



Left: Cohort members of the Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) Young Adults Peer Learning & Wellness Group enjoying a meal of A/PI foods; Middle: Minister Taulau Tupua; Right: A sampling of A/PI dishes that were part of the group's cultural activities.

Talanoa at the Table: A/PI Stories of Belonging

Seattle felt like a family reunion. Not the kind where you already know everyone, but the kind where you meet people for the first time and somehow feel like you've known them for years. What began as a cohort has become chosen family; people invested in one another's lives, faith journeys, and callings. From the moment we arrived, surrounded by vibrant autumn colors and cool air, there was a shared sense of joy and expectation.

Our days were full, but our nights were sacred. We stayed up laughing, crying, telling stories, and holding space for one another in ways that felt honest and tender. Being together as Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) young adults created a rare kind of safety where we didn't need to explain ourselves. Our cultures, identities, questions, and faith could simply exist together.

A meaningful thread throughout the retreat emerged around the table. In our reflections, my peers named it as representation and celebration as well as an acknowledgment that we are disciples who carry culture with us. Someone described it as a beautiful tapestry of colors, fabrics, and heritages, reminding us that Asian and Pacific Islanders are not a monolith. Others spoke of pride in who we are, of warmth shared in the midst of cold autumn air, and of freedom found in being fully seen.

Listening to these reflections, I felt grounded in the truth that we belong, not individually but together. Sharing stories, moments, and reflections in this way was a living example of a sacred relational Samoan word: *Talanoa*. *Talanoa* is a dialogue process focused on sharing stories, engaging relationships, and building upon the collective wisdom. Our *Talanoa* was marked with honest, heart-to-heart storytelling that holds space for our identities and experiences.

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Food, in many A/PI cultures, is never just food. It carries memory. It tells stories. It says, “You are welcome here.” Gathering in fellowship affirmed something important for me: representation is not symbolic, it is sustaining.

The care we showed one another, the joy we shared, and the trust we built felt like communion. It was not abstract, but lived and embodied.

This retreat affirmed that leadership can be gentle, joy

can be shared, and faith can be embodied. We left Seattle carrying one another with us. We were committed to being witnesses and bringing our whole selves to the table, together, continuing the *Talanoa* that began there.



From L to R (top): Rev. Bere Gil Soto, co-host; Cameron Cunningham, co-host; Barbara Borroto; (bottom): AleQ Bateman; Rev. Whittney-Marie Murphy; Rev. Taylon Lancaster

NBA Vodcast Examines Social Media & Addiction for Young Adults

How does technology shape the mental health, relationships, and spiritual lives of young adults, especially with social media? This was the central question behind NBA's vodcast series Holy Scrolls! that debuted earlier this year.

“We hope this conversation can spark people to examine and reflect about their own

relationship with their digital footprint and social media,” said co-host Rev. Bere Gil Soto.

During the six-part series, Rev. Gil Soto and co-host Cameron Cunningham were joined by special guests to explore topics like:

- Platforms built to keep us scrolling
- Algorithms influencing self-worth and worldview
- Comparison culture distorting behavior and values

- Digital spaces' ability to support real community or deepen isolation
- What authenticity looks like in an era of curated feeds and dating apps
- Digital burnout and strategies for reclaiming agency
- And much, much more!

All episodes are available to view online at nbacares.org/holyscrolls. Check out Holy Scrolls! today and let us know which episode is your favorite!



2026 SENT Summer Plans to “Bring the HEAT”

Are you a social entrepreneur looking to grow and strengthen your skills for your social enterprise

project? Plan to join us for the 2026 SENT Summer!

Formerly the SENT Seminar, this year’s annual virtual event hosted by NBA’s Social Entrepreneurship program will feature a new date, time, and format, taking place from 7:00pm-8:00pm ET/6:00pm-7:00pm CT on June 21 & 22. The seminar will bring a message of inspiration and resilience from public change makers as they share personal anecdotes and frameworks that nurture endurance

for those “in the HEAT of The Work” of leading social change. We’ll hear what keeps these leaders going, what has shaped them, and what message of hope they have for those doing social impact work in the world.

Registration is now open and there is no cost to attend. For additional details, event updates, and to sign up please visit nbacares.org/sent. We hope to see you at the 2026 SENT Summer!



Jan Aerie

NBA Adds Mission Specialist to Oversee Older Adult Ministries, Silver Chalice Ministry

The National Benevolent Association is excited to welcome Jan Aerie as Mission Specialist for the Older Adult Ministry Initiative! In this

consultant role Jan will develop older adult advocacy and education resources and events and work to expand networks with congregations and communities.

Additionally, Jan will work to grow the Silver Chalice Ministry designation program, open to all Disciples congregations and regions as well as health and social service nonprofit ministries, who create or enhance programming for older adults in their communities.

Jan holds advanced degrees in Community Health Planning and Family Counseling, along with certification

as a Gerontologist. She developed and led a wide range of older adult and caregiver programs across churches, communities, and public organizations. Jan has also held senior leadership roles in mission education and interfaith organizations, authored aging-related curricula, and helped to host several NBA older adult events. Learn more about NBA’s Older Adult Ministries, including helpful resources for your older adult ministry, at nbacares.org/olderadults.







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Living Into Our Mission

NBA works every day to fulfill our mission of empowering health and social service leaders, organizations, and ministries to do justice and transform communities. This guiding statement conveys who we are, how we understand our call, and the future we are committed to shaping together.



Your support and partnership is needed to help us live fully into this mission. Will you join us in this justice work and make a gift today? As you read in their stories here, your generosity supports leaders like Tau, Jan, Bere, and social entrepreneurs flourish and be sustained. Thank you!

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Called to Care

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