

# Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

Vol 1, Issue 3 • Fall 2012

## A tribute to Tom Taylor

The Potter's House will be saying a fond farewell to Tom Taylor, our long-time Bookstore Manager and dear friend, as he heads into retirement in early fall. We want to share with Callings readers some of the reasons Tom is irreplaceable, even though we will be trying to fill the Bookstore Manager position in the weeks ahead.

There's been talk of a miraculous divine intervention even in the way Tom learned of an opening in the Potter's House bookstore. It's said that word came to him on the precise day he heard the Olsson's bookstore in Metro Center, where he worked, was going to close immediately.

The truth might be a bit more prosaic, but still has that "this was meant to be" feeling: Tom had approached Audrey Metz, then the bookstore manager, to arrange a time for an informational interview. After talking just a few minutes, Audrey said, "Actually, we could use someone right now." And so, on February 15, 2004, Tom arrived as an employee at the Potter's House bookstore.

Tom's engagement with the Potter's House had actually begun decades earlier. He'd discovered the Potter's House in the early 1970s, when he lived in a group house in Adams Morgan; he would come to the PH to listen to music—some of which was played by his roommates.

Tom also knew the larger Church of the Saviour community through his many years managing the transitional addictions recovery program at So Others Might Eat (SOME). SOME coordinated its program with the Samaritan Inns detox program, with Lazarus House and Tabitha House, and with Jubilee Jobs.

Tom has pioneered so many new approaches to the bookstore that it's become a significantly different place than when he first arrived. Then, the bookstore was open only from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Monday through Friday—and never on weekends. Early on, Tom volunteered extra time in order to have the bookstore open more hours—especially Friday nights and Saturdays—so that those who were unavailable daytimes would still have the chance to come in and browse.

As he took on the managerial responsibility, Tom focused on ways to make the books more visible and also to make specific books easier to locate. The Bookstore windows got their own window display, instead of having just a few books perched on the window sills. Meade Jones Hanna hand-crafted window display shelves from Tom's specific wedge-shaped design.

Beyond all his great ideas and his dedication, Tom has brought a spirit of community-building and outreach to the bookstore. He pioneered the idea of taking books off-site to create bookstore tables



at many faith-based conferences, such as the large Ecumenical Advocacy Days event held in D.C. each April. He gave special ongoing support to two monthly programs, Recovery Café and Children's Story Hour.

But even more, Tom has brought a spirit of playfulness and fun to the days at the Potter's House. He's always ready to create a new tall tale, featuring members of the Potter's

House community in semi-fictitious roles. Tom's character in these tales is usually a guy who just can't stop trying to sell books, by any means necessary. One Lent, he told guests, straight-faced, that Gordon Cosby had recommended a Lenten discipline of daily book purchases—indeed, had preached on this theme.

His easy, accepting ways make life go more easily for others. When I was first learning to cashier at the Potter's House, and the lunch rush got a bit overwhelming, I would often make stupendous blunders: I once rang up two chicken salad sandwiches and one soda for a total of \$6,958.35—including tax, it came to \$7,654.15. Just after, Tom came up front, and I expressed my despair. "No, you're really catching on quickly!" Tom assured me.

Now that we are only weeks away from Tom's leaving the Potter's House staff, we asked him to write up a job description listing all the functions that he has been filling. He gave us three sheets, dividing out three areas of involvement. The first two were expected, but the third one said, in closing:

**Function:** Swing Dance

**Qualifications:** Be footloose and have perpetual readiness to break out dancing; ability to forget all other responsibilities.

**Reports To:** God

**Hours:** 168 per week

**Schedule:** 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., Sunday through Saturday THAT is Tom, to a "T"! We'll miss him greatly.

*Shelley Marcus is president of the Potter's House Church Board, and a charter member of the Tom Taylor Fan Club.*

# Turning Time

**T**his is a turning time for the Church of the Saviour. I suppose every era of a church's life is a time of turning as long as there are listening hearts, but especially now we ask: Who are we, individual churches yet also a collective of churches, called to be? Is there a particular 'way' for us now?

Even among our own, I sometimes hear that the Church of the Saviour no longer exists. I am interested in this comment, being the staff person of said non-existing church and knowing that the church, since 1995, has been as it is now—a church of scattered churches. Perhaps the comment relates more to Gordon's no longer being active as minister, but that too has been true for a few years now. Maybe it takes years to ask the real questions and to see whether or not new fruit will emerge. In the past year, at gatherings of the Ecumenical Council, at the Potter's House, at Dayspring, at the Festival Center, in mission groups and at events that draw people together across church affiliations, the Spirit seems to be deepening connections and possibly preparing the soil for new fruit.

In *Call to Commitment* Elizabeth O'Connor wrote that when the church is being the church, "... it will constantly be adventuring out into places where there are no tried and tested ways. If the church in our day has few prophetic voices to sound above the noises of the street, perhaps in large part it is because the pioneering spirit has become foreign to it. It shows little willingness to explore new ways."

It is true that the Church of the Saviour does not—and need not—exist in the same way it used to. But the pioneering spirit seems to be alive and well as we continue to question and explore new ways. Within the churches and among the churches, the new/old story continues to unfold.



**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*.  
[www.inward/outward.org](http://www.inward/outward.org)

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

## At the Crossroads of Commitment and Inclusion

**The land at Dayspring** is golden brown. Stalks bend, leaves swirl and the geese are gone. More than 40 people from the nine churches listed above have gathered to help the Dayspring Church discern the Spirit's leading for the land that we own together. At first, we thought the question was mainly about how to use the Wellspring buildings. But now we know that the land itself holds many seeds of new creativity, new calls and missions. Now the Next Chapter Team will prayerfully sort and sift the many good suggestions for creating a sustainable future at Dayspring.

Meanwhile, many of the churches and missions which grew out of Church of the Saviour are examining their calls and making changes. Lazarus House Church recently changed its name to the Bread of Life community (see above). In the last issue of *Callings*, we heard about discernment gatherings at Friends of Jesus and Eighth Day. All of the churches stand at the crossroads of commitment and inclusion.

While each church values commitment to Christ by its' core members, we are also being stretched to embrace newcomers who want to be involved in decision-making. When Tom and Carolyn Hubers set down their call to publish *Diaspora* a year ago, the

Ecumenical Council approved this newsletter for one year (2012) to make us more visible to each other and to the wider world. If you would like to see it continue, we need your financial support.

**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.**



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



# Guatemala Pilgrimage sponsored by Seekers Church

Every summer, Seekers Church sponsors a work-pilgrimage to Guatemala. We work with a local organization, PAVA (Programa de Ayuda a los Vecinos del Altiplano), which is dedicated to helping people in the Chimaltenango Province with basic infrastructure projects. Aeren Martinez, a former Steward at Seekers, now lives in San Antonio and is on the PAVA Board. She is our local coordinator.

Until this year, we were building a primary school in a different Mayan village each time. Several years ago, PAVA started a 'bookmobile' to encourage adult literacy and eventually house some computers. In Paxixil, where we helped to expand the primary school in 2011, leaders wanted a separate library which could become more of a community center, open in the evenings.

Although most of the farmers in Paxixil are sharecroppers who don't own their own land, the village was able to pool their resources to get clear title to the land for the library. They also provide the labor, while PAVA provides materials, tools, a cement mixer and a mason, to make sure the construction is sound. Part of the pilgrim's fee for the trip goes for construction materials.

This past July, 20 pilgrims from all over the U.S. and Canada worked with the men of Paxixil to construct a library. When finished, it will look like this:



The finished library will be a community center, open in the evenings for adults as well as children.

Although the work can be strenuous, there is something for everyone to do. During the work week, we stay in Antigua, at a modest Lutheran retreat center, and share our reflections each evening. Part of the inner work is surely what we learn about building community together. Marjory and Peter Bankson have been leading this trip since 2002, when it was sponsored by Faith At Work. Over the years, more than 25 Seekers have participated and two years ago, Seekers Church agreed to become the sponsor, but the trip is open to anyone over age 16.

After a week of work in the village, we move to a missionary compound on Lake Atitlan. It is a base camp for three day trips, to visit the vital missions of San Lucas Toliman, the communities of



Julia Dahlin and Peter Bankson help the local mason set a rebar column

Santiago and San Juan de Laguna, and the famous indigenous market in Chichicastenango.

And for the pilgrimage part? We are there, putting our faith to work in the world. We go, expecting to see the face of God each day; expecting to be changed in the process.



Village elder finishing masonry seams

**Peter Bankson**, *Servant Leadership Team, Seekers Church*

**For more information, visit the website at [SeekersChurch.org](http://SeekersChurch.org). Click on "Guatemala Pilgrimage."**

# Discipleship Year

Discipleship Year came to an end in early August for its 2011-12 volunteers, the Columbia Heights house was cleaned and readied for this year's volunteers, just arriving. The breathing space between "farewell" to one group of DY friends, and "welcome" to those arriving, provides a happy moment to look at the Discipleship Year program and its context within the life of Church of the Saviour.

Discipleship Year [DY] is the Festival Center's year-long program consisting of three prongs: each volunteer's work placement in a ministry of direct service or advocacy; shared life in intentional community; and a range of opportunities for theological study and reflection.

Dawn Longenecker, DY program director for the past five years, explains how each of the three prongs of the program has been shaped by its relation to the C of S community.

\*The intentional community component is housed in a spacious and solid row house in nearby Columbia Heights, which is possible through a generous gift of the house to the Festival Center from Charles Demere, a longtime C of S member. This allows the volunteers to live near the C of S churches and ministries in Adams Morgan, which play important roles in DY life.

\*The workplace component has involved placements in a wide range of C of S ministries, including Joseph's House, Jubilee Housing, Jubilee Jobs, the Family Place, Academy of Hope, Sitar Arts Center, Miriam's House & the Festival Center. Connections with FLOC, Becoming Church, Christ House, Jubilee Jumpstart, and other C of S ministries are being nurtured as future placement options.

\*The theological study and reflection component centers on the volunteers' attendance at classes each semester at the Servant Leadership School and weekly seminars that Dawn facilitates based on a curriculum designed to assist members in integrating the various aspects of their experience.

Beyond these tangible institutional supports, DY volunteers also inhabit the C of S understandings of what it means to be church. DYers explore what it means to be on an inward-outward journey, in which one's inward and outward experiences are in deepening dialogue with each other. They are led to recognize the signs of God's call on their lives, and the importance of spiritual accountability. And they end the year by writing a spiritual autobiography, a key practice for C of S participants moving into full church membership.

Here is where DY has a unique gift to offer DY participants: the opportunity to explore the diversity of

worship expressions and community practices within the C of S church family. It is like having access to a spiritual laboratory in which communities of committed Christians, originating in a strong common foundation of faith and practice, have each lived out their common heritage in a range of local expressions.

This exploration is supported by the ongoing structured involvement of C of S members. A Support Team including invited representatives of many of the faith communities, as well as DY alumni from previous years meets once every other month to provide program support. The Support Team also sponsors a monthly dinner with the volunteers, with different Team members providing dinner each month. Individual Team members might also provide individual mentorship to volunteers who would like it, or be guest speakers at one of the DY House's weekly seminars.

And in return, the life of C of S churches and ministries have been abundantly enriched by DY participants, both during their years as volunteers, and often, far beyond. Over a dozen DY alumni have stayed involved in a long-term basis as permanent staff members of C of S related ministries and/or as members of C of S churches!

On August 26, the 2012-2013 Discipleship Year volunteers arrived for their week-long orientation to their home and workplace for the next eleven months. We welcome this year's volunteers, listed below with their hometowns and DY placements:

Amy Chatalaine [S. Minnesota] Joseph's House  
Josef Lorentz [Buffalo, NY] The Interfaith Power and Light  
Eliza Marth [North Carolina] Jubilee Jobs  
Priscilla Megalaa [Cairo, Egypt] Even Start Program  
Kate van der Zwaag [Columbus, Ohio] "N" Street Village's Wellness Center.



Dawn Longenecker, Director of the Discipleship Year





Honored at the July 29 Sending Forth Celebration at the Potter's House (left to right) Ashley Peterson, Megan McFeely, Andre Faulkner, Brennan Baker, Samantha Gangwer, Sarah Baker.

I sought out the Discipleship Year program in response to a confusion—a “homelessness”—that crept up on me during college. Increasingly disturbed and frustrated by what I was learning about the underside of US history and “Christianity’s” complicity in much of this, I was still excited about learning and becoming a critical thinker. I began to find strength and direction pursuing the truth about myself and the world around me.



At the same time, I was confronting a strong pressure to answer the question of what I would do after school, and decide what career path I would take. I refused to enter a career path that wasn’t life giving, and wasn’t yet sure what it would look like for me to continue my journey for truth and justice in the “real world.”

I deeply desired a community struggling to embody the gospel values of love, justice, and liberation that I had discovered as a religion major at Davidson College. When someone gave me literature about Church of the Saviour and the DY program, I recognized immediately that C of S was a community that had refused, in many ways, to live the narrative of the dominant culture. That it had also made such an impact in the Adams Morgan neighborhood made it an easy decision.

Clearly, the Spirit led me to this supportive, faithful community to discern how to choose life in the midst of an oppressive culture and economic system, to evolve my understanding of the relationship between the inward and outward journeys—and to show how, in reality, they are the same journey. The more spiritual work I do, the more I connect the dehumanizing and oppressive forces of Empire with the inner negative patterns of behavior, denial, and fear of freedom I try to let go of through my spiritual practices. “The personal is the political,” after all.

This work can only be done in community. I hope to continue my ongoing discernment within this community.

*Two-year DY participant Brennan Baker worked the 2010-2011 year at Joseph’s House, and the 2011-2012 year at the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.*

## 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

# Dayspring Discernment Process

When the Wellspring Mission Group stopped its conference center mission and limited usage of the buildings in late 2010, Dayspring Church entered into a year-long process of discernment about the purpose and sustainability of the Wellspring properties: the center, three cabins and residence. Representatives from six of the nine C of S churches participated in that process and pursued available alternatives. One result was an agreement with Sandy Spring Friends School (SSFS) to use the facilities in conjunction with their summer program for international students. In addition, another small faith community has begun worshipping at Dayspring. That has reduced some of the financial pressure for covering routine maintenance, but the process raised wider questions about use of the Dayspring land.

As a result, Dayspring Church formed the Next Chapter Team and, with the help of Keith Seat (from Seekers Church), has begun a wider discernment process for all of Dayspring. Much internal work has been done at Dayspring Church and beyond, with two recent, well-attended meetings for those from the wider C of S community to help envision the future. In the C of S community, Dayspring's primary value is seen as retreat. The corresponding value within Dayspring Church is community, and eight of the eleven core members live on the Dayspring land; many speak of being called to a more contemplative life.

The question of discerning God's intention for the land has come to the fore within the context of changes in the wider C of S community. Those who came to the meetings agree that Dayspring needs to look to the future, but despite being the single property held in common by the nine churches of the Church of the Saviour, it is largely unknown to newer members of the churches other than those who worship there.

## Silent Retreat and More

More than any other single aspect, the heart of Dayspring is its beloved Silent Retreat Center, and everyone strongly supports it. While prices for Retreat have increased, gifts subsidize the rates paid by retreatants and are critical for Retreat to operate without a loss. Gifts have accounted for roughly one-third of Retreat income in recent years.

Recent efforts to link faith and ecology offer another possibility for ministry at Dayspring. Many people are interested in the two solar-powered cottages which have been built overlooking the Lake of the Saints, and the solar greenhouse might be expanded. Jim Hall and Cheryl Hellner have offered workshops and quiet days on "earth literacy" to deepen our understanding of the inward/outward journey. Earth Ministry might be enlarged to include school and civic groups interested in organic gardening and other connections with the land. And many other possibilities – ranging from permaculture to focusing on children – have been suggested and are being contemplated for the future.

Care for the 208 acres of land and the 24 buildings on the Dayspring property is a substantial responsibility for the Dayspring Church. Help from the sister communities is needed to pray and dream a new generation of land-stewards into being. But with God, all things are possible!



*If you have not been present at the Dayspring meetings, but have ideas or interest in supporting the Next Chapter Team, please contact Keith at [kseat@keithseat.com](mailto:kseat@keithseat.com).*

Please search your heart to see if you feel called to be a part of the M-83 Prayer Vigil. This prayer vigil is for the county to find a creative alternative to the road, M-83, which threatens the silence and serenity of Dayspring and the ecological integrity of the adjacent creek valley parkland.

Most of you know that the M-83 Committee of Dayspring Church is working with a supportive coalition of neighbors and organizations to advocate for the growing possibility of mass public transit rather than building new roads, such as M-83. (See our blog at [tamecoalition.blogspot.com](http://tamecoalition.blogspot.com).)

In this crucial year, the county government will conclude its study of alternative road routes; apart from a miracle, we expect them to choose a route for M-83 that runs immediately adjacent to the Dayspring Silent Retreat.

- **Sept 25 M-83 Prayer Vigil at Dayspring**
- **Dec 13 M-83 Prayer Vigil at Dayspring**



# Special Events at the Servant Leadership School

## Becoming the Change We Want to See: Building Shared Leadership

*Saturday, September 29, 10am to 2pm, \$30*

Often groups striving to build a better world end up replicating some of what they seek to replace in their very structures. Our named values of empowerment and inclusion can easily give way to old hierarchies of power and privilege without actual practices that back them up. Yet many of us are unaware of any other ways to operate, leaving even our best efforts frustrated.

ONE DC, a community organizing group centered in Shaw, has responded to these challenges proactively by re-building their organization from the ground up in recent years. In this workshop, they will share some of the lessons they have learned about shared leadership, dynamic structures, and creative alternatives that can cultivate truly collective power.

ONE DC's mission is to exercise political strength to create and preserve racial and economic equity in Shaw and the District. Their Shared Leadership Team will facilitate this workshop.

## Simple Gifts: Living in Harmony with the Earth

*Saturday, October 6, 11am to 5pm*

Grace, beauty, and ecological integrity. These are the principles embodied in the Simple

Gifts project at Dayspring. This project has arisen out of a passion to explore ways of living more simply, justly, and in harmony with the earth. We invite you to come out for a tour of the two energy-efficient homes and solar, straw-bale greenhouse which comprise Simple Gifts. The homes integrate a number of design and construction features that result in nearly zero energy use and are a delight to live in. The year-round greenhouse and permaculture gardens demonstrate one approach to meeting the need for healthy, nourishing, locally grown food.

The tour will be held at Dayspring in Germantown, MD. A carpool group will leave from The Festival Center at 10am. Contact the school director for more information.

Dayspring Earth Ministry links faith and ecology through the preservation and restoration of natural habitats and a variety of classes, retreats, and workshops.

## Let the Children Come: Faith Formation for Small Congregations

*Saturday, October 13, 10am to 4pm, \$30*

We not only inherit the faith from our ancestors; we also bequeath it to our children. We can leave our children with a stronger faith community than we were given...if we seek guidance, knowledge, and encouragement to do so.

This one-day workshop will give church leaders and teachers the opportunity to ask tough questions, discuss particular trials, and discover practical ways to guide our youngest members in anything from sacred practices to potlucks. Come to learn new and effective means for including the children in your midst. We trust that by doing so you will enliven the worship experience, deepen the faith of the congregation and authentically respond to Christ's call to "let the children come."

Abigail Vizcarra Perez, MDiv, is the former business manager of Jubilee Jumpstart. Previously a minister and teacher, she has extensive experience in faith formation with children and families.



## Life Asset: Financial Services for the Underbanked

*Saturday, October 20, 10am to 1pm*

Life Asset is a newly formed non-profit organization with the mission to provide affordable financial services to the unbanked and underbanked in Washington

DC. We feel called to explore new alternatives to the "too big to fail" banks and to the predatory payday lenders.

We are excited to provide you with an update on our work so far and to invite you to help us launch the new proposed Life Asset Credit Union. We are confident that the vision of allowing more people to realize their dreams and potential is possible, given adequate support and participation from the community. Please come learn, share, and participate in this new endeavor.

Life Asset will host this event in partnership with Faith and Money Network and Bread of Life Church with special guests Andy Loving and Susan Taylor of the Louisville Loan Fund.

**To register online, visit the website at [slschool.org](http://slschool.org)**

*Artwork by Anne C. Brink. To view more of her artwork, visit her website at [www.annebrink.com](http://www.annebrink.com)*

# Special Events



**October 12-14 @ Dayspring Silent Retreat** Tom Ryan, Paulist Priest and author of *Soul Fire*, explores Jesus' prayer: "Father, may they all be one, as you are in me and I am in you (Jn 17:21)"

Contact: [dayspringretreat.org/weekend](http://dayspringretreat.org/weekend).

**October 26-28 @ Dayspring Silent Retreat** Cheryl Hellner and Jim Hall, leaders of Dayspring's Earth Ministry, guide retreatants in soul work around Antonio Machado's poem, "Wind Trails in the Sea."  
(<http://dayspringretreat.org/weekend>)

**Nov 7 17th Annual Friends of Manna Silent Auction & Reception** At The Carnegie Institution, 1530 P Street, NW, Washington DC 20005 Contact: [www.mannaDC.org](http://www.mannaDC.org)

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