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Missouri Mom Wins American Idol

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Hawley Warns of Crisis Facing Young Men



A growing sense of frustration among young men—spanning work, relationships and identity—is drawing increasing attention from policymakers and religious leaders. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) argues the trend reflects deeper cultural and spiritual fractures in American life.

Hawley discussed the issue with Southern Baptist theologian Al Mohler in a recent podcast conversation.

“You mentioned the manosphere,

■ Please see CRISIS page 3



Who is Jesus?

Either true God, or a madman....He must be one or the other

By **Clint Decker**

Who is Jesus to you? According to a State of Theology religious survey of Americans, 167 million do not believe Jesus was God, but a great teacher. There are also 119 million that deny the physical bodily resurrection of Christ.

What do world religions say

about Jesus? Judaism denies He was the Messiah, that He rose from the dead or had power to forgive sins. Islam believes Jesus was a prophet, that He never died, ascended to heaven and will come again...to revive Islam. Jehovah's Witnesses believe Jesus was created as Michael the Archangel, deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus and

that He has already returned in 1914. The one area all world religions deny about Jesus (except Christianity) is His deity, that He was the one true God in human form.

What did the people of Jesus' day say about Him? After the announcement of Jesus' coming

■ Please see JESUS page 2

Topeka Pools, Aquatic Centers Are Now Open



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

Aquatics information including a list of facilities, admission prices, swim lessons and rentals may be found online at parks.snco.us.

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

Jonathan Roumie Calls America Back to Prayer

As Americans prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it needs prayer more than ever.

“For 250 years, we have endeavored to be one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice,” actor Jonathan Roumie from “The Chosen” said during last weekend’s Rededicate 250 event in Washington, D.C. “May we be that nation once more. May we rededicate ourselves to all that the Lord

is calling us to these next 250 years, and may we — the citizens of the United States of America — never cease praying for our leaders, for each other, for our nation and for the world.”

Roumie has spent the past eight years in his role as Jesus and for the past six years has been a spokesperson for the Hallow prayer app. “If God hands you the assignment of portraying on a global stage his own son, the

■ Please see PRAYER page 2



Americans Report Miraculous Healing and Answered Prayer

Miraculous healings and answered prayers are surprisingly common. Nearly half of Americans said they have received a miraculous answer to prayer, while 35 percent said they have experienced or witnessed a divine healing, according to a new survey from the American Bible Society and CBN News.

U.S. adults who identify with a religion are the most likely to say they have experienced a miraculous answer to prayer. Three-quarters of evangelical Protestants and two-thirds of members of historically black Protestant congregations said they have had these experiences.

Majorities of Catholics (57 percent) and mainline Protestants (51 percent) also said they have, as do 49 percent of members of non-Christian religions. Even among those who don't identify with any religion, 15 percent said they have experienced a miraculous answer to prayer.

Among practicing Christians, 90 percent said they have experienced such an answer to prayer.

"This research confirms what so many people have suspected but rarely seen documented at this scale,"



CBN's Billy Hallowell said, "Americans aren't just curious about the supernatu-

ral; they're experiencing it. These numbers should spark a national conversation about what so many of our neighbors are witnessing firsthand."

A 2008 poll by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found that nearly eight in 10 U.S. adults believed miracles still occur today as they did in ancient times. More than two-thirds said angels and demons are active in the world. Meanwhile, a 2015 Barna Group survey commissioned by author Lee Strobel

found that 51 percent of Americans believe the miracles of the Bible happened as described, and two-thirds said miracles are still possible today. Only 15 percent of Americans said miracles in modern times are not possible.

"We have good evidence from cosmology and physics that there is a creator behind our universe," Strobel told Crosswalk Headlines, "and if indeed a creator can create our universe, then for him to intervene in the same laws of nature that he created would be child's play."

Church Attendance Linked to Biblical Beliefs Decline

The less frequently people attend church, the more likely they are to embrace unbiblical beliefs, a new Lifeway Research study finds.

Lifeway surveyed 3,000 U.S. Protestant churchgoers, both frequent and infrequent attendees, asking if they agreed with a series of statements that either aligned with or contradicted Christian teachings. Infrequent churchgoers were defined as those who attend services once or twice a month, while frequent churchgoers were defined as those who attend services on a weekly basis.

Six in 10 frequent churchgoers said



they strongly disagreed with the claim "Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God," compared to just 37 percent of infrequent attenders. Eighty-five

percent of frequent churchgoers said the "biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate" and the "event actually occurred," while only 64 percent of

infrequent attenders said the same. "This relationship between lack of attendance and theological positions should sound an alarm among church

leaders and dedicated Christians," Lifeway statistician Daniel Price said. "Increasing attendance alone will not guarantee an improvement in the acceptance of theological positions."

In other findings:

Eighty-four percent of frequent churchgoers agreed that "God created marriage as a union between one man and one woman," while only 68 percent of infrequent attendees felt the same.

Similarly, seven in 10 frequent churchgoers strongly agreed with the sentiment that sex outside of traditional marriage is sinful. Forty-two

percent of infrequent churchgoers said the same.

Seventy-one percent of frequent church attendees strongly disagreed that "people should be able to choose their gender regardless of their biological sex," while 51 percent of infrequent churchgoers disagreed.

"Worship services typically include proclamation of the word of God and uniting in songs and readings drawn from the word of God," Price said. "So one way to encourage attendance is explaining the Bible's importance and encouraging its prioritization."

JESUS

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birth and His arrival, Mary and Joseph, His earthly parents, must have wondered to themselves, "Who is this child?" When John the Baptist heard the things Jesus was doing, he sent his disciples to ask who He was. When Jesus' own disciples saw Him calm the raging seas with His spoken word, they wondered, "Who is He?" Jesus once said to His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." And he asked them,

"But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." (Mark 8:28-29)

Who is Jesus? C.S. Lewis once wrote about this, "I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with a man who says he is a

poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

Who do you say Jesus is? Have you made your choice? Let us look at the Bible, our main source for answering the question.

First, the works of Jesus. History records how He rose the dead, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk, cured diseases, walked on the stormy seas and calmed its waters, cast out demons, forgave sins, miraculously supplied food to thou-

sands of people and more.

Why did Jesus' do these incredible wonders? He said, "The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me." (John 10:24) They all reveal that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

Second, the nature of Jesus. It is written that He was the "Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14), the "Author of life" (Ac. 3:15), how there is "salvation in no one else" (Ac. 4:12), how one day Jesus will "be judge of the living and the dead" (Ac. 10:43) and how He is "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of

his power" (Hebrews 1:3).

Third, the cross of Jesus. The suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Christ reveal best who He is. The Scriptures say, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17)

The cross shows that Jesus came to sacrifice Himself for us that we might be free from our sins, know God and live new lives.

A prayer for you – Lord God, I bring my questions about Jesus be-

PRAYER

continued from page 1

savior of the world, the alpha and omega, the great I Am, and you do not have faith — Lord help you," he said, according to "Crosswalk Head-

lines."

Roumie said prayer is vital not only for those in the spotlight but essential for every American, both for their own spiritual lives and for the future of the nation.

"He wants the prayers of all of his children, because that's who we are,"

he said. "We are his, and he is ours, whether you realize it or maybe not yet. Our existence on earth is merely a rest stop between the mortal and the immortal, the earthly and the divine. God has always been there long before us. He always will be — now and forever, world without

end."

Faith was at the core of the nation's founding and is essential to its future, Roumie said.

"At the heart of the vision for what America could be was faith — faith in God, faith in liberty and faith in the seemingly impossible task of

building a nation," he said. "The founding fathers' belief in the American experiment, fortified by their faith in God, formed the bedrock of a virtuous people and proved that this noble endeavor was not only imaginable but achievable against all odds."

U.S. Bible Reading Falls Back to 2024 Levels

Bible engagement in the United States seems to have tapered off after an increase in 2025, a new study reveals.

“Last year, we saw an uptick in Bible reading in the United States,” said John Farquhar Place, chief innovation officer for the American Bible Society. “But this year, Bible use and scripture engagement have generally returned to 2024 levels.”

A combined 48 percent of Americans said they have read half or more of the Bible, according to the group’s State of the Bible USA 2026. This includes 17 percent who said they have read the entire Bible; another 17 percent who have read most of it; and 14 percent who said they have read about half. One-third of respondents told pollsters they have read a little bit of the Bible, while 10 percent have not read any of it. Another 7 percent said they were not sure how much of the Bible they had read.

The story, reported by the Christian



Post, defined active Bible users as those who engage scripture at least once a week outside of a church service and classified those who use scripture at least three or four times a year as occasional Bible users. A plurality of Americans (42 percent) never use the Bible, while an additional 13 percent use it less than once a year and another 7 percent read it once or twice a year. This amounts to a combined 62 percent of respondents who are not Bible users, identical to the share measured in 2024 and slightly larger than the 59 percent recorded in 2025.

“Though scripture engagement has come back down, the number of Americans who are interested in and open to the Bible has swelled by nine million people over the last two years,” Plake said. “Bible-curious Americans tell us that they would welcome someone to guide them through the complexity of the Bible.”

The U.S. region with the highest percentage of Bible users at 54 percent is the East South Central states of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. Regions with Bible use lower than the national average are the Mid-Atlantic states (37 percent), including New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania; West North Central states (35 percent), of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota; Pacific states (26 percent) of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington; and New England states (15 percent).

CRISIS

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which makes me think of all of these young men out there, many of whom voted for Republicans and the president this last time around but now say that they’re very disaffected,” Hawley said. “This is just a very disaffected group, because I believe they feel shut out of American society.”

National data underscores the concern. Labor force participation among men ages 20 to 34 has declined over the past several decades, while marriage rates have fallen and the age of first marriage continues to rise. Research from Barna Group has also found increasing levels of loneliness and disengagement among younger men, particularly those without college degrees.

Hawley, who wrote a book about manhood and masculine virtues in 2023, observed that the difficulties young men face are coming at them from multiple angles and include economic, social and spiritual challenges.

“They’ve been told by the liberals forever that masculinity is inherently toxic and evil,” he said. “They can’t afford to buy anything. They are uncertain about how to have a relationship, how to get married, if they can get married, if they can afford it, all of those things.”

“Manosphere” communities

The discussion comes amid the rise of online communities often referred to

as the “manosphere,” where debates about masculinity, purpose and cultural expectations have gained traction—reflecting, supporters say, a search for identity.

Hawley, a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, suggested that the pain and alienation many young men feel offer Christians an opportunity and a responsibility to disciple them but that policymakers also must play a role.

“This is a huge segment of our population,” he said. “We as believers especially have to speak to these men and say to them, ‘there is a purpose for your life, right? The country needs you; more importantly, the kingdom needs you.’

“And we’ve got to show them that what real masculinity looks like is choosing to be responsible, get that job, get married, have a family. But on policy terms, we’ve got to give them a country where that’s possible. And right now, they don’t think it is possible.”

Some analysts say the challenges facing young men are tied not only to cultural messaging but also to long-term economic shifts, including the decline of stable, middle-income jobs and rising housing costs that have made traditional milestones—such as homeownership and family formation—more difficult to attain.

The crisis facing young men

Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, framed the crisis facing young men in civilizational terms, noting that “no civilization can survive unfulfilled, aimless, restless

young men; it just doesn’t work.” He stressed the importance of teaching young men that they must delay gratification and take the initiative in such things as work, relationships and even hygiene if they hope to find later joy and satisfaction.

In a related discussion, Richard Reeves, author of *Of Boys and Men*, has argued that many young men are struggling to adapt to rapid economic and educational changes, warning that “we have to take seriously the problems of boys and men” in order to strengthen families and communities.

Hawley agreed but noted that the ladder of success that worked in previous generations increasingly feels out of reach for many young men in the United States.

“That’s all what they want,” he said. “And I think that’s the disaffection that we’re seeing right now, is young men are afraid they won’t be able to have it. They can’t always put words to it, but that’s the fear. It’s that, ‘I’m never going to be able to buy a house, get a girl, have children, grow up together.’ They fear they’re going to be shut out of all of that. And they’re not terribly wrong about that.”

The convergence of economic pressure, cultural change and spiritual searching has made young men an increasing focus for both political leaders and faith communities, with many warning that how the issue is addressed could shape broader social stability in the years ahead.

C5 Luncheon to feature Doxazo Ministries

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

The program will feature Ryan Wynne of Doxazo Ministries. They serve the Church by helping them recruit, raise up, and retain their youth and children’s ministry leaders.

Their goal is to help EVERY KID in our community find a church home.

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

“POWER” luncheons are held the 2nd Thursday each month and are open to the public. C5Alive is dedicated to creating Christian culture in the Capital City, by developing and uniting leaders in community businesses, non-profits and churches.

Upcoming luncheon dates are

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 EASTER-FEST, the annual Topeka Easter Fun Fair, held in NOTO Arts District.

C5 members also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations.

C5 is currently holding a membership drive with special incentives for new members. Lower-priced memberships for small and home-based businesses are now available. Individuals may join for \$20.

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



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The Topeka Renaissance Festival Returns for Its Summer Festival

The Topeka Renaissance Festival is set to return this summer, offering an immersive blend of history, fantasy, and live entertainment for attendees of all ages. Held in Topeka at The Woodshed Event Center, the growing event continues to draw visitors from across the region with its unique mix of interactive experiences, performances, and community-driven atmosphere.

The festival features live entertainment across four stages, including music, theatrical performances, and demonstrations throughout the day. Guests can explore a wide range of attractions such as jousting exhibitions, birds of prey demonstrations from Raptors Keep, and full-contact armored combat presented by the Wichita Bisons. Additional activities include archery, axe throwing, horse rides, and encounters with interactive characters like King Oberon and his Fairy Court, The Gnome King & Queen plus the Mermaids!

Festivalgoers will also find a variety of artisan vendors offering handcrafted goods, along with food options and family-friendly activities spread throughout both indoor and outdoor spaces. A new

VIP tent experience has been introduced this year, providing guests 21 and over with upgraded amenities and a comfortable space to enjoy the festival. An adults-only, climate-controlled Pirate Bar will also be available.

The event begins June 12, with gates opening at 6 pm for the Fae Ball, an evening kickoff celebration centered around magical and mythical beings. Opening Ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m., with the ball inside the main hall, and entertainment, food options and much of

the festival happening outside! The main festival opens the following day at 10 a.m., with an opening ceremony at the South Gate, inviting attendees to step into a fully developed world of themed storylines, quests, and roaming characters. Many new entertainment groups are attending this year, showing a growth that makes use of nearly 16 acres to contain the excitement!

The Topeka Renaissance Festival is expanding its community impact this year with creative, family-friendly initiatives that support local nonprofits. One highlight is the Gnome Forest, where individuals and families can build and display their own gnome homes at no cost. For every home created and placed within the forest, the festival will donate \$1 to SENT Topeka. Businesses can also participate by creating branded gnome homes for a \$50 entry fee.

The festival is also bringing back its popular Viking Shield Contest, encouraging participants to design and enter their own shields. For each shield submitted, \$1 will be donated to the NOTO Youth Art Program,

further supporting local youth and creativity.

In addition, attendees who donate a gnome home or shield (one per person) will receive a free one-day festival pass. Organizers say these initiatives reflect the festival's commitment to giving back and strengthens connections within the com-

munity, making the event not only entertaining but impactful for local organizations.

Organizers say the Topeka Renaissance Festival continues to grow as a seasonal highlight, emphasizing creativity, local business support, and community engagement. With its combination of entertainment, education, and immersive storytelling, the festival offers a distinctive cultural experience that brings the past and fantasy to life. Early Bird Tickets are on sale now at www.topekarenfest.com.





Gnome Home Contest

BUILD A GNOME HOME



FREE for individuals
\$50 PER BUSINESS

\$1 per house donated by festival
to Sent Topeka

Winner Chosen on June 21st
after the festival concludes

Winner - \$50 cash

FREE DAY PASS TO THE
TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL PER ENTRY

Entries due by June 12th
DROP OFF
June 11th & 12th - 10 AM - 5 PM
The Woodshed Event Center
South side check in

PROCEEDS BENEFIT SENT TOPEKA






Viking Shield Art Contest

Free for individuals to enter
\$50 ENTRY FOR BUSINESSES

EACH ENTRY WILL RECEIVE A FREE DAY PASS TO THE TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

Each shield entered, FESTIVAL will donate a \$1.00 to NOTO Arts Youth programs

Shields must be 3 ft. or smaller - any materials can be used - Contest during the Topeka Renaissance Festival Summer event
June 12th - 14th
DROP OFF - JUNE 11TH - 12TH
10 AM - 5 PM - SOUTHSIDE OF THE WOODSHED EVENT CENTER



Tent Revivals are Back

Evangelists such as Billy Graham and Oral Roberts preached to thousands of people at big-tent revivals in the 1940s and 1950s. In a high-tech age, organizers of the Jesus Tent Revival movement are using the same strategy to reach the lost.

It started in 2019 during a powerful event in Kokomo, Ind. “People come in underneath that tent that walked in as atheists, walked in as Buddhists, walked in as Muslim,” Dr. Braden Andersen, founder of Jesus Tent Revival, told CBN News recently.

Inspired by that first night and encouraged by a local pastor, Andersen, a primary care physician and evangelist, made the life-

America’s earlier revivals. They have deep roots in American religious history, dating back to the frontier camp meetings of the early 1800s during the Second Great Awakening. Traveling preachers gathered thousands in rural fields and temporary tabernacles for days of preaching, prayer and emotional conversion experiences that reshaped Protestant Christianity in the United States.

By the early and mid-20th century, evangelists such as Billy Sunday, Graham and Roberts drew massive crowds under revival tents, helping popularize altar calls, public professions of faith and large-scale evangelistic



An old-time tent revival in 1930s Appalachia.

changing decision in 2022 to sell his medical practice and house to take the tent revival nationwide.

“The thought of being able to impact people with the gospel, even in that very moment, just seemed so much more important than the clinics that we had, the work that we did in the emergency room or what have you,” he said. “While I’m thankful for that work, this makes a difference in eternity, and we felt like the time was right. And if America’s this hungry, let’s bring them Jesus.”

That was also the theme of

crusades. Historians say the meetings not only fueled church growth but also influenced American culture, music and politics while shaping the rise of modern evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

They fell out of headlines as ministries opted for high tech gatherings in stadiums and other large venues. But in the process, they may have lost something. A desire for something a more authentic Jesus.

This unprecedented hunger has resulted in people driving for hours and staying in hotels for an

encounter with God. “There’s something about the simplicity and the power of that atmosphere that’s just resonating with America,” Andersen said. “America is hungry. I don’t know that I’ve ever seen it this hungry.”

Many who attend the tent meetings testify about receiving newfound freedom. “He saved me from selling drugs, doing drugs, fornication,” Matthew Stewart said. “I was a girl who was just broken and lost,” one

woman said. “I was empty, and then I got into this atmosphere where the Lord filled me with the Spirit.”

A hallmark of the tent revival has been the record number of spontaneous baptisms, with lines so long they’re conducted before, during, and after the services. As demand continues to outpace capacity, the movement is expanding internationally with meetings planned for Canada.

“Jesus is hope, and Jesus is

peace and Jesus is power,” Pastor Sullivan said. “And I think that’s what our nation, our youth, our middle-aged, our elders, everybody’s looking for. With what’s going on in our world, everybody needs Jesus.”

For many, 2026 is 1926 all over again. Tent revivals are an integral part of America’s 20th century faith history and they’re not going anywhere.

To learn more, visit The Jesus Tent Revival.



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TOO LATE TO SAVE?

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are both 25. We've been married just over a year. I'm a stay-at-home mom, and we have one baby. Because I'm home with our son and my husband works outside the home, he believes he gets to make all the financial decisions. He eats out and buys whatever he feels like but tells me I can't do the same. He says getting to be at home all day and having things like television, electricity and air conditioning are my luxuries. I try to be understanding because he works hard, but this is causing real tension between us. Do you have any advice?

A. There's just no other way to say

this: You married a child in a man's body. He's treating you like a second-class citizen, and I'm truly sorry you're finding out the hard way that your husband's a twit. This is just about the most dysfunctional thing I've ever heard.

I want you to really pay attention because I'm about to stack how things should be up against how they stand. When you're married, regardless of who earns the money, you both have an income. You each have a say in where every single one of those dollars goes. My wife hasn't worked outside the home in about 40 years. But she has an incredible income because we have an incredible income — together. And we, together, decide what to do with our income.

Are you understanding these words clearly? None of this is happening in your marriage. Just because I earn an income at my job and my wife doesn't have an earned income personally, that doesn't invalidate her power or right to a vote within our household. She has exactly the same rights I do — morally, spiritually

and legally.

This is not okay. None of it. You are living in a majorly dysfunctional marriage, and it's something I can't fix within the confines of a column. Some marriage counseling is way overdue here. And if he won't go with you as a couple, you go alone. All I can

do is confirm that you're not the crazy one here. The feelings you have about things being really messed up are 100% spot-on.

At the very least, I think your whole family desperately needs to get involved with a good, strong, local church. I'm talking about a healthy church. One that doesn't

support your husband's ridiculous, backwards ideas. One that has some real men who can teach this little boy how to be a man. Because true masculinity is service-oriented. A real man serves his wife, and he serves his children. And that isn't happening here.

— Dave

The Retirement Red Zone: A Critical Window for Financial Security

By Roger Shumaker
Financial 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 before 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

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— THE —
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The Retirement Team is a team of financial professionals that specialize in helping retirees and those about to retire.
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The Emotional Hurdles of Retirement

By Jim Hanna

Retirement is often seen as the long-awaited reward for decades of hard work—a time to relax, travel and enjoy life on your own terms. Yet for many, the transition into retirement brings unexpected emotional challenges. While financial preparation is critical, it's just one part of the equation. As a financial advisor, I've seen firsthand how addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of retirement can be just as vital in helping clients thrive in this new chapter of life.



Hanna

aligned with your goals, lifestyle, and risk tolerance.

Adjusting to a new spending rhythm. Retirement often brings a shift in daily routines and with it, a change in spending patterns. Without the structure of a regular paycheck, retirees may find it challenging to gauge how much they are spending. That's why it's important to revisit your finances and align them with your retirement lifestyle. Consider categorizing expenses into essentials, discretionary, and legacy goals. Tools like monthly cash flow tracking or dynamic budgeting can help you stay on course. Remember: you've prepared for this moment, and spending your savings is part of the plan.

Navigating relationship changes. Retirement can also reshape relationships. Couples may spend more time together than ever before, which can be both rewarding and sometimes challenging. Adult children may rely more heavily on retired parents for support, whether emotional or financial. It can be wise to consider how these changes will impact your financial situation. Whether it's budgeting for shared experiences, preparing for caregiving roles, or simply creating space for individual pursuits, planning can help couples and families navigate this transition with greater ease and understanding.

Embracing the emotional transition. It's normal to feel a mix of emotions during retirement—excitement, anxiety, relief, and even grief. Some people are surprised to find that retirement doesn't feel as joyful as they expected, at least not right away. Acknowledging these feelings is important. Seeking support from professionals, peers, or community groups can help ease the transition. Remember, emotional adjustment takes time, and

there's no "right" way to feel.

Planning beyond the numbers. Retirement is more than a financial milestone – it's a life transition. A trusted advisor can help you prepare not just your portfolio, but your mindset. Building a retirement plan that supports your financial needs, emotional well-being, and personal aspirations is within reach.

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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4 Existing Options with More Favorable Tax Treatment than Trump Accounts

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



Last month we detailed both the tax and control issues that come with a Trump Account. This month we're discussing four existing alternative options that have more favorable tax treatment. With each of these options you'll also be able to invest in a wide variety of choices compared to a Trump Account, which essentially only allows investment in an S&P 500 or similar index fund and nothing else until a child turns 18.

Roth

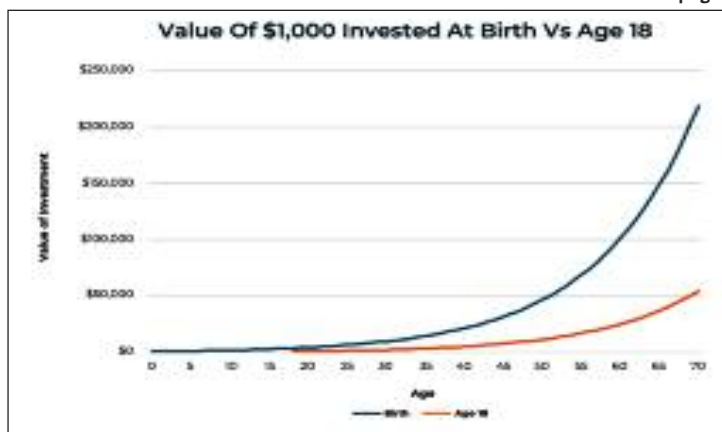
A Roth is usually the best option if a child is eligible for one. To be eligible they must have earnings from some sort of work, which most newborns

don't have. All growth is 100% tax-free and gains can be taken out at zero tax for all the same reasons that would waive the 10% tax penalty for taking money out of a Trump Account, such as education, first-time homebuyer, reaching age 59 ½, etc. Unlike with a Trump Account, whatever was originally contributed to a Roth can be taken out at any time and for any reason with no tax at all. Since any contributions from family would be after tax with both a Trump Account and a Roth and the Roth has all gains tax-free, the Roth is a superior option for any child eligible to have one. Just like with a Trump Account, there is a limit on how much can be contributed each year and the child will gain full control of the money at age 18, which are a couple of bigger downsides.

529

Unlike with a Roth or Trump Account, a 529 allows a parent, grandpar-

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opinion

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Do not underestimate the degree of America's moral decline

By Dr. Michael Brown

In the last few years, there have been significant victories for conservative, biblically based morality here in America, and these victories should be celebrated. But as we approach our nation's 250th anniversary and there is much excitement about formally dedicating the country back to God, we dare not underestimate the degree of moral decline in our land. In many ways, we are sicker than we realize.

To be sure, we can celebrate the overturning of Roe v Wade, something truly momentous in our history, despite the spike in abortions because of the abortion pill. The fact that Roe is no longer the law of the land is massive.

More broadly, we can celebrate a spate of victories for freedom of religion under the current Supreme Court, also reversing a negative trend. As noted in the Washington Post on April 17, 2026, "The court has ruled in favor of religious liberty claims 98 percent of the time over the past

five terms." This, too, is massive.

We can also appreciate that the current administration does not recognize June as Pride Month, a tradition begun by President Clinton and continued by Presidents Obama and Biden.

And we can appreciate this administration formally stating that there are only two sexes, as well as the wider pushback against radical transgender activism, from local schools to the world of sports to many court decisions.

There was also the major D.C. event in April, America Reads the Bible, and throughout the country, there are signs of campus revivals and reports of Gen Z young people turning to God.

This is a sampling of the positive things happening in our nation today, serving as indicators of an incipient spiritual awakening as well as representing some semblance of a return toward moral sanity in the wider population.

But to be candid, the state of the nation can be compared to someone who was almost killed in a car accident and is now doing "much better" as they recuperate in ICU. They remain gravely ill and have a long (and uncertain) road of recovery ahead.

Here are just a few of the symptoms of America's grave condition.

As noted in a May 12 article on Axios by Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen, "Once-forbidden vices – weed, gambling and porn – are no longer confined to back alleys or the desert.

"They're ubiquitous, digital and spreading at a pace that has outstripped the country's social and regulatory guardrails." (Emphasis in the original.)

Worse still, "Governments didn't turn a blind eye to most of this behavior. They encouraged it. We're scaling sin in real time."

As for smoking pot, "Not long ago, you

might've gone to jail for using pot, much less selling it. Now, it's legal for a vast swath of Americans and serves as a primary tax engine for nearly half the country."

As for betting, "There's no reason to visit a sportsbook when you have one in your pocket. That lack of friction is destroying the lives – and arguably the morality – of countless young Americans, even as it fills state coffers."

As for porn, "Online pornography was already ubiquitous before AI. Now, deepfake technology has created an entirely new category of harm that barely existed two years ago."

Who can even remember the days when you had to be at least 18 to access porn legally?

Today, young children encounter porn online, with the average age of first viewing estimated to be 12 years old.

The legalizing of recreational marijuana is already resulting in what some are calling "a public health crisis," while a

■ Continued on next page

Here I Stand!



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

Speaking Truth

Have you ever grown discouraged and felt like giving up after standing for what is right? Olivia understood this when she came across evidence of a fellow attorney in her firm overcharging his elderly clients. After she confronted Liam with the evidence that one of his clients provided, he firmly stated, "Olivia, you do not know what you are stirring up here. Stay out of this!" After Olivia went to the firm's partners, things began to unravel. Threats were made against her so she would stop. Olivia did not know what to do. She feared losing her job and reputation for future employment. And that is what happened. She was eventually let go, which caused Olivia to ask herself, "Should I

have been quiet? Did I do the right thing?"

When we stand for what is right, it is normal to have resistance, which can cause doubts. This happened to Moses, the iconic leader of the Jewish people.

While the Jews were under immense suffering because of the abuse and tyranny of Pharaoh, God called Moses to go and confront Pharaoh over his evil. "Thus say the Lord, the God of Israel," Moses thundered to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." (Exodus 5:1) Pharaoh was angered by the demand and soundly rejected it. He was so incensed by Moses that he made the Jewish people suffer for it. Consequently, the people turned against Moses leading him to question God, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all." (Ex. 5:22-23)

Like what happened to Moses, when we take a Christian stand against any form of evil, there will always be opposition. Why? Because of its spiritual nature. A Christian's re-

fusal to go along with something plainly wrong or their efforts to expose it, is not merely activism. It is something deeper and more noble. It is standing for the truth that comes from the one who created the heavens and the earth. That truth is found in the Bible, God's Word, and is the foundation of the glorious gospel of Jesus. Pharaoh's battle was ultimately with God, and not Moses, who simply spoke the truth of God, which Pharaoh foolishly disregarded. This is why we see God's Word attacked, lied about and twisted to deceptively trick people.

The reason Christians stand for truth, is not just out of allegiance to God though or His Word, but also because of a deep love for their neighbor. Moses confronted Pharaoh's evil to free over one million Jewish slaves who were experiencing terrible suffering. When a believer in Christ stands for truth, they are also standing for others, being a voice to the voiceless that seeks to protect and deliver others from the lies of the Great Deceiver.

Like Moses, we can get discouraged over the chaos, division and attacks that come from confronting evil. Remember the words of Scripture, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to

test you, as though something strange were happening to you." (1 Peter 4:12) Jesus predicted difficulties when we stand for him saying, "In the world you will have tribulation [trouble]. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

How should you handle the disappointment? Do not be a coward and quit. Instead, plant your flag and stand firm. It is written, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." (James 1:12) Endure. Keep standing through faith in Christ, and persevere with joy in your heart, praise on your lips and with love for those who oppose you.

A prayer for you – Lord God, give me wisdom and courage in exposing evil, and help me to remain steadfast in standing for biblical truth and being a voice for the voiceless. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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

A society without God is a society without Truth

Next Thursday evening, Jews will celebrate the holiday of Shavuot. This holiday, which occurs seven weeks and one day after Passover (hence the name Shavuot, which literally means "weeks"), commemorates perhaps the most transformative event in all of human history: the revelation of the Word of God to the ancient Israelite nation. It was at Mount Sinai, congregated at the base of the smoking and trembling mountain, that God promised the Israelites they would be a "kingdom of princes and a holy nation" if they accepted and maintained fidelity to His covenant. In unison, before they had even received the Ten Commandments, the Israelites responded, "All that the Lord has spoken we shall do!"

The Divine Revelation at Sinai fundamentally changed the relationship between mankind and truth. Before Sinai, mankind had understood truth as inherently subjective, subject to the ever-changing whims of the volatile gods. Now, after Sinai, there could be no such moral confusion. The one, true God – He who had created the universe and fashioned mankind in His image – had revealed His Will. Moral relativism and idolatry were now out. Moral objectivity and monotheism were now in. For the first time, there was a fixed barometer by which to judge man's moral conduct, devise laws and political institutions, and live one's day-to-day life more generally.

Because of the breadth and depth of its impact and lasting influence, the Divine Revelation at Sinai was the logical starting point for what we now call Western civilization. Writing thousands of years later at another inflection point in human his-

tory, Alexander Hamilton wrote in The Federalist No. 31: "In disquisitions of every kind, there are certain primary truths, or first principles, upon which all subsequent reasonings must depend." In the United States specifically, and in Western civilization more generally, it was long obvious what those "primary truths" and "first principles" actually meant: the Word of God Himself. Such a properly anchored and oriented society is uniquely suited to improve mankind's lot and advance human flourishing.

Crucially, only such a properly anchored society can claim to comprehend the truth – let alone assert that certain truths are "self-evident," as we recall every Independence Day. Because when God falls by the wayside, truth does as well. Recent events underscore the point.

In a Washington Post op-ed earlier this month, Gregory Conti, a politics professor at perennially top-ranked Princeton University, lamented: "Several years ago, one of my colleagues at Princeton University hosted a lecture on religion and free speech. The talk didn't seem to be landing with the students. Finally, he realized why: The speaker had made repeated reference to the Ten Commandments, and several students didn't know what they were." Conti noted that Princeton students are often smart and driven, but they lack basic religious literacy – even the difference between the Old and New Testaments. In short, many of America's future leaders do not even recognize the "primary truths" and "first principles" upon which our civilization rests.

There is a clear casualty of this ignorance: our ability to accept reality and the

truth. Consider, for example, the shocking inability to do precisely that among far too many members of America's more avowedly secularist political party, the Democrats. A whopping 42% of Democrats believe the attempted assassination of Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, in July 2024 was staged. A similarly galling 34% of Democrats believe the same about the recent attempted assassination of Trump and his Cabinet members at the White House Correspondents' Dinner in Washington, D.C. There is, of course, zero evidence to support either belief. One might as well believe in Bigfoot, or that Neil Armstrong's moon landing was fake.

Americans who have even nominally right-leaning political views who have also lost touch with basic reality, allowing their brains to be rotted by mass consumption of delusional conspiracies and AI-driven online slop. We call them Candace Owens and Tucker Carlson fans.

There can be nothing good down this road. Only a society that is rooted in, and oriented toward, the eternal and the transcendental can ever hope to cultivate decent, truth-seeking citizens. When a free people loses the ability to discern between truth and fiction, rightness and wrongness, justice and injustice, there can only be only misery, despair and destruction. We're losing that because, for far too long, we've been missing God. There is no better time than the run-up to America's sesquicentennial – when we will celebrate the assertion of the self-evident truths that birthed the nation – to find Him once again. Frankly, America's survival for another 250 years depends on it.

- Josh Hammer

Continued from previous page

massive spike in gambling addiction will have disastrous effects in the years to come.

How does a generation recover from this?

Or consider the phenomenon of couples living together out of wedlock.

It's as normal as marriage in the story lines of movie and TV series, perhaps even more common than marriage.

As for having children out of wedlock, in the last 50 years, America moved from stigma to normalization. In 1970, only about 11% of births were to unmarried women; by 1999 it was about 33%, and by 2023 it was 40%, after peaking at 41%.

This represents a massive moral fall.

It's the same with gay relationships.

Same-sex "marriage" has been the law of the land since June 2015, the date of the momentous Obergefell decision. And so, what seemed completely inconceivable not that long ago – namely, the redefining

of marriage on a national level – is taken for granted by most Americans today.

No big deal. Nothing even to get our attention.

The first gay kiss on TV was in 1991 on NBC, featuring two women on "L.A. Law," and it created no small stir.

Today, who can count the number of gay love scenes airing on mainstream TV, cable TV, streaming networks and in movies, let alone the steady stream of gay couples featured in commercials? Does the average viewer even bat an eye?

It was in 1997 that Ellen DeGeneres' TV character came out as lesbian, resulting in a national uproar. How many of us can remember an America like that, when a famous celebrity simply saying, "Yep, I'm gay," could shake the nation?

The very fact that the administration's important declaration that there are only two sexes was applauded for its boldness says it all. This took boldness? Saying that something as basic as 2+2=4 was a landmark moment?

RYAN SHUMAKER

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ent or other family member to maintain complete control of the money indefinitely and can actually change who the money is for at anytime. Not only could the account be changed to another family member, but also to oneself. Additionally, unlike a Roth or Trump Account, there is a Kansas tax deduction for contributing to a 529. One can receive a tax deduction of up to \$3,000 (which could save \$174 in state tax) per year for each person they are making a 529 contribution for. So, if a married couple had two kids, that would mean up to \$12,000 (each person contributing \$3,000 to each child) could be contributed per year, which would save nearly \$700 in state taxes for most. While more can be contributed each year to a 529 than this, there would be no tax break on the additional amounts. If the money is used for education, then all of the growth becomes tax-free. In recent years, the definition of what counts as an education expense has expanded greatly to include a lot of options besides traditional college, such as private K-12 tuition and expenses, student loan repayment, and apprenticeship programs. If a child never ends up needing the money for educational expenses, which was always a concern in the past, up to \$35,000 can now be converted to a tax-free Roth.

UTMA

UTMA stands for Uniform Transfers to Minors Act and is an account that a parent or other person would control and be in charge of until the child turns either 18 or 21. At that point the child would have full control of the account, just like with a Roth or Trump Account. Unlike a Roth or Trump Account, though, there is no limit on how much can be contributed to a UTMA and in most cases up to \$2,700 a year in interest, capital gains, and/or dividends can be made in the account completely tax-free. A UTMA account invested in an S&P 500 index fund, as is required in a Trump Account, would need to be over \$150,000 in value before there would be any federal tax on the dividends. Even above this amount, the tax would be less on a UTMA account than a Trump Account on any gains and with a UTMA account the money can be used for any purpose and at any time without a tax penalty. Once a child comes of age, they could potentially sell investments and realize up to \$66,500 worth of gains each year at zero federal income tax too.

Brokerage Account

This last option really offers the most flexibility as the owner maintains complete control at all times, can invest in anything, can have money withdrawn for any reason, and can have an unlimited amount deposited into it. Who the money is for can also be changed to anyone at any time too. The drawback to this option is that the owner, whether it be a parent, grandparent, etc. would be responsible for paying yearly any taxes owed for any interest or dividends paid. For most, though, this would be a very minimal amount if tax-efficient ETFs are utilized. At any time, the owner can gift shares to a child's UTMA or, if they are over 18, that person's investment account. Doing that would then shift the tax of selling any investment to the child's tax return, which in many cases would be a lower tax or potentially no tax at all. This is a common tax saving strategy we utilize with our clients.

Generally, we suggest starting with a Roth if a child is eligible, then a 529. We caution against putting too much into a 529, though, unless you're confident that the money will be used for education expenses in the future. Ideally, you would want the 529 to not grow in value to more than \$35,000 when the child turns 18 as that is how much could be switched to a Roth tax-free if the money isn't used for education. After that, most people then look at a brokerage account, though we do have a few that use UTMA's.

Regardless of the direction you choose, the most important thing is to save as early and often as possible. Don't be paralyzed by all the choices and let analysis paralysis lead you to doing nothing. As shown in the chart, starting with \$1,000 at birth versus at age 18 leads to a very significant difference later in life even with a conservative 8% return projection. If you'd like help determining what might be the best route for your situation, you can set up a complimentary strategy session with someone on our team at Retirement Portfolios in Lawrence by calling 785-330-9292 or by visiting our website www.RetireFromTaxes.com.

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Christian Parents More Engaged With Scripture

Parents in the United States are more likely than non-parents to consider themselves to be Christians and value scripture, the latest State of the Bible data from the American Bible Society found.

Among churchgoing parents, 91 percent of evangelical Protestants, 80 percent of those in historically black Protestant churches and 69 percent of Catholics say they feel supported by their congregations. The level of faith commitment also appears to play a role: Among practicing Christians who attend church, 92 percent say they feel supported, compared to 77 percent of casual Christians and 50 percent of nominal or non-Christians who attend church.

Churches should intentionally invest programs in helping parents



“Church leaders and fellow Christians need to intentionally invest in parents during this demanding season of life,” said John Farquhar Flake, the group’s chief innovation officer and editor-in-chief of the State of the Bible series. “With support from their

church, these caregivers can establish life-giving rhythms of prayer and scripture engagement with their children, and in their own personal discipleship. Parents are carrying a heavy load, and all of us in the church can help them carry it.”

Although parents (46 percent) are less likely than non-parents (59 percent) to fall into the category of the Bible disengaged, they also are not more likely to be classified as Bible engaged (16 percent for parents vs. 18 percent for non-parents). Instead, parents are far more likely to fall within the movable middle, a category marked by an appreciation for the Bible and moderate interaction with it but without a disciplined commitment. That group includes 38 percent of parents, compared to 23 percent of non-parents.

“We’ve already seen that work-family balance and fatigue sit at the top of parental frustrations,” the report said. “Perhaps some parents just don’t have time (or feel they don’t) for the personal and community disci-

plines involved in scripture engagement.”

More than seven in 10 parents of children ages 2 to 5 say their kids enjoy attending church, while 66 percent of parents with children ages 6 to 12 and 61 percent of parents with teens ages 13 to 17 say the same.

“It’s delightful to see about two-thirds of these children liking their church experience, but we also take note of the trend line that extends well beyond childhood,” the report said. “Perhaps church leaders could start reversing the widely reported generational slide by starting early, creating robust opportunities for middle-schoolers and teens to engage more joyously with their faith, their church and the Bible.”

Spiritual Revival Grows as Secularism Declines

The “death of secularism” and search for meaning are fueling revival, according to Pastor Matt Chandler of The Village Church, a megachurch in Flower Mound, Texas.

“We are in the middle of something,” he says. “I hope it’s the beginning, not the middle. The last three years here have been just marked by supernatural activity.”

Chandler said his church has prayed that God would bring the same movement they’ve been

witnessing in other communities across the nation and around the world to their congregation. This prayer, he said, was answered last year when The Village Church experienced a record number of baptisms.

“We don’t want to watch it play out on YouTube — we want to avail ourselves to the Lord and ask him to do it here,” he said according to Crosswalk Headlines. “And he has honored that prayer here in really stunning ways. It’s

been among all ages — certainly our students and young adults have kind of led the charge in it. But it has spread.”

Chandler pointed to the Unite US gatherings on college campuses, which have sparked thousands of salvations since launching in 2023, saying church leaders have wondered whether that spiritual fire eventually would spread into local congregations. He says it has. “By the grace of God, it seems to be doing just that. We’re humbled and thrilled,” he said.

Chandler believes the current spiritual movement has been fueled in part by the collapse of secular influence.

“We have watched the death of secularism,” he said. “I think it crested and crashed. And you have a whole generation that watched the generation before them go at it, and they’re like, ‘No, thank you.’ I think secular-



ism is dead. I don’t think it’s dying; I think it’s dead. And so, what’s going to take its place?”

Church leaders, he said, should not assume Christianity will automatically fill this void, warning that neopaganism and other spiritual alternatives are rising as well. He described a recent encounter with a stranger who said he and his wife worship a Celtic god and that she identifies as a

witch.

“And so that stuff’s growing, too,” Chandler said. “Why? Because secularism is dead. So they’re looking for the transcendent. People are going to go towards the new age paganism, demonic stuff, if we don’t get them to see and marvel at the beauty of Jesus by the grace of God.”



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Ukraine Churches Grow During War

Ukraine's churches are reporting surprising growth in the shadow of war, with new congregations forming even as Russian attacks continue to batter cities, villages and civilian infrastructure across the country.

Church leaders say more than 100 new churches have opened since Russia's invasion began in 2022. Baptisms have also climbed

sharply during the conflict as many Ukrainians, including soldiers on the front lines, search for spiritual stability amid loss and uncertainty.

"One hundred and six new churches have been started over the past four years," said Igor Bandura, vice president of the Ukrainian Baptist Union. "Over 13,000 people have been baptized, signif-

icantly more than before the war."

Bandura said the mission of many church leaders changed almost immediately after the invasion. Before the war, much of his work focused on strengthening international relationships between churches. Now, he

spends much of his time organizing humanitarian aid and helping congregations displaced by the fighting.

The shift has been especially visible among soldiers serving near the front, where chaplains are distributing Bibles, prayer books and Christian literature to troops facing constant danger.

"A fellow pastor is currently serving as a full-time chaplain on the frontlines," Bandura said. "In the past month, at the request of soldiers, he distributed over 300 copies of the New Testament, 27 audio Bibles and more than 670 prayer books."

Approximately 2,000 chaplains have been deployed to front-line areas as demand from soldiers has increased. Many soldiers who previously showed little interest in faith are now asking for prayer and spiritual counsel after experiencing combat.

"On the frontlines, there are those who are saying, 'God has found us,'" Bandura said. "They ask for Gospel literature and want to learn how to pray."

The church growth has come despite heavy losses. More than 500 churches and religious sites across Ukraine have reportedly been destroyed during the war, including Baptist congregations in eastern and southern regions.

At the same time, Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war have carried their faith into other countries. The Slavic Gospel Association reports that displaced



believers have planted approximately 160 new Ukrainian churches across 15 European nations.

For decades, Ukraine has been described as "the Bible belt of Europe," according to Eric Mock, SGA's senior vice president of ministry operations. Now it's becoming like the modern-day version of the church in the Book of Acts, he said. "We're seeing hundreds of young men eager to enter the ministry and take on the leadership of

local churches."

Many local evangelical churches have also become aid centers, distributing food and providing warmth during the bitterly cold winter months. Support has come from SGA's donors in the U.S.

"We're living in chaotic times and many people are looking for hope," said Mock, a frequent traveler to Ukraine's war-torn areas. "They're finding that faith in Christ is the only anchor in the storm."

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

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Summer activities coming to NOTO

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. Art Walk Hours are 10 am to 9 pm.

First Friday Music in Rebdud Park June 5 - Stephanie Teagarden: Own Two Feet.

Summer Concert Series – June 19: Get ready for an unforgettable night as Pretend Friend takes the stage! This Wichita-based, nationally touring progressive Americana and bluegrass trio delivers driving rhythms, soulful melodies, tight harmonies, and electrifying improvisation that keeps audiences

hooked from start to finish. Blending traditional roots with modern energy, their dynamic sound creates a powerful and engaging live experience. Opening Youth Musician: Addie Resch

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

For more event information visit explorenoto.org/.

Other upcoming events in North Topeka:

HAYSTAK LIVE at The Woodshed: May 30, 9pm.

WOODSHED 1ST SATURDAYS MARKET – June 6, 9-2, Woodshed Event Center. *Also held every Sunday!*

TOPEKA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL – June 12-14, at Woodshed Event Center. Friday Ball 6-11pm. Sat. & Sun.



10-6. Bringing the Medieval world to life for an unforgettable weekend of warriors, feasting, merchants, music, and myth. Enjoy: Mead, feasting, and celebrations; Armored combat exhibitions; Live music & late-night revelry. Merchants; Mead, ale, and food vendors; Weapons demos & Jousting; Storytelling and living-history displays; Family activities & children's realm; Live performers, musicians, and entertainers.

NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT – Jun. 2, 7:30pm, Garfield Park Gazebo

BLOCK PARTY – Jun. 5, 5-9pm, Kaw Valley Bank parking lot, 1110 N. Kansas Ave. Free live music and food! Chance Encounter and Glory Days Pizza, plus Pineapple Dream. Free face painting and balloon artists too! While supplies last!

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION CAR SHOW – Jun. 6, 8-12, Lux Auto Detailing, 660 NE 24 Highway. Show cars, classics, hot rods, etc. Food, drinks, giveaways, etc.

GARAGE SALE & BAKE SALE - June 13, 8am-4pm, Kansas Ave United Methodist Church, 1029 N Kansas Ave, inside Fellowship Hall. Fundraiser for Children/Youth ministry. Lots of good bargains!

HELLO SUNSHINE SUMMER EVENT – Jun. 13, 10-2, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Pl. Face painting, bouncy houses, kid games, food trucks, giveaways

NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT – Jun. 23, 7:30pm,

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the events calendar

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

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

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

BREAD BASKET FARMERS MARKET - Every Saturday 7:30am-1pm, West Ridge Mall parking lot, south end.

MONDAY FARMERS MARKET - Mondays 7:30-11:30am, thru Sep. 14, Topeka & Sh. Co. Library, 10th & Washburn. (closed Memorial Day & Labor Day)

FARMERS MARKET - Hoyt, Wed. 3-6

ROSSVILLE FARMERS MARKET - Thu. 4-6 at the city park by the pool

OVERBROOK FARMERS MARKET - Mon. 4-6 at the fairgrounds (until Labor Day)

LAWRENCE FARMERS MARKET - Sat. 7:30-11:30am, 824 New Hampshire St

PERRY LECOMPTON FARMERS MARKET - Fri. 4-6:30pm, parking lot of the former Thriftway

TOUCH A TRUCK - May 30, 10-12, West Ridge Mall

DOGGIE DATE NIGHT - May 30, 6-8pm, Every Plaza

SILENT AUCTION AND CARNIVAL - May 30, 3pm, Countryside UMC, 3221 SW Burlingame. Games, face painting, a bounce house, and more

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

WELCOME SUMMER VENDOR SHOW - May 30, 10-6, West Ridge Mall. Indoor vendor market.

SPRING VENDOR EVENT - May 31, 11-6, HyVee. Featuring local vendors, food trucks!

SANTE FE BAND CONCERT - May 31, 7pm, Gage Park Amphitheatre

BIBLE CHAT - Jun. 2, 1-2pm, Kansas Ave. UMC, 1029 N. Kansas Ave. All are welcome to join for an open forum Bible study! Come deepen your understanding of scripture & grow through shared reflection & discussion.

NORTH TOPEKA COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT - Jun. 2, 7:30pm, Garfield Park Gazebo

ING NETWORKING GROUP - Jun. 3, 11:30am at IHOP north. All welcome, free to attend, order from menu if desired.

EATS AND BEATS - June 4, 6-9pm, Every Plaza. Switch in Time with Tyler Swain

HHS FOOD TRUCK NIGHT - June 5, 4-8pm, 5720 SW 21st. Food and local bands. Bring a lawn chair. Helps homeless animals.

GNOME HOME CLASS - Jun. 5, 4-8pm, HHS, 5720 SW 21st St. Join us during Food Truck Night for a hands-on fundraiser that's a little magical... a GNOME HOME building class to raise funds for the shelter!

BLOCK PARTY - Jun. 5, 5-9pm, Kaw Valley Bank parking lot, 1110 N. Kansas Ave. Free live music and food! Chance Encounter and Glory Days Pizza, plus Pineapple Dream. Free face painting and balloon artists too! While supplies last!

FIRST FRIDAY AT CONSTITUTION HALL - Jun. 5, 5-8pm, 429 S. Kansas Ave. Constitution Hall will be open as part of the citywide art walk. Stop in, explore the space, and experience a place where history hap-

pened.

FRIDAY NITE BITES - Jun. 5, 234 Main St, Carbondale. Food Truck event

FIRST FRIDAY MUSIC IN REDBUD PARK - June 5. Stephanie Teagarden & Own Two Feet.

WOODSHED 1ST SATURDAYS MARKET - June 6, 9-2, Woodshed Event Center.

HEARTLAND SALUTE TO AMERICA 250 - Jun. 6, 7:30am-2pm, Museum of the Kansas National Guard, 125 SE Airport Dr., Forbes Field. Pancakes/Biscuits & Gravy 7-9, military equipment displays, Topeka Big Band 9am, patriot parade 10am, Sante Fe Band 11am, Cookout meal 11-1, kids activities, face painting, food truck 11-2, inflatables WWII battle re-enactment 1 & 2pm

DOORSTEP'S NEIGHBORFEST - June 6, 10am-2pm, 5973 SW 25th St. Food trucks, 5K FunRun at 9am, car show, fire truck, storm chaser vehicle, raffles, family fun zone, face painting, inflatable. www.Doorstep-topeka.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD HANGOUT MARKET - Jun. 6, 11-3, 29th Oakley Shopping Center. Baked goods, produce, food trucks, flowers, homemade cloths, vendors. Dogs welcome.

NAMI WALK - June 6, 11-1, West Ridge Mall. Registration on-site begins at 10 a.m. The day will also include remarks from several people, along with storytelling, an art display and a scavenger hunt. Find details and register at NAMIWalks.org/Kansas.

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION CAR SHOW - Jun. 6, 8-12, Lux Auto Detailing, 660 NE 24 Highway. Show cars, classics, hot rods, etc. Food, drinks, giveaways, etc.

MULVANE ART FAIR - Jun. 6; 10-5 & 7: 10-3, 1700 SW College Ave. Over 85 fine art booths, Food trucks, Live music, Special guest instructor in the Art Lab Outdoors, Interactive art experiences

SUMMER KICK-OFF - Jun. 6, 2-8pm, Crestview Park, 4901 Shunga Drive. Faith Temple Church presents Talent Show, Live Music, Live DJ, Bounce Houses, Face Painting, Balloon Animals, Kickball Tournament, Great Food, Mechanical Bull, Cornhole, Raffles & More! Info: faithtemple1952@gmail.com; 785-235-1384. KFBG97.7FM / UpperRoomRadioOnline.com

GRAND OPENING - Jun. 7, 10am. New businesses Opal Out West boutique and Soda Rodeo dirty soda, 1929 SW Gage

JUNE FELLOWSHIP - Jun. 7, 5-7pm, Central Park Christian Church, 1535 SW Clay. Fast-paced game of Speed Friendshipping and find out all kinds of interesting facts about the other attendees. Make new friends during this entertaining activity AND enjoy an ice cream sundae bar! Ice cream will be provided, you bring your favorite toppings and goodies.

C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON - June 11, 11:30-1, at Celtic Fox. Featuring Ryan Wynne from Doxazo. Free admission. Meals available from menu if desired. Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org so we know how many to expect. Open to the public - bring a friend!

SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, July 9, 11:30-1
EATS AND BEATS - June 11, 6-9pm, Every Plaza. Milltown Band opening for Villians Dance

250TH BIRTHDAY PARTY - Jun. 11, 5:30-7pm, House2Home, Fairlawn Plaza. Melissa Rau, Topeka sculptress: Her Uncle Sam statute will be on display in

the store. It is amazing. Come listen to her tell you how she creates all her outstanding works of art! July 4th décor on sale.

TOPEK RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL - June 12-14 at The Woodshed Event Center. Step into a world of magic, adventure, and merriment! Jousting, Birds of Prey, Live armored combat, Fire performers, archery, axe throw, pony rides. Separate Pirate Bar for adults. Flinthaven Fae Ball Friday evening. Main festival Sat & Sun 10-6. \$16 per day, \$30 weekend pass. VIP Experience \$100: Admission all 3 days, VIP Tent - Feast like royalty, private shaded seating at shows. Camping available.

ANNUAL SIDEWALK SALE - Jun. 12, 10-5, Fairlawn Plaza. Free Snow Cones while supplies last from 11-10. Music by Colin Nichols

INDOOR GARAGE/TREASURE SALE - Jun. 12-13, 8:30-3, 5221 SW West Dr. Women's Club of Topeka.

CORNER MARKET - June 13, 10-3, 29th & Adams. Vendors and kids activities.

GARAGE SALE & BAKE SALE - June 13, 8am-4pm, Kansas Ave United Methodist Church, 1029 N Kansas

Ave, inside Fellowship Hall. Fundraiser for Children/Youth ministry. Lots of good bargains! 4th décor on sale.

JUNE MARKET - Jun. 13, 10am, The Marketplace at West Ridge Mall. Local vendors.

ANNUAL MAETA TRUCK AND CAR SHOW - Jun. 13, Meriden Antique Engine and Threshers Assn. 8275 KS-4 Hwy. Flea market too.

OPENING CAR SHOW - June 13, Heartland Motorsports Park. Free admission to the public.

HHS RUMMAGE SALE - Jun. 13, 9-1, 5720 SW 21st.

HELLO SUNSHINE SUMMER EVENT - Jun. 13, 10-2, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Pl. Face painting, bouncy houses, kid games, food trucks, giveaways

SECOND SATURDAY FREE CONCERT - Jun. 13, 7:30pm, Celtic Fox, 118 SW 8th Ave. Kansas City's own Rock Party LIVE

SUMMERTIME BLUES - Jun. 17, 7-9pm, Gage Park Amphitheater. Featuring Howard Mahan



ING NETWORKING GROUP - Jun. 17, 11:30am at

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

June 11, 11:30-1: "POWER" Luncheon at Celtic Fox. Ryan Wynne with Doxazo Ministires, helping every kid find a church home.

Free Admission. Order lunch from menu if desired.

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



Save the Dates!

- July 9: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1
- Aug. 13: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1: Sam Brownback
- Sep. 10: POWER Luncheon, 11:30-1

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

THE HEAT – FREE fitness classes for the community. Located at Florence Crittenton Services Center for Integrative Health, 5423 SW 7th. www.flccritkans.org

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

TAI CHI FOR HEALTH – Mon. 10-11 at Lowman United Methodist Church and Thu. 9:30-10:30 at Topeka Zoo. No training needed, just watch & follow. Contact Madon Daily at 505-424-8989 or madondaily@gmail.com. To join from Home via Zoom, contact Madon for the Zoom link.

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

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

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.

NARVRE Meeting (Nat'l Assn of Retired and Veteran Railroad Employees): 2nd Tue each month at Museum of the KS National Guard, 125 SE Airport Dr, 9:30AM.

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? shepherdstoepka@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 tgstoepka.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: 785-272-9249 or kittens812@sbcglobal.net

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

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

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

MIDLAND CARE GRIEF SUPPORT Groups: Building A,

200 SW Frazier Circle; Every Mon., 4-5pm: 12 Week Adult Group for Recent Loss 1st and 3rd Thu., 10:30am & 5:30pm—Ongoing Adult Group 1st and 3rd Thu., 5:30pm: Ongoing Young Adult Group (4-18 years of age) For All Groups: Call for start dates and info packet. Group and individual grief support available upon request. Info: 785-232-2044 ext.341

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS – Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides an opportunity for caregivers to get together and share their ideas and feelings. 2nd Monday, 3:30pm, Topeka public library,

Anton Rm. 3rd Friday, 12 noon, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka

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

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

PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY – Men struggling with

pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/ accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted Roberts. For info: 249-9509. All inquiries confidential.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUPS – Monthly support group meetings for caregivers of individuals with

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entertainment

Michael Jackson Movie: Thriller or Beat It?

What comes to mind when you hear the name “Michael Jackson?” Maybe King of Pop; Jackson Five; Moonwalking; Thriller; We Are the World? Or perhaps Neverland; child molestation allegations; hair on fire; plastic surgery; marrying Elvis’ daughter? The new Michael movie explores the global superstar’s many successes and a few of his failures. What drove him?

The singer, songwriter, and dancer was a pop culture fixture for many years. At age five, he joined The Jackson 5 singers, eventually becoming lead vocalist. The Guinness Book of World Records in 2021 named Michael’s Thriller the all-time best-selling album. Thriller, Billy Jean, and Beat It were the album’s featured singles.

Jackson died on June 25, 2009 from acute Propofol intoxication. It was ruled a homicide after his doctor, Conrad Murray, admitted to administering the drug and other sedatives leaving him unattended. He was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and served two years in prison.

It was a shocking end to a storied career. He won 13 Grammy Awards, performed at the 1993 Super Bowl halftime show, recorded a duet with Mick Jagger, was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2001, and acted as the Scarecrow in the 1997 movie The Wiz with Dianna Ross. Michael and Lionel Richie co-wrote We Are the World to raise millions of dollars for humanitarian aid in Africa.

Success, but sad struggles

Dazzle, excitement, sparkle, and success defined his career.

Sadly, serious struggles and puzzling inconsistencies defined significant parts of his personal life.

Both parents, Katherine and Joseph, had pursued music careers and had dreams of their children doing likewise. Joseph reportedly abused his sons as he pressured them to succeed: beating them with a belt buckle or electric cord, holding 5-hour rehearsals daily after school, hitting them with a tree branch when they made a wrong dance step.

Writing in The Guardian, cultural analyst Alexis Petridis summarized, “Once you knew what Michael Jackson’s child-



hood and early career had been like, the issue wasn’t so much why he was apparently turning so weird but why it hadn’t happened sooner.”

Neverland, young boys

Some weirdness examples: Neverland Ranch became Jackson’s home, amusement park, and residence for young boys with whom he shared his bed. “Why can’t you share your bed? That’s the most loving thing to do, to share your bed with someone,” Jackson told a British journalist in a television documentary.

In a 1991 music video, Jackson’s crotch grab generated so many complaints that he apologized and removed the scene from the video, yet other entertainers copied his move (which the film portrays him making at times).

A 13-year-old boy’s 1993 allegation of sexual childhood molestation by Jackson was settled out of court. Another 13-year-old boy’s allegations got Jackson charged with child molestation in a California court in 2003. After much media hoopla, the court found Jackson not guilty in 2005. Other accusers have recanted their stories, saying they were forced into making statements. Seventeen years after Jackson’s death, the trials continue with two accusers taking Jackson’s estate to court in this coming November 2026.

Faith and forgiveness

Faith played a prominent part in Michael’s life. Katherine Jackson was a devout Jehovah’s Witness and sought to instill that faith in her kids. Michael be-

came quite involved but dissociated himself from that church in 1987. His statements about God and Jesus include: “All is possible if God is on our side.” “I will never stop helping and loving people the way Jesus said to.” “I simply believe in it (the Bible) and I get down on my knees every night and thank God and ask Him to lead the way.”

Whether Michael ever established a personal relationship with God through Jesus is disputed.

However, there is good evidence that he forgave his father for his abusive parenting. In a 2001 Oxford Union speech, he said, “I have begun to see that even my father’s harshness was a kind of love, an imperfect love, to be sure, but love nonetheless. He pushed me because he loved me. Because he wanted no man ever to look down at his offspring. And now with time, rather than bitterness, I feel blessing. . . .my initial fury has slowly given way to forgiveness.”

Jackson is portrayed by his real-life nephew, Jaafar Jackson, and the film explores his life in ways that will please his fans and disappoint his critics. Plenty of music and dancing, but no references to alleged child molestation which could be covered in a subsequent film.

Rated PG-13 (USA) “for some thematic material, language, and smoking.” Now in theaters.

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

“The Bible Recap for Kids” is the Book of the Year



The Evangelical Christian Publishers Association recently announced the winners of the 2026 Christian Book Award program, recognizing excellence in Christian publishing across 12 book and Bible categories. “The Bible Recap for Kids: A 365-Day Guide through the Bible for Young Readers” by Tara-Leigh Cobble was named the 2026 Christian Book of the Year.

The awards were presented at the ECPA Awards Celebration held during the ECPA Leadership Summit. The annual gathering brought together Christian publishing executives and industry leaders for an evening of recognition, including special honors for Robert Wolgemuth and Livingstone Corporation founders Bruce Barton and Dave Veerman, as well as milestone and sales achievements.

“The Bible Recap for Kids” is a kid-friendly adaptation of the bestselling “The Bible Recap,” helping young readers build a lasting rhythm of Bible reading. Its selection comes amid continued momentum in Bible publishing, reflecting strong national and global demand for accessible, habit-forming resources that help readers engage scripture daily.

“The Christian Book Awards represent the very best of our industry each year,” ECPA president Jeff Crosby said. “These winning titles in 12 categories exemplify excellence in content, creativity and impact — books that are shaping lives and advancing the mission of Christian publishing around the world.”

The winners of the 2026 Christian Book Award program are:

• Christian Book of the Year: “The Bible Recap for Kids: A 365-Day

Guide through the Bible for Young Readers” by Tara-Leigh Cobble

• Audio: “The Girl on the Bathroom Floor: Held Together When Everything is Falling Apart” by Amber Emily Smith, narrated by Amber Emily Smith and Granger Smith

• Bibles: “NIV Application Bible”
• Bible Reference Works: “Our Daily Bread Bible Atlas” by John A. Beck

• Bible Study: “God of the Ordinary: A Study in the Book of Ruth: by Alistair Begg.

• Biography and Memoir: “Here Be Dragons: Navigating Mean Girls, Motherhood and Other Mysteries of Life” by Melanie Shankle

• Children: “Hello! My Name is Emmanuel” by Emmanuel Jean Russell

• Christian Living: “You Have a Calling: Finding Your Vocation in the True, Good and Beautiful” by Karen Swallow Prior

• Devotion and Gift: “Spurgeon and the Gospels: The Gospels with Devotions from Charles Spurgeon” by Charles Spurgeon

• Faith and Culture: “The Tech Exit: A Practical Guide to Freeing Kids and Teens from Smartphones” by Clare Morell

• Ministry Resources: “Pastoral Confessions: The Healing Path to Faithful Ministry” by Jamin Goggin

• New Author: “He Always Hears: A Story of Loss and the Hope of Things Made New” by Alyson Punzi

• Young People’s Literature: “The Story of Corrie ten Boom: The Watchmaker Who Forgave Her Enemies” by Jennifer T. Kelley

Christian Mom from Missouri Wins American Idol Title

A Christian woman from Missouri is the latest "American Idol" winner. Hannah Harper, a mother of three from Willow Springs, performed "Married Into This Town," teamed with country singer Lee Ann Womack for a duet of "I Hope You Dance" and revisited her original song "String Cheese," which went viral following her audition earlier this season.

"You deserve to be here for your voice, for who you are as a person, for who you are as a mom, as a daughter, for your songwriting," Carrie Underwood, one of the judges, told her. "I'm so proud."

After host Ryan Seacrest announced her victory, Harper became emotional as she closed the night with "At The Cross (Love Ran Red)" by Chris Tomlin while fellow contestants and judges gathered around her onstage. In a social media



post, she thanked fans for supporting her throughout the competition and pointed back to her faith, the Christian Post reported.

"What a wild, beautiful journey this

has been," Harper wrote. "And somehow, we're just getting started. Thank you to every single person who believed in me, prayed over me, voted and helped carry this dream farther than I ever could've imagined. I'm beyond thankful for the doors the Lord has opened and for the opportunity to walk this path."

Harper, who attends First Baptist Church of Birch Tree, Mo., consistently spoke throughout the season about the role faith has played in her life and music. Her audition went viral after she performed "String Cheese," an original song inspired by her experience battling postpartum depression. During the audition, Harper shared that the song stemmed from a difficult moment with her son that she said ultimately reminded her that motherhood was "the biggest ministry" God had given her. Throughout the competition, Harper continued performing faith-centered music, including during the show's "Songs of Faith" night, when she first sang "At the Cross."

In interviews during the season, Harper said she viewed the national platform as an opportunity to openly talk about her relationship with Jesus.

"I've been in ministry since I was 9 years old," she said earlier this season. "Having a platform at this level and getting to still be this open about my relationship with the Lord is an incredible honor to me."

"I feel honored that I had the privilege to share that song on such a massive platform," Harper told Springfield's KY3TV. "I released it on Mother's Day a year ago, and now seeing the views on the video. The comments, the people who have made videos who are moms who say, 'I feel so seen.' It just gives me all the affirmations of that's exactly why I walked that path."

Zebedee Actor Shares Powerful Faith Journey



The story of Nick Shakoour, who plays Zebedee in "The Chosen," is inspiring as that of the character he portrays. He traces his spiritual journey from Lebanon to the United States in a new book, "Transformer: Awakening from a Spiritual Coma."

"I've always said 'The Chosen' was a conduit that God used to get me over to Texas," Shakoour told CBN News. "Lo and behold, I didn't think it would lead to a church conference invite with friends that I started to make with the construction crew, and then there are friends outside of the production."

Attending that conference would change his life.

"It happened after the church conference was over," he said. "We were in an empty arena. It was just me and pretty much nine people praying over. For some reason, I was thirsty to know who God really was. I was growing tired of people telling me to refer to scripture."

The Bible had started speaking to him at the time, but Shakoour still had questions.

"[I was like], if this is real, like, where is God?" he said. "Where is God?" On the way to the conference, I actually had a physically tangible — I guess you could

call it low-energy — demonic attack where I felt like I was being swallowed alive and my body froze."

Shakoour said he was terrified by the time he reached the conference, finding himself "completely broken and disarmed, and desperate." He said he had no idea where life would be heading after the conference but ended up leaving totally transformed. "A force outside of me was growing larger and larger and larger as my body was just almost shivering, quivering in fear," Shakoour said.

He believes he was experiencing the presence of God in those moments, describing the profound impact it had on his body as the group continued laying hands on him and praying. Shakoour believes it was the moment he received the Holy Spirit, although initially, he was confused.

"I said, 'yeah, but I thought that happened when my grandfather baptized me,'" he said. "And the intercessor there said, 'Well, that may have been resting on you when your grandfather baptized you, but he's resting in you.' It really changed everything."

Shakoour hopes his autobiography will inspire people to look deeper at his



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Mow to the Right Height for a Stronger, Healthier Lawn

How short to mow is a commonly debated topic, and getting it right is not only tricky, but critical to a healthy lawn.

“The goal is to find the right height for the turf type. Mowing too low can over-expose your lawn to the sun, weakening the roots and creating the potential for a weed infestation; and mowing too high runs the risk of excess moisture build-up, creating a welcoming environment for pests and disease,” says Exmark marketing manager, Lenny Mangnall. “On the other hand, grass mowed to the right height can most effectively leverage vital sunlight, rain and nutrients for deeper, denser, stronger and healthier blades.”

A video that Exmark made to demystify lawn care explains that to strike the right balance, you should follow the golden rule of mowing: Never cut off more than one-third of the blade at a time, even if your lawn is overgrown. While you may feel like you’re saving time, overzealous mowing is doing your lawn a disservice. Gradually lowering your blades to the desired height will help maintain a strong root system and lush



yard canopy.

Another consideration is grass type, with warm-season grasses and cool-season grasses falling into two mowing height ranges.

For warm-season grasses, like Zosia and Bermuda, drop the deck height of your mower close to its lowest setting, between 1-2 inches high. These grasses thrive in scorching summer sun and can handle a lower height. If you have cool-season grass, like Fescue or Kentucky Bluegrass, cut it a little bit higher, between 2.5-4 inches. These grasses are built for freezing winters and need some height as protection from the elements.

It’s also important to remember that over the course of a year, the height you mow to within the recommended range of your grass type will change. Once springtime rolls around, lower your deck height by a half inch from your normal summer height. This encourages new growth.

During summer, mow on the higher end of your grass type’s specified range. Taller grass provides shade to the soil, helping it retain the moisture needed to stay healthy and cool.

In fall, continue your normal summer routine, especially if you have warm-season grass. If you have a cool-season lawn, you might have to up your mowing frequency, as it’s this grass type’s prime growing season.

For the last mowing session of the year, drop your mowing height by half an inch again. That brings you up to winter, the perfect season

for you and your lawn to rest. With most grasses going dormant in winter, mowing isn’t typically necessary. So take that time to do other activities and tasks you enjoy in the yard. For warmer climates, you can continue to mow, just cut down on the frequency to ensure a healthier lawn.

For additional insights, watch “How to Determine Mowing Height,” an episode of “Done-In-A-Weekend Projects,” an original se-

ries from lawn care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life — a unique multimedia destination focused on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

Lawn care may seem complex, but with the right knowledge, you can cultivate a lush, thriving lawn this summer and beyond.

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sports

World Cup Outreach Sparks Gospel Conversations

The world is coming to Kansas City and other North American cities this summer for World Cup Soccer. Victory Beyond the Cup and the Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association are ready to welcome the world.

Victory Beyond the Cup hopes to turn watch parties, neighborhood gatherings and shared cultural moments into outreach with lasting gospel conversations.

A national initiative spearheaded by Cru, the effort is getting believers into the game by using the tournament as neutral ground to build community and spark meaningful faith conversations. Cru is partnering with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Alpha USA, I Am Second and other ministries to equip 100,000 individuals and 10,000 churches to engage in this cultural moment.

“With so many people interacting with the World Cup, whether watching with friends, checking scores or even attending a game in one of the United States’ host cities, the opportunity for Gospel impact is too large to miss,” said Heather Reddy, executive director of Victory Beyond the Cup. “By removing barriers and making it easy to host and be involved, our hope is that we will see a lasting change, one that persists long after the winner is crowned.”

Area Baptists are also spearheading a focused effort on the games.

“The World Cup is not just a soccer tournament,” Pastor Nic Wilson of First Baptist Church, Peculiar, says. “It is a divine opportunity to spread the gospel, not just in Kansas City but literally across the world for decades to come. It’s almost unfathomable the scale of what’s happening.”

Wilson is leading ministry efforts for the association.

“Out of that 650,000 to a million people that are coming through (Kansas City) the large majority — 75- to 80 percent — are going to be people from outside the United States,” he told The Pathway. “There are countries coming to the United State that are places we can’t



actively send missionaries to. They want to hear about America. They’re open to what Americans do. They want to see the culture. This opens a massive door for the gospel.”

Multiple Missouri Baptist agencies are coordinating to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of fans, teams and other visitors. The World Cup provides the opportunity to be involved foreign missions for a fraction of the cost of going overseas, Wilson said.

“I was talking to a team that’s getting ready to go to Africa,” he said. “They’re going to spend 10 days in Africa. ‘o get over there and back it’s costing them almost \$4,000 a person.”

Our hope and our goal is that there are countries transformed because people in Missouri went outside and shared the gospel with people that were in their community for a soccer game.”

Rob Pochek, who leads the Missouri Baptist Convention’s Prayer and Evangelism team, said his group is ready to assist individuals and churches in evangelism preparation. Churches and mission teams that want help in evangelism training can get it through his team, in person or by video.

His team also possibly can help churches acquire other gospel outreach resources. “We’re helping with evangelism grants to underwrite some of those (evangelism tool) purchases,” he said.

The World Cup gives Christians “an amazing opportunity to do gospel evangelism work in our own backyard,” Wilson said. “We feel burdened for this opportunity the Lord has placed in front of us. I want to see nations and people groups transformed because people in Missouri have shared the gospel.”

As for Victory Beyond the Cup, they’re providing free physical and dig-

Tony Dungy Has No Regrets Over Backlash to Speech

Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy didn’t expect the reaction. Not like this.

When he agreed to speak at the 2023 March for Life, the former Super Bowl-winning coach and NBC Sports analyst said he saw it as straightforward. Then the emails started.

“And I thought to myself, ‘Wait a minute. Am I a Christian all the time, or am I a Christian only when people think it’s a good thing to do?’” Dungy said on a podcast hosted by Benjamin Watson. “I have to represent the Lord.”

He said NBC executives grew uneasy as viewer complaints piled up, some questioning whether he should remain on air after appearing at the rally.

“The pushback caught me totally by surprise,” Dungy said. “So many people were writing in to NBC, ‘How can you have this guy on TV?’ The NBC executives were very concerned.”

At the rally in Washington, Dungy pointed to a moment that had briefly united the country. When Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed on the field after cardiac arrest in January 2023, players knelt. Fans prayed. Broadcasts paused.

Dungy told the crowd that response revealed something deeper. People instinctively recognized the value of a life in danger. That same urgency, he said, should extend to the unborn.

He also spoke from personal experience. Dungy and his wife have adopted eight children, a decision he has often tied to his faith.

“One of my daughters was with us,”

ital hosting kits — with a hosting guide, recipes from a variety of countries, prayer cards and conversation starters — to help people feel confident. The kits are available in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese, allowing kingdom conversations to occur across cultural lines. Pastor kits also empower churches to engage their congregations in the initiative. Mighty Networks, an online digital community, allows participants to connect with others taking part from across the country.

Five billion people are expected to watch the FIFA World Cup this summer, and both ministries think believers can spark meaningful conversations, connect across cultures and share the hope of Christ, right where the game begins. For more information, visit www.VictoryBeyondtheCup.com and blueriver-kansascity.org.



he said. “She’s adopted, and she was hearing people say, ‘thank you to the moms who chose life.’ She’s thinking, ‘That could have been me.’ It was powerful.”

Dungy has long been open about his Christian convictions. This time, he said, the decision felt settled, even with the backlash.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “I have to go by

the Bible. That’s the measuring stick for me.”

NBC fired Dungy in March after a 17-season run on Football Night in America. The news outlet said it was part of a “revamp.” Dungy responded that it was “disappointing news” but that he was excited about the future.

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3 Steps to Help Recognize Stroke Signs

A stroke can happen to anyone at any age.

In fact, every 40 seconds someone in the United States has a stroke, with approximately 800,000 people experiencing a stroke annually, according to the American Heart Association, making it a leading cause of death and serious, long-term disability.

A stroke happens when normal blood flow in the brain is interrupted.

When parts of the brain don't get the oxygen-rich blood they need, those cells die.

However, many strokes may be prevented, treated and overcome by understanding the risk factors and taking steps toward managing them.

"When a stroke happens, every minute matters," said Dr. Adrian Jaquin-Valdivia, a stroke neurologist at HCA Healthcare and American

Stroke Association volunteer expert. "The faster someone gets treatment, the better the chance of saving brain function. On average, nearly 2 million brain cells die every minute a stroke goes untreated. Early treatment improves survival rates and reduces disability."

Take control of your brain health with this information from the American Stroke Association.

Know the Warning Signs

Because strokes do not discriminate, knowing the signs is key. To help you recognize common warning signs and symptoms of stroke and take action in moments that matter, remember this simple acronym: B.E. F.A.S.T.

B: Balance loss – sudden difficulty with walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination.

E: Eye (or vision) changes – sudden vision loss or trouble seeing in one or both eyes.

F: Face drooping – one side of the face droops or feels numb; a smile may look uneven.

A: Arm weakness – one arm feels weak or numb or drifts downward when raised.

S: Speech difficulty – a telltale sign of a stroke is slurred speech or trouble speaking.

T: Time to call 911 – If someone is having any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call emergency services immediately to jump-start care. Be sure to check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms started.

Explore the signs by playing the interactive, web-based B.E. F.A.S.T. Experience to see what stroke symptoms may look, feel and sound like.

Take Steps to Protect Your Health

Approximately 80% of strokes are preventable, according to the American Stroke Association. Everyday choices – such as eating well, moving



more, not smoking and keeping up with routine health screenings, along with managing risk factors with the support of a health care professional – can help lower stroke risk.

Manage Risk Factors

High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke, according to the 2025 American Heart Association/ACC Guideline for the Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults. Controlling blood pressure through regular checkups, at-home monitoring, following your treatment plan and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce your risk of stroke and support overall

brain health.

Additionally, having a stroke or mini stroke, known as a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA), increases the chances of having a second one. That's why identifying what caused your stroke and reducing your personal risk factors can help protect your health and reduce the risk of another stroke.

To learn more about stroke risk factors and better understand the warning signs, visit Stroke.org/StrokeMonth, where you can also access stroke support services and subscribe to the Stroke Connection e-newsletter for the latest resources.

– Feature Impact

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Medicare: What to Know Before You Turn 65



Sixty-five is more than a number. It's a milestone. A moment to reflect on where you've been and look forward with confidence to what comes next. For millions of Americans, turning 65 also means unlocking one of the most valuable benefits you've earned: Medicare.

The best is still ahead, and it starts with knowing your options. The official source for Medicare information, Medicare.gov, is here to help with clear, trusted information.

The path to Medicare is not the same for everyone. Some people get Medicare automatically and others have to sign up. It depends on whether you are already getting Social Security. Either way, you'll want to choose how you get your Medicare coverage.

Get information for your path at Medicare.gov, where you can find out when and how to enroll and explore your coverage options.

Understanding Your Medicare Coverage Options

When you first sign up for Medicare, you choose how to get your coverage. There are two main options: Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage.

Original Medicare is health coverage provided directly by the federal government. It has two parts:

- **Part A** (Hospital Insurance) covers inpatient hospital stays, skilled nursing facility care, hospice care and home health care. Most people pay no premium for Part A.

- **Part B** (Medical Insurance) covers doctor visits, outpatient care, preventive services (like screenings, vaccines and annual wellness visits) and durable medical equipment like

wheelchairs and walkers. The standard Part B premium is \$202.90 per month and is typically deducted from your Social Security check.

With Original Medicare, you can visit any doctor or hospital in the U.S. that accepts Medicare. You can also add optional coverage to help manage costs:

- **Medigap** (Supplemental Insurance) helps pay your share of Medicare costs.

- **Part D** (Prescription Drug Coverage) helps pay for medications.

Medicare Advantage is an alternative to Original Medicare that provides Part A and Part B and is offered by private insurers approved by Medicare. You still pay the Part B premium. Some plans charge an additional premium – though many carry a \$0 plan premium and may even help cover part of your Part B cost. Most plans include in Part D drug coverage along with extra benefits like dental, vision and hearing. Keep in mind most plans require you to use doctors within the plan's network.

5 Steps to Enroll with Confidence

- 1. Use official sources.** Go to Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE for step-by-step, personalized guidance on coverage and enrollment.

- 2. Start early.** You don't have to wait until your birthday. Explore your options now so you're ready when your enrollment window opens.

- 3. Know your enrollment path.** Your path depends on your circumstances – some people are automatically enrolled and some are not. There are unique steps for people who are still working.

- 4. Avoid late enrollment penalties.** Missing your enrollment window can result in a permanent premium penalty for both Part B and Part D. Signing up on time protects your wallet for years to come.

- 5. Compare plans and save.** At Medicare.gov, you can compare plan costs side-by-side, based on the specific drugs you take. A quick comparison could save you money each year. You can also confirm your current doctors are in-network before you choose a plan.

Turning 65 is a milestone worth celebrating and it's the perfect time to focus on what matters most: your health and well-being. That includes eating well, exercising and making sure you have health insurance that fits your needs. There's no one-size-fits-all plan. What's important is finding an option that works for you and your health and financial needs.

Start your journey at Medicare.gov – your roadmap to a healthier and confident future.

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Feature Impact

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De-Age Your Brain! The 5 Day Reset Plan

More than seven million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease and that number is expected to nearly double by 2050. It's also one of the leading causes of death in the United States. But researchers say some of the most powerful tools for protecting the brain may not come in a pill or a shot, it may be the things you do every day that could protect your brain and your memories.

At 66, Nanette Price is learning to play the piano, draw and beat brain games online. Pushing her brain to keep learning.

"I watched my father be consumed by Alzheimer's as well as my grandmother and my great-uncle," said Price.

Experts say brain health isn't about one magic fix. It's about small daily habits.

"So, we've learned that lifestyle behavior impacts virtually every chronic disease," said Jeffrey Katula, PhD, Health Psychologist, Wake Forest University.

Wake Forest University School of Medicine is testing that idea in a major national study called U.S. POINTER. They looked at whether exercise, healthy eating, social connection and mental challenge could help protect the brain.

"Participation in this trial was transformative in their lives. They are different," explained Laura Baker, PhD, Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

You don't have to change everything overnight. If you want to jump-start your brain health, try a five-day reset. Day one, move more. Day two, eat the rainbow, that means colorful fruits and veggies. Day three, learn something new. Day four know your numbers. Blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar because what's good for your heart is good for your brain. And day five, connect with people.

"The social forces are much, much more powerful than anything else that we do," said Katula.

And once you start, keep going. It's a lifestyle change.

"Make a commitment. 'I'm worth it. I'm worth it, my brain is worth it,'" said Baker.

"Little changes in each of these different domains add up to big change," explained Katula.

For Nanette, it's about doing everything she can now to protect her brain later.

"It gives me hope. I mean, hope's huge," said Price.

There is also some encouraging news on treatment. The FDA has approved Leqembi and Kisunla for people with early Alzheimer's, specifically those with mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia. These drugs are not cures, but they can help slow disease progression.

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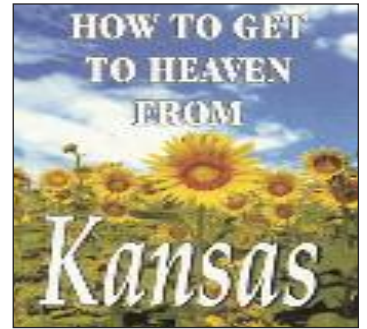
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More important than living in KANSAS is where you will live forever. Just as you would look at a map of KANSAS to find your way, so you must look at the Bible to find your way to heaven. The Bible says, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life,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

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

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

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

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



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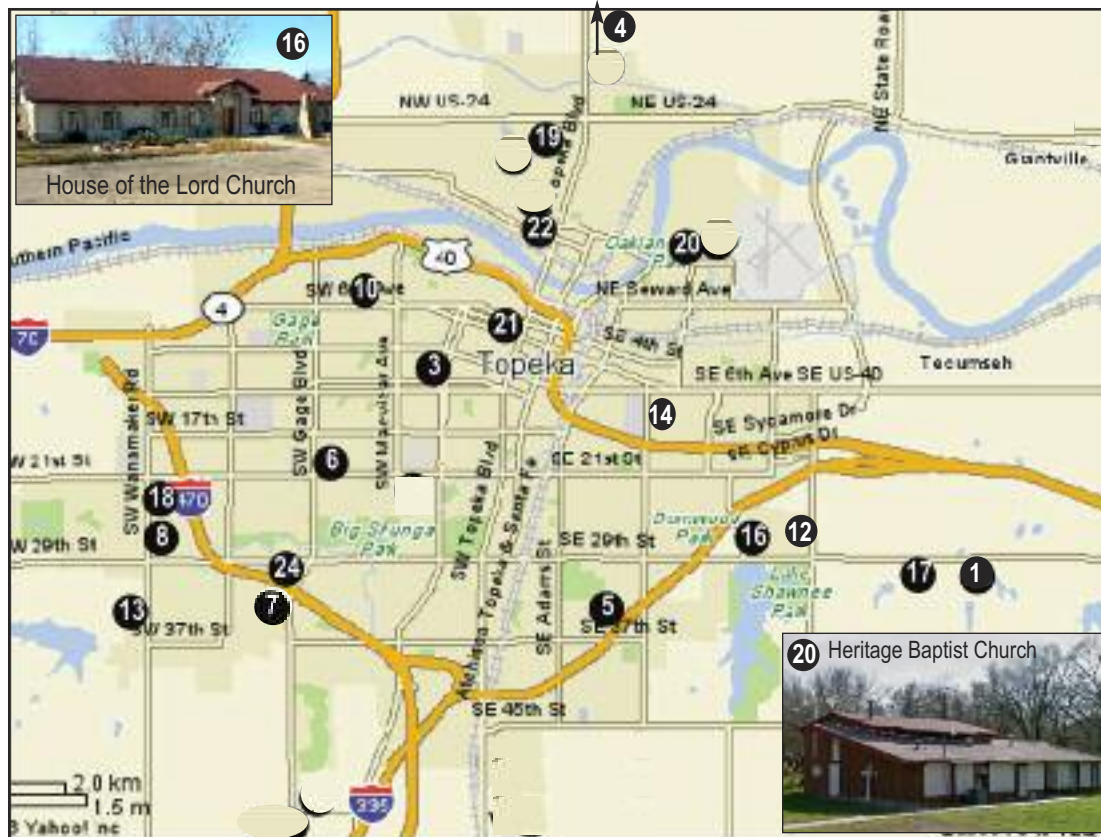
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