

Toolkit

HELPING YOU CARE FOR YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS | ISSUE 1, 2025

JAPANESE AUTOMAKER BUILDS CITY TO TEST MOBILITY

A futuristic city is being built near Mount Fuji in Japan. Toyota is building a city at the site of an old auto manufacturing plant of theirs, where the company plans to test their technologies in robotics, artificial intelligence and autonomous zero-emissions transportation on everyday living. The Associated Press reports that construction began in 2021, with phase one of the construction completed. The first residents will total just 100 people, and will be workers at Toyota and partner companies. All buildings are connected by underground passageways, where self-driving vehicles will provide services like collecting garbage and making deliveries.



SHORT-TERM LOANS DANGEROUS FOR THOSE LIVING PAYCHECK-TO-PAYCHECK

In 2024, cash-poor Americans paid more than \$39 billion in fees to borrow money to pay for unexpected expenses, according to community finance platform SoLo's 2025 Cash Poor Report. The findings, reported by USA Today, show 54% of cash-poor Americans are women, two-thirds are millennials and Gen X, 14% are Black and 40% work full time. The biggest culprits for high fees affecting borrowers trying to cover emergency expenses are some credit cards, payday loans, and buy now, pay later (BNPL) services. With high origination fees, interest, penalties and maintenance fees, these short-term options may hurt those living paycheck-to-paycheck for a long time.

FAITH LEADERS PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE INFLUENCING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

A high percentage of the religious community is open to receiving mental health care if needed – and if encouraged by a religious leader. A survey released by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in the fall of 2024 found that about 60% of adults agree that their faith is an important factor in supporting their mental wellness, yet only 50% of those belonging to a religious community discuss mental health openly. Importantly, 68% of those surveyed said they would seek mental health care if a leader in their religious community recommended it. Along with survey results, the APA released a [mental health resource guide](#) specific for faith leaders.



CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Everence® launched a grant program in response to the damage caused by the 2025 wildfires in California, allocating \$75,000 in funding to help churches in California provide support to individuals and families impacted by the crisis. Grants of up to \$3,000 are available to churches in and around Los Angeles County, California, that are active Everence Stewardship Partners program participants or are part of an Everence-affiliated denomination or church network, and are providing immediate relief and long-term recovery assistance. Those wishing to apply for a California Wildfire Assistance Grant may do so until April 30, 2025. Full program details and the grant application form are available at everence.com/california-wildfire-assistance-grants.



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BELGIAN WOMAN RAN A MARATHON A DAY IN 2024

On Dec. 31, 2024, Belgian runner Hilde Dosogne completed the last of her planned 366 marathons. Running one marathon a day, the 55-year-old ran at least 15,444 kilometers and raised about \$90,000 in funds for breast cancer research, according to CBC Sports. She is hoping to get recognition from the Guinness World Records organization, having submitted GPS data, photo and video evidence, as well as independent witness reports to meet the organization's requirements. If approved, Dosogne would join Hugo Farias, a Brazilian runner holding the male record for running a marathon for 366 consecutive days.



NETHERLANDS RETURNING MORE THAN 100 ARTIFACTS TO NIGERIA

The Netherlands is returning 119 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, 130 years after the pieces were stolen by the British and sold to the Dutch, reports NPR. The collection consists largely of plaques, personal ornaments and figures, which were taken by British soldiers in 1897. The Netherlands government said this is the fifth time the country has repatriated items following research tracing their history. This work is part of an ongoing broader conversation regarding stolen artifacts from the global south during the height of European imperialism.

PICKY EATERS MIGHT BE PRODUCT OF GENETICS



A recent study suggests picky eaters are mostly a result of genetics rather than parenting styles. The study, published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, compared the eating habits of identical and non-identical twins from 16 months to 13 years of age to determine the influence of genetics and their environment. The identical twins were more similar in terms of how picky or adventurous they were with food than non-identical ones. Parents are encouraged to increase the variety of food children eat, especially in early childhood.



MYNEIGHBOR DONATES OVER \$537,000 TO NONPROFITS

Everence donated more than \$537,000 in January to 608 charitable organizations and congregations through the MyNeighbor Program. Giving through your MyNeighbor credit card is simple: Each time you use your MyNeighbor card to buy groceries, pay bills or make other purchases, Everence will donate 1.50% of the purchase total to the charity of the cardholder's choice. In January, Everence writes and sends checks to the selected charities. This year, one nonprofit received over \$9,000 generated by 81 MyNeighbor cardholders. To learn more about the MyNeighbor program, visit everence.com/myneighbor.

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Toolkit is published quarterly for people who attend churches with ties to the Anabaptist faith tradition.

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