that transition period. If you want to pursue an encore career, remember, transformations require persistence and creativity.



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## SOCIAL SECURITY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

#### Question:

I just got a notice from Social Security that said my Supplemental Security Income (SSI) case is being reviewed. What does this mean?

#### Answer:

Social Security reviews every SSI case from time to time to make sure the individuals who are receiving payments should continue to get them. The review also determines whether individuals are receiving the correct amounts. You can learn more about SSI by visiting our website on the subject at [www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi).

### DISABILITY

#### Question:

What is the difference between the disability application and the disability report? Do I have to complete both?

#### Answer:

A disability application is a claim for Social Security disability benefits. A disability report provides information about your current physical or mental



you got our decision letter. You can:

- File a disability appeal online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/appeal](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/appeal) and provide documents to support your request electronically. You can file an appeal online even if you live outside of the United States; or

- Visit your local Social Security office.

For more information, call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### MEDICARE

#### Question:

How do I apply for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs?

#### Answer:

You have several options for applying. You can:

- Apply online by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare/prescriptionhelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare/prescriptionhelp);

- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to apply over the phone or request an application; or

- Apply at any local Social Security office.

Anyone who has Medicare can get Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Some people with limited resources and income are eligible for Extra Help to pay for the costs—monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments—related to a Medicare prescription drug plan. Learn more at [www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare).

### GENERAL

#### Question:

I prefer reading by audio book. Does Social Security have audio publications?

#### Answer:

Yes, we have many helpful publications you can listen to. You can find them at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs). Some of the publications available include What You Can Do Online, How Social Security Can Help You When a Family Member Dies, Apply Online for Social Security Benefits, and Your Social Security Card and Number. You can listen now at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs).

#### Question:

I am receiving Social Security retirement benefits and I recently went back to work. Do I have to pay Social Security (FICA) taxes on my income?

#### Answer:

Yes. By law, your employer must withhold FICA taxes from your paycheck. Although you are retired, you do receive credit for those new earnings. Each year Social Security automatically credits the new earnings and, if your new earnings are higher than in any

earlier year used to calculate your current benefit, your monthly benefit could increase. For more information, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

### RETIREMENT

#### Question:

How are my retirement benefits calculated?

#### Answer:

Your Social Security benefits are based on earnings averaged over your lifetime. Your actual earnings are first adjusted or "indexed" to account for changes in average wages since the year the earnings were received. Then we calculate your average monthly indexed earnings during the 35 years in which you earned the most. We apply a formula to these earnings and arrive at your basic benefit. This is the amount you would receive at your full retirement age. You may be able to estimate your benefit by using our Retirement Estimator, which offers estimates based on your Social Security earnings. You can find the Retirement Estimator at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

#### Question:

I know that Social Security's full retirement age is gradually rising to 67. But does this mean the "early" retirement age will also be going up by two years, from age 62 to 64?

#### Answer:

No. While it is true that under current law the full retirement age is gradually rising from 65 to 67, the "early" retirement age remains at 62. Keep in mind, however, that taking early retirement reduces your benefit amount. For more information about Social Security benefits, visit the website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

### DISABILITY

#### Question:

I've heard there is a way for my daughter to get her disability application on the "fast-track." How does this work?

#### Answer:

If your daughter has one of the more than 200 impairments on the Compassionate Allowances list at [www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances), her application might be "fast-tracked" for a decision. Compassionate Allowances make it possible for applicants to receive a decision on their disability applications within days instead of months or years as long as their medical conditions are so severe that they obviously meet Social Security's definition of disability. Learn more at [www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances).

## senior news/events briefs

**LIFEFEST** – First Thu. of the month, 10am-12:30pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Notice: Seniors ministering to seniors – celebrating with fellowship, fun, food, learning & entertainment. Potluck lunch at noon. If transportation is needed, call 354-4994 or 478-1729

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

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

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

**MEDICARE MONDAYS** – First Monday of every month, 1-3pm. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (Menninger Room 206), 1515 SW 10th. Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or [nhonl@tscl.org](mailto:nhonl@tscl.org)

**MEDICARE EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS** - Learn the basics of Medicare and all of its options. Seminars are designed for those becoming eligible for Medicare as well as those considering making a change during open enrollment. Seminars will be held at Century Health Solutions, a division of Stormont-Vail Healthcare, 2951 SW Woodside Dr. Information: 233-1816 or [info@century-health.com](mailto:info@century-health.com). Light snacks and beverages will be provided.



# sports

## HALL OF FAMER TIM BROWN OPENS UP ABOUT FAITH AND STRUGGLES

By Brett Honeycutt

As Tim Brown told the story of his journey during the Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremonies on Aug. 8, he mentioned a traumatic moment when he was six months old.



He had an infection, and had to go to the hospital. Doctors talked of doing surgery.

"My mom, my grandfather, and my uncle, they prayed," Brown said that day as thousands listened to his induction speech. "The doctor gave me medicine, two hours later I was doing fine. And my mom said from that day on that she thought that God had something special for me. I don't know if she thought it was this special, but she knew that God had something special for me."

Nearly all of Brown's football career, in high school, college and the pros, has been special.

In high school, he was recruited by major college football programs despite his team's 4-25-1 record in his three years as a starter. In college while at Notre Dame, he became the first wide receiver to win the Heisman Trophy. And in the NFL, he retired with the second-most receiving yards (14,934) in league history, was voted to nine Pro Bowls, and set Oakland Raiders records for receptions, receiving yards and punt return yards.

And, he earned his sport's biggest honor when he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in August.

"I think God gives you a talent for a reason, and if He touches your life to live for Him and certainly to do it on the middle of a football field, it's an incredible opportunity to really get some heads turned," he told CBN recently.

And what comes with turning heads, he told CBN, is a platform that he takes seriously.

"Everytime I go to talk to kids, that's the one thing I leave them with—go to church, please go to church. You know, because in my opinion there is nothing more important you can do with your life. Education is great, but I tell them I know a lot of educated fools out there...but it's the Word of God, and the Spirit of God that can keep you from being crazy and doing the things that we shouldn't be doing.

"When I sung in the choir back in the



day, there was a song we used to sing, a song called 'God Is' and the song started out, 'God is the joy and strength of my life,' and the song ended up 'God is my all and all.' And I think that's what it all comes down to."

Brett Honeycutt is managing editor at Sports Spectrum magazine. For information go to [www.sportspectrum.com](http://www.sportspectrum.com).

## FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

by Rob Mooney

If you follow college basketball at all then you have heard the problems that Kansas University has had with the NCAA concerning their top recruit this season, Cheick Diallo. He has yet to be cleared to play this season as the NCAA has an ongoing investigation into his course work at Our Savior New American, a private school located in Centereach, New York. He attended the high school for 3 1/2 years after moving to the United States from Mali. It has surfaced that Our Savior was placed under review in 2012, which would potentially nullify the courses that Diallo took. This happened after he arrived at the school.

Now, you may not be a KU fan and I can already hear the rumblings from Kansas' rivals, but if you're a fan of college sports, this process has to concern

you as well. This isn't about a player at KU being unable to play. This is about the plight of college student athletes across the country who are not receiving their opportunities because of bureaucratic red tape. This is about a system that is broken and needs to be fixed. How many times have we heard KU coach Bill Self rant about the NCAA? Not many, however, he's done it several times this week.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all about making sure that everything is on the up and up and all the T's are crossed and the I's dotted. But come on, does the NCAA really need to go back and look at middle school coursework to help them make a decision? Do the Universities and players themselves have to threaten the NCAA with lawsuits to speed up the process?



## Another Angle: Does God Care Who Wins?

By Stephen Copeland

After the Green Bay Packers' 27-17 victory against the Seattle Seahawks in Week 2 of the NFL, quarterback Aaron Rodgers' post-game comments made headlines across the country. When asked about the win, Rodgers responded, "And then getting help from God. I think God was a Packer fan tonight, so He was taking care of us."

Rodgers made the comment with a wry smile, shifty eyes and a disingenuous tone, which led people to believe that perhaps Rodgers was taking a shot at Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson. Of course, all this speculation does not come without a history.

If you remember, Wilson threw four interceptions in the NFC Championship game in January, yet still managed to lead the Seahawks to a dramatic victory against the Packers to advance to the Super Bowl. Wilson told the media after the game, "That's God setting it up, to make it so dramatic, so rewarding, so special."

When asked about Wilson's comments on a Wisconsin radio show in the coming days, Rodgers supposedly scoffed and commented, "I don't think God cares a whole lot about the outcome. He cares about the people involved, but I don't think He's a big football fan."

He stated his stance then, but now, in Week 2 of the 2015-16 season, perhaps Rodgers was sarcastically dishing one final blow to Wilson's logic and ideology.

Oh, the theological battleground of the NFL!

My intention in writing this column is not to pick sides or weigh in on another celebrity feud (I could care less about stuff like that, whether it's Rodgers and Russell or Nicki Minaj and Miley Cyrus); nor do I want to add more unnecessary noise in our over-sensitive society that seems to be outraged or offended over anything these days. I want to write about this, quite simply,

because I've always appreciated the avenue sports presents to talk about issues of faith and culture—real issues that shape how we see the world.

To begin, one thing I admire about Wilson, judging from Twitter and his interviews with the media, is how his faith seems to bleed into everything he does.

Sure, perhaps he becomes more of a polarizing figure whenever he uses phrases like "God told me..." in relation to sexual

purity with his girlfriend Ciara or "God planned this..." in relation to a football game, but how he expresses his faith is entirely up to him—that's not for me to judge. I believe that faith, no matter what it is, is a deeply personal thing, and is generally something that makes people better unless it inflicts harm on others. So I commend Wilson for seeming to see just about everything

through the lens of his faith—it's inspiring to see his unabashed willingness to be himself.

All this to say, I must also admit—if indeed Rodgers was being sarcastic in his recent comments, and it seems that he was—I found what he said to be comical, and, yes, witty.

Isn't it interesting that this same topic—whether or not God cares about who wins or loses—seems to come up each and every year? Just two years ago, Sports Illustrated ran a cover story featuring Ray Lewis with the headline: "Does God care who wins the Super Bowl?"

And now, here we are once more.

In a society where athletes make mainstream news for bringing God into winning and losing, what can we learn from all this? Primarily, I think we must be careful when we bring up God's name, particularly when it comes to matters of success and winning. We must consider our intentions. God is not a good-luck charm. He is the Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who intricately knit us

You might say that I'm making this about KU. Ok, let's look at a young man by the name of Tacko Fall who attends the University of Central Florida. He came to the United States after growing up in Senegal and attended Liberty Christian Preparatory School in Tavares, Florida. The NCAA announced that they were only accepting seven and half of his core courses from the school. His family hired an attorney and shortly thereafter, Fall was given a waiver to play. This is happening all over the country.

Obviously, the kids aren't to blame. Are the coaches? Maybe the schools themselves? My question is this. Why are most, not all, but most of the schools involved in these type of cases some sort of Christian, academic school? Are the schools just pushing kids through the system? We all have to admit, there are a few schools that specialize in sending players to the colleges to play basketball.

Maybe it's time that the schools themselves start to make some changes. Maybe it's time for the NCAA to revamp the system. Either way, with a big time college program now upset and breathing down the NCAA's throat, you can rest assured that changes are coming.

together in our mothers' wombs. The only response to a grace such as this is awe, and even fear perhaps because of its profundity.

In our last issue, I wrote a column that challenged readers to reflect a God that we can't explain more than a God that we can explain, to gain mystery and wonder in our approach to spirituality instead of playing the "God card." This column is sort of a Part II. Does God have the power to knock a football out of Dez Bryant's hands in the playoffs? Sure. But unless I see the incarnate Christ hit Bryant in the gut (not helmet to helmet) and knock the ball loose, I'd rather dwell on the fact that He created the stars or died for me. It's less complicated, or perhaps more complicated. And it's certainly more wondrous and mysterious.

I'm grateful Rodgers' comments brought this topic to light once more because I think it's an important question every Christian must answer: Does God care who experiences success or who wins in life?

What's interesting about this whole idea of success and winning is that Jesus shattered the mold for all of this. He was the exact opposite of what people expected the Messiah to be. He was not a king who overthrew the Roman government. He was a suffering Savior who came to save humanity from their sins. His victory was set into motion by a horrific death on a wooden cross. And yet, it is the greatest victory this world has ever seen.

Author and pastor Tim Keller puts it this way: "The gospel is the ultimate story that shows victory coming out of defeat, strength coming out of weakness, life coming out of death, rescue from abandonment. And because it is a true story, it gives us hope because we know that life is really like that."

Maybe if we allow ourselves to understand the depth and beauty of victory in its truest sense, then we will have a different perspective on what it truly means to win and experience success in this world.

And it will likely be a victory we never expected.

This column was published in Sports Spectrum's Fall 2015 DigiMag. For information go to [www.sportspectrum.com](http://www.sportspectrum.com).



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# MAKE A GREAT ESCAPE WITH A SPECIALTY ROOM FOR YOU

(Family Features) It has been said that distance makes the heart grow fonder. When the demands of life make it tough to get away, you can actually find your escape closer to home – right in your home, even – by carving out a corner to create a retreat just for you.

A room dedicated to you and all of your hobbies or personal interests can serve as a welcome escape from the real

world if only for a little while. These tips make it simple to get started planning your big escape with ideas centered on some of the most common specialty rooms, as well as a solution for fitting the ideas into a smaller home.

**Create a space for crafts.** If you find your frazzled senses defraying with a little threading therapy, look to create a

space that celebrates this pastime. With the rise in popularity of websites such as Pinterest, which feature a plethora of DIY ideas, you'll have ample opportuni-



ty to distract your mind and busy your hands.

A room designed to let you explore your crafty side can help prevent the kitchen or dining room table from becoming a creative center or wrapping station around the holidays, and allows those areas to remain dedicated to family, food and friendship. It doesn't have to be just for crafts, though. It can also be a place to settle down with a good book and just relax.

Keep your space clutter-free and ready to enjoy with a craft room such as those designed by Wellborn Cabinet, Inc., which can feature spacious storage and expansive countertops, providing ample space to create projects that help decorate both the interior and exterior of the home, or simply to unwind and relieve stress.



**Don't dismiss cars, bars and sports.** If a room free of frou-frou decor where you can just unwind is more your ticket, a man cave may be just the answer. Man caves come in all shapes and sizes, from rowdy dens for sports fanatics to workshops decked out with the tools of your trade.

Even if decorating isn't your thing, look for ways to make the place your own, whether you display trophies from your hunting excursions or decor emblazoned with the logos of your favorite sports teams. This is the room that allows you to relish in the hobbies you enjoy most.

If there isn't a spare room or basement available, the garage can serve as a good alternative. With specific spots for tools and lawn care products – or even that car or motorcycle collection – the garage can meet the same needs as a more traditional man cave.

**When two rooms become one.** Whether space limitations prohibit separate quarters, or you simply prefer to

share your hobby time with a partner, you can create a specialty room that accommodates both your interests with a little creativity and planning. Working as a team, you can find the right accessories and storage to design a getaway for two. For example, a creative room from Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. offers more than 600 door styles, wood types and combinations. The result is a chance to combine two rooms, such as the man cave and craft room, for a sanctuary you can build and enjoy together.

Find more inspiration for personal spaces and tools to maximize your space and storage at [wellborn.com](http://wellborn.com).

### Accessorize Your Personal Space

If creating a space all your own feels like a daunting project, these clever tips from the experts at Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. will help get you closer to a room you can get ready to enjoy:

- **Charging Solutions:** Install a charging station in a drawer for phones or



other handheld devices. Power and docking stations can easily hide devices and ports yet keep them readily accessible.

- **Accessory Racks and Holders:** Hooks for tools or coats keep them off of other furniture, including countertops where they can pile up and detract from your workspace. Cubby inserts and baskets help keep your things organized on shelves.

- **Sliding Shelves:** Sliding shelves, drawers and baskets let you organize tools or crafting accessories while providing easy access to the items you've tucked away.



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www.greatIAMchurch.com
- 2. CHRISTIAN CAVALRY MINISTRIES INT.**  
Pastor Beaux Bryant  
3851 South St., Grantville, KS 66429  
1-800-673-3633  
www.church4bikers.org
- 3. TOPEKA BIBLE CHURCH**  
1101 SW Mulvane St., Topeka  
785-234-5545  
Worship: 8:00 - 9:30 & 11am  
Sunday School & Bible Studies:  
9:30 & 11am  
www.discovertbc.com
- 4. NORTHLAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
3102 NW opeka Blvd., Topeka  
286-1204  
Wed. 6:15 pm: Children/Youth/  
Adult programs  
Worship Sun. 8:00, 9:30 & 11am  
www.northlandctopeka.org
- 5. FAIRLAWN CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**  
730 SW Fairlawn Rd., Topeka, KS  
(785) 272-6322 • www.FairlawnNaz.org  
Sunday Worship: 10:40 am  
Adult, Youth & Children's Sun. School 9:15

- 6. FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST**  
1912 SW Gage, Topeka, KS  
272-0443 www.fsbctopeka.org  
Sunday Services:  
8:30 AM Traditional Worship  
9:45 AM Bible study--all ages  
11 AM Contemporary Worship
- 7. TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH**  
"Finding NEW LIFE in CHRIST"  
Sunday Worship 9:30 & 10:45am, 5pm  
~ Sunday School for all ages ~  
Sat. Evening Worship 5:30pm  
4500 SW Gage Blvd., Topeka  
785-862-0988  
www.topekabaptist.org

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

**9. GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
310 E 8th St (E. US 56 Hwy)  
Overbrook, KS; 785-665-7117  
Elvin Dillard, Senior Pastor  
Sunday School 9 am; Worship 10 am  
www.gccinoverbrook.com  
office@gccinoverbrook.com

**10. LORD'S HOUSE CHURCH**  
300 SW Roosevelt, Topeka KS 66606  
Pastor Marilyn Hahn McGinnis  
10 a.m. Sunday (Non-traditional Service)  
See "About Us" at our website  
www.kawriverkeruv.com  
Questions? kawriverlordshouse@att.net

**12. BUCK CREEK COUNTRY CHURCH**  
Meeting at Buck Creek School House

5 mi. east of Perry on Hwy 24. 13th & Phillips Rd.  
Childrens Sunday School - 8:30 a.m.  
Worship Service - 9:00 a.m.  
Contacts: Logan Barnett 785-597-5498,  
Scott Bond 423-0406, Jack Snavely 760-3513

**13. WANAMAKER WOODS NAZARENE**  
Serving Christ - Loving People  
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Dr. L. D. Holmes, Sr. Pastor  
www.wwnaz.org  
Sun. Worship: 9am (Hymns) & 11 am  
Children's Worship 9 & 11 am  
Sunday School 10 am, all ages  
Sun. Evening Various Children's Programs  
6 pm Life Groups; 6:30 pm Teen Service  
Wed. 6:30 pm Adult & Teen Life Groups  
Wed. 6:30 pm Kids University  
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**15. OAKLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
801 NE Chester, Topeka, KS 66616  
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**16. HOUSE OF THE LORD CHURCH**  
A Spirit-filled, Word-centered church  
2531 SE Wittenberg Rd., Topeka  
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Wed. Prayer & Praise 7pm  
785-266-LOVE (5683)  
J. Michael Borjon, Pastor

**17. HIGHLAND HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
Sunday Services: 8:30 and 10:00 AM  
785-379-5642  
Jars of Clay Children's Center now open  
Taking registrations: 785-379-9098

2930 SE Tecumseh Road  
Tecumseh, Kansas 66542

**18. CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Voted 2015 Best Church in Topeka!  
5973 SW 25th St.  
Topeka, KS 66614 • 273-0710  
Reconciliation: Sat 3-4pm  
Weekend Masses: Sat 4:30pm  
Sunday 7:30, 9, 11am, 6pm  
www.cktopeka.org  
Fr. Mitchel Zimmerman, Pastor  
Fr. Jaime Zarse, Associate Pastor

**19. SEAMAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
Independent Christ-Centered Bible Church  
2036 NW Taylor, Topeka, KS  
354-8777 • www.seamanchurch.com

Adult Sunday School - Sun. 9:30am  
Sunday Worship: 10:30am  
Children's Sunday School: 10:30am  
Youth group 1st & 3rd Sundays 4-6pm

**20. HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Pastor Dale Stockburger  
801 NE Poplar St.,  
Topeka, KS 66616  
785-506-4594  
Sunday Mornings: 10 am Worship  
and Junior Church for the kids

**21. HARVEST FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**  
Meets at 522 SW Polk  
785-220-5418  
Pastor Rey Rodriguez  
Sun. Worship 10 am  
www.topekaharvest.vpweb.com

**22. NEW CITY LIFE CHURCH**  
5221 SW West Drive  
Topeka, Kansas 66606  
Sunday Services - 10:00 am  
Pastor Kathy Crofford

**23. EAST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
4425 S.E. 29th St., 379-9933.  
Sunday Worship 10:45am & 6:00pm  
AWANA Sunday at 5:45 p.m.  
See our website for info on our  
Student Ministries & Kid City  
www.esbcks.org

Reach new residents & seekers! Put your church info in this guide - Call 235-3340 for details.

# classified

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD WITH US! CALL 235-3340

Email your ads to [Voice@cox.net](mailto:Voice@cox.net). Payment in advance required: \$12 for the first 25 words; 25 cents for each add'l word. (classified ads also go immediately online)

**HAIR, NAILS, WAXING, FACIALS, MASSAGE**  
— You'll get the best service ever...or it's FREE!  
Avenue Hair Styling...630 S. Kansas Ave...785-233-5225

**ALTERATIONS** - Clara's Alterations & Creations; central Topeka location, excellent work - above & beyond, over 60 years sewing experience. You Name It - We Can Do It! 785-408-5433

**FOR SALE:** 2 bdrm./2 bath mobile home in South Topeka - Ridgewood Estates. Build-out Living/dining Area, wood-burning fireplace, large covered porch & dbl carport, fenced yard. Asking \$12,900. Rent-to-own with \$1500 down payment then \$280/mo. You pay lot rent & utilities. 640-6399

**FOR SALE: KANGAROO GOLF CART**— Self-propelled push cart for your golf bag. Seat included. Kangaroo Hillcrest model. \$1100 new, asking \$75. Works but needs battery. 640-6399.

**WANTED** - In-home caregiver to care for a 100-yr-old: female non-smoker; must be kind, compassionate, reliable and have good references. Call Sharon at 785-231-4445.

**WANTED: PART-TIME ACCOUNT REP** — Work your own hours. 35% commission on all ads you place; no base. Call on businesses, churches and non-profits about their advertisements in Metro Voice. Call Metro Voice at 235-3340 or email [Voice@cox.net](mailto:Voice@cox.net).

**WANTED: VOLUNTEERS** - Caring Pregnancy Options has some openings for volunteers. Please call 785-249-6130 for info or stop by our office, 2041 SW McAlister Ave, Mon - Thur 10-5.

Ask for Kathy Hart.

**WANTED: VOLUNTEER WRITERS** - Metro Voice needs volunteer writers or interns who can serve as area correspondents for church and community news around the metro area. Call 235-3340 or email [voice@cox.net](mailto:voice@cox.net). Some perks.

**WANTED: DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS** - Metro Voice needs volunteers to help distribute papers to churches and other locations in Topeka. Call 235-3340 or email [voice@cox.net](mailto:voice@cox.net). Gas money and some perks involved.

**WANTED: EMPORIA DELIVERY PERSON** — Metro Voice needs someone to drop off a couple bundles of papers in Emporia at the end of each month. If you're going that way, we'll give you \$20 for gas and your trouble. We also need someone to deliver to Osage City, Lyndon, Baldwin City and Ottawa.

**TOPEKA BIBLE CHURCH**  
1101 SW Mulvane, Topeka, KS 66604  
1135 SW College Ave., Topeka, KS 66604  
234-5545 www.discovertbc.com

Leading People to Life in Christ

First Service: 8:00 - 9:10am  
Second Service & Sunday School: 9:30 - 10:40am  
Third Service & Sunday School: 11am - 12:10pm  
Senior Pastor: Jim Congdon

**21st & Gage • Locally Owned**  
Serving the Topeka Area since 1999

**Do you want to be without your computer for 3-6 weeks?**

Big Box stores ship your computer out of town...and you never talk directly to the technician working on it.  
**We repair most computers in 5 days or less!**

We Sell Laptops and Computers!

Mention this AD and receive a **FREE diagnostic** (\$24.99 savings)

**We do Cell Phone, Tablet and iPad repairs, too!**  
785-267-3223 • www.thecomputerstoreks.com.

## Part-Time Income

### Work flexible hours

Call on businesses, churches, and non-profits about advertising options in Metro Voice.

Keep 35% commission on any ads placed.  
Call 235-3340 or email [voice@cox.net](mailto:voice@cox.net)



**GOING OUT OF BUSINESS**

**SALE**

**Robuck Jewelers**

**Going on NOW**

**40% off**  
(Inventory Only)

**ONCE IN A LIFETIME PRICES ON ALL INVENTORY IN THE STORE YOU MUST SEE IT ALL TO BELIEVE IT!**

Monday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. • Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

845 North Kansas in the Heart of the NOTO Arts District  
785-235-5616 • RobuckJewelers.com



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

## Robuck Jewelers Having Going Out of Business Sale

After more than 50 years in the jewelry business, and 20 years at their current location at 845 N. Kansas Avenue in NOTO, Jim and Charlene Robuck have decided it's time for a little R & R – Rest and Retirement! But closing the store has been a hard decision for them because of the many wonderful friends they've made over the years. They want all of their current and past customers to know how much they have appreciated their patronage and that it has been a pleasure to serve them.

is sold, it is being constantly replenished with merchandise from their vault – so come in again and discover new pieces!

platinum; necklaces, bracelets and earrings; men's and women's watches; a wide selection of estate pieces and clocks of all kinds to go everywhere in your home or office.

And don't forget to shop now for future gift giving. Christmas will be here soon but it's also a wonderful time to shop for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, birthdays and anniversaries!

"Although it's a bit sad to be closing, we feel good about the big savings we can offer during this sale," says Charlene. We're open Mondays through Fridays from 10AM to 5PM and Saturdays from 10AM to 4PM. Robuck Jewelers Going Out of Business Sale at 845 N. Kansas Avenue in the Heart of the NOTO Arts District.



Robuck's entire inventory is on sale, including beautiful diamond rings and wedding sets in white, yellow gold and



Coach Andrea Engstrom

Coach Earl Kemper

Call to schedule your **COMPLIMENTARY COACHING SESSION**  
785.408.5927

**ActionCOACH** business coaching | www.ActionCoachKansas.com

## Powerful Resolutions Prevail

The time of year is drawing near when we begin to hear friends and family talk about their New Year's resolutions and areas to improve upon in their personal lives, career and business. Most business owners set goals based on what they believe is realistic but we believe you're capable of much more. You're only limited by your beliefs and how big you can dream.

Take some time to focus on these areas of mastery as you begin the New Year:

**Destination Mastery:** Where are you going? Where do you choose to be three years from now? Destination Mastery involves a process of being very clear of where you choose to be and the steps it will take to get there.

**Money Mastery:** Do you know your break even numbers and profit margins? Money Mastery involves knowing the Key Performance Indicators that

drive your business and being cognizant of areas to test and measure.

**Time Mastery:** Are you maximizing your value per hour? Time Mastery will



dramatically improve the efficiency and stability of your business.

**Delivery Mastery:** Do you simply

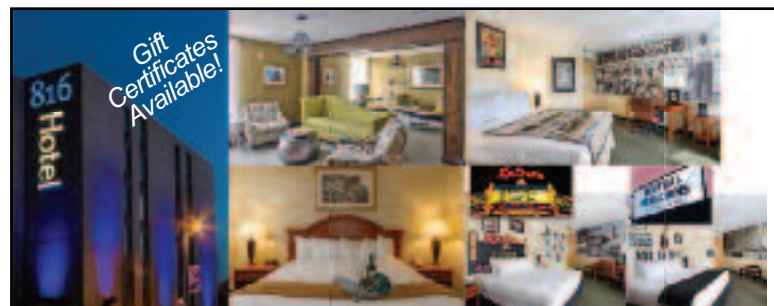
meet your customers' expectations, or do you exceed them? Is the quality of the product or service you deliver top notch? The culture of your business must make your customers feel invaluable.

What goals will you set for Mastery? Whatever your ultimate goal is, it must have a powerful epilogue. It needs to generate excitement for you as you get up each day. A resolution so powerful, that your willingness to overcome challenges and turn them into opportunity prevails because you know exactly what you are going after.

Not sure where to begin? Call 785.408.5927 to qualify for a complimentary coaching session.

The coaches in YOUR corner,

Earl Kemper & Andrea Engstrom  
ActionCOACH Business Coaching



## Unique. Authentic. Fun.

"The 816 Hotel is not simply a Hotel, it's a storyteller of Kansas City History."

Kansas City's only hotel dedicated to the "Paris of the Plains."  
Located in Old Westport, the area around the hotel is home to more than 150 shops, restaurants and bars.

### 816 Hotel Amenities

- Complimentary shuttle service within a 4-mile radius
- Complimentary breakfast (including made-to-order omelets)
- Free cocktails nightly in our Lobby Lounge
- Complimentary passes to Gold's Gym (2 blocks east)
- KC's fastest (and free) hotel Wi-Fi
- Complimentary parking
- Tommy Bahama Bath Amenities

Call Us For Our Best Rate Guarantee  
801 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO 64111  
Phone: 816-931-1000

## 816 Hotel is Unique, Authentic and Fun

Kansas City's 816 Hotel is KC's only hotel dedicated to the past and present of the "Paris of the Plains." The history of KC is rich, and the hotel lends itself to both telling the story of Kansas City while offering a memorable experience through exemplary customer service.

Formerly a Holiday Inn Express, the 816 Hotel has undergone a half-million dollar renovation and interior facelift. The hotel offers spacious rooms decorated with archived photos of Kansas City's history. Large murals of KC history dot the hallways, and 20 corner rooms celebrate some of KC's most colorful people, places and products, past and present, famous and infamous. Themed rooms share the story of Kansas City - everything from the KC Zoo to Boulevard Brewery, to the KC Mob past, to TWA and everything in

between.

The 816 Hotel puts you in the heart of the best amenities Kansas City has to offer. Located in Old Westport, the oldest part of the city, the area around the hotel is home to more than 150 shops, restaurants and bars. Within 90 steps of the front door are these restaurants: Bluestem (highest Zagat rated restaurant in KC); Pot Pie (a moderately priced local gem); and the Westport Flea Market (often voted the best cheeseburger in KC).

Five blocks to the south is the world famous Country Club Plaza, and the 816 is within 1 mile of the Uptown Theater, the Nelson Atkins Museum, the Plaza Tennis Center, the

National World War 1 Museum, UMKC and Rockhurst University. Within 2 miles is the American Jazz Museum, the Negro League Baseball Museum, Crown Center and the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts. Finally, within 3 miles are the Sprint Center and the Power & Light Entertainment District.

And the best part? 816 Hotel offers free shuttle service to all of these attractions and everything in between. Once you check in, you can hide your car keys because you won't need them! All in all, KC's 816 Hotel is one of the most Unique lodging experiences you will ever have.





# MIDWEST Barter Exchange

"Better Barter means Better Business for ALL of US."



"Changing the way the Midwest does Business -- one Barter at a time."

## WHO IS MIDWEST BARTER EXCHANGE



Midwest Barter Exchange is a membership-based association of business owners. Our members buy and sell products and services with other exchange members using barter dollars, which are equivalent to U.S. dollars.

Midwest Barter Exchange acts as a third party record keeper, just like a bank, providing online monthly statements and current barter balances. All transactions are recorded pursuant to trading procedures, policies and regulations of Midwest Barter Exchange, Inc. and the IRS.

We are unlike a bank, because we connect you directly with other barter client members. MBE brings you new customers to purchase your products and services with Barter dollars. You can then use those Barter dollars to purchase products and services from other members without using cash.

Once a member, you can barter locally, nationally and globally with hundreds of established independent reputable barter exchanges.

## WHAT CAN MBE DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

### New Business Sales

- Gain New Customers through Barter dollars for selling your products and services.

### Conserves Cash

- Utilizing Barter dollars provides you with more cash and more purchasing power.

### Increases Your Net Profit

- By earning Barter dollars from new trade partners you can use those Barter dollars to offset business/personal cash expenses by keeping that cash in your bank.

### Brings you new cash business as well!

- Conserve cash & increase profits
- Lower overhead costs
- MBE clients refer new cash customers
- No accounts receivable for trade transactions
- Free online directory listing
- No bad debts or bad checks
- Extend your advertising & marketing resources
- Credit line available (\*Barter \$2,500)
- Local and Global marketplace
- Your gross margin becomes your savings when you purchase
- Use the Free mobile phone app to process transactions
- Your MBE broker helps you with buying or selling needs

123 SW 6th Street - Topeka, Kansas 66603 - (785) 969-1341 - [www.midwestbarterexchange.com](http://www.midwestbarterexchange.com)

## COME SEE THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTMAS AT JACKSON'S

**Annette's tip**  
There is still plenty of time to plant trees and shrubs for better growth and less watering next year. Prices are at the lowest of the year so take advantage of decent weather and get some planting done.

**Topeka's Most Beautiful Christmas Trees Are Here!**  
Fresh, fragrant, soft needle Fraser firs, 3 1/2 ft. to 10 ft. trees.  
Our trees arrive from a family tree farm in South Carolina in Just Cut condition.  
Fresh wreaths, roping and boughs are here in unsurpassable freshness and quality.

**HOMEGROWN POINSETTIAS**  
Pick yours right from where it is growing!  
Buy local and support your fellow Topekans.

**Gift ideas:**

- Gift cards
- Garden tools
- Gazing globes
- Fairy gardens
- Melissa & Doug toys

**• VENUS FLY TRAPS**  
**• PITCHER CARNIVOROUS PLANTS**  
**• AFRICAN VIOLETS**  
NOW AVAILABLE

**STATUARY & POTS Final Clearance**  
Buy 1 get 2nd piece 75% OFF (of equal or lesser value)

**Tree & Shrubs Clearance!**  
Potted plants buy 1 get 2nd half price, Ball & Burlap trees now 40% off! Huge trees instant shade \$100 4 1/2" c and above. Requires large tree spade to move by other contractors. Call 233-5494 for pricing. Special group of Charlie Brown trees & shrubs, 75% off. Select Evergreen group Pine, Spruce Fir 50% off.

**JACKSON'S GREENHOUSE & GARDEN CENTER inc**  
Topeka's Favorite  
2015  
1933 Lower Silver Lake Rd.  
Topeka, KS 66608 (across from fire station)  
Monday-Friday 8:30 - 5:30PM  
Sat 8:30 - 5:00PM  
Sunday 10:30 - 4:30PM  
785-232-3416 Visit our website at [www.jacksonsgreenhouse.com](http://www.jacksonsgreenhouse.com)

### HOURS:

Tax Season:  
Mon-Fri 8-8  
Sat 8-6  
Off Season:  
Mon-Fri 9-4



### NOTICE: Failure to file 2014 Tax Returns Will Prevent Advance Payments in 2016

- If advance payments of the premium tax credit were paid on behalf of you or an individual in your family in 2014, and you do not file a 2014 tax return, you will not be eligible for advance payments of the premium tax credit or cost sharing reductions to help pay for your Market Health Insurance coverage in 2016.

Please call our office to schedule appointment if you have not filed your 2014 returns!

### PERSONAL & SMALL BUSINESS TAX PREPARATIONS

Peggy Beasterfeld, EA, Tax Accountant

300 SE 29th St. - Hi Crest Mini-Mall

785-286-7899

[www.PeggysTaxKs.com](http://www.PeggysTaxKs.com) • [PeggysTax@gmail.com](mailto:PeggysTax@gmail.com)