

Evergreen Notes

The Call From Advent



By Rev. Doug Avilesbernal

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.” - **Malachi 3:1 NIV**

The Latin word *Adventus* is the root word from which we have received Advent. In Latin the word holds a whole lot of

meaning. Its core meaning is indeed how we know it, the anticipation of an arrival, an approach, something special coming. Of course, as with all languages there are also cultural meanings that round out the meaning for all. This cultural meaning is where we grasp the depth why our faith ancestors decided to use this word to describe this season. The first of these was that *Adventus* was the name given to the preparation work for the ceremonies that happened when the emperor was expected to arrive. The second is that it was also used to describe the appearance of something very important or even the ripening of fruit. So, it is indeed, the expectation of and preparation for something special.

In our Christian world that sense has been lost somewhat. In our sacramental tradition family it is still full of liturgical practices that include keeping “Christmas” music away from worship, Jesus hasn’t arrived so we can’t celebrate it yet! The non-sacramental side that includes us Baptist regularly either ignores it or becomes a sermon series on 4 words and a chance to sing Christmas songs.

However, I’d like to remind us all that there is something about the word that calls to action. A call that goes beyond the usual calls of

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EVERGREEN ASSOCIATION
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TRANSLATING OUR UNITY TO THE WORLD

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Pray for Churches seeking Pastoral Leadership

Filipino-American Christian Fellowship,
Lynnwood, WA

Grace Baptist Church,
San Jose, CA

First Baptist Church of
Denver, Denver, CO

Mt. Zion Baptist Church,
Seattle, WA

Shell Ridge Community
Church,
Walnut Creek, CA

Believing in Miracles



By Rev. Sam Kim

"36 And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For

with God nothing will be impossible." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her."- Luke 1:36-38 (RSV)

As we approach the season of Advent anew, I would like to reflect on the concept of miracles. In my work with various denominations, traditions, and theologies, I have encountered a diverse range of responses to the possibility of miracles. Some are skeptical, while others view them as allegorical, and still others see them as actual acts of divine intervention. Whatever your perspective, I think it is essential to recognize that the canon of scripture reveals that God loves us and is actively engaged with our world. Straying from these beliefs would likely bring us closer to Aristotle and forms of Epicureanism than to our Christian heritage. Aristotle understood God as an "unmoved mover," distant from the workings and concerns of the universe. There is something profoundly countercultural to believe that God is intimately concerned with our struggles and works in the power of Love to bring about restoration and renewal. Indeed, even more baffling is that God would choose the

miracle of incarnation, where God takes solidarity with us and our vulnerabilities, to declare that GOD IS WITH US.

This should not be new knowledge for many of the preachers who read this article, but it is worth repeating. When we struggle with our ministries and mission, we can be tempted to declare an implicit theology that God is removed from our struggles, and we are alone in our suffering. At times, when we are struggling, we can forget that miracles are not a theoretical discussion, but it is a challenge to believe that hope can arise when it does not seem sensible. It is a belief that LIGHT can arise from DARKNESS. It is a belief that God can create *ex nihilo* (lit. out of nothing). When we struggle, it is important to ground ourselves in the fact that God is not watching our challenges with indifference. The story of Christ reminds us that God stands in solidarity with our vulnerability, and in that solidarity, miracles are possible. When we struggle, the most important thing to believe is that hope is possible. Romans 8:24-25 exhorts the church to remember that hope is for the future and for things not yet received. "Who hopes for what they already have?" Hope is necessary for us to overcome the fear of the present times. Hope believes that God will pave the way forward for a future marked by God's love and gracious intervention.

Whatever your ministry, renew your belief in hope for Advent. Believe in the miracle of God's solidarity with your weakness. Even when there is overwhelming evidence of death and despair, God can create miracles. May you be blessed with an awareness of miracles and hope in this season of Advent.

Blessings,
Sam.

Password Managers: Why Keeping Everything in a Notebook Isn't Cutting It Anymore, Part III



By Rev. Shavon Walker

Today, we're going to talk about ProtonPass, another password manager designed to help you log in safer and faster. Pro-

tonPass has a lot of the same features as the others we've talked about; it stores all passwords in an encrypted "digital vault", allows you to create strong, unique passwords for every account (and allows for quick password changes when necessary), and it automatically fills in passwords when needed.

There are a couple of perks that make ProtonPass different from the others. First, it works on unlimited devices from day one. You don't have to pay extra for a mobile, tablet or a PC version. Second, your free version has unlimited password generation; there is no limit on the number of logins you can store, and you can also store notes for each account ("Mom's Google", "Alice's Wifi", etc). Lastly, your data is never sold or shared with advertisers, which means no ads. And, ProtonPass doesn't track your behavior.

ProtonPass is based in Switzerland, which has very strict privacy laws. It was created by the ProtonMail team, which is a secure email platform. And if you choose to use a paid version, which is only \$1.99 a month, you get Premium features, which include a built in two factor authentication system, dark web

monitoring, emergency access, customer support, and more.

You can go to proton.me/pass to sign up and download the apps onto your devices. As usual, create one strong master password you can remember, and then you can allow the app to import passwords you may have saved in your browser or enter yours in manually. And if you forget your master password, there are recovery options. From that point on, you can start adding passwords every time you log into a site.

That's it for this week. Next week, we'll talk about our last password manager, Keeper. And if you have any suggestions for my next few articles, contact me at shavon@ea-abc.org.

Calling On Singers for the All-Evergreen Choir for MLK Jr. Day Worship Celebration

Do you enjoy singing? Want to lend your voice alongside other Evergreen folks from the greater Seattle area who will be honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, January 19th at 7pm at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship? Then join the All-Evergreen Choir. There will be rehearsals on Wed., Jan. 14 at 6:30pm and Sat. Jan. 17 at 11am at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship.

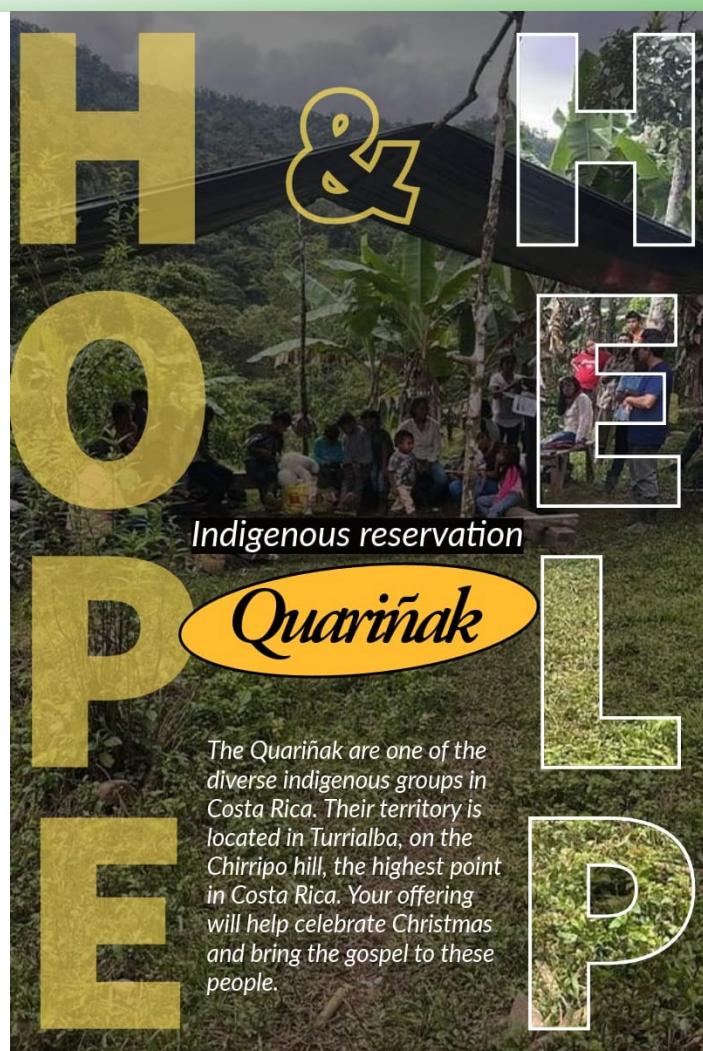
Sign up here (<https://forms.office.com/r/ux9KneVEf9>), and we'll be in touch soon!

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“doing” something such as feeding the poor etc. It also invokes internal movement, action that leads us to re-live something special that moves us. The hope filled expectation of the arrival of he who changed the world. It was no mistake that it called those who first heard it to the preparations for the arrival of the emperor. We are preparing to receive the reason for our existence!

Therefore, the call from Advent is one to internal and external action. We are indeed called to think of and celebrate Jesus’ love that changed the world. To relish in the joy of being loved so thoroughly, not in spite of who we are but because we are. While at the same time, and equally important, a call to look outside our church’s doors and ask how this love is being shared and think through about how we ourselves are contributing to it.

Therefore, this season is one of looking forward to all the good in our lives as well as to ask, how can I be part of the good in the world? To ask, where are love and justice needed most? Who is being left out of love and justice? How can I interrupt injustice in such a way that there is enough room for the perpetrator as well as the victim. To interrupt in such a way that all know they are loved yet to also make clear that injustice is not love and must stop.



Every year, **Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza** in Bremerton, adopts a church and supports it with an offering. We have supported churches in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. This year, we want to support an indigenous community of the Quariñak tribe. This indigenous community in Costa Rica is located in the Turrialba territory in Chirripó, the highest point in Costa Rica. We would like to contribute a voluntary offering to celebrate Christmas with the children of this tribe. Also, if possible, help build a small church, since they only have a space with a roof and no walls. If you would like to contribute, it will be welcome. This offering is completely voluntary. I promise it will be well spent. **Gifts must be received by December 10th so there is time to send it to Costa Rica.** May God continue to bless you. —**Pastor Erick Ramón López López, IBNE**

A rustic wooden signpost with several signs. The top sign is a circular logo for "WILSON CREEK LODGE" featuring a mountain and a tent. Below it are signs for "PRIVATE PROPERTY", "NEXT FIRE", "CAMP IN", "LODGE", "NATIONAL SYSTEM", "REPORT A VIOLATION", "WILSON CREEK LODGE", and "LODGE".

We are planning an enjoyable weekend of snow shoeing, snow play, fellowship, relaxation in front of the fireplace, crafts and some spiritual growth op-

Cascade Meadows is an American Baptist Camp operated under the auspices of the Washington Baptist Convention, which all EBA churches are members of. Accommodations are camp style with attendees participating in food preparation and clean-up. Additional details about Cascade Meadows can be found on its web site: [Cascade Meadows Camp](#).

If you would like to attend or have any questions please contact Mark Pittenger at mandmpittenger@comcast.net. Payment can be made at the following link: <https://square.link/u/N3i5cdOH>, via check mailed to the Evergreen office or by scanning this QR code:



By Rev. Paul Schneider

In short, I am grateful for Evergreen. I was aware of how unique Evergreen was even before I began serving as a staff member. Gratitude is shown to be hugely beneficial in our lives. Living with an attitude of gratitude has measurable health benefits both physical and mental. But it should also provoke a response.

Thank you in advance for anything you can give. It all helps us bless our churches!

A Testimony About the Matupi People in Chin State in Burma



By Thang Mawi

On Saturday, November 22, at Panther Lake Community Church, there was a meeting of Alliance of Asian American Baptist Churches in the Pacific Northwest. During this

time of sharing stories, Thang Mawi shared this with us via an audio recording. To hear her voice, please use this link [here](#). The text below has been edited slightly.

Good Afternoon to brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today, I want to speak directly to the pain, the fear, and the heart-break that so many from Matupi and across Chin State have car-

ried in recent years. Many of us have watched our hometowns change in ways we never imagined. We have seen things no family should ever see. And yet, here we stand held by God, strengthened by faith, and united by hope.

The truth is this, the people of Matupi have

endured deep suffering. There have been air strikes and bombings that shattered homes and shook entire villages. Hospitals that once cared for families have been damaged or abandoned. Schools that once echoed with children's laughter now sit empty, silent, or destroyed. Neighborhoods that were full of life are now quiet, with most of the young people gone, leaving behind mostly the elderly, trying to survive with almost nothing.

And so many of our brothers and sisters have had to flee. Some walked for days through

mountains and forests with nothing but faith in their hearts...hoping to reach India, or at least reach safety. Some made it. Some are still on the journey. And heart-breakingly... some did not

make it far enough. Families have lost loved ones along the way, not because they wanted to leave home, but because they were desperately trying to stay alive. These are the kinds of wounds that do not heal quickly.

Church, these are not just stories. These are our people. These are our families. These are our memories. These are our tears.



Rev. Dr. Paul & Gail Aita with Thang Mawi's family in Burma - Photo courtesy Paul Aita



A congregation in Burma—Photo by Rev. Dr. Paul Aita

And yet... even in all of this...God has not abandoned Matupi. The world may see a remote region, a small town pushed into hardship but God sees a people of extraordinary courage.

He sees the grandparents who stay behind to protect what is left. He sees the mothers who carry their children across mountains. He sees the youth who work abroad and send every dollar home. He sees the fathers who pray through the night, even when they cannot protect their families physically. He sees every step, every cry, every prayer.

When the hospitals fall, God becomes the healer. When the schools are destroyed, God becomes the teacher. When homes are burned, God becomes the shelter. When the future looks uncertain, God becomes the hope that cannot be shaken.

The Bible tells us: "Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy." And I believe there will be a day in God's time, when the people of Matupi will rise again with joy, with restoration, with new beginnings.

So today, church, let us pray deeply: For those who lost their homes. For those who lost family members along the escape routes. For those who are still missing. For those who are elderly and left behind with nowhere to go. For the children who have no school to return to. For the families walking across borders with only faith to carry them forward.

Let us pray for protection, for healing, and for strength. But let us also pray for restoration, that one day, the hills of Matupi will be full again...full of families, full of children, full of life.

Church, even in your pain, you have not lost your identity. You have not lost your courage. You have not lost your faith. And God has not lost sight of you.

Hold on to hope. Hold on to one another. And above all, hold on to God because He is holding on to Matupi.

Amen.



EVERGREEN ASSOCIATION
—OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA—

and the



Invite you to join us for our annual **Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration Service**

at the NBCF Worship & Family Life Center, 19300 108th Ave SE, Renton, WA



Monday, January 19th, 7pm

“Striving to Become the Beloved Community”



**Our Featured Preacher is
Rev. Dr. Victoria Carr-Ware**

This year our preacher will be Rev. Dr. Victoria Carr-Ware, Senior Pastor of Queen Anne Baptist Church in Seattle, WA. She is an enthusiastic preacher, counselor, and educator who's committed to radical solidarity and belonging through the work of racial justice, gender justice, and LGBTQIA+ liberation. Prior to QABC, Pastor Victoria served as the Ecumenical and Multifaith Campus Minister at Seattle University and as Associate Pastor at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship.

**With music from the All Evergreen Choir
Lead by Min. Zhane Perez**

You can join in the All Evergreen Choir—all rehearsals at NBCF

To sign up for the Choir, click this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/ux9KneVEf9>

"Beloved community is formed not by the eradication of difference, but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world."

-bell hooks, killing rage: Ending Racism

Please join us as we worship together and celebrate the life, legacy and vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is always an excellent service, with amazing music, preaching and encouraging our Evergreen family as we strive together to become Dr. King's beloved community.

Evergreen is deeply grateful to our host for this event:



NEW BEGINNINGS
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



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

2026 Annual Leadership Retreat February 5-7 at Camp Burton

9326 SW Bayview Dr, Vashon, WA 98070

February 21, Online on Zoom

Will run 9am to Noon

“Listening Together”

This year we’re going to be collaborating and learning together, and our focus will be hearing God and one another well. The Evergreen Staff, and Rev. Morgan Fletcher, our consultant for Well-Being for pastors and congregations, will be leading this time of listening for what God has placed before us, as churches and as the Evergreen Association.

In Person (2/5-7) Schedule

Thursday—Clergy Session

11am—Arrival & Registration

12:30pm—Lunch

1:30pm—First Session: Listening Well

3:30pm—Break/Free Time

5:30pm—Dinner

6:30pm—Second Session: Well-Being Personally and Congregationally

7:30pm—Free Time

Friday—Combine @ Lunch

8:30am—Breakfast

9:30am—Breakout Sessions

10:30am—Sharing Together

11am—Laity Arrival & Registration

12:30pm—Lunch—Laity join Clergy

1:30pm—Breakout: What are your churches

most concerned about?

2:30pm—Break/Free Time

5:30pm—Dinner

6:30pm—Evergreen Open Session—How does Evergreen Live This Moment?

7:30pm—Where do you see God at work?

Saturday—Combined Session

8:30am—Breakfast

9:30am—Clergy & Laity: What would you like to explore?

10:30am—Identifying Emerging Themes

11:30am—Caucus Connection

12:30pm—Lunch

1:30pm—Next Steps

2:30pm—Closing Reflection

3:00pm—Departure

Online (2/21) Schedule

9am—How can we be open to the Spirit?

10am—What’s on your spirit?

10:15am—Breakouts

10:45am—Break

11:00am—Report Back

11:45am—Next Steps and Closing

Register Now!

<https://forms.office.com/r/WvuXYaAzuH>





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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 peace, hope, joy and love be with you and your congregations this Advent!

Save these Dates!

We’ve got some great events coming up. Please mark your calendars so you can participate in these fantastic events!

Ordination of Min. John Malcomson

Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 1pm at Seattle First Baptist Church. Clergy meet in Hintz Chapel at 12:45 to process, and bring robes and a red or white stole.

MLK Jr. Day Celebration Worship

Monday, January 19, 2026 at 7pm at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship. See inside for more details!

Evergreen Annual Leadership Retreat

February 5-7, 2026 at Camp Burton. See inside for more details!

December Calendar

Dec. 2—Giving Tuesday—Please consider including Evergreen in the organizations you choose to give to this year: <https://ea-abc.org/give>

Dec. 5—International Volunteer Day

Dec. 7—Second Sunday of Advent

Dec. 10—UN Human Rights Day

Dec. 14—Third Sunday of Advent

Dec. 14—Hannukah Begins

Dec. 15—Bill of Rights Day

Dec. 19—National Ugly Sweater Day

Dec. 21—Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec. 21—Winter Solstice

Dec. 22—Final Night of Hannukah

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve

Dec. 25—Christmas Day

Dec. 26—Kwanzaa Begins

Dec. 27—National Leftovers Day

Dec. 30—National Bacon Day

Dec. 31—New Year’s Eve