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VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 6

February 2022

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## NEW RESIDENT churchguide



First Southern Baptist Church

See inside back cover!

## Topeka bucks trends with 25% decline in crime



Amid national reports in 2021 of record-setting crime rates in the U.S., Topeka achieved its lowest homicide rate in five years.

According to the Topeka Police Department's 2021 year-end report, the capital city saw a 25% decrease in overall crime last year. Meanwhile, local property crime was down 27% in 2021, and violent crime saw a 13.5% drop.

"The 2021 capital city crime statistics are outstanding. I am very proud of the work that was put in by our community, in support of the brave officers of the Topeka Police Department," said Chief Bryan Wheelers. "Challenging times necessitate more communication, collaboration and innovation. This community has embraced those guiding principles. Topeka is moving in the right direction - together."

In 2021, Topeka saw a five-year low in the number of reported homicides and a three-year low in reported shootings. The Topeka Police Department's recent report reinforces data published by BestPlaces.net that ranked Shawnee County's crime rate

■ Please see CRIME page 2



Rally For Life

## Pro-lifers rally at Capitol with "value them both" message

Pro-life advocates from across Kansas and the nation marched, rallied and prayed at the state Capitol Tuesday, Jan. 25.

The annual event, which has taken place for over a decade, drew attention to the lives of the unborn and a proposed amendment to the Kansas constitution. The Value Them Both Amendment would not ban abortion

but would place safeguards on the abortion industry concerning health of the woman and unborn child. It would also affirm that there is no constitutional right to abortion in the State Constitution.

Kansans For Life, one of the organizing groups, is spearheading the amendment and working to educate voters across the state.

Part of that education included the

rally which featured women leaders including Kristen Day, Executive Director of Democrats for Life of America and Kim Borchers, Kansas Republican National Committee Woman, and State Senator Kristen O'Shea.

"The issue of life is not a partisan issue. It is a dignity of life issue. I want to thank the Kansas Legislators

■ Please see RALLY FOR LIFE page 3

## Free Parking Comes Back to Downtown



The Topeka City Council has voted to approve a return to free parking in the downtown area by placing plastic bags on parking meters.

The motion was approved on Jan. 18, meaning that bags will be placed on parking meters along the 100 blocks of Kansas Ave. between 6th and 10th streets on the east and west sides, making parking free to motorists visiting the area.

Topeka had gone back to metered parking in October due to budget issues.

The meters bring in revenue of about \$100,000.

The city had bagged those meters since 2017 to allow free parking in the area, in an effort to encourage people to come to downtown Topeka.

## Homeschooling expands across nation as schools push agendas

School restrictions and closures during the Covid pandemic continue to fuel a rapid rise in the prevalence of homeschooling.

In the spring of 2020, around 5.4 percent of households in the United States with school-age kids said they were homeschooling. By the time fall hit, that number had increased to 11.1 percent or more than 1 in 10.

"That change represents an increase of 5.6 percentage points and a doubling of U.S. households that were homeschooling at the start of the 2020-21 school year compared to the prior year," the U.S. Census Bureau said.

"The Los Angeles Times" reported that in California, almost 35,000 families filed an affidavit with the state to start a private

home school for five or fewer kids during the 2020-21 school year. That number was more than twice the number of affidavits filed in 2018-19. Parents are increasingly interested in alternative forms of schooling as many schools continue to threaten closures or force students to wear masks in the midst of the Omicron variant. The World Health Organization has reported that Omicron poses no real threat to those under 18 unless they have serious health concerns.

"There is dissatisfaction with how folks were being taught and treated in schools," said Martin Whitehead, spokesman for the Homeschool Association of California.

California policies might lead more par-

■ Please see HOMESCHOOLING page 2



## Topeka Dino Days Are Here!

You can explore Topeka like never before during Dino Days, a multi-exhibit experience for all ages! Not only can you enjoy main attractions throughout the city, but get ready to discover other participating businesses and organizations throughout Topeka this Spring.

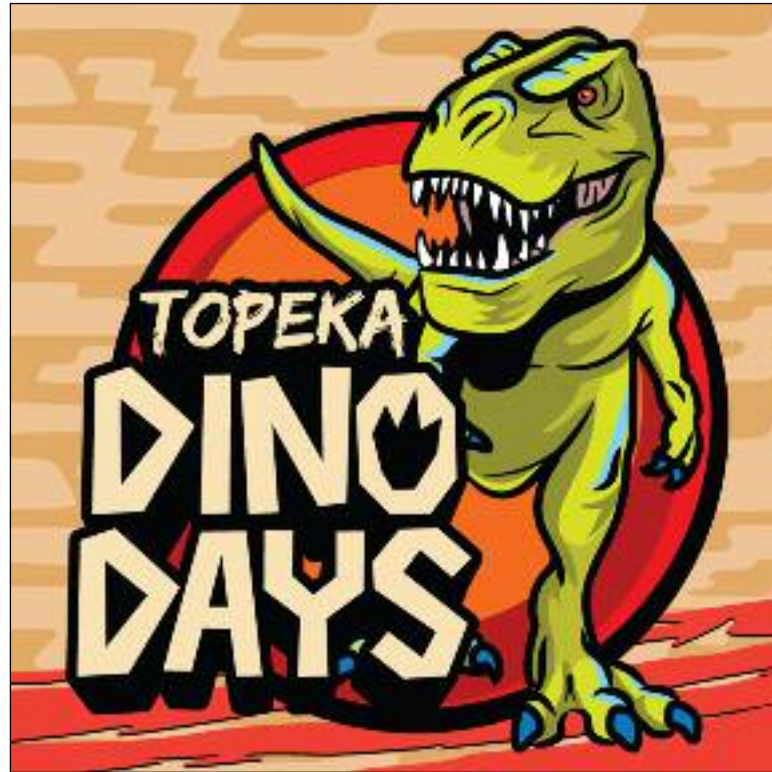
**SUE: The T. Rex Experience** – Great Overland Station [Opens Feb. 4]. See this fearsome fossil all the way from Chicago's Field Museum. Step into the world of SUE the T. Rex to uncover the mysteries about the life of this fearsome fossil. Get to know SUE at the Great Overland Station. This newly updated exhibit, all the way from Chicago's Field Museum is part of an immersive, multi-sensory experience.

**DINO DAYS BASE CAMP** – Topeka Information Center, 715 S Kansas Ave. [Opens Feb. 24] See an Allosaurus and calf at no charge, grab some swag and find out where all of the dino hot spots are throughout town. Start or end your journey at the Topeka Dino Days Base Camp, or swing by at any point along the way.

**DINOSAURS ALIVE!** Created By Dino Don, Inc. – Topeka Zoo. [Opens March

3rd] Dinosaurs are back in a BIG way at the Topeka Zoo. Journey back to the age of dinosaurs in an immersive experience featuring life-size, animatronic prehistoric giants appearing throughout the zoo. This spring the Topeka Zoo presents DINOSAURS ALIVE! This new dinosaur exhibit is an immersive experience featuring life-sized, animatronic dinosaurs that move and make sounds just like the creatures that used to roam the planet! Travel through time and discover different time periods, admire the magnitude of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, and learn about "modern dinosaurs" still living today. It's sure to be a roaring good time! The life-like creatures were created by Dino Don Inc. With each ticket, you get access to the Zoo AND our dinosaur experience. There will also be educational activities in the Field Camp, and at the Dig Site. Admission to Dinosaurs Alive! is covered in the cost of admission to the Zoo.

**TINY TITANS: Dinosaur Eggs And Babies** – Children's Discovery Center. [Opens February 24th] Visitors will enjoy learning about dinosaur eggs, nests, and babies through colorful, hands-on, interactive experiences that include a collection of



real life dinosaur eggs. Visitors young, and young at heart, will enjoy learning about dinosaur eggs, nests, and babies through colorful, hands-on, interactive experiences

that include a collection of real life dinosaur eggs.

For tickets and more info: [topekadino-days.com/](http://topekadino-days.com/) or (785) 246-6271

## Grocery shortage worsens as pandemic policy threatens supply chains

Soaring freight costs plus Omicron and vaccine mandate-related labor shortages are creating a new round of backlogs at processed food and fresh produce companies, leading to empty grocery shelves at major retailers across the United States.

Growers of perishable produce across the West Coast are paying nearly triple pre-pandemic trucking rates to ship things like lettuce and berries before they spoil. Shay Myers, CEO of Owyhee Produce, which grows onions, watermelons, and asparagus along the border of Idaho and Oregon, said he has been holding off shipping onions to retail distributors until freight costs go down.

Myers said transportation disruptions in the last three weeks, caused by a lack of truck drivers and recent highway-blocking storms, have led to a doubling of freight costs for fruit and vegetable producers, on top of already-elevated pandemic prices. "We typically will ship, East Coast to West Coast—we used to do it for about \$7,000," he said. "Today it's somewhere between \$18,000 and \$22,000."

Birds Eye frozen vegetable maker Conagra Brands' CEO Sean Connolly told investors last week that supplies from its U.S. plants could be constrained for at least the next month due to Omicron-related absences.

Earlier this week, Albertsons CEO Vivek Sankaran said he expects the supermarket chain to confront more supply chain challenges over the next four to six weeks as Omicron has put a dent in its efforts to plug supply chain gaps.

Shoppers on social media complained of empty pasta and meat aisles at some Walmart stores; crackers and bread at grocery stores in Kansas City, a



Meijer store in Indianapolis was swept bare of chicken; a Publix in Palm Beach, Florida, was out of bath tissue and home hygiene products; while Costco reinstated purchase limits on toilet paper at some stores in Washington state.

The situation is not expected to abate for at least a few more weeks, said Katie Denis, vice president of communications and research at the Consumer Brands Association, blaming the shortages on a scarcity of labor.

The consumer-packaged goods industry is missing around 120,000 workers, out of which only 1,500 jobs were added last month, she said, while the National Grocer's Association said that many of its grocery store members were operating with less than 50 percent of their workforce capacity.

U.S. retailers are now facing roughly 12 percent out-of-stock levels on food, beverages, household cleaning, and personal hygiene products compared to 7-10 percent in regular times.

The problem is more acute with food products where out-of-stock levels are running at 15 percent, the Consumer Brands Association said.

SpartanNash, a U.S. grocery distributor, last week said it has become harder to get supplies from food manufacturers, especially processed items like cereal and soup.

Consumers have continued to stock up on groceries as they hunker down at home to curb the spread of the Omicron variant. Denis said demand over the last five months has been as high or higher than it had been in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. Similar issues are being seen in other parts of the world.

In Australia, grocery chain operator Woolworths Group said last week that more than 20 percent of employees at its distribution centers are off work because of COVID-19. In the stores, the virus has put at least 10 percent of staff out of action.

The company, on Thursday, reinstated a limit of two packs per customer across toilet paper and painkillers nationwide, both in-store and online, to deal with the staffing shortage.

In the United States, recent snow and ice storms that snared traffic for hours along the East Coast also hampered food deliveries bound for grocery stores

### CRIME

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well below the national average. Shawnee County received a violent crime score of 14 (out of 100), compared to a U.S. national average of 22.7.

"We are extremely proud of the work our community has done to make Topeka and Shawnee County one of the safest communities in the United States," said Matt Pivarnik, CEO of the Greater Topeka Partnership. "It's extremely encouraging to see Topeka's crime has been on the decline, especially when you consider recent national trends. I tend to think the strides we have made to improve community morale, coupled with increased prosperity in our city over the past decade, are among the factors driving these latest crime stats. While there is always more to do, this is an exceptional start. I applaud our local law enforcement for their work."

### HOMESCHOOLING

continued from page 1

ents to make similar decisions about schooling for their children. Democratic state Sen. Richard Pan proposed a bill that would add COVID-19 vaccinations to the state's list of inoculations for grades K-12 in a move that would require all students to be fully vaccinated starting in 2023. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom also has announced an executive order that will require students 12 and old to be vaccinated for COVID-19 after the vaccine is fully approved by the FDA.

Newsom's executive order allows for medical and religious exemptions. Pan's new bill, however, does not currently include a religious exemption. Another bill introduced in the state last week would permit students 12 years of age and up to get the COVID-19 vaccine without parental permission.

Voters also are responding to school measures and policies by electing new leadership. Newly elected Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin of Virginia signed an executive order allowing parents to opt out of school mask mandates if they do not want their children to wear a face covering in school.

—Siddharth Cavale and Christopher Walljasper

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# What They Told Us: Reviewing Some Key Polls

In January surveys, this is what America told Rasmussen Reports:

- Barely a third of Americans believe Martin Luther King Jr.'s dreams of equal opportunity in the country are a reality.

- Voters are significantly more worried about inflation and violent crime than they are about COVID-19 or climate change.

- Tattoos are increasingly common among younger Americans, and most of those who have tattoos have more than one. 14% think they make someone more attractive; 28% say less attractive.

- Business should focus on traditional goals like consumer service and profit, rather than the social justice and environmentalist agenda of the "Great Reset" movement, most voters believe.

- Twenty-six percent (26%) of Likely U.S. Voters think the country is heading in the right direction.



- President Biden registered a daily job approval of between 38-41%.

- There's too much partisanship and not enough cooperation in Washington, according to a majority of voters.

- President Joe Biden's first year in office has been a failure, according to a majority of voters who say the Democrat has left the country more divided than when he was inaugurated. Play Video

- A majority (55%) of voters think congressional Democrats are too liberal, and agree with the Senate GOP leader that voters don't want to "fundamentally transform America."

- The 2022 midterm elections are now 294 days away, and Republicans maintain a strong lead in their bid to recapture control of Congress.

- A majority (58%) of voters believe "fake news" is a problem, and that the media have become "the enemy of the people."

- In other polling, Americans rate 2021 as one of the worst years ever, and few think 2022 will be any better.

- Visit the Rasmussen Reports home page for the latest current polling coverage of events in the news. The page is updated several times each day.

- Remember, if it's in the news, it's in our polls.

## RALLY FOR LIFE

continued from page 1

who have fought tirelessly to make it possible for this amendment to be on the ballot this August. They did their job, now it is time to do ours." Borchers stated.

State Senator Kristen O'Shea agreed in her comments.

"Last year this time, my husband and I found out we were pregnant. I was struck with tears when I heard the heartbeat. This is not just me and my body, this is also him and his body," O'Shea told the large crowd.

Borchers says that legal abortion is not enough for those on the pro-choice side.

"Legal abortion has never been enough," she stated.

"They want no limits. They want taxpayers to pay for it. And they want abortion when they want it, and how they want it, wherever they want it."

She emphasized that the goal is to place reasonable limits on abortion, putting the health of the mother and child above the profit motive of many abortion providers.

Danielle Underwood, Communications Director for Kansans for Life says this is a watershed movement for the pro-life movement and Kansas.

"The world is watching Kansas," she said, repeating a phrase that has become the rallying cry for amendment supporters.

Faith leaders from numerous Christian traditions were at the rally to offer support and prayer.

Glenn Faris of Bethel Baptist Church in Topeka offered prayers that Kansans would work together to confront laws that do not value life.

"Lord, we're here today to say that we value life, from the very beginning to the very end and all the life in between," he stated. "We pray that as we are a people called by your name that we would stand for life, that we would do all in our power that you give us to overturn laws that take life for granted."

Borchers says the time is urgent, reminding the crowd that 7,542 children died by abortion in 2020.



State Senator Kristen O'Shea speaks to the crowd while holding her new baby. Featured speaker Kim Borchers looks on from her left.



"That number exceeded the number of lives lost from COVID-19," she said.

Kristen Day of Democrats for Life, said that while Americans support

pro-life policies, the Democrat Party is on the wrong side of history.

"Ending human life goes against the very principles and foundations of the Democratic Party," she said.

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## "Business Matchmaker" at C5Alive POWER Luncheon

The annual C5Alive "Business Matchmaker" Luncheon will be held February 10, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Fairlawn Plaza Mall. The meeting will feature speed networking to help businesses match up with one another for mutual benefit.

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](mailto:info@C5Alive.org).

C5Alive "POWER" luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month. The next monthly C5Alive "POWER Luncheon" will be held March 10.

For more details on these and other events, stay tuned to the C5Alive facebook page and website: [www.C5Alive.org](http://www.C5Alive.org).

C5Alive is part of the Capital

City Christian Chamber of Commerce (C5), 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 EASTER-FEST, 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 also hosted a Fall Fest this year on October 9 at The Vinewood venue. 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](http://C5Alive.org), [facebook.com/C5Alive](https://facebook.com/C5Alive), or call 785-640-6399.

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# FINANCIAL PLANNING

## Hope is a good thing

Dear Dave,

What is the main difference between people who follow your plan, stick with it and succeed, and those who fall off along the way?

Damon

Dear Damon,

I've walked with thousands of families through financial problems. Some of them were just speedbumps that needed to be smoothed out, while others seemed like mountains. The biggest factor I've noticed separating those who stick with it and gain control of their finances, from those who give up and go back to their old ways, can be boiled down to one simple word—hope.

Hope is stolen when we misunderstand failure and believe lies. One of the biggest lies that robs people of hope is the one that says failure is permanent. The moment we start seeing failures of the past as predictors of our futures, it extinguishes that ember of hope. Failure happens to all of us at times. It's natural, and it is normal. The way to reach your goals, though, is to keep failure in its cage. And failure is caged when we begin to understand it isn't permanent.

Winston Churchill once said, "Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." If we believe failure is here to stay, we lose enthusiasm. And that leads to an inability to re-focus on success. People often make dumb, short-term decisions when they're in financial difficulty. If you talk yourself into believing you'll never be able to save enough money to pay cash for a car, you'll lose hope and borrow the money. Debt not only robs you of the ability to build wealth, but it's also usually the result of losing hope.

Have you done something stupid or wrong in the past that you are still



**DAVE  
RAMSEY**

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

**davesays**

reliving daily? Is that memory haunting you, and stealing your hope? Remember, the past only has power over you if you let it have that power. Don't get me wrong. The past can hurt, and it can be disappointing. But you can either give in to it and let it control you, or you can learn from it and make a conscious decision to keep moving forward.

The choice is yours!

— Dave

## Let's tweak that idea a little

Dear Dave,

I am on Baby Step 2, and I started a YouTube channel earlier this year that led to a new opportunity to make additional income. I try on and review clothing, and I'm paid \$30 for each clip that's anywhere from 30 seconds to two minutes long. Right now, I have about 1,000 viewers. This requires me to buy items from several brands. I usually return the items when I'm through filming, but I'm currently funding this with a credit card I only use for this project. I only pay the minimum each month until I get the refund, so at any given time there can be up to \$4,000 on the card in rotation. I make about \$86,000 at my normal job, so is this an okay way to fund my project and chalk it up as a business expense?

Amber

Dear Amber,

You're taking a risk here, from a

business perspective, by playing around with \$4,000 in debt to make \$30 a pop. That's inordinate. And you shouldn't be paying for the clothes in the first place. These brands should be giving you clothes to review—that you keep—for the marketing exposure, but I'm not sure you've got enough eyeballs on you yet to justify them giving you the clothes for free.

Basically, it sounds like you're trying to put yourself in a position to be an influencer. And the way influencers get paid is by monetizing eyeballs. Obviously, YouTube and other platforms will pay you if you can get the eyeballs. But 1,000 viewers really aren't a lot these days. You're getting there, though, and I'm glad you're working at it and trying to make things happen.

You make good money, Amber. I want you to set aside \$2,000 or \$3,000 for this business, maybe out of the business income, and prime the pump one time. By that, I mean open a separate checking account that's for your clothing exchange process only. Here's the thing, let's say you bought \$1,000 worth of stuff from one of these companies, and they suddenly decide they're not taking it back. You just ate that \$1,000. And guess what else? Now,

you really have credit card debt.

There are three things you can always be sure of in business. One, it's going to cost twice as much as you think it will. Two, it's going to take twice as long as you think it will. And three, you are not the exception to these things. While we're at it, add this to the list of stuff you can always be sure of—you'll never find me advising or endorsing credit card debt!

— Dave

## There are better options

Dear Dave,

I'm coming up on a transition phase in my life. I'll be leaving the military soon, and I've been evaluating my living situation once I am out. My parents said I could live with them for a while, but I am not sure that would work out well. I have done some research on renting versus buying a home, but I understand that you hate VA loans. Can you clarify as to why you feel this way and give some advice for a person in my situation?

Tyler

Dear Tyler,

Hate might be a strong word for how I feel about VA loans, but there are some things you should know about them. Number one, VA loans are usually more expensive, with the interest rate and all the fees, than FHA or conventional loans. Number two,

the reason most people gravitate toward a VA loan is they can get a house with no money down. But if you're trying to buy a house with no money down, it means you're too broke to buy a house!

When you buy a house, and you've got no money in the bank, that house is going to be a curse instead of a blessing. What happens if you buy a home this way, and the air conditioner goes out next week? What happens if your car needs a new transmission next month? Most people who find themselves in situations like this start piling on debt to fix things, and that's not a wise answer.

VA loans and other "no down payment" mortgage loans allow you to buy a home from a position of financial weakness rather than a position of financial strength. Don't get me wrong, I want you to own a home someday. I just don't want the home—and a bunch of other debt stacked on top—to own you.

My advice is to rent a decent, affordable place for a while and concentrate on getting your new life and career off the ground while saving some money. You might even consider a roommate situation for a while to help cut costs. But you don't need to be buying a home right now.

Good luck and God bless, Tyler. And thank you for your service to our country!

— Dave

## The '7% Guaranteed' Annuity Myth

By Ryan Shumaker  
Smartvestor Pro at  
The Retirement Team



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

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

With these kinds of products, there are typically two different buckets. One is your actual account value, which is what you can cash out and which typically goes up and down with the performance of chosen stocks and/or bonds. The other is what I sometimes refer to as "funny money." Many companies call this "income account value" or "protected value." Basically, it is just a bucket that is used for only one purpose: to calculate what your guaranteed income stream will be. It is not something you can cash out and take the money. It is this bucket that is commonly touted as having "7% guaranteed growth."

Let's go through an example of how this might work. Let's say you are 65

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

The issue is, though, that if you signed up at 65, waiting for the income account value bucket to double over 10 years with its "guaranteed 7.2% growth" puts you at 75 years old before you start your \$10,000 guaranteed income stream. At \$10,000 a year, it is going to take you 10 more years just to get back your original \$100,000 investment, assuming your actual account value never grows at all! So, just to get your own original money back, it takes 20 total years and you are now 85 years old. If you have any account growth at all, it would take even longer. When explained this way, that "7.2% guarantee" doesn't sound so attractive now, does it?

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

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

(reprint from Forbes.com)

**Other great articles about retirement, investing, and tax reduction can be seen at [RetireTopeka.com/blog](https://RetireTopeka.com/blog).**

*Material discussed is meant for general/informational purposes and is not intended to be used as the sole basis for any financial decisions, nor be construed as advice to meet your particular needs. Please consult a financial professional for further information. Investing in securities involves risk and profit cannot be guaranteed.*

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## Resolve to Take Control of Your Finances in 2022

By Jim Hanna

Many of us take advantage of a new year to turn over a new leaf. This can include everything from starting a new exercise regimen to committing to cooking more at home. It's also a prime time to assess your current financial situation and take concrete steps to improve it.



Hanna

Here are a variety of steps to take as the New Year begins to enhance your financial life. Some may be more appropriate than others for your circumstances.

### Review where you stand

Start by taking a comprehensive look at your current financial position. Are you generating enough income to meet expenses? Where could you cut back on living costs? Are there loans or debt you can pay off quicker? Are you saving enough for your key goals? Ask the tough questions to get a good sense of where you stand. Then consider any of these following steps that seem appropriate.

### Deal with debt

Make a plan to pay down debts as quickly as you can. A priority should be to repay high interest borrowing like credit card debt as quickly as possible. To the extent loans are manageable, you can continue to make monthly payments, but the more you pay off, the easier it will be on your monthly budget.

### Build your savings

Financial security is closely related to the amount of money you have available to you. Commit to building up an "emergency fund" equal to six months of your income to help deal with unexpected short-term needs. Then commit to boosting your retirement savings contributions per month if you can.

### Resolve to get a better job

Many employers are having a hard time finding the right kind of people to fill roles. This may be the best opportunity in a long time to find a job that offers better compensation and that you may actually find more enjoyable.

### Invest more effectively

Do you think you might be able to get more out of your portfolio? Take a closer look at what's working and what isn't. It may be time to "cut your losses" on investments that have proven to be disappointing while putting some of that money to work in assets that offer greater potential.

### Make 2022 different

If you feel like there's more you could be doing to shore up your financial position, make a pledge to get that process started now. It may be beneficial to consult with a financial advisor to help you find a path to a more prosperous future.

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## Reasons people who don't normally file should file a 2021 tax return

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

With tax filing season just around the corner, this is a good time for those who don't normally file to consider the benefits of filing a 2021 tax return. Filing can help them claim a refundable tax credit or get an income tax refund.



Here are some things taxpayers should consider when deciding whether to file a tax return:

### Find out the general reasons to file

In most cases, income, filing status and age determine if a taxpayer must file a tax return. Other rules may apply if the taxpayer is self-employed or can be claimed as a dependent of someone else. There are other reasons when a taxpayer must file.

### Look at tax withheld or paid

Here are a few questions for taxpayers to ask themselves:

- Did the taxpayer's employer withhold federal income tax from their pay?
- Did the taxpayer make estimated tax payments during the tax year?
- Did they overpay last year on their taxes and have it applied to their 2021 tax?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, they could be due a refund. They must file a 2021 tax return to get their money.

### Look into whether they can claim the earned income tax credit

A working taxpayer who earned \$57,414 or less last year could receive the EITC as a tax refund. For the 2021 tax year, the tax return taxpayers file in 2022, the earned income credit ranges from \$1,502 to \$6,728 depending on their filing status and how many children they claim on their tax return. The law allows taxpayers to use either their 2020 income or 2021 income to calculate their EITC — taxpayers may choose whichever amount gives them a larger credit. Taxpayers need to file a tax return to claim the EITC. By law, the IRS cannot issue refunds to taxpayers claiming EITC until mid-February. The law changed to allow anyone age 19 and older and does not stop at age 65 to claim EITC.

### Child tax credit or credit for other dependents

Taxpayers can claim the child tax credit if they have a qualifying child under the age of 17 and meet other qualifications.

Other taxpayers may be eligible for the credit for other dependents. This includes people who have:

- Dependent children who are age 17 or older at the end of 2020
- Parents or other qualifying individuals they support

### Education credits

There are two higher education credits that reduce the amount of tax someone owes on their tax return. One is the American opportunity tax credit and the other is the lifetime learning credit. The taxpayer, their spouse or their dependent must have been a student enrolled at least half time for one academic period may qualify for the credit.

### Recovery rebate credit

Individuals who didn't qualify for a third Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amount, may be eligible to claim the 2021 recovery rebate credit based on their 2021 tax year information. If they're eligible, they'll need to file a 2021 tax return even if they don't usually file a tax return. The credit will reduce any tax owed for 2021 or be included in the tax refund.



- Multiple Year Tax Returns
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# opinion

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Metro Voice is published monthly and serves the communities of Topeka, Lawrence, and other communities in NE Kansas. It is available primarily by bulk and subscription distribution to over 500 locations, including grocery stores, churches, schools, restaurants, bookstores, libraries, businesses and other retail outlets. Yearly subscriptions are available by mail at a cost of \$24.95. Written materials submitted become property of Metro Voice. The content of this publication, including all stories, advertising or other graphic symbols, may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form for commercial purposes or added to any web site without the express permission of Metro Voice. Advertising in MV is open to anyone wishing to reach the Christian community and the family market with family-friendly advertising. MV reserves the right to refuse any advertising deemed unsuitable. Topeka Metro Voice is a member of the Christian Newspaper Association and the Evangelical Press Association.



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## Interest Rates and Inflation

By Kerby Anderson

Inflation is a growing problem, and yet our political leaders have very few policy tools they can use to combat it. If you are older, you might remember the inflation of the 1970s, and you might even remember how the Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volker, with the support of President Ronald Reagan, dealt with it. He increased interest rates and reduced the money supply. Unfortunately, those tools can't be used this time.

Rod Thomson writes about the "coming financial vise" that illustrates why the solution four decades ago can't be implemented this time. The current Federal



Anderson

Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell can't employ the same one-two punch. Paul Volker raised interest rates higher than inflation. By contrast, Jerome Powell is only talking about raising interest rates from 0.25 percent to 0.50 percent.

Why can't the Federal Reserve raise interest rates higher? The simple answer is the US national debt. I encourage you to look at the US Debt Clock. As I write this, the national debt is \$29.7 trillion. The interest we will pay on that debt is \$422 billion. I will guarantee that between the time I write this and you go to that website, you will see that those numbers have increased.

Let's do some simple math. Each one percent increase adds an addi-



tional \$422 billion. If the Federal Reserve just wanted to raise interest rates to five percent, the interest on the national debt would be \$2.1 trillion. That is roughly equal to what the government spends each year on Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security combined. That is also more than the Federal

government takes in each year in income tax revenue.

This illustrates the "financial vise" that is squeezing the federal government and the Federal Reserve in 2022. I also think that is why few in government want to talk about it.

## A World Divided by Fear



**CLINT DECKER**

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

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What happens when your life, your country . . . literally the whole world is gripped by fear? Disaster! But it does not have to be that way.

Once almost an entire nation was engulfed in fear that led to a near national collapse. Upwards of three million Hebrew people fled the land of Egypt in a massive and historic exodus. Their leader was Moses, who was led by the Lord God. The Hebrews were guided from Egypt toward a promised land God had waiting for them. As they approached, Moses sent out a team to survey the land. Over a month later, the team of 12 came back and gave a report to the nation. They all agreed on the facts of what they saw, but disagreed on the conclusions. They agreed it was a bountiful land that would be good for their people, but because it was occupied and would have to be taken by force, 10 of the 12 feared they would be defeated, while two of the 12 were confident they would be victorious. Consequently, the nation immediately sided with the 10 and fear spread to every family. Though the Lord God promised they would secure the land, the people refused to believe Him.

Fear paralyzed them. It also divided the nation, created anger toward its leadership and fostered rebellion and lawlessness to the point where people planned to kill the two who encouraged obedience toward God. But praise God for the two men, Caleb and Joshua, who courageously gave a good report to their Hebrew nation and remained firm in their conclusions. In the face of death threats, with the whole nation staring down on them they never buckled, saying, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them." (Numbers 14:7-8)

Praise God for Moses. When God was angry at this fear-filled nation and had enough, Moses prayed, and because of his prayers God spared them.

Then in an interesting twist, when they learned how God's judgment would be poured out on them for refusing to obey, they went up to take possession of their promised land, but did so out of fear. There was no faith in God or love for Him. They were godless zealots whom were defeated because God was not with them.

And praise God for Jesus. When He suffered and died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, He died for all our fears. And when He rose again from the dead, He conquered fear. And for



all who turn from their sins and walk faithfully with Him, they are called overcomers by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

National fear almost collapsed the entire Hebrew nation. This is why fear is so dangerous. It is not just an emotion, but a violation of God's holy law. Many times, God directly says, "Do. Not. Fear."

Since March 2020 the headlines of the Covid 19 pandemic have been voiced by the 10. The data, story lines, projections, conclusions; all of it has been exempt of God and has inspired nothing but fear, creating a world filled with anger, division and rebellion. In fear people have flocked to get vaccinated. In fear people have risen up to protest getting vaccinated. In fear people have lashed out at government and health officials. In fear people have condemned the unvaccinated.

Though the voice of the 10 broadcasts fear across the globe, it does not

get the final word. God does. Let us be wise and discerning and not fall for the emotional tricks that lead to fear. Let us be firm in our resolve to believe the Word of God no matter the odds, let it produce a spirit of optimism and hope. And instead of lashing out at our opponents, pray for them as Moses did.

A prayer for you - "Lord God, examine our hearts to see if fear is a controlling element in any of our decisions. Reveal if we are allowing fear to gain a foothold through things we are reading, watching or listening to. If fear has a home with us, we repent. We admit our sin and ask you to help us to turn from fear and completely trust in 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.

# George Washington's Answer for America's Descent Into Moral Chaos

Major American cities are descending into chaos with murders, thefts, assaults and carjackings skyrocketing. This crime wave is a result, first of all, of a cultural rejection of God's moral law. Secondly, it is a result of outrageous, lawless policies that are being implemented by left-wing mayors and district attorneys.

These policies, which coddle criminals and demonize the police, are based on the "progressive" liberal philosophy that human nature is essentially good and it is evil institutions that are the cause of the problems. In this worldview, the criminals are by nature good people who are victims of an evil American system.

America's founders held no such utopian view of the natural goodness of humanity. They held the traditional Christian belief that mankind had been created a noble creature in the image and likeness of God, but that image had become marred by the entry of rebellion and sin into the world (Gen. 3).

This belief in the corruption of human nature was highlighted in a prayer recorded by George Washington in a prayer journal he kept in his 20s. Under the heading of "Monday Morning," it is a prayer for cleansing



from sin and corruption and reads,

"Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by the Holy Spirit. Daily frame me more and more in the likeness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ" (Hyatt, America's Revival Heritage, 72).

Other founders made clear their belief in the corruption of human nature. "Take mankind in general," said Alexander Hamilton, "they are vicious." James Madison added, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." The historian Benjamin Hart wrote, "A central assumption of

America's founders was original sin, meaning the corruption of man's character" (Hyatt, America's Revival Heritage, 94).

For this reason, the founders believed that humanity must either be governed from within by moral principles or controlled from without by laws designed to restrict their wicked behavior. This is what William Penn was referring to when he wrote, "Those who will not be governed by God must be ruled by tyrants" (Hyatt, America's Revival Heritage, 26).

America's founders instituted a

Constitutional Republic with a goal of freedom for its citizenry. They realized, however, that only a virtuous and moral people could be trusted with freedom. Otherwise, they would turn freedom into anarchy and use their freedom as an opportunity to pursue selfish ends, even to the hurt of others.

That is why George Washington, in his farewell address to the new nation, exhorted her citizens to cling to "religion" and "morality," which he called "indispensable" for a stable and prosperous nation. Thomas Jefferson agreed with Washington's address and made it required reading at the University of Virginia, which he founded. Jefferson also said, "Of all the systems of morality that have come under my observation, none appear so pure to me as that of Jesus" (Hyatt, America's Revival Heritage, 85).

America's founders implemented limited government because they expected the citizens to govern themselves from within according to the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament. John Adams made this clear when he said,

"We have no government armed with

power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion . . . Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious [Christian] people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other" (Hyatt, America's Revival Heritage, 79).

The modern, liberal progressive has rejected both the moral law of God and human laws designed to restrict criminal behavior. It should be no surprise that this is resulting in a crime wave hitherto unknown in this nation.

The ultimate answer is a return to the nation's founding principles of faith and freedom, and in that order. America must have a national awakening of faith and morality. It is not too far-fetched to expect such an awakening, for as documented in my book, America's Revival Heritage, such awakenings have occurred more than once in our nation's history and saved her from moral and political ruin.

-charismanews.com. This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's latest book, America's Revival Heritage (second edition), available from Amazon and his website at eddiehyatt.com.

## How Biblical Ethics Puts Our Faith Into Action

The Bible is more than a storybook, or even "just" the anchor of our faith. It is a playbook for our day-to-day existence, a guidebook for every facet of life. According to Jewish tradition and teaching, it provides the foundation for application of biblical values in modern life. Through an ongoing application of these ideas in our lives today, even when we find ourselves in a situation in which there's nothing obvious at all about biblical narrative and modern life, by paying close attention, it's arguable that there's nothing in life in which biblical values do not apply.

Centuries of rabbinic analysis and commentary on a myriad of modern

developments play this out. By applying these values to our belief, we put our faith in action. There are limitless areas in which this is the case.

For instance, one topic that applies to virtually everyone, whether we own a business and employ others, or are the employees, there are biblical values in how we work and interact with our employees or employer matters on a day-to-day basis. The injunction to pay fair wages and to pay on time could not be more simple and clear. It should require no further explanation, but not everyone is as honest as another, so we need these rules even if self-evident to most. On the flip side, employees have

an obligation not to steal from their employer. That should be obvious whether regarding material goods or wasting time for which one is being paid. Everyone with a smartphone is challenged and obliged not to waste time at the employer's expense.

Loosely categorized as "Jewish business ethics," we have obligations to one another, and to God, in multiple areas such as advertising and marketing, intellectual property rights and broader corporate responsibility. Even at our best, are we expected to follow a minimum threshold, or do we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard, going beyond the letter of the law? Rabbis have pondered and taught about the implications of this in many areas for centuries and applied these rules to our changing world.

Abiding by these biblical ethics, we put action into our faith. That's important, but there's another dimension. When religious people are recognized for particularly righteous behavior (regarding business ethics or in other ways), they are seen as honoring God. Others see that behavior and associate it with faith. Conversely, when a religious person engages in embarrassing, even horrific behavior, it's considered in Hebrew a *chilul hashem*, a desecration of God's name. Simply put, all our actions have a myriad of earthly and heavenly consequences.

What about applying biblical ethics to something that's the essence of life and death? What about the ethics of war, or is that inherently a contradiction in terms? Sadly, there's no place in which that seeming conflict exists more on a day-to-day basis than Israel. Let's examine how that very aspect of day-



to-day survival plays out in the only Jewish state, one rooted in God and the Bible, which also happens to be one of the most (if not the most) threatened countries in the world.

Israel is widely credited as having among the most moral armies, providing warning of impending attacks and holding off on attacks that might inflict civilian casualties. This is true in many ways, from dropping leaflets warning civilian residents; calling residents of specific buildings about to be targeted and telling them to get out, not bombing terrorist hideouts under or around civilian areas, sending in Israeli troops rather than widespread bombing to take out a threat; giving the "knock on the roof" that warns residents in a building to get out and attacking military targets in the middle of the night to avoid civilian deaths.

Despite all this, Israel is not perfect. Only a moral army and country will take the time and effort to consider its military ethics nationally and to address where individuals fall short. Israel confronts a balance between keeping ethics and winning a war. With so much at stake, not just individual lives but the existence of a whole country that many want to destroy, why is it not sufficient

to employ the practice that simply winning a war is all that matters and what we do and how we do it doesn't matter?

Different circumstances apply to different scenarios as well; it's not one size fits all. There are considerations that vary between being under direct attack and calculating a preemptive strike. All in all, Israel measures up very well. As a model for the world, it is studied by both military analysts and military ethicists.

There's a biblical prohibition on destroying fruit trees when making war. There are many modern implications of that, but the message is clear. Engaging in war is sometimes necessary and, when doing so, one has the legitimate imperative to win. But winning does not mean at all costs and surely not to harm the well-being of noncombatants.

Facing daily challenges and the overarching threat of a nuclear Iran, these are issues that weigh on Israel and its leaders, militarily and ethically, every day. The Bible provides strength and guidance in these areas and so many other aspects of life.

-Jonathan Feldstein  
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## A special day for your Sweetheart

Are you ready to make your love's heart leap on Valentine's Day? Our guide to a great Valentine's Day will provide you with ideas and tips that will make your Valentine's Day a success.

### Tips for a smooth Valentine's Day:

- Tell your special someone how much you care about them
- Be thankful – it's always appreciated
- Plan ahead – babysitters, reservations, and other things that need done
- Turn off your cell phones – enjoy this time together

### Gift Ideas:

#### Candy and Flowers and Jewelry:

- Visit Hazel Hill Chocolate for a unique chocolate treat, or contact a local bakery and order their favorite cookies or other treat.
- Surprise your special someone with a bouquet of favorite flowers or balloons
- Dazzle him/her with a piece of jewelry from Donaldson's Jewelers or other local jeweler
- Make a list of all the things you love about him/her

#### Gift basket for her:

- Get a gift certificate for a massage or trip to a salon or spa.
- Pick up a candle for a candle-lit bath.
- Find her favorite book at one of Topeka's bookshops for her to enjoy during her quiet time
- Buy her a personalized gift from a local shop, or Personally Yours.

#### Gift basket for him:

- Buy his favorite candy bars and personalize it with "Udaman" wrappers
- Include miniature bottles or cans of his favorite drink and personalize them with valentine's day labels
- Create a ticket book with tickets for him to use at his leisure
- Include a new favorite movie, C.D., or video game he's been wanting

### Dinner:

- Avoid the Valentine's Day rush - create a romantic meal at home



- Go to a restaurant where you share special memories
- Get dinner and a room, and enjoy the indoor pool or other activities

### Dates:

- Laugh together at a comedy show.
- Enjoy a romantic movie at home from Netflix, RedBox, or one you already own. While watching share your favorite treat and glass of wine or sparkling cider. Include a massage.
- Enjoy a night of music and dancing before or after dinner at one of Topeka's nightspots.



- Spend uninterrupted time together with a romantic getaway at a local retreat spot.

## Heart-Healthy Valentine's Day Tips

Your sweetheart may have the key to your heart, but eating healthy and being physically active can be the key to a healthier heart.

This Valentine's Day, indulge your sweetheart with a heart-healthy gift or date.

Rather than going overboard with sweets, also consider a gift that has more permanence. Search for a poem that describes your feelings and write it on beautiful paper for a handmade Valentine. Or visit [www.ShopHeart.org](http://www.ShopHeart.org) for gift ideas that benefit the American Heart Association.

Quality time is one of the most meaningful gifts. Bundle up and plan an active outing such as sledding, ice skating, gathering wood for a fire, or if you're feeling adventurous, visit an indoor rock wall.

If your kids are having a Valentine's Day party at their school or day care, instead of sending candies, consider raisins, grapes, whole-grain pretzels, colored pencils or stickers as tokens of their friendly affection.

Cooking at home is an excellent way to control what and how much you eat. Take a date to a local cooking class to practice your skills or learn a new technique.

Prepare a romantic candlelit dinner at home using one of our heart-healthy recipes.

Give to one another by giving back. Ask a date to volunteer with you at a local organization. Giving back is a healthy habit that can boost your mood and help beat stress.

Use this day as an opportunity to tell your loved one how important they are to you, and share ways that you can support each other's health and wellness. Get started by taking the My Life Check Assessment.

Craving something sweet? Gift a beautiful fresh fruit basket to your loved one or consider more healthy sweets such as dark chocolate. Did you know that daily consumption of dark chocolate is linked with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke in high-risk individuals? It seems that cocoa, a primary ingredient in chocolate, contains antioxidant compounds called flavanoids. Flavanoids have antihypertensive and anti-inflammatory effects, which can reduce the heart's stress and result in

lower blood pressure. So indulge your inner chocoholic with a moderate piece of dark chocolate each day.

Sharing is caring – if you go out for a romantic dinner date, order one entrée to share. Many restaurant servings are enough for two – splitting will keep you from overdoing it.

Don't forget to love Fido, too! Give your pet a Valentine and remember to walk or exercise them daily – getting active with your pet will benefit your health and your bond with your pets.

Take it slow – if you receive a luxurious box of chocolates from your sweetie, stick it in the freezer and enjoy in moderation over the next several weeks.

Take a long, romantic walk with your beloved – and try to make it a regular habit. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week to help keep your heart healthy. You can reach this goal by walking briskly for at least 30 minutes five days each week.

Check out some tips online for healthier preparation methods for cooking.

Rekindle an old flame – try prepar-

ing one of your sweetie's favorite recipes in a healthier way. These healthy substitutions can help you cut down on saturated fats, trans fats, salt, and added sugars, while noticing little, if any, difference in taste.

Working out together can be fun. Strength training increases blood flow, builds lean muscle, and lowers blood pressure and cholesterol. Choose a weight-training routine that is appropriate for your body, consulting a doctor or personal trainer if needed. If your strength is at a low ebb, even lifting a two-pound weight can be helpful. Increase the amount you lift as you gain strength.



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# Valentine's Day brings back that lovin' feeling



By Rusty Wright

February is known for cold weather, presidents' birthdays and Cupid's delight. As Valentine's Day approaches, hearts flutter, lovers sigh and Charlie Brown hopes that little red-haired girl will like the card he's been gathering up the courage to give her.

Love, sex and amorous relationships have dominated the news over the past year. Not every culture is as comfortable as ours with public displays of affection. In one Malaysian state, laws ban total darkness in movie theaters "to prevent immoral acts like kissing, cuddling and other activities," as one official explained it. Public kissing there usually rates a \$70 fine.

## Smooch Cops

In Venezuela, extended public kissing and embracing can get you arrested. "If you kiss for more than five seconds, the police will grab you," complained one young woman whose friends were jailed. "It's ridiculous," grouched a 24-year-old man. "Whoever invented this law must not have a girlfriend."

Defining immoral kisses can be difficult admitted one policeman, but "when you see it, you should know it." (Has he been reading U.S. Supreme Court decisions?)

## Kids on Love, Dating and Marriage

Kids often have unique insights into adults' urge to merge. A friend passed along from the Internet children's answers to questions about love. What do people do on a date? Lynnette (age 8): "Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough."

Martin (age 10) sees the bottom line: "On the first date, they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to

go for a second date."

When is it OK to kiss someone? Pam (7): "When they're rich!" Curt (7): "The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that." Howard (8): "The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them....It's the right thing to do."

How does one decide whom to marry? Allan (10): "You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dips coming." Allan may find it prudent to slightly revise that theory in a few years.

## Do You Love Me?

This season pundits ponder, "What is genuine love?" Popular speaker Josh McDowell delineates three kinds of love that can inform kids' (and adults') attitudes: love if, love because of, and love period. Love if and because of are based on personality or performance: "I love you if you go out with me, if you have a good sense of humor, if you sleep with me. I love you because you're attractive, intelligent or athletic."

But the best kind of love says, "I love you period: even with your weaknesses, even if you change, even if someone better looking comes along. Even if you have zoo-breath in the morning. I want to give myself to you."

## Real Love

Paul, an early Christian writer, eloquently described this unconditional love: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not

demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ...Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. ... [Love] will last forever..."

Committed unconditional love could probably heal many romantic rifts. Solid spiritual roots that help produce it can help undergird stable relationships. And the children have noticed that families and adult relationships can use some strengthening.

How can a stranger tell if two people are married? Derrick (8): By "whether they seem to be



yelling at the same kids." And how would the world be different if people didn't get married? Kelvin (8): "There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn't there?"

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer who has spoken on six continents. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. [www.RustyWright.com](http://www.RustyWright.com)

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# Dog Saves Abandoned Newborn Baby, Protecting Her Like One of Her Puppies

A dog and her puppies are being credited with helping to save a newborn who was abandoned in a field in India, possibly because she was a girl.

Local residents in Chattisgarh, India reported finding the infant while going out into the field to work in late December.

According to Chattisgarh Police, the newborn girl was naked and her umbilical cord was still attached. Local residents said the baby was surrounded by a dog and her litter of puppies, and they believe the animals kept the baby warm by snuggling up against her through the night, the Times reports.

Immediately after discovering the baby, police said the residents contacted local authorities who took her to the hospital. According to police, she appears to be healthy.

The girl child has been named Akanksha. An investigation is underway, and police are searching for her parents. Senior Indian Police Service officer of Chattisgarh Police Special Director-General RK Vij expressed his shock.

Resident Premnath said it was a “miracle” the baby had survived the night because stray dogs can be vicious.

He said: “They are not parents, they are criminals. It is a miracle only to find a newborn baby sur-

living when stray dogs are lurking every now and then at the dead of the night.”

It is quite possible that the baby was abandoned because she is a girl.

Sex-selection abortions and infanticide are a major problem in India because of a cultural preference for male children. Some mothers are pressured or forced into aborting their unborn babies because they are girls.

Experts estimate that approximately 46 million girls are missing from the population in India because they were aborted, the New York Post reported recently.

—lifenews.com



# 1,700-year-old ring bearing the image of the Good Shepherd found at the bottom of the sea

Israeli archaeologists have made a rare and exceptional find in recent months! While excavating off Caesarea, between Tel Aviv and Haifa, where two ships sank some 1,700 years ago, researchers found a multitude of various artifacts, including an octagonal gold ring decorated with a green gemstone. But the most incredible part of this ring is the image engraved on the stone: a young shepherd in a tunic carrying a ram or a sheep on his shoulder. The ring’s iconography casts no doubt about the identity of the subject: it is a depiction of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd!



Helena Sokolov, the curator in charge of the pieces at the Israel Antiquities

Authority (IAA), confirms that it is indeed the image of the Good Shepherd.

The image is rare iconography for a ring, but otherwise widespread in the early

centuries of Christianity. The catacombs of Priscilla in Rome demonstrate the extensive use of the image (they preserve one of the oldest images of Christ portrayed as the Good Shepherd). Because of its small size, the jewel certainly belonged to a woman. Its discovery off the coast of Caesarea is not surprising, as the city was once the local capital of the Roman Empire in the third century. This was a time when Christianity was greatly expanding, “especially in mixed cities like Caesarea,” said the curator.

**The Good Shepherd, a Christ-like figure**

The title given to Christ—the “Good Shepherd”—alludes to the words of

Christ in the Gospel of John (Jn 10:11): “I am the good shepherd, the true shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep.” It also recalls Psalm 23: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures...” During a time when Christians were still severely persecuted, these allegories allowed the apostles of Christ to recognize themselves and to testify to their faith while remaining discreet. Indeed, the Romans already used this image of the good shepherd in their funeral rites by decorating their tombs with a young shepherd among his sheep. This bucolic image symbolized an afterlife filled with peace.

—aletea.org

# Justices to Hear Challenge to Race in College Admissions

The conservative-dominated Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear a challenge to the consideration of race in college admissions, adding affirmative action to major cases on abortion, guns, religion and COVID-19 already on the agenda.

The court said it will take up lawsuits claiming that Harvard University, a private institution, and the University of North Carolina, a state school, discriminate against Asian American applicants. A decision against the schools could mean the end of affirmative action in college admissions.

Lower courts rejected the challenges, citing more than 40 years of high court rulings that allow colleges and universities to consider race in admissions decisions. But the colleges and universities must do so in a narrowly tailored way to promote diversity.

The court’s most recent pronouncement was in 2016, in a 4-3 decision upholding the admissions program at the University of Texas against a challenge brought by a white woman. But the composition of the court has changed since then, with the addition of three conservative justices who were appointed by then-President Donald Trump.

Two members of that four-justice majority are gone from the court: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died in 2020, and Justice Anthony Kennedy retired in 2018.

The three dissenters in the case, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, remain on the court. Roberts, a moderating influence on some issues, has been a steadfast vote to limit the use of race in public programs, once writing, “It is a sordid business, this divvying us up by race.”

The court already has heard arguments in cases that could expand gun rights and religious rights and also roll back abortion rights in a direct challenge to the Roe v. Wade ruling from 1973.

Earlier this month, the justices weighed in for the first time on President Joe Biden’s vaccine policies, halting a rule requiring a vaccine or testing at large businesses while allowing a vaccine mandate for most of the nation’s health care workers.

The affirmative action case probably will be argued in the fall. Both suits were filed by Students for Fair Admissions, a Virginia-based group run by Edward Blum. He has worked for years to rid college admissions of racial considerations, and the court’s new lineup breathed new life into his project.

The group is calling on the court to overturn its 2003 ruling in Grutter v. Bollinger, which upheld the University of Michigan’s law school admissions program.

The Biden administration had urged

the justices to stay away from the issue, writing in the Harvard case that the challenges “cannot justify that extraordinary step” of overruling the 2003 decision.

Harvard President Lawrence Bacow said the Ivy League institution does not discriminate and vowed to continue defending its admissions plan. “Considering race as one factor among many in admissions decisions produces a more diverse student body which strengthens the learning environment for all,” Bacow said in a statement.

Blum voiced hope that the high court will order an end to taking account of race in college admissions. “Harvard and the University of North Carolina have racially gerrymandered their freshman classes in order to achieve prescribed racial quotas,” Blum said in a statement.

The Supreme Court has weighed in on college admissions several times over more than 40 years. The current dispute harks back to its first big affirmative action case in 1978, when Justice Lewis Powell set out the rationale for taking account of race even as the court barred the use of racial quotas in admissions.

In the Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, Powell approvingly cited Harvard as “an illuminating example” of a college that takes “race into account in achieving the educational diversity valued by the First Amendment.”



Twenty-five years later, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor likewise invoked the Harvard plan in her opinion in the Michigan law school case.

Now the Harvard program is under fire from opponents of race-based affirmative action.

Students for Fair Admissions claims that Harvard imposes a “racial penalty” on Asian American applicants by systematically scoring them lower in some categories than other applicants and awarding “massive preferences” to Black and Hispanic applicants.

Harvard flatly denies that it discriminates against Asian American applicants and says its consideration of race is lim-

ited, pointing out that lower courts agreed with the university.

In 2020, the federal appeals court in Boston ruled that Harvard looked at race in a limited way in line with Supreme Court precedents.

Harvard’s freshman class is roughly one-quarter Asian American, 16% Black and 13% Hispanic, Harvard says on its website. “If Harvard were to abandon race-conscious admissions, African-American and Hispanic representation would decline by nearly half,” the school told the court in urging it to stay out of the case.

—cbn.com

# The pandemic changed death rituals and left grieving families without a sense of closure

Alicia de Artola said the virtual funeral for her grandmother drew about 50 participants or households via Zoom, and another 50 or so via a Facebook livestream at the same time.

The unexpected death of a friend and colleague to COVID-19 in January 2021 led me to start researching how American death rituals were transforming during the pandemic. My friend was Hindu, and while watching his funeral on Zoom, I witnessed the significant transformations that had to be made to the traditional rituals to accommodate COVID-19 safety guidelines.

In the spring and summer of 2021, I conducted over 70 hours of oral history interviews with people involved in the medical and funerary professions, as well as grieving families and those who worked closely with them, including grief counselors, and hospice workers.

As a historian of religion interested in how different cultures make sense of death, I noticed what appeared to be a momentous cultural shift happening in America in terms of death rituals as over 850,000 Americans died with COVID-19. During this period, funerary customs dramatically shifted and, in many cases, failed to bring any comfort to grieving friends and families.

## What changed in funerary rituals

In my conversations, funerary professionals described the initial chaos as funeral size had to be dramatically curtailed, sometimes with only one to two hours' notice. Eventually, many began to innovate with new technologies that allowed them to hold virtual funerals.

Richard Davis of the Cook-Walden Funeral Home in Pflugerville, Texas, described how early in the pandemic he utilized radio technology for grieving families who could be in their cars in the parking lot, tune the radio to a specific station and listen to the person giving the eulogy inside



Alicia de Artola said the virtual funeral for her grandmother drew about 50 participants or households via Zoom, and another 50 or so via a Facebook livestream at the same time.

the funeral home.

Some funeral directors partnered with wedding videographers whose business was suddenly upended because most weddings were canceled or delayed. These videographers found that the high-quality equipment used to produce wedding videos could as easily be put to use broadcasting a Zoom funeral.

The end-of-life work of religious leaders was transformed as well: Catholic and Episcopal last rites were performed via FaceTime, sometimes with consecrated oil being carefully administered by a Q-tip. Countless protestant pastors also adjusted their participation and ministry to the grieving.

The Jewish tradition of sitting with a body before burial – usually performed by volunteers in shifts at the funeral home – became an at-home experience. Although the volunteers, called shomer or shomeret in Hebrew, could not sit next to the body as usual, they worked on the honor system to ensure that someone was always praying and keeping the deceased in their thoughts, even while far away.

Muslim leaders described working with local health agencies to obtain

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and specialized training for those performing the full-body washing of a corpse known as ghusl in Arabic.

## Virtual commemorations

These adaptations reflect a long history of transformations for the American funeral.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, most Americans generally prepared the body themselves and hosted the funeral at home. However, by the 19th century, more Americans were dying in hospitals as a result of the availability of medical care and because the corpse was believed to be carrying disease. This spurred the development of the funeral home. Individual funeral homes often personalize their offerings to the needs of local cultural or religious communities.

Funeral homes became most popular after embalming – a form of preservation performed by mortuary specialists – became the norm after the Civil War. The war spurred a crisis to preserve soldiers' bodies while they made the long trip home, and embalmers would sometimes follow the military troops to accept payment in advance for the procedure.

People tried to memorialize their loved one in different ways. Images of COVID-19 victims from Detroit are displayed in a drive-by memorial at Belle Isle State Park. Aaron J. Thornton/Getty Images

Today, the funeral industry has grown to a whopping US\$20 billion, and embalming remains the predominant treatment for the body after death.

With the rise of the internet, funerals are once more undergoing rapid transformations. Scholar of death and dying Candi Cann has shown how the internet gives rise to new forms of social remembrance after death. These can include mourners going to Facebook or Instagram pages on the anniversary of the death and leaving a message about how much they miss the deceased. Online marketplaces allow for the purchase of individualized mourning paraphernalia like T-shirts or bumper stickers, and public memorials at the

site of death.

Such tools thrived during the pandemic. During my research, several individuals who lost loved ones explained creating memorial items, including stickers and face masks commemorating a lost loved one, as a way to encourage others to wear masks. Virtual online communities of COVID-19 mourners adopted the yellow heart as a public expression of loss of a loved one to the pandemic in the U.S. and Europe.

## Unprocessed grief

Funerals and other rituals surrounding death are important to begin the grieving process. Research has found that performing rituals has a major role in alleviating grief through increasing feelings of control and transitioning mourners to accepting their loss. Funerals can provide important structures for families to say goodbye that have been correlated with better grief outcomes.

J.Z. Smith, one of the most influential theorists of religion in recent years, said that “ritual relies for its power on the fact that it is concerned with quite ordinary activities placed within an extraordinary setting.” In other words, ritual takes elements from the ordinary world – words, gestures, symbols, etc. – and imbues them with extraordinary meaning.

We might cry or wear black clothing every day for any number of reasons, but in funeral rituals these activities have special significance and bring a sense of closure. It is this repurposing of ordinary things that makes rituals so effective.

Psychological studies too have shown that the greater the difference between what happens in the ritual and “normal” life, the more effective it is for individuals.

But in my conversations with those who lost loved ones, it became appar-

ent that for many, the transformations in funerals and rituals of mourning failed to help them in dealing with their grief. As one individual explained to me, “I knew my grandmother would pass away sometime, but I always imagined I would be there; I never imagined I would be watching it virtually on Facebook. It felt like a parody of a funeral.”

John Hendricks held a Zoom funeral for his father when the funeral home limited attendance to a “couple of people.”

Another interviewee explained how the isolation necessary in the pandemic era fundamentally undermined the comfort these rituals could provide: “Because my family has been so terrified of COVID, we have not been able to gather together to process my mother’s death. That has been really hard for me culturally – especially in Indigenous families, you grieve together.”

Reverend Richard R. Andre in Austin, Texas, echoed these thoughts as he described assisting those losing loved ones in his own Christian community: “The funeral helps you to start a process of closure. But without the funerals they envisioned, people are just getting stuck and are unable to grieve.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to consider how rituals can lose their extraordinary power when our sense of “normal” is shattered and remains shattered for years. As religion expert J.Z. Smith noted, rituals work by framing the ordinary as extraordinary. But if nothing feels normal, then nothing can feel extraordinary either.

–Natasha Mikles | Assistant Professor in Philosophy and Religious Studies, Texas State University. Reprinted with permission of TheConversation.

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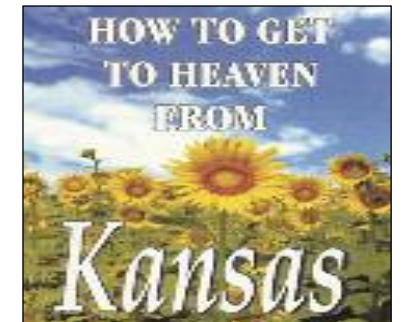
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of god." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says, "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' OPRY** – 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 [grandoopry@gmail.com](mailto:grandoopry@gmail.com).

**WOOD VALLEY PICKERS** – Feb. 4, 7:30pm, Classic Bean, Fairlawn Plaza. Folk & Country, Free admission. 785-271-5005

**SERRANO PEPPERS** – Feb. 5, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at [thehistoricvinewood.com](http://thehistoricvinewood.com). 785.260.6772

**THALEA STRING QUARTET** – Feb. 10, 7:30 pm, White Concert Hall. Live On Stage, Inc. and On Stage Live brings together violinists Christopher Whitley and Kumiko Sakamoto, violist Lauren Spalding, and cellist Titilayo Ayangade. Tickets: \$25, or \$60 season pass (three concerts) at <https://www.onstagelive.org/>.

**DUKE MASON W/COWBOY, INC.** – Feb. 11, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at [thehistoricvinewood.com](http://thehistoricvinewood.com). 785.260.6772

**WINTER JAM TOUR** – Feb. 12, 2pm, T Mobile Center, KCMO. Skillet, Tauren Wells, KB, Colton Dixon & more! \$10 at the door. No tickets required. Jam Nation membership and more details at [www.jamtour.com](http://www.jamtour.com).

**BOP DADDIES** – Feb. 12, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at [thehistoricvinewood.com](http://thehistoricvinewood.com). 785.260.6772

**PLATINUM EXPRESS** – Feb. 19, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at [thehistoricvinewood.com](http://thehistoricvinewood.com). 785.260.6772

**CHRIS TOMLIN** – Feb. 25, T-Mobile Center, KCMO.

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**LEGACY FIVE CONCERT** – Mar. 3, 7pm, Wanamaker Woods Nazarene Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker. Freewill offering. Doors open at 6pm. (785) 273-2248. [www.facebook.com/events/442753234001223](http://www.facebook.com/events/442753234001223); [wwood-snaz@wnnaz.org](mailto:wwood-snaz@wnnaz.org)

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performs his original arrangement of the Leopold Mozart Trumpet Concerto with Community Chamber Orchestra. Tickets are \$8/person or \$18/family, available at Mayo's Dept. Store in Clay Center, or at the door at 6:30 pm. Preorder at [www.kansasmusic.net](http://www.kansasmusic.net). Please use masks, hand sanitizer. 785) 9264725. [baclark@twinvally.net](mailto:baclark@twinvally.net).

## SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

**SENIOR FIT & FUN PROGRAM** – every Mon., Wed., & Fri, 1:30pm, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Place (US Hwy 75 & NW 46th St.) 785-286-0601 or office@rhctoepka.org

**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](http://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](mailto:rhaggertyjr@hotmail.com)

**TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS** – Feb. 1, 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.

**GRIEFSHARE SUPPORT GROUP** – Feb. 7-May 2, Mondays 6:30-8pm, Topeka Bible Church, Mulvane Building, 1101 SW Mulvane St. A 13-week seminar and support group for people who are grieving the death of a person close to them. The video sessions feature biblical teaching and are designed to help you successfully travel the journey from mourning to joy. 785-234-5545

**60TH ANNUAL KANSAS PRAYER BREAKFAST** – Mar. 16, 7-8am, Fellowship Bible Church, 6800 SW 10th. Featured Speaker: Rod Handley. \$20/ticket. Sponsorships available. Call or text 785-554-6996 or email [ksprayerbreakfast@gmail.com](mailto:ksprayerbreakfast@gmail.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.

**TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB** – 4th Mondays at 5:30pm, Norsemen Brewing Co., Visitors 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 [nhorn@tscpl.org](mailto:nhorn@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](http://www.topekasingdance.com).

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

**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.

**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](mailto:shawneeswingers@gmail.com). On Facebook: Shawnee Swingers Square Dance Club. [wesquardance.com](http://wesquardance.com)

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

**TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM** – Now Open, 640 E Woodson, Leocompton. (785) 887-6148 [www.leocomptonkansan.com](http://www.leocomptonkansan.com) [historiclecompton@gmail.com](mailto:historiclecompton@gmail.com)

**FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION** – Fourth Tuesday through November, 9am, 1231 NW Eugene St. Randel Ministries, Inc., in partnership with Harvesters and Family of God Church will be conducting its monthly food distribution. No ID or proof of income required, first come first served. Distributing several tons of fresh produce and other items to families in need. (785) 234-1111 [www.RandelMinistries.com](http://www.RandelMinistries.com)

**BLEEDING KANSAS** – Sundays from Jan. 30-Mar. 6, 2pm, Constitution Hall Historic Site, 319 Elmore, Leocompton. A series of talks and dramatic interpretations on the violent territorial and civil war history of Kansas 1854-1865. Actors will portray Kansans from

this turbulent era. Adm: \$3 adults. Children five & younger free.

**TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS** – Feb. 1, 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.

**TOPEKA DINO DAYS** – Feb. 4 - June 30. SUE: The T. Rex Experience – Great Overland Station (Opens Feb. 4). See this fearsome fossil all the way from Chicago's Field Museum. **DINO DAYS BASE CAMP** – Topeka Information Center, 715 S Kansas Ave. (Opens Feb. 24) See an Allosaurus and calf at no charge, grab some swag and find out where all of the dino hot spots are throughout town. **DINOSAURS ALIVE!** Created By Dino Don, Inc. – Topeka Zoo. (Opens March 3rd) Dinosaurs are back in a BIG way at the Topeka Zoo. Journey back to the age of dinosaurs in an immersive experience featuring life-size, animatronic prehistoric giants appearing throughout the zoo. **TINY TITANS: Dinosaur Eggs And Babies** – Children's Discovery Center. (Opens February 24th) Visitors will enjoy learning about dinosaur eggs, nests, and babies through colorful, hands-on, interactive experiences that include a collection of real life dinosaur eggs. For tickets and more info: [topekadinodays.com/](http://topekadinodays.com/) or (785) 246-6271

**ANNUAL CONVENTION: KANSAS MUZZLELOADING ASSOCIATION** – Feb. 4-6, Ramada Inn. Workshops, seminars



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

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

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

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

**DIVORCECARE PROGRAMS** – (For updates check www.divorcecare.org) locations and times:  
WED. – 6:30pm, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane. Cost: \$15. Child care provided. For info: 379-0505 or www.divorcecare.org.

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

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

**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.

# Christians called upon to boycott Olympics in China

A worldwide, grassroots movement to boycott the Olympics is gaining steam. David Curry, CEO of Open Doors USA, is joining other Christian and political leaders in calling for the boycott of the upcoming Winter Olympics in Beijing, China over that country's genocide against religious minorities.

Curry discussed the actions taken by the Chinese government against Christians and other religious minorities at a news conference unveiling the organization's 2022 World Watch List this week. Although Open Doors USA ranked China 17th among the top 50 countries where its most difficult to follow Jesus, Curry dedicated a significant portion of the press conference to highlight the religious persecution perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party.

The Olympics are "one example of how China is using sports, money and investment in infrastructure around the world to whitenash their human rights violation," he said. Curry praised the Biden administration's diplomatic boycott of the Olympics but indicated that every Christian in the United States had an obligation to go a step further.

He acknowledged that the persecution of religious minorities extends beyond Christians to include Uyghurs, a predomi-

nantly Muslim ethnic group in the country's western region that the Chinese Communist Party subjects to forced labor.

Curry elaborated on his call for a boycott in response to a question from a reporter. "I am suggesting that people don't watch the Olympics, that they don't participate in whatever way they normally would," he said.

Although Curry lamented China's human rights records, particularly regarding religious minorities, he defended Open Doors USA's decision not to place China higher on the list of the top 50 most dangerous countries for

Christians.

Curry expressed particular concern about China's use of "centralized government control to suppress and exterminate the free practice of religion of all kinds." According to Curry, "China's high-tech noose is slowly choking the free expression of Christian faith and the faith of Muslims and other religious minorities. China is using a blanket of surveillance monitored by artificial intelligence to watch the movements of people of faith.

"It's even using facial recognition to mon-



itor those who enter places of worship. China recently implemented additional restrictions on Christian Bibles and literature online, for example. Only groups that recognize the Communist Party of China and their censorship of their sermons and Bibles will be allowed to distribute the scripture."

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# entertainment

## 'Lord of the Rings' debuts Sept. 2 with Second Age of Middle-Earth

The much-anticipated Lord of the Rings Amazon Prime series will debut on September 2, bringing to life what the studio calls the "second age" of Middle-earth history from J.R.R. Tolkien's novels.

The multi-season series, The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power, will premiere on Prime Video in more than 240 countries and territories, Amazon Studios said. It is set thousands of years before the events of Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.

The title itself foreshadows an "epic story that welds the major events of Tolkien's Second Age together: the forging of the iconic rings," a news release said.

"This is a title that we imagine could live on the spine of a book next to J.R.R. Tolkien's other classics. The Rings of Power unites all the major stories of Middle-earth's Second Age: the forging of the rings, the rise of the Dark Lord Sauron, the epic tale of Númenor, and the Last Alliance of Elves and Men," showrunners J.D. Payne & Patrick McKay said in a news release. "Until now, audiences have only seen on-screen the story of the One Ring – but before there was one, there were many... and we're excited to share the epic story of them all."

The first three Lord of the Rings films still rank among the top 75 grossing films of all time. Those movies were The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001), The Lord of the Rings: The Two



Towers (2002) and The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003).

The series, according to the news release, will "take viewers back to an era in which great powers were forged, kingdoms rose to glory and fell to ruin, unlikely heroes were tested, hope hung by the finest of threads, and the greatest villain that ever flowed from Tolkien's pen threatened to cover all the world in darkness."

"Beginning in a time of relative peace, the series follows an ensemble cast of characters, both familiar and new, as they confront the long-feared re-emergence of evil to Middle-earth," Amazon said. "From the darkest depths of the Misty Mountains to the majestic forests of the elf-capital of

Lindon, to the breathtaking island kingdom of Númenor, to the furthest reaches of the map, these kingdoms and characters will carve out legacies that live on long after they are gone."

Amazon Studios unveiled the series title with a 60-second video filmed in a blacksmith foundry in slow motion.

"Three rings for the elven-kings under the sky," a female voice says as the title is formed. "Seven for the dwarf-lords in their halls of stone. Nine for mortal men doomed to die. One for the dark lord on his dark throne. In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie."

—Michael Foust has covered the intersection of faith and news for 20 years.

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

## Roma Downey Shares How Her Father Influenced Her Faith

Actress and winner of the Movieguide® Grace Award Roma Downey said that her on-screen portrayal of an angel named Monica in TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL did not reflect her real life in the way that fans assumed.

"When you play an angel on television you're often mistaken for one. I should know. For nine years and some 212 episodes, I was Monica on Touched by an Angel. Again and again, people would stop me on the street and say, 'You're that angel!'" she wrote in an article from 2012.

"I wanted to correct them, 'I'm an actress who plays an angel.' I loved the role of Monica, but I didn't want anyone to be confused about who I really was, an Irish girl from Derry," she added.

Downey, who has since starred in and produced faith-filled projects such as, RESURRECTION, SON OF GOD and THE BIBLE, said her father encouraged her to pursue her passion for art and storytelling.

"I was the youngest of six. My mother died when I was only 10 and our father raised us. He was a schoolmaster, a reader and lover of poetry. Small and white-haired, he looked older than he was," she explained. "Dad led us in prayers every night around the dinner table. He always stressed that it was how we showed our faith that mattered. 'Kindness is everything,' he said."

"We were expected to reach out to others, whether it was reading to someone with failing eyesight, helping an elderly friend with errands or bringing soup to an ailing neighbor," she continued. "We didn't own a car and certainly didn't have luxuries like a dryer. Yet we were rich—and certainly richly blessed—as long as we could give."

The Movieguide® Award-winning actress and producer, said that amid the riots and bombings in Northern Ireland, her father protected her and the family.

"Several times we had to evacuate my school. Once we had to duck behind cars to avoid flying bullets. (It was years before I could hear a loud noise like a slamming door without diving for cover.) Dad made our home a refuge, a place of peace and protection," she said. "I dreaded leaving home. I wouldn't see my father for months at a time. I didn't know if I could accept that. Dad was all I had."

Before Downey left for school, she recalled a conversation she had with her father:

One night I came to him teary-eyed. 'Dad, I'm going to miss you so much,' I sobbed.

He took my hand and led me outside to our garden. A full moon bathed the grass and bushes in silver.

'Look to the moon,' he said. 'Wherever you go, this same moon will be shining on you and on me. I will leave a message for you there. When you miss me, just look at the moon and you will see how much I love you.'

Downey left for England and recalled how the backfiring of a car reminded her of the fighting in Ireland.

"You're far from the troubles, I told



myself, but my spirit was unsettled. I longed for the sea and the sky of Ireland and the reassuring sound of Dad's prayers," she said.

But Downey realized that art school was not for her and shifted her attention to acting school. However, her father would never see accomplishments on-screen after suffering a fatal heart attack.

"It seemed so cruel and impossible," Downey confessed. "Lord, how could this happen? I demanded. I flew home in a daze. I trudged up our front steps. One of my sisters greeted me at the door. My father was laid out in the sitting room, as was our Irish custom, but I wasn't ready to go in there."

"My father would not have wanted me to give up on my dreams, and certainly not because of him. I returned to London, finished my studies and then threw myself into acting," she added. "My work took me from England to the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, to New York's Broadway and eventually Los Angeles. Far-flung places where I could still look to the moon and feel my father's love with me, and hear him say that we must always be kind."

While in Hollywood, Downey was offered the role of Monica on TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL, where she would go on to star in over 200 episodes over nine years.

"My father would have loved Touched by an Angel. All those acts of kindness, all those answered prayers. The people on the show were wonderful, especially my costar and fellow angel Della Reese, whose wisdom I came to rely on," Downey reflected. "We were flooded with letters from viewers and I got invitations to visit hospitals, nursing homes, schools. I got to put my faith in action, just as Dad had taught. More and more it felt like he was still with me."

Downey insisted that she was not an angel, but she said that she learned to trust that God could use her to show other people His love.

"God could do anything. God could send me places and give me roles I never expected. I had to step aside and let his grace flow through me," she said. "I'm not an angel. I'm just a human being. But if the moon can hold a message of love for a homesick daughter, then anybody can be an angel delivering comfort in a time of need. Kindness is everything, just as my father had said all along."

—movieguide.org

## Angel Studios has plans to produce viewer-driven content like "The Chosen"

Angel Studios, which works with the popular Christian series "The Chosen," is just getting started. The family-friendly moviemaking powerhouse could end up disrupting how films and TV shows are funded and created.

Neal Harmon, co-founder of Angel Studios, shared how his company raised \$47 million to help empower individuals and families to take a larger role in creating the faith and family content they want to see.

"Angel's a home for those who are outcasts from Hollywood, and the

name is after the people who back the projects, the people who love the content and want to see its message made," he said. "People get to participate in culture. They get to have an impact on culture, and it's not just a bunch of Hollywood executives that make these decisions. It is the smartest executives of all time — it's the audience."



(L-R) Daniel Harmon, chief creative officer, Harmon Brothers; Jeffrey Harmon, co-founder and chief content officer of Angel Studios; and Neal Harmon, co-founder and CEO of Angel Studios.

Harmon, who also cofounded VidAngel, a filtering service that helps families cut out negative language, sex and violence from movies and shows, is a longtime hope dealer. Angel Studios' roots were set in 2012 when he and his brother started thinking about their love for storytelling and their quest to protect their children from negative content. Their passionate discussions sparked the creation of VidAngel, giving

parents more control over the content their families watch.

"The Chosen" is just one of many projects that have successfully attracted funds through Angel Studios. "The Tuttle Twins" and the "The Wingfeather Saga," for example, both have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to create second seasons. The film "David" just raised \$5 million, with the creators explaining in their pitch that they aim to create "an epic movie that is biblically authentic while standing alongside the likes of 'Moana' and 'Tangled' for quality and entertainment value."


Angel Studios is achieving a series of successes, but Harmon said the path ahead is going to be a multi-decade marathon and won't be easy. Change, he said, always requires grit and sacrifice. And he said that's exactly what Angel Studios is committed to finding as the team continues on a quest to transform entertainment.

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## Pat Boone's New Movie, THE MULLIGAN, to Release in April

THE MULLIGAN is finally getting a theatrical release!

The movie, starring former Movieguide® Awards host and iconic singer and actor Pat Boone, is set to release in select theaters nationwide as a two-day event on April 18 and 19.

The movie follows Paul McAlister, a businessman who puts his career ahead of everything else in his life—including his family. With the help of a new friend known as “the Old Pro” (Pat Boone), Paul learns how to prioritize what truly matters in life.

Boone, 87, recently joked that he has “been practicing the ‘old’ part, now for some time.”

“I turn 87 in just a couple of weeks, that means I’ve finished my 87th year, but I’m still healthy, thank God, strong, and I’ve loved golf my whole life,” Boone said.

“I played golf most of my life and in many celebrity tournaments and played

with some of the greats, ever,” he added. “So now I have the chance to play a celebrated older golfer, who now, though he’s not playing much himself anymore, is a mentor to younger golfers who are having trouble not just with their golf but with their personal lives.”

Boone, a longtime friend of Movieguide®, said his character’s primary goal is to point the young golfer to Christ.

“The main theme of this movie is the Mulligan, which is a phrase golfers have been using for many years. It’s a do-over. It’s a second chance. If you miss your shot the first time, if it’s okay with your partners, you can try again,” Boone explained. “And of course I convinced him in the course of the film that in the game of life, that Jesus is the one who created the game of life and can grant you a do-over, or a mulligan, a second chance.”

—movieguide.org

## Thalea String Quartet to Perform In Topeka



The Thalea String Quartet will be bringing timeless music and their uniquely stirring sounds to White Concert Hall, Washburn University on Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

The Thalea String Quartet brings together violinists Christopher Whitley and Kumiko Sakamoto, violist Lauren Spalding, and cellist Titilayo Ayangade. TSQ connects with audiences on a musical, emotional and personal level, from young classroom students to chamber music aficionados. They have shared the stage with the Borromeo Quartet in the Mendelssohn Octet, with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer/vocalist Caroline Shaw, with Geoff Nuttall of the St. Lawrence String Quartet, and with pianist Tao Lin. Additionally,

Thalea was the Quartet-in-Residence at Caramoor from 2019-2020. This talented group has made a name for themselves on international stages and captivate every audience they perform for. Find out more about Thalea String Quartet at their Facebook page.

Tickets for this event are available for \$25 per person, or a season pass is available for \$60 to gain access to three concerts during the 2022 year. To purchase a concert ticket or season pass, please visit <https://www.onstagelive.org/>.

On Stage Live has brought world class musicians to Topeka’s stage for nearly 100 years! Purchase a season pass or concert ticket to your next event today. Visit us at <https://www.onstagelive.org/>

# Tom Segura is coming to TPAC

TOM SEGURA announced the second leg of his “I’M COMING EVERYWHERE – WORLD TOUR.” The comedian podcast host will be at Topeka Performing Arts Center on Sunday March 13, 2022 at 7:00PM.

Actor/Comedian/Writer Tom Segura is one of the biggest names in the comedy business. He recently performed to sold-out audiences on his 100+ city TAKE IT DOWN TOUR. He is best known for his Netflix specials, Ball Hog (2020), Disgraceful (2018), Mostly Stories (2016), and Completely Normal (2014). Paste Magazine described him as, “...having a natural and capable storytelling ability, one that lifts his narratives out of average anecdote fare and plants them firmly in hilarious ground.” Your Mom’s House Studios is home to his hit podcasts Your Mom’s House which he co-hosts with his wife, comedian Christina Pazsitzky, 2 Bears 1 Cave which he co-hosts with Bert Kreischer, and many more. Additionally, YMH Studios was one



of the first networks to create wildly successful Livestream Podcast Events as an outcome of the pandemic.

Segura can be seen in the STX FILM COUNTDOWN opposite Elizabeth Lail, INSTANT FAMILY opposite Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne, OPENING ACT, and FLINCH. Segura’s television credits include The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Conan, Workaholics, Happy Endings, The Late Late Show,

Comedy Central Presents: Tom Segura, Mash Up, How To Be A Grown Up.

Segura has an increasing social media following (@seguratom on IG, @tomsegura on Twitter). When he isn’t performing on stage or recording a podcast he’s watching College Football or waiting for College Football to come back.

Tickets can be purchased at [TICKETMASTER.COM](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or [TOMSEGURA.COM/TOUR](https://www.tomsegura.com/tour).

## Actress Jana Kramer Baptized: ‘This Is The Day I Stopped Walking Alone’

Actress Jana Kramer Baptized: “This Is The Day I Stopped Walking Alone”

Actress and singer Jana Kramer, perhaps best known for her role as Alex Dupre on the television show ONE TREE HILL, shared the news of her water baptism with the world on Sunday.

“This is my battle cry. This is the day I stopped walking alone. The beauty is... I was never alone. He was always walking with me... I just didn’t think I deserved that,” Kramer shared via Instagram.

Last April, Kramer announced the end of her marriage to former NFL star Mike Caussin. Post her public separation and divorce, involving allegations of infidelity against Caussin, Kramer shared her raw emotions and what she learned about herself and her faith.

“Looking up to a father figure with my past was hard to believe or have comfort in. I didn’t think he would stay,” she explained. “That he wouldn’t hurt me. So I pushed God away for years. The last year in the brokenness and quiet moments alone, I realized I wasn’t truly alone. That HE was there. That HE never left.”

Fans, along with fellow actresses Faith Ford, Taylor Dooley, Tori Spelling, and others, offered heartfelt support and congratulations.

Outspoken Christian actress Candace Cameron-Bure wrote: “And all the angels sang in Heaven and rejoiced! Praise His holy name!! A step in faith reaps eternal reward.”

Kramer shared the touching video and photographs from the day, surrounded by members of her church community at Cross Point Church in Franklin, Tennessee. Jamie Myatt, Franklin Kids Director, prayed and talked with Jana before her public dec-



laration of her faith.

“Today I made my faith public and it feels really good to know no matter what happens next on this journey of life, HE is next to me walking with me,” she wrote. “God is walking with you too through all the good and bad times, so let HIM in. I hope this encourages someone to take that next step because

you aren’t alone... ‘In the name of Jesus there is healing.’”

Kramer concluded her post by quoting from Lamentations 3:22-23, which reads: “The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.”

—movieguide.org



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# 50+ Lifestyles A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

## 10 more minutes of exercise could extend your life

A new study finds that if Americans were active just 10 more minutes per day, it could save lives.

The estimated number of saved lives is 110,000 if those between 40 and 85 years of age added an additional 10 minutes more a day of being active. More lives are saved the more participants exercised.

“Our projections are based on an additional 10 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity,” said lead researcher Pedro Saint-Maurice of the Metabolic Epidemiology Branch at the U.S. National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. “If the walk is brisk, it counts.”

And added exercise benefits everyone — white, Black, Asian and Hispanic, men and women, the investi-

gators found.

For the study, the researchers examined data from more than 4,800 middle-aged and elderly adults who were part of a government health and nutrition study between 2003 and 2006. For seven days, participants wore monitors to record their activity. The researchers then combed nationwide death data to see how many had died by the end of 2015.

The upshot: Exercise paid off big time.

Adding 10 minutes of exercise lowered participants’ risk of death over the period by 7%; 20 extra minutes reduced risk by 13%; and an extra half-hour of moderate to vigorous activity slashed the risk of death by 17%, the findings showed.

In other words, an extra 20 minutes of exercise could prevent nearly 210,000 deaths a year, and 30 more minutes could head off more than 270,000 deaths, the study authors said.

Dr. David Katz — president of the True Health Initiative, a nonprofit that promotes healthy living as the best way to prevent disease — reviewed the study findings.

Katz noted that the study doesn’t establish cause-and-effect proof that additional exercise prevents premature death. But, he added, “even a portion of such benefit would be of great public health importance.”

While the study did not investigate specific causes of death, Saint-Maurice noted that some of the most common ones in the United States — heart disease, diabetes and some cancers — “may be prevented in adults who are more active.”

The U.S. Government’s Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends:

At least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity; 75 minutes of vigorous aerobics; or a combination of both, spread throughout the week.

Moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (such as resistance or weights) on at least two days per week.

Less time sitting. (Even light-intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary.)

Being active at least 300 minutes (5 hours) per week.

Increasing the amount and intensity of activity gradually over time.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 60% of American adults do not get the recommended amount of activity. And roughly one-quarter aren’t active at all.

However, according to a 2021 study published in the journal *Socius*, more Americans started exercising during the pandemic than before. Canadian researchers found that in 2019 about 73% of Americans took part in some physical activity or exercise. In 2020, as the pandemic took hold, that number increased to 83%. Also, in the past week, 76% of Americans surveyed said they had gone outside for a walk, hike or exercise.

Adding activity to your day doesn’t have to be a grind. Walking for exercise, cycling for fun or transportation, working out on cardio machines, dancing and playing sports like tennis or golf can all help, Katz noted.

Cleaning the house, working in the yard and playing with your kids are other ways to step up your activity level. Parking farther from your destination and walking the rest of the way is an easy strategy. Marching in place while you watch TV or taking the stairs more

often can help, too.

“Abundant evidence from diverse sources indicates that all physical activity contributes to the same, common benefit,” Katz said.

“This is another reminder of the profound potential to leverage lifestyle practices as the very best of medicine to prevent disease, promote health, add years to lives, and add life to years,” he added.

Katz said making this common knowledge and empowering everyone to act on that knowledge should be a top public health and cultural priority.



The findings were published online Jan. 24 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

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# 10 Simple Tips for a Healthy Heart

It pumps blood throughout your body, supplies oxygen and nutrients to every organ and removes metabolic wastes - it's safe to say that your heart is responsible for doing some incredible things and that's exactly why it's so important to make sure it's always the picture of health.

Although there are some risk factors of heart disease that can't be controlled, there are still plenty of steps you can take to reduce your risk of heart disease, including:

- Managing stress levels
- Getting a good sleep
- Cutting down on salt
- Avoiding saturated fats
- Eating more fish
- Opting for clean food
- Getting some exercise
- Quitting smoking

## HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF HEART DISEASE

A heart-healthy lifestyle is one of the best ways to help reduce your risk of heart disease. Making some small lifestyle changes to your everyday life will help in boosting your heart health.

### Manage stress levels

Whether it's cramming for exams or trying to hit work deadlines - stress can sometimes get the better of us. When you begin to stress, it has the power to affect behaviors and factors that increase heart disease risk; namely smoking, physical inactivity and overeating.

For a healthier heart, try to manage your stress levels; treat yourself how you would treat a friend and spend some time doing the things that make you smile!

### Get a good sleep

Sleep is a vital component of everyone's overall wellbeing - it allows our body to recharge and prepare for the day ahead.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and obesity can be linked to a lack of sleep and as a result, your heart health.

That said, try to get at least 7 hours of good quality sleep each night.

### Cut down on salt

If you're eating too much salt, you're not doing any favors to your heart. In fact, when you eat too much salt, the extra water stored in your body raises your blood pressure - this can make it harder for blood and oxygen to get to and from your heart.

It's recommended that adults eat less than 1,500 mg of salt per day (that's less than 1 teaspoon!) - keep an



eye on salt levels in ready-made foods and make a habit of checking food labels.

### Avoid saturated fats

Consuming too much food that's high in saturated fat can raise the levels of cholesterol in your blood, tip your cholesterol balance towards high LDL cholesterol ('bad' cholesterol) and may lead to the formation of blockages in your vessels.

So, the next time you're shopping for your groceries - opt for lean meat, plenty of fruit and vegetables and fat-free or reduced-fat milk to avoid consuming unnecessary saturated fats.

### Eat more fish

The omega 3 fatty acids are a type of unsaturated fat that is present in fish. These fatty acids are known for decreasing triglycerides - a type of fat found in your blood, reducing blood pressure and reducing irregular heartbeats - each of which are more than positive for your heart health!

Fatty fish such as sardines, cod, herring and light tuna are all a great source of omega 3 fatty acids.

### Opt for clean food

Think of your heart like your car

- it works best when it runs on clean fuel. This means you should place emphasis on whole, plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds for optimum heart health.

One of the fastest ways to clean up your diet? Cut out fruit flavored sugary drinks and indulge in some fresh fruit instead!

### Get some exercise

Exercise can act as a mood booster and reduce stress levels - two things which can have major effects on your heart health.

Harvard Medical School says to look at exercise as "an insurance policy that may offer both short- and long-term protection for your heart"; so get those sneakers on and fit some moderate exercise into your day to day routine - your heart will thank you!

### Quit smoking

Smoking is a major cause of coronary heart disease. A year after giving up, your risk of a heart attack can fall to about half that of a smoker.

Nobody said quitting was easy but the positive effects quitting smoking has on your heart and your overall health will give you the motivation you need!



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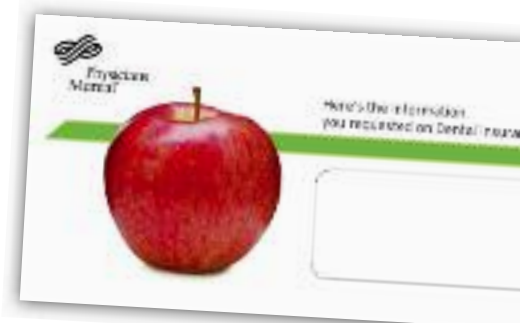
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# sports

## Chiefs fans donate more than \$250,000 to Josh Allen's charity



The Kansas City Chiefs were not the only winner in last Sunday's playoff game against the Buffalo Bills. Fans have donated more than \$250,000 to a Buffalo children's hospital in honor of Bills quarterback Josh Allen, many in increments of \$13.

Thirteen is the number that immediately entered NFL lore after Kansas City needed just 13 seconds to drive for a game-tying field goal in Sunday's AFC divisional-round win over the Bills as time expired. The game then went to overtime, at which point Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes led a game-winning touchdown drive as Allen could only watch.

On Wednesday, John R. Oishei Children's Hospital in Buffalo announced it had received more than a quarter of a million dollars and thanked "Chiefs Kingdom" for setting the windfall in motion. The hospital also noted the help of a Chiefs fan account called Chiefs Kingdom Memes, which on Monday first shared the idea of making \$13 donations to a fund that bears the name of Allen's late grandmother and benefits the children's facility in Buffalo.

Brett Fitzgerald, the fan who runs the account, said in a post that his initial plan was to encourage \$13 contributions to a charity established by Mahomes. A friend later pointed out to Fitzgerald that based on recent actions by Buffalo fans — a.k.a. Bills Mafia — they would have been likely to organize a fundraiser on behalf of the Kansas City quarterback if the Bills had managed to win.

"Changing the donation suggestion to Josh's charity seemed more appropriate," Fitzgerald wrote. "It's to celebrate, obviously, the Chiefs' victory and how it was, while giving due respect to Josh Allen, the Bills and Bills Mafia."

The children's hospital previously was showered with donations from Bills fans following the unexpected death of Allen's grandmother late in the 2020 sea-

son. To help show support for their quarterback, who was in the midst of a breakout campaign after a shaky first two seasons, fans raised so much money — more than \$1 million, much of it in increments of \$17 to reflect Allen's jersey number — that a pediatric recovery wing of the hospital was named in honor of his grandmother, Patricia.

"I know my family is forever ingrained here, myself included," Allen said at the time. "I don't ever want to leave, obviously. I want to play here for as long as I can and give back to the community and give back to the Bills Mafia here."

# FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

By Rob Mooney

Mahomes magic is alive and well over in Kansas City. The Chiefs pulled out another victory from the jaws of defeat against the Buffalo Bills in the playoffs, setting up yet another hosting of the AFC Championship game. This time, they're playing the upstart Cincinnati Bengals and their young signal caller, Joe Burrow.

After watching Burrow play in college, I always figured that he would have a good NFL career and I was glad to see that he went to the Bengals, considering that he played his high school ball in The Plains, Ohio., roughly 160 miles from Cincinnati. As a matter of fact, Burrow went to Ohio State University out of high school before transferring to Louisiana State University as a graduate transfer. He led his undefeated LSU Tigers to the National Championship in 2020 over the Trevor Lawrence led Clemson Tigers. In the

game, Burrow threw for 463 yards and 5 touchdowns. I never expected the Bengals rise so quickly.

There are some high quality, young quarterbacks in the AFC. Of course you have Mahomes and Burrow, but you can throw in Josh Allen with the Bills who will get to multiple Super Bowls himself before his career is finished. Lawrence with the Jacksonville Jaguars. Mac Jones up in New England, Lamar Jackson in Baltimore and Justin Herbert with the Los Angeles Chargers. The AFC will be a tough place to win in the coming years. Speaking of

football, the Topeka Tropics, Topeka's newest venture into the world of Arena Football, held open tryouts this last week. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend so I guess I'll just sit this year out. They open their season on March 12th when they travel to Sioux City, Iowa to play the Bandits. They'll play their first home game the following week when the host the Salina Liberty at Landon Arena. Check them out online at gotropics.fun. You can also check out their Facebook page. My family and I will definitely attend some games this year. I love Arena football!

Not as much as I love baseball though! Spring training gets underway on February 12th when pitchers and catchers begin reporting, unless they're still in lockout mode. If that's the case, the Kansas Jayhawks begin their season on February 18th against Illinois. Their first home game is March 2nd against Missouri State. Kansas State begins their season on the 18th as well when they take on Arizona in the 2022 State Farm College Baseball Showdown. Their first home game is on March 6th when they host the Nebraska Cornhuskers!

It's a great time to be a sports fan!!



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## 4 Stylish Color Trends for 2022

A new year brings opportunities to refresh your living space and add colors into your life. These four trends are all about incorporating more of yourself and your lifestyle into your home, whether it's answering your need for a serene escape or dialing up the energy with vibrant surroundings.

### Bring in Nature

Soothing earthy tones help bring a sense of calm and balance indoors. When designing with nature in mind, use gray-green tones to connect your aesthetic with the serene elements of the outdoors. Incorporate nature's palette with greens in fabrics, accessories and even on the walls. Wood and stone materials naturally complement these shades for a look that's cohesively pleas-

ing and peaceful.

### Stylish Sophistication

If you're aiming to infuse some sophistication with an update to a favorite space, opt for a monochromatic look in a dark (almost black) hue. The approach is simultaneously bold and classic, but the secret to this trend is finding a shade that's rich and deep, but not quite black, then complementing it with fabrics and furnishings that let the hint of color shine.

### Connect with Your Inner Self

Creating a living space that is uniquely yours requires understanding your inner motivations, traits and talents. One source of personal inspiration may be



your zodiac sign, a reflection of the earth's orientation to the sun on your birthday.

The color experts at Valspar partnered with Ophira and Tali Edut of the AstroTwins to make it easy to explore the intersection of your character and style by explaining which 2022 Color of the Year best aligns with each zodiac sign. When you combine your sign with the convenience and advanced one-coat coverage of premium Valspar Reserve Interior Paint + Primer, available at Lowe's, you can create a luxurious space that reflects the real you.

- Aries – Sunset Curtains: A warm and soothing color like this supports a transformational year full of new opportunities.

- Taurus – Gilded Linen: This clean, cozy color makes spaces feel open, perfect for celebrating togetherness.

- Gemini – Grey Suit: This is a color of warmth and versatility, a signature combination for Geminis.

- Cancer – Delightful Moon: A spirited, playful color inspires a year of growth and adventure.

- Leo – Mountain River: A dark and dreamy color invites inspiration for a year filled with abundance.

- Virgo – Subtle Peach: It's the year of partnerships for Virgos; this harmonious color works well alongside others but can also stand on its own.

- Libra – Orchid Ash: A cool and breezy color keeps it simple so Libras can focus on a year of vitality.

- Scorpio – Fired Earth: This warm and approachable color is perfect for Scorpions who plan to bring new people into their lives this year.

- Sagittarius: Rustic Oak: A relaxing and comforting color that welcomes coziness in the new year.

- Capricorn – Blanched Thyme: For Capricorns, this is the year of variety, and this is a refreshing tone to support change.

- Aquarius – Country Charm: This hue provides warmth and stability for a year of productivity.

- Pisces – Lilac Lane: A playful pastel hue that brings softness along with optimism and renewal.

### Add Comfort and Warmth

Treating your home like a sanctuary never goes out of style, and one way to create a soothing, inviting space is through the use of cozy neutrals.

Whether it's applied to a bedroom retreat or a more bustling space like the living room, a neutral palette can add to the allure of comfort and warmth. Keep the visual interest strong by incorporating subtle patterns, textures and layers of

complementary neutral colors.

Find more 2022 color trends and design inspiration at Valspar.com.

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Wed. 6:30 pm Adult & Teen Life Groups  
Wed. 6:30 pm Kids University  
~ Nursery care at all services ~
- 14. OPEN ARMS OUTREACH MINISTRIES COGIC**  
1 (785) 232-3463/41 (785) 217-5560  
Sunday School 10:00, Worship 11:30  
In person or conference call:  
(712) 770-4749 / 583229  
2401 SE 11th St., Topeka KS 66607  
Supt. S. C. Mitchell, Pastor
- 15. OAKLAND UNITED METHODIST**  
801 NE Chester, Topeka, KS 66616  
235-1010 • oumc@att.net  
Shawn O'Trimble, Pastor  
Sunday School 9:15am, Worship 10:30am  
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- 785-266-LOVE (5683)  
J. Michael Borjon, Pastor
- 17. EAST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
4425 S.E. 29th St., 379-9933.  
Sunday Worship 10:45am & 6:00pm  
AWANA Sunday at 5:45 p.m.  
See our website for info on our  
Student Ministries & Kid City  
www.esbcks.org
- 19. SEAMAN COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
Independent Christ-Centered Bible Church  
2036 NW Taylor, Topeka, KS  
354-8777 • www.seamanchurch.com  
Adult Sunday School - Sun. 9:30am  
Sunday Worship: 10:30am  
Children's Sunday School: 10:30am  
Youth group 1st & 3rd Sundays 4-6pm
- 20. HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
1937 NE Madison St,  
Topeka, KS 66616 • 785-506-4594  
Pastor Dale Stockburger  
Sunday Worship: 11 am and 6pm  
Sunday School: Sun 10am  
Wed. Evening Worship: 7pm
- 21. HARVEST FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**  
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785-220-5418  
Pastor Rey Rodriguez  
Sun. Worship 10:30 am  
www.topekaharvest.vpweb.com
- 22. FAMILY OF GOD CHURCH**  
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Topeka, KS 66608
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- 24. TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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Pastor Bob Spagnuolo 785-273-3506  
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# Texas pro-life heartbeat bill wins another challenge in Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected the abortion industry's attempts in finding a path to overturn a Texas abortion ban.

In a 6-3 ruling (pdf) fueled by Trump appointees, the court declined abortion providers' request to move their lawsuit from the Texas Supreme Court and place it in the hands of a federal judge they hoped would overturn the ban. The law, known as the Texas Heartbeat Act or Senate Bill 8 (S.B. 8), prohibits abortions when an unborn baby's heartbeat begins. Data released this week found it has saved as many as 10,000 unborn lives since it went into effect in September 2021. The law makes exceptions for medical emergencies.

The Supreme Court on Sept. 1 denied an effort to block the measure by a 5-4 ruling.

Whole Woman's Health, which

operates four Texas abortion facilities as well as others in five other states, had sued to overturn the law.

The abortion company argued the law violates the 1973 Roe v. Wade and the 1992 Planned Parenthood v. Casey decisions. Roe v. Wade prohibited states from banning abortions prior to when the fetus is deemed "viable"—deemed at around 24 weeks of pregnancy. Planned Parenthood v. Casey reaffirmed the Roe ruling and prohibited laws that place an "undue burden" on a woman's ability to obtain an abortion.

Whole Woman's Health also challenged the unique enforcement mechanism of the Texas abortion ban. Under the measure, state officials have no role in enforcing it, but private citizens (except for an individual who impregnated a woman through



incest or rape) can file lawsuits against anyone who allegedly "aids and abets" in an abortion that violates the law. The law was based on similar laws used in liberal states that targeted industrial polluters, thus putting liberal supporters in an awkward position of attacking a tactic they use themselves.

Because no state officials are involved in enforcing the law, abortion providers have found it difficult to bring legal challenges against particular individuals.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case on Nov. 1, 2021. The court refused to stay the law and threw out most of the arguments against the law, but allowed a narrow challenge to proceed, ruling that certain state licensing officials might have indirect authority to enforce S.B. 8, and so the lawsuit may only proceed against them.

Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch on Dec. 16 sent the challenge back to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, which sent the case to the Texas Supreme Court on Monday, at the request of Texas officials. In a 2-1 vote, the 5th Circuit court panel asked the Texas Supreme Court to interpret S.B. 8 and determine whether state licensing officials are appropriate defendants under state law.

Earlier this week, the 5th Circuit moved the case to the Texas Supreme Court, where pro-life groups say it's more likely to receive a favorable ruling upholding it long-term.

"The unresolved questions of state law must be certified to the Texas Supreme Court," wrote Judge Edith Jones, an appointee of President Ronald Reagan, in an opinion joined by Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan, who was appointed by President Donald Trump.

"With no limit placed by the Supreme Court's remand, this court may utilize the ordinary appellate tools at our disposal to

address the case—consistent with the Court's opinion," Jones wrote.

The statewide pro-life group that has been fighting for the ban applauded the decision.

"On Monday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit certified the Supreme Court of Texas to take over Whole Woman's Health v. Jackson, the one remaining federal lawsuit challenging the Texas Heartbeat Act," Texas Right to Life officials informed LifeNews.

"This is great news for Texas because such action is more likely to ensure a just and favorable ruling, compared to that which could be expected from a pro-abortion federal district judge, to whom the abortion industry asked to send

the case. Beyond this, sending the lawsuit to the Supreme Court of Texas is appropriate because the only defendants left in the case are state agencies," the pro-life group added. "Most exciting of all is that the Texas Heartbeat Act has withstood another court decision and is continuing to save an estimated 100 preborn lives every day!"

"Instead of stopping a Fifth Circuit panel from indulging Texas' newest delay tactics, the Court allows the State yet again to extend the deprivation of the federal constitutional rights of its citizens through procedural manipulation," Sotomayor wrote in her dissent.

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