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NEW RESIDENT churchguide Family of God Church See inside back cover!

Mask mandate remains but "any party" can now opt-out



Several local Topeka businesses were quick to remove mask requirements after Shawnee County commissioners announced in late March that the county's mask mandate will remain in place, but there is now an option to opt out. Commissioners Aaron Mays, Bill Riphahn and Kevin Cook decided to keep the rule requiring masks or face coverings in Shawnee County, but now "any party" - Individuals, businesses, churches, and other organizations - can now choose to opt-out of the mandate. The decision takes effect immediately. Commissioner Aaron Mays made the motion to amend the mask mandate. "It's still that business' choice if they want to follow that order or not," he said. So, businesses, churches, non-profits or individuals can decide to allow

Please see MASK MANDATE page 3



Tulip Time 2021: Event renamed to honor founder

By Amy Buster | Metro Voice

Jerold Binkley Tulip Time 2021 is set for April 9-25. The event features nearly 100,000 tulips and flowering bulbs in Shawnee County Parks + Recreation's three featured gardens - Ted Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee, Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden and Doran Rock Garden and surrounding areas in Gage Park. In 2021, the event will once again be named for

its founder, Jerold Binkley who passed away in 2019.

Tulip Time began nearly 30 years ago in the home gardens of Jerold and Joan Binkley. Mr. Binkley desired to create an ongoing and beautiful county-wide event with Tulip Time. Today the event draws visitors from around the nation.

A ribbon cutting will be held during the Tulip Festival at the Lake April 17 to dedicate a special section of Ted Ensley Gardens in Mr. Binkley's honor.

There are two special events in addition to regular self-guided tours through the gardens. Tulips at Twilight features 35 lighted displays with more than 20,000 tulips illuminated by candle light and lighted displays. The displays include 15-foot tall illuminated tulips and larger-than-life illuminated flowers, illuminated mushrooms tall enough for patrons to walk beneath them, rivers of blue lights and floating

Please see TULIP TIME page 2

Downtown Farmers Market reopening for the season



The Downtown Topeka Farmers Market is now open on Saturday's through Nov. 7, from 7:30 a.m. to noon, at 12th & Harrison, south of the Judicial Building.

The open-air market is full of fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, arts & crafts, flower, home-baked goods and more. Visitors may also find whole wheat baked goods, fresh cut flowers, potted plants, local honey and much more. Service dogs are welcomed at the market.

Farmers Markets provide an opportunity for increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables and help to decrease the number of Kansans who do not eat enough fruits and vegetables.

If you're interested in becoming a vendor please visit the website: http://topekafarmersmarket.com/. For more information call (785) 249-4704 or email topekafarmersmarket@gmail.com.

Other farmers markets in the area will be opening in May.

Just 40 percent who normally attend Easter services expected this year

The arrival of the pandemic caused major disruptions to Easter services at many churches in 2020. Although churchgoers say they now are more comfortable with attending live services, many planned to stay home on Easter Sunday, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

Three-fourths of U.S. adults who regularly attend church services said they were confident they could attend without contracting or spreading COVID-19, a 12-point increase from last July, when 64 percent answered that way. Forty-two percent of regular churchgoers say they attended a service within the past month,

an increase from 33 percent last summer. Overall, interest in following Covid news is down across all demographics.

"As coronavirus cases, hospitalizations and deaths decline and vaccination rates rise across the United States, life in religious congregations is showing signs of slowly returning to normal," a Pew analysis of the data said. "Americans are increasingly confident they can safely go to services at a church, temple, mosque or other house of worship."

Still, many Christians say they don't feel comfortable attending in-person services for Easter this year. Although 62

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Life in U.S. Religious Congregations Slowly Edges Back Toward Normal

As coronavirus cases, hospitalizations and deaths decline and vaccination rates rise across the United States, life in religious congregations is showing signs of slowly returning to normal. A new Pew Research Center survey finds that Americans are increasingly confident they can safely go to services at a church, temple, mosque or other house of worship. And the percentage who say they actually have attended religious services – in person – in the past month is slightly higher than it was last summer. Still, the situation in U.S. congregations remains far from ordinary, and this promises to be the second consecutive highly atypical Easter season for Christians.

Three-quarters of U.S. adults who normally attend religious services now say they are “very” or “somewhat” confident they can do so safely, without spreading or catching the coronavirus – up 12 percentage points from when this question was last asked in July 2020. Over that period, there also has been a considerable drop in the share who say they think their congregation should be closed to help stop the spread of the virus.

Roughly four-in-ten people who typically attend religious services at least once or twice a month say they actually have done so, in person, during the past month – up 9 points since last summer. And as in-person attendance has trended upward, there has been a corresponding decline in the share of regular religious attenders who recently have watched services streamed online or on television.

But while in-person religious attendance has begun to rebound, it still is far from normal. Most people who say they generally attend religious services at least once or twice a month (58%) say they have not attended during the past month. And just four-in-ten U.S. Christians

(39%) plan to go in person to church services this Easter Sunday, which is sharply lower than the 62% who say they typically go to church on Easter.

Furthermore, while growing numbers of religious attenders think their congregations should be open, the clear majority continues to say that various modifications and restrictions – such as social distancing, mask-wearing and limiting the number of people who can attend at any one time – are needed to continue the fight against the spread of the virus. And these kinds of modifications remain widespread. In addition to the 17% of U.S. attenders who say their congregation currently is closed, another two-thirds say their congregation is now open but only on a modified basis due to the pandemic. Just 12% say their congregation is open and operating as usual – double the number who said this in July 2020, but still a far cry from normal.

These are among the key findings of a new Pew Research Center survey conducted March 1-7, 2021, among 12,055 U.S. adults on the Center’s online, nationally representative American Trends Panel. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 12,055 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points. More information on how the survey was conducted is available in the methodology.

Other key findings from the new study include:

- Just as in July 2020, eight-in-ten U.S. religious attenders – ranging from 73% among Catholics to 87% among those in the evangelical and mainline Protestant traditions – say their congregation is currently recording or streaming its services so that people can watch online or on TV.



- Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party are far more comfortable than Democrats and Democratic leaners with returning to normal congregational life sooner rather than later. Among those who typically attend religious services on a monthly basis (or more), Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to say they have attended services in person during the past month (57% vs. 26%).

- Compared with the summer of 2020, in-person religious attendance – and confidence that it is safe – is up in all regions of the country. For instance, the share of religious attenders who say they are “very confident” they can attend services safely, without catching or spreading COVID-19, has grown by 13 percentage points in both the Northeast and the West (where the shares who are now “very confident” stand at 47% and 44%, respectively), by 12 points in the Midwest (to 49% now) and by 7 points in the South (where 42% are now “very confident” they can attend services safely).

- In addition to its questions about congregational involvement, the new survey also asked Americans whether their own faith has grown stronger, weaker or not changed much as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. It finds that roughly one-quarter of U.S. adults say their religious faith has grown stronger as a result of the pandemic, while 4% say their faith has been weakened; the remainder say that their faith has not changed much, including those who say they were not religious to begin with and still are not.

- While Black Americans are among the groups least inclined to return to religious life as normal in their congregations right now (before they think it is safe to do so), they are the most inclined to say their own religious faith has grown stronger as a result of the pandemic. Overall, 38% of Black adults say their faith has grown stronger as a result of the pandemic, compared with 27% of Hispanic adults and 19% of non-Hispanic White adults who say this.

EASTER SERVICES

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percent of all self-identifying Christians say they normally attend an Easter service, only 39 percent plan to do so this year. Among evangelicals, 52 percent plan to attend an Easter service, compared to the 70 percent of evangelicals who say they normally attend. Among black Protestants, the gap is even wider: 68 percent normally attend Easter services, but 31 percent will attend this year.

Among other findings in the survey among regular churchgoers:

- 64 percent say their house of worship is open for in-person services but with restrictions.

- 17 percent say their house of worship is closed for in-person services.

- 12 percent say their house of worship is “open as normal” without any restrictions.

- 15 percent of regular churchgoers say they believe their own congregation should be closed for services, a decrease from 26 percent last July.

Just one-third of Black Christians (32%) plan to go to their house of worship on Easter this year, compared to 41% of white Christians and 37% of Hispanic Christians. In a typical year, Blacks are more likely than either of the other two groups to be in church on Easter.

Pew’s new survey was conducted online from March 1-7. More than 12,000 Americans took part and the margin of error for the full sample is 1.5%.

TULIP TIME

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lanterns in the Asian garden. Patrons may enjoy live music and Old Prairie Town building tours on Friday and Saturday evenings. Tulips at Twilight is

set for 7-10 p.m. April 9-25. Admission is a \$5 donation with children five and under free.

Tulip Time Festival at the Lake is set for April 17 at Ted Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee. The event is from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. A \$5 donation for the day gains guests entry to the

gardens, live musical performances, vendors, classic car show and fun for the kids.

Tulip Time has been attended in the past by people from 68 cities in Kansas, multiple states and visitors from the United Kingdom, India, Russia, Australia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Tulip Time is an annual destination popular with everyone from area residents to out-of-state visitors on bus tours. A \$5 donation is suggested at Ted Ensley Gardens and Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden to help cover the cost of the event and enable Tulip Time to continue in future years. Guided tours for groups of 15 or more with advance reservations are available at Ted Ensley Gardens and Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden (785) 251-6865.

Following the blooming season for the tulips, the bulbs are removed and sold to the public. Tulip Time is a combined effort of Friends of Ted Ensley Gardens, Friends of Ward-Meade, the Parks For All Foundation and Shawnee County Parks + Recreation.

For more information watch the various event pages on Facebook.



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New alternative health care business opens

A local Topeka woman has opened a new health-related business in southwest Topeka. Danyle Harvey, a veteran, is the owner and visionary for Empower Life, a one-stop shop network for health and wellness.

The business, located at 3345 SW Gage Blvd, will focus on bringing together a full realm of alternative health and wellness care. Services included are Red Light Therapeutics, Body Sculpting, Skin Rejuvenation, Fitness, Yoga, Classes, Personal Training, Massage and more.

Harvey will host a Grand Opening at her new business on Friday, April 9, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

For more information or to book appointments, call (785) 925-9364 or email info@empower2.life.



Empower Life, a new alternative health care business now open at 3345 SW Gage Blvd., features a large open space for classes, and a massage room complete with a zero-gravity chair.



Doyle Pryor is featured speaker at C5Alive POWER Luncheon

Doyle Pryor, senior pastor at First Southern Baptist Church, will be the featured speaker at the C5Alive "POWER" Luncheon to be held April 8, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage Blvd.

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 May 13.

C5Alive "POWER" luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month.

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 (cancelled for 2021). The group is planning a Harvest Festival this fall.

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](https://www.facebook.com/C5Alive), or call 785-640-6399.



Pryor

MASK MANDATE

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their employees and patrons to opt-out of the mask mandate while on-premises.

They also have the option to retain and enforce the mask mandate on their premises, whether an individual customer agrees or not.

Numerous recent conversations on Facebook have shown that most people were glad to see the change, but some

others were worried the change came too soon.

This decision came about as some area businesses asked the board not to get rid of the mask mandate entirely.

All health orders, including mask mandates are still in effect on all Shawnee County property, such as parks and buildings. The City of Topeka will also continue to require masks for the public who come to do business at any city building (City Hall, Holliday, Municipal Court, LEC, Fire Stations,

etc).

The mask mandate has been in place in Shawnee County since July 6, 2020.

Other counties across Kansas have taken various actions recently, from retaining current mask mandate rules, to eliminating them altogether.

Ten-digit dialing to be required soon in Kansas

Kansans that live in area codes 785 or 620 will soon be required to use 10-digit dialing when making local calls. This change will make it easier for persons in crisis to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Last July, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved 988 as the new abbreviated number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. As a result, any area code that uses the 988 prefix in telephone numbers is mandated by the FCC to adopt 10-digit dialing. That includes Kansas area codes 785 and 620, which cover the majority of the state. In total, 82 area codes in 36 states will make the change.

It will take time to get in the habit of using 10-digit dialing (example: 785-XXX-XXXX), so a practice period has been established. Callers are encouraged to begin using 10-digit calling on April 24, 2021. Any calls dialed with 7-digits will still go through during this practice period.

Beginning October 24, 2021, callers in 785 and 620 area codes must use 10-digit dialing or the call will not go through. The only exceptions are any three digit abbreviated numbers available in the community, such as 911. Callers will still dial 1 + the area code and telephone number for all long distance calls.

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Kansas News Briefs from around the state

Kansas Governor's Mask Mandate Overturned by Legislative Leaders

TOPEKA, Kan. (KPR) — The Kansas Legislative Coordinating Council has voted 5-2 to revoke Governor Laura Kelly's new mask order. The governor also issued several executive orders in connection to the coronavirus pandemic. The LCC took no action on the other 12 orders issued.

Kansas Expects Federal Policy to Cost It \$360 Million over 3 Years

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas expects to lose a total of \$360 million in tax revenues over three years because of a change in federal policies on COVID-19 relief for businesses. That development complicates legislative debates over state spending and cutting income taxes and clouds what for months has otherwise been a sunny state fiscal picture with tax collections exceeding expectations. The expected loss was outlined in a short memo to six legislative leaders this week from the state Department of Revenue's top administrator and Democratic Governor Laura Kelly's budget director. The memo said relief legislation approved in December by Congress created a new federal income tax deduction for some businesses.

Classes Resume in One of Last Still-Virtual Kansas Districts

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Students in Kansas City, Kansas, are back in classrooms for the first time in more than a year. In-person classes resumed Wednesday in one of the last districts in the state still learning mostly virtually because of the pandemic. Wednesday was the date lawmakers set for public schools to begin offering in-person classes in a bill that Governor Laura Kelly has not yet signed. Most schools already had returned to in-person classes. But because the Kansas City, Kansas, area was hit particularly hard by the pandemic, the district had allowed only a small number of students to return in person before now.

GOP Says Pandemic Justifies Special Tracing Rules in Kansas

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Republican lawmakers argue that the pandemic justifies special rules in Kansas for protecting the privacy of people exposed to COVID-19. They have advanced a proposal to preserve them over public health groups' objections. The Senate voted 26-14 Wednesday to approve a bill that would make contact tracing rules for the novel coronavirus permanent. That sets COVID-19 apart from other infectious diseases, such as syphilis or hepatitis. The GOP-controlled Legislature enacted the special privacy rules at Republican Attorney General Derek Schmidt's urging, but they are set to expire May 1. Critics say it makes little sense to have different rules for different diseases. The measure went to the Kansas House.

GOP Legislators Disagree over Kansas Unemployment Upgrades

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Republican state legislators don't yet agree on how much time to give the Kansas Department of Labor to upgrade its aged technology for its troubled unemployment system. Both the Kansas House and Senate have approved legislation aimed at modernizing the system that would give the GOP-controlled Legislature more oversight of

the upgrades. The state Senate unanimously approved a version Wednesday under which legislative leaders would set deadlines for finishing the upgrades. The Kansas House approved a version in early March that would require the department to finish the work by the end of 2022. The department has had trouble getting benefits to jobless workers and has been beset by scammers.

GOP Lawmakers Advance Measure to Tighten Kansas Voting Laws

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Republican lawmakers in Kansas are joining GOP colleagues nationwide in efforts to tighten voting laws. The state Senate gave first round approval Wednesday to a bill that would make it harder for churches, civic groups, neighbors and candidates to collect and return absentee ballots for voters. Candidates would be limited to delivering ballots for immediate family members. Republicans in the GOP-controlled Legislature argue that they're trying to prevent "ballot harvesting" that could lead to fraud. They presented no evidence that current policies lead to fraud, and critics say the measure would prevent disabled and some elderly voters from returning their ballots.

Kansas Lawmakers OK Bill Mandating Civics Test for Students

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — The Kansas Senate has passed a Republican bill that would require graduating high school students to pass a civics test. The GOP-controlled state Senate voted 24-15 for the bill Wednesday. The Republican-controlled House narrowly approved it in early March, but senators made changes that the Kansas House must review before the measure can go to Democratic Governor Laura Kelly. It would require public and private school students to pass a test or series of tests consisting of 60 randomly selected questions from the U.S. citizenship test. The bill does not set a passing grade, leaving it up to teachers. Students would be able to take the test multiple times until they pass.

Mom Tells Daughter She's Been Shot as April Fools' Day Joke

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — Wichita police

weren't laughing after a woman told her daughter she had been shot as an April Fools' Day joke. Police Lt. Ronald Hunt said the woman called her daughter early Thursday, said she had been shot and hung up. Hunt says between 15 and 20 officers, as well as fire officials and emergency responders went to the family's home after the daughter called 911. When no one responded, officers wearing shields and with weapons drawn, broke down the door. They found no one at home. The woman, 58-year-old Arnthia Willis, was arrested Thursday on suspicion of unlawful request for emergency service assistance.

Police: Man in Home Killed by Stray Bullet from Firefight

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Police in Kansas City, Kansas, say a man inside his home was killed by a stray bullet from a gun battle that took place outside on the street. Police say the shooting happened shortly after 3 pm, when an argument involving a group of people erupted in gunfire. Police have not given other details of the shooting, but witnesses along the stretch of Farrow Avenue told news outlets they heard at least a dozen gunshots. Police have not released the name of the man killed. The Kansas City Star reports that the death marked the city's fifth homicide this year. Kansas City, Kansas, saw 55 homicides in all of 2020.

US Looks to Keep Critical Sectors Safe from Cyberattacks

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top Biden administration official says the government is undertaking a new effort to help electric utilities, water districts and other critical industries protect against potentially damaging cyberattacks. Anne Neuberger, deputy national security adviser, says in an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday that the goal is to ensure that control systems serving 50,000 or more Americans have the core technology to detect and block malicious cyber activity. The threat to those systems was laid bare in February after a hacker's botched attempt to poison the water supply of a small Florida city raised alarms about how vulnerable the nation's utilities may be to attacks by more sophisticated intruders.

Man Accused of Tampering with Ellsworth County Water System

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Federal prosecutors have charged a 22-year-old man with tampering with a public water system. Acting U.S. Attorney Duston Slinkard said Wednesday that Wyatt Travnichek, of Ellsworth County, accessed the Ellsworth County Rural Water District's computers in March 2019. He allegedly was able to shut down processes that affect cleaning and disinfecting procedures. He was charged with tampering with a public water system and reckless damage to a protected computer during unauthorized access. Travnichek could face up to 25 years in prison if he is convicted.

Authorities Identify Body Found in 1990 in Missouri as Girl from Kansas

ANDERSON, Mo. (AP) — Authorities in McDonald County, Missouri, say they have identified a woman whose body was found in 1990. The sheriff's office said Wednesday forensic testing identified the woman, who had been dubbed "Grace Doe," as Shawna Beth Garber of Kansas. Her decomposed remains were found in


December 1990 in southwestern McDonald County. An autopsy revealed she had been raped and strangled about two months before her body was found. In 2020, Othram, a forensics company, extracted DNA from the remains. McDonald County authorities eventually found a half-sister who donated DNA. On Monday, the sheriff's department was notified that the two women's DNA matched.

Former KU Basketball Coach Roy Williams Retiring at North Carolina

UNDATED (AP) - The University of North Carolina says Hall of Fame basketball coach Roy Williams is retiring. The school announced Williams's decision this (THUR) morning. The news came two weeks after he closed his 18th season with the Tar Heels and 33rd season as a head coach overall going back to his time at the University of Kansas. Williams won 903 games in a career that included three national championships with the Tar Heels in 2005, 2009 and 2017.

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FINANCIAL PLANNING

Dealing with debt collectors

Dear Dave,

Do you have suggestions on how to interact with debt collectors? Sometimes they are reasonable and easy to work with, but others are rude and pushy. Your advice would be appreciated.
Paul

Dear Paul,

You'll run into all sorts of collectors, no matter what kind of debt you have. Occasionally they are friendly and understanding, while others can be downright mean and nasty. Whatever their approach is, you have to keep in mind they're all after one thing—your money.

Most debt collectors prey on a person's emotions and lack of confidence. If you don't know your rights, they can scare you by using bogus threats. Understand what I'm saying here, Paul. If you have debt, you have a legal and moral obligation to pay it. At the same time, you need to calmly and confidently control these kinds of conversations. You might have made some financial mistakes, but that doesn't mean you should allow someone to abuse you.

When it comes to dealing with debt collectors, keep track of all the calls and emails. Write down the names of anyone you talk to and when they called. A record of all contact is important, and it will make it easier to report them if they violate the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. If the collector agrees to settle the debt, get it in writing and keep the document as proof in case they "forget" they made the offer.

Also, be completely up to speed on your accounts. Know what you owe, who you owe, and have a record of all the payments you've made. Knowing the facts gives you the upper hand in any situation. Don't be intimidated by debt collectors, either. Calmly explain your situation, the reason you're behind on the debt, and how you plan to pay it off. Don't get emotional and let yourself get

drawn into an argument or shouting match. If they insult you, or yell or curse at you—yes, this happens sometimes—hang up immediately.

Financial troubles like debt can make every aspect of your life feel messed up. If you want to get back on track, start living on a written, monthly budget, and attack your debts using the debt snowball system. It's not easy, and it takes discipline, hard work, and sacrifices, but it's worth it!
—Dave

Saving for a car

Dear Dave,

I decided a couple of years ago to start following your plan. Part of getting out of debt for me included paying off my car. I'm taking your advice, and saving up to pay cash for my next vehicle. I know you like mutual funds, so should I put the money I'm setting aside for that purchase in a mutual fund?
Corey

Dear Corey,

I'm glad to hear you've decided to get control of your money. Mutual funds are great for long-term investing, and by long-term investing I'm talking about a bare minimum of five years—preferably 10. But I wouldn't recommend them as a way of saving up for a vehicle purchase. The problem with mutual funds, in the type of short-term scenario you're talking about, is they can go up, or down, in value.

I'd suggest a simple savings or money market account when it comes to stashing the money you're saving for a newer car. They don't pay much in terms of interest, but your money will be safe, and you won't have the ups and downs of the stock market to worry about.

Did you know the average monthly payment in America for a new car right now about \$554 a month? It makes my head hurt to think about that much cash



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

davesays

flying out the window every month on something that's dropping in value like a rock. Even if you just stashed that kind of money in a shoebox you'd have over \$6,600 saved in just a year. And despite what some people say, that's enough to buy a dependable, pre-owned car. Stick with the plan, Corey!
—Dave

Relationships and giving

Dear Dave,

Do you have guidelines for giving when it comes to helping family members? My wife and I are both 52, we're debt-free, and we have savings along with about \$750,000 in retirement. We agree with you that it's a bad idea to loan money to relatives, but we were hoping you could give us a little extra guidance.
Samuel

Dear Samuel,

I love that you have a helping and generous heart toward your family. Wanting to help is a noble and caring thing. Wanting to help in the best way possible for all concerned in a sign of maturity and wisdom.

The big thing is to make sure

you're helping someone get back on their feet, and make positive changes in their life. You're not helping anyone when you give a drunk a drink, so you have to ask yourself if your generosity is really helping them or if you're just enabling bad behavior.

Also, you can't give to a point where you're putting your own household at risk. You have to continue to be responsible with your finances where your own family is concerned, as well.

This isn't about being a control freak, Samuel. It's about using the resources God has given you in a wise and responsible manner. In human terms, that means helping someone get out of a mess they're in, while at the same time ensuring they're working to make sure they never end up there again!
—Dave

Nearly 1/3 of Investors 65+ Sold at the Market Bottom

By Ryan Shumaker
Smartvestor Pro at
The Retirement Team

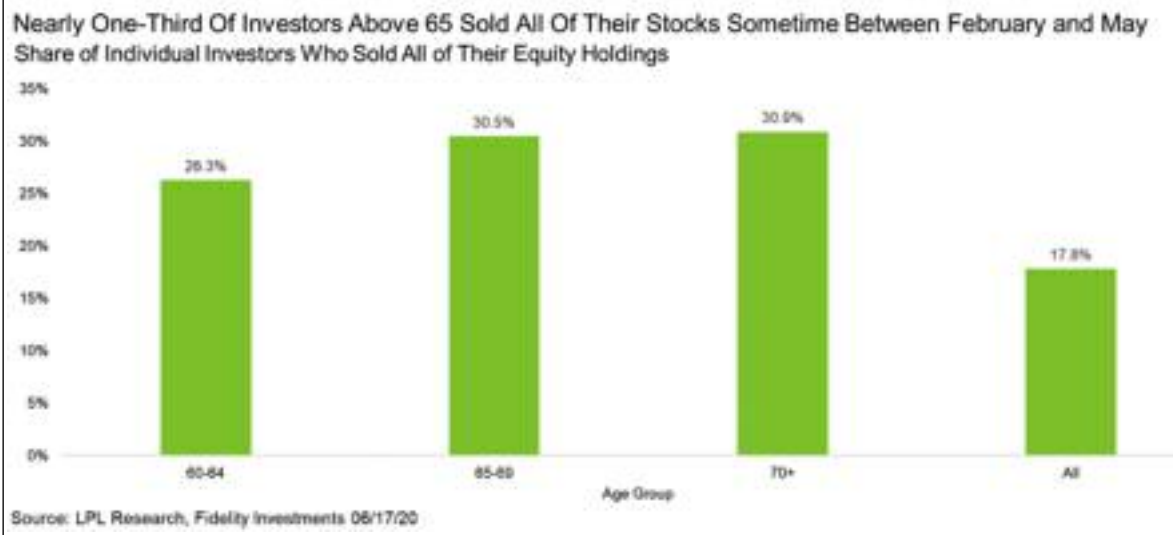


Typically when you fail to plan, you are planning to fail. It's best to have a plan before trouble comes, rather than make emotional decisions

began in March of 2009 and ended in March of last year is the longest one we've ever recorded in the United States. It likely left too many feeling far too confident and then at the first sign of trouble when a few years of gains were wiped out very quickly, panic set in and those losses got locked in by many that sold everything.

ter piece of mind, less worry, and less bad decision making, especially if the plan you have ahead of time ensures your retirement income stream will be unaffected by falling markets.

If you are serious about getting such a plan created, our firm is serious about helping. Whether or not there is a second selloff later this year after the large



on the fly during times of duress as this often leads to the exact wrong decision. Incredibly nearly 1/3 of investors 65+ (a group typically in or near retirement) sold 100% of their investments in stocks or stock mutual funds between February and May of last year; a time in which stocks were down significantly.

One year since stocks hit their bottom on March 23rd the S&P 500 is up 68.9%, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is up 75.9%, and the Nasdaq is up a whopping 95.2%! It is clear that that sold exactly at the wrong time are still sitting on the sidelines too in cash or money market funds given that there is now currently more money in money market funds than there ever has been in history. In fact, there is nearly twice the amount sitting in cash right now than there was just 5 years ago, according to LPL Research.

Certainly 'selling low' and 'buying high' is not a good investment strategy, but unfortunately it is one that far too many that are close to or in retirement are following. The bull market that

It is important to always have a plan ahead of time for not only what to buy and when to buy it, but what to sell and when to sell it. It is also important for those near or in retirement to have a strategy and plan in place for what you're going to do when markets fall and how you're going to generate reliable income from your investments during such times. Unless you have a really short retirement it is not a question of if, but when and how many times the market will fall during your retirement. Relying on emotions to guide you on the fly rather than having a plan ahead of time will too often lead to poor outcomes.

Typically when someone first comes into our office they are positioned well if markets perpetually go up, but have no plan and will do poorly when they go sideways or down. It is important to create a plan for those two eventualities as again it is not a question of if, but when and how many times they will occur in the future. Knowing what you're going to do ahead of time can help lead to bet-

run up we've seen should not impact a good, solid retirement plan as a good, solid retirement plan should have a strategy to deal with future market sell-offs, regardless of what causes them or when they occur.

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USA Today's Bigoted Call to Ban Oral Roberts U. from the NCAA Tourney

By Dr. Michael Brown

The founding of higher education in America was almost entirely Christian, to the point that, even by 1881, "80 percent of the colleges in the United States were church related and private." As one Christian author pointed out, "106 of the first 108 colleges were started on the Christian faith. By the close of 1860 there were 246 colleges in America. Seventeen of these were state institutions; almost every other one was founded by Christian denominations or by individuals who avowed a religious purpose."

Yet an op-ed published in USA Today has called for the NCAA to ban Oral Roberts University because of its biblically-based, Christian standards. What an example of bigotry and intolerance, not to mention an anti-American spirit – and I mean the op-ed, not ORU.

According to sports columnist Hemal Jhaveri, as ORU made a surprising run in the annual NCAA men's basketball tourney, "the university's deeply bigoted anti-LGBTQ+ policies can't and shouldn't be ignored."

Put another way, ORU's Christian views shouldn't be ignored.

Yes, Jhaveri tells us, "Twice in their student handbook, Oral Roberts

specifically prohibits homosexuality. In their student conduct section, under the heading of Personal Behavior, the school expressly condemns homosexuality, mentioning it in the same breath as 'occult practices.'"

How horrific and unthinkable. A Christian university founded by Oral Roberts holds to Christian values. A Christian university that bases its code of conduct on the Bible holds to biblical values.

Oh, the bigotry. ORU should be banned!

Yes, this is the thought process of Jhaveri, who is so shocked by ORU's code of conduct that she quotes an entire section verbatim:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, modesty and morality... Certain behaviors are expressly prohibited in Scripture and therefore should be avoided by members of the University community. They include theft, lying, dishonesty, gossip, slander, backbiting, profanity, vulgarity (including crude language), sexual promiscuity (including adultery, any homosexual behavior, premarital sex), drunkenness, immodesty of dress and occult practices.

How about we quote the words of the apostle Paul directly – the words of the Bible? Paul wrote, "Or do you



not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Jhaveri's problem is with Scripture, not with ORU. And Jhaveri, through the vehicle of USA Today, is, by implication, calling for the NCAA to ban any university that honors Scripture.

Think about that for a moment. And think about what the Christian founders of Harvard and Yale and Princeton and a host of other major universities would have felt had they known what would happen to their

beloved schools.

One of the original rules of conduct at Harvard stated: "Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life." And, "Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day . . ."

Now, a sports columnist writing for a national publication wants the NCAA to ban a university from competition because it honors the Scriptures. Is it any wonder that America is so morally and spiritually confused today? When it comes to sexual mores, our fall has been precipitous.

■ Please see NCAA page 7

What Does God Think of Your Name?



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DECKER

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hopefortoday

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold" (Proverbs 22:1). What do you think of that statement from the Bible? It should make you stop and reflect on the kind of life you are living.

When your name is said in your community, what do you think comes to a person's mind? What about among your family and closest friends, those who know you best, who know both your good and bad? What about with God? Keep in mind, He is a Spirit that is present everywhere all the time. Meaning, He has seen everything we have ever done and heard everything we have ever spoken. He also knows everything that has ever passed through our mind: all images, thoughts and motives. Based on that, what if someone came to God in heav-

en and mentioned your name to Him, what do you think would come to His mind?

The Bible verse clearly communicates that a person's name has significance because it is a reflection of their life. And it states that a good name is to be chosen over riches. What does riches mean? It refers to a person's strong focus on increased income, possessions, influence and all the different things that money can do at the expense of a good name. But what is at the heart of the pursuit of riches? Self. We want, what we want. This reveals our perspective on life. First, we are the most important person in our life and primarily focus on what has a direct or indirect benefit on us. Second, we are only focused on the present or future of this life.

What does the proverb mean by desiring a "good name"? It does not primarily refer to a good name among people, because that would lead to pleasing others in order to be accepted by them. It indicates desiring a good name before God and acceptance by Him. This is the wiser and to be sought out above everything else in life.

How does one achieve a good name? It starts with admitting your life has been primarily about you, which has led to disobedience against God and

the disrespect of others. It is lifting your eyes off yourself and up toward God's only Son, Jesus, who died and rose again. It is calling upon God in faith, asking Him to help change your ways, and maybe even going to others to make things right whom you have wronged. It is God pouring His Spirit within you and giving you His character and power to live differently. And according to His Word, your life will start to become marked by a new set of qualities: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

The new life God will bring upon us will have three amazing promises. First, we will receive a new name. Yes, we will keep our previous name, but in being changed by God our name will become "good" by Him, thereby becoming new. Second, Jesus promises that our new name is written down in a book of life He possesses. Second, He promises that one day in the future, beyond this life, He will confess our new name before God the Father in heaven and all the angels.

If you continue living as you are, the God who knows all things will judge you accordingly and the present and eternal consequences that come will be justified. But if you desire a good name and favor with God above the tempo-



ral things of this life, and turn to Him with all your heart, you will escape His judgement and receive a new name that one day will be voiced among the angels.

A prayer for you - "Lord God, I pray you will help us to examine our ways. Have we been only living for ourselves and this life? Have we disrespected others and disobeyed you in the pursuit of our interests? Lift our eyes toward You. You are King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Save us. Change us. Give us a new name that we might live honorably before You. 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.

When Heaven Says “No”

By Dr. David Watson

Have you ever prayed for something you really believed you needed to have happen and gotten silence from Heaven? I know I have. Have you prayed about something over and over and over again, agonizing on your knees and wanting the Lord to answer in the affirmative but God seemed to say “no”? I know I have.

One of the toughest things to deal with in the Christian experience is knowing that if God doesn't answer “yes” to our prayer it is going to be a huge problem. Yet the Lord says “no”. God often says “no” by His silence. Why would our Lord do that to us?

Perhaps that prayer was for healing for a loved one who would die without divine intervention. Yet God said “no”. Perhaps it was for relief from physical pain or mental anguish, but God said “no”. Perhaps it was for a financial crisis you were facing or an opportunity to leave a place or a job you needed out of. We had a deadline, we prayed, in faith, for the kingdom, for the glory of God, in Jesus' name and God said “no”.

Please don't think you are unique in having this happen to you. I dare say it has happened to every follower of Jesus Christ at one time or another. But what are we to make of it? Is there any encouragement we can take from a “no” from heaven?

The apostle Paul was arguably one of the greatest Christians of all time. He was a man who undoubtedly was in touch with the ways and will of God. Yet he got a big “no” from heaven on at least one major request he made. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 where we find the story:

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Paul had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan, that harassed him (Greek “kolaphizo” – to beat with the fist). Though this thorn kept him humble it apparently hindered his ministry greatly as well. I think the term “thorn” is used because it was painful and it was nagging the apostle.

We don't know what this thorn in the flesh was for sure. At the end of the book of Galatians we read that he writes with very large letters with his own hand (Galatians 6:11). This has caused many to say that the thorn in the flesh was an eyesight problem that required Paul to

dictate his letters and thus that slowed his productivity for the gospel and frustrated him. The experience on the road to Damascus that temporarily blinded him may also give credence to this view.

While we can't be sure what Paul's thorn in the flesh was we can be sure of is: Paul made it a serious matter of prayer. Paul prayed, actually pleaded, 3 times for it to be removed and the Lord didn't grant His request. Rather, somewhere in this conversation with the Lord, Paul heard very distinctly the Lord's reason for the “no” answer. The Lord said “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”. God owes us no explanations, but He gave one to Paul that I am sure applies to all of us.

In reality, we don't need our prayer to be answered the way we want it to be answered. Why? Because when God says “no” He will be sure to supply the we grace to go forward. Though we are weak, His power is perfected in such weakness. We are actually stronger and more effective when we are weak often times because of heaven's “no”. Paul says he will boast in his weakness because in that weakness the power of Christ rests on him.

For the last 12 months starting on March 15, 2020 we prayed not once, not twice, not thrice but almost countless times for Almighty God to stomp out Covid19. We've prayed for the death toll



to albeit. We've prayed for the transmission rate to lower. We've prayed for things to get back to normal. We've prayed on our knees, in our Churches, in the streets, in front of the hospital, in faith, for God's Glory and in Jesus' name. And yet.....many prayers got a “no”.

Our Lord did not leave our prayers unanswered. He has answered many of them the same way He answered the apostle Paul. I'm not sure I was fully listening this past year because I wanted a different answer. I am doing my best to listen now. Yes, Lord Your grace is sufficient. Today His people and His church are not weak but strong because the power of Christ is more evident in us when we are weak than at our strongest

moments.

A few days ago I said to someone “I wonder what Calvary (the church I'm privileged to Pastor) would be like if Covid19 hadn't hit”. At that moment something amazing occurred to me. I am a better Christian and the Church I Pastor is a better Church, dare I say it, in the midst of this global pandemic because God said “no” to many of my and our churches requests. How can that be? Because “His grace is sufficient for us, for His power is made perfect in our weakness.” Amen!

Dr. David Watson is the senior pastor at Calvary Chapel Staten Island. This article was reprinted from his blog, <https://nycshepherd.com/>.

NCAA

continued from page 6

Jhaveri writes, “As a private university and under the banner of fundamentalist Christian beliefs, the school is free to impose whatever standards of behavior they see fit, even if those standards are wildly out of line with modern society and the basic values of human decency. Now, as Oral Roberts gains national attention, the focus shouldn't just be on their very good men's basketball team, but on their prejudiced teachings and moral regressiveness.”

“That Oral Roberts wants to keep its students tied to toxic notions of fundamentalism that fetishize chastity, abstinence and absurd hemlines is a larger cultural issue that can be debated. What is not up for debate however is their anti-LGBTQ+ stance, which is nothing short of discriminatory and should expressly be condemned by the NCAA.”

In point of fact, USA Today should be ashamed of itself for providing a platform for such bigoted, anti-Christian, Bible-mocking commentary.

The truth is that ORU is not “fetishiz[ing] chastity, abstinence and absurd hemlines.” Rather, in a sea of immorality and promiscuity and immodesty, ORU is simply calling for decency and modesty and integrity.

The university also recognizes that – perish the thought – marriage is the union of a man and a woman. But for Jhaveri, this too, is an example of religious fanaticism. She writes, “as part

of their honor code, the university requires students to abide by a pledge saying that they will not engage in ‘homosexual activity,’ and that they will not be united in marriage other than the marriage between one man and one woman.”

Oh, the horror. A Christian university honoring marriage. Ban them!

Sadly, Jhaveri, with the help of USA Today, is guilty of glorifying anti-Christian, Bible-mocking, morality-twisting bigotry, thereby spreading hatred and narrow-mindedness rather than tolerance and grace. A Christian university should not be penalized for being Christian. As for those who disapprove of those standards, there are hundreds of others schools to attend.

In response, then, to this ill-conceived editorial, Christian schools should be strongly encouraged to reinforce (and/or return to) their Christian roots, ORU should be applauded for standing strong, and USA Today should be challenged for giving place to such Bible-bashing bigotry.

Having said that, let the young people compete and have fun. Jhaveri's editorial should not be allowed to detract from the moment – or from ORU's unlikely run so far.

Dr. Michael L. Brown (www.askdrbrown.org) is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. His latest book is Evangelicals at the Crossroads: Will We Pass the Trump Test? Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube.

My Warning About The Remnant Of God In America

By Mario Murillo

There are some scary people in California. It is 7:30 a.m. Preachers are waiting outside of Christian Worship Center in Manteca, as if they were going to a rock concert. They know lunch isn't until noon, but here they are, so excited to get one of the 1,200 seats inside that they showed up, four and a half hours early.

The doors were scheduled to open at 11 a.m. Yet, we have no choice but to open them a full hour early, and by 10:50 a.m. the house is 80% full.

Inside, megachurch pastors sit beside pastors of smaller churches. Love levels the field. Tears flow. They are singing their hearts out. Why is there so much intensity and joy? It is because of the lockdown.

For most, this is the first time in a year they have been able to be in a packed church with on-fire believers. It is not until now that they have come to realize how much they have missed having church.

This blog is about them, not me. It is about a mighty core of Christians with untapped power.

What is it like to preach to an audience like this? They are so open and hungry that my words are absorbed as fast as I can say them.

Here's the thing. My message is not that great. I am not the draw. They are reaching up to God with unending passion. Their zeal is the primary thing. I can add very little to what God was already doing in them.

It is now 12:30 p.m. We break to go

eat outside. I tell them we will pray for them after lunch, when they come back inside. Experts say that it is very likely that many will fail to come back in after they eat. It is the perfect break for them to just eat and then head home. After all they are very busy leaders.

The experts are dead wrong. Everyone came back. And, of course, miracles broke out on the remnant of God. They all reached out to the Holy Spirit and were overwhelmed with more than they expected. There is not a square inch of this sanctuary that is not radiating with the glory of God. It feels like something is being born.

I remember how Donald Trump drew vast crowds in parts of America that were far from population centers. Why did tens of thousands from the outskirts gather in record numbers in the middle of nowhere?

The answer is that these were Americans who felt forgotten. They believed that their leaders had forsaken them, but God had sent a man who gave them a voice.

That same thing happened in Manteca, to pastors, businessmen and businesswomen, even State Senators—people who believe they have been forgotten. They believe their churches have forgotten them. These are the people who left Christian events that were nothing but compromise and human entertainment. They walked out, sick at heart, saying to one another, “There must be more than this!”

There are millions more like these in towns and cities across America. The remnant are comparing notes. They have made up their minds. It will be an Awakening, or it will be nothing. Watch out! These are pastors who are done with the smoke and mirrors of glitzy marketing.

With them are regular folks who love Jesus with every ounce of their being, who are also famished for a true act of God in California. And, God is not going to deny them!

To the hypocritical leader, I say, be afraid—be very afraid. The remnant will not play church any longer. The demon-driven politicians should quake in their boots. The remnant will only obey the Bible and the U.S. Constitution. They will no longer surrender to wicked policies.

California was visited today. Now we will move on to a tent crusade, and the glory and the fire will only intensify!

Be warned. The real remnant of God is here, and they will soon rise onto the national stage!

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3).

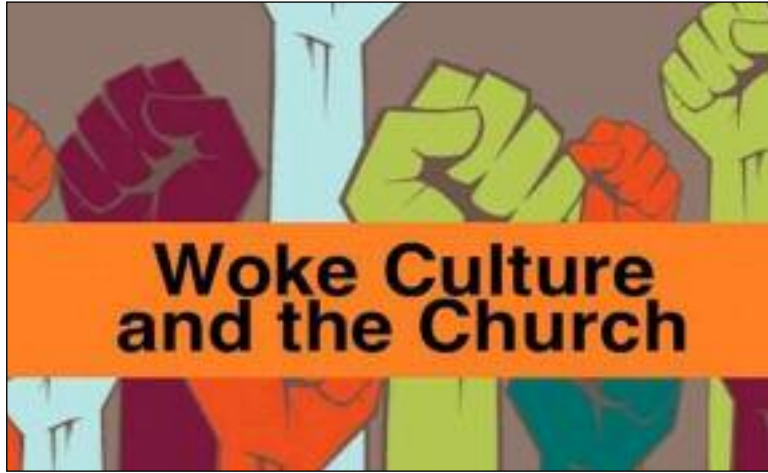
Michael Youssef warns pastors against woke culture in churches

Dr. Michael Youssef, best-selling author and pastor of Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, warns pastors about embracing “woke culture” in their churches saying it’s “popular and appeals to the flesh.”

“Bowling to woke culture allows you to avoid rejection by culture and society,” he said. “It’s a very, very popular message that is now being preached from many evangelical pulpits; traditionally Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching churches. We have gone so far that it just grieves me to the point that I literally sometimes just weep tears.”

Critical Race Theory, Youssef said, is one evidence of woke culture permeating the church at large as the theory pushes for a worldview that categorizes people into oppressed and oppressor groups on the basis of skin color. “It’s a very Marxist ideology that people are taking very seriously,” he said. “The idea of the oppressed and the oppressors is not that simple.”

Youssef a grandfather of 11 and an Arab-American, pointed out



that private Christian schools in Atlanta are having white children apologizing to black kids. “Apologizing for what?” he asked. “They are innocent; they haven’t done anything,” he said. “It’s crazy; it’s just going insane.”

Ultimately, Youssef believes that pastors are to blame for leading their congregations away from biblical truth for the sake of popularity.

“I’ve always believed, as goes the pulpit, so goes the pew,” he said. “As goes the pew, so goes the culture. As a pastor, I put the full blame on us, right in our laps, because we want to be liked, loved and followed on social media by millions of people. Pastors are the culprits. We need to be about Jesus, not about being liked, because that is deadly as far as the gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned. Young

pastors must realize that this is a deception. It’s very subtle and very clever, but it’s a deception nonetheless.”

Ellie Krasne, with the Heritage Foundation, agrees and says even coming out against Critical Race Theory makes you a racist in the eyes of the left.

“If you disagree with that philosophical framework,” Krasne writes on Heritage.org, “then you are ipso facto against fighting racism or deny that racism even exists. And if you push back on the use of terms such as ‘power structure’ or ‘systemic racism,’ you are likewise accused.”

Krasne says it destroys conversations about race. “That’s particularly damaging on two levels,” she says. “First, it precludes any meaningful conversation about racism and race. Second, it creates a chasm between two presumably well-meaning people who most likely agree racism is bad, but disagree on the best way to address it.”

She also says that it limits our

ability to fight true racism. “Our fight against prejudice is being done through what is perhaps the worst tyranny of all; namely, the tyranny over the mind,” she writes.

“It categorizes people based on race and gender, and assumes that people have (or don’t have) abilities based on those categories. It leaves no room for meaningful discourse.”

Says, Krasne, “If we want to fight prejudice, then let’s shape the conversation around our better angels; namely, freedom, the inherent dignity of every single person, truth, and the good.”

Youssef has written extensively on faith and culture and how the “woke” environment has derailed reasonable conversation.

He recently published “Hope for This Present Crisis: The Seven-Step Path to Restoring a World Gone Mad,” in which he provides “a diagnosis of the insanity of the current culture and a seven-step prescription for restoring sanity to a world gone mad.”

Methodist denomination splits, conservative ‘Global Methodist Church’ formed

A group of conservative Methodists has announced plans to form a new denomination after the United Methodist Church officially splits over its longstanding debate over homosexuality.

The Wesleyan Covenant Association and the 17-member Transitional Leadership Council released a statement this week announcing the creation of the Global Methodist Church. It now becomes the largest Methodist denomination in the world.

According to the statement, the theologically conservative denom-

ination will not be officially launched until the UMC General Conference, scheduled for 2022, passes a separation measure known as the Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation. The protocol, which will be up for debate at the general conference, involves allowing conservative churches to leave the UMC to form their own denomination.

The Rev. Keith Boyette, Transitional Leadership Council chairman, said in a statement that the GMC would “make disciples of

Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly. Over the past year, the council members and hundreds of people who have informed their work have faithfully and thoughtfully arrived at this point. They are happy to share with others a wealth of information about a church they believe will be steeped in the life-giving confessions of the Christian faith.”

Last December, a group of theologically progressive United Methodists announced a plan to create its own denomination as part of the likely separation plan for the UMC. Known as the



Liberation Methodist Connexion, its website describes the new church as “a grassroots denomination of former, current and non-Methodist faith leaders working on the unfolding of the ‘kin-dom’ of God.”

The group went on to say that it welcomes all “gender expressions and sexual identity,” “religious or non-religious backgrounds,” “races and ethnicities,” “size” and “monogamous and non-monoga-

mous.”

The UMC General Conference, where the potential separation plan will be debated and possibly approved, is scheduled for Aug. 29 through Sept. 6, 2022, in Minneapolis. Originally, the general conference was supposed to be held last year but was postponed to 2021 because of coronavirus pandemic concerns. The general conference again was postponed this year.

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In His Hands

Canadian pastor will remain imprisoned for holding church service



Christians around the world are speaking out on behalf of a Canadian pastor imprisoned since Feb. 16 for holding in-person worship services.

Pastor James Coates with GraceLife Church of Edmonton was arrested and incarcerated for violating government COVID-19 restrictions that required mask-wearing, social distancing, and keeping church congregations at below

15 percent capacity limited according to the Edmonton Journal.

The Edmonton Court of Queen's Bench Justice Peter Michalyshyn has ruled that Coates shall remain at the correctional facility for not signing a release form admitting to guilt and agreeing to follow what many see as an intrusion on religious liberty.

Coates responded by saying the

health orders "directly contravene the authority of the local church, and the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Attorney James Kitchen said the conduct taken by the pastor and his church "is not about just wantonly rebelling. It is about doing what is intelligent to them and what maintains their freedoms, but most importantly what is ultimately honoring to their God that they believe in."

"And they are not going to cease worshipping God as they believe they have been commanded to do, simply because the government says so," he added.

The church outlined the safety precautions it followed in a statement on the church's website. It said that it abided by COVID-19 restrictions when information about the virus was first released. GraceLife did transition to online sermons but returned to in-person worship last summer after restrictions were lifted.

"When COVID-19 first appeared, we shifted to live stream and abided by

most of the new government guidelines for our gatherings," the website reads. "But when the first declared public health emergency ended, we opened our doors and returned to nearly normal gatherings on Sunday, June 21st, 2020."

"We did so recognizing COVID-19 was much less severe than the government had initially projected. This sentiment was reflected in the assessment of the Premier of Alberta, who deliberately referred to COVID-19 as 'influenza' multiple times in a speech announcing the end of the first declared public health emergency."

GraceLife continues to offer in-person services to congregants, even while Pastor Coates remains in custody.

The church website asserts, "Churches should open, businesses should open, families and friends should come together around meals, and people should begin to exercise their civil liberties again. Otherwise we may not get them back. In fact, some say we are on the cusp of reaching the

point of no return. Protect the vulnerable, exercise reasonable precautions, but begin to live your lives again."

In a sermon prior to his arrest, Pastor Coates said his actions are in direct obedience to the commands set forth by our Lord and Savior.

"I'm doing what I'm doing in obedience to Christ. I am quite content to let the Lord Jesus Christ himself decide whether or not this is persecution," Coates said. "He promises that those who are persecuted for his namesake will be blessed. He's the one that blesses and I'm content to leave that in His court."

"Charter freedoms do not disappear because the government declares regular church services to be outlawed while allowing hundreds of people to fill their local Walmarts," notes lawyer John Carpay, president of the Justice Centre which works on behalf of Canadians for religious freedom.

A trial is scheduled for Pastor Coates from May 3-5 in the Alberta Provincial Court.

Consider the Cross: Stories from Arab and Persian viewers of Christian television



Across the Middle East and North Africa, people are coming to Christ as a satellite TV ministry encourages them to "Consider the Cross."

Sat-7 is a Christian satellite broadcasting ministry reaching into dozens of countries and touching tens of millions of viewers. During this fifth week of

Lent, Sat-7 gives also encourages supporters to look at the ministry through their Consider the Cross effort. They share what people from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are writing to the ministry either by email or in social media messages.

"Not all the people below are

Christians, but Jesus is still making Himself known in personal ways to each one, sometimes in nations where less than 1% of the population are Christians (which include three of the four countries represented below)," the ministry states.

As Easter approaches and we "consider the cross ourselves, Sat-7 encourages us to pray for each person below as well as people in your life who may need to hear about Jesus' sacrifice for them.

Here are just a few stories of Sat-7 messages touching hearts:

The responses have been translated into English.

"Your words are gold. Most of the time, I use negative words on myself in hard situations and illness. But may God forgive me. You preached a harsh lesson to my heart. Thank you. I'll try to fight negativity in Yeshua's name and share the Gospel here in Tunisia."

—Makram* in Tunisia

"Thank you for your amazing SAT-7 KIDS programs. I appreciate it every time you send a pile of books to my son — he really feels special and unique because of you. He loves the Bible stories and memorizes the verses. After he had heard a story, he closed his eyes and prayed with you. I'm grateful for those valuable stories and the way you care for kids."

—Jinan and her son in Egypt

"I am longing to know more about the Bible and Jesus. I regularly watch your programs and I am very grateful to you for allowing me to express my opinion here. I am thankful for your answers."

"I grew up in a religious family and my father was a very devout person. He always said we should try to lend a hand to those in need and serve as much as possible. I loved my father very much and I have tried to act on his advice."

—Shadmehr in Iran

"I am a non-Christian, but your channel is really affecting me and I want to watch it constantly. I'm watching it secretly from my husband and my son,

but I realize there are so many things I don't know about Jesus Christ; I see no harm in learning more. I enjoy watching you and I thank you. Can't wait to see what more I will see."

—Ceyda in Turkey

Another story is that of a 20-year-old Muslim woman from Algeria named Sara. Marianne Awaraji Daou, SAT-7 Arabic Channels Audience Relations Manager shares her online encounter with the young woman.

Sara had been heartbroken and disappointed by love and she shared her comments on the SAT-7 Youth Facebook page. Sara shared that she had a disability, which made her feel that she was not worthy of love as other girls are. She wanted to be loved but felt inferior. Marianne helped her to understand her value through God's eyes and that she is worthy of being loved. "I feel so relieved

just talking to you guys," Sara shared with Marianne. "I've never seen these values in my community, and I love the way you Christians love each other."

Marianne says that she told Sara that anyone can have a relationship with Christ. "He sees what's in your heart," I said to her. We are continuing to communicate with her and pray with her. If she wants to know more, when we feel she is ready we will encourage her to join a discipleship course online," Marianne says.

With most people in the Arab world still at home, or unemployed because of Covid lockdowns, many more are watching Christian programming. Consider joining other Metro Voice readers in daily prayer for these individuals and the millions watching the programming.

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Polls find record low church attendance, support for same-sex marriage

For the first time, religious service attendance has fallen below 50 percent while a majority of Republican voters say they support same-sex marriage. According to a Public Religion Research Institute poll, less than half of self-identified Republicans endorsed same-sex marriage in 2019, but in 2020 that number increased to 51 percent. Gallup handled the church attendance polls.

Many religious respondents remain opposed to what the study described as “pro-LGBTQ policies,” however. As PRRI pointed out, the average demographic of those “who are completely against pro-LGBTQ policies are older, more likely to be Republicans, feel more favorably toward former President Donald Trump and are more likely to be white and Christian than the American population and those who are in favor of these pro-LGBTQ policies.”

Even among religious people, however, the rate of support for LGBTQ policies is greater among younger people. According to the study results:

“Younger members of religious groups who are under age 50 are more likely than their older counterparts to favor LGBT nondiscrimination laws. The gap is larger among white evangelical Protestants (73 percent of those under age 50, 56 percent of those over age 50), other Protestants of color (80

percent of those under age 50, 61 percent of those over age 50), black Protestants (80 percent of those under age 50, 66 percent of those over age 50) and white mainline Protestants (88 percent of those under age 50, 75 percent of those over age 50). The gap is around eleven percentage points or less among white Catholics (83 percent of those under age 50, 72 percent of those over age 50), Hispanic Protestants (71 percent of those under age 50, 62 percent of those over age 50), Hispanic Catholics (84 percent of those under age 50, 75 percent of those over age 50), and religiously unaffiliated Americans (86 percent of those under age 50, 76 percent of those over age 50).

The number of people who self-identify as LGBTQ has skyrocketed among younger generations recently, according to a recent Gallup poll.

While a connection has not yet been substantiated, the views on the issue could be related to church attendance and faith.

For the first time since Gallop began polling, fewer than 50 percent of Americans say they belong to a house of worship.

Forty-seven percent of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque in 2020, Gallup also announced this week, the lowest number in the poll’s eight-decade trend. The



figure is down three percentage points from 2018 and a huge 23 points from 1999.

When Gallup first began the poll, in 1937, U.S. church membership was 73 percent and remained near 70 percent before steadily declining near the turn of the century.

According to Gallup, “The decline in church membership is primarily a function of the increasing number of Americans who express no religious

preference. Over the past two decades, the percentage of Americans who do not identify with any religion has grown from 8% in 1998-2000 to 13% in 2008-2010 and 21% over the past three years.”

The rest of the decline can be attributed to those who do have a religious preference but don’t attend church, Gallup said.

Part of the reason for the steady drop is generational changes. Younger people

tend not to belong to a place of worship compared to older generations, so “those in older generations who were likely to be church members [are] being replaced in the U.S. adult population with people in younger generations who are less likely to belong.”

Currently, 31 percent of millennials say they have no religious affiliation, up from 22 percent ten years ago, while 33 percent of Generation Z have no religious preference.

Mom’s photo of miscarried 14-week-old son has saved other babies

Mom’s photo of miscarried 14-week-old son has saved other babies
March 29, 2021

A 40-year-old mother has shared photos of her miscarried baby in the hope that people will see the humanity of preborn children. Sharran Sutherland says that when she miscarried her son, Miran, at 14 weeks, the doctor offered to throw him out with “medical waste.”

Sutherland told the UK Mirror:

“The doctor said we can either dispose of it as medical waste, or you can call a funeral home.

I was so angered by her calling my baby a ‘fetus’. I couldn’t believe she would insinuate he was medical waste....

But I also felt like a funeral seemed extreme. I didn’t know what to do...”

Sharran and her husband Michael saved their son’s little, perfectly formed body in a container of saline solution in their refrigerator before



eventually choosing to bury him in a flowerpot with hydrangeas “that would grow each year and come back to remind us of him,” says Sharran. “We had him almost a week,” she added. “In that time I was able to get his handprints, take his pictures, hold him, grieve to an extent. But I had that time with him which I think really helped a lot.”

Miran was about four inches long and weighed 26 grams, and, as the Mirror notes, he had a “fully-formed face, hands, feet, and even fingernails.” Many people aren’t aware of how developed children are, even in the first trimester; they develop their major organs quite rapidly and then just need time to further develop and grow.

Sharran was grateful for the opportunity to hold her son, as she chose to have labor induced rather than undergo a D&C, and marveled at what a masterpiece he was:

“I just couldn’t believe how perfect everything was on him. His ears, his tongue, his gums, his lips. I couldn’t believe it.

You have those baby books that show you diagrams of a baby in utero but he didn’t look like anything I had ever seen. I was just filled with such awe and amazement with him. He

just needed to continue maturing and growing and developing. It blew me away. It was an incredible feeling. It’s really hard to describe.”

Sharran adds that because society dehumanizes babies in the womb, miscarried and aborted babies aren’t treated as real children. “This world has done a great job at dehumanizing unborn babies. The abortion industry has done a great job at that but it doesn’t just affect women who are getting abortions,” she says. “It affects women who have lost their babies too – because the world doesn’t view their children as babies. So when a woman loses her unborn child she’s not able to grieve in the same way....”

Because Sharran shared Miran’s photos, which went viral, lives have

been saved. One of Sharran’s friends chose life because of the photos, and Sharran revealed on her Facebook page on November 1 that another woman contacted her to say that she canceled her abortion appointment after reading an article about Miran:

This was Sharran’s hope. Her original post about Miran stated, “I am hoping that by sharing these pictures of my precious little boy that it might just make one person who is contemplating abortion decide to let their child live.” That has now happened.

Sharran knows Miran’s life has purpose and meaning, regardless of how long he lived. She says, “I thought, if that’s all Miran’s life was meant to do, then so be it.”

—Liveaction.org | used with permission



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Why Christianity put away its dancing shoes – only to discover them centuries later



In the PBS documentary series “The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song,” scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. shows how African Americans introduced new rhythms, music and dancing to Christianity from the days of slavery to the present. African American spirituals and the ring shout, a type of religious dance, provided some enslaved people with hope and perseverance.

While the Black Church enlivened Christian worship, there is an even older story of Christian dance that I tell in my 2021 book, “Ringleaders of Redemption: How Medieval Dance Became Sacred.”

Evidence from the ninth through 15th centuries in Western Europe suggests that Europeans not only tolerated dance, but incorporated it into religious thought and practice.

Authorizing dance

The tradition of Christian dance did not happen overnight. For the first five centuries of Christianity, the church opposed dancing. According to church leaders and early theologians such as Tertullian and Saint Augustine, dancing incited idolatry, lust and damnation.

Moreover, early Christianity was more likely hostile to dancing because

it reminded believers of their pagan counterparts in the Roman Empire, as Augustine’s book “The City of God” made clear. For example, Augustine wrote: “the worshippers and admirers of these (pagan) gods delight in imitating their scandalous iniquities... Let there be heard everywhere the rustling of dancers, the loud, immodest laughter of the theater; let a succession of the most cruel and the most voluptuous pleasures maintain a perpetual excitement.”

Indeed, dance was an important part of cultural and civic life in Greco-Roman antiquity. Christians, however, needed to distinguish themselves from pagans and set an example of pious behavior.

Much to the annoyance of medieval clergy, some Christians would even skip Mass for the theater or gladiatorial games, which formed a larger part of ancient dance and entertainment culture.

Despite centuries of dance prohibitions that came from church councils, ancient and medieval Christians would not stop dancing. Ritual manuals of the 13th century and beyond reveal how church authorities turned dance to the service of Christendom.

Within the spaces of churches, cathedrals and shrines, dance could

help generate collective worship. For example, following healing miracles that saints supposedly enacted, community members would erupt into song and dance. From the church’s point of view, such pious performances could actually enhance orthodoxy. In other words, dance could work in the service of conversion and rituals.

By the 12th century, Christian theologians would look to the Bible to obtain evidence that dance was permitted. For example, in Exodus 15:20, Miriam, the sister of Moses, dances with other Israelite women to praise God. For medieval Christians, Miriam’s dancing signified Christian worship and rituals.

Dance of King David

Additional biblical evidence for sacred dance came from King David, an Old Testament monarch. The Bible contains a scene in which David humbles himself before his subjects by dancing for the Lord.

According to the Latin Bible, David danced while he was naked. Medieval commentators interpreted this dance as a Christian expression of humility.

In a 13th-century manuscript called the “Bible Moralisee,” or The Moralized Bible, the dance of David, according to the author, “signifies Jesus Christ who celebrated Holy Church and celebrated the poor and the simple and showed great humility.”

Moreover, as I discovered in my archival research, an image from a 14th-century biblical picture book of sorts, juxtaposes the dance of David with the Crucifixion of Christ.

Although a Jewish figure from the Old Testament, medieval Christians began to see David and his dance as prophesying the “Passion of Christ.” Because David danced naked – in a way unbecoming of a king – they believed, it had a resemblance to the humiliation of one who had to suffer and die.

Sanctifying dancing

Since at least the ninth century, dancing became integrated into Christian devotion. During pilgrimages to the shrine of Saint Faith, a child martyr from the third century who had a strong following in medieval France, Christians would break into dancing and singing.

And 13th-century friar Francis of Assisi was said to dance in a dramatic fashion while preaching. For Francis, who was later canonized as a saint, it animated his image.

Actual dances began to be performed in churches and cathedrals during public worship. Ritual manuals from the 13th century testify to a variety of dances that Christians and clergy performed during sacred days, especially during Christmas and

Easter.

From the 14th through 16th centuries at the Auxerre Cathedral in France, religious men danced and played a ball game on the cathedral’s labyrinth every Easter Monday. They sang a sacred hymn about Christ’s triumph over death, as they danced.

Moreover, dance appeared in the literary arts as well. Dante Alighieri’s “Divine Comedy,” composed in the 14th century, contains exquisite poetic renderings of dance in purgatory and paradise.

Medieval women enacted sacred dance too. Sister-books, or documents produced in German nunneries during the Middle Ages, provide textual evidence for the existence of dancing at convents. For example, one German sister-book tells how a nun named Irmendraut began to dance in a spiritual manner after she recovered from a long illness: “this sister became so deeply enraptured that she jumped off the pillow where they had laid her and into the middle of their circle with quick straight legs. And then, in the presence of the community, she danced so lovingly in God’s praise that all who saw and heard it felt longing and anguish for the joy that was so unknown to them.”

For medieval women, dance allowed them proximity to divine presence during a time when no more women were being ordained into important ministerial and leadership roles. According to religion scholar Gary

Macy, the church stopped ordaining women around the 13th century. As Macy writes, “by the 13th century, it was assumed in both law and theology that women could not be ordained and indeed had never been ordained.”

Christianity and dancing lost in history

By the 16th century, however, the cultural landscape of Christian dance changed dramatically. There were many reasons.

17th Century Shakers modeled dancing on period styles:

The Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation began to critique dancing and declare it idolatrous. Moreover, starting in the 14th century, women were suspected of, and persecuted for, practicing witchcraft. During the European witch trials, witches were accused of dancing with the devil during a satanic ritual known as the Witches’ Sabbath.

By the 17th Century, Christian dance was largely lost to western history. Over time, enslaved Africans, with their traditions of sacred song and movement, would put the dance back into Christianity.

Today, dancing as part of worship is central to the faith of hundreds of millions of believers around the world. Christianity, it seems, is rediscovering its dancing shoes.

– Kathryn Dickason / Visiting Scholar, School of Religion, University of Southern California



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North Topeka activities include new festival

The NOTO Redbud Festival will be held April 2nd and 3rd in Redbud Park.

Attendees will be able to experience the beauty of NOTO in bloom, with music and performances at the new Redbud Park, as well as visit the various murals and outdoor public art installations, shopping, dining, and more. Hours of the event are 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Coinciding with the NOTO First Friday Artwalk April 2, there will be even more activity that Friday than usual. A musical performance by Swinging Country will be featured from 5 - 8 p.m. on the Kaw Valley Bank Stage in Redbud Park.

NOTO Saturday Market on April 3 will be held at Redbud Park and NOTO Teeter Courtyard. This eclectic market offers artists and others a chance to sell their wares at select market areas. Attendees will be able to visit businesses, see the vendors, and explore the area while enjoying live music from Josh Hoover on the Kaw Valley Bank stage in Redbud Park from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Of course, First Friday Art Walk &



Market is the first Friday of every month, including March 5. The North 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. You can visit the NOTO Arts Center to pick up a map of participating businesses and view the newest exhibit at the Morris Gallery.

Also, a NOTO Saturday Vendor Market is now open on 1st & 3rd Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Redbud

Park from now through October.

Various local vendors will be available exhibiting; art, antiques, furniture, and handmade wares.

3rd Saturday Market is also preceded by NOTO Night Out activities on Friday evening.

Looking ahead the NOTO Chalk Walk will be held May 7-9, coinciding with May's First Friday Art Walk.

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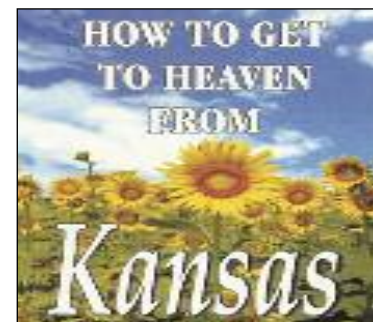
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More important than living in KANSAS is where you will live forever. Just as you would look at a map of KANSAS to find your way, so you must look at the Bible to find your way to heaven. The Bible says, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, 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.

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THE BERRYTON PICKERS – First Sat. of ea. month, 7-9pm, Berryton Baptist Church. Bring snacks, have fun!

GRAND O' PRY – 2nd & 4th Saturday, 6:30PM-pre-show, 7PM showtime, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S Hickory, Ottawa. Tickets are \$10 and only at the door. Ph. 785-214-0013, email grandopry@gmail.com.

LIVE @ LUNCH – Apr. 7, 14, 21, 28; 11am-1pm, Every Plaza downtown. Live music, food trucks, yard games & more. 7th: Top City Groove Band; 14th: Kyle Austin; 21st: Josh Vowell Blues Band; 28th: Delta Haze

TODD GREEN AND AMADO ESPINOZA – Apr. 9, 7pm, TPAC. All Tickets \$10

MARK & THE SHARKS – Apr. 10, 7pm, the Vinewood. \$10.

GRAND OTTAWA OPRY WITH DUKE MASON – Apr. 10, 5:30-9:30pm, Ottawa Municipal Auditorium

CASTING CROWNS – Oct. 3, 7pm, Stormont Vail Event Center. Special guest will be Matthew West. For info: castingcrowns.com

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SENIOR SOLO'S – Every 3rd Tuesday from 3 to 6 p.m. at First Assembly Church, 500 SW 27th St, downstairs Fellowship Hall. Games & Fellowship, lots of Laughter & Fun. 785-817-3071.

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

FREE WEEKLY COMMUNITY PANCAKE BREAKFAST – Sundays at 10am sharp, at Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 900 block of NE Oakland, followed by church services at 10:45am - followed at noon by The Hope House FREE Community Food & Clothing Banks.

FIRST WEDNESDAY WESLEY CAFE – First Wed., 6:15pm, Susanna Wesley UMC, 7433 SW 29th. A worship service will follow at 7:00. 785-478-3697 or www.swumc.org/wesley-cafe-sign-up.html.

FIRST SATURDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET – 7:30 AM - 10:00 AM, Shawnee Heights UMC, 6020 SE 44th

INSIDE OUT FELLOWSHIP – Every Saturday, 6:30pm. Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln. For info: 785-380-7031 or rhaggertyjr@hotmail.com

GOOD FRIDAY EXPERIENCE – Apr. 2, 4-7pm, First Southern Baptist Church, 1912 SW Gage. A museum-like event with "exhibits" that take you through what Jesus experienced before His death on the cross. Take each exhibit at your own pace and use all of your senses to "experience" what Jesus went through on "Good" Friday. Reserve tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/136965695081

DRIVE-THRU EASTER CELEBRATION – Apr. 3, 1:30-2:30pm, Susanna Wesley United Methodist Church, 7433 SW 29th. Each child will receive a goodie bag of Easter candy and treats. Enter from the Indian Hills Elementary School parking lot off of 29th street and follow the cones.

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT – Apr. 3, 10am, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your children to celebrate the Risen Savior with us! (785) 266-3247. FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

EASTER SERVICES – Apr. 4, 9 & 11am, Fellowship Hi-Crest, 455 SE Golf Park Blvd.

EASTER SUNDAY DRIVE-IN PARKING LOT WORSHIP – Apr. 4, 10:30am, First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar.

EASTER BREAKFAST AND SERVICES – Apr. 4, 8:30am & 10am (in-person) and 8:30am, 10am & 4pm online (live.rhctoepka.org). 8am-9:30am Free Community Breakfast. Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Pl.

EASTER SERVICES – Apr. 4, 8, 9:30 & 11am, Wanamaker Woods Nazarene Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker Road. Go to WWW.NAZ.ORG to reserve your seat 785-273-2248; woodsnaz@wnnaz.org

EASTER WORSHIP CELEBRATION SERVICE – Apr. 4, 10:30am, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Are you looking for peace, joy, hope, forgiveness, acceptance or friends? Join Lakeview as we worship & celebrate our risen Lord & Savior!. (785) 266-3247. FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

SPRING CRAFT FAIR – Apr. 10, 9am-3pm, Crossroads Cowboy Church, 1255 Oak St., Perry, KS. contact Andrea at ramadding@gmail.com

THE CHOSEN WATCH PARTY LAUNCH! – Apr. 11, Rolling Hills Christian Church. The Chosen is a TV show about the life of Jesus which allows us to see Him through the eyes of those who knew Him. We will watch one episode each week, followed by a time of discussion. This 8-week series will start at 6:30pm on Sunday, April 11th and continue to meet on Sundays, except on Mother's Day weekend. We will provide snacks and drinks. Childcare will also be available.

SENIOR ADULT POTLUCK LUNCHEON – Apr. 20, 1:30am, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE

Croco Rd. Gather your senior adult friends & enjoy the fun, food & laughter at our potluck luncheon! (785) 266-3247 FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

SENIORS NUTRITIONAL LUNCH – Weekdays, except holidays, at noon at Auburn Civic Center, 1020 N. Washington Street. Minimal cost per person. Reservations/cancellations required 24 hours in advance by calling Meals on Wheels of Jefferson & Shawnee Co. at 295-3980. Each meal includes 1% milk & sugar-free items for diabetics. 215- 0064.

DOWNTOWN TOPEKA LIONS CLUB – 2nd & 4th Mondays at Noon, Madison Street Diner inside the Ramada Downtown, Guests are welcome.

MEDICARE MONDAYS – First Mon. ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library, 1515 SW 10th. Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging offers Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or nhrnl@tscpl.org

SHEPHERDS CENTER PICKLEBALL GROUP – plays Mon. & Wed. Mon. at Countryside UMC, 32nd & Burlingame, from 3-5. Park on the NORTH side & use the furthest WEST door. Follow the hallway to gym. On Wed. at First Baptist, 30th & MacVicar, from 1-3. Park on the WEST side. Gym is right inside the doors.

TOPEKA SWING DANCE – Tuesdays, 7-8pm, Swing Dance Lessons, no partner required, Jayhawk Theatre, 720 SW Jackson. www.topekasingdance.com.

SAFE STREETS COALITION MEETING – First Wed. of the month, 11:45am-1pm. Great Overland Station. For info: 266-4606 or jwilson@safestretts.org

TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB – 2nd Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, Madison Street Diner, inside Ramada Downtown. Guests are welcome

COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING – Thursdays 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Info: Edwina 379-9538 or 478-4760.

SHEPHERDS CENTER LINE DANCING GROUP – meets 2nd & 4th Thur, 2-4 at First UMC, 6th & Topeka. Park on the west side & use west door. Immediately inside, turn left & walk the ramp to the library, then left to elevator. Push [B] for fellowship hall 785-249-3258.

FIRST FRIDAY ART MARKET – Downtown and NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, fine crafts, flea market items, snacks & beverages, entertainment and more.

DOWNTOWN TOPEKA FARMERS MARKET – Saturday's April 3 to Nov. 7, 7:30am-noon, 12th & Harrison. The open-air market is full of fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, arts & crafts, flower, home-baked goods and more

TOPEKA ACAPPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS – Topeka Acapella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four part acapella harmonies. Come be our guest via Zoom at our guest nights to meet the Director and learn more about our chorus. Topeka Acapella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Call Cindy Patton at 785-640-7403 for information on how to receive a Zoom invitation

SQUARE DANCING – Shawnee Swingers has monthly dances and sponsors lessons in the Fall. Call or text 785-845-2357; shawneeswingers@gmail.com. On Facebook: Shawnee Swingers Square Dance Club. wesquardance.com

HARVESTERS MOBILE FOOD PANTRY, 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 2-3pm, Shawnee Heights UMC parking lot.

TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM – Now Open, 640 E Woodson, LeCompton. (785) 887-6148 www.lecomptonkansan.com historiclecompton@gmail.com

APR. CYCLING EVENTS – Various cycle rides are offered by Kansas Cyclist. www.kansascyclist.com/

APR. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES – Outdoor events and activities. www.getoutdoorskansan.org/calendar

CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA – Mar 13 – Apr. 25, tours at 1, 2 & 3pm. Saturdays 7 Sundays, The Volland Store, 24098 Volland Road, Alma, KS. Reservations for the traveling Smithsonian exhibition taken starting Mar. 1 www.vollandfoundation.org. This experience engages visitors in conversation about the unique identity of rural communities as they adapt to meet the changing needs of their citizens. Visitors can connect their experiences through the concurrent local exhibit, Deep Roots and New Growth in Wabaunsee County, a reflection on how our own rural communities have responded to change. 785.499.3616. info@thevollandstore.com

NOTO REDBUD FESTIVAL – Apr 2 & 3, 10am-11pm, Redbud Park. Experience the beauty of NOTO in bloom! Music and performances at the new Redbud Park. Visit the various murals and outdoor public art installations,

shopping, dining, and more. NOTO First Friday Artwalk Apr. 2, 10am-9pm: Musical performance by Swinging Country from 5-8pm on the Kaw Valley Bank Stage in Redbud Park. NOTO Saturday Market Apr. 3, 10am-3pm: Held at Redbud Park and NOTO Teeter Courtyard, this eclectic market offers artists and others a chance to sell their wares at select market areas. Visit businesses, see the vendors, and explore the area while enjoying live music from Josh Hoover on the Kaw Valley Bank stage in Redbud Park from 11am-3pm.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA – ANIMALS HUNT FOR EGGS – Apr. 3, 9am-3pm, Topeka Zoo. Giant paper mache eggs painted for the holiday will be hidden throughout the animal's habitats for them to go on the hunt for their goodies hidden inside.

FOOD TRUCK NIGHT – Apr. 3, 4-8pm, HHHS, 5720 SW 29th.

SCHOOLTIME THEATER SERIES – Apr. 6, 7 & 9, TPAC. Four in-person shows and one workshop. Todd Green will demonstrate 25 of his most fascinating instruments. Amado Espinoza will present a 45-minute workshop for up to 30 students, socially distanced, on how to create musical instruments from recycled materials. Register at topekaperformingarts.org/events.

RN CAREER FAIR – Apr. 7, 3-5pm, St. Francis. On-the-spot offers will be made to candidates who fit our culture of excellence and compassionate care. Go to kutopeka.com/rn to register. Upon arrival, enter through the Hospital Entry A.

For more information, visit kutopeka.com or call 888-365-0440.

C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON – Apr. 8, 11:30-1, at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage. Pastor Doyle Pryor will be the featured speaker.

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

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

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

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

SAVE THE DATE: POWER Luncheon, May 13, 11:30-1, C5Alive POWER Luncheon.

TOPEKA WOMEN'S CONNECTION ZOOM MEETING – Apr. 8, 2-3:30pm. Speaker: Connie Beard, Bloomington, IL. Musi: Marti Ladner Williams. Feature: Floral Design by Ariel Unsett. To obtain the zoom link for the meeting, call Kim, 785. 224.5268.

JEROLD BINKLEY TULIP TIME – Apr. 9-25, 6am-11pm, Ted Enslay Gardens, 3650 SE West Edge Rd; also at Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden and Doran Rock Garden/Gage Park. \$5 suggested donation. Stroll the gardens to see 60,000 multi-colored tulips & other spring flowering bulbs. Vendors, live music, food trucks. 785-251-6800

EMPOWER LIFE GRAND OPENING – Apr. 9, 12pm-4pm, Empower Life, 3345 SW Gage. Empower Life is Topeka's new Alternative Health & Wellness Network Studio: Red Light Therapeutics, Body Sculpting, Skin Rejuvenation, Fitness, Yoga, Classes, Personal Training, Massage and more.


TULIPS AT TWILIGHT – Apr. 9-25, 7pm, Old Prairie Town at Ward-Meade Historic Site, 124 NW Fillmore St. See 30,000 tulips illuminated and more than 35 lighted displays as you stroll along the garden pathways. \$5; Children 5 and under free. (785) 251-6991

59TH KANSAS PRAYER BREAKFAST – Apr. 14, 8am, virtual event. Guest Speaker: Jerry Schemmel, author of the book, Chosen To Live, which chronicles his survival of the crash of United Airlines Flight 232 in Sioux City, IA in 1989. He is also the author The Extravagant Gift, an evangelistic outreach booklet. For more information visit <https://www.jerryschemmel.com/>. RSVP for link at <https://www.kansasprayerbreakfast.org/>

THIRD THURSDAYS: TOPCITY COMEDY – Apr 15, 8-11pm, The Foundry Event Center, 400 SW 33rd St. \$10. (785) 633-1767

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C5Alive POWER Luncheons are held 2nd Thur. each mo.

Apr. 8, 11:30-1:
"POWER" Luncheon
at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage
Featuring Pastor Doyle Pryor

RSVP to info@C5Alive.org.
Open to the public.



Save the Date!
• May 13 - POWER Luncheon: Details to be announced
• Jun. 10 - POWER Luncheon: Details to be announced

For info: www.C5Alive.org or Facebook.com/C5Alive

BALLET MIDWEST PRESENTS "CINDERELLA" — Apr. 16-18, TPAC. Ballet Midwest

TULIP FESTIVAL AT THE LAKE — Apr 17, 10am-3pm, Ted Enslay Gardens at Lake Shawnee. Enjoy live music, visit craft vendors, enjoy fun for the kids and stroll the gardens to view more than 50,000 multi-colored tulips. \$5 admission.

HOTCAKES FOR HOPE CARE — Apr. 22, 5pm-7pm, Countryside United Methodist Church, 3221 SW Burlingame Rd. Pancakes, eggs and sausage with fruit and choice of hot coffee, orange juice and ice tea. The proceeds from this event and silent auction will provide additional support to fund our voucher program for patients in need of financial support for medical, dental, optometry care and many more services that Gracemed provides for our community. Doing good has never tasted better. 100% of proceeds support Gracemed's mission to promote compassionate, accessible, high-quality health care for residents in the communities we serve. Ticket Sales: https://gracemed.org/hotcakes-topeka or at Gracemed Health Clinic: 1400 SW Huntoon, 8am to 5pm Monday thru Friday.

Early Sales April 1 until April 21 - adult \$12 / kids \$5. At the Door - adult \$15 / kids \$5

RETIREMENT ON YOUR TERMS WEBINAR — Apr. 22, 12:30pm & 6:30pm. Presented by Jim Hanna, CFP, MBA, CKA; Private Wealth Advisor at Heart Financial Partners - A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. RSVP by noon April 22: Call Steve Maltby at 785.357.6278 ext. 23 or email steven.maltby@ampf.com

TOPEKA SHAREFEST — Apr. 24, 8am-12pm. Fellowship Bible Church annual event to help Topeka 501 School District and Seaman School District, by landscaping, painting, constructing, and cleaning up the grounds of area schools and buildings. You can register at sharefesttopeka.com

TK5K — May 1, 8am, Hummer Sports Park. The Topeka High Interact Club will be hosting a 5k run/walk fundraiser to raise money for Fellowship & Faith Ministry Inc. and the YWCA Day Center. https://kylelear.wixsite.com/tk5k

CAPITOL NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER — May 6, 12pm, South Steps of the Capitol. Join with Chaplain Dave DePue for the Topeka National Day of Prayer Event. You will be praying with Legislators, singing Praises to our Lord and pleading for Mercy for every area of our culture. (316) 516-0777 www.nationaldayofprayer.org; donna@cultureshield.com

ROD ROGERS MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT — June 4, 10:30am, Dub's Dread Golf Course. Call 913-461-8527 or search for Rog Rogers on Eventbrite. Benefits Pancreatic Cancer research. Lunch & dinner served. Silent Auction. "Funnest Tournament of the Year"

TOPEKA YOUTH PROJECT GOLF CLASSIC — Jun. 11, Shawnee Country Club Golf Course. 8am shotgun. 7:30 registration. Lunch follows touney. Cash prizes! Two \$500 closest to pin prizes! Call 273-4141 to register.

SHAWNEE COUNTY FAIR - July 22 - 25, Stormont Vail Event Center. Thursday thru Saturday at 8:00am - 10:00pm; Sunday at 10:00am - 3:00pm. Animals large and small, competition exhibits, vendors, and food trucks are available all days. Find all the information on the fair at www.shawneecountyfair.org

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA MEETING - Join other concerned individuals to pray and unite in action for Shawnee Co. and our Nation. For info about

monthly meetings: 785-260-5659 or ks.cwfa.org.

HEAT UP TOPEKA - Free fitness classes; learn and build healthy social & eating habits. Held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 4746 SW 21st St. Florence Crittenton: 785-233-0516 www.flocritt.kansas.org

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

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

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

BOY'S TRAIL LIFE & AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROUPOUS — Every Mon. 6pm, Cornerstone Comm. Ch., 7620 SW 21st. Faith-based scouting programs, age 5-18. Register at cornerstonetopeka.com. 478-2929.

TOPEKA MANKIND PROJECT — Mondays, 6:30pm, 2112 SW Morningside Rd. Supports men in becoming their best selves, including physical, mental & emotional health & wellness. Open to any man. Brian Thomas: brian.thomas01@gmail.com or 785-727-9439

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

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

TOPEKA LINCOLN CLUB — 1st Tue. of month, 7pm, Topeka Public Library. Discussing our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, and his times. The public is welcome. For info, contact Kirk Nystrom 235-6977.

OUR LADY OF THE FAITHFUL — 1st Tues., 6:30pm. Mass followed by Dinner, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church. A Catholic group for those in their 20-30s. Michelle Ann 580-3071 or ourladyofthefaithful@gmail.com. Facebook: "Ourladyofthefaithful."

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

MENNINGER BIBLE CLASSES - Tuesdays 11am-12:30. Amerus Room, YWCA, 225 West 12th. A new study group for Year One of Flo Menninger's course on Four Years through the Bible. Read and discuss Genesis through First Kings. Nominal charge for materials. For info call the YWCA at 233-1750 or Clara Gamache at 785-408-5433. (The Bible study is also taught on Sat. mornings on 101.5 FM radio.)

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES Aerie 4319: First & Third Tue. 7pm; Auxiliary: Third & Fourth Tue. month 6pm, 2941 SE Fremont Street. The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope. www.foe.com 785-266-7307

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

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

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

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

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

TOPEKA PRAYER GROUP - Every Wed., 6:30pm, 409 SW Buchanan St. Do you believe that God hears and answers prayers? Do you believe Jesus wants to lead His people by His Holy Spirit? Come join us in prayer as we seek His face for answers and direction. 785-845-1948; holmie2@sbcglobal.net

MACHINE EMBROIDERY CLUB — 1st Wed., 9am-3pm, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th Street (east door). Anyone with an Embroidery machine is invited to attend, there are no dues or formal meeting agenda. Lunch is on your own. Teach each other, enjoy fellowship & complete projects. Call 379-5159.

SAFE STREETS MEETING — 1st Wed., 11:45am, Great Overland Station 266-4606.

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

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

INTENTIONAL MOM - 1st & 3rd Thurs., 9-11:30am, Topeka Bible Church Auditorium, 1135 SW College. For all moms, helping them to be intentional! 234-5545.

OPERATION BACKPACK — 1st Thurs., 6pm, Indian Creek Elementary School, 4303 NE Indian Creek Rd. Volunteers gather to assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. No assembly in August. Sponsored by Topeka North Outreach. For info: 286-1370.

TOPEKA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY — 4th Thurs., 7pm, Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th St. No program in Nov. or Dec. Promotes & stimulates the education, knowledge & interest of the membership & the public in family history, genealogical records & research. 233-5762 or tgstopeka.org.

KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP — 3rd Thu., 11:30am, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. Christian financial professionals: financial planners, accountants, attorney's & insurance agents invited. kingdomadvisors.org or Jim Hanna, james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 357-6278 x19.

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

TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) — Every Fri. 8:30 to 10:00 am at 3221 SW Burlingame Road. 800-932-8677. Support for your weight loss journey. tops.org

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS — Every Fri., Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. (1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. Free will donations accepted. Free blood pressure checks the last Friday of every month, and birthday celebrations the 4th Friday. For info: 785-224-8803.

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

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

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

TOPEKA GREAT LIGHT AGLOW — For meeting info contact Vickie Lynch at greatlighttopeka@gmail.com.

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

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

UPPER ROOM COMMUNITY — second Sat., 10 am, Capitol Building

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS - Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides an opportunity for caregivers to get together and share their ideas and feelings. 2nd Monday of the month, 3:30pm, Topeka public library, Anton Rm. 3rd Friday of the month, 12 noon, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka

ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT — Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Kay Lyn at KLCarlson20@cox.net.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS — for friends & families of alcoholics. 785-409-3072 or topekaanon.org

PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY — Men struggling with pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted Roberts. For info: 249-9509. All inquiries confidential.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUPS — Monthly support group meetings for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. All of our programs have moved from in-person to virtual.

Caregiver support group via Skype 9:30am every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

Caregiver Support Group via Google Hangouts, 4:30pm every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

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

CELEBRATE RECOVERY - Every Mon. 7-9pm at Topeka First Church, 500 SW 27th, Bldg 'B'. Healing our hurts, habits, and hangups. Learning to grow in a Christ-like maturity.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP — Meets 4th Mon. in Formation classroom at Most Pure Heart of Mary, 17th & Stone. Discussion starts 7pm; fellowship & refreshments 8:30. 272-4895

GRIEF SUPPORT — Sponsored by Heartland Hospice for those dealing with death or major loss.

1st Mon., 5:30-7:30pm, Individual appointments; other times are available. Call Terry at (785)230-6730.

3rd Thurs., 11am, Lunch After Loss, Paisano's Ristorante, Fleming Place, SW 10th & Gage Blvd. For reservations or info: 785-271-6500.

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS: a 12-step program for those suffering with emotional instability such as depression, anxiety, grief, etc. Meets every Tues. at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Noon-1pm. For info: Sharon 785-633-7764

FIBROMYALGIA & CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP — 2nd Tue., 7-9pm. First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. For info: Randy at 785-969-4038 or TopekaCFS@outlook.com.

GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP — 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room,

St. Francis Hosp, 1700 SW 7th. For info: Sharla, 286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.

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

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

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

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

DIVORCE CARE PROGRAMS — (For updates check www.divorcecare.org) locations and times:

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

WED. — 6:45 — 8:45pm, Walnut View Christian Church, 3634 SE 37th St. (just east of 37th & Croco). Cost: \$10 registration (scholarships available). The video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost experts on divorce and recovery topics, combined with support group discussion of the materials. Complimentary child care children up to the fifth grade. Info: 266-7550 or walnutviewcc@att.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Electric Scooters Have Arrived in the Capital City



Three hundred Bird Electric Scooters have made their way to Downtown Topeka, Washburn University and other surrounding areas. It is a pilot program that will bring new forms of transit to the city through Oct. 2, 2022.

Scooter users can access a ride on Bird's mobile application. Single-day and monthlong passes range from \$4.99 to \$14.99, and single rides are \$1 to start and 39 cents a minute, according to the company's app. Rides must be a minimum of \$3.50 and there is a 15 cent "Topeka City fee."

"I think that it's a neat program that's an opportunity for us, especially with the

bikes program having gone away, to allow that last mile, last block of transportation from wherever a person might be when they've utilized mass-transit," City Manager Brent Trout said.

Director of Planning and Development Bill Fiander said in April 2019, the scooters will give citizens another option and choice of transportation.

"That in effect gives everybody from the person in the neighborhood, to the person downtown, the student at Washburn, the ability to have another option that is not reliant on a car," Fiander said.



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Movie 'Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence' has multiple Kansas City connections

The recently released documentary "Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence" (available through video on demand and DVD) provides a no-holds-barred account of Bobbi Jo Reed. By her own admission, she found herself living like an animal under a boxcar next to the Golden Gate Liquor Store due to her twenty-two-year downward spiral into addiction, prostitution, and crime.

The film opens with Bobbi Jo, a Kansas City native, recounting how her life had spun out of control until she reached rock bottom only to discover that rock bottom had a basement. She lost all hope and asked herself how anyone who had gone so low could ever be saved. Later she discovered that God had actually gifted her with this desperation and that his redemption for her would involve saving others.

The film is the brainchild of Kansas City native Brent Jones who began his career producing practice and game films for the Chiefs before moving to Los Angeles to pursue a career in commercial films. After working with notable filmmakers like Stephen Spielberg, Jones and his family returned to Kansas City. He and his wife Debbie formed Gold Room Films and began looking for an authentic Kansas City story to serve as inspiration for a feature-length film.

After Jones heard Bobbi Jo speak, he couldn't get home fast enough to tell Debbie that he had found the subject for their film. Together the Joneses co-produced "Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence" for Gold Room Films with Jones serving double duty as film director. He, himself a recovering addict, revealed that he wove elements of the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps into his telling of Bobbi Jo's story noting that he wanted those who saw the movie to realize that hope and redemption exists for those who struggle.



The death of Bobbi Jo's father provided the catalyst for her to finally get sober. She went into a detox facility containing eighteen bunk beds in a single room with no ventilation, no showers, soap, or toothpaste. It smelled of urine, sweat, and cigarettes. After she left the facility she baked and sold baked goods to earn money to buy toiletries for the women there. She would sit on the beds with the patients and encourage them. Bobbi Jo soon discovered that helping other people helped her too.

When Bobbi Jo's mother died from ovarian cancer a few years later, it rocked her world. Alone and despondent, she cried out to God asking for help to keep her from going back to her former life. Bobbi Jo credits Alcoholics Anonymous with getting her sober but she says that the credit for making her whole belongs solely to God. From the day she cried out, the Holy Spirit gave her the relentless drive to do what God created her to do.

The film does not seek to downplay or hide from the sordid details of Bobbi Jo's former life. She tells her story in a forthright and honest manner. But, some of Bobbi Jo's admissions, including a violent gang rape and sex slavery, while not gratuitous, would be inappropriate for pre-

teens. Jones focuses the bulk of the film instead on Bobbi Jo's journey to create Healing House, a group of faith-based recovery homes that provide a nurturing place for addicts to begin anew, free from addictions. He shows the progression beginning with the dilapidated abandoned nursing home on St. John Avenue in northeast Kansas City, now called the Pink House. Bobbi Jo bought it in 2002 after selling her home following her mother's death. Nearly two decades and fourteen houses and apartment buildings later, Bobbi Jo and Healing House have provided services to almost 10,000 people.

Jones documents Bobbi Jo's story in part with a series of interviews with her brother Paul, multiple pastors, police officers, and a local judge. The most impactful interviews, however, featured several alumni women and men who received help from Bobbi Jo and Healing House. Many, after earning certifications in peer counseling, have continued on at Healing House to assist others to find their way out of addiction. Every person featured credits Bobbi Jo with saving their lives. Bobbi Jo credits God for giving her the gift of this ministry. Jones dedicated the film to former Healing House client Judi, known to all as Mama Judi. She became Healing House's Director of Ministry as well as Bobbi Jo's best friend and confidant until she went to be with the Lord last September after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Bobbi Jo's story is one of the compassion that relieves people of shame and welcomes them home to a family that reflects the light of the Spirit's love. That love oozes out of every pore of Bobbi Jo and touches everyone she meets. She lives to serve others and says she will refuse to retire until "they dig the hole for my grave." Brent Jones tells the story of "Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence" in an authentic and compelling way that will make a positive impact on addicts and non-addicts alike.

Watch "Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence" on-demand at www.thebobbijomovie.com. You can also arrange to show the film at your church or event.

For more information on Healing House go to www.healinghousekc.org.

—Diana Francis | Special to Metro Voice

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



Netflix's 'A Week Away' is a must-watch faith-based musical

By Michael Foust

What would happen if you combined the best elements of a Disney teen musical with the inspiring, hope-filled message of a faith-based film -- and then tossed in songs by Steven Curtis Chapman, for King and Country, and other Christian artists?

The answer is *A Week Away*, a new family-friendly musical that launches on Netflix March 26 and breaks new ground in the Christian film genre.

It's the first faith-based teen-centric musical, and it's as impressive as anything you'll ever watch on Disney. The best part? It has a powerful gospel-centric message.

The film tells the story of a troubled teen named Will who agrees to attend a summer camp in order to avoid juvenile detention. Much to Will's surprise, though, that summer camp is ... a Christian camp. Over the course of a week, Will discovers romance and -- most importantly -- the hope found in the gospel.

Will gets a much-desired second chance in life.

It's one of the best inspirational movies you'll ever watch, partially because of the message but also because of the talent.

It stars Kevin Quinn (Disney's *Bunk'd*) as Will; Bailee Madison (*Bridge to Terabithia*) as his romantic interest, Amy; David Koechner (*Anchorman* series) as the camp owner; and Sherri Shepherd (*30 Rock*) as a camp worker.

It was written by two veterans of faith-based films: Alan Powell (*The Song, Like Arrows*) and Kali Bailey (*War Room, Woodlawn*). It also includes popular songs from Christian artists Chapman and for King and Country, as well as Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith. And if you're curious: Yes, the choreography remains in the family-friendly realm.

Madison said she hopes the audience feels "this sense of hope and faith and warmth and love" as they watch it.

"For teenagers growing up, social media is really a crazy thing," she told me, referencing the tendency for teens to compare themselves to others. "... So I think also the message to teenagers [is] you were created to be exactly who you are, and uniquely you."

A Week Away includes no sexuality, violence or coarse language.

Also streaming this month:

Adults/teens

Animals on the Loose: A You vs. Wild

*Movie (Netflix) -- Perhaps you can't go on a real-life exploration with Bear Grylls, but this is the next-best thing. *Animals on the Loose* is an interactive adventure film in which you tell Bear what to do. (You do this by pushing buttons on your remote.) Don't worry: He survives every time. TV-PG.*

Brian Regan: On the Rocks (Netflix) -- Comedian Brian Regan, now sporting gray hair, tackles such issues as aging and obsessive behavior. It's a family-friendly stand-up act that is guaranteed to make you laugh. Rated TV-G.

The Man from Nowhere (VOD) -- An aging author who is nearing death tries reconnecting with his estranged son. It's a faith-based film that has elements from the Parable of the Prodigal Son, only in reverse. It was produced by Master's University and includes well-known talent, including Nick Searcy (*The Shape of Water*). Unrated. Visit ManFromNowhereMovie.com to find a streaming platform.

Made You Look (Netflix) -- It's a fast-paced documentary about the largest art fraud in American history. Over the span of several years, New York art gallery Knoedler & Company sold \$80 million in fake art. Some blamed its president, Ann Freedman, but she claimed she was duped. TV-14.

Children

Raya and the Last Dragon (Disney Plus) -- A teenage girl sets out to save her world from an evil plague that's ravaging the land. To do that, she'll need to find the last magical dragon on earth -- a dragon that has powers over the plague. *Raya and the Last Dragon* has positive messages about friendship and trust. But it also has elements that may trouble some families, including quite a bit of dragon magic and a moderate amount of cartoon violence. It's also implied that the dragons are worshipped. Rated PG for some violence, action and thematic elements. Animated.

The Muppet Show (Disney Plus) -- One of the most creative comedy shows in television history finally lands on Disney Plus. The Muppet Show ran from 1976 to 1981 and followed Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and their friends as they stumbled their way through a hilarious variety routine. TV-G.

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



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'Resurrection' leads this month's family-friendly spotlight

By Michael Foust

Sometimes, you watch an Easter television special and wish it had never been made.

Other times, though, you watch an Easter television special and are so moved by it that you encourage others to watch it, too.

The latter is the case with Discovery Plus' upcoming special Resurrection, a feature-length motion picture that debuts on the streaming platform March 27, telling the story of Christ's latter days on Earth, through his resurrection and ascension. The film captures the emotions of his disciples following his death and then after his resurrection, as they're hunted and persecuted.

It was produced by Roma Downey and Mark Burnett, the team that also made The Bible, Son of God and A.D.: The Bible Continues.

An embargo keeps me from saying too much, but if you enjoyed those earlier projects by Downey and Burnett, then you'll likely enjoy this one, too. Resurrection is a film that Christians who affirm the Bible as God's Word can embrace.

"Jesus has risen!" John says in the film.

It was made using footage from the "vast library" of biblical material from Downey and Burnett, a press release said. (In other words, it wasn't filmed during the pandemic.)

"Faithful audiences crave content that speaks to their faith and values, and we can think of no better home for this film than Discovery Plus," Downey and Burnett said in a statement. "... We look forward to sharing Resurrection's ultimate story of hope with the Discovery Plus viewers and are grateful to be able to share this epic story with families just in time for the Easter season."

David Zaslav, president and CEO of Discovery, Inc., said the film "is emblematic of our ambition" to "provide a subscription service for everyone, including premium storytelling for the entire family."

"We are thrilled to partner with Mark and Roma on this powerful film," Zaslav said.

Discovery Plus remains one of the best streaming options for families with its vast catalog of home

improvement, nature-themed and educational programming. Resurrection only adds to the list of reasons to give it a try.

Also worth watching this month:

Flora & Ulysses (Disney Plus) -- A 10-year-old cynical girl takes in an injured squirrel, only to learn it has superhero-like powers (it can write -- using a typewriter -- and fly, too). She names it "Ulysses," and it helps her re-discover the wonders of the world. More importantly, it helps her mom and dad reunite. This box office movie is based on a book and is one of the best family films thus far of 2021. Rated PG for some mild action and thematic elements.

The Muppet Show (Disney Plus) -- At long last, the original series starring Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy lands on Disney Plus. Created by Jim Henson, The Muppet Show ran from 1976 to 1981 and followed the Muppets cast -- backstage and on stage -- as they took part in hilarious skits for a variety show. They also welcomed such guests as Steve Martin, Diana Ross and Mark Hamill. TV-PG.

The Snoopy Show (Apple TV) -- America's favorite beagle gets his own show in this hilarious new series that stays true to the original Peanuts classics. In the first episode, we learn the backstory of how Charlie Brown met Snoopy and how Snoopy befriended Woodstock. Apple TV is home to multiple Charlie Brown titles, including classic holiday specials and a few movies. TV-G.

Bobbi Jo: Under the Influence (VOD) -- It's the powerful story of Bobbi Jo Reed, a former drug addict and alcoholic who has rescued thousands of individuals from following her path. She does by that sharing her own personal story of how Christ saved her life and her soul. Due to mature themes of abuse -- Reed was raped -- this documentary is best for older children and teens. She's been sober more than two decades. Visit TheBobbiJoMovie.com.

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.

Tim Allen and Richard Karn reunite for new show

Americans love watching shows about people learning, making and competing, and Tim Allen is no stranger to that. Whether it's following along as people purchase storage units sight unseen, flip a wreck of a house or race against the clock to bake up something delicious, there's a show for it and a hungry audience.

"Pawn Stars," "Forged in Fire" and "American Pickers" tend to appeal to the more mechanically minded viewers, and now their ranks are being joined by a new contender: "Assembly Required."

While the show itself is new, the stars are not. For decades, Tim Allen and Richard Karn have been known for their handyman ways thanks to "Home Improvement," and now they have returned to the screen for a different format of show on a similar topic.

"Assembly Required" follows the style of "Forged in Fire" but focus on contestants who are participating in the mechanical building challenges from their own shops. Karn hosts and Allen stars in the show. They are joined by DIY woodworking expert and YouTube star April Wilkerson.

"Let's face it, we're living in a throwaway society," Allen said. "We buy, break, replace... rinse and repeat. Whatever happened to repair and rebuild?"

"There are some people who unfriend, unfollow and dispose of anything that offends, annoys or breaks -- so I've creat-



Richard Karn, Tim Allen and April Wilkerson star in Assembly Required on the History Channel.

ed a show to remind people of the satisfaction and pride that comes from rebuilding something on their own.

"And who better to join me than my buddy from the old Tool Time days -- Richard Karn! Now we're talking More Power! Albert Einstein once said, 'I'm not a genius, I'm just passionately curious.'"

"Well, let's get curious! Even a chimpanzee would at least show interest, right? Wait -- I think I just came up with another idea for the show! R-R-R-RI!"

The series began airing on the History Channel in February.

"Our history is defined by the innovations of ordinary dreamers creating extraordinary things, from Thomas

Edison's light bulb to the Wright brothers' first flight," said Eli Lehrer, executive vice president and general manager of History.

"We love partnering with Tim and Richard, America's beloved duo, as they challenge a new wave of skilled individuals to think out-of-the-box to build upon the innovations of those before them.

"We hope this series will inspire viewers to think twice about throwing out that old item, roll up their sleeves and rebuild it better."

The show airs on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. If you want to catch up on missed episodes, you can see them at history.com/shows/assembly-required.

The Chosen Season Two starts on Easter Sunday

The highly-anticipated second season of The Chosen returns on Easter Sunday. Dallas Jenkins, creator and director of the series, revealed the news in a livestream event.

The first episode of the nine-episode second season will be available for streaming beginning Easter Sunday. Then, according to Jenkins, "each episode will be released as soon as it is done." The son of famed Christian writer Jerry Jenkins also outlined some of the production issues which challenge The Chosen.

The Chosen is a well-reviewed and critically acclaimed independent production that can be viewed via its own app (available for Apple and Android). It is also known for having raised the record-setting crowd-funding project for any previous media project.

The effort raised \$10 million for the first season, the second season budget was also fully subscribed and Season Three already has \$2 million given towards its production. The show's producers also came up with a "pay it forward" system where people can watch The Chosen episodes for free, but choose to pay for a certain amount of episodes that can be watched by others.

In his update, Jenkins told fans that the second season is over budget and that they have not yet completed the entire season. Jenkins pointed to weather in Texas, which experienced a rare arctic cold and snow blast, and Covid as the reasons for additional costs. While many assume the show is filmed in Israel, it is actually produced in Texas.

"We want the authentic Jesus to be introduced to over one billion people around the world; we want our great show to do that," Jenkins said.

The Chosen team say they plan to pro-



XXXX

duce a full seven seasons of the series. Everything from the public ministry of Jesus, to his ministry and death and resurrection will be covered. Jenkins estimates that it will eventually cost \$100 million.

Jenkins maintained The Chosen will continue to be available for free, relying on the generosity of viewers to fund the cur-

rent and future seasons.

Fans who got to know the disciples in the first season will again see how their personalities mesh with that of Jesus and the people they encounter. The show is popular for its portrayal of everyday life around Jesus and the multitudes he served.

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How to Overcome Three Common Obstacles to Positive Change

So much of life is spent on autopilot. Years pass by, then decades. The more time passes, the more we lose sight of who we wanted to be, and the more we accept who we've become, despite the gap between our hopes and our reality.

We recognize the dissonance, but explain it away because the dreams of our youth are, we believe, impractical. It's not realistic or responsible—and may even be selfish—to harbor, let alone act upon, deeply held desires for something more out of life, right?



Time passes. Nothing changes. And we tell ourselves stories about why that's okay.

"I'm 30. I'm advancing in my career, planning a wedding, and trying to pay off student loans. I'm too busy."

"I'm 40. I have kids, a mortgage, and college tuition to save for. I have too many responsibilities."

"I'm 50. My knee hurts, I'm tired, I need to save for retirement. I'm too old."

Life goes by fast, and then faster and faster. If we're not careful, our bucket lists will get filled with excuses rather than accomplishments and experiences. It's easy to allow routine to take hold, and once it does, progress often grinds to a halt. We lose ourselves in other people's expectations about how we're supposed to think, what we should say, and what we ought to do or not do. Those deferred dreams of becoming an artist, of writing that book, of pursuing a new career, of traveling, of living somewhere new, all begin to fade.

But not entirely. Any dream worth dreaming keeps flickering, no matter how faintly. It begins to burn brighter at times of turmoil, when the routine becomes unbearable. It is during trying times, such as the onset of an illness or the disintegration of a relationship, that we conjure the courage to revisit what we really desire from our lives. These are the inciting incidents of life.

How Will You Rise to the Challenge?

In screenplay and novel writing, the inciting incident is the event that gets the story rolling. It's the action or deci-

sion that introduces the problem that the story's main character must overcome.

In movies and books, the inciting incident is unmistakable. It's the moment that calls the protagonist to action and changes his or her life irrevocably. That's the thing about fiction—almost every story follows the same arc. There's incitement, struggle, and ultimately triumph, with twists and turns along the way. But the story almost always gets resolved, wrapped up in a

pretty bow.

Art may imitate life, but real life is, of course, far different. And messier (at least the ending). We're all characters in a narrative, but unlike in most books and movies, our stories don't always result in happy endings. Inciting incidents occur all around us, but rarely do they lead to real change.

Over the past nine months, we have all been called to action. Even if you haven't personally been afflicted with illness, COVID-19's second-order consequences have almost certainly affected you in some ways. The question is: Will you use this moment as a catalyst for change, or merely accept more of the same?

If you've pondered this question, in some form or another, you're not alone. I've struggled with it mightily. For me, it's led to a host of other questions: What legacy will I leave? How will I look back at my time spent during the pandemic? What are my priorities? What lessons will I pass on to my kids that will help them confront the inevitable struggles they will face? Have I stepped up for others? Am I showing up with an abundance or scarcity mindset? Am I living a life true to myself? What changes should I make? If not now, when?

The problem with an inciting incident in the form of a global pandemic is that the severity of such a crisis tends to inhibit and not spur positive change. It's during times like this that we tend to withdraw and avoid risk-taking. We hunker down. We settle for the status quo, no matter how dissatisfying. We get stuck.

Five years ago, facing other challenges, my wife and I finally summoned

the courage to act and change our circumstances for the better. We picked up and moved hundreds of miles away to a place we loved but previously lacked the will to embrace as our home. We started a new business. We fashioned a new life. We took action.

It worked, and the experience has been revelatory in many ways. We're still not sure exactly where this journey will end up, but we got ourselves moving. And that's important, because almost everything positive that has happened in our lives has come as a result of stepping outside of our comfort zones.

One of the most important lessons we learned is that to move forward, you first need to understand what's holding you back. Only after you've diagnosed the problem can you determine the right course of treatment.

Here are three common challenges that impede progress—they certainly impeded ours—and some ideas for moving forward.

The Sunk Cost Fallacy

Have you ever stayed in a job or situation for too long because you felt like you had so much time and effort invested in it? Have you feared that walking away, despite the fact that you were in a bad situation, was not worth the cost? Most of us have, which means we've fallen victim to the "sunk cost fallacy."

A sunk cost is one that has already been incurred and cannot be recouped. It's gone, and there's nothing we can do about it. The fallacy is that we believe we can recover sunk costs by putting more energy into the situation, so we make bad decisions—or no decision at all—because we don't want to accept the fact that the past is in the past. So instead of making progress on a new path, we compound our mistakes based on the irrational desire to justify our prior decisions.

Not only do people overvalue sunk costs, but they undervalue future investments. They stay in situations for too long even though they're not happy because they doubt their potential to pivot and make positive change.

Sunk costs are, by definition, gone. You can't get them back. So there's no reason to regret past mistakes. And there's certainly no reason to compound them by not changing behavior. Learn from your past and remember that every stumble is a step toward your future.

Living for Others

Far too many people live their lives based on perceptions of what others may think of their actions and decisions rather than focusing on their own dreams and desires. Instead of working to be happy, they worry about pleasing others.

"If I quit my job, what will my parents think?"

"If I join this group, what will my friends say?"

"How will my co-workers react if I speak up at the meeting?"

"Will people 'like' my social media post?"

This is no way to live, and it's a recipe for staying stuck. That's not to say that we shouldn't consider what other people think of us, it's just that it can't be your guiding principle.

So what if someone does judge you? You'll never please everyone—that's out of your control. What is in your control is how you react. You can either let it get you down, or you can ignore it and move forward. There's no way that everyone is going to like you, but depending on how you conduct yourself, you can earn everyone's respect. And that should be the objective.

This is not a call to narcissism. It's a wake-up call to start living life on your own terms. The path to progress starts with having a well-developed value system and the courage to unabashedly express it. Again, not everyone will like it, but if you're true to yourself and your values, then you'll be respected no matter where your path takes you.

Thinking 'Why Me?' Instead of 'Why Not Me?'

We hear a lot about "overnight success" stories—people who emerge from obscurity and skyrocket to fame and

fortune, and businesses that start in a garage or dorm room and quickly command billion-dollar valuations. These stories make for great sound bites in the age of the internet and social media, and they leave people thinking that success is more the result of a stroke of luck than it is hard work and determination.

With few exceptions, the overnight success phenomenon is a myth. We see the end result—the fame and fortune—but we don't see the blood, sweat, tears, toil, failure, sacrifice, and rejection that enabled the achievement to happen. Almost no one achieves anything worthwhile the first time they try, or even the second or third. Indeed, the road to success for most is littered with failures.

If you're willing to work hard and persevere through hardship, you can become "successful"—no matter how you define it. It just won't happen overnight. Those who grasp this don't look for lightning in a bottle. They don't fatalistically and self-defeatingly ask, "Why me?" Instead, with calm confidence they dig deep, roll up their sleeves, and proclaim, "Why not me?" And they shift into action.

Success begins and ends with an enduring belief in self.

In almost all ways, the COVID-19 crisis is a curse. But in crisis lies opportunity. What will you do in the face of this clear and present inciting incident to make changes for the better?

—Jay Harrington / *The Epoch Times*



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15 best-paying side jobs for seniors

Retirement can be a ton of fun. After decades of grinding out long hours, you can finally sit back, kick your feet up and relax. Oftentimes, though, people can get tired of the unstructured days ... and the lack of cash.

In cases like these, a lot of seniors will dip their toes into the working world. After all, the right job can teach you new skills and even fulfill you. Plus, it can bring in some much-needed money.

Here are 15 great jobs that are perfect for seniors. Whether you're coming out of retirement or you're a worker looking for a side gig, you're sure to find something that catches your eye. So check these out and polish up your resume — it's time to find your perfect fit!

1. Get the party started as a professional planner

As a party planner, you can organize fun events to help others make the most of their free time. You'll have to book vendors, decorate, choose fun themes — and, unfortunately, clean up afterward.

If you're a creative person who likes to breathe new life into birthday parties, corporate events, fundraisers or more, this is the position for you. According to Thumbtack, you can rack up anywhere from \$50 to \$150 an hour. You can start by networking with other vendors, printing business cards and creating social media pages to attract new customers.

2. Pet sit professionally

Folks can't always take Fido on the plane. When they're out of the home and traveling the world, people want to make sure their pets are well cared for. That's where you come in.

Pet sitting is a flexible side hustle: You can go to your client's house or take care of animals at your own home. Either way, you just have to feed the pets, play with them and make sure they're okay.

The best part of this gig? You can kick back and relax once you've met the animal's needs. Crack open a book while Lucky chews on his toy — you're getting paid by the hour.

3. Rent out your shoulder for strangers to cry on

The great thing about being a professional friend is that you're getting paid to have fun.

Plus, different clients want different services. For example, one person may just want you to sit at a nearby table while they're on a first date. Others may want a partner to go rock-climbing with. Every day is a new adventure, and you're sure to learn new skills.

4. Sell your skills as a personal chef

If you love cooking, why not sell your food? You don't have to buy a food truck or start a delivery service. As a personal chef, you can work from the comfort of your own home.

Just cook up high-quality, homemade meals and watch the cash flow in. One great way to attract customers is by specializing in specific diets, like paleo or

keto. If you have culinary training and flexible skills, you could attract clients for the long haul.

5. Like to craft? Sell your scarves, decorations and artwork

Tons of cities have craft fairs, where you can open a booth and sell your homemade goodies. Whether you love knitting, embroidery or baking, you can turn your fun hobby into a side hustle.

One good way to start making cash is by opening an Etsy account. Although it's free to open up a shop, you have to pay some fees when you list items and make transactions. If you only want to sell in-person, Google nearby craft fairs and other events — you're sure to find something!



6. Write itineraries as a travel agent

More people than ever before are using the internet to book flights, reservations and more. That's a golden opportunity for you. If you're tech-savvy, you could book events and plan fun group trips.

Open up your booking agency, and you could start helping out other folks over 50. This job is also a fun way to get some ideas for yourself: You're getting paid to research fun things for other people to do. That means you could discover river cruises, popular destinations and more.

Plus, you don't need to get a license or certification to start working. Of course, if you open up your own agency, you'll need to work with official transportation agencies and get their approval. On the bright side, you can set up whatever hours you want to work — there's a ton of flexibility.

7. Coach youngsters through life

You've got a ton of life experience under your belt. As a life coach, you can dish out personal advice or professional wisdom to eager ears. This position provides you with the opportunity to guide younger people through the waters of life.

Maybe they're struggling in their job; maybe they just need a guiding figure to hold them accountable. You can step in and help others find their sense of purpose. It's a super fulfilling job, so if you love leadership roles, give it a try!

8. Become a tutor

If you graduated from a college or university, you could tutor students

online. People need help in English, math, science, social studies and more. You can connect with people remotely or work in person, depending on the position.

To succeed in this position, you need to have rock-solid communication skills. You may work with students who have English as a second language, so you should convey critical information clearly and concisely. It's not easy working as a tutor, but it can be incredibly fulfilling to help your students succeed.

9. Stay in shape as a fitness trainer

If you love to exercise, why not get paid for it? Tons of people around your age would like to get in shape, but they might be dissuaded when a fresh-faced young trainer helps them out. Think about it this way: Wouldn't you feel more comfortable with a workout partner closer to your own age?

That's why this is a golden opportunity. The fitness industry is a booming business, and there's a ton of demand for trainers who design workouts for people who are 55 and older.

10. Help families find their homes as a real estate agent

It's never too late to learn a new skill. If you pump your brain full of knowledge on the housing market, you'll always have opportunities. After all, people will always need homes — and, more importantly, they'll always need expert help.

You can provide that help as a real estate agent. You'll need to complete a bunch of courses and pass a licensing exam first. After that, you can start putting your problem-solving skills to work.

If you want to meet new people, this is the job for you. Set your own hours, throw home tours and happily hand over the house keys to your customers once the sale is signed.

11. Do you know how to play an instrument? You could be a music teacher

Music transcends language, location and demographics. If you know the piano, guitar or other instrument, you could share your skills with eager students. Plus, you can teach anyone, from children to fellow adults.

If you want to do one-on-one sessions, you can find clients online or buy advertisements in the local newspaper. If you want to earn even more money, you can host group sessions. Like the other jobs on this list, being a music teacher lets you set your own hours and fees.

You will have to plan lessons, though, and hold music recitals and give helpful feedback. Depending on your preferences, you could rent a studio, hold les-



sons at your home, teach online or even travel to your student's homes.

12. You can even rent out your home as a host

If you don't mind strangers around the place, you can even start renting. Maybe there's an extra room you want to fill up. Open up an ad on Craigslist or Facebook and that empty room can net you \$1,000 a month.

Of course, you'll have to vet newcomers thoroughly. But if you want money and you have a room or house you're not using, this could be a great way to make bank. You could even rent to different people for a week or a weekend.

13. Write resumes for folks in search of a job

If you're good at editing text, formatting documents and writing short blurbs about other people's skills, this job is perfect for you. It's all about making other people look good. You have to look over their previous positions and extract the key traits they can bring to new positions.

Basically, you want to write from potential employers' perspectives. Ask yourself, "What are the most useful skills this person has? How can their prior experience translate to good experiences in the future?"

The good thing about resume writing gigs is that you'll always have a job. They're in especially high demand right now since more people are looking to return to work.

14. Transcribe customer service calls

No matter what, businesses will always have a customer service department. That means they'll always need transcribers. Sure, some companies have

them on-site — but others want to outsource the task.

That's where you can help. Transcribing is a solid at-home gig. You're responsible for transcribing calls from various companies into text.

For instance, you'll have to record all the dialogue you hear from the salesperson and the company. Sure, it's not the most riveting work in the world, but it's a reliable way to ensure a steady cash flow.

You've got to be a strong listener, as well as an accurate typist. You should also be proficient with Microsoft Word or similar applications.

Of course, a transcriber also needs a keen eye for editing and proofreading. | Photo

15. Love your area? Consider becoming a local tour guide

If you live in a popular city with a ton of tourists, you can turn that traffic into cold, hard cash. As a tour guide, you should show tourists around your city's hottest destinations. It will take a good chunk of time out of your day, but you may enjoy showing people the best spots around town.

One good way to stand out from the pack is by finding a niche. See what other tour guides are offering. Some of them offer ghost tours.

If you have something more specific in mind, make that the forefront of your work as a tour guide. It's a great way to draw people towards your specific service. Speaking of attracting people, LinkedIn can help managers to find ideal candidates to fill open positions.

LinkedIn is also the perfect place for employers. It's not just for job seekers. Companies big and small use LinkedIn to find the right candidate.

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sports

Baseball legend Darryl Strawberry talks about winning the game of life

Few people understand the highs and lows of baseball – and of life itself – better than Darryl Strawberry. His storied career with the New York Mets, Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees included four World Series championships and eight All-Star Game appearances. Away from the game, however, he struggled with abuse, addiction and cancer.



coat it. I love who I am. I love what has happened to my life. I love falling from being a baseball star into the arms of God. Being elevated by him is far greater than my baseball career.”

While playing for the Mets, Strawberry noticed that two of his teammates, Gary Carter and Mookie Wilson, had the peace and joy he was looking for in the wrong places.

“The problem in our society today is that people look at celebrities and think they have it all together,” he said. “They have this privileged life, and they can say whatever they want. They live above the average person, but at the end of the day, it’s all meaningless. When it comes down to the end, do you have a relationship with God?”

“Baseball taught me a lot of things, how one can be broken and successful at the same time,” he said. “It taught me the real values of the life we live here, that it’s short-lived. A career comes and goes and it’s over, and there is another guy stepping in front of you. You have to realize it’s the same way with our lives here. After you live a certain period, somebody new will come with a voice.

“I’m glad God has given me a voice in this time to be able to speak. I speak boldly about the gospel of Jesus Christ. I don’t sug-

“They were living a Christian life, and I was wondering why they were so different, why they never condemned anybody, why they never shouted at anybody,” he said. “That’s because they were living from a different perspective. They weren’t living from the baseball uniform; they were living from who they were on the inside. I really wanted what they had, but I didn’t have enough guts to go and ask them, ‘What is it you have that you are so different and are so happy all the time?’

“They were very happy people, and I wanted what they had while they were playing. I just didn’t make the step to go figure that out. Later on in life, I realized that I could have that, too.”

Strawberry found that joy and peace years later when he accepted Christ.

Read the whole article on our website: metrovoiceneews.com.

FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

By Rob Mooney

There’s one thing that I truly enjoy about the beginning of baseball season, and that’s the fact that every team is 0-0 and hopeful that they have the right ingredients to produce a winning team capable of reaching the post season. As a Kansas City Royals fan, it’s no different for me. Looking at the roster, how the team played in Spring Training and remembering how they finished last season, there’s no reason to not get excited about the 2021 Royals. After all, hope springs eternal, right?



The Royals made some interesting moves during the off-season, acquiring outfielder Andrew Benintendi from the Boston Red Sox in a trade. They also signed pitcher Ervin Santana, outfielder Michael Taylor and first baseman Carlos Santana. They brought back pitchers Greg Holland, Wade Davis and outfielder Jarod Dyson. However, with all of

those additions, two transactions stand out to me more than any other, and those are the re-signings of third baseman Hunter Dozier and catcher and fan favorite, Salvador Perez.

It appears to me that the Royals are gearing up for a run at the post season. It’s hard to get excited about spring training statistics, but the Royals were crushing it in Arizona this year. They finished with a record of 16-8, best in the Cactus League and the hope is that their momentum will carry over to the regular season. Couple that the fact that they open the season against the Texas Rangers, it’s very possible that they’ll get off to a good start this year.

If you look at the starting lineup, you’ve got to feel good about it. Whit Merrifield leading off and playing 2nd base. Benintendi batting second, Dozier third and then

Santana, Jorge Soler and Perez in the 4th, 5th and 6th spots. Throw in 2018 #2 pick Kyle Isbel, then Taylor rounded out by Nicky Lopez, and you’ve got the makings of a decent offensive team.

As far as pitching, not many people realize that the Royals finished 6th in the American League in team ERA last season. With the young guns having a year under their belts and the additions they made to the staff, they look poised to improve on that this year.

The Royals may go out and lay an egg like they’ve done so many times in the past. However, one thing that we can say about them this year is that management is all in and they’re not wasting time with players that can’t cut it at the major league level. How many times in the past did we see them wait on promising prospects that never panned out. By the way, the top player in the minors, Bobby Witt Jr, will be up with the Royals within 2 months! T

There is reason to be excited about the Royals this year. With the players currently on the roster and some of the players on their up from the minors, it’s going to be a fun year!

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Fresh Ideas to Spruce Up for Spring

Spring means it's time to start sprucing up your home and garden with a little TLC inside and out. If you're unsure where to begin, consider these tips:

Make function a priority. While aesthetic changes may boost value and please the eye, be sure to consider upgrades that make living easier, like organization units that give you more space or upgrades that create additional living space.

Keep budget in mind. Make a list of the projects you'd like to complete and estimate how much each will cost. Use the list to determine what you can afford to complete now.

Do your research. If you'll be making a significant purchase such as a new vacuum or grill, be sure to explore your options, read reviews and shop around for the best prices for greater confidence in what you choose.

Set yourself up for a more enjoyable



spring with more home and garden tips at eLivingtoday.com.

Hands Free Spring Cleaning

For busy households, an all in one vacuum and mop robot like the Deebot N8+ is a perfect daily companion to help automate spring cleaning. It features high suction power (but low

noise), TrueMapping technology to create an efficient cleaning path and the OZMO Mopping System to remove 99.26% of bacteria with dual vacuuming and mopping. Controllable with a smartphone app, it includes an Auto Empty Station for months of hands- and maintenance-free cleaning. Learn more at ecovacs.com/us.

Enhance the Space Under Your Deck

Optimize the space beneath an elevated deck by adding a drainage system such as Trex RainEscape. Designed to

capture and divert water, this system protects a deck's substructure from moisture damage while creating dry space usable for storage or an additional living area. Homeowners can safely add gas lines and wiring to accommodate grills, appliances, ceiling fans, lights and entertainment components to create an outdoor oasis. For more information, visit TrexRainEscape.com.

Perfect Your Pantry

Cleaning out your pantry is an important step during spring cleaning as it allows you to discard expired items and rethink the space. Start by reorganizing and simplifying the area with ClosetMaid ventilated shelving like this Pantry Organizer. Built with the ShelfTrack system for a fully adjustable space along with close mesh to help prevent items from tipping over, it includes four 4-foot-by-16-inch shelves, a hang track and all necessary hardware. Find more information at closetmaid.com.

Get Ready to Grill

A grill's lifespan depends on many factors, including where and how it is stored and your climate. When it's time to upgrade, you'll have some decisions to make. The biggest is which heating style you prefer: gas, electric or charcoal. Other considerations include the overall size, number of burners and grate quality. Also be sure to compare available features, such as side burners and igniters, which are fairly common, and upgrades like lighting and fuel gauges.

When to Update Home and Garden Goods

Investing in quality products, properly maintaining and storing them all have an impact on how long they'll stay in good working condition. As you tackle spring cleaning this year, take stock of your common home and garden equipment to determine what may need updating.

Lawn Mower: If your mower needs a repair that exceeds its value, it's time for a replacement. However, there may be other signs that an upgrade is warranted. Rough operation, frequent breakdowns or other indications of faulty performance deserve a second look.

Before you buy new, remember to check your warranty to determine whether repairs might be covered.

Vacuum: Many homeowners discard their used vacuum when it stops picking up dirt and debris as efficiently as it did originally. Before you move on, be sure to check that performance issues aren't the result of clogged hoses or a filter than needs cleaning or replacing. A belt may also be worn or need adjusting. Other signs it may be time to replace the vacuum include damaged or frayed cords, motor issues like overheating or making strange noises.

Grill: A grill may last anywhere from

5-15 years, depending on the quality of the materials and how it is maintained. However, it's common to have to replace parts along the way. Signs you may need a new grill include a firebox (the main enclosure) with cracks, rust or holes and burners that distribute heat unevenly. Damaged grates can affect even grilling if they're warped or if they're flaky or rusted, they can contaminate food. If you're not able to replace the grates, or any other essential part, including hoses and connectors for a gas grill, you'll be better off replacing the unit.

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Shannon Bream talks about her book on incredible Women of the Bible

Popular Fox News host Shannon Bream has published a new book focusing on the incredible stories of women in the Bible.

"Women of the Bible Speak: The Wisdom of 16 Women and Their Lessons for Today," shares about the lives of these women and the lessons that we can learn and take with us today.

Recently, Bream talked about the book and how her faith informs her life and role in television.

"You know, it was actually Fox that came to me and said they were working on some ideas for their first round of books to come out under the Fox label (at HarperCollins)," Bream shared. "They approached me about this idea, and it was an immediate, 'Yes!'"

"I love this idea of highlighting the women of the Bible and their stories because some of them I think people know, they're familiar. They may have heard about Mary the mother of Jesus and Queen Esther, but there are so many stories that



people don't know or, like me, they even grew up studying in church but there's so much more to the story. I think people who are intimidated by religion, not interested or have this impression that

women are sort of second-class citizens in the Bible, they just don't know. They've got it all wrong," Bream said.

"So, I'm happy to tell these stories and show how God used these women."

The book is filled with detailed research that Bream did, not only to bring these stories to life but to share some of the historical and cultural situations that could seem somewhat foreign to modern audiences.

"The days and hours that I was able to focus on the book was such a blessing to me because it renewed my faith and it showed me things I hadn't seen before," Bream explained. She was also able to lean on theologians she knew who were able to explain the meaning of par-

ticular words in Greek and the customs of the time.

"I definitely had angels along the process who helped me with the research and diving in and learning more," Bream said. "You just always wish you had more time."

This last year was an exceptionally busy news cycle for Bream, with a presidential election, COVID, rioting and Supreme Court confirmation hearings dominating the headlines. (In addition to her role on "Fox @ Night," Bream is also the network's chief legal correspondent.) But Fox is supportive of its staff and doesn't shy away from recognizing the role of faith in the lives of people it employs, she says.

"It's a huge blessing (to work at Fox) because I've always been open about my faith, and several of us at work are," Bream said. "Some people are more private and just have a different way of expressing it or talking about it, so I love that there's room for all of us and for people who don't have a religious faith at all. There's a seat at the table for everyone, so it's nice just to have that mutual respect."

"I feel like many of my coworkers

will come to me in times of crisis and say, 'You know, I don't even understand how all of this works, but I know that you pray or that you believe in prayer. Will you put me on your list and pray for me?' To me, that's the biggest gift, the biggest blessing in the world that I can be open about my faith and be there to comfort and encourage other people when they need it. It's really a gift."

Each section of "Women of the Bible Speak" is generally divided into two chapters, focusing on a different woman. For example, the first section shares the stories of Sarah and Hagar, and the next, Rachel and Leah.

"We were looking at where we could find parallels between the women in their lives and some of them knew each other and they have direct relationships and some of them are complicated," Bream shared. "There's sibling rivalry and that kind of thing. But there were other women that we thought had common themes."

Throughout the book, what's incredibly evident is how God works in the lives of broken women to redeem and forge ahead with his divine plan. In fact, the Bible is one of the most detailed historical accounts of the lives of individual women in the ancient world, marking the scriptures as an exceptionally unique source.

"What that shows are how valued

women were and are to God," Bream said. "Because, as I said, there are people who were prominent. We have Deborah who was a leader of the Israelites. She was in charge and led them into a battle that nobody would have thought on paper they could win. And yet, because she trusted God and His faithfulness, she acted on it. She convinced her military leader to go along and to follow this plan, and they had this enormous victory. That was just completely out of the blue to those who didn't know and believe in God's power in his faithfulness."

Moving on to the New Testament, Bream continued, "Back then, Jesus was an esteemed religious teacher or rabbi, it wouldn't be normal for women to be traveling with him and studying at his feet. He really had relationships with women that were friendships. They were respectful, and they were part of his close inner circle. He also went to the women who were outcasts of society."

Bream included the story of how Jesus reached out with compassion and not condemnation to a woman who was convicted of having committed adultery.

"I think that's a great message for all of us that our lives don't have to be perfect and cleaned up and holy, to go to God. He's always waiting for us and whatever place that we're in in life. He is there for us," Bream said.

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