

Callings

in Church of the Saviour

Vol 14, Issue 4 • Winter 2025

The Spirit Is Rising at Wellspring

Prepared by Bill Samuel in collaboration with the Wellspring Staff and Committee

Wellspring Conference Center and Dayspring Church are pleased to announce that staffing is in place following the departure of former Administrator/Host Adam Greene. Catalina Conneally-Salazar and Jean Brown came forward from within the Dayspring community to serve as the team handling hosting, administration, planning, and programming, initially for an interim year from August 2025 through August 2026. This year is intended to be a time to discern the longer-term call of Wellspring. Each will work half-time.

Both Catalina and Jean have worked at Wellspring in the past. They join continuing members of the larger Wellspring team: Dalma Moussa, who has been providing cleaning and kitchen help for several years, and Anne Richard, who became our chef this spring. We did not advertise for any of these positions. These women of faith were all provided through the grace of God. Support and accountability for staff is provided by the Wellspring Committee, consisting of Dayspring Church core members Nona Beth Cresswell, Jen Goode, Bill Samuel, and Margaret Schoap.

Below, each member of the Wellspring staff team provides some of her background and something about why she loves Wellspring and all of Dayspring.

Catalina – I am originally from Los Angeles and have lived in Maryland and at Dayspring for the last 7 years, where I was a co-host at Overlook Retreat. I bring my skills as an educator, chaplain, and spiritual advisor to this position. In my cross-country travels, I have attended retreats all over the United States and consequently have many ideas to continue to make Wellspring a welcoming place for all. I am thrilled to begin this new ministry of hospitality and spiritual deepening and look forward, along with the

Wellspring Team, to serving the CofS churches and wider community by providing this sacred space for you to rest and renew among the trees, trails, vistas, wildlife, ponds, and creeks. My life motto is: Grace Happens! (All the time, what is lacking is awareness!)

Jean – As this new season unfolds, I am happy to be serving with Catalina as Co-host of the Wellspring Conference Center. After attending a Church of the Saviour “Come and See” event in 2007, I left my pastorate at a Presbyterian Church in SW Virginia, saying yes to a Discipleship Year in DC. That yes has led to many others with CofS ministries, including Joseph’s House, Potter’s House, and Dayspring. I look forward to living into this new chapter of Call, following the Spirit to welcome in new, old, and those in between. Hope to see you on the Land and around the Well!

Dalma - I was born in Sudan. Before coming to Dayspring in 2015, I lived in Chad for 10 years. I was the water carrier for my family. Every day, early in the morning, I used to walk an hour to get water and then carry it on my head back home. I came to the U.S. in 2015. I live at Dayspring with my husband, 4 children, and 4 other members of my



L to R: Anne, Dalma, Catalina & Jean

See more on page 3

Editor's Corner | Our Confession of Faith



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Confession is a common word among church-folk and yet we rarely consider its double meaning. My fat red dictionary says that confession means **acknowledgment**, as in making a statement of faith or naming a framework of values that lead to action. Of course, confession also means admitting wrongdoing, as in confessing one's guilt or sin.

Too often, we focus on guilt and not on a positive statement of faith. For people who grew up in churches with an emphasis on sin and salvation, confession can become so habitual that it undermines self-confidence and leads to depression, but for people who focus on God's call and gifts for ministry in daily life, as we do in the sister communities of Church of the Saviour, confession is more often a sign of newness, of Spirit's presence or guidance.

In that tradition, the sister communities of Church of the Saviour have approved a **Confession of Faith** which you will find on page 7. We hope you will share it with others as a way to call forth courage and care among all who hunger for hope these days. For us, confession proclaims love for our neighbors and justice for all. And in this season of Advent, our confession of faith heralds a light in the darkness of violence and persecution in our own country.

In another kind of Advent confession, Gayle Boss has created a children's version of her beautiful book, **All Creation Waits**, which can be ordered directly from Paraclete Press. Gayle and Cheryl Hellner are well-known in CoS circles for their long-ago teamwork on the Potters House Press in which they combined extraordinary photography with in-depth reporting on a single issue. Now each one has created a stirring "confession of faith" in the natural world that captures my own sense of awe and wonder at the intricacy of God's creation. We featured Cheryl's upcoming book, **Sing Up the Earth**, in our fall issue of CALLINGS and that will be available from Paraclete Press in early February.

For now, I want to thank all of you who have supported CALLINGS with your words of encouragement and financial support. We have money in the bank for another year and your stories of call and commitment are always welcome, even if space does not permit publication.

Please keep Church of the Saviour in your prayers and join us in making a public confession of faith that will help to keep hope alive for a more inclusive and caring world.

Marjory

Marjory Bankson
Editor of InwardOutward.org and Callings
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The Church of the Saviour is an ecumenical Christian community, made up of seven small churches, rooted in the radically inclusive life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We believe that in our diversity, each of us is an image-bearer of God, equally valued and loved. We welcome all individuals to join in the life of worship, fellowship and ministry in any of our small faith communities. All of us have an essential role in bringing God's love, justice and mercy to our world.

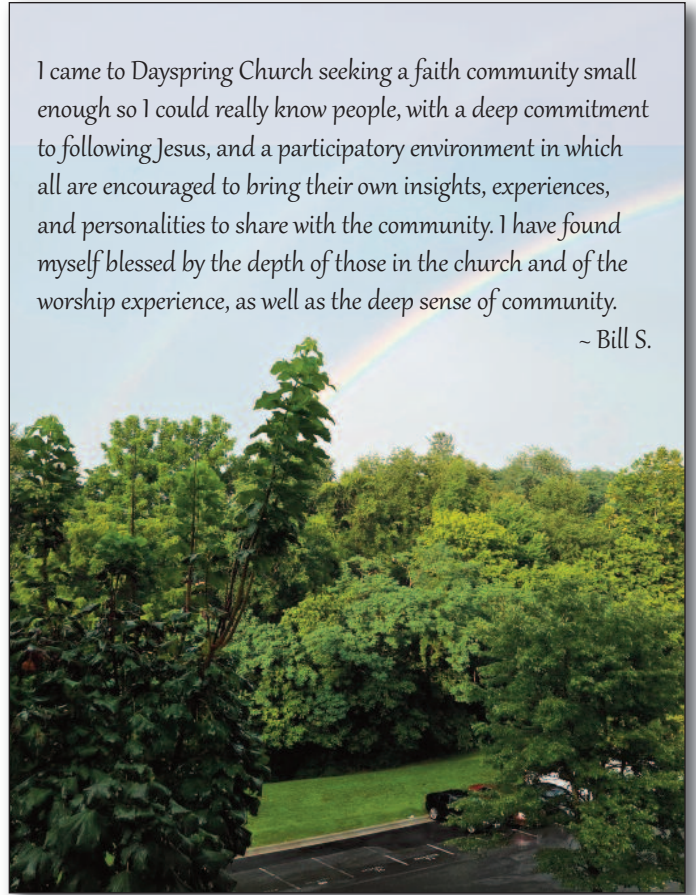
husband's family. I have been a cook and cleaner at Wellspring for 8 years. I love Dayspring. They have helped my family so much. Janet Hudson taught me everything about cooking and cleaning for Wellspring. I like working here. I like to talk to the people who come and to practice my English. I am happy when people love the food we make.

Anne – I joyfully profess Jesus Christ as my Savior. I am originally from the beautiful safari country of Kenya and a proud mother of four wonderful children—a daughter and three sons. I have been living and working in the U.S. for 18 years, carrying with me the rich traditions and flavors of my homeland. Cooking runs deep in my family, and my greatest inspiration was my mother, who could turn the simplest ingredients into gourmet meals that amazed everyone. She taught my four sisters and me the most important ingredient in any dish is the love and care you put into it. I cater under the name She-Ka-More, inspired by the Swahili greeting Shikamoo—a warm, respectful salutation that conveys love, care, and kindness. As you enjoy your meals, I hope you will also taste the warmth and affection that go into every dish. When I'm not cooking, I'm pursuing my other passion as an early childhood educator, teaching four-year-olds. I cherish their sense of wonder, curiosity, and adventure.

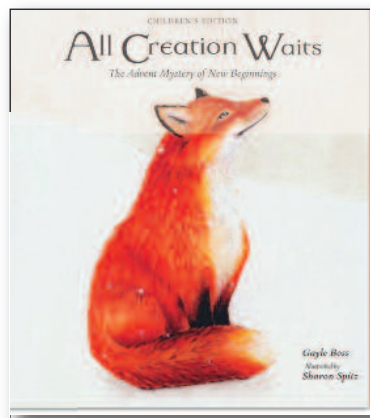
Wellspring would be glad to host your retreat or other gathering. We also welcome your insights and ideas about programs we could offer and any other comments. You can reach the Wellspring Team at wellspringconferencecenter@gmail.com or 301-515-9120. We hope to see you at Wellspring!

I came to Dayspring Church seeking a faith community small enough so I could really know people, with a deep commitment to following Jesus, and a participatory environment in which all are encouraged to bring their own insights, experiences, and personalities to share with the community. I have found myself blessed by the depth of those in the church and of the worship experience, as well as the deep sense of community.

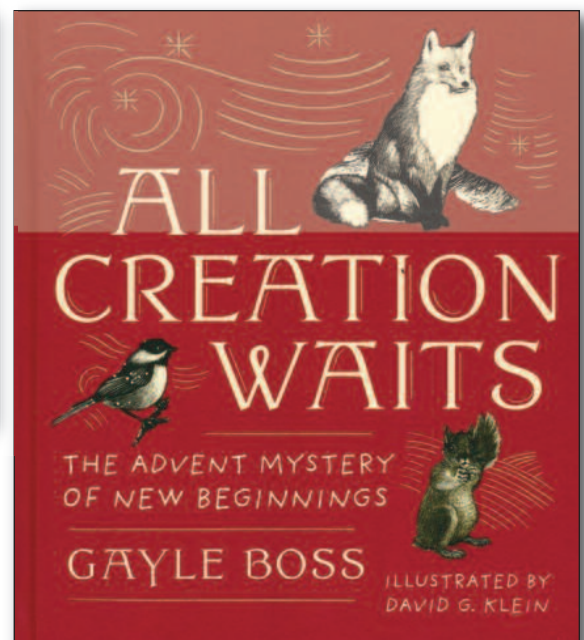
~ Bill S.



NEW FOR ADVENT



All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings by Gayle Boss, and illustrator, David G. Klein, readers will discover the ancient wisdom of Advent as it is reflected in the natural world. Includes 25 daily readings featuring woodcut illustrations from award-winning artist David Klein. This updated edition includes a new introduction and afterword. Hardcover, 192 pages. Ages 8 years and older. Order directly from Paraclete Press.



Weaving Threads of Healing for Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

By Kolya Braun-Greiner

Weaving the threads of healing for reparations and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples is a long and creative process. At Seekers Church we have learned some deep truths and hard lessons about becoming allies in this social justice ministry.

Our journey of gathering threads began when Lucy Slater and I, as members of Earth & Spirit Mission Group and the Racial and Ethnic Justice Ministry Team, felt called to co-teach a class to introduce people to the deep and painful history of the Doctrine of Discovery as well as how it is still very actively implemented today.

In mid-winter 2024, we offered a class in Seekers School for Christian Growth based upon the book, *The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery*, by Tiwa and Mennonite author, Sarah Augustine, who is also the founder of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery (CDDD).

Doctrine of Discovery

We learned the painful history that this Doctrine originated with the Christian church under the authority of Pope Nicholas V, who issued the Doctrine in 1455, by which lands were deemed “empty,” Terra nullius, if occupied by people who were not Christian, and Christian colonizers were authorized:

to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery...

Sarah Augustine asks this poignant and prophetic question: How do we respond to such a doctrine, moving towards reconciliation? What does repentance look like?

Our class brought it fully into the present time, shedding light on how indigenous lands are still being occupied and stolen today by extractive industries (mining, logging, fossil fuels). We also connected the class learnings with how we might be advocates for



Dr. Wendsler Nosie

current struggles of Indigenous People for land rights, religious freedom and respect for their culture. Our class inspired the following actions, each of them being a thread woven into a growing fabric of healing and solidarity:

- Together with Earth & Spirit mission group, the Racial and Ethnic Justice Ministry Team at Seekers joined the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery and its Repair Network of faith communities committed to solidarity with Indigenous People. To express our support, \$2000 was designated from our Domestic Giving, for their Rematriation Fund, to support “landback” efforts with Indigenous Peoples.
- Several members of Seekers Church attended two events at Well-

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 • Caroll Café • Christ House • Columbia Road Health Service • Cornelius Corps • Cornerstone • Dayspring Earth Ministry • Dayspring Retreat Center • Dunamis Peace Institute • Earthen Hands at Dayspring • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Good Shepherd Ministries • Hope and a Home • Institute of Radical Reconciliation • Inward/outward • Joseph's House • Jubilee Housing • Jubilee Jobs • Jubilee JumpStart • Kairos House • L'Arche • Liberation School • Life Asset Credit Union • Life Pathways • Manna, Inc. • New Community ArtSpace • New Community for Children • O.N.E.DC • Overlook Retreat House • Potter's House • Recovery Café DC • Samaritan Inns • Sarah's Circle • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Wellspring Conference Center



Lucy Slater, Sallie Holmes, Kolya Braun-Greiner

spring Conference Center, a Blanket Ceremony in April and “Mixing of the Waters,” in Nov. 2024. The Blanket Ceremony included a group role-play in which history was inverted where indigenous folks framed a narrative of colonization. Lucy reported that, “This experience helped me feel the trauma and sorrow of indigenous peoples in a new embodied and visceral way, and it was a blessing to be able to collectively share our experiences and new and old understandings with each other.” The latter event brought Indigenous Peoples from all over the Americas together with local faith representatives to better understand each others’ histories. We were invited to plan how to work with each other for decolonization through sharing of offerings and needs for future collaborations.

- Fall 2024: Through the Repair Network, we learned that a delegation from Apache Stronghold was coming from AZ to petition the Supreme Court to hear their case to save Oak Flat, sacred land of the Apache, from a gigantic copper mine that would be two miles wide and 1,000 feet deep.

We attended the worship hosted by Festival Church and Eighth Day communities accompanied by members of the Community House Church in DC (also members of the Repair Network). Seekers Church members volunteered to serve food to the delegation.

We heard Dr. Wensler Nosie, spiritual leader of Apache Stronghold, speak about the “spiritual battle” for Earth which is sacred, a battle for a way of life that is in harmony with Earth rather than harming the only home we have. The next day, Sept. 11, 2024, we attended a multifaith prayer vigil in front of the Supreme Court when a petition to hear their case was submitted. The Rev. William Barber summed up their case for religious freedom: Destroying Oak Flat would be like giving a mining company permission to destroy the National Cathedral.”

- In March 2025, Lucy and I met with Araf Apache, Principal Emissary for the Piscataway Indian Nation (PIN) from whom we learned that one of their priorities was to develop a Community Cultural Center that would offer an intergenerational space for learning and sharing their cultural traditions and values. At our request, Seekers designated funds (\$2000) to the PIN to support

that priority as an expression of our solidarity with them. Then in June, we were invited to join Adam Greene, the new Emissary with PIN, to meet (virtually) with Araf Apache and Mark Tayac (the 29th generation chief) of the PIN who affirmed our new “friendship.”

- And in August, another thread woven into this tapestry of actions, Seekers hosted an educational event at Seekers Church about Saving Oak Flat with Kirstin and Merwyn De Mello, where we learned more about the spiritual significance of Oak Flat, where 800 year old Oak trees live and rites of passage ceremonies have been held for generations. This fight to preserve that sacred space for future generations has been going on for a long time and will continue!

Our most recent expression of solidarity was when three members of our congregation attended a Defend the Holy speaking event at Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, the last stop of the nationwide tour Dr. Wensler Nosie gave on Sept. 22. Both Emissarys, Apache and Adam Greene, were present to welcome him with an interfaith gathering of religious leaders.

Earth as Sacred

At that gathering, Dr. Wensler Nosie called all people of faith to proclaim their own tradition which affirms that Earth is sacred. We continue to pray and advocate for their sacred land to be saved from desecration as it works through the court system.

As a closing blessing of the August event, this prayer was offered to continue weaving a fabric of healing relationships with Indigenous People and our Dear Mother Earth, God’s Creation:

*Teach us the power of connection to land, as a holy space to commune with God, as a path of healing away from the distortions and destruction of colonization, and as a guide to where we belong within the broader community of all living things. Reweave us into the fabric of the ecosystems in which we live, so we can claim our interconnectedness with all creation.**

May it be so, through all Divine power in the universe.

Part of Litany for Oak Flat; Written by Joanna Lawrence Shenk and Sarah Herrera from First Mennonite Church of San Francisco.

CoS COUNCIL CHAIR | KATE LASSO

Healing our Shared Culture



Thirty years ago, while working with a Latin American human rights organization, I learned how culture (our shared beliefs, values, and behaviors) can carry both the seeds of oppression and the hope for freedom. Since then, I have walked a spiritual path asking how I might help heal culture. Through the Church of the Saviour, I embraced a

Christianity committed to be an embodied expression of God's culture – God's beliefs, values and way of being. I came to understand that the invitation to discipleship is to visibly live those values: to engage in peaceful resistance to oppression and to work for justice for the poor and marginalized. This is a costly grace, in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one that can demand even more from us in the face of entrenched injustice.

Around that time, I completed my doctoral research on Chile's political economy with a focus on the Pinochet dictatorship. Under that regime, the Catholic Church, through the Vicaría de Solidaridad,

became Chile's most influential defender of human dignity. Because of its moral authority, it withstood government threats and offered a prophetic witness to injustice. In stark contrast, senior Catholic leaders in neighboring Argentina largely supported their own dictatorship. There, resistance emerged not from influential institutions, but from grieving families. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, searching for their disappeared children and grandchildren, found one another and stepped into public life as leaders of nonviolent resistance to an oppressive regime. With nothing left to lose, they became their nation's call to justice, visible to all.

On November 9, 2025, the sister communities of the Church of the Saviour affirmed the Confession of Faith included in this issue of Callings. As an expression of our core beliefs and commitments as followers of Christ, it is a public declaration of our intention to be faithful to God and to encourage others to do the same. For me, affirming this confession is one way I can reaffirm my desire for God to lead me on the journey that I began thirty years ago, to contribute to the healing our shared culture.

–Kate Lasso

confessingourfaith@gmail.com

New Offerings at Dayspring's Overlook House

By Trish Stefanik

The Nest Art Studio is the expression of a longtime dream to host monthly retreat days where art is engaged as a spiritual practice of presence, exploration, and fun. What has motivated me to begin now, is a compelling urge to create in response to so much destruction, *to go deeper* in relationship to Spirit as the ground of our being is shaken, and *to provide more space for respite and life-giving connection* when so much is frenzied and being fractured.

The Painted Prayer Garden emerged as I sought to make art as a spiritual practice along with connecting to the natural world where I find solace and restoration. The garden of living stones is based on an ancient Celtic tri-spiral design. It represents spirited flow inward and outward, the eternal transformative cycle of life, death, and resurrection, and the interconnectedness of all things as part of a sacred whole. All those who come to Overlook for a retreat or visit are **invited to paint a stone in the garden as a prayer for the world.**

On November 9, we celebrated the birth of this new venter which happened to fall on my birthday weekend, so there was cake and ice cream along with our prayerful blessings.

–Trish Stefanik is the host and guide at Overlook.



A Confession of Faith

We live in extraordinary times, when lies and distortions of truth are promoted by authorities to sow confusion and justify the exercise of authoritarian power. Such deception stands in direct opposition to God's vision for communal life.

As Christians, committed to following Jesus, we are called to be a public witness to his Way: to love God, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to seek the common good. Therefore, we confess the following truths:

1. Commandment to Love

We confess that God commands us to love with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:36–40; Mark 12:30–31). We reject the falsehood that personal comfort or communal safety can be secured through exclusion, scapegoating, or persecution of others. God's universal love embraces all creation and honors the God-given dignity of all people, no matter who they are or where they are from.

2. Love of Neighbor

We confess the truth of the Good Samaritan: Godly love is not confined by legal definitions or cultural preferences—it is universal (Luke 10:25–37). We reject the falsehood that limits our understanding of neighbor to those who look like us, talk like us, or believe what we believe. Even those we may consider our enemies are our neighbors. A peace built on persecution and marginalization is a false peace that is not sustainable without oppression. True peace begins with love—of God, of self, and of neighbor.

3. Authentic Love

We confess that Jesus calls us to embody a love that disrupts oppression, speaks truth in love, and names injustice (Luke 4:18–19; Matthew 23:23). We reject the false notion that violence or hate can ever be reconciled with Christian doctrine. We proclaim our commitment to love and nonviolence in pursuit of God's authentic peace.

4. The Cost of Love

We confess that following Jesus requires a costly love rooted in courageous faithfulness to God (Mark 8:34–35; John 15:12–13). We reject the false idea that silence or disengagement in the face of injustice is faithful. Christ calls us to visible witness—standing with the vulnerable, caring for the poor, and crossing boundaries of difference in love (Matthew 25:31–45).

5. Faithfulness to God

We confess that our first loyalty is to God, not to human authority, so that we may guard against idolatry (2 Timothy 1:13–14; Acts 5:29). We are called to embody Christ, who led through service, humility, and love (Matthew 20:25–28). We reject false claims that elevate political power, national identity, or human leadership above faithfulness to God's purposes.

The sister communities of Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC, have joined together to declare these truths as the theological foundation of our identity as a Confessing Church. We call upon others to stand with us in this Confession of Faith and to embody these truths in public witness and private life. We appeal to all who share our concern to reject the falsehoods we are witnessing in public life, resist fear, confront injustice, and act in ways that lead to peaceful unity and communal well-being in faith, hope, and love.

Church of the Saviour
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Special Events

Also see Pottershousedc.org and FestivalCenter.org for their current listings



Wednesday, December 3 | Cocoa and Carols

Festival Center, 5:30-6:30pm

Dress warmly, bring a flashlight and your holiday singing voice.

Wednesday, December 3 | Ember Day

Dayspring Retreat, 10am-4pm, \$25

Bring bag lunch. Pre-register at dayspringretreat.org.

Dec 5-7 | "Daring the Dark,"

Dayspring Retreat

Weekend retreat with Ann Dean, \$300. Dayspringretreat.org.

Wed. Dec 10 | Quiet Day

Dayspring Retreat, 10am-2pm

\$30, bag lunch. Register: dayspringretreat.org

Wed, Dec 17 | Self-guided Retreat

Dayspring Retreat, 9am-5pm

for up to 6 people, \$25: dayspringretreat.org.

Wednesdays, Jan 7 on | Earthen Hands Studio

1-5pm

Try your hand at the potter's wheel led by Rev. Jean Brown at Dayspring. For more information: earthenhandsgatherin1g.com.