

# Evergreen Notes

## Love Your Field



By Rev. Doug Avilesbernal

**NJB. “He also said ‘this is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, at once he starts to**

**reap because the harvest has come.” - Mark 3:26-29**

There are many times during ministry, professional, laity, etc., that frustration and problems seem to be the norm. It was during one such period of my life that I found this passage. At that time, it seemed like the majority of my time was spent on figuring out how to get more people to come to the church. I know that problem is neither new nor unfamiliar to many of us. However, I did not realize how wrong I was in my approach. I kept trying to figure out ways to make what we were doing more appealing to people so they would come.

Not unexpectedly, this was a very frustrating place to work from that more often than not ended up in failure. Still, when troubles came my response was very American, to simply keep on pushing. It was in those struggles that came across this passage. It hit me like sunlight on a cold day. Almost immediately I realized how a big part of my troubles and frustrations was the fact that I was wanting to reap harvest without planting anything. In my hurry to bring back to life the youth group of an Episcopal church I thought I could become like the earth that grows the plants in the parable! What a ridiculous thought!

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EVERGREEN ASSOCIATION  
—OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA—  
TRANSLATING OUR UNITY TO THE WORLD

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### Pray for Churches seeking Pastoral Leadership

Filipino-American Christian Fellowship, Lynnwood, WA

Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Lynnwood, WA

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Baptist, Renton, WA

The United Church of Moscow, Moscow, ID

Grace Baptist Church, San Jose, CA

Panther Lake Community Church, Kent, WA

First Baptist Church of Denver, Denver, CO

# Spear Phishing



*By Rev. Shavon Walker*

This month in our Social Media Series, we're going to talk about spear phishing. You don't need a sharp stick or a net, but you'll definitely need to

stay alert. This will be a relatively short article since we've covered a lot of this before, but here's what you need to know.

Spear phishing is defined as "the fraudulent practice of sending emails ostensibly from a known or trusted sender in order to induce targeted individuals to reveal confidential information. Instead of relying on a scattershot method of phishing, the phisher targets people by impersonating people or institutions they know, hence the name." Spear phishing falls under the umbrella of social engineering; in fact, we touched on this in the last article because of this.

For instance, if you've recently ordered an Amazon package, you might not think twice about clicking on a link in an email that says your package is delayed. Or if your child emails you about sending them money, you might not think anything of that either. As I mentioned before, the safest thing to do in this situation is to contact the person or company directly to ask if they sent the email.

Another helpful move is to block the sender from your emails so you don't have to worry about being tricked again. Blocking methods will vary depending on your email provider, but you should be able to Google "how do I block a sender in <email provider>" and get step by step in-

structions. Many email providers have a one button option to send an email to Spam and block the sender at the same time.

That's it for this month. Next month, we'll talk more about scams and how to avoid them. If you have any questions or would like me to tackle a certain topic, please email me at [Shavon@ea-abc.org](mailto:Shavon@ea-abc.org).

## Slam the Scam!

Slam the Scam promotes awareness about Social Security phishing scams. Safety is a year round job and our older population is the most at risk. Here are some things to remember.

### Scammers may:

- Pretend to be from an agency or organization you know
- Tell you there's a problem with your account or promise a prize
- Insist that you act right away
- Give you a specific method of payment (usually difficult to trace, like gift cards, pre-paid debit card, cryptocurrency, wire or money transfer, or mailing cash)

### To protect yourself:

Don't feel pushed into making a decision right then and there. If you do feel pressured, calmly tell the person that you'll need to call them back. Hang up (in the middle of their pitch, if necessary) and contact your local Social Security Administration to verify. You can call them at 800-772-1213 (hold time is roughly 36 minutes; call early in the morning or right before closing on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for best results). You can also email them at <https://secure.ssa.gov/emailus/>. If it turns out to be a scam, report it at <https://secure.ssa.gov/ipff/home>.

You can find out more at <https://www.ssa.gov/scam/>. Be safe and God bless!

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Ministry did not stop bringing problems and frustrations after my epiphany. However, meditating on this passage has shown me where I/we fit in the process. We will never be able to grow the seed ourselves. Of course we should plant, water, tend to our fields, but it is God who actually grows the seeds. Our call in ministry is not to grow the church but to plant, water, tend to the fields we have been given. This does not mean we stop inviting people or working on creating a church space that is loving, safe and relevant. But it does mean that the focus of our work should not be our church itself but the “field” we have been given.

Let us, therefore, be faithful in planting seeds, and tending to the field we’ve been given in ways they need to be tended.

We are walking into Spring now, time to get ready to plant. What are you doing to love the field you have been given as an individual and as a church? It seems to me like it is planting season. If we focus on reaping only we will find little more than troubles and frustration as results for our efforts. But if love, planting and care are our focus, who knows, we may even be fortunate enough to be around for reaping the harvest.

## Please Share Your Events!

Friends, we know there’s wonderful and amazing things going on at your churches. Please share those events with us so we can help get the word out in the Evergreen Notes and on social media. Tell us in advance about things from Rummage Sales to Special Performances to Lectures or Town Halls. Send us reports of great events after the fact that you want to share with your Evergreen Family. It will make our life together much richer! Please send those notices by email to Rev. Paul Schneider at [paul@ea-abc.org](mailto:paul@ea-abc.org).

## Resources for Your Church are Readily Available through the Evergreen Offices!

Did you know that all four of the Evergreen Staff, (Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, Rev. Sam Kim, Rev. Shavon Walker, and Rev. Paul Schneider) are available for pulpit supply? That’s a role we’re glad to fill, and we enjoy the opportunity to connect with churches and bring a word of encouragement and challenge to our Evergreen Congregations. Rev. Shavon Walker is based in Fremont, California, and Rev.’s. Doug, Sam and Paul are up here in the Seattle, Washington area. You can reach out to inquire their availability by emailing them directly. All their emails are their first name followed by @ea-abc.org.

Looking for Workshop or Retreat leaders? Rev. Doug has repeatedly worked with churches on developing truly intercultural ministry. Rev. Sam has lead workshops on Human Centered Design for ministry, resolving internal conflict in churches, and more. Rev. Shavon is glad to lead workshops on tech and social media literacy or online safety. Rev. Paul recently lead a Board Retreat for Fairview Community which included Consensus and Baptist Polity workshops, and lead a Consensus workshop with Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church on Zoom.

There are plenty of other topics we can cover or help identify leaders in Evergreen with expertise for. We also have resources to tap which can help with communication, team building, rethinking how your church is using its building, youth ministry, and the people who literally wrote the book on Consensus (Rev. Dr. Marcia Patton & Nora Percival’s *Sacred Decisions: Consensus in Faith Communities*) just lead a training on Consensus at FBC Salt Lake City!

Call or email Rev. Paul ([paul@ea-abc.org](mailto:paul@ea-abc.org), 253-859-2226) to find out more.

# Seasons of Challenge



By Rev. Sam Kim

Greetings in Christ,

In our wide range of ministry journeys, we all recognize that we have gone through many seasons. Some seasons have been joyful and flourishing,

whereas some have been challenging and confusingly dry. Undoubtedly, we would all love to remain only in times of abundance, but we can also recognize how many vital insights were discovered when we struggled. Many of our thriving times were often preceded by a very humbling season. It is easy to perhaps bring all of our attention to the “good old days” and seek to repeat and manufacture anything there in the hopes that we can prolong those flourishing times as much as possible. Yet, is this the proper practice for what God wants of us in our ministries? Paul challenges how we may cling on to the places of thriving and strength with this sobering exhortation: “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11) Paul was eager to learn from the struggles and suffering so that more of Christ’s life could manifest within him. How different would our ministries look if we welcomed our challenges with the hope that we could discover new sightings of Christ’s resurrection in us?

The Holy Week is central to the sacred calendar of the Church: it is a time when we recognize, celebrate, and give thanks for the death and resurrection of Christ. In this death and resurrection, we are given the hope of redemption and new life. In the life of Jesus, we see that even the darkest efforts of evil to destroy the light are ultimately futile. Not even death itself could put out the Light of Hope revealed in Christ. The resurrection reminds us that we do not

have to fear the darkest struggles or the harshest opposition to bringing Light into the world. Instead, we can bravely face our challenges, knowing that for those in Christ, resurrection is our final destination, not death.

If death and resurrection are central to our Christian observances, so should it be with our practices.

When we face those painful seasons of challenge,

*“let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:1b-3)*

Whatever our season may be, let us know that the ultimate hope of the resurrection is our sustaining strength and our inspiration for the future.

Blessings to you all as you continue to serve our Creator in your calling,

Sam

## Leadership Cohorts

One of the outcomes of this year’s Leadership Retreat was the formation of our new Leadership Cohorts. You do not have to have attended the Leadership Retreat to participate in a cohort. These cohorts will meet for six months, fostering deeper conversation and empowering ministries. The first meetings are happening in April, so there’s still time to get in on the ground floor.

The leadership cohorts are in these five areas:

- Community Engagement
- Race, Culture, and Religious Liberty
- Neighborhood Outreach (Loving the Neighbor)
- Change/Grow/Create
- Next Generation/Emergent Ministers

To find out a bit more about the cohorts, and to sign up to be part of one, please visit the webpage here:

<https://ea-abc.org/cohorts>



# LOVE YOUR MOTHER

## APRIL PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF THE EARTH, SPONSORED BY INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION

FOR DETAILS, CONSULT THE SFBC CALENDAR & "THIS WEEK."  
OR EMAIL [smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org](mailto:smallgroups@seattlefirstbaptist.org).

### YOU ARE INVITED!

Interfaith Climate Action (ICA) warmly invites you to join us in our efforts to protect God's creation. That invitation extends to a wide range of events in observance of Earth Month. Please choose activities that touch your soul. Then invite your family and friends!

### EARTH SUNDAY, APRIL 21 11 AM–1:30 PM

Celebrate the Earth in a special worship service at SFBC, with **REV. KEITH CURL-DOVE** preaching. He is a Presbyterian Church (USA) minister, a certified Wild Church Leader, and the Fossil Fuel Campaign Manager at Washington Conservation Action.

Following worship, celebrate the blessings of the Earth with a scrumptious vegetarian and vegan meal prepared by SFBC Chef Stephenie Simmons.

### SUN., APRIL 28 6:30–8 PM

Join Interfaith Climate Action members on Zoom to share stories, debrief Earth Month, and think about future activities.

### CLASSES AT SEATTLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SUNDAYS, 9:30 AM

#### April 7: Caring for Our Common Home

ICA members reflect on how our faith compels us to care for the Earth. Presenters: Sandra Jones, George Lawson & Linda Zaugg.

#### April 14: Reconciliation Through Eating

When we eat, we depend on people, the land, and God. Join Pastor Leigh Curl-Dove to talk about food and faith. Explore food interdependence and our connections to the Earth.

#### April 21: Fossil Fuels, Powers, and Principalities

With Rev. Keith Curl-Dove, see the world through a powers-and-principalities lens, with the fossil fuel industry as an example. Become better prepared to work for a future with clean, equitable energy.

#### April 28: Planet vs. Plastics: Prayerful Actions to Save the Earth

Learn new ways to reduce, refuse, reuse, and recycle, protecting our Earth one bag and bottle at a time, with Lynn Gaertner-Johnston.

### SATURDAY GATHERINGS FROM SHORE TO TABLE TO FOREST


#### April 6: Cruise Ship Protest at Pier 66, 10 AM–Noon

Rally with ICA, Seattle Cruise Control, and other groups to protest the opening day of the Seattle-Alaska cruise season. Demonstrate on behalf of the planet we love! Info: ICA member Elizabeth Burton, [bookmoose1@yahoo.com](mailto:bookmoose1@yahoo.com), 206-407-5398.

#### April 13: A Place at the Veggie and Vegan Table, Details TBD

ICA members and others host lunch and dinner potlucks of tasty vegetarian and vegan dishes in their homes. Sign up at Coffee Hour on Mar. 17 and 24 to host; Mar. 31 and Apr. 7 to attend.

#### April 20: Forest Bathing, Washington Park Arboretum, 9:30–11:30

Bathe in creation! Rev. Keith Curl-Dove leads a meditative experience to calm your mind, nourish your body, and connect your soul to the natural world. Accessible . Info: Donna Ward, 206-229-7141.

#### April 27: Forest Restoration, East Duwamish Watershed, 10 AM–Noon

Join our all-ages group in giving back to the Earth in a volunteer project led by Green Seattle Partnership exclusively for us. Meet across from 8631 39th Ave S. Contact: Cindy Ervin, 206-349-1680.

# Meet our Global Servants: Sarah and Luis Matos

By Rev. Paul Schneider

Periodically we'll be highlighting some of the amazing Global Servants who work with International Missions and partner with Evergreen Churches share the Gospel in places outside of our country. Global Servants are doing ministry in amazing ways in other countries, sharing God's love and helping ministry partners abroad through serving the communities in which they are embedded.

Our first Global Servants we'll be introducing are Sarah and Luis Matos. Sarah was raised at First Baptist Olympia, and it was while listening to other Global Servants that the church supported when she was younger that she felt the call to that ministry. After participating in a variety of short term missions through her high school and college years, she became a Global Servant and spent a term in Bolivia. She is currently a seminary student at Palmer, projected to graduate next spring with her MDiv.

Sarah's husband Luis actually met her in high school, but they didn't start dating until Sarah joined IM on her way to Bolivia. Unlike Sarah, Luis did not believe he was going to go into ministry most of his life, instead he followed a secular track working on a business degree and working his way up the corporate ladder. It was when he was working as a manager at a restaurant that he felt God's call on his life. However, even after he and Sarah got serious, he did not think he'd be a Global Servant – but then God showed him that his background in business could be hugely beneficial in working in ministry abroad.

Their new call will be working in Oaxaca Mexico with **COBAMI** (Cooperación Baptista Misionera Mesoamericana), which is an established IM Partner. COBAMI has a cross-cultural school of ministry, which trains up ministers to serve in churches throughout Mexico, and around the world, through classes

placed in local churches. They also sponsor the Talita Cumi girl's clubs, which allow older women from the community to provide mentorship to 8-12 year old girls, teaching them how to rise above their situations, and become agents of change in their communities.

Sarah and Luis will each be working with COBAMI in different ways. Sarah is already working doing training with the Talita Cumi girls club program over Zoom, and will continue supporting that in person once she heads down there. She will be helping specifically to contextualize it for Oaxaca in particular. 25 girls already engaged with the first year of the program, and more are set to join in this coming year. Luis will be working with coffee farmers and

bee keepers to develop a more long lasting and sustainable funds for those farmers, so they can continue to build up their businesses.

Sarah and Luis have their daughter Nora, who is 15 months old right now, and will go to Oaxaca with them. Their first term of service together as Global Servants, which they hope to begin soon, will last five years.

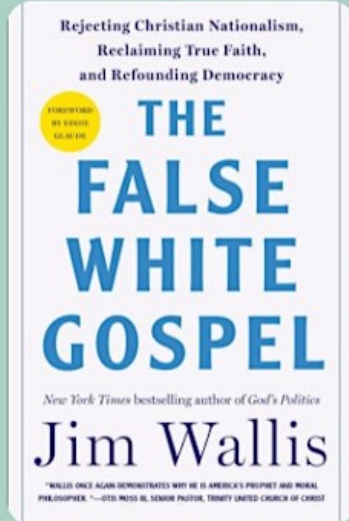
They need some additional support, especially recurring monthly support from churches, to get started on their assignment with COBAMI in Oaxaca. They also could use the prayers of their Evergreen family for the challenges ahead, including adapting to a new culture, language school for Luis, and learning the Oaxacan dialect for Sarah, and transitioning from their family support system of readily available and eager grandparents up here to the community support down in Oaxaca.

To find out more about Sarah and Luis, and to donate to their mission work, you can check out their page on the IM website (<https://internationalministries.org/author/matos/>). If you'd like them to come to your church and share about their ministry work this spring and summer, they are glad to do so. You can email them at [matos@internationalministries.org](mailto:matos@internationalministries.org).



# Jim Wallis

## Thursday 4/11, 7pm at Seattle First Baptist



Jim Wallis: The False White Gospel  
Thursday, April 11 at 7:00pm  
Seattle First Baptist Church  
1111 Harvard Ave, Seattle, WA

Author Jim Wallis returns to Seattle First Baptist Church in support of his new book.

Tickets: \$6

Ticket + Book: \$35

Tickets available here: <https://www.strangertickets.com/events/150455240/jim-wallis-the-false-white-gospel>

New York Times bestselling author Jim Wallis returns to Seattle to celebrate the release of *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy*, a major new work that argues that the answer to bad religion is true faith that will help refound democracy.

### **ABOUT THE BOOK**

It is time says Jim Wallis, to call out genuine faith—specifically the “Christian” in White Christian Nationalism—inviting all who can be persuaded to reject and help dismantle a false gospel that propagates white supremacy and autocracy. We need—to raise up the faith of all of us, and help those who are oblivious, stuck, and captive to the ideology and idolatry of White Christian Nationalism that is

leading us to such great danger. Wallis turns our attention to six iconic texts at the heart of what genuine biblical faith means and what Jesus, in the gospels, has called us to do. It is time to ask anew: do we believe these teachings or not?

This book isn’t only for Christians but for all faith traditions, and even those with no faith at all. When we see a civic promotion of fear, hate, and violence for the trajectory of our politics, we need a civic faith of love, healing, and hope to defeat it. And that must involve all of us—religious or not. Learning to practice a politics of neighbor love will be central to the future of democracy in America. And more than ever, the words of Jesus ring, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Jim Wallis is Georgetown University’s inaugural holder of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair in Faith and Justice, and the Director of its new Center on Faith and Justice. He served on President Obama’s first White House Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and is the author of multiple *New York Times* bestselling books, including *God’s Politics*. In 2022 and 2023, *Washingtonian* magazine named Wallis one of the 500 most influential people shaping policy in DC. Wallis is also the founder of *Sojourners*.



EVERGREEN ASSOCIATION OF  
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES  
P.O. BOX 1044  
Kent, WA 98035-1044  
Phone: 253-859-2226  
Email: [office@ea-abc.org](mailto:office@ea-abc.org)

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Return Service Requested

Evergreen Notes, the newsletter for member churches, ecumenical partners, national affiliates, and friends of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches is published monthly. Please submit articles by the 20th of the month prior to expected publication. You are encouraged to copy and/or reprint information and articles for your congregation and community.

Building Bridges, Resourcing Churches & Translating Our Unity

## Mission Statement

Being a culturally diverse people who are one in Christ and who value the liberties of our American Baptist Heritage, the Evergreen Baptist Association will **Build bridges** between communities; **Provide resources** to equip member churches to share Christ and teach God’s word; and **Translate our unity** to the world.

**May the Blessings of the Holy Spirit find you this Easter Season**

## Save these Dates!

We’ve got some phenomenal events coming up with the region and our ABC-USA denomination. Please mark your calendars so you can make sure to participate in these fantastic coming events!

### Jim Wallis at Seattle First Baptist, Thu. Apr. 11, 7pm

Jim Wallis returns to Seattle First Baptist to share about his new book, *The False White Gospel*.

### Quarterly Business Meeting,

### Sat. May 11, 10am–Noon

Online and In Person at Panther Lake Community Church. Join us as we do the important business of Evergreen Together.

### Faith and Family Day at the Mariners, Sat., Jun. 15, 4:15pm Game Time

Evergreen Day at the Ballpark is coming! Tickets are only \$21 for Main Level Seating. After the game will be a concert, a player panel, and more.

## April Calendar

**April 2nd**—Autism Awareness Day

**April 9th**—Eid al-Fitr—Last day of Ramadan

**April 9th—11th**—ABHMS Space for Grace—you can still register for online attendance: <https://abhms.org/space-for-grace-spiritual-caregivers-conference-2024/>

**April 11th**—Jim Wallis at SFBC to speak

on “The False White Gospel”

**April 15th**—Jackie Robinson Day

**April 16th**—Emancipation Day

**April 18th**—Tax Day

**April 22nd**—Earth Day

**April 23rd**—World Book Day

**April 26th**—Arbor Day

**April 28th**—National Superhero Day

**April 30th**—International Jazz Day