

# Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

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## The Birth of Reunion

By Kevin Fomalont

As a new participant in the Church of the Saviour community, I have watched as more than a year of careful discernment culminated in the creation of Reunion. Leaders from the community, including Rebecca Stelle, Larry Watson, Enrique Brown, Barbara Moore, Tom Corcoran, Peter Clamp, Julie Petersmeyer, Ali Kirnon, Sal Corbin, and Courtney Stewart felt called to create a non-profit organization dedicated to combating the catastrophe of mass incarceration. The personal experiences of those who have dealt with the criminal justice system in Washington, and the awareness that the United States imprisons more of its own citizens than any country in the world, have driven the group to expand their work of reconciling returning citizens with the larger society.

The reconciliation began with weekly freedom circles, conducted both inside and outside of the prison system. The freedom circle is a one-hour meeting where all participants are encouraged to take turns sharing their personal thoughts and experiences, often with a spiritual dimension. I attend the Grace freedom circle on Thursday evenings, where I have shared and listened as participants speak about their struggles and successes. Cross-talk is forbidden so that each participant knows that his or her thoughts will not be rejected. Through this personal sharing, our weaknesses are exposed and we come to know each other quickly, all a part of the process of building authentic community.

Since Jesus has taught us that humans cannot survive on bread alone, Reunion understands that returning citizens need more than housing and employment to succeed.

The authentic community opens up the possibility to encourage, to admonish, and to reconcile. Community requires commitment, and reconciliation can only occur if we are willing to be with each other and depend on each other.

But Reunion also understands mass incarceration as a political problem, a legacy of the incomplete success of social movements led by the religious left. Reunion invites those who have been personally affected by mass incarceration to take leadership to introduce alternate models of criminal justice and to change the conditions that created the crisis of mass incarceration.

Reunion's first breakfast on October 27 gathered interested members of the community to share their experiences with mass incarceration and their thoughts on the healing

process. While there were over 150 in attendance and more than \$22,000 raised, it was the spirit of the gathering that provided the initial momentum to reach Reunion's goal of 50 freedom circles. To join Reunion in its goal to bring together those of different faiths, races, and economic backgrounds to end mass incarceration, please come to one of the freedom circles. The schedule can be found on our website: <https://sites.google.com/site/reunionwwcw/> When you come to a freedom circle, you will be welcomed.

*Kevin is on the Steering Committee of Reunion, a member of the Grace Freedom Circle, and is also a student in Shepherds Training at the School of Christian Living for the Church of Christ, Right Now.*



# Editor's Corner | Differing Gifts



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*Callings*

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

People often ask me, "What is Church of the Saviour like now?" My answer usually includes the different gifts that God has planted in each community, making each church a unique member of this C of S family. Certainly Gordon's legacy was that each community would be defined by its mission, but we are also defined by a shared respect for the inner work of prayer, journaling, spiritual direction, silent retreat and making a yearly recommitment. That gives us a rich mix of inner and outer work which defines each separate church in the C of S family.

At a recent Ecumenical Council meeting, each community representative identified what we do best, and I thought you might be interested in how we self-identify today:

**Bread of Life:** working with issues of faith and money;

**Dayspring Church:** hospitality – retreats, conferences, earth ministry, children's nature ministry;

**Eighth Day:** racial reconciliation and transitioning with creative solutions;

**Festival Church:** pastoring each other;

**Friends of Jesus:** racial reconciliation and working to apply Jesus' message to our everyday lives;

**Jubilee:** applying scriptures to everyday life with the mentally challenged;

**New Community:** ministry to children (after-school programs, interactive plays and leading teens);

**Seekers:** being church (creative worship, School of Christian Living and shared leadership).

**Dayspring News:** Because these eight churches own the Dayspring property together, the Council is charged with making important decisions there. Last January, after extensive preparation with maps and explanations by property stewards from Dayspring Church, the Council approved putting two portions of the wooded land into a Forest Easement with Montgomery County. That will protect the watershed from development along two sides of the property and bring much-needed revenue to Dayspring for maintenance of current buildings and roads. Those documents have now been signed and submitted to the county. The land is being "posted" now, so you will be able to see what is being preserved. No fences will be added and current trails will be maintained, so you can still enjoy the woods and streams.

**CALLINGS:** In each issue of CALLINGS, we try to feature one of the church communities and at least one of the independent missions that have grown out of Church of the Saviour. In this issue, Reunion, forming to further support for post-incarceration citizens. Seekers Church is once again sponsoring the Bokamoso group from South Africa. The centerfold article comes from Seattle, Washington, where Killian Noe continues to shape the Recovery Café, which combines the hospitality of the Potter's House with Killian's 12-step experience at Lazarus House. And we have a report on the renewed Potter's House. If you'd like to contribute news of a C of S mission or ministry that you are involved with, deadlines for the upcoming year are: **Feb 29; May 31; August 31 and November 30.**

Blessings for your Advent Season,  
Marjory

*Marjory Bankson is Editor of CALLINGS and chair of the Church of the Saviour Council.*

## The Church of the Saviour Council

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



# Bokamoso Comes Again

By Peter Bankson

Every year since 2002, 12 students from the Bokamoso Youth Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa, have come to Washington, DC, for a month of fund-raising performances and leadership development. Initiated by Roy Barber, a member of Seekers Church and teacher (now retired) at St. Andrews Episcopal School, the performances feature theatrical plays and vignettes based directly on the life experiences of the performers. Their joyful music and South African harmonies are truly inspiring.

Midway through their visit, Seekers sponsors a Career Workshop for the Bokamoso visitors. With one-to-one mentors, they identify a dream and a path to get there, create resumes, and visit worksites related to their field of interest. This year, those worksite visits include child psychology, law, fire fighting, homeopathy, social work, travel agent, music, theater and nature conservation.

Fund-raising for the scholarship program benefits about 50 other students at the Bokamoso Youth Centre for some kind of post-high school education. The Bokamoso Dream Brunch, held at St. Andrews School in Potomac on Saturday, January 23, is the main source of funding for the scholarship program.

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## Special Dates

**January 18..... InterPlay at Seekers, 1-4pm**

**January 23..... Dream Brunch at St. Andrews School**

**January 24..... Sunday worship at Seekers, 10am  
Worksite visits, Jan 26 & 28**

**Jan 25 ..... Blue Monday Blues at Westminster  
Church, Wash DC**

**Feb 5 and 6 .... Marvin Center, Geo Wash University**

The Bokamoso students and their staff leaders spend a final week at George Washington University, in the theater program chaired by Leslie Jacobsen. They attend classes and interact with GW students, working toward a final presentation at the Marvin Center on February 5 and 6. That's the place to go for the joyful and inspiring finale of their visit to the U.S.

*Peter Bankson is a Steward at Seekers and a mentor in the Bokamoso Career Development program*

# When Spaces Speak - The Recovery Café

By Kate Willette

For the last year or so I've been spending a few hours a week inside a beautiful old one-story building that sits in the heart of Seattle's current muscular development zone. The building is home to an organization known as the Recovery Café. Outside its doors the scene is tower cranes, construction-blocked sidewalks, traffic, and roaring equipment. Everywhere you look there are young tech workers rushing past, eyes on their smart phones, corporate badges flapping with every step.

Most of them don't see the entry to the Café – a wide red door in the old brick wall, framed and nearly hidden by lush wisteria. I find myself wanting to put a hand on their arms and point them toward this secret little world.

**I was kind of expecting a rundown organization that was small and didn't have a lot of resources. I was blown away when I walked in.**

**Victor, Member of the Recovery Café**

Inside, it's almost magical. This is a space that says: "Oh, good, you're here! We've been waiting for you. We're so glad you made it." It's not just that the room is bright and open, with big windows, high ceilings and solid warm wooden beams. It's not just that the staff and volunteers are so quick to laugh or listen. It's not just that the food – prepared twice a day by staff and members working together – is delicious, plentiful and fresh. It's not the rich autumn colors of the walls, or the art on those walls, or the enormous framed portraits of heroes like Dr. King and Gandhi.

What makes the Recovery Café so extraordinary is the thought behind all that. It's the fact that someone took so much care to build a space for forgotten people that is this intimately and personally loving. It's the reality that someone has taken seriously the radical idea



that each human is precious and deserving. To be in the Café is to breathe, taste, and see that thought, and finally to have it become part of your being. Each human is precious. Each human is deserving. That's the message this building preaches loudly and passionately – without ever saying a word.

## 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 Conference Center



We're here with a radically different message . . . your life matters and we won't be the community or the city or the world that we could be without you. We need you. It's not just that you're "okay," it's not just that we care about you because we're so good, it's that you bring a piece to the whole that we wouldn't have without you.

Killian Noe



Beauty and warmth, it says, aren't just for people who can afford to buy them. Thoughtful and tasteful surroundings are just as soothing to lost, marginalized men and women as they are to those with resources to visit a spa.

**It had the actual Café feel . . . it was a really pleasant place to be in when my apartment was very hot. It was for me a nook.**

**Esmeralda, Member of Recovery Café**

Of course, a great deal of serious and difficult work gets done in this building, too. Members learn to confront themselves bravely and to hold one another accountable. Volunteers deliver thousands of hours doing everything from befriending the members to leading writing classes to filing paperwork. People make art in clay and paint and language. They do yoga; they go on city hikes; they have open mike night parties. Day in and day out, the meal preparation team finds sources of fresh, healthy food and turns it into first-class menus. Behind the scenes, the staff runs an endless marathon to expand its financial base of support. They work hard at creating connections that link the Café to a network of organizations in the city and throughout the state of Washington. And they smile a lot, especially when Killian Noe is in the room.

Killian is the person whose vision created the Café and whose deep reservoir of energy and warmth helps keep it thriving. She takes her work very seriously and herself not seriously at all; the Café, she says, is just one of lots and lots of models that could change the world. But it's one that she knows is effective, because it manifests what is for her a core truth.

That's really the secret behind the door that opens into the Café. A different sort of world – one in which every single person is cherished and needed – is possible.



*Kate Willette is a freelance writer in Seattle WA. She's authored a series of profiles of Recovery Cafe members and volunteers, the latest of which is here.*





# Renewal at The Potter's House

By Dixcy Bosley-Smith

“The heart of The Potter's House is the conversation,” says Tim Kumfer, General Manager. In the first six months, over seventy community events were held reflecting core values of solidarity, economic justice, interfaith spirituality and care for the earth. These gatherings were weekly discussion tables, larger author events, and live music in the cafe. Along with weekly Christian worship services in the community space, members of other faith traditions have found The Potter's House as a place of welcome for fast breaking of Ramadan, Buddhist meditation or Jewish ceremonial rites. The Potter's House with all its aesthetic improvements, is still the soulful place we have known it to be.

Now some of the C of S family may be surprised to see so many unfamiliar faces in “their” Potter's House. Since the dramatic renovation, the café has drawn a younger crowd of people who live or work in Adams Morgan. With Chef Chris' healthier menu and specialty direct trade coffees, the café is on the path to sustainability while still being a not-for-profit coffeehouse and community center. This concept with such features as “pay it forward” or “pay what you can” meals are not typical of most businesses and present our new customer base with both intrigue and curiosity. Newcomers inquire about the church history, neighborhood ministries, the structural values and the unique alternative way of being within a ever changing city.

Hospitality to those on the margins has been a source of interest, appreciation from customers and remains a strong commitment



from staff. Seating is sometimes hard to find as many still find the walls of the Potter's House to be a place of comfort while they work, read or study. Our hope is to welcome all so the staff and board are exploring creative ways to be both cyber-cafe and still have space for friendship and conversation.

Art, books and specially crafted gifts are plentiful for the holidays. You will find a unique collection of local artists' work. Brennan Baker, Bookstore Manager, encourages folks to spread the word about author events for all ages, toddler story time to adult groups on end of life care. Many of the older C of S books written by members of our wider community remain appealing for those who hunger to understand what alternative Christian community can be like. The photo history collection along the brick wall helps tell the sacred story of how The Potter's House has been and still is more than just a cafe with really good coffee. It is OUR Potter's House, the place where ordinary people meet and together really extraordinary things happen.

Recently featured in the Washington Post, subtitled “In Adams Morgan, a café renews its spirit,” the Potter's House was described as a good place to meet a cross-section of people. Tim said, “To continue to be here, we have to reconnect to the wider world and our neighbors, who are changing. But this way, we can stay true to our values.”

*Dixcy Bosley-Smith is on the Potter's House Board and a member of the 8th Day Community.*



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## SACRED SPACE

**"Sacred Space,"** offered by the New Creation Mission Group of the 8th Day Faith community, has some similarities to the Taizé service. We sing, using songs and chants that one can sing over and over. And, there is silent meditation. Our particular group does not use musical instruments, except the drum.

We sing songs, chants and kirtan that are mostly from the Christian tradition, and also include some that aren't. We have a spoken introduction at the beginning, and sharing at the end, and in between we don't use words; instead we have a sheet to refer to, for the words to songs and the format.

Please join us, and pass it along to those who may be interested.

**What:** Sacred Space, a celebration of song, chant and silent meditation

**When:** Each 2nd Sunday, 5:30-6:30pm

**Where:** Potter's House Community Space (rear of Potter's House, past the cafe)  
1658 Columbia Road NW, Washington DC 20009



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## Special Events

**Jan 8 "Bumper Jacksons" at Carroll Café,** the 2nd Friday Coffee-house at Seekers Church. Traditional jazz and pre-war country music. For tickets, go to [carrollcafe.com](http://carrollcafe.com).

**Feb 10 Ash Wednesday Quiet Day at DaySpring Retreat Center,** 10 am - 2 pm. No charge. Bring your own lunch

**Feb 12 "Victoria Vox and the Unified Jazz Ensemble,"** at Carroll Café. Tickets at [carrollcafe.com](http://carrollcafe.com).

**Feb 12-14 "Lent – the Spirituality of the Season."** Weekend retreat at Dayspring. \$210. To register: [dayspringretreat.org](http://dayspringretreat.org).

**March 11 "Tret Fure, a CD release concert"** at Carroll Café. Tickets at [carrollcafe.com](http://carrollcafe.com).

**March 12-14 "Dying to Self, We Live."** Weekend retreat at Dayspring. \$210. To register: [dayspringretreat.org](http://dayspringretreat.org).

**March 18 Book party** at the Potter's House for *"Stalking the Spirit"* by Marjory Bankson, and *"Calling On God,"* by Peter Bankson and Deborah Sokolove. .

Photo by Peter Bankson

