# Every Morning Is A Gift

**By Van Yandell**

Psalm 118: 24 "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Early risers see a world others miss. To see a sunrise or an early morning rain is to witness this once perfect world God gave us.

To awaken and go outdoors when darkness still envelopes our location enables us to see our part of the universe as it was created.

We witness the constant movement of the moon and stars. With the perpetual rotation of the earth and its orbital path around our star (the sun), we realize this perfect motion set in "the beginning" is without error.

Could these movements have happened accidentally? That of course, is in the mind of the observer.

Everything in creation (in our universe) is in motion. The growth of grass in our front yard to the flow of our blood through our veins to the movement of the planet earth around the sun has been perfectly predetermined.

When we consider these perfect movements we conclusively see, those could not have simply fallen into place by chance.

Early mornings for many of us gives an opportunity to be alone with our creator. I have long believed prayer is designed to praise God and give thanks. Many believe in praying for material things but scripture does not fully support that.

When material things are asked for and the prayer is not answered, many would be inclined to believe God is not hearing them or not answering. In scriptural reality, such prayers are not within God's will to answer.

Matthew 6:8 "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 is a Jesus lesson on how to pray. His instructions for us in many areas are commandments, not suggestions.

Matthew 6: 9-13 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

If we notice, the only material thing Jesus asks for is "our daily bread." The rest is to acknowledge God, submit to His will, forgiveness, deliverance and to acknowledge His power.

In asking for "our daily bread," He is a asking for sustenance, not an extravagant meal.

Early morning prayers and all prayers should emulate His prayer. The heathen asks for riches, death to his enemies and power.

Solomon asked for wisdom. 1 Kings 3: 9 "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people."

In Solomon's asking for wisdom to "judge this thy so great a people," God not only answered that prayer but gave him those things he did not ask for.

Every morning is a gift from God to be in His presence, to witness His creation and to give Him thanks for allowing us to be a part of that creation.

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

The Apostle Paul gives further instructions for prayer. "Pray without ceasing" is our admonition to be in a continual state of prayer and in the presence of God.

A neighbor family are members of a church that promotes that the women wear bonnets. I once asked the wife "What is the symbolism of your bonnet?" Her reply "It is to keep us reminded to constantly be in God's presence and in a mind of prayer."

To be a continual state and connection with God is not an easy task in today's world. It must be a conscious and ongoing effort.

Of course, early mornings are not the only time we can be in the presence of God and in a continual state of prayer.

C.S. Lewis (played by Anthony Hopkins) in the movie "Shadowlands," said "That's not why I pray, I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."

A man was asked "What do you gain by praying? He answered "Absolutely nothing but what I lost was more important. I lost anger, greed, depression, anxiety, insecurity, egotism and a fear of death. The answers to our prayers are not what we gain but what we lost which in the end is gain."

God's Holy Bible teaches a spiritual realm and that we are spiritual, eternal beings. Eternity is a Biblical reality and teaches the path to that state of existence.

The Bible teaches there is only one eternal salvation. That is by a faith based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) that Christ Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (Romans 4: 25) and resurrected (Matthew 28: 6).

*Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com*

# Take Time To Stop, Smell The Roses

***By Becky Greenwell***
***bgreenw2@bellsouth.net***

On this eve of Thanksgiving, which is quickly becoming lost in a whirlwind of flurry as quickly as the dry leaves being tossed among the people hurriedly getting ready for the Christmas season. There never seems to be much ado about Thanksgiving in the air.

Whose fault might that be? The public, the media, or everyone who is living in the fast lane?

The philosophy of "Stop and smell the roses," flows off tongues as smoothly as a Popsicle melting down the arms of a child on a hot summer day.

Who really stops and smells the roses? Who takes the time on the one day of year that has been set-aside for us to give thanks and remember just exactly what we have been blessed with?

Blessed are they who remember and are thankful.

When watching the pretend portrayals of TV families when everything seems perfect and comes across so fictitious, makes one want to throw up their hands and proclaim, "Sure, that's how real life is."

I'm sure Thanksgiving Day could be more like that soap opera scene if time and planning went into Thanksgiving as is in the planning of Christmas.

Halloween supplies are in one aisle of the stores while Christmas decorations are already on display in the next aisle. Thanksgiving items are nestled in with the Halloween decorations as fall decorations.

There isn't much advertising or wishing families Happy Thanksgiving either. It goes from "Trick or Treat" to "Are you ready for Christmas yet?"

Yes, I'm right there lost in the hustle and bustle, getting my shopping started, and getting decorations out to enjoy them before it is time for the next season.

This year though I'd like to pause for a just a few minutes and think of some of the things I am truly thankful for.

First, to be born into a country which is free. A country where a person doesn't have to be afraid to speak, can believe in God, and attend a church of choice. I pray that an unborn baby will have as many rights and chances at a healthy life as a premature newborn child.

I am thankful to have a home with food on the table, and I pray poverty, hunger, and homelessness will forever be absolved.

I am thankful for my children who are healthy and successful in their own hearts with their own families.

I am thankful to be able to enjoy grandchildren laughing and playing and who think I'm great.

I am thankful for the mistakes I've learned from and the heartaches I've lived through. Mistakes that made me grow. For the boy who broke my heart and taught me how to recognize true love, and for all the people who have passed through my life who made a difference. My life would truly be different if even one of those people had not been a part of it.

I am thankful for the battles between a mother and teen, so that I could handle teens of my own.

I am thankful my neither of my parents suffered long and hard from the pain of cancer but showed me how to be strong in the face of death and how to appreciate the roses in life.

I am thankful for my talent for writing and the right to express my thoughts on paper freely and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing I have brightened another's day.

This Thanksgiving there is so much to be thankful for and yet so much more that needs changing.

My prayer for each of you this year is that you find the things that really matter and be thankful. I offer a prayer up for each of you for what needs to be changed in your life will be changed or you find the blessing from its pain.

On a lighter note: May your stuffing be tasty, may your turkey be plump, may your potatoes 'n gravy have nary a lump, may your yams be delicious, may your pies take the prize, and may your Thanksgiving dinner stay off your thighs.

God bless you all and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

# Kentucky Department Of Education Approves ACT As State-Funded Exam In 2027

**By Tom Latek**
**Kentucky Today**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has announced the award of a contract to ACT to administer the ACT test as the state-funded college admissions exam beginning in spring 2027.

The previous contract with the College Board to administer the SAT Junior State Administration cost $30 per student over four years. For the last administration of the ACT in 2025, Kentucky paid $38 per student for online testing and $39 per student for paper testing for the statewide administratio

The reduced testing cost between the 2025 ACT contract and the new one will save the state nearly $500,000 each year while continuing to provide all juniors with the opportunity to take a college admissions exam.

KDE is required to follow the?Kentucky Model Procurement Code, the part of state law governing how state agencies purchase goods and services, including large-scale contracts like statewide assessments. This process is designed to ensure fairness in vendor selection and was facilitated by the Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet

"We at KDE are thankful this process has been completed and that our schools now know which exam their juniors will take next spring," said Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher. "We want to thank the Finance and Administration Cabinet for working with us so closely to complete this process in a very efficient manner."

In July 2025, KDE completed a competitive procurement process. The contract was awarded to the College Board to administer the SAT Junior State Administration beginning in spring 2026. During the 2026 legislative session, the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation requiring KDE to begin a new procurement for the state-provided college entrance exam to be implemented in the 2026-2027 school year.

"It is important that all students, regardless of zip code or circumstance, have access to opportunities that help them pursue college and career success," Fletcher said. "This contract helps us maintain that commitment while being responsible stewards of public resources."

The contract with ACT for the college admissions entrance exam is up to $1,425,000 annually to test up to 50,000 students at a cost of $28.50 per student. The cost per the contract with the College Board for the SAT was $1.5 million annually at $30 per student.

The contract also includes more free support for students, families and educators, including free online practice tests.

# UCB Bancshares Announces Dividend Increase

United Community Bancshares, Inc. today announced that its Board of Directors has approved the Company's annual cash dividend to shareholders of record on December 1, marking its 21st consecutive annual dividend increase.

The newly declared dividend represents a 10% increase over the prior year dividend, reflecting the Company's continued financial strength, consistent earnings performance, and commitment to delivering long-term value to its shareholders.

The dividend increase follows a period of continued growth and investment for United Community Bank, highlighted by the opening of its Sebree banking location and a new loan production office in Henderson. As the bank continues to broaden its reach throughout western Kentucky, it remains focused on the principles that have contributed to its success: local ownership, community-based decision making, and strong customer relationships.

With more than $540 million in assets, United Community Bank remains the only locally owned bank based in the tri-county area.

Subscribe
To
The
Sturgis News

## PUBLIC NOTICE

THE FOLLOWING ESTATE HAVE BEEN PROBATED IN UNION DISTRICT COURT. PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS TO FILE AGAINST SAID ESTATES MUST FILE SAME NOT LATER THAN SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIDUCIARY.

Estate of Bobby Franklin Brantley. Executor/Administrator: Amanda Carol Collins, 45 State Route 2835, Morganfield, KY 42437. Date of Appointment: November 12, 2026. Attorney: Charles Williamson, 209 West Main Street, Morganfield, KY 42437.

## -- Thank You --

**It is difficult to find adequate words to express the heart's feelings! The family of Don Edd Wright would like to offer our deepest gratitude for everyone's contributions in helping us in our recent loss. The prayers, cards, food, gifts, and Celebration of Life Mass were all comfort offerings and a testimony the place Don Edd holds in all our lives. Thank you, and God bless you!**

**KELLY BROOK APARTMENTS**
**aka**
**Public Housing Corporation of Sturgis**
**221 South Holt Drive - P.O. Box 252**
**Sturgis, KY 42459**
**Phone (270) 374-4000**
**kellybrook@bellsouth.net**
*Affordable HUD Section 8 Senior/Disabled One Bedroom Apartments*
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY
**Maintenance Free - Serene Settings**
**Friendly Neighbors**
**Community Events**