



Evergreen Notes

Volume 20, Issue 4

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE Virtual and Whenever You Choose

Hallelujah! Christ Arose!

Hi Evergreen Family,

Here's the final edit of our very simple and modest Easter service! Feel free to post it on your own individual streaming/social media sites if you like. Also, Mindi will be uploading this to the Evergreen Website. It comes in at about 24 minutes? Be forewarned it's a large download so I'd recommend a good internet connection if you're going to try it.

https://japanesebaptistchurch206-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/office_jbcseattle_org/ESAYdEMbouJBplogMsmqU-gB8E4bA6gDISCMEqrKHXC7Hw?e=hn0Bbx

Here's an "Order of Worship"

- Welcome Rev. Anita Peebles
- "Beautiful Things" Min. of Music, Alex Zarecki
- Scripture Reading Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell
- Sermon Rev. Bianca Luna
- "Everything New" Rev. Samuel Kim
- Benediction Rev. Douglas Avilesbernal

May we all be blessed in this time of worship together!

Rev. Samuel Kim (he/him)
Senior Pastor, Japanese Baptist Church

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Pray for Churches Seeking Pastoral Leadership

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Filipino-American Christian Fellowship (FACF), and Fairview Community Church

Keep Praying for Burma

Lynn Pulliam

In 1961, I was on staff at the American Baptist Conference Center in Greenlake WI. My fellow worker, Sharo Dwe, was a seminary student from Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Toward the end of the summer she said she would go back to Burma and minister to the Karen hill people. In response to my question, "What can I do to help?", all she asked was for prayer.

Here we are some 60 years later, and the call is still: Keep on praying for Burma. Join me in continuing to lift Burma before God.

Leadership Retreat Report

Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell

We held our first Leadership Retreat entirely online on Saturday, March 13th on Zoom. Last year, our 2020 retreat was held at Camp Burton, and next year, it will be held February 11th-12th, 2022 at Camp Burton on Vashon Island, WA.

We began our retreat with a welcome from Rev. Doug and a re-introduction to the UNCO (short for UnConference) model by Rev. Anita Peebles. The UNCO model allows us to explore what our questions are and what our needs are, rather than hiring a keynote speaker to come and do a workshop with us. The UNCO model helps us to determine what our needs are so then we can form workshops at a later date.

Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell then reminded us of the work from the 2020 Leadership Retreat, which had over 60 people attend! We did the UNCO model in person, and from 23 conversations, we came up with four main areas: Immigration and Intentional Intercultural Life, Leadership and Change with Young Leaders, Spiritual Life and Resources, and Bridging Church and Community. Unfortunately, with the Covid shutdown soon after, some of these conversations have been paused. Others, like the Intentional Intercultural Life, have been reborn and are currently active. We do not wish to lose sight of those areas, but rather to remember that those areas are still important to us and we hope to resume those conversations and interests. Some of the conversations from this year's retreat may

fit as a continuation of those previous conversations.

Rev. Paul Schneider led us in a devotion from Romans 8:38-39 and we asked the question "Where have you seen God at work in the last year?" We split into clergy and laity groups to respond to that question, and reported back from our small groups. The retreat leadership team during lunch took the notes from reporting back to create our afternoon breakout groups, with input from the attendees. We held six breakout groups on the following topics, and we have included a brief summary of the notes from those conversations:

"What are we doing about justice?" What are we doing as an association? We shared about the Anti-Racist Team (ART) working with our Euro churches, the work of individual congregations, the American Baptist Churches Anti-Racism Task Force, and resources such as book discussions that some of our congregations are having. New Beginnings Christian Fellowship recently had a conversation on "White Fragility" with the author Robin DiAngelo. Queen Anne Baptist has an anti-racist book discussion group that is currently reading "How to Fight Racism" by Jemar Tisby. We also discussed living into being welcoming and affirming of LGBTQ folks.

What can we do: One suggestion that came forward was doing an audit of the church—one congregation had completed a gender audit to see how women were included in leadership. Perhaps an audit could be conducted to determine who is in leadership in terms of gender, race,

sexual orientation, ability, etc. What can we do together? How can we learn together? Another suggestion was for an online justice bulletin board—some way we could share ideas and work together. We can join in book groups together. We can use the resources provided by ART and the American Baptist Churches Anti-Racism Task Force: <https://www.abc-usa.org/2021/02/the-abcusa-anti-racism-task-force-a-call-to-just-action/>

"Supporting Burma (Myanmar)." This group shared what is happening in Burma and how we can help support those who are suffering. We currently have five Evergreen churches in the Seattle area made up of members of ethnic minorities from Burma. There is a great concern about the power void that will occur when the military topples, or changes. Some of the younger population of the Bama majority is just now starting to recognize the racism against ethnic minorities, who are often labeled as terrorists. Karen Community Church sent some funds (along with Panther Lake Community Church) to Karen Baptist Theological Seminary.

What can we do: Currently, Doug holds a weekly gathering of the pastors from Burma to share information and mutual resources. We can learn more. American Baptist Churches has a Burma Refugee Commission: <https://www.abc-usa.org/burma-refugee-commission/> Evergreen Church-

(Continued on page 3)

Leadership Retreat (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

es can also pray for Burma and for those suffering. We can also send funds to Karen Community Church or the Oakland Burmese Baptist Church who will send it. Panther Lake Community Church has also set up a fund in their online giving.

“We can’t go back, so how do we go forward in a post-Covid world?” There were so many that wanted to discuss this we had two groups. Both groups discussed the need for hybrid worship going forward—being online as well as being in-person. We have all missed the in-person interaction. Youth have missed the praise music elements found in in-person worship. Some seniors have not been able to connect. However, there has been wonderful opportunities for people out of state to join in, and there may be some who wish to continue to join online only. People with certain disabilities are able to join in more fully, and being online opens up new ideas, collaboration, and experiences for Christian education and worship. There is still a learning curve of how to do this well. Along with this, there is the question for each congregation to ask: “When are we ready to resume in-person worship?” Each congregation has different needs, different demands, different challenges.

What can we do? As a result of this conversation, we are putting together a workshop for Evergreen on hybrid worship, learning about different platforms (Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube livestreaming, etc), different technology and equipment that is needed, and how to blend in-person

with online, while continuing to maintain social distancing and other measures that are still in place. We will announce this workshop soon.

“Grief: What Have We Lost?” Grief is not just due to the loss of life from Covid, now topping over 540,000 people in the United States. We grieve due to the loss of control, things changing, what we still do not know about Covid, other deaths in our churches and families that we were unable to hold funerals for. We grieve for loss of friendships, life events, and normalcy. Many of us feel stuck. Stress is high for clergy and there is no opportunity to take vacations. There is so much to grieve, but no opportunity really to do so. One of the major struggles is the need to be “competitive in the spiritual marketplace.” This can be really draining for clergy.

What can we do? Perhaps Evergreen can offer a grief training. We can find a way to create a ritual for the things we have missed and lost. Perhaps throwing a party to celebrate all the things we couldn’t when Covid is over. Acknowledge communal and private moments of grief. Move into hybrid ways of doing things, as children are still not vaccinated, and others may still be restricted.

“Ministry.” This group explored the need to share in ministry within Evergreen and how we might build coalitions. We are stronger together. For example, when we work for racial justice, when we speak to elected officials, we are better able to advocate when we work together.

What can we do? Evergreen can

develop and offer a training on how to do advocacy work. Evergreen has great feeding ministries happening already—how can we connect? Evergreen has support ministers—need to share these resources and communicate them more effectively. We need to learn how to access the resources in our community and how we can help at our local schools. Another note: we need Sunday School teacher training.

“Evangelism.” This came from the Hispanic/Latino caucus, as we held a Spanish-speaking breakout group and this is a passion for this caucus. How can we be holistic in our approach? How can we use technology and other methods to do holistic ministry in our communities? We are still learning how to do ministry in the United States.

What can we do? Evergreen can help provide training on technology.

We had a rich time together online. The full reports of notes from each group will be shared with caucus leadership, but we hope that this small report helps remind us of what we want to learn more about and what we hope to do as Evergreen.

Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, Rev. Anita Peebles, Rev. Paul Schneider, and Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell
Evergreen Leadership Retreat Team

Rev. George Oliver to Become Grace Baptist—San Jose’s Pastor

Excerpt from PCBA Notes, Lent, 2021

The Rev. George Oliver will become the new Pastor of Grace Baptist Church, San Jose on April 1, 2021. The congregation reports he is experienced in social action leadership, community outreach, music, worship reform, public advocacy, and inter-faith involvement. They say Rev. Oliver’s ministry emphasizes expository preaching with social consciousness. He’s been involved with peace issues including Summer Conference Coordinator

for the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

He is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School and has been Senior Pastor of Christ’s Community Church in Chicopee MA, and has served as Interim Senior Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Natick MA and as Minister of Worship and the Arts at Union Baptist Church, Cambridge MA.

In a letter to the congregation, Rev. Oliver writes, “The Black church nurtured and formed me more than my education, and I owe a debt to the Church,

which molded my identity to defy every statistic about what a poor, black boy from a single parent home with a deceased father should be [able to accomplish]. I saw what difference churches make and never shrink from my belief that God ordained the church not merely to save souls, but to save lives, just like it saved mine.”

Congratulations Grace Baptist Church—San Jose and Pastor George Oliver. Welcome to the Evergreen Family, Rev. Oliver!



VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 3/25/21)—Register today for the American Baptist Churches Biennial Mission Summit. Visit www.americanbaptists2021.com to register.

Hurtful Delusion

by Rev. Doug Avilesbernal



“ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
Matt. 22:37-40

The birth of the delusion

Being raised in our country means that it is just about impossible to escape the glorification of violence. We read about violence, we watch violence, we live violence. We enjoy and escape to violence when stressed. It is all over our language; our expressions around work, talk of success, the way we describe difficulties of life, even the way we talk about ministry! Worse still, violence is nearly always presented as a viable solution to conflict: Kill this off! Beat them/this to the ground! I'm going to fight this! We're going to war against this problem. The best solution to a problem is a magic bullet! Violence is inescapable in our culture.

The delusion

Do not fall for the delusion that we Americans are better and as soon as there are enough people visibly carrying the mass killings will stop. Someone hell bent on releasing their anger by killing will just make sure they are better armed when they do. Then there is the obvious question: if there are many people armed, how could anyone possibly know who the good guy is when rounding a corner there are 2, 3, 4, or more people shooting at each other?

In glorifying violence, we also glorify the individual with a firearm.

“The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

We nurture countless good people into the delusion that by carrying a firearm they will be the good guy/gal s/hero who stops the bad one. This delusion allows too many to think that when someone opens up with a semi-auto assault rifle, he/she will be able and alert enough to:

*Draw and accurately aim his/her Springfield XD, Ruger, Glock or other.

*Identify which shooter is the bad person.

*Accurately put rounds on target while missing victims in front, behind, and/or next to the bad guy and those running through the line of fire.

All within seconds and, of course, while also making sure whoever is with the XD, Ruger, Glock or other shooter, is safe and out of the kill zone.

Into this mess Jesus sits with perpetrator and victim to cry. That is because everything in the Gospels SHOUTS against what we think of and defend as normal. Matt. 22:37-40 is just one of the passages telling us how getting better at killing in the hope of saving lives is against everything Jesus taught as well as basic reason.

EBA, preach the Gospel by living it and loving all every bit as much as we profess to love God! Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that condemning others and focusing only on banning firearms will solve this complex issue. It will be a struggle; it will be long, and it is certainly worth it.

Please go online to www.ea-abc.org and click on “Give” to donate.

We are grateful for your continued support!

Happenings Around the Region

Grace Baptist Church—Tacoma Gracefully Good Coffee You are invited to email us to place an order at gracefullygoodcoffee@gmail.com

If there is a bulk order from a congregation or church that will make any shipping or delivery much easier. But people can still order individually as well.

Donation suggestion is \$12 per pound of coffee. We offer whole bean and ground coffee (from coarse to fine grind), in medium and dark roasts.

Right now we are working on setting up accepting credit cards, but it's not available yet. Mailing a check to the church is easiest, but I can work out payment options through the email orders.

Info from our website: <http://www.gracebaptisttacoma.org/gracefully-good-coffee.html>

Jared

*******Evergreen Resource Ministers** are a support provided by the Evergreen region. Receiving thousands of resource links when one is getting started or one is stuck can be paralyzing. So, Resource Ministers can come alongside the church into discovering their call, who they are and what process, resource, etc. might help them best in their context.

Children Ministries	JC Mitchell, revjcmitchell@gmail.com Patrick Green patrickgre@comcast.net
Youth/Family Ministries	Angeline Lau alau.jbc@gmail.com Anita Peebles anita@seattlefirstbaptist.org
Houselessness	Chris Boyer mcboyer@gsbchurch.com
Worship	Victoria Carr vcarr@thenbcf.org
Media	Mindi Welton-Mitchell media@ea-abc.org

*******From PCBA – Concern Expressed for Burmese Baptist Congregations**

American Baptists in Northern California expressed concern for members of the San Francisco Kachin Baptist Church, meeting at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, and the Oakland Burmese Mission Baptist Church meeting in the First Baptist Church of Oakland, regarding the recent military coup in Myanmar. Pastor Naw San of the Kachin congregation describes it as “turning people’s world up-side down”.

Leadership of the American Baptist Churches USA has issued a call to prayer for the Burmese people and for peaceful ways of resolving conflict. Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Interim General Secretary advises he has sent a letter to President Biden asking “support for Burma’s democratic institutions,...urging the military to honor the results of recent elections, adherence to democratic norms, the rule of law and the release of detained elected officials”.

*******American Baptist Women of the Pacific Northwest** Conference

Committee has scheduled the date—**October 1-3, 2021**, Howard Johnson Hotel, Yakima. The following elections are official: Regional President—Gail Aita; Literature Chair—Lorna Flannery; Coordinator of AB Girls—Gaythoo Thaw and Coordinator of Young Adult Women—Ehlertha Win. Additionally, the North Puget Sound Area Board and the Far West Area Board determined to merge and become one body with the Region ABW.

Mentoring Young People Changes Lives

Very truly I Tell you, who-ever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father! John 14:12

Dear Loved Ones,

Greetings and Happy New Year 2021. Let me introduce to you Mr. Dieudonne Almeant. Mr. Dieudonne, a village boy, a high school dropout, joined the eye clinic in 2007 as a cleaner. Slowly the eye clinic added night watch duties to his description.

When the clinic needed a driver for its mobile clinics in the remote villages, we pointed out Mr. Dieudonne as the suitable candidate. We sent him to a professional driving school in Cap-Haitien. While he was working and going to driving school, he was also taking afternoon classes to complete his high school education. He successfully passed his States High School Exam.

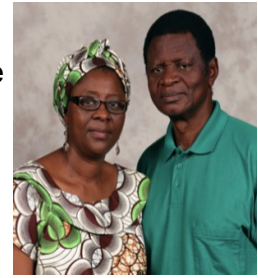
The eye clinic sent Mr. Dieudonne to a professional school to study electricity. After two years, this last December 27, 2020, Mr. Dieudonne graduated as a certi-

fied electrician. We hope that he can take plumbing in the near future. The idea is to have a young handy person to replace the aging one we have right now.



Mr. Dieudonne Almeant's wife, with the help of the eye clinic, has a year to go before finishing up her high school. She also helps the clinic alongside her husband and keeps an eye on the security of the clinic.

Dieudonne has become the key person in the daily function of the clinic. Everybody calls on Mr. Dieudonne to do this or that or to go here and there. He has been voted the Best Worker of the eye clinic, three years in a row (2017-2020).



Kihomi & Nzunga

We are slowly preparing the future of the eye clinic by promoting its staff, one person at a time.

This is what you do when you cannot go physically on the mission field. We are there to represent each one of you as the Feet and the Hands of Jesus-Christ.

In Haiti,

Yours,
Nzunga & Kihomi

KIHOMI and NZUNGA serve as a vital link between International Ministries and the Haitian Baptist Convention. They preach in churches and serve through a variety of ministries. Nzunga teaches theology at the Christian University of Northern Haiti, trains assistant professors and administers a scholarship program for elementary- through university-age students. He manages the goat and pig projects for children, the clean water project for communities and the Cap-Haitien Eye Clinic. Kihomi works in counseling, women's health, community health evangelism and economic development. She coordinates and advises the women's association of the convention, representing women of all the Baptist denominations of Haiti at international conferences.



Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches
409 Third Avenue S, Suite A
Kent WA 98032-5843

Phone: 253-859-2226

Email: eba@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.



Rev. Douglas Avilesbernal
Executive Minister

Building Bridges, Resourcing Churches & Translating Our Unity



Executive Committee meets monthly on the second Thursday each month at 6:30 PM, Japanese Baptist Church (Via Zoom during Corona Virus pandemic).

Calendar of Upcoming Event

Association Board Meetings, Quarterly:
June 12, 2021;
August 14, 2021; and
October 8-9, 2021 (Annual Meeting)

Annual Meeting—October 8-9, 2021, Olympia First Baptist Church. **Theme:** Rooted & Re-purposed; **Scripture:** Colossians 2:6-7; **Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley, Executive Minister Metro New York

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.