

Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

Vol 1, Issue 6 • Summer 2013

Purpose and Direction for Church of the Saviour

About 50 people gathered in the Wellspring Center on June 2 to consider the purpose and direction for the Church of the Saviour. As we introduced ourselves into the circle, there was a sense of eagerness and anticipation. Although we know ourselves as people shaped by the Spirit, bound by call and commitment in our separate communities, we were also aware that our churches hold the land at Dayspring together. We are both a legal and a spiritual body together. Before this meeting, the C of S Council had identified the following areas for our common life:

- Preserve our C of S identity (call, commitment, mission groups, EOC books, lay leadership, valuing the inward/outward journey in community)
- Stewardship of Dayspring
- Joint missions (children, pilgrimages, racial reconciliation)
- Forums for difficult conversations (e.g. future of Potter's House)
- Witness to larger issues (simplicity, sustainability, racial reconciliation)
- Support communal resources (Dayspring Retreat, Callings, Potter's House, Servant Leadership School, Discipleship Year, Festival Center) ... list needs discussion
- Vibrant Council with distinctly different churches

The Earth Celebration discussion began with this important question: How can we know ourselves as one body? Brenda Seat (Seekers) remarked that the world already sees us as one body, but we see ourselves as fragmented and separate. She asked, "How can we value the 'different flavors,' and yet heal the wounds we carry?" As people responded to her description, Fred Taylor (8th Day) asked "How can we raise difficult issues so they can be addressed?" Rather than try to answer those questions, we simply noted the desire for developing ways to do that.

"Language is important," added Helen McConnell (Festival Church). Others acknowledged Kayla McClurg's role as our C of S staff person, who is also in charge of the inward/outward website. Kayla then offered this piece of advice from a visitor: "Whatever you change, don't let go of the vibe." Although difficult to pin down, that "spiritual vibe" seemed to resonate through the discussion. We agreed that much depends on the story we tell ourselves—about our history (with its shadows), our current identity, and God's call now. Without a single interpreter, how can we embrace a shared narrative?



Photo By Keith Seat

Kent Beduhn, Connie Ridgway, Gale Quist, Jimmie Speer

Kent Beduhn (8th Day) offered an example of this creative ferment from the current discussions at 8th Day over renewing the Potter's House mission. "We are rewriting some of our basic requirements," he said, "in order to share decision-making power more equally." Several other communities commented that they had also done that. It felt like a new breeze of the Spirit was blowing in the room. Suggestions and needs began to arise: What does "Saviour" mean now? Could we sponsor a Youth conference led by C of S young people? What are some common resources within the wider community (pro bono therapists or medical help)? To start with, we have the C of S office and website, the Council and Callings as a hub.

Jean Brown (Dayspring) shifted the conversation with her query: "I'm hungry to hear what's alive for you now?" There were suggestions for open Council meetings around a single topic, a weekend at Wellspring, or even a week which would be open to anyone from the C of S churches – planned for fun, sharing personal and communal stories, spiritual enrichment and connecting with the land. As the meeting came to a close, there was talk of a Memorial Day weekend retreat next year and the Council will consider next steps from this discussion. Although we agreed that technology can help, there was a clear desire to BE together and let our common life emerge.

If you and your community would like to join this conversation, please let me know by email: Churchofthesaviour.office@gmail.com and put CALLINGS in the subject line.

Marjory Zoet Bankson Chair of the C of S Council
Editor of CALLINGS

The inward/outward journey in community ...

One of the unique aspects of The Church of the Saviour is that we are a pretty ordinary group of local faith communities and missions—and yet also looked upon as a radical form of church. The reason? Commitment to the “inward/outward journey in community.”

In the early years Elizabeth O'Connor wrote books about it, Mary Cosby spoke across the country about it, while Gordon was shaping a community by preaching about it, and people made pilgrimage to come and see. We have been shaped as much by those who have come as by those who have stayed.

It was one of those who came on pilgrimage who first had the idea of creating an online site where people, regardless of where they lived, could ponder the inward/outward way in community. For the past seven years I have facilitated the web site and subscription service called inward/outward which offers daily readings. In the past month the site grew and now subscribers can receive:

- Daily Words - excerpts from published works (Mon.-Fri.)
- On the Way - essays by people in the church community (every other Sat.)
- The Story - short reflections on one of the lectionary scriptures (every Sunday)

The primary purpose of inward/outward is to consider ways of being together that are as simple and profound as Jesus himself. A secondary intention is to be a place for sharing past and current movements in this body of churches. In the upper right corner of the home page is an entry point into pages about The Church of the Saviour. There you will find a narrative description and links to pages for each of the churches and ministries, Callings, a newly developed audio sermon site, and events and activities. This section will continue to be developed, and soon we hope to have a password protected page for access to the Friendship Directory.

The life we have together will be nurtured, I hope, by the writings at inward/outward. Maybe you will offer your own thoughts there. Go to www.inwardoutward.org and subscribe at the bottom of the page.



Kayla McClurg is the point-person for The Church of the Saviour, Andrews House and inward/outward.org.

A Few Facts about *Callings*

After the special edition of *Callings* which we published to honor Gordon Cosby at the time of his death, many people have asked to be put on the mailing list. Some didn't realize this is a regular quarterly publication of The Church of the Saviour. It is supported by the incorporated churches represented on the C of S Council – and by individuals who want to receive it by mail. To keep costs down, we deliver most of the copies to the Potter's House and Festival Center, and notify the churches that they are available for pick-up. You can also read it online at the new inwardoutward website (see Kayla's article above).

Our publishing schedule is early March, June, September and early November. Material must be submitted two weeks earlier, mid-month before publication.



We feature one C of S church and one of the related ministries in each issue. This month, Festival Church and Joseph's House are highlighted, along with news from the all-church Earth Celebration which was held at Dayspring on June 2. On the back page, there is a calendar of Special Events. You can submit events by email to: churchofthesaviour.office@gmail.com and put “CALLINGS” on the subject line.

We also welcome your comments and suggestions.

Marjory Zoet Bankson *Chair of the C of S Council*
Editor/publisher of CALLINGS

A contribution of \$10 from every reader would actually cover the costs. More would be gratefully welcomed. Gifts payable to the Church of the Saviour may be sent to: Callings, Church of the Saviour, 1640 Columbia Rd., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Joseph's House

In late May, staff, volunteers, and residents at Joseph's House gathered for their spring memorial service to remember those who had died there the previous year. Outside the Adams Morgan row house, residents spoke of the deep love and caring they found there, something few expected when they arrived to spend the final months, weeks or days of their lives.

Climbing the Joseph's House stairs, you are greeted by notes on the wall nudging you to come back to yourself and the present moment, to notice what is happening inside you as well as outside. These reminders point to a second pillar upon which the house is built: mindful presence. It is this culture of mindfulness and presence that helps foster the love the residents describe.

Joseph's House, a residential hospice for formerly homeless men and women dying of AIDS and cancer, was founded by Eighth Day Faith Community member David Hilfiker, then a doctor at Christ House. As the AIDS epidemic worsened in the 1980s, Hilfiker recognized the need for a community for homeless people suffering from AIDS. He opened Joseph's House in 1990 and moved in with his family. They lived on the third floor and several homeless men – women were admitted years later – lived on the second.



Community and spiritual life remain the hospice's hallmarks. As nurse Priscilla Norris says, "Core values of work at Joseph's House are one's spiritual growth or deepening, and one's ability to function in community." She says these values are as important as nursing skills because the forming of loving relationships allows for emotional and spiritual healing. Eating meals together and gathering for community meetings twice a week help foster those relationships.

Medical care has grown more important since the early days of Joseph's House. Then, residents came to the house relatively well, shortly after being diagnosed. Now, with AIDS treatment advances and the hospice's move towards admitting residents closer to death, skilled nursing is critical to address the many symptoms of AIDS and cancer. (Joseph's House began admitting cancer patients years ago.) Doctors outside the house – typically from more traditional hospices under whose medical supervision the residents remain – direct the nurses' care.

Still, it is the spirit of Joseph's House that distinguishes it from



most hospices. After Patricia Wudel (another Eighth Day member) became executive director in 1997, she came to realize that mindfulness practice, together with "a common ground for what we mean by love or home," would build upon the house's focus on justice and compassion. Wudel discovered a California organization, the Metta Institute, with a program for end-of-life practitioners. Metta, led by Frank Ostaseski, emphasizes mindfulness as central to compassionate hospice care. Wudel took the year-long program in 2003, and other staff followed.

The focus on mindful presence and compassion has helped staff and volunteers to work more fully from the heart. Perhaps surprisingly, as they observe their interior state – their suffering and other emotions, their body sensations – they are better able to relate to and live in community with the residents. This despite the inherent difficulties in hospice care, including continual losses as residents die.

In the constant presence of death, Joseph's House cultivates an awareness of the sacredness of life. Through "Mindful Mondays," the stairway reminders, community life, and other intentional practices, the focus is on living one's life fully.

This awareness is a transforming experience for the several volunteers who work at the house for a year after college. They are drawn from different programs, including the Church of the Saviour Discipleship Year. The volunteers, who assist the nurses and offer compassionate companionship to the residents, take two courses – one focused outward on social justice and the other inward on mindfulness and presence. They are also taught much by the dying residents they serve and to whom they open. Amy Chatelaine, finishing her Discipleship Year, speaks of her spiritual healing and that of those who enter Joseph's House dying physically and also having experienced a kind of social death earlier from being ostracized by society. As she recently preached at Seekers Church, "I have realized that in this year I am called not only to heal, but to be healed myself. And that healing comes through the practice of self-presence and self-compassion."

Many volunteers, changed and deepened by their year at Joseph's House, go on to serve the disadvantaged and suffering through chaplaincy, social work, medicine, and other vocations. A number return regularly. All take into the wider world what they have learned about social justice, compassionate presence, and love.

David Novello is a regular volunteer at Joseph's House and a member of Seekers Church.



Barbara Quist and Margie Lance



Nat, Leland and Daniel Reid, Nona Beth Cresswell, and Rachel Rudy



**DAYSPRING'S
ANNUAL PAINT,
PRAY AND PLAY
May 11th 2013
We got our
hands dirty. our
hearts lifted. and the
child in us fed. Come
join us next year!**



Meade Hanna and Jean Brown



Kip Landon, Karen Johnson, Margie Lance, Barbara Quist



Kent Beduhn, Nat Reid, Margaret Schoap

Earth Celebration at Dayspring



Janet Hudson as liturgist for worship



Dixcy Bosley-Smith, Wendy Dorsey and Betsy Baker



Jim Hall ready for a hike



Janet Hudson with crocheted basket on her head



Photos on this page were taken by Keith Seat

The Church of the Saviour Council

Bread of Life • Dayspring Church • Eighth Day • Festival Church • Friends of Jesus
Jubilee Church • New Community • Potter's House Church • Seekers

From the White House to the Potter's House

Many of us know Jerry and Carolyn Parr as founding members of Festival Church, but few of us know the story of their remarkable faith journey together. In October, Tyndale House will publish Jerry's story, titled **In the Secret Service: the True Story of the Man Who Saved President Reagan's Life**. "It's really his spiritual autobiography," Carolyn said when we sat down for this interview.

Carolyn: When we moved here, we joined Heritage Christian Church, and I think it was there that we first ran across Elizabeth O'Connor's book, *Call to Commitment*. When Jerry retired (in 1985), we started to get more serious about our faith journey together.

Jerry: I heard about Loyola's master's program in pastoral counseling, and I thought, "This is the Lord's leading." The combination of "pastor" and "counseling" resonated with my spirit. Because of my working class background—and my career in the halls of power—I was comfortable with almost everyone. Less than a month after I graduated, Carolyn and I sold our big house in Potomac and moved to the Tenleytown section of Washington. Our three daughters were launched and we were ready for something new.

On a snowy night in January, 1988, Carolyn and I came to our first class led by Gordon Cosby, up on the third floor of Christ House. We had no idea what we were in for. "We'll introduce ourselves," Gordon said, "but don't tell us what you do or where you're from. We'll learn that soon enough. Just tell us your name and your deepest pain."

I had no idea what I would say. One woman got up and left. When my turn came, I said "My mother, is in a nursing home with Alzheimer's. We tried to keep her at home but it was impossible. My daughter Trish is the only one who can bear to go with me to visit her. It's very hard."

Nobody gave advice. Nobody tried to fix anybody else, but by the time everyone had shared, we felt accepted, not judged. We left with a deeper understanding of our own brokenness. More important, we walked out of there knowing we were loved and forgiven, just as we were.

After that, we went to everything. On Sundays we attended the ecumenical service at 2025 where Gordon preached. At Jubilee Church, we sang gospel songs, recovering addicts gave testimonies, and kids crawled under the tables. With Potters House Church, we practiced silence and Taize chants. Thursdays found us at Christ House's Table Fellowship. Soon after that, Gordon asked me to become the manager at the Potter's House and I did that for two years.

Carolyn: That year we also got involved with Mother Teresa's ministry here in DC for people with AIDS. In those days, there were no drugs and people were dying on the streets, because nobody would help them. When Mother Teresa came for a visit in 1985, she was appalled. Her order was given an old convent on Otis Street, and Don McClanen set up an interview for us.

Jerry: We had friends, a couple whose world-class concert pianist son had AIDS, who had no place to go when they grew too old

to care for him. They were desperate to find a place where he would not be shamed or neglected, and they asked us to take him in. After struggling with what that would mean for us, we felt we had to refuse. They eventually moved to Arizona, where they found a gay couple who would take care of their son, but we wanted to do something here. Carolyn was still working full time, but we thought we could commit one night a week at Gift of Peace.

One night, we were cleaning up a man named Franklin, who had been a wonderful help to others while he was still mobile. Now he couldn't get out of bed and I had just finished putting salve on a huge open sore. As I worked he said, over and over again, "Thank you, Jesus!" When I finished I took his hand and said, "God loves you Franklin."

He looked straight at both of us and said, "I love you, too." Not "God loves you," but "I love you, too." Others might think that was just a socially acceptable response, but for us it was a life-changing affirmation of love coming from beyond Franklin and beyond death. After a year of volunteering at Gift of Peace, we had to stop because Carolyn's travel schedule picked up.

Carolyn: After we joined Jubilee Church in 1989, we got involved in three major C of S undertakings: Joseph's House, the Servant Leadership School, and forming of Festival Church around the call to be a diverse, multicultural and bilingual faith community that would welcome Central American refugees. I speak Spanish and immediately bonded with Edgar Palacios and his wife, Amparo, when Charles Demeré brought them.

Jerry: That's a good story to wrap up this interview. Edgar's Baptist church in El Salvador had 12 children orphaned by the civil war and they really needed a small bus for transportation. We found a vehicle with only 5,000 miles on it and when the cease fire was declared in 1992, I rashly volunteered to drive it down through Mexico and Guatemala. When we got to the border between Guatemala and El Salvador, guards stopped us and ordered us to unload the bus which was packed to the gills. We thought they would take everything! Amparo talked with them and then an amazing thing happened. Both guards came over and looked closely at me, nodding, and smiling. Then they waved us on through.

When I asked Amparo what had happened, she said, "I told them you are an American hero. You saved President Reagan's life." And the guards said they had seen you on TV last night, so they let us go.

When we got to the Palacios family's house that night, their daughter produced a tape that she had made of the TV program. It was a Top Cops documentary of the attack on President Reagan—a program I'd filmed 18 months before. Edgar said, "The Salvadoran channel advertised it all week. Many people were watching."

Amparo's smile filled her whole face. "See," she said, "I tell you Jesus always goes before me."

Interview by Marjory Bankson. For a sneak preview, see Jerry's book on amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.



The Festival Church

Mission Statement:

Believing that reconciliation is the heart of the Gospel, we are called to be a multicultural, intergenerational, open and affirming community, centered in Christ, bathed in prayer, and grounded in grace. Knowing ourselves to be broken and vulnerable, we seek to live, as Jesus did, in solidarity with all ages, abilities, races, classes and sexual orientations.

Worship: Mondays at 6:00 p.m. The Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Road NW, Washington, DC 20009

The Festival Church faith community, now in its twenty-fourth year, is marked by both stability and transformation. Our stability is anchored in the presence of four of the founding members still in membership, a weekly Eucharistic liturgy that has grounded us for many years, and our corporate faithfulness to the disciplines which shaped us years ago. Transformation is evident in several new young adult community members, our ever-growing and maturing children, and the effects of aging on our elder members. The membership is currently comprised of twelve core members including two co-pastors, and five community members.

Our three mission groups are “Transforming Words,” “Contemplation in Action” and, since 2013, a “Writers” mission group. We observe the traditional disciplines of the Church of the Saviour.

The five children in regular attendance range in age from 8 to 12 and pursue a spiritual curriculum led by community member and parent, J.B. Schramm, Founder and CEO of College Summit. The two oldest children, Jake Schramm and Josiah Smith, are now

preparing for their confirmation. Jake just had a great experience accompanying his 86 year-old-grandfather, Ray Schramm, in running the BoulderBoulder 10k race!

We are actively involved in several C of S missions: Carolyn Parr was recently elected Chair of the Board of The Festival Center, Helen McConnell chairs the Governance Committee of the Board of The Family Place, and Margie Ford has tutored at Academy of Hope.



Highlights from the community:

- The Festival Church became a founding partner of the Charter for Compassion in 2009. Since then Margie Ford, Helen McConnell, and Rick Rodgers have introduced the Charter at an open forum at The Festival Center and have offered several courses in compassion at the Servant Leadership School. Most recently, Margie and Helen facilitated a course in self-compassion. Rick is now pursuing a mission for compassionate accessibility.
- We held a special service of commemoration for Gordon Cosby during the Easter season on April 8, 2013, attended by Mary Cosby who selected all of the music. Past members from Australia and Maine were with us, and everyone shared personal memories of Gordon’s impact on our lives.
- Our Advent season traditionally includes a festive Lessons and Carols service with readings in the diverse languages of the world—in 2012 seven languages from five different continents!
- In October 2012, co-pastor, Cindy Martens went on a mission trip to Haiti where she worked with Help for the Children on their Charlier Project, a 10-year mission to build two schools, a medical clinic with staff and guest housing, and an orphanage in Charlier, Haiti.
- Paige Reuber, a former Discipleship Year member, is called to teach ESL and is pursuing a Master’s at American University in TESOL. She will visit Ecuador and return to Guatemala this summer for her practicum.



- For the past two years we have provided tuition support for Ugandan refugee, Florence Akurut, who completed her Associate’s degree in criminal justice at the Community College of the District of Columbia with a 4.0 average! We are very proud of Florence!

Helen McConnell is Director of Development for Academy of Hope and core member of The Festival Church

Callings

Church of the Saviour
1640 Columbia Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20009

Special Events



Living Water by Peter Bankson

Monthly walks along the M-83 routes near Dayspring. Check website for dates and times: tamecoalition.blogspot.com (or) tamecoalition@gmail.com

June 19 ... Quiet Day at Dayspring, Wednesday, 10:00am - 2:00pm.

June 21 – 23 ... COMING HOME, Weekend Retreat at Dayspring, \$200
Led by Stephanie Burgevin, associate faculty member of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation and a graduate of their Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats program

June 23 ... Why We Can't Wait Revival at Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1720 Minnesota Ave SE 20020 @ 3pm.

July 14 ... Why We Can't Wait Revival at Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Rd. NW, Wash DC 20009 @ 3pm.

July 20 ... Quiet Day at Dayspring, 10-4 on Saturday.

August 2-4 ... AN INVITATION TO NEW LIFE, Weekend Retreat led by Fay Acker, Director of Spiritual Guidance and Pastoral Care at Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel at Howard University. \$200. See dayspring.org

August 15 ... Quiet Day at Dayspring, Thursday, 10:00am - 2:00pm. More information on all Dayspring Retreats at dayspring.org.