

# Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

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## Joseph Deck Directs Festival Center

Since his appointment as Executive Director of the Festival Center in January, Rev. Joseph Deck has hit the ground running. He's taking every opportunity to introduce himself to the larger community and to tell the story of the Center. Rev. Deck is deeply committed to helping make Festival Center an even more vital resource for churches, organizations and individuals wanting to develop structures for spiritual growth and social action that meet the needs of the present age.

Joseph first came to the Church of the Saviour in 2007. At the time, he was the director of the Fatherhood Initiative, one of the largest programs at the Perry School Community Center, a community organization that works to eradicate poverty in the city's North Capitol area. He was approached by Avery Blakeney, who has been active with C of S for many years and was also involved at Perry. Avery told Joseph of his excitement about C of S and its ministries in the community and invited him to come to hear Gordon Cosby preach.

### Prayer Class

Avery also thought that Joseph would be the right person to teach the prayer class at the Servant Leadership School, and introduced him to Ann Brink, who then headed the School. The son of an Episcopalian mother and a Baptist father, Joseph had experienced the prayer practices of both traditions. He also loves the silence of Quaker worship, as well as the music and physical engagement of many African-American churches. With such rich gifts, he was soon teaching the course at the School.

Not long after, Harold Vines called: he was on the Board of Festival Center, and wanted Joseph to consider applying to be part of the Center's leadership team. While this possibility hadn't really been part of his plans for himself at the time, Joseph ultimately felt irresistibly drawn to working with a church that integrated strong structures for spiritual discipleship with a deep concern for those he sees as underestimated in our society.

As Director of the Servant Leadership School (SLS), Deck was inspired by the number of amazing thinkers, teachers, and practitioners willing to lead classes at the School without pay. Working with them to create the curriculum for this "lay seminary", while also supporting students to discern courses that would serve them best, was deeply satisfying work.



During this time, Rev. Deck was also called to be Minister for Men at Reid Temple AME Church in Glenn Dale, Maryland, ministering to the church's 4,000 men. He has experienced profound ways in which his two ministry locations have complemented each other. In the fall of 2009, a Reid Temple forum on racism included a panel with C of S

members Mike Little, Harold Vines, and Jim Melson, together with SLS special guests, John Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) and his grandson. Their presence helped to create the opportunity for questions to be asked and answered that might not otherwise have been possible.

### Sustainability

Joseph's immediate aim as Executive Director will be to assure the long-term sustainability of the Center's existing programs, including the Servant Leadership School, Discipleship Year, and Festival Foods programs. He'll be focusing on fund-raising and pursuing grants for the Center's work. More long-term, Deck envisions building the Center's capacity to get the Gospel message out in powerful ways. He values the Church of the Saviour's emphasis on Christian discipleship, and seeks to find means to embody the essentials of C of S wisdom in practices that will speak clearly to the present culture. He hopes the Center can begin reaching for younger people through tapping into the social networking approaches they have adopted, and bringing creative young voices into the Center to be in the dialogue.

**By Shelley Marcus, Board member of the Potter's House Church.**

# Intern Coming

This summer marks the seventh year that the Church of the Saviour is hosting a summer ministry intern from Duke Divinity School's Center for Reconciliation. Pictured here are Alison Dunn, 2011 intern, and John Stean III, 2012 intern who will serve from the end of May until the beginning of August.

While John will connect with several of our church and ministry venues, his central place of learning and serving will be the Potter's House under the supervision of Jean Brown. From Long Island, John grew up in the AME Zion tradition. He studied at St. John's University in Queens, where he encountered an ecumenical path that set the stage for his calling to ministry. He early sensed a call to preach, and he loves expressing his faith through music and the arts.

Any of the Church of the Saviour communities that would like to invite John to experience your community's life, offer a sermon or music, or serve with you in another way, can be in touch with Jean Brown at 540-230-1760 or [jean\\_brown@rocketmail.com](mailto:jean_brown@rocketmail.com). Welcome, John! We rejoice in the gift of your presence among us!



Interns Alison Dunn and John Stean.

**Kayla McClurg** is the point-person for The Church of the Saviour, inward/outward, Andrew's House and a core member of Potter's House Church.

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

**Mission groups** continue to be the backbone of The Church of the Saviour communities. These smaller groupings of 4-6 people provide an experience of belonging, reflection, accountability and service together. So different from the usual church committee or task force, a mission group invites intimacy and vulnerability as well as stretching our capacity for call and Christ's work in the world.

As Elizabeth O'Connor so often remarked, mission groups inevitably draw someone you don't want to be with --- requiring regular confrontation with the shadows we try to ignore. I smile ruefully as I think how often I've gotten irritated with someone in my mission group, then followed that thread to its source in my own ignored psyche. My journals include many of those witch-hunts, the shadow side of spiritual formation. It's an ongoing process for me and something I value more with age.

Recently I've been coordinating a class on mission groups for the Seekers School of Christian Living. In preparation, we reread the Handbook for Mission Groups as well as our own version on the Seekers website. I was struck once again by the radical vision of combining inner spiritual development with a common outward mission and how that will change us over time. I was also shocked to realize that I have been in one mission group, Learners & Teachers, for nearly 30

years with only a couple of short forays into other fields. But it hasn't been a static group. Everyone else has moved in and out, like healthy cells in the body of Christ.

Years ago, Learners & Teachers confirmed my call to "outreach teaching." I've enjoyed their blessing for work which often took me away from Seekers on weekends. My call to outreach teaching has prompted me to undertake this newsletter for the CoS Council. It will be a quarterly offering from the churches and ministries which have grown out of Church of the Saviour --- at least for this year. Your contributions will tell us whether to continue in print form or not. Send those to the return address on this newsletter and mark it for Callings.

If you have comments or questions, you can write to me at [churchofthesaviour.office@gmail.com](mailto:churchofthesaviour.office@gmail.com). Just put "Callings" in the subject line. Our next deadline for copy will be August 1 for publication by September 1.

**Marjory Zoet Bankson** is the Moderator of the CoS Council, author of *Creative Aging*, and a Steward of Seekers Church.



# Mary Cosby Celebrated

In a moving ceremony at Georgetown University, Mary Campbell Cosby was honored by the Fund for the Future of our Children with its Faith in Action Award. Many from the churches and ministries of the wider Church of the Saviour network were able to participate, each presenting Mary with a white rose and their words of acknowledgment as part of the celebration. The award citation told the unfolding story of Gordon and Mary's ministry together:

Mary became a well-loved speaker across the country as well as a teacher for the Washington, DC church. She has a special eye for "ambiance" and has always felt that beauty is especially close to God's heart. One of the church's first missions is the Potter's House coffeehouse in Adams Morgan, where the art gallery is named for Mary...

Their activities are a national model for translating spiritual values into work with the poor. The Festival Center trains people from all over the US who learn how to adapt these programs in cities across the nation.

Mary and Gordon have defied the traditional model of building a big organized mega-church. They have carried



Terry Flood

out faith-based social justice initiatives with small groups of no more than 15 or 20 dedicated people. Full-time employees work for modest salaries.

Always on the cutting edge, Gordon and Mary's faith-based social justice model serves as an inspiration to us all. Mary is the living model of how faith is demonstrated through action. Through their faith, sacrifice, and relentless commitment to serve the least served, they demonstrate the truth of the proverb of the "mustard seed."



Mary Cosby



Peter Bankson greets Mary Cosby

## Keynote by Edelman

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, gave the keynote address and spoke of Mary's gracious influence on the lives of many people including hers. She presented the award to Mary Cosby.

Since 1993, FCC has taken as its mission the support and encouragement of leadership qualities in today's youth. With a yearly essay contest on some specific topic, FCC has invited high school students to explore aspects of the Abrahamic faiths. In 2010, the program expanded to include a financial grant for a youth-led community service project which brings to life the deep teachings of the Abrahamic faiths.

This year, the theme was "Present at the Beginning: Celebrating Three women and Three Faiths."

Speakers outlined the role of Yocheved, the mother of Moses; Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Khadija, the wife of Muhammad. These women were selected because of their uniquely different ways of influencing the founding of their faiths and the way they lived their lives when faced with injustice, prejudice and persecution. After studying the lives of these three founders, five young women received grants for projects ranging from building a sci-



Ray McGovern

ence lab in Nigeria, creating a fruit and vegetable stand at the food bank in Howard County, to leading a social-action teen group at Rockville high school.

Videos and photographs of the event are available on the Fund for

the Future of our Children's website ([www.futureofchildren.net/home.html](http://www.futureofchildren.net/home.html)).

In that context, honoring Mary Campbell Cosby as a founder of The Church of the Saviour seemed just right.

*Photos by Byron Buck*

# Friends of Jesus Church

Just over 5 months ago, Friends of Jesus Church (FOJ) faced the very real possibility that it would disband. All but five of its former members had heard personal calls to other churches; and two of those remaining were also preparing to leave. But instead of disbanding, the church has boldly called two new co-pastors and a new leadership team to share responsibility for holding the church's life. Now, it is energetically living into a new church call.

The church was started by Gordon Cosby in 1999 to focus specifically on addressing economic injustice, and to promote meaningful dialogue across barriers of class and race. After over a decade of faithfully living out that mission, the church found last summer that a number of members were sensing new calls that would take them from FOJ.

Jim Dickerson, pastor at New Community Church, was invited to talk about a similar moment when his church was faced with a number of members being drawn to different forms of church. "Jim's story seemed to offer affirmation to FOJ members to follow their calls into different churches," Joe Collier, a new co-pastor, remembers.

Then a sense of new possibilities began to surface within those who remained. Sydney Johnson, who was stepping down as pastor, suggested that Harold Vines co-pastor with Joe Collier to support a shift in the focus of the church itself from economic justice to working toward racial reconciliation and justice. Vines has long been an advocate for racial reconciliation in the Church of the Saviour, including hosting a weekly discussion table on this mission at noon every Tuesday at the Potter's House.

After prayerful consideration, Vines gave his answer to the church in mid-December: he was ready to take up this role if the co-pastors would be supported by a leadership group of seasoned FOJ members.

A new leadership group, having joined with Harold in studying together Elizabeth O'Connor's *Call to Commitment*, gladly agreed. The group consists of Harold Vines, Joe Collier, Sydney Johnson, Susan Bell, J.J. Steiner and Mike Hopkins.

## Structures

Creating structures for integrating new members has been an early priority. Three men are in the process of preparing to commit to the church as Community Members. Two of



Joseph Deck, Sydney Johnson and Harold Vines at Dayspring

those are participating with members in a class on Christian Growth. Sydney Johnson's consistent guidance has helped the church work with how to balance the traditional commitment to integrity of membership with the desire to be more inclusive and diverse.

The church also went on silent retreat together at Dayspring in mid-April, with a theme of reconciliation. For four of the participants, it was their first time on silent retreat. All who went came back deeply moved.

## Third Thursdays

Early attention has also been given to how to support a range of worship approaches as new participants come to the group with different past worship experiences. One exciting development is the participation of Rev. Joseph Deck, Festival Center's Executive Director, whose inaugural sermon at the new FOJ was enthusiastically received, and who will now preach regularly on each 3rd Thursday. Music on 3rd Thursdays will feature gospel singer Audrey Cunningham, accompanied on the piano by her son, Adonis, and in song by son, Adam, and daughter, Ashley. (The family is familiar to many who have followed the One Voice One Sound program on Thursdays at the Potter's House.) Other weeks find Joseph Martin accompanying FOJ worship music at the piano.

The vision for FOJ is that it be a channel for a deeper engagement with the work of racial justice and reconciliation among persons of diverse cultures. Vines longs for a church that can support the important work of fully facing into the pain of our racial history, as an essential step toward being able to fully claim God's healing work of reconciliation.

Collier hungers for the community to think toward one or two ways that they can be in mission for justice in the world. "The question is: we are a diverse church that is doing WHAT together to challenge the world toward justice?"

Both Collier and Vines see how closely racial justice and reconciliation are linked to economic justice. In that way, they see FOJ continuing and building on the church's original call.

Friends of Jesus Church worships at the Potter's House on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome.

By Shelley Marcus



# Jubilee Jobs Receives Portraits

Jubilee Jobs proudly welcomes a series of water color portraits to its Anacostia office. “Our hope,” says office director Bettie Tabron, “is that job applicants will look at the pictures, see in them something of themselves, and experience a fuller Jubilee welcome. We are here to help.”

The work of local artist and New Community Church member, Mary Lee Barker, the pictures were painted of individuals she encountered at Loaves and Fishes, a week-end feeding ministry in D.C. The images touch the drama of ordinary life. These African-American men reflect triumph and tragedy, pain and struggle, and unmistakable dignity in their faces. A Bible passage or saying accompanies each picture.

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**“After so much discouragement in the job search, I knew I came to the right place. These are my people, people Jubilee helps to get jobs.”**

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The effect of seeing this collection is surprisingly powerful. It is fascinating to watch people’s reactions. Many stop, study the pictures, get into discussions. Something is being communicated. One viewer put it this way, “After so much discouragement in the job search, I knew I came to the right place. These are my people, people Jubilee helps to get jobs.”

On March 18, a reception was held to thank the artist for the permanent loan of her portraits. Accompanied by Cordell Banks, who has become a good friend after sitting for his portrait some years ago, Mary Lee reflected, “I cannot think of a more appropriate home for my paintings than here at Jubilee.”

Last year the fledgling Southeast office was able to make 289 job placements. Roughly half of these were citizens returning from incarceration. In the heart of one of the poorest areas of our nation’s capital, with an unemployment rate exceeding 25%, Anacostia poses a continuing challenge for the work of Jubilee Jobs.

**Dick Busch** worships at New Community Church and volunteers at Jubilee Jobs in the Anacostia office.



Mary Lee Barker receives thanks from Bettie Tabron, director of the Anacostia office of Jubilee Jobs



Cordell Banks and his portrait

# Re-Visioning at Eighth Day Community

**E**ighth Day Faith Community continued its “Re-Visioning” in a members’ meeting that was characterized by truth-telling and thoughtful listening. Members and interns considered how we can grow into our unique selves and at the same time be deeply rooted in our community. Issues included:

Our sharing at the meeting was guided by our membership commitment – italicized below (also see [www.8th-day.org](http://www.8th-day.org)):

- barriers to inclusive community,
- how to grow in our welcome of diversity,
- what about the community makes us uncomfortable or angry,
- what keeps us in community, and
- how can we articulate the compelling story that transcends difference and holds us together.

***I will seek to be open to God’s transforming power and love.*** Whatever barriers to inclusive community --- race, class, dress, language, mental capabilities, diversity in all its manifestations—all these become part of our transformation. Our identity is subsumed in “God’s transforming power and love.” In community we encourage one another to become more like Jesus. Each of us becomes our true self in Christ through encouraging our brothers and sisters to the same joy.

***I acknowledge that we are united in God’s love and grace.*** Our community’s unity balances between whatever invites us to stay and would lead us to leave. We candidly expressed our irritations at such things as too lengthy services, uneven giftedness of preachers and worship leaders, and hymns we didn’t like; at the same time we acknowledged shared responsibility. Deeper issues included our hope that we remain utterly serious about our quest for heartfelt, honest Christian faith; that we not substitute “being religious” for “being real.” People shared that they might leave 8th Day membership if we became a “social club” where conflicts or hypocrisy could not be addressed openly, and if there was not a persistent focus on poverty and justice issues.

## What Keeps Me Here?

“What keeps me here?” Responses varied, with shared nods affirming our deep friendship with one another, our appreciation of our differences, healing prayer, our fidelity to mission, our accountability in small groups, and our work as a ‘community of creative doers.’ We expressed our joy in supporting missions that address many challenges and in being open to new calls. We like shared leadership and our transparent and open budget process. We like not having a build-in, and are grateful to the Potter’s House for sharing theirs.

## Compelling Story

So, is there a compelling story that transcends difference and ultimately holds us together? That story is evolving. Diversity keeps arising as a key. We seek to be newly rooted in Old Testament prophetic stories, as well as New Testament parables and our Church of the Saviour heritage. We may decide we need new language to define both discipleship and community. We’ll remain a “listening community” that welcomes, works for justice, and lives out Gospel love and forgiveness. We stand captivated by Dr. King’s vision of “the Beloved Community.” We long for the profound joy we are led to by the teaching and life of Jesus. As our commitment statement says, I will respond to Christ’s call to stand with “the least of these” by committing my resources of time, money, and energy to help build a world of inclusiveness, love, and equity.

## Being Real

Fred Taylor preached at 8th day on Easter morning: “... One of the things I like about 8th Day is that people here are not particularly concerned with being religious. We are primarily concerned with being real—real with ourselves, real with each other, real as we relate to the world, and real with God.”

He ended his teaching asking: “What is the hope? The hope is that the crucified Jesus is alive among us, and his very weakness is strangely awesome power. We as a community need to sit with that mystery and work openly with both our skepticism and our faith.”

Opening ourselves as an Easter people means we shall be “blessed in the process.” We experience resurrection out of the creative tension between faithful questions and hopeful answers. Pilate said, “Behold the man.” Behold, Christ holds up a mirror in which we see real community reflected. Look again: faith reveals the truth of Christ’s wounds as real community, ultimately fulfilled through Resurrected Love among us.



**Kent Beduhn** is a covenant member, musician and spiritual director of the New Creation Mission Group. He works as a psychotherapist, clinical supervisor and consultant. He serves as Council Representative for the Eighth Day Faith Community.



# ArtSpace Opening

The April 27th opening of the Fibres: Formed of Such Thread exhibit was well attended by 40-50 community residents and friends of the fiber artists enrolled in class at the New Community ArtSpace. One of the main attractions was the demonstration loom where guests were able to try their hands at weaving twill patterns on a sampler. Two of those guests who were interested in weaving and crochet returned to the ArtSpace on the following Tuesday, and joined with the class as it debriefed about the success of the opening and prepared to attend the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival on May 5th and 6th



Maybelle Bennett welcomes visitors to ArtSpace.



## Care Packs

In early 2010 a team of volunteers led by Jake Folger began to assemble care packages to give to homeless people in the Washington DC area. Referred to as "Care Packs", each is stuffed with fresh, clean socks; a hand towel and washcloth; toiletries; walking food; and other useful items all inside a reusable mini-backpack.

The Care Pack Team invited Seekers to donate items for the care packs, and soon had enough to assemble about 15 each and every month. The team encouraged Seekers to take Care Packs out into the community and give them directly to homeless people. Training was also provided, by the team, which has two formerly homeless people on it's staff, to teach how to approach our friends on the street and feel comfortable with giving them the Care Packs. Stories about these experiences are posted on the "Friend to the Homeless" website. (See link below)

In October 2011 the Stewards of Seekers Church affirmed the Care Pack Program as a ministry of Seekers Church. In addition to producing care packages for our homeless friends, the Care Pack Team is developing materials to help other faith communities, groups and organizations to start a care pack program of their own.

There are several ways for you to get involved:

- Donate items for the Care Packs;
- Contribute financially to sponsor the Care Packs;
- Help with distribution of the Care Packs;
- Volunteer in other ways; or
- Start a Care Pack program within your group, organization or church.

There are stories and much more information on the Friend to the Homeless web site at [www.friendtothehomeless.org](http://www.friendtothehomeless.org).

## Related Ministries

**The following ministries have grown from churches and mission groups of The Church of the Saviour. Each is independently organized.**

Academy of Hope • Becoming Church • Bethany, Inc. • Bokamoso Foundation • Christ House • Columbia Road Health Service • Cornelius Corps • Cornerstone • Dayspring Earth Ministry • Dayspring Retreat Center • Discipleship Year • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Hope and a Home • Inward/outward • Joseph's House • Jubilee Housing • Jubilee Jobs • Jubilee JumpStart • Kairos House • L'Arche • Life Asset Credit Union • Life Pathways • Manna, Inc. • Miriam's House • New Community ArtSpace • New Community for Children • O.N.E.DC • Potter's House • Samaritan Inns • Sarah's Circle • Servant Leadership School • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Sounds of Hope • Tell The Word • Wellspring

# Special Events

**June 3...Earth Celebration** at Dayspring. For the whole Church of the Saviour community, 1:30-6:30. Worship in the amphitheater at 5pm.



Photo credit: Peter Bankson

**June 7... Celebration of The Family Place and to Honor Dr. Ann Barnet, MD** Fundraiser for The Family Place, 6:00pm - 9:30pm at The Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Rd., NW. No charge. RSVP: Lorenn Maysonet at 202.265.0149, ext. 111 or [lmaysonet@thefamilyplacedc.org](mailto:lmaysonet@thefamilyplacedc.org)

**June 21 ... Academy of Hope** forum to discuss "When Parents Learn, Children Prosper: Adult Literacy and K-12 Education." 8:30 – 10:30am, Busboys and Poets, 2021 14th Street, NW. RSVP: Krystal Ramseur, 202.269.6623, ext. 123; [krystal@aohdc.org](mailto:krystal@aohdc.org)

**June 22 -24... Dayspring Retreat** Led by Marjory Bankson called "Try the Other Side" Contact [www.dayspringretreat.org](http://www.dayspringretreat.org)

**July 20-22... Dayspring Retreat** Led by Rev. Carlyle Gill called "The Word Made Flesh". Contact [www.dayspringretreat.org](http://www.dayspringretreat.org)

**June 26 – 30, 2012 ... Servant Leadership School Special Event** A week with Wes Howard-Brook and Sue Ferguson Johnson titled "Come Out, My People!" God's Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond. The information on Wes and Sue's week at SLS can be found here: <http://slschool.org/summer-special-event.html>

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