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HILLARY SWANK IN NEW MOVIE Page 25



RANDY STONEHILL Page 17

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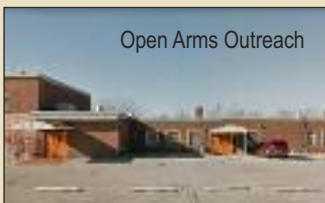
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NEW RESIDENT churchguide



Open Arms Outreach

See inside back cover!

New Rasmussen Nursing School now open in South Topeka



Rasmussen University is approaching the 10-year anniversary of its Topeka campus. With this milestone comes the move to a brand new, state-of-the-art facility 3722 SW Burlingame Rd. A grand opening was held April 19 with a ribbon cutting and tours the new campus.

Attendees had the opportunity to see live demonstrations of new simulation equipment and take guided tours of the new facility,

■ Please see RASMUSSEN page 3



Has a concert mentality replaced worship at church?

Anyone who has visited a shopping mall understands the big idea behind a food court.

"If you want Mexican food, you go here. ... If you want pizza, you go over there," said Kenny Lamm, the worship ministry strategist for the Southern Baptist Convention of North Carolina. "Then we sit together and eat whatever we

want."

"The question is whether a food-court approach works if you are seeking unity while leading worship in a church."

In the latest wrinkle in what researchers have long called the "worship wars," some church leaders are asking a blunt question about the decision to trade tradi-

tional hymnals for contemporary Christian music. That question: Has the typical Sunday service become a semiprofessional concert instead of a communal worship experience for all believers?

As part of his work, Lamm hears from many pastors, musicians and church members. One

■ Please see WORSHIP page 2

Consecration ceremony to be held for new \$40M church

After waiting for several years, celebrants of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) will host a consecration ceremony for their new Immaculata Church in St. Marys.

The consecration is set for May 3, 2023, for what promises to be one of the largest churches in the Sunflower State, according to Immaculata spokeswoman Philomena Peters. With a seating capacity of more than 1,500 people, this

church will be the largest SSPX church in the world. Present for the ceremony will be Bishop Bernard Fellay, an auxiliary bishop of the SSPX.

Peters said a consecration changes an ordinary building into a church dedicated to the service of God. It includes the traditional rite of consecrating a church, followed by the first mass at the Im-

■ Please see CHURCH page 3

Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum is now open



The Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum opened April 14 as the first and only museum in the country solely dedicated to Amelia Earhart's trail-blazing aviation legacy. Some of the Earhart family was in attendance for the opening.

The centerpiece of the museum is the world's last remaining Lockheed Electra 10-E aircraft — Muriel. It was named after Earhart's younger sister, Grace Muriel Earhart Morrissey, and is identical to the plane Earhart flew

■ Please see EARTHART page 3



Kingdom to Capital tour makes Kansas its ninth stop

The 'Kingdom to Capital' event at Kansas' state Capitol building drew a good crowd on Sunday, April 23. An estimated 2-3000 people attended the event.

Founder of the "Let Us Worship" movement Sean Feucht acted as worship pastor for the fervently Evangelical event.

Online photographs and videos of the event showed dozens of people, mostly youth, "receiving prayer on the Capitol steps." Others called it an "altar call."

Before coming to Kansas, the ninth stop on the circuit, Feucht led events in Oklahoma and

Texas. The ongoing series of events on the tour, organizers assert, have drawn "thousands ... in person, and over a million people online." Attendees came together "in prayer and worship for their city."

The press release stated the tour is becoming "A vital story, showcasing hope and unity amid adversity."

Feucht has said the effort is focused on "recent tragedies: racist remarks from political leaders, gang shootings, and local library violence across the United States.

After an unsuccessful run for elective office in 2020, Feucht

started the "Hold the Line" and "Let us Worship" efforts, drawing national attention.

In his website biography, Feucht is described as a "missionary, musician, activist, author, and speaker. He married his high school sweetheart Kate, and together with



their four children Keturah, Malachi, Ezra, and Zion, Sean travels the world sharing the life-changing power of the Gospel."

Charlie Kirk's group, Turning Point USA, is pro-

viding practical and direct support for the Feucht-led tour. He described earlier stops as filled with "compassion and love" and "truly heartwarming."

Days ago, in Nashville, Tennessee, an estimated 5,000 people "gathered ... to pray for school shooting victims," Kirk said.

Feucht rose to wide national prominence for guiding "worship protests" opposing church

closings and other restrictions on faith activities early in the COVID-19 Pandemic. He has drawn a wide supportive following for that work, as well as critical scrutiny.

Breitbart, a conservative online news organization, reported early this year on vandalism aimed at a church that had hosted one of Feucht's appearances, a New Year's event in California.

WORSHIP

continued from page 1

recent letter — which he posted while keeping the writer anonymous — combined many hot-button issues in this debate. After four weeks of visiting a church, the writer noted that he was constantly distracted during worship by "haze machines," "programmable lights that blind the audience," concert-level darkness in the auditorium, as well as musicians wearing "ball caps," skinny jeans, "Chuck Taylor" tennis shoes and other "stage" apparel.

Many of the new songs seemed to confuse the congregation.

"The melody is unmemorable. Very few in the audience seem to know the songs either; indeed as we looked around during one of the

songs, we did not see one person singing — not one," noted this visitor. "Some of the songs are so high I cannot sing them. I wish the leaders would consider the average singer! Why does just about every praise and worship song go up an octave and double in volume halfway through, then die back down at the end?"

Concerning volume levels, he added: "Driving home, my wife indicated that the excessive loudness was starting to cause some serious anxiety. Having earplugs available in the lobby is a sure sign there might be a problem."

For generations, noted Lamm, most Protestant worship music came from hymnals that developed over time, shaped by denominational leaders who weighed whether these songs and anthems were "theologically sound" and familiar to most worship-

pers.

But traditions began changing in the 1970s. While trying to appeal to young people and the unchurched, worship leaders replaced classic, familiar hymns with hit songs from contemporary Christian radio shows and publishing houses. Hymnals disappeared, replaced by song lyrics projected with multimedia equipment — which assumed worshippers already knew the melodies and the arrangements.

In the 1980s, the big hits "might stay around for several years," said Lamm, reached by telephone. Then songs began drifting out of popularity every few months. Today, "worship bands" — usually with drums, bass, guitars, electronic keyboards and multiple vocalists — may rotate new material into services every few weeks.

"It's a consumer mentality," he explained. "Worship leaders are thinking,

'If I'm not singing the latest, greatest songs, then I'm behind, which means that our church is behind everybody else, and we need to catch up.'"

Lamm stressed that he supports church musicians seeking excellence in everything they do, including the use of contemporary songs and technology that improve worship, as opposed to creating a "concert" environment that separates stage performers from the congregation. It's possible, he said, to create services that — while avoiding food-court syndrome — combine classic hymns, popular modern songs and new pieces, perhaps one per service, that worshippers will need to learn.

Right now, said Lamm, worship leaders should ask this question, Are church members still singing together, or have they become isolated listeners?

"It is moving to come to worship and see a family present that just lost a loved one and see them worshipping with all their might; it really encourages those around them," he wrote, in an online reflection. "Seeing a grandmother, daughter and granddaughter standing side by side, boldly singing songs to the Lord together motivates others to worship wholeheartedly."

Too often, he added, modern churches "transform their times of gathered worship into personal worship for the congregation at best and spectatorship at worst. Essentially it denies the existence of the corporate body journeying together in this act of worship."

Terry Mattingly leads GetReligion.org and lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He is a senior fellow at the Overby Center at the University of Mississippi.



EARHART

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on her final flight.

Museum visitors will have the opportunity to:

- Enter a full-scale replica of Muriel's cockpit to experience Amelia's perspective from her "cozy cubbyhole"; compare Amelia's instrument panel to Garmin's G1000 avionic suite
- Hear the roar of Amelia's Lockheed Electra 10-E aircraft's Pratt & Whitney R-1340 WASP engine; see a modern Pratt & Whitney Geared Turbofan come to life
- Challenge their riveting skills to discover the precision required to forge the nearly 85,000 metal rivets that hold Muriel together
- Flip through Amelia's digitized scrapbook to see stories of bold women who motivated her; meet "uplifting influencers" who helped Amelia reach for the stars
- Create an avatar to try on

Amelia's career paths as a nurse, mechanic, pilot and fashion designer

- Go "above the clouds" to explore how Amelia and her navigator, Fred Noonan, relied on radio waves, a sextant and quick calculations
- Turn on "Amelia's guiding lights" to see how constellations helped Amelia navigate the night sky
- Trace 3D aircraft holograms through the history of flight — from unmanned gliders and biplanes to jet engines and space travel
- Discover more "feminine feats" of trailblazing women in aviation — past and present
- Pilot a virtual reality recreation of Amelia's historic 1932 transatlantic flight to try navigating obstacles she overcame to make history (ticketed experience)
- Explore theories and cast votes on what happened to Amelia and

Fred Noonan in July 1937 when their plane disappeared over the South Pacific

The Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum opened to the public on Friday, April 14, in Atchison, Kansas.

"Amelia Earhart was a true Kansas pioneer who exemplified our state motto: Ad Astra Per Aspera: 'To The Stars through Difficulty,'" U.S. Senator Jerry Moran stated. "The new Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum will be a place for visitors of all ages to learn and be inspired by Amelia's tenacious spirit of exploration that continues to be exemplified all across Kansas."

Museum tickets can be purchased for the following:

- Adults \$15 (plus tax) per person
- Seniors (60+) and Military \$12 (plus tax) per person
- Children Ages (ages 4-12) \$8 per person (plus tax) per person
- Children (3 and under) Free
- Virtual Reality Flight \$5 per person (plus tax) per person

RASMUSSEN

continued from page 1

featuring:

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mon areas

- Quiet study spaces
- Expanded offices, debrief rooms and conference rooms

Manniquins with real fluids and realistic symptoms help nursing students with hands-on learning.

with an open house.

The new Immaculata replaces the original building destroyed by fire in 1978, according to Peters. Construction on the new church began in 2020, thanks to millions

of dollars in funding from donors.

The Immaculata will conduct traditional Latin mass and other sacraments according to the traditional rites of the Catholic Church.

C5Alive Power Luncheon will Feature Marcus Miller, First Tee

The May C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held May 11, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Aldersgate Village, in their new Home Plus North building, 7202 SW Uxbridge Circle; parking is on Bristol St. (turn south at the 4-way stop).

Marcus Miller, executive director of First Tee - Greater Topeka, will be the featured speaker. First Tee teaches life skills and character lessons to local youth.

The cost to attend a C5 luncheon is \$15 for C5 members and first-time guests who RSVP, and \$17 at the door. Non-members and repeat guests pay \$20. C5 luncheons are open to the public. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

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

C5Alive is an organization dedi-

cated to creating Christian culture in the Capital City, by developing and uniting Christian Leadership in the community: businesses, non-profits and churches. C5 also hosts other periodic events, including **EASTER-FEST**, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Family Fun Fair, held on N. Kansas Avenue and at **Great Overland Station** on the day before Easter.

The 3rd Annual C5Alive **TOPEKA FALL FEST** will be on September 16, 2023 at **Great Overland Station**.

C5 members may also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations. C5 is currently holding a membership drive with special incentives for new members.

For more information about C5, go to www.facebook.com/C5Alive, C5Alive.org, or call 785-640-6399.



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CHURCH

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maculata. The four-and-a-half-hour-long ceremony will conclude

Grace Cathedral Cross is back after being gone for more than a decade

After more than a decade, the Grace Cathedral Cross once again graces the Topeka skyline as crews pinned the fixture onto the more than 200-foot-tall building.

On Monday, April 17, crews at Grace Episcopal Cathedral at 8th and Topeka Blvd. replaced a cross that had been missing from the Topeka skyline for more than a dozen years.

A crane was brought in to lift the 500-pound cross to the top of the more than 200-foot building. About 16 extra feet had been added to the crane to clear the towers.

The cross was lowered onto a metal plate that holds pins to secure the fixture into place.

The ornament was originally removed as it had deteriorated to the point that chunks were falling from the stories-high building onto the ground.

Crews noted that the crane operator could not physically see where the cross needed to be set down, so extra pairs of eyes were required to communicate the location of the cross compared to the fixed metal plate.

"I think it is going to be a big surprise to people," said Grace Cathedral facilities manager, Kent Wingerson. "We have been without it... I think Dean Torey before had mentioned probably 12 to 14 years, 10 to 14 years in there and it was 100 years approximately at

that point, so now we get the permanence of something new that is going to outlast all of us that are here now. Pride is something that you need to be careful with, but to keep this building, this entire facility up and available for our members and some occasional community groups is very important."



2033 Commitment sets goal to fulfill Great Commission in next decade



Ministry organizations and church leaders from a broad segment of the global church are uniting around the "2033 Commitment: A Call to the Global Church for a Decade of Great Commission Effort."

The initiative calls on Christians from around the world to recog-

nize the need for Jesus Christ by more than eight billion people, including the 3.5 billion who never have had an opportunity to hear the gospel. It challenges Christians to:

Collaborate with one another toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Pray for the salvation of family, friends, neighbors, coworkers and the people of the nations of the world.

Mobilize the followers of Jesus entrusted to ministries and local churches in reaching every person on earth with his grace and truth.

Invest increased resources in evangelistic efforts, especially for people who have never heard the gospel.

Go with the good news, using every means available so everyone has the opportunity to know Jesus Christ.

Signatories to the commitment agree to prioritize the fulfillment of the Great Commission in their life and ministry, with the goal of seeing every person on earth reached with the gospel by 2033. That year will be the 2,000-year anniversary of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection,


ascension and the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost.

"I believe we are entering the most important decade of Great Commission effort in the history of the church," said Dr. Billy Wilson, chair of Empowered21 and the Pentecostal World Fellowship. "If we as the church will work together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can reach everyone on earth with the good news of Jesus and see the fulfillment of Christ's command in Mark 16 to go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone."

The 2033 Commitment was drafted during a gathering of de-

nominal and parachurch leaders in New York City in December 2022. The 2033 Commitment will be a centerpiece of the Amsterdam2023 conference, to be held June 21-24 at the Amsterdam RAI Convention Center and Olympic Stadium. With more 150 speakers and thousands of Christian leaders from around the world, Amsterdam2023 will serve as a launching point for the decade of evangelism leading up to 2033.

For more information, a list of participating organizations and individuals and to become a signatory of the 2033 Commitment, visit <https://2033.earth/>.



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Kansas enacts presidential primary; Missouri fails

The Missouri House voted down a bill Monday that would reinstate the primary while in Kansas, Gov. Laura Kelly signed a bill to reinstate the primary in the Sunflower State.

The Missouri bill was amended to establish that the primary will take place on “the first Tuesday after the first Monday in April.” As introduced, the bill would have ordered the primary to be held on “the second Tuesday after the first Monday in March.” It was approved last week on a voice vote but failed during roll call.

Missouri Democrat Party Chair Russ Carnahan and Missouri Republican Party Chair Nick Myers found rare unity in testifying together in the bill’s support.

“I think the primaries are popular and, frankly, caucuses exclude a lot of people from being able to participate,” Carnahan said after the bill failed. “If we want more trust and engagement with our democratic institutions ... presidential primaries are a way to do that.”

The Kansas primary may increase voter turnout for both parties and elevate the state in national politics. Detractors say voters could be confused after dealing with a caucus system for decades. The cost is estimated at between \$4 and \$5 million and will be held on March 19, 2024. Candidates will pay a \$10,000 filing fee or submit the names of 5,000 registered voters to be considered eligible.

Republican Secretary of State Scott Schwab voiced support of the bill but asked for the state to assist with funding the local expenses of holding a primary.

“Enactment of the presidential preference primary bill signifies the trust party leaders have in the integrity of Kansas elections,” Schwab said. “We are asking the Legislature to fully fund this measure. Our county election offices will be ready to conduct a fair and secure election.”

Missouri’s bill goes further including keeping regulations on election signs, literature or polls 25 feet away from “the building’s outer door closest to the polling place.”

Representatives also discussed what type of IDs are valid to present at the polls. Last year, the legislature changed voting laws to require that voters present a valid government ID card with a photo and an expiration date to vote. Rep. Barbara Phifer, D-St. Louis, said expired driver’s licenses should be allowed, because otherwise they are penalizing people

who have a difficulty getting to the DMV or do not drive anymore. Rep. Cyndi Buchheit-Courtway, R-Festus, the bill’s sponsor, said she wanted to give “voices back to voters.”

No changes to the voter ID requirements were adopted.

Missouri may try to bring the bill up again before the session ends at the end of May.



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MY PARENTS OFFERED TO PAY OFF MY MORTGAGE

Dear Dave,

I'm 32 and a teacher. My house is my only debt, and there's \$55,000 left on my mortgage. My parents always taught me

about saving and being smart with money. The other day, mom and dad offered to pay off the rest of my mortgage by loaning me the money with a very small interest rate. I know you don't like the idea of mixing money and family, but considering I have a great relationship with my parents, what do you think about this offer?

Lacy

Dear Lacy,

I'm going to make a suggestion before saying don't do this. See what I did there? But seriously, I'd recommend they just make the money a gift and reduce your portion of any later inheritance by that amount. By doing this, you could help reduce the possibility of your brother feel-

ing slighted in any way.

I would never loan my kids money. And here's why: One hundred percent of the time, the Bible says the borrower is a

slave to the lender. That doesn't exempt parents and their kids. No matter how nice your masters are, you're still a slave in this kind of situation — and you'll feel it. Family dinners and get-togethers are different when you're sitting down to eat with your masters — your creditors — instead of just good ol' Mom and Dad.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggest-

ing you should act ungrateful that they offered a loan instead of a gift. It's a generous thing either way. But if they don't want to go the gift route, that's fine. You have a good job, a nice home, and you'll be okay. The thing is, I just wouldn't want to take a chance on straining a great relationship because of money.

— Dave

42 Reasons to Sell All of Your Investments

By Ryan Shumaker
Smartvestor Pro at
The Retirement Team



I often hear when I first meet with someone that the only reason they are still working is to pay for health insurance until they can get on Medicare at age 65. No doubt health insurance when you are in your late 50s and early 60s is quite expensive. A private insurance plan through the marketplace (HealthCare.Gov) for a 62 year old couple living in Topeka runs from a whopping \$21,420 a year to an astronomical \$37,788 a year, depending on the plan chosen. That's even the cheaper non smoker rates. If you smoke or are older than 62, the rates will be even higher. What might be even more outrageous than the price of the cheapest insurance possible is the deductible on it, which is a staggering \$16,000! Seeing this kind of sticker shock it is no wonder that so many believe they can't afford to retire early solely because of the exorbitant cost for private health insurance.

The thing is, though, that health insurance can actually be cheaper if you retire early if you do proper planning and it's been that way now for over a decade. The key to cheap, or free, healthcare if you retire early is knowing how the tax credit subsidies work for health insurance and how to be strate-

gic on where you get your income from before turning 65. With good planning, a 62 year old married couple could receive a massive \$27,228 a year in free tax credit money to pay for their health insurance. That's more than what many of the plans even cost in the health insurance marketplace, effectively making the health insurance completely free.

In order to be eligible for the full amount you need to have the amount of income that shows up on your tax return (but not necessarily the income you pay tax on or actually have) to be around \$18,000. The higher your income goes up, the more this tax credit shrinks. In the past if your income got too high you would go from getting a large tax credit to nothing at all if your income was just \$1 too high and over the threshold. One of the few good things (in our opinion) for retirees that came from the stimulus bill number 3 (called the American Rescue Plan) signed into law in March 2021 is the elimination of this threshold cliff. Instead of the subsidy suddenly ending it instead slowly decreases as income goes up. Even if you have a six figure income, you'll still get a subsidy of some sort now. The lower the income that shows up on your tax return, though, the larger the subsidy will be as long as it is not too low. If it is too low you get nothing at all.

Here is where smart tax planning ahead of time comes into play. If you were to take money from a pension buyout, IRA, 401k (or other company retirement plan like a TSP, 457 or 403b) and switch that money over to a Roth ahead of time you can still have a high actual income while having a low amount show up on your tax return. This will then allow you to get a larger health insurance tax credit subsidy that could fully pay for your insurance. The reason behind this is that any money that comes out of a Roth does NOT show up anywhere on your tax return. From the government's perspective, it is as if the money no longer exists once it goes to a Roth. A person can take enough out of their investments that have taxes on them (like 401ks, IRAs, and pension buyouts) to get the maximum tax credit for insurance and take

the rest of the income they want and need from the Roth. This is something we have been helping people do to allow them to retire earlier for years.

Great retirement planning is much more than just picking investments. There are many moving parts when it comes to income planning, tax reduction planning, tax credit planning, when to start Social Security, etc. that all interrelate and change when you go from working and earning paychecks to retiring and wanting paychecks. Far too many people end up paying more than their fair share in taxes (and/or miss out on tax credits) and work for longer than they actually need to just because they either don't know about how best to navigate all of these complex topics or aren't well informed. If you're putting off retiring just because of potential health insurance costs you likely don't have to. Schedule a time to talk with us at The Retirement Team at 785-228-0222 if you're in this situation, if you'd like to save on taxes in retirement, and/or need help with figuring out how to get the most out of Social Security. We strive to help people do the best they can in all financial aspects of retirement including, but not just, investments.

Other great articles about retirement, investing, and tax reduction can be seen at RetireTopeka.com/blog.

Ryan can be contacted at 785-228-0222 or RetireTopeka.com.

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Financial Considerations Before Taking a Career Break

By Jim Hanna



Hanna

There are many reasons adults choose to step off the career treadmill. For some, it's to care for children or other loved ones, such as elderly parents. Others decide to take a step back in order to pursue higher education or training that will position them for new or expanded opportunities in the future. Some simply come to the conclusion that that they need a break in order to pursue other interests or recover from career burnout.

Whatever the case may be, if you plan to downshift your career – even temporarily – it's wise to plan ahead. Here are some tips to keep in mind before you turn in your resignation letter.

Define your time away. Consider what your leave will ideally look like. Determine how long you plan to be on break, with start and end dates, keeping in mind that you may need to stay flexible in case it takes time to land a job once you're ready to get back in the game. Define to what you hope to accomplish and what resources you may need. Your answers to these questions will help you estimate the monetary impact of your change in employment.

Create a budget. Review your sources of income and projected expenses to ensure you will be able to make ends meet without your usual paycheck. Make sure you have sufficient savings or other income, such as investments or a partner that you can rely upon to meet your monthly obligations. If you plan to be out of work for 6 months, budget for 9 months to prepare for unforeseen changes to your timeline. Additionally, avoid funding a planned career break with emergency funds, which should be reserved for unexpected events such as a medical emergency.

Stay covered. You may be entitled to continued health insurance coverage if you take an approved leave from your employer. On the other hand, if you plan to voluntarily quit your job, your employer-sponsored coverage will end. Understand your cost sharing and the enrollment window for gap coverage. COBRA insurance offered through the federal government will be higher since your employer is no longer obligated to subsidize them. Consider other options such as coverage through a spouse or a more affordable short- and

long-term medical coverage through the health insurance marketplace.

Keep saving. Ideally you will continue to maintain progress toward long-term goals such as college or retirement during your time away from work. The consistency of saving will be beneficial in the long run, even if you must lower your monthly contributions due to reduced income.

Weigh career repercussions. Consider how leave will affect your career trajectory. A work hiatus may reduce future earnings, impacting Social Security, retirement benefits and long-term financial goals. It's quite possible your exact job will not be waiting for you when you return. If you qualify for leave under employment law, your employer can place you in a "similar job" after your leave expires. An employer has leeway under the law to fill your chair with someone else if they can show that keeping the job open would cause the company financial harm.

Create a re-entry plan. Presuming you intend to return to your current workplace, your employer will want to know your anticipated date of return. If you plan to seek new employment, stay in touch with your professional network, keep an eye on the job market and be proactive in applying for openings. If, in the back of your mind, you're not certain you'll return, give some thought to what you would do next, and how you will manage financially.

Seek guidance. A financial professional can help you study the financial impact of stepping away from your career. Armed with insight from a financial advisor, you can feel confident about this next chapter of your life.

Jim Hanna, CFP®, MBA, CKA®, is a Private Wealth Advisor and Certified Kingdom Advisor® with Heart Financial Partners a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies.

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Watch out for scammers

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

The Internal Revenue Service is urging everyone to remain vigilant against scams aimed at tricking taxpayers.

Here are items from an annual IRS list of 12 scams and schemes that put taxpayers at risk of losing money, personal data and more.

IRS Online Account: Steer clear of help from third-party scammers

In this scam targeting individuals, swindlers pose as a "helpful" third party and offer to help create a taxpayer's IRS Online Account at IRS.gov. People should remember they can set these accounts up themselves. But third parties making these offers will try to steal a taxpayer's personal information this way. Taxpayers can and should establish their own Online Account through IRS.gov.

Fake charities: Real scams

Scammers set up fake organizations to take advantage of the public's generosity. They seek money and personal information, which can be used to further exploit victims through identity theft.

Fake charity promoters may use emails to solicit donations or alter or "spoof" their caller ID to make it look like a real charity is calling on the phone. They often target seniors and groups with limited English proficiency. Here are some tips to protect against fake charity scams:

- Don't give in to pressure. Scammers often use a tactic focused on an urgent need to pressure people into making an immediate payment. Donors should take time to do their own research.

- Verify first. Scammers use names that sound like well-known charities. Donors should ask the fundraiser for the charity's exact name, website and mailing address so they can confirm it.

- Be wary about how a donation is requested. Taxpayers should never work with charities that ask for donations by giving numbers from a gift card or by wiring money.



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Dr. Charles Stanley leaves legacy of inspiring words

Americans lost one of their most beloved pastors in April. Dr. Charles Stanley, the popular pastor, evangelist, author and founder of In Touch Ministries, died at age 90.

“Dr. Stanley lived a faithful life of obedience, dedicated to teaching others how to have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ,” according to a statement on his ministry’s website. “Now he is receiving the joy of his soul — seeing his savior face-to-face. Please join us in praying for the entire Stanley family.”

The Rev. Johnnie Moore, president of the Congress of Christian Leaders, noted Stanley’s long legacy of faithfulness.

“Charles Stanley was a Christian icon, and a true media pioneer whose sermons were watched by countless millions,” Moore tweeted. “Dr. Stanley believed the Bible, and he taught its precepts faithfully — and without fanfare — for his entire life. He taught that Christians should just ‘obey God’s word and leave all the consequences to him.’”

Born Sept. 25, 1932, in Dry Fork, Pittsylvania County, Va., Stanley decided to pursue a spiritual life in part because of the loss of his father at an early age. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Richmond, a bachelor of divinity degree at Southwestern Theological Seminary and a master of theology and doctor of theology at Luther Rice Seminary.

In 1969, Stanley joined the staff of First Baptist Church in Atlanta and became senior pastor in 1971, holding the position until his retirement in September 2020. In 1972, he began a local Atlanta television program called “The Chapel Hour,” which later became “In Touch with Dr. Charles Stanley.” For his extensive broadcast work, the National Religious Broadcasters inducted Stanley into its Hall of Fame in 2018 and gave him the NRB Chairman’s Award in March 2020.

During the 1980s, Stanley served two one-year terms as pres-

ident of the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. He was part of the SBC’s Conservative Resurgence, a movement that led to a rejection of the progressive theological trends that dominated other Protestant churches.

Stanley was recognized for selling more than 10 million copies of his

more than 70 books, the latest of which was published in 2023. Over the decades, he gained global influence as a preacher through his broadcasting efforts. According to his ministry, the “In Touch” program is broadcast on more than 4,000 television, radio and satellite networks and stations worldwide, and his sermons have been translated into 127 languages.

Other Christian leaders remembered him for a lifetime of service.

“Charles Stanley went to Heaven today. He made his mark on this world for the Gospel and his incredible teaching of God’s Word,” tweeted Harvest Crusades founder Greg Laurie, also a pastor. “I like so many others was blessed by hearing his messages on the radio and TV and he was a trusted voice we have all been encouraged by.”

“I join with thousands of friends of Charles Stanley to mourn his passing,” CBN founder Pat Robertson said. “He was a great man of God, a wonderful Bible teacher, and his influence reached all around the world. To those of us who know Jesus, we don’t mourn the fact that one of his saints comes home, although at the same time, that doesn’t take the sorrow from our hearts.”

“Dr. Stanley’s preaching and pulpit ministry was nothing short of iconic,” said Liberty University Chancellor Jonathan Falwell, also



a pastor. “A preacher among preachers, he left an indelible mark upon several generations of men in Gospel ministry. He was a friend of my father’s and a well-known friend of Liberty University. The entire Liberty family joins countless others in honoring the memory of Dr. Stanley and praying for his family.”

In 2010, Stanley was honored by Southwestern as a distinguished alumnus with Stanley telling those gathered to “do what God tells you to do next.”

“I have one goal: Get the truth of the Gospel to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, as simply as possible, in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God,” said Stanley.

A Lasting Impression

Dr. Charles Stanley will long be remembered for his words that both encouraged and challenged Christians. These are some of his most memorable quotes.

- “Obey God and leave all the consequences to him.”
- “You always have God’s undivided attention.”
- “We must remember that the shortest distance between our problems and their solutions is the distance between our knees and the floor.”
- “Behavior is the substance of religion. Belief is the substance of relationship.”
- “Our willingness to wait re-

what he is going to do? He will never tell you. God does not tell you what he is going to do. He reveals to you who he is.”

• “Hellen Keller was blind and deaf when she graduated from college with honors. So what’s your problem?”

• “If sympathy is all that human beings need, then the cross of Christ is an absurdity and there is absolutely no need for it. What the world needs is not ‘a little

bit of love’ but major surgery. If you think you are helping lost people with your sympathy and understanding, you are a traitor to Jesus Christ. You must have a right-standing relationship with him yourself, and pour your life out in helping others in his way — not in a human way that ignores God.”

• “God does not give us overcoming life; he gives us life as we overcome.”

• “Our heavenly father understands our disappointment, suffering, pain, fear and doubt. He is always there to encourage our hearts and help us understand that he’s sufficient for all our needs. When I accepted this as an absolute truth in my life, I found that my worrying stopped.”

• “The circumstances and events that we see as setbacks are oftentimes the very things that launch us into periods of intense spiritual growth.”

veals the value we place on the object we’re waiting for.”

• “The time you spend alone with God will transform your character and increase your devotion. Then your integrity and godly behavior in an unbelieving world will make others long to know the Lord.”

• “You have to have courage to be obedient to God.”

• “God’s plan for enlarging his kingdom is so simple — one person telling another about the Savior. Yet we’re busy and full of excuses. Just remember, someone’s eternal destiny is at stake. The joy you have when you meet that person in heaven will far exceed any discomfort you felt in sharing the gospel.”

• “We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that he injects into our bodies energy, power and strength.”

• “Have you been asking God

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“Back the Blue” Kansas license plates available



Kansas drivers soon will be able to show their support for the police by displaying special “Back the Blue” license plates. Gov.

Laura Kelly on Monday signed legislation to allow the plate. The law also created a city of Topeka license plan and allows distinc-

tive license plates to be personalized.

Kansans now can be issued a Back the Blue license plate for their vehicles starting on Jan. 1, 2024. These license plates will be issued for the same time as other license plates with proper registration and payment of the regular license fee under Kansas law.

Cost of Back the Blue plates

Annual renewals of registration are required for these license plates, along with a law enforcement support fee of \$30. Back the Blue license plates will have a background design and emblem or colors designating association with Back the Blue. City of Topeka license plates will be made available to Kansans on and after Jan. 1, 2024, according to the bill’s description. These license plates will be issued for the same time as other license plates with proper registration and payment of the regular license fee under Kansas law.

Any motor vehicle owner or lessee can apply annually to use the City of Topeka flag image on a license plate at a cost of not less than \$25 and not more than \$100 to the county treasurer for each plate. The image used for the city of Topeka license plates will be the flag design approved by city leaders in 2019.

Distinctive license plates will be made available through cash provided from the state highway fund and only after 100 paid orders have been placed. Any distinctive license plates may be personalized on or after Jan. 1, 2025. Individuals and/or organizations sponsoring any distinctive license plates will be required to submit a nonrefundable amount up to \$5,000 for costs in developing a distinctive license plate.



Kansas names missing child poster winner 2023

Fifth-grade student Mahith Surapaneni has won the Kansas Missing Children’s Poster contest. Surapaneni, 10, attends Harmony Elementary School in Overland Park.

The announcement was made by Attorney General Kris Kobach and KBI Director Tony Mattivi announced today. According to the KBI, almost 200 children went missing in the state in 2022 reflecting a growing problem across the country.

The annual statewide competition drew almost 100 entries from 13 schools across the state and is held in recognition of National Missing Children’s Day observed annually on May 25. The 2023 theme is “Bringing

Our Missing Children Home.”

The poster contest provides an opportunity for schools, law enforcement and child advocates to discuss the issue of missing and exploited children with youth, parents and guardians and to promote child safety. It also brings attention to the common goal of bringing missing children home safely.

Mahith’s entry was submitted to represent Kansas in the 40th Annual National Missing Children’s Poster Contest, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Mahith’s winning artwork can be found at <https://bit.ly/3Hd30Vc>.

To search for known missing children, visit the KBI website.

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The Lake of the Ozarks to get \$300 million “Oasis” family fun development

Families soon will have more reasons than just boating, swimming and fishing to visit the Lake of the Ozarks.

Developers have announced plans for the Oasis at Lakeport development. The \$300 million family resort and year-round entertainment district will include a 400-room, full-service hotel, an indoor water park and an amusement park with a Ferris wheel. The development will be near the intersection of U.S. 54 and Jeffries Road near the Grand Glaize Bridge in Osage Beach.

“As plans for the family-friendly offerings at Oasis at Lakeport continue to be announced, I am enjoying watching our community gain momentum as one of the fastest-growing lake destinations,” Osage Beach Mayor Michael Harrison said.



The Marriott hotel will include a 26,000-square-foot conference center, indoor water park, restaurants, 200 public boat slips and 1,000-space

parking garage. Developers said the project attractions also will include roller coasters, thrill and family rides, and a 200-foot Ferris wheel visible

from across the Lake of the Ozarks.

Construction is expected to begin this year, and parts of the project could open as early as next summer.

The recent surge in tourism has been good news for businesses and local sales tax revenues around the lake.

Aside from the new resort, the area also is expecting a major redevelopment of the beleaguered outlet mall in Osage Beach. A proposed incentive deal with Kansas City developers recently fell apart, the Lake Expo reported. Now, local developer Gary Prewitt plans to redevelop the site.

Prewitt, who has developed local shopping centers and several popular bars such as Backwater Jack's and Shady Gator's, is expected to submit formal development plans this spring. Those plans, he told the Lake Expo, “will include family friendly recreation opportunities mixed with dining establishments and premium retail stores.”

Christian organizations experiencing increased hostility during Biden administration

Several nonprofit groups are reporting increased cultural and governmental hostility toward Christians under the Biden administration.

“I think it's just a rise in secularism in the United States,” Arielle Del Turco, assistant director of the Center for Religious Liberty at the Family Research Council, told Fox News.

Del Turco is the primary author of “Hostility Against Churches Is on the Rise in the United States,” which documents the increasing rate of church vandalism during recent years. In an update published this month, the report noted that 2023 already is on track to log the highest number of church vandalism incidents within the six years that the organization has been tracking them.

According to the report, 69 acts of hostility against churches in 29 states already have occurred during the first quarter of the year, including 53 acts of vandalism, 10 arson attacks or attempts, three gun-related incidents, three bomb threats and two other inci-



dents, such as assault. The statistics represent approximately three times the number of hostile acts that were recorded in the same timeframe last year.

“As secularism increases, people just understand religion less and less, they have less of the respect for religion that they might have had decades ago,” Del Turco said. “All of these are increasingly in conflict with core Christian teachings and core Christian be-

liefs. So the left is getting increasingly intolerant of Christianity for this reason, and I think we're seeing that even being represented physically with these physical attacks on churches.”

Roman Catholic churches especially tend to be the primary targets.

“I think that's because they are just a beautiful outward representation of Christianity,” she said. “They have these beautiful

buildings, they have statues outside, but also they are expressly pro-life. So, they do bear the brunt of most of these attacks.”

Del Turco also said she believes the Biden administration has made evident by its actions that religious freedom and pursuing the violent offenders against it are “not a priority.”

“I think even the public discourse — the way that President Biden talks about Christians or

people who might oppose some of these secular dogmas — creates a really dangerous environment where people feel increasingly comfortable lashing out against churches,” she said.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a controversial organization that has come under investigation for fraud and internal abuse, has itself labeled the Family Research Council as a hate group. FRC was then targeted in a shooting that injured one employee.

Callista Gingrich writing in Newsweek last year says the attacks are at crisis levels, “The wave of church attacks in the United States is an intolerable attempt to intimidate Christians and prevent them from worshipping freely and serving their communities. Such attacks are a blatant violation of our fundamental right to religious freedom. These criminal acts harm not only church members, but also American communities at large that rely on church aid and support.”

Kansas House overrides governor's vetoes of three pro-life bills

The Republican-controlled Kansas Legislature voted on Wednesday to nullify Democrat Gov. Laura Kelly's veto of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act.

The legislation, also known as HB 2313/SB 320, will take effect on July 1 and will require that healthcare providers "exercise the same degree of professional skill, care and diligence" to preserve the health of newborns delivered during an abortion procedure that a "reasonably diligent and conscientious" provider would with other live births.

Newborn babies who survive attempts to end their lives will now have to be transported to a hospital to receive medical care. Violations of the new law will be a felony, punishable by up to a year's probation for a first-time offender.

Two-thirds of the legislative majority voted to quash Kelly's veto. The Kansas House voted 87-37, and the Kansas Senate voted 31-9.

A survey recently conducted by



Heart+Mind Strategies for Kansans for Life shows 96% of Kansans support protection for babies born alive following an abortion.

"We thank the leaders in the Kansas House and Senate who are leading the way in protecting babies born alive following an abortion," Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life said in a statement. "We praise our affiliate Kansans for Life for their tireless and un-

ceasing work in seeing this law passed."

Pro-life advocates argued the new law is a commonsense measure that protects newborns and recognizes the human lives of abortion survivors.

"We do have a culture of death," said Republican state Rep. Ron Bryce, a southeastern Kansas physician. "The value of life is of the utmost importance."

Jeanne Gawdun, who lobbies for Kansans for Life, the state's most influen-

tial pro-life organization, said lawmakers "stood together for compassion and basic human decency."

But abortion supporters say the law is designed to sow fear so that doctors won't want to perform abortions and women will be afraid to seek them.

"The words in these laws do not have any kind of real meaning," said Elisabeth Smith, state policy and advocacy director for the Center for Reproductive Rights. "Doctors and hospitals and clinics that are trying to interpret them don't know what they mean and they don't know how a prosecutor or a district attorney will be reading those laws."

The Kansas law is similar to laws in at least 18 other states requiring that such newborns go to a hospital while also imposing criminal penalties for doctors who don't provide the same care that would typically be offered for other live births. In Montana, voters rejected a proposed "born alive" law in November

2022.

The new Kansas law includes a requirement for medical providers to file annual reports with the state health department on infants "born alive" during abortion attempts. Like most states, Kansas doesn't collect such statistics.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2022 that the U.S. Constitution allows states to restrict abortions. A statewide vote affirmed abortion access in The Sunflower State in August of 2022, but Kansas bans most abortions at the 22nd week of the preborn person's development.

The legislature also overrode the Governor's veto of House Bill 2325, which bans abortion providers from buying liability insurance from a state fund, and House Bill 2264, which requires physicians to give patients medical information about the potential to reverse the abortion pill.

U.S. households added \$320 billion in debt last year

U.S. households continue to struggle, adding \$320 billion in debt last year. It marks the highest level since the 2008 financial crisis which saw millions lose their homes.

Households owe a combined \$17 trillion as a result of their

mortgages, student loans, credit cards and auto loans, according to WalletHub. Current debt levels are approaching the \$18 trillion held by households in 2008, the year in which the American housing market collapsed and the world was

plunged into a severe recession.

The typical American household had nearly \$142,700 in debt at the end of 2022, much of which came from an average of \$100,700 in mortgage debt. An average auto loan balance of \$13,100 and student loan balance of \$13,500 composed much of the remaining balance. A separate study published by WalletHub last month indicated that average credit card debt increased from \$8,500 in the first quarter of 2021 to \$9,300 in the third quarter of 2022.

The increased debt levels come as inflationary pressures continue to affect consumers. Inflation reached a 6.4 percent year-over-year rate as of January, according to a report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics last week. Prices for groceries, energy and other necessities rose even as inflation continued to fall from the 9.1 percent year-over-year rate recorded in June 2022.

Overall food inflation reached 10.1 percent last month, considerably exceeding the 6.4 percent headline inflation rate. The national average price of gasoline is currently \$3.39 per gallon, constituting a 42 percent increase since



President Joe Biden assumed office in January 2021, according to data from the Energy Information Administration

Americans continue to spend beyond their means on some products despite the economic pressures, relying upon a combination of consumer debt and savings accumulated during the lockdown-induced recession. The average amount of debt among those who spent beyond their means during the most recent holiday shopping season rose to \$1,549, marking a 24 percent increase from the previous year, according to a survey from LendingTree. The percentage of

debtors who expect to take five months or more to pay off their debt rose from 28 percent to 37 percent.

The total level of consumer loans increased from \$1.5 trillion at the beginning of the Biden administration to \$1.8 trillion, according to data from the Federal Reserve. The personal savings rate has dropped from 20 percent to slightly more than 3 percent over the same period, according to data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, marking a significant decline from typical rates witnessed before the lockdown-induced recession.

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Supreme Court hears case over government “home equity theft”

After a 94-year-old woman lost her home to “home equity theft” by the county, she sued and now the U.S. Supreme Court seems sympathetic to her case.

The court heard arguments April 26 concerning “home equity theft” – when local governments or states, keep the full value of a home as payment for much smaller property tax debts. The questionable practice is employed in Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

Minnesota Homeowner Geraldine Tyler is being represented Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) which released a report months ago saying that 12 states and the District of Columbia allow local governments and private investors to seize dramatically more than what is owed from homeowners who fall behind on property tax payments. PLF is a national not-for-profit public interest law firm that challenges government abuses.

Minnesota law allows counties to retain windfalls at the expense of property owners, and from 2014 to 2020, about



1,200 Minnesota residents lost their homes, along with the equity they held, for debts that averaged 8 percent of the home’s value, said the PLF.

Tyler owned a modest one-bedroom condominium in Hennepin County, but after she was harassed and frightened near her home, she moved to a new apartment in a safer neighborhood. The rent on her new apartment stretched her resources and she fell into arrears on her condo’s property tax bills,

accumulating about \$2,300 in taxes owed, along with \$12,700 in penalties, interest, and costs.

The county seized Tyler’s condo, valued at \$93,000, and sold it for just \$40,000. Instead of keeping the \$15,000 it was owed, the county retained the full \$40,000, amounting to a windfall of \$25,000, according to the PLF.

Tyler sued, but her lawsuit was rejected by the courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, which found that the legal forfeiture of the property extinguished the owner’s property interest.

Tyler’s lawyer, Christina Martin, a senior PLF attorney, told the justices during oral arguments on April 26: “When the government takes property to satisfy a debt and takes more than

what is owed, it has a constitutional duty to return or pay for the excess.”

By seizing assets beyond what it was owed, the county took private property without providing just compensation, Martin said.

The county could have stayed within the bounds of the U.S. Constitution if it had simply taken the property, sold it, satisfied the debt out of the proceeds, and refunded the remainder to Tyler, which is the “traditional common law rule still followed in most states and still followed in Minnesota in nearly every other debt collection circumstance.”

But “instead, the county took everything,” the attorney said.

According to Supreme Court precedents and hundreds of years of common law, the seizure of Tyler’s home equity without just compensation amounts to a fine punishing her for failing to timely pay her property taxes and is subject to scrutiny under the Constitution’s Excessive Fines Clause “because it goes well beyond compensating the government for any loss,” Martin said.

“This Court has repeatedly held that an economic sanction that serves in part to punish is a fine within the meaning of the Eighth Amendment,” she added.

U.S. Department of Justice attorney Erica Ross said taxes themselves are not takings in the constitutional sense. The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment states that private property may not be taken for public use without the payment of just compensation.

“When a taxpayer fails to pay her full tax debt, the government may seize and sell property to recoup the money it is owed. But that power does not encompass the power to extinguish an owner’s full rights in property that is worth more than the tax debt,” Ross said.

“When the government obtains absolute title to such property without any mechanism for the owner to recover excess value, it engages in a potentially compensable taking. History and precedent strongly support that rule,” she said.

“In the decade after the founding, the federal government and nine states ... all limited the government to recovering the value of a tax debt,” Ross added.

The lawyer for the county, Neal Katyal, said Tyler’s arguments, if made policy, would inconvenience governments by forcing them “to act as real estate agents and fiduciaries, and even forcing them to pay claims immediately at forfeiture, well before a property is sold.”

Tyler’s arguments have generated “a dangerous reality distortion field,” Katyal said.

The attorney faulted Tyler for leaving her condo.

“Why in the world would it be that Tyler walked away from her home,” he said, adding she did so because “there was no equity in the home.”

After Katyal argued Tyler lacked legal standing to proceed with the case, Justice Clarence Thomas said Tyler was saying “at bottom ... the county took her property, made a profit on it with the surplus equity, and it belongs to her.”

Justice Elena Kagan also pushed back against Katyal, wondering aloud if there were limits to the government’s ability to take property without refunding the surplus to the owner who was behind on taxes.

Could a government seize a \$5 million house for a \$5,000 tax debt and keep the leftover money, she asked.

Along the same lines, Justice Neil Gorsuch asked: “a \$5 property tax, a million dollar property – good to go?”

The Supreme Court is expected to rule on the case by June or July.



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Christians take out payday loans despite excessive interest rates

More than one-third of Christians in states that don't regulate payday loans say they have obtained them, despite believing that charging excessive interest is a sin.

In a recent survey, Lifeway Research found that more than three in four see lending harmful to borrowers as sinful even though one in three respondents has taken a payday loan before. And even though a growing share of Christians see these predatory loans as helpful, most support government and church intervention in an industry predicted to grow to \$42.6 billion globally by 2028.

"The proliferation of retail payday lending establishments has increased the firsthand

knowledge many Christians have of these financial institutions," said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. "The majority of Christians in states with few regulations on payday lending want more regulations that protect borrowers."

Missouri and Kansas were included in the survey, along with Alabama, Alaska, California, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The Department of Financial Services in New York, where payday loans are illegal, notes that

"payday loans are designed to trap borrowers in debt. Due to the short term, most borrowers cannot afford to both repay the loan and pay their other important expenses."

In Missouri, where it is unregulated, payday loans can charge up to 2,000% interest.

Despite warnings from states such as New York however, when asked to choose which words apply to payday loans, some 37 percent of respondents said payday loans are helpful, more than doubling the share of those who held this sentiment in 2016 when a similar survey was done. Only 16 percent of respondents described payday loans as helpful at that time.

"Short-term financing is a real



need for many Americans, so you expect to see a growing number of customers who appreciate the payday lending service," McConnell said. "Yet many describe payday loans with lan-

guage that sounds more like warnings than endorsements. Most churches are silent on payday loans at times when Christians desire advice and emergency help."

IRS collects \$5 trillion in taxes but wants more

The U.S. government collected a record amount of taxes from Americans but will increase the monitoring of bank accounts and mobile payment systems to collect more.

The IRS says in its newly released Data Book that during the 2022 fiscal year, about \$5 trillion in taxes were collected. The fiscal year 2022 ran from Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022. It issued 242 million refunds totaling nearly \$642 billion. Business income taxes amounted to around \$476 billion while individual, trust and estate taxes came in near \$2.8 trillion.

IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel said in an introduction to the Data Book that the agency's commitment to maintaining a "visible, robust tax enforcement presence" is "strong."

In a press release accompanying the data, the IRS claimed it would focus on high-income and high-wealth individuals, complex partnerships, and big corporations with its enforcement efforts but tax analysts say that there's not enough wealthy individuals and businesses to account for the



additional tax auditors that are being hired.

The agency recently received an \$80 billion funding boost over 10 years, with part of the funds going to hiring more staff, including in areas of tax enforcement. This has fueled concerns about an increase in tax audit rates among lower and middle-income Americans, which the IRS has said repeatedly would not be the case.

The IRS recently released its strategic operating plan (pdf), in which it identified certain transactions as being at high risk of

noncompliance and vowed to ramp up enforcement in some areas.

Crackdown on your PayPal and Venmo

The agency says it will begin auditing bank accounts showing digital asset transactions as well as other digital payment options popular with Americans. These include everything from Apple Pay, Venmo, Paypal and others. The agency says Americans are not complying with the regulations and will now question deposits into bank or online accounts totaling more than

\$600.

"The IRS tracks many known, high-risk issues in noncompliance, such as digital asset transactions, listed transactions, and certain international issues. These issues arise in multiple taxpayer segments, and data analysis show a higher potential for noncompliance," the IRS wrote.

"We will prioritize resources to increase enforcement activities, including criminal investigation as appropriate."

The tax agency, which has the lowest favorability rating of any government agency, stated that it will develop an information platform to support digital asset reporting and analytics tools that have access to bank account records and third-party platform mobile payment systems with the aim of forcing compliance with the new rules.

The agency stated that it's rolling out a new program of "tailored post-filing treatments" to resolve issues and omissions on tax returns to provide an opportunity to remedy them before proceeding to a tax audit.

The IRS will use "advanced analytics" to distinguish taxpayers who make good-faith mistakes on their tax returns from those trying to avoid paying what they owe.

The program would then notify the honest-but-errant taxpayers in a way that gives them an opportunity to "self-correct."



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Why the Pro-Life Side Will Win

"The GOP's Abortion Problem is Only Getting Worse," so said the headline of a story by Alex Shephard that The New Republic posted on April 6.

"The party has been losing elections ever since the Supreme Court reversed Roe v. Wade -- and there's no end in sight," said the subhead.

"Republicans' longtime opposition to abortion is coming back to haunt them." That was the headline for Eugene Robinson's column that The Washington Post published on April 10. "Be careful what you wish for," Robinson said. "Republican zealots spent decades trying to erase the constitutional right to abortion. Last year, they finally succeeded -- and now they are reaping the whirlwind."

"The Abortion Ban Backlash Is Starting to Freak Out Republicans," said the headline for an April 7 column in The New York Times written by Michelle Goldberg.

Pro-abortion liberals have adopted a party-line position on the political ramifications of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* -- which overturned Roe v. Wade and sent the issue of abortion back to the states. They argue that advocating for abortion on demand is a winning issue for liberal politicians, while defending the right to life of an unborn child is a losing issue for conservatives.

Time will prove them wrong just as it proved them wrong on Roe.

Why?

Imagine you are in a third-grade classroom -- even in one of the worst public schools in California. The teacher, who earns a salary of \$90,000 (the average teacher's salary in that state), tells her students: "The grass growing in front of this school is red."

A student raises her hand. The teacher calls on her.

"Teacher," she says, "I just walked past it on the way into this class and the grass was green."

"No," says the teacher, "it was red."

The second-grader replies: "No, it was green."

Other students nod their heads. They agree with their classmate, not their teacher. They know the grass is green.

Now, this may seem like a particularly far-fetched hypothetical -- almost as far-fetched as, say, declaring in a public school that a biological boy is a girl.

But it is even more far-fetched to declare that an unborn child is not a human being and that a parent, therefore, has a right to deliberately kill that unborn child.

In the long run, lies will lose in a democratic society when they are forced to compete with the truth.

The only way lies can win is if those who hold some form of power over the people threaten them with retaliation for standing by the truth -- and the people cower.

That can happen in a classroom when a teacher tries to instill her students with a lie and can give them a bad grade if they do not adopt that lie -- or if they do not at least pay obeisance to it in the context of the classroom and the tests that teacher administers.

In the broader society, we call it political correctness: Some people decide to accept a position that is demonstrably wrong because the people who have some form of power over them want them to take that position.

As the headlines cited above demonstrate, the politically correct position in the liberal media is to advocate for the legalized killing of unborn children.

But, ultimately, political correctness cannot advance a policy based on lies if the other side declares the demonstrable truth with unwavering commitment. This is what happened in the debate over Roe: Just as the grass in front of the school is not red, there is no constitutional right to kill



an unborn child. Because pro-lifers never backed away from advocating that truth, they eventually won.

Now the truth can win on the state level in the fight to prohibit abortion: If those working to protect the right to life do not back down, they will win just as they won in the struggle to reverse Roe.

We can see the underlying current in this debate even in some of the rhetoric the Biden administration uses to discuss the deliberate killing of an unborn child.

Sometimes, they will use the word "abortion" in their official declarations. But they frequently use the euphemism "reproductive rights" instead.

In the month of April, the White House has posted three sets of remarks and one statement made by Vice President Kamala Harris that carry headlines that use the euphemisms "reproductive rights" or "reproductive healthcare" to describe abortion.

On April 6, the White House posted an item with this headline: "Statement by Vice President Kamala Harris on Americans' Continued Rebuke of Attacks on Reproductive Rights."

On April 13, it posted an item with this headline: "Remarks by Vice President Harris at the Interagency Task Force on Reproductive Healthcare Access."

On April 16, it posted an item with

this headline: "Remarks by Vice President Harris at a March for Reproductive Rights."

On April 19, it posted yet another item with this headline: "Remarks by Vice President Harris in a Moderated Conversation on Reproductive Rights."

Even the Biden White House understands that if it was candid about what it is advocating -- the deliberate killing of an unborn child -- it would inevitably lose.

And if those seeking to stop the deliberate killing of unborn children keep speaking the truth, they will ultimately win.

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Everything Is the Culture War Now

By JIM GERAGHTY

On the menu today: Digging into an intriguing but disputable poll from NBC News that finds the country starkly divided on social and cultural issues; wondering if the numbers are better for conservatives than they think, or whether they even want to hear good news these days; and wondering if Americans as a whole think too much about culture wars and not enough about actual wars.

A Social and Cultural Divide

NBC News unveiled a new poll with a lot of questions focusing on social issues, and not all that surprisingly, it found “stark partisan differences on major cultural issues — racism, accepting LGBTQ people, the term ‘woke,’ and even the fundamental goals of American society.” The good folks at NBC were kind enough to have me on their panel discussing these topics.

One of the things that stands out about this poll, and makes it really intriguing but also disputable, is that it often gave respondents two options and asked which is most important, and aimed to dissuade them from saying,

“both” by not listing that as an option. For example, the surveyors asked, “Which should be a more important goal for our society these days — promoting greater respect for traditional social and moral values, or encouraging greater tolerance of people with different lifestyles and backgrounds?” “Both” was only recorded if that was volunteered as an answer, 5 percent volunteered that answer, and another 3 percent said, “not sure.”

How do you think 1,000 American adults would answer when asked that question? Take a guess.

This month, 50 percent of Americans said, “promoting greater respect for traditional social and moral values” is more important, and 42 percent said, “encouraging greater tolerance of people with different lifestyles and backgrounds” is more important. Those numbers are barely changed from 2013, smack in the middle of the Obama years.

Wait, there’s more. When you break down the respondents by race, “traditional values” was picked by 51 percent of whites, 48 percent of blacks, and 51 percent of Hispanics. “Tolerance for dif-

ferent lifestyles” was selected by 40 percent of whites, 47 percent of blacks, and 44 percent of Hispanics. Whatever racial divisions America has, those three demographics see this choice roughly the same way.

You would think a poll result like this would encourage conservatives. But I suspect this poll result will be largely ignored because it doesn’t fit the narrative either for progressives who want to hear about culture-war triumphs, or folks on the right who on some level actually enjoy hearing about how decadent and depraved American society has become. Year by year, the loudest voices on the right have adopted a dystopian “this country is going to hell in a handbasket” vision; hearing that half the country wants to promote greater respect for traditional social and moral values might actually stir hope, confidence, optimism, and even unity, and lordy, we can’t have that, now can we?

As you would probably suspect, 74 percent of self-identified Republicans said “promoting greater respect for traditional social and moral values” is more important, while 67 percent of self-iden-



tified Democrats said “encouraging greater tolerance of people with different lifestyles and backgrounds” is more important. Independents split, with 49 percent picking traditional values and 41 percent siding with greater tolerance. (I wonder how many cultural traditionalists stopped defining themselves as Republicans during the Trump era.)

Now, as our panel discussed yesterday, a lot of these terms are subjective. How do you define “traditional social and moral values”? Which “different lifestyles and backgrounds” do you have in mind? You could easily envision a churchgoing

Baptist African American who usually votes Democrat or a devout Catholic Latina mom who want to prioritize both. Also note that back in 2020, another NBC poll found 47 percent of those who described themselves as “LGBTQ” also described themselves as “moderately or highly religious. Those who were older, Black or lived in the South were the most likely to be religious.”

NBC’s most recent survey asked, “Is America racist?” “Not sure” was only counted if it was volunteered as an answer, but there was no “yes in some ways,

■ Please see CULTURE WAR page 21

Centrality of The Cross



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

Speaking Truth

All over the world there are signs of the cross of Christ. Churches prominently display it. Both the religious and non-religious drape it around their necks as a beautiful piece of jewelry. Homes have crosses hanging as pieces of art on their walls. May I ask, “What if there never was a cross? What if Jesus never died? What if He never rose again?” If that was the case, what would change as a result?

Let me boldly state, if there never was a cross, the world today would be completely different. There would be nothing but evil, darkness, emptiness and hopelessness in every home. Why? Because the cross of Christ is the centerpiece of our world. It is the foundational hope of all humanity.

Praise God for the cross!

Peter, one of Jesus’ Apostles, gave a message at the home of Cornelius, a man who lived 70 miles outside of Jerusalem. There were several people gathered to hear what Peter had to say about Jesus’ and what was happening in Jerusalem following His death. In that brief message Peter stated the following about Christ, “They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day... (Acts 10:39-40) What was Peter communicating to his listeners? The centrality of the cross of Christ. If that one statement was removed from his talk, it would have changed everything.

What do I mean when I say, “the cross?” I am referring to the death and resurrection of Christ and the judgement and mercy of God shown through it.

Why was Peter talking about the cross, and why do people still talk about it, nearly 2,000 years after Jesus hung on a tree outside Jerusalem? Because their Lord commanded them to. It is written, “Then he [Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it

is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:45-47)

Why did Jesus command the message about Him and His cross be shared with the world? Because of the implications it has for every human being.

From the earliest days of humanity, evil and lawlessness have reigned upon the earth. Amid this, was always a remnant of God-fearing men and women through the Jewish nation that worshipped and served the Lord God. This proved to be a restraint upon evil, when people were called to turn from their immoral ways and live according to the holy ways of God. When Christ died and rose again, God took what He was doing through the Jewish nation and expanded it to the whole world. As a result, this became good news for all. Salvation then became available to all humanity, regardless of gender, race, religion, or culture. And what does salvation refer to? The forgiveness of sins.



Every human being has the curse of sin within them. It is the cause of all immorality in the world. The death and resurrection of Christ means mankind can be delivered from this.

When someone engages in any form of disobedience against God, which often reveals itself in how we treat others, it exposes the sin that unknowingly is enslaving them.

The cross broke this curse! It provided a way for you to be set free. If you acknowledge your sins, turn from them and place your full faith in Christ alone, there is mercy. It waits for you at the foot of the cross. You can avoid the judgement of God, and become a new creation. Jesus has the authority and power to make this

available to all who cry out to Him in faith. Come to the cross and be changed today.

A prayer for you. “Lord God, thank you for the cross. We praise you for all you have done for the whole world. We come to the cross this hour, and ask for our heart to be searched and changed by your grace. Make us new creations. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

—Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings and Speaking Truth is a nationally syndicated column. Please share your comment with Clint at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.



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NOTO offers varied arts options

First Friday Art Walk & Market is the first Friday of every month. The North Topeka Arts District has become an attraction to Art Lovers and History Buffs alike with beautiful scenes of art and history. Entertainment can also be found on First Fridays, at various venues during the artwalk up and down N. Kansas Avenue, as well as streetside vendors. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries, antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination. Art Walk Hours are 10 am to 9 pm.

May 5-7th - NOTO Chalk Walk, May First Friday Weekend. This annual chalk walk event is one for all ages. Come decorate the sidewalks with your own masterpieces. Think you might have some skills creating sidewalk chalk art? Want a chance to win some cool prizes for it? Sign up at Amused Gallery to participate in the Chalk Art Competition.

May 5, 6pm - Redbud Park has music

by **Kyler Carpenter** Acoustic starting on the Kaw Valley Bank stage. After attending college at Kansas State University, Carpenter started performing at coffee shops and bars. When he started working at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library 24 years ago, he found that he enjoyed singing and reading to children. He is a regular at several venues around Topeka and any place where he can read and play children's songs to the young listeners.



CALL FOR NOTO MARKET VENDORS

- 5/20 Saturday Market in Redbud Park
- Summer Concert Series
- Third Fridays May - Sept in Teeter Courtyard

<https://explorenoto.org/vendors/>



May 5 - Join Compass Point, home of Dirty Girl Adventures for LIVE MUSIC on the Courtyard with Cryin Out Loud! Get yer boots out and get yer tickets! This band plays hard drivin', fast swingin' and elbow bendin' music good for a night on the town!

May 6th, 2-3pm - JR Juggles 40 Years of Clownin' Around! JR Juggles Celebrates 40 years of Clownin' Around! FREE performance in Redbud Park.

Exhibiting in May inside the NOTO Arts Center Morris Gallery, "A Fine Art 6.0" Select fine art photographers have been invited to participate in this sixth iteration of the annual photography exhibit. Held in the Morris Gallery inside the NOTO Arts Center, this show brings together some of the most interesting work being produced in the region.

3rd Friday - May 19* - Opening Act at 7pm with Maria the Mexican starting at 8pm. FREE admission. The NOTO Summer Concert Series is a celebration of music that strives to offer culturally rich experiences for the community through a diversity of genres and performers. In addition to regionally acclaimed bands, concerts feature a local emerging artist as the opening act. With the intentional focus on diverse music, the vibe of NOTO, and the intimacy of Redbud Park, these concerts are like none other in the community.

Third Saturday Market is May 20, 10-3, Music in the park 1-3.

The Story of NOTO in Art is a project that is in the works for the Kansas Avenue bridge and the grassy area east of Veteran's Park. These areas will tell the NOTO Story with bridge murals and sculptures. You can help support this project with a donation to the Heidi Trejo Memorial Fund:

<https://explorenoto.org/support/heidi-lynn-norris-trejo-art-fund/>

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CONCERTS

KANSAS PRAIRIE PICKERS – Fourth Sun. ea. Month, 1pm, Auburn Community Center. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes. Concessions available

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

GRAND OTTAWA OPRY – 2nd & 4th Saturday, 5:30PM-pre-show, 6PM showtime, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S Hickory, Ottawa. Tickets are \$15 and only at the door. Ph. 785-241-6762, email grandootpry@gmail.com. GrandOttawaOpry.com

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED – Apr. 30, 3pm, First United Methodist Church, 6th & Topeka Blvd. Featuring the musical talents of Grace Morrison, MD, Scott Teeter, MD, Steve Crouch, MD, Mary Franz, MD and more.

LIVE AT LUNCH – May 3, 11-1, Every Plaza. Colin Nichols

SHAWNEE CHORAL SOCIETY MOZART REQUIEM – May 7, 7-9pm, White Concert Hall. Prelude Music by Kansas Youth Chorale. Free Admission. Donations Gratefully Appreciated

LIVE AT LUNCH – May 10, 11-1, Every Plaza. Paradize Band

RANDY STONEHILL – May 13, 7pm, Seaman Comm. Church

LIVE AT LUNCH – May 17, 11-1, Every Plaza. Heart-strings

EATS AND BEATS – May 18, 11-1, Every Plaza. Knucklehead Jones

MARIA THE MEXICAN – May 19, 8pm, Redbud Park

Summer Concert Series. Part of 3rd Friday NOTO Summer Concert Series. Free admission

LIVE AT LUNCH – May 24, 11-1, Every Plaza. Matthew Mulnix

EATS AND BEATS – May 25, 11-1, Every Plaza. The Bash

LIVE AT LUNCH – May 31, 11-1, Every Plaza. Waf- flers

NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT – June 5, 7:30pm, Garfield Park Gazebo, 1600 NE Quincy. (Also on June 19 and July 10) North Topeka Community Band concerts have been a summer treat since 1996. No admission cost. Bring your lawn chairs. Contact Info: Ginger Patterson, (785) 633-2438

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@rhctopeka.org

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

HOPE HOUSE FREE COMMUNITY CLOTHING BANK – Wed. 6-8pm and Sat. 12-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland

HARVESTER FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 2nd Saturday each month, 1:30-3pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland

FREE WEEKLY COMMUNITY PANCAKE BREAKFAST – Sundays 8:10 to 10:30am, at Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland, followed by church serv-

ices at 10:45am with Pastor Jeanette Cook.

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

INSIDE OUT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH – Every Sunday 12pm service; Every Tuesday 7:30pm service. Location: 2020 SE 21st. For info: 785-380-7031 or io@insideoutinc.net or www.insideoutinc.net

KIDS for JESUS! – Wednesday's 6:30 – 8pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your friends, family, neighbors, enemies! For info: 785-266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, Email: Lakenaz@aol.com

CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP – Monday's, 1-4pm, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

SENIOR ADULT EXERCISE CLASS – Tuesday's 10am, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. All exercises will be done from a chair, will help you get up out of a chair, & climb stairs safely! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

MID-WEEK PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY – Wednesday's, 7-8pm, Lakeview Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. You are invited! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene

LOL "LADIES OF LAKEVIEW" – Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Monthly Women's Ministry Events! (Cooking, Crafts, Outreach, Bible Study, Fellowship!) Call the church office for info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

FERVENT BIBLE STUDY – May 1, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your Fervent by Priscilla Shirer, with you. Contact info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

SPRING SING – May 27, 6pm, Oakland United Methodist Church, 801 NE Chester Ave. Join Oakland Neighborhood Churches in the annual event of singing worship to the Lord. Contact Reverend Phil Anderson (Oakland UMC), Pastor Jeanette Cook (Oakland Church of the Nazarene) or Pastor Barbara Deeter (Oakland Grace Baptist) for more information.

KIDS SUMMER FUN & JESUS – Every Wednesday, beginning June 7, 7-8pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Water Play, Yard Games, Fun, Snacks, Jesus, Fellowship, Friends, Side-walk Chalk. Contact info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

'KEEPER OF THE KINGDOM' VBS – June 12 to Family Fun Night, June 16, 6 – 8pm, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Bring your friends, family, neighbors, & enemies! Contact info: (785)266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, Email: Lakenaz@aol.com

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

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

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 rhoni@tsopl.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.

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

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

TOPEKA ACAPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS –Topeka Acappella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four-part acappella harmonies. Topeka Acappella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Call Cindy Patton at 785-640-7403 for info

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

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

FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 4th Tue. through Nov., 9am, 1231 NW Eugene St. Randel Ministries, Inc., in partnership with Harvesters and Family of God Church will have its monthly food distribution. No ID or proof of income required, first come first served. Distributing fresh produce and other items to families in need. 785-234-1111 www.RandelMinistries.com



TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS – 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.

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• May 11: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
 • June 8: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

For info: www.C5Alive.org or [Facebook.com/C5Alive](https://www.facebook.com/C5Alive)

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

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

BREAD BASKET FARMERS MARKET – Saturday's, 7:30am-1pm, Apr. 1 through Nov. 18, south end of West Ridge Mall parking lot.

LAWRENCE FARMERS MARKET – Sat. 7:30-11:30, 824 New Hampshire Street. Opens April 8

LAWRENCE TUESDAY MARKET – Tuesdays, 4-6pm, South Park, 1141 Massachusetts. Opens May 9

MONDAY FARMERS MARKET – Mondays 7:30-11:30am, May 8 to Oct. 2, Topeka & Sh. Co. Library, (closed Memorial Day & Labor Day)

PERRY LECOMPTON FARMERS MARKET – Fridays 4-6:30pm, Bernie's/Cenex parking lot, Ferguson & Hwy 24

DOWNTOWN TOPEKA FARMERS MARKET – Saturday's April 8 to Oct. 28, 7:30am-noon, 6th & Harrison. The open-air market is full of fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, arts & crafts, flower, home-baked goods and more.

YOUTH ART EXHIBIT – Apr. 1, 11-3pm, Redbud Park Pavilion. Live music, scavenger hunt, Redbud sprig giveaway

THE MORAL IS – Apr. 28 & 29, 7pm; (dinner at 5:30pm) The Moral Is is an original one-act play featuring an assortment of Aesop's fables. The whole evening is free of charge, with donations accepted. Performances will be held in the facilities of Grace Community Church, 310 E. 8th Street, Overbrook. Contact info: ccs.kansas@gmail.com

TOPEKA SHAREFEST – Apr. 29, 8am-12pm. Fellowship Bible Church annual event to help Topeka schools, by landscaping, painting, constructing, and cleaning up the grounds of area schools and buildings. You can register at sharefesttopeka.com

PAWS IN THE PARK – Apr. 29, 10am-2pm, Topeka West High School. Info: gracec@hhstopeka.org

CELEBRITY PANCAKE FEED – Apr. 29, 7am-12pm, Combat Air Museum at Forbes Field. All you can eat Perkins pancakes for \$7 donation, plus sausage, juice & coffee. Free tour of museum is included. 785-862-3303.

LAST SUNDAY FREE BREAKFAST BUFFET – Apr. 30, 8am – 12pm, Philip Billard Post 1650, 3110 SW Huntoon. Free pancakes & sausage, eggs, coffee, juice, and sometimes biscuits & gravy. Donations accepted and go to helping vets in the Topeka area.

FOCUS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING – May 2, 9:30-10:30am, Sunflower Foundation on the former Menninger Campus, 5820 SW 6th. Prevention and Resiliency Services (PARS) and Safe Streets present a community education event, designed to spark engagement, increase awareness and understanding, and empower the community to be informed and vocal on challenges faced in Topeka. RSVP - <https://tinyurl.com/2p4yse37>

CAPITOL NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER – May 4, 12pm, Capitol Rotunda. Info: (316) 516-0777 www.nationaldayofprayer.org; donna@cultureshield.com

BREAKFAST FOR HOPE – May 5, 8-9am, The Beacon, 420 SW 9th St. Valeo fundraiser featuring Mike Matson as the keynote speaker. Tickets \$50. At valeotopeka.org, or call 785-342-7232.

BERNIE TOURNEY – May 6, 12:30pm, Lake Shawnee Golf Course. Combat Veteran annual Bernie Deghand memorial tourney. Lunch at 11:30. Registration: lsg-bernietourney2023.golfgenius.com. 785-217-1662 Sponsors needed!

AN EVENING FOR A CHILD – May 6, 5:30 - 11pm, Maner Conference Center. The public is welcome to purchase individual tickets, a Stable Table (8 seats), or individual tickets to the Capper Derby After-Hours portion only (8:30 - 11pm). Individual ticket holders and Stable Table attendees have access to the entire evening of Kentucky Derby-themed fun including a buffet dinner, live auction, pediatric scholarships

funding, and raffle giveaway plus the After Hours activities (*Capper Derby Race, Wine & Whiskey Boards, Casino Games, Tee Box Golf Simulator, Inflatable Bouncy Horse Races, Adult Tricycle Races, Wine/Bourbon Boards and more). After-Hours portion (8:30 - 11pm) is \$25 per person. To purchase tickets, visit www.capper.org. Lacey Kinder, 795-272-4060 x 1165

TOUR OF TOPEKA RIDE/RUN – May 6, 9:30am – noon, Dornwood Park. Celebrating connecting Shawnee County Parks + Recreation's trail system across the community. Cyclists can now ride from SW 29th and McClure all the way to and around Lake Shawnee via the Shunga, Deer Creek and Lake Shawnee trails. Registration is free and a Tour of Topeka t-shirt can be ordered for \$15. Rides include a 32.2-mile route along the entire trail loop, a 10-mile route to and around Lake Shawnee and back and a 5K route along the new section of the Deer Creek Trail. A 5K run/walk follows the same route along the Deer Creek Trail. This is a non-timed, non-competitive event

FLINT HILLS FESTIVAL – May 6, 10-5, Blue Earth Plaza, Manhattan, directly across from the FHDC at 315 South 3rd St. Live entertainment, activities for children and adults, a wine tasting area (21+), community groups, demonstrations, food trucks, vendor booths. This is also the final weekend for Dinosaurs: Fossils Exposed. Get up close and personal with a T-Rex or one of the five other full skeletons on display. www.flinthillsdiscovery.org/ffh

C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON – May 11, 11:30-1 at Aldersgate Village's new Home Plus building! Featured speaker is Marcus Miller of First Tee of Greater Topeka. Cost: \$15 for C5 members & first-time guests who RSVP, \$17 at the door; • \$20 for non-members & repeat guests. • Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org, so we know how much food is needed! Open to the public – Put POWER in your life with great food, great speakers and great company! Invite a friend to join you! SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, June 8, 11:30-1.

FRIDAY FLICKS – "HOME": May 12, 8pm, Everygy Plaza

EVANS CARNIVAL – May 18-28, Vail Events Ctr.

5K HOME RUN – May 29, 8:30am-10am, Lawrence. Benefiting Family Promise Of Lawrence, this race is perfect for seasoned racers, walkers and those who've never run or even walked 3.1 miles. Grab your strollers and favorite pets on a leash – they're welcome, too! Sarah Plake, KSHB-TV 41 news anchor, will emcee the event. \$30 per person. Teams of four or more people can register to receive a \$5 discount per person for either the in-person or virtual event. Register at <https://runsignup.com/race/5k2022>. Contact info: maggie.kneidel; 785-764-9506 or maggie@lawrencefamilypromise.org

SOLE REASON GOLF TOURNAMENT – June 24, Cypress Ridge Golf Course. 8-8:30 AM registration, 9 AM shotgun. Solreason@yahoo.com or 785-338-2965 or register at solreason.net. Benefits children that need sneakers. Lots of prizes, silent auction.

TEE-PAC GOLF TOURNAMENT – July 21, Shawnee Country Club. A fundraiser for mainstage programming and capital improvements at the Topeka Performing Arts Center. The early bird registration price for a team of 4 is \$375, available until April 30th. On-line registration deadline is July 7th. Registration will include lunch, 18-hole course and golf cart. Individual person registration is \$100. Lunch sponsor Iron Rail Brewing. Also silent auction and 50/50 raffle. <https://www.topekaperformingarts.org/events/2023/teepac-golf-tournament>

3RD ANNUAL TOPEKA FALL FEST – Sep. 16, 10am-3pm, at the Great Overland Station. Live music, a craft & vendor fair, food trucks, and a health & fitness fair, plus games and activities for kids. Admission is free! Dozens of local businesses, non-profits & churches will operate games & activities such as Face Painting, Craft Stations, Inflatables, Petting Zoo, Cake Walk, Pumpkin Decorating and more! We'll have a Health & Fitness Fair sponsored by Topeka Emerald City Cosmo Club, featuring Health Screenings & Fitness Demonstrations, Information & Educational Booths, Health & Safety Products and more. For more info, email info@C5Alive.org

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA MEETING – Join other concerned individuals to pray and unite in action for Shawnee Co. and our Nation. For info about monthly meetings: 785-260-5659 or ks.cwfa.org.

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

TOPEKA LIONS CLUB – 2nd Mondays at Noon at Wings, Etc. Come at 11:30 to order from the menu. Guests welcome.

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

TOPEKA NEEDLEWORK GUILD – Every Mon. (except holidays) 9a-11a in the Menninger Room of the Topeka Public Library. Bring a project to work on as we share our needleworking skills and ideas. All are welcome to drop in.

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

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

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

NARVE (Nat'l Assn of Railroad Veteran Employee) – 2nd Tuesday each month at Grace Episcopal Church, 701 SW 8th Ave - 9:30AM. Enter on NW corner.

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

TOPEKA

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

DUPLICATE BRIDGE - Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:30PM at The Woman's Club of Topeka, 5221 SW West Dr. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett play duplicate bridge! It is great for your brain health. For additional information email janescola@hotmail.com.

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

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

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

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

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

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS - Every Wed., 10-45 Bible Study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. (1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. Free will donations accepted. For info: 785-224-8803 or vip@topekanorthoutreach.org.

SAFE STREETS MEETING - 1st Wed., 11:45am, Great Overland Station 266-4606. (no meeting in July)

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

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

TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB - 3rd Thursdays at 7pm at Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco. Social gathering, guests welcome. Topekaliions.org

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

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

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

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

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

A GOOD YARN CLUB - 2nd & 4th Sat., 9-11am, Wanamaker Rd Baptist Church, 2700 SW Wanamaker. Doing Good for Others: Knitting & Crocheting for Local Charities, free yarn, needles, hooks & patterns. All are welcome. Info: Anne, 785-272-9249 or kittens812@sbcglobal.net

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

MONTHLY SCORE MEETING - 1st Sat., 8-9:30am, Washburn Tech, 5724 SW Huntoon (enter east doors

facing Huntoon). No RSVP or fee is required. Small business owners are invited to a Breakfast Roundtable discussion with members of SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). Info: 234-3049.

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

HOPE AND HEALING ACADEMY harnesses the power of horses to transform the human spirit. They are expanding services to address the needs and experiences of first responders and members of the armed forces. For info, call 785-224-4232 or go to www.hopeandhealingacademy.com.

OVERCOMER'S OUTREACH ANONYMOUS RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP - Mondays 6:30-7:30pm, at Be Filled Of South Topeka, 200 Airport Rd, Bldg. 818 Suite 1. Led by Pastor Bill Ritchey. 785-817-2802

BINDING UP THE BROKEN HEARTED - Sessions offered for women who suffer from the after-effects of abortion. All the women who lead these sessions have had an abortion and have received healing from God's Word. For info, contact local Healing Hearts representative Shelly Bruch, First Southern Baptist Church at shelly.b@healinghearts.org. All communication is confidential and secure.

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

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

ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT - Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Kay Lyn at klCarlson20@cox.net.

AL-ANON is a support group for families and friends of alcoholics. For information on meetings in the Topeka area email ais-topeka@kansas-al-anon.org or call 785-215-1045. All correspondence is confidential

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

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

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

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

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

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP - 4th Mon. in Formation classroom at Most Pure Heart of Mary, 17th & Stone. Discussion starts 7pm; fellowship & refreshments 8:30. 785-272-4895

CAREGIVERS GROUP - Caring Hearts of Hope meet 2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 5:30-6:30pm at Highland Heights Christian Church. This group will root its encouragement in God's word and prayer as well as conversation and sharing and is open to all those who care for others with illnesses such as Alzheimers, dementia, cancer or other debilitating illnesses or injuries. For dates and info, go to "Weekly Class List" at www.highlandheightsscc.com or call

785-379-5642.

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

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

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

GRIEF SUPPORT - Sponsored by Heartland Hospice for those dealing with death or major loss:

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

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

"HEALING AFTER THE SUICIDE OF A LOVED ONE" ("HEAL") - or Survivors of Suicide" (SOS). 1st & 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, Zoom meeting 1st Tue, and in-person meetings 3rd Tue. at First Congregational Church, 1701 SW Collins. No cost to attend. Informal meetings. Contact: Topeka.heals@gmail.com or Sandy at 785-249-3792

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 PRAAYER 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 - First Thursday, 3pm, St Francis Hospital. Room 300 on 2nd floor. For info: Jim 785 806 3266

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. 816-453-0884 or 816-966-0927

Antisemitic incidents rose more than one-third last year,



The number of recorded antisemitic incidents in the United States increased by 36 percent last, reaching the highest level since tracking began in 1979. It also follows an uptick in attacks on churches.

The Anti-Defamation League, which tracks antisemitic violence or harassment against Jews in the United States, documented 3,697 incidents last year. The audit tracks "criminal and non-criminal incidents of harassment, vandalism and assault against individuals and groups as reported to ADL by victims, law enforcement, the media and partner organizations."

Serene Hudson, vice president of advocacy at Passages, an organization that facilitates trips for Christian students to the Holy Land, cited a January ADL report that found beliefs in anti-Jewish tropes have grown and basic knowledge about the Holocaust has declined.

"Passages is committed to continue standing by the Jewish people," she says. "This is an alarming moment for American Jews, who must think about increasing security for Jewish institutions or the safety of wearing a kippah or the Star of David in public."

Hudson urges Christians and others

to "advocate boldly for the well-being and safety of the Jewish community."

"In order to stem the tide of antisemitic perceptions, we must educate the church on the dark legacy of Christian antisemitism and Holocaust history and forge alliances with Jewish communities," she said

Antisemitic incidents occurred in all 50 states, but the areas with the highest numbers were New York (580), California (518), New Jersey (408), Florida (269) and Texas (211). These states account for 54 percent of the total incidents, according to the ADL. Most incidents at Jewish institutions consisted of harassment, but the ADL recorded 86 incidents of vandalism and nine assaults. Ninety-one bomb threats were made against Jewish institutions, the highest recorded since 2017.

In New York, many of the attacks were carried out by young Palestinian Arabs and the attackers are both men and women.

According to a survey released last month by the advocacy group the American Jewish Committee, 82 percent of American Jews agreed that antisemitism in the United States increased in recent years.

Send your calendar events to voice@cox.net

See complete calendar at metrovoiceneews.com

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Christians fear new Islamic caliphate in Nigeria

Nigerian Christians are gripped with terror after a wave of attacks followed Nigeria's presidential election. Faith leaders and politicians are now voicing concerns about an expanding Islamic caliphate.

More than 1,041 Christians have been murdered by Muslim extremists across Africa's most populous nation this year alone, according to Emeka Umeagbalasi, a respected criminologist and genocide researcher who is chairman of the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), an organization that tracks and reports genocide in Nigeria.

He says the attacks have been influenced by the outcome of the presidential election, which produced a Muslim president- and vice president-elect for the first time in the country's history.

"Seventy to 80 percent of the attacks occurred a week before the elections or shortly after," he says, with Boko Haram, Fulani Islamists and ISIS responsible for most of the carnage.

The Fulani are a large ethnic group in West Africa that claims



up to 20 million residents in Nigeria.

Militants who identify as members of the tribe include village-raiding semi-nomadic herders and kidnap-for-ransom bandit terrorists besieging the northwest and north-central regions. Attacks by the Fulani militants have taken six times more lives than Boko Haram in recent years, according to the HART Foundation, a UK-based nonprofit organization.

Fulani terrorists are responsible for more than half of the killings this year, including the deaths of more than 528 Christians as of April 10, Umeagbalasi said.

The attacks in Nigeria are genocidal against Christians, according to Solomon Maren, a member of the Nigerian House of Representatives.

Christians Massacred

President Muhammadu Buhari—who boasted of making "successes on security" in a tweet for Easter on April 7—has "turned a blind eye" to the attacks, which have surged in recent weeks, according to Maren, who represents a district in Plateau state in the Nigerian House.

"Consistently, we see Christians being massacred, and the president, who is the commander-in-chief of the armed

forces, is not doing anything to stop them," Maren told The Epoch Times.

On April 16, in one of the latest instances, a series of attacks were directed against five villages 30 miles southeast of Jos, the capital of Plateau state. The attacks claimed "several lives and properties" according to Plateau Gov. Simon Lalong.

For several hours, 200 to 300 terrorists armed with assault rifles swarmed the Christian communities on the boundaries of Mangu and Bokokos counties, burning houses and shooting at residents as they tried to flee, Alams told The Epoch Times.

A group of 20 to 30 civilian volunteers fighting with home-made single-shot guns in each community were only successful in delaying the terrorists to enable women and children to escape, he said.

"They were overwhelmed," Alams said, noting that a military task force located 10 miles away didn't arrive at the scene until six hours later.

Emmanuel Ogebe, leader of a Nigerian law group in the United States, has alleged that the recent declaration of the Muslim candidate of the All Progressives Congress as the winner of the Feb. 25 presidential elections in the country is the motivation for the surging attacks.

"Already, Muslims have been

celebrating an 'Islamic republic of Nigeria' because Tinubu [Bola Ahmed—the Nigerian president-elect] picked a fellow Muslim as vice president instead of a Christian as has been the practice," Ogebe told The Epoch Times in a text message.

The attacks often described by genocide deniers as clashes between sedentary farmers and seminomadic herders are aimed at imposing an Islamic

caliphate in Nigeria, Maren said. "When you look at the patterns of attacks, who the victims are, and the fact that they always drive out people and settle in their lands, you cannot rule out the fact that there is an agenda that is being carefully and systematically implemented," he said. Andrew Boyd, spokesman for Release International in the UK, agrees.

"The violence is often simplistically characterized as clashes between herders and farmers, ignoring the religious dimension

behind many of the attacks which have the characteristics of an Islamist jihad," he wrote in a statement mailed to The Epoch Times.

"Predominantly Christian villages have been overrun, church buildings destroyed, and pastors targeted for assassination. Villagers are being burned out of their homes."

Kyle Abts, president of the International Committee on Nigeria, has called for international sanctions to be imposed on Nigerian officials for encouraging killings.

"The world must hold the Nigeria government accountable for the egregious manner in which it is destroying its citizens and their democracy," Abts wrote to The Epoch Times in a text message.

"The Nigerian government lied to the world that they would be able to conduct a free and fair election and that the terrorism would stop. Neither happened and we have returned to violence, kidnappings, and killings."

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Former lesbian professor repents for using transgender pronouns

A former lesbian and self-proclaimed “tenured radical” professor is encouraging Christians not to use incorrect transgender pronouns.

“I have publicly sinned on the issue of transgender pronouns, which I have carelessly used in books and articles,” Rosaria Butterfield wrote in a blog post. “I have publicly sinned by advocating for the use of transgender pronouns in interviews. Why did I do this? I have a bunch of lame and backside-covering excuses. Here are a few. It was a carryover from my gay activist days. I wanted to meet everyone where they were and do nothing to provoke insult.”

Butterfield, who is now a homeschool mother and is married to a Reformed Presbyterian minister, noted that the Supreme Court decision to af-



firm same-sex marriage prompted her to realize that there is an unavoidable “collision course between LGBTQ+ and the Christian faith.”

She described her previous use of preferred pronouns as a sin against the

ninth commandment that encourages people to sin against the tenth commandment, as well as a denial of the “creation ordinance” and a hindrance to a believer’s progressive sanctification away from sin and toward righteous-

ness.

Watch her interview with the Family Research Council:

Rosaria Butterfield shares her story of leaving the LGBT lifestyle and why she no longer uses preferred pronouns and repents for having done so.

“Using transgendered pronouns isn’t a sin because the times have changed, and therefore, using transgendered pronouns isn’t sinful today but a morally acceptable option in 2012,” she wrote. “Sin is sin. The Bible defines this as sin. Sin does not lose its evil because of our good intentions or the personal sensibilities of others. But a renewed focus is no excuse for sin and no dodge for repentance, not for a real Christian. I repent.”

Butterfield, who wrote “The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert” as a

memoir about her conversion, shifted her attention later in the article toward self-professed Christian commentators, such as “New York Times” opinion columnist David French and Wheaton College clinical psychologist Mark Yarkhouse, who continue to use transgendered pronouns in the name of “being winsome,” yet thereby promote falsehood harmful to believers and unbelievers alike.

“They nod in the direction of traditional values but then swap biblical clarity for postmodern pluralism, thus burning to the ground any legitimate theological bridge to gospel grace,” she wrote. “Transgenderism is satanic. We who once promoted ‘pronoun hospitality’ lent false credibility to a wolfish theology that fails to protect the sheep. Instead, it eats them alive.”

CULTURE WAR

continued from page 15

no in other ways” option. Among all adults, 59 percent agreed America is racist; 53 percent of whites agreed, 69 percent of Latinos agreed, and 79 percent of black adults agreed. (I would note that the poll report refers to this demographic as “African-American,” but the article on NBCNews.com refers to them as “Blacks.”)

The survey asked respondents if they or a family member, friend, or coworker are transgender; 28 percent said yes and 72 percent said no. (This is likely to shock a lot of people in the Acela corridor.) Among those who know someone who is transgender, 67 percent agree with the statement, “We have not gone far enough in ending discrimination against transgender people.”

This is a poll designed to push people off the fence into one camp or another, and to see what they believe when the more neutral, consensus, or socially approved answers are taken off the table. It’s not the same as a push poll; it’s more of an examination of where people lean when the easy answers are removed.

It is also worth noting that Americans likely have some contradictory beliefs. Seventy percent of American adults agreed with the statement, “Our country needs to do more to increase social justice.” At the same time, 64 percent agreed with the statement, “Our country needs to reduce political correctness and cancel

culture.” Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed that they “want our country to become more tolerant and accepting of the L-G-B-T-Q community.” But in the same survey, 59 percent agreed that “we have gone too far promoting L-G-B-T-Q lifestyles in our culture.” Maybe they’re just tired of rainbow decorations in store windows every June.

One of the things I noted is that, so far in 2023, the nascent Republican presidential primary is being fought almost entirely on social or “culture war” issues. Sure, candidates have all kinds of policy proposals, but it’s the culture-war stuff that gets the crowds jazzed: What kind of gender-change procedures should be legal for those under age 18, if any; whether schools should inform parents about the pronouns their child prefers; whether those born men should compete in women’s sports; whether the Disney Corporation is attempting to indoctrinate the young fans of its pop-culture offerings; what’s being taught in schools and so-called “book banning” (requiring books in school libraries to be age-appropriate is not a ban); even the Dylan Mulvaney promotion by Bud Light.

The verdict of this cycle is painfully clear: Arguments about economics and foreign policy do not get the blood pumping. In fact, the best way to get people talking about economics or foreign policy is to wrap them up in aspects of the culture war — “Woke Inc.,” ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investing, contending that the U.S. mili-

tary “has now gone woke at the top levels, by trying to indoctrinate everyone down to the lowest ranking patriot,” as former president Trump put it.

At one of Trump’s recent rallies, Ted Nugent declared Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky a “homosexual weirdo.” Since the beginning of the war, some opponents of U.S. aid to Ukraine such as Donald Trump Jr. have showcased a 2014 video of Zelensky, once Ukraine’s most popular comedian, dancing in a parody of the Ukrainian band Kazaky, a male dance-pop act that often dances in leather and high heels.

This is akin to the U.S. electing Dana Carvey as president, and opponents contending he’s a crossdresser because of Church Lady sketches, or electing Weird Al Yankovic as president, and contending he’s a crossdresser because he dressed up as Lady Gaga for a parody video.

It’s a free country, and you can prioritize what you wish. But I would note that just because people don’t want to pay attention to non-culture-war issues doesn’t mean they go away.

During China’s 20th Party Congress last October, President Xi Jinping emphasized Beijing’s commitment to artificial-intelligence development and “intelligent warfare” — a reference to AI-enabled military systems. (Hey, we’re coming up on four years since something experimental from a Chinese government-run laboratory got loose and killed millions of people.) China is building sophisticated cyberweapons to “seize control” of enemy satellites, rendering

them useless for data signals or surveillance during wartime, according to that Discord leak. Pro-Russian hackers are making an ongoing cyberattack to take down air-traffic-control systems all across Europe. And the Pentagon admits that U.S. hypersonic weapons are not as advanced as those already developed by China.

In that war game on Capitol Hill conducted last week, the U.S. ran out of long-range missiles quickly, and “Beijing’s missiles and rockets cascade[d] down on Taiwan and on U.S. forces as far

away as Japan and Guam. Initial casualties include[d] hundreds, possibly thousands, of U.S. troops. Taiwan’s and China’s losses [were] even higher.” The U.S. economy tanked, and most of America’s allies chose to stay on the sidelines.

God forbid some scenario like that comes to pass. But if one does, people will ask if we spent too much time thinking about a culture war and not enough time thinking about the potential risk of an actual war.

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Investigation of Biden family finances widens

Concerns about President Biden and his family profiting from his position increased after members of Congress viewed relevant documents at the U.S. Treasury Department this week.

House Oversight Chairman James Comer, R-Ky., and other GOP members announced the visit following a breakthrough agreement allowing access to suspicious activity reports (SARs), which financial institutions can use to flag possible criminal behavior, for the Biden family and their associates' business transactions.

"Thousands of pages of financial records related to the Biden family, their companies and associates' business schemes were made available to members of the



House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, which confirms the importance of this investigation," Comer said. "The Biden family enterprise is centered on Joe Biden's political ca-

reer and connections, and it has generated an exorbitant amount of money for the Biden family.

"We've identified six additional members of Joe Biden's family who may have benefited from the

month that subpoenaed financial records dating back to Biden's time as vice president showed \$1 million in indirect payments from a Chinese energy company to Biden's adult son,

Biden family's businesses that we are investigating, bringing the total number of those involved or benefiting to nine."

Multiple members of the Biden family already are known to be of interest to GOP investigators.

Comer announced last

Hunter Biden; brother, James Biden; daughter-in-law, Hallie Biden; and an unknown "Biden," adding fuel to concerns about influence peddling and business schemes.

Separately, federal prosecutors are investigating Hunter Biden over his foreign business dealings in countries such as China and Ukraine, tax affairs and more. Though Hunter Biden has said he expects to be cleared of wrongdoing, Republicans have raised concerns about influence peddling, especially any that may include the president, spurred in part by findings on an abandoned laptop.

Only Republicans visited the Treasury Department this week. Democrats, who have been heavily critical of the Biden probe, did not join their GOP colleagues but do have access to the same SARs documents.

Jews returning to Israel fulfills biblical prophecies, leader says

Jews from around the world are fulfilling biblical prophecy by returning to Israel.

"It's very monumental to see how this organization that my father dreamed about, that people said would never happen, would never succeed, has outlived him," Yael Eckstein, CEO of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews says. "And really become the leading philanthropic organization in Israel and the leading bridge-building organization between Christians and Jews, which is what he dreamed about, what he prayed for."

Over the past year, the organization has also helped feed, clothe and rescue Jews fleeing the horrors of Russia's deadly invasion of Ukraine. It has helped get people out of Ukraine, navigating the complexities of doing so even for those who don't have passports or paper work.

"It's seeing that unique impact that the fellowship is able to make, especially during times of crisis, but also seeing God's hand on a regular basis," she said. "And fulfilling biblical prophecy, bringing Jews home from all four corners of the earth, from Arab countries, from across the former Soviet Union — that when the fellowship, every day, greets flights in Israel of Jewish people who are persecuted, facing antisemitism, facing poverty and war, and we're able to bring them home."

2023 marks the 73rd anniversary of Israel enacting the Law of Return, allowing anyone who is Jewish to immigrate to Israel and



obtain citizenship. The law is popular among Israeli Jews with 98% supporting the continuation of the practice.

The issue of fulfilling prophecy might stand out to Christians, especially as end-times prophecy often gets a great deal of attention. The establishment of the state of Israel in

1948 often is seen as a major fulfillment of eschatological events.

"In 1948, Israel was recognized as a sovereign state and this, too, has ramifications for the student of scripture," GotQuestions.org noted. "God promised Abram that his posterity would have Canaan as 'an everlasting possession' (Genesis

17:8), and Ezekiel prophesied a physical and spiritual resuscitation of Israel (Ezekiel 37)."

Ezekiel 37 is seen as prophesying that the Jewish people will return to Israel, with 1948 serving as a benchmark in that fulfillment timeline. "I think what's so incredible in our generation is that so many Christians have gone back to studying their roots," Eckstein said. "We know in the New Testament it says that the Christians are grafted onto this rich olive tree of Israel."

Eckstein said the "modern state of Israel is nothing short of prophetic," explaining the connection she sees between 1948 and the current regathering of Jewish people from all over the world. "We see that happening every day," she said. "The prophecies say that the children will be filling the streets of Jerusalem with laughter once again; that's happening."



Strong, Stylish Spring Home Upgrades

Springtime is a perfect opportunity for homeowners to begin planning renovations to enhance the interior and exterior of their living space. Because of its strong performance capabilities, low maintenance and design flexibility, brick is a popular building material choice when looking to improve or refresh your home in time for warm-weather hosting season.

Often selected for its functional benefits, brick is available in a wide array of colors, textures and sizes that can match varying design styles, from modern to traditional and almost everything between. If you're considering adding brick to your home's aesthetic, consider these five projects to tackle this spring from the experts at Glen-Gery, one of the largest brick and stone manufacturers in North America.

Basement or patio bar – As homeowners spend more time at home, they often look to maximize livable space. One way to take advantage of unused living space is building a basement or patio bar, which provides an area for entertaining. Using an exposed brick wall can help designate the bar area and separate it from the rest of the basement, or lining a bar counter with brick can create a rustic contrast against the bar's seating.

Fireplace – To change the look and



feel of a room almost instantly, you can use brick to give a fireplace a facelift or make it a focal point of your home. Available in a variety of colors and textures, Glen-Gery's diverse, premium portfolio of more than 600 brick and stone products can elevate your living room's style in a big way and create a more inviting area to share with family and friends. An outdoor fireplace is another option for extending livable space in a cozy way that can be used throughout the year.

Accent wall – Create a statement in or outside your home with a brick accent wall. Accent walls can help bring color, texture and beauty to homes by breaking up the monotony of mono-

chromatic color or decor, creating visual interest and dimension. While brick in a running bond pattern is expected, you can spice up rooms with an unexpected bond pattern like a stacked bond for modern appeal or herringbone for a rustic look.

Kitchen backsplash – One of the most overlooked areas of kitchen design is the backsplash. While its job is to protect your kitchen walls from the never-ending assault of kitchen splatters, there's no reason it can't look good, too. Brick backsplashes can accommodate most home designs and styles thanks to the versatility of shapes, colors, finishes and sizes available.

Black or white glazed brick works well with more modern kitchens while irregular brick containing an abundance of texture and a messy mortar application can complete rustic farmhouse kitchens. An option like Glen-Gery's virtual design tool, Picture Perfect, can help you visualize projects in your home to see what fits your style and needs.

Brick skirt – For added curb appeal, consider adding a brick skirt around the foundation of your home. Given its resilient, durable and energy-efficient qualities, brick can help provide better insulation and protection while also adding visual appeal to the exterior of your home through texture, color and contrast. The skirting can also continue through to the front porch floor and steps, helping balance out the elevation of your home.

For more inspiration for your next home renovation project, visit glengery.com.

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entertainment

Big George Foreman movie: Fame, tragedy, triumph, second chances

Most know George Foreman as an Olympic gold medalist, twice World Heavyweight Boxing Champion, TV grill pitchman, and philanthropist. But a near-death experience forever altered his life's trajectory. Sony's new biopic conveys his tragedies and triumphs, with inspiration for anyone who ever needed a second chance.

Big George Foreman stars Khris Davis (Judas and the Black Messiah) as Foreman and Academy Award-winner Forest Whitaker (The Last King of Scotland) as Foreman's trainer and mentor Doc Broadus.

Foreman quips that he received his first punch in the 1940s "when the doctor slapped my behind." His memoir says the '50s brought his first thrown punches, the '60s Olympic gold, the '70s his world heavyweight championship, the '80s his unexpected boxing return, the '90s his stunning second world heavyweight championship at age 45, and the new millennium his "King of the Grills" appellation.

Rags to riches resets

As the film vividly portrays, his life has been rags to riches to resets. In his impoverished youth an often absent, alcoholic father and sparse meals taught him to value scraps. Sometimes family dinner was one hamburger divided eight ways, and lunch a mayonnaise sandwich.

He frequently skipped school, learning pugilism through street fighting. Hatred and anger fueled his rage. "Poverty produces a feeling of hopelessness," he recalls. Mugging and theft became routine.

He craved love and acceptance. When riches grew, he flaunted his possessions.

Killer instinct

In the ring, he "wanted to hurt" his opponents: "I viewed them as animals to be hunted," not as humans; "they were the enemy," he recalls. "I'd say to myself, I'm going to kill him." The film mixes realistic, pounding boxing action with character insights.

Foreman thought money could solve all his problems...until it couldn't. When his beloved nephew became seri-



ously comatose, George's name, fame and wealth couldn't cure the boy. His mother counseled, "Son, you're just going to have to pray."

"When someone tells you the only thing you can do is pray," he realized, "that's bad." He'd "never really prayed before.... I didn't believe in all that religious stuff." He "mocked" Bible readers, considering Christianity "boring...an escape for poor people and little old ladies." Desperate to save his nephew, he finally asked God to spare the boy and take his own life.

Near-death experience

The boy recovered. Empty and unfulfilled, George contemplated suicide. After a 1977 match, he blacked out in the dressing room and experienced "utter darkness," "the putrid smell of death," intense fear and "hopelessness."

He emerged from the brush with death believing that Jesus had suffered for him. "Jesus Christ is coming alive in me!" he suddenly shouted on the training table, astonishing his companions, using a name they "had only heard me use in profanity."

Foreman says his new faith brought joy, love, peace, contentment, and significance. Especially impressive was forgiveness overcoming revenge.

Forgiveness trumps revenge

George had previously considered hiring a hit man to kill Leroy, a former friend and employee who had swindled him by selling his house and treasured possessions. Now he sincerely forgave Leroy, who was astonished. George forgave his previous enemies and asked for forgiveness. He told friends and other

boxers his story: Muhammad Ali, Archie Moore, Joe Frazier, Sammy Davis Jr., and Marvin Gaye.

George became a pastor, speaking internationally about his life changes. His alcoholic father came to faith and stopped drinking. George founded a youth center to help troubled kids.

The film poignantly depicts that George has had his share of setbacks. His wife left him. He suffered bankruptcy from others' mismanagement but resumed boxing to pay the bills and fund his charity.

Turning tragedy to triumph

Turning tragedy to triumph is a life theme. An image of Ali standing in victory over a defeated Foreman reminds him that his disappointing failure – losing the heavyweight title – began his spiritual search. He and Ali became good friends. "All things work together for good to those who love God," Foreman affirms.

I suspect that anyone who's lost a spouse, or a job, or friends or money or popularity or opportunity will identify with George's story. I certainly can; I've lost them all. Big George Foreman should inspire folks to consider the boxer's hope-through-heartache outlook. I have a hunch that's his wish.

Rated PG-13 (USA) "for some sports violence." The movie hits theaters April 28 (USA).

—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

Jim Caviezel stars in new film about taking on global sex trafficking



"Sound of Freedom," a film about a man who devotes his life to rescuing victims of global sex traffickers, will be released by Angel Studios, Faithwire reported.

"Sound of Freedom" is a riveting film that shares the story of one man's heroic efforts to rescue children from human trafficking," said Neil Harmon, the company's CEO. "Through this powerful cinematic experience, we aim to amplify the growing movement to expose this heinous violation of human rights and inspire people to take action, helping their communities put an end to this modern-day slavery once and for all."

Jim Caviezel, 54, plays the role of federal agent Tim Ballard, who has been working in the dark world of child crimes for 12 years and is beginning to lose hope. But then he rescues a 7-year-old boy who was kidnapped, along with his sister, by brutal traffickers. When the boy asks Tim to find his sister, Tim discovers his life's mission — rescuing children from sex slavery, wherever they may be. Academy Award winner Mira Sorvino and Bill

Camp also star in the film.

Caviezel is best known for his role as Jesus in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of Christ." He also portrayed Luke in the film "Paul, Apostle of Christ." He once again is set to play Jesus in Gibson's highly anticipated sequel, "The Passion of the Christ: Resurrection." The movie will begin production late this spring, according to multiple reports. No release date for the film has been set.

Angel Studios has scored some impressive successes at the box office. Box Office Mojo reports that "His Only Son" has taken in more than \$5.5 million, right behind "John Wick: Chapter 4."

The family-friendly company behind the national distribution of "His Only Son" also has produced several hugely successful shows, including "The Chosen," "Dry Bar Comedy" and "The Wingfeather Saga." "The Chosen," the first-ever multi-season TV series about the life of Christ, was one of the company's first projects and has been viewed hundreds of millions of times worldwide.

Costing only \$250K, "His Only Son" earns \$11 million

The low-budget faith-based movie "His Only Son" has earned an impressive \$11 million since it opened two weeks ago. The Angel Studios biblical drama created by David Helling



tells the Old Testament story of Abraham, who was commanded by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac.

"His Only Son" recounts one of the most controversial moments in the Old Testament, when Abraham was commanded by God to sacrifice his son

Isaac on the mountain of Moriah," the official film synopsis says. "While traveling to the place of the sacrifice, alongside Isaac and two servants, Abraham is flooded with vivid memories from the years he and Sarah spent longing

■ Continued on next page



Oscar winner Hilary Swank stars in new film “Ordinary Angels”

Academy Award-winning actress Hilary Swank is set to star in “Ordinary Angels,” the next move from the Erwin brothers. It is scheduled for release on October 13.

The movie will tell the story of Sharon Stevens (Swank), a “fierce but struggling hairdresser in small-town Kentucky who discovers a renewed sense of purpose when she meets Ed Schmitt, a widower working hard to make ends meet for his two daughters,” according to Kingdom Story Co. “With his youngest daughter waiting for a liver transplant, Sharon sets her mind to helping the family and will move mountains to do it. What unfolds is the inspiring tale of faith, everyday miracles and ordinary angels.”

Swank, who is expecting twins, said she was drawn to the story “because it’s such a powerful reminder that angels reside everywhere among us.”

“And that faith, hope, grit and positivity are all powerful fuel for miracles,” she said. “It’s also a story about the power of organ donation, something incredibly near and dear to my heart. I couldn’t be more thrilled to be a part of this story

for the son they were promised — the son he must now lay upon the altar.”

The film was produced on a tiny budget of \$250,000. Advertising was done through a crowdfunding campaign in partnership with Angel Studios, which raised more than \$1.2 million for prints and advertising costs. Angel Studios said it was the first-ever crowdfunding film with a nationwide theatrical release.

“His Only Son” earned the No. 3 spot in its opening weekend behind “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves” and “John Wick: Chapter 4.” It was knocked out of the top five over Easter weekend because of the massive success of “The Super Mario Bros. Movie.”

and message.”

The 48-year-old actress won Oscars for her roles in “Boys Don’t Cry” and “Million Dollar Baby.” She also has received two Golden Globes, a Critics’ Choice Award, an Independent Spirit Award, a Gotham Tribute Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award.

“Ordinary Angels” is directed by Jon Gunn, written by Meg Tilly and Kelly Fremont Craig, and produced by Kingdom Story Co., the group behind hits including “I Can Only Imagine” and “Woodlawn.”

“Ordinary Angels” comes on the heels of the success of “Jesus Revolution,” which was released has grossed \$45.5 million since its release last month. Based on a true story, the film is set in the 1970s and chronicles the true story of a spiritual awakening among hippies in Southern California. The film’s Rotten Tomatoes audience score is 98 percent from more than 5,000 reviews, and it has also received an A+ CinemaScore. According to Collider, “Jesus Revolution” is Lionsgate’s highest-grossing post-pandemic film.

“His Only Son” is the little indie that could, a film made on a tiny budget by a director who went to film school on the G.I. Bill based on a story people have wrestled with for untold centuries,” said Jared Geesey, senior vice president of global distribution for Angel Studios. “Our investors believed in the project and crowdfunded the P and A so word could get out. This film was up against big studio films with serious marketing budgets, and yet this film continues to turn in incredible numbers.

“We believe that the audience is the future of this industry, and we have faith they’ll prove that over and over again with each new offering they choose to get behind.”

How ‘On A Wing And A Prayer’ succeeds in Hollywood

Amazon Studios’ new film “On a Wing and a Prayer” succeeds both as a faith-based film and mainstream inspirational drama, hopefully setting a new standard for faith-based representation in Hollywood.

The film follows passenger Doug White’s (Dennis Quaid) harrowing journey to safely land a plane and save his entire family from insurmountable danger after their pilot dies unexpectedly mid-flight.

Much has been said about the “faith-based film” industry. Christians feel underrepresented in Hollywood movies, so they’ve attempted over the past nearly 20 years to create an alternative “faith-based film industry” of their own. And while many continue to debate its virtues and flaws (including myself), there’s no denying the rise of quality and financial success with movies and TV shows like this year’s “Jesus Revolution” and third season of “The Chosen.”

Less has been said about Hollywood’s faltering attempts to make their own faith-based movies. Upon seeing the success of movies like “The Passion of The Christ” and “Facing The Giants,” Hollywood saw how much money can be made from the faith-based market and tried to get in on that. It’s had modest financial success with inspirational dramas like “Miracles from Heaven,” but otherwise these films — Biblical blockbusters and cheesy dramas — have produced financial disappointment and ire from Christians.

If the Christian film industry’s main problem is understanding faith but not filmmaking, Hollywood’s main problem is understanding filmmaking but not faith.

In pretty much every way, though, “On A Wing And A Prayer” sticks the landing (pun absolutely intended).

Unlike most faith-based dramas, this movie is actually really entertaining. Most faith-based films are all drama and tears, and where they do try to be funny, they fail.

The dialogue in “On a Wing and a Prayer” is funny and witty (and sometimes sexy in a family-friendly way), and the story moves at a brisk pace. The characters are likable, and their arcs throughout the story, while not terribly original, feel like the stories of real people. They wrestle with loss, family drama and faith the way real people do. Even when it’s predictable or corny, it still remains deeply entertaining.

The filmmaking is also refreshingly well-executed. The quick editing back



and forth between the different parties trying to save the plane and all the individual storylines keeps the drama from feeling repetitive. One particularly simple but still effective trick was a pan from Doug to someone else at the end and back, which served as an effective device for a “message” moment from a dead character without feeling overly cheesy in its presentation.

The acting is solid, with Quaid as the obvious standout, showing both deep likability and a compelling cocktail of stubborn determination and intense vulnerability that elevates the material. He’s now starred in multiple entries in this genre: “Soul Surfer” (also directed by Sean McNamara), “I Can Only Imagine,” “Blue Miracle” and the upcoming “Reagan” biopic. I think it’s safe to say he’s becoming faith-based drama royalty.

These elements may seem like bare minimum expectations for any movie — but this is the first movie in this genre that I can remember to nail it so effortlessly.

All this would be breaking new ground for faith-based dramas. But where it especially shines is in its portrayal of faith itself. Typically, Hollywood films water down the faith of the protagonists or make it clumsy and overbearing, but this film showed the main characters interacting with their faith in a way that was central to their lives while also feeling seamless and natural. Every moment of faith was connected to some emotion or experience that anyone could relate to, and the fact that they reacted to it with faith so naturally was simply a reflection of their values. Frankly, it reminded me a lot of my own family.

It seems to me the portrayal of faith in this movie is the kind of portrayal of faith that would resonate with believers without being offensive to

nonbelievers, and therefore something Hollywood could replicate into more movies. Faith is a huge part of a lot of people’s lives, and Hollywood’s typical silent erasure of that part of life is a kind of dishonesty. That dishonesty is part of why a separate faith-based industry was born in the first place.

There are a lot of touches that I could imagine becoming standard for the Hollywood faith-based melodrama going forward — for example, using mainstream beloved songs that talk about God or Jesus. “On a Wing and a Prayer” uses the classic rock song “Spirit in the Sky” and a cover of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah” very successfully.

Of course, the movie isn’t perfect. Some of the dialogue — particularly the faith-based dialogue — is on the nose and corny. (“Sometimes you just have to have faith in something you can’t see” stuck out as particularly clumsy.) The movie leans obnoxiously on the tired “bratty teenage daughter stuck on her phone” trope without any real nuance.

I and other Christian critics often complain about how the only faith-based movies are inspirational melodramas, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t a place for inspirational melodramas. They should just be good when they’re made — and “On a Wing and a Prayer” is one of the best. Hopefully filmmakers use it as a model to make many more like it.

“On a Wing and a Prayer” is available to stream on Amazon Prime Video.

—Joseph Holmes is an award-nominated filmmaker and culture critic living in New York City. He is co-host of the podcast “The Overthinkers” and its companion website theoverthinkersjournal.com, where he discusses art, culture and faith with his fellow overthinkers.

50+ Lifestyles

A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

Take These 6 Steps to Manage Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, affects nearly half of adults in the United States, and only about 1 in 4 with this condition have it under control, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hypertension can be dangerous and in many cases, fatal. In 2020, it was a primary or contributing cause of more than 670,000 deaths nationwide. Medical experts say that controlling your blood pressure is possible and it starts with having the right information.

“Nearly half of all American adults have high blood pressure, and many don’t even know it. High blood pressure is a ‘silent killer,’ often having no overt symptoms, but increases the likelihood of heart attack, stroke and other serious health risks. I urge you to know your numbers and make the simple lifestyle changes that can help you control your blood pressure and live a long and healthy life,” says Jack Resneck Jr., M.D., president of the American Medical Association (AMA).

To get on the right track, con-

sider these tips and insights from the AMA:

1. Know your numbers. Hypertension is diagnosed when your systolic blood pressure is greater than 130 mmHg or your average diastolic blood pressure is greater than 80 mmHg. Visit ManageYourBP.org to better understand your numbers.

2. Monitor blood pressure. Once you learn your blood pressure numbers, take and keep regular records using an at-home blood pressure monitor. For an accurate reading, the CDC says to sit with your back supported for 5 minutes before starting and wait at least 30 minutes after drinking or eating a meal. You should also avoid stimulants for at least 30 minutes beforehand, as the CDC says that smoking and drinking alcohol or caffeine can elevate your blood pressure. If you take medication for hypertension, measure your blood pressure before your dose. Share your numbers with your health care provider.

3. Eat right. Reduce your intake of processed foods, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Eat less red meat and processed meats, and add more plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and olive oil to your diet. Also, reduce your consumption of sugary beverages and drink more water instead. Drinking sugary beverages, even 100% fruit juices, is associated with a higher all-cause mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open.

4. Drink alcohol only in moderation. If consuming alcohol, do so in moderation as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans -- up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

5. Be more physically active. Do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity. Be sure to include a mix of cardiovascular exercise, strength training and flexibility. Obtain guidance from your doctor if you aren’t sure if it is safe for you to exercise.

6. Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing as little as 5 to 10 pounds may help lower



your blood pressure. Consult your doctor about safe ways to maintain a healthy weight.

“Unmanaged hypertension can have life-altering consequences,”

says Dr. Resneck. “The good news is that there are many ways you can take control of your blood pressure and your health.”

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Learn How to Protect Yourself from Medicare Fraud



More than 65 million people in the United States were enrolled in Medicare as of February 2023, with more people becoming eligible and enrolling each year. Anyone on Medicare is at risk of Medicare-related fraud, and the Medicare program continues to warn people to watch out for scammers who steal Medicare Numbers and other personal information to exploit beneficiaries' benefits.

Broadly speaking, Medicare fraud occurs when someone makes false claims for health care services, procedures and equipment to obtain Medicare payments. Medicare fraud costs taxpayers billions of dollars and puts the health and welfare of beneficiaries at risk.

"Anyone on Medicare can be a

target of Medicare fraud," said Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. "But there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones by using CMS' fraud tips to recognize and report potential scammers. Let's all work together to make sure you're not a victim of Medicare fraud."

How to Spot Medicare Scams

There are many types of Medicare scams, taking the form of unsolicited emails, phone calls, text messages, social media posts and phony websites. Scammers often claim to be from the Medicare office, an insurance company or a government office. They'll ask for

your personal and financial information, such as your Medicare or Social Security Number, so that they can submit false claims for payment.

Remember that Medicare will never call, text, email or contact you through social media asking for your Medicare Number.

How to Protect Yourself

You'll also need to know how to protect yourself from potential fraudsters. Remember to:

- Guard your Medicare Number just like your Social Security card and credit card
- Share your Medicare Number only with trusted health care providers
- Review your Medicare statements, watch for services billed that look suspicious and ask questions if something looks wrong

How to Report Scammers

Reporting Medicare fraud protects you and millions of other people with Medicare and those with disabilities. If you or someone you know have experienced Medicare fraud or suspect an offer you've received is a scam, report it as soon as possible.

To learn more about Medicare fraud, visit [Medicare.gov/fraud](https://www.medicare.gov/fraud). To report potential Medicare fraud, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-

800-633-4227) or report the scam at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov) to the Federal Trade Commission

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'Deep man of faith' Trent Dilfer relying on God's guidance as he takes over UAB football



The way new University of Alabama at Birmingham football coach Trent Dilfer tells it, the story of how he got into coaching begins at a church. It was October 2018.

"I'm at church one day," Dilfer told CBS Sports in a recent interview, "and I don't want to bang you over the head with the Bible, but I audibly hear the voice of God say, 'Quit saying no to Me.' And I am rocked."

After the service ended that day, Dilfer sat there trying to process what had happened. He had found plenty of success after retiring from a 13-year NFL career — working at ESPN for nine years and helping train the country's top quarterback prospects at the annual Elite 11 camp. Life was good. However, he was sure God was trying to tell him something.

"I'm a deep man of faith," he told CBS Sports. "I do believe the Holy Spirit lives within us and communicates with us. ... It was like a murmur in my ear on my right shoulder. And my whole body tingled. I was in a little church in Austin [Texas]. I actually stayed after [the service]. I was quiet, saying, 'What just happened to me?'"

Through conversations with his wife and daughters, Dilfer realized he missed being challenged. That led to the former Pro Bowler and Super

Bowl champion to become the head football coach at Lipscomb Academy, a private Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee.

Dilfer told CBS Sports that when he arrived at Lipscomb, the team consisted of 36 players. Six of them were lifting with PVC pipes. He had found exactly what he was looking for.

"I love things that are super hard," Dilfer told The Athletic in another recent interview. "Those are my two core values: Do hard things and be uncomfortable."

Lipscomb went 7-6 in Dilfer's first season in 2019, but lost only four games total from 2020-22, winning back-to-back D2-AA state championships. Dilfer's success at Lipscomb and NFL background caught the attention of some college programs, including his alma mater, Fresno State. He was announced as the seventh head coach in UAB history on Nov. 30.

Dilfer takes over for Bill Clark, who resigned due to health issues and led the Blazers to two Conference USA championships. Dilfer's task is not to rebuild the program as much as it is to elevate it with the school officially joining the American Athletic Conference on July 1. UAB will face defending national-champion Georgia in addition to a conference schedule that includes last season's Cotton

Tennessee's Hendon Hooker awaits NFL draft, aims to 'spread the Word of Jesus Christ'

On Thursday night in Kansas City, 31 names will be called, 31 childhood dreams will be realized and 31 lives will be changed forever in the first round of the 2023 NFL Draft. Former Tennessee quarterback Hendon Hooker hopes he's among them. (There aren't 32 picks — the total number of NFL teams — because Miami violated tampering rules.)

Hooker quarterbacked the No. 1 scoring offense in all of college football a season ago at 46.1 points per game. He led the Volunteers to an 11-2 record, including wins against Alabama and Clemson in the Orange Bowl.

In the process, he tossed 27 touchdowns and only two interceptions while completing 69.6% of his passes. For his efforts, he earned first-team All-SEC and SEC Player of the Year honors, and his name subsequently skyrocketed on many draft boards.

Some experts have Hooker ranked as the third-best quarterback available behind Bryce Young and C.J. Stroud, while others have him being selected near the end of the second round.

A possible reason for such diverse opinions on Hooker's potential as an NFL prospect is how his college career came to an end: limping off the field in a loss to South Carolina on Nov. 19 after an injury that was later revealed to be an ACL tear.

Although injury concerns swirl around the 25-year-old Hooker before this weekend's draft, Hooker himself is seeking to tune out the noise and rest in his firm foundation of faith in Christ.

"When I step onto the field, I'm not worried about anything because I'm really playing for an audience of One, and that's God," he said on Sports Spectrum's "Weekly Slant" in December 2021, following his first season at Tennessee after four at Virginia Tech.

"That's something that the guys in our Bible study and in our community

Bowl winner (Tulane) and Conference USA winner (University of Texas-San Antonio).

Speaking on the Sports Spectrum Podcast in 2019 shortly after accepting the job at Lipscomb, Dilfer explained how God led him to the school and discussed the responsibility he has as a leader of young men.

"I feel an incredible burden to make sure that I'm being changed daily, I'm being renewed daily, I'm



here at Tennessee, it's something that we pride ourselves in ... trying to play for an audience of One and not letting anything else — any outside obstacles — get in the way."

The Greensboro, North Carolina, native grew up attending church regularly with his parents and two siblings, yet it wasn't until college that he says his faith matured into what it is now. He attended Fellowship of Christian Athletes events while in school, prayed after practices and often encouraged teammates in one-on-one conversations about faith.

Hooker has also been known to share about his faith on Instagram and Twitter, where both of his bios state, "Giving him all the Glory."

In 2021, Hooker and his brother, Alston, released a faith-based comic book tailored toward young athletes called "The ABC's of Scripture for Athletes." It's filled with some of the brothers' favorite Bible passages.

"These few scriptures will give athletes or anyone a foundation of God's word to live in their hearts," the book's website reads. "We encourage you to read them repeatedly until they become an extension of your daily conversation as you pursue what you love."

being laser-like focused on allowing God to make sure I'm saying the right stuff," he said on the podcast.

That challenge is similar to one he's long felt as a father.

"I want to raise kids that are blessings from God. That's the bottom line," Dilfer said in the November 1998 edition of Sports Spectrum Magazine. "That's our goal as parents — to raise children who are blessings to God, who know Him personally,

Then in February 2022, Hooker was interviewed by the pastor of First Baptist Church in Morristown, Tennessee, Dean Haun. There, Hooker revealed that he and his brother were inspired to write the book because they wanted to see their young cousin grow in his own relationship with Christ.

Hooker also said that his dad taught him at a young age, through various youth-group games at their church, that "I can use the game to get the message out there and spread the Word of Jesus Christ."

As he said on the "Weekly Slant," "I feel like my time here at Tennessee has taught me that when you trust in God and you put the work in, then anything is possible, and that God will always have your back."

So as his NFL draft experience begins on Thursday, with uncertainty about where or even when he'll be picked, Hooker can find peace in the knowledge that his Heavenly Father will be with him every step of the way.

The first round of the draft is set to begin on Thursday at 8 p.m. ET. Rounds 2 and 3 will be on Friday, followed by Rounds 4-7 on Saturday

—sportspectrum.com

and who serve Him diligently throughout their life. The biggest people I want to be a witness to in my life are my kids. When they're asked about their dad they can say, 'Oh yeah, he played in the NFL,' but I want them to say first, 'He loves Jesus.' That's a great, great challenge."

Dilfer and UAB begin the 2023 season at home against North Carolina A&T on Aug. 31.

—sportspectrum.com

Aliyah Boston goes No. 1 in WNBA Draft to Indiana Fever: 'It's just a blessing from God'

There were no surprises at the top of the 2023 WNBA Draft on Monday night as the Indiana Fever took former South Carolina standout Aliyah Boston with the first overall pick, as expected. Boston, the unanimous 2021-22 National Player of the Year and a three-time Associated Press first-team All-American, became the second No. 1 pick in school history, joining Las Vegas Aces star A'ja Wilson (2018).

"It's just really special," Boston said. "I'm thankful, first, to God just for putting me in this position, but also thankful to everybody in Indiana, just because they saw something in me and I'm just ready to get there and get to work."

Boston's basketball career and faith journey began in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where she was raised in a Christian family. When she was 12, Boston and her older sister moved to Massachusetts and lived with their aunt to further their basketball careers.

In her interview Monday night with ESPN's Holly Rowe, Boston made sure to acknowledge the support she received from her parents as she chased her dream.

"My parents made a big sacrifice allowing my sister and I to move away from home at the age of 12 and 14," she told Rowe. "And so, to be able to see their hard work pay off, it's just a blessing from God."

Boston lost only nine games in her

four-year career at South Carolina, making the Final Four all three NCAA Tournaments she played in and winning the national championship in 2021-22. She averaged 13.0 points, 9.8 rebounds and 2.0 blocks last season, which unfortunately ended in the Final Four as Iowa denied the Gamecocks a chance to repeat as national champions and complete an undefeated season. Boston leaves college as a two-time Naismith Defensive Player of the Year and South Carolina's all-time leader in rebounds, while also ranking second in blocks and fifth in points.

Having accomplished just about everything she could at the college level, Boston chose to forgo her extra year of eligibility and enter the draft. She thanked God in her social media post announcing her decision to turn pro.

Boston joins a young Fever team that hasn't made the playoffs since 2016, but features a promising group of five players that logged at least 12 minutes per game as rookies last season. One of those players is Destanni Henderson, who was teammates with Boston at South Carolina.

This was the first time in franchise history Indiana had the top pick.

"There's just so many things," Fever general manager Lin Dunn said of Boston. "I can't even list everything. Just a tremendous person, great leadership skills. Just brings an enormous amount

of positive energy to our program, sends a message that we're serious about reestablishing the Indiana Fever as a championship-caliber program."

Talking to the media following South Carolina's loss to Iowa, Boston was asked whether she thought she would be able to impact the sport the way she has. If she was being honest, Boston replied, the answer was "no."

Then she pointed to her faith.

"God is good, you know? And He works," she said. "And I hope that all the little girls and boys that want to take pic-



tures with me can see God through me because He's the reason for all of this. No matter what happens, no matter how it happens, He is the reason for it all, and His plan is greater than ours."

Indiana's first preseason game is May 7, and the team begins the regular season at home against the Connecticut Sun on May 19.

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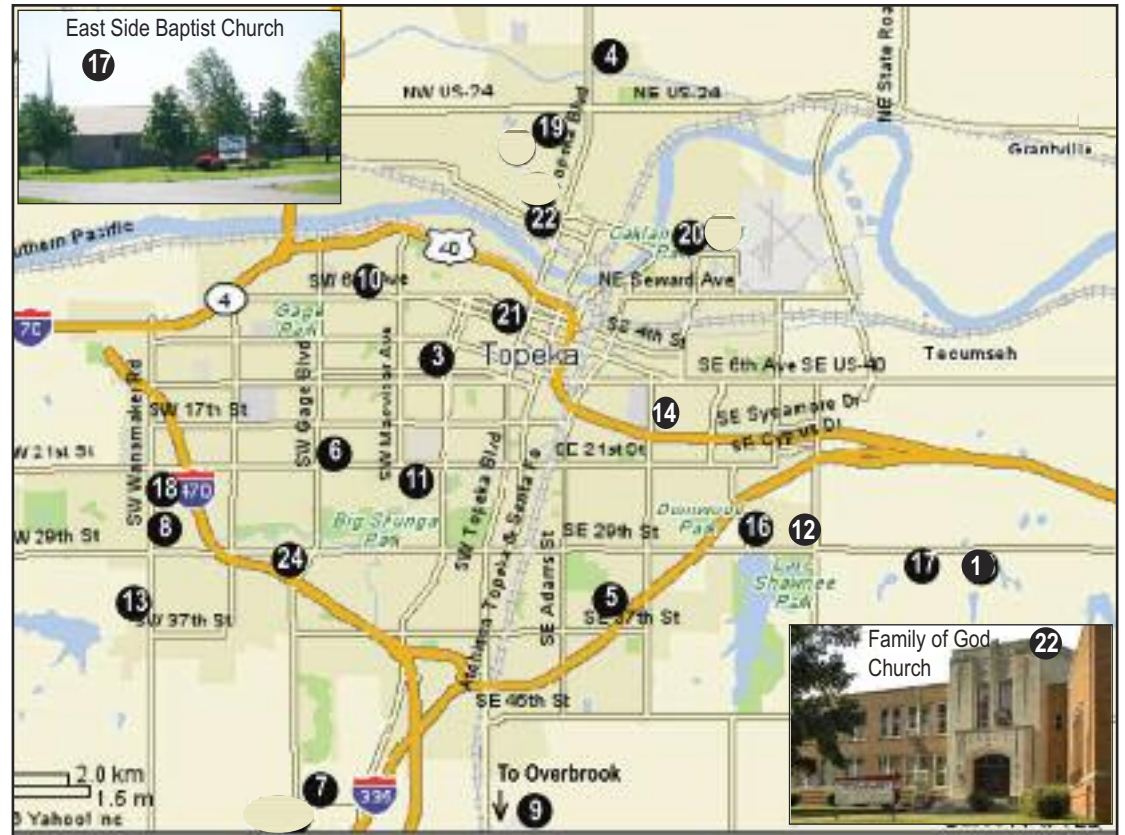
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WANTED: Retired veteran with Certification as EMT, CMA, CNA, and combat medic seeks house-sitting part-time for your aging parent. Call Marvin at 785-741-1929 for details.

ASSISTANT EDITOR – Research articles & event info online & on phone. Some writing & editing. Some updating files, social media posting, possibly some deliveries. Mostly work from home. Could be part-time hourly wages, or contract services basis. Call 785-640-6399

PART-TIME ACCOUNT REP – Work your own hours. Call on businesses, churches & non-profits about their advertisements in Metro Voice. Generous commission on all ads you place; no base. Voice@cox.net

VOLUNTEER WRITERS – Metro Voice needs volunteer writers or interns for church and community news around the area. Call 235-3340 or email voice@cox.net. Some perks. involved.

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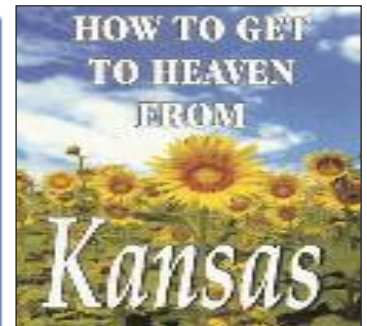
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More important than living in KANSAS is where you will live forever. Just as you would look at a map of KANSAS to find your way, so you must look at the Bible to find your way to heaven. The Bible says, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life,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

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

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

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

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

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