

God, My Salvation

Isaiah 12:2-6

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD God is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.

⁵ Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Headlines for week of December 9th:

Dozens of businesses and institutions across the United States and Canada received email threats Thursday afternoon, prompting evacuations and sweeps of buildings. At this time it's unclear if the threats -- which have been received in San Francisco, New York, Seattle, Miami, Washington, DC and other locations nationwide -- are connected. The FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said they are aware of the threats and are working with law enforcement to provide assistance. "As always, we encourage the public to remain vigilant and to promptly report suspicious activities which could represent a threat to public safety," the FBI said. Email threats also have been received in Vancouver, Ottawa and Toronto, Canada. Vancouver Police Department Sgt. Jason Robillard tells CNN that businesses have received threats. He is not aware of any buildings that have evacuated.

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Springfield, Missouri (CNN)The police chief in Springfield, Missouri, on Thursday told a rape victim advocacy group that the department will review sex crimes cases in which the agency destroyed rape kits. Chief Paul Williams' pledge to Me Too

Springfield came two weeks after he apologized to sexual assault victims and invited them to contact him if they felt their cases were mishandled. His gesture was in response to a national CNN investigation into rape kit destruction. The chief said the department's review will focus on the 108 rape kits that CNN identified as being destroyed since 2010 before a statute of limitation expired or when there was no time limit to prosecute. Seventy-five percent of those kits, tied to cases reported as recently as 2014, were never submitted to a lab to be tested for DNA, CNN found. Springfield Police stood out from other agencies for the variety and volume of investigative shortcomings that led to kit destruction and how quickly rape kits were destroyed. Dozens of untested kits were destroyed in a year or less after victims reported being assaulted, according to department records. Experts who reviewed Springfield case files at CNN's request called practices they saw in its investigations "disturbing." The police imposed 10-day deadlines on victims shortly after they reported being assaulted. If victims did not respond in time, their cases were closed and their kits destroyed while prosecutions were still viable. The police also gave victims waivers declining their option to prosecute before thorough investigations had been conducted, a tactic that effectively ended cases. Outraged by revelations in CNN's investigation, the grassroots organization asked for the meeting with Williams so he could respond to their questions and requests. Police declined to open the discussion to journalists. In their meeting, Me Too members said they asked the chief to notify every victim whose kit was trashed and reopen those cases if possible. Williams rejected that idea, according to Sarah Bargo, #Me Too's secretary, because the chief said he feared that contacting victims risked re-traumatizing them. Williams told Me Too that he is working with The Victim Center, Springfield's primary rape advocacy group, to use the center's hotline -- 417-864-SAFE -- as a way for victims to ask questions about their cases or rape kits. Victim Center director Brandi Bartel told CNN that the plan is in its early stages. Victims who call the line could give the center permission to pass their questions to police. Since CNN's story published, one victim whose case is currently

being investigated has contacted the department to learn the status of the rape kit, according to written answers police gave to Me Too and provided to CNN. Two other victims have told police they feel their cases were mishandled.

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Raleigh, North Carolina (CNN) Republican and Democratic officials in North Carolina are beginning to maneuver for position in anticipation of a fierce and protracted second campaign in the state's scandal-ridden 9th Congressional District. Leaders from both parties have all but publicly agreed that a new election is necessary, but they are pursuing much different paths to winning it. Democrats are zeroing in on Republican nominee Mark Harris' ties to operative at the center of the alleged election fraud, demanding Harris personally address the depth of their relationship, while escalating nationwide fundraising appeals to back their candidate, Dan McCready. Republicans have sought to nudge Harris from the stage, most clearly by moving to mandate a new primary in the case a new general election is called, and by suggesting -- as one senior party official did to CNN -- that the mess has rendered him damaged political goods. On Thursday night, The Washington Post added to those doubts with a report that Harris decided to hire Dowless earlier in the campaign than had been previously known -- and in defiance of warnings about his criminal background and rumors of shady tactics. The decision to re-run the midterm race, which Harris initially appeared to have won by a slim margin in November, ultimately rests with the State Board of Elections, which is overseeing an investigation into allegations of an absentee ballot fraud operation directed by an operative on the payroll of a firm hired by Harris. In North Carolina and around the country, Democrats are rallying around McCready ahead of the board's as-yet-unscheduled evidentiary hearing, sending out calls for campaign cash and, at a press

conference in Raleigh earlier this week, hammering Harris over his refusal to explain the extent of his relationship with the operative, Leslie McCrae Dowless. Democratic Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Cory Booker and Tammy Baldwin have also asked supporters to donate to McCready. Harris has not spoken publicly since last Friday, when he denied in a taped statement having any prior knowledge of misconduct committed on his behalf. Dowless previously denied any wrongdoing to the Charlotte Observer and has not responded to repeated requests for comment from CNN. With the affidavits piling up and elections board probe potentially widening, Republicans fearful that the scandal has made Harris effectively unelectable and vulnerable to still more unsavory revelations, are both in the media and through their legislative actions moving to nudge him off the field. On Wednesday, the North Carolina state legislature, which is controlled by a lame duck Republican supermajority, passed a bill with Democratic support that would require any call for a new general election to also include a second primary.

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(CNN)The kidnapping and killing of 13-year-old Hania Aguilar may have been prevented if authorities had properly handled DNA evidence from a separate case last year, a North Carolina prosecutor said. Robeson County District Attorney Luther Johnson Britt told reporters on Wednesday that authorities had evidence linking suspect Michael Ray McLellan to a rape case for at least a year but they took no action. "This hurts," Britt said. "This is like taking a punch to the gut and not being prepared to get it." The county's sheriff and district attorney offices were notified in October 2017 that DNA recovered from a 2016 rape kit possibly matched McLellan. The kit had been compared to more than 17 million profiles taken from convicted offenders, detainees and arrestees in the national law enforcement database system known as CODIS. But nobody followed

up on it and authorities only discovered the issue last week, Britt said. "I don't know what happened," Britt said. McLellan, 34, has been charged with first-degree murder and multiple other offenses related to Hania's killing. He is being held without bail. Hania was kidnapped last month from her driveway in Lumberton, about 95 miles south of Raleigh. Police said the abductor forced her into a relative's idling SUV and drove away. The eighth-grader's body was found last week in water off a rural road in Robeson County, while the SUV was abandoned fewer than 10 miles from the home, authorities said. The FBI matched DNA from the car in Hania's disappearance with a previous DNA sample linked to McLellan, the prosecutor has said. On Wednesday, county officials met with Hania's family and, with the help of an interpreter, tried to explain to them what happened. "She was very tearful," Britt said about the girl's mother. "It was a difficult conversation to have with her," he said. "Maybe the most difficult conversation I've ever had with a victim's family -- to tell them that had this information been followed up on -- her daughter might be alive." Britt said Hania's mother quickly asked whether they had fixed the problem already. "We assured her we were working on that." Robeson County Sheriff Burnis Wilkins, who took office December 3 after being elected in November, said that his office has launched an internal affairs investigation.

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(CNN)A group of West Virginians rescued after being trapped for days in an abandoned mine are suspected of entering the mine to steal copper, authorities said Thursday. Three people were brought to the surface and transported to a local hospital for medical treatment, Samantha Smith, a spokeswoman with the West Virginia Department of Commerce, told CNN late Wednesday. Kayla Williams, 25, of Artie; Erica Treadway, 31, of Pax; and Cody Beverly, 21, of Dorothy were alert, talking and walking without assistance, Raleigh County Sheriff Scott Van Meter said. He said the

three had snacks and water with them. "It's a miracle they were found alive," the sheriff said. Their entry into the mine is under investigation, according to Lt. Mark McCray of the Raleigh County Sheriff's Office. Entering into an underground coal mine with intent to commit any larceny is a felony in West Virginia, according to McCray. But he said no charges have been filed in the case. Williams, Treadway and Beverly were among four people reported missing Saturday after an ATV they were believed to be using was found abandoned near the entrance of the Rock House Powellton mine in Clear Creek, according to a statement from West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice. One of those, Eddie Williams, 43, of Artie emerged late Monday, according to the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training. He said the three others were trapped and gave authorities details of their location, according to the governor's office. Rescue teams failed to find the missing three earlier this week, but they removed standing water from the mine and pumped in fresh air. By Wednesday, more access space had been cleared, allowing additional rescuers to enter, Justice's office said. Cheering and crying family members celebrated the trio's rescue Wednesday night, according to video from [CNN affiliate WVVA](#). "We drank mine water. We had no food," Beverly told ABC after being rescued. "We just found a stream in the mine, just started drinking and hoping and praying to God that it was not contaminated." The underground mine is inactive and sealed, Contura Energy, whose affiliate Elk Run Coal owns the property, told CNN, adding that the person who made it out earlier "was apprehended by law enforcement." The trespassing incident was the second one reported at an abandoned mine in the last two weeks, [Justice said in a statement](#). Van Meter said the three found alive Wednesday could possibly be charged because they were not supposed to be in the mine. But first, the sheriff said, "they need to enjoy being rescued."

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(CNN)An emergency medical technician has been placed on unpaid leave after racist comments surfaced of him comparing black patients to gorillas and claiming to take "immense satisfaction" as he "terrorized" an African American boy with a needle. Alex McNabb, a part-time EMT in Patrick County, Virginia, made the statements on a white supremacist podcast called "The Daily Shoah." McNabb is a frequent co-host of the podcast, whose title mocks the Holocaust. The comments, which McNabb, 35, later claimed on Twitter to be a "work of fiction," ignited a debate over whether he can render adequate care to vulnerable, minority and Jewish patients. McNabb would not comment directly to CNN, beyond indicating in a tweet that he is undergoing a "character assassination attempt." Using an alter-ego named "Dr. Narcan" on the podcast McNabb repeatedly called black people "dindus," a slur combining the words "didn't" and "do" -- a reference to black people who claim they are mistreated by the justice system. In one podcast from October 4, 2016, first reported by the Huffington Post, McNabb tells of an emergency call to what he characterized as a black apartment complex that medics call "Ebola Alley." Using the Dr. Narcan persona, he refers to a black woman as a "dinduisha" and called her a shaved "Harambe," the name of a famous gorilla. "This individual should never be involved in patient care at any level," said Lock Boyce, the board of supervisors' chairman of Patrick County. "Not as a physician, a nurse, an EMT. Not anywhere." The rural, overwhelmingly white county in the Blue Ridge Mountains has a contract with McNabb's employers. Virginia's Department of Health has opened a formal investigation into McNabb's conduct after receiving a complaint late last month, a spokesperson said. An attorney for McNabb's employer, JEB Stuart Volunteer Rescue Squad, told CNN that McNabb was placed on unpaid leave Monday night, two days after news reports of his comments surfaced. "We'll cooperate (with the state)," said Wren Williams, JEB Stuart's attorney. Williams said McNabb's future will rest with JEB

Stuart's board. The board held an emergency meeting Wednesday night where it affirmed the decision to place McNabb on unpaid leave until the state's investigation concludes, he said. Williams added that there is no indication so far that McNabb mistreated anyone in his care. The case is testing the longtime protection for extremists whose words may be racist and offensive, but who are still shielded by free speech laws. In this case, McNabb's occupation is front and center. "He is making life-or-death medical decisions for residents of a variety of ethnicities, many of which do not fit his criteria for a white ethno-state," said Keegan Hankes, a senior research analyst with the Southern Poverty Law Center. "Whether drawn from his experiences as an EMT or fiction, (McNabb's statements) are tremendous cause for concern." Though McNabb has said on Twitter that "any resemblance to actual persons ... is purely coincidental," he told his podcast co-hosts in 2016, after describing a diabetic ER patient and a doctor who collects toenails, that "both these stories are real." Later in the same podcast, in a Dr. Narcan story that McNabb doesn't label as fact or fiction, he speaks of "an unruly, young African American male child" who needed to have blood drawn. "So, guess who volunteered to take (his) blood?" McNabb said. "Dr. Narcan enjoyed great, immense satisfaction as he terrorized this youngster with a needle and stabbed him thusly in the arm with a large-gauge IV catheter." The Virginia health department's investigation will focus on whether "any alleged violations of Virginia's EMS regulations have occurred," the agency said in a statement. Those regulations stipulate that "EMS personnel may not discriminate ... based on race, gender, religion, age, national origin, medical condition or any other reason." In a November podcast he said he hasn't treated any patients differently based on race because "it's a professional duty," the Huffington Post reported.

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I don't know what your headlines have been this week or this year...but I do know our security cannot be based on the CNN headlines... nor our economic status... nor our health... nor our social status...nor a hundred other categories by which we define ourselves. We too on this Third Sunday of Advent are called to sing for joy, to celebrate the ways in which God has delivered us, is delivering us, and will deliver us, until there is true peace, shalom, *safety, fairness*, wholeness on earth and goodwill throughout the entire creation. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation Shout aloud and sing for joy." For, in the words of another old hymn, "Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?" **Randle R. Mixon**

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