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THE NELONS AT WNAZ | Page 13

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Grace Community Church - Overbrook

See inside back cover!

Study links neurosis and smartphones in teenagers

by **Michael Foust**

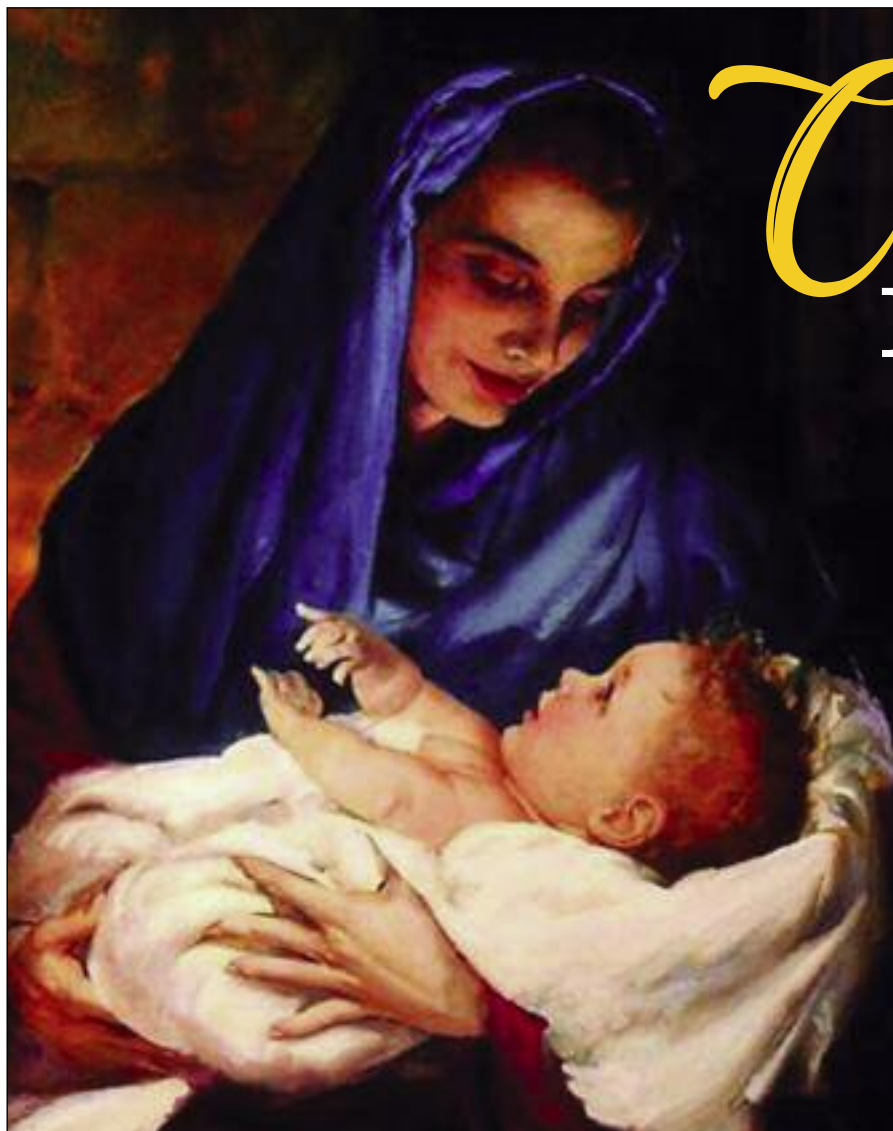
(WNS)--A Colorado research professor this week proposed a hypothesis to explain the unprecedented rates of depression and anxiety in the post-millennial generation: dwindling social cues.

Scott Stanley, a researcher at the University of Denver and a fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, said decreases in the reliability of information about relationships (for example, an emoji response to a heartfelt question) may be exacerbating mental and emotional issues in today's teens and young adults.



Ambiguity leads to neurosis, according to Stanley. Ivan Pavlov found that when dogs could not discriminate between stimuli, they had a mental breakdown. Stanley argues today's young people are left in the same state, asking questions like, "Why didn't she 'like' my

■ Please see SMARTPHONES page 4



How Christmas Defeated Evil

As I sat down to prepare for this column, I began thinking about Christmas and the end of the year. I pondered some of the recent news headlines like the Texas church mass shooting, a potential war with a nuclear weaponized North Korea and the ever-growing political divisions. I wondered, "With all this, how can we move into a joyous Christmas season?"



CLINT DECKER
 President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings,

Then as I began reading the Christmas story from the Bible, a light came on. When I dug beneath the surface, I saw how history has much in common with our day.

The ruthless King Herod, who had been given the title King of the Jews by the Roman Senate, ruled over Israel during the time of Jesus' birth. One day, a large entourage of esteemed, well educated, eastern wise men entered his city after a long journey. When they arrived they began asking, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when

hopefortoday

■ Please see CLINT DECKER page 8

10 STEPS TO LESS STRESS AT CHRISTMAS

By **Rick McDaniel**

Christmas can be a very stressful time. It is a frenzied season full of expectations and obligations. Decorations need to be put up, baking has to be done, presents have to be purchased and relatives must be visited. It is quite possible that in a season where you should experience peace and joy you may miss out on all of it. Here are ten steps you can take to manage your stress this Christmas season.

1. Establish your priorities

This is the time when we celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world. Whatever else may beckon for your attention the most important thing is the spiritual. Luke 2:10-11 tells us, "But the angel said, 'Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make

■ Please see REDUCING STRESS page 4



10 Tips For **REDUCING** Holiday Stress

Museum of the Bible opens as a celebration of Scripture

By **Michael Foust**

When visitors to Washington, D.C., tour the capital's historic museums and monuments in the future, they'll have more than just American history to learn. They'll also have the opportunity to explore the history of the best-selling book of all time – the Bible.

The \$500 million, 430,000-square-foot Museum of the Bible opened Nov. 17 in the heart of the nation's capital, within walking distance for visitors and just two blocks from the National Mall and National Air and Space Museum and three blocks from the Capitol building.

With cutting-edge technology spread out across eight floors, it is the largest museum in the world dedicated to the history, narrative and impact of Scripture.

It will open seven years after a Museum of the Bible non-profit was established and five years after the site was purchased. It formerly was the Washington Design Center. Construction began in December 2014.

The museum's founder is Hobby Lobby president Steve Green, who said public opinion surveys were conducted to determine if people would visit the museum.

"The question was: If we built it, would they come? The answer was overwhelmingly



yes -- if it was done well and done right," Green said. "[The survey] also showed that it would be best attended in Washington, D.C. ... That is where museum-goers go. To be right there with all the museums would be the best place for us to be."

Each visitor to the museum will receive

a hand-held tablet known as a "Digital Guide," which will take advantage of 500 wireless access points to give guests a one-of-a-kind personalized guide. It can adjust the tour when a guest deviates from the pre-planned tour and even can re-route a tour when certain rooms are packed with visitors. The Digital Guide has three age levels: adults and teens; 9-12, and 8-and- under.

The museum will be a "celebration of the Bible" to be enjoyed by all people – Christians and non-Christians alike, Green said.

Forming the core of the museum's eight floors are three permanent exhibits:

"History of the Bible": Visitors will follow the humble origins of the Bible and learn how it became the most widely read text in history.

"Narratives of the Bible":

Visitors will discover the stories of Scripture, from Genesis to the New Testament.

"Impact of the Bible": Visitors will learn how the Bible has impacted history and modern-day life, including science, government and the arts.

"The average person has no clue the degree that this book has impacted their life," Green said. "We want to show that, whether it be in science or art or literature or government or compassion ministries."

A restaurant serving foods of the Bible will reside on the top floor. The museum also will house a 500-seat performance arts theater.

Green said his passion for the Bible came from his father, Hobby Lobby founder David Green.

"God has blessed us tremendously, and we do strive to operate our business according to biblical principles," Steve Green said. "[My love for Scripture] goes back to the love that our family has passed down to us – my parents and my parents' parents, and it goes even further back than that. It's a love for God's Word. ... We want to celebrate and highlight this Book, and encourage all people to engage with it. That is the bottom-line goal for the Bible museum.

"... The way I look at it, we have the best material of any museum in the country. We have a book that has changed our world like nothing else has."

—Michael Foust is an award-winning freelance writer and father of four children. He blogs at www.michaelfoust.com.

i moreinformation

Learn more at www.museumofthebible.org.



Life Lessons From a Little One

NO STRINGS ATTACHED - PART 2

by **Jessica S. Hosman**

Fast forward a couple of months from our last story when Zechariah had given a new friend his prized trophy for no reason other than to help a child feel some value and worth (see November 2017 Metro Voice). We hadn't seen the new friend since the gift had been given when, months later, he came by our house. The boys were playing nicely outside when I thought of the trophy and innocently asked the child where he had it displayed. I secretly wondered if he had treasured it in the same way that Zechariah had and I envisioned it proudly displayed on a shelf somewhere for all to see. The boy hesitated and abruptly shared that he had to leave. His face grew somber as he told us goodbye. Again, I asked about the trophy and my heart sank as he put his head down and solemnly shared that one of his caregivers had made him throw it away. He apologized sincerely and turned and ran away.

My heart honestly felt sick. I knew what that trophy had meant to my son and was personally crushed and offended that someone would abuse such a precious and heartfelt gift. But, while my son asked me why that would occur, he didn't let it bother him. He shrugged his shoulders and remained grateful that he was able to provide some joy to the friend, even if only temporarily.

Many times, we give because we subconsciously want something in return... a reciprocation, a word of thanks or at least an acknowledgment of the time and thought we put into giving. It's hard to admit that would ever be our motivation for giving but, if we get offended when those anticipated thanks are not received, our motive should definitely be something to consider.

Gifts will be given and received over

the next few weeks. When we give someone a gift, we are giving the recipient the opportunity to do with that gift as he or she chooses. That means we relinquish control of what happens to that gift when it's placed into another's hands. Some will treasure our gifts, some will trash them. Does the Lord call us to give only when we know our gift will be used the way we hoped? Or does He call us to give unselfishly as He leads, regardless of the outcome?

My son was willing to give of a treasure that was later, quite literally, trashed. It hurt his momma's heart, but he didn't allow it to cause bitterness or pain in his. What's the difference between me and him in this instance? He gave without an expectation of anything in return. I watched him give but yearned for a respect and treasuring of the gift and gesture given in return. While some may say that is perfectly normal, I don't believe God would want us to allow frustration a foothold if our kindness isn't received or reciprocated the way we had hoped. The Bible is filled with passages that tell us to love when persecuted; continue to bless others even when there is no kindness received in return.

Give freely without reservation. Give freely with no strings attached. The recipient may not recognize the depth of your gift, or perhaps the sacrifice that went along with it, but God does. He smiles down on you. Is that not what this season is about? We give gifts to represent the great gift of Jesus that was given to us. We do so to honor God, not ourselves. As that becomes our sole motivation this Christmas, may we receive an even greater joy in knowing the One who really matters is looking down on us with satisfaction and love. He is our motivation and joy. As He has so freely given, may we now freely give... with no strings attached.



Jessica Hosman

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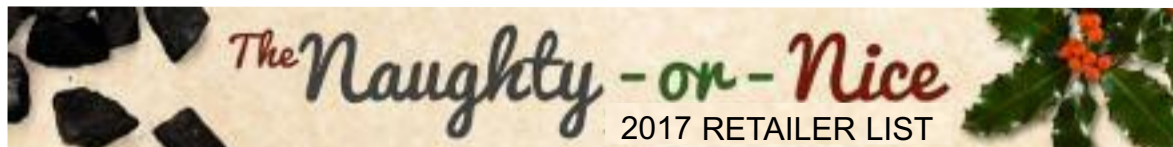
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Which companies made the naughty list this Christmas?

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 and Liberty Council have each 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, JCPenney, Kmart, and Lowe's. Others fell into a "marginal" list, meaning that they rarely or infrequently referred to Christmas.

The two organizations 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.

AFA has also begun its "Keep Christ in Christmas" campaign. AFA President Tim Wildmon announced that his group is offering wristbands with messages about the battle against "secular liberals." There are also yard signs and buttons featuring the "Merry Christmas" message available at www.afa.net



"You might ask why we think this is an important battle. Well, secular liberals in our nation are bent on minimizing and even removing any mention of Christianity from the public square. And no other time of the year reminds people of Jesus Christ and America's Christian heritage more than the Christmas season," Wildmon explained.

Liberty Counsel also monitors cases across the U.S. where there is intimidation by officials and groups to remove the celebration of Christmas in public and private spaces.

These threats include atheist groups seeking to ban nativity scenes from public property, senior living centers that prohibit residents from singing

Christmas carols, public schools that ban students from wearing the Christmas colors of red and green, school officials who censor religious words from Christmas carols, and retailers which profit from Christmas while pretending it does not exist, according to the group's statement.

Liberty Counsel provides a memorandum to offer guidance regarding publicly and privately sponsored religious holiday displays, religious holidays in public schools and the rights of public school students in the context of religious holidays. For example, publicly sponsored nativity scenes on public property are constitutional so long as there is a secular symbol of the holiday in the general context. Privately sponsored nativity scenes or religious symbols are also permissible on public property that has been opened to the general public for expressive activity. No secular symbol is necessary.

"Celebrating Christmas is legal in public schools and in public venues. In the private retail market, consumers can choose to patronize stores that recognize Christmas and refuse to buy from those that pretend it does not exist," said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel.

More information is available at the website, www.lc.org. You can also stay up to date on the subject and participate in the discussion by visiting the Liberty

2016 listing of top retailers and how they recognize Christmas

Companies FOR "Christmas"

Ace Hardware
AFA Online Store: afa.net
American Eagle Outfitters
Banana Republic
Bass Pro Shops
Bath & Body Works
Bed Bath & Beyond
Belk
Big Lots
Books-A-Million
Bronner's CHRISTmas WONDERLAND
Cabella's
Christmasplace.com
Cracker Barrel
Dillard's
Do-It-Best Hartware
Dollar Tree
HSN.com
Hallmark
Harbor Freight
Hobby Lobby
Home Depot
Hy-Vee

JC Penney
JoAnn Fabrics & Crafts
Kirklands
Kmart
Kohl's
Kroger
Lowe's
L.L. Bean
Macy's
Marshall's
Meijer
Menard's
Michael's Stores
Neiman Marcus
Pier One Imports
QVC.com
Sam's Club
Scheel's Sporting Goods
Super D Drug
Toys R Us
True Value
Walmart
Zappos.com

Companies marginal on "Christmas"
Amazon.com

Best Buy
CVS Pharmacy
Old Navy
Rite Aid
Sears
Staples
Starbucks
TJ Maxx
Walgreens

Companies AGAINST "Christmas"

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Barnes & Noble
Dick's Sporting Goods
Dollar General
Family Dollar
Foot Locker
Gap Stores
Limited Brands
Maurice's
Nordstrom's
Office Depot
Office Max
PetSmart
Stein Mart
Victoria's Secret



C5Alive Christmas Luncheon to celebrate with music, games

The monthly C5Alive "POWER Luncheon" will be a Christmas Celebration held at fairlawn Plaza Mall, on Dec. 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Christmas music, games, photos and fun will be the order of the day.

Photos will be offered against the mall's holiday decorations. Santa is rumored to be attending as well!

The cost to attend the luncheon is \$10 for C5Alive members and first-time guests who RSVP, and \$12 at the door. Non-members and other guests pay \$15. C5 luncheons are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend, organizers said. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

C5Alive is an organization founded in 2009, dedicated to developing and uniting Christian Leadership in the community, involving businesses,

non-profits and churches.

In addition to monthly "POWER" luncheons held on the second Thursday of each month, C5 also hosts periodic business fairs and other events, including the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Family Fun Fest, held on N. Kansas Avenue and in Garfield Park on the day before Easter.

The luncheons are held in different locations around the Capital City each month.

C5 members may also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations. For more information about C5, go to C5Alive.org, facebook.com/C5Alive, or call 785-640-6399.

Next month's luncheon will be held January 11 at The Peak, 1920 SW Gage, and will feature Gary Tenpenney of CBMC Leadership Institute.



How to Celebrate Christmas without Breaking the Bank

Christmas changed - a lot - when my husband and I had children. The first few years, we wanted to make sure our daughter (now almost 8) had the very best of everything.

Thankfully, now that she's old enough to understand we can start imparting the importance of charity and giving back.

We want to be careful with teaching our children the reasons we celebrate Christmas and how our church celebrates the message of Christmas all year - not just December 25. We want to make sure our daughter and our son understand that Christmas is not just about the presents under the tree. It's a time to celebrate family and a way for us to share our many blessings with those less fortunate.

Last years we started a new tradition - 24 days of Christmas. We scheduled a daily holiday-themed activity. They ranged from craft projects and special dinners to helping others.

One of my favorite activities last year, was "pay it forward," I bought a \$5 gift card to McDonalds and told my daughter she had to give it to a member of her cheerleading team she'd never spoken to. We put it in a Christmas card, and we made a new friend.

Another activity I personally enjoyed was in conjunction with my work. We purchased duffel bags and filled them with necessities for children in need. Every department in my company filled a duffel bag, and many families (my own included) filled bags on their own. I let my daughter pick out the items that would go in the bag from our family and took the chance to explain to her how many children - maybe even some in her own school - don't have the money for things like shampoo and toothpaste.

We concluded the 24 days with Christmas memories, in which we each wrote our favorite memory of the season and put them in a box to look at for years to come.



I'm excited to open the box this year and see what stood out to us last year.

We're continuing our new tradition this year. Some of the activities will be the same, but I've found a few new ones.

They're all fairly simple and either free or inexpensive. But the most important part is it requires us to turn the television and the electronic devices off and just be in the moment -together.

Here are a few activities on our list:

Popcorn Garland - Make garland for one of the trees out of popcorn. This was an activity I remember doing with my mom and something I think my daughter will love doing as she sneaks a few kernels here and there.

Christmas Crafts - We have a few days of various Christmas crafts. Everything from ornaments to homemade gifts and our own wrapping paper.

Random Act of Kindness - My daughter will get to do something nice for someone she doesn't know. We'll lay out the parameters for her while teaching her again that we should always seek to do for others. I'm eager to see if she makes another new friend.

Christmas Karaoke - My husband and I love Christmas music and will listen to it in our cars for weeks. So a night of singing

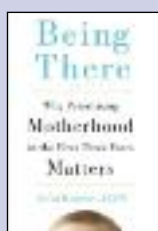
newsbriefs

The importance of moms

(WNS)—A politically liberal psychoanalyst whose research led to traditional conclusions got the cold shoulder from mainstream media when she released her book *Being There: Why*

Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters. "I couldn't get on NPR," Erica Komisar told *The Wall Street Journal*. "I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press."

The book makes the case, backed by neuroscience and psy-



chology, that "mothers are biologically necessary for babies." Komisar insists she isn't trying to set women back 50 years, but says the needs of children are being lost when women believe they can have it all—high-pressure jobs, big salaries, and babies—at the same time.

“Women Who’ve Changed the Heart of the City” Luncheon Raises Funds for Classes at Topeka Correctional Facility

On Thursday, November 16, 2017, World Impact Topeka presented the Women Who’ve Changed the Heart of the City Topeka Luncheon in the Capitol Plaza Hotel Emerald Ballroom. Patterned after City Union Mission’s flagship luncheon in Kansas City by the same name, the event honored women whose vision, compassion and service have made a difference in the lives of those affected by poverty or incarceration in Kansas.

The following women were recognized for exemplary service in the areas of rescue ministry, community, nutrition and educational initiatives, and missional work among those impacted by poverty or incarceration.

- Nell Ritchey, Topeka
- Glenda DuBoise, Topeka
- The Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison

Sponsorships and funds raised at the luncheon will make it possible for seminary-level, leadership development classes to be held in Topeka Correctional Facility, where 58 women are currently enrolled in the pre-requisite class for the program.

Nell Ritchey, Director of Program Development at Topeka Rescue Mission

All of us experience revolving doors of one sort or another. But Nell Ritchey, Director of Program Development at Topeka Rescue Mission, remembers a very specific revolving door: the one that she walked through every morning to get to her work desk and again every evening to leave.

One day, she stood before the revolving door and found herself asking, “What am I doing here, shuffling papers all day?” In that moment, she experienced a specific call to



Ritchey

rescue ministry that took her to two other states and, then, back to Topeka.

Since that day, before her 30th birthday, Nell has served those impacted by homelessness, and she continues to minister and to mentor others in rescue ministry and leadership development.

Glenda DuBoise, Communities Opportunity

For one young teenager, the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. called for action. Emulating her brother and others older than her, she went to the principle of her junior high school and asked if they could organize events to honor him.

Since then, Glenda DuBoise has worked in many capacities on behalf of women and community. She is the recipient of several awards and has served as member or chair of numerous organizations. Glenda has a strong belief in women in ministry who are doing the work and expressing their gift. Her work toward the realization of job opportunities, education and freedom for women illumines God’s love for those impacted by poverty, incarceration and injustice.

The Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica

The Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica have a history of service to women dating back to 1863. To spend time with this community is to be drawn into their lives of reflection and contemplation from which flow vocations and ministries



DuBoise

of justice and compassion.

For these women, long-range planning meant answering the question, “how do we want to spend our resources, both personnel and financial, in the future?” In answer, they established important ministries. The Sophia Spiritual Retreat Center in Atchison allows women opportunity for retreats, prayer, workshops and to share in the worship life of the community. The Keeler Women’s Center opened in Kansas City in 2003 and seeks to empower women in the urban core of Kansas City through education, advocacy personal and spiritual development. All are served as though serving Christ, Himself.

World Impact Topeka

As an urban Christian mission organization, World Impact has been serving in under-resourced communities for over 40 years. World Impact is committed to facilitating church-planting movements by evangelizing, equipping, and empowering the urban poor. Locally, World Impact Topeka works with partners to offer The Urban Ministry Institute of Topeka (TUMI Topeka) seminary courses, the Evangel School of Urban Church Planting, urban retreats, discipleship classes and other initiatives that empower urban leaders.

SMARTPHONES

continued from page 1

post?” and “How did all my friends end up getting together tonight without me knowing about it?”

Stanley is not alone in his conclusions. San Diego State University psychologist Jean Twenge recently wrote in an editorial in *The Atlantic*: “It’s not an exaggeration to describe iGen [those born between 1995 and 2012] as being on the brink of the worst mental-health crisis in decades.”

Twenge also blames the smartphone. Instead of voices, young people get ambiguous cartoon images. Instead of direct communication, young people are left to interpret a friend’s Instagram post.

“The arrival of the smartphone has radically changed every aspect of teenagers’ lives, from the nature of their social interactions to their mental health,” Twenge said. “There is compelling evidence that the devices we’ve placed in young people’s hands are having profound effects on their lives—and making them seriously unhappy.”

REDUCING STRESS

continued from page 1

everyone happy. This very day in King David’s hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord.”

Because of Jesus our imperfection can be replaced with Christ’s perfection, we can be forgiven and begin a relationship with God. We can know inner peace, joy greater than mere happiness and learn to love others as Christ loves us.

We can have hope knowing God has a purpose and plan for our lives. All of this is because Jesus was born.

2. Have realistic expectations

We all want the season to be filled with happiness but the reality is that may not be possible. There are factors beyond our control that can negatively impact any Christmas celebration. Job loss, health issues, family problems do not disappear because it is Christmas. Be prepared that things may not turn out exactly the way you want or expect.

3. Keep spending under control

Establishing a budget for Christmas is crucial to managing stress. Knowing how much you can afford and sticking to your budget will make your holiday a whole lot better. Spend only what you have saved for buying presents and avoid using credit cards. In the end Christmas is about relationships and memories not material things.

4. Guard against perfectionism

Even people who are not perfectionists can get wrapped up in wanting everything to be perfect at Christmas. Much like a wedding, if you are not careful you can get so stressed out over every detail that you miss out on enjoying the celebration. Striving for perfection in your gift giving, decorations and events can leave you frustrated and exhausted.

5. Ask For Help

If you feel overwhelmed with all that you have to do ask others to help you. Being a martyr will not make your holi-

day better. Let the people who care about you know that your stress level is too high and ask for their assistance to get everything done.

6. Practice moderation in activities

You simply cannot attend every party or event. You need to say “no” to those activities that you can’t fit into your schedule. There must be enough time for relaxation and rest. Don’t overdo anything (even the good stuff) and realize that you can’t do everything.

7. Maintain your perspective

The reality is that the Christmas season lasts a fairly short time and then life returns to normal. The extra stress you are experiencing is not unending and will pass sooner than you realize. Certain challenging situations brought on by family or finances will only be for this brief season and then life returns to normal.

8. Continue healthy habits

Your schedule can get pretty jumbled during the holidays. It is easy to let certain positive habits slip away. Exercising is a proven stress reducer and should be done consistently throughout the Christmas season. Getting enough sleep is crucial to looking and feeling your best. As tempting as it is, don’t overdue it with too much eating or drinking.

9. Have some fun

Make sure to have time for the things you truly enjoy at Christmas. Do the fun stuff this season provides. Whether that is a favorite holiday movie, special tree lighting, feeding the homeless or trip to the city those activities should be highlights of your Christmas season.

10. Remember the reason

After all the parties, shopping and events Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. His teachings and His example are what we should follow. Showing God’s love to others, serving those in need and giving gifts is what Christmas really is. Wrap up your Christmas season at a Christmas Eve service and you will truly experience a less stress Christmas.

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Separate Accounts?

Dear Dave,

I have a full-time job, but I also have a small Etsy business on the side selling 10 products that makes about \$200 a month. I don't see the money from this part-time work getting any bigger in the future. Should I keep a separate account for this business, or just roll it into our regular checking account?

Sydney

Dear Sydney,

It's very important to have a separate account, or accounts, for small businesses for two reasons. One, it's a huge help when it comes to taxes and tax season. It will also give you a much clearer picture of how your business is actually doing. Whether you're talking about revenue or tracking expenses, it will give you an

easy-to-read report card.

Even if the business is small and is going to stay small, I would want to know – almost as an intellectual exercise – which of my products were winning in the marketplace. This would help you concentrate on the ones that are making you money, and allow you to focus less on the ones that aren't doing so well.

So yeah, you need to keep a separate business account, and preferably a separate checking account on your business. Make sure all of the income from the business goes into those accounts, and only expenses associated with the business come out of those accounts. With small side businesses, a checkbook register can almost become a simplified profit & loss statement.

—Dave



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

davesays

Balance rebuilding and repaying

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have had marriage problems, and a lot of them were related to money. We're working through those issues and are on Baby Step 1 of your plan. In the process, we're talking more and things are getting better. We have \$40,000 in credit card debt, along with a combined income of around \$70,000, so

I talked to her about taking an extra job or two. She said she would rather I be at home so we can spend more time together in working on our marriage. What should I do?

James

Dear James,

First and foremost, I would urge you two to begin seeing a good marriage counselor together. Money problems and fights over money are the number one cause of divorce in our country today. Continuing to deal with these issues, with the help of a good counselor, will create more communication.

I think you've both realized you're going to be in a mess if you don't address your income and money management issues. However, her concern about spending more time together and becoming closer is valid. Since you've just started the rebuilding process, maybe you could put off the extra jobs for a month or two – but no longer. That should give you both time to talk, hug on each other a lot, and start developing a solid plan together for the future!

—Dave

You still need one

Dear Dave,

I'm debt-free except for my home, and I'm about to start Baby Step 3 of your plan. I will be will back on active duty in the Navy soon, and they provide certain types of relief funds for its members depending on where you're based and other factors. With this in mind, how should I approach Baby Step 3?

Brad

Dear Brad,

For Baby Step 3, I tell folks to have three to six months of expenses set aside in an emergency fund. You have incredibly stable employment, so you would probably be okay on the three-month side of that equation. And you wouldn't need as much emergency fund money as if you were on straight commission sales.

However, my guess is you'll still have emergencies that will be your responsibility to cover. Everyone needs an emergency fund. But you'll probably be okay with one that's closer to three months of expenses rather than six months.

Thank you for your service!

—Dave

Five Facts about Charitable Contributions

By Peggy Beasterfeld
Owner, Peggy's Tax and Accounting Service

With the holidays around the corner, many people will be making donations to benefit charitable organizations. However, come tax time, the person who made the donation might also benefit. That's because taxpayers who donate to a charity may be able to claim a deduction for the donation on their

federal tax return.

Here are five facts about charitable donations:

Qualified Charities. A taxpayer must donate to a qualified charity to deduct their contributions. Gifts to individuals, political organizations, or candidates are not deductible. To check the status of a charity, taxpayers can use Exempt Organizations Select Check on IRS.gov.

Itemize

Deductions. To deduct charitable contributions, taxpayers must file Form 1040 and itemize their deductions. To do this, taxpayers complete Schedule A, Itemized Deductions. They file this form with their tax return.

Getting Something in Return. Taxpayers may receive something in return for their donation. This includes things such as merchandise, meals, and event tickets. Taxpayers can only deduct the amount of the donation that's more than the fair market value of the item they received. To figure their deduction, a taxpayer would subtract the value of the item received from the amount of their donation.

Type of Donation. For donations of property instead of cash, a taxpayer can only deduct the fair market value of the donated item. Fair market value is generally the price they would get if they sold the item on the open market. If they donate used clothing and household items, those items generally must be in good condition. Special rules apply to certain types of property donations, such as cars and boats.

Donations of \$250 or More. If a taxpayer donates \$250 or more in cash or goods, they must have a written receipt from the charity. The statement must show:

- The amount of the donation.
- A description of any property given.
- Whether the taxpayer received any goods or services in exchange for their gift, and, if so, must provide a description and good faith estimate of the value of those goods or services.

Taxpayers can also use the Interactive Tax Assistant, Can I Deduct my Charitable Contributions? This tool helps determine if charitable contribution is deductible.



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

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opinion

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metro
VOICE

MANAGING EDITOR



Lee
Hartman
LHartman3@cox.net

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Nick Hartman
Dwight Widaman

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

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

Mary Meens 785-338-1104
meenzylife@gmail.com

NEWS & FEATURES

Jessica Hosman, Carolyn Cogswell, John Potter, Rob Mooney, Phil Boatwright, Marie Asner, Kharissa Forte, Alan Goforth, Leilani Haywood, Dwight Widaman, Lee Hartman

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Joe Boothe, Lee Hartman, Dwight Widaman

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CONTACT INFO

Offices: 2611 SW 17th St.
Correspondence & Payments:
P.O. Box 5724, Topeka, KS 66605
Phone/Fax: 785-235-3340
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THE DEATH OF "COMEDY" IN LATE NIGHT COMEDY



RACHEL
ALEXANDER

Political columnist and the founder and editor of Intellectual Conservative

viewpoint

Ignoring the advice of Johnny Carson, today's comedians peddle hate

Late night comedy shows are no longer funny. They've turned into crude political attacks. There is nothing funny about watching a solid hour of the left spewing out hate speech against everything they disagree with. There are no conservative major late night comedy hosts.

People tune in to comedy shows in order to escape the endless political infighting. They want humor, not biting partisanship. Conservatives especially don't want to be subjected to nonstop attacks. Hate speech is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "speech expressing hatred of a particular group of people." Late night comedy has evolved into hatred toward conservatives.



"With an annoying, smug demeanor, Colbert turned the show into incessant, savage attacks on the right. As a result, only 17 percent of his viewers identify as Republicans."

Stephen Colbert is the most partisan of today's big three late night comedians. He took over "The Late Show," which was originally hosted by David Letterman from 1993 until 2015. Under Letterman, there was a semblance of balance between

political jokes aimed at the right and the left, and much of the show wasn't political. The replacement of Letterman with Colbert changed all of that. CBS gave him nearly full control over the show. With an annoying, smug demeanor, Colbert

turned the show into incessant, savage attacks on the right. As a result, only 17 percent of his viewers identify as Republicans.

Colbert's show isn't just partisan but downright disgusting. In May, Colbert made a crude sexual joke about President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Even those on the left accused it of being homophobic. In September, Colbert made a Nazi salute in reference to the president. This is offensive to Jews who suffered from the real Holocaust.

Colbert says things that are flat out false. During a September show, he claimed that Trump "didn't meet a single storm victim, see an inch of rain or get near a flooded street" while surveying Hurricane Harvey damage. In reality, plenty of Americans watched footage on TV of Trump meeting with victims in shelters and elsewhere. In fact, ironically, the left wrongly condemned Melania Trump for wearing heels while touring the damage.

Colbert is a hypocritical liberal. He has a staff of 19 that write his material for him. Only two are women and 17 are white men. Yet he is one of the first comedians who will attack others for being sexist or racist.

■ See COMEDIANS on page 7

Celebrating the King of the Jews



JERRY
FELDMAN

Leader of the Messianic congregation of Adat Yeshua

myopinion

I grew up a nice Jewish boy in Brooklyn, N.Y. When late December arrived it brought some interesting challenges. Why? My family owned a toy store! I knew little about Christmas, but what I knew was that it was "all hands on deck!"

Christmas was a celebrant and frantic time with exciting expectations for the "others," but not for Jews. To me, whatever Christmas was, one thing I knew was that it was not Jewish. Besides, we celebrated Hanukkah. So, the fact that my father owned a toy store was a win-win for "them" and me!

Unknown to many is that gift giving on Hanukkah is an essentially American invention. So many Christians and too few Jews placed cultural pressure to accommodate the new Jewish immigrants and their kids from being left out. So, Hanukkah assimilated itself seemingly into the "Jewish" Christmas.

For too many Christians therefore, Hanukkah has as much meaning as Christmas has conversely for Jews. Yet lit-

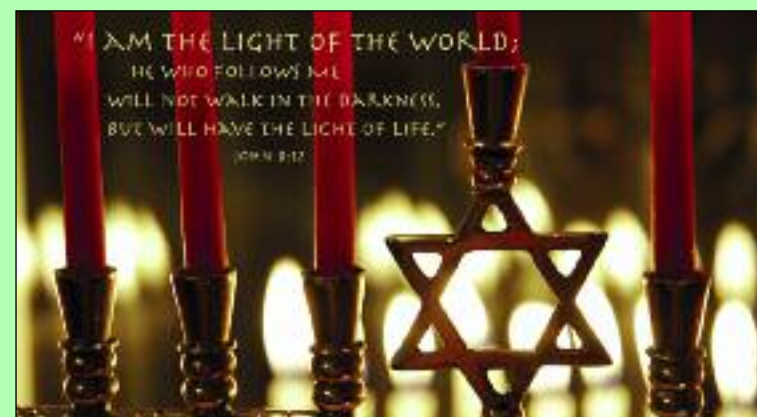
tle known by both communities is the historical connection that makes one not possible without the other.

In 168 B.C.E., a Syrian Seleucid king name Antiochus Epiphanes IV subsumed and decimated Jewish life in the land of Israel.

Most noted was the desecration of Jewish worship and the Holy Temple by replacing it with the worship of pagan idols, including the killing of a pig on the altar.

This event came to be infamously known as the "Abomination of Desolation." The story continues through the heroic efforts of Judah Macabbee resulting in the rededication of Jewish worship through military victory and ritual cleansing three years to the day, the "25th Day" (any coincidence) of the Hebrew month of Kislev. Hanukkah is the Hebrew word translated "dedication." It is remembered yearly by the lighting of the Menorah, commemorative of the original rekindling and the story of how with just enough oil for one day it remained lit for eight days until additional oil could be prepared.

The prophet Malachi prophesied 250 years earlier that the "Lord would suddenly come to His Temple." Did he come when under Zechariah, 150 years before him, the Temple was rebuilt as he spoke of a priest named "Joshua" (3:8-9) who would be the agency for the forgiveness of sins in a single day, speaking of the anticipated Messianic age ('Branch' is a



reference to the seed of David) as a Day of Atonement?

No. Did he come to His Temple at the conclusion of the Temple's rededication eventually known as Hanukkah? No.

Neither experienced the witness of the Spirit presence of God.

In the Gospel of Luke (1:67-80) we read about another Zechariah who prophecies identically of what is to come. Filled with the Spirit, he declares the salvation of the Lord is coming and already in motion with the announcement of his son in the spirit of Elijah, Messiah's herald. He is coming, the Messiah, the seed of David, the one who forgives sins and reveals the light of God.

So it was. Simeon held these prophecies in his hands officiating at a Pidyan Haben (the redemption ceremony) 30 days after the birth of a first born son.

Which son? He was the one that was anticipated (Lk 1:31-33). Yes, "his name shall be 'Jesus' for he shall redeem his people." His Hebrew name is "Yeshua", a

form of the name Yehoshua, or "Joshua". The Lord fulfills His promises to Zechariah and Malachi.

It should be noted that Yeshua celebrates Hanukkah in John 10:22ff., or didn't you notice! Perhaps Hanukkah is a Christian holiday?

If it were not for Hanukkah, there would have been no Temple for the Lord to return. If it were not for Chanukah, there would be no revealing of the light of the world. Historically, if it were not for Chanukah, there would be no Christmas!

If it were not for the Jewish Messiah there would be no salvation for the Gentiles. Christmas celebrates Israel's Messiah "a light for salvation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." Apparently Christmas is a Jewish holiday. Well, it should be! Tell your kids when they get their "toys" this year!

This "Christmas" perhaps we need to ask once again, "Where is the one who has been born "King of the Jews"?"

COMEDIANS

continued from page 6

What happened is "The Late Show" basically became the left-leaning, partisan "The Daily Show" reincarnated as late night comedy. Colbert got his start on the latter as a regular guest when it was hosted by Jon Stewart. Meanwhile, "The Daily Show" continues on with a new lefty host, Trevor Noah. "The Daily Show" is very clever; it is a left-wing political show masquerading as comedy. Under Noah, it has become even more vicious against the right than under Stewart.

"Jimmy Kimmel Live!" debuted on ABC in 2003, becoming a second major late night comedy show. After Trump took office, Kimmel's attacks on conservatives increased. While talking about his son's health condition during a show, Kimmel went on a rant against opponents of Obamacare, cruelly implying that if they had their way, his son wouldn't have been eligible for health insurance to cover his urgent heart operation.

A day after the Las Vegas massacre, Kimmel exploded in a rant against Republicans. As a result a media outlet asked Kimmel if the days of apolitical late night comedians are over. Kimmel responded, "Maybe we'll never go back. Maybe the days of fun are over" — brazenly admitting the comedic aspect of late night comedy has been taken out. He criticized Trump, "Everything Donald Trump is doing and undoing is bad, bad, bad, bad, and it seems so obvious, and it's happening anyway."

Kimmel doesn't care that he's losing Republican viewers. During an interview with CBS last month, he said, "if they're so turned off by my opinion on health care and gun violence then I don't know, I probably wouldn't want to have a conversation with them anyway. Not good riddance, but riddance."

Jimmy Fallon, who replaced Jay Leno on "The Tonight Show," has kept that show a little classier. When asked by NBC's "Sunday Today" why he features less Trump bashing than the other two late night shows, he responded, "It's just not what I do, I think it would be weird for me to start doing it now. ... A lot of [his] stuff is hard to make a joke about. It's just too serious."

Previous late night comedy hosts were never this partisan. Johnny Carson wisely told Barbara Walters in 1984, "I think one of the dangers if you are a comedian, which basically I am, is that if you start to take yourself too seriously and start to comment on social issues, your sense of humor suffers somewhere."

Today's comedians are turning comedy into partisan talk shows. We don't need anymore — especially on the left, where there is a glut of them due to the left-leaning slant of almost all news networks. These new late night comedians aren't funny—they're downright rude. Considering a large proportion of the population that watches late night comedy are conservative, they are making a big mistake.

A year into the age of Trump

God and Donald Trump author says president has potential for greatness

By Michael Gryboski

Evangelicals and others should give President Donald Trump a chance, especially given his warm reception of evangelical Christians, says the author of a new book examining the spiritual side of the controversial commander-in-chief.

Charisma Media founder and CEO Stephen E. Strang, whose book *God and Donald Trump* was released last month, says that one goal he had with his book was to encourage people to "give Trump a chance."



STRANG

"There's some people that just, they're against every single thing he does or says. He says that today's Monday, they say 'no he's lying because its Tuesday in Australia,'" said Strang.

"I would hope that people would stand back, look at what's happening with the economy, look at what's happening internationally."

Strang says that he believed Trump "has the makings to be a great leader" and "a great president," then added the caveat that he still has to "definitely grow into the job."

"But I believe that God raises up people in times of crisis and I believe our country is in a time of crisis," said Strang, who believed that Trump seemed fit for the job due to his apparent ability to be unphased by the "onslaught" of criticism he gets.

An unexpected candidate

In his book, Strang noted the gradual

rising support for Trump among evangelical leaders, saying that during the Republican primary he had originally endorsed Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

"I supported [Cruz] up until the day he dropped out," explained Strang, noting that once Sen. Cruz dropped out he "immediately endorsed Trump."

"I was not a Trump supporter to start with. My image of him was, you know, what I picked up in the media. I rather expected, as a lot of evangelical leaders did, that his campaign would implode at some point."

Strang said that his support for Trump came in part because "some Christian leaders that I respected were meeting with him, they were praying with him."

A flawed, yet changing president

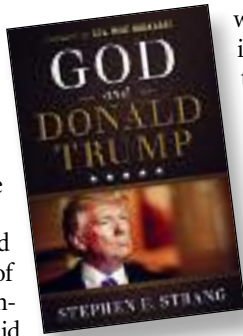
Strang referenced the Rev. Franklin Graham when speaking about his ultimate conclusion that evangelical voters had no better option when it came to the 2016 general election.

"Like Franklin Graham said, we're not electing a pastor-in-chief, we're electing a commander-in-chief," said Strang, noting that many past presidents were "absolutely imperfect."

Strang believed that a decade ago "Trump cleaned up his act" and has been "certainly moving in our direction" when it comes to both public policy and personal practices.

"He seems to have changed a lot. He enjoys being around Christians, he enjoys being prayed for," continued Strang.

Strang felt that "beyond the fact that somebody might not like his latest tweet," Trump "has matured" and "is acting more presidential."



Thankful for what?



LEE HARTMAN

Managing Editor
Metro Voice

editor's blog

Anyone who thinks about it for only a minute will soon realize they have much to be thankful for.

I am especially thankful this year that my sister in Tulsa just had a good report from the doctor after a recent surgery for Pancreatic Cancer. They caught it early and we are so thankful for that and the successful surgery!

I was able to recently trade up for a better vehicle, which will help in delivering Metro Voice all over the area, and especially for that trip to Tulsa for Thanksgiving Dinner!

Also thankful that we have been able

to meet our bills and obligations in recent months. We just got notice from our print shop that our printing costs are going up \$667 per month! Praying that God will continue to help us find the supporters and partners to help us meet this need!

Just so you know.....

Not everyone who disagrees with you is a bigot.

Who are the real haters and bigots? Those who call for tolerance but then want to shut others down because they have a different view or belief.

I know there are some who call themselves Christian who also spout hateful speech — they are certainly not speaking the truth in love. Bottom line is: Not everyone who disagrees with you hates you.

Christians are called to speak the truth in love. Nowhere does the Bible say to speak hate, or to not speak the truth at all.

Don't be afraid to speak up for the truth, and don't be a hater.

In his book, Strang emphasized the notion of God raising up specific people to do His will and mentioned that it was possible that despite his flaws, Trump was being chosen to do important things.

"I believe that there was a spiritual aspect to this election," noted Strang. "I felt that the story needed to be put on the record and the secular books written about the election don't go into the spiritual aspect at all."

"I tried not to be too dogmatic in the book, to say it's this way or the highway. I put in some disclaimers about, you know, we don't know yet how it's going to end with Trump, but what I did was I tried to connect dots."

Other Republican candidates were "too nice" to be able to "stand to the onslaught that is happening against Trump now," argued Strang, who felt they would have "just folded."

A welcoming leader

When it came to evangelical outreach by the Trump Administration, Strang echoed the sentiments of other conservative Christian leaders that the president has given evangelicals unprecedented access to the White House.

As with others, Strang believed that this access and influence was even greater than times when devout evangelicals like George W. Bush or Jimmy Carter were in office.

Strang says that he felt a part of it was seen in the personality of Trump, contrasting his experience of interviewing Bush with his interviewing Trump.

"I had the opportunity to interview

George W. Bush once with six other Christian journalists. And, there was nothing really wrong with the interview, but, it seemed to me that he would have rather been somewhere else," recalled Strang.

"Contrast that to my interview with Trump, which I write about in the book, in which for the ten minutes I had with him he was absolutely focused, he was respectful, he gave me good answers, he showed a nice side of himself that I wasn't really expecting."

Strang felt past presidents, including Carter and Bush, "were never really comfortable with the evangelical community. They would woo the votes and then kind of go on their way."

"His faith advisory board is still very strong, it's not just something he did during the election," said Strang, who in his book detailed many policy efforts appealing to Christians.

Strang also referenced an event featuring dozens of evangelical leaders at the White House in which the president appeared to go beyond mere formality in welcoming them.

"People who were there said they expected Trump to say something nice and then leave, but he sat there the whole evening, because he seemed to enjoy it, he seemed to be comfortable with it," explained Strang.

God and Donald Trump includes a foreword written by former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and was published Nov. 7 by FrontLine, which is an imprint of Charisma House Book Group.



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2017 Christmas Memories

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

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

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

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

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

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

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

Mary Visits Elizabeth

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

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed

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

The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise

Mary responded, "Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and now generation after generation will call me blessed. For he, the Mighty One, is holy, and he has done great things for me. His mercy goes on from generation to generation, to all who fear him. His mighty arm does tremendous things! How he scatters the proud and haughty ones! He has taken princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. And how he has helped his servant Israel! He has not forgotten his promise to be merciful. For he promised our ancestors — Abraham and his children — to be merciful to them forever."

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

The Birth of Jesus

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

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

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

The Shepherds and Angels

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior — yes, the Messiah, the Lord — has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

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

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

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

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

Jesus is Presented in the Temple

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

Then it was time for the purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.



The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord." So they offered a sacrifice according to what was required in the law of the Lord.

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they

returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom beyond his years, and God placed his special favor upon him.

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

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First Christmas filled with darkness, despair, hope

CLINT DECKER

continued from page 1

it rose and have come to worship him" (Matthew 2:2). Unknown to them, Herod already held the title, King of the Jews, so all Israel became troubled by their questioning. Herod immediately became protective of his position, and determined to strike down his rival, employing a gruesome tactic. He knew baby Jesus could be no more than two years old, and learned from the wise men, He was from the area of Bethlehem. Therefore, he mobilized his soldiers to kill any child under two living there. Jesus was spared, when Joseph and Mary took Him and fled toward Egypt for protection.

History's first Christmas was filled

with darkness and despair, but also tremendous hope.

Jesus was born a few miles from Herod's palace. It was intentional. God sent His Son to be born in the presence of evil's most notorious figure, King Herod, and boldly announced His coming. Right on evil's doorstep God came and firmly planted a flag of victory in the form of an empty cross, that His Son one day would die on.

Repeatedly, Herod and other emissaries of evil have tried to vanquish what is good; time after time they have always failed. In this spiritual battle between good and evil light bursts through the darkness, love smother's hate and forgiveness cuts down the legs of bitterness.

No matter the news headlines or



political spins this Christmas, there is hope waiting for you in Jesus' manger. That hope can become yours when you decide to turn your back on the wrong things you have done, and when you are ready to give up trying to be a good person in your own power. Call upon Jesus. Ask Him to make you good, by making you a new person and giving you a new heart. Then in Him, you will find a new beginning.

Hunger doesn't take a holiday...

Please remember the homeless and hungry this Christmas. Thank you.

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MEMORIES OF CELEBRATING A CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS

By Zeta Combs Davidson

If someone described how you celebrate Christmas, what would they say? Every year about this time, I ask myself this question. If I'm fortunate, most will say, "She celebrates a Christian Christmas."

How has this happened? Well, it has been intentional—thanks to a Thursday morning tea at Brenda Poinsett's home.

After serving hot cider stirred with a cinnamon stick, Brenda posed the question, "How is Christmas in your home different from any other house on your block?"

Then she announced that if a Christian Christmas is going to be celebrated, someone must plan it. In those years, one could find very limited Christian Christmas décor—now there is a plethora. Still, the



activities of celebrating together have me remembering this generation later.

What guidelines has my family followed to celebrate a Christian Christmas at home?

The nativity scene takes center stage. Our first was from a nursing home craft shop. It was what we could afford. Today, you will find one in every room.

The activity of 'unwrapping the manger scene' is a favorite. As someone reads the story from Luke 2, each person unwraps his piece and places it. We never change the placement—year after year all pieces circled the baby Jesus—beautiful.

The tree must tell The Message. What used to be one large tree has become a narrow

Adirondack tree in every room— one a mission tree, one a Scripture tree (where each family member wrote their five favorite verses on decorations,) one a chrismons tree, one an angel tree—all with Christian themes.

Intentional conversations—praying for those from whom Christmas greetings are received. Sharing how decorations everywhere are telling His story—lights represent the star, the very first decoration; wreaths announce the never-ending love of our Lord.

Long shopping lines are meant for praying—for those in line and the one the gift is for.

The kitchen calendar advertises important church celebrations—children's program, Christmas Eve service.

Lighting the advent wreath—four candles, a circle of greenery, plus the white Christ candle in the center. No one told me this has to be reserved for church.

It's time to start thinking—"How will Christmas in my home be different from other houses on my block?" Even though Brenda Poinsett has long ago moved from Kansas City, don't you think I should say 'thank you' for that cinnamon tea and her wonderful Celebrate a Christian Christmas ideas?

If you're happy – inform your face

My team just began a program to call every Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries supporter to say thank you. Thank you is such a short, sweet phrase and yet so powerful. We thank people and ask only one question, "Would you like to turn in a prayer request?"



We've run into our share of skeptics – people who, like me, can't believe we're calling to just say thank you. When they hear the smile on our faces and love in our voices, they begin to think our purpose is true. Many prayer requests are being turned in. We're discovering that not only is it encouraging to those we call, but also, to those who are calling and praying for those specific requests.

If you're reading this, I'm guessing you too are a follower of Jesus – one who Knows Him and desires to make Him Known. If not, maybe you're looking for "something more." What's different

about us? Followers of Jesus, during the struggles of life, are confident God is using us to build His kingdom and that He hears our prayers. We also rest in a guaranteed eternal security. The darker things get, the more His light can radiate from His followers. Jesus really does love you and wants you to know Him.

My wife has a saying and she frequently reminds me: "If you're happy, inform your face."

When I remember Psalm 63:3-4, "My lips will glorify You because Your faithful love is better than life. So, I will praise You as long as I live; at Your name, I will lift up my hands," I can't help but smile.

Remember, God designed you with a smile and it is a great way to share His love.

Mark DeGross
Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries

Santa at the Station!
December 3 • 1pm-4pm
Admission:
Members - FREE
2 & under - FREE
3 & up - \$5

Santa arrives by Union Pacific train at the Great Overland Station every year — but this year is a little different. The Great Overland Station and The Carnival guy have partnered to offer an extra special event!

Admission includes all activities:
Photo with Santa, Bounce House, craft, face painting, singing with Kyler Carpenter, balloons by The Amazing Christopher, railroad safety with Operation Lifesaver.

Visit www.greatoverlandstation.com for more details!
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Open Nov. 1 to Jan. 1 • 10am to 4pm Mon. - Sat. • 1 - 5pm Sunday

Over 130 trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme décor — including turn-of-the-century and WW II-era decorations, a barb-wire tree, feather trees, and many more unique decorations! Also tour Constitution Hall, a National Landmark!

Christmas Vespers
Dec. 3, 2 PM

- National Landmarks
- Territorial Capital Museum
- Constitution Hall

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Celebrate the Holidays in Downtown Topeka!

As we enter the Holiday season, the downtown renovations have been pretty much completed! It's a new look for Topeka! 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?

A Full-Service Florist & Gift Shop

Absolute Design by Brenda, 629 S. Kansas Avenue, offers hand-selected



flowers and exquisite designs with delivery 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.

A little bit of Heaven

Working side-by-side at Cashmere Gourmet Popcorn, Bill and Angie Anderson's goal is to create a high-quality product in every handcrafted batch of popcorn, and provide it to you with unmatched customer service. Faith and family is the driving force behind this amazing company. In fact, their family motto has always been, and will always be, "Thanks Be To God!"



Along with daughters Aleigha and Emily, they produce, package and market the popcorn. With about twenty flavors to choose from, you'll find a little bit of heaven in every bag.

serves authentic East Coast-style subs on fresh baked bread – the same recipe from 60 years ago!

You can stay up to date with Jersey Mike's latest promotions and deals, as well as get a free sub + drink on your birthday when you sign up for the



Jersey Mike's Subs Email Club. You can do that as well as place your order, at www.jerseymikes.com.

Don't dread the dressing room!

Whether you shop 'till you drop or you'd rather drop than shop, choosing your next outfit should be a positive experience. Maricel Wilson, owner of Maricel's Boutique at 729½ S. Kansas Avenue, stocks her store to flatter your body and taste. You'll leave the store confident and you will look your best without the sticker shock.



"You feel most confident in your favorite outfit." Maricel Wilson says. "I want you to feel that confidence every time you set foot out the door."



Get another opinion with personalized fashion advice, and find a stylish solution for your next outing."

Maricel also stocks a variety of accessories, wall plaques and other décor items.

Premier Flooring

Stearns Super Center, your premier flooring store, has served Topeka and the surrounding area since 1929. Current owner Steve Lowry attributes their longevity to the emphasis they place on their customer service approach. Their goal is your complete satisfaction, and it is evident in each step of the sales process, including installation and follow-up of all new flooring. They even offer a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, and will remove and replace any flooring they install within 30 days for whatever reason if the customer is not satisfied.

Flooring they sell includes carpet, vinyl, tile, hardwood and luxury vinyl. Popular brands sold at Stearns include Shaw and Mohawk. Steve



specializes in complete, customized service for everyone who comes in. Call him at 785-232-0381 or stop by for more information.

Let your sweet tooth run wild

Hazel Hill Chocolates 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 handmade treats that explode with flavor.

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www.jerseymikes.com • Must bring this coupon.

If you're hungry, stop in for a sub

You can't go wrong taking a lunch break at Jersey Mike's, 718 S. Kansas Avenue, with their fresh ingredients and bread baked fresh every morning.

Jersey Mike's, a fast-casual sub sandwich franchise with more than 1,000 locations open and under development nationwide, also has a long history of community involvement and support. Started at the Jersey Shore in 1956, Jersey Mike's

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Christmas Memories, Events, & Gift Ideas!

Check out the many Downtown Renovations and all the Holiday Events!



sweets," Terry says. "You'll never leave empty handed."

Handmade chocolate truffles, home-style fudge, crispy-creamy caramel apples and more - they fashion delightful treats for every palate. Need a gift basket, gift box, or just a



few delicious chocolates to go? They'll take care of all the packing and shipping, too

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."

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

While you're making your way around the downtown area, check out all of the new features! And watch for these downtown events coming up:

THE CHOCOLATE NUTCRACKER MIDWEST, Nov. 25 at 7pm and Nov.26 at 3pm; TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-383-9373 or 785-580-9707



ANNUAL RESCUE RUN - Nov. 25, 5-6pm, 534 S. Downtown Topeka. Proceeds benefiting the Topeka Rescue Mission Ministries. Register at trmonline.org/rescueerun/. Volunteers needed: email volunteer@trmonline.org or call 354-1744x393



SHOP SMALL VENDOR FAIR - Nov. 25, 9-1, Juli's Coffee and Bistro, 110 SE 8th. Locally



owned small businesses such as Fierce Life, Kombucha Tea, Scentsy and more!

MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE - Nov. 25, 5-8pm - Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, Parade and more. For info: downtowntopekainc.com

GATLIN BROTHERS CHRISTMAS SHOW WITH BILLY DEAN - Nov. 29, 7:30pm, TPAC. 785-234-2787



NOON NOELS - Nov. 29, Dec. 6 & 13, 12-12:30pm. Music and Bible reading. Nov. 29: Cair Paravel Madrigals; Dec. 6: Topeka High Madrigals; Dec. 13: Hayden Singers. Lunch served at 11:30 and 12:30 (\$5 donation)

SESAME STREET LIVE - Dec. 1, 2pm. TPAC

FIRST FRIDAY COOKIE WALK - Dec. 1, 5-8pm. Downtown's 3rd annual cookie walk as part of First Friday Art Walk. Get a cookie at each location! Also, Music at Juli's, Bruno's & Two Wolves. Comedy at Breakroom 8pm.

WINTERFEST TOPEKA 2017 - Dec. 2, 10am-2pm, Downtown. Kansas Avenue comes alive with winter holiday fun for this special event. Find Santa and other holiday characters, take a horse and carriage ride, take a selfie with a reindeer, enjoy carolers and get some holiday shopping done at some of your favorite Downtown Topeka businesses.



KELLY HUNT & JEFF BLACK - Dec. 2, 7-10pm. Jayhawk Theatre, 720 SW Jackson.

SESAME STREET LIVE! LET'S PARTY! - Dec. 1, 2pm & 6pm at TPAC



THE NUTCRACKER -- Dec. 8: 8pm; Dec. 10: 2pm & 8pm; Dec. 11: 2pm. TPAC. Tickets available through TPAC, Ticketmaster or at Barbara's Conservatory of Dance.

LADIES DAY OUT - Dec. 10, 10-5pm. Ramada Hotel Downtown. Shopping, socializing, pampering, and fundraising

KANSAS BALLET: THE NUTCRACKER - Dec. 16, 7pm, 17, 1pm. TPAC. \$41. For info: 234-2787



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"We will be glad to help you find that special gift, from \$20 and up!"

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David's is open seven days a week. Holiday Hours expand as Christmas approaches. Gift certificates & free gift wrap available.
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Celebrate the Holidays in North Topeka!

Lots going on in North Topeka during Holidays

The North Topeka area has a lot going on this time of year! In addition to First Friday Art Walk in NOTO Arts District, there are also many other events going on north of the river:

SPOIL ME SILLY - Nov. 30, 6pm, The



Brownstone, 4020 NW 25th St. Free Admission, Topeka Ladies – amazing pop up boutiques and vendors showcasing the best Topeka has to offer. We'll also have our signature free pampering services onsite! Along with a CASH bar.

WINTER CRAFT FAIR & BAKE SALE - Dec. 1-2, 9-3pm. The Cottages of Topeka Clubhouse, 620 NW Lyman Rd.

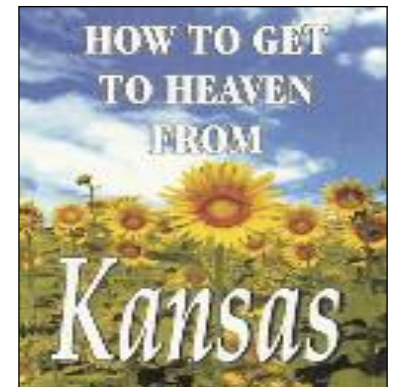
SANTA AT THE STATION - Dec. 3, 1-4pm. Great Overland Station. Santa arrives by Union Pacific train. Free for members and children 2 and under. 3+ \$5. Bounce House, crafts, face painting, photo with Santa, balloon making, etc. For info: greatoverlandstation.com/Santa-at-the-station

BEAT IT (AN INTRODUCTION TO DRUMMING AS A SELF-CASE ROUTINE) - Dec. 7, 3:30-5pm. Creations of Hope Gallery, 909 N Kansas Ave. \$15.

COMMUNITY HARVEY HOUSE LUNCHEON – Dec. 7. Great Overland Station. Tour included. \$23.50 per person. RSVP by Dec. 1: 232-5533, ext. 14

CHILDREN'S SHOPPING SPREE - Dec. 9, 10-2pm. Garfield Park Shelter House. Ages 6-14. All gifts available for under \$10. Free admission and gift wrapping.

THE WRIGHTS CHRISTMAS CONCERT – Dec. 17, 6pm, Family of God Church, 1231 NW Eugene. 289-8905. thewrightministries.com



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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 ("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 faithfamilyministries@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 – (For updates check www.divorcecare.org) locations and times:

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. (just East of 37th & Croco). Cost: \$10 registration (scholarships available). The video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost experts on divorce and recovery topics, combined with support group discussion of the materials. Complimentary child care children up to the fifth grade. Info: 266-7550 or walnutviewcc@att.net.

WED. – 6:30pm, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. No Cost. 286-1204, www.northland.cc

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 Univ. setting.

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP – 1st Thurs., 7pm, Saint Francis Hospital 2nd floor conf. room of the cancer unit. 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. crtopekaks.org.

TOPEKA NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUP – For families & friends who are affected by someone else's narcotic addiction. Every Sat., noon-1:15 pm, rm. A, 1st Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar, enter on S. side, door A. 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.

Visit Historic Lecompton to see largest Christmas trees and ornaments display in the Midwest

Memories of Christmas are relived when visiting Historic Lecompton. Visitors this holiday season can see an indoor display of over 130 trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme decor- including turn of the century and WW II era decorations. Among the many trees is a barb-wire tree and feather trees, and many more unique decorations.

At the same time, visitors can also tour Constitution Hall, a National Landmark. Lecompton is the "Birthplace of the Civil War, Where Slavery Began to Die." Lecompton was recently named one of the "Best Small Towns in Kansas" by Kansas Magazine readers.

The display will be offered from



November 1 to January 1. The display and museum is open 10 am to 4 pm Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 pm Sunday. A Christmas Vespers will be offered December 1 at 2pm. For more information go to lecomptonkansas.com.

CELEBRATE

continued from page 3

Christmas songs is right up our alley.

Red and Green Dinner – Our supper this night will be all red and green foods – on our red dishes.

Scavenger Hunt – Our kids will have a list of Christmas-oriented items to find.

Christmas Volleyball - We're going to get red and green balloons and just spend an evening batting them around the house.

"Snowball" fight -By snowball, I mean marshmallows. My kids love marshmallows so this should prove to be fun.

Gingerbread House – We'll get a kit to make our traditional gingerbread house. This year, our kit is a mini village, and comes with four separate buildings.

Hot Cocoa for Breakfast – Our daughter loves hot chocolate and is over the moon at the prospect of having it for breakfast.

Bobbing for candy canes - we'll use candy canes to hook and pick up other candy canes, without using our hands.

Cookies – Baking is an important part of Christmas; making cookies is always fun

Christmas Memories – Each of our

Christmas activities will be in a box that on Christmas Eve we will fill with our new memories. Each of us will write our favorite memory from the holiday season so we can revisit them in years to come as we add more each year.

Christmas in the park and a game night are definite musts. Our daughter loves going to Christmas in the park, and I cannot wait until my son is old enough to appreciate it.

Merry Christmas from our family to yours.

Topeka Bible Church will present LIGHT SHOW 2.0

It's their legendary Light Show, but like never before! It's all the sights and sounds of Christmas, kicked up a notch and taken INSIDE! Welcome to Topeka Bible Church's Light Show 2.0!

Light Show 2.0 combines live performances by musicians and vocalists, and dazzling lighting effects to tell the story of the birth of Jesus Christ and get you in a Christmas mood. The show includes toe-tapping Christmas favorites as well as a few new numbers you won't soon forget. And they've added a hot cocoa bar, a children's play area, and as always – there are free glow sticks for everyone!

TBC is presenting this free event is a gift to the Topeka community. Donations will not be accepted.

Light Show 2.0 will be presented Friday thru Sunday, December 15 through 17, with shows hourly at 6, 7, 8 and 9 PM in the College Avenue Building

On performance nights, College Avenue will be closed between 11th and Munson to allow for pedestrian traffic. Guests should enter the east parking lot

on Mulvane St, between 11th and Munson.

Overflow parking locations are:
 • TBC north parking lot, NW corner of 11th & Mulvane

• Lowman Hill Elementary parking areas

• Topeka Public Library parking lot, NE and SE corner of 11th & Garfield

When guests arrive, traffic attendants will help them find a parking space or direct them to overflow parking. Guests should arrive early to ensure a seat at their desired performance. There will be a children's play area and fun photo opportunities for the entire family while waiting to be seated.

Seating will begin approximately 10 minutes before performance time.

After the performance, guests can visit the free hot cocoa bar for a beverage and cookies, or the children's play area.

NOTE: Be aware that Light Show 2.0 is a concert-style event, with flashing lights and music at a high volume.

For more information, call 785-234-5545 between 8:30 AM-5 PM Monday-Friday.



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entertainment

The Star breaks faith-based animated drought

movienews

by Michael Foust

In the dozen so years since *The Passion of The Christ* sparked the modern faith-based film wave, there have been dozens of Christian movies at the box office.

We've seen movies about police and firefighters (*Fireproof*, *Courageous*), movies about glimpses of the afterlife (*Miracles From Heaven*, *Heaven Is For Real*), movies about football and surfing (*Woodlawn*, *Soul Surfer*), and movies about kidnappings and murders (*Captive*, *End of the Spear*).

We've even had a couple of comedies (*Mom's Night Out*, *The Resurrection of Gavin Stone*).

But there has been a shortage of animated films geared toward children – the last wide one being *The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie*, which was released in 2008.

That changed Nov. 17, when Sony's Affirm Films released *The Star*, which follows a donkey named Bo (voiced by Steven Yeun), a dove named Dave (Keegan-Michael Key), a sheep named

Ruth (Aidy Bryant) and a host of other animals as they accompany Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and experience the nativity story.

An embargo prevents me from saying too much about *The Star*, but I am free to say this: It's very good, and it's genuinely funny – for both children and parents.

Also, it's much better than the trailer. It will have you and your children laughing as the animals witness the greatest story ever told.

DeVon Franklin, who was once named one of the "most influential Christians under 40" by *Beliefnet*, serves as the executive producer, while Academy Award nominee Timothy Reckart is the director.

Faith-based animated films at the box office are rare. In fact, among the Top 50 grossing Christian films of all time, only three – *The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything* (2008), *Jonah: A Veggie Tales Movie* (2002) and *The Prince of Egypt*

(1998) – were animated.

Ash Greyson, the founder of Ribbow Media, told the Metro Voice News that the dearth of animated faith films can be attributed to a lack of funds.

"The last few animated faith films have not done very well," Greyson said. "They are expensive to produce, and I

suspect that is why we haven't seen many. Most people of faith have no issues with Pixar or Disney, so you can't just pitch a faith animated movie as an alternative to Hollywood.

"I think this is a space where Hollywood can win. Look at what *The Prince of Egypt* did."

Released in 1998, *The Prince of Egypt* opened in second place and stayed in the Top 10 for six weeks. It finished with a total gross of \$101 million.

Time will tell whether *The Star* approaches those numbers. But Christian families at least have another option at the box office.



An interview with the author of *Thirty Days to Glory*

localauthor

by Jeanette Gardner Littleton

If you're looking for a heart-warming book with a heaping helping of Christmas, check out *Thirty Days to Glory* by Kathy Nickerson. Kathy lives in rural Missouri but sold her book to her publisher when she attended a Heart of America Christian Writers Network (www.HACWN.org) conference several years ago.

Besides being an author, speaker, and grandmother of 14, Kathy admits that she's an eternal optimist because she has a deep faith in the God who made Light to shine from darkness. Kathy's articles have appeared in several magazines and she is the author of three novels, including *Thirty Days to Glory*, which won the Christian Small Publisher Book of the Year award for fiction.



Q: What was the hardest thing about writing the book?

A: Honestly, I was surprised by the emotions I encountered with the characters. They feel almost as real as my family sometimes.

I've read and revised the book about a zillion times, but some places still make me laugh. Or cry.

Q: Do you hear from readers about *Thirty Days to Glory*?

A: Responses have been amazing and humbling. One teenager told me a scene with Catherine's nativity set made her realize she needed to read the Bible for herself, not just rely on what people had told her. A reader admitted she had never felt permission to pray because she isn't part of organized religion; now she prays every morning. Another woman who read the book helped her alcoholic brother find a treatment center instead of slamming the door in his face because he suddenly reminded her of Elmer Grigsby.

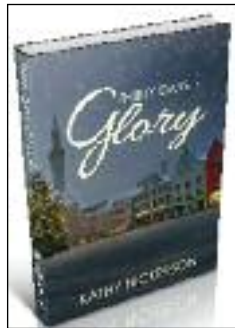
There's even a lady who said she can't slip in the side door of the church anymore. She has to walk up the front steps like Catherine. Those things stay with me when I'm working on the next book.

Q: Are you currently working on any other projects?

A: Several. Some of the other characters in the book demanded stories of their own. Bess Caldwell stars in *Rose Hill Cottage*, which is available now. Madge is about to save the day in a story due out next year, and that one has led to a sequel I'm writing.

Q: Anything else you would like to add?

A: I'd love to connect with your readers through my website at www.kathynick.com. From there, they can find me on social media. And I hope readers will be inspired to take some action after reading *Thirty Days to Glory*. I hope they will mend a relationship, find a friend, or leap toward that One Great



Thing, as the book says, whether it is as simple as a prayer or as grand as an exotic adventure.

Kathy's book is available from online retailers, such as Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com, or your bookstore can order it from the publisher at CrossRivermedia.com.

Jeanette Gardner Littleton is a writer and editor in Kansas City and co-directs the Heart of America Christian Writers Network (www.HACWN.org).

MOVIES, STREAMING, BOOKS, MUSIC, INTERVIEWS & MORE!

streaming



'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' tops December Streaming

By Michael Foust

He's the meanest creature on the planet, but perhaps that's to be expected. After all, his heart is "two sizes too small."

He enjoys sending nasty letters to the people in the next town. He gets jollies out of stealing presents. He even eats glass.

The Grinch – who lives on an intimidating mountain overlooking the kind people of Whoville – just may be the most unlovable "thing" ever made. But not everyone agrees.

Little Cindy Lou Who – a bright-eyed young girl from Whoville – believes the Grinch is capable of good. She even claims he saved her life!

So, when the townspeople push back against Cindy Lou's claims about the Grinch, she launches an investigation. What she finds is shocking: Long ago, a younger Grinch was (heavily) bullied by the kids of Whoville. He subsequently left town and climbed up the mountain, and the people haven't heard from him since. Perhaps that's why he is so mean. And maybe if someone is kind to him, he will return the favor.

It's all part of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (PG), the highest-grossing film of 2000 and one of the top choices for Christmas-themed streaming selections in December. It is playing on Netflix.

This delightful and mostly family-friendly film was directed by Ron Howard and stars Jim Carrey as the Grinch. Is also won an Oscar (Best Makeup).

■ Please see STREAMING page 17

New this month:

Amazon Prime

Charlie Brown's Christmas Tales (2002, unrated) – This isn't the Charlie Brown Christmas that we all love, but for 20 minutes of entertainment with Snoopy, it's not bad. Just don't expect a Gospel message. Animated.

I Want a Dog for Christmas, Charlie Brown (2003, unrated) – Ever heard of Snoopy's brother Spike? He's featured in this one – and he's hilarious. Animated.

If You Give A Mouse A Christmas Cookie (2016, unrated) – Based on the popular series of children's books, this cartoon likely will have your kids cackling in the floor. Animated.



Christmas with the Kranks (2004, PG). In this comedy, a family decides to skip Christmas and go on a cruise. It doesn't go well. Starring Tim Allen and Dan Aykroyd. Rated PG for brief language and suggestive content.

Also playing: *Lots of old Christmas cartoons that haven't played on television in several decades. Search for "Christmas cartoons." Additionally, The Mayflower Voyagers – a classic Peanuts cartoon about the Pilgrims and their faith – is also on Amazon Prime. It's never too late to teach*

■ Please see NEW THIS MONTH page 17

STREAMING

continued from page 16

Although purists of Dr. Seuss' books might be troubled by some of the additions, it nevertheless maintains messages on kindness and redemption. The bullying angle gives it a timely 20th-century lesson. It does contain a few scary parts that might trouble young children, and one or two inappropriate scenes.

Among other Christmas-themed selections this month:

White Christmas (1954, unrated) – This musical-comedy about a pair of singing-and-dancing men won an Oscar (Best Song) and stars Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney.

Also playing: Lots of Hallmark-type romantic Christmas specials. Just type "Christmas" into Netflix. Enjoy!

NEW THIS MONTH

continued from page 16

some history!

Hulu

Christmas with the Kranks (2004, PG). See above. Otherwise, it's a slow month for Christmas classics/family-friendly entertainment on Hulu.

Note: *The 1965 classic A Charlie Brown Christmas is not available on any of the major streaming services. But it often is available on YouTube.*

Tis the Season to Read

Did you realize that some of the classic Christmas movies started as books? Here are some movies you might be familiar with and the book authors:

- **The Miracle on 34th Street** by Valentine Davies (released with the movie)
- **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer** by Robert L. May
- **The Year Without A**



Santa Claus by Phyllis McGinley

• **The Littlest Angel** by Charles Tazewell

• **A Christmas Story** -

book: In God We Trust; All Others Pay Cash by Jean Shepherd

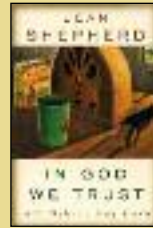
• **Cricket On**

The Hearth by Charles Dickens

• **A Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens

• **The House Without A Christmas Tree** by Gail Rock

• **Christmas With The**



Kranks – book: Skipping Christmas by John Grisham

• **The Christmas Wish** by Richard Siddoway

• **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever** by Barbara Robinson

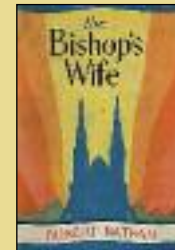
• **Die Hard** – book: Nothing Lasts Forever by Roderick Thorp

• **It's A Wonderful Life** – book/story: The Greatest Gift – Philip Van Doren Stern

• **The**

Bishop's

Wife by Robert Nathan



• **The Gift Of The Magi**

(story) by O. Henry

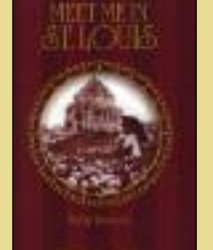
• **Mickey's Once Upon A Christmas** – book/story The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry

• **Polar Express** by Chris Van Allsburg

• **The Nutcracker** – book:

The Nutcracker and the Mouse King by E.T.A. Hoffman

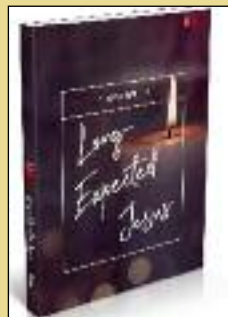
• **Meet Me in St. Louis** by Sally Benson



Other books of interest

Long-Expected Jesus: An Advent Devotional

A Kansas City publishing company, The Foundry Publishing (formerly Nazarene Publishing House), has recently released this devotional book which offers a reading for each day from the first Sunday in Advent until Christmas day. Some authors offer warm personal



experience, others teach us a bit of Bible background. Every day features a key scripture reading, with more scriptures for those who want to immerse themselves deeper in God's Word. The book also includes weekly discussion questions and family time prompts. This can be used for personal devotions, for a family, in a small group, or even in a church service—it's created to be easily adaptable. It's available for individual or bulk purchases through bookstores or at 1-800-877-0700.

Birth of the Chosen One

Each of the 54 pages in this 8" x 11" book is a delight to the eyes and ears. Foremost, of course, is the story. This is the story of Christ's birth told in the voice of the First Nations Version of the Bible, which is being created by author Terry Wildman and a council of Native American and First Nations people, with support from Wycliffe and OneBook.ca. If the story of the nativity has grown old to you, this will give you fresh insight. Each page is also a



treat to the eyes, thanks to the wonderful illustrations by Ramone Romero, an artist of indigenous descent. Even if you're not First Nations or Native American, reading this book to your family each year along with your normal scripture version would be a great tradition to start. This is available through Amazon.com or <http://www.firstnationsversion.com/birth-of-the-chosen-one/> You can find samples on their website or on their Facebook page.

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

musicscene

Seasons Greetings Everyone

As I mentioned in my last column, Christmas is our family's favorite season of all. Over the last several years we have waited until Thanksgiving night to begin putting up Christmas decorations. This year, we could not wait so we put them up a week before. That is how excited we were. We are creating our own holiday traditions as we celebrate the gift that keeps on giving, our Lord and Savior, Jesus. I hope you all have an amazing Christmas with family and friends.



Cedric Austin

December New Releases

Project 86 - Sheep Among Wolves - Independent

Crossing Worship - This Is Life - Independent

Brooke Robertson - Have My Heart EP - Independent

Decade The Halls, Vol 1 by Tenth Avenue North

Most of us have heard of Tenth Avenue North. Some of their greatest hits are; By Your side, Love Is Here, You Are More and I Have This Hope just to name a few. Now to add to our list of favorite Christmas tune, they have released a Christmas album for our listening and memory's pleasure. It's fair to say that Tenth Avenue North had fun creating their Christmas release this year. The clear creative approach to this album was spot on. In their 10-track Christmas album, they explore the styles and genres of music over the last 100 years, with each song encompassing a different decade. I would encourage you to get this album and have fun with



your family trying to figure out which decade each song is from. This is definitely one of the most musically absorbing Christmas releases I have seen in a long time, and I'm thankful for! You can check out Tenth Avenue North's music on all digital media outlets.

Lauren Daigle - Behold: A Christmas Collection

Lauren Daigle led worship at her church, became an American Idol contender and sang on an EP a local band was recording. It was that gig that led to an invitation from Centricity Music to attend a retreat in Washington State. When the lead singer of the band had an emergency appendectomy, Daigle stepped in and immediately impressed label execs that encouraged her to come to Nashville. Produced by Paul Mabury (Brooke Fraser, Hillsong, One Sonic Society), Daigle's How Can It Be is a compelling collection of songs



that celebrate God's faithfulness with a sense of wonder and awe. Atlanta-based Daigle now delivers Behold, her first Christmas album and second LP for the Centricity label. Co-produced by Paul Mabury and Jason Ingram, the album offers soft jazz arrangements of a variety of holiday standards from "O Holy Night" to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Inspired by the jazz sounds of her hometown of New Orleans, Behold also includes a new song "Light of the World," which was written by Mabury and Ingram. You can find Lauren Daigle's music on all digital media outlets.

Matt Redman - These Christmas Lights

It's been a while since a top worship artist has released a full length album of original Christmas music and Matt Redman's Christmas album has been a

long, process involving a songwriting retreat to Israel where he walked paths and roads that are so familiar to us in the Christmas story. Redman explains: "I don't just want to just tell a story, I want to make sure that we put ourselves in the story too." Not only do these songs make great Christmas listening but Matt Redman's Christmas album brings some new life to familiar carols with songs and original choruses for use in Christmas worship services as well. "One of my main aims during the adventure of writing these songs was to not just tell the old story, but to invite ourselves into it. Some of the very best worship songs move from a place of re-enactment to a stage of realisation – in other words, not just recounting what happened, but actually placing ourselves inside the story and singing of what that means for you and me, here and now." You can find Redman's music on all digital media outlets.





healthy living



Don't let winter curb your exercise

Many people who spend the bulk of the year happily jogging, biking and hiking outdoors begin to curb their activity at the first sign of frost. But even if you workout indoors during winter months, it pays to find some snowy activities that can bring you outside. Not only do most wintertime sports slaughter calories, the double whammy of physical exercise and sun exposure helps improve mood, boost the immune system and may even play a hand in preventing long-term chronic illness.

Exercise, whether indoors or out, boosts serotonin levels — the brain hormone associated with improved mood, the absence of which is related to depression. But that's not all: improved blood circulation from moderate exercise can also jumpstart the immune system. In fact, a study from the American Journal of Medicine found that older women who walked for 30 minutes each day for an entire year reported half the number of seasonal colds as did women who didn't exercise during the same period. Researchers theorized that the increased circulation of infection-fighting white blood cells helped the active group retain their health throughout the year.

Sun exposure also helps, in small doses. We often neglect time spent in daylight during the winter months, but the sun's rays also work to boost our mood and immunity. You only need 15 minutes of sun exposure per day to get a sufficient amount of vitamin D, which improves immune system health and helps the body properly absorb calcium, building strong bones (the National Osteoporosis recommends 400 to 800 IU of vitamin D for adults under age 50 — and 800 to 1,000 IU for those over 50 — as a central part of its prevention strategy).

What's more, sun exposure is associated with other hormones (despite its name, vitamin D is actu-

Find a purpose

Having a life full of purpose is important for any age but especially essential for a healthy lifestyle for the Over 50's. Having meaning and joy in life and sensing your purpose in God's plan is crucial.

As we age many significant events are likely to occur which dramatically influence our life. Your life WILL change and you will gradually lose things that previously occupied your time and gave your life purpose. For example, you may change jobs or retire. Your children might head off to college or work, marry and may move away and you may become grandparents. You may also experience physical changes too which are signs to you that you're getting older.

Now it's time to focus on yourself and those things that are important to you but also find where you can serve in a new way and make a difference for your church or community. Rekindle those unfulfilled dreams. Later life can be a time of exciting new adventures if you let it.

Reconnecting with your life purpose and passions, your special giftings in the Lord, and setting important goals will empower you and your faith.

ally a prohormone, not a vitamin): dopamine and serotonin. Sunlight stimulates the same neurotransmitters as antidepressants do and is especially valuable for the four to six percent of the U.S. population who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder

■ Please see EXERCISE page 19

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FOUR BOXES HELP ESTATE PLANNING

thecaregiver

As the end of the year approaches, people tend to look for ways to cut their taxes by making charitable contributions and putting more cash in tax-deferred retirement plans. It's also a great time to consider a smart estate-planning move: helping your elderly parents inventory their possessions through a "four boxes" system.

A family inventory will not only tidy up their home, it can help your mom and dad get their financial house in order, too.

What Estate Planning Is Really About

Estate planning is about much more than wills and trusts. It is also about preserving and understanding the life of a person, in part through his or her possessions.

There's no question that cleaning house can be a tricky project, especially if there is no move or downsize to prompt it.

Your elderly parents may question your motives, so make it clear that the exercise is not about contemplating their deaths or trying to get their assets. It's about hearing the stories and memories that go along with the possessions they've collected over a lifetime, so you won't have to play a guessing game later about what is valuable, emotionally and financially.

The 4 Boxes Inventory System

Here's how the "four boxes" organizing approach works:

Put four boxes in each room of your parent's house:

- 1) "Keep Until I Die" For items with sentimental value, such as family heirlooms, personal letters, wedding china and photo albums.
- 2) "Appraise and Sell" For unwanted items of value.
- 3) "Keep with Me" For unsentimental items, such as furniture and art.
- 4) "Garage Sale/Donate" For unwanted items.

Then, go room by room with your parents, sorting their possessions.

For bigger items that won't fit in boxes — like furniture, pianos and workout equipment — consider putting pictures of them on index cards and then dropping the cards in the appropriate boxes.



My Mother and the 4 Boxes

I went through this exercise with my mother two years ago when, at age 89, she realized it was time to downsize from two homes to one. The 10-hour drive between her places in Delaware and South Carolina had become too much.

In addition to dealing with the logistics involved in moving everything to her South Carolina home, we reviewed key financial information, including her will, power of attorney,

■ See CAREGIVER on page 19

GET ORGANIZED FOR TAX SEASON - NOW

moneymatters

Regardless of whether you manually file your own taxes from home, use an online filing system, or work with a tax preparer or accountant to file your taxes, organization is key! December is a great time to prepare for 2018 tax season!

Collect all your tax documents in one designated folder, binder, box or drawer. You may also want to consider storing these important documents in a safe. Keep your personal and business documents separate. Make photocopies of all your paper tax documents as well. Another trick is to use your smartphone to take pictures of tax documents or relevant receipts (i.e., a charitable donation receipt from Goodwill) and then e-mail yourself these pictures. Store

and categorize these pictures in a password-protected secure folder, Dropbox-like storage program, or a secure cloud-based online storage system.

In the January Metro Voice we'll continue on this topic, discuss in further detail the best tech tools to help keep you organized and get ahead for



the 2018 tax season.

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Hillsdale Place L.L.C.

CAREGIVER

continued from page 18

living will, beneficiaries, retirement savings, budget and her new cost of living. Then, we inventoried her possessions.

Using the four boxes approach, it was amazing to unleash the stories behind her acquisitions.

“Tell me about this piece,” I would say to her, sparking tales about how she got certain pieces and the role each one played in her life. Without going through this process, I would have missed out on hearing the stories that will now become part of my family’s legacy.

The final step was selling my mother’s home. The proceeds from the sale helped supplement her retirement income, providing comfort that — at nearly 90 years old — her cash flow would continue.

I encourage you to consider how a four boxes inventory might be helpful to your family. The process can actually be a bonding experience and help prompt a re-assessment of savings during the later years of a parent’s retirement.

– Holly Kylan is a financial advisor with ING Financial Partners.

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EXERCISE

continued from page 18

or SAD — a season-specific episode of depression-like symptoms. The added time in the sunlight even helps improve sleep, by regulating the body’s melatonin production, which controls its circadian rhythm. Just be sure to wear adequate sun protection, including sunscreen and sunglasses; not only are winter rays strong enough to burn, their reflection in white snow actually compounds the strength, putting snowbirds at even greater risk of damage.

None of this sounds like an improvement over the balmy jogs and swims of summer, but it turns out that from a weight management and fitness standpoint, there are few exercises more effective than regular walks or jogs in the winter sun.

Make Yourself a Priority this Holiday Season



diate and extended family. Take a deep breath and use the coming weeks to “set the table” so that your holiday preparations and celebrations can be heartfelt, productive and enjoyable.

The second part of being prepared

is sharing the load. Ask others to join in and help - it will be more fun and less work for everyone.

Lastly, be realistic and scale back. Don’t try to do too much. Focus on time with loved ones, not to-do lists.

Achieving balance in life is never easy; it is something that everyone has to work towards. The holiday season can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding, but only if you let it get the best of you. Even if you have not taken the time for self-care throughout the first part of the year, at the very least make some strides before your responsibilities increase. Planning ahead and self-care are gifts to yourself and the rest of your imme-

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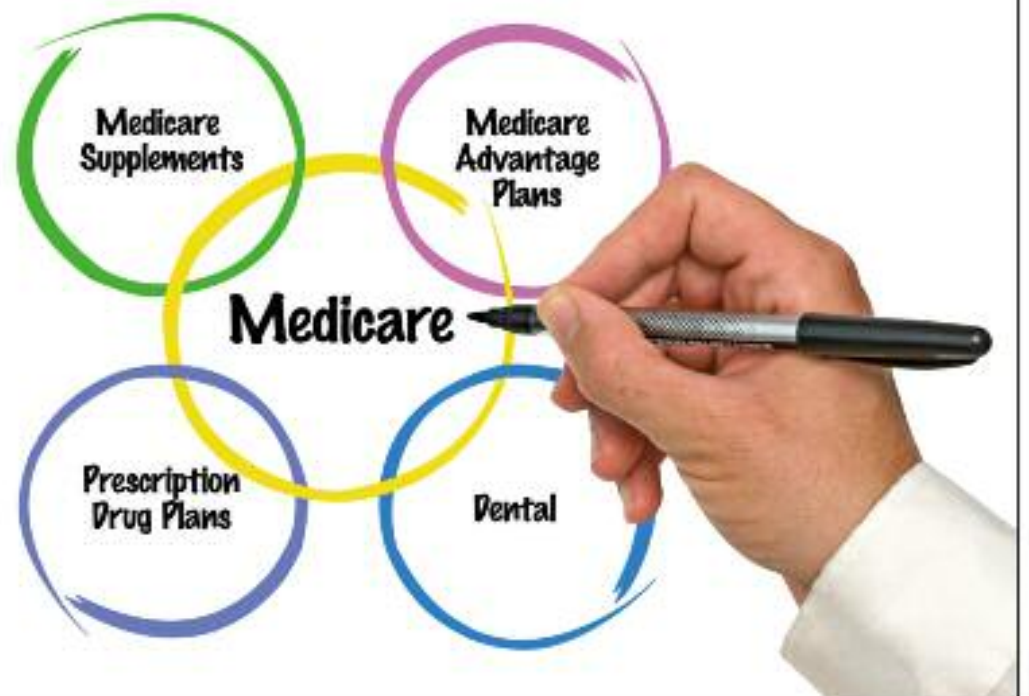
Myth About Losing Your Medicare Supplement Plan F

If you have been approached by an insurance agent or company stating Plan F is going away in 2020 and not to purchase one now or to change your existing coverage **BEWARE**. Medicare Access CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 prohibits the sale of Medigap Plan F and C beginning in 2020. That prohibition only applies to newly eligible Medicare beneficiaries. Congress did not prohibit the sale of these policies to people who were already eligible or enrolled in Medicare before 2020.

Many seniors like Plan F because it pays the Part A and B deductibles of Medicare. All they need to remember is to pay their premium and make sure the claim is an approved claim from Medicare. Marketing of other supplement plans like Plan G is being done heavily because, for some insurance companies, Plan F premiums are too expensive in the marketplace. Only their Plan G premium can compete. Or, maybe a sales representative only sells price and not benefits. Remember, saving a penny today could cost you a dollar at some point.

Again, beware, only people who become eligible for Medicare on or after 1/1/2020 are affected by the change. If you have Plan C or F, you can keep it.

Century Health Solutions is a subsidiary of Stormont Vail Health, Topeka, and provides free Medicare Educational Seminars. We are your local expert in Medicare insurance planning and will help you find the best option for your personal situation. Call us at **785-270-4593** Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm. with questions or to sign up for a free seminar. For more information go to www.centuryinsuranceagencyks.com or email info@century-health.com.



sports

PASSIONATE PURSUIT FCA Magazine Q&A with Mason Rudolph, Oklahoma State



The motivation behind the pursuit — and the corresponding journey — usually begins at an early age. It starts with a dream; young children envision reaching their goal. Soon enough, they're sweating through drills under the scorching sun, examining how older players are doing it, how they prepare and train to become accomplished football stars.

Every college football player takes their own path before arriving on campus to play on Saturdays in front of thousands, but there's one common theme: They worked incredibly hard to get there.

For Christian athletes, that effort and energy is simply a form of worship — a way to glorify their Creator, giving Him praise and honor for the abilities He blessed them with to compete. The lessons learned in passionately pursuing their gridiron goals also apply directly to their relationship with Christ. Time spent with the Lord in prayer and in His Word develop a longing to know Him more—and it forges a closer bond and deeper devotion to their relationship with Him.

It's in that vein, in the game or out, that Colossians 3:23 remains the highest calling upon their lives: "Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."

That verse was the inspiration behind FCA Magazine's theme of "passionately pursuing God" for its eighth-annual college football player profiles. This year's edition features Oklahoma State quarterback Mason Rudolph and 40 other Christ-following student-athletes from around the country. They all shared why and how they pursue a relationship with Jesus, and the impact He has had on their lives and football careers.

"In fact, they got worse," Rudolph said. "But I had this peace and this hope for a better future that I never had. My spirit changed, my attitude changed, the

way I perceived things changed. I was certainly a long way from perfect, but I knew there was a purpose for my life because I met the Creator of my life."

FCA Magazine Q&A with Mason Rudolph, Oklahoma State; #2 – Sr./ QB / Rock Hill, South Carolina

FCA: Why do you passionately pursue a relationship with Jesus Christ?

MR: Growing up with my family, my grandfather being a minister, I was always around the gospel. Once I made it to college, my faith had to become my own. The distance away from my family actually strengthened my relationship with Christ. I passionately pursue Christ because I want to be a witness for Him and use this platform to impact our community. I think my faith has grown in every chapter of my life, especially in college.

FCA: How does your relationship with God impact your approach to football?

MR: It seems like during the season you just naturally become more emotional and closer to God because you're thinking about Him, you're more anxious, you're more nervous. You have to turn to Him with those nerves and emotions and just lean on Him and trust that He's going to protect you and keep you safe.

Christ is at the center of it. It's Christ who will always be there for you; He's your foundation. So just getting in the Word and leaning on a few of my life verses throughout the week, as well as constant communication with my parents, my grandparents — that's my secret to success.

FCA: In your role on the team, how do you balance encouraging unity while also using your voice for leadership?

MR: It's important to have individual connections with every position group on the team. We compete every single



FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

By Rob Mooney

Just when you didn't think that the University of Kansas football team couldn't sink any lower, they fool us all. Not with their play on the field, we've all become accustomed to the product that is on display on Saturdays in Lawrence. I'm talking about the total lack of regard for sportsmanship they showed when the Oklahoma Sooners came to town.

It starts off with the KU captains refusing to shake hands with Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield at the coin toss. Mayfield is a Heisman Trophy candidate and arguably the best quarterback in college football this season. He is also a very brash young man. This is the guy that planted the Oklahoma University flag at midfield when the Sooners knocked off the Ohio State Buckeyes. Nothing wrong with that except the fact that the game was played at Ohio State!

It continued as KU players took cheap shots at the Oklahoma quarterback throughout the game. Eventually, Mayfield grabbed his crotch and yelled cuss words at KU players, an act that earned him a seat on the bench for the beginning of the following week's game against West Virginia. He also lost his team captain position for that game.

On the other side of the coin, KU coach David Beaty said that the KU players were just trying to get inside of Mayfield's head, who is known as a fierce competitor. What? Come on guys, you've won three games in three years. Focus on what you're supposed to be doing during a game and not trying to get into a guy's head! That's ridiculous.

I'm not a Mayfield fan. I think that he does a lot of unnecessary showboating. But when the number 3

team in the nation comes to visit and they have the leading Heisman candidate, you show a little bit of respect! Oklahoma will probably represent the Big 12 in the college playoffs this year and what kind of a showing would they have if KU would have hurt Mayfield. Anytime a player takes a cheap shot at another player, he should be kicked out of the game. There's no place for it. Football is dangerous enough as it is.

Beaty said he didn't know anything about the handshake snub beforehand and I believe him.

However, the players involved need to be disciplined. Strip them of their captain's positions and make them start the last game on the bench, like Mayfield has to do.

I trust the process that KU is going through right now with their football program. However, if this is going to be acceptable behavior in the coaches' eyes, there needs to be a change right away. If the coaches turn a blind eye to what happened against Oklahoma, maybe KU should take Mayfield's advice when he said they should stick to basketball!



day against each other — the defense and the offense — so sometimes the defense can feel a little bit isolated from the offense, or vice versa. I have to make a conscious effort every single day to go speak to those guys (on defense) personally. And not just about football.

Then you've got to have that trust from your teammates, and it comes from your work ethic. That really translates into an environment where you have the sole voice (of leadership), and the guys will follow you into any circumstance.

FCA: Why do you feel God put you in this specific position in sports?

MR: I was blessed with talent, but my parents taught me at a young age that it takes a lot more than just talent to get where you want to go. It's just a blessing from God, and I've tried to use that to the best of my ability. I try to be a witness and do things off the field, because it's more about how we can affect other people's lives.

God is not predictable. In Mark Batterson's book, *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, he says, "You can bank on God to bring the unpredictable." We try to diligently lay out a plan for our lives — for the day or the month or the year — and a lot of times He kind of just laughs at us because it's His plan for our lives, not ours. The way He's orchestrated my career in football, as well as my life off the field, I don't think I would've dreamed it would've gone this way.

FCA: Why do you feel the ministry of FCA is important?

MR: It's big because people look up to athletes. Those guys in leadership roles can show there's more to life than just football; they can be a witness for Christ.

That was big with me with Tim Tebow. I thought Tim Tebow hung the moon when I was in high school and middle school. The way he used his platform to reach kids and reach people all across the world with his ministry, the way he carried himself — that made an impact on me. I always told myself, that's what I want to be.



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Prepare Your Home for Holiday Guests

(Family Features) Welcoming friends and family into your home, celebrating time-honored traditions with delicious food and enjoying quality time with loved ones are all sure signs that it's the most wonderful time of the year. However, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by holiday preparations and pressure to make your guests feel comfortable while visiting.

From loading up on pumpkin-scented candles to leaving out clean towels and upgrading that old air mattress to a real bed, it's important to help loved ones relax when they're away from home. Make the most of this holiday season with these handy tips from the experts at Mattress Firm to get each room of the house ready for guests.

Entryway

The first step into a home away from home for the holidays can set the tone for the entire visit, so make sure that first impression is a welcoming one. Incorporate lively seasonal decor into the space to create a cheerful, festive atmosphere. Be sure the area is free of clutter and make space for your guests' shoes, coats and other personal items to send a message from the start that you're happy to be hosting them.



Guest Bedroom

After a long journey, guests are sure to appreciate a clean, fresh bedroom, with personal touches to make them feel special. Make sure the pillows are fluffed and bedrooms are stocked with fresh linens, along with a few magazines or a good book. Test all lights and fans to confirm they're working properly, and be sure an alarm clock is available. A notecard featuring your Wi-Fi network name and password can help your guests feel right at home.

For elderly guests, you may consider adding an adjustable base to your guest bed. Adjustable bases, including those available at Mattress Firm, are solid metal structures that fit twin- to king-sized mattresses and act as a movable foundation with the power to adjust the mattress into a variety of positions from reclining to inclining. These bases can be suitable for sleepers with chronic pain, sleep disorders such as sleep apnea or the average sleeper just looking for additional comfort.

Guest Bathroom

Although visitors are likely to carry their own toiletries, it can be awkward to discover a forgotten essential while in an unfamiliar home. Stock your guest bath with the basics to ensure guests have everything they need, such as extra toothpaste, shampoo, razors and deodorant. Also provide plenty of freshly laundered, fluffy towels and washcloths.

Living Room

Adding extra bodies to the household may put seating space at a premium, especially during the holidays when seasonal decorations take up extra room. Remove unnecessary items from the living area and add seating, if necessary, to ensure everyone can gather comfortably. It's also a good idea to ensure there are ample flat surfaces and coasters available for beverages so you can comfortably visit well into the night.

Kitchen

For close friends or family, you're likely to know their preferences and it's easy to stock up on a few favorites ahead of time. If a new guest will be joining, be sure to ask about likes or dislikes as well as allergy or dietary needs ahead of time. Make a point to show first-time guests around the kitchen

early in the stay so they can easily find anything they might need, such as a glass for water during the night.

For more tips and tricks on getting your home prepped for the busy holiday season, follow along with #SleepGiving or visit MattressFirm.com/blog.

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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. It's important to remember that evergreen trees & shrubs should be well watered before winter sets in. This includes not only the needled evergreens (conifer) but also broad-leaved evergreens such as boxwood and holly.

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The Computer Store is a member of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, the Capital City Christian Chamber of Commerce and the Topeka Independent Business Association.

Locally-owned food delivery service expanding

Topeka2Go is a restaurant food delivery marketing service that started in 2015 and is rapidly expanding across the nation. In addition to the Topeka area, the service was recently added to the Emporia market. The service partners up with local restaurants and independent contractors to get hot, fresh, and delicious food delivered quickly and conveniently.

The online site and mobile app allow you to order food hassle-free and to coordinate when and where food is delivered directly to you. Orders can be for an individual or a group, delivered to a home or business location, or even to a hotel.

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