

Topeka/Lawrence EDITION

The Area's Most Complete Event Guide

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 Luminary Walk & Light Show  
**April 10 - 26**  
 Wednesday - Sunday Only  
 EVENTS Page 13

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**NEW RESIDENT churchguide**

Heritage Baptist Church



*See Inside Back Cover!*

## 2026 National Day of Prayer Rally to be held at Capitol



The public is invited to join together for prayer and celebration on Thursday, May 7th at the Kansas State Capitol. The event will be held in the Capitol Rotunda, on the 1st floor, over the noon hour.

The celebration will open with a local high school ROTC military team posting the flag. A dozen state leaders and dignitaries will lead prayers for

■ Please see PRAYER page 5

## Do You Know Why Jesus Died?



By **Clint Decker**

I live in a small rural town in north central Kansas. We have 10 churches in our city limits, with religion being a part of the fabric of our community from its founding. Accordingly, when I ask the Easter question, "Why did Jesus die?" to someone in my town, it

should be a simple Sunday School type answer.

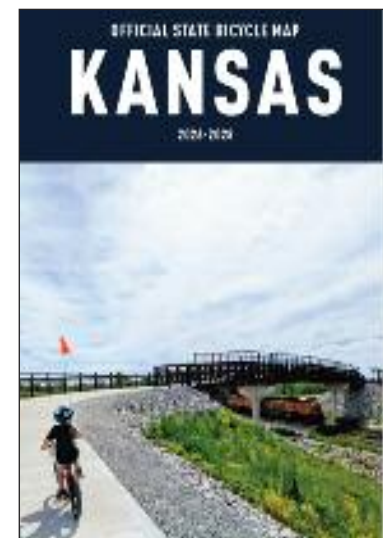
One day as I was talking with an older gentleman that had lived much of his life in the town, I asked, "Do you know why Jesus died?" He honestly replied, "No, I do not." I was shocked. I did not think that people deep in the Amazon jungles of South America

knew, but I surely thought everyone in rural Kansas knew.

In 2019, a British religious poll was taken, which included a question about Jesus dying for sins. Only 46% of Christians in the poll agreed that Jesus died for sins, which meant that 54% of Christians did not agree! Again, I was

■ Please see JESUS page 2

## New Kansas bicycle maps now available



The new 2026-28 Official State Bicycle Map of Kansas is now available from the Kansas Department of Transportation. Whether riding a few miles or cycling across the state, this edition offers a variety of information to help active transportation users plan a short trip or a long ride.

■ Please see MAPS page 2

## Tulips at Twilight returns to Ward-Meade Park

Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden, 129 NW Clay St. in Topeka will once again host the Tulips at Twilight Luminary Walk & Light Show.

This all-ages family event will take place April 10–26, 2026, 7-10:00 PM (Wednesday - Sunday nights ONLY).

The admission fee is \$7.00, with children 5 & under getting in free. Ages 6-18 are \$5.00, and 65 or over get in for \$5.00.

Last year's winner of the "Best in Topeka LOCAL EVENT 2025." Many other awards have been received in the previous years from the yearly "Topeka Community's Choice Awards". Come see over 25,000 tulips, and a massive number of illuminated, larger-than-life hand-crafted botanical displays, as you stroll along the lighted garden pathways. Enjoy several lighted water features including pools, a stream,

■ Please see TULIPS page 2



# President Trump shares letter in which Franklin Graham explains plan of salvation

Franklin Graham presented the gospel plan of salvation in a letter to President Donald Trump last fall. The president shared the letter on Palm Sunday.

Graham congratulated Trump for securing a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and the return of remaining Israeli hostages, which he praised as "incredible accomplishments" and "an answer to prayer" amid Trump's "historic" leadership. He also praised Trump for being a peacemaker, noting that Jesus promised blessing for such figures.

Graham went on to exhort the president to remember that, despite his many accomplishments and apparent blessings, neither he



nor anyone else can earn favor before God and salvation from hell apart from trusting in the right-

eousness and atoning death of Jesus Christ performed on their behalf.

"This week, you commented to the media that you might not be heaven-bound," Graham wrote, referring to remarks Trump made last October. "Maybe you responded in jest, but it is an important issue to know for certain that your soul is secure and will spend eternity in the presence of God. The only one who can save us from hell is Jesus Christ. You can't save yourself; I can't save myself. The only way to heaven is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ."

Graham closed his letter by promising prayer for Trump and quoting the gospel message from Romans 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the

dead, you will be saved."

Despite some accusations of cynicism from detractors on social media, Graham's letter drew approval from figures such as evangelist Sean Feucht, who expressed hope last fall that the 79-year-old president's remarks could indicate that he is at least thinking about eternity and questioning where he will spend it.

"He has no shortage of people that have clearly explained to him on phone calls, on conference calls, in person about the forgiveness of sins, repentance, by grace alone you can be saved, not by works," Feucht said at the time. "I believe God is moving his heart closer than ever before."

## Topeka Presbyterian Manor Art is Ageless® exhibit and reception feature senior artists

Local senior artists will be celebrated April 6 – 9 at Topeka Presbyterian Manor, 4712 SW 6th Ave., as they host its annual Art is Ageless® exhibit.

Art is Ageless is a trademarked program of PMMA (Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America®). The program offers senior artists the opportunity to share and display their artwork and reaffirms

the agelessness of human creativity.

"Art is Ageless is a joyful program, meant to celebrate seniors," said Carol Maynard, senior living sales director. "Art provides an avenue for older adults to express their creativity and showcase their talents, and we love sharing that with the entire Topeka community."

The first Art is Ageless calendar was

published in 1981, featuring art from Presbyterian Manor community residents. Since then, the program has expanded to include a juried art competition open to all seniors age 65 and older.

The Art is Ageless exhibit will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 6 – 9 and will feature works from local artists. The pub-

lic is welcome to view the exhibit of acrylics, oils, photography and various other mediums, ranging from amateur to professional levels. Winning pieces at the community level move on to a masterpiece level judging to determine which pieces are featured in the annual calendar and note cards.

In addition to the exhibit, Topeka

Presbyterian Manor will honor the artists who entered artwork in the exhibit during a reception from 2 – 3 p.m. April 9.

For more information about Art is Ageless, visit [ArtIsAgeless.org](http://ArtIsAgeless.org). For more about Topeka Presbyterian Manor, visit [TopekaPresbyterianManor.org](http://TopekaPresbyterianManor.org) or contact Carol Maynard at 785-272-6510 or [camaynard@pmma.org](mailto:camaynard@pmma.org).

### JESUS

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shocked. Why would a Christian not believe the Christian teaching that Jesus died for their sins?

Then I came across a well-educated pastor who stated, "I don't teach that we have an angry, vengeful God that was so wrathful over our sinfulness that God sacrificed God's son, God's self, to himself, for his own vengeance. That doesn't hold for me," said the pastor. "Jesus, having borne the pain and suffering of the cross... allows us to be

liberators and to be liberated." This is a teaching of Liberation Theology, which is taught to many pastors in seminaries across the country.

Not everyone, including church people, know why Jesus died, and if they do know, they may not necessarily agree.

Why did Jesus die and rise again? Because of sin. No other person in human history has ever died for the sins of another. It is the most unique death. This was spoken of at Jesus' birth. An angel told Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, "[Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for

he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Why did Jesus die for "sin"? Because of its awfulness. The Scriptures say, "... nothing unclean will ever enter [God's presence], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27) Sin is called unclean, detestable and false. God lays out some examples, "... the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars..." (Rev. 21:8) Outwardly, there is a lot of difference between being a coward versus a mur-

derer. What do they both have in common regarding God's rules? Prideful defiance. When God lays down His rules for us and we respond with defiance, that angers Him. He will have nothing of it.

What are the consequences God has laid out for such rebellion? Death. Both spiritual and eternal. God clearly communicates this, "... their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8) Is there any hope for humanity or is it the fate of us all? This is the good news of Easter.

Though the consequence for our

sinful defiance is death, it is something we can be delivered from. The Bible says in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have eternal life."

God is willing to show you mercy in the face of your deserved penalty. He voluntarily sent His Son to take that sentence. Jesus' death on Easter's cross was an act of divine kindness toward you. He died so you would not have to. Then He rose again, conquering sin and death, that you might overcome and have the incredible gift of eternal life, beginning now.

### TULIPS

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bridge, gazebo, and waterfalls that surround the Asian Garden.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, Old Prairie Town buildings will be open 7-8 PM for touring, and FREE potted plants will be available (one per person). Friday through Sunday evenings will feature live music &

entertainment from 7-8:30 PM, and visitors will be able to get old-fashioned ice cream at the Drug Store, or a sandwich from Butcher BBQ stand.

For more information, follow the

Old Prairie Town at Ward-Meade page on Facebook.

You can also visit Ward-Meade Park during the day, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., or Sundays from noon to 4. Admission is just \$5 for

adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for kids ages 6 to 12.

Stop by, request a tour of the Drug Store Museum or the Ward-Meade Mansion... and rediscover a piece of Topeka's history.

### POSTMARKS

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State bicycle maps and educational flyers with bicycle safety tips are free and can be ordered on KDOT's website at <http://www.ksdot.gov/KSBikeMap>.

"Rail- Trails and the U.S. Bicycle Route

System maps are included in the publication and showcase historic and unique places to visit along these routes," said KDOT's Active Transportation Manager Jenny Kramer. "We want residents and visitors alike to experience a few of the many venues and sights Kansas offers by bike while participating in active lifestyles."

The map features color-coded highways to help riders distinguish traffic levels and varying route widths to show where shoulders are paved and wider than 3 feet.

For those wanting to avoid highways, county roads are also shown using the same color coding for traffic ranges and denote whether they are paved or un-

paved.

Additional features include:

- Rest areas and bike shops
- State parks and scenic byways
- Hospitals with 24-hour emergency care
- Past Biking Across Kansas routes

In addition, details and contact information on the new Kansas Trails Inc. or

organization are available. According to the group, its mission is to provide the resources, support and community connections needed to make trails across the state accessible and sustainable for everyone.

For more information or to order maps, send an email to [KATE@ks.gov](mailto:KATE@ks.gov) or call Kramer at 785-296-5186.

## Jerusalem Holy Sites Reopen, Despite Safety Restrictions

Israeli officials and Catholic Church leaders traded verbal jabs after the closing of Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other major holy sites on Palm Sunday. The closures were part of Israel's broader wartime restrictions that have seen other large crowd venues closed because there are not enough bomb shelters.



While the Catholic Church called the police decision "a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure," Israeli police cited the need to balance freedom with public safety. An Iranian missile recently landed in the church courtyard. The structure, which dates to the 4th century, has no public bomb shelters for the multiple thousands that traditionally visit it daily during Passion Week.

The Prime Minister's Office said there had been "no malicious intent whatsoever" by the police.

Israel initially stood by its safety measures, which all Israelis live under, saying "Under Home Front Command directives, lifesaving restrictions apply to all holy sites in the Old City — for Jews, Christians and Muslims alike." "The Old City has been targeted by murderous missiles multiple times this month, alongside constant fire on residential areas. These threats do not discriminate between religions, and neither does our duty to protect you. We are in active dialogue with religious leaders, including an upcoming meeting with the Patriarch, to examine solutions that balance freedom of worship with public safety."

The Latin Patriarchate said Cardi-

nal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Father Francesco Ielpo, who are all typically hostile to the Israeli government, were filmed being stopped by Israeli police while trying to reach the after the traditional Palm Sunday procession had already been canceled Sunday. The religious leaders were accused of fabricating the incident, having already known of the restrictions before they forced the confrontation with police.

Observers say that while the restrictions made sense in light of the daily Iranian missile barrage, inaccurate reporting and social media outrage put Israel in a corner, having to defend itself as the only nation in the Middle East where freedom of religion exists, but still needing to ensure public safety during the war.

Prime Minister Benjamin ordered an exception for the easing of safety guidelines and allowing it to open to large crowds, even as thousands of other Israeli events are canceled or scaled back, such as weddings and university lecture halls.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog then called the restricted worshippers to "express my great sorrow over this morning's unfortunate incident."

"I clarified that the incident

stemmed from security concerns due to the continuous threat of missile attacks from the Iranian terror regime against the civilian population in Israel, following previous incidents in which Iranian missiles fell in the area of the Old City of Jerusalem in recent days," he wrote on social media. "I reaffirmed the state of Israel's unwavering commitment to freedom of religion for all faiths and to upholding the status quo at the holy sites of Jerusalem."

In a joint statement issued by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Custody of the Holy Land, they thanked President Isaac Herzog for his intervention and stressed the need to safeguard freedom of worship during the war.

Israel is not playing favorites, Israeli news outlets report. The Western Wall, the holiest site for Jews, also remains closed to large group. Just 50 people at a time are allowed to pray in an enclosed area adjacent to the plaza.

The Holy Sepulchre, on the other hand, can host thousands inside at the same time.

There will be free 2-hour parking available in the underground parking lot, The entrance is from 8th street, between Topeka Ave. and Kansas Ave. Much of the street parking around the Capitol building is metered.

## PRAYER

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their area of service.

In addition, the Visitor Center staff will be available to lead Capitol tours until 4:30 PM.

## C5 Luncheon to feature Boys & Girls Clubs info

The April C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held on the 9th at 11:30am at the Celtic Fox.

The program will feature Shelley Robertson, supervisor of Special Projects, speaking about current and future projects at Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka, including the new Adventure Oasis Playground and the proposed Workforce Development and Learning Center.

Admission is free, and lunch can be ordered from restaurants on site if desired. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto: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

May 14, June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sep. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, and Dec. 10, 2026. Coming up on August 13 will be Ambassador Sam Brownback.

C5 also hosts other events, including EASTERFEST, 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](http://www.C5Alive.org), at [www.facebook.com/C5Alive](http://www.facebook.com/C5Alive), or by calling Lee Hartman at 785-640-6399.



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# Novelist Mark Helprin on Learning, Curiosity, and Revitalizing Education

Mark Helprin once got fired from tutoring a high school girl because she lit a cigarette at the kitchen table and refused to put it out. When he insisted, her mother stormed in and showed him the door.

It's a story he tells to illustrate why so many schools fail today.

"If a school can't remove disruptive students, it will fail," he said. "You're sacrificing the many for the one."

The acclaimed novelist—author of classics such as "Winter's Tale," "A Soldier of the Great War," and the recent "The Oceans and the Stars"—has lived a life that could fill several books: Born in Manhattan in 1947 to a Broadway-star mother and an Office of Strategic Services veteran/journalist father, he studied at Harvard and Oxford, served in the British merchant marine and the Israeli military, and became a sharp commentator on foreign affairs.

The Epoch Times asked him for his unfiltered thoughts on education. Drawing from his own childhood, his parenting, and a scene in his upcoming novel "Elegy in Blue," Helprin offered a no-nonsense blueprint for parents, teachers, and a system that has lost its way.



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## Curiosity Starts on the Sidewalk

In "Elegy in Blue," a father walks with his young son through the city, patiently answering endless "What's that?" questions about water tanks, storm drains, and other objects. The father answers patiently, turning ordinary sights into lessons.

It's straight from Helprin's own playbook as a dad—he turned everyday walks into a classroom.

"That's what I did with my own children," Helprin recalled. "Toddlers are information sponges. If you spend hours with them that way, you ignite curiosity. Curiosity is the one thing that absolutely guarantees intellectual development. A lot of people just aren't curious."

He added another essential: Read aloud to them every day. "We did an hour before bed. The kids sat between my wife and me, following along," Helprin said.

As they grew, he also taught practical skills—riding a bike, sailing, shooting a rifle, balancing a checkbook. "It's the most satisfying thing we do: teach our children. That's why we exist," Helprin said.

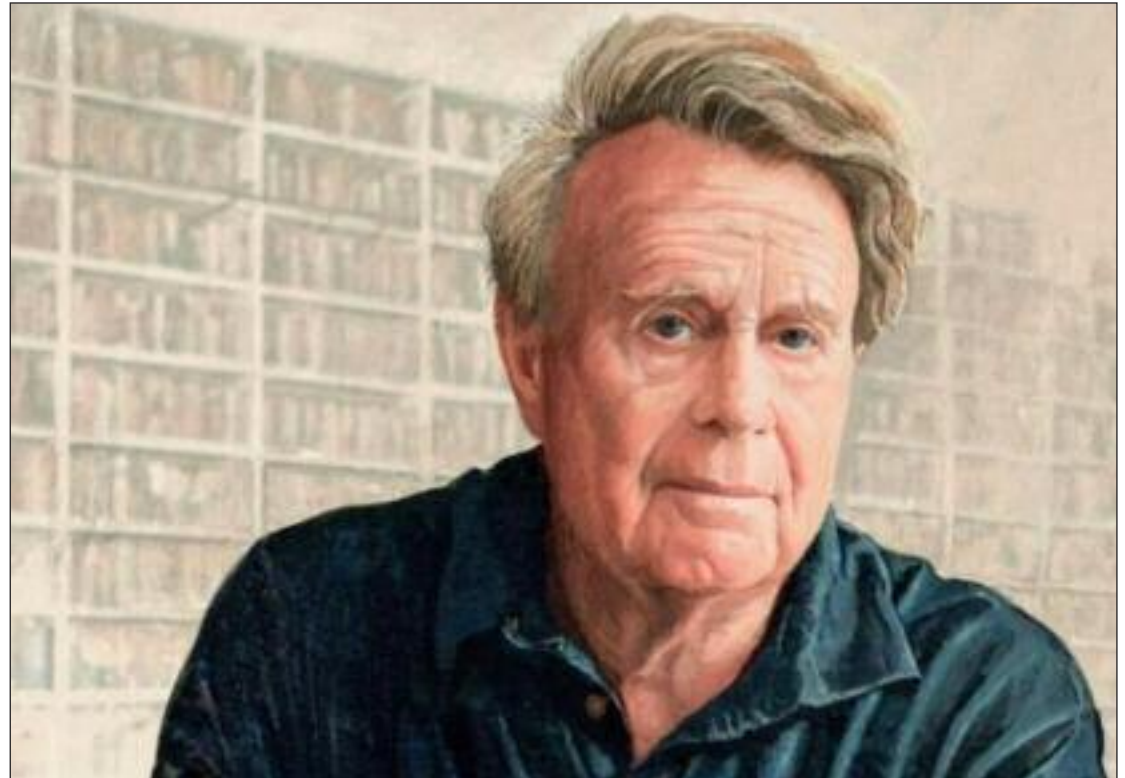
The tragedy? Modern families are fractured. "They watch separate television programs in separate rooms," he said. "Return to traditional family structure—eating together, talking, teaching. That's a key part of any solution to education problems."

## Don't Underestimate Kids—Demand More

Helprin said he sees "secondary" education (everything outside the home, from kindergarten on) as too soft. He rejects the binary debate: academics versus trades.

"What you have is this destructive polarization," he said. "One side saying we need an academic curriculum, and this is most of what we have. The other side says we need people in the trades and vocational schooling."

Helprin pointed to his own school experience, with both demanding vocational and academic tracks: "If you're learning both ac-



ademic and practical things, that's very, very good because one reinforces the other, and both are a great boon to forming character."

He also noted that 19th- and early-20th-century English public schools taught teens Greek, Latin, advanced mathematics, and history at levels matching or even surpassing those of today's college undergraduates. "Children and adolescents are enormously capable of learning," Helprin said. "We just don't demand enough of them. If I founded a school, it would be rigorous—very demanding."

## Zero Tolerance for Disruption

Despite massive U.S. spending per pupil (second only to Luxembourg), many schools fail basic standards. Helprin said he blames teachers unions' "predatory" behavior, prioritizing their own interests over those of their students.

But he hit harder on something rarely said. "Schools don't work because they're disrupted. It's like prisoners running the prison," Helprin said.

That cigarette incident isn't ancient history—it's the symptom. Without authority to remove

chronic disruptors, the class suffers, he said. "You can't teach if one kid derails everything. Sacrifice the whole class for one student, and education fails," Helprin said.

## College: Four Pillars for Real Learning

Universities, too, need repair. Helprin proposes dividing a student's program into four clear parts:

- Humanities (languages, literature, music, philosophy) to appreciate truth and beauty.
- How the world works (history, economics, military history).
- Science and technology.
- Trades and physical work for grit.

## The Bottom Line

Helprin's vision isn't gentle. It starts at home—with endless questions answered, books read aloud, skills taught, and families reunited. It demands rigor in classrooms: Blend academics and trades, raise expectations, and eliminate chaos. A college should be built on four solid pillars.

Through it all runs the hard transmission of real knowledge—because that's what sustains civilization and lets individuals thrive.

Helprin's final word cut straight through: "Do it the hard way. That's what makes for character, civilization, and survival."

By Jeff Minick | *The Epoch Times News Service*

# RFK Jr. Says Hospitals Must Serve Healthier Food

U.S. health officials on March 30 informed hospitals they must provide patients with more nutritious food.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) stated in a memorandum to hospitals across the country that they must comply with certain conditions to receive federal funding, including making sure that menus and diets meet the nutritional needs of patients.

Officials noted the January release of new dietary guidelines, which emphasize limiting ultra-processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and sugar-laden products in favor of whole foods such as whole milk and meat.

Hospitals “should review and revise food and nutrition service policies, standard menus, therapeutic diet protocols, and food procurement practices to align with the [guidelines], which support contemporary evidence on diet quality and health outcomes,” the letter stated.



A good diet for a patient might feature steel-cut oats with berries and nuts for breakfast, grilled salmon with quinoa and roasted vegetables for lunch, and a lentil-based entree with a side salad later in the day, according to the document.

Health Secretary Robert F.

Kennedy Jr., at an event in Florida that was held in part to coincide with the memo, said that it was “essentially a federal mandate” that would help incentivize hospitals to serve better food.

“The food at hospitals is so uniformly, appallingly bad that it

meant to heal—but too often, the food they serve holds patients back.”

“It’s time for hospitals to prioritize real, nutrient-dense food, cut ultra-processed options, and align meals with evidence-based medical needs.”

Oz and Kennedy said that re-

is now a pejorative,” he said. “If you tell somebody that this tastes like hospital food, it’s not a compliment.”

Dr. Mehmet Oz, the administrator of CMS, said in a statement that “hospitals are

vamping menus would lead to faster recovery and lower readmission rates for patients.

The event also included the announcement that Nicklaus Children’s Hospital had committed to sourcing 5 percent of its food from local farmers in Florida.

The hospital will look to add 1 percent to that percentage each year moving forward.

“This means that kids getting cancer treatment will eat real protein, from the producers here in Florida,” said Hannah Anderson, director of the Healthy America campaign from the America First Policy Institute, which hosted the event.

“This means that kids getting treatment for debilitating diseases will get whole milk. And this means that the kids who are fighting infection are getting the vitamin C and vitamin A from food that’s grown right here in Florida.”

By Zachary Stieber

## Anti-Christian Violence Rises in Europe, Experts Tell U.N.

Anti-Christian violence and legal pressure affecting religious freedom are increasing in Europe and require stronger protection of freedom of religion worldwide, experts warned during a recent United Nations Human Rights Council side event in Geneva.

More than 760 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded in Europe in 2024 according to official reporting cited at the meeting, which speakers said was the first state-sponsored side event at the council focused specifically on persecution and discrimination against Christians. Other reports put the number at more than 2900 attacks with 94 church arson attacks.

“Several European governments have targeted individuals through criminal procedures for peacefully expressing their religious beliefs,” said Anja Tang, executive director of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe.

Tang also pointed to neutrality laws



limiting religious references in schools and legal disputes that she said affect parental rights in education and the internal autonomy of religious communities. ([intoleranceagainstchristians.eu](http://intoleranceagainstchristians.eu))

Speakers said some restrictions arise from laws affecting religious ex-

pression in schools, legal disputes involving internal church governance or public expressions of faith such as prayer or baptisms. Tang said cases across Europe have involved bans on public expressions of faith as well as court rulings interfering with the autonomy of religious communities.

([intoleranceagainstchristians.eu](http://intoleranceagainstchristians.eu))

Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, the Holy See’s permanent observer to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, said the observatory documented 2,211 violent incidents affecting Christians across the continent during 2024. Some incidents involved direct violence, while others involved legal actions against individuals expressing religious beliefs. “These include prosecutions for silent prayer near abortion facilities or for quoting a Bible verse on social issues,” he said.

Nazila Ghanea, the U.N. special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, told the event that violence against Christians often involves wider violations of fundamental rights and should be understood within the broader system of international human rights protections. “Christians do not and should not stand alone,” Ghanea said, adding that the global human rights framework recognizes the interconnected nature

of rights and places human dignity at the center of the U.N. system.

Marie Thérèse Pictet Althann, ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in Geneva, called the discussion a significant moment because the Human Rights Council had rarely focused directly on discrimination against Christians. Márk Aurél Érszegi, special advisor for religion and diplomacy at Hungary’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said practical assistance programs can help communities facing persecution.

Balestrero said nearly 400 million Christians worldwide face persecution or violence and that about one in seven Christians is affected. He also said nearly 5,000 Christians were killed for their faith in 2025, an average of about 13 people each day. The archbishop said governments must protect freedom of religion by preventing third parties from violating that right and by safeguarding believers before, during and after attacks.

# FINANCIAL PLANNING



**DAVE RAMSEY**  
Financial author,  
radio host, television  
personality, speaker

**davesays**

## MY WIFE THINKS SHE OWES ME

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have been married for nine months, and we've been following your Baby Steps plan for three months. We have about \$50,000 in debt, and I recently cashed out an old whole life policy that enabled us to pay off \$22,000 of our debt.

My wife still feels weird about us doing that, since the money paid off all the student loan debt she accumulated before we got married but none of the debt I brought to the marriage. I look at everything as ours, not mine and hers. What can I do about her sense of guilt and feeling indebted to me?

**Answer:**

This isn't an uncommon thing in situations like yours. But more than feeling indebted to someone or experiencing a sense of guilt or shame, it's really a discussion about differing views of marriage. You're never in debt to your spouse. You should be all-in where your husband or wife is concerned. Remember the vows? For richer, for poorer. In sickness and in health. If she makes you chicken soup when you're sick, does she charge you for it?

Of course not. When you get married, you agree to take on each other's burdens. Once you walk down the aisle with someone, you're choosing to serve each other. You're also choosing to take on each other's debt, each other's income, each other's assets and each other's crazy parents. Everything!

It all boils down to having a shared view of a proper marriage relationship. And the proper (and biblical) view is we own everything. There's no mine and yours anymore.

Now, you can't make her feel—or not feel—a certain way. But you can ask her questions to understand where she's coming from and what blockers are keeping her

from being totally together in this. Talk about it. Put your heads together and practice thinking about your marriage as a union.

It will take some encourage-

ment from you and some getting used to on her part, but if you work together, it's a muscle you can grow and develop together.

—Dave

## The Retirement Red Zone: A Critical Window for Financial Security

By Susan Shumaker  
Tax Professional at  
The Retirement Team



For many folks approaching retirement, the final years before leaving the workforce have become a defining period—one that can shape financial stability for decades to come. Known among financial professionals as the “Retirement Red Zone,” this phase—typically spanning five to ten years before and after retirement—demands careful planning and informed decision-making.

“It's where preparation turns into reality,” said Roger W. Shumaker, a financial advisor based in Topeka. “You're no longer just building wealth—you're preparing to rely on it. It's the transition from paychecks to paychecks.”

Shumaker, who works with clients on retirement income and tax-efficient strategies, says this transition period is often misunderstood.

“Many people think if they've saved enough, they're set,” he said. “But how you manage those assets in the final stretch is just as important as how you accumulated them.”

### From Growth to Protection

During earlier working years, investors often focus on growth—contributing to retirement accounts and riding out market fluctuations. But in the Retirement Red Zone, the strategy typically shifts toward preservation and income planning.

A significant market downturn late in one's career can be especially damaging. Without sufficient time to recover losses, retirees may be forced to adjust their lifestyle or delay retirement altogether.

“That's why risk management becomes critical,” Shumaker explained. “It's about finding the balance between protecting what you've built and still allowing for growth.”

### Key Challenges Facing Retirees

Financial professionals point to several risks that become more pronounced during this period:

- Market volatility: Losses just be-

fore retirement can have long-term consequences.

- Longevity: With longer life expectancies, retirement savings must last decades.

- Healthcare costs: Unexpected medical expenses can quickly erode savings.

- Income distribution: Poor withdrawal strategies can increase taxes and reduce portfolio longevity.

- Tax planning risk: Without a coordinated tax strategy, retirees may pay significantly more over time. Required minimum distributions (RMDs), Social Security taxation, and withdrawals from tax-deferred accounts can push retirees into higher tax brackets if not carefully managed.

- Tax allocation risk: Assets are often spread across taxable, tax-deferred (such as traditional IRAs and 401(k)s), and tax-free accounts (like Roth IRAs). Drawing income from the wrong type at the wrong time can trigger unnecessary taxes, increase Medicare premiums, and reduce long-term efficiency.

“Taxes are one of the biggest overlooked risks,” Shumaker said. “What matters isn't just how much you've saved—it's how much you actually get to keep—and when you take distributions.”

### Planning for the Final Stretch

Experts recommend that individuals nearing retirement take several proactive steps:

- Reassess investment allocations to reduce unnecessary risk

- Develop a structured income plan that accounts for Social Security and other sources

- Build a reserve of liquid assets to weather market downturns

- Create a tax-efficient withdrawal strategy across taxable, tax-deferred, and tax-free accounts

- Plan when to begin Social Security benefits—often referred to as Social Security maximization—which can be especially important for married couples

Shumaker notes that education is a key part of the process.

“People feel more confident when they understand their plan,” he said. “It's not just about numbers—it's about clarity and peace of mind.”

### Balancing Mortgage Payoff and Liquidity

Paying off a home before retirement continues to resonate with many Americans seeking financial peace of mind. Still, some advisors caution against becoming “house rich and cash poor.”

While eliminating a mortgage can reduce monthly expenses, tying up too much wealth in home equity may limit flexibility. Maintaining sufficient liquidity—readily accessible funds—can be essential for covering unexpected expenses without disrupting long-term investments.

### A Defining Moment

While the Retirement Red Zone can feel daunting, financial professionals say it also offers an opportunity to take control of one's future. With the right strategy, individuals can move from uncertainty to confidence as they approach retirement.

“If the plan you have today isn't optimized for your retirement needs,” Shumaker added, “when would you want to know?”

“The goal,” he said, “is to cross into retirement knowing you're prepared—not just hoping everything works out.”

**For more information or to schedule a complimentary, no-obligation review, contact Roger Shumaker at 785-478-7808.** The Retirement Team includes financial and tax professionals who specialize in helping individuals create customized Retirement Red Zone plans.

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## Staying on Track When Markets Feel Uncertain

By Jim Hanna

Geopolitical developments, economic policy changes, inflation data, and interest rate shifts regularly influence the markets. While recent headlines may feel unsettling, market volatility is not unusual — and uncertainty has always been part of investing. What often matters most during these periods is not reacting to the news itself, but focusing on what you can control and ensuring your financial plan continues to support your long term goals.

Whether you're early in your career, approaching retirement, or already drawing income from your portfolio, periods of market volatility can serve as a useful reminder to revisit your strategy and confirm it still aligns with your needs, priorities, and comfort level with risk.

Whether you're early in your career, approaching retirement, or already drawing income from your portfolio, periods of market volatility can serve as a useful reminder to revisit your strategy and confirm it still aligns with your needs, priorities, and comfort level with risk.

**If you're decades from retirement.** Market swings can feel uncomfortable, but they also provide an opportunity to reassess your perspective on risk. Investing always involves some degree of uncertainty, and how you react emotionally when markets move up or down can offer insight into whether your current portfolio still fits your risk tolerance. Taking time to reflect on that response can help ensure your strategy is appropriate for your circumstances.

With a longer time horizon, short term market fluctuations often become less meaningful. Historically, markets have recovered from downturns over time, and what feels significant today may ultimately appear as a temporary setback in hindsight. Consistent investing, such as dollar cost averaging, can also help turn volatility into an advantage by spreading investments over time rather than trying to time the

market.

**If you're nearing retirement.** As retirement approaches, diversification becomes increasingly important. Different asset classes and investment types often respond differently to economic conditions, and a broadly diversified portfolio can help manage risk during periods of volatility. Reviewing your allocation across stocks, bonds, cash, and other investment vehicles can help ensure your portfolio reflects both your income needs and your comfort with market movement.

It's also wise to consider how your investments are positioned for your upcoming expenses. Funds you expect to use in the early years of retirement may benefit from being invested more conservatively, while assets with a longer time horizon can remain focused on growth and keeping pace with inflation. Striking the right balance between protection and continued growth is key as you transition toward retirement.

**If you're already retired.** Market volatility can feel especially personal once you're relying on your savings for income. Reviewing your withdrawal strategy during uncertain markets can help protect your long term financial security. If your portfolio experiences decline, it may be worth reassessing how much you're withdrawing to ensure your income remains sustainable over time.

While equities may still play a role during a retirement that could last several decades, preserving your savings base is critical. Evaluating your stock exposure within the context of your overall financial plan can help ensure you're not taking unnecessary risk while still allowing your portfolio the potential to grow over the long term.

Regardless of where you are in your financial journey, market movement

provides an opportunity to step back and compare your investment strategy to your goals. Are you still on track? Even if the answer feels uncertain, there are steps you can take to regain clarity and confidence. Working with a financial advisor can help you stay focused, adapt to changing conditions, and move forward with a plan designed to support your financial goals — even when the markets feel unpredictable.

\*\*\*\*\*

*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, 785.358.6278 x19, 601 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66603.*

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## Is it Time to Cash Out Until Things Calm Down?

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*



Lately, the news has been dominated by negativity, and in many meetings I've had with new prospective clients recently I've heard the same question: "With everything going on right now, should I just cash everything out until things calm down?" If you've found yourself wondering the same, you're not alone.

As with most things in life, **failing to plan is planning to fail.** While it's completely normal and understandable to feel anxious, the problem is that relying on emotions, especially fear, to make financial decisions is a horrific idea. According to Dalbar, the average retail investor has earned just over half the average return of the S&P 500 in the stock portion of their portfolios over the past 30 years. Due to the power of compounding, this underperformance adds up drastically. For example, \$100,000 invested in the average retail investor's port-

folio would have grown to about \$615,000, while the same investment in the S&P 500 would have grown to over \$2.1 million. That's a staggering difference of nearly \$1.5 million from the same starting amount!

One major reason for this performance gap? Emotional investing: namely, fear and greed. A classic example comes from the Fidelity Magellan Fund, which was managed by the legendary Peter Lynch from 1977 to 1990. During that time, the fund averaged an incredible 29% annual return. Yet, Fidelity reported that the average investor in the fund actually lost money. Why? Because people piled in after big gains (greed) and bailed after losses or underperformance (fear). We've seen this pattern in human history repeat itself over and over again whether it was tulip bulbs in 1634, tech stocks in 1999, real estate in 2007, or many would argue crypto currency today. Most of the easy gains are usually already gone by the time something becomes popular and many get burned chasing and buying what's 'hot' then fleeing

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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 66603  
James.c.hanna@ampf.com  
ameripriseadvisors.com/team/  
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# opinion

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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

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Offices: 2611 SW 17th St. (by appt.)  
Correspondence & Payments:  
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Phone/Fax: 785-235-3340  
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## Antisemitism, Canaries-in-Coal-Mines, Conspiracy Theories, and Kool-Aid

By Dr. Michael Brown

Everywhere we turn, antisemitism – the hatred and demonization of Jewish people – is on the rise, and that rise is both meteoric and, quite literally, **deadly**.

It is national and global, on the political left and right, among the religious and non-religious, and growing exponentially on social media. Tracking this disturbing phenomenon, let alone responding to it, would require a dedicated team working 24/7, and even that would not be enough.

What, then, is the purpose of this article?

It is simply to make some general observations that help diagnose the

symptoms of this infectious plague, thereby helping us combat it.

**First**, as is often noted, antisemitism in a society functions as the proverbial canary in the coal mine. This refers to the old miners' practice of bringing a canary into the mines, since it was highly sensitive to toxic gases like carbon monoxide. The canary getting sick or dying was a warning sign for the miners to get out quickly, since they would be next to get sick or die.

In the same way, when something is going amiss in a society, when it becomes prone to demonizing and scapegoating others, when a particular group must be blamed for societal ills, it is highly likely that "the

Jews" will be first ones singled out.

This, then, is the warning sign, the portent of worse things to come, the symptom of a much more widespread and dangerous disease.

The horrific spike in antisemitism in America, not to mention worldwide, should serve as a very serious wake up call. Something terrible is amiss!

**Second**, antisemitism is the mother of all conspiracy theories,



portraying "the Jews" as the source of all evil and the sinister puppet masters controlling the world, to the

■ Continued on next page

## Easter: A Gift of Life to The World



CLINT  
DECKER

President and  
Evangelist  
with Great  
Awakenings, Inc.

### Speaking Truth

It was Friday morning in Jerusalem, the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath on Saturday. As the sun rose and people began their normal routine, something in the air felt different. Yes, there was the usual morning light, but dark clouds were slowly moving in, not rain clouds, but ones of a different sort. There was something ominous about it all.

The whole city was stirred up by one man. He was arrested by authorities the night before and taken back and forth between Jewish and Roman officials. Before the council, the high priest tore his robes in judgement against the man saying, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." (Matthew 26:65-66) He was sentenced

to death by crucifixion claiming to be the Son of God. He was Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus was indeed the Son of God, and His death on Good Friday, nearly 2,000 years ago, had a purpose. Jesus explained this during the Passover meal with His disciples the night before, And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26:27-28)

His death was to be a sacrifice for the sins of all humanity – past, present and future. He would pay their penalty of death for them. Why? So they might be forgiven for all their evil deeds and be restored to a relationship with their Creator.

After His death, Jesus' lifeless body hung on the cross before it was taken down and laid in a tomb. Darkness enveloped Jerusalem. It was finished. Jesus paid the wages of death for the sin of all humanity.

But there is more.

After Jesus' died, a battle waged in an invisible realm. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live..." (John 11:25) Within Jesus, the

Son of God, lay the supernatural power of life. It was shown when he spoke into Lazarus' grave, who had been dead for four days, "[Jesus] cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." (Jn. 11:43) Another time, there was a 12-year-old girl, who had been dead for hours when Jesus came to her. Then witnesses recounted "...taking her by the hand



he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once." (Luke 8:54-55) And a similar event occurred when Jesus approached a funeral procession carrying the dead body of a young man. Jesus spoke and he came to life.

How can Jesus' raise people from the dead? Not because He is a miracle worker, but because He is the source of all life. "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*" (Jn. 1:3-5)

When Jesus lay dead in the tomb for three days, within Him was still that source of divine life. The Devil and demons of hell and all of Jesus' enemies thought He was gone for good, but on Sunday morning the supernatural life in Jesus burst forth! He rose Himself from the dead! Jesus' said about His life, "No one takes it from me but I...have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." (Jn. 10:18)

He was able to live again, because of the supernatural life within Him. His life and light overcame sin, death and darkness. And because He did, He now offers that same supernatural life to you! Turn from your sin. Turn to the living Christ and receive His gift of life!

A prayer for you – *Lord God, I pray you will bring people to believe in your beloved Son and receive His gift of life. May they be born again into a new and living hope through the work of your life-giving Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

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

### Continued from previous page

detriment of everyone other than themselves.

In an era when conspiracy theories have gained mainstream credibility, it is no surprise that antisemitism surges.

To be sure, not all conspiracy theories prove false—as recent years

as if representing world Jewry) continues to grow.

And, in keeping with the spirit of sensationalism, a connection to “the Jews” must be found everywhere. All roads must lead back to the evil influence of “Israel”!

This helps to explain why once-respected commentators and pun-

the government can rightly be criticized on many points. In fact, Israel itself is highly self-critical, as evidenced by the daily reporting of a major leftwing Israeli website like Haaretz.com. Their criticism of Prime Minister Netanyahu and his coalition is absolutely withering, to give one example of many.

Is it *always* antisemitic to criticize Jewish people?

Certainly not, no more than it is inherently wrong to criticize other people or groups.

The criticism becomes antisemitic when it demonizes the *people as a whole*, when it negatively caricatures them, when it *repeats falsehoods* about them, when it makes *derogatory generalizations*.

When it comes to Israel, the criticism becomes antisemitic when it *denies Israel's right to exist*, when it uses *double standards in judging Israel*, and when it *demonizes the nation as a whole*, to use Natan Sharansky's convenient three-fold definition.

Today, we can better understand global events by recognizing that **antisemitism functions as the canary in the coal mine, that it is the mother of all conspiracy theories, and that it causes people to let go of their rational thinking capacities.**

Is the root cause of all this spiritual? I believe it is.

But that is the subject of another article.

dits become gross caricatures of themselves.

They drank the Kool-Aid of antisemitism.

Is it *always* antisemitic to criticize the people of Israel or, more specifically, the government of Israel? *Absolutely not.* Both the people and

showed with COVID origins linked to the Wuhan lab, once dismissed, or concerns over mask policies and vaccine mandates, once scorned.

Unfortunately, this has breathed new life into conspiracy theories, inverting suspicion so that the non-conspiracists are viewed askance, and as if, for example, Erika Kirk had to prove her non-involvement in her husband's assassination.

*How sick is that?*

In an environment like this, the old lies about the Protocols of the Elders of Zion resurface with a vengeance, while the nation of Israel suddenly emerges as the evil empire dominating the world. And all it takes is one Jewish name – such as “Epstein” today – to make ALL Jews suspect, if not guilty.

Nothing fits more like a hand in a glove than “the Jews” and conspiracy theories.

**Third**, antisemitism is akin to drinking the Kool-Aid. Once it is imbibed, anything becomes possible, everything can be believed, and nothing is too far-fetched. Rational people become irrational, their arguments more tenuous and convoluted, all while their obsession with “the Jews” (or, simply with “Israel,”

## Canary in the coal mine: An early warning sign of danger



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## RYAN SHUMAKER

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after losses.

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Not only do we help people not worry about money during uncertain times, but we help them take advantage of others that are panicking during them. We often see during volatile periods the greatest opportunities for

significant amounts of outperformance.

Worry is like a rocking chair; it gives you something to do, but doesn't get you anywhere. If current events have you worried about your portfolio or retirement, it may not be the news itself that's the problem. It may be that you have the wrong portfolio, a poor or no plan at all. A smart portfolio and plan can get you up out of that rocking chair and back to making memories and doing whatever you want whenever you want worry free as that is what retirement is supposed to be all about.

\*\*\*\*

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# Here's How Many Americans Believe Religion is Important

Is religion gaining popularity among Americans? Do anecdotal stories of revivals on college campuses or young people connecting with faith in other ways reflect something greater in culture?

Not if the latest research is to be believed.

Fewer than half of Americans say religion is very important in their lives, a new Gallup poll has found. Fifty-seven percent report that they rarely or never attend religious services.

"I think this is another piece of evidence about how there is no religious revival happening in America," said Ryan Burge, a political scientist at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis, according to Religion News Service. "There's nothing here that would represent any



sort of major reversal or significant change in the trajectory of religion in America."

Among the biggest declines was the percentage of black Americans who say religion is "very important" in their lives. Between 2001 and 2005, 85 percent of U.S. blacks

said religion was very important, compared with 63 percent from 2021 to 2025, a 22 percentage point drop over two decades.

Among the groups that experienced virtually no decline were Republicans. Two-thirds said religion was very important to

them 20 years ago, and 64 percent said the same last year. Democrats fell from 60 percent to 37 percent over the past two decades. Although Republicans continue to say religion is very important in their lives, however, their self-reported church attendance has dropped.

"They like the idea of religion — that hasn't changed — but they don't actually go as much," Burge said. "So it's sort of like a symbolic religion."

The number of men who said religion was "very important" in their lives fell from 51 percent over the past 20 years to 43 percent, an 8 percentage point drop. Even more significant, the number of women who say religion is "very important" fell from 66

percent to 51 percent over the past two decades, a 15 percentage point drop. This suggests the gender gap is closing. Women still are more religious than men, but the importance of religion is falling fast among females, suggesting the gender gap eventually may disappear if trends continue.

Young adults are particularly less likely to participate in religious services, with 61 percent seldom or never going. This presages a particularly gloomy prospect for religious institutions. Gallup suggested generational replacement may lead to a long-term trajectory of decline. "Younger adults are both less likely to identify with a religion and less likely to attend services, reshaping the nation's religious landscape as they constitute a growing share of the population," the report said.

## Few Churchgoers Read the Bible Daily Despite High Regard

Although most churchgoers say they place a high value on scripture, only about one-third actually read it daily, the Lifeway Research State of Discipleship study found.

"Protestant churchgoers overall report they are engaging the Bible, but on any specific question, as many as one in five say they are not following Jesus Christ in that way," said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. "This reflects an overall pattern in assessments of churchgoers where the direction is often good but far from the standard seen in scripture."

Six in 10 Americans who attend religious services at least once a month regularly read the Bible, including 31 percent who read it every day and 30 percent who do so a few times a week. Some engage once a week (14 percent) or a few times a month (11 percent).

Reading frequencies have remained mostly steady since 2019, when 59 percent were regular Bible readers. Personal Bible engagement has increased, however, since previous studies. In 2012, 46 percent regularly read



the Bible, including 19 percent who did so every day. Five years earlier, in 2007, only 36 percent of churchgoers were regular Bible readers, with just 16 percent who read it daily.

"The portion of churchgoers reading the Bible a few times a week or more on their own has leveled off recently after rising dramatically since 2007, but the churchgoer population was also changing during this period," McConnell said. "A lower percentage of Americans attend a Protestant church once a month today than when this series of studies began. Clearly, the remnant of Americans attending

church each month are more willing to regularly read the Bible on their own than when churches were more populated."

Although nine in 10 Americans have read at least some of the Bible, just 22 percent have finished the entire Bible at least once. Churchgoers are more likely than others to have read larger percentages of the Bible. Even among those who attend church services more than once a week, around six in 10 say they have read the entire Bible at least once.

As expected, U.S. Protestant churchgoers hold scripture in high regard, but not always in the

highest regard. Around three-quarters say the Bible has authority over every area of their lives, with 15 percent unsure and 11 percent disagreeing. However, only 40 percent strongly agree.

"The Bible can't have full authority in someone's life if they don't know what it says or aren't

considering what it says about the specific things they are facing in life," McConnell said. "The Bible makes the appeal, 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.'"

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# The Online Rabbit Hole of Antisemitism Sucks in Christians

Christians are falling through the rabbit hole of antisemitism as it spreads through social media feeds, podcasts and influencer-driven platforms. Alarming, says Sen. Ted Cruz, the damage is no longer confined to politics.

In a recent interview with CBN News, the Texas Republican warned that anti-Jewish rhetoric on the right is fueling hatred, twisting biblical language and seeping into parts of the church in ways that undermine Scripture and the historic Christian understanding of the Jewish people's enduring place in God's covenant story. "I have seen more antisemitism on the right than at any point in my life," Cruz said. "It is dangerous, and it risks consuming our party."

Cruz's warning is borne out by data as antisemitic incidents in the United States remain at record levels. For the last full year data is available, the Anti-Defamation League reported 9,354 antisemitic assaults, acts of harassment and vandalism in 2024, a 5% increase over the prior year and the highest number since the group began tracking the data in 1979. The organization warns that extremists are increasingly weaponizing ordinary phrases, symbols, and coded language on mainstream social-media platforms, helping hatred travel farther while flying under the radar of the average user.

For Cruz, that is not just a headline in yet another story about antisemitism. He directly challenged Tucker Carlson, one of the most influential voices on the political far-right, and said Christians need to recognize what is happening around them. "Look, everyone's going to have to decide where they stand," Cruz said. "Ronald Reagan in 1964 gave a very famous speech, a time for choosing. And I think this is a time for choosing." He argued that evangelical believers who support Israel are being targeted in the process. "The target of this operation is you and me," Cruz said. "It is evangelical Christians."

Cruz was even more blunt when he described Carlson's attacks on Christian Zionists, a term for Christians who hold to the "everlasting promise" of Genesis 15:18 of God to Abraham, and where the term

"promised land" in reference to Israel derives. "Tucker Carlson has said there is nobody he hates more on planet earth than Christian Zionists, and he names specifically me and Mike Huckabee," Cruz said. "I think it's unfortunate that I am the person he says he hates most on earth. Now, why does he hate me?"



He hates me, number one, because I'm a Christian and that is my faith and I'm not going to run away from it or apologize for it. But he hates me, number two, because I'm a Zionist," he told CBN.

He also criticized the growth of replacement theology in some circles, including Evangelicalism, which has traditionally been the strongest friend to the Jewish people. "I think that is absolutely wrong," Cruz said. "If God breaks his promises to the people of Israel, that suggests that God could break his promises to Christians as well, and I don't believe God breaks his promises." But it is not just evangelicals. Catholics are also at risk of it spreading. That concern, he suggested, is now colliding with a digital culture where slogans often outrun careful teaching.

Cruz pointed to the phrase "Christ is King" as one example of language he says has been warped and is now used online, not in the true and spiritual sense as Christians would understand it, but in an explicitly antisemitic context. "It is being used online in a way that is meant to say, 'screw you, Jew,'" he

said. "It is being used in a context very directly to say, 'I hate Jews,' and that's almost an online code word." His point was not that the phrase itself is illegitimate, but that people can weaponize Christian language as cover for contempt. He contends that is one reason pastors and church leaders need to get out of

mentators who point to examples of online clips, slogans and unvetted influencers shaping opinion on Jews and Israel instead of real news or sound bible teaching.

The wider public mood has shifted, too, especially since the Hamas invasion of Israel, which launched a two-year war fought primarily in the terrorist enclave of Gaza. Pew Research reported in 2025 that 53% of U.S. adults held an unfavorable view of Israel, up from 42% in 2022 before the war. Many news outlets used death numbers from the Gaza "Ministry of Health" for reporting. Since the war's end, some media have been forced to retract their

numbers, brought on by a Hamas admission that the vast majority of those killed were men of fighting age, and not women and children. Yet, those earlier false claims of "genocide" at the hands of Israel still spread on social media.

Still, it shows there's a harsher climate around Israel and Jewish concerns than existed only a few years ago. In that atmosphere, unvetted online influencers, relying on "I heard it from a friend of a friend" reporting, can shape opinion faster than true journalism, and viral clips can carry more weight than careful facts, according to Pew.

their comfort zone and confront the issue directly. For Cruz, it is especially important to educate younger believers who are more connected with the platforms where the hate is happening.

As Metro Voice regularly reports, Cruz is not alone in his warning to the church.

Influential Christian leaders and commentators have been warning for years that antisemitism is creeping into some church and conservative spaces. Most pastors have chosen to ignore it, fearing wrongly that it is only a political and not a spiritual issue.

At a 2026 Jerusalem summit covered by Metro Voice, attendees focused on support for Israel and confronting antisemitism. One pastor, Jesse Bailey, stated "the pulpit has become quiet," and warned that cultural voices, including anyone with a microphone or phone camera, are reaching believers faster than pastors are. But another problem is that many pastors have ceded their role and are refusing to stand up.

That concern is repeated by ministry leaders and Christian com-

As the boomers and millennials, traditionally the generations containing the strongest support for Israel, abandon social media or die, the scriptural, pro-Jewish, Zionist point of view also disappears. One problem is the lack of education.

On Wednesday, March 25, Calvary University will be part of the solution. It's holding a historic "Israel in God's Plan" free conference from 8:30 to 4pm at the school's Liberty Chapel. It will focus on whether Israel continues to hold a distinct place in biblical prophecy and theology, an issue that has long shaped evangelical teaching and debate. It also covers antisemitism and "replacement theology," the dangerous belief that God has broken His promise with the Jewish people and that modern Christianity is not the "Chosen People."

The topic, according to Calvary, is so important that they're making the event free to the public and encouraging pastors, lay leaders and the public to attend. Interested readers can visit the school's website.

This type of event is desperately needed to help educate a new generation. Cruz's warning to younger Christians is direct. "Listen, you're being lied to about Israel," he said. "Those who attack Zionism – Zionism simply says Israel should exist." He tied that argument to the Holocaust and the creation of the modern Jewish state, saying Israel's existence remains a reasonable moral proposition in light of Jewish history. Whether Republicans and Democrats, pastors, priests and Christian media figures take that warning seriously may say a great deal about where this debate goes next.

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## Spring activities coming to NOTO

NOTO will feature the Redbud Youth Art Exhibit, April 3rd through 18th, a vibrant celebration of artistic expression and creativity, showcasing the talents of young artists aged 5 to 18, providing them with a platform to explore art techniques, exhibit their work, and connect with fellow creatives. The theme is "Recycled & Reclaimed."

April 3rd First Friday will feature Poetry in the Park 5-8PM

Saturday April 11th - Seaman Theater Group @ Redbud Park, 1pm

Saturday April 18th - TPS 501 Eco Art Exploration Fair. Showcasing a form of creative practice that addresses the relationship between humans and the natural environment, this fair will provide hands-on art stations, interactive workshops in painting, printmaking, sculpture, and collaborative projects led by local artists all with an eco art focus.

Friday May 1st - Youth Talent Showcase Music in Redbud Park Featuring

"Youth Talent Showcase" Multiple youth performances will take place on the Kaw Valley Bank Stage with an open mic opportunity from 7-8PM Youth Entrepreneurship Expo in Redbud Park, NOTO Young entrepreneurs (18 and younger) will share their talent/skills in our NOTO Youth Expo at Redbud Park

Sat. May 9th - Youth Art Supply Sale & NOTO Chalk Walk Explore the Redbud Park Pavilion and purchase art supplies with NOTO Bucks at our Youth Art Supply Swap\* Additional supplies can be purchased with USD.

NOTO Chalk Walk - This annual chalk walk event is one for all ages! Decorate the sidewalks with your own masterpieces and put your skills to the test! Chalk provided but we encourage you to bring your own.



The Morris Gallery in NOTO Arts Center will feature Between the Lines, an exhibit of drawings that dwell in the spaces where meaning lingers between gesture and silence, intention and accident, presence and absence.. These works, rendered solely in pencil, ink, charcoal, and graphite on paper, invite viewers to read the invisible.

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

**Racing with Daryl** - Fighting cancer one lap at a time: A fundraiser for Daryl Hiebsch 6:30pm, Apr. 3 at The Woodshed. Live & Silent Auction, Tod's BBQ, Music from Crooked Kicks & Nucklehead Jones.

NOTO also features live music on a regular basis at Artismo Gallery & Bistro and Compass Point.

For more event information visit [explorenoto.org/](http://explorenoto.org/).

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# the events calendar

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

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

**HHHS FOOD TRUCK NIGHT** — Apr. 3, 4-8pm, 5720 SW 21st. Food and local bands.

**FIRST SATURDAY & SUNDAY MARKET & EGG HUNT** — Apr. 4 & 5, Woodshed Event Ctr. 1901 N. Kansas Ave. Inflatables, food trucks, free comic book & stickers + Vendors. Egg Hunts start at noon.

**EASTER FOOD GIVEAWAY** — Apr. 4, 9am, New Hope Food Pantry, 404 SW Polk. Giving away hams, sides, and other goodies to those in need.

**EASTER MORNING BREAKFAST** — Apr. 5, 8:30-9:30am, Worship service at 10am, Shawnee Heights Baptist, 4335 SE 29th St

**EASTER BUNNY FREE PICS** — Apr. 4, Noon, 909 S, Kansas Ave at Cosmos Court. Decorate a Cosmic Cookie for \$5! Bring the Family for the Saturday Family Feast. Large Pizza, 2 small salad bars and 4 build your own ice cream sundaes for just \$30!

**EGGSTRAVAGANZA** — Apr. 4, 9am-3pm, Topeka Zoo. Visitors can watch as some of their favorite animals participate in their version of an Egg Hunt with 'eggs' made out of paper mache

**EASTER EGG HUNT** - Apr. 4, 11am, First Christian, 1880 Gage. An Easter egg hunt for the community on our lawn. We will have three egg hunts: toddler, pre-school and pre-K, and kindergarten to fifth grade. We will have over 4000 eggs for kids to hunt. The Easter Bunny will be in attendance and hotdogs and chips will be served. Everyone is welcome!

**EASTER SERVICES** — Apr. 5, 8 & 10:30am, Christ Lutheran Church, 3509 SW Burlingame.

**EASTER SERVICES** — Apr. 5, 9 & 11am. The services

are identical and there will be no Sunday School on Easter. Wanamaker Woods Nazarene, 3501 SW Wanamaker Rd

**EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE & BREAKFAST** — Apr. 5, 8am, First Baptist, 3033 SW MacVicar. Breakfast at 8:30, Sunday School for all ages at 9:15 with Egg Hunt for kids, EasterWorship at 10:30

**EASTER SERVICES** — Apr. 5, 10:30, Breakfast & activities at 9am, Beautiful Savior Lutheran, 5905 SW 10th.

**EASTER SERVICES** — Apr. 5, 11am, Fellowship Hi-Crest, 455 SE Golf Park Blvd. Easter is about God choosing to be present with us, not only in moments of joy or certainty, but in everyday life, unanswered questions, ordinary spaces, and complicated stories. We'll explore what it means to receive presence as a gift, and how being present with God shapes the way we show up for one another. It's a conversation about attention, connection, and hope that doesn't require you to have everything figured out.

**BLOCKFEST** — Apr. 9, 5:30-7pm, Public Library

**C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON — Apr. 9, 11:30-1, at Celtic Fox. Featuring Shelley Robertson, speaking about Special Projects at Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka, including the new Adventure Oasis Playground and the proposed Workforce Development and Learning Center. Free admission. Meals available from menu if desired. Please RSVP to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org) so we know how many to expect. Open to the public - bring a friend!**

**SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, May 14, 11:30-1.**

**WEST RIDGE LIVE** — every Thursday from 6:30-8:30, food court at Westridge Mall. Apr. 9 — Bill Horn Band; Apr. 16 — The Coats; Apr. 23 — Departure. While you lis-

ten, grab food and drinks from Iron Rail Brewing, Ta Co, and more, serving from 6:30-8:30 PM.

**SMOKE IN THE SPRING** — Apr. 10-11, Osage City Community Building. Taste of Osage City BBQ and fun. Beer Garden, Live Music, Inflatables, & Fireworks!

**FRIDAY FLICKS** — Apr. 10, 7-10pm. Every Plaza. Jurassic Park

**TULIPS AT TWILIGHT - Every evening April 10-26, Wed. - Sun., 7-10pm. Family fun! A luminary walk & electric light show. Experience the Ward-Meade botanical garden and Old Prairie Town's historic buildings at night with hand-crafted electric light displays. Admission is \$5 with children 5 and under free. No pets allowed. Located at Old Prairie Town & Ward-Meade Park, 1st & Clay St. Old Prairie Town buildings open for touring.**

**WAMEGO TULIP FESTIVAL** — Apr. 11-12. Wamego City Park will again be filled with over 200 craft vendors. Food trucks, a beer and wine garden, playground and inflatables for the kids, and 2 days of live music and entertainment.

**JEROLD BINKLEY TULIP TIME** — Apr. 10-26, 6am-11pm, Ted Ensey Gardens, 3650 SE West Edge Rd; also at Old Prairie Town/Ward-Meade Botanical Garden and Doran Rock Garden/Gage Park. Stroll the gardens to see 60,000 multi-colored tulips & other spring flowering bulbs. Certain days will include vendors, live music, food trucks. 785-251-6800

**YOUR COMMUNITY CARES** — Apr. 11, 12:30-3:30, Every Plaza. Bring a blanket or lawn chair for music, recovery panelist, bereaved panelist, community resources, games, face painting, food

**CORNER MARKET** — Apr. 11 & all 2nd Saturdays. 29th & Adams. 50+ Vendors, food trucks, music, kids activities.

**AD ASTRA SPACE CELEBRATION** — Apr. 11, 1-4pm, Stoffer Science Hall, Washburn Campus, 17th & Washburn

**LIVE AT LUNCH** — Apr. 15, 11-1, Every Plaza. Ryan Manuel, food trucks

**ING NETWORKING GROUP** — Apr. 15, 11:30am at Big Biscuit. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

**TOPEKA YOUTH FOR CHRIST COMEDY CAFÉ** — Apr. 17, 6:30pm, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane Ave. A Night of Laughter featuring comedian Connie Hall. Underwritten by table sponsors. Seating is limited. Make reservations at [www.topekaafc.org/event/comedycafe](http://www.topekaafc.org/event/comedycafe) or call the YFC office at 785-232-8296

**PAWS IN THE PARK** — Apr. 18, 10-2, HHHS, 5720 SW 21st St. Meet the community, shop vendors, help the animals. [Lindsay.hubbard@hhhstoepka.org](mailto:Lindsay.hubbard@hhhstoepka.org); [helping-hands@hhhstoepka.org](mailto:helping-hands@hhhstoepka.org)

**HOLISTIC SPIRIT MIND BODY EXPO** — Apr. 17-19, Ramada Inn. Fri. 2-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun 11-5. Raffles, Food, Fun, Readers, Practitioners. \$5 at the door.

**LIVE AT LUNCH** — Apr. 22, 11-1, Every Plaza. Odyssey, food trucks

**CLASSIC CAR SHOW** — Apr. 25, 3-7, 1321 SW 10th, Penwell Gabel. Cars, trucks, bikes, live music, food truck, vendors

**RANDY STONEHILL CONCERT** — Apr. 25, 6:30pm, Seaman Community Church, 2036 NW Taylor. Free event

**K9 EDITION CAR SHOW** — Apr. 26, 12:15-4:15pm, Dugout, 1545 SW Fairlawn. Door prizes, mobile DJ, raffles.

**LIVE AT LUNCH** — Apr. 29, 11-1, Every Plaza. Mathew Mulnix, food trucks

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER** — May 7. Prayer Rally at Noon at Kansas Capitol, First Floor Rotunda. Patriotic ceremony with state leaders local youth. [www.nationaldayofprayer.org](http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org); [donna@cultureshield.com](mailto:donna@cultureshield.com)

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER** — May 7, Noon. South Park Gazebo, Lawrence, KS. Rain location: Victory Bible Church, 1942 Mass. [jeff@ccclawrence.org](http://jeff@ccclawrence.org). 785-766-7417

**LIVE AT LUNCH** — May 5, 11-1, Every Plaza. Colin Nichols, food trucks

**ING NETWORKING GROUP** — May 6, 11:30am at IHOP North. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

## ONGOING EVENTS

**SK&AWAY LEARNERS SESSIONS** — Every Saturday morning 11-1, Sk&away, 815 Fairlawn Family fun environment and the best deal in town, \$8 per person but an adult skates for free with paid child! [sk&away.net](http://sk&away.net); 785-272-0303; [manager@sk&away.net](mailto:manager@sk&away.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 [nhoni@tsccpl.org](mailto:nhoni@tsccpl.org)

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

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

**TOPEKA ACAPPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS** — Topeka Acappella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four-part acappella harmonies. Topeka Acappella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Aedelines, International. Cindy Patton: 785-640-7403

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

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

**OPEN INDOOR COURT PICKLEBALL** — Sundays at 4pm, Beryton United Methodist Church (7010 SE Beryton 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 [grandotawapry@gmail.com](mailto:grandotawapry@gmail.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** - 3rd 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

## MEETINGS & CLASSES

**CHRISTIAN WRITERS GROUP OF TOPEKA** - 1st & 3rd Mondays, 7pm at the Hughes Room 205 of the Topeka Library. Workshop for aspiring writers. Each participant is asked to bring five copies of a two page type written sample of a work in progress. After reading the pages aloud each participant is allowed an equal number of positive and negative comments offered in a spirit of helpfulness. If you would like to read something email Charles at [jccccc@gmail.com](mailto: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

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

**CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA MEETING** - Join other concerned people to pray and unite in action for Shawnee Co. and our Nation. For info about monthly meetings: 702-328-7835 or [ks.wcfa.org](http://ks.wcfa.org).

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

**C5Alive** Developing and Uniting Christian Leadership  
 • Business • Non-profits • Churches

Membership open to all Christian businesses, non-profits, churches & individuals!  
 Luncheons & Tradeshaws & other events open to the general public!

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

**Apr. 9, 11:30-1: "POWER" Luncheon at Celtic Fox. Shelley Robertson will speak on New Adventure Oasis at Topeka Boys & Girls Clubs**  
 Free Admission. Order lunch from menu if desired.  
 Open to the public. RSVP to [info@C5Alive.org](mailto:info@C5Alive.org)

Save the Dates!

- May 14: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- June 11: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- July 9: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

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

**FRIENDS OF WARD-MEADE**

**TULIPS AT TWILIGHT**  
 Luminary Walk & Light Show

**April 10 - 26**  
 Wednesday - Sunday Only  
**7-10 PM**

1st & Clay St. Topeka, KS

Old Prairie Town & Ward-Meade Park

All Ages Family Event  
 \$7.00 - Ages 16-64  
 \$5.00 - Ages 8-15 and C5+  
 Free - Ages 5 and under

**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 madondailey@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!

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

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

**TOPEKA LINCOLN CLUB** – 1st Tue. of month, 7pm, Topeka Public Library. Discussing our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, and his times. The public is welcome. For info, Kirk Nystrom 785-235-6977.

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

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

**FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES** Aerie 4319: 1st & 3rd

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

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

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

**MAP GROUP (MEMOIRS, ANCESTRY, PHOTOS)** – VIA ZOOM - 4th Wed. 10-11:30am. Contact Rich McReynolds at rim4017@gmail.com. Via Zoom link

**FAMILY HISTORY WRITING GROUP** – 2nd Wed. 10-11:30am, Lowman United Methodist Church, room 12. Do you have great family stories to tell and want to pass them down to the next generation but don't know where to start? shepherdstopeka@yahoo.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**INTENTIONAL MOM** - 1st & 3rd Thurs., 9-11:30am,

Topeka Bible Church Auditorium, 1135 SW College. For all moms, helping to be intentional! 234-5545.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SUPPORT GROUPS

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP** meets 1st Thursday every month at 5:30 pm, Midland Hospice House, 200

SW Frazier. Jean Barton 785-478-9045.

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

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

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

**MIDLAND CARE GRIEF SUPPORT** Groups: Building A, 200 SW Frazier Circle; Every Mon., 4-5pm: 12 Week Adult Group for Recent Loss 1st and 3rd Thu., 10:30am & 5:30pm—Ongoing Adult Group 1st and

3rd Thu., 5:30pm: Ongoing Young Adult Group (4-18 years of age) For All Groups: Call for start dates and info packet. Group and individual grief support available upon request. Info: 785-232-2044 ext.341

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

**ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT** – Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Kay Lyn at KLCarlson20@cox.net.

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

**PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY** – Men struggling with pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/ accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted

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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.highlandheightsscc.com](http://www.highlandheightsscc.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](mailto: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](mailto:Topeka.heals@gmail.com) or 785-380-9309.

**DIVORCARE PROGRAMS** – (For updates check [www.divorcere.org](http://www.divorcere.org)) locations and times:

WED. – 6:30pm, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane. Cost: \$15. Child care provided. For info: 379-0505 or [www.divorcere.org](http://www.divorcere.org).

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

WED. – 6:30pm, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. No Cost. 785-286-1204, [www.northland.cc](http://www.northland.cc)

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY** – Every Fri., 6pm, 1912 Gage Blvd. A Christ-centered program, based on 8 principles found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Applying these Biblical principles, become free from addictive & dysfunctional behaviors. [crtopekaks.org](http://crtopekaks.org).

**PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** – First Thursday, 3pm, St Francis Hospital, Room 300 on 2nd floor. For info: Jim 785 806 3266

**TOPEKA NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUP** – For families & friends who are affected by someone else's narcotic addiction. Every Mon. 7pm; Every Sat. 10am. First Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar, Enter Door A,

Room 211. [www.naranonmidwest.org](http://www.naranonmidwest.org)

**COVENANT KEEPERS** – 3rd Sat. Group for people who want to see their marriage saved when their spouse wants out. 816-453-0884 or 816-966-0927

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

to the Lord. For info: 357-0369.

Send your calendar events to [voice@cox.net](mailto:voice@cox.net)  
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## Churchgoers Report How They Read, Live Out Scripture in Daily Life



A new Lifeway study finds that while churchgoers say they value scripture, fewer are doing it each day.

The research looked at American Protestants who attend services at least

once a month. It revealed that a healthy 61% said they read the Bible fairly regularly. Of those, 31% who said they do so daily and 30% a few times a week. Another 14% said they read it once a week, while 11% said only few times a month.

The findings, according to Lifeway's 2025 State of Discipleship study, prove a long-running concern among pastors and Bible teachers: valuing Scripture does not always mean people will act on it. Lifeway said roughly three-quarters of Protestant churchgoers believe the Bible has authority over every area of life, though only 40% strongly agreed with that statement

"Protestant churchgoers overall report they are engaging the Bible, but on any specific question, as many as 1 in 5 say they are not following Jesus Christ in that way," Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research, said in the report. He added that the pattern is "often good but far from the standard seen in Scripture."

There was some encouragement in the numbers. Lifeway's study says Bible reading among churchgoers has held mostly steady since 2019 and has climbed noticeably from earlier benchmarks. In 2007, just 36% of churchgoers were regular Bible readers. That rose 46% in 2012, driven, say experts, by bible apps which increased convenience and allowed readers to easily pick translations after a "text run."

For the study, Lifeway surveyed 2,130 Protestant churchgoers online in March 2025. More recently, in late 2025, the Barna Research Group found weekly Bible reading among all U.S. adults had recovered to 42%. The conclusion is that there may be a broader interest in Scripture beyond just those who regularly attend church.

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Join believers to pray for our nation. Patriotic Ceremony including state leaders and community youth.

Free 2-hour underground parking - enter off 8th Street.

Capitol tours available until 4:30pm.

"Glorify God Among the Nations, Seeking Him in All Generations."  
1-Chronicles 16:24

# entertainment

## Sight and Sound's 'A Great Awakening' Film About Liberty Opens April 3

A new feature film from Sight and Sound is set to hit theaters April 3, aiming to tie America's 250th anniversary. "A Great Awakening" will explore the religious revival that helped shape the country's early identity and spotlight an unlikely partnership between evangelist George Whitefield and statesman Benjamin Franklin.

The film, says CEO Joshua Enck, centers on the relationship between Whitefield, one of the most prominent preachers of the 18th-century revival, and Franklin, a printer and political figure often described as a deist.

Its release comes as cultural and political debates continue over the role of faith in the nation's founding, giving the project added relevance beyond its historical focus.

"What this film really depicts is the biblical definition of liberty," Enck said in comments to media, pointing to the Liberty Bell inscription: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land."

According to Enck, the story emerged during research into the nation's founding era rather than from a long held plan to produce a historical film. What stood out, he said, was how Whitefield's preaching and Franklin's publishing reach worked together.



Whitefield traveled extensively across the American colonies, preaching to large crowds during the revival period known as the Great Awakening. Franklin, leveraging his printing press, distributed Whitefield's sermons widely, a partnership Enck described as instrumental in spreading the movement's influence.

"They were a team," Enck said. "When you combined the power of his voice with Franklin's ability to get the word out, it unified the colonies."

### A Great Awakening looks at imperfect leaders

The film avoids presenting its cen-

tral figures as idealized heroes. Instead, it emphasizes their personal flaws and spiritual struggles, framing the revival as a movement shaped by imperfect leaders.

The historical awakening itself unfolded amid denominational tensions and colonial divisions, conditions Enck suggested mirror aspects of modern American life. Still, he said the film is not intended as a political statement.

"We're not trying to prove whether every founding father was a Christian," he said. "We're simply telling how this powerful friendship ignited an awakening."

## 'The Chosen' breaks own record after being translated into more languages



"The Chosen" continues to chart new territory in Christian entertainment. This time, it broke its own record when "The Guinness Book of World Records" in February recognized it as the most translated season for a streaming series, reaching 125 languages worldwide, which surpassed its previous record of 86 languages.

"The Chosen" is the first multi-season series about the life of Jesus, focusing specifically on his impact on his disciples, followers and the wider community. Season six of the seven-season series will launch this fall. The Come and See Foundation is the faith-based nonprofit organization that helps fund and oversee the translation of the series.

"People are hungry for truth," CEO James Barnett told Crosswalk Headlines. "They're looking for answers."

He described "The Chosen" as a phenomenon of its generation. Nothing else has touched people in the entertainment realm since the "Jesus" film in 1979, he said. The "Jesus" film has now been trans-

lated into more than 2000 languages.

"It really brings out the humanity of Jesus, and people connect with it around the world," Barnett said. The world record marks a further step toward Come and See's ambitious goal of translating the series into 600 languages, a goal that has been accelerated by the use of artificial intelligence "It's fast-tracking" the process," Barnett said of AI.

Just a few years ago, the target was 100 dubbed languages and 500 languages with closed captions. Dubbing replaces the original dialogue with voice actors speaking another language, while closed captions display translated text on the screen while the original audio remains unchanged. But now, Come and See believes it can reach several hundred dubs of the series.

The goal of 600 languages represents a massive undertaking of 33,600 translated episodes across seven seasons of eight episodes each. "We're seeing people's lives just being touched all around the world," Barnett said.

## Jimmy Stewart Movie Honors Veterans and First Responders

A new movie titled "Jimmy," set for release in November, will spotlight Jimmy Stewart's heroism and offer free tickets to veterans and first responders. The actor, best known as a Hollywood icon, was also a decorated World War II hero. This new film, says producers, brings his little-known service to light.

The free tickets are made possible by Hien Papaian, founder of Papaian Studios, a new media company "committed to developing and supporting projects that illuminate faith, inspire hope and positively influence culture." Papaian, who also executive-produced "Jimmy," founded the veteran effort in honor of her husband, Haig Papaian Jr., who died



in 2024. She provided the first 10,000 tickets for the campaign.

"The moment I finished reading the script for 'Jimmy,' I knew it was a story Papaian Studios had to support," she said. "Beyond the Hollywood glamor and the

trials of war, what resonated most was its message of kindness — something our world desperately needs right now. 'Jimmy' reminds us to look beyond our own struggles, to embrace the suffering of others and to choose grace."

Stewart is known for an illustrious Hollywood career and for bringing beloved character George Bailey to life in the Christmas classic, "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Rear Window." Actor K.J. Apa will portray Stewart in "Jimmy," which is being produced and directed by Aaron Burns. Burns told CBN News in a 2024 interview about his motivation for bringing the project to fruition. He said he, like so many other Americans,

has long known Stewart as an actor, but his perspective changed when he read an article detailing his decision to fight in World War II.

Stewart grew up in a small town with a faithful father who was a deacon in the Presbyterian church.

"His dad just prayed for his son, raised him, invested in him," Burns said. "And, all of a sudden, Jimmy winds up making it as an actor, heading off to Hollywood and rising through the ranks to become

a huge star."

Before Stewart shipped off to war, his father gave him a note that included Psalm 91.

"It's about the Lord's comfort and Lord being with you," Burns said. "And his dad said, 'I have confidence, and I will be praying for you the whole time you're away that God will be with you. You'll make it home safely,' and Stewart kept that with him in his uniform every mission that he went on."

# A Restored Version of “The Ten Commandments” Returns to Theaters

A restored version of the classic 1956 movie “The Ten Commandments” will return to theaters from March 31 to April 2 to mark its 70th anniversary.

The movie, based on the book of Exodus, dramatizes the story of the life of Moses, who becomes the deliverer of the enslaved Hebrews and then leads the Exodus to Mount Sinai, where he receives from God the Ten Commandments. The film stars Charlton Heston in the lead role, Yul Brynner as Rameses, Anne Baxter as Nefretiri and Edward G. Robinson as Dathan. Heston’s son, Fraser Heston, played baby Moses.

In 1957, the film was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including best picture. Cecil B. DeMille won the Foreign Language Press Film Critics Circle Award for best director; Charlton Heston was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for best actor; Yul Brynner won



the National Board of Review Award for best actor; and Heston, Baxter, and Yvonne De Carlo won Laurel Awards for best dramatic actor.

It also is one of the most financially successful films ever made, grossing approximately \$122.7 million at the box office during its initial release; it was the

most successful film of 1956 and the second-highest-grossing film of the decade. According to the “Guinness World Records,” in terms of theatrical exhibition, it is the eighth-most successful film of all-time when the box office gross is adjusted for inflation.

Theaters such as AMC and Revue Cinema will be showing the film.

“Celebrate 70 years of cinematic greatness with Retro Rewind as this epic returns to the big screen March 31 — April 2,” according to a press release. “Experience the sweeping scale, unforgettable moments and timeless storytelling the way it was meant to be seen — in a theater.”

For those unable to see it in a theater, “The Ten Commandments” will be show on TV on ABC (KMBC-TV in Kansas City) at 6 p.m. on April 4. It also is available to rent on streaming services such as Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Fandango and Google Play.

## Shannon Bream Pens New Book on Overcoming Adversity



Shannon Bream is using her pain to encourage others. The Fox News journalist, who suffers from a rare genetic cornea condition, has written a new book, “Nothing is Impossible with God” about biblical figures who endured adversity and emerged transformed.

“I’ve always loved this collection of stories,” she told “The Christian Post.” “They kind of lived in the back of my brain, these stories of overcoming. I think I’m always in a season of overcoming something. So I kept these stories tucked away and collected them together, and it just seemed like a good time to put them in one place.”

Her own medical crisis reshaped her faith in ways she hadn’t anticipated.

“You memorize verses, you study the Bible, you learn things intellectually,” she said. “But walking through something like that really made me feel like I knew him, that he was with me and present in a deeper way.”

For nearly two years, Bream said she lived in constant pain while searching for answers. She fought for a diagnosis and to find the right specialist. Ultimately, she leaned hard into prayer.

Eventually, she underwent a difficult surgery, a painful procedure that doesn’t work for everyone, which is why she hesitated for years before agreeing to it. Today, she is pain-free 98 percent of the time. Even more remarkably, her vision is clearer than it has ever been. It’s one of many blessings that followed a long and difficult valley.

“I’m literally looking out the window at the leaves on a tree, and it’s a miracle that I can see them individually,” she said. “I can read street signs. I’ve worn glasses since second or third grade, so aside from the relief of the pain, which was the number one issue, I now have vision I never would have had before.”

The common thread among the people she profiles in her book is perseverance. Sometimes they faced external opposition, enemies plotting against them or systems working to destroy them. Other times, the struggle was internal. She pointed to Peter, who denied Jesus after vowing he never would.

“So sometimes you’re overcoming outside forces,” she said. “Sometimes it’s your own mistakes or self-doubt. But there’s always something to overcome.”

## Documentary explores impact of women’s relationships with their fathers

The recent Kendrick brothers documentary “Show Me the Father” has helped countless men heal the father wound in their lives. A new production, “He Calls Me Daughter,” by director Rick Altizer, explores father-daughter relationships and the lasting impact they have on a woman’s life. Through honest stories and thoughtful insight, the film reveals how faith in Jesus brings healing, transforms lives and restores identity.

“My dad never told me that I was pretty,” one woman in the film said. Another said, “My dad never told me that I was special or important. He didn’t know me.” Comedian Chonda Pierce also shared her insights. “I don’t remember a

church my dad ever pastored at that he didn’t have a girlfriend,” she said.

Altizer said he felt compelled to help women who experienced absent, broken or distant relationships with their dads.

“The Spirit just made it clear that I am to make this film for women, that I’m to do this,” he told CBN News. “I’m going, ‘But I’m a dude. Why would you call me to do this?’ And I heard the Holy Spirit just say, ‘I’ve given you everything you need; just do it.’”

A diverse range of voices share their personal journeys, including Pierce and Lynsi Snyder, owner of the In-N-Out Burger restaurant chain. “My dad, as soon as he was out of my life, there was this gaping wound,” Snyder said.

Many women, even those who are in the church, can relate to growing up without a dad.

“I made this film for a Christian woman who goes to church, she’s on the worship team, she goes to the women’s conferences, she gets the books, the curriculum books, she goes to the Bible study, she does all these things and the pain’s still there,” Altizer said.

The movie tells how some women feel like they can connect to Jesus as a man but not to God as a father. To help with that, viewers can obtain access to a six-week study guide to continue the healing process.

More information is available at [www.hecallsmedaughter.org](http://www.hecallsmedaughter.org).



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## What to Know Before You Remodel Your Home

Planning a home remodel is as much about your vision as it is your preparation. With a thoughtful plan, you can refresh your living space, stay on budget and enjoy the process without feeling overwhelmed.

Consider these steps to get the process started:

### 1. Define your goals

Decide what you're looking to accomplish with your remodel, whether it's improved functionality, updated style, higher resale value or a combination. Make a simple list of "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves" so you can prioritize upgrades if costs start to climb too high.

### 2. Set a realistic budget

Determine how much you're comfortable spending then add a cushion

of 10-20% for additional material costs and any surprises behind walls or under floors. Get rough price ranges for materials and labor, which allows you to adjust the scope of your project before the work begins, if necessary, instead of mid-project.

### 3. Gather ideas and inspiration

Collect photos, paint colors and product ideas in a single place, such as a digital folder or photo album on your smartphone. Pay attention to recurring themes in your inspiration – such as cabinetry, flooring and fixture styles



and colors – so it's easier to choose finishes when the time comes.

### 4. Lay out the project timeline

Think about the best time for your household to live through construction, especially if kitchens or bathrooms will be out of commission during the renovation. Talk with potential contractors about timing for each phase so you can plan for temporary living arrangements, if necessary.

### 5. Choose the right construction crew

Interview a variety of potential contractors, being sure to ask for references and verify licenses and insurance. Once you've narrowed your list, request written estimates that include labor and material costs, timelines and payment schedules so expectations are clear before choosing a service provider and signing an agreement.

### 6. Finalize design details and materials

Make as many design decisions as possible before demolition, including choosing fixtures, appliances, flooring, tile, paint, hardware and other details. Ordering key items early can help avoid delays and keep the project on schedule once work begins.

### 7. Prep your home and family

Before construction begins, clear areas where work will be completed of furniture and decor, covering anything that cannot be moved out of the room with plastic sheeting. So everyone knows what to expect while your home is in transition, talk with family members about the impending noise and dust, and make necessary schedule changes to avoid interrupting work.

Visit eLivingtoday.com for more resources and home renovation guidance.

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# sports

## Chiefs backup Justin Fields says missionary work may follow football



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Justin Fields says he is already thinking about life after football, and he believes missionary work may be part of it.

Fields, who joined Kansas City this month as Patrick Mahomes' backup, spoke about that future in an appearance on "The Walk" podcast.

"I've been thinking about this a lot, and people ask me this question a lot," Fields said. "I think I want to be a missionary. I think I want to go to different countries, go to different places and be able to spread his word and just help people find Christ and help people just get that relationship started with him."

It was not a throwaway answer. Fields sounded like someone who has been carrying the idea for a while.

He said he has talked with friends about going abroad, mentioning Africa and other places where, in his view, people may not have had much opportunity to hear the Christian message.

"I've actually been talking to a few friends, and I'm going to try to go somewhere, whether it's somewhere in Africa or just somewhere where people haven't necessarily gotten the opportunity to build that relationship or even get that relationship started," he said. "So I think that's what I'm going to pursue."

Service matters

Fields said service itself matters to him, whatever shape that takes.

"I love just helping people out," he said. "I love just being a servant to others, being able to bless others."

That was not the first time Fields had spoken that way about his faith publicly.

Last season with the Jets, he said his relationship with God kept him grounded even when things around him turned difficult.

"There's nothing in this world that can faze me, and that's just due to my relationship with the Lord," Fields said, according to the Jets' team website. "Everything happens for a reason."

For the 27-year-old from Kennesaw, Georgia, his goal isn't retirement but calling. Even as he settles into his new role in Kansas City, football isn't the end-all, but a step onto the platform God has given him.

## Bennett Stirtz Shares Faith in Sweet 16 Run

Bennett Stirtz, a local basketball player who starred at Liberty High School, is sharing his faith as he leads Iowa into the Sweet 16. Last weekend, on one of college basketball's biggest stages, Stirtz pointed attention to God after helping the Hawkeyes pull off a stunning NCAA tournament win.

"Win or lose, give glory to God," Stirtz told TBS after the game. "He gave me a platform. I just want to go use it for him."

Stirtz scored 13 points and added five assists as the ninth-seeded Hawkeyes defeated top-seeded Florida, 73-72, in the second round of the NCAA tournament. He created the game-winning play in the final moments, racing past Florida defenders with Iowa trailing 72-70 before passing to teammate Alvaro Folgueiras, who knocked down a three-point shot with four seconds left.

He earned first-team Big Ten honors in March after averaging 20.2 points, 4.4 assists and 1.5 steals per game. He began his college career at Northwest Missouri State, where he played two seasons before transferring to Drake and guiding the Bulldogs to an NCAA appearance and first-round victory in 2024-25. At each stop, he followed coach Ben McCollum, who started at Northwest Missouri before taking jobs at Drake and then Iowa. Stirtz said his faith deepened after he moved away from home and began attending school at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville.

"That's really where my faith and my relationship with Jesus just started to strengthen, because I went to him every day," he said. "In high school, to be honest, I didn't really do that. I just started



getting in the word every day."

He told Sports Spectrum that he turned down more NIL money from other schools to stay at Iowa.

"Money is never going to satisfy you," he said. "Fame will never satisfy you. Nothing in this world is going to satisfy you except for God."

Although Stirtz has developed into an NBA prospect, his father and high school

coach told Sports Spectrum that his character and foundation have remained unchanged.

"He's had one girlfriend in his life," Roger Stirtz said. "He's driven one vehicle in his life, 'He's extremely loyal. It might not look like you're loyal when you go to three different schools in your college career, but he's committed to a coach and a system."

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# 50+ Lifestyles

## A Guide to Enjoying Life in the Best Years

### The Great Timing Debate: Should I Claim Social Security Early or Late?

Retirees become eligible to claim Social Security benefits at age 62, but the timing of when you claim can drastically impact your benefit amount. Still, when to claim will be entirely dependent on your unique situation. As you approach retirement, it's important to understand the impact that timing has on your benefits.

"The timing of when you elect to receive your Social Security benefits warrants thoughtful consideration," said

Rich Guerrini, head of PNC Wealth Management. "This decision can significantly influence not only the total benefits you receive, but also the trajectory of your investment income, your tax obligations, and even your healthcare premiums."

#### How Your Benefit is Calculated

Your benefits are based on your top 35 years of earnings, adjusted to account for changes in wages from the

year they were earned. The Social Security Administration then applies a formula to those figures to arrive at your specific benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA), also referred to as your primary insurance amount (PIA).

There are three options for when to claim your benefits: claim early, claim at your FRA, or claim at age 70. Each comes with its own benefits and risks.

#### Claim at age 62

You can begin claiming your benefits as early as age 62, but your benefits will be permanently reduced. Still, there are instances when claiming early makes sense:

- You're in poor health – The benefit of receiving Social Security early may be worth it, particularly if you're unsure if you'll live beyond your break-even point;

- You're maximizing benefits with a spouse – Timing your claim to Social Security with your spouse can help you maximize a long-term benefit, while fulfilling cash flow needs in the present;

- You no longer want to work – The lifestyle benefits of not working may outweigh a larger future financial benefit from Social Security; or

- You want to preserve assets with growth potential – Claiming Social Security early may preserve investment or savings accounts.

#### Claim at your full retirement age

The primary benefit of waiting until your FRA is that you are then entitled to 100% of your benefits, without possibility of reductions over time. Your FRA for purposes of Social Security is based on the year you were born. For those born between 1943-1954, their FRA is 66. For those born between 1955-1959, their FRA is 66 + 2 months for every year after 1954 until 1960. For those born 1960 and later, their FRA is 67.

#### Delay your claim to age 70

You can delay claiming your benefits until the maximum age 70, with the

primary advantage of increasing your benefits for the remainder of your life. Delaying a Social Security claim may make sense if:

- You have other forms of income – You may realize tax benefits from pulling from sources such as retirement accounts or savings;

- You're still working – Working beyond your FRA may allow you to meet lifestyle expenses while increasing your future benefit; or

- You're concerned about spousal or survivor benefits – When you delay claiming your Social Security, your spouse may be entitled to a larger spousal benefit and/or survivor's benefit as well.

Further, cost-of-living-adjustments (COLA) begin giving your potential benefit a boost at age 62 – and that boost will continue to compound every year you delay making your claim.



#### Tax and Other Impacts

Generally, your Social Security income will be tax dependent on your "combined income," which factors in gross income, nontaxable interest earned, and half of your Social Security income. Potential effects on healthcare premiums should also be factored in.

Additional insights can be found by visiting [www.pnc.com](http://www.pnc.com).

While the question of when to claim Social Security benefits will be unique to your individual financial situation, it's a decision that warrants careful consideration – and potentially even a professional opinion.

–StatePoint



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# Navigating Cholesterol: What You Need to Know for a Healthy Heart



With so much information available, it can be difficult to understand what cholesterol is – and why it's important.

Knowing your personal risk of developing heart disease and managing your cholesterol early through healthy habits, regular screening and informed care is key for heart and brain health.

This advice from the American Heart Association can help you understand why cholesterol matters, how to manage it and how lifestyle habits may affect your long-term heart health.

## Cholesterol is Essential

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found throughout your body. Your body makes all the cholesterol it needs for important jobs, such as helping to build cells and make certain hormones. The concern is having too much “bad” cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein, or LDL) in the blood, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Having enough “good” cholesterol (high-density lipoprotein, or HDL) in your blood can help reduce your risk.

“Cholesterol itself isn't the enemy – our bodies need moderate levels to function,” said Roger S. Blumenthal, MD, FAHA, chair of the 2026 Dyslipidemia Guideline writing group and an American Heart Association national volunteer expert and cardiologist. “The goal is balance. Healthy lifestyle

habits are a powerful step in keeping LDL cholesterol in a healthy range and protecting your heart and brain over the long term.”

## Cholesterol in Your Blood vs. Cholesterol in Food

Too much blood cholesterol – the type measured on a cholesterol test – can cause plaque buildup in arteries (atherosclerosis), increasing your risk for heart disease and stroke. Blood cholesterol levels are influenced by overall eating patterns, lifestyle habits, genetics and other health factors, not just the cholesterol found in foods. Enjoy vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, unsaturated fats and lean proteins as part of an overall healthy eating pattern. Limit ultra-processed foods that are high in saturated fats, added sugars and sodium.

## Know Your Numbers and Understand Your Risk

Adults ages 19 and older should have their cholesterol checked at least every five years, as recommended by the American Heart Association.

A lipid profile, or cholesterol test, is a blood test that will provide results for your HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and total blood cholesterol. Other risk factors like age, family history, smoking status and more should also be considered to determine your risk of developing heart disease or stroke. Work with your health care professional to understand your results and design a treatment plan based on your risk.

## Managing Cholesterol: Lifestyle is Essential

For many people, healthy lifestyle habits are the foundation of cholesterol management. Eating a nutritious diet, getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, getting enough sleep, avoiding tobacco products and managing blood pressure and blood sugar can all help support heart health.

## Cholesterol-Lowering Medications

In addition to healthy lifestyle habits, some people may require cholesterol-lowering medication based on their overall risk of developing heart disease or stroke. If



side effects occur, talk with a health care professional. Another medication or approach may be a better fit, and staying on the recommended treatment plan can support long-term heart health.

## Cholesterol in Children

High cholesterol doesn't just affect adults. It can begin in childhood, particularly for children with inherited conditions or other risk factors, which is why early screening is important.

Cholesterol screening is recom-

mended for children not previously screened between the ages of 9-11 to help assess risk and guide care, along with kickstarting wellness habits such as prioritizing healthy foods, daily exercise and adequate sleep. These small lifestyle changes can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke through adulthood.

For more information and heart health resources, visit [Heart.org/KnowYourCholesterol](https://www.heart.org/KnowYourCholesterol).

– Feature Impact



## Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

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

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.<sup>2</sup>

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

Unexpected bills like \$299 for a filling ... \$1,471 for a crown<sup>3</sup> can be a real burden, especially if you're on a fixed income.

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

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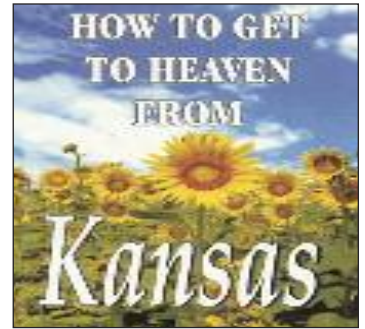
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says,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

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

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

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



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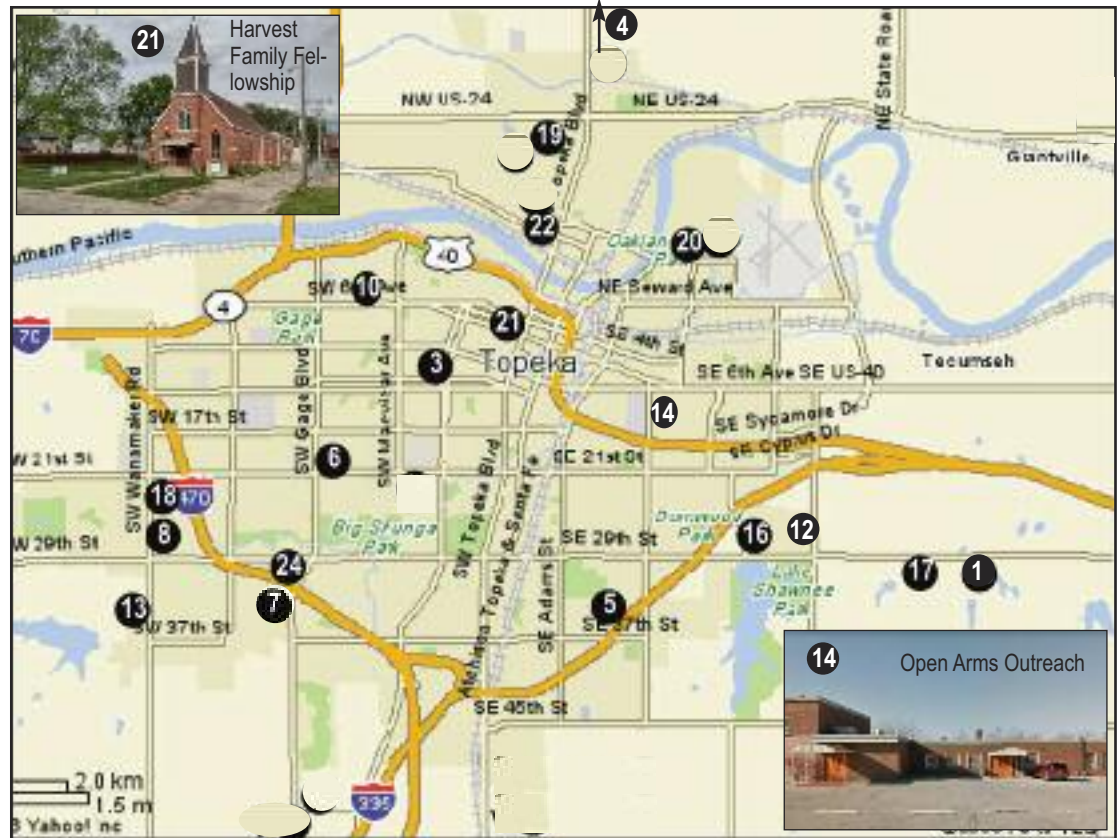
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# NEW Resource Directory for Kansans

## KANSAS RESOURCE GUIDE

*The Kansas Resource Guide (KRG) is a collaborative effort to connect consumers and service providers with resources and services for women, infants, children, youth and people with disabilities in Kansas.*

### What can you find?

The KRG website is an online navigational tool for Kansas consumers and service providers in Kansas. You can find links to partner's websites, topical lists and a searchable resource directory.

### How does the KRG help?

The KRG can help you identify:

- Available resources
- Who to contract
- Where to go for assistance

### Find information on:

- Advocacy
- Adult and Aging Services
- Disability Services
- Education
- Employment
- Health Care Services
- Independent and Community Living
- Nutrition and Wellness
- Women and Children's Services
- Youth Services



**Call 1-800-332-6262 for more information.**

**[www.kansasresourceguide.org](http://www.kansasresourceguide.org)**