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Page 13

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Page 4

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NEW RESIDENT churchguide

East Side Baptist Church



*See Inside
Back Cover!*

Salvation Army Kicks Off Red Kettle Campaign



The season of giving is upon us, and the familiar sound of bell-ringing has announced the Salvation Army's annual Red Kettle Campaign. The campaign kicked off in late November at select locations.

The Salvation Army has expressed hope that this Christmas season the many that are in need in our community will not be forgotten for emergency assistance, food and shelter.

Volunteers are still needed for bell ringing.

Maj. Tom McDowell, corps officer at the Topeka Salvation Army, says people

■ Please see **RED KETTLE** page 3

Christmas: The Hope of The World



By **Clint Decker**

On the eve of history's first Christmas, it was a dark time for the Jewish people. Their land was occupied by the Roman Empire. The Lord God had not spoken to them for hundreds of years. Heaven's voice was silent. Their religious texts spoke of prophecies

about a King that would rise up from among them. They anticipated this King, that He would be their deliverer from Roman rule. How would darkness be turned to light? How would despair be turned to hope?

In approximately 4 B.C. a divine earthquake caused a split right down the middle of human history

— the birth of Jesus Christ. It was like the rising of the sun dispelling the darkness. It was a new era for mankind.

The Jewish prophet Isaiah, 700 years earlier, foretold about the coming of a Messiah who would become the hope, not just of the Jewish people, but of all nations.

■ Please see **HOPE** page 2

City of Topeka Announces Its New City Website



The City of Topeka is excited to announce the launch of its newly redesigned website at Topeka.gov. The new site replaces the former Topeka.org, offering residents, businesses, and visitors a modernized, mobile friendly, and more user-friendly online experience.

While the website's URL has changed to Topeka.gov, users who type Topeka.org will automatically be redirected to the new site. The updated website features a fresh, streamlined design that makes it easier for people to find the most frequently accessed city services, resources, and information.

"The launch of Topeka.gov represents a major step forward in how we

■ Please see **WEBSITE** page 2

City of Topeka Raises Thousands Through 'Oh SNAP!' Campaign

The City of Topeka announced Thursday that the "Oh SNAP!" community fundraising campaign has successfully raised \$9,450.47 through online donations and the Pass the Hat fundraiser led by the Topeka Fire Department and the Office of Inclusive Communities.

All funds raised will be directed to the United Way of Kaw Valley, which will equitably distribute the funds to local food security partners. These

funds will help replenish supplies and provide families with essential support as the holiday season approaches.

"I am grateful for the kindness shown by our community," said City Manager Dr. Robert Perez. "This support ensures our local food banks and partner organizations can continue providing crucial resources throughout the holiday season. Thank you to everyone who gave, shared, and supported

■ Please see **SNAP** page 2



Kansas Museum of History reopens with free admission through end of year

The Kansas Museum of History reopened Nov 22, after three years of renovations. The day featured welcoming speeches, musical performances, food trucks, and plenty of photo opportunities, including Dorothy and her friends from Wizard of Oz.

The ceremony began at 9:30 a.m., with doors opening at 9:00 a.m.

“It is so thrilling to finally be here today and have the reopening of the museum that we’ve been planning for more than 3 years,” said Museum Director Sarah Bell.

A large crowd was on hand to participate in the festivities.

The museum, located at 6425 SW 6th Ave., will feature free admission until the end of 2025. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m.

Further updates and improvements will continue in the coming months, Bell said.



SNAP

continued from page 1

this effort.”

The “Oh SNAP!” campaign was

launched in response to delays in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which left families across Topeka facing unexpected hardship. The City partnered with the United Way of Kaw Valley to ensure all contri-

butions remain local and directly benefit families most affected by the funding delay.

Members of the Topeka Fire Department and the Office of Inclusive Communities helped lead the effort

through a two-day Pass the Hat event, collecting community donations at five locations across the city. Their involvement, coupled with online contributions, played a key role in the fundraising success.

The City of Topeka extends its sincere thanks to all residents, partners, and volunteers who contributed to this effort and helped ensure families have the resources they need during the holiday season.

HOPE

continued from page 1

Isaiah wrote, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Jesus was the fulfillment of this prediction. The birth of the Christ-child was a divine light borne into darkness. As He grew up and settled into His heaven-sent role, the public responded

and a divine unstoppable movement took shape. However, His followers soon became disillusioned at His messaging. He was not becoming the national Savior they envisioned. Soon, the dreams they had of Jesus turning back the Roman Empire started to fade away.

Instead, Jesus told the crowds, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10) He also said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” (Lk. 9:23) This meant if they wanted to follow Him, they must give

up pursuing their agenda and take up God’s. This was much different than expected.

Jesus’ focus was the hearts and souls of mankind. He purposed to deliver them from the bondage of sin and lead them to spiritual freedom. He was born to govern the lives of precious souls, not a nation.

The lesson of Christmas teaches that the change our world needs is ultimately spiritual. Like the Jewish people, we can look around and see our world filled with oppression and injustice and wonder how it all can change. Like them, our hope can be for a type of national savior to be raised up. This is how we naturally think. In times of

national crisis, we instinctively begin with what we can do with our own intellect and resources. And history is replete with the rise and fall of political, military, religious and other types of national figures to help save their nation.

Law, policies, programs, regulations, committees, organizations, investigations. All these have their place. At best, they can curb, reduce or control lawlessness and corruption, but they cannot eliminate it. Why? Because the heart of the problem is the human heart. Jeremiah once wrote, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9) Then he penned God’s

own words, “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind . . .” (Jer. 17:10)

Christmas shows us that evil in the human heart is the greatest threat to the future of the world. God so believed this truth, He sent His only Son to be born of a virgin, then to die on a cross and rise again. Through this, Christ conquered evil. And to all who come to Him in repentance and faith, He will provide forgiveness of sin and a transformed heart and life.

A prayer for you. “Lord God, open our eyes to see beyond the physical to the spiritual. Bring men and women to humble themselves before you and be changed by your grace and mercy. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

WEBSITE

continued from page 1

connect with our community,” said

City Manager Dr. Robert Perez. “We wanted to make sure our website not only looks modern but truly serves the people of Topeka by being intuitive, accessible, and responsive to

their needs.”

All city staff email addresses will continue to use the @topeka.org domain for the time being.

The new website is live now, and res-

idents are encouraged to explore it and provide feedback. If users notice missing information or encounter issues, they are asked to email citycommunications@topeka.org for as-

sistance.

A video to help guide people through the new website can be found here: <https://youtu.be/B-8fxRh6zD8>

God, faith, football: Kansas City church leader named Chiefs fan of the year

Dr. Yvette Richards keeps her priorities straight. She wears a shirt that reads “God, Faith, Football.” The Kansas City Chiefs have rewarded her loyalty by naming Richards their fan of the year. “When you think about Lamar Hunt and the Hunt family, they’re always giving back to this community,” she said. “I believe that’s also the assignment that God has given me.”

“I love football,” she said, according to MSN. “I grew up in a military family and we traveled a lot, so sports were a way that we connected. Watching the games



was a family thing for us.”

Richards has been a Chiefs fan for nearly four decades and a season ticket member for 11 years. Chiefs games have become a way of life.

“Where I’ve been sitting, I’ve seen people get engaged, get married, have children and now their children are sitting in those seats,” she said. “It’s been a wonderful opportunity to meet people and share this together.”

She lives out her faith as a member of St. James United Methodist Church and has served in various ways, from teaching Vacation Bible School to leading women’s groups before taking over as the organization’s director of community connection and mission.

“I had a grandmother who was born in 1898, and she always said, ‘When you put your faith in God, he will open doors for you,’” Richards said. “My parents raised me to always give back and that God will pour out the blessings on you, so everywhere I go, I try to give.”

She also was awarded the 2025 Heart of a Champion Impact Award, which recognizes the work and service of local leaders. Her coworkers at St. James, who were aware of her nomination as the Chiefs’ fan of the year, were determined to make the reveal something that she would never forget.

“I’ll admit it,” Richards said. “My whole church, they got me.”

RED KETTLE

continued from page 1

can support the organization by signing up to ring bells during the holiday season.

“We always begin the Friday before Thanksgiving,” McDowell says, “We still depend on the public to help us with that. We’d love to see a number of bell-ringers sign up.”

The iconic Red Kettle campaign has increased options for people to donate via smartphone. This year, donors can utilize PayPal and Venmo along with Apple Pay and Google Pay to make their donations. For online shoppers, the Topeka Virtual Kettle is available 24 hours a day at: DonateTopeka.com.

Individuals/groups looking to ring at Red Kettle can sign up at RegistertoRing.com. For all other volunteer opportunities at the Topeka Salvation Army location, call 785-233-9648.

The money raised stays local. It provides food boxes and toys for registered families through the Angel Tree Program that assists folks in need. It also provides funding for assistance year-round through social service programs, including emergency assistance in rent/utilities, food pantry, and the meals.

McDowell says needs have increased lately with the government shutdown and with the curtailment of SNAP benefits.

“Every day for the past two weeks, we’ve seen about 40 to 50 percent more people in our food pantry and that’s of course a very significant increase,” McDowell said, “and we would ask for the public’s help as we strive to respond to that need.”

C5 Christmas Luncheon will be held at the Mall

The December C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 11th at 11:30am in the food court area of Westridge Mall.

The program will feature a focus on Christmas with a devotional and some fun games.

Admission is free, and lunch can be ordered from restaurants on site if desired.

RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

“POWER” luncheons are held the 2nd Thursday 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 January 8, February 12, March 12,

and April 9, 2026.

C5 also hosts other events, including EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Fun Fair, held just before Easter each year

C5 members 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 may join for \$20. A list of current members and more information is available on the website at www.C5Alive.org, at www.facebook.com/C5Alive, or by calling Lee Hartman at 785-640-6399.



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Why do we celebrate Christmas?

Christians the world over celebrate Christmas in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Various Christmas traditions have been associated with the celebration of Christmas, and different cultures celebrate different ways. The unifying factor is the historical fact that Jesus was born, c. 5 BC. The angel who appeared to the shepherds the night of Jesus' birth said, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10–11).

We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, the birth of Jesus Christ is "good news." Good news is meant to be celebrated. In fact, the angel said the news of Jesus' birth would cause "great joy" and would be "for all the people"—the joyful celebration would be universal. People around the globe would be glad for this occasion.

We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, "A Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." The three titles the angel applies to Jesus are important. Jesus is

the Savior who delivers us from sin and death (Matthew 1:21). He is the human Messiah (or Christ) who fulfills the Law and the Prophets, showing that God is faithful (see Matthew 5:17). And He is the divine Lord who has entered our world: the Almighty has taken on human flesh; God and man have been fused together in an indivisible, eternal bond; God is truly with us (see Matthew 1:23).

In celebrating Christmas, we celebrate the Savior, because we needed deliverance. We celebrate the Christ

gift" that God gave to us (2 Corinthians 9:15). We celebrate Christmas by stringing lights because the Light of the world has come to us (John 1:4; Isaiah 9:2). We celebrate Christmas with carols and choirs because they are expressive of joy and follow the examples of Mary and Zacharias and Simeon and the angels, all of whom extolled the Lord in poetry (Luke 1–2). We celebrate Christmas by decorating evergreen trees with stars and angels and tinsel because of the eternal life Jesus brings (John 4:14)—and stars and angels and beauty were all associated with Jesus' birth.

In celebrating Christmas we celebrate the love and condescension of God. In Texas in 1987, a toddler by the name of Jessica McClure fell into an eight-inch well casing. Down she went, becoming stuck twenty-two feet below ground. Once people discovered that "Baby Jessica" was in the well, they took immediate action. They didn't tell her to find a way to climb back up, and they didn't just shout happy thoughts to encourage her. No, they went down to where she was and got her. They did whatever it took. Rescuers worked nonstop for fifty-eight hours to free her.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fell. Down they went, dragging all humanity with them into the darkness and death of sin. And what did God do? He did not tell us to find our own way out of the mess we were in, and He did more than shout down happy thoughts to us from heaven. No, He came down to where we were and got us. That's what Christmas is all about—God's coming down to rescue us, to do whatever it took to deliver us from sure death.

When even one person is in a life-threatening situation, we understand what has to be done. When God looked down at our sinful planet, He saw a whole world of people in mortal danger. We cele-



brate Christmas because it was at Christmastime that the Rescuer of all mankind came to save us from

the hopeless situation we were in. God did not stay in heaven; He came down to where we are.

See our list of holiday events in our calendar on page 13!

in whom all of God's promises are "Yes" and "Amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20). We celebrate the Lord who in humility took on "the very nature of a servant" for our sakes (see Philippians 2:6–8).

We celebrate Christmas with gift-giving because of the "indescribable

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4 Reasons for Joy This Holiday Season

It's the holiday season again. Homes down every street are decorated with lights and filled with people gathering and celebrating at the end of yet another year. The holidays are a time to feel joy and peace. However, in the hearts of many there is grief, anxiety, and hopelessness.

While many enjoy the season with picturesque traditional family-filled holiday dinners, some are struggling to keep their house clean while their kids make a mess everywhere they go. Some are even grieving a lost family member. For several different reasons, the holiday season is hard on many people, maybe even you.

WHERE IS THE JOY?

First, let's dive down into what "joy" actually means. The world can define joy based on outward situations and blessings. However, the joy that the Lord gives you is not what the world says it is.

"Chara," the greek word for joy used in Scripture, indicates a delight not born of or dependent upon temporal experiences or blessings, but founded in a relationship with God. As your relationship with the Lord goes deeper, the joy in your heart gets bigger. Joy is not dependent on our ever-changing circumstances in this world. It is dependent on our ever-constant Savior that was

born on Christmas day.

Count it all JOY my brothers and sisters, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. -James 1:2-4

Are you feeling less than joyful during the holidays? From Scripture, let's explore 4 reasons to be joyful during the holiday season even if you are struggling.

1. THE LORD'S PROMISE

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. -Psalm 118:24

For every day this Christmas season, we can rejoice in the fact that God sent His only son for us. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice so that we could live eternally alongside Him. Unfortunately, this broken world can be a heartbreaking at times. Things don't always go the way they should and it leaves us feeling empty inside. But the life of Jesus promises us that the world will not tear us down no matter how hard it tries. Having the hope of Jesus is a promise and comfort that can carry us through the hard times. God knows His exact plans for you, and sometimes He brings you

out of your personal comfort for that plan. This season, listen to what God is telling you in your struggles and remember that He will not forsake you, especially during the difficult seasons.

2. MORE TIME TO SPEND WITH FAMILY

The holidays are when family is in town, and the kids have some time off from school. Being with friends and family is a blessing from the Lord. It allows us to take some time and reflect on the year, and have some fun with our loved ones.

3. FOOD

Christmas is a time for good food with family. We are blessed every day to be able to put food on our tables because God has provided us with it. This is true especially during the holidays when we have friends and family over to enjoy delicious holiday treats. We can have a little more joy this season when we reflect on not only the spiritual blessings of Christmas, but also the physical and tangible blessings that the Lord provides us every day.

4. CHRISTMAS MUSIC

This season is a time to spread joy through music about our Savior. Christmas music brings a message of hope into your drive to and from work, and it puts a little bit more joy in your heart. Listen

Finding Balance during the Holidays

It's easy to fall into the trap of believing that if our holiday celebrations don't look like they're straight out of a Hallmark movie then we're not doing a good enough job. We see others seemingly having more fun on social media. Our memories of holidays past are overshadowing the present. But if we allow ourselves to stay in this mindset, our fears will become reality. Let's explore four tips to manage expectations this holiday season:

1. Ignore Advertisements

A picture ready holiday meal on the table; couples walking hand-in-hand

under romantic snowfall; excited children opening the perfect presents. It all sounds great, but the reality is that holidays can be messy, uncomfortable, tense, or even dreadful. Let go of high expectations and enjoy the holidays for what they are.

2. Lower the Stakes

The higher the expectations we have for something, the higher the stakes are. If we don't meet our expectations, however unrealistic they might be, we feel like we've failed. Be reasonable in setting expectations and accept your own limitations. Do what works best for you and

where you're at in life.



3. Attitude of Gratitude

Be grateful for the things you do have. You can't focus on this and the things you feel like you're lacking at the same time. Be thankful for the love, support, and connections you do have. Focus on what you value in life and where you find joy.

4. Make New Traditions

Reset your expectations and memories and make new traditions. Find things you like to do during the holidays. Try something new - whether it's staying in or going out, there isn't a wrong choice.



to all your favorite Christmas classics, carols, and new holiday favorites now through Christmas day!

It's our prayer that you'll listen and take some time this season to reflect on

the joy and hope that only Jesus can provide.

What other ways do you find joy in the Christmas season?

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LOOKING BACK...

Dear Dave,

I started listening to your show, and following the Baby Steps, three months ago. I'm already seeing great results with my money. Over the weekend, I spent time looking at part-time jobs to help me pay off debt faster and keep moving forward with my finances. I found a few work-from-home ideas that were intriguing. But how can I tell the difference between real opportunities and all the scams featured online and on television?
Bonna

Dear Bonna,

Congratulations on making the decision to gain control of your money! You sound motivated, and I believe it will translate into some really good things. Truth be told, the vast majority of things you see online and in late-night infomercial presentations are scams. I'm not talking about ads for legitimate job hunter sites, I'm talking about the business-in-a-box kind of thing. I know you've probably seen the advertisements that go something like, "My sister-in-law makes \$500 an hour working from home, and you can, too!" These clowns are the worst of the worst. Please, don't waste a second of your time on that kind of stuff. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

There's no shame in picking up a normal, part-time gig a couple of nights a week after work and on weekends. You'd be surprised at how much extra cash you can earn just delivering pizzas,

or working at a local retail store. If that doesn't sound like something you'd enjoy for a little while, you might try thinking of something you love doing, and find a creative way to make some extra money doing that. Your idea might even be something that would allow you

to work from home. I've known lots of folks who make wonderful second incomes by turning a hobby or hidden talent into extra cash.

But the big thing is to just find a real and honest idea to help you make extra money. Remember, short-term sacrifice

for long-term gain. You won't be doing this side gig forever. But whether you're looking for a little help in building your emergency fund or paying off debt, creativity, determination and hard work go a long, long way.

—Dave

By Susan Shumaker
Tax Professional at
The Retirement Team



2025 Year-End Tax Tips

As we approach the end of the year, it's a crucial time to reflect on your financial strategies and make moves that can optimize tax savings for the upcoming year. Proper year-end tax planning can provide significant benefits, ensuring that you are taking full advantage of available deductions, credits, and strategies that can lower your tax burden.

1. Review Your Financial Situation

Before making any decisions, take time to assess your current financial situation. Look at your income, expenses, debts, investments, and retirement contributions. This review will provide clarity on the tax strategies that best suit your needs. Some important questions to consider:

- Are there any significant life changes this year (marriage, divorce, home purchase)?
- Do you expect a large increase or decrease in income next year?
- Have you had any major capital gains or losses this year?

Having this snapshot of your financial health will help you determine which actions will make the most sense for your situation.

2. Maximize Retirement Contributions

One of the easiest ways to reduce taxable income is by maximizing your contributions to retirement accounts. Contributions to traditional IRAs, 401(k)s, and other retirement plans can lower your taxable income for the current year. Contributions are also subject to phase-outs due to income limits, filing status and other factors. Here are some key points to remember:

- 401(k), 403(b), 457 & TSP Contributions: The contribution limit for 2025 is \$23,500 for individuals under 50, and higher for those 50 and older (catch-up contributions). If you haven't reached the limits yet, consider contributing more before the year-end deadline.
- Traditional IRA: The maximum contribution for 2025 is \$7,000 (or

\$8,000 if 50 or older). These contributions are tax-deductible if you meet certain income limits.

- Roth IRA: While Roth IRA contributions do not reduce your taxable income, they can provide tax-free growth in the future. However, you need to meet income eligibility requirements to contribute.

- SEP IRA : If you're self-employed, these accounts allow for larger contributions, potentially up to \$70,000.

3. Tax-Loss Harvesting for Investments

If you've experienced losses in your investment portfolio, year-end is an excellent time to engage in tax-loss harvesting. This strategy involves selling investments that have decreased in value to offset any gains you've realized throughout the year. The IRS allows you to offset capital gains with capital losses, reducing your taxable income.

For example, if you have \$10,000 in capital gains, you can sell investments that have lost value to offset those gains. If your losses exceed your gains, you can deduct up to \$3,000 (\$1,500 if married, filing separately) from your taxable income. Any remaining losses can be carried forward to future years.

4. Review Your Deductions

Many tax deductions are available to reduce your taxable income, but they need to be reviewed and planned for throughout the year. Some common deductions to keep in mind:

- Standard vs. Itemized Deductions: For the 2025 tax year, the standard deduction for single filers is \$15,750 and \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly, and \$23,625 for head of household. Compare this to your total itemized deductions (mortgage interest, medical expenses, charitable donations, etc.) to decide which is more beneficial.

- Additionally, a new temporary bonus deduction of \$6,000 for qualifying seniors (age 65+) is available, but is subject to income phase-outs.

- Charitable Contributions: Donations to qualifying charities can be de-

ducted from your taxable income if you itemize your deductions. If you are near the standard deduction threshold, consider making larger charitable contributions before year-end to push your itemized deductions higher.

- Medical Expenses: If your unreimbursed medical expenses exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income (AGI), you may be able to deduct them. Review any out-of-pocket medical costs and receipts to see if you qualify.

- New Higher State & Local Tax Deduction (SALT): This deduction limit has temporarily increased to \$40,000, up from the previous \$10,000 cap, and is subject to income phase-outs and filing status.

- Itemizing Deductions on Your Kansas Tax Return: The State of Kansas has a much lower Standard Deduction compared to the Federal standard deduction. Many people do not realize that you may be able to itemize your deductions on your Kansas tax return, while still claiming the large standard deduction on your Federal return.

5. Plan for Capital Gains Taxes

If you're considering selling an asset such as real estate or stocks, keep in mind the capital gains tax implications. Long-term capital gains (on assets held for over a year) are typically taxed at a lower rate than short-term gains (on assets held for one year or less). Depending on your income level, long-term capital gains could be taxed at 0%, 15%, or 20%, while short-term gains are taxed at ordinary income tax rates.

To reduce your capital gains tax liability, consider holding onto investments for at least a year, particularly if you anticipate being in a lower tax bracket next year.

6. Use Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)

If you have access to an FSA or HSA, you should consider contributing to these accounts before the year-end deadline to take full advantage of the

■ See RETIREMENT TEAM on page 9



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2026 Change to Retirement Catch-Up Contribution Rule

By Jim Hanna

The year is already rapidly coming to a close, making it peak season for assessing (and, in many cases, reassessing) contribution options related to retirement savings accounts. A major factor worth considering heading into the new year are changes to the SECURE 2.0 Act's catch-up contribution rule. The changes begin on January 1, 2026, and could have a significant impact on individuals 50 years of age and older who earned more than \$145,000* in 2025. If you are part of this group of investors, read on to learn about what catch-up contributions are and what the new rules mean for your retirement savings.



Hanna

What is a catch-up contribution?

If you're age 50 or older and have any variety of qualifying retirement savings accounts — including 401(k)s, 403(b)s, 457(b)s — you have the option of contributing additional pre-tax funds beyond the standard contribution limits set by the Internal Revenue Service.¹ These catch-up contributions are designed to help people nearing retirement give their investments an extra boost, which is especially beneficial for individuals who weren't able to contribute as much during their younger years. Catch-up contributions give soon-to-be-retirees an opportunity to accelerate their savings to match their expected income needs in retirement.

How did Secure 2.0 Act impact investors?

Passed in December 2022, the SECURE 2.0 Act was created to encourage greater use of retirement plans that allow Americans to prepare for their golden years. The legislation included a variety of tax credits and other provisions, such as opportunities for long-term and part-time employees to participate and save

more for retirement. The act increased the age at which individuals must begin making required minimum distributions (RMDs) to accommodate employees who stay in the workforce longer. The catch-up contribution limit for participants aged 60 to 63 was raised in 2025 to \$11,250 under this legislation, dubbed a "super catch-up" contribution.² This allows individuals within this age group to contribute well above the standard catch-up amount and take advantage of their peak earning years.

What is the new catch-up contribution rule?

Beginning in the new year, individuals with employer-sponsored 401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) government retirement plans who are 50 years of age or older and who earned more than \$145,000* in FICA wages the previous taxable year, must put their catch-up contributions into a designated Roth account after taxes.³ Simply put, this means any catch-up or super catch-up contributions for these high-income earners will be subject to tax deductions. This change does not impact a participant's standard contributions to their employer-sponsored retirement savings, which will continue to be able to be contributed pre-tax, and will not impact individuals who made less than \$145,000 in FICA wages the prior year.

How can I prepare for this change?

For individuals nearing retirement, it's important to regularly reassess your contributions and make sure they're aligned with upcoming regulatory changes, shifts in late-career professional plans, and your personal income needs and financial goals. This shift to the catch-up contribution rule presents new strategic opportunities for high-income earners. A financial advisor can help navigate these decisions and diversify investments to set you up for success in retirement.

* In Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) wages and adjusted for inflation

1- CNBC, IRS announces 401(k) catch-up contributions for 2025; <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/11/01/401k-catch-up-contributions-2025.html>

2- Kiplinger.com, New SECURE 2.0 Super 401(k) Catch-Up Contribution for Ages 60-63. <https://www.kiplinger.com/taxes/super-catch-up-contribution-for-age-60-63>

3- John Hancock, SECURE 2.0's new Roth catch-up contribution rule. <https://retirement.johnhancock.com/us/en/viewpoints/legislative--regulatory/secure-2-0-s-new-roth-catch-up-contribution-rule---manulife-john>

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The Secret to a Worry-Free Retirement:

Ensuring Your Money Works as Long as You Do

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



Part 3: How Much Will You Have?

There are only three questions you need to answer to ensure your money continues working for you throughout your retirement. Over the past two months, we've covered "How Long Will You Live?" and "How Much Will You Spend?" both of which you can revisit under the 'Retirement Tips' tab on our website. This month, we'll address the final question: "How Much Will You Have?"

It doesn't matter what you make; it matters what you keep. When you're accumulating assets for retirement, that means spending less than you're earning. Making a habit of budgeting and ensuring that each pay raise leads to increased savings rather than higher spending is one of the most important steps you can take to maximizing how much you'll have later.

Once you've started retirement, maximizing how much you keep gets more complex. A 2017 Social Security administration study found that there are over 9,000 different ways a married

couple could go about claiming their benefits. The difference between the most and least optimal selection is typically over a \$100,000 difference in lifetime Social Security payments for the people we work with. Picking which of those 9,000 ways is best involves more than using a simple online calculator too, because the gross amount of total Social Security, much like other income, is not the most important. The most important is how much you keep and how much you keep depends on how much is lost to Uncle Sam.

For far too many, taxes are the largest expense in retirement. Minimizing taxes is key to maximizing how much you'll have and goes well beyond choosing when to start Social Security. Which pension option you choose, whether that be a lump sum or traditional payments and how much, if any, of a spousal benefit you elect is heavily intertwined with tax planning and Social Security timing decisions. How much you take out of which investment accounts and when as well as what investments are in which accounts also play a huge role in making sure you end up with the most and Uncle Sam the least.

There are certainly many other large and important decisions, such as

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The Truth About Christian Zionism

By Dr. Michael Brown

Is “Christian Zionism” an oxymoron? Worse still, is it a heresy? And whether it is an oxymoron or a heresy, is it a recent creation, dating back no earlier than the 19th century?

Before we answer these questions, let’s first define our terms. If Zionism is the belief that Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, then Christian Zionism is the belief that the Bible affirms that Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people.

It’s that simple.

We can now answer the first question: Is “Christian Zionism” an

oxymoron?

Not at all, since it can easily be demonstrated that:

1) God’s covenant with the patriarchs remains intact, which promised the people of Israel the land of Canaan as a lasting inheritance (see especially Psalm 105:7-11).

2) Jesus the Messiah did not cancel the promises to the patriarchs but rather confirmed them (Romans 15:8-9).

3) Many of the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament, which include the worldwide regathering of the Jewish people to their an-

cient homeland along with their national spiritual rejuvenation (see, e.g., Ezekiel 36-37), are yet to reach fulfillment.

4) The Sinai Covenant cannot annul the earlier promises given by God to the patriarchs (see Galatians 3:17).

That’s why Jesus is returning to Jerusalem rather than to any other location on the planet. And that’s

why verses speaking of His return

■ Continued on next page



God’s Caution When Welcoming the Immigrant



**CLINT
DECKER**

President and
Evangelist
with Great
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Speaking Truth

Once a year I step onto an airplane and leave my familiar American soil, fly over the Atlantic Ocean then step off the plane to plant my feet on African soil, specifically, Kenyan soil. When I do, I find myself in a sea of people with a different skin color, language, clothes, food, music and overall culture than mine. And quickly, I find myself a stranger in another land.

This is a picture of immigration, where people move from their native land to a different one, sometimes by choice, sometimes by force. Instantly, they go from being a native to a foreigner, from a citizen to a stranger.

We live in a world of immigrants. The United Nations Migration report states that nearly 300 million people live in a different country from which they were born. And the United States receives more immigrants than any nation in the world. The U.S. Current Population Survey reports that America has 53-million foreign-born immi-

grants (legal and illegal). A record number.

The United States was built on Christian principles that welcome the stranger. What are those? The Scriptures say, “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34) The word “stranger” can also be sojourner, alien or foreigner. In a very practical term, it also means “guest.” Anyone who travels to a different country than which they were born, is a “guest” to that host nation.

What is expected by God from these guests? Immigrants are to abide by the existing laws of their host nation, “You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the LORD your God.” (Lev. 24:22) Immigrants are also expected to assimilate into the host nation’s culture, “Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice...” (Lev. 17:8)

How is the host nation to treat their guests? Immigrants are expected to receive equal justice in the courts, “You

shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner.” (Deuteronomy 24:17) Immigrants should be treated by the people with a sense of generosity, “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner...” (Deut. 24:19) Immigrants should not be taken advantage of, “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt...If you do mistreat

cases where there are nefarious motives with that, it will have a dangerous and dramatically negative impact on the host nation.

For immigrants who seek to assimilate and are respectful of their new nation, God’s laws apply. But for those who intentionally refuse to assimilate, deceive, harm others and blatantly defy laws there is a different response. There is biblical precedent and wisdom to remove them from the host nation. For it is an act of defense of the country and love for its own citizens. And church leaders, politicians and business owners that deliberately enable and justify the ungodly behavior of defiant immigrants, it is no response of love, instead they become complicit in the immigrant’s criminal conduct.

A prayer for you – Lord God, we pray for wisdom and understanding on the divisive

and complex immigration issue. We pray you will help us to employ your wise principles in navigating this. Help us to not be deceived while embracing both compassion and justice toward all immigrants. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

—Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Share your comment at cdecker@greatawakenings.org and follow his blog at clintdecker.blogspot.com.



them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn...” (Exodus 22:21-24)

God lays out what He expects from the immigrants and from their host nation, but overall, He urges caution when welcoming the immigrant. He says, “There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god.” (Psalm 81:9) This speaks of how immigrants naturally bring their own values and culture with them from their native land, and in

■ Continued from previous page

presuppose that He is returning to a Jewish Jerusalem (see, e.g., Zechariah 12; Matthew 23:37-39).

In light of these observations, we can now address the second question, namely, Is “Christian Zionism” a heresy?

The answer is obviously not, since the Bible supports the most fundamental tenets of Christian Zionism. How can it be heretical to believe what the Scriptures explicitly teach?

“But,” the retort might come, “the Church Fathers taught no such thing, and the concept of Christian Zionism is a direct outgrowth of dispensationalism, which can be traced back to the teachings of J. N. Darby in the 1830s.”

Certainly, there is truth to this statement as far as it pertains to the teaching of the Church Fathers. At the same time, many of them did speak of a future spiritual conversion of the Jewish people.

In the words of Augustine (354-430), “The time will come, the end of the world will come, and all Israel shall believe; not they who now are, but their children who shall then be.”

Or as stated by Jerome (347-420),

“[W]hen the Jews receive the faith at the end of the world, they will find themselves in dazzling light, as if our Lord were returning

were far from perfect in their doctrines and beliefs, with many espousing a dangerous antisemitism that left its ugly mark throughout Church history. (I have documented this in, *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the Church and the Jewish People*.) While many of their teachings are worthy of great respect, they differ among themselves on various points and do not carry the final authority of Scripture.

What is remarkable, though, is how many Christian teachers over the centuries have believed in the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, with some stating explicitly that they would return to the Land in unbelief, only to turn to the Messiah afterwards.

Here are some representative quotes, beginning with highly respected Puritan leaders in 17th century England.

Thomas Brightman (1562-1607) wrote, “What, shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it.”

John Owen (1616-1683), the greatest of the Puritan theologians wrote,

“They shall return to their own land; they shall enjoy it for a quiet and everlasting possession, their adversaries being destroyed; they shall also be filled with the light and knowledge of the will and worship of God, so as to be a guide and blessing to the residue of the Gentiles who seek after the Lord, and perhaps, shall be entrusted with great empire and rule in the world. The most of these are foretold concerning them, not only in their own prophetic writings, but also by the divine writers of sundry books of the New Testament.”

According to the New England Puritan leader Increase Mather (1639-1723),

“the Israelites shall again possess . . . the Land promised unto their Father Abraham.”

Skipping ahead to the 19th century, Anglican Bishop J. C. Ryle (1816-1900) wrote,

“I am well aware that many excellent Christians cannot see the subject as I do. I can only say, that to my eyes, the future salvation of Israel as a people, their return to Palestine and their national conversion to God, appear as clearly and

plainly revealed as any prophecy in God’s Word.”

And it was none other than Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), hailed as the Prince of Preachers, who said in 1864,

“I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough about it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the Children of Israel.”

And he made abundantly clear that there was to be a physical return to the Land as well as a spiritual return to God. (Of course, neither Spurgeon nor Ryle were dispensationalists.)

I’m quite aware that there are many Christians who differ with these statements and interpret the Scriptures differently. But to claim that Christian Zionism is either a heresy or of recent vintage is to speak in serious error.

RYAN SHUMAKER

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whether you should contribute to a pretax traditional retirement account or after tax Roth. How much to potentially convert from traditional to Roth is something that must be looked at too on an ongoing basis as tax laws and personal circumstances change, which they frequently do.

While you only need to answer the three questions we’ve written about over the last three months to ensure your money outlives you rather than the other way around, finding the answers on your own isn’t always easy. Whenever you do anything for the first time whether it is building a deck, painting a room, driving a car, etc. it probably isn’t going to be the best and a lot of decisions regarding retirement you only get one shot at. Making a mistake when closing in or at the finish line of working and transitioning to retirement can prove costly. You can get help avoiding a first timer retirement planning mistake by reaching out for a complimentary meeting with

someone on our team at Retirement Portfolios by visiting RetireFromTaxes.com or calling 785-330-9292. You might find that with good planning you can either have more money in retirement or more time in retirement. Even if you think you’re already in good shape to accomplish the goal of your money outliving you, making sure your assets go to where you want and not to lawyers, taxes, or a probate court is something else we do as part of our comprehensive approach.

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

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Call Ryan at 785-330-9292.

RETIREMENT TEAM

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tax savings.

• FSA: Flexible Spending Accounts allow you to set aside pre-tax dollars for healthcare expenses. However, many FSAs operate on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis, so it’s important to use the funds before the year ends. Check your balance and make sure you’ve planned for any remaining eligible expenses.

• HSA: Health Savings Accounts offer tax deductions, tax-free growth, and tax-free withdrawals for qualified medical expenses. For 2025, the contribution limits are \$4,300 for individuals and \$8,550 for family coverage. If you’re 55 or older, and not enrolled in Medicare, you can contribute an additional \$1,000 as a catch-up contribution. Unused funds in an HSA roll over year after year, making this a valuable tool for long-term savings.

7. Tax-Efficient Withdrawal Strategies

If you are retired or nearing retirement, consider your strategy for drawing down retirement funds. Withdrawals from traditional retirement accounts are taxable, so it’s

essential to manage the timing and amount of your withdrawals to minimize your tax exposure.

One key strategy is to draw down taxable accounts first to allow your tax-deferred accounts (like IRAs and 401(k)s) to continue growing tax-free for as long as possible. You may also want to spread out your withdrawals to avoid pushing yourself into a higher tax bracket.

8. Consider Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs):

You can donate up to \$108,000 from your IRA directly to a qualified charity. You must be 70 ½ or older, and the QCD can be used to satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). The IRA custodian must send the funds directly to the charity, and you do not pay tax on the distribution. Please consult with a knowledgeable tax or financial advisor to see if you can take advantage of this tax saving strategy.

9. Roth IRA Conversions: Converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA can have many tax benefits, but also potential tax consequences. You should always consult with a qualified professional to assist you.

Year-end tax and financial plan-

ning is an essential part of maintaining a healthy financial situation. By reviewing your financial health, maximizing retirement contributions, engaging in tax-loss harvesting, and making strategic decisions regarding deductions, you can possibly reduce your tax burden for the year. It’s important to be proactive and make the most of the opportunities available before the year closes out. Taking time to plan now can set you up for a successful and financially efficient year ahead. While many of these strategies can be implemented independently, it’s always wise to consult with a knowledgeable tax or financial advisor to help you navigate the ever-changing tax laws.

Call The Retirement Team at 785-478-7808 to schedule a complimentary, no obligation consultation.

The Retirement Team is a team of financial professionals 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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Celebrate the Holidays in Downtown Topeka!

As the Holiday season begins, Downtown is looking better than ever! People are getting in the Christmas Spirit!

Christmas shopping in Downtown Topeka can be fun, with all the unique shops and a bit of nostalgia in the air. It might remind you of a time when shopping was more exciting and personal.

Following are some tidbits from some of your friendly downtown merchants.

Unique Boutique and Gifts

Hunter & Laine, 826 S Kansas Ave, is a locally owned boutique that offers unique items made by local makers and other small businesses. The selection includes everything from BBQ sauce and freeze-dried candy to beaded ornaments, wallets, jewelry, quality clothing, and pet accessories. It's also kid-friendly and dog-friendly, so you'll find an area



for kids to relax and enjoy coloring pages and activities, while you browse with your furry friend.

"We love to work with local makers and artists by selling items on commission or buying products wholesale," said Tara Crousen, Hunter & Laine Manager. "By doing so, we can contribute to a unique shopping experience that



gives back to the community."

Check out the great assortment of items that will provide you with unique gifts to share with your family and friends this holiday season. Hours are Tuesday-Friday from 10:00-6:00 and Saturday 10:00-4:00.

Taking chocolate to a new level

Owners Nick & Terry Xidis at Hazel Hill Chocolate, 724 S. Kansas Avenue, have been a Downtown staple for years.

Hazel Hill, Terry's grandmother, is a symbol of their dedication to a family



tradition of "the best in everything they do." Nick is the third generation chocolatier, and they use only the finest ingredients, chocolate, fresh cream and butter, to produce handmade treats that ex-

plode with flavor.

For the last 6 years, Nick has been making handcrafted chocolate from cacao (coco beans) that import from around the globe. Much like fine wine, each cacao origin produces a unique flavor profile in the finished chocolate.

It's not just Topekans that delight in Hazel Hill chocolates.

"In 2019, three of our handcrafted chocolate bars won bronze in the International Chocolate Awards Americas competition," Nick said. "In 2020 our sea salt caramel won the gold medal in the Chocolate Alliance competition."

There are now over 20 awards and counting! Whatever your preference – handmade chocolate truffles, home-style fudge, crispy-creamy caramel apples or something else – at Hazel Hill they fashion delightful treats for every palate.

Need a gift basket, gift box, or just a few delicious chocolates to go? They'll take care of all the packing and shipping, too!

When you need a break

For your coffee emergency, go to Juli's Coffee and Bistro – a locally owned, woman owned, Veteran owned and operated coffee shop offering legit house coffee and all manner of espresso drinks.

Juli's features "Made in the USA" cof-



fee grown and roasted in Hawaii, with aloha flavors like toasted coconut, chocolate and vanilla macadamia nut. Buy a bag to take home!

Local favorites are still available, like the Turkey Lurkey and house made Cranberry Almond Chicken Salad for lunch. Fresh salads, wraps and tasty paninis make it perfect for casual dining. Daily house made specials keep it fresh and exciting.

Check out the menus online at www.juliscoffeeandbistro.com and order online, pay online and then pick up, or use Eatstreet delivery.

New menu items include made from scratch pies! Using recipes handed down for 5 generations, locally sourced small batch and uniquely tasty. Come in for a slice, or order ahead for the holidays: Apple, cherry, pumpkin, pecan, oatmeal, coconut cream, and more!

A little bit of Heaven

Working side-by-side at Cashmere Popcorn, Bill and Angie Anderson's goal



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Holiday Memories & Events

Check Out These Upcoming Holiday Events & Activities Downtown!



is to create a high-quality product in every handcrafted batch of popcorn, and provide it to you with unmatched customer service.

Faith and family is the driving force behind this amazing company. In fact, their family motto has always been, and will always be, "Thanks Be To God!"

They produce, package and market all the popcorn. With about twenty flavors to choose from, you'll find a little bit of heaven in every bag. Hours are Tuesday-Friday 10-6 and Saturday 10-4.

Cashmere Popcorn would like to wish everyone a Blessed Christmas Season, and thanks for supporting local.

Pancakes and more

Hanover's Pancake House at 1034 S. Kansas Avenue has been a local favorite since 1969! With a wide variety on the menu, and friendly service, it's a great



place to stop for breakfast, lunch or brunch! They are also famous for the pork tenderloin sandwich, and it is huge!

With the friendly service and generous portions, you won't go away hungry!

There are so many other unique shops downtown you won't believe it! Don't stop with this incomplete list! There's plenty more to discover in Downtown Topeka

Bring a friend, or the family, and re-discover the joy of hanging out downtown!

While you're making your way around the downtown area, check out all of the new things to look at on both sides of the street. And watch for these downtown events and opportunities during the holiday season:

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

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

WING FLING – Dec. 6, 2-5pm, Stormont Vail Event Ctr. Indoor festival of hot wings, cold drinks, and friendly competition. Live music, party games. \$27 in advance, \$32 at door.

MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE – Dec. 6, 6-9pm, Downtown Topeka. Lighted parade at 5th & Kansas. www.topekapartnership.com/gt-p-events

NUTCRACKER BALLET – Dec. 12-14 at TPAC. Ballet Midwest's holiday staple. Tickets at TPAC box office, and Barbara's Conservatory of Dance. www.ballet-midwest.net



www.ballet-midwest.net



SANTA'S FREE COSMIC WORKSHOP – Dec. 13, 2:30-5:30pm, Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas Ave. Fun, games and crafts with your kids! Write letters to Santa! Decorate an ornament! Play Santa Bingo! Color Santa Pictures! Santa stickers! Pictures with Santa from 3:30-5:30! ALL FREE FOR THE KIDS! Purchase a Cosmic

Cookie and decorate it for FREE in the Cosmic Workshop!

The whole family can also eat dinner for \$33! Large Pizza, 2 Side Salads and up to 4 small build your own sundaes PLUS you get 2 Cosmic Cookies to decorate in Santa's workshop! Buy a giant sugar cookie to decorate for \$5

RED STOCKING BREAKFAST – Dec. 13, 8-10:30am, The Penant, 915 S. Kansas Ave. Get \$15 tickets in advance at www.kcls.org or \$18 at the door. Children 10 & under eat free. Benefits KCSL's child abuse prevention programs and services.

THE NUTCRACKER BY KANSAS BALLET ACADEMY – Dec. 21-22, TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-234-2787

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Celebrate the Holidays in North Topeka!

CELEBRATIONS OF WINTER – Nov. 29, 2-8pm, NOTO Arts District. Candlelight shopping, Santa visits, lighting of Redbud Park, Horse-drawn wagon rides and free hot cocoa & cookies..

FIRST FRIDAY DEC. 5TH will start in the morning and end around 9pm with music in Redbud Park.

CHILDREN'S SHOPPING SPREE – Dec. 6, 9-2, Garfield Park Community Ctr, Kids can explore a mini market full of treasures — every item is \$15 or less, and free gift wrapping is included, booth

spaces available, \$30. Call 785-251-6886.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SANTA! He'll be making an appearance now and then in the NOTO Arts District in December! Christmas sales and displays are everywhere in NOTO this year!

Other Upcoming Events include:

VISIT FROM SANTA + HOLIDAY KID'S JAM – Dec. 7, 12:30-5pm, Doughboyz Pizzeria, 1312 N. Kansa Ave. Santa 12:30-3, Kids Jam 1-5. Take your own photos or have a 4x6 photo printed on site.



GINGERBREAD BASH – Dec. 7, 6-7:30pm, Capital City Church, 2000 NW Clay. Kick off the holiday season with an evening of fun and games. Families will build gingerbread nativities, hear the Christmas Story, sing songs and more. Registration closes Dec. 1. For questions, contact Miranda at kids@capcitytopeka.org.

WOODSHED HOLIDAY MARKET – Dec. 14, 10-3, The Woodshed Event Ctr. Food trucks, Market Bingo, free prizes

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

TOPEKA SPIRIT FAIR – Dec. 6-7, 10-5, The Woodshed Event Center. A two-day indoor symposium, with optional outdoor activities (weather permitting), dedicated to holistic wellness Workshops led by recognized local practitioners, designed to engage participants in practices promoting mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Vendors and Food Trucks. \$3 admission. www.geminivibeskansas.com

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Topeka, KS 66608

OR

P.O. Box 8350

Topeka, KS 66608

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

the events calendar

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

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

240 CHRISTMAS TREES & ORNAMENT DISPLAY — Nov. 1-Jan. 1, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat., & 1-5pm Sun. at Territorial Capital Museum, 640 E. Woodson, Leocompton. Over 240 Christmas Trees decorated in antique, Victorian, vintage and theme décor — including turn of the century and WW II era decorations, a barbwire tree and feather trees. Also tour Constitution Hall, a National Landmark 785-887-6148. lecomptonkansas.com

SLI FESTIVAL OF TREES — Nov. 25- Dec. 6, 10am-6pm, Fairlawn Plaza Mall. Wonderfully decorated trees and a silent auction.

TARC'S WINTER WONDERLAND — Nov. 26-Dec. 31, Sun-Thur; 6-9pm; Fri-Sat 6-10. Lake Shawnee, 3435 SE East Edge Rd. View dazzling holiday light displays,

featuring one million lights, while winding through a 2-mile scenic drive. Advanced Tickets are available: TARC, 2701 SW Randolph. 785.506-8720. winterwonderlandtopeka.com. Closed to public Dec. 1, 8 & 15

KNIGHTS OF LIGHTS HOLIDAY FESTIVAL — Nov. 28 — Dec. 29, Fridays & Saturdays — 5:30pm — 10pm; Sundays — 5:30pm — 9pm; PLUS December 19-24, 27-29; AND New Year's Eve Party 31st 10:00pm — 1:00am. Stroll through a Renaissance wonderland with lights, shopping, food, entertainment, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and more! Glow in the dark putt putt, train rides, & snowball fights! \$20 at the gate. Age 5-9 = \$9, under 5 free. (Free tickets available from Metro Voice for advertisers & donors: emailvoice@cox.net)

CELEBRATIONS OF WINTER — Nov. 29, 2-8pm, NOTO Arts District. Candlelight shopping, Santa visits, lighting of Redbud Park, Horse-drawn wagon rides and

free hot cocoa & cookies.

ING NETWORKING GROUP — Dec. 3, 11:30am at Dough Boy's Pizza, 1312 N. Kansas Ave.. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

HOLIDAY REMEMBRANCE SERVICE — Dec. 4, 6pm, Mt. Hope Cemetery Funeral Chapel & Reception Ctr, 4700 SW 17th St. This service includes an ornament presentation and special video tribute. You may submit one photo of your loved one by the video to contact@monthopetopeka.com by Dec. 1. Refreshments will be provided. To RSVP: <https://share.hsforms.com/1Y1-sKWIBQZq3s5nY0cMBgwbnf0> 785-272-1122

CRAFT SALE — Dec. 5, 9-4, New Life Baptist Church, 3601 SW 10th. Breakfast and lunch available. Raffle for 2 quilts.

NATIVITIES AND NOELS — Dec. 5-6, 10am - 9pm; Dec. 7, 1-7pm, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2401 S.W. Kingsrow Rd. Hundreds of nativities on loan from members of many different local churches, live Christmas music, refreshments, more. Free. For info: 785-554-8068 or <https://www.facebook.com/nativitiesandnoels>

CHILDREN'S SHOPPING SPREE — Dec. 6, 9-2, Garfield Park Community Ctr, Kids can explore a mini market full of treasures — every item is \$15 or less, and free gift wrapping is included, booth spaces available, \$30. Call 785-251-6886.

DONUTS WITH SANTA — Dec. 6, 9-11am, Dover Community Ctr, 5928 SW Douglas Rd, Dover, KS. Free.

CHRISTMAS ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR — Dec. 6, 10am, Stout Elementary School, 2303 SW College. Music, food, decorations & gifts. Contact markarganbright@yahoo.com for booth space. Sunflower Fiddlers will perform.

SANTA PAWS — Dec. 6, 11:30-3, HHHS, 5720 SW 21st St. A festive day of fun and furry cheer. Vendors, photos with Santa, bake sale, garage sale section, more. <https://e.givesmart.com/events/M4Y/> for Santa photo reservations, nail trim or to donate.

SANTA AT WHEATLAND IN BROOKWOOD — Dec. 6, 1-3pm, 2905 SW 29th St. Free visit and photos.

LIVE NATIVITY — Dec. 6, 4-6pm, Old Rock Church, 301 SE Railroad St. Silver Lake. See the people, pet the animals, enjoy live music, get a hot dog or s'mores by the fire pits.

WING FLING — Dec. 6, 2-5pm, Stormont Vail Event Ctr. Indoor festival of hot wings, cold drinks, and friendly competition. Live music, party games. \$27 in advance, \$32 at door.

BREAKFAST IN BETHLEHEM — Dec. 6, 9-11am, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame. A free Christmas event for all ages! Sit back and enjoy food and time in fellowship, or participate in our interactive Christmas story stations. Pancake Breakfast, Coffee & Cocoa, All-New Activities, Giveaways.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVENT — Dec. 6, 5-7pm, Susanna Wesley UMC, 7433 SW 29th St. Christmas crafts, cookies & cocoa, the Christmas story, build-your-own gingerbread house, more.

UGLY SWEATER FUN-RAISER — Dec. 6, 5-8pm, Topeka Art Guild & Gallery, 5333 SW 22nd Pl, Suite 25 in Fairlawn Plaza. Karaoke, games, photo booth, door prizes, auction items, refreshments. Register: www.topekaartguild.org

MIRACLE ON KANSAS AVENUE PARADE — Dec. 6, 6-

9pm, Downtown Topeka. Lighted parade on Kansas Avenue. www.topekapartnership.com/gtp-events

LAWRENCE OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PARADE — Dec. 6, 11am, Downtown Lawrence. Authentic horse-drawn carriages parading down Massachusetts Street is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season. Cozy up with hot cocoa and blankets. Feel the true holiday spirit while watching dozens of beautiful horses and wagons adorned in garland and bells

TOPEKA SPIRIT FAIR — Dec. 6-7, 10-5, The Woodshed Event Center. A two-day indoor symposium, with optional outdoor activities (weather permitting), dedicated to holistic wellness and personal development. This event will feature workshops led by recognized local practitioners, designed to engage participants in practices promoting mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. All are welcome. Vendors and Food Trucks. \$3 admission. www.geminivibeskansas.com

COOKIES WITH CLAUS — Dec. 6, 10-1, Big Gage Shelter House. Cookie decorating & hot cocoa, A festive holiday craft, Giraffe feeding, Storytime & music, A photo opportunity with Santa, A candy cane hunt

VISIT FROM SANTA + HOLIDAY KID'S JAM — Dec. 7, 12:30-5pm, Doughboyz Pizzeria, 1312 N. Kansa Ave. Santa 12:30-3, Kids Jam 1-5. Take your own photos or have a 4x6 photo printed on site.

GARDEN OF LIGHTS & CAROL SERVICE — Dec. 7, 5:30-7pm, Highland Park UMC, 2914 SW SE Michigan Ave. Kick off the holidays with music, laughter, and community in our prayer garden. Singing all the classics. Warm up with cookies & hot chocolate. Will move inside if the weather is bad.

GINGERBREAD BASH — Dec. 7, 6-7:30pm, Capital City Church, 2000 NW Clay. Kick off the holiday season with an evening of fun and games. Families will build gingerbread nativities, hear the Christmas Story, sing songs and more. Registration closes Dec. 1. For questions, contact Miranda at kids@capcitytopeka.org.

HOLIDAY REMEMBRANCE SERVICE — Dec. 9, 6pm, Cremation Garden Pavilion at Memorial Park Cemetery, 3616 SW 6th Ave. This service includes a litany of remembrance and red ribbons to personalize with your loved one's name. Refreshments will be provided. To RSVP: <https://share.hsforms.com/1Y1-sKWIBQZq3s5nY0cMBgwbnf0> Call 785-234-6605

C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON — Dec. 11, 11:30-1, at Westridge Mall Food Court. Featuring a Christmas devotional and fun games! Free admission. Meals available from menu if desired. Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org so we know how many to expect. Open to the public - bring a friend!

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

1, at Celtic Fox.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW — Dec. 12-14, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane St. Dazzling light displays synchronized to live performances of Christmas music as you enjoy the show from the comfort of your car. Music is played over your car's stereo. Shows at 6, 7, 8, and 9 p.m. Price: Free, 30 minutes long. Free glow sticks for everyone. 785-234-5545. <https://www.discovertbc.com/light-show>

NUTCRACKER BALLET — Dec. 12-14 at TPAC. Ballet Midwest's holiday staple. Tickets at TPAC box office, and Barbara's Conservatory of Dance. www.ballet-midwest.net. Join Clara at the Christmas Eve party where she receives a gift that will soon take her on a fantastic journey. Feel the joy of a Christmas Eve party, marvel at the special effects and excitement as the Nutcracker battles the Mouse King, watch as the snow falls gently in the forest and marvel as the dancers entertain you in the Kingdom of Enchantment. You don't want to miss this Topeka holiday tradition!

RED STOCKING BREAKFAST - Dec. 13, 8-10:30am, The Pennant, 915 S. Kansas Ave. Get \$15 tickets in advance at www.kcsl.org or \$18 at the door. Children 10 & under eat free. Benefits KCSSL's child abuse prevention programs and services.

HOLIDAY FLING TOPEKA — Dec. 13-14, Stormont Vail Event Ctr. Featuring booths showcasing the latest in fashion, beauty, wellness, treats and more. Sip and shop with festive cocktails (or cocoa for the kids!), sample gourmet foods and wines, and check out the latest fashion trends live on stage—featuring clothing and accessories you can find right at our boutique exhibitor booths. Adults \$10, Senior \$8, kids 6-12 \$8

COOKIE WALK — Dec. 13, 9-1, Potwin Church, 400 SW Washburn Ave. \$8 per pound.

SWEET SHOPPE — Dec. 13, 9-1, Highland Park UMC, 2914 SW Michigan Ave. (south side). Delicious baked goods perfect for gifting or enjoying at home

"WHY THE NATIVITY?" - Dec. 13, 2pm, Oakland United Methodist Church, 801 N.E. Chester Ave. Film from David Jeremiah will be shown. Free.

SNEAKERS FOR SANTA 5K RUN/WALK — Dec. 13, 8am, Garfield Park. Hot chocolate, donuts, raffles, free pics with Santa & Chester Cheetah. Contact solgreason@yahoo.com

PICTURES WITH SANTA & HEALTH FAIR — Dec. 13, 9-11am, SENT Topeka, 455 SE Golf Park Blvd. Healthcare services, shopping for gifts, wrapping and more. Free photos & gifts for kids to choose, wrap. Food pantry available.

OLD PRAIRIE TOWN CHRISTMAS — Dec. 13, 10am-



"Christmas at The House"

**December 24, 2025
7:00pm**



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

**Dec. 11, 11:30-1: "CHRISTMAS" Luncheon
at Westridge Mall. Christmas devotional, fun &
games. Free Admission. Order lunch
from any mall food outlet. Open to the public.**

RSVP to info@C5Alive.org

Save the Dates!

- Jan. 8: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Feb. 12: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Mar. 12: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Apr. 9: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

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



2pm, 199 NW Filmore. Old Prairie Town will be filled with activities: Letters to Santa, make an ornament to take home and hear a story in the school house, petting zoo, snowman snow machine, giant snow globe photo op. Families can enjoy shopping for nostalgic gifts or treats in the Mulvane General Store and Potwin Drug Store as well. Warm beverages can be purchased. \$5 per person

NEKAWF PAWS WITH CLAUS—Dec. 13, 1-4, Rosewood Event Ctr, 3216 SW 29th St. A Festive Event for the Whole Family (Including Your Furry Friends)! The Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation invites you and your entire family to enjoy photos with Santa, local vendors with unique gifts, treats and pet-friendly products.

SANTA'S FREE COSMIC WORKSHOP—Dec. 13, 2:30-5:30pm, Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas Ave. Fun, games and crafts with your kids! Write letters to Santa! Decorate an ornament! Play Santa Bingo! Color Santa Pictures! Santa stickers! Pictures with Santa from 3:30-5:30! ALL FREE FOR THE KIDS! Purchase a Cosmic Cookie and decorate it for FREE in the Cosmic Workshop! The whole family can also eat dinner for \$33! Large Pizza, 2 Side Salads and up to 4 small build your own sundaes PLUS you get 2 Cosmic Cookies to decorate in Santa's workshop! You can also buy a giant sugar cookie to decorate for \$5 without any other food purchase.

WOODSHED HOLIDAY MARKET—Dec. 14, 10-3, The Woodshed Event Ctr. Food trucks, Market Bingo, prizes

ELVIS AND FRIENDS CHRISTMAS LIVE - Dec. 14, 2pm, Cosmos Court, 909 S. Kansas Ave. A Family Friendly Afternoon with Branson Tribute Artist of the Year, Matthew Boyce and Female Entertainer of the Year, Cadence Miller as they come to Topeka for ONE SHOW! This show will be the best of the year. Elvis is coming to town with an Amazing Christmas show!

ING NETWORKING GROUP—Dec. 17, 11:30am at REMAX EK Real Estate, 2130 SW 37th St. All welcome, free lunch provided by Shannon Engler.

THE NUTCRACKER BY KANSAS BALLET ACADEMY—Dec. 20-21, TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-234-2787

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE—Dec. 21, 4-5pm, Stull Community of Faith, 1596 E. 250th Rd, Leocompton. Blue Christmas- is a worship event offered during the holiday season for those who are experiencing grief, loss, or pain, and who may feel estranged from the overwhelming joy of the Christmas season. Questions: pastor@stullcoff.com

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE - Dec. 24, 4pm, Countryside Christian Church, 3635 NE Highway K4. Join us for "The Greatest Story!"

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - Dec. 24, 6pm, First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, Oakland United Methodist Church, 801 N.E. Chester Ave.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE - Dec. 24, 4:30 & 6:30pm, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame.

CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE - Dec. 25, 9:30am, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame.

LIVERPOOL LEGENDS—Dec. 27, 7PM, TPAC. Tickets available at the TPAC box office or Ticketmaster.com. For info: 785-234-2787

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE, 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31, Kansas Avenue United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave

ONGOING EVENTS

SK8AWAY LEARNERS SESSIONS - Every Saturday morning 11-1, Sk8away, 815 Fairlawn Family fun environment and the best deal in town, \$8 per person but an adult skates for free with paid child! sk8away.net; 785-272-0303; manager@sk8away.net

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 1½ 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. 580-4545 or nhoni@tsccpl.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 parking lot.

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

TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS—Every Tuesday, 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco; Then 1-3pm at Auburn Community Center. 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. 10-3, 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!

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

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

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. GrandOttawaOpry.com

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

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

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

ROOTED CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOL CO-OP; Colosians 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

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 jcccccw@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: 702-328-7835 or ks.cwfa.org.

THE HEAT—FREE fitness classes for the community. Located at Florence Crittenton Services Center for Integrative Health, 5423 SW 7th. www.flcritkans.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. To Join from Home via Zoom, contact Madon for the Zoom link.

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

SHEPHERD'S CENTER BOOK CLUB - 1st & 3rd Mon. 2-4pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1275 SW Boswell Ave. Call: 785-249-3258 or email 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.

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 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. 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.)

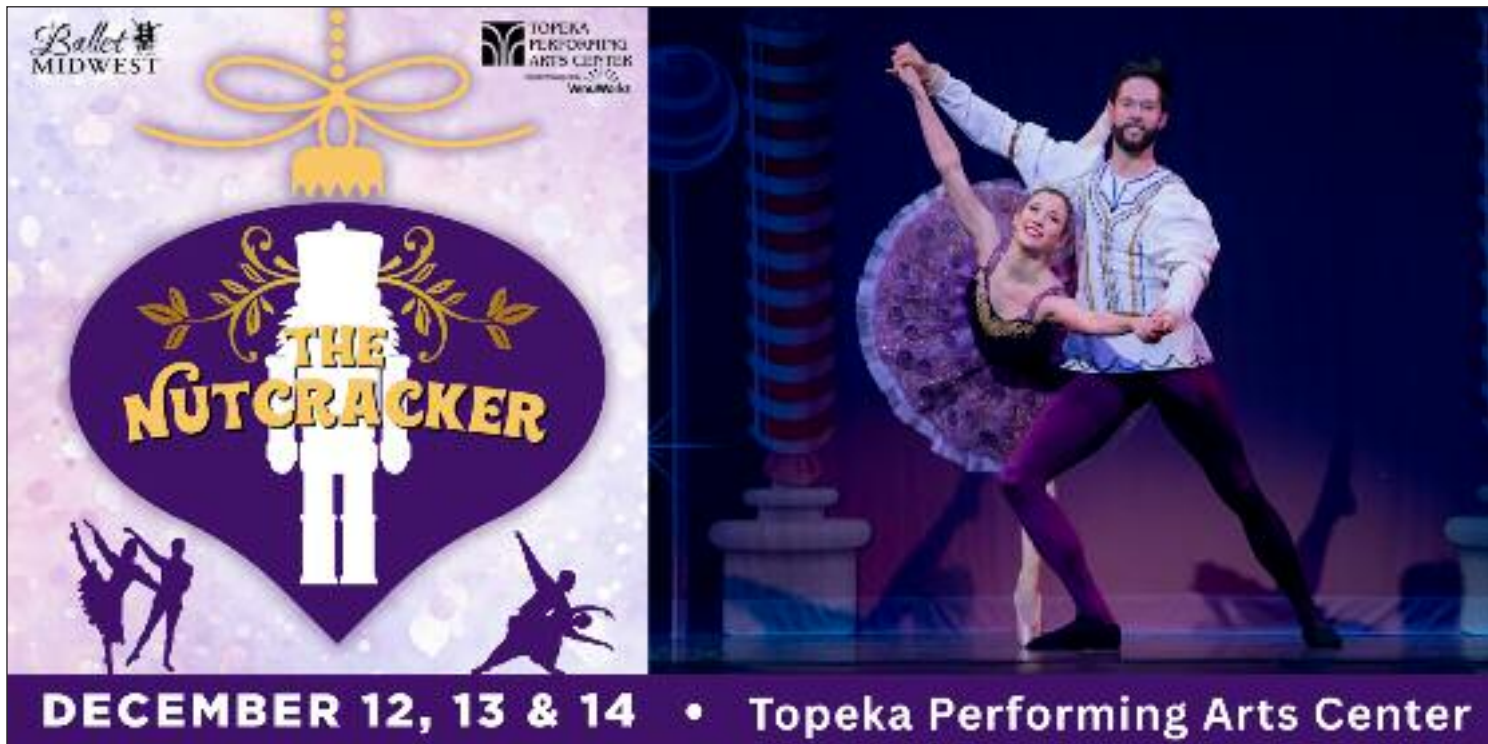
FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES Aerie 4319: 1st & 3rd Tue. 7pm; Auxiliary: 1st & 4th Tue. 6pm, 2941 SE Fremont Street. An international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope. www.foe.com 785-266-7307

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

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

MAP GROUP (MEMOIRS, ANCESTRY, PHOTOS) - VIA ZOOM - 4th Wed. 10-11:30am. Contact Rich McReynolds at rlm4017@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 know where to start? shepherdstopeka@yahoo.com



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

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

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

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

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS – Every Wed., 10:45 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 tgstopeka.org.

KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP – 3rd Thu., 11:30am-1pm via Zoom. Christian financial professionals: financial planners, accountants, attorney's & insurance agents invited. For info: kingdomadvisors.org or Jim Hanna, james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 785.357.6278 x19.

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

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP meets 1st Thursday every month at 5:30 pm, Midland Hospice House, 200 SW Frazier. Jean Barton 785-478-9045.

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 info 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.highlandheightsccc.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

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.



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entertainment

Christian Transformation in Nigeria Spotlighted in “Go Africa” Movie

Formerly murderous militants in Nigeria are being transformed into spiritual warriors for Christ. Christian widows whose husbands are victims of genocide in that African nation also are experiencing a powerful work of transformation and healing.

Against a backdrop of violence and tragedy, Youth With A Mission (YWAM

)ministry-training bases in Africa’s most populous nation are seeing remarkable stories unfold. For years, Christian believers in Nigeria have faced beheading, rape, arson and torture, and their plight is now on the radar of world governments as President Donald Trump has redesignated Nigeria a “country of particular concern.”

A new movie produced by



YWAM (watch it below) shows why the designation is accurate while also highlighting the ways in which missionaries are advancing the kingdom of God in a hostile nation. The film features testimonies from child soldiers who have surrendered their lives to Jesus, along with other inspiring stories.

The movie, “Go Africa,” also honors the wives of pastors killed by beheading in northern Nigeria. Up to 150 widows come to a YWAM base there every six months to heal from trauma.

True stories of brutality and satanic rituals are depicted in the film, along with the official account of the birth of YWAM in one capital city.

The founder and leader of one YWAM base in Nigeria narrates the story of its origin and recruitment of staff, two-thirds of whom are reformed militants. The base he leads is among the largest in Africa, and its location is undisclosed to protect young missionaries, staff and widows.

“When God called us to go to that place, it was a no-go zone full of violence,” Paul Dang-

toudma said.” A lot of people lost their lives there. Many villages were destroyed. Young people lost their lives. There was a lot of chaos.”

His wife initially was scared about bringing her daughters to a place haunted by a spirit of death until she experienced a heart transformation. “God changed my heart and gave me his heart for the nation of Nigeria,” said Rachel Dangtoudma, who originally is from South Africa.

Without fear of losing their lives, the couple started a discipleship training school on land once owned by militants and occultists who, the Dangtoudmas learned, killed Christians after participating in demonic, spiritual rituals.

Dedicated to Loren Cunningham, the late founder of YWAM, the new movie is directed by his son David L. Cunningham. Worldwide donors funded the movie to honor courageous souls who have risked their lives for the sake of the gospel. The film is free to download or watch in its entirety at www.thegomovie.org.

Superbook Kids Bible App Brings Free Animated Bible Stories



Many Christians who grew up watching the television series Superbook now have children of their own. The new Superbook Kids Bible App from CBN is designed to help children learn more about the word of God in a fun and interactive way. The new app will allow families to watch all 68 episodes of the animated series, plus delve deeper into scripture through games, videos and more, all for free.

“Our goal, really at the heart of it all, is Isaiah 55:11, which says, ‘the word of God does not return void,’” said Paul Richardson, executive director of CBN Animation. “And so, with the Bible app, the goal is to get scripture into the hearts of kids, to help kids engage with the Bible in a variety of ways. They can scroll through the Bible, and in line with the text, you can see different videos pop up.”

The Bible app, a companion to the Superbook series, will be available in 23 languages in more than 200 countries and territories.

“We know it’s going to be effective, because we know the content that’s in it is lifechanging,” said Ben Edwards, vice president of CBN International. “And we’ve already seen that experience. We’ve had that experience all over the world, watching kids’ lives be changed and transformed. So now we just have to put it in front of them, put it in the language they speak, make

it easy for them to access and it’s going to change a lot of lives.”

Designed for children aged 6 to 10, it features a biblical topics section where they can learn more about subjects ranging from angels to the Holy Spirit to handling everyday life.

“It’s really important for a child to have an experience with the gospel and with the Bible between the ages of 4 and 14,” Edwards said. “Once you get up toward 18 and higher, changing that worldview and having an impact on someone’s life, it can still happen, obviously, but it gets more and more difficult. So that’s another reason why Superbook is so strategic. It’s targeted at kids at a time in their life when they really need to have their biblical worldview and their spiritual worldview shaped.”

Many children also receive Jesus in the process.

“Superbook is the most effective evangelism tool we’ve ever had at CBN,” he said. “I’ve been involved in international ministry for so many years, and I’ve never seen anything that just has this incredible power and ability to impact and change a life. These young kids, they come to know Christ. They come to have a relationship with the Lord.”

To download the app visit their website here <https://us-en.superbook.cbn.com/app>.

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Titanic: An Immersive Voyage sets sail at Union Station in Kansas City

More than a century after nearly 1,500 people lost their lives when the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank, interest in the ill-fated ship and its passengers remains as great as ever. A new exhibit at Union Station in Kansas City lets visitors experience what it may have been like to be onboard on the night of April 14, 1912.

Titanic: An Immersive Voyage features more than 200 objects throughout 12 imaginatively themed galleries, including works of art, artifacts, memorabilia, props and innovative technology to view the wreck site.

"Titanic is the most enchanting ship of all time and is revered by many as an iconic gem," said John Zaller, executive producer at Exhibition Hub. "Our voyage engages the Titanic story like never before. Our expertise in exhibition design and immersive storytelling creates an unforgettable emotional connection to Titanic. We're delighted to tell this immortal story in our signature humanistic and immersive style, and to share it with guests around the world, including in Kansas City at your historic Union Station."

Guests board the luxurious ship through a recreation of the Southampton, England, maiden voyage dock. They then set sail through an immersive series of Titanic rooms that transport them back in time to meet fellow passengers, pause for iconic photos and experience moment-by-moment the series of events that led to the tragedy known around the world.

The exhibit also highlights local connections to the tragedy. Several passengers were immigrating from Europe to start a new life in Kansas City. Molly Brown of Hannibal, Mo. (better known as "The Unsinkable Molly Brown") was one of the more famous survivors. And coincidentally, Union Station was under construction at the time of the disaster.

Visitors encounter artifacts from Titanic and its sister vessels the Olympic and the Britannic, as well as objects from Carpathia and Californian, two additional ships key to Titanic's story. Included are the Heart of the Ocean, Artemis statue, one of



seven fully intact deck chairs, fine china, employee uniforms and more. A self-paced, downloadable audio guide (available in English, Spanish and French) is included to narrate each step of the way.

Among many first-time exhibition elements are an invitation to board a lifeboat to witness Titanic's final, dramatic moments. Seeing the distress

(with an additional ticket) to be fitted with state-of-the-art virtual reality technology and journey to the Titanic wreck site to explore and interact with their physical surroundings. Titanic: An Immersive Voyage

Titanic: An Immersible Voyage is now open and will continue until April 2026. Because high attendance is anticipated, Union Station officials en-



calls and the responses from other ships in the area add a layer of reality that is particularly poignant. In the final room, guests have the option

courage visitors reserve a boarding time in advance. To purchase tickets, make reservations or learn more, visit www.unionstation.org.



Brandon Lake Gospel Tour Draws Huge Crowds in Secular Cities



Christian singer Brandon Lake is drawing crowds and changing lives even in cities that are not considered friendly to the gospel. More than 15,000 people attended his recent concert at the SAP Center in San Jose, California.

"Tonight is not about me," Lake told the crowd. "But it is about one man — and his name is Jesus."

Lake, who sings "The Hard Fought Hallelujah," in the middle of his 48-city Kings of Hearts tour, which included a stop in Kansas City. His music is not only encouraging Christians but also breaking through to secular audiences. Jim Harrington, a music critic for the "San Jose Mercury News," was impressed with his local performance.

"That all of this was happening in the heart of Silicon Valley/Bay Area — widely known as one of the least religious and most 'unchurched' areas in the country — only made this accomplishment more impressive, greatly underscoring the historic nature of Lake's trajectory as an artist," he wrote. "Simply put, this 35-year-old talent is drawing attendance numbers at the box office that are simply astounding, arguably beyond anything ever seen in the CCM genre before."

Lake's song "Count 'Em" sounded "like something that could hail from the Foo Fighters catalog," Harrington wrote. Even so, Lake has an uncanny "ability to go from big rock star spectacle to

intimate moment at the drop of a hat."

During one moment, Lake walked into the audience to pray over a concertgoer. Toward the end of the show, he gave an invitation, urging those who had not done so to accept Christ as their savior. Thousands lifted their hands, saying they had prayed the salvation prayer.

"I pray it's just the beginning, and I pray that it takes over," Lake recently told the AP. "And not the genre of Christian music, but songs — whatever genre they are — that carry the message of the gospel."

Lake is unusual in that he has embraced not only worship but also pop, rock and even hip-hop, as evidenced in a song he performed with L.A.-based hip-hop artist Skema Boy, Harrington wrote.

He's also got a few thoughts on Gospel music's growing popularity within a secular audience. "The reason why people are turning their ear towards those kinds of songs right now is because that's what they were made for," he told the AP. "Music doesn't just have to be entertainment. They can have a spiritual experience. They can be educated on who they were made to be. They can receive hope and life and faith. ... I love all kinds of music, but if you have a song that carries that kind of message, it's just super charged, you know? It does something deeper."



Tips to Overcome Home Renovation ‘Decision Paralysis’

to choose from, it’s all too common to experience “decision paralysis.” Rather than put off your exterior renovation further, consider these tips and tools for nailing down the details:

Browse

Online tools can both help you bring your vision to life -- and decide what that vision is. ProVia’s Design Center is an innovative tool that lets you browse and save colors, coordinating palettes and product images. As you explore the Color Palettes page, which features color wheels representing unique palettes, along with suggested product colors and inspirational imagery, keep these factors in mind:

Architectural style. Understanding the features that define your home’s design style is essential in color selection. For instance, a colonial-style home may look best with classic, neutral colors, while a modern-style home might benefit from bold, vibrant accents.

Landscaping and surroundings. Look to your surroundings for inspiration, selecting colors that har-



monize with your landscape to create a cohesive and visually appealing look.

Color psychology. Colors have the power to evoke specific emotions and moods. Think about what you want guests to feel when they come to your front door, or what you want to feel each time you pull into your driveway. For instance, warm colors like red and yellow can create a welcoming and energetic feel, while cool colors like blue and green can create a sense of calm and tranquility.

Signing up for a My Design Account at provia.com/register allows you to create and save your own vision boards, so you can compile your favorite ideas in one place.

“In addition to any color palette images you’ve saved, you can ‘favorite’ other images on the site by clicking the heart in the upper right corner. Use your saved images to create whatever you want, whether it’s a board with just entry door ideas, or a board to visualize your favorite colors together,” advises Jennifer Kline, digital experience supervisor at ProVia.

Visualize

Are you more of a big-picture person, preferring to see how all the parts fit together as a whole? It can be hard to imagine how your

home will look by holding up a siding color swatch or trying to visualize a new metal roof to replace your worn-out asphalt shingles. This inability to “see” the finished result in your mind’s eye can be frustrating. Fortunately, the ProVia Visualizer tool enables you to preview colors and styles on your home, so you know exactly how it will turn out. Simply upload a photo of your house and then experiment with products. Get creative with door and window configurations, siding styles and shades, stone profiles and grout colors, and metal roofing options.

“Purchasing home exterior products is a big decision, which is why it’s nice to visually try before you buy. The ProVia Visualizer lets you preview different design and product selections so you can move forward with your project with confidence,” says Kline.

While the endless possibilities of a home renovation can be exciting, they can also make it seem overwhelming. Fortunately, increasingly sophisticated digital tools can help you define your style and see your vision through.

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sports

Strong faith keeps Patrick Mahomes grounded through pressures of fame and success



Patrick Mahomes has earned widespread acclaim for leading the Kansas City Chiefs to three Super Bowl victories. Team Chairman Clark Hunt also praises him for putting God first.

“One of the guys that I have enjoyed seeing grow so much in his faith has been Patrick Mahomes,” Hunt said on the Intersection podcast. “He was raised in a Christian family, and I have seen him be more demonstrative of his faith here across the years. Anytime that I have an opportunity to have that conversation, it’s always special.”

Mahomes has long been open about his faith in interviews, especially during high-stakes moments such as the Super Bowl. “He’s my lord and savior,” he said. “It’s someone that I look up to every single day to decide what I want to do with my life and how I want to live my life. And so Jesus is everything to me at the end of the day.”

Mahomes shared a Bible passage that serves as his spiritual anchor. “It’s about a boy named Eutychus and his faith, listening to a sermon, and falling and dying and coming back to life,”

Mahomes explained. “It spoke to me in that moment of how I need to live my life and how I need to be fully invested in God.”

Even after suffering an ankle injury before Super Bowl LVII, he credited God with helping him push through the pain. “I want to thank God, man. He healed my body this week,” Mahomes told Tracy Wolfson of CBS. “To battle through that, he gave me the strength to be out here.”

Chiefs chaplain Marcellus Casey said Mahomes is a regular at the team’s chapel services, noting how deeply his faith has shaped his leadership. “Patrick is the same person in private as he is in public — humble, grounded and grateful,” Casey said.

Faith helps Mahomes handle the pressure that comes with being one of the NFL’s biggest stars.

“I feel like I’ve grown in my faith these last few years, and I think that’s given me more sense of who I am and why I play the game,” he told ESPN. “It just kind of relieves the pressure of playing a football game, because I know that I’m on that field to glorify him before everything.”

Tua Tagovailoa Floats Jerusalem as Potential NFL Destination

After leading the Miami Dolphins to a win over the Washington Commanders in the NFL’s first regular-season game in Madrid, Tua Tagovailoa hinted at a bold next step for the league. “It would be pretty cool to go play in Jerusalem, I don’t know. That would be sick,” he said, sparking conversation about the possibility of an NFL game in the Holy Land.

The NFL has made a steady push beyond U.S. borders. Cities like London, Berlin, Dublin, São Paulo, and now Madrid have hosted games, bringing America’s football spectacle to new audiences. A game in Jerusalem, however, would mark a historic first in the Middle East.

Commissioner Roger Goodell has made no secret of the league’s global ambitions. “I think our next step after Australia would be probably moving into Asia,” he said in September, emphasizing that the NFL wants “everyone playing one game a year internationally.” While Israel isn’t in Asia, the suggestion of Jerusalem underscores the



league’s willingness to explore unconventional venues.

The idea carries symbolic weight. Israel is one of the United States’ strongest allies, and tourism in Jerusalem is rebounding strongly after years of disruption. Visitors are returning to the city’s historic sites, signaling both economic revival and renewed international interest.

Of course, logistical and political challenges would be significant. But for players like Tagovailoa, an outspoken

Christian, the chance to play in a city steeped in history is thrilling. For fans, it’s a glimpse of the NFL’s evolving identity: a sport that is not just American, but increasingly global.

Whether a game ever lands in Jerusalem remains uncertain. Still, with the league expanding its international schedule and stars openly dreaming big, the possibility doesn’t feel so far-fetched. As Goodell puts it, the NFL is “serious about being a global sport,” and fans around the world are taking note.

Dodger players keep God first after winning World Series

Many baseball fans are calling the recent World Series in which the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Toronto Blue Jays one of the most exciting ever. However, even after winning back-to-back championships, several Dodger players say their faith is far more important than success on the field.

Mookie Betts (shortstop) was instrumental in the Dodgers’ two victories in Toronto, driving in two runs in Game 6 and turning a series-ending double play in Game 7. Betts moved to shortstop during the offseason after primarily playing the outfield and second base.

Asked by CBN Sports to reflect on God’s grace in his life, Betts said, “It’s huge. I mean, just for me — me moving to short and then praying a lot of prayers and wanting to be a successful shortstop, right? — especially in his image.”

Betts wore a wristband that read, “God is greater than the highs and lows.”

Clayton Kershaw (pitcher) made only one appearance in the World Series, but it proved to be significant. With the bases loaded in a tie game during Game 3, Kershaw entered in the 12th inning to record a groundout and end the Toronto threat. The Dodgers went on to win that game in 18 innings. It was the final season for Kershaw who announced his retirement during the offseason. Kershaw is one of



the more outspoken Christians in the majors and cited his favorite Bible verses during the press conference when he announced his future plans.

“My last thing is my favorite Bible verse,” he said. “It’s ‘Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as you’re working for the Lord, not for men.’ It’s Colossians. And that’s what I’ve tried to do. Just work at it. Just work at it and love it.”

Tommy Edman (outfielder) drove in a run on a sacrifice fly during Game 7’s 5-4 victory and finished with eight RBIs and two home runs during this year’s postseason.

“Having your identity in your faith and in who you are, and with Jesus, is way more important than your success on the

baseball field,” he told the Sports Spectrum podcast in 2023. “What it really means to be all in for Jesus is it’s something that can definitely transform you.”

Blake Treinen (relief pitcher) recorded a save in Game 1 of the National League Championship Series against Milwaukee and was critical during the Dodgers’ stretch run in August, tallying 14 strikeouts and a 2.16 ERA. He often uses Christian music for his walkout songs and also speaks at the Dodgers faith and family events.

“Our job is to humble our hearts and admit we are sinners in need of a savior, and that Jesus paid for it on the cross,” Treinen said.

Alex Call (outfielder) joined the Dodgers last summer and saw limited plate action during the postseason, batting .364 during a largely pinch-hitting role in seven games, including three World Series appearances. He hit .267 with 31 RBIs during the regular season.

“I think that you can actually perform at your highest when you’re fully surrendered, when you’re fully present in the moment,” he told the Sports Spectrum podcast last year. “I think having a relationship with Christ actually allows you to get to that place where it’s like, all right, I know I’ve done the work. Now I’m just going to give it to you.”

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Watch Out for Fraud While Holiday Shopping

While gifts are being wrapped and lights are being hung, fraudsters are devising ways to leverage the holidays to scam you out of your money. Because an urgency to buy gifts and find deals make the season a time of high risk, it is more important than ever to exercise caution and to know that scams can come in-person, by phone, by email, by text or even via social media.

Last year, Darktrace researchers detected a 692% increase in Black Friday-themed phishing attacks in late November, where fraudsters sent emails to trick people into taking certain actions, and Visa identified a 284% increase in fake and spoofed merchant websites in the four months leading up to the holiday season. A Norton Cyber Safety survey found that around a third

of Americans have been targeted by a holiday shopping scam, and around half of those targeted actually fell victim.

What are some of the most prevalent seasonal scams?

Gift Card Scams. Pre-paid gift cards can be taken off the rack, drained of the funds and then repackaged, meaning you buy a gift card that has no value. Criminals attempting to scam you may also ask for payment via gift card, realizing payment is instant and your money will be irretrievable.

Package Scams. Scammers may make false claims about a returned package or other delivery issues to convince you to give them personal information. Criminals may even go as far as sending a package you didn't order to force you to engage with them with an aim to elicit your personal information or a payment.

False Claims. Holiday fraud attempts are often made by making false claims that either a credit card was declined or that you are owed a refund of some sort, prompting you to engage and provide information.

Online Scams. Fake online shopping websites and too-good-to-be-true sales or offers are widely promoted by email and on social media. A lot of these deals will highlight a limited window of opportunity to force immediate action and create a sense of urgency.

Charity Scams. Scammers create phony charities to exploit the generosity of people during the season of giving by creating professional and legitimate-looking material online, complete with branding, photos and compelling stories.

Here are some ways to help protect yourself and your wallet:

- **Be Suspicious.** Maintain awareness that there are a lot of fake offers and false claims during the holiday season and take the time to carefully investigate anyone you don't know who contacts you or sends packages and asks for



your personal or payment information.

- **Stay Alert.** Check gift cards to make sure the PINs aren't exposed with the coverings already scratched off before you purchase them. Keep track of your accounts and flag any suspicious transactions for your financial services provider or bank. If needed, freeze your account and have cards reissued. Setting up alerts with your bank enables them to flag these issues for you, too.

- **Don't Rush.** Even if the deal or gift

offered online or on social media seems like a great value, pause before clicking. Research the organization and stick with trusted brands when making purchases whenever possible.

- **Check Charities.** Research charities before giving by utilizing a reliable charity checking site like Charity Navigator, Charity Watch or GuideStar.

A little extra caution around the holidays can make for a season that is merry and bright.

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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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Stretching for Success

If you think stretching is only for athletes, you're wrong. Experts say stretching is good for everyone, and a 2023 study found that adults who stretched five days a week had a 20% lower risk of dying over the next nine years than those who didn't. Our experts share what stretches you should start doing today and why.

If you go straight from sitting to exercising, you could be setting yourself up for a serious injury!

"Everybody needs to stretch. It's really important to help your body stay mobile. It helps with recovery. It helps to prevent injury and just helps you live a better quality of life," said Tatyana

Siddeeq, lead flexologist for StretchLab Winter Park.

And you shouldn't just stretch when you feel tight.

"When we don't stretch, we will lose our flexibility and over time that's gonna limit our mobility and our range of motion," explained Caitlin Ann Cheruka, PhD, clinical assistant professor at the University of Central Florida.

And that range of motion can be lost in 4-8 weeks. But you don't want to stretch to the point of pain.

"If you're going from a scale of zero to 10, you wanna get to maybe that seven mark. Once you get to that nine, 10 mark,

that is when there's a greater chance of injury," Siddeeq told Ivanhoe.

Siddeeq recommends that everyone do the forward fold, which opens your back and loosens up your hamstrings and calves. If you sit a lot every day, Prof. Cheruka recommends the hip flexer.

She also recommends targeting every muscle group, so you should also do the hamstring stretch, chest opener, quadriceps stretch, and shoulder stretch. And one more reason to stretch:

"Stretching can help improve our cardiovascular health, which is super important because we know that cardiovascular disease



is the leading cause of death worldwide," said Prof. Cheruka.

Finally, when is the best time to stretch? Prof. Cheruka says before a sport, after a sport, and any day you don't do a sport! In other words, whenever you can.

If you're considering trying

stretching to fix your back pain, Prof. Cheruka recommends strengthening exercises instead. Stretching may only provide temporary relief. To help back pain you should focus on developing core strength.

—Ivanhoe Newswire

The New Age of Aging: When Does Aging Really Start?

Americans are living longer than ever. Right now, nearly 58 million people are 65 years old or older and research shows 65-year-olds can expect to live another 18.9 years, on average. If you want to live a long life, aging is part of the journey. But just how do our bodies age and what can we do to slow it down?

Everyone ages, but not everyone ages the same way. At almost

70-years-old, Maureen doesn't let her age slow her down.

"To me, age, it's a number. It's what you allow it to be," said Maureen Smith.

Scientists studied proteins in tissue from people between ages 14 and 68. They found aging might start earlier than you think.

"Things start happening in your cells as early as your early

30's," said Tom LaRocca, PhD, Associate Professor and Director, Healthspan Biology Lab, Colorado State University.

The aging process seemed to speed up the most between ages 45 and 55. But interestingly, their study found different body parts don't age at the same pace. The spleen and adrenal gland showed signs of aging at around 30. At 40 to 45, your lymph nodes begin to age, at 50, it's your intestines, and 55 your lungs. The aorta saw the biggest changes in protein levels around the ages of 45 and 55. In



your 60's it's your plasma and muscles that start to feel the ef-

fects.

Good news — you can slow aging with smart habits.

Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, folate, vitamin c, vitamin a, and curcumin, avoid smoking, alcohol, and stress, keep blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol in check, get enough sleep, and stay active. Adopting these habits between 45 and 50 could add up to 10 healthy years of life at the cellular level.

The study authors say their findings may have implications for future research into treatments for chronic conditions related to aging. This could add decades to both a person's lifespan, and health span.

—Ivanhoe Newswire

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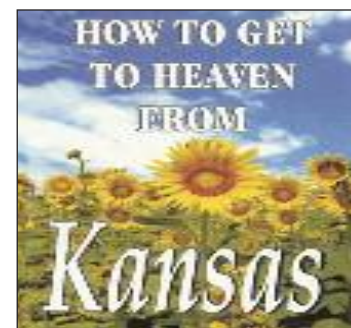
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of god." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says, "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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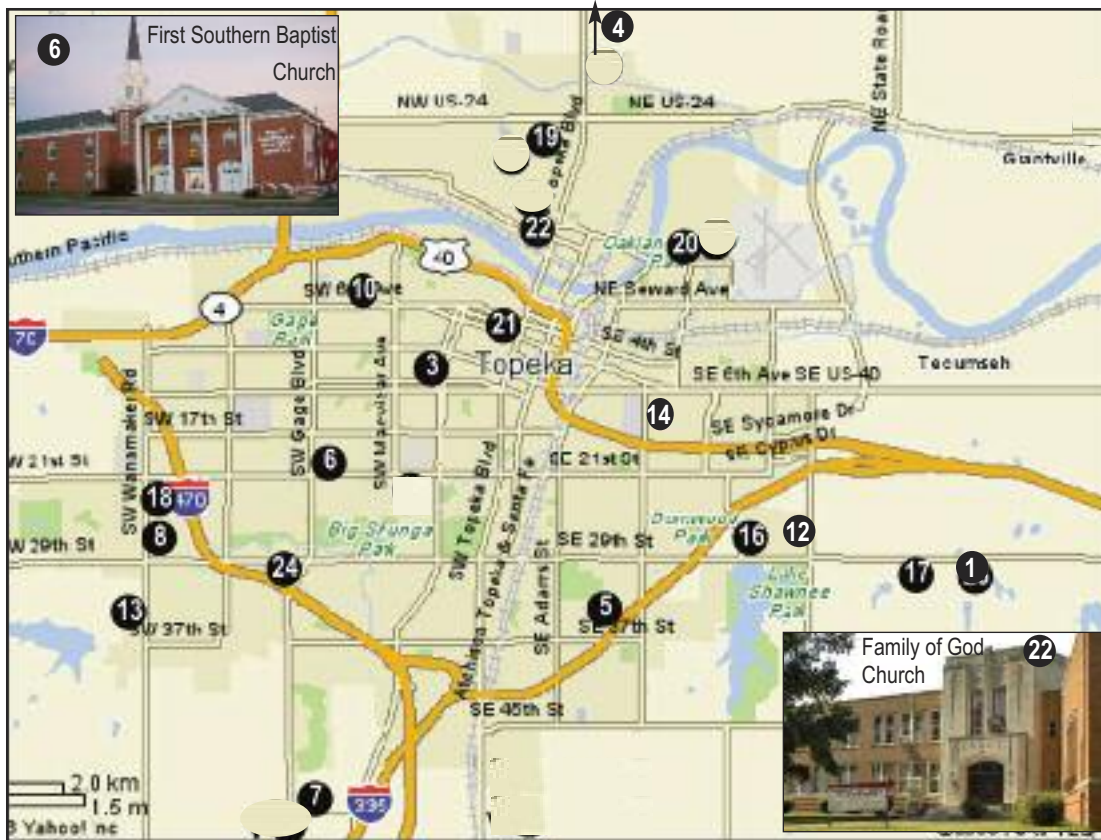
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Finding faith in “The Nutcracker,” a Christmas classic

The popularity of the ballet “The Nutcracker” skyrockets during Advent and the Christmas season because of its pageantry, dancing, and timeless classical music. But have you ever wondered what the story is really all about? If so, you’re not alone.

The story is much clearer, says the Reverend Matt Rawle, the lead pastor at Asbury United Methodist Church in Bossier City, Louisiana, if we use a “lens of faith” to look more closely at the characters and the action.

The story actually resonates with strong parallels to our faith and helps us prepare for Christmas, Rawle writes in his book on the subject.

We can see many parallels to our faith in what happens to the characters. Clara, the main character, is at that “in between” age and always waiting: waiting to grow older, waiting for someone, waiting to understand the world. She is loved dearly by her peculiar godfather who gives her a special gift – the Nutcracker. After the Nutcracker later comes to life, he battles the evil Mouse King, only to die in battle. However, the loving godfather resurrects the Nutcracker, who then takes Clara to his kingdom to the acclaim of many who have awaited his return.

Sound familiar?

“The Gift of the Nutcracker explores (many) Christian themes throughout the four chapters,” writes Rawle, “each focusing on a particular character from the story. In turn, each chapter applies the lessons learned from the story to help us better understand our walk as Christians and relationship with Christ.”

Like Clara, we Christians understand what it’s like to live in an “in between” time of life. We live in this world, raise families, enjoy traditions, and celebrate holidays and holy days. Yet Paul encourages us to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” (Romans 12:2). Like Clara, we find that it is often in these periods of waiting that we see the most growth in our lives.

Or consider Drosselmeir, Clara’s peculiar godfather, who gives her the Nutcracker. He also produces a puppet show that foreshadows future events, though it doesn’t disclose everything that will hap-



pen. If we are watching the play for the first time, we may not know this. But if once we have seen the play in its entirety, we know what events lie ahead.

Similarly, the Scripture passages during Advent foretell the coming of the Messiah, God’s gift of his only begotten son. We know now that Jesus is the King of Kings, but people in the first century did not know the full story. “Scripture doesn’t tell us everything we want to

know,” writes Rawle, “but it does reveal everything that we need.”

The third section of the book looks at the Mouse King, the villain of the story. We’re not quite sure who he is or why he wants to battle the Nutcracker, but Clara fears him from the start.

Are there times when fear and suspicion are the dominant feelings in our day? Are we constantly fighting battles, both real and perceived ones, throughout the day? Clara finds comfort when the Nutcracker is by her side, but what about us? Do we truly feel peace and the hope for a new life by realizing that God will never abandon us?

The final section of the book deals with the Nutcracker, whom Rawle calls “the greatest gift.” When Clara receives the Nutcracker at the Christmas party, she doesn’t know what to think about the gift. It wasn’t something that she wanted, but she found out later that it was a gift that she needed.

In one sense, Jesus is the gift we wanted, but we are surprised to find that he is also the gift we need. Jesus calls us all to turn the other cheek, welcome our neighbor, feed and clothe the poor, even carry his cross. If we are to welcome the Christ child into our lives at Christmas, we must also embody his teachings and act more like Jesus during the rest of the year.

Rawle summarizes the connections between the story and our faith journey in this way: “Much like our journey as Christians, Clara’s story is one that begins with uncertainty, fear, and struggle, yet ends with comfort, hope, and joy. Both The Nutcracker and the Advent story unfold just as we know they will, but not without the hope and anticipation that always accompany both the dance and the season.”

So the next time you attend a live performance of The Nutcracker, or watch it on TV, be sure to use a “lens of faith” and walk with Christ alongside Clara and the Nutcracker.

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49 Years of The Nutcracker: Ballet Midwest’s Annual Production

Every December, Ballet Midwest brings to life a holiday tradition in Topeka that spans generations: The Nutcracker. For 49 years, audiences young and old have gathered at the Topeka Performing Arts Center (White Concert Hall before that) to be transported into Clara’s magical world — a world of toy soldiers, snow-kissed forests, and the Land of the Sweets.

What makes this production so special is not only its timeless story and Tchaikovsky’s sweeping score, but how it becomes a bridge across age groups: grandparents, parents, siblings, toddlers, and teenagers can all find joy in it together.

A Tradition Passed Down

For many families in Topeka, the Ballet Midwest Nutcracker is a yearly ritual. Parents who once sat wide-eyed in the audience now bring their own children, pointing out favorite scenes — the Nutcracker’s battle with the Mouse King, the swirling snow, the Sugar Plum Fairy — with the same delight they remember from their first viewing. It becomes a kind of cultural inheritance: “Remember when you were that little mouse?” one generation might tease another.



Ballet Midwest underscores that family connection with ticketing options catered to intergenerational attendance. Adults 55+ and youth (under 18) enjoy a reduced ticket price (\$17 when purchased via certain channels) while family-pack options help make attendance easier for households, \$60 for 2 adults and 2 children.

Involving Young Dancers and Community Outreach

One of the most tangible ways Ballet Midwest draws in younger generations is via participation. The company includes

local auxiliary dancers in the production — students, novices, and community dancers who get to share the stage. Third generation dancers grace the stage as their families watch in the audience with pride. As these young dancers rehearse and perform alongside seasoned company members, they build confidence, skill, and a real sense of ownership in a community art form.

Beyond the stage, Ballet Midwest hosts outreach efforts such as offering a free Nutcracker performance for area 4th-grade students along with going out in

the community to perform small sections of different dances. This means children who might never otherwise see ballet in person get to experience the magic firsthand — sometimes becoming part of the tradition themselves.

Shared Moments That Echo Across Ages

Certain moments in the performance tend to evoke collective gasps or delighted murmurs from every age group. The transformation of the Christmas tree, giant snowflakes drifting in the forest, the dramatic battle with mice and soldiers — all are theatrical treats that don’t require ballet knowledge to enjoy. (To younger attendees, these moments can be dazzling “magic tricks.”)

Moreover, many longtime audience members relish subtle changes in each annual staging: new choreography flourishes, fresh costuming, maybe a twist in set design. Comparing year to year becomes a game for returning patrons — “Did you catch the new flower costumes?” — and gives even the oldest attendee a renewed interest.

A Community Standard

Because it’s local, the Ballet Midwest

Nutcracker feels like “our” production. It’s not a touring company passing through. Neighbors and schoolmates often appear in the cast, making the show a community effort. That helps cement a feeling of shared ownership across generations: “I know someone up there!” adds extra excitement even for casual attendees.

Furthermore, the Topeka tradition has stood for so long — first staged in 1977 and continuing year after year — that many multigenerational families have grown up with it. That continuity is powerful: grandparents might say, “I saw this when I was your age,” and children respond, “One day I’ll bring my kids too.”

Ballet Midwest’s The Nutcracker is more than a ballet; it’s a seasonal ritual combining imagination, music, spectacle, and community. The production succeeds at weaving all these threads together so that grandparents hold hands with tiny toddlers, teenagers cheer for the mouse king, adults reflect on traditions, and new dancers step bravely into the spotlight. In doing so, it reminds us that art is timeless — and that some performances truly belong to every generation.