



**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL** Page 13



**Lilo & Stitch** Page 17

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**June 2025**

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*See Inside  
Back Cover!*

**"Kids Ride Free!"**  
**all summer long on**  
**Topeka city buses**



Topeka kids can now look forward to a break from school, with summer right around the corner, as well as free transportation around Topeka on city buses.

Since the summer of 2013, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority has offered bus transportation at no cost on all fixed routes to youth ages 18 and under. They are again launching this popular promotion from May 15 through August 30.

"The Kids Ride FREE! program eases financial strain for families and encourages young people to navigate

■ Please see **RIDE FREE** page 3



**Topeka Renaissance Festival Gives Back to the Community**

The Topeka Renaissance Festival, scheduled for June 20th-22nd, 2025, is showing its commitment to community engagement through a series of philanthropic initiatives. Beyond providing an immersive historical experience,

the festival aims to contribute meaningfully to the Topeka community in four distinct ways.

One of the cornerstone initiatives is the "Build a Viking Shield" Contest. This event invites participants to showcase their craftsman-

ship, artistic skill, and imagination by designing and constructing a Viking shield. A \$5 entry fee grants participation, with all submitted shields to be displayed prominently throughout the festival grounds.

■ Please see **RENVEST** page 2

**Topeka Pools,**  
**Aquatic Centers**  
**are now open**



It may not be officially summer yet, technically speaking, but it feels like it in Shawnee County with the pools and aquatic centers all officially open! Grab a towel and some sunscreen and go make a splash!

• Aquatic Center operating hours are Noon-7 p.m., daily.

• Pool operating hours are Noon-5 p.m., daily.

• Adventure Cove operating hours are 11:30 am-7 p.m., Thur.-Mon

The Adventure Cove opened in 2017

■ Please see **POOLS** page 3

**New 250-Unit Community to Address Affordable Housing Needs in Topeka**

WNC & Associates (WNC), a family-owned business known as both a pioneer and leader in the affordable housing industry, and The Annex Group, a leading impact housing developer that creates affordable, workforce, student and market-rate housing communities, have begun construction on Union at Tower District, a \$69.7 million, 250-unit affordable housing community within walking distance of downtown Topeka.

Strategically located at the southeast corner of Southeast 11th and South-east Quincy Streets, Union at Tower District offers convenient access to nearby restaurants, retail, schools, pharmacies, recreational facilities, and major employment centers. The development features three modern buildings – rising three and four stories – that together house 250 modern, energy-efficient residences. The unit mix

■ Please see **HOUSING** page 3





## RENFEST

continued from page 1

The contest winner will receive a \$50 prize.

"The Viking Shield contest is an opportunity for individuals to express their creativity while contributing to a vital community resource," stated a festival spokesperson. "While historically significant, these shields also served as personal expressions. We encourage participants to let their imaginations flourish, as historical accuracy in decoration is not a strict requirement for this competition."

Importantly, all proceeds generated from the "Build a Viking Shield" contest will be donated directly to the NOTO Arts District Youth Program. This partnership underscores the festival's dedication to fostering artistic development and providing educational opportunities for young people within the Topeka community.

### "Build a Gnome Home" Charity Initiative

The Topeka Renaissance Festival has also unveiled its second significant community outreach program: the "Build a Gnome Home" contest. This initiative invites individuals and businesses to engage their creative talents while directly supporting Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

Participants in the "Build a Gnome Home" contest will construct imaginative gnome dwellings, with a portion of all entry fees dedicated to Habitat for Humanity ReStore. These contributions will aid ReStore in its vital mission of providing affordable building materials and fostering homeownership opportunities within the community.

The contest features an entry fee of \$10 for individual participants and \$100 for businesses, encompassing four distinct categories:

Cash prizes will be awarded, with individual winners receiving \$25 and the "Best Business" winner receiving \$100. This contest not only serves as a creative outlet but also offers businesses a unique platform for community engagement and philanthropic support.

"We are excited to introduce the 'Build a Gnome Home' contest as an-



**Angela Kearney (on the left) is lead organizer for Topeka Renaissance Festival. She and other organizers and participants have been appearing around town at various events to promote the festival.**

other facet of our commitment to the Topeka community," stated a festival representative. "It provides a wonderful opportunity for creative expression while directly contributing to Habitat for Humanity's crucial work in assisting local families.

### Charity Tug-of-War Tournament to Benefit HHHS

A third community engagement initiative is a Tug-of-War Tournament dedicated to supporting the Helping Hands Humane Society. This event provides a competitive platform for participants to contribute to local animal welfare.

The tournament will feature a single-elimination format, commencing at 11:00 AM. Teams consisting of five adult members (ages 18 and over; mixed-gender teams encouraged) are invited to compete. The entry fee is \$100 per team, with the victorious team receiving a \$100 cash prize and a championship trophy. It is important to note that the tournament

entry fee does not include general admission to the Topeka Renaissance Festival.

"This Tug-of-War tournament offers a unique blend of competitive excitement and philanthropic purpose," commented a festival representative. "It provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to engage in a spirited challenge while directly contributing to critical community service."

A significant portion of the proceeds

generated from the tournament will be allocated to the Helping Hands Humane Society, aiding their crucial efforts in caring for stray and lost pets within the Topeka area. This initiative highlights the festival's diverse commitment to community support.

### Highland Games Will Benefit SENT Topeka

The fourth and final pillar of Topeka Renaissance Festival's comprehensive community engagement strategy is the inclusion of Highland Games. This traditional Scottish athletic competition will serve as a dynamic fundraising event, with proceeds benefiting SENT Topeka's crucial work in community development and affordable housing.

The Highland Games will immerse participants in a vibrant celebration of Scottish and Celtic culture, featuring "heavy events" designed to test strength and skill. Local competitor and esteemed Highland Games organizer, Darrin Plank, will oversee the competition, ensuring adherence to traditional standards.

Participation in the Highland Games requires a \$50 entry fee per person. This fee encompasses entry into the competition, a commemorative Topeka Renaissance Festival T-shirt, and lunch.

"The introduction of the Highland Games provides a distinctive avenue for our attendees to connect with historical traditions while directly contributing to vital local initiatives," stated a festival spokesperson. "We are honored to partner with SENT Topeka, an organization actively building our community through impactful outreach programs and the provision of affordable housing solutions."

A substantial portion of the revenue

generated from the Highland Games will be directed to SENT Topeka, reinforcing the festival's commitment to supporting impactful organizations that foster community growth and stability.

### 12-acre plot will become a medieval realm

The Woodshed Event Center at 1901 North Kansas Avenue will be the epicenter of this inaugural Topeka Renaissance Festival. Behind its castle-like facade, the main ballroom will morph into Valhalla Hall, a haven for vendors, art, a welcoming bar, and spaces to rest weary travelers' feet. Venture through the mystical forest to discover the adults-only Pirate bar, complete with its own stage and an adjacent outdoor smoker's lounge.

Beyond the indoor wonders, the 12-acre Woodshed property will teem with life: live jousting tournaments unfolding alongside whimsical gnome homes and a dedicated Children's area, the enchanting Pixie Hollow brought to life by Once Upon a Party KS. Majestic Friesian horses will grace the grounds, alongside Juniper the War Cow and the mesmerizing Mermaids from OKC. For the adven-

turous at heart, archery and axe-throwing await, while unique treasures can be found among specialty vendors nestled within an enchanted festival. A petting zoo and face painting will also delight the younger visitors.

Mark your calendars for Saturday and Sunday, June 21st and 22nd, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. An affordable entry fee of \$16 per day (or \$30 for a two-day pass) awaits, with children aged 5-13 entering for just \$5 per day. This promises to be an incredible family-friendly event, with a dedicated space for adults to revel in the fun as well!

Adding to the magic, a Royal Ball will be held on Friday, June 20th, from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. This masquerade ball for adults 21 and over offers a sneak peek of the festival, complete with characters, vendors, and food trucks. Limited tickets are available at \$35, offering a chance to witness the King and Queen holding court at the Royal Dance in the enchanted ballroom.

Details on all events can be found on Topeka Renaissance Festival's Facebook page, as well as on their website: [www.geminivibeskansan.com](http://www.geminivibeskansan.com)



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



## Missouri Supreme Court Halts Abortions in State

The Missouri Supreme Court on Tuesday reinstated Missouri's abortion ban, overturning prior lower court decisions and requiring the case to undergo stricter legal scrutiny. This high-profile ruling effectively blocks most abortions in Missouri, following legal disputes sparked by Amendment 3, which added abortion rights to the state constitution.

The ruling states Jackson County Judge Jerri Zhang of the 16th Circuit applied the wrong legal standard when she temporarily blocked the state's abortion ban and licensing requirements in December 2024 and February 2025.

The dispute began after voters narrowly approved the pro-abortion Amendment 3 in November, adding



abortion rights to the state constitution.

Planned Parenthood affiliates quickly filed suit to end the state's pro-life laws, and Judge Zhang responded with orders allowing abortions to resume and ruling that the state's clinic licensing requirements were discriminatory. But the Missouri Supreme Court's two-page order Tuesday sided with state officials, stating that "Zhang applied the incorrect standard in issu-

ing injunctions against a duly-enacted state law and, in effect, had too easily enjoined the state's abortion restrictions," reports Reuters.

Attorney General Andrew Bailey had asked the court to intervene, warning that Zhang's orders left women "no guarantee of

health and safety because abortion facilities are functionally unregulated under state law in Missouri," reports Reuters. The Supreme Court agreed, emphasizing that any preliminary injunction against a state law must be supported by a "threshold finding" that the party seeking the injunction is "likely to prevail" on the merits of the case. Zhang will now have to reconsider the case using this stricter standard.

## RIDE FREE

continued from page 1

public transportation as well as learning to be more self-sufficient," said Topeka Metro General Manager Bob Nugent. "Our bus operators are supportive and make sure youth can travel safely to a variety of destinations within the city."

This program offers key benefits:

- Affordability – Helps families save

on transportation during summer.

- Independence – Youth can travel on their own to summer school, jobs, pools, the library, and more.

- Safety & Reliability – Buses provide a secure, dependable option for young riders.

- Skill Development – Encourages confidence and real-world navigation skills.

Teens may be asked to show ID; riders under 5 years-old are required

to be accompanied by an adult. Plan your trip easily at [topekametro.mytransitride.com](http://topekametro.mytransitride.com) or call customer service at 785-783-7000. Visit [topekametro.org](http://topekametro.org) for more info.

In the past, Topeka Metro has provided over 40,000 rides per year to Topeka kids.

Bus operations hours are Mon–Fri: 5:40 a.m. – 6:40 p.m., and Sat: 8:30 a.m. – 6:40 p.m.

## POOLS

continued from page 1

with themed paddle boats, the resumption of canoe and kayak rentals at the lake and the introduction of paddle board rentals.

Aquatics information including a list of facilities, admission prices, swim lessons and rentals may be found online at [parks.snco.us](http://parks.snco.us).

In addition to regular swimming hours, SCP+R offers an expanded array of aquatic fitness classes, Water Walking at Shawnee North Family

Aquatic Center and lap swimming hours at Blaisdell Family Aquatic Center.

The popular pool punch-passes are once again available. The passes are a less expensive alternative to paying full admission at the gate.

## HOUSING

continued from page 1

includes 100 one-bedroom, 84 two-bedroom, and 66 three-bedroom garden-style apartments, all reserved for households earning between 30% and 60% of the area median income (AMI).

"With 25% of households in Topeka earning less than \$25,000 a year, market-rate rentals are simply out of reach for too many families," said Dan Garrett, Vice President of Originations at WNC. "This development is about more than housing – it's about creating stability and opportunity for Topekans who need it most. We're proud to help bring

more affordable options to a city where the demand is both real and urgent."

Each unit at Union at Tower District will include essential modern features to support comfortable living. Amenities include an electric range, refrigerator, dishwasher, and in-unit washer and dryer. Homes will also feature central air conditioning, composite flooring, window blinds, and a private patio or balcony.

Union at Tower District will feature a wide range of community amenities that support an active, connected, and convenient lifestyle. Highlights include a clubhouse with a community room, a business and computer center, fitness center, dog park with pet care facilities,

and a playground. Residents will also have access to bike racks and storage, walking paths, common area Wi-Fi, and inviting shared outdoor spaces like patios and porches. Additional features such as elevator access, on-site management, CCTV security cameras, and a 252-space surface parking lot will further enhance convenience and peace of mind. Construction is expected to be completed in March 2027.

This project will utilize permanent financing from Citibank of \$16.55 million, along with \$20.1 million of State of Kansas affordable housing credits. WNC will infuse \$27.7 million of low-income housing tax credit equity into the project.

## C5 "POWER" Luncheon concerns man's best friend

The June C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 12th at 11:30am at the Celtic Fox at 8th & Jackson.

The program will feature a Cammie Landholm of Topeka Street Dog Coalition. This month's sponsor is Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation.

Admission is free, and lunch can be ordered from the menu on site. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto: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 leaders in community businesses, non-profits and churches.

Upcoming luncheon dates are July

10 and August 14, 2025.

C5 also hosts other events, including EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Fun Fair, held on N. Kansas Avenue and 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. Lower-

priced memberships for small and home-based businesses are now available. Individuals without a business to promote may join for \$20. A list of current members and more information is available on the website at [www.C5Alive.org](http://www.C5Alive.org), [www.facebook.com/C5Alive](http://www.facebook.com/C5Alive), or call 785-640-6399.



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# Holocaust Exhibit Comes to Lee’s Summit June 8 for One-Day Exhibit

A powerful Holocaust exhibit and open House will take place Sunday, June 8, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at Colbern Road Library in Lee’s Summit. “Shoah: How Was It Humanly Possible?” challenges viewers to confront difficult questions about conformity and the capacity for courage in the face of evil.

Through 20 vivid panels, it examines the unprecedented systematic genocide perpetrated in Europe from 1933 to 1945. Through compelling photos and powerful words, it trace the evolution of the Holocaust from peaceful Jewish neighborhoods in pre-war Europe through the rise of Nazi Germany, exploring how ordinary human beings became willing participants in the mass murder of millions.

“When viewers see these images and learn their stories, something changes,” says Anita Widaman, director of VisionIsrael.org and publisher of MetroVoice. “They begin to understand why we say ‘never again’ – and why that promise is more important now than ever.”

“Shoah”, the Hebrew word for Holocaust, encourages Christian communities to confront the hardest questions of faith and humanity. How do ordinary people



turn on their neighbors or, ing places from the Nazis. “Some lessons can only be fore seeing such an exhibit, people might ask me how normal

learned by looking evil in the eye,” Widaman believes. “But there’s also hope as it examines the strength of the soul from where ordinary people risked their own lives, and those of their families, to shelter their neighbors from the Nazis.”

Widaman shares that people could let this happen. “This exhibit answers that question by showing how gradually, step by step, an entire society turned against its neighbors. It’s a warning about how fragile our humanity can be,” she says. “Shoah: How was it Humanly Possible?” is produced by Widaman and her husband, Dwight, in partnership with Yad Vashem: the World Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. The couple founded Vision Israel as an educational nonprofit and developed relationships with Yad Vashem on the tours to Israel they organize for groups.

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11



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# TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

**June 21st & 22nd 2025**  
**10 am - 6 pm**  
**1901 N. Kansas Ave Topeka KS**

**Jousting ♦ Living history ♦ 21 & over smokers lounge ♦ Pirates Vikings & Fantasy ♦ Axe & Arrow games ♦ Highland games ♦ Art Contest**  
**A STEP BACK IN TIME**

# Topeka Renaissance Festival

## MAGICAL MASQUERADE

### Royal Ball

**June 20th**  
**6 pm - 11 pm**

The Woodshed Event Center  
 1401 N. Kansas Ave  
 Topeka KS

Limited tickets available  
 experience the festival before the weekend  
**\$35 per person**

# Gnome Home Contest

## BUILD A GNOME HOME

**ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 18TH, 2025**  
 Homes be displayed during the Topeka Renaissance Festival

\$20 per individual  
 \$200 per business

Portion of the Proceeds benefit Restore Topeka Habitat For Humanity

Houses can be no more than a 1/2 x 1/2 ft  
 Personal houses please keep it family friendly

Judging by Festival Attendees  
**WINNER CASH PRIZE**

Business Houses use a 1/2 x 1/2 ft to build your home & promote your business

**TO SIGN UP - MORE INFORMATION** [www.gnomesinthehouse.com](http://www.gnomesinthehouse.com)

# CALLING AN ARTIST

## Viking Shield Art Contest

Entries Due by June 18th, 2025  
 Will be displayed during the Topeka Renaissance Festival

June 20th - 22nd  
 The Woodshed Event Center

Cost to enter: \$2  
 Proceeds benefit: 80% Arts & Crafts Program Winner: \$50

Sign up - More information [www.gnomesinthehouse.com](http://www.gnomesinthehouse.com)

# TUG OF WAR TOURNAMENT

PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS TO GOVERNMENT HELPING HANDS HUMANITY SOCIETY

SUNDAY JUNE 22ND, 2025 | 011:00 AM  
 REGISTRATION FEES: /\$100 PER TEAM (5 PEOPLE) OVER 10 YRS OF AGE

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Come to watch an exciting tug of war and cheer for your favorite team!

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## WEALTH MAGNIFIES WHAT'S THERE

Dear Dave,

My wife and I started out broke when we married. Since then, we've been very blessed in our work and investments. We're currently looking at retiring early in a few years, with a nest egg of somewhere between \$8 million and \$12 million. Our four daughters, all between the ages of 7 and 12, have been raised in the church, and we've tried our best to teach them to love God, not money. Is there a certain limit in terms of how much we

leave them as an inheritance?

Mark

Dear Mark,

Honestly, I don't look at things like this in terms of an amount, but as a principle. You aren't obligated, biblically or otherwise, to leave your money to your kids. At the same time, I think it's wrong to assume that leaving them your money will damage them in some way. Wealth always magnifies the character of the person holding it. That includes both their positive and negative traits. You said you're raising your girls to love God and understand that the church is important. I believe those are great first steps toward teaching children to have good, strong character.

he Bible tells us that a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children (Proverbs 13:22). But at the same time, you don't want your hard-earned money going to fund a cocaine habit for

some here today, gone tomorrow reality television star on the back of a yacht. It sounds to me like you and your wife are doing a great job — not only with your money but also with raising your girls to know right from wrong and to have a sound, biblically based moral compass. Finally, Mark, one thing I want you to

avoid falling for is the thread running through some of our Christian churches that says money is a bad thing. It's not. Money is a tool, one that's not inherently good or bad. It can be used responsibly or irresponsibly, depending on the holder, and it exposes the morals and character of the people it touches.

Your job as parents is to raise kids who grow into adults with the morals and character to manage this huge financial legacy wisely for the Lord. If you do your job well (and I think you're off to a good start), the wealth you leave them will truly be a blessing.

—Dave

## The Benefits of Qualified Charitable Distributions

By Susan Shumaker  
Tax Professional at  
The Retirement Team



As individuals approach retirement age, managing tax obligations becomes an increasingly important part of financial planning. One powerful — yet often underused — strategy for charitable individuals over 70½ years old is the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This tax-smart approach allows donors to support their favorite causes while enjoying significant tax benefits. Here's a closer look at why QCD charitable giving can be a win-win for both taxpayers and charities.

### What Is a QCD?

A Qualified Charitable Distribution allows individuals aged 70½ or older to donate up to \$108,000 per year (and indexed yearly for inflation) directly from their traditional IRA to a qualified charity. The donated amount can be counted toward the individual's Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) for the year — but critically, it is excluded from taxable income.

Unlike a regular charitable deduction that requires itemizing on a tax return, QCDs offer a direct reduction in adjusted gross income (AGI), which can have broader financial advantages beyond the donation itself.

### The Major Benefits of QCD Charitable Giving

1. Direct Reduction of Taxable Income

The most immediate benefit of a QCD is the reduction in taxable income. Normally, withdrawals from traditional IRAs are taxed as ordinary income. With a QCD, however, the donated amount is excluded from taxable income altogether. This is particularly valuable because:

- Lower taxable income can reduce your overall tax bill.
- It may prevent certain taxes from kicking in, such as taxes on Social Security benefits.
- It can help avoid the 3.8% Net Investment Income Tax applied to higher-income individuals.

2. Satisfying Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)

Starting at age 73 (as of 2023 rules), retirees must take annual RMDs from their retirement accounts, whether they need the money or not. QCDs can count toward meeting these RMD requirements. This allows individuals to satisfy the IRS withdrawal mandate without inflating their taxable income, which can otherwise have ripple effects on taxes and benefits.

3. No Need to Itemize Deductions

After the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, far fewer taxpayers itemize deductions because the standard deduction nearly doubled. Under typical charitable giving, donors only get a tax break if they itemize. However, QCDs bypass this limitation — you receive the tax benefit even if you take the standard deduction.

This means you can simplify your tax filing while still enjoying the full advantage of your charitable giving.

4. Mitigating Medicare Premiums and Other Costs

Because Medicare premiums are based on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI), reducing income via a QCD can lower income-related monthly adjustment amounts (IRMAA) for Medicare Parts B and D. In other words, strategic QCD giving could save money not just on taxes, but also on healthcare premiums.

5. Flexible Giving Options

QCDs offer donors flexibility in directing their funds to meaningful causes. Most qualified public charities are eligible recipients. However, it is important to note that certain organizations, such as donor-advised funds and private foundations, do not qualify for QCDs.

6. Enhancing Estate Planning

Making QCDs can also serve an estate planning function. Reducing the balance of an IRA during life means less taxable income will eventually pass to heirs, particularly important given that inherited IRAs must generally be distributed within 10 years under the SECURE Act.

By proactively using QCDs, individuals can support charities they care

about while reducing future tax burdens on their estates.

### Important Rules and Considerations

While the benefits are numerous, it's important to follow the IRS guidelines to ensure your distribution qualifies:

- The donor must be at least 70½ years old at the time of the distribution.
- Funds must be transferred directly from the IRA to the charity.
- The maximum amount that can qualify for a QCD is \$108,000 per year for 2025, (adjusted for inflation after 2024).
- Only Traditional IRAs (and in some cases inherited IRAs) qualify; 401(k)s and other retirement plans do not unless rolled over into an IRA first.
- Proper documentation and reporting are essential for tax purposes.

### Conclusion

Qualified Charitable Distributions offer a powerful way to merge tax efficiency with philanthropy. By using QCDs, retirees can meet their required minimum distributions, reduce their taxable income, potentially lower their Medicare premiums, and support causes close to their hearts — all without the need to itemize deductions.

As with any tax strategy, it's wise to consult with a financial advisor or tax professional to ensure QCDs are executed properly and aligned with broader financial goals. But for many charitably minded retirees, QCDs represent a smart and impactful giving strategy.

**You may contact Susan Shumaker at The Retirement Team today at 785-478-7808 for a complimentary consultation on your specific tax situation.**

*The Retirement Team is a team of Financial professionals, which includes a Dave Ramsey SmartVestor Pro, that specialize in helping retirees keep more of their hard earned dollars. They are located at 5909 SW 28th St, Ste 100, Topeka, KS. The phone number is 785-478-7808.*

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# Test Drive Your Retirement Plan

By Jim Hanna



Hanna

Two emotions are common for those who are nearing retirement – excitement and fear. Leaving the working world behind can feel empowering, however, apprehension about entering a new life stage may also creep in. If you're nearing retirement, you've likely taken steps to prepare financially for the future. But there's one important thing you might not have considered adding to your pre-retirement checklist – a practice run. Test driving aspects of your plan before you're actually in retirement can help provide a sense of security for this next phase of life.

Consider what an ideal retirement looks like in the long term. How you choose to spend your time (and in many cases, your money) in retirement is your decision to make, but it's not always an easy one. As we age, our interests, hobbies and relationships change. What you may consider your "ideal" retirement when you're 55 may not be the same as when you're 65. This evolution can make it hard to plan accurately for retirement. Consider sitting down with your spouse or family members to explore how aging and future milestones may alter your retirement. Your financial advisor can help you make a plan that aligns your ideal retirement with your financial situation.

Test drive your retirement lifestyle. Many people pledge a significant amount of savings towards a particular lifestyle in retirement. This could be a home in another part of the country, a timeshare or a trip abroad every year. Problems can arise if you have cemented a financial commitment to a certain lifestyle but change your mind

down the road. It's natural to change your mind about what you want, but it's better to understand the potential implications of altering your plan before you actually retire.

For example, those who have based their financial plan for retirement on the idea that they will be living in a new location may benefit from a practice run before making the big move. Consider an individual who has lived their entire life in New York, but moves to Florida when they retire – where taxes and cost-of-living are generally lower. Deciding after several years to relocate back to New York to be near family – where cost of living and tax rates differ – can mean savings may not go as far as planned. Be prudent and build some flexibility into your plan to avoid unintended consequences.

Simulate your retirement expenses. Practice can also be beneficial in another way – simulating how to manage your expenses in retirement. The idea that your cash flow no longer comes from a reliable paycheck, but from other sources like Social Security and personal savings can come as a shock – even to those who are well prepared for this change.

One idea to accomplish a sense of financial security is to run two accounts for a certain period of time. Through one account, manage all of your household and lifestyle expenses that you expect during retirement. This includes the costs for necessities like food, clothing, shelter, utilities, taxes and insurance as well as "nice- to-have" items like dining out, traveling, etc. Keep in mind that you may have to estimate or inflate your lifestyle expenses for retirement as they could rise when you have more free time.

Through the second account, manage all of your expenses that are expected to end in retirement like

principal and interest on a mortgage payment (if your home will be paid off), current car payments (although car payments can certainly happen again in retirement), college costs for your kids and contributions to retirement plans. Keeping these two separate accounts will help you more appropriately plan for and quantify your expenses in retirement.

The best way to get a handle on these expenses is to experience them while you're still working. Take that trip to Europe before retirement and find out first-hand what you can do within your budget. If the cost is different than expected, make adjustments to your financial projections to more accurately reflect reality.

Perfecting life in retirement. A little practice can go a long way toward easing emotional and financial concerns when it comes to making the jump into retirement. Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you determine a budget and a retirement income plan that fits your needs and desires.

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# 6 Tax Pitfalls to Avoid

By Ryan Shumaker  
**Smartvestor Pro**



*Ryan hosts a radio show Saturdays at 7:30am & Sundays at 8am on FM93.5/AM1440. Listen anytime at [RetireLawrence.com/Radio](http://RetireLawrence.com/Radio)*

I'm a big fan of the saying, "Give to Caesar his due, but not a dollar more!"; which is why at my firm we focus on helping clients create tax efficient retirement plans and portfolios. With tax filing season recently ending with many likely feeling they paid more than their due, we thought we'd share a few common issues we see when reviewing previous tax returns of new clients.

1) Selling too soon- Depending on when you sell an investment, you can pay anywhere from a 0% federal tax on your gains to a whopping 40.8%! Losing 40% of your gains to federal taxes when you could potentially lose nothing dramatically changes how much of your profit actually ends up in your pocket. Waiting to sell an investment after you've owned it for at least a year and/or when your income may be lower can significantly decrease your tax burden.

2) Poor recordkeeping- Prior to 2012, it was up to the taxpayer to keep a record of the purchase price of their investments. Thankfully since then brokerage firms have been required by law to keep track of this information and relay it to any firm an account may sub-

sequently be transferred to. Despite this change, we have seen situations where this information isn't transcribed properly or at all and investors pay tax on the entire sale price of an investment, rather than on just the gains. This happens even more frequently with investments bought prior to 2012, as firms won't always provide the original cost on tax forms in this scenario. If you're filing your own return, pay careful attention to tax documents when you receive them and don't blindly input numbers from these forms into tax software. If you're utilizing a professional to help you file your taxes and they don't catch this problem, you may want to consider a different preparer.

3) Not using losses optimally- With financial markets experiencing a bumpy ride recently, you may have losses in some of your investments. While having losses isn't fun, don't add insult to injury by failing to use them in the most tax advantageous way possible. Losses from prior years can be carried forward to future tax years and can be used strategically. For instance, it makes far more sense to offset your gains with losses if you're faced with a 40.8% tax versus a 0% tax, like in pitfall #1. You can also use up to \$3,000 worth of losses per year to offset the tax on other income that may be taxed at a higher rate. When an investment is sold should not be based solely on performance. Having a strong return is nice, but

■ Continued on page 11

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# opinion

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## Try Visualizing a Fair Trade World

By Christian Milord

For those with a sense of history, it's common knowledge that there never has been and never will be completely fair and free trade in this world due to the vagaries of human nature and differing national interests. However, it might help to imagine a world where trade is at least moving in the direction of greater fairness. Let's take a look.

### The Challenge

Most nations produce a range of goods and services that are sold in the domestic or foreign markets. There are labor, materials, and

packaging costs to the production process, which vary from country to country. In addition, there is a cost to deliver the item by train, truck, plane, or ship to its destination abroad or at home.

Once the item reaches its destination, it has to be unloaded from a transport vehicle at a particular business, port, or warehouse for eventual distribution. Consequently, the purchaser isn't merely paying for the product, but also any fees that accompany a lengthy process of transportation and distribution to the consumer.

This entire flow chart is part of the reason for fees, duties, levies, tariffs, and taxes on goods moving



about both within a country and also to foreign lands. The problem arises when taxes on goods reach an unreasonable level for both consumers and producers.

Government officials lower or

raise duties depending on the state of their domestic economies or to protect certain industries. They might also apply reciprocal tariffs according to levels set by trading

■ Continued on next page

## “Wives, Submit to Your Husbands.” No Way!



**CLINT  
DECKER**

President and  
Evangelist  
with Great  
Awakenings, Inc.

## Speaking Truth

A husband and wife were having a disagreement and stopped speaking to each other when suddenly, the husband realized that the next day he would need his wife to wake him up at 5:00 a.m. for an early morning business flight. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me up at 5:00 a.m.," and he left it where he knew she would find it.

The next morning the man woke up only to discover it was 9:00 a.m. and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife had not awakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed that said, "It is 5:00 a.m. Wake up!"

When it comes to marriages, we can do our best to try and find some humor in the tension, even though at the time it may not be so funny.

A wife once jokingly said, "the only thing I am going to submit to my husband is a complaint." What was her comment in response to? A Bible verse that states, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22) This verse can quickly strike up heated conversations in churches, academia and in politics.

Am I stepping on a cultural landmine? No, rather our society is. When we debate away God's truth for the home, we are assuring its destruction. What the Scriptures say about husbands, wives and children is the cultural life preserver we need to help save our marriages and families.

Year after year, 40 to 50 percent of first-time marriages end in divorce, and for those who marry a second or third time, the likely hood of divorce climbs higher and higher. Do you know the percentage of children that will end up living in divorced homes? It is 40%, which amounts to millions of our kids. We have this mess because we are not building marriages and families God's way.

Let me go back to Ephesians and read a little further, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church..." (Eph. 5:22-23) There is

more, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..." (5:25) And God does not leave out the children, "...obey



your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (6:1) Can you see what God is communicating? Order and responsibility.

The concept came from our Creator. He made each of us with equal worth, but with distinct roles. It reflects the Holy Trinity. God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit are separate but one with different responsibilities. The Spirit submits to the Father and the Son, while the Son submits to the Father.

Likewise, God built the family. He appointed the husband as leader, the wife under his leadership, the children under the parents and all under Jesus. This also reflects divine order, and was God's perfect plan before evil and lawlessness came into the world causing chaotic disorder. Then husbands began

dominating their wives and children, some being passive and others putting their work and hobbies first. Wives started controlling their husbands and putting their children first, and children rose up in defiance to their parents. It has been, and still is, a battle for selfish control.

Jesus is the answer to this chaos. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, yet He humbled Himself, by submitting to the Father's will to suffer, die and rise again. Why? So that we might be made new. It is not about male dominance or patriarchy. It is about the family coming under the authority of Christ the King with a willing and loving heart, as modeled for us through the cross.

These are hard truths, and will not be easy to follow, but through Christ it is possible. And today it can start with just one member of the family. Will you be the one?

A prayer for you – *Lord God, I pray for the families of America. End the chaos and the divorce epidemic. Bring husbands, wives and children to yield themselves before the one true King, and bring love, peace and forgiveness in their homes. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

—Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Share your comment at [cdecker@greatawakenings.org](mailto:cdecker@greatawakenings.org) and follow his blog at [clintdecker.blogspot.com](http://clintdecker.blogspot.com).



# 'A Republic. If You Can Keep It'

By Carolyn Cogswell

I'll never get used to email. It makes me dizzy. I don't like this whole idea of getting rid of paper. I don't have anything against getting rid of paper per se. I got rid of a whole lot of paper today. But this idea that we have to "go paperless," not so much. I don't know if it's because of the cohort of people who believe there will never be enough resources (e.g., trees) to meet the needs of all the people on our "overpopulated" planet, or whether it's because the people in charge of everything just want to be in charge of everything and create a "brave new world" of the 21st century or what, but it's really so oppressive.

And they're going to get rid of pennies. And what is next? No more cash, of course, is obviously where they're headed.

So, when all their goals are accomplished what will we have? Just a bunch of people typing on electronic devices in cubicles all over the world? No more jobs to go to, because everyone will be working at home, I suppose. So in the Great Reset proposed by the World Economic Forum, which will obliterate human rights and national sovereignty as the godless ideologues around the world plot to take over the world and everybody in it, we will all just live in isolation until we die? Is that the plan? Apparently.

The events taking place in our world right now are very concerning on every front, and I believe that there are spiritual strongholds at the bottom of all of it. I believe we are seeing it more and more as we

get closer to the end of the age, we will see it more and more and understand it better.

Sometimes the power behind the destructive social and cultural trends and even crime and wars, is referred to as evil, but there are actually people who don't believe such a thing exists. I am not sure how they explain it, other than to label anything they disagree with as evil, but I think it's more than that.

I think that whole swaths of people don't believe in anything that Christians believe about sin and about evil. They don't believe the Bible is something to take seriously, they don't believe in God and Jesus, and they don't believe in the devil, so talking about these things just makes them want to poo-poo the whole thing. Then they just say, "I don't believe that," and go on about their lives, feeling stressed and worried and angry and confused about what's happening and lashing out at people who have a worldview different from theirs.

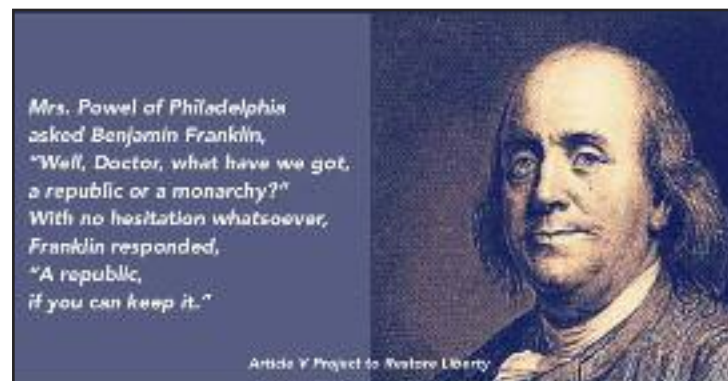
And that is what we're seeing with the political division that is currently coming to a head. They are giving it names that try to explain what it is, for example a "Constitutional Crisis." Yes, that is what we are experiencing right now. Americans have grown very ignorant about the founding documents of our great nation, and we really need to correct that. Both sides of the divide need to do that. I really think that if all Americans exerted some effort to inform themselves about the Constitution, it would help a lot.

There are a lot of things going on in the government that have been going on since the founding of the United States, that most of us are not aware of. The first book I read that really began to open my eyes was a book called *None Dare Call it Treason* by John Stormer. If you haven't read it, I recommend it to get you started. Then recently I started taking free online courses by Hillsdale College. I highly recommend them also.

It is our duty as citizens of a representative republic to be informed. Otherwise, we will not have an America anymore. As Benjamin Franklin said, "A republic. If you can keep it." Those words really shake me up. I don't know about you. But we all need to be involved. We can't expect elections to solve everything, if we ever could. If elections were all that kept us going as a representative form of government, bureaucrats would not be able to stay in power as long as they do and overrule the will of the people the way they do. We all need to get our heads together and figure this thing out.

Elections were intended to be the way to keep our republic a republic, but as evil gets involved and the citizens do not, we will not keep it. I am convinced of that. The founders knew people were sinful. That is why they worked so hard and risked so much to put together the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

And the battle is also spiritual. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 these words:



"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

My Bible notes tell me the obedience Paul was referring to here means "the commitment of the Corinthians to Paul's cause in opposing the false apostles."

Besides praying and pulling down strongholds, the people of God need to pray for the people in government. I confess I have been very lax about this, but Paul writes about it in 2 Timothy 2. In verses 18-20, he talks about church leadership, describing some who have "suffered shipwreck," and which we are seeing also in today's church.

And then, he writes, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be

made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (2 Timothy 2:1-7).

So, there you have our instructions for this evil age. We are in this world with all kinds of people, and we first need to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and then to love our neighbor as ourselves. Simply put, that's what we are to do, and praying for everybody and praying for our government leaders is also what we are supposed to do. Let's pray for each other that we will hear and do what God is telling us to do.

## ■ Continued from previous page

partners.

The law of supply and demand can also affect tariff rates on products. If demand and supply are balanced, there is usually greater stability. If demand outstrips supply, prices often rise, and when supply exceeds demand, prices are often reduced.

If tariff levels rise too high, a trade war can ensue until the costs of economic warfare outweigh the benefits, and negotiations proceed to reduce barriers and taxes. It's important to remember that labor and quality control standards vary from country to country when assessing the reasonable costs for goods and services and accompanying fees.

## Possible Solutions

In the current trade environ-

ment, there is plenty of uncertainty as the status quo is being upended. Under the Trump administration, exorbitant levies placed on American exports to foreign lands have been raised as part of bargaining for reduced trade barriers and a leveling of the tariff playing field.

The threat of higher U.S. tariffs on incoming foreign goods has brought both adversaries and allies to the negotiating table to rethink economic policies within the framework of each respective nation's interest. Some nations have retaliated against the potential higher tariffs that might be implemented following a ninety-day pause, despite the fact that most nations already had sky-high tariffs placed on specific American products.

It's quite reasonable that nations protect certain industries and intellectual property that enhance

national security and export goods to increase development. However, protectionism can go overboard by denying citizens of any nation access to quality goods and services from other nations.

In prior decades, countries such as Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan were primarily export-driven nations until they underwent further modernization and began to meet the needs of domestic consumers.

China failed to adhere to that same pattern and has continued to dump highly taxed, cheaper goods abroad at the expense of its workforce. The Chinese Communist Party has grown very wealthy while half of the populace lives in poverty. In time, this can lead to decreased economic productivity and perhaps social unrest.

Let us examine what it might

look like for trade to become fairer and freer. Due to the interdependent nature of global commerce, nations would begin to open up their own markets to foreign companies and investors. However, these business forays should refrain from creating debt traps for the nations that host these enterprises. Foreign companies could bring in a leadership team but primarily hire local workers to enable economic development through manufacturing and services.

Building trust over a period of time would create an environment wherein trade barriers and taxes could be lowered to allow for domestic consumption and exports. Foreign investment could also motivate developing nations to become more self-sufficient in specific critical industries as development unfolds and they create

their own intellectual property. Any technology transfers would be mutually agreed upon.

Likewise, the nations that carry out the investing would benefit from reasonably priced goods from other nations, and at the same time rely less on recalcitrant states that attach high fees on products they export. Although it's partially wishful thinking, it's possible to attain fairer trade if nations would negotiate in good faith in areas that align with their national interests without surrendering their autonomy.

In this scenario, it could be argued that balanced trade might lead to improved economic growth as well as better labor and quality control standards. Some less democratic nations might gradually come around to embrace greater freedom and the rule of law.



# Churches See Attendance Rebound and Volunteering Surge

Church attendance in the United States is seeing a notable rebound, with an estimated 32 percent of adults attending in early 2025. This church attendance surge reverses a long-standing decline, as numbers had dropped from 48 percent in 2009 to just 28 percent last year, according to recent research. The upward trend is especially visible in new studies, which also highlight a volunteering surge revitalizing church communities according to the latest State of the Church re-



search from the Barna Group.

"There are several exciting new insights from this month's report, most notably around attendance," said David Kinnaman,

CEO of State of the Church 2025: Barna Launches Groundbreaking Church Health Series. "While overall attendance has fluctuated, early 2025 data suggest signs of renewal, particularly among younger generations. These insights, coupled with trends we're seeing on church relevancy, relationships and volunteerism, offer hope for church leaders seeking revitalization and valuable opportunities to foster meaningful engagement in congregations."

Among other new findings:

- Sixty-five percent of adults believe church remains relevant in today's world.

- Weekly church volunteering rose to an estimated 24 percent (vs. 15 percent in 2024), with Gen Z (21 percent) and millennials (19 percent) significantly outpacing boomers (9 percent), Gen X (11 percent) and elders (12 percent).

- Today's churchgoers actively seek connection at church, with at least half engaging with a pastor (57 percent), other attendees (53 percent) or church staff (50 percent) before, during or after service.

- Adult Christians overwhelmingly prioritize spiritual encounters at church, with 73 percent saying "connecting to God" is very important to a meaningful church experience, followed by the "presence of the Holy Spirit" (68 percent) and "growing closer

to Jesus" (67 percent).

"As church leaders continue to navigate the rapidly evolving intersection of culture and church, it's essential to understand church engagement trends," said Brad Hill, chief solutions officer at Gloom. "These latest findings reinforce the critical role that churches play in helping people

and communities flourish. We're seeing some hopeful insights that can help leaders better meet people where they are and provide church as a place for deep connection with God and one another. The findings in this report provide some exciting new opportunities for deepening engagement in enduring ways."

Every Sunday night in June: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at East Side Baptist Church, 4425 SE 29th St. Register at [esbcks.org/vbs](http://esbcks.org/vbs) or use QR code.

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## Pickleball Brings Churches Together Through Upward Sports

Many churches are engaging members and building relationships through one of the fastest-growing sports in the nation, pickleball. Now, the Christian youth sports organization Upward Sports has added it to its growing list of sports options.

“With its easy-to-learn format and broad appeal, pickleball aligns perfectly with Upward Sports’ desire to support local churches by offering impactful sports experiences,” according to the group. “Whether participants are seasoned players or stepping onto the court for the first time, Upward pickleball offers a welcoming environment for skill development, friendly competition and relationships to be formed.”

### Upward Options

Churches can choose from two flexible league options — the traditional format, which includes separate practice and game nights, or the practice and play format, where both activities occur on the same night. This flexibility allows churches to tailor the program to best support their congregation and community.

“As the fastest-growing sport in America, it offers churches an excellent opportunity to bring people together so they can encounter Christ,” Executive Director Kevin Drake said. “Every church that does Upward pickleball will engage with people they would never



meet otherwise.”

Pickleball continues to grow in popularity across all age groups and communities, making it an ideal sport for churches seeking to connect with members and neighbors. Its simple rules and broad appeal have helped make it the sport that’s “taking America by storm,” as noted by USA Today.

Local church leaders already are embracing this new offering.

“Upward pickleball is a multigenerational sport giving our church the opportunity to have enthusiastic coaches that foster meaningful relationships with parents and players,” said Pastor Chad Booher of Creekside Church in St. Johns, Fla. “Pickleball provides us a clear means to help everyone experience an overflow of Christ in their life.”

Upward pickleball offers a compre-

hensive and easy-to-implement league experience, primarily focusing on middle to high schoolers, providing churches with adaptable league structures, coaching resources, apparel and ministry materials to ensure lasting impact.

For nearly 30 years, Upward Sports has empowered churches to use sports as a connection tool for community outreach. With programs in basketball, flag football, soccer, cheerleading, volleyball, baseball, softball, running for adults and now pickleball, it continues to provide innovative ways for churches to make a difference through sports and foster the discovery of Jesus.

For more on how churches are using sports to build community and faith, see this feature on Upward Sports’ mission and how local churches are connecting with youth through sports.

## RYAN SHUMAKER

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keeping more after taxes is nicer. If you fail to account for tax implications, a large investment gain could result in less money making it back to your bank account versus a smaller gain with smart planning.

4) Buying too soon- Washing dirty hands before eating is a good idea, but rebuying an investment you recently lost money on usually isn’t. Why? Well, if you sell an investment for a loss, but repurchase the same or a substantially identical one within 30 days you can’t claim the loss on your taxes. If you’re looking to maximize your after tax investment return, which investments you buy and when can sometimes be just as important as which investments you sell and when.

5) Missing tax breaks- According to the IRS, over 1/3 of all errors on tax returns involve either the child tax credit (16%), earned income tax credit (10%), or taking deductions (8%). These 3 are the most commonly caught by the IRS as they’re usually something computer systems can catch automatically, but you shouldn’t bank on the IRS finding missed tax credits or deductions for you. With the myriad of newly available tax breaks as part of the inflation reduction act for certain car purchases and home improvement projects (many of which have complicated requirements), you may want to seek out a second opinion as to

whether you’re receiving every tax break you’re entitled to.

6) Using the default tax plan- Taxes are complicated. There are over 6,800 pages of tax code and 70,000 pages of interpretations and guidelines related to that code. When confronted with something this overwhelming, it is easy to throw up your hands and say, ‘whatever I owe, I owe.’ The issue with taking this route is that you’re accepting the ‘default tax plan.’ Given that the default plan was created by the government, who do you think it benefits most?

Being able to select great investments is only one small part of creating the highest investment return that you can keep and spend in retirement. It doesn’t necessarily matter how much you make with your investments, it matters how much you keep after taxes since what you keep is what you can spend. Unsuccessful investors react to what has already happened, while successful ones continuously act on a plan, so get a tax plan you’re continually acting on. Don’t get stuck reacting to the default tax plan as that can be quite costly.

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FOR  
**TOPEKA CITY MAYOR**

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*Paid for By Duncan For Topeka, Barbara Duncan Treasurer*



# Welcome... TO NORTH TOPEKA!



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[FOGchurch.com](http://FOGchurch.com)

## June features Concerts, Summerween & Renaissance

**NOTO Summer Concert Series** is happening again on 3rd Fridays in Redbud Park. On June 20th it will feature Carswell & Hope. Just getting back from their European Tour in Ireland, this Lawrence, KS band bring a unique taste of Ireland to the Midwest. Carswell & Hope bring vintage rock sounds and sensibilities together with big harmonies, carefully crafted textures and inventive songwriting, to create a sound and experience all of their own. Formed in 2012 when Irishman Nick Carswell arrived in Lawrence, Kansas with guitar in hand. He soon found Jason Slote (drums), Austin Quick (bass/keys) and Jordan Tucker (guitar), and the sound immediately began to form the cohesive yet difficult to define space that Carswell & Hope inhabits. The band has been compared to Elvis Costello, Radiohead, Fleet Foxes, Local Natives and ELO. Bring a lawn chair and bring a friend, this is one summer concert you don't want to miss!!

**Summerween** will take place on June 26 from 6-8:30 pm, presented by Mars, the official Halloween Headquarters in Topeka! Trick-or-treat with Mars in NOTO! Free candy for everyone!! Live music by Ocean Side Hotel, photo op with the M&M's characters, food truck, fun, and memories for a lifetime! Come in costume!

The **Inaugural Topeka Renaissance Festival** comes to the grounds of The Woodshed Event Center on June 21-22. Step back in time in this 12-acre fantasy wonderland!

Here are some other North Topeka events to look forward to:

**FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE MUSEUM** – Every First Friday, 6-10pm, Great Overland Station, 701 N. Kansas Ave. Karaoke, board games, card games, including the digital card game Magic: The Gathering Arena, Dungeons and Dragons, crafts and activities, food and refreshments, and

more. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for teens. Children 12 and under free.

**FIRST FRIDAY FARM & ART MARKET** – Every First Friday through Sep., 4-10pm, Great Overland Station. For info: [communityevents@snco.gov](mailto:communityevents@snco.gov) or 785-251-6945

**WOODSHED MARKET: NOTO EDITION 2ND SATURDAYS** – 10-4, in NOTO.

**TOPEKA'S BACKYARD MUSICFEST** – May 30 – 31, doors open at noon, shows start at 3pm. Music, arts, crafts, wrestling. 15 Bands + MCs & DJs on 3 stages. [www.topekasbackyardmusicfest.com](http://www.topekasbackyardmusicfest.com)

**FAMILY DAY OUT** – May 31, 10-3, Woodshed Event Center. Celebrating kids, Dads, granddads, stepdads and bonus dads. Food, crafts, bounce house, photo booth, kids activities and more.

**JESUS FEST** – June 7, 1-4pm, Family of God Church, 1231 NW Eugene St. Josh Anderson, JQ Guest, DVVID, Dominick Totta, Rev Rog & Rhythm Review. Food & drinks provided while supplies last. Bring a lawn chair. Prizes, too!

**NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT** - June 16, 7:30-9pm. Garfield Park Gazebo, 1600 NE Quincy

**INGNETWORKING LUNCH** - June 4, 11:30-12:30, Bradley's Cafe. Come network with other small business people. Order from menu if desired.

**COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY** – June 6, 5-9pm, 1110 N. Kansas, Kaw Valley Bank celebrating with food and live music by Departure. Kid friendly! Free pizza. Pineapple Dream, face painting and balloon artists while supplies last

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL VIKING SHIELD ART CONTEST and GNOME HOME CONTEST** - Jun. 18, 10am, Woodshed Event Ctr. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details.

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL ROYAL BALL** - Jun. 20, 6-11pm, Woodshed Event Ctr. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details. Limited Ticket Event. See the "Topeka Renaissance Festival" before the crowds come! Only 150 Tickets available, Walk the 13 acres of this amazing event with Characters & vendors on site! Dance royally in our beautiful "Valhalla Ballroom." Meet the Jousts and our King & Queen w/ their court!

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

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

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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](mailto:Voice@cox.net); mail to Metro Voice, P.O. 5724, Topeka, KS 66605; fax to 785-235-3340 or enter online at [metrovoicenews.com](http://metrovoicenews.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

**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 [grandopry@gmail.com](mailto:grandopry@gmail.com). [GrandOttawaOpry.com](http://GrandOttawaOpry.com)

**WOOD VALLEY PICKERS** — Last Sat of each month, 7pm, Classic Bean, Fairlawn Plaza. Folk & Country, Free admission. 785-271-5005

**"PICKIN' ON THE PRAIRIE"**, a FREE Acoustic Jam at Great Overland Station every Sunday from 1-3pm. For info: 785-251-6944

**LIVE AT LUNCH** — Wednesdays, 11-1, Every Plaza. [www.evergyplaza.com](http://www.evergyplaza.com)

**EATS AND BEATS** — May 29, 6-9pm, Every Plaza. Departure with The R & J Playerz

**EATS AND BEATS** — Jun. 5, 6-9pm, Every Plaza.

**JESUS FEST — June 7, 1-4pm, Family of God Church, 1231 NW Eugene St. Josh Anderson, JQ Guest, DVID, Dominick Totta, Rev Rog & Rhythm Review. Food & drinks provided while supplies last. Bring a lawn chair. Prizes, too!**

**EATS AND BEATS** — Jun. 12, 6-9pm, Every Plaza.

**CONCERT FOR A CHILD** — June 13, 7pm, Every Plaza. featuring the Logan Mize 3-piece Acoustic Show. Also included: food trucks, line dancing lessons, raffles, a Capper Foundation presentation including a video featuring a child receiving therapy services, Dallas Pryor and the Lazy Wayne Band. Visit [www.capper.org](http://www.capper.org) or call 785-272-4060 or [abilities@capper.org](mailto:abilities@capper.org)

**SANTE FE BAND CONCERT** — June 15, 7pm, Gage Park Amphitheatre

**NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT** - June 16, 7:30-9pm. Garfield Park Gazebo, 1600 NE Quincy

**SUMMERTIME BLUES** — June 18, 7-9pm, Gage Park Amphitheatre. Brody Buster, Bobby's Food Co. Food Truck

**EATS AND BEATS** — Jun. 19, 6-9pm, Every Plaza.

**EATS AND BEATS** — Jun. 26, 6-9pm, Every Plaza.

## 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

**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](mailto:io@insideoutinc.net) or [www.insideoutinc.net](http://www.insideoutinc.net)

**KIDS for JESUS!** - Wednesday's 7 - 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](mailto: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**

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

**CELEBRATE THE SAVIOR VBS** — June 9-13, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame. Register at [www.christlcms.org](http://www.christlcms.org). 785-266-6263

**WONDER JUNCTION VBS** — June 9-13, 9-noon, Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, 2835 SE Croco Rd. For info: 785-266-3247, FB: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, [Lakenaz@aol.com](mailto:Lakenaz@aol.com)

**MAGNIFIED VBS - every Sunday night in June; 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th from 5-7PM at East Side Baptist Church, 4425 SE 29th St. Discovering the bigness of God in the smallest of things. Register online at [esbcs.org/vbs](http://esbcs.org/vbs)**

## 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 [nhonl@tsclpt.org](mailto:nhonl@tsclpt.org)

**COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING** - Thursdays 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Info: 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 ACAPPELLA 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. Cindy Patton: 785-640-7403

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

ing 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. [RandelMinistries.com](http://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.

**WOODSHED MARKET** — Sun. 9-2, 1901 N. Kansas Ave.

**FAMILY NIGHT AT COSMOS COURT** — Tuesdays, 5pm, Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas Ave. Pizza, salads, hot dogs, nachos, soup and more! Get a 16" Pizza, 2 side salads, and 4 cups of ice cream for only \$30! Also table games!

**FRIDAY NIGHT FUNNIES** — Every Friday at Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas. Weekly comedy show is only \$15, or two for \$25.

**SATURDAY CRUISE NIGHTS** — 5-9pm: 1st Sat: Spangles, 29th & Topeka Blvd (Cruise the Blvd!); 2nd Sat: Fairlawn Plaza; 3rd Sat: The Dugout, 17th & Fairlawn; 4th Sat: The Pad; 5th Sat: The Dugout.

**CARS AND COFFEE** — 10-Noon, every Saturday starting April 5 at Classic Bean; alternate Saturdays at Fellowship Bible Church, 10th & Urish. All models

**CORNER MARKET** — 2nd Saturdays. 29th & Adams. 50+ Vendors, food trucks, music, kids activities,

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**FIRST FRIDAY FARM & ART MARKET** — Every First Friday through Sep., 4-10pm, Great Overland Station. Info: [communityevents@snco.gov](http://communityevents@snco.gov) or 785-251-6945

**BREAD BASKET FARMERS MARKET** — Saturdays 7:30am-1pm, West Ridge Mall south parking lot

**DOWNTOWN TOPEKA FARMERS MARKET** - Saturday's April 12 thru Oct., 7:30am-noon, 6th & Harrison. The open-air market is full of fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, arts & crafts, flower,baked goods

**LAWRENCE FARMERS MARKET** - Sat. 7:30-11:30, 824 New Hampshire Street. Starting Apr. 12.

**MONDAY FARMERS MARKET** — Mondays 7:30-11:30am, thru Sep. 29, Topeka & Sh. Co. Library, 10th & Washburn.Closed Memorial Day & Labor Day

**OVERBROOK FARMER'S MARKET** - every Monday now to Labor Day, 4-6 pm at Overbrook Fair Grounds.

**SPLASH PAD FOUNTAINS** — Everyg Plaza, Sun. 12-6, and 11-1 & 4-8 on most weekdays.

**WOODSHED MARKET: NOTO EDITION 2ND SATURDAYS** — 10-4, in NOTO.

**SPLASH PAD YOGA AT EVERGY PLAZA** — Every Tuesday at 7pm.

**CROSSROADS FOUNTAIN SHOW** — Tuesdays 9-9:30pm, Everyg Plaza

**WOODSHED MARKET** — Sundays 9-2, 1901 N. Kansas Ave.

**WOODSHED MARKET: NOTO EDITION 2ND SATURDAYS** — 10-4, in NOTO.

**MONTHLY FARMERS /FLEA MARKET** — 3rd Saturdays, 8-2, Meriden Antique Threshers, 8275 K4 Hiway.

**SUNRISE JAZZERCISE** — Everyg Plaza, Saturdays. 9-10am

**TOPEKA'S BACKYARD MUSICFEST** — May 30 — 31, doors open at noon, shows start at 3pm. Music, arts, crafts, wrestling. 15 Bands + MCs & DJs on 3 stages. [www.topekaskbackyardmusicfest.com](http://www.topekaskbackyardmusicfest.com)

**FAMILY DAY OUT** — May 31, 10-3, Woodshed Event Center. Celebrating kids, Dads, granddads, stepdads and bonus dads. Food, crafts, bounce house, photo booth, kids activities and more.

**SUMMER KICK-OFF PARTY** — May 31, Topeka Library. A carnival-themed celebration with live music from Delta Haze. Face painting, canvas painting, yard games, Storytime and a photo booth! Check out big vehicles from Topeka Fire Department, SWAT, SNCO, and Everyg. Plus Kansas Highway Patrol helicopters and Great Plains Balloon Club

**PREPLANNING FOR PEACE OF MIND FREE MEAL WORKSHOP** — Jun. 3, 11:30-1 or 5:30-7pm, Johnny's Tavern. Plan ahead for funeral or cremation expenses to save your loved ones from making hard decisions. [www.penwellgabeltopeka.com](http://www.penwellgabeltopeka.com)

**ING NETWORKING LUNCH** - June 4, 11:30-12:30, Bradley's Cafe. Come network with other small business people. Order from menu if desired.

**FREE SPAY/NEUTER & MICROCHIPPING EVENT** — Jun. 4, 12-2pm, Southside Filling Station — 455 SE Golf Park Blvd. FREE Spay-Neuter & Vaccine Sign-Ups through the HHHS Community Clinic. FREE Microchipping — Fast, easy, and done on-site! No sedation or clinic visit needed! Pet Supply Giveaway — Leashes, collars & more (while supplies last!)

**COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY** — June 6, 5-9pm, 1110 N. Kansas, Kaw Valley Bank celebrating with food and live music by Departure. Kid friendly! Free pizza. Pineapple Dream, face painting and balloon artists while supplies last

**MULVANE ART FAIR** — June 7-8, Mulvane Art Museum, Washburn University Fine Art, food trucks, music, childrens activities. Adm: \$6

**GERMANFEST** — June 7 & 8, 312 NE Freeman, Sacred Heart-St. Joseph Parish

**MULVANE ART FAIR** — June 7-8, 10am, Mulvane Art Museum, Washburn University Fine Art, food trucks, music, childrens activities

**SHOAH: HOW WAS IT HUMANLY POSSIBLE** - Jun 8, 1:30-3:30pm. Colbern Road MCP Library, 1000 NE Colbern Rd. Lee's Summit, MO.

**HHHS FOOD TRUCK NIGHT** — Jun. 7, 4-8pm, 5720 SW 21st. Music, adoptions, free microchipping.

**C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON — June 12, 11:30-1, Celtic Fox, 8th & Jackson. Featuring Cammie Landholm of Topeka Street Dog Coalition. Free admission. Meals available from the menu if desired. Please RSVP to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org) so we know how many to expect. Open to the public - bring a friend!**

**SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon**, July 10, 11:30-1. Featured: Anthony Blanco, Business Coach

**SIDEWALK SALES** — Jun. 13-14, 10-5, Fairlawn Plaza. Music & food trucks, too

**HEARTLAND MILITARY DAY** — Jun. 14, 10-4, Museum of the KS National Guard, Forbes Field. Pancake Breakfast, Topeka High Band, Battle reenactments, Sante Fe Band, Topeka Big Band, Military equipment displays, noon cookout. Free Admission.

**MAETA TRUCK AND CAR SHOW** — June 14, 8-2, Meriden Antique Engine and Threshers Association, 8275 KS-4, Meriden. No Entry fee! Chuckwagon and camping available. Free Admission! Flea Market! Contact Sarah for info: 785-640-7164

**FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT** — Jun. 17, 5pm, Everyg Plaza. "Moana 2"

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL GNOME HOME CONTEST** — Jun. 18, 10am, Woodshed Event Ctr. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details.

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL VIKING SHIELD ART CONTEST** - Jun. 18, 10am, Woodshed Event Ctr. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details.

**ING NETWORKING LUNCH** - June 18, 11:30-12:30, El Ranchito #5, 3425 S. Kansas Ave. Come network with other small business people. Order from menu if desired.

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL ROYAL BALL** - Jun. 20, 6-11pm, Woodshed Event Ctr. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details. Limited Ticket Event. See the "Topeka Renaissance Festival" before the crowds come! Only 150 Tickets available, Walk the 13 acres of this amazing event with Characters & vendors on site! Dance royally in our beautiful "Valhalla Ballroom." Meet the Jousters and our King & Queen w/ their court!

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL - Jun. 21-22, 10-6, Woodshed Event Ctr. grounds. Step back in time in 12 acres of wooded & grassy wonderland. Jousting, Fresian horses, mermaids, Highland Games, Tug of War, live entertainment, axe & arrow games, petting zoo, kids zone and much more! See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details.**

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL HIGHLAND GAMES** - Jun. 21, Woodshed Event Ctr. Modern Highland Games competition is a vibrant celebration of Scottish and Celtic culture, blending intense athletic competition with traditional music, dance, and heritage. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details and registration.

**8TH ANNUAL SUNSHINE REGGAE ROOTS FESTIVAL** — June 21, 4pm-12, corner of 8th & Jackson streets outside of The Celtic Fox. Featuring national, regional, and local Reggae and Ska bands, DJ's, Food Trucks, Arts & Crafts vendors, a kids corner, swag giveaways, and more! \$15 ADMISSION; ids 10 & under free.

**TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL TUG OF WAR CONTEST** - Jun. 22, 11am, Woodshed Event Ctr. Assemble your 5-person team and battle for glory. See Topeka Renaissance Festival facebook page for details and registration.

**DREAM ACRES CRUISING 4 CHARITY CAR SHOW** — Jun. 28, 9-7, For-

est Park, 3158 SE 10th St. Food trucks, vendors, live auction, more

## MEETINGS & CLASSES

**CHRISTIAN WRITERS GROUP OF TOPEKA -1st & third Mondays, 7pm at the Hughes Room 205 of the Topeka Library. Workshop for aspiring writers. Each participant is asked to bring five copies of a two page type written sample of a work in progress. After reading the pages aloud each participant is allowed an equal number of positive and negative comments offered in a spirit of helpfulness. If you would like to read something email Charles at [jccccw@gmail.com](mailto:jccccw@gmail.com)**

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

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

**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](http://ks.cwfa.org).

**THE HEAT** — FREE fitness classes for the community. Located at Florence Crittenton Services Center for Integrative Health, 5423 SW 7th. [www.flocritkanssas.org](http://www.flocritkanssas.org)

**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](mailto: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](mailto:davemathias@sbcglobal.net), or Betsy Thompson, [betsyjthompson@gmail.com](mailto:betsyjthompson@gmail.com).

**SHEPHERD'S CENTER BOOK CLUB** - 1st & 3rd Mon. 2-4pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1275 SW Boswell Ave. Call: 785-249-3258 or email [shepherd-stopeka@yahoo.com](mailto:shepherd-stopeka@yahoo.com) for the book of study.

**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](mailto:anne.crawford@cox.net).

**SENIOR FIT & FUN PROGRAM** - Every Mon., Wed., and Fri at 1:30 at Pleasant Hills United Methodist Church, 4525 NW Button Rd., 785-246-1737.

**TOPEKA LIONS CLUB** — 1st Mondays at Noon - 1 pm at The Capper Foundation, 3500 SW 10th Ave. Park on the North side. RSVP by Fri. for lunch/pay at the meeting. Visitors welcome. [TopekaLions.org/contact-us](http://TopekaLions.org/contact-us) to make reservations. WE SERVE!

**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](http://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.

**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, Kirk Nystrom 785-235-6977.

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

**NARVE (Nat'l Assn of Railroad Veteran Employee)** - 2nd Tuesday each month at at 9:30AM @ Museum of the Kansas National Guard, 125 SE Airport Dr, Topeka

**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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.faithfamilylife.com)

**MAP GROUP (MEMOIRS, ANCESTRY, PHOTOS)** - VIA ZOOM - 4th Wed. 10-11:30am. Contact Rich McReynolds at [rjm4017@gmail.com](mailto:rjm4017@gmail.com). Via Zoom link

**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

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

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

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

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

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

**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 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 assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. No assembly in August. Sponsored by Topeka North Outreach: 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 tfgstopeka.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.

**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

**TOPEKA GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY** – 4th Fridays, 7:15pm, 1st Congressional Church, 1701 SW Collins.

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

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

**TOPEKA GREAT LIGHT AGLOW** – For info contact Vickie Lynch at greatlighttopeka@gmail.com.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**HOPE AND HEALING ACADEMY** harnesses the power of horses to transform the human spirit. For info: 785-224-4232 or 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..

**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 & 4th Tuesdays 5:30-6:30pm at Highland Heights Christian Church. Encouragement in God's word and prayer as well as conversation and sharing, open to all those who care for others with illnesses such as Alzheimers, dementia, cancer or other debilitating illnesses or injuries. For info: "Weekly Class List" at www.highlandheightscc.com or call 785-379-5642.

**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 and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8, at 1st Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. For info: Topeka.heals@gmail.com or 785-380-9309.

**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. 785-286-1204, 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 Mon. 7pm; Every Sat. 10am. First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar, Enter Door A, Room 211. 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

**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.

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

**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.

**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.

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# entertainment

## Greta Gerwig's NARNIA Movie Breaks a 75-Year Tradition. Would C.S. Lewis Approve?

Greta Gerwig's upcoming NARNIA adaptation is about to break a 75-year tradition — and that might not be such a bad thing.

"The release is believed to be an adaptation of 'The Magician's Nephew,' C.S. Lewis's sixth novel in the Chronicles of Narnia series, which tells the origin story of this magical land," British Vogue reported.

Gerwig and Netflix have not made an official confirmation statement about the NARNIA adaptation, but a recent casting announcement from The Hollywood Reporter stated that the movie would be telling the story of "The Magician's Nephew."

It had been rumored that Gerwig would start with "The Magician's Nephew," as actor Jason Isaacs let slip in an interview, "I picked ['The Magician's Nephew' as my favorite from the series] because Greta Gerwig is about to make a film of it, which I can't wait to see."

This decision is pretty noteworthy, as it breaks with 75 years of tradition when it comes to launching a CHRONICLES OF NARNIA series — all other adaptations have started with "The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe," which was the first book Lewis published in the series.



While some might be disappointed that Gerwig isn't starting in the traditional place, others — including Lewis himself — would disagree.

"After the last book was released, Lewis was asked about the best order for reading the books," the official C.S. Lewis website explained. "He suggested that chronological order might be the easiest way to read the Chronicles," meaning readers should start with "The Magician's Nephew."

While this creative decision might have received Lewis' stamp of approval, others have raised eyebrows; specifically, Meryl Streep potentially taking on the role of Aslan. While this hasn't been officially confirmed, Gerwig and Netflix have not denied that Streep is in talks to take on the

role.

Movieguide®'s Dr. Ted Baehr cautioned against taking too many liberties with Lewis' books, writing, "The treatment of Lewis' material can either detract from the core preferences of the modern western mindset, or it can speak to them, and tap into them at a very emotional level. Netflix is in a key position to capitalize on this. It is a business opportunity that should be recognized and carefully nurtured."

"The commercial realities of keeping faith with the original intentions of the author are far further reaching than the implication on any given moviegoer's preferences," he continued. "Throughout the globe, there are many millions of Christian people who, in partnership with Netflix, will form a catalytic coalition capable of propelling the work and its influence to stellar box office performance."

NARNIA fans are excited to see a lesser-known Lewis work make it to the big screen and are hopeful Gerwig will take Dr. Baehr's advice and stay true to the original source material.

-movieguide.com

## Silver Dollar City, Big Cedar Lodge Win USA Today Honors



USA Today readers have recognized two Branson attractions, Silver Dollar City and Big Cedar Lodge, as the best in their categories, shining a spotlight on these iconic Missouri destinations. Silver Dollar City was recently named America's best theme park for the third consecutive year, a remarkable achievement in a field crowded with legendary destinations. This national recognition demonstrates how the park continues to outperform established competitors in the industry.

"We appreciate our fans and the readers of USA Today for voting for Silver Dollar City," said Brad Thomas, president of the theme park. "Every single day, our citizens strive to entertain our guests in this unique theme park nestled in the heart of the Ozarks. In the past year, we've welcomed visitors from all 50 states, plus 30 countries. Our guests choose to visit us for our eclectic mix of thrilling rides, family experiences, home cooking-inspired menus, skilled demonstrating craftsmen and artisans, entertaining shows, and world-class festivals that change by season." Attendance numbers have surged as visitors flood to Silver Dollar City, and the park continues to draw families from across the country.

Rivertown Smokehouse, Silver Dollar City's barbecue restaurant, earned second place for best theme park restaurant, adding to the park's growing reputation for exceptional food. In entertainment, the Rivertown Ramblers stage show was ranked second among all theme park performances, while

the Time Traveler roller coaster achieved its highest-ever finish as the sixth-best coaster in the nation. The past season also saw Branson attractions drawing record crowds and setting new standards for guest experiences.

With around two million people exploring its 40 rides and attractions annually, Silver Dollar City stands among the best family theme parks in America. Its continued popularity and acclaim highlight the park's enduring appeal for both locals and tourists.

The region's accolades don't stop there. Readers also voted Big Cedar Lodge, located in Ridgedale, as the number one golf resort in the United States for 2025. Set on the shores of Table Rock Lake and created by Bass Pro founder Johnny Morris, Big Cedar Lodge is celebrated not only for its conservation efforts but also for its unique public golfing experience. Guests frequently praise the resort's variety of accommodations, natural beauty, and amenities such as restaurants, swimming pools, and a spa.

"It's very humbling to be recognized with this honor, especially because the voting was done by golfers and guests who have visited Big Cedar Lodge and golf resorts and destinations across America," Morris said. "It's a testament to our beautiful Ozarks and to the shared passions of many talented people, including our team members, who wake up every morning committed to providing the most genuine, friendly hospitality and creating lifelong happy memories for our guests."

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## 3 Things Parents Should Know about the New 'Lilo & Stitch'

Lilo is a spirited young Hawaiian girl in need of a friend.

After losing her parents in a tragedy, she's been raised by her devoted but overwhelmed teenage sister, Nani. At school, Lilo is often teased and excluded by her peers -- one even mocking her handmade bracelet, sneering, "It's not a friendship bracelet if you don't have any friends." Not surprisingly, Lilo channels her grief and isolation into outbursts typical of a 6-year-old -- like the time she shoved a bully off the stage during a hula recital.

Now, a social worker is warning that Lilo could be placed in state custody unless Nani can prove she's capable of providing a stable home. She's given one week to get things in order -- stock the fridge, pay overdue bills, and secure health insurance -- before a final decision is made.

"I like you better as a sister than a mom," Lilo says.

Perhaps a pet will ease Lilo's loneliness. So that's what Lilo does--picking up a dog one day at the local animal shelter to provide her with some much-needed companionship.

Yet this dog is different from any her neighbors have ever seen. It growls like a monster. It climbs the ceiling. It's also ... blue.

True, it barks on cue. And yes, it adores Lilo like any loyal dog would.

But soon, Lilo and Nani discover that this so-called dog is being hunted by government agents -- and a pair of mysterious men with their own reasons for chasing him down.

The new Disney movie *Lilo & Stitch* (PG) follows the story of Lilo and Nani as they try to get their life back on track while protecting the oddest-looking dog around. It's a live-action remake of the 2002 animated film that was nominated for an Oscar and was the year's 14th-highest-grossing film.

Here are three things parents should know before taking the family to see this film.

1. It Follows the Same Plot as the Original

These days, studios often fumble when reimagining beloved classics. But here's the good news: this one stays remarkably true to the original.

The film opens with Stitch -- a mischievous alien experiment gone rogue -- learning that he's been exiled from his galaxy and is now being hunted. The story then shifts to Earth, where Lilo is dancing on stage while Nani struggles to make it on time after her old truck won't start. A social worker -- portrayed as a



kind, compassionate woman in this version instead of the stern, intimidating man from the original -- warns Nani that she must prove she can provide a stable home for Lilo.

Soon, Jumba and Pleakley -- the two bumbling alien agents -- arrive on Earth to retrieve Stitch, though they repeatedly fail due to a strict prohibition against harming humans. Unlike the original, where they appear in clumsy disguises, the remake uses holographic projections to give them human appearances.

Stitch still can't swim (just like in the original), and he continues to cause chaos -- destroying the house and derailing Nani's job interview.

The film's final moments play out a bit differently, thanks in part to the introduction of a new character: Tūtū, a wise and warmhearted neighbor who offers Lilo and Nani emotional support.

But don't worry -- Stitch remains on Earth with his best friend, Lilo.

2. It's Still about Friendship and Ohana

Even without the specific focus on "Ohana," *Lilo & Stitch* is a heartwarming movie about friendship and familial love. Its embrace of Hawaiian culture makes that message all the more powerful and authentic.

In the film's opening moments, Lilo kneels at her window, watching a shooting star dart across the sky. She whispers a heartfelt prayer for "a real friend -- someone who won't tease me, someone who won't run away."

"Send me an angel," she prays.

Soon after, Stitch crashes into her life -- though it's far from clear to Nani or anyone else that Lilo has found what she was looking for. Part of the confusion, of course, is due to Stitch's talent for creating chaos.

The tension between Lilo and Nani reaches a boiling point when Stitch starts a fire on a restaurant patio, costing Nani her job. Furious and overwhelmed, she demands that Lilo return him to the shel-

ter.

"Ohana means family. Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten," Lilo insists.

"That's not reality," Nani responds, pointing to a messy kitchen. "This is reality."

But things begin to change. Nani lands a job as a surfing instructor, and slowly, she starts to see the value Stitch brings. Again and again, the film illustrates what it truly means to stand by someone. When Stitch is trapped underwater and on the verge of drowning, it's Nani who dives into the ocean to save him. When Stitch runs away, believing he's the source of all their troubles, it's Lilo who chases after him and reassures him: "Ohana means family, and sometimes family isn't perfect."

In the film's closing moments, as Stitch faces being taken back to his home galaxy, he proves he's learned what matters most.

"This is my family -- broken but still good," he says.

3. It's Still Charming

Stitch is every bit as charming and hilarious in the live-action version as he was in the Original. He sits in Lilo's room and drinks her lava lamp while she observes with innocence, "I don't think you're supposed to drink that." He splashes around in the toilet, unaware of the bacteria lurking in the water. He zips through a downtown square in a child's toy car, oblivious to the danger around him. He's the kind of cute, plush-looking alien you'd love to play with -- but probably wouldn't want to wreak havoc in your own home.

Newcomer Maia Kealoha is perfect for the role -- adorable, expressive, and effortlessly believable -- and, honestly, she's even more endearing than the animated version of Lilo.

For families concerned about content, there are only a handful of speedbumps. The film includes mild language ("what the h-ll" and a possible "OMG"), some

## Christian Music Gains Attention With Billboard Hot 100 Hits



Christian music may be starting to make an impact in the secular world. Two songs -- "Hard Fought Hallelujah" by Brandon Lake and "Your Way's Better" by Forrest Frank -- are ranked in the latest Billboard Hot 100.

Frank's album "Child of God" also has dominated the Top Christian Albums chart, spending 34 weeks and counting at No. 1, making it the fifth-longest-leading No. 1 album this century. He released the set's follow-up, "Child of God II," on May 9.

Christian music historically has had a limited presence on the Hot 100, according to "Billboard." Dating to when Billboard's Hot Christian Songs chart adopted its current multi-metric methodology -- blending U.S. streams, radio airplay and sales -- 52 Christian songs have charted on both the Hot 100 and Hot Christian Songs. Two additional Christian tracks are climbing "Billboard's" Bubbling Under Hot 100 ranking, which lists the 25 songs just below the Hot 100 that haven't yet debuted.

For Provident Label Group, which finished 2024 as "Billboard's" No. 1 Top Christian Label and whose roster included Lake and genre powerhouse Elevation Worship, pivoting their marketing efforts to younger demographics has been key to their success.

"Over the past few years, we've focused on investing in the future of the genre instead of just seeking to repeat past successes," said Mat Anderson, the company's marketing and brand strategy vice president. "For Christian music to thrive in the next five to 10 years, we must attract younger audiences seeking sonically diverse music that authentically reflects their faith and life experiences. We've partnered with young artists who offer unique perspectives, enabling them to shape the genre's future rather than molding them to fit its past."

"This approach by Provident and others has been highly successful, as the genre's rapid growth over the past three years demonstrates that Christian music is resonating with new audiences and reengaging previous ones."

slapstick-style violence, and a moment when Lilo tells one of Nani's male suitors that she read a text saying Nani "liked your butt." Set against the backdrop of warm Hawaiian culture, the film includes midrifts and swimsuits -- yet noticeably fewer than in the animated version.

There's a mid-credits scene, but nothing after the full credits roll.

Overall, this new *Lilo & Stitch* captures everything that made the original special -- and in some ways, it even improves on it.

Rated PG for action, peril and thematic elements.

Entertainment rating: 4 out of 5 stars.

Family-friendly rating: 4.5 out of 5 stars.

—Michael Foust / Crosswalk.com



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## Create a Cozy Outdoor Space with a Backyard Firepit

A firepit can serve as a warm and inviting backyard retreat, perfect for roasting marshmallows for s'mores or stargazing while wrapped in cozy blankets. Before you can share time around the firepit with loved ones, however, consider these tips to elevate your outdoor space.

### Choosing the Right Design

When it comes to building a DIY firepit, the design you choose can significantly impact the aesthetics and functionality. From classic stone pits to modern metal designs, the options are nearly endless. Think about the size and shape as well. Circular designs are traditional and encourage conversation while square or rectangular pits offer a more contemporary look.

### Gathering Materials and Tools

Essential materials include bricks, stones or metal parts for the structure, as well as gravel or sand for the base. Fireproof materials are a must to ensure safety and longevity. You'll also need tools such as a shovel for digging the base, a level to ensure even construction and adhesive or mortar for binding materials together. Depending on your design, you may require a metal fire ring, grill grate or mesh cover.

### Keeping Safety in Mind

Safety should be your top priority



when building and using a backyard firepit. Always place your firepit at least 10 feet away from any structures, trees or flammable materials. Make sure the area is clear of dry leaves and other debris that could catch fire. Consider installing a spark screen to prevent embers from escaping and always keep a bucket of water or fire extinguisher nearby.

### Enhancing Ambiance with Seating and Lighting

Creating a cozy atmosphere around your firepit involves more than just the fire itself. Comfortable seating is essential for making your outdoor space inviting. Choose weather-resistant chairs, benches or DIY log stools arranged in a circle to foster conversation. Ambient lighting from string lights, lanterns or solar-powered path lights can elevate the mood and extend the usability of your

firepit into the evening. Consider adding citronella candles or torches to keep insects at bay while enhancing the ambiance.

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# sports

## NFL QB Derek Carr retires, says he's been 'radically transformed' by Christ



Four-time Pro Bowl quarterback Derek Carr announced Saturday that he is retiring from the NFL after 11 professional seasons. The 34-year-old former New Orleans Saint and Oakland/Las Vegas Raider ends his career with 257 regular-season touchdown passes and 41,245 passing yards while completing 65.1% of his throws.

"Upon reflection of prayer, and in discussion with (my wife) Heather, I've decided to retire from the National Football League," Carr said in a statement released by the Saints. "For more than 11 years, we have been incredibly blessed, and we are forever grateful and humbled by this experience. It's difficult to find the right words to express our thanks to all the teammates, coaches, management, ownership, team officials and especially the fans who made this journey so special. Your unwavering support has meant the world to us."

In a post on his Instagram account, Carr wrote, "Through it all, I gave this game everything I had every single day. I sleep well knowing that I gave my teammates, my coaches, and my cities my all. Now, I look forward to whatever God has next and I'll pursue it with the same fire I brought to the field."

In late March, while preparing for the 2025 season, Carr and his doctors discovered he had a labral tear and significant degenerative changes to the rotator cuff in his right (throwing) shoulder. He ultimately opted for retirement rather than undergo surgery and miss most, if not all, of the season.

Carr spent the last two years with the Saints after nine with the Raiders, the franchise that drafted him 36th overall out of Fresno State in 2014. He is the all-time leader in completions, passing yards and passing touchdowns in Raiders history.

Throughout his career, Carr has boldly

proclaimed his faith in Jesus. He has a tattoo of a Chi Rho (an early Christian symbol) on his right wrist and one referencing the Bible verse Jeremiah 29:11 on his left.

"All the self-glory, that stuff is fleeting. I've already been through that," Carr said after a 2021 win with the Raiders. "God took me to a place that all I want to do is glorify Him, and wherever He's going, that's where I want to go. So if it's a win, awesome. If not, I'm still gonna glorify Him."

In a Sports Spectrum video from 2014, Carr explained how he first became a believer. He was claiming to love God while in college at Fresno State, but his actions weren't reflecting it. It was then that Heather (just a friend at the time) wrote him a letter to challenge him in his faith. He apologized to Heather, repented and trusted anew in Christ.

"That next week, we had a game at the University of Ole Miss. I got up in front of my whole team and I told them, 'Guys, I've been calling myself a Christian, and I haven't been living it. You guys know what I've been doing. I'm a Christian now, and I've asked God for His forgiveness. Now watch how I live my lifestyle.'"

Later, he added, "That's how I know He's with me — because I have a peace and a joy. I can't describe it, but I have it and I know it's real."

Carr is a gifted speaker and has accepted many invitations to speak at churches throughout his time in the football spotlight. In fact, he nearly quit football years ago to become a pastor before ultimately realizing God had called him to the gridiron.

"It was in that moment where I think the Lord knew that my heart was His, and I've been able to minister to thousands of people," Carr said in 2022 on "The High Note" podcast, hosted by Christian musician Tauren Wells. "I've been in stadiums

## KC Royals Help Players Earn Degrees at Christian College

Leandro Mendez, Jose Ballista and Jesus Reyes never fulfilled their dream of playing Major League Baseball for the Kansas City Royals. But earlier this month, all three graduated from Kansas City Christian College, thanks to help from the team.

Anne Rogers, who covers the Royals, wrote about the accomplishment on the team's website. In January 2020, Mendez's professional baseball career was cut short when he was released by the Royals. He had signed with the organization four years earlier out of the Dominican Republic. He pitched for three seasons in the Dominican Summer League, but the Royals have to cut a certain number of players every year, and in 2020, Mendez was one of them.

"It was hard," he said. "It was a tough conversation. Everybody has the dream to become an MLB player. You want to be like the players you're watching on TV."

While the transition out of professional sports can be difficult, some teams have taken steps to better support their players' futures, recognizing the importance of educational opportunities and holistic development. The Royals' director of professional and sports development, Jeff Diskin, explained that Mendez had made a strong impression on the staff, especially with his classwork. He might have a potential opportunity for Mendez in the United States.

"I was curious," Mendez said. "I was hopeful. I had no idea it would be the best decision I have ever made in my life. He told me, 'I think I can get you to the United States to play some more baseball and, more importantly, get a degree.'"

What Diskin was proposing was an education program the Royals had established a few years earlier for some players released from the organization's Dominican Academy. This kind of initiative is part of a wider movement in baseball to treat prospects as people first, investing in their lives beyond the field and helping them prepare for their next steps, whatever those may be. Mendez, Ballista and Reyes were identified as stu-

— 15,000, 18,000 people — preaching the Gospel and watching thousands of people get saved. I've seen healings take place. I've seen people set free. I've seen marriages reunite. I've seen kids come back home. All while playing football."

As he said during a Night of Worship event with the Saints last year, "God did something in my life. He radically transformed and changed my life and I can't help but tell people about Jesus."



dents who might do well with an opportunity such as this when they were released because of their work ethic and abilities in the classroom. All three enrolled at Kansas Christian College and have now graduated.

"I can't even say how happy I am to see those guys accomplish this," said Randy Fernandez, the Royals' assistant to Dominican operations. "You don't see that often down here in the D.R. These kids start playing baseball at a young age. And if they don't make it, they don't know what's going to happen. That's why we try to encourage these kids: School is part of Plan A. It's not just about baseball."

Such programs are especially meaningful for international players, who often face added challenges and uncertainty when their sports careers end. By prioritizing education alongside athletic training, organizations can empower young people to find success in multiple arenas and better navigate the transition

out of professional sports. This broader support for player well-being has been echoed across the league, with teams looking for new ways to help prospects thrive both during and after their time in baseball.

Because of their experience, they know that there are opportunities in baseball beyond the field and that they're equipped for it.

"I never expected to be here," Reyes said. "Never. When I was a kid, I thought I would grow up and just find a job. In my country, it's hard. But to see me right here, with a degree in the United States, it's incredible. I am proud of myself."

For the Royals, supporting academic achievement helps strengthen their ties to the community and demonstrates a commitment to the personal growth of every player. These efforts are gaining traction as teams recognize that investing in education is vital for building a positive, lasting legacy in sports and beyond.



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# 50+ Lifestyles

## A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

### 5 Healthy Habits to Help Reduce Stress

Between work, family obligations and a constantly changing world, people in the United States are stressed. In fact, U.S. workers are among the most stressed in the world, according to a State of the Global Workplace study. While some stress is unavoidable and can be good for you, constant or chronic stress can have real consequences for your mental and physical health.

Chronic stress can increase your

lifetime risk of heart disease and stroke. It can also lead to unhealthy habits like overeating, physical inactivity and smoking while also increasing risk factors, including high blood pressure, depression and anxiety. However, a scientific statement from the American Heart Association shows reducing stress and cultivating a positive mindset can improve health and well-being.

To help people understand the con-

nection between stress and physical health, the American Heart Association offers these science-backed insights to help reduce chronic stress.

#### Stay Active

Exercise is one of the easiest ways to keep your body healthy and release stress. Physical activity is linked to lower risk of diseases, stronger bones and muscles, improved mental health and cognitive function and lower risk of depression. It can also help increase energy and improve quality of sleep. The American Heart Association recommends adults get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity or a combination.

#### Meditate

Incorporate meditation and mindfulness practices into your day to give yourself a few minutes to create some distance from daily stress. Some studies show meditation can reduce blood pressure, improve sleep, support the immune system and increase your ability to process information.

#### Practice Positivity

A positive mindset can improve overall health. Studies show a positive mindset can help you live longer, and happy individuals tend to sleep better, exercise more, eat better and not smoke. Practice positive self-talk to help you stay calm. Instead of saying, "everything is going wrong," re-frame the situation and remind yourself "I can handle this if I take it one step at a time."

#### Show Gratitude

Gratitude – or thankfulness – is a powerful tool that can reduce levels of depression and anxiety and improve sleep. Start by simply writing down three things you're grateful for each day.

#### Find a Furry Friend

Having a pet may help you get more fit; lower stress, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar; and boost overall happiness and well-being. When



you see, touch, hear or talk to companion animals, you may feel a sense of goodwill, joy, nurturing and happiness. At the same time, stress hormones are suppressed. Dog ownership is also associated with a lower risk of depression, according to research published by the American Heart Association.

Find more stress-management tips at [Heart.org/stress](https://www.heart.org/stress).

#### Stress 101

Understanding stress is an important step in managing and reducing it. Consider these things to know about

stress and how it could affect your life:

- Today, 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. report being worried or depressed.
- Higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol are linked to increased risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular events like heart disease and stroke.
- The top sources of stress are money, work, family responsibilities and health concerns.
- Work-related stress is associated with a 40% increased risk of cardiovascular disease like heart attack and stroke.

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##### Medicare doesn't pay for dental care.<sup>1</sup>

As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. If you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

##### Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to avoid large dental bills is preventive care. Experts recommend checkups twice a year.

##### Previous dental work can wear out.

Your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.<sup>2</sup>

##### Treatment is expensive — especially the services people over 50 often need.

Unexpected bills, like \$190 for a filling, or \$1,213 for a crown<sup>3</sup> can be a real burden, especially if you're on a fixed income.

1 "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2025. 2 "Aging changes in teeth and gums", medlineplus.gov, 4/17/2022. 3 American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2020 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2020, American Dental Association.

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# The Post-Tax Season Playbook for Spending Smart



With tax season officially in the rearview mirror, it's the prime time for small business owners to step back and re-evaluate their expenses. Before tossing those receipts, now is a good opportunity to understand how every dollar you spend can fuel your next adventure.

One way to maximize your rewards for business spending is by selecting a credit card that works as hard as you do. Credit cards can help manage cash flow but also provide a way to get rewarded for purchases you're already making. One credit card to consider is the World of Hyatt Business Credit Card from Chase, which offers opportunities to unlock benefits like free hotel nights, elite status and points on every purchase.

Cardmembers can conduct business as usual while unlocking a quicker route to an elite status and earning two World of Hyatt Bonus Points per \$1 spent on their top three eligible spending categories each quarter. That means treating clients to a dinner, shipping samples or running a digital campaign to boost your business can transform into more points toward a bucket-list trip, higher tier status and more. Those who apply by June 30, 2025 and are approved can also earn a special offer of 60,000 World of Hyatt Bonus Points and enjoy World of Hyatt Explorist status through February 2026 after spending \$7,000 in the first three months of opening the account. That means more rewarding stays with perks like room upgrades, 2 p.m. late checkout, and extra points

every time you check in. Learn more at [chase.com/hyattbiz](https://chase.com/hyattbiz).

If you're looking to get the most out of your business expenses, consider these categories and how they can be maximized for more rewards.

## Earn While You Wine and Dine

Entertaining clients is more than just a meal – it's an investment in the relationships that can drive your business forward. Whether that's closing a deal over lunch or hosting a team dinner to celebrate a milestone, dining can reward your business. By using a rewards-driven credit card to pay for these expenses, you can accumulate points and turn them into valuable rewards. The celebratory dinner for your biggest client can earn you points toward your next business trip or vacation to unwind with the family.

## Supercharge the Online Visibility of Your Business

Marketing and advertising – including social media and search engine advertising – can be crucial for business growth, and a credit card designed for small business owners can help you earn more rewards for the way you do business.

## Turn Spending into Upgraded Travel Experiences

If your business requires frequent travel, you can earn up to nine Bonus Points total per \$1 spent on qualifying purchases at more than 1,400 Hyatt hotels and resorts around the world with the World of Hyatt Business Credit Card. Plus, extended benefits like auto rental coverage, extended warranty protection and travel assistance make it so you can focus on what's important without worrying about unforeseen events.

Being a small business owner requires complete dedication, which can lead to long hours, high stress levels and a lack of time for self-care. A strategic credit card can help drive your business forward and allow you to redeem points for experiences that are designed to complement your well-being. From on-property spa treatments to unique experiences that don't require a hotel stay, you can reward yourself and your employees.

As a small business owner, you can flip the script on business ex-



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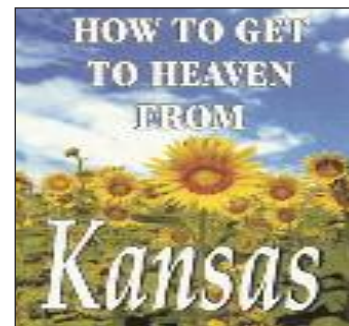
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of god." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says,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

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

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

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



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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](http://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

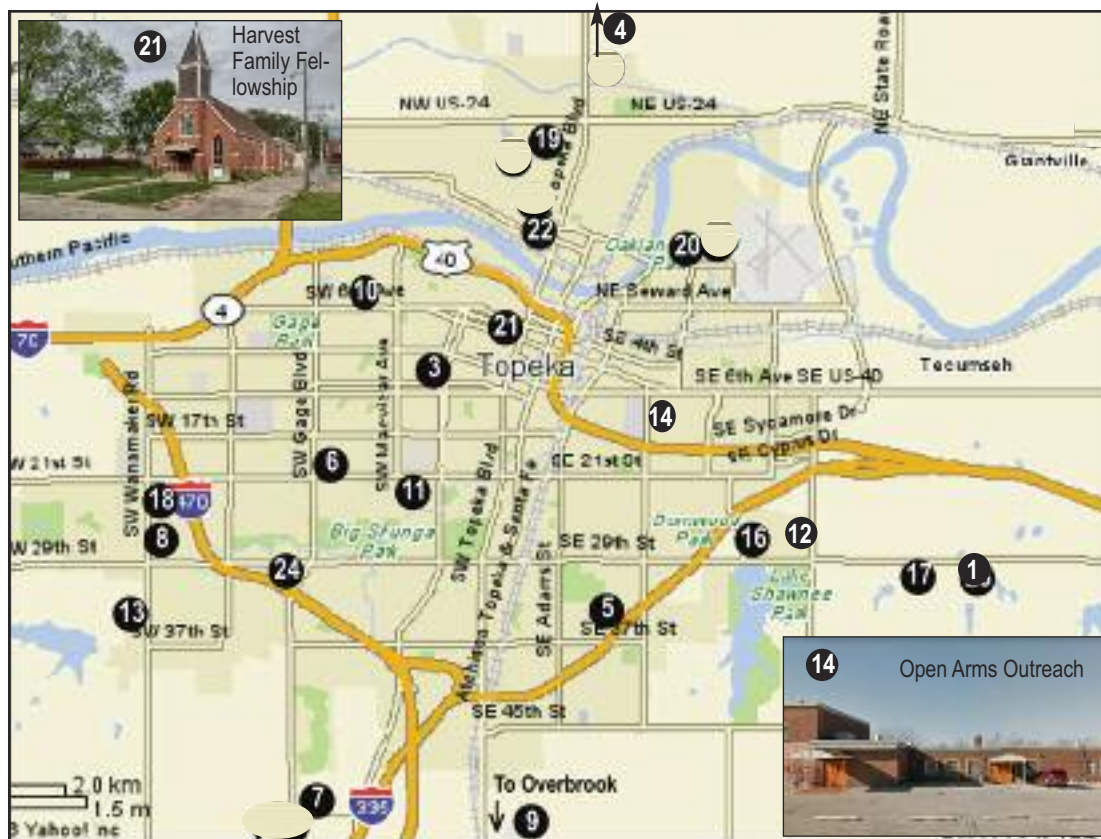
1 (785) 232-3463/+1 (785) 217-5560  
Sunday School 9:30, Worship 11:00  
In person or conference call:  
(712) 770-4749 / 583229  
Bible Study Tue & Wed conference call  
2401 SE 11th St., Topeka KS 66607  
Supt. S. C. Mitchell, Pastor

## 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



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## 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](http://www.esbcks.org)

## 20. HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1937 NE Madison St,  
Topeka, KS 66608 • 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  
Sunday School 9:15 am  
Bible Study Wed. 7 pm  
[www.harvestfamilyfellowshiptopeka.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.TrinityReformedBaptist.org)



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