

October 2008 Soundings

This issue of Soundings includes:

Calendar

Numerous fall events, news from Seekers far and near, sermon summaries

CALENDAR

Saturday, October 18—Singalong, Emily Gilbert's home, 7:30 p.m. (see story).

November 6–10—Trip to Pearlinton, MS, to rebuild homes. (See story with invitation to take part.)

Friday, November 14—Event to meet visitors from the Asturias School (see story).

[Also please note: Seekers Overnight will not be held this fall.]

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING—NEXT FALL TERM

Seekers School of Christian Living, second fall term 2008, October 28–December 2.

Tuesday evenings, classes 7:45–9:30p.m.

All are invited to share a light dinner before the class, beginning at 7 p.m., and a post-dinner meditation. There is a small charge for the dinner, and class members are invited to sign up for preparation and cleanup.

Class: "Jesus the Misunderstood Jew," led by Deborah Sokolove and David Lloyd.

Many Christians frequently view Jesus as somehow being outside his culture and faith. Moreover, passages in the New Testament have been interpreted in ways that are anti-Jewish. We will explore Jesus' Jewishness in his teachings and actions, look at Christian misinterpretations of both the Judaism of Jesus' day and current Judaism, and examine problematic passages in the New Testament to understand the conflicts early Christianity had with Judaism. Our goal is to find ways to understand the linkages between Jews and Christians to promote positive interfaith relations.

Participants will read Amy-Jill Levine's book, *The Misunderstood Jew*, for reading assignments; copies will be available for purchase at the first class.

FALL/WINTER SEEKERS SINGALONGS

Glen Yakushiji writes—In October, we will be meeting to sing songs out of *Rise Up Singing*, sharing snacks, and making general conversation. We're going to meet at Emily Gilbert's home in Alexandria, Virginia, on Oct 18 at 7:30 pm. I hope you'll be able to join us.

Because I know our holiday calendars get filled quickly, I want to let you know that the December singalong will be held on Dec 13 at the Amoss house in Silver Spring. I'm not sure what the Nov date is yet. If you can't make it I hope I'll see you soon.

RECOMMITMENT AT SEEKERS

Peter Bankson writes for the Servant Leadership Team (Seekers' ministerial team).

Dear Seekers—A key element in the life of Seekers Church is

the understanding that our commitment to God and to the Seekers Church is conscious and intentional. To reinforce this understanding, we renew our commitment to God through the community each year.

“Recommitment Sunday” this year will be the third Sunday of October, the 19th, when those of us who are renewing our commitment will be invited to stand and join together in a sign of this renewed commitment. The recommitment statements for Members and Stewards are printed inside the bulletin cover for this season.

This time before Recommitment Sunday is an opportunity for each of us to review our commitment to God and to Seekers Church and sign the membership book which is on the altar table during worship. This year, as you reflect on the call of Seekers Church and our commitment statements, we invite you to ask yourself:

- † What am I being called to offer to God and God’s creation?
- † How can being a part of Seekers Church support my response to God’s call?
- † What do I need from and through this community in order to deepen my commitment to Christ?

If you have questions about the details of our recommitment, feel free to talk with me or another member of the Servant Leadership Team (Kate Cudlipp and Brenda Seat). ... keep praying ... peterb

FOURTH SACRED CONVERSATION ON RACE AND DIVERSITY

Please join together in the community of communities’ 4th Sacred Conversation on Race and Diversity – Sunday, October 12th from 1-3 PM, as Covenant Christian Community embraces everyone in their worship service in the spirit of love. As both those who have participated before and those new to the conversation join us we will continue to build trust through

knowing each other in God's love in small groups where we can share and listen deeply and authentically.

Everyone is also welcome to break bread together and contribute to a pot luck lunch at noon prior to the conversation so that we can care for each other in body as well as spirit.

On behalf of the planning committee, who hopes to see you there—Kevin Barwick, Maybelle Bennett, Jeannine Caracciolo, Kate Cudlipp, Kimberly, Sandra Miller, Will Ramsey, and Jackie Wallen

NEWS FROM MEMBERS AND FROM THE WIDER SEEKERS COMMUNITY

Rebecca Sears writes—Just a note on my “global travels”...I will be returning to South Africa where I am training a group of 16 therapists, social workers and clergy in Imago relationship therapy...for the first 2 weeks of October. ...I will be returning again in January 2009 and still hope to go to Winterfeldt.

Caitlin, her daughter, turned 18 on Sept.29 and had her birthday party at Seekers.

Julia Dahlin wrote to Liz Gould-Leger in September from Brown University—Hi! Sorry to be late to get back to you, but time is hard to come by, as you can probably imagine. I loved the pre-orientation program, and have been keeping up with the people, and they'll be having seminars throughout the year, which should be fun.

So far, I have a small group of people who I hang out with a lot of the time—our personalities are well matched, if very different, and we live in the same dorm. I'm also getting to know a lot of people from interest meetings and my classes. I love it here—people are happy to be here, and the campus is gorgeous (so far. I'll change my mind when it's cold.)

I'm taking Econ, Race and Gender in Urban Politics, a class on the history of science and 15th and 16th century explorers, and (I know you're going to snicker) Intro to Sleep, a psych class.

Deadlines for papers are starting to come up for me, but since, unlike high school, I like every single one of my classes, it's kind of exciting—I hope it's the same for your job.

Last weekend I visited my best friend in Boston, and then stayed the night at my sister's new place, which was definitely a good time. I have to say, I was pretty jealous of the Wellesley campus, where my friend goes—it's humongous. Ask my mom about the favoritism played by the mail service (this girl was in my Girl Scout troop, so my mom sent us both care packages—and hers got there days before mine, which has been the source of much teasing from the family)

Well, I'm off to get a bunch of reading done. Tonight I have a meeting for this really cool new organization that is starting up this year to teach high school kids political activism, which should be exciting.

Thank you so much for checking in—it feels great to know that I'm still supported by the Seekers community. I think everyone there would blend in well here, actually—it's a thoughtful, open community.—Until later, Julia

TRIP TO REBUILD HOMES IN PEARLINGTON, MS, AFTER THE HURRICANES
Richard Lawrence writes—I would like to inform you of an opportunity to go down to Pearlington, Miss., just inland from the Gulf of Mexico, to help rebuild homes destroyed first by Katrina and more recently by Hurricane Gustav. Much progress had been made in this town since Katrina, but the latest hurricane damaged about 100 homes. The financial loss for these lower income fellow Americans has been devastating but,

with this second wave of destruction, the emotional and psychological impacts have been even worse. They need our help if at all possible.

If there is sufficient interest, the trip will be for a long weekend, Nov 6-10, 2008. The major cost will be airfare at around \$340 plus a few meals in Pearlington. Tools will be provided by our local coordinator as with our trip last spring. We would have bunk beds at the Pearlington Recovery Center (go online for more info) for \$5 a night. The Seekers finance committee has money in the budget to cover our local rental car expenses, with some funds available to offset some of the cost of airfares.

Kevin Barwick has been good enough to offer to take the lead again on our assigned construction project(s). We would need both skilled workers and helpers.

If it feels right for you to help these folks or if you have any level of interest, please email me by the Monday, Oct 6, so I can see if we have enough volunteers to warrant a trip. If we have enough interest, then volunteers could make plane reservations and I would proceed to make local arrangements. I encourage you to let non-Seekers know about this opportunity. See you all soon, Richard

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT SEEKERS— BELONGING AND COMMITMENT

Trish Nemore writes about Sunday School with the older kids.

During our recommitment season, in Sunday school for our older children (Makayla Wallace, Luis Fuentes, Victor Fuentes and Henry Teagle) we are working with belonging and commitment – though we are not really using those words too heavily.

We start each time together with movement and “getting to know you” exercises that tell us something about each person’s belonging at home and create a sense of knowing each other so

we feel we belong at Seekers. We toss around a bean bag asking each other questions: Who all lives in your household? What's your favorite thing to do? With whom? What's your favorite toy? Movie? etc etc. We just move around a bit, tossing the beanbag or making shapes or jumping around.

Then we build an altar out of blocks that Pat made with the kids a few years ago. We light what Luis calls the King candle, a white pillar candle, then each child lights his/her own votive with a taper, taking light from the King candle. Last week Luis asked to be reminded about what an altar is for so we talked a little about altars in the past being for bringing gifts of animals to God and that now we put things on the altar that are our gifts to God, including our monetary gifts, and that help us remember God and our relationship with God.

After a brief discussion of the children's word/lesson for the day -they remember the children's word practically verbatim! – which we do around the altar, we blow out the candles, take the altar down and start work on our project, which we hope to bring as part of our commitment/recommitment to Seekers on recommitment Sunday.

In preparation for reinstating some form of offering during the children's word, last week we started talking about "offering" but in the sense of offering self to others – being kind, doing a chore that's not expected, writing a poem, etc – a gift giving. We will continue with that theme, also as part of commitment/recommitment.

Questions that have come up in class: was/is God always called God? (We'll do a little work with the names of God, both from the Bible and from Peter's list that is on our website) and was God a regular person before God became God?

There's lots going on in those young minds!

MASSAGE SESSIONS FROM SHERI BERGEN THIS FALL

Sheri writes—I would like to alert Seekers that I am offering massage on alternate Monday afternoons. My motivation for offering massage here is to make it available to Seekers who want to experience my work but who do not wish to drive to my office in Alexandria. The secondary purpose for me is to support my China “habit”: to help pay for the trips to China to see my children.

The remaining dates for 2008 are Oct. 20, Nov 3 and 17 and Dec 1 and 15. The available times are 5 pm, 3:30 pm and 2 pm (in that order since I want to schedule them as close to my group meeting time as possible). If all of those times were to fill on any one Monday, I could offer a morning time, but I doubt that is likely to happen. The price is \$85 per hour, \$95 for 75 minutes and \$115 for 90 minutes. In order to schedule a massage, contact me, preferably by email: sdbergen@gmail.com. Phone contact number is 703 671 0679. Thanks!

SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Pat Conover writes—I wrote my brief analysis of the current financial crisis and the United Church of Christ chose to feature it for the most recent public policy alert. By using the following url you can read my analysis and then easily respond to your elected leaders.
<http://www.ucc.org/justice/economic-justice/ucc-public-policy-analyst.html>

Aloha, Pat

NEWS ON POLARIS PROJECT—RECIPIENT OF SEEKERS GIVING

Jeannine Caracciolo writes—On September 12, Polaris Project received a Certificate of Recognition from the United States Attorney’s Office, District of Connecticut, for help with the case United States v. Corey Davis, aka “Magnificent”. Here is

an article released by the USAO about the case:

Cases involving human trafficking and sexual slavery are garnering attention of late, and the case against Corey Davis, known to himself as "Magnificent," demonstrates why. Davis ran a multi-state trafficking operation, enslaving children and young women and forcing them into a life of prostitution and adult dancing for his own financial gain. His methods were terrifying. He kidnapped certain victims and coerced others, forcing them to work and preventing them from leaving by physical violence, confinement, humiliation, degradation, and intimidation. The Stratford Police Department was involved with the case from its outset, initially locating the twelve-year-old victim and obtaining invaluable information about Davis's trafficking operation in Bridgeport which was provided to the FBI.

The success of this case was also the direct result of the extraordinary efforts of the Polaris Project and GEMS, who were instrumental in rescuing and stabilizing the victims in this case. They provided invaluable assistance to law enforcement and the victims and their family members by providing support during interviews, preparation for grand jury testimony, and during the preparation of the trial. They also in several instances provided housing, medical and psychological care to the victims. For many of the victims the process of testifying for the grand jury and the trial preparation was extraordinarily stressful, and both the Polaris Project and GEMS provided the support necessary so that the victims could go through this process with as little psychological damage as possible.

ASTURIAS SCHOOL VISIT—EVENT TO MEET OUR VISITORS

Jackie McMakin writes—The gathering to meet our visitors from the Asturias School in Guatemala [one of the recipients of Seekers international giving] will be on Nov. 14 at 6:30 at

the home of Leslie Smith, 9310 Ocala St., Silver Spring, MD. If you need directions, email Leslie at smith.estrada@erols.com

This will be a potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to share. All Seekers are welcome at this gathering. If you haven't signed up for it yet, please let me know, preferably via email, that you'd like to attend and please let me know how many people will come with you: jacdavmac@verizon.net

We would like very much to introduce a Spanish teacher or other teacher to the Asturias School in hopes that they might like to establish a kind of partnership. The Asturias School has a very lively partnership with Juniata College and the Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, PA and is open to another one. So if you know of a lively teacher on any subject who might like to have a partnership with a "third world" school doing excellent work, please invite them to our gathering and let me know their name. On the Seekers website, there is a description of the School and our connection with it. This might be a good piece to give any invitees who want more information. Thanks very much.

RESOURCES FOR THE PLANET

Ruth Alice White has gathered several resources for environmental groups and events, which she presented to the current School of Christian Living class on Global Warming (she is a co-teacher). Here are some of these:

Jeannine's opening statement for the class:

http://groups.google.com/group/takoma-park-climate-change-discussion/browse_thread/thread/e1fd74d745a3eaaa?hl=en

Aeren's poem:

http://groups.google.com/group/takoma-park-climate-change-discussion/browse_thread/thread/a8abea633af20c6e?hl=en

Kolya, a class member, shared that she has written a curriculum used by 1000 Catholics on how our lifestyle is hurting people around the world. (see Catholic resources here: www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/resources/education.html)

Many more details on the following announcements are on this page:

<http://groups.google.com/group/takoma-park-climate-change-discussion/web/announcements--solar-home-tour-interfaith-climate-events-and-earth-summit-in-dc?hl=en>

18th Annual Washington DC Solar Tour of Homes - Oct 4/5, 2008, 11am – 5pm. the 40 homes are in a large area including in Takoma Park. <http://www.solartour.org/>

Seekers may remember the March service where Jackie McMakin spoke about her commitment to the Earth Charter. www.seekerschurch.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=220&Itemid=17 You can participate in the annual Earth Charter Community Summit here in DC on Sat 10/11. DC Earth Charter Community Summit – Saturday, October 11, 2008 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM Martin Luther King Memorial Library, 901 G Street, Washington DC – Room A-5. www.earthcharterus.org/

Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light (GW IPL) 2008 Annual Summit, Building A Sustainable Future www.gwipl.org/summit.asp Sunday, October 12, 2008 from 2:30-5:30pm, Arlington VA (free event).

GW IPL is a local part of the national group The Regeneration Project: Interfaith Power and Light, which supports faith communities of all stripes in faith related education and action around climate change. Their conference on 10/12 in Arlington should be a great opportunity to learn more about their wonderful efforts. See list of GW IPL member congregations here and membership form for a congregation to “join” here. (for free) – no pressure, but really those of you who are Seekers... why wait to join? These are member organizations – Jubilee Housing Inc. – Washington, DC, The

Potter's House – Washington, DC

A list of October events for the Simplicity Matters Earth Institute: <http://simplicity-matters.org/events/index.php>

LAUREN SEAT—ARTIST IN SEEKERS GALLERY

A new exhibit in the Seekers Gallery displays a collection of prints by Lauren Seat, a Seekers young adult, reflecting her thoughts about a college semester in Japan, as well as other themes. Lauren took a required course in the arts at Denison University, thinking “I’m not an artist,” and has produced some remarkable images intertwined with words from contemporary bands and groups. Read her written piece at the exhibit—it includes information on the techniques she used and the themes she explored.

CURRENT FILMS—REVIEWS

Jeannine Caracciolo writes—In the simplest terms, “Trouble the Water” is a Hurricane Katrina documentary – Sundance-celebrated, celebrity-endorsed – but it also is every bit a historical document, capturing the fear, the uncertainty and the grief of two emblematic residents of New Orleans’ Lower 9th Ward as they endure their Katrina odyssey. Along the way, directors Tia Lessin and Carl Deal provide a big-picture look at the myriad social and political deficiencies that Katrina laid bare – the inefficiency, the ineptitude, the shameful abandonment of the city’s poorest citizens. Playing at E Street Cinema in DC.

<https://streamingmoviesright.com/us/movie/trouble-the-water/>

[Note from the editor: the following, a review of “Prince Caspian,” is by a colleague of mine, Vivian Lazo, rather than by a Seeker. I enjoyed the review so much that I wanted to pass it along to Seekers, since many of us may be interested

in the “Narnia” series, both the C. S. Lewis books and the films being made.]

A PRINCE BY ANY OTHER NAME . . .

Not for the meek of heart or imagination, Prince Caspian shines as the second and most recent screen adaptation of C. S. Lewis’ beloved saga. Providing a refreshing contrast amongst a summer of blockbusters full of weapons, explosions, admittedly clever vehicles and technologically enhanced armor that tend to dehumanize the combatants, this film brings the violence down a notch to a more personal (and personally accountable!) level, without getting anatomically graphic. The special effects are not intrusive; they seem to be organically woven into the rich tapestry of the story. Naturally, there are critters aplenty, both modern and mythological, with a particularly humorous coda featuring a domestic cat. If you’ve ever wanted to see New Zealand or Eastern Europe (just two of the locations in which it was shot), this movie is cinematographic nirvana, enhanced by a sweeping musical score, both orchestral and vocal. And if you’ve never visited Narnia before, the first ten minutes will tell you, more to the point, show you, all you need to know.

BOOK NOTE– HUMMINGBIRD HOUSE

Trish Nemore writes–Has anyone read the novel Hummingbird House, by Patricia Henley?

I’ve just finished it, sobbing to the end. It is a beautiful and heartbreaking story of la violencia en Guatemala, American ex pats and Mayans, in 1989. The setting is largely Antigua and Guatemalan pilgrims will recognize many references. I cannot loan it, as I’ve borrowed it myself, but strongly recommend it.

NEW MEDICARE INITIATIVE FOR CAREGIVERS

Trish Nemore writes in an email to all Seekers, September 19–Below is information from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services – the agency that administers Medicare – about a new initiative for caregivers. I have not read any of the material, but wanted to share it with you as many of us are or are becoming caregivers (or will soon have our children giving us care).

[Note from the editor: A quick overview. “The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has launched Ask Medicare, a new initiative to help family caregivers –those who are family members or friends who help people with Medicare – access and use valuable healthcare information, services and resources.” Please see Trish’s 9/19/08 email for much more information on the program.]

SEEKERS SERMONS IN SEPTEMBER

The sermons that appear on the Seekers website are listed below, with brief thoughts on their themes. You can read these sermons and archived sermons as far back as 1995 at seekerschurch.org. At the home page, find the tab “Worship” near the top. Click on the tab, and the drop-down menu will list both Sermons and Sermon Archive.

September 28. “A Sermon on Matthew 21:23–32.” Dan Phillips, a Seekers alumnus who is now a Baptist minister, asked which of the two children in the parable did what the parent asked. Was it the one who agreed, but went of and did something else? Or was it the one who said no, but thought better of it and mowed the lawn anyway?

September 21, 2008 . Taize chanting and worship. Our worship this Sunday was a service in the style of Taize, filled with silence, chanting, prayers of the community, and hearing the word of God.

September 14, 2008. "Our Commitment to Loving Forgiveness." Peter Bankson. I'd been reading the Scripture lessons for the week very much aware of the dedication of the National Memorial to those who were killed when that airliner was flown into the Pentagon. . . . The people we hear named "terrorists," aren't part of my faith community. But they are clearly part of this reality, and I believe that the God we worship is Creator of everything. I kept coming back to our worship theme for this recommitment season – loving forgiveness – and seeing it from different perspectives.

September 7. "Commitment and Sin." Marjory Bankson. Today begins our recommitment season, which will come to fruition on Recommitment Sunday the third week of October – when it will be time for each one of us to decide whether to claim our membership in Seekers. For us, it's a season of reflection and examination that leads toward the commitment statement which is printed on the inside of the bulletin. You can also see the similarity and differences between the members' statement and the additional elements of the Stewards' commitment to care for the health of Seekers.