

Topeka/Lawrence EDITION

The Area's Most Complete Event Guide



BLEEDING KANSAS

Page 13

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Anne
Wilson
Page 17

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Back Cover!

Greater Kansas City area preparing for hundreds of thousands of World Cup fans



Ready or not, the world is coming to the Kansas City area this summer. Arrowhead Stadium will be one of the North American sites for soccer's FIFA World Cup, which Fox News said is comparable to playing 104 Super Bowls in one month.

Finding places to house all of the expected visitors will be a challenge. Tourism officials estimate hundreds of thousands of visitors could pass through the metro during the tournament, while the city has roughly 36,000 hotel rooms. Some rooms are under

■ Please see WORLD CUP page 5

February 2026

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US AT or at www.metrovoicenews.com



By Clint Decker

When a man picks up a gun in anger and then points it at his enemy and pulls the trigger – hate wins. When one abuses the levers of power to silence opponents – hate wins. When one spews vile insults at their foe – hate wins. Martin Luther King, Jr once said,

"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

What kind of love can conquer selfish hatred? A love that is pure,

holy, undefiled and has never been touched by evil. I speak of a love that comes from another dimension in time and space. A divine holy love that exists in the One who sits on the throne of the universe in the celestial city among the stars. The Lord God created the heavens and earth out of this love,

■ Please see LOVE WINS page 2

■ Please see POSTMARKS page 2

USPS: Postmarks Not Guaranteed on Same Day



The US Postal Service (USPS) has changed how it handles postmarks, and it could cost you big time.

Under the new procedure, instead of receiving a postmark on the day you put it in the box or hand-deliver it to the Post Office, the postmark will now reflect when they got around to handling your piece of mail.

USPS says it could be days before the official postmark is added. This could cost you in terms of late taxes, bills, legal documents, election ballots and numerous other important business in which a postmark matters. You'll now need to go to the window and request

Metro Voice's Midwest Christian College Fair Returns to KC Feb. 28

As Christian colleges report record-breaking enrollments for 2025-2026, the area's largest Christian College Fair is set to showcase 50 faith-based universities under one roof. This pivotal event, scheduled for Feb. 28, comes at a time when Christian higher education is seeing remarkable growth despite national enrollment challenges.

Planning your college future? Get ready for an event that could shape your next four years. The Midwest's

largest private Christian college fair is coming to Kansas City on Feb. 28, bringing together 50 faith-based universities under one roof.

The 28th Annual Christian College Expo isn't your typical college fair. From 10:00 AM to noon at Colonial Presbyterian Church (9500 Wornall Rd., South Kansas City), you'll get real face time with admissions counselors from top Christian universities across

■ Please see COLLEGE FAIR page 2



Faith, Family and Chicken Sandwiches: Chick-fil-A celebrates 80 years with new menu items, contests

Chick-fil-A is having a milestone birthday this year. The restaurant chain founded by S. Truett Cathy is celebrating 80 years of faith, family and chicken sandwiches.

A yearlong nationwide celebration called "Newstalgia" will combine new menu items with a vintage twist designed to honor Chick-fil-A's past. The campaign includes a line of collectible retro cups available for \$3.99 each. Three thousand of them are golden fan cups, redeemable for a prize of free Chick-fil-A for a year. Each cup includes a hidden QR code and instructions for claiming the prize, which totals 52 entrées over 12 months. The contest is running nationwide through July 1, and the specialty cups are being randomly



distributed across participating locations.

"This year marks more than an anniversary," said Khalilah Cooper, vice president of brand strategy,

advertising and media. "It's a celebration of the memories, meals and meaningful moments that have brought people together at Chick-fil-A for generations. We

have so much in store this year, firmly rooted in Chick-fil-A's renowned quality, care, generosity and hospitality."

Cathy opened The Dwarf Grill in Hapeville, Ga., in 1946. It was there that the now-famous chicken sandwich was conceived, ultimately leading to the opening of the first Chick-fil-A restaurant in Atlanta in 1967. From a single diner to more than 3,000 restaurant locations across the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom and Singapore, the company has become one of the most successful family owned restaurant chains in the world.

The anniversary celebration will also bring new frosted sodas and floats to Chick-fil-A's permanent

menu, inspired by old-fashioned soda fountain drinks and made with the company's signature frozen dairy dessert. For a limited time, the original Chick-fil-A sandwich will be served in retro packaging featuring vintage-style graphics pulled from the brand archives in another nod to the company's roots.

Cathy, a devout Southern Baptist, built the company on biblical principles, including closing on Sundays to honor the sabbath. Over the years, the chain has weathered cultural backlash for its stance on traditional family values, but it remains one of the most loved -- and most profitable -- fast-food brands in the nation.

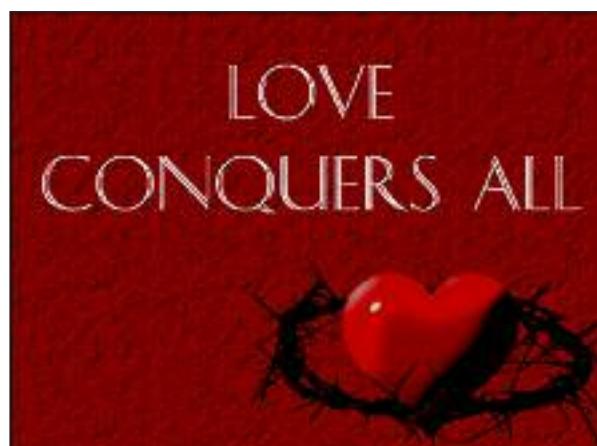
LOVE WINS

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and fashioned man and woman together, but soon evil found its way into the human heart. They rejected His love and embraced the darkness. Eventually, evil took hold of the world and hate abounded everywhere. Then in time, the God of light and love chose a people and began to teach them about Himself.

He told them, "...it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand...from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 7:8) He also taught them to love Him, "You shall love the Lord your

God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might...and keep...his commandments always." (Duet 6:5, 11:1) And He taught them to love one another, "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18) Then at the right time, He revealed His marvelous love to the world on Christmas Day, "For God so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) For three years Jesus went about manifesting the love of God through His teachings,



signs and wonders. But hate raised its ugly face and sought to silence the voice of love and truth. Anger, violence and wickedness nailed Jesus to a tree and buried Him in a tomb. Then three

days later, the love of God came bursting forth from that grave. Love won!

Today, the message of God's love and truth continues around the world. It is a love unlike any other. It is loyal, sacrifices, it is pure, exposes evil, disciplines and corrects, overcomes evil with good and is a love that forgives. The song, "The Love of God" says it best, "The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; it goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell...O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure: the saints' and angels' song!"

This love of God compels us to love others, to love as He loves, especially those who are the most difficult. For Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (John 13:34)

What is God's message to a world that is filled with violence and vulgarity? Stop! Do not let hate win. There is a better way. Quit returning evil for evil. The love of Jesus has shown us a different path. Turn from the darkness and toward heaven's light and love. See Jesus lifted high upon a cross. See how He rose from the dead for you. Call out for a touch of His grace and mercy. Do it this very hour, then watch His divine love be poured into your heart and be changed forever. Love wins!

COLLEGE FAIR

continued from page 1

17 states. The best part? It's totally free.

Think of this fair as your one-stop shop for college planning. Want to know about campus life? Athletic programs? Financial aid? The admissions teams are there to give you straight answers. With 2026 expected to bring

record-breaking scholarship opportunities at Christian colleges nationwide, this couldn't come at a better time.

Every student gets a free copy of the 2026 College Guide and Directory – a valuable resource for your college search journey. Plus, you'll meet representatives from these outstanding institutions:

The event is powered by Metro Voice news and VisionIsrael.org. Our media

partners Bott Radio Network with PrecisionPrintKC help make this possible.

Want to stay in the loop? Visit metrovoicenews.com or sign up for the weekly newsletter. For immediate questions, call 816-524-4522 or visit the Facebook Event Page. Share your excitement with #KCCollegeFair!

Pro Tips for Fair Day:

- Bring a notebook or use your phone to jot down key information

- Come with questions ready – this is your chance to get real answers

- Consider bringing a parent or mentor for additional perspective

The location at Colonial Presbyterian Church has served as the fair's home for 27 of its 28 years, perfectly positioned for both Kansas and Missouri students. Its central location makes it an ideal meeting point for families across the metro area.

Remember, choosing a college isn't just about academics – it's about finding a place where you can grow in faith while preparing for your future. This fair brings together the best of both worlds: top-tier education and strong Christian values.

Mark your calendar, spread the word, and take the first step toward finding your perfect college fit. We'll see you Feb. 28.

POSTMARKS

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a hand stamp on your mail.

The changes are part of its Delivering For America initiative that in-

cludes closures of many post office branches and modernizing infrastructure. While they say it is to respond to the decreasing volume of mail and increasing packages, some say it only adds to the hassle of everyday Americans.

The USPS which has faced bankruptcy for over a decade, is again increasing priority mail rates.

The increase in USPS shipping rates goes into effect Jan. 18. Prices are based on the package's weight and the distance it is being shipped.

First Class mail will remain at 78 cents per ounce.

Priority Mail prices start at \$10.45 per package and \$11.90 for a flat-rate Priority Mail envelope. They are expected to increase 6.6%.

Priority Mail Express packages

start at \$32.50 and flat-rate envelopes start at \$33.40. They are expected to increase by 5.1%.

USPS Ground Advantage starts at \$7.20 and is expected to increase by 7.8%. Parcel Select is expected to increase by 6%.

Bleeding Kansas program returns

Historic Lecompton is presenting six weeks of programs to help get you in touch with the territorial war and Civil War-era history of the area.

The 2026 Bleeding Kansas program series features six weeks of talks and dramatic interpretations focusing on the area's history from 1854-1865. Bleeding Kansas describes that time in Kansas Territory, during the struggle to determine whether the new state would be free or slave. Each program explores aspects of the state's unique history. What happened in Kansas during this time-frame was critical to the nation's history.

The programs begin at 2 p.m. each Sunday, from January 25 through March 1. They're held at Constitution Hall State Historic Site, 319 Elmore St. in Lecompton. A donation of \$5 is requested.



Constitution Hall is one of the oldest, wood frame structures left standing in the state. Audiences love to sit inside this historic old structure and listen to modern day historians and authors talk about issues that were discussed over 160 years ago inside this very building. It was the location of some of the most signif-

icant events in territorial Kansas political history, namely the writing of the 1857 Lecompton Constitution. This document would divide the National Democratic Party in the 1860 presidential election and ensure the election of Abraham Lincoln and the civil war.

For info www.lecomptonkansas.com

Hobby Lobby Founder on Secret to Lasting Success

David Green has been highly successful as founder of Hobby Lobby and Mardel Christian & Education stores. But at age 84, he is convinced that true success is measured not by what people get but what they give to others.

"The Bible talks about our life being nothing but a vapor," Green told "The Christian Post." "That helps us decide what we're going to do with our lives. We're here for a short time, so what are we going to do with it?"

Green shares his story in the new book "The Legacy Life," which he wrote with Bill High, a longtime leader in the Christian giving community, both in Kansas City and nationally. He learned the importance of serving others from an early age.

"I think what helped us shift was



our parents," Green said. "We knew what was important to them. My mother loved the Lord, had children who served the Lord and had a strong marriage. On her dying bed, she said, 'Do you see them? Do you see them?' And she was seeing angels."

That moment, he said, clarified what truly lasts. "Just acquiring a lot of stuff is not what makes someone

happy," he said. "God's been very good to us in business, but we want to do it for a reason bigger than this vapor life."

For young entrepreneurs hoping to honor God while building successful businesses, Green offered the reminder that everything belongs to God. "We see ourselves as stewards," he said. "We say God owns it, but then we treat it like we own it. If he owns everything, then we don't own it. We're stewards."

Green's ultimate vision remains centered on faith rather than fortune. "My greatest aspiration isn't financial," he said. "It's using what we have to tell as many people as possible about Jesus. We don't have this set up so we can sell it and sit on the beach. It's his, and we just want to be good stewards as long as we can."

World Cup for years. "The energy, the excitement, the anticipation is unbelievable," she said. "Everyone's about to show up on our doorstep."

Kansas City is one of the smallest host cities in the World Cup lineup, alongside major destinations such as New York, Los Angeles and Miami, but officials are confident visitors will spread out across the region to find places to stay.

Area restaurant and business owners are likewise preparing for the surge. "I think Kansas City doesn't understand how big it's going to be for them to come here," said Matthew Hill, owner of AJ's in downtown Kansas City. "All of our teams are going to be working double time."

More information is available at <https://kansascityfwc26.com/>.

WORLD CUP

continued from page 1

contract with FIFA and unavailable to the general public, adding pressure to an already competitive lodging market.

Local reports show hotel occupancy rates spiking and that rooms across the metro are filling fast as bookings surge.

Short-term rental markets are also frenzied, with listings skyrocketing in price and availability. According to The Kansas City Star, some Airbnbs in the area have reached astronomical nightly rates, raising concerns about affordability even as demand explodes.

This demand is pushing some locals to take unusual steps. Adam Kinner, a short-term rental host who owns mul-

iple properties in the Kansas City area, said he plans to even rent out his own home during the World Cup and move in with his parents. "I will actually be moving back into my parents' basement," he told Fox. "The opportunity is just so large here that it would be silly not to take advantage of it."

Across the region, property managers are fielding inquiries from everyday homeowners curious about hosting. Heather Autry, a short-term rental property manager in Johnson County, said she's been swamped with meetings. "I've talked to so many folks who never even considered renting before — now they want to know what to do," she told KSHB.

Kathy Nelson, president and CEO of the Kansas City Sports Commission, said the city has been preparing for the

C5 Luncheon to feature Wabaunsee Co. Sheriff

The February C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 12th at 11:30am at the Celtic Fox.

The program will feature Wabaunsee Co. Sheriff Eric Kirsch, who has served in the US Marines and NCIS. He is popular locally, and the Wabaunsee County Sheriff's Office Facebook page has 47,000 followers! His story is one you should hear!

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,



March 12 featuring Iron Man John Cantrell; April 9, May 14, June 11 and July 9, 2026. Coming up on August 13 will be Ambassador Sam Brownback.

C5 also hosts other events, including EAST-ERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Fun Fair, held this year on March 28 in NOTO Arts District.

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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www.shanemjones.com

EasterFest Coming Back to NOTO area for 11th year

The 11th Annual Topeka EasterFest returns to the NOTO Arts District for 2026. This year, the event will be held Saturday, March 28 (the weekend before Easter).

The Big Egg Hunt and Fun Fair will be held at Veterans Park, in between Kansas Avenue and the Kansas/Quincy bridge. In the large parking lot behind the NOTO district there will be childrens activities, inflatables, a petting zoo, food trucks and other vendors.

There will be live music at Redbud Park, with more vendors and activities in that area, including the popular cake walks!

More food trucks will be next to the NOTO Arts Center across the street, with more vendors inside.

Even more vendors and activities will be available up and down Kansas Avenue, and in the breezeway connecting the Avenue to Veterans Park.



Up to three thousand people have attended the event in the past to take part in the activities.

Every year, dozens of churches, businesses and non-profit organizations set up vendor booths and kids' games as part of the family fun fair.

This year more NOTO storefronts will join in the fun with outdoor booths and sales.

"We've had a great response and new entries each year at EasterFest," said Kevin Doel, one of the organizers. "I expect it to just keep growing every year."

The Family Fun Fair will consist of activities geared toward children and families, as well as health & wellness vendor booths, vendor exhibits, and more. Live performers will be on hand all day as well.

Back are the ever-popular cake walks, along with face painting, and some new



food trucks. A kid's Foam Party is new this year!

There is still room for more EasterFest sponsors and participants for the Vendor Market, Entertainment Stage, Food Court, etc.

Volunteers are also needed to help with the entire event.

Major sponsors for EasterFest include Luxury Motor Cars, The Learning Center, Ernest-Spencer Metals, Rooter-Man Plumbing, Downing Septic, Stomont Vail Health, Emerald City Cosmopolitan Club, Lions Club, Kaw Valley Bank, Health & Wellness Magazine, SoulFire Nutrition, College HUNKS Movers Capital City Flooring, and Kansas Fencing.

Media partners and sponsors include TV25, WIBW, WREN Digital Media, Majic 107.7, Apha Media, KFGB 97.7 FM, and Metro Voice.

Proceeds from the event will benefit Let's Help and other local non-profits. The event is coordinated each year by C5Alive.

For more information or to volunteer, visit Topeka EasterFest 2026 on Facebook, email info@C5Alive.org or call/text 785-640-6399.

News Briefs: Buick production to KCKS, new motorpark owners; police raid documentary; KS reading skills

GM to move some Buick production to Kansas City, Kansas

General Motors announced a plan to move production of the next-generation Buick from China to the Fairfax Assembly Plant in Kansas City, Kansas, for domestic sales.

Production of the Buick compact SUV at the GM Fairfax plant is set to begin in 2028. The facility currently produces the limited-run Chevy Bolt EV, and will start production on the gas-powered Chevy Equinox in 2027.

In a press release, the United Auto Workers Local 31 said it is excited at the prospect of more manufacturing work and careers stemming from this move.

The union said the decision is a testament to the hardworking people at the plant, and the union "looks forward to continuing the growth of the American working class in the KC-Metro for generations to come."

This move comes as U.S. President Donald Trump has been pressuring major automakers to expand vehicle production in the U.S. (KSHB)



IHRA Acquires Heartland Motorsports Park

The International Hot Rod Association (IHRA) has acquired Heartland Motorsports Park in Topeka. Originally opened in 1963, the park has hosted major national drag racing events, road racing, karting, motocross and grassroots competitions.

Planned restoration and redevelopment efforts will focus on creating a year-round destination that blends motorsports with live entertainment and community engagement. Specifically,

plans call for: revitalized drag racing operations with improved racer and fan amenities; expanded motorsports and special event programming; live music, concerts and festival experiences; enhanced hospitality, vendor and fan experience areas; community-focused events designed to drive tourism and economic impact.

Renovation planning will begin immediately, with additional announcements regarding redevelopment phases, event schedules and community partnerships expected in the coming months. (rebusinessonline.com)

Documentary about police raid on Kansas newspaper to premiere

A documentary about the police raid of the Marion County Record is set to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in early 2026, more than two years after law enforcement stormed the newspaper.

per office, the publisher's home and a city councilwoman's home.

Director and producer Sharon Liese says the film looks beyond the First Amendment implications of the raids and dives deeper into the small town of Marion in a way the public hasn't seen before. She called it "a canary in a coal mine" type of story.

"The story that we eventually told is not what you would expect," Liese said. "It's not all about the First Amendment. It's about what happens between a newspaper and its community in a small town. It'll make people think about what journalism really is and what people really want journalism to be."

"Seized" will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival Jan. 22 through Feb. 1. It is one of 10 documentary films chosen to compete in the U.S. documentary category and was chosen out of thousands of submitted films.

Blueprint for Literacy director seeks to polish Kansas' reading skills

The Kansas Legislature directed the

Kansas State Board of Education and Kansas Board of Regents to implement separate laws enacted during the past four years to elevate reading skills of public school students.

Both the 2022 Every Child Can Read Act in the hands of the K-12 Board of Education and the 2024 Blueprint for Literacy organized by higher education's Board of Regents recognized the threat of failing a majority of 450,000 students enrolled in Kansas classrooms.

"Reading and literacy, reading and writing, are the fundamental skills in which all other learning is built," said Cynthia Lane, director of the Blueprint for Literacy. "Literacy is directly related to health outcomes and the ability to secure high quality jobs."

Evidence for urgency to the state's work on child literacy wasn't difficult to find. Testing showed 55% of Kansas students in third through 10th grades read at the limited or basic levels, which meant they couldn't handle the content independently. Put another way, state exams revealed less than half read at the proficient or advanced levels.

Topeka Church with History and Heart Goes Up For Sale

Nestled in a quiet corner of Topeka at 2516 SW Huntoon, a warm, inviting brick church built in 1960 is ready for a new chapter. Originally constructed by the Reformed Latter Day Saints, the building later became home to Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church. Now, as the congregation prepares to move to a larger space to accommodate its growing membership, this 1,775-square-foot sanctuary offers a rich history, striking architectural features, and a welcoming atmosphere for the next owners.

A Legacy of Community

Over the past three decades, the building has been more than a place of worship – it has been a cornerstone for generations of families. “There’s been over 30 years of history here. For some people, this is where they grew up... three generations have had their spiritual life formed and strengthened in this building,” said Fr. Nikolai Meyers.

From baptisms to Holy Week celebrations, the space has hosted countless cer-



emonies and gatherings that have shaped the spiritual lives of its parishioners.

Architecture That Invites

The church’s exterior, with its attractive brickwork and welcoming entryway, is just the beginning. Inside, sunlight pours through updated windows, high-

lighting rich wood paneling and trim. Walls painted in golden tones complement the wood, creating a warm, comfortable atmosphere.

“The building’s southern light and wood trim create a warm, inviting atmosphere, which is very characteristic of Orthodox churches,” said Fr. Nikolai

Meyers. These features make the space both personal and welcoming – qualities that have helped define the congregation’s identity over the years.

Flexible Space for Worship and Beyond

The sanctuary comfortably accommodates 80–90 people, though it has hosted over 100 for special occasions. The adjoining fellowship hall provides additional space for gatherings, making the property ideal for a small to mid-sized congregation.

“The building itself is flexible. For us, over 100 people on a Sunday is our norm, but the space could be adjusted for another congregation’s needs,” said Fr. Nikolai Meyers.

A Church at the Heart of Its Neighborhood

For years, the church has been a visible presence in its community. Annual events, including a Greek Festival in the fall, and summer programs for children and teens, bring neighbors together and extend the church’s mission beyond its

walls.

“We’ve been a part of this community for decades... people walking down neighborhood streets, kids playing nearby – it’s a neighborhood church in every sense,” said Fr. Nikolai Meyers.

A Space Ready for Its Next Chapter

With its rich history, inviting design, and strong connection to the local community, this church building offers a unique opportunity. The congregation’s decision to move reflects its growth and need for a larger space, but the property has been priced so a smaller congregation can take the next step in their growth. For the next owners – whether a new congregation or someone with a vision to repurpose it – the building carries the potential for a vibrant next chapter.

“It’s been a good place for us for 30 years to grow and just be a community,” said Fr. Nikolai Meyers.

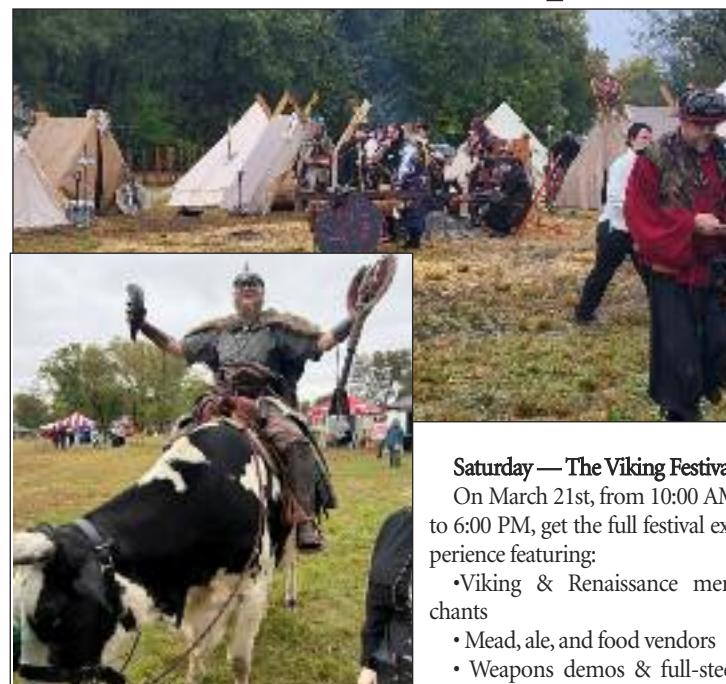
Purchase inquiries should be made to Team Bowes - Countrywide Realty, 785-414-9124

Topeka Renaissance Festival to present Viking Celebration 2026

The Topeka Renaissance Festival is gearing up for its first Viking themed event, Viking Celebration 2026, as it brings the world of Norse legend to life for an unforgettable weekend of warriors, feasting, merchants, music, and myth. Step into the realm of longships and lore as they honor the rise of the new Viking leader. It’s a Renaissance Festival like no other!

Friday Night — The Crowning of the Jarl

On March 20th, from 6:30 PM to Midnight, witness the grand Crowning of our Jarl, Viking King Hjarta An Róthai, as the clans gather to swear loyalty beneath torchlight. Enjoy the Opening ceremony & royal procession, mead, feasting, firelit celebrations, Viking combat exhibitions, live music and late-night revelry. This evening event sets the stage for the battles, stories, and festivities to come.



Saturday — The Viking Festival

On March 21st, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, get the full festival experience featuring:

- Viking & Renaissance merchants
- Mead, ale, and food vendors
- Weapons demos & full-steel combat
- Storytelling, runes, and living-history displays
- Family activities & children’s realm
- Live performers, musicians, and entertainers
- Clan Óttalauss in full Viking regalia

You can help celebrate the victory and rule of Jarl Viking King Hjarta An Róthai as the clans unite for a day of immersive fun and historical adventure.



Join the Saga

You are encouraged to come dressed as a shieldmaiden, raider, rune-reader, skald, or villager, or whatever you desire. But whatever you wear, you’ll find yourself transported into a world of Norse magic and medieval wonder.

The fun takes place at the Woodshed Event Center, 1901 N. Kansas Avenue in

Topeka.

For updates, be sure to visit the official Topeka Renaissance Festival pages on Facebook and other social media channels. Be part of this epic celebration of history.

General admission tickets and a special VIP option can be purchased at www.topekarenfest.com



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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Dear Dave,

Our son is a freshman in high school, and he has the opportunity to take a school-sponsored, week-long trip next year with the rest of his class. The student fee is \$500. Over the past couple of years, he has started making money mowing lawns and doing odd jobs around the neighborhood. We've always taught him that money comes from work, and he has always been very focused on being smart with the money he earns. Do you think we should cover the entire \$500, or should he have to contribute something?

A. When it came to making these kinds

of decisions at our house, my wife and I would always take a look at a few things. Is the kid behaving? Are they getting good grades? You know, just basic things that can reasonably be expected from most teenagers. Most of the time, if they were living like well-behaved, responsible young people, we'd pay for things like this as a reward.

But, there's a good argument to be made for a kid having some skin in the game at that age, too. If you and your husband can pay for it without causing yourselves any financial stress—and your son is fulfilling his responsibilities at school and at home—there's nothing wrong with you paying the fee. Then, here's an idea. If you want to make this a teachable moment, another learning experience, you could require him to work, and save up his own spending money for the trip.

I'm glad you and your husband are thinking of your teenage son as an adult in training. I know you love him, but it's also a parent's job to teach their children what they need to know for that moment when you send them off to college, trade school or even their own apartment and their first real, full-time

job. Trust me, you don't have to be a finance professor to teach your child how to save money and wisely manage their finances.

I'm so impressed with the young

man you're raising. To have that kind of drive and maturity at his age is a testimony to him, and to how well you and your husband have taught and guided him throughout the years. I have no

doubt your son will be well-prepared to take on the world one day. In the meantime, I hope he has lots of fun on his upcoming trip!

—Dave

Topeka Metro Voice

It's Not Too Late: You Still Have Time to Contribute to an IRA Until April 2026

By Susan Shumaker
Tax Professional at
The Retirement Team



The year 2025 has come to an end, and if you think that you've missed your chance to boost your retirement savings, here's some good news: it's NOT too late. You still have time to contribute to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) for the 2025 tax year all the way up until **April 15, 2026**. That extra window can make a meaningful difference for your long-term financial future.

Understanding the IRA Contribution Deadline

One of the most helpful (and often misunderstood) features of IRAs is their contribution deadline. Unlike many financial goals that reset on December 31, IRA contributions for a given year can usually be made up until the federal filing deadline of the following year.

That means contributions made between January 1, 2026, and April 15, 2026, can still count toward your 2025 IRA contributions, as long as you properly designate them for that year.

Why This Extra Time Matters

Life gets busy. Unexpected expenses, job changes, or simply forgetting can push retirement savings down on the priority list. The extended IRA deadline gives you a second chance to:

1. Catch up on savings if you couldn't contribute earlier
2. Use a clearer picture of your income and tax situation
3. Make smarter decisions without rushing at year-end

Even contributions made later can still benefit from long-term compounding growth.

Traditional vs. Roth IRA: A Quick Reminder

When making your IRA contributions, you can choose between:

- Traditional IRA - Contributions may be tax-deductible (subject to income and * plan coverage rules), with taxes paid when you make withdrawals in retirement.

• Roth IRA - Contributions are

made with after-tax dollars, and qualified withdrawals in retirement are tax free.

Both options allow you to take advantage of the extended deadline, as long as you meet eligibility requirements and have earned income for the year you are contributing to.

SEP IRA and SIMPLE IRA Deadlines: What Business Owners Should Know

If you are self-employed or own a small business, retirement plans like SEP IRAs and SIMPLE IRAs also come with important deadlines—some of which offer flexibility similar to traditional IRAs, and others that require earlier action.

SEP IRA Contribution Deadlines

A SEP IRA (Simplified Employee Pension) is especially flexible when it comes to timing. Contributions can generally be made up until the business's tax filing deadline, including extensions.

- For many businesses, this means contributions can be made as late as October 15, 2026, if a tax extension is filed.
- SEP IRA contributions are typically employer contributions, even for self-employed individuals.

This extended deadline makes SEP IRAs a powerful option for business owners who want to wait until they know their final income before deciding how much to contribute.

SIMPLE IRA Contribution Deadlines

A SIMPLE IRA works a bit differently and has stricter timing rules:

- Employee salary deferrals must be made by December 31, 2025.

• Employer matching or non-elective contributions generally must be made by the employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.

Additionally, a Simple IRA plan must be established by October 1 of the year for which contributions are made, making advance planning especially important.

Why These Deadlines Matter

Understanding the different contribution deadlines helps you to avoid

missed opportunities and penalties. Whether you're an employee, freelancer, or small business owner, knowing which plans allow late contributions - and which do not - can significantly impact your retirement strategy and tax planning.

Small Steps Still Count

You don't need to maximize every plan to make progress. Even partial contributions improve your financial future. What matters most is taking action when you can – and using every available window wisely.

Take Action Before the Clock Runs Out

If you're planning to make retirement contributions for the 2025 tax year, be sure to:

- Confirm which plan you're contributing to
- Understand the specific deadline that applies
- Properly designate contributions for the correct tax year
- And be sure to inform your tax preparer if you made any contributions so that they can be properly reported on your tax returns

The bottom line is encouraging: it's not too late. Whether through a traditional IRA, Roth IRA, SEP IRA, or SIMPLE IRA, you still have valuable time to invest in your future – and every step forward counts.

*Always consult with a knowledgeable tax advisor for your own particular situation.

If you would like a complementary personalized review of your own tax situation, Susan Shumaker can be reached at 785-478-7808.

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— THE —
RETIREMENT
TEAM

KsRetire.com
785-478-7808

5909 SW 28th St., Ste 100
Topeka, Kansas 66614

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Parenting and Financial Decisions: New Research Offers Tips

By Jim Hanna



Hanna

Few life milestones are as emotionally and financially transformative as becoming a parent. While this chapter is often filled with deep joy, it can also bring new worries as each stage of parenthood can present fresh challenges. It's only natural to wonder whether the financial decisions you're making today to support your children might impact your ability to achieve longer-term goals – like saving for retirement. Whether you're already a parent or planning to become one, the following insights can help you feel more confident and in control of your financial future.

Understand that having financial worries is normal. Today's parents face a complex mix of financial responsibilities, from saving for retirement or college to covering everyday costs like childcare. It's a lot to manage, and it's understandable to feel stretched at times. According to the Ameriprise Parents & Finances study, nearly all parents surveyed (96%) found joy and purpose in parenting but admitted it was harder than they expected – both emotionally and financially.¹ You are not alone if you find yourself worrying about the feasibility of accomplishing short- and long-term financial goals.

Assess your competing goals. The first step in taking control of your finances is prioritizing the varying goals that shape your financial plan. Consider separating your goals into three buckets: short, medium and long-term goals. Short-term goals might include your plan to cover the cost of childcare or a home renovation project. Depending on your timeline, medium and long-term goals may encompass paying for secondary school or college, taking the dream vacation you've always wanted to, or saving for retirement. Once you've defined your goals, consider how you will finance the

three buckets. A financial advisor can help you choose the right strategies and solutions to fit your needs and show you how to balance your hard-earned dollars across various priorities.

Communicate early and often. Create an open dialogue about family finances with your partner and your children. The Parents & Finances study found that 70% of parents involve their children in family financial decisions to help instill values and principles.² Consider having age-appropriate conversations with your children, so they understand financial concepts and the financial tradeoffs you make as a parent. These conversations not only help pass financial knowledge to the next generation, but they can help families coalesce around a financial plan that fits both family goals and values.

Give children a strong financial foundation. Becoming a parent can inspire a look at your own financial situation and decision making, but it is never too early to start building your children's financial foundation. Consider the steps you can take now, even while your children are young, to help guide them to a stable financial future. The Parents & Finances study revealed the top ways parents support their children in making smart financial decisions: open a savings account for them (76%), encourage them to save for a short-term goal (68%), and stop them from spending money unwisely (61%).² Additionally, nine in ten (88%) parents give their children money as an allowance or for certain actions, such as academic or athletic achievements, to give them a chance to make their own decisions around money. As you decide how you want to set your children up for success, consider how you can support their success while fostering their financial independence.

Parenthood, whether you're caring for a newborn or guiding a young adult, comes with a wide range of financial responsibilities and decisions. A trusted fi-

nancial advisor can help you build a plan that supports your family today while keeping your long-term goals firmly in sight. With thoughtful, comprehensive planning, you can move forward with greater clarity and confidence, knowing your family is prepared for both the opportunities and challenges ahead.

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1 – Ameriprise Financial Press Release: "New Research from Ameriprise Financial – Parents & Finances – Explores the Unique Financial Decisions and Competing Priorities Parents Face Throughout Their Children's Lives"

2 – Ameriprise Financial Parents & Finances Study, 2025. Research Report.

Jim Hanna, CFP®, MBA, CKA®, is a Private Wealth Advisor and Certified Kingdom Advisor® with Heart Financial Partners a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Topeka, Kansas. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for over 25 years. To contact him, ameripriseadvisors.com/james.c.hanna, 785.357.6278 x19, 601 S Kansas Ave, Topeka, KS 66603.

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Jim Hanna, CFP®, MBA, CKA® | Private Wealth Advisor

Heart Financial Partners

A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

785.357.6278 x19

601 S Kansas Ave, Topeka, KS 66070

james.c.hanna@ampf.com

ameripriseadvisors.com/team/heart-financial-partners

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3 Things Investors Should Do If an AI Stock Bubble Is Brewing

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



Google searches for the term "AI bubble" have been skyrocketing of late, which should come as no surprise when nearly 80% of the gains in the



US stock market came from AI related businesses last year. The growth of AI stocks over the last 3 years is reminiscent to the last 3 years of the 90's when dot com stocks soared and has been so large that AI stocks have more than doubled their share of the global stock market over this time period. Just five stocks (Nvidia, Google, Apple, Mi-

crosoft, and Amazon) now comprise a mind blowing 30% of the value of the S&P 500.

The S&P 500 is actually not an index of the largest 500 companies in America owned equally. Instead, the larger a company, the larger share it is of this index. The largest companies are all AI related, make up such a large share, and have all taken off over the last 3 years, as such, the S&P 500 index has seen tremendous growth over this

period. It has also made the extreme concentration of just a handful of stocks much worse as the average company is not doing so well in comparison. About 200, or a staggering 40% of stocks in the S&P 500, declined in value and lost money last year.

Given these statistics, it is no wonder

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Ryan Shumaker
RetireFromTaxes.com



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opinion

metro VOICE

MANAGING EDITOR



Lee
Hartman

LHartman3@cox.net

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Lorraine Jessepe,
Dwight Widaman

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Lee Hartman
785-640-6399
Voice@cox.net

NEWS & FEATURES

Carolyn Cogswell, Rob Mooney,
Alan Goforth, Clint Decker,
Hannah Allen, Dwight Widaman,
Lee Hartman, Lorraine Jessepe

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Joe Boothe, Lee Hartman, Dwight Widaman

Metro Voice is published monthly and serves the communities of Topeka, Lawrence, and other communities in NE Kansas. It is available primarily by bulk and subscription distribution to over 400 locations, including grocery stores, churches, schools, restaurants, bookstores, libraries, businesses and other retail outlets. Written materials submitted become property of Metro Voice. The content of this publication, including all stories, advertising or other graphic symbols, may not be reproduced in any way, for commercial purposes or added to any web site without the express permission of Metro Voice. Advertising in MV is open to anyone wishing to reach the Christian community or the family market with family-friendly advertising. MV reserves the right to refuse any advertising. Metro Voice is a member of the Christian Newspaper Association and the Evangelical Press Association.

CONTACT INFO

Offices: 2611 SW 17th St. (by appt.)
Correspondence & Payments:
P.O. Box 5724, Topeka, KS 66605
Phone/Fax: 785-235-3340
Voice@cox.net
MetroVoiceNews.com
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The Mississippi Synagogue Fire and the Virus of 'Christian' Antisemitism

By Dr. Michael Brown

What prompts a 19-year-old college student to set a historic synagogue on fire in Jackson, Mississippi? (This happened on January 10, 2026.) What prompts another 19-year-old college student to carry a rifle into a synagogue in Poway, California and begin shooting at random, seeking to kill as many Jews as possible? (This happened on April 27, 2019.)

It appears that both of these young men were infected by a deadly virus, a virus known as antisemitism, a virus that affects

one's ability to think rationally.

But in both these cases, it was an especially insidious strain of antisemitism that affected them, one that is completely oxymoronic: "Christian" antisemitism.

This is an antisemitism that cloaks itself in Christianese, often citing biblical verses in support.

It is an antisemitism that parrots the standard (or latest) antisemitic tropes but adds in alleged theological support.

Yet the Christian faith is based on the teachings of a Jewish rabbi named Yeshua and grounded in documents written almost en-

tirely by Jews/Israelites. This makes it all the more tragic when the tenets of this faith are used to kill Jews or destroy places of Jewish worship. It is an absolute perversion of the gospel of love and kindness and compassion and forgiveness.

Stephen Spencer Pittman, the alleged arsonist of the Beth Israel synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi, grew up in a practicing Catholic home and



claimed to be a "follower of Christ" in his Instagram bio. He was on the honor roll of his

■ **Continued on next page**

Choosing Hope in a Moment of Crisis



CLINT
DECKER

President and
Evangelist
with Great
Awakenings, Inc.

Speaking Truth

Olivia left home for college during the summer to pursue her dreams. It was hard for her parents to say goodbye. It was tough for her too, because she loved her dad and mom a lot. She also said goodbye to her youth pastor that had been such a big help through so many things.

Within a few days after classes began, she met Lucas. They hit it off right away and things moved fast. Too fast, as they were spending a lot of time alone together. A few weeks after dating, she started feeling like something was not right. She panicked about what it might be. After several days of wrestling with the idea, she took "the test."

"Oh no!" she gasped. "This was not supposed to happen!" Olivia's mind raced, thinking what her parents, her church and others might think. She

grabbed her phone and started searching for answers. Soon she found herself staring at a screen that provided an option that would take care of everything. "No way!" she thought, "This goes against everything I have been taught." But as she sat there, she told herself, "I have to do this. There is no other option." Olivia filled out the online form in her dorm room, and days later she received a package in the mail. Nervously she opened it, pulled out the pills and held them in her hand while she read the instructions in how to end her pregnancy.

Last year over 1 million women like Olivia made that decision, and over 60% chose getting pills by mail, instead of driving to a clinic. Upwards of 30% of women will suffer an injury because of their choice. And college age women, like Olive, make up 66% of those ending their pregnancy.

Why do they do it? Some are not ready for parenthood, seeing how a baby would interfere with college studies, work or other pursuits. Other women are already single moms and cannot afford another child and others know they are carrying a baby who would have life-long disabilities.

For those who are pregnant and facing the same decision as Olivia, there is a better way, there is hope. The first

step on this path is a woman recognizing she is carrying another life inside her. It is not just a "fetus" or a "blob of tissue", but another human life. Pursing an ultrasound will show her viability, like a detectable heartbeat, a sign of life. It will also reveal the gestational age of the baby, to see how far along the preg-



nancy is, and will show the location of the baby, to see if it is developing inside or outside the uterus.

Hope is also found in adoption. There are between 1 to 2 million couples waiting to adopt. When a woman chooses not to raise her baby for whatever reason, there are numerous loving parents who stand ready to help. Have hope for yourself and hope for that little life inside you.

What about God? What does He want? God says to you, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew

you..." (Jer. 1:5) The Bible also declares, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:13-14). Since God is the Creator of all life, why would He want a doctor, mother or father to end what He created?

When a woman is facing a crisis pregnancy, it is an overwhelming experience. Yet, God tells her, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5) Why? Because when you trust Him, He promises to be with you. Choose Jesus, choose life and He will provide for all your needs. Today, if you need help call Heartbeat International at 1-800-712-4357.

A prayer for you – Lord God, I pray for young women who are facing the biggest decision of their lives, wondering if they should keep their baby or not. Help them to turn to you and find help in their hour of need. 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.

■ **Continued from previous page**

Catholic high school, was described as an "all-American boy," and some of his social media posts were overtly and unashamedly Christian.

Some of his friends pointed to changes in his behavior in recent years, "But it wasn't until around a week before the arson that Pittman began making antisemitic comments, according to FBI Special Agent Ariel Williams, who testified at a court hearing Tuesday during which Pittman

8-year-old girl and the synagogue rabbi. (Had his gun not jammed, the numbers would have been much higher.)

In the manifesto he left behind, Earnest wrote, "I did not choose to be a Christian. The Father chose me. The Son saved me. And the Spirit keeps me. Why me? I do not know."

But for Earnest, that Christian faith required him to hate God's alleged enemies: "There is no love without hatred. You cannot love God if you do not hate

pressed.

Yet there is no denying that the very ancient virus of "Christian" antisemitism is spreading rapidly again today, perhaps affecting young white males more than any other group.

It behooves us to continue to call it out, expose it, and denounce it, doing our best to understand why it is becoming so popular again and uprooting its faulty ideological, theological, and intellectual foundations.

After Earnest was sentenced, the daughter of the slain woman in Poway, Hannah Kaye, told a local Los Angeles radio station "that it was 'beyond comprehension' how Earnest — reputed to be an accomplished student, athlete and musician who was studying to be a nurse at California

State University, San Marcos — had 'traveled down the rabbit hole' of violent antisemitism."

We do best to comprehend the nature of this rabbit hole and why it is so appealing before more lives are destroyed.

Satan. You cannot love righteousness if you do not also hate sin. You cannot love your own race if you do not hate those who wish to destroy it. Love and hate are two sides of the same coin."

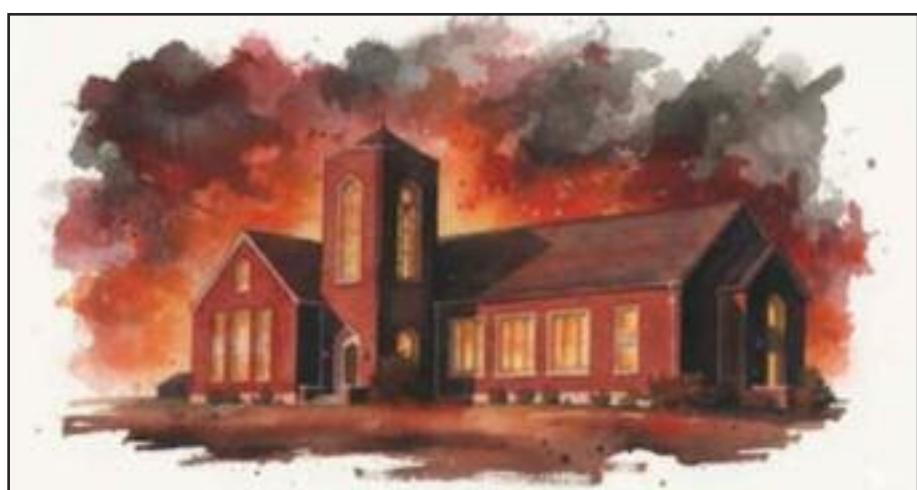
And for "Christian" antisemites, no enemy is more hateful or vile than the Jew.

As expressed by the Jewish philosopher Eliezer Berkovitz,

"A straight line leads from the first act of oppression against the Jews and Judaism in the fourth century to the holocaust in the twentieth."

Of course, there are always other factors at work when a seemingly normal, well-adjusted 19-year-old commits an act of arson or murder, and God alone knows the full motives of the heart.

And the churches associated with Pittman and Earnest categorically denounced their actions and the antisemitism they ex-



pledged not guilty to the arson."

For Pittman, this synagogue was "the synagogue of Satan" (based on a misuse of Revelation 2:9 and 3:9) and it needed to be set on fire because of its "Jewish ties."

According to an affidavit, "once Pittman was confronted by his father about what happened Saturday morning, Pittman confessed to the crime. Pittman also allegedly 'laughed as he told his father what he did and said he finally got them.'"

When asked by the court if he understood his rights, he replied, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

As for John Earnest, the Poway synagogue shooter in 2019, he attended an Orthodox Presbyterian Church and spoke plainly about his Christian faith in his 6-page manifesto. This was his justification for murdering Lori Gilbert-Kaye, a 60-year-old Jewish woman, as well as wounding an

RYAN SHUMAKER

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some are beginning to worry. While history doesn't always fully repeat itself, it does often rhyme. The prices of these AI stocks relative to how much the companies are actually earning in profits are at levels not seen since right before the dot com boom went bust.

Two big differences between AI stocks now and dot com stocks then is that AI stocks have minimal debt compared to many dot coms, and also have large and impressive profitability. Most dot coms had zero profits and investors were just hoping they would eventually become profitable. Still, the assumption that the large AI stocks will continue to see record profits, when a recent report by Nanda of MIT's Media Lab showed that 95% of organizations are getting zero return on AI investment thus far, is far from a sure thing.

So what should someone saving for, near, or in retirement do with their nest egg now given all this?

1) Consider diversifying out of index funds, like the S&P 500 that are not so diversified anymore. Many 'target date' retirement funds found in 401ks have the same problem of too much exposure to a handful of large AI related companies and thus too much risk. While many of these businesses are solid companies that are likely to succeed over the long term, having too many eggs in a single or similar baskets is rarely a good idea.

2) When looking at where to diver-

sify elsewhere, consider the secondary benefactors that will do well if the AI hype does come to fruition, but won't fall apart if they don't, such as utilities. AI uses a lot of power and will use a lot more if the boom continues. The average utility company won't go bust, though, if history does end up rhyming with AI stocks going the way of the dot coms in the early 00's.

3) Have a plan. Don't get caught up in the hype. More wealth is lost to fear and greed in financial markets than to anything else. Retirement plans shouldn't be built on hoping you correctly guess what any one stock, one type of stock, or even the stock market as a whole may do in any given short term time period. Instead, a retirement plan should be designed to succeed and provide ever increasing income over the long term regardless of what happens in the short term. If you need help creating such a plan, call 785-330-9292 for a complimentary strategy session as that is exactly what our team does at Retirement Portfolios.

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

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A special day for your Sweetheart

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

Tips for a smooth Valentine's Day:

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

Gift Ideas:

Candy and Flowers and Jewelry:

• Visit Hazel Hill Chocolate for a unique chocolate treat, or contact a local bakery and order their favorite cookies or other treat.

• Surprise your special someone with a bouquet of favorite flowers or balloons. University Flowers is a great option.

• Dazzle him/her with a piece of jewelry from Donaldson's Jewelers or other local jeweler

• Make a list of all the things you love about him/her.

Gift basket for her:

• Get a gift certificate for a massage or trip to a salon or spa.

• Pick up a candle for a candle-lit bath.

• Find her favorite book at one of Topeka's bookshops for her to enjoy during her quiet time

• Buy her a personalized gift from a local shop, or Personally Yours.

Gift basket for him:

• Buy his favorite candy bars and personalize it with "Udaman" wrappers

• Include miniature bottles or cans of his favorite drink and personalize them with valentine's day labels

• Create a ticket book with tickets for him to use at his leisure

• Include a new favorite movie, C.D., or video game he's been wanting

Dinner:

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



- Go to a restaurant where you share special memories

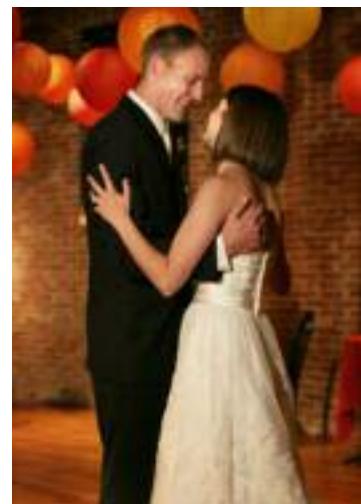
- Get dinner and a room, and enjoy the indoor pool or other activities

Dates:

- Laugh together at a comedy show.

- Enjoy a romantic movie at home from Netflix, RedBox, or one you already own. While watching, share your favorite treat and glass of wine or sparkling cider. Include a massage.

- Enjoy a night of music and dancing before or after dinner at one of Topeka's nightspots.



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

Heart-Healthy Valentine's Day Tips

Your sweetheart may have the key to your heart, but eating healthy and being physically active can be the key to a healthier heart. This Valentine's Day, indulge your sweetheart with a heart-healthy gift or date.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Craving something sweet? Gift a beautiful fresh fruit basket to your loved one or consider more healthy sweets such as dark chocolate. Did you know that daily consumption of dark chocolate is linked with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke in high-risk individ-

uals? It seems that cocoa, a primary ingredient in chocolate, contains antioxidant compounds called flavanoids. Flavanoids have antihypertensive and anti-inflammatory effects, which can reduce the heart's stress and result in lower blood pressure. So indulge your inner chocoholic with a moderate piece of dark chocolate each day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Handmade chocolate truffles, home-style fudge, crispy-creamy caramel apples and more – Hazel Hill Chocolate fashions delightful treats for every palate. Stroll into our cozy shop in downtown Topeka and savor the intoxicating aroma of newborn sweets.

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Valentine's Day brings back that lovin' feeling



By Rusty Wright

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

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

Smooch Cops

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

Defining immoral kisses can be difficult admitted one policeman, but "when you see it, you should know it."

Kids on Love, Dating and Marriage

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

Martin (age 10) sees the bottom line: "On the first date, they just tell

each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date."

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

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

Do You Love Me?

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

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

What is Real Love?

Paul, an early Christian writer, eloquently described this unconditional love: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ...Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through

every circumstance. ... [Love] will last forever...."

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

How can a stranger tell if two people are married? Derrick (8): By

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

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

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Activities continue in NOTO in winter months

The Morris Gallery in NOTO Arts Center is getting a face lift! There are some great exhibits planned for this year, including the Washed Ashore exhibit that is traveling to Topeka through a partnership with the Topeka Zoo!

Thursdays in NOTO feature an Open Jam 5-8pm at Artismo Gallery & Bistro; Compass Point Yoga 5:45-6:45pm at 800 N. Kansas Ave.; and College Night at Footpool NOTO, 800 N. Kansas Ave.

NOTO will host the 11th ANNUAL TOPEKA EASTERFEST on Mar. 28, 10am-3pm, in the NOTO Arts District on North Kansas Avenue, in Redbud Park, and in Veterans Park & the connecting breezeway. The Big Egg Hunt begins at 10am in Veterans Park (between NOTO and the Kansas Ave. Bridge). Food Trucks will be on hand and the Family Fun Fair will continue until 3PM, including vendor booths, children's games, food trucks, face painting, inflatables, and more. Live

music and other entertainment, along with more vendor booths, will be on hand at Redbud Park. More food trucks and vendors will be located in NOTO Arts Center and parking lot across the street. In addition, sidewalk merchants will be located up and down Kansas Avenue. For more info: Topeka EasterFest on Facebook, info@C5Alive.org or 785-640-6399.

First Friday Art Walk hours are 10 am to 9 pm. First Friday Art Walk & Market is the first Friday of every month. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

Visit explorenoto.org for more information event listings

Other upcoming events in North Topeka:

The 4TH ANNUAL VALENTINES



SIP & SHOP - Feb. 7, 10-5, at Woodshed Event Center, Featuring food trucks, vendor market and a full bar.

DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE - Feb. 21, 1pm, The Brownstone, 4020 NW 25th St. Featuring PJs, pancakes & memories. <https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/t-hebrownstonetopeka/pancakes-pj-s-daddy-daughter-dance>

TOPEKA SPIRIT FAIR – BODY & SOUL REJUVENATION – Feb. 28 - Mar. 1, Woodshed Event Ctr. Holistic wellness fair with hourly workshops, vendors, food trucks, cash bar

TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL – VIKING CELEBRATION – Mar. 20-21, at Woodshed Event Center. Friday 6:30pm-midnight; Sat. 10-6. Bringing the world of Norse legend to life for an unforgettable weekend of warriors, feasting, merchants, music, and myth. Step into the realm of longships and lore as the clans gather to swear loyalty beneath torchlight. Enjoy: Mead, feasting, and firelit celebrations; Viking combat exhibitions; Live music & late-night revelry. Return on Saturday for the full festival experience, Featuring: Viking & Renaissance merchants; Mead, ale, and food vendors; Weapons demos & full-steel combat; Storytelling and living-history displays; Family activities & children's realm; Live performers, musicians, and entertainers; Clan Ottalauss in full Viking regalia



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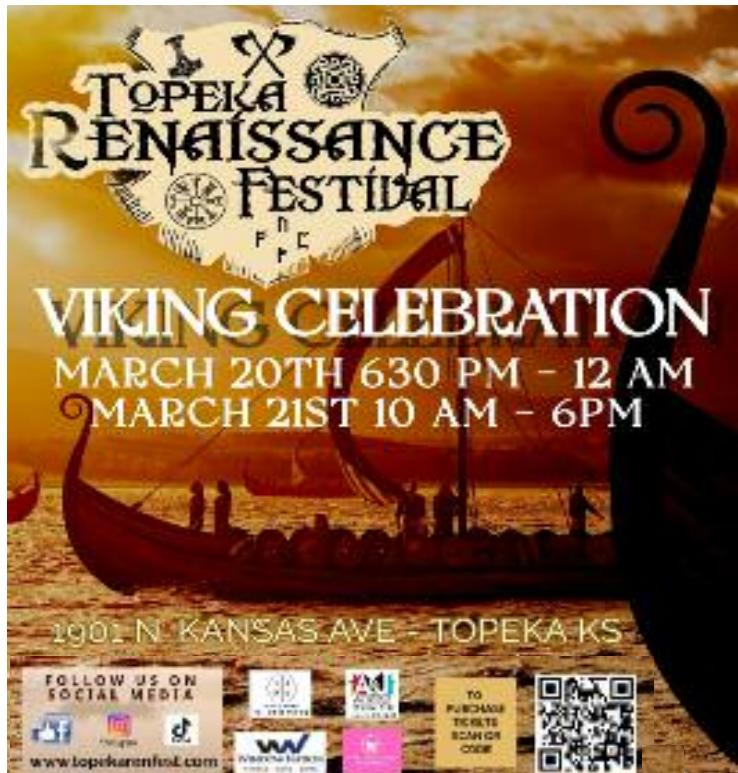
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the events calendar

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Get your event **Highlighted in Blue** in print, our online calendar and promoted in social media for only **\$29!**



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

Feb. 12, 11:30-1: "POWER" Luncheon at Celtic Fox. Featuring Wabaunsee Co. Sheriff Eric Kirsch! Free Admission. Order lunch

from menu if desired. Open to the public. RSVP to



Save the Date!

- Mar. 12: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1 - Iron Man Cantrell
- Mar. 28: 11th Annual EASTERFEST in NOTO, 10:00-3:00
- Apr. 9: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

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



SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon,

Mar. 12, 11:30-1, at Celtic Fox: Featuring Iron Man John Cantrell

NIGHT TO SHINE — Feb. 13, 6-9pm, Vaerius Event Center, 6410 SE Forbes Ave, at Forbes Field. This complimentary prom event for teens and adults ages 14 and older with special needs is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and Grace Community Church. Guests walk the red carpet, are greeted by paparazzi, and enjoy dancing and royal treatment. Attend, volunteer or contribute - details and registration can be found at www.nighttoshine-topeka.com

CAR SEAT CHECKUP EVENT — Feb. 14, 9am-noon, Cable Dahmer Chevrolet, 3731 SW Topeka Blvd. Certified technicians will inspect the child restraint, provide instruction, offer guidance.

AXE THE EX VALENTINES EVENT — Feb. 14, Noon to midnight, Axe & Ale, 115 SE 6th. Axe-throwing fun for all skill levels. Singles, couples, and families – everyone is welcome! Digital Valentine's Day games for a modern and love-filled twist! Limited spots available, book your lane in advance at www.AxeAleTopeka.com

SECOND SATURDAY CONCERT — Feb. 14, 7-11pm, Celtic Fox. Mike Babb & The Mix. Free Valentines event.

R&B MY VALENTINE — Feb. 14, doors open at 8pm, Tonix & Tunes, 820 N. Kansas Ave. DJ Candy + live performance by JrSazophonic. \$15

VALENTINES AT THUNDERBIRDS GRILL — Feb. 14, 8-11pm, 2920 SE Croco Rd. No cover. Rock Party Band with music from 70s-80s.

ANTI-VALENTINES PARTY, Feb. 14, 8:15pm, Jessie's Bar, 5011 SW Topeka Blvd. Singles welcome! DJ & dancing, special drink offerings

ING NETWORKING GROUP — Feb. 18, 11:30am at Bradley's Cafe. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

CHILI or VEGETABLE SOUP SUPPER — Feb. 20, 4:30-6:30pm, Kansas Ave United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall (in NOTO), 1029 N. Kansas Ave. All you can eat, plus cornbread, crackers, relishes, drink and dessert. \$10.00 Adults, \$5.00 Kids under 10. Hot Dogs - \$1.50, Chili Dogs - \$2.00. Dine in / Carry Out.

TOPEKA BOAT, FISHING & HINTING SHOW — Feb. 20-22, Expocentre.

DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE — Feb. 21, 1pm, The Brownstone, 4020 NW 25th St. Featuring PJs, pancakes & memories.

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/thebrownstone-topeka/pancakes-pj-s-daddy-daughter-dance>

FREE WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE SEMINAR — Feb. 21, 4-6pm, Vigilante Martial Arts, 2013 SW 6th Ave.

<https://cp.mystudio.io/e/?=ploR48/14930/786877/1768945184>

THE LARGEST COLLEGE FAIR IN THE REGION!

28th ANNUAL MIDWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE Fair

Saturday Feb. 28 10am - Noon

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- College of the Ozarks • Colorado Christian University
- Dallas Baptist University • Emmaus University • Evangel University
- Dordt University • Emmanuel University • Grand Canyon University
- Greenville University • Hannibal-LaGrange University
- Friends University • Heartland Christian College • Haskell University
- Harding University • Heartland Christian College • Haskell University
- John Brown University • Lee University • Newman University
- Kansas Wesleyan University • Mid-America Nazarene University
- Lindenwood University • Missouri Baptist University • Oklahoma Wesleyan University
- Mission University • Northwestern College of Iowa • Oklahoma Wesleyan University
- Oklahoma Christian University • Oral Roberts University • Ozark Christian University
- Olivet Nazarene University • Palm Beach Atlantic University • Southwest Baptist University
- Spurgeon College • Sterling College
- Storling Conservatory & Visual Music College
- Tabor College • University of the Ozarks
- University of St. Mary
- VC School of Ministry

List of regular attendees:
New schools added weekly

MIDWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE EXPO – Feb. 28, 10am - Noon. Colonial Presbyterian Church: South KC Campus, 9500 Wornall Rd. Kansas City, MO 616-524-4522

TOPEKA HOME SHOW – Feb. 27, 1-6pm; Feb. 28, 9-6; Mar. 1, 10-3, Stormont Vail Events Ctr

POLAR PLUNGE TOPEKA – Feb. 28, 10-2, Topeka West HS. 2001 SW Fairlawn. <https://charity.pledgeit.org/plungetopeka26>

TOPEKA SPIRIT FAIR – BODY & SOUL REJUVENATION – Feb. 28 - Mar. 1, Woodshed Event Center. Two-day holistic wellness fair with hourly workshops, vendors, food trucks, cash bar

ING NETWORKING GROUP – Mar. 4, 11:30am, at IHOP on Hwy 24. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

COUTURE FOR CANCER – Mar. 7, 4-7pm, Vaeris Aviation, Forbes Field. An annual fashionable charitable event supporting the American Cancer Society.

CAPITAL CITY CARNAGE DEMOLITION DERBY – Mar. 6-7, Stormont Vail Events Ctr. stormontvailleventscenter.com or 785-251-5552

KANSAS KIDFEST – Mar. 7, 10-4, Maner Conference Center, 1717 S. Topeka Blvd. Inflatables, Face-painting, Activity Stations, Interactive fun for curious minds, Live Performances, Interactive Exhibitors, Hands-on experiences. Email hello@tastyfestivals.com to learn more about event & exhibitor opportunities. FREE Admission. Upgrade your experience with an Adventure Wristband (\$12.99 at KansasKidFest.com)

BLARNEY BREAKFAST – Mar. 14, 7-10am, Blind Tiger. All-you-can-eat breakfast buffet, entertainment, raffles, and more while celebrities servers get their Irish on...earning tips for a great cause. Advance tickets only: <https://bit.ly/blarneybreakfast2026>

TOPEKA IRISHFEST – Mar. 14, Every Plaza. Begins at 10am with parade, music, food, vendors and kids activities. <http://TopekaIrishFest.com>

TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL – VIKING CELEBRATION – Mar. 20-21, at Woodshed Event Center. Friday 6:30pm-midnight; Sat. 10-6. Bringing the world of Norse legend to life for an unforgettable weekend of warriors, feasting, merchants, music, and myth. Step into the realm of longships and lore as we honor the rise of our Viking leader. Friday Night — The Crowning of the Jarl. Enjoy: Opening ceremony & royal procession, Mead, feasting, and firelit celebrations; Viking combat exhibitions; Live music & late-night revelry. Return on Saturday for the full festival experience. Featuring: Viking & Renaissance merchants; Mead, ale, and food vendors; Family activities & children's realm; Live performers, musicians, and entertainers

PINSTRIPE AND PEARLS – Mar. 21, 5:30-9:30pm, (Afterparty from 9-11pm), Union Station, Kansas City. The Center for Developmentally Disabled (CDD) empowers children and adults with developmental disabilities by providing inclusive programs that promote independence, dignity, and meaningful participation in the community through residential support, education, vocational training, nursing services, and access to essential resources. CDD's signature 1920s-inspired fundraising gala brings together community and business leaders for dinner, auctions, and entertainment. Ticket Link: <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/cddgala26/>

11th ANNUAL TOPEKA EASTERFEST: FAMILY FUN FESTIVAL & VENDOR FAIR – Mar. 28, 10am-3pm, in the NOTO Arts District on North Kansas Avenue. The Big Egg Hunt begins at 10am in Veterans Park (between NOTO and the Kansas Ave. Bridge). Food Trucks will be on hand and the Family Fun Fair will continue until 3PM, including vendor booths, children's games, food trucks, face painting, inflatables, and more. Live music and other entertainment, along with more vendor booths, will be on hand at Redbud Park. More food trucks and vendors will be located in NOTO Arts Center and parking lot across the street. In addition, sidewalk merchants will be located up and down Kansas Avenue. For more info: Topeka EasterFest on Facebook, info@C5Alive.org or 785-640-6399.

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 1% milk & sugar-free items for diabetics. 215-0064.

MEDICARE MONDAYS – First Mon. ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library, 1515 SW 10th. Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging offers Senior health insurance counseling. 580-4545 or nhon@tscpl.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. Randal 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. RandalMinistries.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 checkout & 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 grandotawaopry@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. 10am-12pm, Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 939 NE Oakland

HARVESTER FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION - 2nd Saturday each month, 10-11am, 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, Colos-

sians 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, Face-book: Topeka Lakeview Nazarene, LakeNaz@aol.com

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 jccccc@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

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CHRISTIAN WRITERS GROUP OF TOPEKA - 1st & third Mondays, 7pm at the Hughes Room 205 of the Topeka Library. Workshop for aspiring writers.

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JAN 25 "Kansas Day" – Join us in commemorating the 170th anniversary Constitution Hall's construction, 165th anniversary of Kansas Statehood, and 250th anniversary of the founding of the Nation. Remarks by Patrick Zollner, Executive Director, Kansas Historical Society, and Sara Bell, PhD, Museum and Education Dev. Director, Kansas Historical Society. Special program by Dan Rockhill, J.H. Cozzani Distinguished Professor of Architecture, University of Kansas, focusing on the restoration efforts that preserved Constitution Hall as the State Historic Site we know and love today.

FEB 1 Postmarked: Bleeding Kansas, by Chad Lawhorn, Editor and Publisher, Lawrence Journal-World
Chad Lawhorn discusses his 2013 book that republished the Bleeding Kansas era correspondence between early Lawrence settler and Free State supporter Edward Fitch, and his wife, Sarah Fitch. Culminating at the 1863 Lawrence massacre, the Fitch letters offer a front-line view of the border conflict in Kansas before and during the Civil War as it was seen by those who lived it.

FEB 8 Jayhawkers and Red Legs: Union Guerrillas of Civil War Kansas
by Paul A. Thomas and Matt M. Matthews, authors. Before and during the American Civil War, Kansas anti-slavery militants patrolled the Kansas-Missouri border. Known as "Jayhawkers" and later "Red Legs," they raided anyone they believed sympathetic to the pro-slavery cause and southern secession. For many, these irregular warriors were heroes fighting for a Free Kansas and the preservation of the Union; for their victims, these men were little more than opportunistic thieves. Authors Paul A. Thomas and Matt M. Matthews seek to find out who these men really were in their new book.

FEB 15 Bogus Legislature and Border War: The Politics of the Shawnee Indian Mission and Thomas Johnson, by Jennifer Loughlin, Site Administrator of Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site. The Shawnee Indian Mission, built in 1839, served as a trade school near the Missouri border on the Shawnee Reservation. In the 1850's, it became a major epicenter of Kansas territorial politics. Thomas Johnson, the Methodist Minister and Superintendent of the School, was himself a leader of the pro-slavery movement during Bleeding Kansas, fueled by his own personal ideologies and close proximity to Westport. Business, culture, assimilation, religion, politics and controversy all found a place on these two-thousand acres until Johnson's death in 1865.

FEB 22 "Suffer and Be Strong": The Wakarusa War of 1855, by Eric Smallwood, Site Administrator of Constitution Hall State Historic Site. Five years before South Carolina seceded from the Union, military units of northern and southern Americans faced off against one another on the field of battle over the political issue of slavery for the first time, in the opening act of what we now call "Bleeding Kansas". Though it was nearly bloodless, the "Wakarusa War", as it would come to be known, was a dark omen of things to come for the next decade of American history, and was where many of the leading figures of Bleeding Kansas began to gain their fame.

MAR 1 Lincoln in Kansas, by Carol D. Ayers, M.L.S., M.A., and author. In December 1859, Abraham Lincoln traveled to Kansas to give his first campaign speech for the presidency and to help Republican candidates vie successfully in the upcoming election. Though often overlooked, this visit had important historical significance. Lincoln was very connected to Kansas as it focused its first Republican Party, and was supportive of its vicious fight against slavery within its borders.

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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.florictkansas.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 madonday@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, betsythompson@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 shepherdstopeka@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 TROOPS - 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 needlework 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 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 Buffet 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 rhm401@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. madonday@gmail.com. To Join from Home via Zoom, contact Madon for the Zoom link.

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 kittens81@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, www.scorekansas.org

Washburn Tech, 5724 SW Huntoon (enter east doors facing Huntoon). No RSVP or fee is required. Small business owners are invited to a Breakfast Round-table 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.hIGHLANDHEIGHTSCC.COM or call 785-379-5642.

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

GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP - 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room, St. Francis Hosp, 1700 SW 7th. For info: Sharla,

286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.

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 wahluviewcc@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. crtopeka.org

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP - First Thurs-

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



Friday, Feb. 13th, 2026, 6-9 p.m.

Vaerus Event Center
6410 SE Forbes Ave., Suite 2 at
Forbes Field

This complimentary prom event for teens and adults ages 14 and older with special needs is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and Grace Community Church.

Guests walk

the red carpet, are greeted by paparazzi,



and enjoy dancing and royal treatment

Details and registration can be found at
www.nighttoshinetopeka.com

entertainment

Nominees Announced for the 33rd Annual Movieguide Faith & Values Awards Gala

Movieguide, the number one family review service for movies and television shows, has announced the nominees for its 33rd Annual MOVIEGUIDE Faith & Values Awards Gala & Report to the Entertainment Industry. The ceremony will be held on Friday, February 6 at the Avalon Theatre in Hollywood. It will be an evening celebrating hope and inspiration, and will be broadcast on the Great American Family network in the coming weeks and available to stream on Great American Pure Flix.

"These nominees demonstrate what audiences are hungry for: stories anchored in faith, virtue, and timeless values," says Robby Baehr, Movieguide CEO. "Faith-driven storytelling isn't just meaningful, it's powerful entertainment that resonates across generations. We're honored to celebrate these films and the filmmakers who are bringing light to screens worldwide."

In addition to honoring the Best 2025 Movies for Mature Audiences, the Epiphany Prizes for the Most Inspiring Movie and Television Program, The Faith & Freedom Awards for Movies and Television, and the Grace Awards for Most Inspiring Performance in Movies and Television.

Here is the list of nominees for the 33rd Annual Movieguide Awards:

BEST FAMILY MOVIES

- THE CHOSEN: THE LAST SUPPER – PART TWO: Episode 5.3
- THE CHRISTMAS RING
- DAVID
- THE LAST RODEO
- THE SENIOR

BEST MATURE AUDIENCE MOVIES

- BAU: ARTIST AT WAR
- THE FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST STEPS
- MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – THE FINAL RECKONING
- SARAH'S OIL
- SUPERMAN

BEST FAMILY TELEVISION/STREAMING

- CROSSROAD SPRINGS Episode 1.6 "Sunrise and Still Water"
- MAN VS BABY: Episodes 1.1-1.4
- TIMELESS TIDINGS OF JOY
- WHEN CALLS THE HEART: Episode 12.2



Episode 12.2

- WHEN HOPE CALLS (2025): "A New Beginning" and "So Long, Not Goodbye"

BEST MATURE AUDIENCE TELEVISION/STREAMING

- BOSTON BLUE: Episode 1.8: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son..."
- NCIS: Episode 23.7 "God Only Knows"
- HOUSE OF DAVID: Episode 208: "The Truth Revealed"
- MARTIN SCORSESE PRESENTS: THE SAINTS: "Peter"
- RUTH & BOAZ

BEST MOVIES FOR CHILDREN

- THE KING OF KINGS (2025)
- LIGHT OF THE WORLD
- LILO & STITCH (2025)
- PADDINGTON IN PERU
- ZOOTOPIA 2

EPIPHANY PRIZE MOVIES

- THE CHOSEN: LAST SUPPER – PART TWO: Episode 5.3

THE CHRISTMAS RING

- DAVID
- THE KING OF KINGS (2025)
- LIGHT OF THE WORLD

EPIPHANY PRIZE TELEVISION

- THE CHOSEN ADVENTURES: Episodes 1.1-1.6
- A CHRISTMAS PRAYER
- HOUSE OF DAVID: Episode 208: "The Truth Revealed"

- MAN VS BABY: Episodes 1.1-1.4
- WHEN CALLS THE HEART: Episode 12.2

FAITH & FREEDOM AWARD MOVIES

- BAU: ARTIST AT WAR
- THE FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST STEPS
- MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – THE FINAL RECKONING

- PADDINGTON IN PERU
- SARAH'S OIL
- FAITH & FREEDOM AWARD TELEVISION

- BOSTON BLUE: Episode 1.8: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son..."

THE CHRISTMAS SPARK

- COUNTY RESCUE: Episode 2.5 "Hot Water"

- HOUSE OF DAVID: Episode 208 "The Truth Revealed"

- WHEN HOPE CALLS (2025): "A New Beginning" and "So Long, Not Goodbye"

ALETHEIA: BEST DOCUMENTARY PRIZE

- THE CASE FOR MIRACLES
- DUDE PERFECT: THE HERO TOUR

INVESTIGATING THE SUPERNATURAL: MIRACLES

- KEVIN COSTNER PRESENTS: THE FIRST CHRISTMAS
- MEARS: HOW ONE WOMAN CHANGED CHRISTIANITY

BEST TELEVISION/STREAMING FOR CHILDREN

- BUILDER BROTHERS DREAM FACTORY: Episodes 1.1-1.6
- DOT CONNER: WEBTECTIVE

- THE CHOSEN ADVENTURES: Episodes 1.1-1.6

- TEAM MEKBOTS ANIMAL RESCUE: Episodes 2.1-2.4

- DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LAST STRAW

GRACE AWARD FOR MOVIES

Actress

- Naya Desir-Johnson (SARAH'S OIL)

- Vanessa Kirby (THE FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST STEPS)

- Rebekah Schafer (LIGHT OF THE WORLD)

- Jana Kramer – (THE CHRISTMAS RING)

- Uma Thurman (THE KING OF KINGS (2025))

Actor

- Kelsey Grammer (THE CHRISTMAS RING)

- Oscar Isaac (THE KING OF KINGS (2025))

- Zachary Levi (SARAH'S OIL)

- Paras Patel (THE CHOSEN: LAST

Why Faith Took Center Stage in American Idol



So, why has AMERICAN IDOL leaned into faith?

"When we open our floodgates for auditions every spring, we don't know what's coming," Wolflick explained. "We follow the lead of who comes through our doors. What is happening in music today? And that, organically, in the last couple years, has been more and more faith-based music. Not intentional, but it was resonating with the public."

The judges and Wolflick look for contestants they want to hear again and again.

"We've been doing auditions for six hours. Everyone is tired. When this person walks into the room, are you going to be like, 'yes?'" she told TV Insider. "It's a real instinctual process. We are looking for true artists. We are a television show, but I really do feel it's the big leagues of the music. This is a way to break into the music industry. Take Jamal for instance, who clicked a link last year and now he is going on tour with Brandy and Monica. How would he ever have access to that in less than a year if it weren't for IDOL and auditioning?"

AMERICAN IDOL returned for its 24th season on Monday, Jan. 26.

—Mallory Mattingly / moveguide.com

• Serayah (RUTH & BOAZ)

Actor

• Rowan Atkinson (MAN VS BABY: Episodes 1.1-1.4)

• Trevor Donovan (CHRISTMAS AT THE INN)

• Michael Iskander (HOUSE OF DAVID: Episode 208: "The Truth Revealed")

• Stephen Lang (HOUSE OF DAVID: Episode 208: "The Truth Revealed")

• Tyler Lepley (RUTH & BOAZ)

• Jonathan Stoddard CROSSROAD SPRINGS Episode 1.6 "Sunrise and Still Water"

Country Artist Reveals Heart Behind Her Hit Song About Letting Jesus Carry You

Christian country artist Anne Wilson recently opened up about why she chose to write her hit track, "Carry Me."

"We all know what it feels like to carry the weight of the world. Whether it's grief, pressure, or just the heaviness of life, it can feel impossible to hold it all together," she shared on Facebook. "This song is a reminder that we were never meant to carry it alone. My prayer is that this song gives you hope and rest right where you are."

The song debuted on Oct. 3, 2025, as part of her third album, Stars.

The lyrics read:

*I went to bed 15
I woke up 23
And now it all just feels like
Some kind of crazy tragic dream
Truth is I'm way too young
To feel as old as I do
It ain't easy being strong
When they're all counting on you
So girl pull yourself together
Don't you dare lose your composure
So much for closure
Where is that little girl?
That one I used to be
I can't remember the last time
That I felt young and free
How much can one heart take
When it's taking on everything
I carry the weight of the world
Can someone carry me?*

"I wrote 'Carry Me' in a season when I didn't have the strength to keep pre-



tending I was okay. This song is my prayer for anyone who's tired of holding it all together and just needs Jesus to meet them right where they are," Wilson added in an Instagram post.

In an interview with The Music Universe, she called the song as "one of the most personal songs I've ever written."

"When my brother Jacob passed away, I was forced to grow up fast," Wilson explained. "Not long after, I signed a record deal and felt the heavy pressures that came with it. In the middle of all of that, I realized I was never meant to carry the weight of the world on my own – Jesus is the One who carries me."

Wilson's brother died in a tragic car accident on June 6, 2017. She sang in public for the first time at his funeral, and that moment ended up launching her career.

"Even now, when I look around at

the brokenness and pain in our world, that same heaviness creeps in," she continued, speaking with The Music Universe. "It's easy to wonder how we'll ever make it through. But this song is my reminder that the same God who carried me in my darkest season is the same God carrying us today. He promises to lift our burdens and give us rest, and that's where my hope will always be."

She hopes the song reminds her listeners to turn to Jesus.

"Some seasons you have the strength to walk through, and other seasons you need to be carried. Let this be your reminder today that you're not alone. Jesus will carry you," Wilson said.

If you're feeling the weight of the world, take Wilson's reminder to heart, and let Jesus carry you.

—Mallory Mattingly/
movieguide.com

Does Science Support God? Examining New Evidence

"God is dead," the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously declared in 1882. Not so fast, two acclaimed scientists respond in a compelling new book now available in the United States after impressive sales figures in Europe.

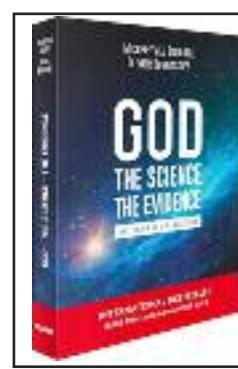
A Metro Voice Book Review

"God, The Science, The Evidence" by Michel-Yves Bolloré and Olivier Bonnassies has sold more than 400,000 copies worldwide. The book presents commentary and research drawn from hundreds of scientists and scholars, including 63 Nobel Prize winners, and presents what the authors describe as a "180-degree panorama" of the evidence.

ing the Big Bang, the fine-tuning debate and the information-rich complexity of DNA.

"Many people live with an unresolved tension between what they were taught about science and what they feel drawn to spiritually," Bolloré said. "One of the great reliefs readers report is discovering that this conflict is not inevitable and may no longer be justified."

The consensus before the 20th century was that both time and space had no beginning and no end, so there was no need for a creator God. Recent scientific advances called this long-held assumption into question. "Never have so many spectacular scientific discoveries emerged in



such a short period of time," the book said. "These discoveries have overturned our view of the cosmos and forcefully put the question of the existence of a creator God back on the table."

If science confirms that time, space and matter had an absolute beginning, it becomes clearer that the universe proceeds from a cause that is not temporal, spatial or material. "The Big Bang forces us into a corner," the authors said. "To put it bluntly, it brings us face to face with the idea of God. We dare to say that the picture painted by the Big Bang is remarkably consistent with the idea of the creation of the universe by God."

Latest Family-Friendly Flick Just Smashed Oscar Winner's Record



ZOOTOPIA 2 just achieved another major milestone: it surpassed the \$1 billion mark at the worldwide box office, thanks to an unexpected lead in China.

The sequel has now achieved a milestone not seen since James Cameron's 1997 classic TITANIC, becoming the first Hollywood movie in nearly three decades to sell more than 100 million tickets in China alone. Reports say that it has earned \$560 million in China, nearly double that of its US take at \$321 million.

The movie will now need to surpass INSIDE OUT 2's worldwide box office take of \$1,698,863,816 to become the highest grossing animated movie of all time, a feat that at this time seems attainable.

Forbes reported, "In less than three weeks, Disney's ZOOTOPIA 2 smashed the global box office and joined the \$1 billion club."

The movie follows "Judy Hopps (voiced by Ginnifer Goodwin) and Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman) as they track down a snake that arrives in Zootopia."

Fans seem to love the movie, and Movieguide isn't surprised why.

"ZOOTOPIA 2 is an action packed, heartwarming fantasy adventure with loads of laughs and great animation," Movieguide's review reads. "It has a strong allegorical Christian, moral worldview. It stresses doing the right thing, even if it means sacrificing your life, working together, seeking truth and justice, and overcoming differences through love."

The review notes that the movie

"has a few implied adult jokes, two light profanities, and scary scenes of peril in the movie's often exciting and comical action scenes. So, MOVIEGUIDE® advises caution for younger children. We suggest ages six and above are more appropriate."

One fan reportedly saw the movie 50 times, which gained attention from Disney Animation's CCO Jared Bush.

Co-directors Bush and Byron Howard recently shared the creativity that went into the movie, as well as the possibility for a third installment.

"Byron and I really enjoy exploring and playing with a lot of creative ideas," Bush said. "And obviously we secretly put a lot of things in the ending of ZOOTOPIA 2, like the bird feather we saw, which we're happy to think about, and it's also exciting to think about what will happen to Judy and Nick next."

He added, "It typically takes us 4–5 years to make an animated film, but the first 2–3 years are spent exploring creative ideas. So, it takes about 3 years for a project to reach the stage where the script we're working on is ready. Therefore, without specifying what we're currently exploring, I would say: exploration itself is a wonderful thing because you can surprise yourself, and that's important."

When Hollywood creates a family-focused movie, it's sure to succeed.

—Kayla DeKraker
movieguide.com

sports

Patriots QB Eyes NFL Games as Opportunity to Share the Gospel



New England Patriots quarterback Drake Maye is ready for the Super bowl, but more importantly, he's ready to share the gospel through the platform God's given him.

"I think the biggest thing is using my platform to spread the word and spread the good news," Maye said on the WEEI show in Boston. "That's one of the biggest things that I've tried to work on in my career is using my platform to inspire young kids or inspire even older people that may not be into their faith as much just to know that it's out there for everybody."

"One of the biggest things in my life that I've learned is that there's purpose and there's passion. My passion is football and my purpose is [being] a believer and being strong in my faith," the athlete emphasized.

Maye also spoke about his relationship with the Broncos' injured quarterback Bo Nix. Nix broke his ankle at the end of the Divisional game against the Buffalo Bills.

According to Sports Spectrum, both Nix and Maye were "drafted in the first round of the 2024 NFL Draft...[and] developed a friendship during their pre-draft process, training together and spending time with one another's families. Their friendship developed over their shared faith in God."

"I got to train with Bo [during] the pre-draft and got to know him well; him and his family and his wife," Maye said. "First off, they're just great people. Great Christians. I've really enjoyed being around Bo Nix and his family. Obviously, the news was heartbreaking

for the player he is, the guy he is. I'm just praying for Bo, and I know he's going to bounce back. He's a great player in this league. I look forward to matching up with him."

Maye used his platform in the past to talk about his faith in God. When the Patriots beat the Baltimore Ravens on Dec. 21, the quarterback focused all his attention back on his team and his faith.

"I'm looking forward to celebrating with these guys," he shared after the game. "Just props to them, and I just thank the good Lord — what a position I'm in in my life. Just stay strong in my faith and good things happen."

QB Mendoza thanks God after Improbable Indiana win

The Indiana Hoosiers, traditionally one of the worst teams in college football history, capped a record-breaking season on Monday by defeating the University of Miami to win the national championship. Fernando Mendoza, their Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, led the way.

In December, during his Heisman acceptance speech, he thanked God for "the opportunity to chase a dream that once felt a world away," as the Deseret News previously reported.

"I want to give all the glory and thanks to God," Mendoza said after the game. "My offensive lineman blocked perfectly, and we were able to execute the team toward a common goal."

He later thanked his friends, family and coaches "for taking a chance on me," reiterating how he wanted to "give all the glory to God." As the Hoosiers were presented with the national championship trophy, Mendoza pointed to God first and said, "I first want to give all the glory to God" and called it "the most special moment of my life."



Sports Center posted video showing Mendoza and Miami quarterback Carson Beck kneeling in prayer on the field ahead of the game. Mendoza often publicly displayed his Catholic faith throughout the past season. Before the Heisman Trophy awards ceremony last month, he said he was happy that God had put "bumps and challenges in my life," such as finding a college team that wanted him and earning a starting job.

"Evidently, those have been blessings, because they've lit a fire underneath myself in order to make myself work harder and get to the point that I am today," he said. "I believe that I would not be here without the path that my Lord Jesus Christ has put me on today. And so that's why I always try to give him the glory and always give him the thanks, as I know he has a plan for me."

It's not the first time, or the last, in which the star player points to God. "The only reason I've gotten to this point is because there's so many different people helping me in my journey, and (the Saint Paul priests) have been one," Mendoza told Sports Illustrated. "They've done so

Why This Former NFL Star Says Faith and Fitness Go Together

Tim Tebow wants you to understand the importance of taking care of your body.

"Taking care of your body and being a good steward of it in every way, form and fashion is so important," the former Heisman trophy winner said on an episode of the "Post Run High" podcast. "There's a lot of people that they want to be their best, but maybe they're so fo-

cused on business or their career or something, but actually the right movement, the right sleep, the right fuel, all of that is just going to make you better with more clarity, with more energy, with more drive for that thing that you're striving for."

"A lot of people say, 'Well, because you're done playing, you'll take it easy now.' And I say no, because a lot of it wasn't just for a game. I want to be my best at everything that I get to do, you know, especially when I'm doing things that are more important than a game," he continued. "And so if I would give all that effort and diet and nutrition and everything to a game. Why would I give less for things that are more important?"

Tebow explained that when you workout with the right people around — for him, it's his wife Demi — the experience becomes even better.

"If we're around the right people, it becomes contagious, and we want to do it," he said. "It's really about trying to be your best, but then it's also about how the right people around you can inspire you, which just means to be filled with the urge to do something right. And so that inspiration when you're around the right people, it does fill you with the urge to do more, to be healthier, to go a little bit further, to train a little bit more, because you want to be your best for what



you're pursuing, but you want to be your best for them too."

The Apostle Paul hits on this topic in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, which reads, "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."

If we do not take care of our bodies, the temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells, we will not be well enough to go out into the world and share the Gospel. God gave us our bodies, so why would be not want to honor Him with them?

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5 Advances in Alzheimer's Treatment

For the millions of Americans touched by Alzheimer's disease, 2025 brought major advances in understanding of brain health and progress in diagnosis and treatment. Here are the year's biggest advances:

1) A structured plan can sharpen brain health.

In a major U.S. clinical trial of older adults at risk for cognitive decline, two healthy lifestyle plans in the Alzheimer's Association's U.S.

POINTER study improved memory and thinking skills over two years. Both interventions included exercise, brain-healthy nutrition, cognitive training and heart health monitoring. However, participants in a highly structured program that also included regular coaching and peer support showed significantly greater brain health gains, demonstrating that when brain-healthy habits are organized and supported, people stick with them and

thinking skills benefit.

Next steps for families: Start small but structured: aim for 150 minutes of weekly exercise of at least moderate intensity, Mediterranean-style meals, 7-8 hours of sleep per night, and 2-3 short brain-training sessions each week. Put goals on a shared calendar, find an exercise or brain-health buddy, and schedule regular check-ins with your healthcare professional.

2) Simple blood tests can help spot changes earlier.

In 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared two blood tests that detect Alzheimer's-related brain changes, offering a less invasive, less expensive option for those experiencing memory changes to support diagnosis and potentially reduce the need for PET scans or spinal taps. Blood tests are not stand-alone diagnostic tools, but their use can help guide next steps for testing, treatment and planning. The Alzheimer's Association has developed clinical guidelines to help specialists determine when to use blood tests alongside established "gold standard" tests.

Next step for families: Ask your health care team whether an Alzheimer's blood test makes sense for you or a loved one, and how your results would affect lifestyle and health care plans. If they recommend testing, ask them to refer you to a specialist who can explain the results.

3) Americans want to know sooner.

A recent Alzheimer's Association survey of adults 45 and older found most want to learn early if they have Alzheimer's before symptoms impact their lives, and 9 out of 10 would take a simple test, if available, to clarify next steps. Nearly 3 in 5 respondents said they would accept a moderate or high level of risk to take medication that could slow the disease's progression.

Early awareness unlocks time to live healthfully, organize support, consider treatment options, and plan finances and care preferences.

Next step for families: Bring your top concerns, what's changed (mem-

A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years



ory, mood, function), and goals for the next 3 months to your appointment.

4) Treatment can be easier to take.

The August 2025 FDA approval of Leqembi for delivery via weekly subcutaneous injections may ease treatment for some patients. Those who complete initial infusion treatments as directed for 18 months can now receive their subsequent weekly treatment using at-home autoinjectors.

Fewer infusion clinic visits can mean less travel and lower caregiver burden, making it easier to stick to treatments for eligible patients. Decisions depend on eligibility, monitoring requirements, side-effect profile, and your clinician's judgment.

The Alzheimer's Association encourages clinician participation in ALZ-NET, a nationwide program col-

lecting real-world data on Alzheimer's.

Next step for families: If treatment is on the table, ask whether at-home injections might be an option after the initial phase.

5) A new clinician hub helps care teams stay current.

When clinicians have fast access to evidence-based resources, patients get clearer answers and more consistent care. The new centralized professional portal, ALZPro, now curates practice guidelines, professional training, and point-of-care tools for earlier detection, appropriate test use, treatment, etc.

For information, support, research and public policy, visit The Alzheimer's Association at alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

—StatePoint



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How to Live to Be 100 Years Old

Living to 100 may sound extraordinary, but research suggests it's more achievable—and enjoyable—than many people think. Studies show the majority of centenarians rate their health as good, and large numbers of people in this age group are mobile, active and optimistic.

According to the American Medical Association, adopting these seven habits can improve longevity and quality of life:

1. Eat healthy. Think of food as medicine. Choose nutritious, whole foods. Eat more fruits that are dark in color — blue, purple and red — to get the most nutrients, as well as fiber-rich vegetables, especially non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli, carrots and leafy greens. Incorporate whole grains, nuts, seeds, lean meats and fish. Drink more water, or as an alternative, flavored or sparkling water with no added sugar.

Reduce your intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy ultra-processed foods, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Drinking sug-

ary beverages, even 100% fruit juices, is associated with a higher mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open. Eat fewer processed meats, which tend to be high in fat and heavy on added salt and preservatives. Limit your intake of refined grains, such as breads, crackers, baked goods and white rice. Drink less alcohol.

2. Exercise. Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly. A recent study published in JAMA found that putting down the television remote and walking can improve healthy aging — highlighting the importance of small everyday habits.

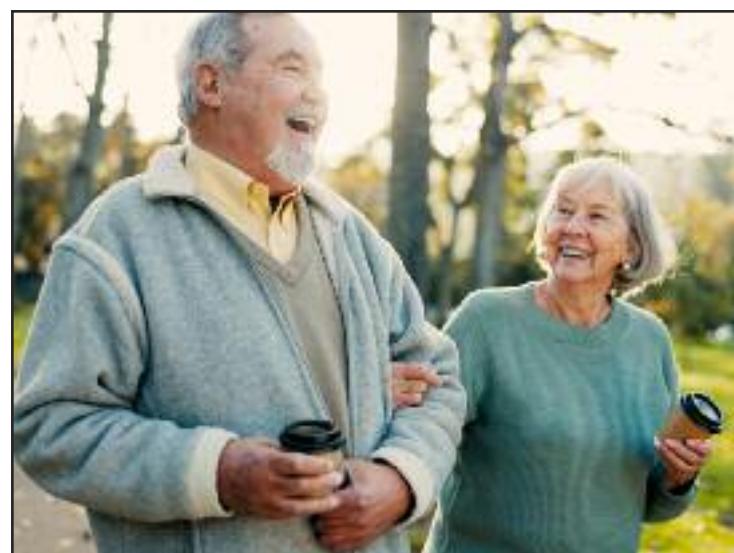
3. Get enough sleep. Adequate sleep improves memory, reduces stress, improves mood, and primes the body's natural defenses against disease. But sleep quality decreases with age. Improve your sleep quality by setting a regular bedtime and wake-up time, insulating your bedroom against noise, avoiding

exercise within an hour of bedtime, maintaining a cool and dark bedroom, and limiting fluids within two hours of bedtime. Also avoid alcohol before bedtime and make your bedroom a tech-free zone as screen-time can impact your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

4. Live with purpose. A sense of purpose can lead to increased energy, motivation, emotional stability and resilience. Take time for self-reflection and try meditation or yoga. Prioritize your values and beliefs and put them into action toward a goal that's meaningful to you and benefits others.

5. Stay positive. To bust stress, take a break from decisions, connect with others, pet your dog or cat, write a to-do list (stick to three items), take time to recharge, laugh, sing, curb clutter, set boundaries, perform mindfulness exercises, practice gratitude, and seek help from a professional when stress becomes overwhelming.

6. Stay connected. Research shows that having social connections is a significant predictor of longevity and better physical, cognitive and mental health, while social isolation and loneliness are significant predictors of premature death and poor health. Unfortunately, there is a



nationwide loneliness epidemic that medical experts consider a major public health concern. Combat loneliness with social clubs and community groups, or by taking up a hobby, learning something new or volunteering.

If you're struggling with loneliness, reach out to a professional, your doctor, family member or friend. You can also call the 988 crisis helpline for support

7. Get screened. Schedule preventive care, tests and health screenings to help your doctor spot certain conditions before they become more serious. Your doctor can recommend needed tests based on your age, gender and health conditions — including colonoscopies, mammograms, gynecological and prostate exams, and vision screenings.

Today, there are many at-home screening options available. Some are more effective than others, and all work best — and minimize stress around results — when taken in consultation with a doctor.

For more resources on staying healthy, visit <http://www.ama-assn.org>.

"Everyone strives to live longer, but the goal should be to live as healthy as possible for as long as we live," says AMA CEO John Whyte, MD, MPH. "Simple steps today — eating well, staying active, sleeping enough, and seeing your doctor — can add quality years, or even decades, to your life."

—StatePoint



Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

Medicare doesn't pay for dental care.¹

That's right. As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. That means if you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to prevent large dental bills is preventive care. The American Dental Association recommends checkups twice a year.

Previous dental work can wear out.

Your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.²

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

Unexpected bills like \$299 for a filling ... \$1,471 for a crown³ can be a real burden, especially if you're on a fixed income.

¹"Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2025. ²"Aging changes in teeth and gums," medlineplus.gov, 4/17/2022. ³FairHealth, Inc. National average dental fees. Data current as of July 2025; subject to change.

When you're comparing plans ...

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FROM

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

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

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

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

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

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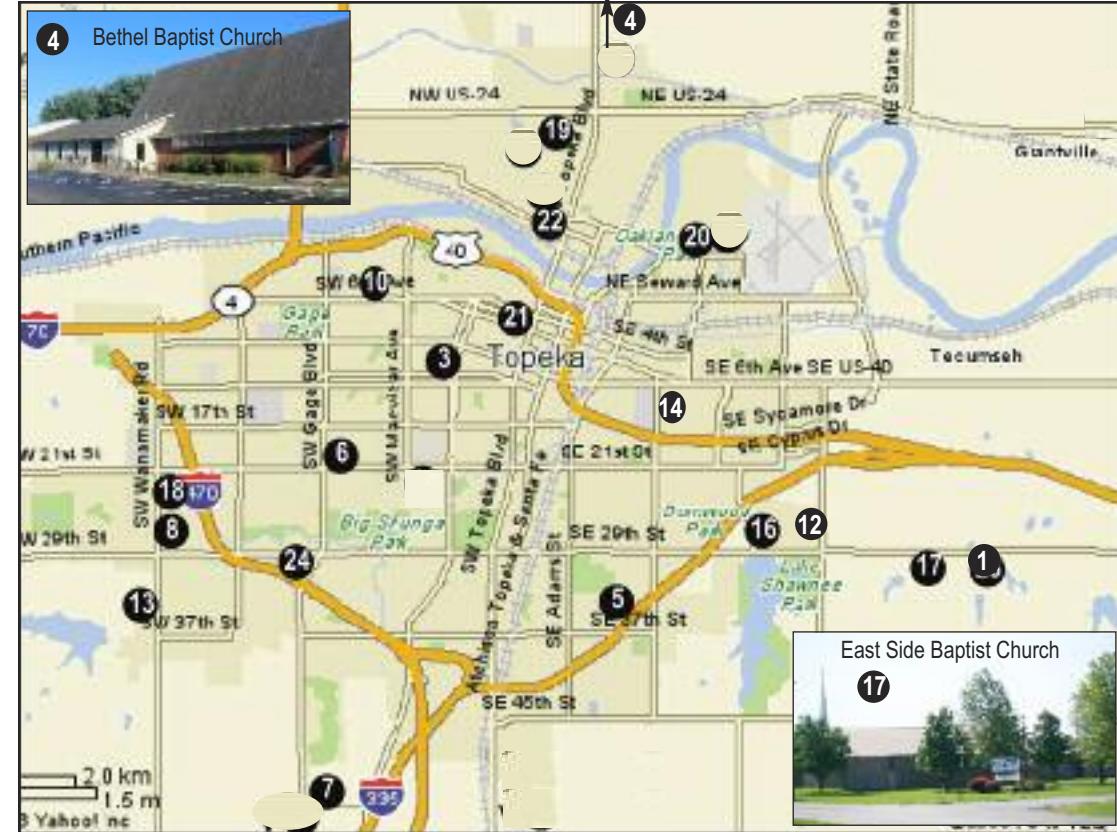
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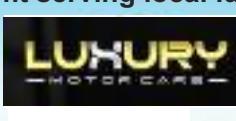
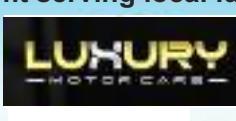
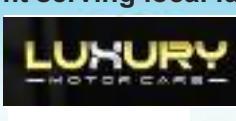
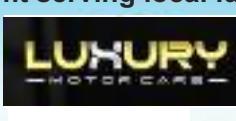
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