

Evergreen Notes

Journeying Away

By Rev. Doug Avilesbernal



To embrace a Jesus guided and Scripture rooted belonging we need a journey away from the current reality into a new one free of all the constraints and oppression we have inherited. A reality that fully embraces our diversity imbued with Jesus' call to love and reconciliation as the grounding foundation for belonging.

We must engage in a walk toward a new reality that is not only possible, but also within reach when we embrace being transformed by Jesus and come together to support and encourage each other.

Currently the overwhelming majority of houses of worship in the United States are racially segregated. It would be very difficult for segregation to that degree to happen by accident or because of individual proclivities separate from societal norms. The answer therefore must lie in the broader cultural structures and resulting communal pressures. One strong possibility as a root cause is that all humans crave belonging that is not limited to the immediacy of familiar relationships and we all therefore search for and build places where belonging can be exercised and felt. This belonging though is shaped by cultural structures and the resulting society. Consequently, houses of worship can serve as strong indicators of communal exercise of that desire to belong as shaped by society. It follows then that by reviewing how belonging is lived out in these spaces we can infer

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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
- First Hispanic Baptist Church, Santa Barbara, CA
- 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

Digital Estate Planning: What Happens to Your Online Life



By Rev. Shavon Walker

This month, we're going to start a series about digital estate planning. Most people have attempted to plan for their

eventual demise by making wills and creating power of attorney documents. Some of you may already have put your most valuable assets in the name of trusted individuals. Your physical belongings are taken care of. Now, what about your online accounts?

Digital assets have financial, sentimental, and practical value. If they're not secured or organized properly, loved ones can face months of frustration or permanent loss of all those values. Imagine losing the digital images of Grandma's 101st birthday, or that picture you need to send to your mother's insurance, or that scanned copy of a birth certificate. And let's not forget all those logins, especially the one for that password manager (see my other articles for more information!). Today, let's talk about financial accounts.

To organize your financial accounts, make sure you have access to every account you own. From the 401K you started when you

got your first real job to the savings account you opened for your grandchild, each one must be accounted for. You'll need the platform name and website, the username and password, the 2FA (two factor) authentication method (if using; you really should be), and your wishes for each account (close, memorialize, transfer access).

Financial accounts also include automatic bill payments and subscriptions, PayPal, Venmo, loyalty and rewards programs, and even cryptocurrency. A special note: out of all of these accounts, the financial ones are the most crucial to secure because identity theft of the deceased is widespread. Also, your loved ones will need access to your accounts to help pay for things, and you don't want them surprised by a recurring Netflix subscription. That's it for this month. Next month, we'll talk about the personal and sentimental accounts. And if you have any suggestions on article ideas, feel free to email me at shavon@ea-abc.org. And don't forget to check out our Facebook and Instagram!



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WellBEing Cohorts 2026



By Rev. Morgan Fletcher

In a world that often says being well is a luxury or only available with the latest trends, the WellBEing cohorts seek to debunk that myth and create space for church leaders to identify

what would allow them to thrive. These cohorts are grounded in the beliefs that being well is part of justice work and that it is our divine right as Beloveds.

In 2026, there will be two cohorts: Personal and Systems. The Personal wellBEing cohort is in its second year and the Systems cohort is in its first. Learn about both and register for one or both as this season invites you. Both cohorts will have a chance to connect in person at this year's annual gathering.

Systems Cohort

The wellBEing Systems cohort is open to senior pastors and one or two lay leaders for each congregation registered. The four sessions are focused on:

- 1) identifying when your community is at its best,
- 2) what system impedes your freedom to live into your best,
- 3) how to encourage or practice what is best about your community, and
- 4) what resistance within your system can you identify.

WellBEing Systems is free of charge for four sessions led by Rev. Sam Kim & Rev. Morgan C. Fletcher.

While Sam and Morgan will be the guides for this cohort it will be grounded in collaborative learning from the cohort members. Following session four, cohort members can work directly with Sam and Morgan for a consultation to cocreate an implementation plan to engage the system that impedes your community's best selves. The consultation will cost \$200 and if you wish to work with one of the Pneu-

ma Consultants or fellow congregations, there may be additional costs based on specific partners' fees. Sessions will begin in June and end in September, meeting once a month based on registrants' availability.

Personal Cohort

The WellBEing Personal cohorts will consist of up to six pastors who will receive the following support:

- one 45-minute intake session,
- four 60-minute sessions to coach and assess steps to support your personal well-being,
- one 45-minute exit session to brainstorm action steps to move forward with identified practices,
- three 90-minute group sessions focused on topics/resources chosen by cohort members.

Cohorts will begin in March and run through August, with each member scheduling their sessions with the cohort guide and through one poll to schedule the group sessions.

The cost for the Personal cohort is \$600/person and if a congregation can't cover this in full the Evergreen Association can subsidize up to 50% of the fee. Gatherings and sessions will be virtual, so wherever you live you are able to attend. Evergreen Association values exploring ways to be well – in service of those values, Evergreen will provide \$500/each to go to whatever item the cohort member identifies as going to their wellbeing.

Registration

Registration for both cohorts will open at the February Leadership Retreat and can be accessed here.

To all who explore the 2026 WellBEing cohorts, thank you for taking this journey with us to find meaningful ways to invest in our pastors. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to [Rev. Sam](#) or [Pastor Morgan](#).



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indicators of how United States community life writ large understands and lives out belonging. It is my contention that this segregation indicates a very prejudicial understanding of belonging that perpetuates segregation and restraints our ability to faithfully follow Jesus' call to a broad belonging that aims to include all children of God regardless of external differences like skin color or even internal ones like culture.

Such walking toward freeing our deeply held sense of belonging from its constraints requires active leadership that makes use of cultural intelligence in praxis while also building a solid Scriptural knowledge foundation that together leads to positive tension that results in deconstructing inherited definitions of belonging and building a new understanding that births an entirely new reality.

To that end we will engage with the perceived reality we currently live with as our starting point. That grounding exploration will then serve as the launchpad for the proposed method for precipitating a liberation of our understanding of belonging as the grounding principle for the new reality to be built. The building of the new reality will then be the foundation on which a liberated sense of belonging is built.

March Quarterly Association Meeting—Sat. Mar. 21, 10am

Our first Quarterly Association Meeting of 2026 will be happening on Saturday, March 21 at 10am at Seattle First Baptist Church. It will be a hybrid meeting, so people can also join us online using Zoom. The agenda will be sent out about a week before the meeting and also posted in the Calendar Event on the Evergreen Association Web Page.

It is really important that people come to these meetings. As you all know, quorum in Evergreen is not determined by hitting a specific number of people, but by the presence of members of all of our caucuses. We as Evergreen need the wisdom of all our diversity in order to make the best decisions, and to hear the different ways the Spirit is talking to us all. Please do join us, either in person or online. In addition to making some important business decisions, we'll be meeting with our caucuses, and these meetings are not just places to come to consensus, but a chance for us to connect and develop real relationship.

The meeting will run from 10am to Noon.

The Zoom Link for this meeting will be:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3828576559?omn=82046206742>

Questions? Go ahead and contact Rev. Paul Schneider at the Evergreen Office: Phone 253-859-2226 x 1 or paul@ea-abc.org.

You are invited
To the Evergreen Mountain Area Gathering
March 7, 2026 at Calvary Baptist Denver
Denver, CO
9:30 AM -1PM

Clergy? Laity? Not from the Mountain Area?
Everyone is welcome!
Lunch is included, dinner is optional.
Scan the QR code below to register.



Join us for this time of
connection and fellowship!

This year the Evergreen Staff is working on doing two Local Area Gatherings. The first of these will be Saturday March 7, 2026 at Calvary Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado. We'll be starting at 9:30am and our time together will include some opportunities for learning as well as time for building connections and relationship.

Though this Area Gathering is in the Mountain Area, people from all over Evergreen are welcome to join in. The point of these local area gatherings is to build greater connection and understanding across Evergreen churches, even those beyond the local area in question.

This event will include a brief time of training, lead by Rev. Sam Kim, Rev. Shavon Walker, and Rev. Paul Schneider, members of your Evergreen Staff. We will have a time of listening, for the Staff to hear what are the con-

cerns and challenges your congregations are facing, and also be sharing some of what we learned at the Leadership Retreat.

We'll close out our time with a lunch together. This lunch that we'll be sharing really does make it imperative for people who are planning on coming to RSVP as soon as possible, that way we can make sure we're ordering not just enough food, but the right kinds of food. You can RSVP online by using the QR Code in the graphic above or using this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/M0hKYd3fhs>

If you have any questions or are looking for more information about this event please don't hesitate to reach out to Rev. Paul Schneider at the Evergreen Office by phone at 253-859-2226x1 or by email at paul@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 Spring bring warm hope, new life, and grace abundant to your church!

Save these Dates!

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

Mountain Area Gathering

Saturday, March 7th at Calvary Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado. A time of learning and fellowship, all are welcome to attend. Check inside for more details and how to register!

March Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, March 21st In Person at Seattle First Baptist Church and Online. See inside for details!

Marcia Patton 50th Ordiversary!

Saturday, May 16th at New Beginnings Christian Fellowship!

March Calendar

March 3—Purim

March 4—Holi

March 8—Daylight Savings begins, spring forward an hour or you’ll be late to church!

March 10—Mario Day



March 17—St. Patrick’s Day— wear a little green for Luck

March 19—Ramadan ends

March 20—Eid Al Fitr

March 20—Vernal Equinox—Spring Begins!

March 25—The Annunciation

March 29—Palm Sunday!

March 28—Earth Hour at 8:30pm—turn off your lights and non essential power.

March 31—Cesar Chavez Day

March 31—International Transgender Day of Visibility