

# THE WORD AND THE WORLD

(A Turning Point) Article No. 22

**BY JIM FRECH**  
Pastor, Countryside Christian Church

▶▶ The year was 1980, and my dad surprised me with our first video game system. It was an Atari 2600, and the first game cartridge we bought was, of course, Pac-Man. The point of Pac-Man is to eat as many cookies as you can while staying away from the Inky, Pinky, Blinky, and Clyde. Those four ghosts will eat you, unless your Pac-Man eats a power cookie, and then, for a short period of time, you can eat the ghosts.

Successfully eat all the ghosts, and more appear. If you clear all the cookies from the screen, it starts all over again. Only this time, the ghosts are faster. Clear all the cookies again, and the difficulty only increases. Every level, the ghosts get faster. Difficulty increases. If Pac-Man gets eaten too many times, it's...GAME OVER.

Video games have come a long way, but for many games, the paradigm is the same. Stay alive. Don't die. Attacks never stop. The enemy never runs out of ammo. Every level gets harder. You can be among the best, but eventually you'll make a mistake and you're done. When you play Pac-Man, no matter how well you do, no matter how high your score, no matter how fast you can go, you always lose. Always.

It's kind of depressing, but I wonder if that's the way a lot of people see life. A never-ending battle. Stay alive. Don't die. Only in the real world, you get one chance - not three. And another quarter isn't going to reboot the game.

Everyday life can seem like you're trying to sweep back the ocean.

The house never stays clean for more than a few minutes.

The car will eventually need to be repaired.

The kids will get sick.

And for the Christian, it seems the devil never, ever lets up. We can fight him for hours, days, weeks, but eventually we're gonna mess it up.

It can feel like the Christian life is like a game of Pac-Man. No matter how well I do, or how long I stand, I will fail somehow. Temptation never stops. And it's not a matter of 'if,' but 'when' I give in, give up, or fall down.

So, I'm really thankful that's NOT the way the Christian life works. That's the devil's game, played by the devil's rules. And if we play with that mindset, we will always feel like losers.

But Romans 8:1 blows that mindset away. 'There is therefore NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' Did you catch that? No condemnation for those in Christ. None.

For us, it's not Game Over. For those who are in Christ, the answer is 'We Win' even while we're still in the game. How is that possible?

Romans 8:2 - '...[we are] set free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, God did by sending His own Son to be a sin offering.'

In other words, all of our best efforts at 'winning the game' (aka being good people, earning eternal life) will never be good enough. Jesus came as a human and won the game. He lived a sinless life and gave Himself as a sacrifice to pay the price for our sins so that we could be right with God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, 'God made Him who had no sin (that is, Jesus) to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God.'

So, place your faith in Christ and what He accomplished on your behalf. Live holy lives not to gain favor with God or because you have the ability, but because the Holy Spirit lives in you to help you. Understand, but do not fear the devil's attacks. He may never take a day off, but those who are in Christ do battle with His strength, His power, His courage. We know we've already won. Satan has already been defeated. He's just going down kicking and screaming.

So don't spend your time and energy paying attention to all the devil is doing, as if you have the ability to battle him yourself. Spend time and give attention to Jesus, and let His Word dwell in you richly (Colossians 2:16). Cover yourself in the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

If you're in Christ, you've already won. Let's finish the battle, run the race, and fight the good fight.

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## Sheriff Department vehicle financing approved

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING - APRIL 17, 2026

**BY PHILIP STEVENS**  
HOMETOWN GIRARD

▶▶ The Crawford County Commission met Friday, April 17, at the courthouse in Girard, conducting two public hearings, approving several resolutions and invoices, and addressing a range of administrative matters.

Commissioners approved the consent agenda, which included the April 14 meeting minutes, accounts payable warrant numbers 644602 through 644873 dated April 15 in the total amount of \$500,604.65, and authorization for the chairman to sign the previous week's vouchers.

The first items of business were two public hearings. The first addressed proposed assessments for street improvements in Prairie View Estates. County Counselor Jim Emerson explained that the project originated from a 2022 petition by property owners seeking improved roads in the subdivision. Final asphalt work was delayed until home construction was completed, with the project finishing late last year.

The total cost of the improvements was \$53,264, divided evenly among 10 lots. Commissioners opened and closed the public hearing without comment from the audience, then approved Resolution 2026-017 to levy the assessments. Property owners will receive notice and have 30 days to prepay the assessment. Those who

do not pay in full will see the costs applied as special assessments on their property tax statements over a five-year period.

The second public hearing involved a request to vacate portions of platted streets and an unopened alley in the first addition to the town of Ringo. Commissioners again opened and closed the hearing without public comment and approved Resolution 2026-018 to proceed with vacating the designated areas.

During public comment, resident Rick Elnicky asked about the timeline for the county's ongoing zoning regulations and comprehensive plan. Commissioners indicated they expect more clarity following an upcoming discussion with consultant Joshua Albin and acknowledged the timeline may extend to late May before final materials are ready for adoption.

In new business, County Clerk Lisa Lusker informed commissioners of a polling location change affecting Frontenac and Capaldo voters. Those voters will now vote at the Frontenac Senior Citizen Center instead of Sacred Heart Church.

County Counselor Jim Emerson presented Resolution 2026-016, which commissioners approved to authorize a lease-purchase agreement with Labette Bank for three sheriff's department vehicles. The proposal includes a new 2026 Chevrolet Silverado and two used vehicles,

a 2023 Ford F-150 and a 2025 Ford Explorer, with a 36-month repayment term at 3.75 percent interest.

Sheriff's office representatives explained that purchasing used vehicles and reusing equipment from previously totaled units helps reduce costs. The total package is expected to come in slightly lower than earlier estimates due to a last-minute substitution after one vehicle was lost during delivery. Commissioners discussed insurance considerations, fleet shortages, and the challenges of maintaining adequate vehicles for road deputies before approving the resolution.

Emerson also presented an annual invoice from Tyler Technologies related to the county's transition to a cloud-based system for dispatch, records, and reporting. Commissioners reviewed how costs are allocated among the county, 911 services, the sheriff's department, and Baker Township Fire, and approved payment of the invoice as presented.

In other financial matters, Emerson presented a late invoice from Southeast Kansas Recycling, Inc. in the amount of \$5,486.56 for services dating back to September 2024. Emerson expressed frustration with the delay but noted the services had been performed. Commissioners approved payment of the invoice.

Emerson also announced an upcoming

Kansas Department of Transportation project that will temporarily close a section of South 200th Street for approximately two weeks beginning Monday, April 20. The \$81,000 project includes safety striping and shoulder improvements, with local traffic allowed as conditions permit.

Commissioners entered executive session multiple times during the meeting. They first recessed for one hour and 15 minutes to conduct EMS interviews, followed by a separate 15-minute session on the same topic. Later in the meeting, commissioners entered a 10-minute executive session with legal counsel to discuss zoning matters under attorney-client privilege and a separate 20-minute session to discuss EMS personnel under the non-elected personnel exception. No action was taken following the executive sessions.

During closing remarks, commissioners briefly discussed attendance at a recent state corridor meeting and upcoming county events, including work sessions and the Kansas County Commissioners Association conference scheduled for the following week.

The meeting concluded with approval of a motion to adjourn.

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## Zoning survey postcard may be coming to unzoned mailboxes

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING - APRIL 21, 2026

**BY PHILIP STEVENS**  
HOMETOWN GIRARD

▶▶ The Crawford County Commission met Tuesday, April 21, at the courthouse in Girard, approving several resolutions, continuing discussions on countywide zoning, and reviewing ongoing federal funding expenditures.

Commissioners Tom Moody and Carl Wood were present for the meeting, while Bruce Blair was not. The meeting began with approval of the consent agenda, including minutes from the April 17 session.

In the public forum, a presentation from Tim Turner with Cintas introduced a potential cost-saving purchasing agreement through a cooperative program. He said that Cintas has been providing its services to the County since 1999. Turner explained the program could eliminate an existing weekly service charge and reduce pricing on items such as floor mats and facility supplies. Commissioners directed staff to review the proposal further before taking action.

During regular business, a focus of the meeting came from a video update from planning consultant Joshua Albin regarding the county's comprehensive plan and ongoing zoning discussions. Albin presented a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct a targeted survey of property owners in currently unzoned areas of the county.

The proposed survey would consist of a single-question postcard asking whether respondents support countywide zoning. Albin said the intent is to gather direct input from those most affected, noting that residents in municipalities are already subject to local zoning regulations.

The two commissioners discussed whether the survey should include all county residents or remain limited to unzoned areas. Commissioner Wood raised questions about balancing input from different parts of the county and how the results would be interpreted alongside previous survey data.

Albin emphasized the survey would provide a clearer picture of sentiment among property owners who would be directly impacted by new regulations. He also noted that compliance challenges could arise if zoning is implemented without support from those residents.

Commissioners ultimately chose to table the decision until the Friday meeting, when all commissioners could be present for further discussion and then make the decision whether to conduct the postcard survey.

In other business, County Clerk Lisa Lusker presented two cereal malt beverage licenses for Lakeview Café, covering both on-premises and off-premises sales. Commissioners approved the licenses after confirming no objections from relevant departments.

Lusker also presented several requests for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, including payments to Adam Jones law firm associated with the comprehensive plan,

training equipment for public health, and childcare-related building expenses. Commissioners approved the requests, noting that remaining ARPA funds are nearing depletion.

Emerson reported that approximately \$7.1 million in ARPA funds has been spent to date, with roughly \$300,000 remaining to be allocated. He said final reporting will continue into next year as the program concludes.

Moody provided an update on cleanup efforts at a property along U.S. Highway 160, thanking county staff and partners for completing the work. The project included tire removal, with costs coming in lower than initially expected.

The commission also reviewed upcoming meetings and events, including a work session scheduled for April 28 and a joint city-county meeting in Pittsburg.

Following a final executive session for legal consultation, the meeting adjourned.

\* \* \*

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