

Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

Vol 3, Issue 1 • Spring 2014

Launching the Life Asset Office

By Bettina Del Sesto

Life Asset will be opening its doors on April 11th with a ribbon cutting ceremony, Godspeed prayer, and best wishes to all involved with the final vision of Gordon Cosby before his death a year ago on March 20, 2013.

Life Asset is to be a center for financial learning, an incubator for Entrepreneurs to flourish and network, and finally the dream to come of a credit union for the Adams Morgan neighborhood and the city. Its mission grew out of desire, similar to the many other ministries inaugurated by Gordon Cosby, to serve those overlooked and disregarded, in this case by financial institutions. Life Asset's mission is to help alleviate poverty by empowering people through affordable financial products, services, and education, thereby promoting self-help and self-respect and expanding social and economic opportunities for low-income residents.

Over the past three years, Life Asset has served over 250 entrepreneurs, providing business advice, training and microloans. Markus Larsson, co-founder of Life Asset, is energized by the difference they see in people's lives. As Markus oversees the opening of Life Asset's new office, made possible by Jubilee Housing, he carries with him the sincere hope "that Life Asset will not only help people to greater financial heights, but will also serve as a tool to help people on their journey of spiritual growth."

Banks are making over \$50 billion per year in fees. Payday lenders are charging an annual interest rate of 400% (national average). DC residents are paying \$117 million on check-cashing services (not counting late fees or interest on loans). If you add up all the fees, interest rates charged by banks, payday lenders, cash checking places etc, it adds up to approximately \$150 billion per year mostly paid by people making less than \$30,000 per year.

Responding to the need, Life Asset is working on three initiatives:

1) Loan Fund: small loans to entrepreneurs who want to start or expand a business but are having difficulty getting loans



(left to right): Joanne Henson, Christopher Damola, Markus Larsson, Karlisima Rodas, Queeny Belfond, Bettina Del Sesto and "Mr. D."

from traditional financial institutions. The program is modeled after Grameen Bank.

- 2) Financial Training:** hands on guidance on how to start or expand a business, how to get out of bad debt, or how to avoid payday lenders and loan sharks.
- 3) Life Asset Credit Union** (under formation): will be the equivalent of a bank for low income families, a bank that avoids high fees and interest rates, and will aim to provide a full spectrum of services including savings and checking accounts, car loans, mortgage loans and online banking.

Please save the date and come to Life Asset's new office space for an **OPEN HOUSE** from 11:00 AM -3:00 PM on Friday, April 11th at 2448 18th Street in the heart of Adams Morgan.

Please see photos on page 4

Questions Attract Visitors

In the spring people from around the country—and even the world—begin to inquire about making visits to us. They want to “come on pilgrimage” to see and hear how we do church. What can we show them that will be meaningful, I wonder? They are hoping for direction and inspiration, but we are a scattered church of small groups with our own inadequacies, and even failures. We have more questions than answers. But what visitors say, when I have asked them why they come, is that those are the reasons they come.

We are one of the few churches they know who are willing to be honest about uncertainty. They love that we do not offer packaged answers, formulas for success, but keep pondering the big questions. They say we inspire them to ask bigger questions in their own communities, to dare to poke at the systems of racism and economic



apartheid they see in their own churches but have been afraid to address, to find the few who are ready to journey more deeply and to begin.

Thinking about these visitors, and others who are dreaming and daring to imagine what the church universal and local is called to be, gave my colleague Martin Saunders and me an idea. What if inward/outward gathered some writings from people in this community about being church today? The joys and the challenges, lessons learned and questions still being asked, collected into a small book, a letter of sorts to others on the journey. This book project is the third for inward/outward, preceded by a collection of excerpts from Gordon's sermons and a book of reflections on the Gospel Lectionary. All are available at www.inwardoutward.org.

Kayla McClurg is staff person for *The Church of the Saviour*. She facilitates and writes for www.inwardoutward.org

Editor's Corner

Racial Justice Resource Center Opens

On March 13, the Friends of Jesus Church hosted a number of visitors at the Festival Center, to reflect on the Damascus Road training, and to celebrate the opening of a new collection of books on racial justice. The resource center will provide a centralized collection for people who want more background in the issues of institutional racism. It's part of the Festival Center library, a rich collection of books related to Church of the Saviour. Art Brown, who sang at worship and wrote the article on the facing page, is pictured in front of the racial justice collection.



One of the gifts that we carry from the C of S tradition is that each church, and each mission, embodies a particular call. As followers of Jesus, the call to love the world in its broken state means that we will be changed in the process. Just now, we see that happening at the Potter's House, where a major renovation is just beginning, and at Dayspring, where a new focus on loving the earth is taking shape. And with the opening of the Life Asset office, we see the Bread of Life Church backing an effort to offer small loans to local entrepreneurs. As we go to press with this issue of CALLINGS, the C of S network is ripe with seeds of new life.

Marjory Zoet Bankson is Chair of the C of S Council and editor/publisher of CALLINGS



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The Church of the Saviour Council

Bread of Life • Dayspring Church • Eighth Day • Festival Church • Friends of Jesus
Jubilee Church • New Community • Seekers

Beloved Community Explores Institutional Racism

Rev. Arthur S. Brown, Jr.

In his April 4th, 1967 speech at the Riverside Church in New York City, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. identified three social evils (he called them "...the giant triplets"): materialism, militarism and racism. "When America values profit margins and property rights over human rights and conditions," he said, "these social evils are recalcitrant and intractable."

At the Church of the Savior, Gordon Cosby elaborated this theme: "There's no way to hang onto the Christian faith without taking seriously God's longing for equality for the total human family. Lots of people have heard of God being just, but they don't even think about attempting to literally embody that justice."

In an effort to increase our focus on racial justice and reconciliation, Dawn Longenecker (Director of the Discipleship Year Program) has, for several years, invited members of the C of S beloved community to engage in the yearly anti-racism training. Recently, sixty participants and volunteers gathered at Sojourners for an intensive "anti-racism analysis training" conducted by three facilitators from Roots of Justice, Inc. The facilitators helped the group unpack concepts of Internalized Racial Oppression (peculiar to people of color), and Internalized Racial Superiority (peculiar to white people).



(l to r): Gail Arnall, Keith Seat, Maybelle Bennett)

"WHEN AMERICA VALUES PROFIT MARGINS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS," HE SAID, "THESE SOCIAL EVILS ARE RECALCITRANT AND INTRACTABLE."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

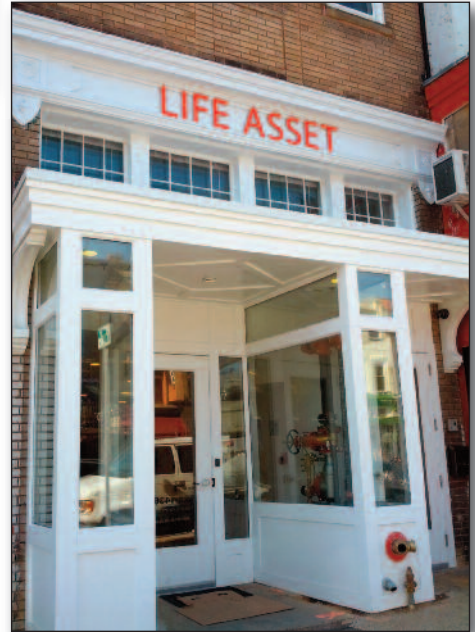


Racism was viewed as an iceberg. The visible tip was described as Oppressive Power, the large invisible middle as White Power, and far below, the base was Identity Power. Skits, personal testimonies, articles, stories, songs, group meetings, separate caucuses, and writings on chart paper on the walls, were techniques used to assist the participants to investigate and to understand the ramifications of institutionalized racism.

The participants believe the objective of eliminating racism can be accomplished by embracing and acquiring a transformed character and identity in Christ, so that white people will become accountable to people of color, and people of color will become accountable to themselves, in order to counter the message of white superiority. All the trainees were encouraged to join the white people's caucus, and the people of color caucus, which meet once a month respectively at the Festival Center. Also, on the first Friday of the month, the Damascus Road anti-racism ministry will show a movie that prepares folks for anti-racism work.

Rev. Arthur S. Brown, Jr., *On The Damascus Road Ministry, Friends of Jesus Church*

Launching the Life Asset Office, continued



Jubilee Housing transforms a homely building on 18th Street, across from Tryst, into the Life Asset office.

Markus Larsson, principal of Life Asset came to Washington from Gothenburg, Sweden in 2003, to establish the US office of a Swedish company. Following the completion of that endeavor, Markus sought to share his passion for starting businesses and helping individuals realize their potential through the founding of Life Asset. Markus is a member of Bread of Life Church, (formerly Lazarus Church), one of the small communities of Church of the Saviour. Markus is married to Maia

(Pierce) Larsson, and in January of last year, they welcomed their son, Lukas, with joy.

Bettina B. Del Sesto is an intern volunteer for Life Asset, consulting with decor and community relations. She has been involved with "Life Asset ideas coming to life" since the inception of the Spiritual Support groups in 2004 begun by Gordon Cosby and Kayla McClurg.

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



Loans are made to a group of five entrepreneurs, each wanting to start or expand his/her business. All borrowers go through an initial 6-week business development training with their group prior to receiving their first micro-loan. Borrowers meet weekly to repay their loan and continue their business training.

Markus Larsson working with a circle of local entrepreneurs..

Servant Leadership School

The Servant Leadership School in the Festival Center is pleased to announce the following courses for our Spring Term. The classes will begin Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 7pm

From Creed to Call

6 week class (April 30 - June 4) • 7pm – 9pm

led by Marjory Bankson

Have you ever wondered how Church of the Saviour fits into the sweep of church development, from the earliest gatherings recorded in Paul's letters, to the present day network of scattered churches? Where did our focus on the journey inward/journey outward come from? How is it related to the traditional creeds (statements of belief) that some churches use? This six-week class will engage you with questions of faith and practice. You can expect minimal reading, experiential exercises and spirited discussion.

Marjory Bankson is an author, artist, and a Steward of Seekers Church.

Racial Reconciliation – A Practicum

6 week class (April 30 - June 4) • 7pm – 9pm

led by Dr. Paula Mantabane and Dr. Kimberly Turner

With all of the workshops, documentaries, and training sessions on racial reconciliation and justice, the questions always looms; where do we go from here? Dr. Martin Luther King answered that question by saying we had two choices; either chaos or community. This class will be interactive and participatory with emphasis on finding practical ways to practice living as community together.

Dr. Paula Matabane is a professor at Howard University, ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, documentary film maker, and has led retreats at Dayspring Retreat Center

Dr. Kimberly Turner is the Program Manager for the Occupational Safety Health Statistics Program at the D.C. Dept. of Health and an Associate Minister at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, DC.

Please contact Joseph Deck, Executive Director of the Festival Center at (202)328-0072 or jdeck@slschool.org to register.

A Year of Challenge and Stretching

Michelle Irvin

One year ago I could not have imagined that I would be living in Washington, DC, participating in the Discipleship Year program. In addition, I had no idea that I would be spending a year working at a place like Joseph's House. Five months into the program, I can feel that I have been challenged and stretched.

As part of the program, I have been living in community with five other amazing women. We are all working with different non-profit organizations in the area. We spend our days facing challenges from teaching computer literacy to verifying community service hours to cleaning out bedside commodes. Although none of us are having the same work experiences, it's beautiful to see how we are all growing in some way.

My placement is Joseph's House, which is a hospice home for women and men dying of AIDS or cancer. My role as a volunteer can be described as a compassionate caregiver. I have learned much from performing tasks such as cleaning rooms, helping with baths, doing laundry, accompanying residents to the doctor, and making meals. However, I have learned so much more from simply being present with the residents. When a resident is close to death, we begin a practice of "keeping vigil." Essentially, we try to have someone sitting with the resident twenty-four hours a day. This is holy work. It is an altogether intimate, terrifying, humbling, and privileged experience to sit with a human who is hours away from death.

I had never experienced death with such openness before working at Joseph's House. This, and many other experiences, have challenged me, but in a way that I cannot yet process. It has been a trying five months, and I look forward to the growth that will continue as the year progresses.

The Discipleship Year Program offers year-long internships to adults over the age of 21, seeking to serve the low-income community in DC and to work for justice. Internships include direct service assignments & advocacy positions. Participants live in intentional community together; sharing meals, house nights and worship times together. They attend the Servant Leadership School, taking classes to deepen both their inward and outward journeys. Room/Board/Health Insurance are covered and members receive a monthly stipend. Retreats are built into the experience along with an Anti-Racism Training. Weekly seminars are included, designed to assist participants in integrating all they are experiencing throughout the year.

To apply, contact Dawn Longenecker – Program Director at dlongenecker@slschool.org



(L to R) Kate van der Zwaag, Candace Wells, Eliza Marth, Michelle Irvin, Rachel Nerger, Rebecca Martin

Program support comes from the network of Church of the Saviour Faith Communities and The Festival Center, our mother institution, where the Servant Leadership School is also housed. www.festivalcenter.org

Loans for Potter's House Renovation

Tim Kimfer

Individuals and churches have been very generous since our Nurturing the Next Fifty Years capital campaign kicked off in October. As of this date, we have received \$250,000 in gifts and firm pledges! Additionally, we anticipate receiving a significant foundation grant in April that would further supplement this amount. Thank you for your faithful support – we are overwhelmed by your love for The Potter's House and excitement for its next chapter.

We are putting the final touches on our renovation plans and intend to begin demolition in March to be ready for a late summer opening. We anticipate that the total project costs will be around \$750,000. This amount is higher than we initially expected, due largely to the extensive mechanical and electrical repairs that are needed. With the exception of the rear addition, the building has not received a major update since 1960 – and it shows. Our renovation aims not only to restore the building to the beauty with

which it was founded but also increase its functionality for churches, community groups, and the general public. We believe this investment is critical to any sustainable future for The Potter's House.

We are now at the point of inviting people who know and love The Potter's House to consider making loans to help fund our renovation and larger renewal efforts. We need to secure \$500,000 in loan commitments over the next eight weeks in order to move forward as planned. This community financing approach is a time-honored Church of the Saviour tradition. It has enabled our churches and ministries to avoid more costly bank loans as well as welcome the wider community's involvement.

If you are willing to make a loan, at 0-3%, for a period of 3 to 10 years, please contact Transition Manager, Tim Kumfer, at 202.232.5483 or email me at: tim@pottershousedc.org.

Dayspring Welcomes Gardeners

by Chris Grataski and Jean Brown

In mid-January, Dayspring welcomed two new residents to the land. Grace Singletary and Ben Patterson have re-located to Dayspring from Lynchburg, VA to commence the first stages of our much-anticipated permaculture project. Together they will be establishing the 1-2 acre garden over the course of 2014, taking management responsibilities for production as it develops into an active garden.

Ben Patterson is a musician from Lynchburg, Virginia holding a Bachelor's degree in English and Philosophy. His interest in permaculture began four years ago when he worked on a biointensive market garden in central Virginia. Now that he's moved to Dayspring, he's excited to deepen his relationship with the land, and is looking forward to the rhythms of work and rest that farming affords, uniting mind and body in a holistic approach to life and wellness.



Ben Patterson, Embden, Grace Singletary and Jean Brown

Grace Singletary was drawn to the discipline of permaculture by its vision for the flourishing of the earth and its people. She comes to Dayspring seeking to immerse herself in the work of biointensive gardening and regenerative land-use practices. With a Master's degree in Biblical Studies, her primary interest is in working at the intersection of social justice and ecology, and she's excited about the potential for the gardens at Dayspring to be a place where these commitments can take root.



Grace Singletary, Embden, Ben Patterson and Gale Quist

Since their re-location, Grace and Ben have been spending the short winter days getting to know the landscape and ecological dynamics of various sites being considered for the garden. They've also begun acquiring materials, testing soils, examining deer behavior, measuring solar aspect, researching plant species and cultivars, working up various management protocols, and exploring the region's sustainable food movement. Perhaps more importantly, however, they've been giving themselves to the work of contemplation, believing that truly regenerative land-use begins in stillness and observation. Rather than the rushed, impulsive, and rote work of industrial agriculture, the permaculture team at Dayspring is committed to a kind of "sacred farming" where the human community works with, rather than against, the patterns and inclinations of the landscape.

Learn more at facebook.com/Dayspring-PermacultureGarden

Earth Celebration

Dayspring

Sunday, June 1, 2014

**Arrive anytime after 1:00 pm,
Celebratory worship at 5:00 pm**

For those of us in the Church of the Saviour "scattered community" of small independent churches, with a common family history and vision- Earth Celebration is a time to celebrate the common sacred ground that we share at Dayspring and community as people of God.

The day will offer communing with nature, sharing in community and celebrating with all of creation. Something for all ages and every living being.

For more information, see dayspringchurchmd.org or call Margie Lance 301-648-4879.



Special Events

March 25 (Tuesday) . . Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat Lodge, 11301 Neelsville Church Road, Germantown MD. 10-2pm. No charge. Bring your lunch.

March 28-30. . . "Opening to the Divine Through Sound and Silence," a week-end of chant and body prayer led by Scott Robinson, member of the Third Order of St. Francis. \$200. Register at: Dayspringretreat.org.

March 29. . . Jewelry-making at New Community ArtSpace, 614 S St NW. 10-3pm. More information at www.artspacedc.org.

"Solidarity," photography exhibit by Dzifa at New Community ArtSpace until April 18.

April 9 (Wednesday) . . Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat Lodge. 10-2pm. No charge. Bring your lunch.

April 11 . . . Launch of Life Asset Office. 11:00 AM -3:00 PM on Friday, April 11th at 2448 18th Street in the heart of Adams Morgan.

April 11 . . . Eric Byrd, Lea Gilmore and Phil Wiggins perform at Carroll Café, the Second Friday coffeehouse at Seekers Church, 276 Carroll St. NW, Wash DC. 7:30pm. \$16 advance; \$20 at the door. See www.CarrollCafe.org

April 25-27 . . ."Second Acts: Igniting Prophetic Forms of Church."

Conference sponsored by Becoming Church at the Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Road NW, Wash DC. \$250. Register at www.becomingchurch.org.

May 9 . . .Carroll Café - Bob Zents and Magpie, with Karen Mohr as the opening performer. Begins at 7:30 Seekers Church

May 13 (Tuesday) . . . Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat Lodge. 10-2pm. No charge. Bring lunch.

May 16 . . . Launch of Jesse Palidofsky's new cd, "Dancing Toward the Light." Carroll Café, 7:30pm, Seekers Church.

June 1 . . . Earth Celebration at Dayspring Farm and Wellspring Center. All members of the C of S community are invited for a day of play, exploration, and worship together. 1-6pm.



Photo by Peter Bankson