

Toolkit

HELPING YOU CARE FOR YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS | ISSUE 2, 2026

THE POWER OF TABLE TENNIS

Research suggests exercise is essential for managing Parkinson's disease, but consistent workouts can require a lot of discipline. **As a fun alternative, there's table tennis.** PingPongParkinson was founded in 2017 by Nenad Bach, a musician and activist who had been diagnosed seven years prior with Parkinson's disease. In 2015, a friend of his invited him to a table tennis center, and the next day the musician realized that he moved and felt much better. Today, the organization has **more than 400 chapters in 31 countries hosting PingPongParkinson sessions**, which include warmups, coaching and a variety of exercises that promote strength and hand-eye coordination.



A WORKPLACE PARADOX

Most work teams are asked to bring bold ideas to the table, but few individual employees actually offer them. A study commissioned by INTOO, a global HR firm, found that 74% of U.S. employees say they're expected to bring new ideas to their organizations, but despite the supportive messaging from their employers, **41% of workers fear that a single mistake could cost them their job.** Experts say this "paradox" is just mixed psychological signaling, with organizations **touting innovation and openness, but past experience telling employees that there is consequence to risk.** Leaders are advised to create psychologically safe environments, reward intelligent attempts and build "safe-to-fail" sandboxes for employees.

LAUGHTER CAN BOOST CHILD DEVELOPMENT

For kids, laughter is more than the best medicine. According to a recent study, **it's also crucial to their development and resilience.** Early childhood expert Jacqueline Harding recently published "The Brain that Loves to Laugh," a book based on her findings from extensive studies into how laughter and play contribute to healthy brain development, emotional well-being and social bonding. The author notes that laughter **builds emotional connections and soothes the nervous systems in children**, making them more resilient. Laughter can also influence heart rate and breathing, strengthen the immune system, and improve memory.



EVERENCE FOUNDATION GAVE OVER \$128 MILLION IN 2025

In 2025, Everence clients donated **a record-breaking \$128,643,940 to more than 4,600 different organizations** through Everence Foundation. Sixteen percent of charitable distributions went to local church congregations across a variety of denominations – fueling ministry and outreach in the communities our clients care about. Another 16% of giving went to mission and relief organizations that are serving people and living out the gospel around the world. Supported organizations include Mennonite Central Committee, Goshen College, Mennonite Disaster Service and Global Disciples US. **Everence Foundation is 100% donor-advised**, meaning all gifts go to organizations at the direction of our clients.



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HISTORIC CHURCHES GETTING RENOVATIONS

Two historic churches that played as the backdrop to events in the Civil Rights Movement era are getting a facelift thanks to an \$18 million federal grant for restoration projects in Memphis. The Mason Temple in Memphis, the site where Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his final speech the day before he was fatally shot on April 4, 1968, is getting a \$1.2 million federal grant. Another project includes \$3.1 million for restoration of the historic Clayborn Temple, the staging area for the 1968 sanitation works strike that brought King to Memphis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING HOPEFUL

Hope plays an important role in our everyday lives. A recent study conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital found that **nine out of 10 Americans find hope important and can't imagine living in a world without it.** When they need hope, people look to things they can control, however small. Perhaps that's why **68% of those surveyed said they felt hopeful about their personal futures and that of their friends and family members,** compared to only 41% who said they felt confident in the world and society's futures. Hope is essential, the study argues, as it can affect physical, emotional and mental health.

WIND, SOLAR ENERGY REACH NEW MILESTONE

For the first time ever, in April 2026 **wind and solar sources generated more electricity than gas globally,** reports global energy think tank Ember. Combined, wind and solar **generated 22% of global electricity, compared to 20% from gas.** The milestone is part of a broader trend of the rapidly growing solar and wind generation, but not necessarily of a reaction to an energy crisis caused by distribution challenges, as the data shows no evidence of energy switching from gas or coal. Instead, electricity usage is rising, and the alternative, renewable sources are stepping up to meet the demand.



EVERENCE CELEBRATES IMPACT FROM PASTORAL FINANCIAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

After a decade of partnership and impact, the Everence Pastoral Financial Wellness Program formally concluded. Everence was among the original grant recipients of the Lilly Endowment National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders, which launched in 2015. Over the last 10 years, the grants – totaling \$2.5 million – **enabled us to establish and expand the Pastoral Financial Wellness Program.** The program provided meaningful support to pastors facing complex financial pressures through direct financial assistance grants, long-term financial planning assistance and practical financial education. In total, **we awarded 399 grants, issued 160 financial planning subsidies and hosted 124 financial education and wellness events.**

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