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Survey: Nearly half of Harvard freshmen don't believe in God



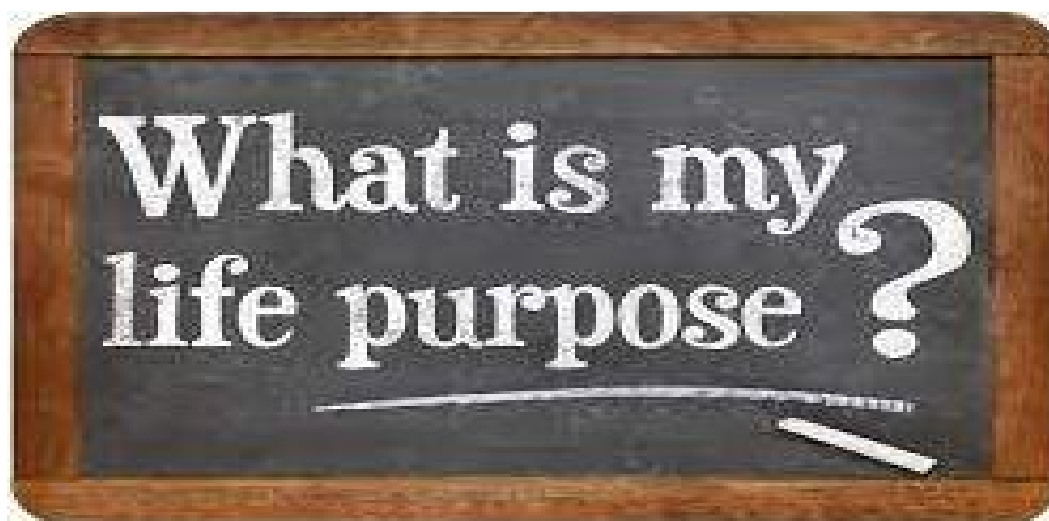
Nearly half of Harvard University freshmen don't believe in God, according to survey results from the student newspaper.

The Harvard Crimson recently released new results from its survey of the class of 2027. About half of freshmen completed the surveys.

The student newspaper found 24.6 percent of respondents said they were "agnostic" while 21.5 percent called themselves "atheist."

"A majority of freshmen identified as

■ Please see HARVARD page 3



Discover Your Destiny in 2024

In August of 1991, I began packing my things up and saying goodbye to family and friends to head east. Over a year earlier I had a life changing encounter with Jesus. Through that, He put a desire with me to go and tell others about Him. This led me to the place where I loaded up all my belongings and left my home in Colorado and traveled to Kansas. There I enrolled in college to begin

preparing for my new purpose in life. It was through that experience where I discovered my true destiny.

What about you, have you ever thought, "What is my destiny in life? What is my purpose?" Everyone's answer falls into three groups. The first group says, "You bet! I get up every day with a sense of purpose for myself." The second truthfully states, "Honestly, I have never considered

the question. I just do not think that way." And the third, "Me? I am totally lost. I have no idea where my life is headed."

No matter how you are wired, let me say that your life has a purpose. You are destined to achieve something beyond yourself. And as we begin a new year, I think it is finally time to discover what that is.

■ Please see DESTINY page 2

A new passenger train route may become a reality



Amtrak's Heartland Flyer, a daily passenger train, currently follows a 206-mile route from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Fort Worth, Texas. Under a proposal from the state of Kansas, Wichita and several other cities will be added along the line.

An influx of federal infrastructure dollars will allow Kansas cities to join a long-running train route between Oklahoma and Texas.

The concept of expanded passenger rail service in Wichita and Newton has been promoted by Kansas Department of Transportation officials and railway enthusiasts for years, but lost steam because of

■ Please see TRAIN page 2

Kansas has a new license plate, and a new vanity plate

According to authorities, the old license design with raised letters and numbers has deteriorated and is difficult to identify by law enforcement. After Kansans made a full about the new plate Gov. Kelly chose, she allowed us to vote on 5 designs she picked.

The winning design features the Kansas Statehouse dome within a cutout of the state and a yellow, white, and blue gradient background.

"Of all of these designs they kind

gave us I think they are variations of the one that was not awesome but that one is okay. I wish it said ad astra per aspera or ad astra instead of to the stars," says Kansas resident, Tyson Barnes.

"The Department of Revenue is pleased to have a design selected so it can promptly get to work issuing the updated plates," said David Harper, Director of the Kansas Department of Revenue's Division of Vehicles.

■ Please see PLATES page 3



Panasonic still moving forward with Kansas factory after pulling plans for Oklahoma

Oklahoma lawmakers offered Panasonic a \$698 million incentive package and funded \$145 million in site improvements for an electric vehicle battery plant near Tulsa. The company said the decision won't affect its promised \$4 billion factory in De Soto, Kansas.

A global company has once again decided against building an electric vehicle battery plant near Tulsa despite lawmakers offering a \$698 million incentive package and funding millions of dollars in site improvements at the company's request.

A Panasonic spokesperson said Friday that the company will not build a multibillion-dollar battery plant at Pryor's MidAmerica Industrial Park.

"In April 2023, we entered into an agreement with the state of Oklahoma to explore building a factory in the state, with the understanding that we would make a decision about whether or not to move forward at the end of that exploratory process," Panasonic



spokesperson Alison Klooster said in an email. "After careful deliberations, we have made the decision not to move forward with developing the site."

Klooster did not say why the company is no longer considering Pryor. Decisions about where to build new facilities are complex and based on a wide range of factors, she said.

Oklahoma officials have been trying to lure Panasonic to the state since at least 2022. Panasonic announced plans last year to locate a new, \$4 billion-dollar electric vehicle plant in Kansas, but the company then explored the possibility of building a second plant in Pryor that could have resulted in 3,500 new jobs.

State lawmakers put together a \$698 million incentive package for the company in an attempt to close the deal.

After Panasonic requested \$245 million in site work at the MidAmerica Industrial Park, lawmakers appropriated \$145 million this year for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to

fund facility upgrades and infrastructure and safety improvements at the park.

"The Legislature provided that which was requested by the executive branch to win the commitment of Project Ocean," House Speaker Charles McCall, R-Atoka, said in a statement, referencing the codename given to the proposed Panasonic project. "Oklahoma remains open for business, and we are excited about the economic development advancement we have recently seen in our state, including the 1,500 job manufacturing facility under construction by Enel."

House Appropriations and Budget Committee Chairman Kevin Wallace, R-Wellston, told lawmakers in May that if the Panasonic deal didn't pan out, funding improvements at the MidAmerica Industrial Park could help the state land a different mega-manufacturing project.

Senate President Pro Tem Greg Treat, R-Oklahoma City, said the incentive package offered to Panasonic required the company to hit certain spending and employment thresholds before receiving any funds.

In the spring, Treat formed a select legislative committee on business retention and economic development after the state found out it lost a bid to land a Volkswagen battery plant. The committee is exploring possible policy changes that could make Oklahoma more attractive to businesses.

"I'm thankful that Panasonic strongly considered Oklahoma," Treat said in a statement. "I also appreciated their objective global perspective on some of Oklahoma's strengths."

The Governor's Office expressed optimism that the state could still work with Panasonic on a future economic

development project.

"Panasonic had already chosen to go to Kansas last year," according to a statement from Gov. Kevin Stitt's office. "We would have been thrilled had both parties been able to sign an agreement earlier to expand here to Oklahoma when market conditions were stronger, but hopefully we can find another opportunity to partner with them in the future."

Oklahoma Department of Commerce spokesperson Becky Samples said the agency looks forward to future opportunities to partner with the company.

The agency also remains focused on other economic development endeavors, she said.

"We will continue to foster current opportunities in our pipeline and remain committed to helping our existing companies in Oklahoma grow and expand," she said in a statement.

Klooster, the Panasonic spokesperson, said the company's decision not to expand its operations to Oklahoma will not impact its electric vehicle battery operations in Kansas or Nevada.

-Kansas News Service

TRAIN

continued from page 1

scarce funding and low numbers of passengers.

Federal emphasis on railway infrastructure improvements has given the project the necessary funding for expansion. \$500,000 in federal funding has been allocated for the state's proposal to extend Amtrak's Heartland Flyer.

"In south-central Kansas and across the state, the call to renew this passenger rail route has been strong, unified and clear," said Kansas Department of Trans-

portation secretary Calvin Reed. "The result is another step forward in bringing this vital passenger rail line back into service."

The daily passenger train currently follows a 206-mile route, going from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Fort Worth, Texas. Kansas is set to join this route under the state's proposal, with new city stops added to the rail service in both Kansas and Oklahoma. New locations will include Edmond, Perry, Ponca City, Arkansas City, Wichita and Newton.

The plan will incorporate Wichita as a key stop along the route, a boost for the

city that hasn't had access to the national passenger rail network since 1979, when services were discontinued.

"The extension of the Heartland Flyer Passenger Rail would further connect Kansans to Oklahoma City and north-central Texas, unlocking business, educational, and cultural opportunities to Kansans and enabling our neighbors to the south to add to the Kansas economy," Kelly said. "One of Kansas' greatest assets is that we are in the center of the country, which is why my administration has supported rail projects like this to build on that strength."

KDOT partnered with Texas and

Oklahoma transportation departments to submit the proposal to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Funding comes from the Corridor Identification and Development Program, created as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The law authorized \$108 billion to support federal infrastructure programs, including bolstering U.S. passenger railway infrastructure.

The proposal is one of several railways chosen for upgrades. Nationwide, 15 existing rail routes have been given funding for upgrades, along with seven new high-speed rail projects, and 47 new routes given federal dollars to add or ex-

tend services.

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran praised the use of federal funding to extend the Heartland Flyer. He said the move would open up travel and economic opportunities for the state.

"Connecting communities across these three states will support new economic opportunities for businesses and provide a new means of travel along this busy route," Moran said. "I am pleased to see the first step in this corridor progress and look forward to seeing the project benefit Kansas and the region and look forward to continued dialogue with local stakeholders."

DESTINY

continued from page 1

One of the greatest men who ever lived, was Paul of Tarsus. He was a Jew, whom made his mark on the world in the first century. He was brilliant from his youth, with some believing he had an equivalent to a triple Ph.D.

He lived at the same time as Jesus of Nazareth, and began to make his mark on the world following Jesus' death and resurrection. In Paul's own words he wrote, "I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I

was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. (Galatians 1:13-14) To fellow Jewish observers, Paul was a success and living out his destiny.

However, in the middle of all his achievements, something began to change. It started with a man named Stephen, where Paul oversaw his martyrdom. This impacted him. However, Paul went on to do more and more evil until he came face-to-face with the one he was trying to destroy - Jesus. He confronted Paul, causing him to fall to the ground. Through this encounter Paul was trans-

formed and given a new direction in life. Years later after reflecting on that moment, he stated, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." (Philippians 3:7) To Paul, all of his success in Judaism meant nothing in relation to Jesus.

Paul's achievements early in life, was about "him." He was living out "his" purpose. But something changed when he turned to Jesus. He realized how God had a purpose for him that was different than his own. Paul humbled himself, accepted that purpose, and began to live it, counting everything before that moment, "as loss because of the surpassing

worth of knowing Christ Jesus..." (Phil 3:8)

What is true success? It is taking yourself before God and saying, "I want your purpose for my life, not my own." Or it is admitting, "I do not feel any sense of direction for my life at all. Show me your purpose O God." It is then letting God's plan for you, to become your plan.

And where does it all start? At the cross, where Jesus died. It is where you also must die, die to what you feel is your purpose or even lack of purpose. Then take up God's direction for you. It is at this intersection, where you will discover your divine destiny.

A prayer for you - Lord God, awaken people to their divine destiny. Let them wake up each day with a sense of holy purpose. Help them to find this at the foot of the cross, and begin a new life in you this day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

- Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Please share your comment at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com. Join Clint on a journey to Israel in November 2024. Go to greatawakenings.org for information.

Switching to whole grains a good choice for winter



When the weather turns cold, people naturally are drawn to comfort foods such as casseroles, soups, stews and noodle dishes, among others. They often are familiar foods that people may have grown up with or been introduced to at pivotal times in our lives. During the winter months, they can feel as much a part of the season as spiced apple cider and hot chocolate.

“At the same time, many comfort foods aren’t the healthiest of choices,” said Dr. Graham Colditz, associate director of prevention and control at Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. “They can

be high in unhealthy fats, calories and refined grains, and have few nutritious vegetables. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have them, but it may be healthiest to keep some dishes on the occasional list, rather than the regular menu.”

One easy way to give them a healthy boost while also keeping their familiar flavors is to use whole-grain noodles in place of standard refined-grain noodles. This can work well in stroganoffs, many casseroles, macaroni and cheese, lasagna, noodle soups, stir-fries with noodles and pasta dishes.

“While Americans are eating slightly more whole grains than before, most of us still fall short of

recommendations that at least half of the grains we eat each day be whole grains,” he said. “Switching out the types of noodles we use can be a simple way to work toward that goal.

There can be real benefits to doing so.

“Whole grains are filled with fiber and many other important nutrients that get removed to make refined grains, such as white flour and white rice,” Colditz said. “Studies show that eating more whole grains can lower the risk of weight gain, diabetes, heart disease and cancer — and may even help us live longer.”

He has several other tips to stay healthy while hibernating in the winter months.

“Winter can be very busy, between work, school, family and the holidays,” Colditz said. “However, it’s important that we continue to look after our own health and well-being even as our schedules fill up. This can mean getting enough sleep, taking time to relax, getting out for regular walks or other exercise and trying to keep up with healthy eating. Adding whole grains to some of our recipes can be one quick and easy way to work toward that.”

HARVARD

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either not at all religious or not very religious,” the student newspaper reported.

“Though 23 percent considered themselves somewhat religious, only 12 percent of respondents said they were very religious, with 2.5 percent identifying as extremely religious.”

Incoming students reported low lev-

els of sexual activity and drug use. “Nearly two-thirds, or 63.4 percent of respondents, said they had never had sex. For those who have had sex, 56.2 percent have had one sexual partner,” the student newspaper also reported.

PLATES

continued from page 1

The winning design received over 140,000 votes, 53% of the total.

The one Kansans really wanted, according to social media, was not allowed by Kelly.

“So many of the designs circulated on social media and sent to my office are beautiful works of art but, unfortunately, cannot be used given the strict public safety, printing, and branding guidelines the new license plate has to meet,” Governor Kelly said. “Kansans will notice that license plates across the country are moving to simpler designs — that’s because of law enforcement and license plate reader requirements. Our number one priority with these license plates is safety.”

However, BT Creative, who designed the plate Kansans liked on social media, has made them available as vanity plates. Ben Tegtmeier of BT Creative announced on Tuesday, Dec. 19, that it is in the process of printing vanity plates to hang on the front of Kansas vehicles with a design that recently went viral.

Tegtmeier, who created the design, noted that official vanity plate samples — sublimation printed on a metal blank — were created on Tuesday. Pricing, customization and ordering availability will come at a later date.

“If you can’t have it for the back, you



The new official Kansas license plate.

might as well have it for the front,” the Eudora-based graphic designer said.

Due to the overwhelming support, Tegtmeier also indicated that merchandise, including t-shirts, would soon be available.

Another big change in store is that you can’t keep your old license number, as the state is adding a digit to its alphanumeric system.

C5Alive Christmas Luncheon scheduled

The January C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 11th. It is an opportunity to meet and learn from other like-minded Christian business people.

The cost is \$15 for C5 members and first-time guests who RSVP, and \$17 at the door. Repeat guests pay \$20. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

“POWER” luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month and are open to the public. C5Alive is dedicated to creating Christian culture in the Capital City, by developing and uniting Christian Leadership in community businesses, non-profits and churches.

Upcoming luncheon dates are Feb. 8 and Mar. 14.

C5 also hosts other periodic events, including **EASTERFEST**, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Fun

Fair, held on N. Kansas Avenue and at **Great Overland Station** on the day before Easter. The 2024 date is March 30.

The 3rd Annual C5Alive **TOPEKA FALL FEST** was held 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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Letters from 'Daisy' - No. 7

Below is another article from someone I have been working with, who is going by the name, "Daisy". As I saw how writing was so healing for Daisy, I believe God has prompted me to help facilitate her being able to share her journey with you. I believe it will not only be healing for her, but also for many of those who read what she has to say. If you would want to write to Daisy, you can send your email to, shane@shanemjones.com, and I will forward it to her.

Shane M. Jones, LSCSW

Shane M. Jones & Associates, P.A.

#7... My story continues.

Hello everyone. I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving holiday with friends and family. Mine was uneventful and spent most of the time watching the Yellowstone marathon.

For me the toughest is yet to come. Christmas is a great holiday to celebrate as it is when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born, however for my family it's just another day. As far as the hustle and bustle of Christmas, fighting the crowds to get that one special gift, it's not something I look forward to. Of course, most people take at least the week of Christmas off as they may visit family and friends, and many will travel.

In my last article I had fallen off the "self-harm" wagon and started cutting my hands. Right now my right hand is in bad shape. My week of Thanksgiving was very long. I didn't see my therapist for nine days and as a result abused my right hand. I had prepared for the worst and as a result I mutilated my hand like

I never have before.

I spent a lot of time at home with my cat Smokie Jo. During that time, I unmercifully cut my hand. I would make myself cut at least twice a day. The stress of knowing I had to cut was immense. I always tried to get it over with so I might be able to enjoy at least part of the day. It didn't happen though because no matter how many times I would cut I would say "just one more time." By this past Monday my hand was pretty damaged. When I met with my therapist on the Monday of the next week, I did give him the item I had cut myself with.

Yesterday was the first time I hadn't cut in over a week. When you're used to cutting yourself at least twice a day, it's a shock to your system when you don't cut at all. I was missing the one thing that no person could give to me. The act of hurting myself had become my best friend. How could it not be? Hurting myself has become my main coping mechanism for decades. It had been there for me when no one else was. What I was cutting with would not let me down the way people had so much of my life. The day I was seeing my therapist I hadn't planned to cut but felt I needed to. However, what happened that very morning convinced me that it was time to stop my week of abuse. So, this past Monday when I saw my therapist, I couldn't even begin to tell him how the week had gone. No one can even begin to imagine unless you were with me



going through it day by day.

So it's been two days and I saw my therapist this morning. I'm not saying the desires are not there. I surrendered my "instrument of evil" to my therapist on that Monday. I don't know how to explain how much I abused my body in just a week. It's hard to talk about because it was some of the worst cutting I've done in 30 years of self-harm. That "instrument of evil" I will never use again. It left some nasty cuts and left behind a trail of scar tissue.

I'm going to be honest. With Christmas days away from now and my therapist takes his time off, I'm terrified that I'll do something similar. Going from therapy three times a week to no contact for twelve days may not seem like much to you but it is a lifetime to me. My right hand has a lot of healing to do. I just pray that when Christmas comes, I handle it better.

I'm just taking it day by day. Sometimes it's even minute to minute. I'm not saying I don't have the urge to cut. It's always on my mind. It's always there and I'll probably fight the urge the rest of my life. However, I do try to distract myself in a variety of ways when I do get that urge to cut. Anywhere from watching a funny movie, coloring in my many coloring books to physically leaving where I am at.

All through this I never stopped praying. God was with me even when I was skinning my hand. It reminds me of Isaiah 43:2 "when you go through deep waters I will be there for you." He was. He has been and will continue to do so.

More to come...

-Daisy

Many pastors still hurting in the wake of pandemic



Andrew McQuitty, pastor emeritus of Irving Bible Church. Photo: Irving Bible.

Although the pandemic is over, the human toll on pastors is still being felt.

"At the height of the pandemic, we were losing up to 1,500 pastors a month in this country," said Andrew McQuitty, pastor emeritus of Irving Bible Church in Irving, Texas, and founder of the pastor support ministry the Kaleo Collective. "Their churches were locked down. And these are mostly pastors out in the hinterlands. They're not in metropolitan areas where they have a lot of peer communities. When they got locked down, they had no people coming to church. Therefore, they had no money flowing in. They had no encouragement, and they were just withering on the vine."

McQuitty, who retired from being a senior pastor in 2019 after more than 30 years of service, talked about how, during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the already challenging job of pastor was made harder. He said he felt "really guilty" about retiring the year before the pandemic began, which led him to start his ministry. Another factor, he said, was the "remembrance of my peers that kept me

going here in Dallas for 30 years" that helped him out when he was a senior pastor.

McQuitty said he and other prominent pastors in Dallas-Fort Worth used to get together once a month for support and camaraderie, and he wanted to create that for other pastors.

"And I thought, that's all I want to do," he said. "I want to find a way to facilitate guys getting together in peer communities where they can deal with soul-care issues and leadership best practices, where they can become a band of brothers who have enduring not just relationships, but friendships."

He contrasted secular leaders and church leaders, noting that the latter are more likely to have to make spiritual and political decisions for those who follow them, not just policy and financial decisions. "I just think that the pressure of all that is just too much," he said. "There is too much demanded of pastors today than what their training and experience has prepared them for."

McQuitty's remarks and his ministry come at a time when churches in the United States are experiencing concerns about pastoral succession, because the average age of clergy has been increasing in recent years. According to a recent study from the Barna Group, as of last year, the average age for a Protestant pastor in the United States was 52, while only 16 percent of Protestant pastors were younger than 40.

There's been a sharp increase in pastor suicides since the beginning of the pandemic

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A USDA program gives a second chance to food that stores won't sell



Over 100 billion pounds of food goes to waste every year in America. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm to Food Bank is trying to cut down on that waste by connecting local farmers and food pantries, but its future depends on how much funding is included for the program in the next farm bill.

Volunteers are packing up meals in the production hall at the Northern Illinois Food Bank — about an hour west of Chicago.

The majority of food banks across the country, including this one, report increased demand. In 2022, 13% of U.S. families said that they were food insecure at some point in the year.

"Right now we're working really

hard on our holiday meal box program, getting about 50,000 traditional holiday meals out our food pantries," said Jacob Lamplough, the food bank's interim director of food procurement and donor development manager.

Over the past few years, the Northern Illinois Food Bank has been able to provide a lot more local produce to residents. They've received 400,000 pounds of food that otherwise would have nowhere to go.

"The peaches are the big one, we've had apples, and then we've even had things like squash and a bunch of different peppers," he said.

That additional food has all been through Farm to Food Bank, a federally-funded program that's currently

in 28 states, including Illinois. It focuses on food farmers can't sell to supermarkets because it has a blemish, a weird shape or just isn't the right size. Before the program, such food often rotted away on farms, because there was no market for them.

How Farm to Food Bank works

Authorized through the 2018 farm bill, the Farm to Food Bank program has moved millions of pounds of surplus food. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture handed out more than \$7 million to state agencies for Farm to Food Bank projects, including in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Michigan.

Stacy Dean, deputy under secretary for the USDA's Food, Nutrition, & Consumer Services, said they still hope to spark interest in states that aren't participating, such as Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

"These are the bread baskets of our country," said Dean. "And if they're leaving food available, unharvested, that we can be using to feed vulnerable families, then let's work together to figure out a path forward."

The Farm to Food Bank program is funded through the farm bill, which comes up for reauthorization every five years. Deans said, this fall, funding briefly expired before the farm bill was extended for another year.

"I think Farm to Food Bank was particularly vulnerable," she said.

And funding in the next farm bill isn't guaranteed.

Why Illinois is taking it a step further

In Illinois, officials wanted stability for the program. So, earlier this year Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a law establishing a state-funded Farm to Food Bank initiative. That makes Illinois pretty unique among states who've utilized it.

Raghela Scavuzzo is the associate director of food systems development at the Illinois Farm Bureau. She said the state funding means the program will continue no matter what happens with the farm bill.

Apples from Rendleman Orchards in far southern Illinois. It's one of several farms taking part in the Farm to Food Bank program in Illinois.

Rendleman Orchards

Apples from Rendleman Orchards in far southern Illinois. It's one of several farms taking part in the Farm to Food Bank program in Illinois.

And she said that allows farmers to feel more stable and diversify their products.

"So maybe we were afraid to grow broccoli, because we didn't know the market was there. What happens if we can't move all of that or it's just not as pretty? Now we've created the secondary market to recover some of those potential losses," she said.

While farmers aren't paid full-price for the food, they're able to cover their costs including labor and transportation. And they don't have to see their food go to waste.

"We had a farm last week that was going to get hit by the frost with apples," said Scavuzzo. "We moved almost 10,000 pounds of apples off of their trees. It covered their labor, but that product would have just had nowhere to go if it hadn't been for

this project."

It's not that farmers didn't want to donate this food before Farm to Food Bank — Scavuzzo said there were just barriers in the way of getting it onto people's plates.

She said if they can secure both federal and state support for the program, it's a bonus. That means Farm to Food Bank can reach more farms and branch out further into other areas like protein and dairy.

What it looks like at the farm

Rendleman Orchards is one of more than a dozen farms participating in Illinois' program.

Wayne Sirles is the owner and manager of the orchards in far southern Illinois. He said, unfortunately, there are some fruits and vegetables that are more likely to go to waste.

"Very little processing takes place with zucchini or yellow squash as far as a secondary market for misshapen ones or blemished ones," he said. "A lot of times that produce could possibly get dumped."

Sirles says he's in regular contact with Feeding Illinois — the nonprofit that administered the federally-funded version of the program — about how much surplus he has and what the food banks need.

He collects food from five or six farms to make up a semi load that he can truck to warehouses and drop-off locations. With the help of those local farms, they sent out about a dozen semi truck-loads of produce this year.

"It's a win win situation, not just for the customers of the food bank, but also for the farmers themselves," Sirles said.

Peter Medlin is a reporter at WNIJ. This story was produced in partnership with Harvest Public Media, a collaboration of public media newsrooms in the Midwest. It reports on food systems, agriculture and rural issues.



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Erin

Dear Erin,

In a situation like this you need to do a basic business analysis. You've got to have a plan in place, and you've got to figure out the worst-case scenario. Part of this is determining whether you can survive if things fall apart. In this case, the worst case is that you can't get a renter, and the

house doesn't sell. It puts your family in jeopardy, so to me it's not an option.

Want my honest opinion? I think you've both got a case of house fever right now. The possibility I just mentioned isn't a rare occurrence. Lots of people have had the same idea, with the best of intentions, and still wound up in a big mess. I love real estate. I mean I really love real estate. And I've flipped more than a few houses in my day. But the particulars of this deal make me a little nervous. If you and your husband are willing to accept the possibility of things not working out like you planned—and the fact you might have to take additional jobs for an unknown length of time just to make ends meet—then it might be a play. But for me? Nope. I don't like putting myself into these kinds of situations.

When I was much younger, I was willing to do all kinds of dangerous stuff and ignore the risk. But going broke decades ago knocked that kind of thinking out of me in a hurry. Any deal that runs the risk of leaving you bankrupt, or the victim of a foreclosure, just isn't worth it, Erin.

— Dave

Top 10 Reasons Not to Plan for Retirement

By Ryan Shumaker
Smartvestor Pro at
The Retirement Team



You probably read or hear about some "Top Ten" list nearly every day, but take a moment to read this one. This list is different, and probably not the kind of list you'd expect a financial advisor to write.

Reason #10: "It's too expensive" Being penny wise and dollar foolish isn't necessarily a great idea. There are unfortunately far too many in the financial industry that are salespeople and not planners. A good financial advisor should bring far more value than any fees charged whether that is from better investment performance, tax reduction, Social Security maximization, or something else. At our firm we generally won't take on a client unless we believe we can bring over 3 times more value to them than whatever fees are charged. Sometimes the cheapest option can end up being the most expensive option if you're missing out on other planning opportunities.

Reason #9: "I'm too busy" I can't tell you how often I hear this excuse. So many people want to plan for a better retirement and future, but they don't have time. They think they'll take care of it tomorrow, or the day after that ... and before they know it, years have gone by. The best advice I can give is to stop procrastinating and start planning. My great grandfather use to have a saying that 'procrastination is suicide on the installment plan.' There's a lot of wisdom and truth in that saying, especially when it comes to finances, taxes, investments, and retirement planning.

Reason #8: "It's too soon" The notion that you shouldn't have to start planning for your retirement until it's almost time to retire is incorrect. The truth is, the sooner you start planning, the better chance you stand of having the kind of retirement you want. It's never too soon. If what you thought about your financial future turned out not to be true, when would you want to know about it? As soon as possible so you can make simple and easy corrections, or later when it's not as simple or easy? Often if you're failing to plan, you're planning to fail.

Reason #7: "It's too late" So what if you're already near or in retirement? Does that mean all is lost and whatever you've got is what you're stuck with? Is it now too late to do anything about it? Certainly not. If you're unsure of what your options are, speak to a profes-

sional. Even if you've already retired, it's important to consider how you're receiving income, how long it will last, how much in taxes you're paying, and whether your investments are still the most suitable for this new phase of life. It's never too late to make improvements; but the longer you wait, the more costly avoiding taking corrective action can become.

Reason #6: "I don't need to" I've heard this excuse many times and it always baffles me. Many people think that because they've been diligent about contributing to a retirement account, they're all set. While saving for retirement is good, you also need a plan for income distribution once you enter retirement. The front 9 of this golf course is very different from the back 9. Are you certain that what you're saving will be enough? Have you considered your distribution plan? What about taxes? What about inflation? Are you sure your money is best positioned to create an ever increasing income to offset ever increasing prices? There may be other, better options for you and it quite likely would prove worthwhile to look into them.

Reason #5: "My finances are a mess" This is all the more reason to seek out an advisor who can help you sort through and understand your assets. Perhaps you have several 401(k)s from former employers scattered across several companies, a couple of savings accounts, a trust from a deceased relative, and some stocks that your parents bought in your name when you were younger. A hodgepodge of accounts like this can be confusing and feel overwhelming, but leaving it as is won't improve the situation. Consider speaking with someone who can look at your complete financial picture, help you to understand it, and help you to develop a plan to simplify it.

Reason #4: "The Government will take care of me" The bottom line is this: If you think the government is going to take care of you then you're likely not going to live the lifestyle in retirement you'd like.

Reason #3: "Between my savings and my 401(k), I'll be fine" Saving for retirement is one thing, but creating a distribution plan is completely different. How will you use that money once you have it? And while you may think you'll have everything you're going to need, have you considered how much will be lost to taxes and inflation? There is over a 50% chance that a 65 year old couple in average health will have at least 1 partner live past age 92. Will your

assets last that long? If they won't, what then? It's a good idea to look ahead and have a plan for lifelong, increasing income and to account for lifelong potentially being very long.

Reason #2: "I don't want to think about it" With financial markets having a rocky last couple of years, many view the thought of discussing financial matters right now as unappealing. I can certainly understand that, but ignoring the problem isn't going to make it go away. Having a good, solid, well constructed plan and portfolio can alleviate the pressures and anxiety a volatile market can bring, particularly if that plan ensures you have the income you want and need regardless of what is going on with the economy, stock market, and elections.

Reason #1: "I don't know how" If you knew everything there was to know about financial planning, you'd probably be writing articles like this instead of reading them. While it is possible to do everything on your own, that generally results in poorer outcomes. The first time you do something like build a deck, drive a car, or ride a bike, is it usually the best? You only get one retirement and the reality is struggling through it one time alone will likely result in many expensive learning experiences along the way. Working with a financial advisor that has seen and helped hundreds through the process can prevent you from making first timer's mistakes. If you're putting off retirement planning because you don't know how, then you need to speak with someone who does.

Don't let one of these top excuses prevent you from reaching your full financial potential. Retirement is supposed to be about going out and making memories, not worrying or stressing. The sooner you get started optimizing a plan, likely the sooner you can start living the retirement you want.

Other great articles can be seen at RetireTopeka.com/blog. Ryan can be contacted at 785-228-0222 or RetireTopeka.com

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

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How to Pass Along a Tradition of Giving to Your Children

By Jim Hanna

As an advisor, I often receive questions from my clients who want to help pass along a tradition of giving. If you're looking to impart financial values to your children, here are some ideas on how you can open their eyes to the gift of giving.

Talk about why you give. Help your child understand the importance of giving to others in need. Talk early and often about why sharing your knowledge, abilities, possessions or wealth matters to you. Instilling a culture of giving in your family is a process, not a one-time event. Remember to embrace the joy of giving, doing your best not to make giving back feel like a homework assignment or chore.

Find causes your child cares about. Your child is more likely to develop a habit of giving back when he or she is passionate about the cause. Start by brainstorming the possibilities of who your child can help, such as their classmates, animals, the environment or individuals experiencing hunger – and encourage them to think about ways they can be of assistance. Do they love to bake or meet new people? Do they enjoy music or caring for animals? Next, help your child choose one or two charities whose missions



Hanna

reflect their interests. Involve older children in the search and vetting process, teaching them how to have confidence that a charity is doing its best to help the cause.

Give and volunteer together. When your children see you volunteering your time, talent and treasure, they see your values at work. Find ways to involve your children in your own giving. With the holiday season in full swing, consider volunteering or purchasing gifts for another family together. Your children will learn first-hand how rewarding giving to others can feel, and you'll have the bonus of creating family memories to cherish, too.

Encourage disciplined saving. Kids need to learn how to manage their own money in order to become responsible givers as they grow older. When your children get an allowance, or otherwise receive money, they can practice making responsible choices. Introduce the idea of “save, share and spend” — setting aside a portion of their money for the future, a portion to help others and a portion for fun spending.

Create a family foundation. Consider establishing a foundation to fund causes you care about. Formalizing your giving in this way can create ongoing opportunities for you and your children to make a lasting impact on the community. Talk to your

financial advisor for advice regarding establishing a foundation and leaving a legacy of service to the next generation.

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. in Topeka KS. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for over 25 years.

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“I placed my son for adoption 20 years ago. Words can’t describe what I felt when we met.”

At the age of 15, I became pregnant and chose life and adoption to give my son the life I never had and the family he deserved.

Even before I was pregnant, I knew that adoption was an act of love and found it fascinating how someone could become a parent because of the selfless act of someone else. After finding out I was pregnant and realizing I could not parent my child in my situation even if I wanted to, I decided to make the most out of the situation.

My whole world was collapsing. The cocky young girl that thought she was invincible was gone.

My religion looked down on pregnancy out of wedlock. And I knew what I had to do even in the midst of despair. I knew I could never offer my son what was rightfully his, a life full of opportunities. A home where both mom and dad wanted him.

My parents never supported my decision, because in my culture that is considered child abandonment. You never leave one of your kind behind.



But I went ahead with the adoption process and stuck to it even though the father and half of my family didn’t support it. I knew it in my heart it had to be this way.

The day of the adoption came. I found myself holding my baby, filled with confusion, indecision, and doubting myself — about to sign all my

rights away to someone I hardly knew but who wanted a son so desperately. I had to step back and pray, because I could not physically sign the papers in the state of confusion and despair I was in.

I gave my baby to my sister and walked to another room.

Praying was hard. The voices in my head were so loud I could not get a sentence out. But I persisted, and finally... there was peace in my soul. I knew right then and there this was going to change lives — not only mine but the adoptive parents’... and most importantly, my son’s life.

I went ahead and signed the papers without hesitation. I kissed my baby boy one last time, and walked to the adoptive mother and father anxiously awaiting their son. As I passed my baby to her, I could see and feel the joy in her as tears ran down her cheeks and she trembled ecstatically. Then, just as she said, “He’s just like in my dreams!” my world collapsed.

The evident contrast of pain and joy was in that room. The pain of loss for one mother and the joy of another.

Just like in life, there is an opposite to everything. We must experience both pain and joy in life to know what real happiness is.

For years, letters and pictures held this hole in my chest ever so present. And I watched him grow away from me, but was happy of the decision to

choose to give him more.

A month ago — almost 21 years later — I decided to reach out to him, and to my surprise he wanted to meet me. He wanted to know more about me, to learn about this part of him he knew about, but truly had no idea about.

This past weekend, I met him at the airport and was able to hug him, kiss him, and caress his hair... just like I did 21 years ago. Time had passed by, but my love had never diminished. I was whole again! We talked for hours!

He thanked me for the life I gave him and for the sacrifice I made so he could be the man he is today. Words cannot describe the joy I felt being around him and reconnecting with him.

There is love and only love when you choose life and adoption. There’s the opportunity for lifelong bonds and relationships. “Ends are not bad things, they just mean that something else is about to begin.” Mine has just begun!

— Elisa Fucci | Guest Columnist

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Annual Rally and March for Life to be held in Topeka January 24



Kansans for Life will hold the annual Rally and March for Life in Topeka on January 24. The day will be full of events including an inter-denominational worship service and a rally on the south steps of the State Capitol Building.

The event is a reminder that even with the overturning of Roe V. Wade, much work is now needed state-by-state. KFL says they hope the event will "inspire our state legislators to stand boldly for life as they begin their legislative session."

Schedule of events:

9:00 – 11:30AM: Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC) — Catholic Ignite event with pro-life speakers followed by Catholic Mass

10:30 – 11:45AM: Memorial Hall — Non-denominational prayer and worship service in Memorial Hall Auditorium

11:30AM – 2:30PM: Hungry? Stop by the Mater Dei-Assumption church anytime from 11:30AM to 2:30PM for a free-will-offering lunch located in Rossiter Hall,

lower level.

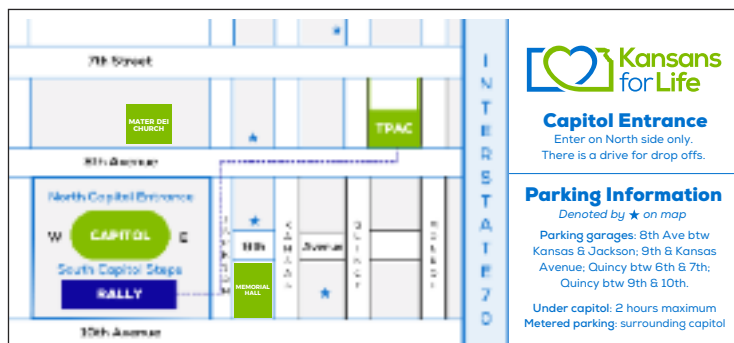
12PM: Pro-lifers will march from TPAC and Memorial Hall to the steps of the State Capitol. Bring your smiles and energy!

12:15 – 1:15PM: Rally for Life on south steps of state Capitol. Speakers will be announced soon! If you haven't yet met with your legislators, taken a tour, or watched the legislature in action, you can do so after the rally.

For more information, visit www.kfl.org, or follow the Facebook event.

After the April 2023 vote creating a right to abortion in the Kansas Constitution, the Topeka Rally for Life may be more important than ever.

"Take the next step with us in your commitment as an advocate for pro-life values. There's nothing to fear. We'll equip you with everything you need to carry key pro-life messages to your elected representatives and senators. Together we'll show our movement continues to be a powerful voice for the voiceless!" the organization says on its website.



Rally & MARCH for LIFE!



Wednesday, Jan. 24 Kansas State Capitol

9am-11:30am Registration

10:30-11:45am Non-Denominational Prayer Service

11:30-2:30pm Lunch any time Mater Dei-
Assumption Church, lower level

12 Noon March to Capitol from TPAC

12:15pm Rally, souths steps of Capitol

In addition to the March and Rally, events include pro-life educational booths, capitol tours, visiting legislators, and attending general legislative sessions and committees.

Join us for this
Kansas tradition!



For info visit KFL.ORG

Thousands more people are now traveling to Kansas for abortions

In the first half of 2023, nearly two-thirds of people getting abortions in Kansas traveled from out-of-state, according to new data from the Guttmacher Institute.

Eighty-one out of every 100 patients who go to the Trust Women clinic for an abortion have crossed state lines to get there. An average of 54 are from Texas, 21 are from Oklahoma and six are from another state that doesn't border Kansas, clinic officials say.

"Our clinic receives an average of 3,000 to 4,000 phone calls a day," said Zachary Gingrich-Gaylord, the Wichita clinic's communications director. "We have capacity for around 40 to 50 appointments per clinic day."

The estimates reinforce new research that shows the extent to which Kansas continues to be a significant abortion access point for people living in states with abortion bans.

In the first half of 2023, 65% of abortion patients in Kansas traveled here from outside the state — the second-highest percentage of any state in the country, according to the analysis from the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights. Researchers estimated that 3,700 more people traveled to Kansas for an abortion over the first six months of 2023 compared with a similar period in 2020.

That rise is part of a nationwide surge in abortion-related travel. In the first six months of 2023, 92,100 Americans traveled outside their home state for abortions — more than double the number from 2020.

"Nearly 1 in 5 patients are now traveling out-of-state for abortion care," said Kimya Forouzan, principal state policy associate with the Guttmacher Institute. "In 2020, it was about 1 in 10."

The study counted abortions provided within the formal health care system. It's the first to comprehensively analyze how the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 deci-



sion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, has begun to reshape interstate abortion travel.

Since the court's ruling, 14 states have banned abortion in nearly all cases. An additional seven have restricted abortion earlier in pregnancy than would have been permitted under *Roe*.

That sent patients across state lines in droves, often to places

like Illinois and New Mexico that have enacted "shield laws" to explicitly protect abortion patients from prosecution in other states.

But states like Kansas, North Carolina and Florida — where abortion remains legal, but restricted — also continue to field an influx of patients. In Kansas, abortion remains legal thanks to a 2022 vote that guaranteed the right to an abortion until the 22nd week of pregnancy. Several

Kansas restrictions, including a 24-hour waiting period, are on hold due to ongoing litigation.

Kansas borders Missouri and Oklahoma, which both have near-total abortion bans, and is close to other states with bans, like Texas and Arkansas. Wichita, in particular, is the nearest place to get an abortion for a region that is home to more than 1.8 million women of reproductive age, stretching as far south as

Houston.

The state's clinics have been undated. Planned Parenthood Great Plains, which operates three Kansas clinics, has previously reported only having capacity to see 10% to 15% of people who request appointments.

At Trust Women, Gingrich-Gaylord said the surge in demand from out-of-state patients has, consequently, made it much more difficult for Kansans to get abortions locally.

But people have been traveling to Kansas for abortions long before the *Dobbs* decision. During the Guttmacher study's 2020 reference period, 52% of abortion patients at Kansas clinics were from other states.

The Kansas health department reports that Missourians accounted for 3,201 — nearly half — of abortions in the state in 2020. That was during an era when Missouri had a 72-hour waiting period that made it one of the most difficult places in the country to get an abortion, leading many patients to seek abortions in Kansas, Illinois and Iowa.

—Kansas News Service

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Researchers are finding high levels of fertilizer in drinking water from rural Kansas wells

College students are testing private wells in south-central Kansas. The results are prompting families to install treatment systems to reduce nitrate levels.

Matthew Kirk has an unpleasant task: breaking the news to families about fertilizer chemicals in their drinking water.

The Kansas State University geology professor and his collaborators check for nitrogen pollution in the private wells that so many rural households depend on.

“Most of the well owners that I’ve talked to,” Kirk said, “this isn’t something that’s really on their radar.”

Researchers aim to test about 150 private wells in south-central Kansas in Barton, Stafford, Pawnee, Edwards, Rice, Pratt and Kiowa counties.

Students and scientists from K-State and Barton and Dodge City community colleges have teamed up to test about 90 so far.

Of those, half contain more nitrate than federal regulators allow in public water systems.

“Of those that didn’t,” Kirk said, “a lot of them were pretty darn close.”

One well contained more than five times as much nitrate as the federal government tolerates in public water supplies. That household has started treating the water before drinking it.

Drinking too much of these nitrogen compounds is dangerous for babies, and scientists are investigating suspected links to serious health conditions in children and adults, such as cancer.

Public water sources have to comply with federal standards, so utilities treat water to reduce nitrate levels when necessary.

But the same rules don’t apply to private wells, and people often don’t know what their groundwater contains.

Meanwhile, decade by decade, chemicals accumulate.

In 2016, K-State researchers checked water quality in south-



central Kansas wells that had also undergone testing 40 years earlier.

“We’re seeing nitrate increases that are massive,” Kirk said, adding that they are “among the biggest” when compared to long-term data from a similar national study.

The stakes for human health

Farms and livestock facilities rank among the top sources of the nitrogen pollution spilling into U.S. waterways and seeping into groundwater.

Above ground, scientists at the University of Kansas and elsewhere find this runoff makes the blue-green algae on many bodies of water increasingly toxic. These toxic blooms poison thirsty animals, spoil weekend plans at the lake and increase the cost of treating public drinking water.

Below ground, in aquifers, the effects of nitrogen call less attention.

Part of the problem: It’s not easy to collect large datasets of chemical analyses from private property. Not everyone tests their wells, and if they do, there’s no centralized database where members of the public and academic researchers can see what they found.

Barton Community College faculty, students and members of the public view information about nitrate levels in central Kansas groundwater during a presentation at the

college.

But public health experts continue to dig.

Scientists at the University of Nebraska Medical Center are investigating areas with troubling patterns of childhood cancer. They’re trying to understand whether groundwater contaminated with nitrate and atrazine (the second most common farm herbicide in the U.S.) could play a role.

Nitrate contamination contributes to blue baby syndrome. And scientists continue to scrutinize correlations with thyroid disease, premature births and more.

The questions about health effects leave some scientists uneasy with the Environmental Protection Agency’s current standard for nitrate levels in public water supplies.

The agency allows up to 10 milligrams of nitrate per liter of water.

In Kansas, an estimated 150,000 to 175,000 people use groundwater from private wells. No one knows how many of them treat it first.

Families that depend on private wells can consider several treatment options of varying effectiveness, with prices ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

Kirk often points well owners to a guide from the Minnesota Department of Health that explains each home water treatment approach and typical price tags.

What can people do?

In south-central Kansas, K-State’s analysis of water samples indicates that most of the nitrate pollution comes from chemical fertilizers sprayed onto cropland.

Despite advances in technology that help farmers apply the stuff more precisely, the contamination persists.

Wells in the area pull water from the Great Bend Prairie Aquifer.

On the whole, this groundwater is relatively close to the surface, and the ground above it is relatively permeable, Kirk said.

That means nitrates trickle into the aquifer faster than, say, into the Ogallala aquifer farther

west.

However, Kirk warns that nitrogen pollution could worsen in the Ogallala, too, even if it takes longer.

K-State researchers plan to share their well water data from south-central Kansas with the Kansas Geological Survey and the Kansas

Department of Health and Environment — agencies that monitor groundwater issues.

As some aquifers shrink, it could exacerbate the problem of nitrogen pollution by concentrating the chemicals in less water.

More people using private wells will either need to treat their water or drink troubling levels of nitrate.

Already, the EPA estimates that about one-tenth of the land in Kansas has groundwater with nitrate levels that exceed 10 milligrams per liter.

Meanwhile, small-town and rural water systems — which have tight budgets but must comply with the same federal nitrate limit that applies to larger public water sources — will struggle to handle this.

Haviland, with a population of less than 700 people, had to build a \$2.4 million treatment facility. This nearly tripled residents’ water bills.

“This is going to make it hard to sustain a lot of rural communities,” Kirk said, “who aren’t going to be able to afford a big, fancy treatment plant.”



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facebook.com/metrovoiceneews

Letter from an Arab to Muslims

Dear Arabs and Muslims,

I just back from Israel, and my life will never be the same.

I thought I was going to be met with pure racism, and then came to see that half of Israelis look just like me.

I thought I was going to be treated as a terrorist, but I was met with kindness and hospitality.

I thought I was going to experience apartheid, but I saw people from different backgrounds co-existing in peace together.

I thought I was going to see hatred against Muslims, but I met dozens of Muslims who love Israel and are proud of their country.

I thought I was going to meet angry Jews who hate all the goys and want to manipulate them, but I was met by a kind people who are struck by grief and terror.

Every street I visited in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv has a story of a terror attack. In every cafe I sat in, I was told "A Jew was stabbed right here", and "A shooting

happened on the other side of this street a few months ago."

Throughout this trip, I have been excommunicated by close-minded friends and family members. But you know what? It was worth it. Because I got to see Israel and experience the truth about the country that I was indoctrinated to hate for myself.

I wish that my friends and family members would also be able to visit Israel and see the beauty and hospitality of the country like I did. I was able to swiftly visit Israel because of my Swedish passport – I won't deny my privileges.

But I also have the elusive privilege of humanizing both Israelis and Arabs. I had the greatest privilege of meeting, and seeing and talking to Israelis, whom I had learned to hate since I was a child.

I am so happy to have cleansed the hatred out of my soul. I wish that the Muslim and Arab communities could do the same.

Nothing good can ever come out of hatred, violence, and terrorism. And now, having been in Israel, I cannot stress



enough how much it saddens me that my culture and my people have learned to hate this country and these people.

To all the Israelis who have opened their hearts and homes to me and showed me their beautiful country – thank you.

– Luai Ahmed. His bio says he is "a

30-year old author, content creator and columnist. I live, breathe, and fight for the country and continent that granted me freedom, peace, and freedom of expression, and I will do everything in my power to preserve them. Feel free to support me."

Reprinted from Twitter post. Photo: Twitter.

We Cannot Be Passive': Religious Liberty Expert's Warning

Nathan Berkeley, communications director and research coordinator for the Religious Freedom Institute, believes the religious liberty situation right now in America is a "mixed picture."

But while there are positives and negatives surrounding the trajectory, Berkeley said he's most alarmed by the way cultural elites see faithful Americans.

"What alarms me right now is the fact that there are so many cultural elites who view religious people, people of faith, Christians, and others not only as wrong on kind of core cultural issues, but as dangerous and even bigoted," he said. "And when you think about it like that, you can see why it's almost like ... throw the restraints off and attack these people because they're dangerous to society."

Seeing people of faith as "pernicious," he said, is "extremely dangerous" and creates a misunderstanding of what religious



liberty is supposed to be.

"It makes religious freedom seem like a license to harm as opposed to a fundamental human right that should be protected and upheld," Berkeley said.

Part of the problem is that this narrative becomes pervasive across multiple communication realms, mainly academia, entertainment, and media, he argued.

"We've seen these ideas in so many sectors ... in such a way that it pitches them in an adversarial way against people of faith," Berkeley said. "There's no way that elites across these many sectors could em-

brace these harmful ideologies without them eventually taking expression in law and being used in various political ways to the detriment of Christians and others."

Berkeley, who made his comments before the Supreme Court's most recent

rulings affirming religious liberty, said he has been encouraged of late by the high court's rulings vindicating religious liberty.

In a more general sense, he said there seems to be a recognition among Christians and people are faith more broadly that public faith dimensions are important and helpful to society.

"They're understanding that we cannot be passive ... in the face of things that are happening around us," Berkeley said. "And we need to bring to bear our convictions in the public square. This is a good thing."

In the end, he said religious liberty is the

cornerstone of any healthy society.

"It can serve as a fundamental kind of basis for other rights, freedom of speech and association and others," he said.

While there's a mixed but overall "good" picture for protecting religious liberty at the court level, Berkeley said there are still "cultural forces that are not going away anytime soon."

And with issues surrounding human sexuality, among other battles, intense First Amendment debates won't be quelled anytime soon.

"[The current] direction is entirely incompatible with what Christians understand to be true about marriage, sexuality, family formation, and all the rest," he said of culture. "There is going to continue to be real problems that we have to contend with and, and real pressure on religious freedom as a principle because that will be the principle that allows people of faith to continue to be full participants in our society, or they won't be full | faithwire.com-participants."

–By Billy Hollowell | faithwire.com

8 thoughts on being genuine friends with unbelievers

As a young believer, I learned from older believers that we were supposed to evangelize lost people—but do so from a distance so you're not stained by the relationship. I understand that thinking, especially when we're not yet spiritually mature enough to fight temptations that might come with those relationships. Godly wisdom is always in order.

On the other hand, I'm convinced we miss a lot if we never have genuine relationships with non-believers. Here's what I'm learning these days as the Lord deepens my burden for lost people:

Lost people know when we're treating them as "projects" over against just loving them as people created in God's image. They're generally not naïve. If they know they're only another "notch in our spiritual belt," they'll have little interest in our message.

These relationships remind me just how deeply caught in the bubble of Christianity I have been. My

world is sometimes quite narrowly focused on believers, and I'm caught in an unhealthy cocoon. So much have I tried to correct this problem that I wrote an upcoming Church Answers free e-book entitled, Lord, I'm Caught in the Bubble.

These friendships help me to realize the questions non-believers have. I've assumed their questions—and I'm learning I often assume wrongly. Sometimes I've been answering questions they're not asking; at other times, I've been forced to study and seek answers to questions that surprised me.

I've come face-to-face with non-believing doubts about the genuineness of the church. I've read about those questions, but that's different than talking with someone who genuinely thinks the church is hypocritical and judgmental. Those concerns, I've learned, are often overstated, but they're nevertheless real. Defensiveness on my part has seldom been the best answer.

These friendships have forced me to my knees much more than most relationships with believers. The Lord is increasingly breaking my heart over lost friends. I've spent more time in prayer and fasting on their behalf in the past few years than I did in many years prior.

They've also pushed me to rely on the Holy Spirit in the context of a friendship. I'm realizing how sensitive I must be in determining when to listen, when to speak, what to say, how to read eyes and hearts, when to push and when to back off. I mess it up when I just charge in without seeking the Spirit's guidance.

I've learned much about myself in these relationships. They've tested my willingness to be uncomfortable around people who think, talk, and act differently than I do. They've forced me to ask, "If I really believe what I say I believe about lostness and salvation, won't that change the way I live?" They've



pushed me to consider how much I am really willing to give up—including my life—for the sake of others who need Christ.

Frankly, I've realized that some non-believers are more fun to hang around than some believers are. At least in my experience, many lost people have no pretense about them. They're honest about their questions and doubts. And, they respect and care for someone who seriously seeks to connect with them, love them, live real faith in front of

them, and try to point them to Jesus. I want them to see there's joy in following Him.

What are your thoughts about building real friendships with non-believers?

—Chuck Lawless is Dean of Doctoral Studies and Vice-President of Spiritual Formation and Ministry Centers at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, NC, where he also serves as Professor of Evangelism and Missions.

New Year's Possibilities



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

Speaking Truth

The new year is an opportunity for a new start. I once heard about a man that regularly took a block of time in December to engage in planning and goal setting for the next year for his organization. The way our annual calendar is set up, it provides a vision for that. It is the end of the old and the beginning of the new. Not only do we see this concept in view of time, but in nature too. In our part of the globe, we are blessed to have four seasons. When fall and winter come, it is the end of the old. But when spring and summer

come, it is the beginning of the new. We see this concept in life itself. In a family, when great a grandparent has passed away there is sorrow in saying goodbye, but then later there is joy in welcoming a new little infant to the family. And we also see this in spiritual terms. For people outside of Jesus there is spiritual death and darkness, but once they are in Jesus, there is spiritual life and light. One writer from the Bible put it this way, "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God..." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

You may not realize it, but if you are outside of Jesus, you are living in the old. All that is in you is death and darkness. Though that sounds grim, it is true. And that may explain some things happening in your life and family right now. They are the consequences or by-prod-

ucts of it. We may try to "Instagram" our life to others, but we cannot escape the reality of our condition. No amount of busyness, noise, praise by others or positive self-talk can hide the truth. This is the old.

Jesus declared He is life and light. He is the one who can make all things new. He conquered death and darkness through His own death and rising again. For all who come to Him, He is willing to make new. But to receive the promise of being made new, there is a great cost. To receive what Jesus died to give you will cost your very life. What does that mean? It means you are no longer willing to put your desires, wants and needs above, beside or to the exclusion of God. It means that you deliberately choose to follow Jesus as your own Lord, King, Master and Ruler.

It is a new year, and the possi-



bility of a new life is waiting for you. The empty blood-stained cross of Jesus is what it took to bring you the chance for a new start. Commit all to Jesus as the first step toward transformation.

A prayer for you - Lord God, I pray you will make many new creations today. May people receive by faith the promise of newness you rose again to give them. I pray they would turn from their ways and give all they

are to you. There is no cost too great, compared to what you did on the cross for us. May they see that and humble themselves before you. 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.

IDF expands ground offensive into Gaza's central urban camps

Israeli forces on Tuesday expanded the ground campaign into urban refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip, and are continuing to fight in Khan Yunis in the south.

"The IDF forces are fighting in the Gaza Strip in Khan Yunis, and we have expanded the fighting to the area called the 'central camps,'" IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said during a press briefing on Tuesday night.

"We are operating in Khan Yunis with new methods and with a different force composition in the face of the challenge, and the same is true in the central camps. We will continue to adapt the operation, the method and the composition of the forces according to the operational needs," he continued.

On Tuesday, forces from the IDF's 36th Division launched an attack on terror infrastructure in the al-Bureij camp in central Gaza, which the army described as an "established Hamas terror nest."

During the operation, Israeli forces located a tunnel shaft leading to a wide underground route and a Hamas training complex containing many weapons.

With regard to Shejaia, Division 36 commander Brig. Gen. Dado Bar Khalifa said, "The fighting in Shejaia was difficult

and complex and we managed to achieve significant achievements during it. Shejaia will no longer be a terror center for Hamas."

"The IDF is not stopping," he continued. "Division 36 is moving to its tasks in the center camps, the fight against terrorism in the camps will be a fundamental move. The battalions of the center camps are currently meeting the strength of the IDF. They will cease to function as other battalions have ceased to function. We are crippling Hamas in the center of the Gaza Strip as well. All in order to meet the goals we set for ourselves."

The IDF said on Wednesday morning, the 82nd day of the war, that 200 terrorist targets were attacked over the past 24 hours across the Gaza Strip.

Ground and aerial forces combined to eliminate terror cells in the Shejaia area.

The IDF said that soldiers identified Hamas terrorists passing between buildings in the combat zone from which shots were fired at Israeli forces. Ground troops directed an Air Force aircraft to attack and eliminate the terrorists. The attack resulted in secondary explosions, indicating that the area was used as a base.

Furthermore, the Israeli Air Force was directed by ground troops to kill terror-

ists and destroy a weapons warehouse after two terrorists were spotted arriving there in a vehicle.

Also, in the Daraj and Tuffah areas of Gaza City, IDF tanks were directed by ground forces to kill a terrorist holding a short-range anti-tank missile before he could fire at the troops.

Naval forces overnight attacked terrorists who posed a threat to ground forces in Gaza and attacked Hamas targets, as part of assisting the activities of the 14th Brigade along the coastline.

Red alert warnings for incoming rocket fire were heard in the Gaza border community of Nahal Oz on Wednesday morning, breaking 16 hours of silence in southern Israel.

Terrorists in the Gaza Strip have fired more than 12,500 rockets at Israeli territory since the mass invasion of Oct. 7 when hordes of Hamas terrorists murdered, raped and pillaged their way across the northwestern Negev, killing 1,200 persons, mostly civilians, wounding thousands more and taking 240 hostages back to Gaza.

Three more soldiers killed in Gaza

The IDF released for publication on Wednesday morning the names of three more soldiers killed in action in the Gaza Strip, bringing the death toll since the



start of ground operations on Oct. 27 to 164 and the total military death toll since the war began on Oct. 7 to 498.

All three soldiers fell in battle on Tuesday night in the northern Gaza Strip.

They are: Lt. Yaron Eliezer Chitiz, 23, from Ra'anana; Staff Sgt. Itay Buton, 20, from Petah Tikva; and Staff Sgt. Efraim Jackman, 21, from Neve Daniel.

Netanyahu visits IDF Intelligence Unit #9900

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited IDF Intelligence Unit #9900 at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv on Tuesday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visiting IDF Intelligence Unit #9900 on Dec. 26 in Tel Aviv. Photo by

Haim Zach (GPO).

He was briefed on the IDF's intelligence-gathering technologies and viewed artificial intelligence capabilities allowing for a three-dimensional view of the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu also visited the "Space Center," which gathers intelligence via satellites.

"We have soldiers on the ground, sometimes underground, and we have eyes in the sky," the premier said.

"We say to the Hamas terrorists: We see you and we will reach you. We are continuing the war, and are intensifying the fighting in the southern Gaza Strip and other places. We will fight to the end, with the help of the most advanced technology."

A third of Arab Israelis see Oct. 7 massacre as in tune with Islamic values

The result was among the findings of a new poll carried out by the Center for Democratic Values and Institutions.

Palestinian Arabs celebrate the first night of the holy month of Ramadan in Jerusalem's Old City on March 23, 2023. Photo by Jamal Awad/Flash90. Palestinian Arabs celebrate the first night of the holy month of Ramadan in Jerusalem's Old City on March 23, 2023. Photo by Jamal Awad/Flash90.

One-third of Israel's Arab citizens disagree with Ra'am lawmaker Mansour Abbas's statement that Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre "does not reflect Arab society, the Palestinian people and the Islamic nation," according to a recent poll.

Thirty-three percent of all Arab Israelis surveyed disagreed with the statement while a further 11% "didn't know." Among Muslim Arabs only (separating out Druze and Christians) the number was larger still, with 34.5% disagreeing with the



statement and 12.5% answering "didn't know."

The poll was carried out between Nov. 27 and Dec. 4, 2023, with 538 men and women interviewed by telephone in Arabic. The maximum

sampling error was $\pm 4.31\%$ at a confidence level of 95%.

It was conducted by the Center for Democratic Values and Institutions (Arab Society in Israel Program) in

collaboration with the Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute.

The pollsters noted that "this was a statement by a political figure

[which] may have impacted certain responses."

The poll results, similar to those of a survey published in early December, indicate that a significant number of Arab Israelis harbor views that put them at odds with the country's values.

The earlier poll, conducted by Tel Aviv University, found that 32% of Arab Israelis do not believe that Hamas terrorists intentionally targeted women and children on Oct. 7.

The TAU poll also found that 44% of Arab Israelis did not feel that Israel's response to the Hamas attack was justified, while 38% believed that both Israel and Hamas share responsibility for the outbreak of war.

A total of 502 Israeli Arab citizens over 18 were surveyed. The Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation initiated the study.

According to the data, 21% of Arab Israelis think that Oct. 7 contributed to a solution to the Palestinian problem.



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Activities continue in NOTO during the winter

First Friday Art Walk continues throughout the winter months. Hours are 10 am to 9 pm. 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 street-side vendors. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

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

Make plans now to attend the NOTO Arts and Antiques Festival in March, featuring an array of workshops offered by local experts. Deadlines for applications to exhibit are in February.

The Annual Fiber Juried Show is also

coming up March 1-April 27 at NOTO Arts Center in the Morris Art Gallery.

For more event information visit explorenoto.org/.

More North Topeka events:

GARY'S BERRIES – SANTA'S ACRES– Nov. 24 through December, at 5991 17th Street, Grantville, KS 66429, off of Highway 24. Christmas characters such as Santa and the Grinch, nearly one million lights, plenty of food items (like fudge, donuts, kettle corn and more), shopping and more. Meet Santa. garysfarmfest.com or call (785) 246-0800.

NEW YEAR'S EVE WATCH NIGHT SERVICE - Dec. 31, 4pm, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

WOODSHED FLEA MARKET –

OPEN CALL FOR FIBER ART
Artist's Choice; Fiber Passion Project

Cash Awards. Submissions due January 9, 2024.

Annual Fiber Art Juried Exhibit
March 1 – April 27, 2024

DETAILS ONLINE AT:
<https://explorenoto.org/arts-center/gallery-and-ecolibital>

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Jan. 21, 10-3, Woodshed, 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Indoor & outdoor vendors.

SPEED DATING EVENT – Feb. 10, 7-12pm, Woodshed, 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Fantastic speeding dating event with food, refreshments, full bar open and soda drinks! Purchase Tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../the-woodshed-speed-dating...> 7-8pm: Meet people face to face without having to do it on an individual date format. This is a fun way to meet people even just as friends. 8 pm - 11:59 pm - Band - \$10 for band time. Option for time w/ a professional to help you with your online profile.

9th ANNUAL EASTERFEST: TOPEKA EASTER PARADE & FUN FAIR – Mar. 30, 10am-3pm, at Great Overland Station and on North Kansas Avenue. Topeka's annual Easter Parade will begin at 10am at Garfield Park and proceed south on Kansas Avenue to the tracks in NOTO. Egg Hunt begins right after the parade at the Great Overland Station. Food Trucks will be on hand and the Family Fun Fair, Vendor Market, and Cosmo's Health Fair will be 10-3, inside and outside Great Overland Station, including vendor booths, children's games, food, facepainting, inflatables, cake walk and more. Live music, gymnastics, ballet and other entertainment will be on hand. For info: Topeka Easter Parade on facebook, info@C5Alive.org or 640-6399.

SENIORS PITCH CLUB - Every Tuesday 1 pm at Garfield Community Center. First visit free then a dollar per visit for coffee and replacement cards

For more information visit <https://explorenoto.org>.

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

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS – Every Wed., 10:45 bible Study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd.

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The Area's Most Complete Guide to the Family-Friendly Events You Want to See!

the events calendar

FREE LISTINGS! E-mail your events to: Voice@cox.net; mail to Metro Voice, P.O. 5724, Topeka, KS 66605; fax to 785-235-3340 or enter online at metrovoiceneeds.com
Get your event **Highlighted in Blue** in print, our online calendar and promoted in social media for only \$29!

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 grandoprpy@gmail.com. GrandOttawaOpry.com

PICKIN' ON THE PRAIRIE BLUEGRASS JAM, every Sunday 1-3:00, Potwin Drug Store, Old Prairie Town, 785-215-6997 for info. Milkshake for the month of August is GIMME'S'MORE

JAM4DAN17 Jam For Dan – Jan. 12-14, Celtic Fox. Lots of Bands will participate

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

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 services 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: 2409 NE Division St. 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

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

L.O.L. "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

SENIOR ADULT EXERCISE CLASS – Tuesday's @ 10am, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Church: 785-266-3247. Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. Email: LakeNaz@aol.com

BIBLE STUDY: Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer – Monday's, starting Oct. 2, 6-8pm. This study is for men & women. Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Be sure to bring your study guide with you! Church: 785-266-3247. Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene.: LakeNaz@aol.com

ROOTED CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP: Colossians 2:6-7. Monday's 12-4pm. Cooking class for 4th graders & older at noon. Call the Church Office for more information. Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. Church: (785) 266-3247. Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene. LakeNaz@aol.com

NEW YEAR'S EVE WATCH NIGHT SERVICE – Dec. 31, 4pm, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

FAMILY LIFE PRESENTS: 'WEEKEND TO REMEMBER' – February 9-11, Overland Park Marriott. For everyone who is engaged or married! To register & pay: familylife.com/weekend-to-remember. Use the Group Name: LakeviewChurch. \$350/couple - (until 1/9/2024: \$300/couple), Discounted room rates: \$149/night. Friday: You came into marriage looking for a particular "happily ever after." But then your love met reality. We'll help you find the dream again. Saturday: Let's chat about what threatens your closeness,

how to pull closer through conflict, & tips for other areas of the married life. Sunday: For a marriage bigger than just "happily ever after." 40+ Years of Experience! 96% say it "greatly improved" their relationship. 100% satisfaction guarantee. If you don't like it, we'll refund your registration." Contact info: (785) 266-3247, Facebook: 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 nholn@tscpl.org

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

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

FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION – 4th Tue. thru 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.

OPEN INDOOR COURT PICKLEBALL – Sundays at 4pm, Berryton United Methodist Church (7010 SE Berryton Rd. All ages and abilities welcome.

SENIORS PITCH CLUB – Every Tuesday 1 pm at Garfield Community Center. First visit free then a dollar per visit for coffee and replacement cards .

BREAD BASKET FARMERS MARKET – Saturday's, 7:30am-1pm, inside West Ridge Mall .

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

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES – Outdoor events and activities. www.getoutdoorskansascity.com/calenda

170 CHRISTMAS TREES & ORNAMENT DISPLAY – Nov. 1-Jan. 1, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat., & 1-5pm Sun. at Territorial Capital Museum, 640 E. Woodson, Lecompton. Over 170 Christmas Trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme décor – including turn of the century and WW II era decorations, a barb-wire tree and feather trees. Also tour Constitution Hall, a National Landmark 785-887-6148. lecomptonkansascity.com

KNIGHTS OF LIGHTS – Nov. 24 - Dec. 31, 5:30-10pm, Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, KC RenFest grounds, Bonner Springs. Stroll through a Renaissance wonderland with lights, shopping, food, entertainment and fun. Visits with Santa, Mrs Claus and Barbie the Christmas Elf will captivate you and the sights, scents and sounds of the festivities will enchant you. <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/59351124/knights-of-lights-2023-bonner-springs-kansas-city-renaissance-festival>

TARC'S WINTER WONDERLAND – Nov. 22-Dec. 31, 6-9pm Mon-Wed; 6-10pm Thu-Sun. Lake Shawnee, 3435 SE East Edge Rd. View dazzling holiday light displays, featuring one million lights, while winding

BLEEDING KANSAS

PROGRAM SERIES 2024

CONSTITUTION HALL STATE HISTORIC SITE | HISTORIC LECOMPTON
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A series of talks and dramatic interpretations over the issue of slavery in Kansas and the nation, 1854 to 1865

- JANUARY 28** "Kansas Day" with David Toland, Kansas Lieutenant Governor and Kansas Secretary of Commerce, Patrick Zellner, Executive Director, Kansas Historical Society, Bodgens Jobs, Director, Kansas History, Aiden Najafabadi, student, Bishop Seabury Academy
- FEBRUARY 4** "Sitting on the Fence: Living in Bleeding Kansas Between the Factions" by Kendall D. Gott, retired senior professor, Central Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth and author, Book signing
- FEBRUARY 11** "John Brown, Man of Action" by Cindy Awever, Administrator, John Brown Museum, State Historic Site, Chautauque
- FEBRUARY 18** "A Monopoly on Misfortune: An Immigrant Regiment in the Crucible of Civil War" by Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan, Associate Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History, San Francisco State University, Book signing
- FEBRUARY 25** "Abolitionist of the Most Dangerous Kind: James Montgomery and His War on Slavery" Todd Aldrich, author and retired Kansas public school educator and David D. Schefer, author and retired Park Ranger, National Park Service, Book signing
- MARCH 5** The Lecompton Reenactors present "Bleeding Kansas" voices from Kansas Territorial characters: Uranus Nichols, John Brown, Jim Lane, Charles & Sam Robinson, David Ashjian, Sammie Jones, Marsha Taylor

KANSAS IN THE UNION!

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

Jan. 11, 11:30-1: "POWER" Luncheon

Join us to learn from and interact with other Christian business people, non-profit workers & church staff! Details on our Facebook page!

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

Save the Dates!

- Feb. 8: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Mar. 14: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Mar. 30: **EASTERFEST** at Great Overland Station!

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

through a 2-mile scenic drive. Advanced Tickets are available: TARC, 2701 SW Randolph. 785.506-8720. Winterwonderlandtopeka.com

LEARNERS SESSION - every Saturday morning 11-1, Sk8away, 815 SW Fairlawn. Free skate lessons by certified instructors. \$8 per person but an adult skates for free with paid child! sk8away.net, 785-272-0303, manager@sk8away.net

GARY'S BERRIES - SANTA'S ACRES - Nov. 24 through December, at 5991 17th Street, Grantville, KS 66429, off of Highway 24. Christmas characters such as Santa and the Grinch, nearly one million lights, plenty of food items (like fudge, donuts, kettle corn and more), shopping and more. Meet Santa. garysfarmfest.com or call (785) 246-0800.

CLINTON STATE PARK FIRST DAY HIKE - Jan. 1, 11am-1pm, 798 N 1415 Rd, Lawrence, KS. There is no better way to ring in the New Year than with a hike at your favorite park, on Prairieview Nature Trail. A casual hike through native grass fields along and up Bunker Hill that will give way to scenic views of Clinton State Park and the lake itself. Bring your family, friends, and pets (leashed)! This hike will be approximately 1.5 miles. Meet at Bob Mowery Meadows Disc Golf Course parking lot at 11 am. No vehicle permit required! It's a Free Entry Day! Non-perishables will be collected and donated to a Local Food Bank

JOY BISHOP'S BOOK LAUNCH - Jan. 6, 2-4pm, 4700 SW 17th St. Celebrate Joy's new book, My Gift To You. There will be short talk and reading by Joy, and questions. Autographed books will be available. This will be held inside Mt Hope's beautiful indoor chapel.

TOPEKA FARM SHOW - Jan. 9-11, Stormont Vail Events Center.

C5Alive "CHRISTMAS" LUNCHEON - Jan. 11, 11:30-1. See our Facebook page for details.

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

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

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

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

SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, Feb. 8, 11:30-1.

JAM4DAN17 Jam For Dan - Jan. 12-14, Celtic Fox. Lots of Bands will participate

TOPEKA BRIDAL FAIR - Jan. 20, 10-4, Stormont Vail Events Center. Get your tickets at bridalfair.com

WOODSHED FLEA MARKET - Jan. 21, 10-3, Woodshed, 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Indoor & outdoor vendors.

RALLY AND MARCH FOR LIFE - Jan. 24, 8am-2:30pm, Capitol Building, Downtown Topeka. Pro-life speakers and meetings with legislators. For more info: kfl@kfl.org

BLEEDING KANSAS - Sundays from Jan. 28-Mar. 3, 2pm, Constitution Hall Historic Site, 319 Elmore, Leocompton. A series of talks and dramatic interpretations on the violent territorial and civil war history of Kansas 1854-1865. Actors will portray Kansans from this turbulent era. Adm: \$5 adults.

LAST SUNDAY FREE BREAKFAST BUFFET - Jan. 28, 8am - 12pm, Philip Billard Post 1650, 3110 SW Huntoon. Free pancakes & sausage, eggs, coffee, juice, and sometimes biscuits & gravy. Donations accepted and will go to helping vets in the Topeka area.

"GUS" GUSTAFSON SUPPER AND SILENT AUCTION - Feb. 3, 5-7pm, Grace Community Church, 310 E. Eighth St, Overbrook. International speaker who has turned tragedy into triumph shares a humorous, heartwarming message. Pancake and Sausage supper served at 5pm. Freewill donation benefits Community Christian School in Overbrook.

SPEED DATING EVENT - Feb. 10, 7-12pm, Woodshed, 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Fantastic speeding dating event with food, refreshments, full bar open and soda drinks! Purchase Tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../the-woodshed-speed-dating...> 7-8pm: Meet people face to face without having to do it on an individual date format. This is a fun way to meet people even just as friends. 8 pm - 11:59 pm - Band - \$10 for band time. Option for time w/ a professional to help you with your online profile.

KANSAS LAWN & GARDEN SHOW - Feb. 16-18. Stormont Vail Event Center

9th ANNUAL EASTERFEST: TOPEKA EASTER PARADE & FUN FAIR - Mar. 30, 10am-3pm, at Great Overland Station and on North Kansas Avenue. Topeka's annual Easter Parade will begin at 10am at Garfield Park and proceed south on Kansas Avenue to the tracks in NOTO. Egg Hunt begins right after the parade at the Great Overland Station. Food Trucks will be on hand and the Family Fun Fair, Vendor Market, and Cosmo's Health Fair will be 10-3, inside and outside Great Overland Station, including vendor booths, children's games, food, facepainting, inflatables, cake walk and more. Live music, gymnastics, ballet and other entertainment will be on hand. For info: Topeka Easter Parade on facebook, info@C5Alive.org or 640-6399.

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CRAFTY, SKILLED OR CREATIVE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to develop outdoor lighted displays at Ward Meade Park events. Contact Elsie, 785-256-2920, leave a message.

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

THE HEAT - FREE fitness classes for the community. Located at Florence Crittenton Services Center for Integrative Health, 5423 SW 7th St. www.fl-ocritkansan.org Sun. 4-5 pm Yoga; Mon. 12-12:45pm Cardio Remix; Mon. 5:30-6:15pm STRONG™; Tue. 12:15-1:15pm Restorative Yoga; Tue. 5:30-6:15pm Zumba@; Wed. 5:30-6:15pm Cardio Sculpt; Thu. 12:15-1:00pm Pilates + CIRCL Mobility™; Thu. 5:30-6:15pm Zumba@; Fri. 12-12:45pm POUND

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

TAI CHI FOR HEALTH - Mon. 10-11 at Lowman United Methodist Church and Thu. 9:30-10:30 at

Topeka Zoo. No training needed, just watch & follow. Contact Madon Daily at 505-424-8989 or madondaily@gmail.com. To Join from Home via Zoom, contact Madon for the Zoom link.

PICKLEBALL - Mon. & Wed, 1-3pm, First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar Ave. Park on West Side, where the gym is located. Contact Dave Mathias, davemathias@sbcglobal.net, or Betsy Thompson, betsyjthompson@gmail.com.

SHEPHERD'S CENTER BOOK CLUB - 1st & 3rd Mon. 2-4pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1275 SW Boswell Ave. Contact Pat Kirkman at pattyk696@yahoo.com.

SMS - STRENGTH, MOBILITY, STABILITY EXERCISE GROUP (SMS) Mon. 9-9:30am, Arbor Court, 4200 SW Drury Lane. Tue. & Thu. 9-9:30am, Rosehill Place, 3600 SW Gage Blvd # 97. Tue & Thu, 10-10:45, Grace UMC, 2627 SW Western Ave. Call Anne Crawford at 785-273-4527 or email anne.crawford@cox.net.

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@rhcc.topeka.org

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 TROUPS - 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.

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

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.

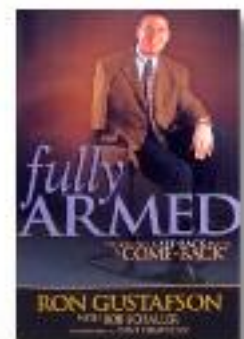
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NARVE (Nat'l Assn of Railroad Veteran Employee) – 2nd Tuesday each month at Grace Episcopal Church, 701 SW 8th Ave - 9:30AM. Enter on NW corner.

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.)

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES Aerie 4319: 1st & 3rd Tue. 7pm; Auxiliary: 1st & 4th Tue. 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

HAND AND FOOT CANASTA – 2nd & 4th Tue., 2-4pm, St. David's Episcopal Church, 3916 SW 17th St. Must arrive before 2pm and stay for entire game. Email Caroline at libopper1@gmail.com or call 228-2447.

MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES – 1st & 3rd Tue., 2-4pm, St. David's Episcopal Church, 3916 SW 17th St. Do not come before 1:45pm. Email Ollie Reed, reed7111@gmail.com, or Mary Adkins, marycat-keeper@gmail.com

MAP GROUP (MEMOIRS, ANCESTRY, PHOTOS) – VIA ZOOM – 4th Wed. 10-11:30am. Contact Rich McReynolds at rim4017@gmail.com. A Zoom link will be sent to you.

FAMILY HISTORY WRITING GROUP – 2nd Wed. 10-11:30am, Lowman United Methodist Church, room

12. Do you have great family stories to tell and want to pass them down to the next generation but don't know where to start? shepherdstopeka@yahoo.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., 10-4:15 Bible Study and meal at 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.

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. Topekalions.org

TOPEKA COSMOPOLITAN CLUB: The Club that fights Diabetes -- Meetings: first three Thursdays of every month, 12 noon, at the Topeka Country Club.

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.

LINE DANCING – 2nd & 4th Thu. 1:30-3:30 at First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar Ave. Contact Karen Botkin at 785-945-6785 or Jim Baer at 785-256-2432 or jimbaer73@gmail.com to register.

BRIDGE GROUP – 1st & 3rd Thu. 1-3:30pm, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th St. To play, arrangements must be made by Mon. 5pm with Joan Arterburn at 408-5174.

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

KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP – 3rd Thu., 11:30am-1pm via Zoom. Christian financial professionals: financial planners, accountants, attorney's & insurance agents invited. For info: kingdomadvisors.org or Jim Hanna, james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 785.357.6278 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/YEA style quizzing & rules. 913-593-6427 or biblequizzier.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 Brush, 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, 3:30pm, Topeka public library, Anton Rm. 3rd Friday, 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 785-215-1045. All correspondence 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.highlandheightsccc.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

New film brings to life stories behind Casting Crowns songs



Millions of Christians enjoy the music of Casting Crowns. Now they can learn the stories behind the words in the new documentary film "Casting Crowns: Home by Sunday."

The group's Mark Hall at first resisted the idea of a movie.

"I finally told them, 'If you make the film about the songs and we can tell the stories of people who've been impacted by the songs, I think there's something to tell there,'" he says. "And as I started telling my story, I started realizing, 'OK, there's stuff in here, too. Being a learning

disability kid who never wanted to be in front, but God made me get out front — that was a pretty big deal."

In its 20-year history, the band has sold 13 million albums while winning four American Music Awards, one Grammy, two Billboard Music Awards and 18 GMA Dove Awards. It released its latest album, "Lifesong: A Celebration of the First 20 Years," this fall. The band has soared to the top of the charts multiple times while balancing ministry and life at home.

For the band's entire existence,

Hall has served as a youth pastor. He currently is on staff as youth pastor of Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga. Many of the band's songs, he said, were born out of his ministry.

"If I wasn't in the church, the songs wouldn't have been written," he said. "So the songs are just kind of overflow. Because it all comes from something I'm teaching, something I'm teaching students or I'm one-on-one with some of the guys that I meet with or things that have happened in our families."

Hall never considered quitting his church ministry. "People think teenagers are scary," he said. "No — grownups are the scary ones. If you love a kid and you spend time with them and you know their name and they know that you're calling their name out to God, you can speak truth into that."

He wants moviegoers to realize the members of Casting Crowns are not just ordinary but "less than ordinary." When people finish watching the film, he said, he wants them to tell themselves, "If they've got a

ministry, then I've got a ministry." More information about the

movie is available at www.castingcrownsmovie.com.

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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 LOSS TO SUICIDE (HeALS) Topeka support group meets the 1st Tuesday of each month via Zoom. The 3rd Tuesday meeting is in-person at First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. Both meetings are 6:30-8. Topeka.heals@gmail.com. 785-380-9309

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 faithfamilyfeministries@gmail.com.

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

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

DIVORCECARE PROGRAMS – (For updates check www.divorcecare.org) locations and times:

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

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

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

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP – 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

Send your calendar events to voice@cox.net
See complete calendar at metrovoicenews.com

US downs 17 Houthi attack drones, missiles in Red Sea

The United States military said on Tuesday night that its forces had intercepted 12 attack drones and five missiles in the southern Red Sea launched by Houthi terrorists in Yemen.

Two hours earlier, the Israeli military announced that an Israeli Air Force fighter jet had shot down a “hostile aerial target that was on its way to Israeli territory,” adding that the “air control unit tracked the target throughout the incident.”

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) tweeted that the guided-missile destroyer USS Laboon and F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets from the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group struck the drones and missiles, which included three anti-ship ballistic missiles and two cruise missiles.

The drones and missiles were “fired by the Houthis over a 10 hour period which began at approximately 6:30 a.m. (Sanaa time) on December 26. There was no damage to ships in the area or reported injuries,” CENTCOM said.

The Iranian terrorist proxy in Yemen has undertaken an offensive against maritime trade in the Bab el-Mandeb



Strait since mid-November, engaging in numerous anti-ship drone and missile attacks and acts of piracy against commercial and military vessels.

Since declaring their support for the Hamas terrorist group in Gaza in its war against Israel sparked by the Oct. 7 massacre in the northwestern Negev, the Houthis have also launched regular long-range missile and drone attacks on Israel.

Major shipping companies have responded to the threat by rerouting vessels from the Suez Canal-Red Sea-Bab el-Mandeb route to the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa, a much longer

journey.

Maersk, one of the world's largest shipping companies, will resume operations in the Red Sea despite Houthi threats, the Danish company announced on Sunday.

“As of Sunday 24 December 2023, we have received confirmation that the previously announced multi-national security initiative Operation Prosperity Guardian (OPG) has now been set up and deployed to allow maritime commerce to pass through the Red Sea / Gulf of Aden and once again return to using the Suez Canal as a gateway between Asia and Europe. This is most welcome news

for the entire industry and indeed the functionality of global trade,” the company said in a statement.

“With the OPG initiative in operation, we are preparing to allow for vessels to resume transit through the Red Sea both eastbound and westbound. We are currently working on plans for the first vessels to make the transit and for this to happen as soon as operationally possible,” the statement added.

“Operation Prosperity Guardian” is a U.S.-led multinational coalition of naval forces protecting shipping in the Red Sea.

On Dec. 22, the White House accused Iran of helping to plan Houthi attacks against cargo vessels during the Israel-Hamas war.

“We know that Iran was deeply involved in planning the operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea. This is consistent with Iran's long-term materiel support and encouragement of the Houthis' destabilizing actions in the region,” White House national security spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said in a statement.

Researcher now believes near-death experiences prove Heaven



The validity of near-death experiences as proof of heaven is a topic of debate among Christians. John Burke, a pastor and author who has studied and examined more than 1,000 accounts of near-death experiences, believes such reports provide faith-building evidence of God and the Bible.

“It's when someone clinically dies, their heart stops and they have no brain waves,” he told CBN. “And yet either modern medicine or miracle brings them back minutes later, sometimes it's hours.

And when they come back, they talk about experiencing the life to come, and they talk about how it's more real than anything they've ever experienced in this world.”

And when they come back, they talk about experiencing the life to come, and they talk about how it's more real than anything they've ever experienced in this world.”

“The way I like to describe it is, imagine if all of our existence is being lived on a flat black-and-white painting on the wall of your home,” he said. “Death means separation. Your soul separates from your body. So imagine at death you peel off that two-dimensional black-and-white painting, you come out here into a three-dimensional world of color, and then imagine getting pressed back in

and you have to describe three dimensions of color in two-dimensional black-and-white terms.”

He said those who have near-death experiences are seeing God's reality in an “extra-dimensional” way. “When I first heard about this, I was an agnostic,” Burke said. “So hearing these experiences as an engineer got me thinking, ‘maybe this is evidence,’ and then it got me into the scriptures and then I started to see the evidence, and I came to faith.”

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Christians can take practical steps to increase their impact on culture

Christians often come up short in having a significant impact on the culture.

“People don’t listen to what you say as much as what you do, and in that category, Christians are failing miserably,” said Phil Cooke, a Christian author and filmmaker in Los Angeles. “The truth is, to change today’s culture, we don’t need more legislation, boycotts, criticism, outrage or even evangelism campaigns – we just need to change the way we live.”

Cooke recommends 10 things Christians can do to better influence the world around them in the new year.

Read the Bible. “Research from the Center for Bible Engagement reveals that engaging the Bible four or more times a week actually causes visible behavioral changes. But today, only 19 percent of churchgoing Christians read the Bible daily, and 40 percent read it once a month, rarely or never.”

Serve people. “Pastor John Piper said, ‘Christ will be known in the culture when we begin treating people better than they deserve.’”

Be the church. “Not just showing up



at church but being a vital, connected and supporting member of a local congregation. ‘And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near,’ Hebrews 10:25.”

Taking prayer seriously. “Today, only 63 percent of Christians say prayer is essential, which means that more than a third of Christians attending church today don’t believe it’s essential.”

Stop looking at the culture as the

enemy. “Our regular denunciation, boycotts and criticism of organizations and groups we don’t like have blinded us to the compassion Jesus had, even for his harshest critics.”

Submit to other believers. “How many Christians today look for a church that meets their needs instead of finding a church where they can serve? Nothing upsets the 21st century mindset more than submission, and yet that’s exactly what Jesus has called us to do.”

Be more mindful of social media. “Today, Christians can be some of the most critical and judgmental people online. Social media is addictive, and it is incredibly simple to pass on information without checking the facts, which far too often damages other people’s character and undermines the work of the gospel. It’s time for serious believers to take social media seriously.”

Take bold chances. “It’s far too rare to hear of a standout leader in science, politics, business, entertainment, the Internet and other influential areas who is a believer. Part of the reason our influence is disappearing in the culture is because we haven’t raised up many heroes who are remarkable in those fields. What if unashamed Christians were leading major technology, entertainment, educational, business and other companies? How would their work in those fields change how Christians are perceived by the culture? What are we doing in the Christian community to find, mentor and raise up these types of leaders?”

Understand the impact of living a moral life. “For the early church, per-

sonal morality mattered. Rather than criticizing immorality in the outside culture, those leaders started inside by becoming examples themselves of what a moral life could accomplish. But in the last few years, we’ve seen a remarkable number of major pastors and Christian leaders fall from grace, and the damage that does to our witness can’t be estimated. No one is perfect, but when we as a community lose our moral authority, we’ve lost all hope of influencing culture for the better.”

Invest our lives in Jesus. “Everyone is invested in something, and I’m not talking about financial investment. I’m talking about investing in your status, your credibility and your career. For instance, if you’re a college professor, you’re invested in your standing among other professors, your academic credentials and your professional associations. In the same way, religious leaders of Jesus’ day were invested in their authority or office (See Acts 4:19). As a result, even those who believed in him pulled back, fearing the damage it might cause to their reputation, position in the community or relationship with power.”

Young Americans more likely to deny Holocaust, criticize Israel, survey finds

The October 7 Hamas attack on Israel has exposed the extent of antisemitism in the United States, especially among young people. One in five Americans believe the Holocaust of the Jewish people is a myth, according to polling data published by YouGov/The Economist and reported by “The Jerusalem Post.”

When asked how much discrimination Jewish people face in America today, nearly three-fourths of the respondents said “a great deal” or “a fair amount.” Among respondents within the youngest age bracket (18-29) this fell to 61 percent. This same age bracket was on par with the general sentiment regarding discrimination against Muslims. Seventy-two percent of those aged 18 to 29 said Muslims face “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of discrimination in the United States today, similar to 73 percent of the total population that said the same.

It may come as no surprise in light of the onslaught of antisemitism in American entertainment and social media. One example is the influence



of Taylor Swift who attended a fundraiser for Gaza sponsored by a controversial, antisemitic organization.

Anita Widaman, publisher of Metro Voice, is also director of Vision-Israel.org, an education non-profit aimed at educating young people

about the Holocaust and antisemitism. She says the numbers are concerning but not unexpected. “Much of it stems from a lack of education in schools, whether public or private,” she says. “Curriculum devotes very little time to the Holocaust and the events and ideologies that led to it.”

Widaman says that some states, like Missouri, are taking steps to increase the educational component. “Hopefully, the next generation will have the knowledge to confront Holocaust denial and antisemitism.”

Until then, polls show a dire situation. Among the other findings:

When asked how serious of a problem hate crimes in the United States against Jews are, almost two-thirds responded that it was a “very serious” or “somewhat serious” problem. By comparison, only 56 percent of youngest cohort answered likewise.

In response to the question of how serious a problem antisemitism is in the United States, the younger generation was far closer to being in step with the general population of respondents than other cohorts. Some 63 percent of all respondents said it was a “very serious” or “somewhat serious” problem; among the youngest age bracket, 60 percent agreed.

Regarding whether opposition to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians

was antisemitic, most respondents stated that they believed it was either not antisemitic (40 percent) or were unsure (40 percent).

Thirty percent said it was not antisemitic to boycott Israeli products in protest of Israeli government policy; one-third said it was, and the remaining 37 percent were unsure.

While 7 percent of the total population of respondents said they believed the Holocaust was a myth, almost three times as many of 18-29 year-old respondents (20 percent) said the same thing.

Asked if they agreed with a series of statements widely considered antisemitic, including “Jews have too much power in America,” “People should boycott Israeli goods and products,” “Israel exploits Holocaust victimhood for its own purposes,” “Israel has too much control over global affairs” and “the interests of Israelis are at odds with the interests of the rest of the world,” the youngest age bracket answered in the affirmative more than any other group.

Why Mr. Beast's humanitarian efforts actually work—and why his

James Stephen “Jimmy” Donaldson, better known by his professional moniker “Mr. Beast,” has made a name for himself — and hundreds of millions of dollars for humanitarian causes — by leveraging his social media platform.

He's cleaned up our oceans, planted 20 million trees, and fought hunger by feeding needy people in communities across the US. In his latest effort, Mr. Beast built 100 wells in Africa, bringing clean drinking water to an estimated 500,000 people in countries from Kenya to Cameroon to Zimbabwe.

Not everyone is happy with Mr. Beast's latest campaign, however, or his broader philanthropic efforts.

One Kenyan politician told CNN Mr. Beast's well campaign fed the perception that African countries are “dependent on handouts,” while the founder of a charity complained that “a white male figure with a huge platform... gets all of the attention.”

While this might sound simply like sour grapes — and some of it likely is — the criticisms against Mr. Beast are much broader than many might suspect. For years, many have complained that Mr. Beast's “philanthro-tainment” strategy — combining philanthropy with online entertainment — is exploitative.

For example, in February when Mr. Beast partnered with a non-profit organization to provide sight-restoring surgery — procedures Mr. Beast personally paid for — he was accused of “poverty porn.”

“... it is all in the service of enriching himself,” one person tweeted.

“He cares about poor people and disabled people because they make him money,” another one said.

“Doctors/nurses don't exploit their patient's dignity for profit.”

‘The Stranglehold of the Profit-Seekers’

The word is key: profit.

Profit has become a dirty word over the last century. Ayn Rand explored the growing distaste for profit at length in her classic work *Atlas Shrugged*, a dystopian novel that depicts a society in which the titans of industry who produce the goods and services of society are viewed with contempt by many — particularly moochers — for pursuing profit.

James Taggart, a villain in the novel, talks of “breaking up the vicious tyranny of economic power” and setting “men free of the rule of the dollar.”

“We will liberate our culture from the



stranglehold of the profit-seekers,” thunders Taggart.

Rand was conscious of the fact that our modern world was turning the idea of profits into a sin, even though economist Adam Smith long ago observed that self-interest is the source of economic prosperity in society.

“It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest,” Smith famously wrote in *The Wealth of Nations*.

Smith understood that self-interest isn't just healthy and rational; it's the economic engine of society. In pursuit of his own desires, the butcher provides an essential service to others, just as the brewer and baker do.

Yet profit is anathema to many today, particularly those who've been inundated with social justice tropes at universities. The Marxist notion that profits are mere exploitation has been adopted by many, even by people who likely would never consider themselves Marxists.

Like the failed businessman in *Atlas Shrugged* who defends himself by saying “I can proudly say that in all of my life I have never made a profit,” many young people now see profit as synonymous with exploitation.

“Inspiring people to help others is great, but encouraging young [people] to exploit vulnerable communities for content which they can then profit off of enormously, is the issue,” tweeted the Washington Post's grievance correspondent Taylor Lorenz.

In other words, the scorn heaped on Mr. Beast stems from the fact that he has accrued an estimated \$500 million fortune while pulling off his remarkable humanitarian achievements.

And it's worth noting that the criticism he's received is in notable contrast to the (initial) widespread praise of Sam Bankman-Fried, the FTX founder who

built an empire singing a song of effective altruism and rejecting the importance of profits.

“It's okay to do a deal that is moderately bad, in bailing out a place,” SBF said during a 2022 talk with Bloomberg.

SBF let it be known he wasn't very concerned about crass profits; he was far more focused on helping others. (A closer inspection of SBF's private rhetoric and business shows he was far more concerned with making money for himself than he let on.)

The difference is that Mr. Beast's humanitarian efforts actually worked, whereas SBF's “altruistic” efforts failed miserably (and he's now facing more than 100 years in prison).

This is the real reason Mr. Beast is taking so much heat. He's showing the power of voluntary action and the miraculous power of the profit motive. This isn't just a stark contrast to SBF's altruistic efforts, however.

‘It's Embarrassing’

One of the best quotes you'll find on Mr. Beast's humanitarian work in Africa comes from Kenyan journalist Ferdinand Omond.

“[I]t's embarrassing that a YouTuber jetted into Kenya on a charity tour to perform tasks our taxes should have completed ages ago,” said Omond.

These words have to sting, in large part because they ring so true.

Is this an embarrassment for the Kenyan government, which has long been plagued by inefficiency and corruption? Undoubtedly. But it's also an embarrassment to every public intellectual who insists profits are evil and that government-led efforts are the solution to poverty, despite their dismal track record.

And it should be pointed out that the Kenyan government is not the only one that has proven utterly inept at fighting

poverty.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson famously declared “war” on poverty. Over the next five decades, the average wealth transfer, in real terms, to a low-income family increased from \$3,070 per capita (1965) to \$34,093 (2016). Economist Vance Gill last year estimated the federal government has spent a total of \$25 trillion in its nearly 60-year War on Poverty.

What do we have to show for this fortune in federal spending?

According to the United States Census, in 1966, the percentage of American families living in poverty was 12.4 percent. Today, according to new data from the US Census, the percentage of Americans living in poverty is ... 12.4 percent.

That's right. Since 1964, despite tens of trillions of dollars in spending at the federal level alone, the poverty rate in America has not budged; it has merely bobbed around the same level since the Beatles arrived in the British Invasion.

Some could argue that poverty in America could be much worse if we hadn't spent \$25 trillion fighting it, but this ignores an inconvenient truth. In the

two decades before the War on Poverty, poverty had fallen from 32.1 percent to 12.4 percent.

All of this helps explain why Mr. Beast is being attacked despite all the good work he is doing.

Milton Friedman famously said that one of the biggest mistakes humans make “is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.”

The results of Mr. Beast's philanthropy, which is all voluntary and profit-driven, surpass government-led efforts by miles. And that's what his critics can't handle.

MrBeast is being canceled over his charity work because it exposes government inefficiencies.

—Jonathan Miltimore is the Editor at Large of FEE.org at FEE.

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Founding Fathers: Jewish people key to American success

Respecting Jewish people and standing against antisemitism has a long history in the United States.

“The Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation,” John Adams said. “If I were an atheist and believed blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations.”

The words of the second president reflect the pro-Jewish sentiment that prevailed among America’s Founding Fathers and throughout the nation at the time of its founding. This respect was rooted in their view of history and the positive role they believed the Jews had



played in world history.

Many early immigrants to America

considered themselves a second Israel and England as their Egypt from which

they had fled to the New England wilderness to find freedom. It is, therefore, not surprising that they looked to the story of Israel in the Old Testament for guidance and inspiration. This respect for Old Testament Israel, led to colonial colleges such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton, all offering courses in Hebrew. Several students at Yale delivered their commencement speeches in Hebrew. At the time, Hebrew was not offered in any university in England.

George Washington visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, where he was warmly received by this Hebrew congregation. In his official welcome, Moses Seixas compared the Rev-

olutionary War to the struggles of ancient Israel and Washington to King David and Daniel/ Yaari Taal of George Washington University said Washington’s remarks to this congregation established a precedent for protecting religious liberty and pluralism in the United States that persists to this day.

Early America’s embrace of the Jewish people resulted in the United States becoming a haven for persecuted Jews from all over the world. This led to America becoming home to the largest Jewish population in the world. This remained true until 2003, when the Jewish population in Israel finally surpassed that in America.

Up to 300 million Christians face persecution: report

Despite dire statistics about rising persecution, Christians are facing down terrorists and moving ahead with Christmas celebrations.

After multiple attacks on a village in northcentral Nigeria’s Plateau state from Fulani militants, a sense of hope emerged as the community reunited for a special Christmas service.

For one congregation whose church was burned down in 2021, believers gathered this week under a new roof funded by International Christian Concern.

Sitting on building stones, Christians from the village joyfully sang Christmas songs of praise as the pastor preached from Matthew 1:16, and encouraged them to celebrate this year’s Christmas, hoping they would be free from Fulani militant attacks.

An estimated 200 million to 300 million Christians worldwide are under persecution for their faith, according to Jeff King, president of International Christian Concern. “I’ve been doing this for 20-some years, and that’s bigger than the populace of Christians in the United States,” he said. “It ranges from light persecution to the decimation of the church, which is murder, assassination and torture.”

Although some of this persecution raging across the world is intense and deadly, King warned that Christians in the United States also face much lighter forms of denunciation but that the rebuke is necessary to mention and explore. “You see the job discrimination, that exclusion from the public square, the silencing, the firing, the court cases,” he said. “All that

stuff is persecution.”

King cited several flashpoints this year, including Pakistan, where a 5,000-strong mob of radical Muslims destroyed two dozen churches and hundreds of homes in the Christian enclave of Jaranwala. In Nigeria, millions of Christians have suffered attacks from radical Muslims during the past 20 years, resulting in a death toll that may be as high as one million and the loss of 3.5 million farms.

“Across the globe, our brothers and sisters can be imprisoned or killed simply for identifying as a follower of Jesus,” he said. “They are legally prevented from telling others about their faith, and anti-conversion and blasphemy laws are used to falsely charge Christians with crimes.”

The organization’s 2023 persecution report compiled a comprehensive list of



the world’s worst persecutors broken down by individual actors, entities, and countries. It includes the countries of Nigeria, North Korea and India, and such groups as the Allied Democratic Forces, Al-Shabab, Fulani Militants, Sahel Terror Groups, the Taliban and Tatmadaw (Burmese Army).

Although King said he doesn’t want to be an alarmist, he cautioned that the

“storm clouds are gathering,” describing the current dynamic in America as “persecution light.”

“But people need to wake up, because we are the frog in the kettle,” he said. “And, if you just follow the trajectory, we need to do something. We need to raise our voice. We need to shout and we need to cry foul when a foul is being perpetrated against us.”

“Total surrender and dedication to Jesus”: Hulk Hogan gets baptized

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Hulk Hogan, who soared to fame as a professional wrestler and later became an actor, has found the purpose of his life at age 70. He recently announced on social media that he had been baptized in a special ceremony at the Indian Rocks Baptist Church in Florida.

“Total surrender and dedication to Jesus is the greatest day of my life,” he posted, along with photos of the baptism. “No worries, no hate, no judgment.. only love!”

Hogan’s wife, Sky Daily Hogan, also took part in the baptism, which involved fully submerging themselves in a large body of water.

Video footage shows Hogan and his wife both in white smiling as they are dipped into the water. Hogan also wore his trademark bandanna in white, along with a silver cross necklace for the occasion.

“God is doing amazing things at Indian Rocks,” the church wrote on its Instagram account.

Hogan was discovered in 1979 by WWE owner Vince McMahon Sr. and had his debut match against Andre the Giant, which he won. In



1984, Hogan was awarded the WWE championship belt for his memorable defeat of the Iron Sheik. He quickly rose to superstardom, and the resulting fan frenzy, nick-

named Hulkamania, became legendary. Hogan’s success during this time bolstered the public’s fascination with professional wrestling. In total, he would become a 12-time world champion; six times with the WWE and another six with the World Championship Wrestling.

By 1985, Hogan had acquired tremendous popularity among Americans. His image was mar-

keted to sell a multitude of products, and he began to take on leading roles in a number of films. Hogan has spoken publicly about his Christian beliefs in the past.

“I accepted Christ as my savior at 14 years old, and the training, prayers and vitamins kept me in the game,” Hogan posted on X last spring. “But now that I am one with God, the main event theme of surrender, service and love makes me the Real Main Event that can slam any giant of any size through the power of my Lord and Savior and so it is, even now brother, AMEN!”

Tens of millions have seen Hogan baptized on social media.



5 Steps to Winterize Your Home

Without a little prep work and routine maintenance, winter weather can wreak havoc on your home. Following a few simple steps can help you avoid frozen pipes, drafty rooms and slippery sidewalks.

1. Clear Gutters – Melting snow will have nowhere to go if



gutters are clogged with leaves and debris.

2. Protect Pipes – Open cabinet doors under kitchen and bathroom sinks so warm air can surround pipes. Drain outside spigots before tempera-



tures drop below freezing.



3. Improve Insulation – Cold air can seep in through openings around windows and doors. Install weather stripping and seal openings with caulk to insulate cracks and crevices.

4. Prevent Slips and Falls – Keep sidewalks and driveways clear of ice and snow. Sprinkle



deicing salt on steps, sidewalks and driveways to prevent accidents.

5. Control the Temperature – Set the thermostat to at least 65 F during winter months. Consider installing an energy efficient or programmable thermostat.



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entertainment

The 20 Best Christian Movies of 2023

There's a lot of trash coming out of the movie industry. But as 2023 proved, a lot of light is coming out of it, too.

In fact, 2023 may have been the best year in the past two decades for excellent faith-based content, thanks to new companies such as Angel Studios and Great American Pure Flix and veteran companies like Affirm Films and Kingdom Story.

This year featured a summer blockbuster and multiple Top 5 box office hits. It also included several streaming movies that may have gone under the radar but deserve your consideration nonetheless.

Here are the 20 best Christian movies of 2023:

1. *After Death*

Stories of near-death experiences are examined in this fascinating documentary, which includes interviews with scientists, researchers, and individuals who say they briefly visited heaven before returning to this life. One of those is Don Piper, a minister who was involved in a car crash in 1989 and says he remembers leaving this world. A film from Angel Studios, *After Death*, opened in the Top 5. Rated PG-13 for thematic material, including violent descriptions, some bloody images, and drug references.

2. *Birthright Outlaw*

A devoted father goes on a quest to rescue his daughter after she is kidnapped by bandits. Set in the 1800s, this old-time Western movie stars Lucas Black (NCIS: New Orleans F9, *Furious 7*, and *Tokyo Drift*) and Sarah Drew (*Grey's Anatomy*), and was directed by Aaron Burns. Black told *Crosswalk*, the family-centric film tells the story of a man who fights for what's right. "There's a lot of people out there that are hungry for these types of movies and for content like this."

3. *Big George Foreman*

A broke, washed-up boxer gets back in the ring in order to raise money for his ministry and youth center. Incredibly, he also overcomes all odds to win the heavyweight title. The film is the story of boxer and minister George Foreman, who won the heavyweight title in 1973 before retiring and staging a comeback to win it again in 1994. A near-death experience in 1977 played a key role in his decision to preach the gospel. It's one of the best sports movies you'll ever watch. Rated PG-13 for some sports violence.



4. *The Blind*

A couple falls in love and gets married at a young age, only to separate due to his alcoholic, angry ways. The film is the

stick violence and thematic elements.

6. *Divine Influencer*

A social media influencer loses everything only to discover her true purpose



backstory to the life of Phil and Kay Robertson (*Duck Dynasty*), who only reconciled after Phil became a Christian. It's gritty and redemptive, and it includes a message from Phil Robertson himself at the end. Andrew Hyatt, who directed *Paul, Apostle of Christ* (2018), also directed *The Blind*. Rated PG-13 for thematic content and smoking. It also includes some coarse language. Because of dark themes, this one isn't for small children.

5. *Camp Hideout*

A troubled teenager finds redemption at a Christian summer camp. He also outwits a few career criminals who chase him to that same camp, searching for an electronic device they think he stole. This hilarious and inspiring movie features the physical comedy of *Home Alone* and the quirky plot of *Ernest Goes to Camp*. It also stars someone you've seen: Christopher Lloyd, the Emmy-winning actor best known for playing "Doc" in the *Back to the Future* trilogy. He portrays a quirky camp leader. Rated PG for slap-

while volunteering at a homeless shelter. Lara Silva, known for her portrayal of Eden in the Bible-based series *The Chosen*, plays the lead character, Olivia. Shari Rigby (*Overcomer*) directed it. The film, Rigby told *Crosswalk*, will urge viewers to consider: How can we use social media to do things better? "First, by loving God. Second, by loving others," she said. It's available on Great American Pure Flix.

7. *Heaven Sent*

A grandmother and a widowed pastor find love again thanks to modern technology. This romantic comedy stars Karen Abercrombie (*War Room*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*) and Charlene Tilton (*Dallas*) and stands out for its unique plot: characters in late adulthood falling in love. Tilton told *Crosswalk* that the movie is the "best thing I've ever done." It debuted on Great American Pure Flix.

8. *The Hill*

A young boy born with a degenerative spinal disease overcomes long odds to become a professional baseball player.



The movie tells the true story of Rickey Hill, who developed an uncanny ability to hit a baseball by practicing with a rock and stick. He also faced opposition at home from his father, a Baptist minister. It stars Dennis Quaid (*Blue Miracle*, *I Can Only Imagine*) and Colin Ford (*Walker, A Thousand Tomorrows*) and was co-written by Angelo Pizzo, who is best known for writing *Rudy* (1993) and *Hoosiers* (1986). Rated PG for thematic content, language and smoking throughout.

9. *His Only Son*

The Old Testament patriarch Abraham goes on a long journey in order to obey God and sacrifice his son, Isaac. The film opened at No. 3 and received a CinemaScore grade of "A" from moviegoers. It was written and directed by David Helling, who was serving as a Marine in Iraq more than a decade ago when he says God "got a hold of my heart" and led him into filmmaking. "I wanted to do everything I could to bring others to the Word," Helling told *Crosswalk*. Rated PG-13 for thematic content and some violence.

10. *Identity Crisis*

A college student struggling with self-esteem clones herself, only to learn she already has the skills needed to succeed in life. This whimsical comedy was produced by the same company, The Boylan Sisters, that previously released *Switched* (2020). Shari Rigby (*Overcomer*) directed it. The film stars identical twin actresses, Scout Tayui-Lepore and Sophia Tayui-Lepore. Producer Alexandra Boylan told *Crosswalk*: "We want to make hip and fun films that girls ... want to go to school and can't wait to tell their friends about it."

11. *Jesus Revolution*

A straight-laced minister welcomes long-haired hippie Christians into his church, sparking a nationwide revival. The movie tells the true story of Chuck Smith, a California pastor who embraced hippie evangelist Lonnie Frisbee and other young believers in the late 60s and early 70s. It outraged some of his more traditional members, but it also birthed

the so-called "Jesus Movement." *Jesus Revolution* grossed \$52 million domestically and earned an "A+" CinemaScore from moviegoers. Rated PG-13 for strong drug content involving teens and some thematic elements.

12. *Journey to Bethlehem*

The story of Mary, Joseph, and the Christ child is retold in this groundbreaking musical, which features pop-style music mixed with traditional tunes. It features musical names you know: For King and Country's Joel Smallbone, CCM artist Moriah, and Christian hip hop's Lecrae. Affirm Films, the company behind *War Room*, *Risen*, and *The Star*, produced it. Adam Anders, who received Grammy nominations for *Glee* and *Rock of Ages*, directed it and co-wrote the screenplay and the music. Rated PG for thematic elements.

13. *Left Behind: Rise of the Antichrist*

A television reporter tries to uncover the truth about a worldwide mystery: the recent vanishing of millions of people. The film is a sequel to the 2014 film *Left Behind*, which was based on the best-selling novels and imagines what the world will be like in the days surrounding the return of Jesus and the Rapture. (Those novels, in turn, were based on a pretribulation, premillennial interpretation of the Bible's passages about the Last Days.) *Rise of the Antichrist* is the best *Left Behind* movie yet.

14. *Nefarious*

A convicted serial killer undergoes a psychiatric evaluation prior to his execution and claims he is a demon. He also predicts the psychiatrist will commit three murders. No doubt, this R-rated thriller isn't your typical Christian movie, but its strong faith-centric themes -- the reality of evil and the supernatural realm -- warrant its placement on this list. Co-directors Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon also co-directed *Unplanned* (2019). This movie is thought-provoking, but it's not for children. Rated R for some disturbing violent content.

15. *The Shift*

A man gets separated from his wife in the middle of a dystopian multiverse and



must fight to find her again. The movie broke new ground in the faith-based realm for its science-fiction plot, even as it has a strong biblical framework: It's a modern retelling of the biblical book of Job. It starred Neal McDonough, Kristoffer Polaha, Elizabeth Tabish, and Sean Astin. It stayed in the Top 10 its first three weekends and was released by Angel Studios. Rated PG-13 for violence and thematic elements.

16. Sound of Freedom

A federal agent quits his job to travel overseas and catch child sex traffickers. The movie was inspired by true events and follows a man named Tim, who rescues a young boy from sex trafficking only to learn the boy's sister is still in captivity. Unable to just "let it go" -- as his friends suggest -- Tim goes on a quest to catch the criminal. This Angel Studios movie was a surprise hit and was directed by Alejandro Monteverde, who previously helmed *Bella* (2006) and *Little Boy* (2015). Rated PG-13 for thematic content involving sex trafficking, violence, language, sexual references, some drug references, and smoking throughout.

17. Southern Gospel

A hard-partying rock-and-roll star dedicates his life to the pastorate after a tragic arrest. Unfortunately, a few of his church members don't have the same view of God's grace as he does. The film is based on real events and follows the story of Samuel, a young man who helps grow his small church but encounters resistance from traditionalists. Emmy-nominated actor Max Ehrlich portrays the lead character. (In real life, Ehrlich also was baptized on set.) Rated PG-13 for mature thematic content, drug use, some violent content, suicide, and language.

18. Sun Moon

A young woman seeks solace over-

seas after being left at the altar. While there, she discovers God's purpose for her life. This charming film tells the story of a young woman named Kelsey (Mackenzie Mauzy), who moves to Taiwan to teach English at a Christian school and learns a lesson straight from Romans 8:28: God works all things together for good. It debuted on Great American Pure Flix.

19. Surprised by Oxford

A young agnostic woman faces a clash of worldviews when she befriends people who believe in God. The film is based on a nonfiction book of the same name and tells the story of a postgraduate student, Caro, who enrolls at the University of Oxford in pursuit of knowledge but is shocked to learn some students are in pursuit of faith. The film's inspiration was the book's author, Carolyn Weber, who currently serves as a professor at New College Franklin in Franklin, Tenn. Although not rated, it likely would have garnered a PG-13 for language and a discussion about sex.

20. On a Wing and a Prayer

A middle-aged man must learn to fly an airplane after the pilot dies in the middle of the flight. That may sound like a far-fetched plot, but it's based on the true story of Doug White, who was traveling with his family back from a funeral in 2009 when the pilot suffered a heart attack. Although Doug didn't know it at the time, experts on the ground gave him only a 5 percent chance of survival. Dennis Quaid stars in the lead role. Roma Downey is a producer. Her company, Lightworkers, helped make it. The movie debuted on Prime Video. Rated PG for peril, some language, suggestive references and thematic elements.

—Michael Foust

National Geographic film "The Mission" tells story of murdered missionary

"The Mission," a new documentary film from National Geographic, shares the story of John Chau, a 26-year-old missionary who was killed by the Sentinelese tribe after he traveled to North Sentinel Island, an isolated region of India, to share the gospel.

Some people, both in the Christian and secular arenas, condemned Chau's journey as a reckless one that reflected deep levels of ignorance, pride and cultural superiority. Others applauded his commitment to the Great Commission.

The documentary explores Chau's personal writings, social media and diaries and features interviews and accounts from those who knew him best, including his inner circle, family and pastor. Woven throughout the film is a poignant letter from his father, psychiatrist Patrick Chau, who blames "extreme Christianity" for his son's death.

"The Mission" seeks to present a nuanced narrative, giving a dimensional view of Chau's decade-long preparation for missionary work. In 2017, he joined the missionary training group All Nations, which has a vision "to see Jesus worshiped by all the peoples of the earth," and trained at the group's North American hub in Kansas City.

The film has received favorable reviews for its authenticity and willingness to explore spiritual issues.

States Brett McCracken with the Gospel Coalition, "Part of why The Mission can be so variously interpreted is that filmmakers Amanda McBaine and



Jesse Moss (Boys State), to their credit, attempt to tell the story in a balanced way, interviewing a broad spectrum of friends, family members, pastors, missionaries, and academics. Each person interviewed has a different take on the wisdom and worthiness of Chau's ill-fated effort to bring the gospel to the unreached peoples of North Sentinel Island—one of the last remaining "untouched" tribes on the planet."

"He was one of the most prepared young men I know," said Mary Cho, the group's international executive leader. "He had made many short-term mission trips to hard places like Iraq. He came to All Nations to get equipped on how to tell Jesus' stories, because he knew the Sentinelese were an oral culture. You don't want to preach to them; you want the art of telling stories, how to make disciples and how to start simple churches. He was highly prepared, and that is very well documented."

McCracken writes that the film is well-made, compelling and uses voiceovers and animation to bring Chau's words to life. But, the author says it can also be a bit frustrating at times but can ultimately "spur helpful discussions for Christian churches, students, and missionaries alike."

The filmmakers attempt to navigate contrasting views with care, from those who admired Chau to those questioning his decisions. They sought to create a safe space for all voices, including those critical of missionary work and its implications of consent.

Jamie Saint, grandson of missionary Nate Saint, said Chau's story draws parallels to his own grandfather's legacy. He underscored the importance of obedience to God's calling, a lesson he learned from his grandfather's endeavor to reach the Wao-dani tribe in Ecuador, which resulted in his and his colleagues' martyrdom.

"God knew what he was doing then, and he knows what he's doing today," Saint said. "We don't see the entirety of the masterpiece that he is writing. But we know the end of the story. And so, when we know the end of the story, we don't have to be afraid of the chapters that come before."

Before his death, Chau wrote in his diary that he was "doing this to establish the kingdom of Jesus on the island... Do not blame the natives if I am killed."

The film is showing on Prime, YouTube, Vudu, Apple TV and Google Play.

REVIEW: 'Prince of Egypt: The Musical' movie

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When people make lists of the best faith-based films of all time, particularly from my generation, they almost always include Dreamworks's animated film "The Prince of Egypt." A feature animated film based on the story of God calling Moses to lead the enslaved Israelites out of bondage, "The Prince of Egypt" was both critically acclaimed and commercially accessible.

"The Prince of Egypt" is one of those rare movies made after the 1980s that is beloved both by the religious and non-religious. Biblical epics were par for the course back in Hollywood's heyday, with "The Ten Commandments" and "Ben Hur" just two notable examples.

But with "The Last Temptation of Christ," Hollywood and religious Americans began to diverge. Religious movies loved by critics — such as "Noah" — and

those loved by faith-based audiences — such as "Passion of The Christ" — seemed to be completely different. "The Prince of Egypt" broke that trend. People of faith believe that the movie accurately captures the truth of the Biblical story and the nature of God as taught in the Bible (without watering any of the faith elements down), and secular audiences loved the beautiful animation, characters and storytelling.

Which is why it's no surprise that people are looking to find ways to bring it back. The stage play adaptation of the movie, "The Prince of Egypt: The Musical" (which is sort of a funny title given the original was also a musical) premiered in London's West End in 2020 with original screenwriter Phillip LaZebnik and "Wicked" lyricist Stephen Schwartz returning. Now, NBC is televising the stage version, most likely to help



increase the brand in hopes of a Broadway run (or perhaps to tee up a live-action adaptation like Disney has done so often for box office success). For many, this will be an opportunity for the first time to see if this new version of the story lives up to the original.

Fear not: "The Prince of Egypt" is a rousing triumph of both faith and stagecraft. It is one of the most satisfying viewing experiences I've had all year, and is a stunning reminder of what can be accomplished when faith and art are put together well.

50+ Lifestyles

A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

Wellness Tips for a New You in the New Year

If your list of New Year's resolutions is a mile long, you may be feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start. Let these three essential wellness tips set you up for a successful year and give you the power, energy and determination you need to reach all your other goals.

Make Time For Breakfast

Many people make the mistake of skipping breakfast, particularly if they are trying to lose weight. But breakfast is an essential part of your overall health and wellbeing, giving you the fuel and energy you need to power the day until lunch. This is important to help kickstart your metabolism and regulate your hunger.

Think you don't have time to prepare a healthy breakfast? You're not alone. However, many are open to implementing this habit with quicker breakfast options that cut prep time

in half. In fact, 51% of consumers agree that frozen breakfast foods are the most convenient option and 37% said they would eat frozen breakfast foods more often if they were healthier, according to market research from Mintel. Thanks to quick and tasty options like Egghand's Best Frozen Breakfast Bowls, made with hearty ingredients and ready to eat in minutes, there are efficient ways to enjoy a nutritious breakfast. Not only do the bowls taste great, but they are made with nutritionally superior Egghand's Best eggs, which contain six times more vitamin D, more than double the Omega-3s and 10 times more vitamin E compared to ordinary eggs, so you can feel confident that you're getting optimal nutrition before taking on the busy day ahead. The bowls are available in three great tasting flavors, Sausage & Cheese, Salsa, Bacon

& Cheese, and Loaded Potato Scramble, meaning you certainly won't get bored putting your new breakfast plan into action.

Practice Self-Care

Between work, family life and other commitments, it can seem challenging to carve out time for yourself. But a little self-care goes a long way toward helping you recharge and better manage all your responsibilities and stressors. Whether it's going for a run, taking a yoga class, doing arts and crafts or reading a book, be sure to spend some time each week doing something that you love that makes you feel your best.

Prioritize Sleep

Prioritizing sleep will improve every aspect of your physical and mental wellness and help you achieve all your other goals. Unfortunately,



streaming devices, social media and other distractions make it all too easy to stay up later than you intend. Setting an alarm in the evening can serve as a gentle reminder that it's time to put down devices and start your bedtime routine, helping you create a more consistent sleep schedule. This will also eliminate exposure to blue

light late in the evening, an environmental factor that has been proven to make it harder to fall asleep.

Achieving your goals starts with feeling your best. Make that happen in the New Year by prioritizing the most essential building blocks of health and wellness, from sunrise to sundown.

—StatePoint

Healthier Habits on a Budget This New Year

This new year, creating healthier habits can be easy and affordable with proper planning. Whether you're resolving to improve your diet, relax your mind or give back to your community, you can use these tips from the team at Dollar General to help you meet your goals.

Food and Fitness

If you are looking to improve your physical health in the new year, begin by making slight changes to your eating and fitness habits to aid long-term consistency. For example, use healthier alternatives in your favorite meals. Dollar General's Better For You recipes provide healthier and afford-

able options for breakfast, lunch, dinner and even dessert. Additionally, consider setting daily exercise goals, such as taking a morning walk or squeezing in a 30-minute strength training session during lunch. Workouts don't have to take a long time to increase your energy and stamina.

Nourishing the Mind

Taking steps to care for your mental health can help decrease stress and improve your mood. Proper rest each night is fundamental. Work toward maintaining a consistent sleep schedule that includes waking up and going to bed at the same time. Next, find an outlet to express daily thoughts, such as updating a journal each night before bed. Finally, create time



to practice enjoyable hobbies such as playing in a sports league, crafting or reading.

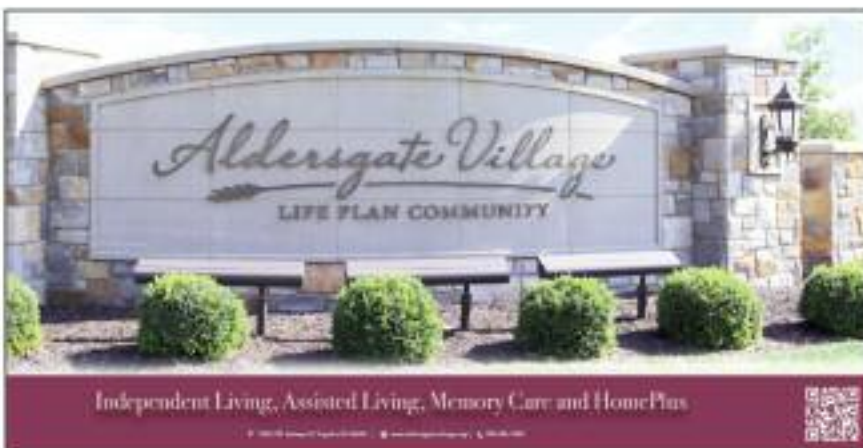
Community Care

Getting involved in your community can be a healthy habit that benefits your and others' wellbeing. To get started, research local nonprofit organizations and choose one that connect to your values. Consider

donating time, funds or products to help build strong relationships with neighbors and make a positive difference.

Through implementing these smart and affordable resolution ideas and strategies, you can help maintain a healthier lifestyle and improve your wellbeing.

—StatePoint



Make These 10 Doctor-Recommended Health Resolutions in the New Year



The New Year is the perfect time to hit the reset button on your health and wellness. Not sure where to start? Doctors say you can make the biggest impact with small, incremental tweaks to your routine.

“It is quite common after the holidays to think about all you’ve eaten or your reduced physical activity and get discouraged,” says Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, M.D., MPH, president of the American Medical Association (AMA). “But the good news is you don’t have to make major health changes in one fell swoop. You can make small, positive health choices right now that can have long-lasting effects.”

Want to get started today? Here are the 10 resolutions the AMA recom-

mends top your list this year:

1. Get moving. Exercise is essential for your physical and mental health. The American Heart Association recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity. Just can’t get to the gym? No problem: start off by going for a family walk, taking the stairs at work or parking a little farther away from the mall entrance when you’re making those post-holiday gift returns.

2. Tweak your diet to include more water and less sugar-sweetened beverages. Replace processed foods -- especially those with added sodium and sugar -- with nutritious, whole foods.

Stock your fridge and pantry with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry.

3. A number of respiratory viruses circulating this winter can be serious and even life-threatening. Get up to date on your vaccines to protect yourself and your family. These include the annual flu shot and the updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccines are also available to protect older adults from severe RSV. New tools to protect infants during RSV season include maternal vaccination and monoclonal antibody immunization. If you have questions, speak with your physician and review trusted resources, including getvaccineanswers.org.

4. Get screened. Estimates based on statistical models show that since April 2020, millions of screenings for breast, colorectal and prostate cancer may have been missed due to pandemic-related care disruptions. Check in with your physician. If you’re due for preventive care, tests or screenings, make an appointment. These measures are designed to keep you healthy and help your doctor spot certain conditions before they become more serious.

5. High blood pressure, often referred to as hypertension, can increase your risk of heart attack or stroke, and it affects millions of Americans. Visit ManageYourBP.org to understand what your blood pressure numbers mean and what you can do to get your blood pressure under control.

6. One in 3 American adults has prediabetes, a condition that can lead to type 2 diabetes if left unmanaged. However, healthy eating and exercise can help delay or even prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Learn your risk by taking a simple 2-minute self-screening test at DoIHavePrediabetes.org. This resource also features helpful lifestyle tips that can help you reverse prediabetes.

7. If consuming alcohol, drink only in moderation. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans defines that as up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

8. Your health care provider can

offer resources and guidance for quitting tobacco and nicotine. Declare your home and car smoke-free to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.

9. Follow your doctor’s instructions when taking prescription drugs – especially opioids. Always store and dispose of medications safely to prevent misuse. Whenever prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as directed. Not taking the full course can lead to antibiotic resistance, a serious public health problem, and will not make you feel better if you have a virus, such as a cold or flu.

10. Good mental health is part of

good overall health. Manage your stress, get sufficient sleep, exercise and seek help from a mental health professional when you need it.

If you don’t have health insurance, the AMA encourages you to sign up for coverage because those with coverage live healthier and longer. Healthcare.gov has new, affordable insurance options. The enrollment deadline for 2024 coverage is Jan. 15, 2024. Find more health resources at ama-assn.org.

For a healthy 2024 and beyond, invest in your wellness with these doctor-recommended New Year’s resolutions.

—StatePoint



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sports

Former NFL quarterback Jeff Kemp shows men how to break free in new book “Receive”



Jeff Kemp completed nearly 500 passes in his decade-long career as a professional quarterback. But regardless of how accurately he threw the football, he was successful only if a teammate received it. Many men today are striving in vain to perform better as Christians, husbands and fathers when God is simply asking them to receive what he already has done for them.

“Jesus was the strongest and most courageous man ever,” Kemp said. “He was the greatest leader ever. He was the one who changed history with 12 friends and no marketing budget. Jesus said, ‘I can do nothing apart from my father, and I choose to say and do only the things my father gives me.’ Jesus shows us a pattern of receiving his identity and receiving his minute-to-minute guidance on how to live. That model will set us free so we don’t have to earn it.”

Kemp, who leads the ministries Men Huddle and Jeff Kemp Team, speaks to men across the nation about how they can find their identity in the finished work of Christ. Just in time for the Christmas season, he has released his latest book, “Receive: The Way of Jesus for Men.” The book grew out of the confusion he saw about what it means to be a man in today’s culture.

“The words that come to mind are busy, isolated, lonely and confused,” he said. “This sense of isolation has led to loneliness, and loneliness in an era as confused as this one can be debilitating. It’s hard to have the confidence to roll up your sleeves and play the role you are

meant to play.”

Simply put, men have forgotten what it means to be a man. “Men are meant to be strong, but their strength is meant to be used for others,” Kemp said. “Our identity has always been misplaced. We try to earn it through sports, money, women or achievement.”

The message of “Receive” is for men to find their identity not through performance but through what God freely gives them.

“You can’t earn more kudos with God, and you can’t make him love you more or less by how you behave,” Kemp said. “He already loves you unconditionally based on receiving the forgiveness of Christ. Wouldn’t it make sense then that our identity as a man, as well as the strength of our identity and how we live as a man, are received through a relationship with the heavenly father, the way Jesus did it? The reason this is so hard for guys is that it’s counterintuitive — but most things in the Bible are counterintuitive.”

Even Christian men can fall into a trap of believing they can find their identity through performance.

“In general, a man believes he needs to earn things when he becomes a believer,” Kemp says. “He thinks there is a way the guys in church are doing things or a way the pastor expects things to be done. I’m not saying we don’t need to apply ourselves or that we don’t need teamwork. But the fundamental thing we are aiming to do is to get so close to God so we are listening to him and letting him guide us

Football player criticized for supporting FCA cause

Football players throughout the NFL on Sunday participated in My Cause, My Cleats, in which they promoted their favorite charities on their game cleats. More than 900 players wore special cleats, which later will be auctioned off to support their chosen charities.

Of course, no good deed goes unpunished in an age of political correctness. Cornerback Kendall Fuller of the Washington Commanders used the opportunity to express support for Kansas City’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes during Sunday’s game against the Miami Dolphins. The list of which causes NFL players would support during Weeks 13 and 14 of the season was released last month. As Week 13 crept closer, Fuller was criticized for his support of the Christian group.

OutSports, a sports website focused on LGBTQ+ issues, scrutinized Fuller for his support of the FCA. The site described the FCA as having “anti-LGBTQ policies” and previously criticized the organization’s belief system, which reportedly included that marriage is between a man and woman and a sexual purity statement that condemns sex outside of marriage and homosexual acts.

“The Fellowship of Christian Athletes

in how to live, which means we are receiving.”

“Receive” has 22 chapters in four sections — receive, transform, huddle and lift. It is designed for men to study with friends or in small groups, and a field guide is available. Men will enjoy the football analogies and insights from such players and coaches as Russell Wilson, Tony Dungy and Benjamin Watson.

“Jeff Kemp has been a leader of men his adult life,” CBS broadcaster Jim Nantz said. “He now provides a gameplan based on following the way of the ultimate man at the center of history.”

Anyone who orders “Receive” at www.jeffkempteam.com will receive a bonus gift of the book “Level Five Friendship.” There also is a discount with orders of 12 or more books. The book makes a good gift for Christmas or for men making resolutions for 2024.

“The message of ‘Receive’ is a hopeful and grace-filled one,” Kemp said. “We can receive our identity; we do not have to perform for it or earn it. ‘Receive’ is a message to break free, go back to the way Jesus did it and receive both identity and the way of living from the father, and you are set free from having to perform. Then you live from your identity instead of trying to earn it.”



is appreciative to the many players who have represented FCA in the NFL’s My Cause My Cleats campaign,” the organization said in a statement. “For 69 years, FCA has stayed true to its vision to see

the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes. All are welcome to participate in Fellowship of Christian Athletes activities and events, and FCA believes that all people are of great worth and value to God, and should be treated with love, dignity and respect.”

Fuller, 28, is in his eighth season in the NFL and his sixth with the Commanders. He has played in 12 games this season and has two interceptions to his credit.

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It all takes place at Great Overland Station and on N. Kansas Avenue!

Fun Fair open 10 am - 3 pm at Great Overland Station, with Live Music 10:45 am - 3 pm!
Parade starts at 10 am at Garfield Park and goes to the tracks in NOTO. Big Egg Hunt follows parade at 11 am at Great Overland Station! Food Trucks open 9 am - 3pm at Great Overland Station.
Vendor Market and Health Fair open 10 am - 3 pm at Great Overland Station, with craft stations, face painting, Easter Bunny photos, Petting Zoo, Inflatables, Carnival Games, Cup Cake Walks, Health exams, products & demonstrations: Dance, Gymnastics, Ballet, Vision Screening and more!

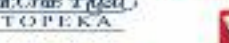
Volunteers needed! Contact:

info@C5Alive.org or 785-640-6399

For booth, sponsor & parade entry information:

info@C5Alive.org or 785-640-6399

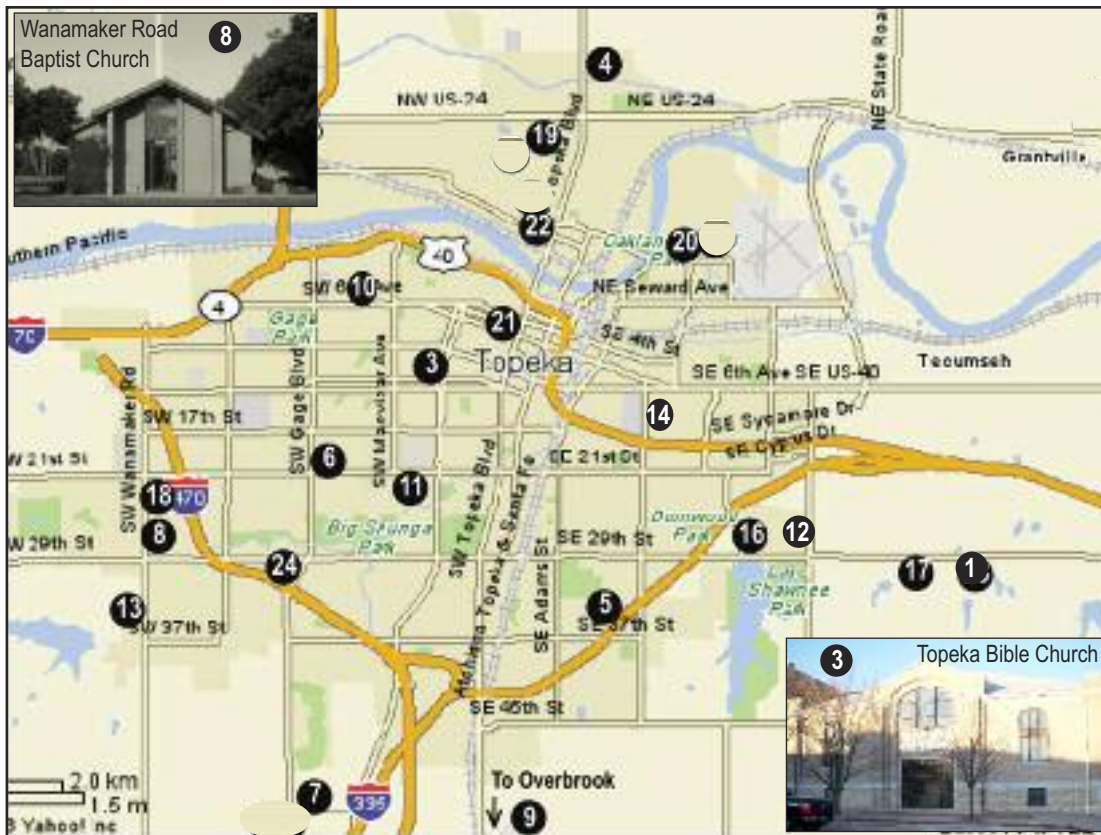
Funds raised will be shared with a local non-profit serving local families



SATURDAY, Mar. 30, 2024 • 10 AM - 3 PM

TopekaEasterParade.com • "Like" us on Facebook: Topeka Easter Parade & Family Fun Fair

New Resident Church Guide



1. HIGHLAND HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

785-379-5642
 Sunday Services: 8:30 and 10:00 AM
 2930 SE Tecumseh Road
 Tecumseh, Kansas 66654
www.highlandheightscc.com
 Jars of Clay Children's Ctr 785-379-9098

2. CHRISTIAN CAVALRY MINISTRIES INT.

Pastor Beau Bryant
 Call about new meeting location for current services.
 785-224-5419 • www.church4bikers.org
 Sun. School 9:30 am
 Sun. Service 10:45 am
 Wed. Prayer & Bible Study 7pm

3. TOPEKA BIBLE CHURCH

1101 SW Mulvane St., Topeka
 785-234-5545
 Worship: 9:00 & 10:30 am
 Livestream at 9:00 am
 Sunday School & Bible Studies:
 9:00 & 10:30 am
www.discovertbc.com

4. NORTHLAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3102 NW Topeka Blvd., Topeka
 286-1204
 Worship Sun. 9:00 & 10:45 AM
www.northland.cc

5. INDIANA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"Grace has dispensed, because Grace has redeemed"
 3510 SE Indiana Ave., Topeka, Ks. 66605
 785-266-7788, www.Indianaavecofc.org
 Bible University – Sunday - 9:30 a.m.
 Classes for all ages.
 Morning Worship – Sunday – 10:45 a.m.
 Midweek Bible University – Wed. – 7pm

6. FIRST SOUTHERN BAPTIST

1912 SW Gage, Topeka, KS
 272-0443 www.fsbctopeka.org
 Sunday Services:
 8:30 AM Traditional Worship
 9:45 AM Bible study—all ages
 11 AM Contemporary Worship

7. TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH

"Finding NEW LIFE in CHRIST"
 Sunday Worship 9:15 & 10:45am, 6pm
 ~ Sunday School for all ages ~
 4500 SW Gage Blvd., Topeka
 785-862-0988
www.topekabaptist.org

8. WANAMAKER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

"Being and making disciples of Jesus Christ by the power of the Gospel, to the glory of God"
 2700 SW Wanamaker Rd., Topeka
 (785) 272-9323 www.wrbctopeka.com
 Traditional Sunday Worship 11am & 6pm
 Sunday School 9:30am • Wed. Prayer 7pm

9. GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

310 E 8th St (E. US 56 Hwy)
 Overbrook, KS; 785-670-6456
 Elvin Dillard, Senior Pastor
 Sunday School 9 am; Worship 10 am
www.gccinoverbrook.com
office@gccinoverbrook.com

11. COMMUNITY CHURCH

1819 SW 21st St., Topeka
 233-3537 www.CommunityTopeka.com
info@CommunityTopeka.com
 Sun. 8:30am - Sunday School for all ages
 Sun. 10:00am - Worship & Word
 Sun. 10:00am Youth Service
 ~ Nursery care for all services ~

12. LAKEVIEW CHURCH of the NAZARENE

2835 SE Croco Road (785)266-3247
 Rob Self, Senior Pastor
 Facebook: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene
 Sun. 9:45am: Sunday School all ages
 Sunday 10:45am:
 Nursery, Children's Church, & Worship
 Wed.: Prayer, Bible Study, & Discussion 7-8pm
 Kids J.A.M. 'Jesus & Me!' 7-8pm

13. WANAMAKER WOODS NAZARENE

3501 SW Wanamaker Rd • 273-2248
www.wwnaz.org
 Sun. Worship: 9am (Hymns) & 11 am
 Children's Worship 9 & 11 am
 Sunday School 10 am, all ages
 Sun. Evening Various Children's Programs
 6 pm Life Groups; 6:30 pm Teen Service
 Wed. 6:30 pm Adult & Teen Life Groups
 Wed. 6:30 pm Kids University
 ~ Nursery care at all services ~

14. OPEN ARMS OUTREACH MINISTRIES COGIC

1 (785) 232-3463/+1 (785) 217-5560
 Sunday School 9:30, Worship 11:00
 In person or conference call:
 (712) 770-4749 / 583229
 Bible Study Tue & Wed conference call
 2401 SE 11th St., Topeka KS 66607
 Supt. S. C. Mitchell, Pastor

16. HOUSE OF THE LORD CHURCH

A Spirit-filled, Word-centered church
 2531 SE Wittenberg Rd., Topeka
 Sunday Worship 11am & 6pm
 Wed. Prayer & Praise 7pm
 785-266-LOVE (5683)
 J. Michael Borjon, Pastor

Local Christian Radio
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KFGB 97.7 FM
 Upper Room Radio

17. EAST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

4425 S.E. 29th St., 785-379-9933.
 Sunday Worship 10:00am & 5:30pm
 Sunday Evenings at 5:30pm:
 • AWANA
 • Student Ministries
 • reJengage
www.esbcks.org

20. HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1937 NE Madison St,
 Topeka, KS 66616 • 785-506-4594
 Pastor Dale Stockburger
 Sunday Worship: 11 am and 6pm
 Sunday School: Sun 10am
 Wed. Evening Worship: 7pm

21. HARVEST FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Meets at 522 SW Polk
 785-220-5418
 Pastor Rey Rodriguez
 Sun. Worship 10:30 am
www.harvestfamilyfellowshiptopeka.org

22. FAMILY OF GOD CHURCH

1231 NW Eugene St.
 Topeka, KS 66608
 Pastor Roger Randel
 Sunday School 9am; Worship 10:30am
 Wednesday Bible Study 7pm
 785-234-1111
FOGchurch.com

24. TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST

Holding to the authorized King James Version and the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
 Sunday 9:30 a.m. Wednesday 6 p.m.
 Pastor Bob Spagnuolo 785-273-3506
 meeting in our home:
 4307 SW 30th Ter., Topeka
www.TrinityReformedBaptist.org

Topeka Bible Church
 Leading People to Life in Christ
 1135 SW College Avenue
 and 1101 SW Mulvane
785.234.5545
 Sunday services, Sunday school, and Bible studies
 at 9 and 10:30 AM • Livestream at 9 AM • discovertbc.com

VOICE OF FAITH RADIO BROADCAST
 Sermons and Teachings of Rev Max L. Manning
 Sundays — 9 am WIBW RADIO 580 AM
 Daily (Mon—Fri) — 10 am KFGB 97.7 FM
www.global-missions.com
 PO Box 161 Topeka KS 66601
 785-232-2992 or 785-231-8183

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SERVICE:

ECONOMY HOUSE CLEANING in the Topeka Area: Only \$50 for most houses. Call Marvin for appointment. Phone 785-741-1929

WANTED:

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.

FEMALE SINGERS WANTED – Topeka Acapella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four part acapella harmonies. Topeka Acapella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Call Cindy Patton at 785-640-7403 for more information.

DELIVERY PERSON – Metro Voice needs someone to help distribute papers to churches and other locations in Topeka, a couple days a month, using your own car. Call 235-3340

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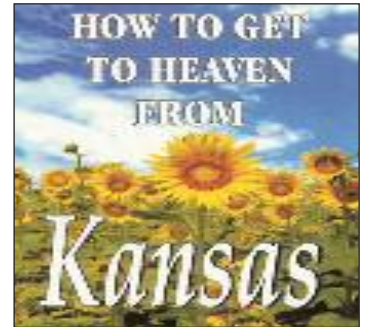
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EDE www.slitopeka.org



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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