

Evergreen Notes

Signature Campaign for Burma

By Rev. Dr. Paul Aita

It has been more than a year since the military executed a coup in Burma (officially known as Myanmar), preventing the duly elected Parliament to govern. The Burma army has terrorized the country since then, and the country's ethnic minorities have been particularly hard hit. Efforts are being made in the US Con-



gress to advocate for democracy to be restored in Burma. The House of Representatives passed the Protect Democracy in Burma Act of 2021 (HR 1112) and sent it to the Senate, where it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. Last October, Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland introduced a separate bill in the Senate (S 2937), which was also referred to that committee. Consideration of that bill is still in process.

American Baptists have had a special interest in Burma since the time of Ann and Adoniram Judson, who began their ministry there in 1813. In 2007, in

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Please Pray for Churches seeking Pastoral Leadership

- Mount Zion Baptist Church,**
Seattle, WA
- Queen Anne Baptist Church,**
Seattle, WA
- Fairview Community Church,**
Costa Mesa, CA
- Wenatchee Brethren Baptist Church,**
Wenatchee, WA
- Filipino-American Christian Fellowship,**
Lynnwood, WA
- Good Shepherd Baptist Church,**
Lynnwood, WA

Check your Spam Filter

Not an April Fool's joke! Some have reported that emails from the new Evergreen Office Administrator ended up in their "Spam" or "Junk" email folders. If you were expecting an email message from Paul and didn't get it, please check your Spam or Junk email folder, and please "whitelist" paul@ea-abc.org in your email and mark any of those email messages caught in your filter as "not junk."

Please Help Us Update our Contacts for Churches and Pastors!

One of the important tasks we're working on is updating important contact information. These updated lists will be used to make sure that all of our Pastors are contacted swiftly and efficiently when there is a need, and that our churches, and lay leaders are connected to Evergreen as well. Even if you know, that we have your church or Pastor's email address or phone number, please list it anyway. This way we can be sure we have the most current information. The form also asks that you give us certain dates as well (founding date of the church, hiring date and ordination dates of the pastors). We want to celebrate those anniversaries with your congregation! They are important to mark. If you do not know a particular date, that's ok, please fill out the rest of the form anyway. That way we can get the critical contact information set.

This request was also in last month's issue but only two churches have responded so far.

The form can be filled out online at <https://forms.office.com/r/Rp8tRKH4jd>, or you can request a copy be sent to you by mail or email. It would be great if we could gather all this information by the end of April! Please contact Paul Schneider with any questions at paul@ea-abc.org.

The Current Crisis in Haiti and Our Mission

By Rev. Dr. Keith Madsen

By now most of us should know about the dire situation in Haiti: The country really hasn't fully recovered from the 2010 earthquake, which killed hundreds of thousands of people. In August of last year, a 7.2 magnitude quake hit southern Haiti, and several smaller quakes have been recorded since. The island nation was also hit with Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Laura in 2020. The total deaths from those three storms was over 700, and hundreds of thousands were left homeless. Covid-19 has, of course, also hit the struggling country hard.

Adding to the misery of these natural disasters, President Jovenal Moise was assassinated in July of last year, and ever since the country has been ruled by gangs. Our American Baptist missionaries, Nzunga Mabudiga and Kihomi Ngwemi have not been able to get back in the country because of the dangers, although Nzunga did recently attend a gathering in the Dominican Republic which focused on ministry in Haiti.

The Evergreen Association has a task force of leaders who are getting together by Zoom to get guidance on how to stand with the people of Haiti in the midst of these crises. I have been serving as the convener of this group, and Nzunga, Adalia Gutierrez-Lee and Herb Rogers also meet with us.

How do we help in Haiti right now? That is the question on which we have focused. Just sending money is insufficient. The gangs will too often steal such donations (However, sending donations to Evergreen

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response to the large number of refugees from Burma coming to the United States, ABC/USA appointed a Burma Refugee Task Force to support and encourage the refugees and to inform the wider family of their situation. In 2014, the task force became a standing commission that works in partnership with associations of Baptists from Burma that have come into existence in the US. Since February 2021, the Commission has focused on the ministry of advocacy in light of the present situation. More information about the Commission is available online at <https://www.abc-usa.org/burma-refugee-commission/>. (The resources at the bottom of that page include a Power Point presentation.)

Recently, the Commission put together an advocacy group with representatives of many organizations from the “Burma diaspora” throughout the US, entities within American Baptist Churches USA, and the Christian human rights organization 21Wilberforce. That group has been promoting a signature campaign to submit a petition to members of the US House of Representatives and Senate. The petition expresses support for a Burma bill and requests that the final version of the bill include eight specific provisions. These include support for a new constitution in Burma establishing a federal democracy, recognition of the National Unity Government [composed of duly elected members of Parliament] as the official government of Burma rather than the military-backed State Administration Council, provision of direct cross-border emergency aid to Internally Displaced Persons and individuals in the Civil Disobedience Movement, and support for religious freedom and human rights for everyone in Burma.

The ABC Burma Refugee Commission urges concerned US citizens to sign the petition, which can be found online at <https://burmaadvocacygroup.org/>,

along with articles and photos. **Clicking on the blue “Take Action” button will take you to a page that includes the full text of the petition.** Filling out the accompanying form with your name and address will cause a copy of the petition to be sent on your behalf to your two US Senators and the Representative for your congressional district. The end-date for the signature campaign had been March 31st, but the Commission has discussed extended that deadline, at least through Easter. As of March 18th, almost 900 petitions had been processed with reports of more on the way.

Six congregations affiliated with the Evergreen Baptist Association were established by refugees from Burma. Five are in the Seattle area (Karen Community Church of Greater Seattle, Seattle Chin Baptist Church, Seattle Falam Baptist Church, Washington Chin Baptist Church, and Washington Kachin Baptist Church) and one is in the Bay Area (San Francisco Bay Chin Christian Fellowship).

Gail and Paul Aita have made ten mission trips to Burma and two to Malaysia since 2000. They serve under contract as volunteer Special Assistants for Southeast Asia for American Baptist International Ministries. One of Paul’s functions as such is to serve on the Burma Refugee Commission. In 2012, Paul was appointed Minister to People from Burma by the Panther Lake Community Church. In 2020, he was invited by the Washington Kachin Baptist Church to be their Senior Pastor. You are welcome to contact Paul for more information at aita.paul@gmail.com.



Building Bridges

Evergreen as a region has a vested interest in church growth. This is for many reasons, but primarily because the local church is the expression of the Beloved Community in its particular place. We want to help new churches be planted, help revitalize existing churches, and help find ways to help new paradigms of church get off the ground. And while salvation is free, ministry is not. Oftentimes new or re-starting churches don't have adequate funds to keep them going long enough to become self-sustaining. The Building Bridges Fund is going to be part of our answer to that.

Thanks to the generosity of individuals and our churches, especially First Baptist Palo Alto and Mount Lake Terrace, we have established an endowment to help churches which need that revitalization or seed money to get the funds they need. This fund is overseen by a Steering Committee with a representative from each of Evergreen's Caucuses. They're still working to determine the exact criteria under which existing churches, churches looking to restart, and new ministries can apply, and the oversight and help they'll receive. If you have any questions or concerns about this, we ask that you reach out to your caucus representative so that they can be brought up and discussed in the regular meetings of that committee:

Asian Caucus Representative: Pam Nomura
pnomura1@gmail.com

Black Caucus Representative: Scott Pegues
tscottp@gmail.com

Euro Caucus Representative: Pete Shaw
pete@crosswalknapa.org

Hispanic Caucus Representative: Jorge Saquic
reverendosaquic@gmail.com

Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, our Executive Minister is also on this committee.
doug@ea-abc.org

We look forward to bringing you more information about how this program will be implemented soon!

Corrections and Clarifications

Evergreen Annual Meeting Date: We accidentally included erroneous dates for the annual meeting last issue. **Our Annual Meeting will be October 13th through the 15th at First Baptist Denver, Colorado. We'll also stream it out over Zoom so everyone can participate.**

We apologize for getting that wrong!

ABWM "Shine the Light" Award Nominee Wendy Neale of SRCC

Wendy Neale was nominated by the Shell Ridge Community Church American Baptist Women's Ministry for nationwide ABWM's "Shine the Light" award.

While she did not win, she was an excellent candidate and met all criteria of the award. Wendy's leadership has involved Shell Ridge Community Church in interfaith projects, outreach to the community, and programs to feed children.

Wendy is a long time supporter of the Pacific Coast Baptist Association. She is currently on their board as Financial Secretary, a role she has served in for many years with them.

On March 24th, Shell Ridge Community Church honored Wendy, citing the many projects she's promoted and worked for. She is also on the Shell Ridge Mercy and Justice Team.

Congratulations and thank you Wendy Neale!



Koffee for Kiev! Concert & Fundraiser

Koffee For Kiev

Concert to raise funds for our Ukrainian neighbors!

- No cover charge
- Donations accepted
- 100% of donations go to refugees

Date: April 23rd, 2022

Time: 6PM - 8PM

Grace Baptist Church
2507 North Vassault
Tacoma, WA 98406

Saturday, April 23, 2022

6 to 8 pm

Join us for our first Coffee Night at Grace Baptist Church! We will be featuring live music from our

very own Praise Team, with a mix of praise music and popular music from various decades.

There will be lots of Gracefully Good Coffee, soft drinks, and light snacks offered at this event. There is no cost for admission or food/drink, but donations are most welcome!

This is a casual event, just like going to hang out at a coffee shop with friends!

Our goal is to have multiple Coffee Shop events at Grace throughout the year, featuring local musicians and other forms of entertainment.

Our first event will be "Koffee for Kiev" with 100% of our donations for the evening going to support humanitarian efforts related to the war in Ukraine.

Please share this event with your friends and family, it is open for all ages!

Invitation to Nathan Brittsan's Ordination

First Baptist Church of Berkeley, the Pacific Coast Baptist Association, and the Evergreen Baptist Association warmly invite you to:

The ordination celebration for Nathan T. Brittsan

Sunday, May 1, 2022 at 4:30 pm

Sanctuary of Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
3534 Lakeshore Avenue, Oakland CA

Clergy are encouraged to wear stoles; no robes, please.

If you would like to attend via Zoom or need other details, please contact Pastor Nancy Hall:

neh@amural.com.

Night @ the Ballpark Aug. 27th, 2022, 7:10p

On August 27th, 2022 at 7:10pm you are invited to join the Evergreen family in the stands of T-Mobile Park to watch the Seattle Mariners play the Cleveland Guardians. This is the night Ichiro Suzuki is being inducted into the Mariners Hall of Fame, and the first 20,000 fans will get an Ichiro T-Shirt. Guaranteed to be a night to remember, as we celebrate a man who is a baseball legend in two countries!

Let's get a big Evergreen crowd going to celebrate the return of Baseball, and an Evergreen tradition.

Tickets are only \$18.00 for main level seats and are going to go quickly! To reserve yours, please call the Evergreen Office at 253-859-2226 and press 1 to talk to Paul. Or you can email your reservation to

paul@ea-abc.org.

In Memoriam—Norman Gottwald

Norman Gottwald
Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies,
New York Theological Seminary

Norman K. Gottwald (1926 - 2022) passed away on March 11, in Berkeley, California. Along with his spouse, Laura Lagerquist-Gottwald, Dr. Gottwald was a longtime and active member of First Baptist Church of Berkeley and will be deeply missed by the congregation.

Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at New York Theological Seminary, Dr. Gottwald taught previously at the American Baptist Seminary of the West and the Graduate Theological Union (both in Berkeley, CA) and Andover Newton Theological School (Andover, MA). His most influential book is *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Lib-*



erated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E. (1979), a celebrated study of the origins of ancient Israel as an indigenous peasant uprising. His other writings include *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and in Ours*, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, and, as co-author, *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. Gottwald pioneered the use of social theory and method in

biblical studies. He was a world-wide lecturer on the critical relevance of the Bible to contemporary social struggles and a citizen activist in numerous civil rights, anti-war, and pro-labor movements and organizations. As an ordained minister of American Baptist Churches USA, Dr. Gottwald was a strong advocate of biblical study committed to social change.

April Calendar

- April 1st** — April Fool's Day
- April 10th** — Palm Sunday, Holy Week begins.
- April 14th** — 6:30pm — Executive Committee meets via Zoom.
- April 15th** — Good Friday
- April 17th** — Easter! - Christ is Risen, Indeed!
- April 18th** — Tax Day
- April 22nd** — Earth Day
- April 23rd** — 6pm — Grace Baptist Tacoma — Koffee for Kiev see below!
- April 27th** — Administrative Professionals Day
- April 29th** — Arbor Day

Evergreen Quarterly Board Meetings

Here are the dates for the remaining Evergreen Quarterly Board Meetings for 2022. **These meetings take place from 10am to 11:30am Pacific.**

It is ideal to have both lay and pastoral leadership present when possible. These Quarterly meetings are an important part of our work together as a region, where we both do the necessary business and set our agenda for the future.

Please note corrected date for
Annual Meeting below!

- #2 – June 11th, 2022** – Physical location TBD, also over Zoom.
- #3 – August 13th, 2022** – Physical location TBD, also over Zoom.
- #4 – October 13th-15th, 2022** – Annual Meeting at FBC Denver in Denver, CO, and over Zoom.

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or International Ministries, to be used when it can be done in a secure way is always helpful). Two kinds of actions are most urgently needed now:

Concerted prayer: This is a big challenge, but no challenge is too big for our God! We need God's guidance on this vital issue.

Explore Advocacy Options: our government needs to support Haitian efforts to solve their crisis. What can church leaders do to make sure that happens? This is a tough issue, but a critical one. There is a group established in

Haiti calling itself "Commission for a Haitian Solution to the Crisis." It is seeking to set up fair elections to restore leadership. To date, our government seems to be supporting the former Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, who is a suspect in the former President's assassination, and who is resisting setting up an election. Can we find a way to support this commission, or other efforts Haitians make to bring hope and healing to their country?

Our group continues to meet to determine how we can help. Keep in prayer for God's guidance for us as well!

Editor's Notes—Connections

By Rev. Paul Schneider, Editor Evergreen Notes

I was recently surprised to realize that I've had one of my email addresses for more than a quarter of a century. I have friends who change their email addresses every few years, and making sure I'm using the most current one can be a challenge.

One of the greatest advantages we have in Evergreen is our diversity. We are over sixty congregations, diverse in ethnicity and national origin, in theological perspective, in geography and in socio-political background. We choose to be associated together, to be a Region together. We do so out of respect for historic Baptist principles of Local Church Autonomy, and the Priesthood of All Believers, and because what unites us is greater than our differences – We are all beloved children of God, and followers of Jesus Christ.

Here at the Region office, part of our task is to help facilitate connections between the many congregations and people that make up our Evergreen Family. Another major part of our job is to be a resource and a hub for information for the congregations we serve. In order to do our job well, we need to be able to reach out to you quickly and effectively.

Evergreen has been around for almost as long as I've had some of my email addresses, and in some cases we have multiple instances of contact information for our congregations and the individuals who are part of them. Some of this contact information is likely outdated, even while some of it hasn't changed in that time. Sometimes people and churches change emails or phone numbers and notices of those changes can be missed or missent.

To that end, we're asking you to help us update the contact information for our churches and pastors, so that we can communicate important information quickly and accurately to the right people. Please take the time to fill out the form linked below. It can be done right online if you prefer, or you can request that I send you a copy to fill out as a Word document or by hand. Thank you for helping us with this so we can serve you better!

You can always email me at paul@ea-abc.org.

<https://forms.office.com/r/Rp8tRKH4jd>



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Email: office@ea-abc.org

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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.

Christ is Risen!
Christ is Risen,
indeed!

Some of the Evergreen Good Friday Online Services

Below are some services available online for Good Friday across Evergreen!

Seattle First Baptist Church—6pm via Zoom and in person in their sanctuary—reach out to contact@seattlefirstbaptist.org for Zoom credentials

Japanese Baptist Church—7pm via Youtube Streaming and in person in their sanctuary—<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpdR5EE6kpp6liXqEIK3sFA>

Burien Community Church & Cristiana Confraternidad Ebenezer—7pm via Zoom and in person in their sanctuary—Bilingual worship in English and Español—reach out to info@buriencommunitychurch.org for Zoom credentials

Several other churches are having in person worship and you can check their websites to see what else they’re doing! For a list of Evergreen churches you can go here: <https://www.ea-abc.org/churches.html>

KI Facilitator Training

Evergreen Association uses many Kaleidoscope Institute tools and skills. They are offering Facilitator Training on many of the basic skills. You don’t have to commit to becoming a certified facilitator to take the training, and the skills you develop will help in many different situations of service. Spring training is May 2, 4, 6, 10, and 12, for 3-1/2 hours each day. You can check them out online to get more information: <https://www.kscopeinstitute.org/>.