

RESET

CHURCH FORWARD • NIGHT TWO

Salvation, Funerals, Probates, and Estates

THE ETERNAL LIFE CONVERSATION

FAITH | FAMILY | PREPARATION | LEGACY

SAME
MISSION.
STRONGER
FAMILIES.
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS.

A PREPARED
CHURCH BUILDS
STRONGER
FAMILIES

REAL
CONVERSATIONS
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS

1

Faith and Final Wishes

Have the conversation before a crisis.

2

Funerals and Finances

Know the choices, costs, and options.

3

Family and Dependents

Protect those who depend on you.

4

Property and Inheritance

Document your intentions and reduce future conflict.

5

Legacy and Next Steps

Prepare, communicate, and review regularly.

A PRACTICAL READINESS REPORT FOR CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Findings, Recommendations, and Practical Next Steps

Mount Ollie Baptist Church | September 29, 2026
Hosted by Rev. Reginald Lee Bachus

STRONGER
PEOPLE.
STRONGER
CHURCHES.
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.
A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW.

The Conversation and the Call to Action

A practical readiness report for churches, ministries and community organizations. September 29, 2026.

Why this conversation matters

Faith teaches us to face eternity with hope. Love calls us to prepare the people who will remain. During this Church FORWARD conversation, clergy, attorneys and a funeral director described what families experience when final wishes, funeral costs, property and responsibilities are left unsettled.

Five promises made on the cover

1. Faith and Final Wishes

Create space for honest conversations about salvation, end-of-life wishes and the people who need to know.

2. Funerals and Finances

Help families compare choices, ask about costs and know whom to call.

3. Family and Dependents

Consider children, older adults, caregivers and relatives whose needs will continue.

4. Property and Inheritance

Help people understand what they own, whom they want to benefit and which steps need professional follow-through.

5. Legacy and Next Steps

Move from a single event to ongoing teaching, family conversations and practical action.

How to use this report: read the lessons, discuss the real cases once, choose the church role that fits your capacity, and complete the fillable worksheets. Save your completed PDF before closing it.

What We Heard from the Panel

Faith and responsibility belong together

Rev. Reginald Lee Bachus opened with the call to get our house in order. The RESET approach - Grounded, Aligned, Aware, Intentional - connects faith and values to choices we can make now. The conversation returned to a simple idea: a difficult subject can also be an act of love.

Funeral planning can reduce pressure

Funeral director Ernest A. Sampson III encouraged preplanning and explained that families can ask questions and learn about arrangements before a death. Advance conversations can reduce rushed decisions, especially when relatives live far away or disagree about preferences.

Paperwork must match real life

Lesly R. Devereaux, Esq. described why an unfinished trust transfer, an unresolved marriage or an outdated plan can change what happens to property. The lesson for churches is not to practice law, but to help members recognize when they should seek qualified help.

An inheritance is also a responsibility

The discussion raised a broader concern: wealth can be built over decades and lost quickly when the next generation is not prepared. Financial education, honest family conversations and appropriate planning are part of stewardship.

Practical help should be accessible

Sampson shared that he offers information and seminars without charge and directed listeners to his funeral preplanning resources. Panelists also discussed cost barriers and the need for people to ask about available options rather than postpone every step.

1 | Faith and Final Wishes

What the church can teach

Salvation and eternal life are spiritual questions. Final wishes are practical questions. A church can hold both conversations with compassion. Members may want to discuss the kind of service they hope for, whom they want contacted, where important papers are kept and who should speak for them when they cannot.

Build a safe conversation

- Invite members to a workshop without requiring them to share private financial details.
- Offer a simple final-wishes worksheet they can keep at home.
- Encourage a trusted family conversation, including younger adults.
- Prepare pastors and deacons to listen without making decisions for the family.
- Provide a private referral list when questions require professional help.

Suggested church workshop

Opening reflection	2 Corinthians 5:1-8
Guided discussion	Who needs to know my wishes?
Personal action	Choose one conversation this week
Follow-up	Share the household companion guide
A useful question for every household: If something happened tonight, would the people who love me know whom to call, what I wanted and where to find the essentials?	

2 | Funerals and Finances

A practical church response after a death

First contact

Confirm who is coordinating with the family; offer prayer and a single point of contact.

Family wishes

Ask what the family needs and whether the deceased left instructions. Do not assume everyone agrees.

Costs and choices

Encourage families to request written itemized prices and understand what is included.

Service planning

Clarify the church building, clergy, music, hospitality and scheduling arrangements.

Care after the service

Plan a follow-up call, grief support and assistance with practical next steps.

Questions families can ask a funeral provider

What are the available options? What is included in the quoted price? Which charges are optional? What paperwork will be needed? What happens if death occurs away from home? Can we receive the details in writing?

Preparing when money is tight

Churches can offer information about preplanning, transparent costs, available assistance and reputable providers. A benevolence ministry should have clear eligibility and approval rules so help is fair, accountable and sustainable.

3 | Family and Dependents

Look beyond the funeral

When a parent, caregiver or business owner dies, responsibilities do not stop. Children still need care, bills still arrive, and family members may need access to essential information. A church workshop can help people make a list of the people who depend on them and the arrangements they should discuss.

Five areas to review

Children and guardians

Who is caring for children now? Have appropriate arrangements been discussed and documented?

Older adults

Who checks on relatives, medications, housing and transportation?

Caregiving

Who knows the daily routines and critical contacts?

Business or ministry work

Who can locate records, vendors and time-sensitive obligations?

Family communication

Who is the trusted contact, and how will information be shared?

The church should not collect members' passwords, account numbers or private legal files. Help families organize their own information and keep it securely.

4 | Property and Inheritance

From ownership to legacy: the steps people overlook

Step 1: Make an inventory

List homes, land, bank accounts, retirement plans, insurance, businesses, debts and property in other states.

Step 2: Check the names

Find out whose name is on each deed, account and beneficiary form. An old name may no longer reflect current wishes.

Step 3: Decide the purpose

Ask what the inheritance is meant to do: provide housing, support education, care for dependents or build lasting security.

Step 4: Get the right documents

Speak with qualified professionals about wills, trusts, powers of attorney and healthcare instructions where appropriate.

Step 5: Finish the process

Confirm deeds, account titles and beneficiary forms are handled as intended. A signed document is not always the last step.

Step 6: Prepare the next generation

Teach budgeting, saving, responsible ownership and how to seek trustworthy guidance.

Real Stories | Decisions and Consequences

The marriage that never legally ended

Lesly R. Devereaux described a man who had moved on from his legal marriage, built wealth and lived with another partner. Because the marriage was never ended and family members died in a particular order, the property ultimately reached a person who had no personal relationship with him. The story shows why a family's understanding of relationships may differ from the documents and rules that control inheritance.

The house that was not transferred

Devereaux described a father who had trust documents prepared, but whose home had not been placed into the trust. The plan was therefore not fully carried out as intended. A family should ask its professional adviser to confirm which property is actually covered by the plan.

Two brothers, very different outcomes

Devereaux described two brothers who each received about \$500,000 from an inherited home. One invested and preserved his share; the other reportedly had only 96 cents remaining after roughly a year. Her example connected inheritance planning with financial education and the way distributions may be structured.

A death across the border

Funeral director Ernest A. Sampson III described a family that attempted to transport a deceased relative from North Carolina toward Canada. Authorities stopped the trip at the border, and the family had to return to address required arrangements. The lesson is to ask about transport and documentation before attempting to move remains across jurisdictions.

Church discussion prompt: Which of these stories reveals a gap in the way we teach, communicate or support families? Select one response the church can realistically offer.

5 | Legacy and Next Steps

Legacy is more than a bank balance

A legacy can include a home, savings and property. It can also include faith, education, practical skills, family history, community relationships and a model of responsible decision-making. Churches can help families name what they hope to pass on, then make a plan that matches those values.

Build a continuing ministry, not a one-night program

Month 1: Listen and assess

Identify current bereavement practices, trusted volunteers and the questions families most often ask.

Month 2: Teach and connect

Hold a public workshop and introduce a short list of qualified community resources.

Month 3: Practice and improve

Review one anonymized scenario, test the family-contact process and update the ministry plan.

Choose a sustainable role

Not every church should operate a full legacy ministry. Some can host education, some can provide grief support, and others can coordinate referrals. Choose a role the congregation can sustain without overpromising or exhausting volunteers.

RESET can support facilitated workshops, readiness reviews and implementation planning through separate engagements. The free report is designed to help everyone take the first responsible step.

Fillable Worksheet | Church Readiness

Complete the fields below on screen. Use the dropdowns to mark where your church stands. Save a copy with your answers before printing.

Pastoral contact after a death

Choose status

Funeral service and building procedures

Choose status

Bereavement follow-up

Choose status

Member education on final wishes

Choose status

Trusted referral contacts

Choose status

Family and caregiver support

Choose status

Legacy and financial education

Choose status

Church or organization name

Person completing this worksheet

Date completed

Fillable Worksheet | Workshop Plan

First workshop topic

Choose topic

Who should be invited?

Lead person or ministry

Proposed date

Potential professional or community partner

How will people participate?

Choose format

How will you follow up?

Before the workshop

Confirm space, accessibility and transportation needs

☐

Review how personal questions will be handled privately

☐

Provide a simple take-home action sheet

☐

Arrange a referral path for questions beyond church expertise

☐

Fillable Worksheet | 30-60-90 Day Action

Next 30 days

One action we will take

Person responsible

Target date

Progress

Not started

Next 60 days

One action we will take

Person responsible

Target date

Progress

Not started

Next 90 days

One action we will take

Person responsible

Target date

Progress

Not started

Fillable Worksheet | Follow-up and Referrals

This is a planning sheet for church leadership, not a place to record a member's confidential personal information.

Ministry contact name or office

Public phone or email for requests

Most-needed referral

Select area

Professional or organization to contact

Who will verify the referral information?

Date for next review

What would make this ministry stronger?

Our biggest current barrier

Support or training we need

Next leadership review date

Resources and Important Information

What to do this week

Share the household companion with members. Choose a ministry lead. Set one meeting date. Ask the congregation what it needs most. Then take one concrete action instead of trying to do everything at once.

Continue the conversation

RESET provides education, facilitated conversations, organizational readiness reviews and planning support. For information about workshops and implementation assistance: reggie@reggiebachus.com.

Panel and source

Based on Church FORWARD Night Two, September 29, 2026, featuring Rev. Paul P. Martin, Esq.; A. Servall Chilliest; Ernest A. Sampson III; and Lesly R. Devereaux, Esq. The case studies are experiences described during the conversation. The practical tools and action steps are RESET educational materials.

Important disclaimer

This report provides general education, not individual legal, financial, insurance, medical or funeral advice. Rules and procedures vary by state and by circumstance. Consult qualified professionals before making important decisions, signing documents, transferring property or arranging services. Protect private family information. Participation in a RESET educational activity does not create a professional-client relationship.

© 2026 RESET / Reginald Lee Bachus. All rights reserved.