

Callings

in Church of the Saviour

Vol 8, Issue 3 • Fall 2019

NEW AT THE POTTER'S HOUSE

By Lee Tivol

The Potter's House is an organization whose efforts to build relationships and foster action are more important than ever. We are in a dark time in our country. It's easy to become overwhelmed by the things that divide us. And yet I still believe that, in the words of Anne Frank, people are basically good. I believe that nothing matters more than kindness. I believe, as Glennon Doyle says, that there's no such thing as "other people's children." And I believe that when people can come together and see one another as humans first and foremost – that's when real change happens. The Potter's House is one of those rare and powerful places where that coming together takes place – and I am humbled and honored to work in service to its mission.

I grew up an Army brat, moving frequently with my family all around the country and overseas – an experience that showed me how wide the world is, taught me how to find my way in unfamiliar territory, and allowed me to get to know all kinds of people in all kinds of settings. Ours was an unusual military family for the time – my mother was a self-described hippie, my father a liberal Jew – and my parents instilled in us very early a sense of fairness and social justice. It's perhaps not surprising, then, that I found my way to anti-poverty work and activism, catalyzed by a cynical college sociology professor who asserted in class that poverty and inequality were just "part of the natural order of things in this country," and there was nothing that any of us could do about it. That wasn't okay with me. It still isn't.

My entire 25-year nonprofit career has been focused on clearing paths to financial well-being for people and communities too often left behind. Most recently, I've spent a dozen years in leadership at a national think tank. My job at The Potter's House will involve very different work – hyperlocal and public-facing – but it is also wholly aligned with the values of opportunity, community, and equity that have been the through-line of my career. I am excited to roll up my sleeves in service to this new set of opportunities and challenges.

The Potter's House's longevity is a testament to the commitment, passion, and hard work of so many people over the past 59 years, and to its central and continuing role as a gathering place for our community. As I prepare to receive the baton that Gail Arnall is so gracefully passing, I am deeply mindful of how much The Potter's House has meant to all those who have supported, sustained, led, and patronized it over nearly six decades. There is much to honor, and much to learn, from these years of experience and service.

I am also energized by the possibilities that lie ahead as The Potter's House charts its next course. There is so much powerful history and infrastructure to build on – and also, many important questions to ask. As a nonprofit social enterprise, what does The Potter's House mean to our community? How has that changed as our neighborhood has experienced gentrification and development, and how do we ensure that we remain a welcoming and inclusive place for a truly diverse community – economically, racially, socially? What critical needs is The Potter's House uniquely positioned to meet, and how can we deepen and broaden our impact? We will be exploring these questions – and many more – over the months to come.



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Editor's Corner | Down the Road Together



Why do we have so many vital elders in our midst? People who live fully and give fully of themselves? Could it be the harvest of our mission group structures? Or maybe the spiral of call to silence and service, which we know as the inward/outward journey?

Pictures from the birthdays of John Mohr (age 94) and Emmy Lu Daly (age 96) landed on my desk this month, and they made me look around our community to see others over 90 who are still contributing to our life together. Most have been with us a long time, shifting from program management to project involvement as their outward journey becomes more constrained by health and energy. Some, like Eve Tetaz, are still demonstrating and getting arrested. Others, like John and Harriette Mohr, reach out to neighbors in their retirement home. Many have continued their contemplative



inner journey as well, assisted by mission group expectations and support. I suspect we are seeing the fruits of long commitment to the inward/outward journey in community.

When my mother stopped driving to church, she dropped out of the life of her congregation. She wasn't in the hospital, so nobody came to visit. She was called periodically by "her" deacon, but the conversations were stilted, and then they stopped. She simply disappeared from view – for what turned out to be 20 years. If I hadn't phoned her regularly, and asked about her sense of call when mobility set those limits, she would not have seen her work as valuable to others. In her final months, in assisted living, she answered my query this way: "I think my call is to bring something decent to the dinner table. I watch the news and bring ONE question to change the conversation. Otherwise, they just complain about the food."



At The Potter's House, Dixcy Bosley-Smith has sponsored periodic Death Café events, to encourage open discussion about the end of life, but our elders are teaching us that there are other issues which precede our final days and they can make a huge contribution to the fullness of our life together. At Seekers, we have a new website, Down the Road*, which is geared to aging issues. Guided by Jacqie Wallen, herself a clinical and pastoral social worker, Down the Road is meant to be a resource for the wider community. While there are plenty of practical resources in our society for people who know how to hunt for them, there are not many spiritual communities which emphasize call and commitment in our later years. We hope you will be part of the conversation too.

See www.downtheroad.life OR visit seekerschurch.org and click on Down the Road.

If you'd like to see CALLINGS continue, please make a contribution by check to:

Church of the Saviour

(In Memo line put "Callings")

1640 Columbia Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20009

Marjory Bankson

Editor of CALLINGS and inwardoutward.org

Email: CALLINGSeditor@gmail.com

CALLINGS deadlines for 2019: October 31.

The Church of the Saviour Council

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

The Voice of the Spirit in the Digital Square

By Matthias Martin



As the webmaster for InwardOutward.org, it seems appropriate to reflect on the approach we've taken in the past two years, and legitimate concerns about what's next in a digital environment rife with insecurity and negativity.

We recognize that Jesus didn't avoid the public square or the Temple interior. He went into the heart of those power structures in every

town and village, and spoke his word. He held the power brokers accountable and was a regular thorn in their side, but ultimately his message was for the people. That is my motivation for Church of the Saviour to maintain a presence online, and more recently on Facebook and Twitter: to reach out to the people in those public squares.

Outreach

It was the vision of Kayla McClurg's original Inward/Outward email ministry to reach people with simple and direct devotional messages where they were. She knew it was not a substitute for in-person community, but she also knew there were people beyond our local area who wanted something more to deepen their spiritual lives. Her reflections and questions were designed to do that. The Gospel Reflection Group has tried to continue that style, although with varied voices.

I am grateful that a wiser editor than I, Marjory Bankson, is the lead content supervisor, and that this effort is supported by the Ecumenical Council and other individuals and faith communities who are digitally active. It isn't a solo enterprise and it really isn't about tooting our own horn, but pointing the people of God back to God and God's work in the world.

I am hopeful our efforts might attract people who would otherwise not be interested in "church" or folks who are looking to plug-in to one of our communities or ministries. I don't believe we've deviated from the original mission, but have grown it as thoughtfully as we could.

Today there are some 6,000 subscribers on our InwardOutward website. We've been heartened by some of the feedback we've received:

"I have enjoyed Inward/Outward for many years and appreciate the Light your page bears to all of us. Keep up the great work of Love!" -Cheryl, Indiana, via email, July 29, 2019

While we plan to continue the weekly gospel reflection and offering of daily quotes (chosen by that week's reflection writer) on email, we are also maintaining Facebook and Twitter accounts which were created during Kayla's time. Instagram is one of the most popular social media sites, however it requires regular photo posts and we don't currently have the capacity to support that.

Social Media

Social media is not a significant use of my time as Webmaster, an hour or so a week, and nothing has "gone viral" yet, but both accounts are slowly growing in followers. As I write this, Inward/Outward has nearly 1,100 followers on Facebook and nearly 400 on Twitter. When we receive positive feedback, which we do pretty regularly, it makes me feel that this effort is worthwhile. Even if a few people show up to church events or find a deeper sense of peace amid the maelstrom of digital distraction, I feel we've done God's work.

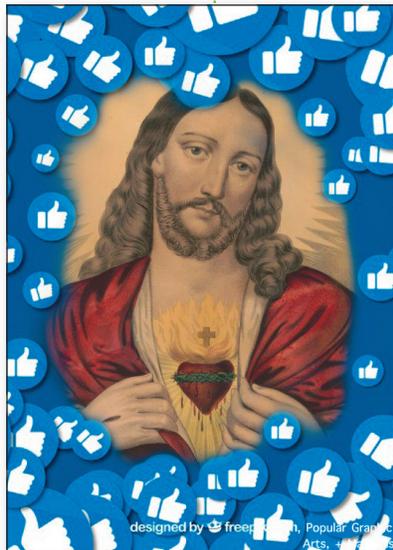
Sound criticism is taken to heart about the questionable ethics and reliability of Facebook as a corporate entity, the viability of sharing spiritual wisdom in a 280 character tweet, or general concern about the vacuum of the digital space versus the splendor of nature or the quality of in-person human contact. It's a conversation I've had many times: "How can we trust Facebook?" The truth is we can't. As a corporation, they have demonstrated many times what poor business ethics they have and that their priority is not their users but their advertisers. Shall we boycott them? I don't disparage people who choose to do so, but I am drawn back to Facebook because of one thing: the community.

The power of American tech giants is being challenged in court and now in Congress, after significant challenges in Europe. However it plays out legally, it will not change the fact that people of all types are on those platforms. I feel that if they are there, we should be, too.

Church of the Saviour has always emphasized public action that is sustained by an inward journey which is both individual and communal. We know that the Inward/Outward journey is not primarily undertaken online, but perhaps our quotes and homilies can be a little reminder of all that lies beyond, can encourage a weary heart, can soothe a crippling grief, and enliven a morning. Being in intimate community with our neighbors and God can never be replaced by the digital experience. Many of us today are indeed too attached to our devices, but if it's a space of communication, let's speak a good word there. May the Spirit always guide us.

To subscribe to our email list, go to ["inwardoutward.org/subscribe"](http://inwardoutward.org/subscribe) and select your preferences. If you're on Twitter, consider following us on [@InwardOutward](https://twitter.com/InwardOutward) or "Liking" our pages on Facebook at ["facebook.com/InwardOutward"](https://facebook.com/InwardOutward) or ["facebook.com/thechurchofthesaviour"](https://facebook.com/thechurchofthesaviour). And most of our outgrowth ministries are also on social media, considering following them as a way of keeping track of what they're up to."

Matthias Martin is the webmaster for Inward-Outward.org, a student at Wesley Theological Seminary, and a core member of Jubilee Church.



Potter's House from page 1

Getting to the answers will require a lot of learning, conversation, and listening. I'm eager to hear your ideas and hopes for The Potter's House, and will be actively seeking dialogue and input from a wide range of our neighbors. It's also clear to me that the network of other Church of the Saviour related ministries will be essential stakeholders as we embark on this journey, and a key priority will be continuing to strengthen and deepen these institutional partnerships.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to lead this very special organization. I look forward to sitting across the table from you to cook up big ideas, make new connections, foster a richly diverse community...and together, enjoy some really good coffee.

Beginning on September 1, Lee Tivol will be the director of operations at The Potter's House.



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 • Discipleship Year • Dunamis Peace Institute • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Hope and a Home • Institute of Radical Reconciliation • 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 • Overlook Retreat House • Potter's House • Samaritan Inns • Sarah's Circle • Soteria [Servant Leadership School] • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Sounds of Hope • Tell The Word • Wellspring Conference Center



Potter's House Steering Committee Members

Kevin Boteler,
Chair, 8th Day Church

Meade Jones,
Secretary, 8th Day Church

Dave Wiley, Treasurer,
New Community Church

Tony Donaldson, Jr.
Vice Chair, Community
Member

Gretchen Van Fossan,
Festival Church

Jim Marsh, Jr.,
Bread of Life Church

Bryan Weaver, Community
Member

Regular events in the Community Room

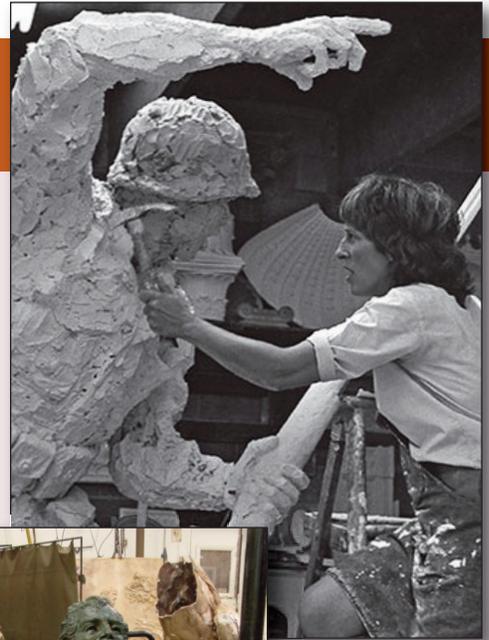
- Jubilee Church on Wednesday nights;
- Bread of Life Church on Thursday nights;
- Recovery Cafe Open Mic the 2nd Saturday of every month;
- Open Mic on the 3rd Friday of every month;
- Yoga every Saturday morning
(except when the 4-day Doula training takes place);
- Deaf Cafe every two months;
- *Braxton Institute once a quarter.

*In 2017, the Braxton Institute for Sustainability, Resiliency and Joy began an exciting partnership with the Potter's House. Since then, four times a year, the Braxton Institute's "Dialogues on Resisting and Thriving" have engaged justice-activists with the nitty-gritty issues that can undermine our success, such as conflicts within our movements, burnout, internalized oppression and benevolent paternalism.

In August we will have a four-week class on "theology for the confused" on Sunday nights, and we are starting a Monday night "Game Night" beginning August 5th. Please email events@pottershousedc.org if you would like to be put on the mailing list for a weekly announcement of what is going on at the Potter's House.

Remembering Jimilu Mason

Jimilu Mason, who died May 27 in Cincinnati OH, was a great friend of Mary Cosby and Church of the Saviour. She helped design the original art space at the Potter's House and her sculpture of the Servant Christ anchors the Festival Center, Christ House and Wellspring. Honored by many public figures for her skill and expression, her bust of President Lyndon Johnson is on display at the LBJ Library in Austin TX and several churches in the area contain tableaus by Jimilu. Google her name and you will be surprised by the acclaim that we barely knew she had. Surely we will all miss her creative spirit!



Special Events

Youth group (middle school and older) activities are twice/month on Fridays at New Community Church. Please contact Grace Dickerson at 202-615-3316 or at gracemickerson@gmail.com for the schedule.

Sep 20-22 | "Living With Gratitude," led by Rev. Fay Acker. \$225. Register at dayspringretreat.org.

Oct 4-6 | "Sacred Movement: Every Step Becomes a Prayer," led by Suzi Kindervatter. Dayspringretreat.org.

Oct 18-20 | "Deepening Trust in the Could of Unknowing," led by Ann Dean. Dayspringretreat.org.

Nov 1-3 | "Beauty's Embrace," led by Trish Stefanik. Dayspringretreat.org.

Nov 15-17 | "Playing With God in the Field of Creation," led by Connie Ridway. Dayspringretreat.org.

Dec 6-8 | "Awaiting New Birth – From Root to Shoot," led by Peter Bankson. Dayspringretreat.org.

Check with Dayspringretreat.org for daytime retreats at no cost.



End of Deep Forest Road

By Jim Hall, moderator at Dayspring Church

A few weeks ago, our Sacred Circles class assignment was to find a local place that evoked our grief for the loss and suffering of Earth and its peoples and to go there and allow ourselves to feel the sorrow and loss. I chose to go to a nearby interstate highway construction site where I knew that trees were coming down, earth was being moved around, and concrete was being laid down, all so that more cars could travel and burn more petroleum in our unchecked course of drastically changing the climate of our planet home.

Late one afternoon I drive to a nearby residential development and park in a little cul-de-sac off Deep Forest Road (named after what had once been a deep forest). I get out of the car and make my way along a little valley in the remaining sliver of forest toward the construction site. I

notice how stormwater runoff from the development has eroded channels in the valley where once a tiny brook flowed. I pass a little remnant of Spring Beauty in bloom. Good for you, I think. Amazing!

I climb up a little ridge and find myself at the edge of this bit of



forest looking down at the construction site. Below me, in between swaths of bare clay, are the cut tree trunks in neat piles. On the Interstate beyond it is rush hour. At the construction site the day's work is winding down. A lone excavator machine is tidying up a large pile of dirt. A worker is collecting some metal frames into a neat pile.

I am sad for the ongoing loss of forest, for the rush of life passing by – unaware of all that is being lost, and even more, all that will be lost if we don't stop. If we don't make a radical change of course. So I am sad, but I want to do the assignment; I want to deepen my grief, feel the fullness of it.

But something else is happening. A Robin comes, sings gloriously in the tree right above me. To my surprise I am feeling a powerful sense of comfort coming to me from somewhere deep in the little remnant of forest. It is almost as if it is saying that it will be alright. And the forest says another thing to me, clear and strong: Thank you for coming. Thank you for caring. This means so much.

The late afternoon sun is low in the sky casting long shadows across the construction site below me. A gentle cool breeze dries my tears. I watch the man who has been staying late to collect his metal frames into a neat pile. Finishing he gets into a little cart and drives off. I imagine that he is going home. I see him coming in the door of his house, his children running up to greet him. I imagine him down on all fours, giving them rides around the room, a little playtime after a long hard day of work.



Any sorrow can be borne if it can be made into a story.
Isak Dinesen

Years ago when we were visiting with Sister Miriam MacGillis at Genesis Farm, a Biospiritual Center based on the work of Thomas Berry, she said something that has stuck in my memory: *We are all good people caught in bad systems.* And sometimes she would add: *Maybe, somehow, this trouble we're in is right where we're supposed to be – at a critical juncture in the grand picture of this evolving universe.*

If that is where we truly are, we will have to learn to walk this path from grief to gratitude and from despair to hope. Not just once, but again and again. And we must invite others to join us. Many others. It will be the grandest adventure we can imagine!

Callings

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*Every dollar we spend
has the potential to create social &
environmental change.*

--Ellis Jones, The Better World Shopping Guide

Looking to use your dollars to make a difference *and* buy beautiful gifts or fabulous food?

Earthen Hands at Dayspring has partnered with SERRV through their Serve and Earn program: As you shop for gifts and food, 80% of your dollars will go to artists and growers from around the world and 20% will support Earthen Hands at Dayspring: a new ministry called by artist Rev. Jean Brown to provide a point of contact between The Land, our Creator and we, the people (as individuals and in community).

Simply go online to <https://serrv.org?a=ClayHands> and start shopping! Want to know more? Contact Jean at 540-230-1760 or EarthenHandsatDayspring@gmail.com



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