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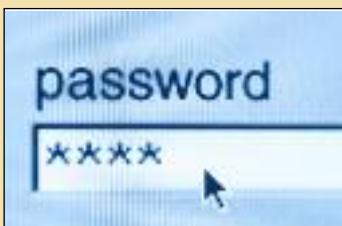
NEW RESIDENT churchguide

Wanamaker Road Baptist Church



See inside back cover!

What were the worst passwords for the past year?



NordPass has published its annual research on the most common passwords of the year.

The most popular passwords of 2020 were easy-to-guess number combinations, such as "123456", the word "password", "qwerty", "iloveyou", and other uncomplicated phrases.

The list of passwords was compiled in partnership with a third-party provider, which evaluated a database that contained 275,699,516 passwords in total. Of those, only 122,894,788 were unique. This is only 44% of unique passwords.

"Despite the constant reminders from cybersecurity experts, after comparing the list of the most common passwords of 2020 with the same list from 2019, it became pretty clear that people are still using very simple passwords, and a lot of them are similar to the ones they used last year," said NordPass.

Only less than half (78) passwords were new on the 2020 "most popular" list.

If you recognize your password among the top 200, cybersecurity

■ Please see PASSWORDS page 15

Why We Need to Stop Making New Year's Resolutions – and What to Do, Instead.



New Year's Day seems like the perfect time to begin anew. The world is celebrating, emotions are high, and the very earth is poised to bloom into renewed life over the next few months. Most of us ride the wave and make a few resolutions, promising ourselves that we're going to get out of debt, lose weight, or simply reinvent ourselves.

And by mid-February, we fail. We forget those promises. Over the next months, flowers bloom and the trees spring to life, but we're left in that same

cold winter of the status quo all year round.

The making of New Year's resolutions is an old habit of the human race, extending all the way back to the ancient Babylonians, who were making resolutions about 4,000 years ago. They made promises to their gods to pay off debts and returned borrowed items—promises that, if kept, were thought to curry favor with the gods in the coming year.

There's a reason we've been making

resolutions for so long. The very nature of celebrating the New Year brings our faults to the forefront. The season is changing, the year is turning, and the feeling of transience reminds us that we have a chance to begin again.

"Resolutions are a way of erasing the mistakes of the past through the promise of a better future."

Resolutions are a way of erasing the mistakes of the past through the prom-

■ Please see RESOLUTIONS page 2

Respect Life Special Section PAGE 8

Topeka named a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community



The efforts of the City of Topeka to build better places for people to bike have been honored with a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award from the League of American Bicyclists. Topeka joins 485 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes Topeka for its commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while

■ Please see BIKE page 3

Kansas River Weir Is Under Construction

In September, construction began to modify the existing river weir and banks of the Kansas River where it runs through Topeka. The purpose is to enhance public safety, provide reasonable fish passage, improve navigation around the weir – all while maintaining adequate upstream pool elevation for water intakes to the water treatment plant. On the 12th of December, the contractor poured the first chute for the weir project, as well as creating a rock base for the second chute and basin.

Limitations imposed by KDWPT prohibit work in the river during the

summer months to protect native fish, therefore the work is being broken down into two phases. Phase I started in September and will be completed in the first part of 2021. This work includes the boat and fish passages on the north bank as well as the new boat ramp and benching of the highest portion of the weir to reduce the impact of the keeper hydraulic.

Phase II will start September of 2021 and conclude in early 2022. That work includes constructing the chute at the low water notch in the

■ Please see RIVER WEIR page 2



Impact of Trump's Middle East peace deals hits new high

The Middle East peace agreements the Trump administration brokered between Arab nations and Israel were accomplished despite the doubts by the "deep state" in Washington.

So far, Morocco, Bahrain, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have reached agreements to normalize relations with Israel.

But now there's a new development that shows how right the Trump administration was to abandon the policy of appeasing the Palestinians and push forward with Arab peace proposals regardless of the opposition of Palestinian factions.

The Middle East Media Research Institute reported that because of the

peace deals, Palestinian officials want to restart the negotiations with Israel and renew security and civilian coordination.

Also, they have ceased their attacks on the Arab countries that have normalized relations with Israel, the MEMRI said.

MEMRI said the PA's opposition to negotiations with Israel produced a "deep political and economic crisis" that led to the suspension of American aid, the termination of the Oslo Accords and all ties with Israel. Funding has been so tight the PA's employees have not been getting full pay.

"The Arab media, and especially the Palestinian media, directed harsh criticism at the PA, accusing it of lacking political

vision and of taking a hardline stance that is ineffective and undermines the well-being of its citizens. It appears that the election of Biden provided the PA with a way out of the crisis and an opportunity to renew the contacts with Israel."

MEMRI said the "renewal of the civilian coordination with Israel enabled the PA to receive the tax revenues collected by Israel on its behalf, and for the time being Israel has apparently stopped deducting from these revenues the cost of the stipends paid by the PA to terrorists and their families. At the same time, the PA is seeking a way to continue paying these stipends while avoiding Israeli and American sanctions. So far, it seems to be eying administrative measures aimed at disguising the payments and deceiving Israel and the West, who oppose them."

The affirmation that PA leadership now is ready to renew talks with Israel came right after the U.S. presidential election.

"In statements on November 4, 2020, one day after the election, PA President Mahmoud 'Abbas and Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh stressed the Palestinian leadership's willingness to renew negotiations based on international law and under the auspices of the UN," the report said.

A short time later, PA Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki said "the state of Palestine is willing to renew its contacts with the new U.S. administration, based on the ini-



tial contacts that have been recently made with it, and based on the stated position of the president- and vice president-elect."

And PA officials have stopped criticizing the nations that have made peace deals.

The criticism, the report said, likely was isolating the PA in the Arab world.

"This is not to say that the PA leadership has stopped expressing opposition to the agreements with Israel, but it is doing so through quiet diplomatic channels," the report said.

And the PA has renewed coordination with Israel on several issues, it said.

The report noted several issues remain unresolved, such as taxes,

President Trump has been nominated for a Nobel prize based on his work on the agreements.

When the fourth deal came through, he said: "Another HISTORIC breakthrough

today! Our two GREAT friends Israel and the Kingdom of Morocco have agreed to full diplomatic relations – a massive breakthrough for peace in the Middle East!"

WND columnist Michael Brown said America is watching "history unfold before our eyes."

"And it is America that is brokering these deals with Israel and these Muslim nations," he pointed out.

"On one of my recent trips to Israel, I was struck by the degree of enthusiastic support for Trump from the man on the street, among both the religious to the irreligious. (There are plenty of both in Israel!)," he wrote. "In the rough and tumble world of Israeli politics, Trump's worst qualities hardly raise a concern. Instead, for them, they saw results, tangible results. And some of those results were the difference between life and death."

RIVER WEIR

continued from page 1

weir and benching the middle section to reduce the hydraulic keeper in these sections.

"This has been a long-standing priority for both the City and the Riverfront Advisory Council," said Greg Schwerdt, owner of Schwerdt Design Group and chair of the Riverfront Advisory Council. "The weir will not only be an engineering feat, in and of itself, but it will also serve as a way to better control the flow of the River, improving safety and enjoyment overall. I, personally,

can't wait to see the final product in the spring of 2022."

The project underway at this location will include a bypass channel which will allow safe navigation around the existing river weir without having to portage. The other features of the project include alteration of existing wing dikes and installation of rock and concrete surfaces below the weir to improve public safety. When the project is completed next year, a new parking area will be constructed which will feature a more reliable access road aimed to reduce illegal dumping and destruction of property.

RESOLUTIONS

continued from page 1

ise of a better future.

But despite having 4,000 years of practice, we're abysmally bad at keeping these promises to ourselves. While 41 percent of Americans make a habit of laying out New Year's resolutions, only 9.2 keep them.

But why is that? Why do we continually make the same promises to ourselves year after year, only to fail time and again?

The reason is simple: we're confining our efforts to change to one day a year.

Humans are creatures of habit and hope. We get caught up in the motivating emotion of the New Year, thinking we can do anything. We make promises, intending to keep them. But when that emotion and revelry wears off, our motivation disappears. We stop going to the gym. We start overspending again.

So what's the trick to sticking to our guns throughout the entirety of the year rather than fizzling out in February?

We need self-discipline.

Consider this. There are two types of writers—professionals and amateurs. Amateur writers have only a fraction of the output of the pros. Why?

Because they wait for inspiration to strike. They sit and stare out the window, awaiting the romance and intrigue of that Perfect Moment—that instant when the rays of sunlight alight just right, when a swarm of butterflies swirl past, when the clouds arrange themselves into sacred shapes.

In other words, they do nothing.

Professional writers, on the other hand, work constantly. They place posteriors on seats and set fingers to keyboards. They don't need the euphoric emotion of the Perfect Moment. For them, every

moment is the Perfect Moment, because they're not running on emotion; they're running on discipline.

Resolution makers are those amateur writers, working only in the heat of the moment, and then stopping as soon as it's over.

Don't be an amateur resolution-maker. Be a pro. Here's what you can do instead.

Make Goals Year-Round

Don't confine your major goal-making to New Year's Day. When you see a need in your life, make a promise to yourself to fill it.

That means, if you notice that your pile of debt is beginning to get out of control around mid-year, make a July resolution. If you start putting on some Thanksgiving pounds, make a November resolution.

Make these resolutions with the same fervor and sincerity that you would feel on New Year's Day. Remember—every month, every day, every hour, and every breath is a new beginning.

Take advantage of them all.

Rely on Discipline

The biggest mistake most resolution-makers make is relying on emotions to motivate them.

Emotions are mercurial. They change and flow like sand dunes in the wind. Would you build your house on a foundation of sand?

No—you wouldn't. You'd build it on solid rock. And what's more solid than an iron will?

Willpower is a muscle like any other—it can be weakened through disuse, or strengthened through regular practice.

And the product of a strong will is self-discipline, which is the factor that will have you keeping your resolutions past the dreaded February mark and on through the rest of the year—for the rest of your

life, in fact.

Discipline helps you intentionally build good habits, and good habits build good lifestyles. Emotion alone cannot do this for you.

Start With Small, Well-Defined Goals

The best way to initially build self-discipline is to set small, easily-attainable goals. Whether you want to lose weight or become more socially active or learn how to repair your car, start small.

Once you make a habit of making small promises to yourself and keeping them, you can move on to bigger and better things.

A great way to ensure you keep these promises is to make them well-defined. Don't say to yourself, "I'm going to lose weight." That could mean anything, and the concept of anything is paralyzing.

Instead, tell yourself that you're going to walk for an hour a day or do a particular workout three days a week at the gym. Tell yourself that you're going to start using an envelope system to better manage your money. Proclaim that you're going to go out on a date with your spouse every Friday.

When you lay out the details of a goal, you make it real. And real is far easier to follow than nebulous.

Be Consistent

So you're making resolutions all year round, you're starting small and well-defined, and you're building discipline and willpower. That's great. But there's one last thing you need.

Consistency.

You can't stop when things get difficult—and they will. The key to consistency is being honest with yourself upfront. It's going to be hard to keep going to the gym. Tell yourself that. It's going to be dif-

ficult to save your money instead of going out to see that movie you've been waiting for.

But being consistent means making the right choices over and over again—not just in the days directly after the New Year.

To do this, you need to eliminate negative thought patterns. Don't let yourself dwell on how hard a resolution is to keep. Accept that it is hard, and move on. Think on the benefits, on how pleased your future self will be that you made it.

Finally, hold yourself accountable. If you can't, get a friend to hold you accountable. In fact, get several friends to do so—people who talk about their resolutions are 10 times more likely to keep them.

Stay positive, stay honest, and stay

accountable. There, you'll find consistency.

A New You

When the next New Year's Day rolls around, you're not going to do a thing. Do you know why? Because your resolutions will have already been made. You'll be ahead of the game, and far ahead of your friends as they make their easily-broken promises to themselves.

So endeavor to break the 4,000 year chain of failure. Don't worry with New Year's resolutions anymore, and you'll soon join the 9.2 percent of people who actually succeed in reinventing themselves.

—Wesley Baines / beliefnet.com

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Nashville Police Officer Hears From God and Turns Away From Explosion

An emotional Officer James Wells told the media Sunday about an encounter with God. As one of the police officers responding to the scene prior to the explosion Christmas morning, he was on scene helping evacuate the public.

Before the recording began counting down to the coming explosion, Wells and his partner were parked right in front of the recreational vehicle, unaware that it was the vehicle in question. When asked to move the car and set up a perimeter, they did so.

Wells called for more backup to assist with evacuation. He began to look around the "high ground" for people on roofs or looking from parking garages, people who may have a secondary attack



planned, he says in the video.

When going door to door during the evacuation, he heard the RV issue a 3-

minute warning. At one point, he began walking back to his car to get his "heavy plates" in preparation for whatever was about to happen. He was told again to move the car, this time out of the blast radius.

He got out of the car and began to walk back toward the RV, he says, "This may not be politically correct, but this is my truth. I barely hear God tell me to turn around and go check on Topping," his partner who was by herself down on Broadway. "And as I turn around, for me, it felt like I only took three steps and then the music stopped, and as I was walking back toward Topping, I see orange, and I hear a loud boom."

—christianews.com

KCC orders utilities to continue payment plans

The Kansas Corporation Commission has extended an order that requires utilities to offer 12-month payment plans and waive late fees to help residential and small business customers avoid disconnection. The original order, issued in May, is set to expire on December 31. This action ensures it remains in effect until the COVID-19 pandemic has officially ended. The order applies to all electric, natural gas and water utilities under the KCC's jurisdiction.

A report, filed by Commission staff last week, shows that payment plans and waiver of late fees appear to be working as intended. With the exception of one utility (Liberty-Empire), customer arrearage balances are falling with roughly 90% of customers keeping up with payment plans. That report can be found on the Commission's website at <https://estar.kcc.ks.gov/estar/ViewFile.aspx/S202012090922136770.pdf?Id=4e5a01a7-71e7-4ba7-b4b0-875ef644b842>.

The Commission acknowledged that

some members of the public are advocating for an order reinstating the suspension of utility disconnects. As a result, Commission staff was directed to file a report and recommendation on whether an additional suspension on disconnects is warranted. That report is due January 8, 2021.

The order can be viewed on the KCC's website at <https://estar.kcc.ks.gov/estar/ViewFile.aspx/20201215103827.pdf?Id=13d68adb-a6c3-41fa-8bae-b25ee2105a0f>.

BIKE

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encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices.

"During one of the toughest years in recent memory, we have seen so many Americans turn to biking during the pandemic for fun and for necessary transportation options. It's so important that communities like Topeka have laid the groundwork over several years to make biking a safe, accessible option for people when we all need as much

health and happiness as possible," said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. "This Bicycle Friendly Community award is the culmination of years of work put in by Topeka and its citizen advocates for better biking. This award round, Topeka joins 51 new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Communities in the movement toward healthier, more sustainable and connected places. As we turn the page on 2020 and look ahead to 2021, we're proud that Topeka and communities like it are embracing bicy-

cling as a solution to our collective recovery."

The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making biking better. This round of awards includes 51 new and renewing awardees, joining a total of 485 current Bicycle Friendly

Communities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Bronze-level BFC award recognizes Topeka's commitment to improving conditions for all people who bike through investments in bike education programs, regular bike events that promote and encourage people to choose biking, pro-bike policies, and bike infrastructure.

"We are honored to be one of only five cities in Kansas with a bronze recognition which is the highest recognition in the state. Biking is a choice for some but a must for others. It's imperative to our quality of life and economic growth that Topeka continues to advance high quality transportation choices for all citizens. The bronze award speaks to the type of dedicated people we have in this community who will not let us forget that. Even with lower stress bike lanes, an expanded trail system, more complete streets, and bike racks at businesses, there's still a lot more work to do including bringing back bike share," said Bill Fiander, Director of Planning and Development.

To learn more about the BFC program, visit bikeleague.org/community.

January C5Alive Luncheon will feature local pastor

The January C5 POWER Luncheon will be held January 14, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Peak, 1912 SW Gage Blvd.

Featured speaker will be Doyle Pryor, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church.

The cost to attend a C5 luncheon is \$10 for C5Alive members and first-time guests who RSVP, and \$12 at the door. Non-members and repeat 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.

The next monthly C5Alive "POWER Luncheon" will be held Feb. 11.

C5Alive "POWER" luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month, and meals are catered by Aboud's/Engroff's or other fine caterers.

For more details on these and other events, stay tuned to the

C5Alive facebook page and website: www.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 EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Family Fun Fest, held on N. Kansas Avenue and in Garfield Park on the day before Easter. This year's date is Apr. 3.

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.



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Kansas News Briefs from around the state

Missouri Senator to Contest Biden's Electoral College Win

WASHINGTON (AP) - A Republican Missouri U.S. senator says he'll object when Congress meets next week to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the election. Senator Josh Hawley says he'll protest the Electoral College certification because "some states, including notably Pennsylvania" didn't follow their election laws. A Biden spokeswoman is dismissing Hawley's move as "antics" that will have no bearing on Biden being sworn in on Jan. 20. Hawley isn't giving specifics or evidence in the statement he released announcing his intentions. Hawley's move is likely to force votes in the House and Senate that would delay the certification of Biden's win, but not change the outcome.

Magnitude 3.8 Earthquake Hits Wichita Area

WICHITA, Kan. (KWCH/KPR) - An earthquake rattled the Wichita area early this (WED) morning and this one was more powerful than other recent quakes in south-central Kansas. The U.S. Geological Survey reports the quake measured a magnitude 3.8. That's stronger than the dozen or so smaller earthquakes that have shaken the Wichita area since Thanksgiving. Residents of Haysville and Derby also reported feeling this (WED) morning's earthquake, which struck around 5 am. There have been no reports of significant damage.

KCK police seek public's help in murder investigation

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) - Police in Kansas City, Kansas, are seeking the public's help in identifying a person of interest in a murder investigation. WDAF-TV reports that Gregory Stallings was found dead on Dec. 21. Police believe he had been shot a day earlier in the 2500 block of North 18th Street. Police are looking for a man who was driving a silver Dodge Caravan that may be connected to the killing, and released photos of the man being sought for questioning.

Kansas Universities, K-12 Schools

Decide to Coordinate Spring Break

WICHITA, Kan. (KNS) - Starting in 2023, public universities in Kansas will all hold their spring breaks the same week as Martin Luther King Junior Day. Earlier this month, The Kansas State Board of Education recommended public schools align their spring breaks with each other. The Kansas Board of Regents held a similar vote for all the colleges and universities it governs. That lined up public school spring breaks with colleges. Many students in Kansas take courses for college credit, but run into problems when their schools' spring breaks don't line up. It also causes child care issues for parents who are college students. This year's spring break was canceled for public universities to prevent students from traveling and spreading the coronavirus.

Kansas Hospitals Face Staffing Shortages Amid Pandemic

WICHITA, Kan. (KNS) - The number of coronavirus cases has declined across Kansas. And some hospitals are seeing fewer new COVID-19 patients who need care. But more than half of the hospitals in the state say they're facing critical staffing shortages this week. Overall, new cases remain high, with about 1,500 new cases each day, according to the state health department. Hospitals still lack enough staff to care for all their COVID patients. Health officials say they're worried about a possible surge in COVID-19 cases following the holidays.

Kansas Counties Drop Mask Rules; Arena Hosts COVID-19 Shots

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - Two counties in northeast Kansas are backing off mask mandates they imposed last month as coronavirus cases surged. County commissioners in Brown and Jackson counties argued that they had weathered a wave of infections and dropped mandates requiring people to wear masks. Meanwhile, officials set up a clinic in an arena in the state's largest city to vaccinate thousands of health care workers. Sedgwick County set up a clinic in downtown Wichita's Intrust Bank Arena to vaccinate 10,000 health care workers,

including dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, and home-health and hospice workers.

Topeka's Nearly Abandoned White Lakes Mall Damaged by Fire

TOPEKA, Kan. (KPR/AP) - Topeka firefighters worked in freezing rain Tuesday morning to battle flames at the city's mostly abandoned White Lakes Mall. The fire, which started around 6:30 am, significantly damaged the old shopping mall in south Topeka. The mall property includes one remaining business, a printing company that apparently didn't sustain damage. White Lakes Mall opened in 1964, but its popularity waned when a new mall opened in west Topeka in 1988.

737 Max Flies Again, Benefiting Wichita Industry

WICHITA, Kan. (KMUW/KNS) - Boeing's 737 Max has made its first U.S. flight since being grounded last year. The return of the Max is critical for Wichita's Spirit AeroSystems, which builds more than 70% of the aircraft. The grounding of the plane followed two fatal crashes. The crashes and the pandemic led to thousands of furloughs at Spirit. Tuesday marked the first flight for the 737 Max since it was grounded. That first flight was an American Airlines flight from Miami to New York.

Chlamydia Cases on the Rise in Kansas

TOPEKA, Kan. (KNS) - Cases of chlamydia in Kansas shot up 66% during the past decade. Chlamydia, or more specifically a chlamydia infection, is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*. The infection is on the rise in Kansas and nationally, a new report from the United Health Foundation says. Many people who have it don't have symptoms, so they don't realize they're infected. But it's still dangerous to them and their sex partners - and important to treat. The infection can damage the reproductive system, for example, making it hard for women to get pregnant.

Kansas Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sell Well in 2020

HAYS, Kan. (KNS) - More Kansans turned to socially-distanced hobbies like hunting and fishing this year. But that doesn't mean it was a banner year for outfitters. Kansans bought nearly 27 thousand licenses that cover both hunting and fishing in 2020. That's up 16% from a year ago. Yet Tim Clark, of Red Dog Outfitters in northwest Kansas, still saw a dip in business this year because out-of-state hunters weren't sold licenses to go after turkeys in the spring. But Clark isn't surprised that hunters came back this fall, even as COVID cases rose. "A lot of the hunting community isn't as scared of the COVID thing as the non-hunting community. Not that they're not respectful of it, but it doesn't cripple them from getting out and doing what they want to do. And it's probably because we're playing out in the woods." The National Shooting Sports Foundation says hunting license sales are up 12% nationwide for 2020.

-kansapublicradio.org

Get ready for taxes: Important things to know about refunds

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

As tax filing season approaches, the Internal Revenue Service cautions taxpayers not to rely on receiving their refund by a certain date, especially when making major purchases or paying bills. Some tax returns may require additional review and those refunds may take longer.



Many factors affect refund timing

Just as each tax return is unique and individual, so is each taxpayer's refund. Here are a few things taxpayers should keep in mind if they are waiting on their refund but hear or see on social media that other taxpayers have already received theirs.

Different factors can affect the timing of a refund. The IRS, along with its partners in the tax industry, continue to strengthen security reviews to help protect against identity theft and refund fraud.

Even though the IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days, it's possible a particular taxpayer's refund may take longer. Some tax returns require additional review and take longer to process than others. It may be necessary when a return has errors, is incomplete or is affected by identity theft or fraud. The IRS will contact taxpayers by mail when more information is needed to process a return.

By law, the IRS cannot issue refunds to people claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) before mid-February. The law requires the IRS to hold the entire refund, including the portion not associated with the credits. This

helps ensure taxpayers receive the refund they're due by giving the IRS more time to detect and prevent fraud.

Using Where's My Refund?, taxpayers can check the status of their refund within 24 hours after the IRS has received their electronically filed tax return or four weeks after mailing a paper return. It provides a personalized date the taxpayer can expect a refund after the IRS processes the return. Taxpayers should also take into consideration the time it takes to receive a check by mail, or for financial institutions to post the refund to their account.

File electronically and use direct deposit

The vast majority of taxpayers get their refunds faster by filing electronically and using direct deposit. It is simple, safe and secure. This is the same electronic transfer system used to deposit nearly 98% of all Social Security and Veterans Affairs benefits into millions of accounts.

Taxpayers select it as their refund method through their tax software and by typing in their bank account number and routing number. Taxpayers can also let their tax preparer know they want direct deposit. It is even also available to the small number of taxpayers still filing by paper.

Refunds should only be deposited directly into accounts that are in the taxpayer's name, their spouse's name or both if it's a joint account. No more than three electronic refunds can be deposited into a single financial account or pre-paid debit card. Taxpayers who exceed the limit will receive an IRS notice and will be mailed a paper refund check. Whether a taxpayer files electronically or on paper, direct deposit gives them access to their refund faster than a paper check.

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



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FINANCIAL PLANNING

Keeping the side hustle alive

Dear Dave,

I have a full-time job, but I also have a side job providing firewood to help pay off debt. I make \$600 to \$1,000 a month with this project. My log splitter went down recently when a hydraulic line burst, and the machine caught on fire. I'm not sure how much it will cost to get it going again. Should I invest in a new one that will increase my productivity and help me pay off debt faster?

Chris

Dear Chris,

If I'm in your shoes, I'm going to fix the old one. Even it means duct tape and glue, I'm going to try to find a way to repair it instead of spending a bunch of money or going deeper into debt.

If you can't do that at a reasonable price out of pocket, I'd be in the market for a decent, used log splitter. And pay cash! I get your line of thinking when it comes to increasing productivity. Splitting wood is real work. But don't try to justify buying an expensive, new piece of equipment when it's just not necessary.

If you're making that much with a side hustle, you can make your money back on a used splitter in a month or two—three at the most. Be smart about it, Chris!

—Dave

Show them your value!

Dear Dave,

I've been with my company almost four years. Currently, I make the same money as a co-worker with the same title and the same amount of time on the job. But since we've both been there, I have taken on many more responsibilities than he has. What's your advice on asking for a raise? I feel that I have the right to complain about the situation, and think I should make more money than he does.

Vincent

Dear Vincent,

If you honestly feel like you deserve a raise because of your effort and performance on the job, that's fine. Sit down with your leader, and make an objective, logical, and reasonable argument for why you deserve more money. I wouldn't mention your co-worker, because it's just not relevant. What is relevant is the value you bring to the company.

I understand how you feel right now. But no, you don't have the "right" to complain. You agreed on your pay when you took the job, and you should perform your duties with integrity and character. What someone else does, or doesn't do, isn't tied to your personal



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

davesays

compensation.

If you think you deserve a raise, and you've got the results to prove it, sit down and have a respectful conversation with your leader. Show him or her the numbers, and the value you bring to the company, and explain why you feel you should get more money.

Good luck, Vincent!

—Dave

You've got to change the person in the mirror

Dear Dave,

I'm just starting to pay off my debts. How do you feel about moving credit card balances to other companies in order to get lower rates? It seems like that would help

me get out of debt faster.

Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth,

I get what you're saying. It might help speed up the process a tiny bit, but the habits that got you into debt in the first place won't change just because you've switched credit card companies. What you're talking about is an easy way to lower the interest rates—temporarily, in most cases—but it doesn't keep you from taking on more debt.

Many people think they've really done something to solve their debt problems when they do this. But you've got to remember that getting out of debt, and gaining control of your finances, is all about changing the person you see in the mirror. You've got to make a commitment to getting out of debt, staying out of debt, and sticking to a written, monthly budget—that means keeping track of every, single dollar and living on less than you make.

In many cases, when people have problems with debt it's the result of unwise lifestyle and financial choices. But guess what? When you change, interest rates don't matter nearly as much. And when you shift your mindset about money, that will make a difference in a way that changing credit card companies and chasing lower interest rates can't!

—Dave

Idea behind the legacy drawer

Dear Dave,

A friend recently told me about you and your teachings about money. While we were talking, she mentioned something called a "legacy drawer" for important papers. Can you explain more about this?

Anna

Dear Anna,

Simply put, a legacy drawer is a collection of your essential documents in a safe place where your family and loved ones can find them when you die, or if you're sick or disabled. It doesn't have to be a drawer, specifically, just a safe, secure place where you keep all the pieces of your financial life—your will, living will, estate plan, investment statements, insurance policies, and property deeds. You should also include stuff like power of attorney documents, bank and lock box access information, and any other instructions for and information about your last wishes and what you leave behind.

The stress and grief when someone becomes seriously ill or dies is bad enough. Don't make it any harder than it has to be by leaving your finances and other essentials in a mess!

—Dave

What is the '7% Guaranteed' Annuity Myth?

By Ryan Shumaker
Smartvestor Pro at
The Retirement Team



One of the most common things I hear from people who own or have been pitched an annuity is the belief that the annuity will "earn 7% guaranteed." Usually this is due to either a salesperson misrepresenting how the annuity works or the consumer misunderstanding.

The fact of the matter is, to my knowledge, there have been exactly zero annuities in the last 25 years that actually guarantee 7% growth of your account value that are still in force today. What is actually guaranteed in most of these cases is that for every year you wait to take income from the annuity, the amount of income that is guaranteed to be paid to you goes up by 7% per year, which is entirely different.

With these kinds of products, there are typically two different buckets. One is your actual account value, which is what you can cash out and which typically goes up and down with the performance of chosen

stocks and/or bonds. The other is what I sometimes refer to as "funny money." Many companies call this "income account value" or "protected value." Basically, it is just a bucket that is used for only one purpose: to calculate what your guar-

anteed income stream will be. It is not something you can cash out and take the money. It is this bucket that is commonly touted as having "7% guaranteed growth."

Let's go through an example of how this might work. Let's say you are 65 years old and you put \$100,000 into one of these products. At a growth rate of 7.2%, your money doubles over the course of 10 years. This is what would occur with your income account value bucket. Your actual account value, again, will usually fluctuate with the performance of chosen stocks and/or bonds. Let's just assume, though, that it doesn't gain anything over those 10 years. So now you have an account value that is \$100,000 (this is what you can actually cash out) and an income account value of \$200,000. Let's say that in this case the annuity guarantees an income stream of 5% of the income account value (I've seen these range from 4% to 7% in most cases, usually depending on age). So, 5% of \$200,000 is \$10,000. This is the guaranteed annual income amount that you will receive. As long as you never take out more than this amount each year, you will continue to receive it even if it causes your account to run out of money.

The issue is, though, that if you signed up at 65, waiting for the income account value bucket to double over 10 years with its "guaranteed 7.2% growth" puts you at 75 years old before you start your \$10,000 guaranteed income stream. At \$10,000 a year, it is going to take you 10 more years just to get back your original \$100,000 investment, assuming your actual account value never grows at all! So, just to get your

own original money back, it takes 20 total years and you are now 85 years old. If you have any account growth at all, it would take even longer. When explained this way, that "7.2% guarantee" doesn't sound so attractive now, does it?

Many annuities can be complex and hard to understand products. Because of this, you should be sure you fully understand exactly how the product works and all of the costs and fees associated with it before making a buying decision. Many annuities are very long-term and sometimes lifetime commitments if you are older. Knowing exactly what you are getting as a guarantee and the fee you are paying to get that guarantee should be carefully considered.

Sometimes how something is presented when it is sold and how it actually works are two very different things.

(reprint from Forbes.com)

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opinion

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You Are Essential

BY KERBY ANDERSON

When the pandemic hit earlier this year, an odd term became part of our common vernacular: “essential worker.”

As some states implemented massive shutdowns, many people were forced to stay home — whether or not their work could be completed remotely. Only certain professionals, those deemed absolutely necessary to a barely-functioning society, were allowed to continue working as usual.

While people like first responders, healthcare workers, and grocery store employees certainly provide crucial services, the term



Anderson

“essential worker” is misleading.

In reality, we are all essential. Our actions don't exist in a vacuum. Every decision we make affects someone else, and when millions of people are forced to stop going about their normal routines, there will be national consequences.

When dine-in restaurants, mom-and-pop shops, and other “non-essential” businesses were forced to close, the economy came crashing down. Millions became unemployed, had to turn to government welfare, and struggled to make ends meet. Even charitable giving took a dip, as more and more Americans had to



tighten their own belts. This affected truly essential work that charitable organizations provide on a daily basis for those most in need.

What's my point? My point is that you are essential. It doesn't

matter whether the government gave you that title in 2020. The contributions you make to society, like where you eat, where you shop — where you give — have a real-life impact not only for you, but for others as well.

DRIVEN BY GOD TO SPEAK UP



CLINT
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This is an often-asked question, “Should a pastor or other Christians address cultural (or social) issues or just keep focused on the gospel?” Sometimes speaking on culturally touchy subjects can cause division, tension or have negative consequences. This is a complex question for some. What is the answer? As a person who has wrestled with this, I found much help from a story about John the Baptist.

John preceded Jesus and became the most influential religious figure throughout Israel in a matter of weeks. His phenomenal ministry rocketed upward quickly and ended about the same way six months later. And it ended due to what we are talking about — a cultural issue. He took on adultery, divorce and remarriage.

Herod Antipas was the political leader over Israel, appointed to that role by the occupying Roman Empire. Herod had taken notice of John's rising ministry and John had taken notice of Herod's lifestyle. In particular, John was deeply troubled by something Herod had done. While Herod was married, he went to visit his brother and had an affair

with his sister-in-law, who was also his niece. She divorced his brother, Herod divorced his wife, and they married. Herod did not do this in secret. The whole nation, including all the religious leaders, knew what he had done. Yet, because Herod was a ruthless leader -- punishing, even killing, anyone who opposed him; no one challenged him — except one man. John.

Herod's immoral behavior became a cultural issue. As the highest political leader in the land, his actions had influence. He affected culture. Silence among the spineless Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and the entire Sanhedrin was akin to acceptance of Herod's behavior.

John spoke to Herod about his actions. He pointed out how they were lawless, having violated God's laws. No doubt John addressed it in his messages to the people of Israel. This angered Herod's wife, which eventually was the cause of John being arrested and thrown in prison.

What drove John to talk about it? He was driven by the Word of God. He knew the Word was divinely inspired and authoritative. And He knew God and His Word were King over Herod, and Herod would be judged by the Word. He knew Herod must submit to God's Word and repent or come under eternal judgment. John raised this point out of love for God and love for Herod and his eternal soul. John had no choice because the Word of God burned in his bones with great conviction.

When John addressed the issue,



he understood it could cause division among his listeners. Some would want him to keep quiet about it. John knew the brutality of Herod and understood the potential consequences. But John knew he had to do what was right; not what was safe for himself or unifying to the nation. John knew he was ultimately accountable to only One. When he was executed by beheading for boldly addressing a major cultural issue, perhaps his critics said, “See, this is what happens when you step into secondary and divisive issues.” Yet, what people say about us is not as important as what God says. Jesus said about John, “I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John” (Luke 7:28).

As we move into a new year, desire to seek out what the Word of God has to say on any issue facing you personally, your congregation

or our nation. Then speak forth that Word in wisdom, love, humility and courage. No matter if it be truth to power, truth to your neighbor or truth to the church, be courageous and leave the results or consequences in God's hands.

A prayer for you - “Lord God, I pray you will raise up a man or woman like John the Baptist through this column. Raise up a person that has Your Word burning in their bones. Where they must speak forth Your truth no matter the consequences to their health, career, finances or relationships. Raise them up and send them out. In Jesus name. Amen.”

Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Hope for Today is a nationally syndicated column.

If God used one of Clint's columns to impact your life, share your story at cdecker@greatawakenings.org.

2020: The year 'expert' credibility died

BY MICHELLE MALKIN

If there were ever a time to "question authority," as the old counter-culture slogan of the 1960s urged, the authoritarian age of COVID-19 is that time. 2020 will go down in American history as the year that public health "experts" got everything wrong.

It's not just that their judgment was faulty. It's that time and again, the professional elites deceived the citizenry, derided other academics and medical professionals who challenged them and de-platformed outspoken dissidents who refused to obey them. These pathological liars are the true public health threat.

Exhibit A: Anthony Fauci.

The incurably smug director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases led the "Great Mask Hoax" in March 2020 when he told CBS News,

"There's no reason to be walking around with a mask." He very explicitly characterized mask-wearing as a performative gesture that "might make people feel a little bit better and it might even block a droplet, but it's not providing the perfect protection that people think that it is."

Months later, fact-doctorer Fauci performed a whiplash-inducing 180-degree turnaround and became the planet's No. 1 mask cheerleader.

He rationalized that he needed to mislead the nation about the efficacy of masks in order "to save the masks for the people who really needed them because it was felt that there was a shortage of masks."

I don't know about you, but in my house, we call this sick behavior "covering your behind."

Last week, Fauci was at it again. After repeatedly asserting over the past year that 60-70% of Americans would need to submit to vaccine jabs to reach herd immunity, he cranked up the number to between 70-90% in an interview with The New York Times. Fauci confessed that he manipulated the numbers based on polling data about citizens' vaccine hesitancy:

"When polls said only about half of all Americans would take a vaccine, I was saying herd immunity would take 70 to 75 percent. ...

Then, when newer surveys said 60 percent or more would take it, I thought, 'I can nudge this up a bit,' so I went to 80, 85. We need to have some humility here. ... We really don't know what the real number is."

"We" need to have some humility? Speak for yourself, Dr. Gasbag!

Fauci further disclosed on CNN this weekend that his herd immunity pronouncement was nothing more than a "guesstimate."

I don't know about you, but in my

house, we call this kind of prestidigitation "pulling things out of your behind."

Fauci's colleagues performed similar feats of scientific fraud, deception, misdirection and political propaganda.

The Erroneous Experts shut down playgrounds, ordered us to stop singing and dancing, and canceled Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas in the name of social distancing – but gave the green light to Black Lives Matter marches, Antifa protests and post-election celebrations by Joe Biden supporters.

The Erroneous Experts caused panic shortages of hand sanitizer and antiseptic wipes with unsupported claims that COVID-19 spread through surfaces.

The Erroneous Experts facilitated the suffering of countless patients by recklessly hooking them up to ventilators, turning their lungs to mush and forbidding their loved ones from comforting them as they lay dying unnecessary deaths – while publicity-thirsty doctors and nurses went viral twerking for TikTok and Twitter.

The Erroneous Experts conducted online purges and witch hunts against naturopaths, chiropractors, independent investigative journalists, informed parents and front-line doctors who advocated vitamin D, zinc, sunshine, exercise, hydroxy-chloroquine or any other common-sense measures that did not involve lining the pockets of Big Pharma – even as two-faced Fauci admitted he



takes vitamins C and D to boost his immunity.

The Erroneous Experts stoked widespread fear of "asymptomatic transmission" of COVID-19, forcing catastrophic lockdowns of healthy people around the globe. But as a new British Medical Journal article acknowledges: "(W)e know very little about the proportions of people with positive results who are truly asymptomatic throughout the course of their infection." About half of people classified as "asymptomatic" go on to develop symptoms. Contrary to the impression Erroneous Experts have left the public with, they have no idea to what extent people with no symptoms transmit the virus to others.

Moreover, the BMJ article makes clear: "No test of infection or infectiousness is currently available for routine use. As things stand, a person who tests positive with any kind of test may or may not have an

active infection with live virus, and may or may not be infectious."

So, the COVID-19 tests are unreliable as we hurtle toward mandatory, universal testing, tracking and tracing. And, as I reported in my three-part series on the clinical trials, the COVID vaccines are neither safe nor effective by any honest measure. Indeed, the World Health Organization's chief scientists admitted Monday what I pointed out last month:

"I don't believe we have the evidence on any of the vaccines to be confident that it's going to prevent people from actually getting the infection and therefore being able to pass it on," Dr. Soumya Swaminathan stated.

The "believe science" cult of Erroneous Experts is the epitome of anti-scientific thought. May 2021 be the year of resistance and the death knell for COVID control freakism.

Who's in Charge of a World That's Suffering? Billy Graham's Book Reprinted

The year 2020 certainly brought the world a load of suffering, pain, and anguish. Billy Graham examined the issue of suffering in his 1981 book, *Till Armageddon*. The late evangelist's publishers thought this would be an especially appropriate time to reprint it, but with a new title, *Who's in Charge of a World That Suffers?*

Graham's son Franklin pens the new introduction for the newly reprinted book. He writes, "...suffering is no surprise to the Lord. Jesus warned that we would face uncertainty, persecution, and trouble of every kind. He, Himself, suffered for us..."

It's a Fallen World

"God, no question, is in charge. But we also know that the world in which we live is a fallen world," Graham told CBN News. "And the god of this age is Satan. And we know that he controls so much of what is going on in the world. The bad things that are going on."

It's also a world where COVID has killed more than 300,000 of our fellow Americans.

Graham pointed out it's an



unprecedented time.

"Never in the history of mankind has the world been locked down," he noted. "It's never done that. We've never taken healthy populations and locked them down. It's always been sick people that we locked down."

"And we look at COVID and not only what it's done to the world, but what it's done to families," the CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse continued. "We've had it in our family. And we've had it in our organization. Family members have died as a result of COVID. It's touched

every country in the world. It's touched almost every part of our society."

"And how do we deal with it? How do we handle it?" Graham asked, then referred to his father's book. "And this book, I think, is just tailor-made for the problems that we are facing today."

The Start of the End of Days?

There's so much darkness rising these days, Graham suspects we're beginning to enter the time in the Book of Revelation – the end of days.

"When we read the Scriptures, I believe we are probably approaching the first chapters of Revelation," Graham said. "Things are happening so quickly. The world is changing so fast -- the world that hates God and has turned their back on Him."

"This I think is an exciting time. It's not something we should be afraid of," Graham explained. "But we need to know that God is still in charge and that He writes the last pages of history. It's not going to be the Republican Party, the Democratic Party or the United Nations. The Lord Jesus Christ comes back and establishes His kingdom. And for those who put their faith and trust in Him, we know that our soul will be secure in His hands."

Christianity Isn't a Grant of Immunity

And there we'll be for eternity. But that certainly doesn't mean Christians are immune from suffering while here on earth.

"We're not exempt. We don't live in some kind of a bubble," Graham said. "And we are going to go

through suffering. And I think this book deals with that. Till Armageddon was the original title. But we all face these armageddons in our lives, as we go through life: these storms of life. Jesus, himself was in a storm. He was with his disciples out in the Sea of Galilee. And a storm came up suddenly without warning. And it was swamping the boat...sinking it."

So the disciples woke Jesus, who commanded the storm, "Be still."

'We Just Need to Make Sure We're in His Boat'

"Of course the wind and waves are going to obey His voice because He created them," Graham said. "And when we put our faith and trust in Him and we're in His boat, we don't have to worry. Because His boat doesn't sink. We just need to make sure we're in His boat."

In his introduction to the book, Franklin Graham writes, "There is no need to worry, there is no need to wrestle, and there is no need to wonder who is in charge of a world that is suffering. Look to Jesus Christ and live."



Mom Told to Abort Baby With Terminal Illness Shocked After She's Born Perfectly Healthy

An Australian mom told by doctors to abort her baby due to a rare terminal illness was in disbelief after her miracle girl was born completely healthy. The family has just celebrated her first birthday.

The couple is now sharing their incredible story to prove to other parents that miracles can happen and to always go with your gut instinct because doctors cannot be right 100 percent of the time.

Mom of six Dinah De Regt and her husband, Adam, were over the moon after discovering they were expecting a baby back in early 2019.

However, seven months into the pregnancy, the 41-year-old from Brisbane, Queensland, was left devastated after doctors warned her baby had a rare and terminal genetic condition called pontocerebellar hypoplasia (PCH), a disorder that affects the brain.

The couple said they felt pressure from hospital doctors to consider a termination at 30 weeks due to having no cure for the condition, adding if their baby did survive the birth, they would likely only live a few hours.

Faced with a heartbreaking decision, however, Dinah and Adam decided to go ahead with the pregnancy and cherish any time they got to spend with their daughter—no matter how short that might be.

After their little baby Brianna was born in November 2019, the couple “braced themselves” for heartbreaking news while their newborn girl underwent rounds of tests, including genetic analysis, eye scans, renal tests, ultrasounds, and a brain MRI.

However, after these examinations, Dinah and Adam were gobsmacked after doctors discovered that little Brianna was perfectly healthy.

Dinah, who is mom to Jordan, 18, twins Aaron and Alex, 11, and Olivia, 3, said: “We were elated when we found out we were pregnant. It was the most exciting news, and we couldn’t wait to be parents



again.

“But at our 20-week scan, doctors started noticing that something was wrong. They said our baby has a small cerebellum.

“Eight weeks later they diagnosed her with Pontocerebellar hypoplasia. She had ventricular abnormalities and also fluid on the brain.

“They basically gave us no hope. They said our baby was not likely to live beyond a few hours after birth.”

Dinah said the doctors said that their baby might survive to young adulthood with constant medical care, but “it was very unlikely.”

“In addition to this, they warned her quality of life could be terrible. She would be unable to eat, talk, or walk and would need round the clock care,” Dinah said.

“At 30 weeks, the hospital doctors suggested we consider a termination. But we decided to go through with the birth and spend as much time with our daughter as we could.”

“After she was born, I only got to have a very quick kiss and cuddle before she was whisked away for tests,” Dinah said. “Adam and I were preparing for the worst. We were waiting for the terrible news that we only had a few days or hours left with our girl.”

“But unbelievable, all the results were coming back clear. We

couldn’t believe it,” she added.

Dinah added: “Finally the doctors broke the news that Brianna was perfectly healthy. She was



absolutely fine, and there was nothing wrong with her. We were so incredibly shocked and overwhelmed at what we were hearing.

“They explained that these things can happen, and an MRI of the baby outside the womb is much more accurate than an ultrasound performed during pregnancy.

“We were so happy, Brianna is our little miracle baby.”

Dinah and Adam shared they went through a traumatic miscarriage with their son Noah, who passed away in the womb at 20 weeks back in October 2018. Due to this experience, the couple explained they could not go through with the doctor’s suggestion to have a termination while pregnant with Brianna.

“It was certainly something we had to discuss,” said Adam, who works as an arborist. “We had our other children to think about and how this might affect our whole family.”

“Dinah and I had just gone through a very traumatic miscar-

riage at 20 weeks the year before. I think this experience made it really difficult for us to consider having a termination. So in a way, we feel like Noah helped his little sister be here. Without going through that, we might have gone through with it.”

“But we held out hope and decided that even a few hours with our baby would be better than going through a termination,” Adam said. “It chills us to think that we could have done that when she was perfectly healthy.”

Dinah added that their miracle baby Brianna just celebrated her first birthday in November and is perfectly healthy and happy.

Thinking that they would only have mere hours with their little girl, Dinah and Adam sought help

“I got in touch with Selena to help us through this experience and to capture some photographs of our time with Brianna.

“She was amazing with us and it meant the world to have her there. We feel so blessed with Brianna. She is healthy and reaching all her milestones.

“She is so funny and cheeky, she makes us laugh every day. The reality is doctors are human too and can’t be right 100 percent of the time. Never give up hope. Our girl is proof that miracles do happen.”

Photographer of 20 years Selena Rollason captured a series of poignant images on the day of Brianna’s birth and added that the entire experience was incredible.

“On hearing Dinah’s story, I knew instantly that this family needed my support,” Selena said. “I am a big believer in giving back and each year I try to do just that. My way of doing this is by providing complimentary photo services and support to women like Dinah, and their families.”

Selena said as a stillbirth photographer and bereavement doula, she knows “how much support these families need and how priceless having these memories are.”

“I cried as soon as I knew the baby was healthy. It was a big relief and a miracle,” Selena said. “When you support families like this you become quite invested. You cry together, grieve together, and laugh together.”

“Dinah and I did all of those things together. We still talk about it 12 months on. I get emotional even now when I look at how perfect Brianna is. She is a beautiful baby and very special,” Selena added.

—theepochtimes.com

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How a woman's will saved a baby from abortion

Last Thursday, Monica and Luca arrived with their 7-month-old baby Simone, accompanied by Giulia, one of our team members, who met this couple who had decided not to continue with their pregnancy. This is what they told me:

"We were fine until a short time ago. Our jobs allowed us to rely on regular income with which we could pay the rent on our house and live a normal life. Then, we lost everything. The businesses we worked for closed their doors, and our landlord is threatening to evict us. As if all this weren't enough, I'm 6 weeks pregnant. Carrying this pregnancy to term would be folly. I think you would agree."

Despite her sweet expression, Monica was asking me to agree with her decision to abort her unborn child. I looked at Luca, who also looked like a good man, and who was attentive to every movement of their young child Simone. "He's very alert," he told me, "and tries to participate actively in our family life."

The baby in your womb is the same as the one in your arms

As always in these cases, I felt like I could hardly breathe, and I wasn't sure how to handle such a difficult situation when they'd already made their decision. There was a moment of silence, and Simone was the only one who made his joyful and bright voice heard. We all looked at him intently, and I felt with absolute certainty their love for this son of theirs. That gave me the strength to speak.

"Have you thought about the fact that a little more than a year ago, Simone, who is so beautiful and alert now, was exactly like the child that's growing inside Monica? Certainly, he was much smaller than he is now, but it's the same baby that we have here with us today and who brings such joy with all his babbling and energy."

I had the sensation of having set off a small bomb. The couple looked at each other, and took Simone by the hand, as if to be sure that he was alive and well.

"It's true," Monica said unhappily. "That's the way it is, but with all of these problems ... for example, the problem of us losing our house, what can we do?"

"Unfortunately," I answered, "you would end up without a home and without your baby. Interrupting a pregnancy isn't the solution to the problem that you're facing. Would you allow me to make a phone call?"

A last will and testament saves a life

Suddenly, I had remembered some news we'd received a short time ago: "The apartment on Eustachi Way has been freed up, because that couple has been assigned public housing."

At this point, I was able to offer Monica and Luca the possibility of moving into that convenient two-room apartment, which had been renovated a short time ago. I looked them in the eye, saying, "Can I tell you a story? Years ago, I was called to give my testimony at the Parish of St. Francesca Romana. Among those present was a woman, well along in years, who loved children. Apparently, my story had made her reflect, and it resulted in her leaving her house to our Center in her will, so that it could be used by a pregnant mother who would otherwise have an abortion because of a lack of housing. Would you like to move in there? I'm sure that the woman who made this gift would be happy, and the apartment is perfect for housing a beautiful little family."

Monica was very surprised — too surprised to believe it — and couldn't manage to accept the offer right away. "Monica, I never tell a lie, especially in serious matters," I said. "I'm convinced that moving to that house could be the beginning of a new life for your family, giving you a bit of serenity."

Monica was still perplexed. "I can't believe it. I'd like to see it."

And so, an appointment was made that very morning and after the visit, they came back very happy. I greeted them with enthusiasm, saying, "The fact you came back means you're saying yes, right?"

Luca answered, "Nothing this beautiful has ever happened to us before. This way, Simone will have a little brother."

We all shared the emotion of this moment, but especially Monica, who repeatedly hugged me close to her.

—aletea.org

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The power of an ultrasound to change a mind and save a life should never be underestimated

It happened when I was scrolling through my Facebook feed one day.

In between posts about the latest football games, I saw it—and it melted my heart.

There was an Ultrasound of not one, but two babies—the latest additions to my Facebook friend's family.

I have seen my share of Ultrasounds over the years—my darling daughter's was the most memorable. Lying on the exam table, I looked up at the screen and saw my little one playing with her toes while in utero.

It was an incredible and unforgettable sight.

But I believe this was the first time I have viewed an Ultrasound of twins. The precious preborn babies were clearly visible—and their official age was 14 weeks' gestation.

In that moment, gazing at that image, it was hard for me to fathom the idea that anyone would view them as unworthy of care and too young to be guaranteed the right to life. It was also hard to accept the fact that babies where I live, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, can be legally aborted up to 24 weeks' gestation—10 weeks past the age of the twins in question. It is even more alarming to think about the babies who are aborted up to the moment of birth.

A picture is worth a thousand statistics.



It is one thing to hear about nearly one million preborn children being aborted each year. It is quite another to see a prenatal portrait of a baby who lacks protection under the law.

I wonder how many other minds and hearts that Ultrasound touched. From the comments below the photo, it was clear that Facebook friends were astounded at the amazing image.

And it is no wonder that studies show that, when pregnant women are shown an ultrasound of their babies inside supportive pregnancy resource centers, the vast majority will choose life for their children.

Thus it is abundantly obvious why abortion centers do their best to hide Ultrasounds from their abortion-minded clients. Once a woman sees that miraculous image, her tenuous bond to her child is highly likely to grow stronger. The Ultrasound literally puts a face—a dis-

tinctively human face—on what the abortion industry cavalierly refers to as the "choice."

The experience of seeing that Facebook Ultrasound has also left me to wonder, "How many twins are aborted each year in our country? How many times is the tragedy of abortion actually doubled through the deaths of two preborn babies at one time?"

In the words of one clergyman, this could be considered a "two-for-one temptation." Twice the tragedy. Twice the heartache for the mother left behind.

Never underestimate the power of an Ultrasound to change a mind and to save a life. And consider using your Facebook feed as a way to celebrate life at all its stages and at all phases of development.

—Maria Gallagher

KVC Kansas Celebrates 100+ Adoptions This Year During National Adoption Month

There are over 122,000 children and teens in foster care in the U.S. who need loving, permanent forever families and nearly 900 in Kansas. These are children who have experienced abuse, neglect or other serious family challenges. During National Adoption Month in November, KVC Kansas is helping facilitate 20+ children's adoptions throughout the state. On November 21, National Adoption Day, which is the Saturday before Thanksgiving, courthouses across the country will open to help families finalize their adoptions and grow in love.

This year, KVC Kansas has facilitated 130 adoptions, and 5,539 total in our agency's history.

Meet Youth Waiting for Families

View profiles of children who need to be adopted at adoption.kvc.org and adoptuskids.org. The profiles include photos, bios and, in many cases, videos.

The theme of this year's National Adoption Month is "Engage Youth: Listen and Learn," which highlights the need to connect with teens, who often age out of foster care without a support system. Securing life-long connections for them is critical in determining their future well-being. Approximately one in five children in U.S. foster care waiting to be adopted are teens, but only 5% of all children adopted in 2017 were 15-18 years old. According to the most recent AFCARS report, of the 122,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted:

- 52% are male and 48% are female
- 23% are African American, 21% are Hispanic, and 44% are white
- The average age is eight years old
- Average time in foster care is

about 20 months

KVC's adoption work is done in partnership with the Kansas Department for Children and Families and Adopt KS Kids.

Families Find New Ways to Celebrate Despite COVID-19

In other years, celebrations are typically marked by gatherings in courthouses, balloon releases and other fun activities. This time around, families and KVC staff are taking new approaches to celebrate families who adopted this year. In Kansas, for example, families are holding car parades, drive-in movies, raffles and more. Children's adoption finalizations are still able to happen with judges using video conferencing.

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Rally and March For Life is Jan. 21 in Topeka

Kansans for Life will hold the annual Rally and March for Life in Topeka on January 21. This year's theme is United for Mothers and Babies. The day will be full of events including educational workshops for teens and adults, an interdenominational worship service and a rally on the south steps of the State Capitol Building.

The event commemorates the anniversary of Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion. Since that day in 1973, over 65 million babies have been aborted in the United States.

This year, much attention will be



The crowd swells up at the Kansas Capitol at the 2018 Rally for Life

unlimited 'right to abortion' in our 1859 State Constitution," states Mary Kay Culp, Director of KFL. Prior to this ruling, through widely supported limitations, Kansas abortion rates had been reduced by 43 percent since 1999 and partial birth abortions had been completely banned.

"Essentially, women and their preborn babies have now been abandoned to an unregulated abortion industry," Culp says.

Because of the Kansas Supreme Court's April 26, 2019, ruling, existing bans on late-term and taxpayer-funded abortions are now in danger

placed on passing the "Value them both amendment" to the State Constitution in the Kansas legislature and then by Kansas voters.

"On April 26, 2019, the Kansas Supreme Court took power from voters and found - created - a nearly

of being rendered unenforceable. Furthermore, the ruling allows violent live dismemberment abortions to continue and threatens these life-saving limits:

- Parental consent for minors seeking abortion
- Informed consent, alerting women to potential health risks
- 24-hour waiting period
- Abortion clinic sanitation and safety standards

To do this, the pro-life community will need the support of a two-thirds majority in both the Kansas House and Senate. From there, voters will weigh in at the ballot box. A simple majority of votes is all that's necessary once the amendment is on the ballot.

Kansans for Life and like-minded organizations are working to pass the amendment to the Kansas Constitution.

Registration begins at 8:30 on the ground floor of the Capitol Visitor Center inside the north entrance.

Special guests include Kristen Day, Executive Director of Democrats for Life of America, and Kim Borchers, Kansas Republican National Committeewoman, as they stand united for mothers and babies.

"Life is truly the winning coalition!" stated Culp.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

8:30 a.m. - REGISTRATION - Get info on legislative activities, maps, lobbying, capitol tours, pro-life booths and more

9:00 a.m. - WORKSHOPS 1 & 2 - 30-minute educational workshop sessions provided by KFL

10:30 a.m. - NON-DENOMINATIONAL RELIGIOUS SERVICE— Capitol workshop room

10:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass with Kansas Bishops at TPAC or stream it at www.livestream/ArchKCK/KSMassforLife

11:45 a.m. - MARCH FOR LIFE from TPAC to south steps of the state Capitol

12:15 p.m. - Rally for Life on the south Capitol steps

2:30 p.m. - WORKSHOPS 3 & 4 - 30-minute educational workshop sessions provided by KFL

All workshops will take place in the Capitol Visitor Center and are no charge.

Everyone is welcome for lunch any time between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for free-will donation in the Mater Dei Assumption Catholic Church basement. Mater Dei, 204 SW 8th Ave., is north and across the street from the Capitol.

If weather is a problem, the rally will be held on the 1st floor rotunda of the Capitol.

For last-minute changes due to Covid or restrictions, visit KFL.org.

For details about the capitol building and parking information, visit www.kshs.org/p/kansas-state-capitol-plan-your-visit/18649


March for Life in Washington D. C. is Jan. 29

The 48th national March for Life, taking place this year on Jan. 29, 2021, is the World's largest Pro-Life event, held at our Nation's Capital in Washington D. C. Abortion is the greatest injustice of our time and people young and old march each year to end abortion. This year's walk starts at 12 noon at the National Mall, with prescheduled guests and pro-life speakers.

A rally and Christian concert is scheduled before the walk. At 1:00 pm the march will go up Constitution Ave. to the Supreme Court and capital building where in 1973 abortion was legalized after the landmark decision was issued in the Roe v Wade and Doe v Bolton cases.

Since Roe v Wade over 60 million children have been killed in the womb.

For more information on this and related events visit marchforlife.org.



Topeka Rally For Life

THURSDAY January 21, 2021

United for Both Mothers and Babies!

Join special guests Kristen Day, Executive Director of Democrats for Life of America, and Kim Borchers, Kansas Republican National Committeewoman, as they stand united for mothers and babies! Life is truly the winning coalition!

All workshops listed below will take place in the Capitol Visitor Center and are no charge.

8:30 a.m. - REGISTRATION - Get info on legislative activities, maps, lobbying, capitol tours, pro-life booths and more

9:00 a.m. - WORKSHOPS 1 & 2 - 30-minute educational workshop sessions provided by KFL

10:30 a.m. - NON-DENOMINATIONAL RELIGIOUS SERVICE— Capitol workshop room

10:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass with Kansas Bishops at TPAC (see map). Or stream it at www.livestream/ArchKCK/KSMessforLife

11:45 a.m. - MARCH FOR LIFE (see map)

12:15 p.m. - Rally for Life on the south Capitol steps

2:30 p.m. - WORKSHOPS 3 & 4 - 30-minute educational workshop sessions provided by KFL

LUNCH: Everyone is welcome any time between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for free-will donation.
Location: Mater Dei Assumption Catholic Church basement (grey box on the map below)

7th Street

Mater Dei Assumption Church

8th Avenue

North Capitol Entrance

W CAPITOL E

South Capitol Steps

Rally at 1 p.m.

10th Avenue

INTERSTATE 70

Capitol Entrance:

Enter on North side only. There is a drive for drop offs.

Parking (denoted by * on map):

On street: 10 hr. North & West of Capitol; 2 hr. spots are available. Feed the meter. They ticket.

Under capitol: (2 hrs maximum, or ticket)

Crosby Pkg. Garage: 8th Ave btw Kansas & Jackson;

Centre City Parking Garage: 9th & Kansas Ave.;

Park-N-Shop: Quincy btw 6th & 7th;

Coronado Parking Garage: Quincy btw 9th & 10th.

If weather is a problem, rally will be held on the 1st floor rotunda of Capitol.

For details about the capitol building and parking information, visit www.kshs.org/p/kansas-state-capitol-plan-your-visit/18649. For details about the event before January 18, visit kfl.org. For updates on the day of the event, follow the Kansans for Life Facebook and Rally for Life Facebook Event. For emergency or media, please call KFL personnel Joanna 785.383.8636 or Mary Kay 913.406.4446.

For more information and last-minute details, visit KFL.org

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Orders still being taken for Choose Life plates

Kansans can still pre-order the new “Choose LIFE” Kansas license plates, though the printing of the plates must wait for a sufficient number of orders to be received. The campaign currently has more than half of the orders needed.

In February of 2018, Rep. Trevor Jacobs (R-District 4) was asked by a constituent if the state had Choose Life license plates. Rep. Jacobs researched the situation to find that Kansas did not have such plates. Without delay he introduced in the House Transportation Committee, HB 2678, that would make Choose Life license plates available for purchase in Kansas. He then asked Sen. Richard Hilderbrand (R-District 13) to introduce a companion bill in the Senate, which he did.

HB 2678 was then combined with other groups wanting specialty plates. It passed both the House and Senate and was signed into law July 1, 2018 by Governor Jeff Colyer.

“Looking back, we give thanks to God for inspiring Rep. Jacobs at the time in which He did,” said Barbara Saldivar, State Director for Concerned Women for America of Kansas. “Any later and it more than likely would not have been signed into law by today’s governor.”

To date 33 states have now passed pro-life license plate legislation.

The Plate Challenge

The Department of Revenue requires that at least 1,000 plates be sold for \$40 each by before the plates can go into production.

Concerned Women for America (CWA) of Kansas has taken on the responsibility of collecting names and payments from persons who want the plates.

When at least 1,000 plates are sold, the information and payments will be turned over to the Kansas Department of Revenue



(KDOR). Then KDOR will in turn issue all individuals a certificate of no charge that can be used to purchase the plates in their county.

The plates will then be made permanently available along with all the other issue-specific plates Kansas has to offer.

The Procedure

For all the details on how to reserve your plate, go to concerned-women.org/state/kansas/. You can also send an email to order brochures to distribute: director@kansas.cwfa.org.

Fill out the back panel of the brochure, or go to chooselife-plate.com, to be one of the first 1,000 people in Kansas to obtain a Choose Life license plate.

The cost to pre-order plates is \$40 per vehicle + \$1.50 processing fee for online orders. Complete all fields for each vehicle you are registering. Separate payments for each vehicle are due at time of registration.

You will be emailed a receipt so you know that your order and payment have been received.

Once 1,000 registrations have been collected, KDOR will mail you a certificate to pick up your license plate in your county.

“Please pray that thousands of people will purchase these plates so that the message of life is proclaimed all over the state,” said Saldivar. “Pray these plates will

detour those contemplating abortion, encourage many to minister to someone they know who is contemplating abortion, and inspire many to vote accordingly.”

Sen. David Haley (D-Kansas City) said he was concerned the Choose Life plate was inappropriate for the state government to establish as it appears to be an anti-abortion statement.

“I’m only concerned,” Haley said, “about opening the door in this particular case to one (license plate) in particular — that was the Choose Life option. ... That is state sanctioned political speech.”

Sen. Mike Peterson, R-Wichita, said these plates have been used by other states and don’t necessarily implicate abortion issues. They also could be considered general endorsement of protecting life as a whole, he said.

Specialty plates available because of lowered printing costs

Other specialty plates made possible by the bill include license plates for veterans of the Korean War, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Similar attempts failed in the past because of high costs. Technology allowing digital printing of the plates have now substantially lowered the cost, according to Peterson.

“Digital printing will save our treasurer tons of money and make development much cheaper,” Peterson said.



Baby saved from abortion goes on to become a football star

In the middle of a recent football game, Gus Johnson, an announcer for FOX sports, revealed how a running back for Ohio State, J.K. Dobbins, was only on the team thanks to a courageous decision made by his mom 20 years ago.

During the game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Michigan Wolverines, Johnson explained to the millions of viewers that Dobbins’ mom Mya became pregnant when she was 18 years old, as reported in Live Action. Like many pregnant teens who find themselves in this position, “she went to the doctor because she was thinking about aborting the baby, but changed her mind,” he shared with the viewers.

While this very personal news might have shocked the many sports fans out there, it’s an encouraging example for women in a similar position to Mya to help them change their minds, even if they initially decide to abort.

Mya’s story is, of course, inspiring — never could she have imagined what her young baby would go on to achieve on that day she walked out of the abortion clinic. But it’s a story of having faith — faith that God would guide her along her path, and faith in her ability to be a mom, even at 18.

During the game, which saw Ohio State beat Michigan 56 to 27 and Johnson share the player’s intimate past, J.K. Dobbins happened to play his personal best. As For the Win details: “With an incredible 33-yard touchdown run in the middle of the fourth quarter, he notched his first career four-touchdown game.”

While Mya might call her son a “miracle baby,” perhaps the real miracle lies in the path that God laid down for Mya and her son, and for other pregnant young women who might be making similar life and death decisions.

—aleteia.org



Mom refuses doctors’ advice to abort baby 10 times...

A British mom, Chloe Conlin, 21, was told by doctors that if she went ahead with her pregnancy, her unborn daughter would not make it to her first birthday. Conlin, who had already experienced a stillbirth, decided to ignore the doctors’ advice and went on to give birth to a little girl called Miyah 14 months ago.

The baby was born with right atrial isomerism, which meant she only had half a heart. As Conlin explained to the Daily Mail: “When I was pregnant they told me to have an abortion over 10 times because they said she wouldn’t be compatible with life, it would be a real struggle and she probably wouldn’t live until her first birthday.” Luckily for Miyah, the determination of her young mom proved enough to mend her little heart after she underwent open-heart surgery on Christmas Eve last year at the famous children’s hospital, Great

Ormond Street in London.

After the operation Miyah went from strength to strength, and is now even taking her first steps as she celebrates her first Christmas away from the hospital ward. She’s beginning to talk and is reaching the milestones doctors believed she’d never make.

Although the doctors can’t actually mend her heart, they can try and help prolong her life. This will entail an operation in the next couple of years when her condition starts to deteriorate, followed by check-ups a few times a year, and then it will be down to God as to how long little Miyah’s heart will keep on beating.

In the meantime, Miyah will spend Christmas surrounded by her family and a heap of presents celebrating the life she’s been given with hope for more wonderful Christmases to come.

—aleteia.org

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River Front Development Concept Photos Shared

North Topeka On The Move (NOTOMA) recently shared some concept drawings for what the Great Overland Station Park could look like. They show exciting possibilities! For more about River Front Development for the North Topeka community, see the NOTOMA Facebook page.



Aerial view of site plan

Fire Me Up Ceramics is presenting Clay Night Out on Jan. 14, so that you can learn to hand-build with clay. For details visit <https://firemeupceramics.com/> or call 785-766-4667.

Dirty Girl Adventures and Compass Point is hosting Mindful Mondays and Thoughtful Thursdays, to give you an opportunity to cultivate mindfulness in your daily life. It is a researched-based practice that is shown to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

The class will consist of 4 ZOOM sessions. For more information visit facebook.com/events/304316133576952/ or call 785/608-7888 or 785/224-0351

First Friday Art Walk & Market: Topeka Arts District has become an attraction to Art Lovers and History Buffs alike with beautiful scenes of art and history. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

Art Walk Hours are 10 am to 9 pm. Visit

the NOTO Arts Center to pick up a map of participating businesses and view the newest exhibit at the Morris Gallery.

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



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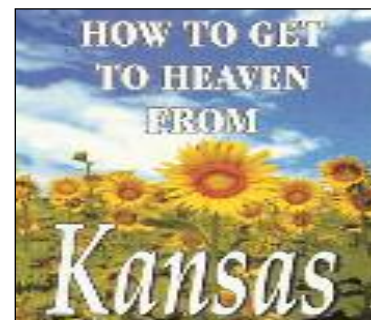
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More important than living in KANSAS is where you will live forever. Just as you would look at a map of KANSAS to find your way, so you must look at the Bible to find your way to heaven. The Bible says, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life,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

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

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

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

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

4 Ways COVID-19 Has Changed Worship

Is it time to re-imagine what worship looks like?

During COVID-19, many churches have come up with creative ways to hold worship still. Regardless of the means, whether physical or virtual, this time is offering an unprecedented opportunity for spiritual awakening. It is also an opportunity for the church to reach people they may not have before the crisis. Here are four ways COVID-19 has changed worship.

Shift to Online Church

Many churches have moved to online communications during this period. The pandemic is encouraging churches to con-

nect in new ways. Congregations are staying connected virtually – many are using facebook live and Zoom, a remote video conferencing service to continue to see familiar faces and remain connected. While people cannot see you during a facebook live broadcast, it is still interactive. You can engage with content as much as you want to. If you happened to wake up later than you planned to, you could watch the broadcast then. Many churches who did not have a large social media presence plan to continue these broadcasts even when in-person services resume as they know it is a beautiful way to reach people. Zoom is another platform people are using for worship to connect more

intimately. This is a platform where people can see your face and hear your voice, which gives many a sense of connection and community without meeting in-person.

Drive-in Church

Drive-in church services have become a creative way for churches to share God's Word, giving churches the ability to turn their parking lots into pews. Gateway Fellowship Church in Northwest San Antonio, TX., is one of the churches that decided to try drive-in worship. Worshipers stay in their cars so that they can continue to self-quarantine.

"We said, how can we protect people and get them into a space where they can worship the Lord," pastor Matt Robertson said.

People who have tried drive-in church have said they have still been able to experience a sense of community while also remaining safe while keeping social distancing guidelines. Some churches have also offered drive-up holy communion. A pastor or priest approaches your car, and you receive communion by hand. Doing this has been helpful for churches that put great emphasis on the sacrament of holy communion.

We See Church as the People, Not a Building

During this crisis, we have had to transform our view of what church looks like. The church is commonly understood as a building used for public worship, but the biblical definition characterizes the church as people. We see the word church used in the Bible in multiple ways. First, it is described as the body of Christ. The church is often defined as a local assembly or group of believers. Paul, who was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, says in his greeting, "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be His holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:2). This is just one example of the church being defined as a company or assembly.

Next, the church is defined as the body of living, individual believers. When Paul



preaches the Gospel after receiving it by revelation from Jesus Christ, he says, "For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it" (Galatians 1:13). Paul also said, "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9). Both of these verses signal that the church is a body of living people.

Finally, it is defined as the universal group of all people who have trusted Christ through the ages. When Peter makes his confession of Christ, Jesus replies, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it" (Matthew 16:18). From these examples, we see that church is not something we do individually. It is something we do collectively. A critical aspect of the Christian life is not just what you do by yourself but also what you do together with other people. Biblically, the church is considered to be the "family of God". We understand family to be a group that is mutually dependent on each other. The same goes for the church. During this crisis, we can worship together in community without being in a physical building because we recognize we are the church. We can do incredible things when we understand we aren't limited in our ministry even if we can't come together for in-person worship.

More People Are Seeking God's Word

Some churches are reaching more people online than they ever could during

regular worship services. Some are connecting to a church for the first time through facebook and other social media live streams. Many churches are seeing their social media presence grow as more people are tuning into online services than ever before, and finding worship through non-traditional means.

In a Daily Article podcast, Dr. Jim Denison shares that the global pandemic is sparking global interest in God's love.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Global Media Outreach has gone from reaching 350,000 people per day to upwards of 500,000 globally. A GMO leader told the Christian Post, "People are coming to us saying, 'I need hope. Where can I find hope in the face of tragedy, anxiety, bankruptcy?'" he added, "When people are in pain, we offer encouragement and hope. They're coming to us looking for answers." Some people who are not even searching for worship services are still stumbling across them online. Friends or family may have shared their worship service on social media, or they may have stumbled across the service through an explore feature on social.

While worship has shifted in a lot of ways, we should not look at this as a bad thing. We must not lose sight of the opportunities we have to reach new people and share the message of Christ in ways we never have before. People are looking for a message of hope, and we can show them that through the means we worship now.

—Leslie White | beliefnet.com

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PASSWORDS

continued from page x

expert Chad Hammond suggests changing it immediately.

"Most of these passwords can be hacked in less than a second. Also, they have already been exposed in previous data breaches. For example, the most popular password "123456" has been breached 23,597,311 times."

Hammond also warns about the threats of not using a unique password or using one that's easy to hack. "For example, your weak password can be used for credential stuffing attacks, where the breached logins are used to gain unauthorized access to user accounts.

If you fall victim to a credential stuffing attack, you might lose your Facebook or another important account with all its content.

"Also, your email address could be used for phishing attacks or for scamming

your family and friends, who may very well fall for it, as the email will supposedly be coming from you," said Hammond.

What do cybersecurity experts advise?

Use complex, lengthy, and unique passwords and store them in a password manager.

Use 2FA if possible.

Delete the accounts you no longer use and regularly check the ones you do for suspicious activity.

Try Password Salting — adding random characters to the passwords before it's hashed.

"Ashley" was the most popular name used as a password last year (26th place). This year, not only did it drop to the 31st position, but was also beaten by "aaron431" (18th place), which became the most popular name for a password.

How to create stronger passwords

Avoid using dictionary words, number

combinations, or strings of adjacent keyboard combinations. For instance, "password", "qwerty", or "123456" are terrible passwords, as they are too easy to crack.

Also, refrain from repetitive characters, such as "aaaa" or "123abc", and under no circumstances choose passwords based on personal details that might not be completely confidential, such as your phone number, birth date, or name.

How to create a strong password

Never reuse passwords across multiple accounts. Create a unique one for each account and make them long — don't settle for anything shorter than 12 characters, even more if you can.

Use a mix of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers, and symbols to significantly lower the risk of getting your passwords cracked. Also, make sure to change your passwords at least every 90 days.

To create a complex, robust password, take advantage of a Password Generator.

entertainment

‘Safety’ – so much more than a sports movie

Safety is based on a real story about Ray McElrathbey who played for Clemson in 2006. He did so while serving as guardian for his 11-year-old brother, who became something of a secret unofficial mascot for the team.

The film, released to streaming Dec. 11, is a pretty great story even without the Disney treatment, but director Reginald Hudlin expands its scope to talk not just about the McElrathbey family, but the notion of what the word family itself actually means.

When McElrathbey shows up for his first football meeting at Clemson University, his coaches launch into speeches about the proud tradition of Tigers football—a tradition-filled with success, sacrifice and teamwork. They tell Ray Ray (as he’s known) and the rest of the freshmen about how, before each home game, players will run down the hill toward the east end zone and touch Howard’s Rock, one of the university’s most sacred traditions. And if players aren’t willing to “give it 110%, keep your filthy hands off of it.”

Sacrifice, Ray Ray hears again and again. Sacrifice for your team. Your coaches. Your school. “You must sacrifice,” the coach says.

Ray Ray understands the word well.

The red-shirt freshman sacrificed plenty to get to Clemson. His dad split a long time ago—when his little brother Fahmarr was still asking for help putting on his shoes. His mother’s a drug addict, so she’s often gone, either physically or mentally. But even so, Ray Ray overcame his upbringing and sacrificed much to land at Clemson with a football scholarship.

He takes the “student” part of being a “student-athlete” seriously, too. Instead of taking a litany of can’t-fail classes like most football players, he dives into a heavy load of psychology classes. He aims to do more than play football: He wants to graduate and set himself up for a life off the gridiron. And he hopes that all those psych classes might help him help his mom, too.

But he keeps getting calls from Fahmarr, whom everyone just calls Fay. Ray Ray thinks his 11-year-old bro just wants to talk, and Ray Ray just doesn’t have the time. But then, finally, he learns the truth: Their mom got caught for possession again. She’s been gone for a week.

Ray Ray rushes back to Atlanta and gets some mixed news. The good: His and Fay’s mom, Tonya, has been accepted to a rehab program, all expenses paid. The bad: It’s a 30-day, live-in program. Fay will be in foster care for a month.

Unless.

“I’ll take him,” Ray Ray tells the



counselor as he leads Fay away.

But how? The school dorms don’t allow 11-year-olds. If anyone found out, the coaches would probably kick him off the team.

But Ray Ray’s willing to risk it. He’s Fay’s brother, after all. Family. And what do you do for family? You sacrifice for them, that’s what.

Yeah, Ray Ray already knew all about sacrifice. He didn’t need some coach to tell him. But a student? An athlete? And now a mother and father, too?

This freshman’s about to take a graduate-level course for the word.

POSITIVE ELEMENTS

Most people would say they’d do “anything” for their family, and it might be true. But Ray Ray has the opportunity to walk the walk.

Already dealing with a demanding practice schedule and a back-breaking academic load, Ray Ray carves out time to care for his little brother—spiriting him off to a school bus so Fay doesn’t fall too far behind, keeping him out of trouble (as much as he’s able) and instilling some tough love along the way. Ray Ray’s commitment to Fay only climbs as the movie goes on. “I’m Fay’s brother, his father and everything else that he needs me to be,” he says.

But—and this is something of a spoiler if you’re not aware of the real story behind the movie—Ray Ray learns that he doesn’t have to do it all alone.

You can’t hide an 11-year-old in a college dorm room forever, of course. Ray Ray’s roomie, Daniel (Clemson’s third-string kicker), is the first to become an accomplice. Then a few other teammates are brought into the fold, helping out where they can.

When Ray Ray’s secret is discovered by the whole team, his coaches are pretty angry at first. But when they see the devotion that Ray Ray has for his brother—and the loyalty that some team members show to Ray Ray—they work with the safety to make it happen. They facilitate a move off-campus. A coach’s wife begins shuttling Fay to school. And

when the community hears about Ray Ray’s story, many of them rally to help as well.

This ultimately complicates matters: The NCAA, in an effort to avoid any appearance of shady, under-the-table payments to student-athletes, doesn’t allow schools or communities to provide any tangible help to student-athletes at all. Even giving Fay rides to school could be construed as some sort of “payment.” So when Ray Ray goes to the NCAA to ask for the variance, his team rallies behind him.

When Ray Ray asks a handful of fellow Clemson players about his secret, his friends promise to keep it. Moreover, they’ll help Ray Ray in any way they can. “As long as you’re family, so’s the kid,” one says. Later, when a school official tells a Clemson coach not to risk the NCAA’s wrath for just one kid, the coach shoots the guy down. “He’s not just one player to me,” he says. “He’s part of a family. I’ll take that risk any way of the week.”

For years, Ray Ray thought that it was just he and Fay against the world. They’d have to do it alone if they were to do it at all. And throughout the film, we see times when Ray Ray pushes away help, or the possibility of help.

But finally, he realizes that that’s not the way forward. “Clemson taught me it’s OK to open your heart and accept help,” he says. In our culture of self-sufficiency, it’s a lesson that many of us could probably internalize a bit more.

Safety continues a strong tradition found in Disney’s film catalog—that of the inspirational sports movie. This movie indeed inspires. And while some of the themes here are kinda gritty, Safety deals with them without slathering on a lot of excess muck.

A movie that feels both clean and real? That’s not as rare as a college football player caring for his 11-year-old brother. But it’s rare enough to celebrate.

—Reviewed by Paul Assay | Focus on the Family

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



Skillet’s John Cooper: ‘We Are in War’

John Cooper has been entertaining audiences for more than two decades as the lead singer of popular rock band Skillet, but now he’s adding a new mission into the mix: combating cultural relativism.

Cooper, who has been increasingly vocal on issues plaguing Christianity and America, is out with a new book titled, “Awake and Alive to Truth: Finding Truth in the Chaos of a Relativistic World” — and he’s intent on driving home truth in an era of biblical apathy.

“We have gotten so scared about saying things that are true that it has caused a crisis,” the singer recently said on the “Edifi With Billy Hallowell” podcast. “It has caused a crisis of people believing that they are good and that they can reach heaven without Jesus’ help.”

Cooper has become more vocal in recent months about issues plaguing culture — a move that came after he started seeing friends around him struggle with their faith and make comments that didn’t quite align with biblical truth.

As some of his Christian friends started to say, “I don’t think that Jesus is the only way,” or make other unbiblical claims, Cooper’s fears about the watering

down of faith sparked in him a desire to speak out and help others navigate the ebbs and flows of an increasingly chaotic culture.

“There is chaos happening for a reason and we need to be bold about what those reasons are,” Cooper said. “If you just ground your life in the truth of Christ, you can escape all of this chaos.”

He said there’s a disturbing trend in which too many people have come to believe that “nothing in the world is absolutely 100 percent true,” saying things like, “your truth” and “my truth.”

“Relativism is something that Christians cannot believe,” he said, going on to note that there are many inside churches who don’t quite realize this reality. “We are in war where the church is losing so much ground within the church ... the church is not looking like Christianity anymore.”

Cooper knows that there’s a risk to extending outside of music to address the issues of the day — but he believes the stakes are too high to back down.

“What we are losing is so great,” he said. “If it costs me fans, we have to start trying to save as many as we can. It’s that kind of a time.”

Kathie Lee Shares Thoughts on Living a Life that Matters

Entertainer Kathie Lee Gifford says she will never retire. She plans instead to “re-fire.”

The Emmy Award-winning talk show host, singer, and songwriter says she still has a lot of work to do. She sat down with me to take a rare look back at her life to this point.

It’s been almost two years since Kathie Lee walked away from her co-host spot on NBC’s “Today” show.

These days, she’s not only singing again, but she’s also added directing her first film and writing another best-selling children’s book to her list of accomplishments.

“I am in a new place at the age of 67 that I never would have dreamed I would be. I have a number one hit record. And my movie that came out just went to number one in America,” Kathie Lee said.

“At this stage in my life, when I should be getting my senior discount to go see movies, I am writing them, baby. You got to laugh,” she added.

This busy widowed mother of two laughs a lot. She’s enjoyed a decades-long career making millions laugh right along with her. Some of the untold stories

behind that success are told in her new memoir, *It’s Never Too Late: Make Your Next Act of Life, Your Best Act of Life*.

She says it was a hard book to write for a number of different reasons.

“It’s speaking to people’s hearts about their fears and about God’s faithfulness in every season of our lives,” Kathie Lee said. “I just asked the Lord to use me. Help me to remember things, Lord. Things I have never said before. Give me boldness. But at the same, time tenderness towards people.”

Kathie Lee includes some stories that she’s never had the chance to tell, a “who’s who” of those who have touched Kathie Lee, and those whose lives she has touched in return.

Those “who’s who” stories include Paul Newman, Audrey Hepburn, Billy Graham, Al Pacino, Sting, and many more.

Kathie Lee shared one of her life lessons, summed up in the phrase, “It’s never too late to leave a good thing.” She left both her talk show with Regis Philbin and the Today Show at the height of each program’s success.





Pixar's 'Soul' has multiple great messages about life

By Michael Foust

The phrase "family-friendly" -- as every parent knows -- is subjective. The film your neighbor says is fine for the children might not be so family-friendly in your home.

Such is the case with the new Pixar movie *Soul* (PG), which tells the story of a super-talented young musician, Joe, who is on the verge of a big career break when he unexpectedly dies. Joe, though, wasn't ready to die, so when his soul enters the "Great Beyond" -- that's what it's called in the movie -- he runs back down the eternal staircase and ends up in the "Great Before," the place where souls get their personalities before going to Earth.

There, in the Great Beyond, Joe is confused for being someone else and is given the job of "mentoring" souls. (Think: Big Brother/Big Sister.) He is paired with a notoriously difficult soul -- No. 22 -- who has the attitude of a moody teenager and who supposedly made her previous mentor, Mother Teresa, cry.

Joe's job is to help No. 22 find her "spark" -- that is, her talents and goals in life.

The film then takes an even crazier turn during a mishap that places the duo on Earth in the wrong bodies: No. 22 in Joe's body, and Joe in the body of a cat.

This unfortunate event, though, ends up being a blessing for the duo: No. 22 (Tina Fey) finds her spark and talents, while Joe (Jamie Foxx) -- by watching himself interact with others -- realizes his life was not meaningless.

The plot, of course, is hogwash from a biblical perspective.

But as a parable about life, *Soul* can teach moviegoers a lot. Here's why: Much of the plot takes place not in the Great Beyond or Great Before, but on our planet.

And although Joe's job is to mentor No. 22, she ends up educating him. She teaches him to slow down and enjoy the simple blessings of life -- like enjoying a nice walk or a beautiful, blue sky. (She's thrilled about both.) She helps him appreciate his mother in a way he never had. She (and others) also help Joe discover an important truth that has a biblical foundation: Everyone is unique and special.

Finally, Joe learns that his life's goal -- to play in a well-known band -- doesn't bring true happiness. (After his first show, he tells someone, "I thought it would feel different.") His barber, Dez, tells Joe he grew up wanting to be a veterinarian. But Dez tells Joe his life as a barber couldn't be better: "I'm happy as a clam. ... I love this job. I get to meet interesting folks like you, make them

happy and make them handsome." The story urges us to be content -- a message straight out of Scripture.

To be sure, the message in *Soul* is incomplete, and Christian parents will need to fill in the blanks. Still, it's a good conversation-starter about God's purpose for life.

Soul contains no coarse language, sexuality or violence, yet it's a mixed bag for families because of its mixed bag of worldviews. After all, "family-friendly" can have different meanings.

Soul launches on Disney Plus Christmas Day.

Also worth watching this month:

The Last Champion (VOD) -- A disgraced athlete returns to his small hometown years after he was stripped of his wrestling gold medal due to drugs. There, he meets an old friend -- and her pastor-father -- who teaches him about redemption and second chances. Cole Hauser (*Yellowstone*) stars in the lead role. It's one of the best family films of the year. Due to minor language (OMG, 2; and a--), and a fight scene, this PG-13 film is best for older children and teens.

Hardy Boys (Hulu) -- Brothers Frank and Joe Hardy move to the small town of Bridgeport, Conn., following the surprising death of their mother. There, they discover the truth about their mom's death and set out to find out who murdered her. The series, based on the books, remains in family-friendly territory, with no sexuality or graphic violence, and only minor language (I caught only a total of two coarse words, h--, after watching multiple episodes.) Due to the plot, this series may be best for older children and teens. Rated TV-PG.

The Croods: A New Age (Theaters, VOD) -- The Croods family meets another family, the modern-living Bettermans, sparking a clash of cultures. It's a hilarious film with no coarse language and no sexuality (minus the grandma donning a two-piece warrior outfit). It includes a family-centric, Father of the Bride-type plot. The film's conclusion begs the question: Does every technological advancement make our lives better? Rated PG for peril, action and rude humor.

Real Right Stuff (Disney Plus) -- It's a 90-minute documentary that spotlights the Mercury 7 astronauts -- John Glenn among them -- who helped America catch the Russians in the Space Race. The film includes radio broadcasts, interviews, home movies and other never-before-seen material. Rated TV-PG.

Michael Foust has covered the intersection of faith and entertainment more than 15 years. He is the husband of a wife, Julie, and the father of four small children.

The 10 best family-friendly movies of 2020

By Michael Foust

Even if 2020 was the worst year in recent history, it still produced dozens of inspiring and entertaining movies families can enjoy -- including documentaries, dramas and comedies.

Here are the 10 best ones, in no order:

I Still Believe (PG) -- A young couple, fresh off their honeymoon, see their faith tested when one of them is diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. The film is based on the true story of Christian singer Jeremy Camp and his first wife, Melissa. It's one of the best faith-based movies ever and has powerful lessons on love, prayer and faith in the midst of tragedy. Rated PG for thematic material.

Clouds (PG-13) -- A teenage boy, given only months to live because of cancer, begins writing songs about life. One of his tunes, *Clouds*, becomes a worldwide hit. The film is based on the true story of Zach Sobiech, whose mom prayed, "Okay, Lord, you can have him. But if he must die, I want it to be for something big. I want someone's life to be changed forever." It's rated PG-13 for brief strong language (supposedly an f-word, but I watched the film and didn't hear it).

Red Sea Mirage I and II (unrated) -- Christian filmmaker Tim Mahoney interviews scholars and tours biblical sites as he explores two questions: 1) What route did the Hebrew people take out of Egypt? 2) Was the crossing of the Red Sea a miraculous event? The films are plain-language biblical scholarship for the layperson. Don't worry: Mahoney takes an inerrantist approach. It's unrated. Treat it as a G-rated movie.

Dude Perfect: Backstage Pass (unrated) -- If you've never heard of Dude Perfect, then your children -- or the kids in your neighborhood -- definitely have. This quintet of trick artists and comedy show hosts has 54 million YouTube subscribers, and all of their videos are clean enough for the entire family. In *Backstage Pass* -- which is free on YouTube -- the group takes the viewer along on their 2019 tour. They also discuss their faith. It's unrated. Treat it as a G-rated movie.

Free Burma Rangers (unrated) -- It's the most hair-raising Christian documen-



tary ever made, and follows missionaries Dave and Karen Eubank as they take humanitarian assistance -- and the gospel -- to some of the world's most dangerous war-torn countries. The film includes gripping footage from their adventures, including from a gunfight in the streets of Mosul, Iraq. It's unrated. Treat it as a PG-13 film for thematic elements and violence.

The Last Champion (PG-13) -- A disgraced Olympian who was stripped of his gold medal returns to the small town that never forgave him. The town's pastor -- and his daughter -- reach out to him when few are willing to forgive. The film stars Cole Hauser (*Yellowstone*) and includes powerful lessons about second chances, forgiveness, and finding purpose after tragedy. Rated PG-13 for some thematic elements and a brief scene of violence. It also has minor language (two instances each of a-- and OMG).

Switched (PG) -- A bullied high school girl prays that her nemesis will learn what it's like to walk a day in her shoes. The next morning, the two girls wake up having switched bodies. It's a hilarious film that uses comedy to convey serious messages about bullying, kindness and the true meaning of beauty. It's aimed at children, tweens and teens and contains no coarse language. Rated PG for thematic elements.

JESUS (unrated) -- It's a Broadway-style musical production by Sight and Sound that follows the ministry of Christ, from the streets of Jerusalem to his resur-

rection and ascension. *JESUS* was filmed before a live audience and features massive sets, special effects and live animals. It's unrated. Treat it as a PG-rated film.

Soul (PG) -- A talented musician learns valuable lessons about life after dying, unexpectedly, at a young age. This Pixar film will divide Christian families, but it nevertheless contains solid messages rarely seen in a mainstream title: death could occur any day; each of us has a soul; work isn't the purpose of life; and blessings are all around us -- if we'll only open our eyes. That said, parents may want to screen this one first. Rated PG for thematic elements and some language (children saying "hell" in reference to the actual place).

Farmer and the Belle (unrated) -- An aging model discovers the true meaning of beauty when she returns to the small town of her childhood. There, she meets an old friend (who becomes her romantic interest). She also helps save the town's famous Santaland festival. This Hallmark-like, faith-based film is a must-watch for today's young girls, who constantly are bombarded with unbiblical messages about beauty. A devotional, a children's book and a bracelet (the one seen in the film) also can be purchased. It's unrated. Treat it as a G-rated movie.

Michael Foust has covered the intersection of faith and entertainment for more than 15 years. He is the husband to Julie and the father of four young children.

Fourth Installment of 'God's Not Dead' to Begin Filming

Producer and Pure Flix co-founder David A.R. White announced there will be a fourth installment of the film franchise "God's Not Dead."

In a video shared on Instagram, White said the film, titled "God's Not Dead: We the People," is set to begin production next month and will be shot on location in Oklahoma.

White revealed that the fourth film was inspired by the 1946 drama "It's a Wonderful Life" and the 1939 film "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington."

"God's Not Dead" is a faith-based film franchise for Pure Flix Entertainment, which debuted in 2014. The first film takes on the question of whether God really exists.

The sequel, which was released in 2016, addressed the question of who



Jesus really was - man or myth? And the third installment, "God's Not Dead: A Light in Darkness" opened in theaters nationwide in 2018.

Previous film stars have included Kevin Sorbo, Shane Harper, Melissa

Joan Hart, and many more.

White explained that certain elements of "God's Not Dead: We the People" are still in development and some cast members from the earlier movies will return.



At-Home Exercises Can Help Older People Boost Immune Systems

Older adults, especially those over 65, have five times the risk of hospitalization and 90 times the risk of death from COVID-19 compared with younger adults.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 78 percent of the more than 114,000 COVID-19 related deaths between May and August were people age 65 and older. Many of those individuals had compromised immune systems due, in part, to a variety of other health conditions that include obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, and hypertension.

The CDC suggests these additional health problems could lead to increased severity of COVID-19.

The good news, however, is that regular exercise and cardiorespiratory fitness can significantly reduce the risk COVID-19 poses to older adults by improving overall health and boosting the immune system.

Now Isn't the Time to Stop Moving

Staying active can be challenging, as many older adults are remaining at home most, if not all, of the time to avoid the novel coronavirus. As a result, the very changes in lifestyle that keep people safe from exposure can also result in their adopting sedentary habits—which leave people vulnerable



to serious health consequences should they get COVID-19.

Exercise, especially aerobic exercise, which gets the heart pumping hard and improves cardiorespiratory fitness, has multiple health benefits, including reduced risk for stroke, heart attack, depression, and age-related cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that older adults get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise. That means three 50-minute sessions each week, or a little over 20 minutes per day.

Firing Up the Immune System

Not only can exercise enhance overall health, it can also specifically improve immune system response, which is critical to surviving COVID-19.

As humans age, the immune system becomes progressively less effective at

responding to new viruses because of an age-related weakening of the immune system, also known as "immunosenescence."

The good news is that exercise improves the efficiency of the immune system in people of all ages. Every session of exercise mobilizes billions of immune cells throughout the body. The more immune cells circulate, the better they are at spotting and attacking potential pathogens.

Although there is no data yet on how exercise and cardiorespiratory fitness can reduce the risk of hospitalization or death from COVID-19, previous studies show that regular exercise improves the immune response to other viral infections. Regular exercise has also been shown to lower the risk of death from viral and respiratory illnesses. Furthermore, increased physical activity is known to improve and prolong the immune response from the flu shot.

Working Out at Home

How can older adults safely exercise and keep aerobically fit while stuck mostly at home without access to a gym? At the Aging & Brain Health Alliance at Rutgers University–Newark, we have been offering virtual exercise classes, by video conference or phone, for seniors using materials they can easily find around the home.

Here are a few suggested exercises

from our fitness classes you can do safely on your own at home.

One of the best exercises to get you started on your fitness journey is to walk the floors of your home. Whether in a house or an apartment, take time every hour to get up and just walk. Set aside 5 to 10 minutes with the goal of increasing your daily step count and improving your overall cardiorespiratory health. Challenge a family member to join you and make it fun.

Use your walls

You should also take advantage of your walls. Wall sits are an easy way to engage your muscles and work your body. Simply stand with your back against a wall; step your feet two feet away from the wall and open your legs hip-distance apart. While keeping your



shoulders against the wall, slowly and carefully lower your body until you are sitting in an imaginary chair.

Remember to keep breathing, inhaling through your nose, and exhaling from your mouth, and you will begin to feel the burn in your leg muscles. Try coming up and down five times if you feel safe and comfortable doing so. (For extra security, keep a chair or something else nearby to hold on to if you lose your balance.)

Work out your core while seated

Finally, use a chair. Sit at the edge of a solid chair focusing on maintaining good posture. Plant your feet hip-distance apart; take a big inhale and, on the exhale, slowly lift one knee toward



your chest. This is a seated crunch and it will engage your deep core muscles. Complete five of these knee lifts on each side, making sure to do each knee lift on the exhalation.

Exercise habits developed during this period of COVID-19—and maintained after the threat has passed—will support your immune health for years to come.

Survey: 66% of all nursing homes at risk of closing

A new survey conducted by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) has returned startling results. Nursing home providers across the U.S. state the majority are at risk for survival as a result of Covid lockdowns and deaths.

In the most shocking result, two-thirds, or 66% of nursing homes say

they won't make it another year given current operating circumstance due to increased COVID costs.

One of the requests is that nursing home residents and staff be given vaccines in the first round. President Donald Trump has stated several times that this should be a priority and encouraged the CDC to issue guidelines ensuring the safety of residents,

nurses, and other staff.

Other key findings outlined in the letter on why long term care facilities should receive vaccines first include:

- 90% of nursing homes are currently operating at a profit margin of 3% or less. (65% of nursing homes are currently operating at a loss).

- Staffing has been the top cost in response to COVID with nine out of 10 nursing homes hiring additional staff and/or paying staff overtime.

- 58% of nursing homes said additional staff pay and hiring new staff were their top cost incurred due to COVID.

- 70% of nursing homes have hired additional staff and nine out of 10 have asked current staff to work overtime and provided hero pay.

Mark Parkinson, President and CEO, AHCA/NCAL stated the survey reinforces the need for Congress to pass another COVID relief package to replenish the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Provider Relief Fund, which is nearly



out of funding. Republicans had been pushing for the package when Nancy Pelosi last week admitted she had purposely held up the aid. "The funding helps hospitals and nursing homes respond to the record number of cases in the community and within their facilities," Parkinson stated.

"Our nursing home providers are facing the worst financial crisis in the history of the industry due to increased costs related to COVID (testing, personal protective equipment, staffing) and chronic Medicaid underfunding,"

he states. "Without adequate resources, the U.S. will repeat the same mistakes made during the initial outbreak last spring. We need Congress to prioritize our vulnerable seniors and their caregivers in long term care facilities, by passing another COVID relief package right away."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell this week said he had reached an agreement with Pelosi that would allow the passage of a new coronavirus package.

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How to Age with Style and Grace

Aging may be inevitable, but with advancement in research and technology, there are plenty of ways you can slow, or even reverse, the hands of time to stay healthy and promote longevity.

Consider these ideas from Longevity Labs+, a company dedicated to cutting-edge aging research and the makers of spermidineLIFE, a first-of-its-kind, clinically studied supplement containing natural spermidine, which renews cells and can reverse the signs of aging:

Protect Your Skin

Not only does your skin protect vital internal organs, it's an essential barrier to intruders like bacteria and other infection-causing microbes. The skin is also the body's greatest tool in managing hydration levels and providing critical cues to your nervous system about things like temperature and pain.

With such a big role in your overall health and well-being, the skin often shows the first signs of aging. Wrinkles and age spots are often indicators of a person's true age.

However, you can reduce the visible impacts of aging on the skin with daily care. Regularly moisturizing helps keep skin supple, and diligent sunscreen application year-around can protect your skin from damaging sun rays. Some compounds and nutrient plans can help nurture youthful skin.

It's also important to closely monitor your skin for changes, especially changes to moles or other spots that may be signs of skin cancer, which is generally treatable when caught and managed early. In addition, collagen peptides and a spermidine-rich diet can be key in ensuring healthy skin into your later years.

Maintain Clean and Healthy Cells

You may not realize it, but as each day passes, your body's cells age, die and accumulate toxic matter, which disrupts cellular function and causes a



myriad of age-related diseases such as dementia and cardiovascular disease as well as decreases immune function. However, a compound naturally produced by the body and found in nature called spermidine can clean cells of toxic matter so they can operate with renewed youth and efficiency. Spermidine triggers a cellular renewal



process called autophagy, which allows cells to shed layers of waste and regenerate instead of slowing down and dying off. As the body ages, natural levels of spermidine decline, cellular regeneration slows and signs of aging are accelerated.

Spermidine is a key to anti-aging and is believed to help reduce the onset of neurodegenerative and age-related diseases. You can boost spermidine levels by eating certain foods that are high in spermidine, like lentils, soybeans, mushrooms, aged

cheese, pears, broccoli, peas and cauliflower.

However, few people eat enough spermidine-rich foods to maintain optimal levels in their later years. Taking a supplement like award-winning spermidineLIFE* can support cellular renewal and help cells stay young and healthy. The first and only clinically studied spermidine supplement in the world, it includes spermidine naturally extracted from European non-GMO wheat germ along with carefully selected vitamins, minerals and healthy fats.

Manage Physical Health

As you grow older, your metabolism slows, making it easier to hold onto extra weight. Excess pounds are associated with numerous health risks, in addition to slowing you down overall. Maintain a more youthful body and mobility by consuming a well-rounded, nutritious, whole-food diet and committing to regular exercise, which can help not only banish extra calories but also keep your muscle tone strong, your balance steady and your posture straight.

Just as important as what you do to protect your health as you age is what you don't do. That means limiting alcohol, quitting smoking and avoiding the temptation to indulge in high-fat and sugary foods.

Support Mind Matters

Worry lines aren't just wrinkles that come with age; they can be a sign of persistent angst. From stress to lack of sleep to slips in memory, there are plenty of reasons to focus on your mental health as you advance in years.

Getting enough rest can play a big role in your physical health as well as your mental wellness. Too little sleep prevents your body from reenergizing itself fully and can affect your cognition and mood. Worry and stress can also cause you to feel your years. Information is key, and smart devices such as heart rate and sleep trackers can provide you with the necessary information to find what helps and what hurts healthy circadian rhythms and deep, regenerative sleep.

Growing forgetful as you age is also common to an extent, but memory problems can be exacerbated by stress, lack of sleep and other factors. You can also keep your mind sharp by playing games, doing puzzles, reading and maintaining an active and engaging social life with others. Even during this pandemic, phone and video calls can help engage your mental state through important social activity.

Find more ideas for navigating your later years with grace at spermidinelife.us.

— Family Features



Study Suggests High Blood Pressure Damages the Brain

A new study has come to a clear conclusion about blood pressure and brain function. Regardless of age, high blood pressure takes a toll on memory and thinking skills.

The findings, published in Hypertension, the journal of the American Heart Association, suggested that even hypertensive middle-aged folks experienced cognitive decline. And even if high blood pressure was kept in check until advanced age, cognition took a steep decline once it set in.

The long and short of the study is that if you've got high blood pressure at any age, you can almost bet that it will take a toll on your ability to think and remember.

But much like blood pressure, the effects on your brain may be correctable. The study found that getting blood pressure under control can preserve brain health and slow cognitive decline.

Therefore, controlling blood pressure may be an imperative component of preventing memory loss and preserving thinking skills.

There is still no proven cause-and-effect link between high blood pressure

and mental decline. There are a few indications as to why the association exists.

High blood pressure can limit the flow of oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to the brain, which can cause damage to brain cells.

Chronic inflammation is also linked to high blood pressure and damaged white matter in the brain. White matter damage can result in cognitive decline and increase dementia risk.

Thankfully, the study found that reducing blood pressure with medication and/or lifestyle measures was able to show benefits to brain health.

You can work on lowering blood pressure by:

- Continuing with any existing treatment or medications
- Slowly increasing the amount of daily physical activity
- Including more colorful fruits and vegetables into your diet
- Eating more fiber-rich whole grains
- Staying hydrated
- Limiting intake of processed foods, refined grains, and high-sugar items

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sports

Steadied by faith in Christ, Trevor Lawrence leads Clemson back to College Football Playoff



The Clemson Tigers were dominant from start to finish in their 34-10 win over Notre Dame in the ACC Championship Game on Saturday, avenging a loss to the Fighting Irish earlier in the season.

The College Football Playoff committee rewarded the 10-1 Tigers the following day by giving them the No. 2 seed in the playoff and a date with No. 3 Ohio State. It will be Clemson's sixth consecutive appearance in the playoff. Notre Dame also made the playoff as the No. 4 seed, along with No. 1 overall seed Alabama.

Junior quarterback Trevor Lawrence was once again the star for the Tigers. He torched the Fighting Irish defense to the tune of 412 yards of total offense — 322 yards and two touchdowns through the air, with 90 more yards and another score on the ground.

"It's just a great moment," Lawrence told ABC on the field after the game. "This team has just been through a lot this year, obviously with everything going on, the ups and downs, and just to see how steady we've been, just kept coming back to work every day.

"It just goes to show how much better

you can get throughout the year, and it's the most important thing who's playing well at the end of the year. And we've gotten so much better. I'm really just proud of this team — just a great overall win."

Lawrence, widely expected to be the No. 1 pick in next spring's NFL Draft, has electrified college football since he joined the Tigers as one of the highest-rated quarterback prospects of all time. He took over as the starter midway through his true freshman season in 2018 and led Clemson to a national title. Last year, he led his team back to the National Championship Game but fell to LSU.

This year, Lawrence is once again in the Heisman Trophy conversation despite not playing from Oct. 24 until Nov. 28, missing two games (including the first matchup against Notre Dame) due to a positive COVID-19 test. Lawrence's head coach, Dabo Swinney, believes his quarterback is deserving of college football's highest honor.

"It would be a crying shame if the Heisman didn't attach their name to Trevor Lawrence," Swinney said from the field during the ACC Championship trophy presentation. "That would be a shame. I know that's become a stat award

FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

By Rob Mooney

Christmas is over and that means that the college football season is just about finished as well. Obviously, it wasn't the type of season that we're used to, but then again, what is normal these days? Every week there were postponed and cancelled games all across the nation.

You have to give credit to the SEC and the Big 12 for finishing their regular seasons. Sure, they cut most of their non-conference schedules, but the regular season schedules were completed and we have some sort of a playoff set.

However, that's the problem. I don't know about you, but I'm just about tired of seeing the same 2 to 3 teams in the playoffs every single year. I wouldn't mind so much if more teams were involved, but when it's Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and insert some other random power five conference team in the last slot, it's just not

fun to watch.

I understand the logistics of adding teams to the playoff mix are tough. Do we really want college teams playing three games in January before the national title game?

There are 10 conferences in college football. You have the Power Five, (Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, ACC and the SEC). Each conference champion earns an automatic bid to the playoffs. At least one spot goes to the remaining five conferences and two go to any school, regardless of conference, for three at large bids. That gives us an eight team playoff and the two teams that advance to the championship game play three games total, only one more than the current setup.

I realize that there will always be teams left out when deciding playoffs within the NCAA model. It happens in basketball all

Game showdown, Lawrence wrote a Bible verse, Galatians 6:9, on his left wristband. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." — Galatians 6:9

The public display of his faith on some of college football's biggest stages is something Lawrence has been known to do before. He wrote "Romans 8:28" on his wrist during last season's National Championship Game.

As a freshman, before he had even made a name for himself nationally, Lawrence said he was steadied by the knowledge of who he is in Christ. After Lawrence was named the starter in September 2018, he was asked about

his calm demeanor, even in big games.

"That's just always my personality," he said at the time. "Football's important to me, but it's not my life. It's not the biggest thing in my life. I would say my faith is. That just comes from knowing who I am outside of that. No matter how big the situation is, it's not going to define me."

Lawrence will lean into his faith as he and his teammates face another College Football Playoff and an opportunity at another national championship. The road begins with the Sugar Bowl against the undefeated Big Ten champions, the Ohio State Buckeyes (6-0). The game is set for Friday, Jan. 1, at 8 p.m. ET from the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans.

Seahawks receiver DK Metcalf earns 1st Pro Bowl nod as he glorifies God in his breakout season

In his second season in the NFL, Seattle Seahawks wide receiver DK Metcalf has firmly established himself as one of the best wideouts in the league. And the NFL recently confirmed that, when Metcalf was named to the Pro Bowl for the first time.

The 2021 Pro Bowl will not be played due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but a total of 88 players were still named to the AFC and NFC Pro Bowl teams, with rosters determined by votes from fans, players and coaches.

Upon learning of his honor, Metcalf gave glory to God.

Following a rookie season with 58 catches for 900 yards and seven touchdowns, Metcalf has already topped those numbers in 2020.

That Metcalf is producing at such a level is a miracle (he even has the word tattooed on his back). In a recent ESPN Cover Story, Metcalf detailed how close he came to never playing football again after a neck injury in 2018, his redshirt sophomore season at Mississippi. Initially thought to have a stinger after a hit to his chin in a game, doctors discovered he had a broken neck.

"That's when the doctor was like, 'You



may not be able to play again. Football should be the last thing on your mind, and you need to have surgery," Metcalf told ESPN. "He said if I had gotten hit any harder, the bone would've pierced my spinal cord and I would have been paralyzed."

For two days Metcalf processed that news. He had dreamed of making it to the NFL, like his father, Terrance, who played seven years as an offensive lineman for the Chicago Bears. And DK had always been built for the sport.

"He was just a little baby with biceps all shaped up," Terrance told ESPN. "He just showed crazy strength when he was a young kid."

But then another neurosurgeon looked at Metcalf's CT scan and determined he could return to football. If he completed months of rehab, DK would be at no

greater risk, the doctor said. "I found myself, my real calling in life, while I was sitting at home for a month and a half in a neck brace and in a recliner," DK told ESPN. "I told myself, 'Remember these days, because these days are going to make you who you are.' It shaped me into the person I am today, just being at home, thinking about life, thinking about what I want to look like in five months or 10 years down the road."

Doctors approved him to begin training again after three months of rehab, and Metcalf declared for the 2019 NFL Draft. It was a risky move, coming off a serious neck injury.

But as Metcalf has risen in his journey to the NFL, he's seen football as a chance to share the Gospel.

"I look at football as a platform to help other people or to spread the Word of God," he told the Daily Mississippian. "I know many people don't want to just sit in church and just listen or to go to church. Me looking at it as 'How'd you get here, what'd you do?' I put my faith in God, my trust in God and that He's blessed me each and every day to play the game of football. Me spreading the Gospel through football is how I look at it."

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5 impactful, on-trend cabinet stylings

The kitchen is the heart of many homes, and careful planning is a necessity when it comes to redesigning this essential living space. Picking out cabinetry – and a color for those cabinets, in particular – can be a challenging process.

Everything from the style of your cabinets to the amount of natural light your space receives are key factors to consider when choosing an updated hue. While white cabinets are an everlasting choice, and wood-stained cabinetry once held 70% of the market, painted cabinets now account for 70% of sales, signaling a significant shift among homeowners and their preferences.

While there are virtually no limitations when it comes to the paint, stain and glaze options available to complement your overall kitchen design, the current stylings reflected in Wellborn Cabinet's annual color trends provides an opening to a range of impactful colors, such as grays, blues, blacks and wood tones, and a mixture of these on-trend hues.

A Gray for Every Mood

While gray cabinets have been a popular design choice for several years, much like shades of white, no two grays are exactly alike. Cabinet colors live on a color spectrum that ranges from warm to neutral to dark; warm grays have yellow or brown undertones while cool grays have hushed hues of blue.

Neutral gray, or Ash, is a true black and white mixture of colors. However, many homeowners are opting for warmer or cooler shades instead. For

example, light gray cabinets can create a chic, modern motif for homeowners looking to liven up their space while avoiding completely white cabinetry. One of the latest gray trends is a warmer gray that can look almost beige, earning the nickname "greige." Shades of dark gray – whether painted or stained – are also options for making a luxurious, traditional statement that can span ever-changing color trends.



A Sea of Blue

One of today's hottest trends in kitchen cabinetry is the use of shades of

blue, which provide calming and restful effects and the feeling of harmony and serenity. Pops of blue can be used as an accent color on islands or on either upper or base cabinets. To balance out these dramatic darks, many homeowners are opting to pair a bold color choice like a navy hue – such as Bleu – with neutral to warm whites, such as wool and bone white, to create a crisp, clean look. Gold hardware can be used on navy cabinetry for an upscale and regal look while silver-tone hardware provides a contemporary finishing touch.

While lighter shades of blue, like aqua, are perfect for keeping spaces light and airy, one of the latest colors to emerge is a mid-tone classic blue. A balanced option like Sapphire from Wellborn Cabinet, which is a classic, mid-tone royal blue available in the Premier and Estate Series framed cabinetry, as well as the full-access, frameless Aspire Series, can help create energy and inspiration for dining or cooking.

Mixed Wood Tones

Even with the rise in painted woods, stains are seeing a surge in popularity. The application of stain to natural wood can enhance the character of the cabinetry. Neutral color, dimension, texture and soft luxury can be layered into nearly any space to create a blended balance.

Wood grains typically pair well with whites, grays, blues and brass tones – all of which are popular colors in modern kitchens and other localized entertaining areas such as in-home refreshment areas or bars.

Dark Drama

Often overlooked as more of an "accent" color, black has become livable, luxe and inviting with textured woods adding rustic, homely charm. For example, Wellborn Cabinet offers a decorative laminate veneer option in matte black. Edgy but classic, black cabinets can pair perfectly with nearly any design element still in its natural

wooden state to create a distinct style that is all your own.

Multi-Tones and Unexpected Pops of Color

While all-white palettes have long reigned supreme in the kitchen for their timelessness and versatility, straying

from neutral tones can add an energetic and welcoming feel to nearly any space. Smaller kitchens that once had an all-white look are getting a facelift by adding a burst of bright, bold color on either the upper or base cabinets. Adding colorful retro appliances or using the island as a canvas for an energetic and welcoming pop of color can also make a similar statement and help create a space unique to your style and personality.

Many homeowners are even pairing two or more complementary colors to



create two- and three-toned looks. For example, lighter gray, Shale or blue can be used for the upper cabinets with darker shades used below for the base cabinetry, or a neutral hue can be used on the uppers with a contrast color on the bottom. In three-toned kitchens, an additional color or material is introduced to create asymmetry in the palette to help define zones or functions and keep the eye moving.

Find more on-trend kitchen inspiration and color options at Wellborn.com.

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Pro-life Operation Rescue recognizes President Trump as person of the year

Although “Time” magazine selected Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as its persons of the year, Operation Rescue honored President Trump with its 2020 Person of the Year Malachi Award.

The organization gives this award each year to recognize individuals who sacrificially work to advance the cause of protecting the unborn. It cited a number of reasons for its choice:

- During Trump’s administration, he has done more to protect unborn lives than any other president in U.S. history.

- When he first took office, he immediately set out to defund groups that promote abortion worldwide. He established policies at the Department of Health and Human Services that completely changed the philosophy of government from one that favored abortion businesses such as Planned Parenthood to one that promised to protect life “from conception until natural death.”

- His new Protect Life Rule blocked Planned Parenthood and other abortionists from receiving millions in Title X family planning grants.

- Most recently, the Trump administration withheld \$200 million from California for requiring all health insurance policies to include abortion coverage.

- Earlier this year, Trump pulled out of the pro-abortion United Nations’ World Health Organization. The WHO is one of the world’s top promoters and funders of



abortion internationally.

- Trump has appointed three Supreme Court justices — Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, the first openly pro-life Justice on the Supreme Court. This has produced the first conservative majority on the high court in decades.

- Trump’s more than 300 judicial appointments give pro-life supporters new hope that life-affirming legislation will withstand legal challenges. These appointments have created a climate where the possibility of overturning Roe v. Wade now exists and have placed the nation on a course toward building an abortion-free America.

- Trump has strengthened conscience clauses so no one can be forced to participate in an abortion who has moral objections to it. Just recently, the

Department of Justice, acting under these strong conscious protections, sued a Vermont hospital for forcing a nurse to participate in an abortion against her conscience.

- He has also protected religious liberties that ensure Americans can continue advocating on behalf of the unborn.

“President Trump has done more to build a culture of life in the United States than all previous presidents combined,” Operation Rescue President Troy Newman said, speaking of the Person of the Year award. “It is my honor to acknowledge these accomplishments and relay my deep gratitude to him for keeping and exceeding all his promises when it comes to the matter of abortion. He is a worthy recipient of the 2020 Person of the Year Malachi Award.”

—Alan Goforth / Metro Voice

Coach Tony Dungy: If you believe the Bible, you cannot support abortion

Tony Dungy is well-known for his accomplishments as a football coach, and he is also known for being an outspoken Christian. In 2007, his Indianapolis Colts’ win over the Chicago Bears marked the first time an African American had coached a Super Bowl-winning team. That year, ESPN quoted his words during an awards ceremony, “I’m proud to be the first African-American coach to win this. But again, more than anything, [Chicago Bears coach] Lovie Smith and I are not only African-American but also Christian coaches, showing you can do it the Lord’s way. We’re more proud of that.”

This week, Dungy spoke out on Twitter, stating his belief that pastors and others who claim to follow the Bible cannot support abortion.

According to Christian Headlines, Dungy commented on a tweet by Georgia radio host Tim Bryant, who had interviewed Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Raphael Warnock, a senior pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Bryant’s August 20 tweet did not reference Warnock by name, but read, “I spoke with a Dem candidate for U.S. Senate (and minister) today. Abortion is ‘healthcare’ and ‘reproductive justice and God is cool with it.’”

Dungy tweeted in response, “When you say ‘a minister’ does that mean they represent a church? I’d like to know what book the candidate uses as their foundation for truth and their guiding princi-

ples? It couldn’t be the Bible.”

Dungy then responded to a Twitter user who asked where abortion was mentioned in the Bible.

“Read Psalm 139. ... If you believe the Bible is the word of [God] you can’t read this and conclude that God doesn’t view a baby in the womb as a life,” Dungy replied.

Another commenter said, “Psalm 139 shouldn’t decide a woman’s reproductive health, it’s fiction,” to which Dungy replied, “If you don’t believe the Bible there’s nothing I can say to convince you. But why do you then think it’s wrong to kill someone who has been born? Who decided that’s wrong? Why is it wrong?”

To another Twitter user who claimed, there’s “NO place in government” for religion, Dungy tweeted, “You better be glad there is some religion and sense of right and wrong in government. If governing was left purely up to people we

would be pretty messed up.”

Another Twitter user claimed that seven of the Supreme Court justices who legalized abortion in the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision were “Republican judges,” and Dungy responded, “Right and wrong has nothing to do with political party. Right and wrong is based on following what God says, not our own ideas or wishes.”

In 2017, Dungy took heat for supporting NFL football player Benjamin Watson, who called abortion “the ultimate form of racism.” Dungy tweeted “I applaud my brother for speaking the truth on a controversial issue. Thank you.”

In 2019, Live Action News featured a story about Tony Dungy and his wife Lauren’s new book encouraging adoption. Seven of the Dungys’ 10 children are adopted.

—liveaction.org



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Preparations in Progress for Future Trafficking Shelter

The Project 2 Restore, a nonprofit in Topeka, Kansas announces that it has been selected for the 2021 Shelter Mentorship from the Institute for Shelter Care.

The Samaritan Women (TSW) – Institute for Shelter Care is leading a national initiative seeking to address the lack of services for victims of domestic sex trafficking. At present, there are only 177 agencies nationwide providing residential care for trafficking survivors. That equates to about 1,300 beds for what is estimated as upwards of 300,000 victims in the U.S.

With a 14-year history providing restorative care for survivors, The Samaritan Women has built a national training program to help equip others to start shelters for trafficked victims.

“TSW’s shelter mentorship program is a rigorous, long-term commitment,” shares Kim Checkeye, Director of Shelter Mentorship for the Institute. “Mentees selected for this program will undergo a 1-year training program and two additional years of mentorship to ensure that the shelter is established on a sure foundation and the quality of services to survivors is based on research and best practice.”

In Summer 2020 the Institute hosted a series of national webinars to introduce the application process for the mentorship program. Over 115 individuals from 31 states participated. After an extensive application and vetting

process, The Project 2 Restore of Topeka, Kansas was selected to be among the 2021 cohort.

“In reviewing applications, we are looking for organizational readiness, maturity, and clear community support,” acknowledges Jeanne L. Allert, Executive Director of The Samaritan Women. “Serving trafficking survivors requires an ‘all-in’ commitment. The work is emotionally and spiritually depleting. The most successful shelter programs in the United States are those with strong leadership, spiritual fortitude, and full community support.”

“Having the privilege over the past 2-1/2 years to work alongside others that are committed to helping victims of trafficking, my eyes were opened to the complexity of needs in serving this population and the lack of homes or shelters in our area that are equipped for them. Our hope is to provide a faith-based restoration program to provide shelter, programs and counseling to help victims make a healthy transition away from their past,” said Angela Boles, Executive Director of the future shelter home.

Selected mentees are offered a significant scholarship through the Institute but must be actively raising community support for the acquisition of their residential home and operating expenses. Donors interested in contributing to the establishment of a trafficking shelter in Topeka should contact: angie.boles@cox.net.

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Easter Egg Hunt following parade at Garfield Park playground! • **Vendor Market** open 10 am - 3 pm!
Dance troupes, martial arts, gymnastics, ballet, demonstrations & more at the **Health Fair** 10am-3pm!
Craft stations, Facepainting, Easter Bunny photos, Pony rides, Petting zoo, Inflatables, Games & kid's activities!
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Volunteers needed! Contact:
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