

Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

Vol 6, Issue 2 • Summer 2017

Who is God Calling Us to Be?

Representatives of the CoS Sister Communities met at Wellspring for a weekend of silence and discernment, March 24-26. These unsigned reflections were gathered at the end of the retreat.

Who is God calling us to be in this new day? How do we participate in the struggle for the soul of America? What story do we tell? What is the hope that comes out of suffering? Listen! Be patient and think big Resilience – what does it mean to be able to live with suffering because things are out of control? Fear not! Trust God to give gifts to do our work. New life comes out of being rooted in inner life. This challenging time makes us return to basics. How do we go deeper in faith to be and to do what we are trying to be, and to do with the wild trust in the Holy Mystery who sustains us?



It has been a truly good thing to be here on silent retreat together with other people from the Church of the Saviour communities. It is simply good to hear about what the other churches are being and doing; their 'good news'.

The practice of extended silence has helped me to be more open to God and provided some rest in body and mind, which was especially needed. I have felt more tired and heavy since the election. Silence and retreat seem to be even more essential now.

It has been a time of individual and communal discernment and sharing of what God is calling us to be in this new time. I felt a call to let go of my ego and for our church communities to do this too. We must be open and welcoming to all. We must also work towards interdependence in our communities, embracing our different gifts and abilities. Being here this weekend with my friend from L'Arche has helped me to learn that more.

With the support of others here I was able to voice and let go more of some of the weight and awkwardness that comes with being one of only a few young people in this community. It has also been a gift to hear from the wisdom, story, and maturity of folks older than me, and I am deeply grateful for that rare opportunity.

We need our CoS spiritual brothers and sisters. There is so much to learn from each one of us; to love more, to be taught, each to the other. We are mature enough to handle our self and each other. Our greatest teachers are each other.

We have the experience to pray and hold the rest in patience, repentance and hope. God's work through each other carries us beyond our human capacity alone.

We are to work as ONE, to work as CHRIST, to be the parts that make the CHURCH, equally. This will be the piece that needs our prayer (union, as one) – true equality of leadership—being faith-filled which gives us the answers without force upon our sisters and brothers in CoS. Our prayer (union, as one) is more powerful than any elected official. The power of prayer can get lost if we become authoritarian with each other; or it can change the densest rock-hard heart of our human opponent.

We are not alone and we are not God. We are simple, small, weak, and through our faithfulness to serve, God will shine and change the world.

Decades ago, when CoS members gathered and voted to let CoS die, there were dissenters. I was one who felt and continue to feel that there is strength in unity. This weekend has been verification of that concept for me. I celebrate the uniqueness of each faith community but I also recognize and celebrate the power we unleash when we come together to worship and/or pray together. Today's political climate is inviting us into a new, new, land where we are challenged to be the voice of the third way. We are being challenged to reach out to others from our new sense of having lost control to share our new understanding of our interconnectedness and interdependence. We need to find space in our deeply Christian hearts for our brothers and sisters who are very different from us, but humans just like us. We need to remember that God is in solidarity with all of creation!

Editor's Corner | Seeking the Spirit's Guidance



Since the beginning, Church of the Saviour has been marked by its reliance on spiritual guidance, what we call the “inward journey.” We were also shaped by the radical vision for social justice that Gordon Cosby drew from the life and ministry of Jesus: the “journey outward.” 20 years ago, in a referendum of the committed members of all CoS faith communities, a majority voted to let CoS die – but we are still very

much alive. As the writer below says, “Now that the Cosbys are both gone physically, we are finding our way to a new form based in the silence and speech of Dayspring, our earthly home.”

By that, he or she acknowledged the separate charism of each church community, AND our shared legacy at Dayspring Farm. After years of hosting other church groups to “come and see” the many inner-city ministries that grew out of CoS, it was fitting that a representative group would gather at the Wellspring Conference Center to discover what the Spirit might be saying to us about our common life now. It felt to me like the disciples at Pentecost, waiting for what lay ahead.

Cheryl Hellner led us into the silence with a powerful image that none of the writers chose to describe, so I will. The simple altar in our midst featured an empty nest, taken from a bush at Dayspring. Cheryl said that during Lent, she had “apprenticed herself” to a pair of eagles nesting at the National Arboretum. Because eagles mate for life and return to their nests year after year, a video camera had been set up to watch them through rain, sleet and snow, protecting their two eggs. As she said, they were protecting “the possibility of new life” – as, by implication, were we.

About 25 representatives of the various CoS communities gathered just as those eggs began to crack in the nest at the Arboretum. By Sunday, there was a strong sense of new life and new purpose as Church of the Saviour. How to bridge our differences became a theme for some. What we might do together engaged others. Ideas like having a common website, a single curriculum for teens, or a single School of Christian Living rose up in our reflections, and I believe we all had a sense that our job right now is to nurture that sense of new life together. That is the underlying purpose of CALLINGS, this quarterly newsletter.

Meanwhile, at the Festival Center, there is a new brochure titled “Faith in Action.” It describes the inward/outward life based on call, gifts, ministry and retreat that has been our CoS tradition. The next issue of CALLINGS, in September, will feature new initiatives at the Festival Center. You can visit the Potter’s House website for all the outreach activities happening there.

At the end of April, the CoS Council accepted Kayla McClurg’s resignation as the long-time “center-holder” for Church of the Saviour, and hope that she will be able to resume her popular inward/outward meditations as her health permits. The official address for Church of the Saviour remains the same: 1640 Columbia Road NW, Wash DC 2009. Kate Lasso is our new treasurer, and contributions for CALLINGS should be made out to Church of the Saviour with “Callings” in the subject line.

Do keep us in your prayers,

Marjory

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

CALLINGS deadlines: August 31, Nov 30

For me, the “tradition of CoS” is a deep well, built by intention and commitment to the inward journey of walking humbly with God in community with others who share that call.

We are marked by the experience of living “another way” from the success-drive in our culture. That way divided into smaller units some 40 years ago. For some, it was more recent. Now that the Cosbys are both gone physically, we are finding our way to a new form based in the silence and speech of Dayspring, our earthly home.

Gratitude wells up in me for the leadership – the call which quickened into speech – to gather here this weekend. What was said about those who fell out of favor with Gordon need our attention, because if we learn to deepen our experience of loving one another as Jesus loved his disciples, we will truly have “living water” for others.

The American way divides and separates – culling the strong from the weak. The CoS tradition of inward journey can be the ground for embracing our own powerlessness and vulnerability, and then we need words to share. Right now, we are finding new language because we actually haven’t had the experience of being a body with many parts.

Thank you for this structure and process of sharing, then writing. It’s been good.



Silver & Light

Nature photography throughout this issue by Keith Seat
www.silverlightArt.com



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Common Efforts...

I appreciate this structure of being together: silence followed by sharing and writing. I hope there will be other opportunities to share in this way.

Let's not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by the confusion of our political situation. The most important things in our life have not changed. Our commitment to the people God has given to us is still the same. If our mission was important before, it is even more important now.

We are called to faithful resistance to the destructive policies in our country. At the same time we must remain faithful to the task at hand and affirm this community that God has called together.

May God guide us in becoming "exceptional lovers" of His people.



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The CoS of the past was an exemplary witness of radical discipleship. It fit a hungry world recovering from the Great Depression and World War II and the false promises of the times.

Today we face a nation and world afflicted with radical polarization which is a death warrant unless it has an alternative.

Hints, clues and evidence of the alternative exist, have surfaced in the CoS tradition. This raises several questions. First, what kind of training, education and discipline do we need to empower our tradition? In the absence of a single School of Christian Living, how do we help each other build this capacity?

Second, how can we practice the exercise of discernment and sharing among ourselves which is good and right and true and must be exposed?

The beauty of the connection between the CoS faith communities is our commitment to the inner and outer journey. We find God's Spirit working in our lives and our churches when we take seriously the disciplines of daily silence and meditation on the scriptures. Educating ourselves to be mature Christians is an integral part of being a member of CoS. It requires time and effort to develop and deepen our own relationship with God; and to be part of a community that seeks to be God's hands and feet in the world.

After spending this weekend in silence with fellow CoS members, it occurs to me that one way to strengthen these bonds and also continue to grow as followers of Jesus, is to share School of Christian Living classes together. I believe this would have multiple benefits, to individuals, the churches, to the overall strengthening of CoS – as a prophetic witness to the world, and offering a 'third way' to a divided and broken country.

We are more powerful together than apart as a witness to God's kingdom. Concrete ways to join together:

- **Prayer** – especially for one another as communities.
- **Dayspring** – continued tradition of inter-community retreats.
- **Music** – Let's find a way to make music together at special times. I am really up for doing this! I forgot how many of us are musicians.
- **Mission** – How can we get the word out about all the happenings?
- **Inward/Outward** – Has been uniting us in a common thought/theme for each day. How can we continue at this time?
- **Children** – Joining forces to bring up our youth in the church. Teens especially need a bigger group, I believe. My son has been participating in New Community's Youth Group. We have developed a curriculum for confirmation around age 12-14, called CROP (Christian Rites of Passage).
- **Visiting** – I will find a way to visit the other CoS communities regularly.

Outward Mission Together:

- The question that comes to me right now is, "How do we translate our vision/life/wisdom for the secular or church-averse world?"
 - Is it a website with the right buzz words?
 - Is it a recovery group for the technology-addicted?
 - Is it a sanctuary banner (literally) out in front of the Festival Center and other missions?

Better horizontal connections...



*It is a blessing to be a young person growing in the Spirit
In this community. What a gift! I know others would
treasure it too, if only they knew.*

I love the idea of having a “loud retreat” where we talk and share all weekend. CoS is very good about vertical communication with God, but we could be better about horizontal communication with each other. I see in what John says, a need to be with each other joyfully, to share and not be too serious.

I also like the idea of a “loud retreat” that is more of a working retreat where we envision action and mission., where we speak to each other’s calls, and invite our neighbors to join with us. I would love to have a “Call It Out” type weekend like this as the Festival Center.

So, two different events”

- Fun, recreational, sharing retreat with CoS folks
- Fun, mission-oriented, idea-sharing for CoS and neighbors

It is a blessing to be a young person growing in the Spirit I this community. What a gift! I know others would treasure it too, if only they knew. So I see a need for better outreach to our neighbors, and the young activist communities in DC. There are many youthful churches in our midst: Grace, Advent, All Souls, Foundry, and we should not let our theological, liturgical or discipline differences get in the way of our realization of The Church in our city and God’s work through us.

What if we hosted discussion in a series that became consistent between the worrying factions of our nation? Why shouldn’t we lead a civil dialogue? Where is our Samaria?

We are the ones who stand on the edge of two worlds with deep awareness of what’s happening.

In our everyday world we stand at the edge, often with those at the margins of society, who can see, and we give our full awareness to the sufferings of Earth and its peoples. We allow ourselves to feel the grief, the anger, and the despair that God feels.

At the same time, we stand at the edge of the world of spirit and soul. We want to know something of what’s really happening under the surface of things. We want to see and hear more of this present struggle for the soul and for the imagination of America.

Finally, as those who stand on the edge of these two worlds, we bring what we learn in the invisible world to the visible world. Thus, in our effort to deeply see and to deeply listen, we are the prophets for our people: we offer that gift.





Take-aways:

- Good work by good and faithful servants. This is critical and long over-due work. The hunger and thirst for what was among and between us, both in silence and spoken, is the antidote for the chaos and suffering of our current time. May it always be, in Jesus, such a sense of the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of expressing the central love and grace between us as faith communities.
- Prophetic and confessional truth-telling. What was shared, exposing the shadow side of the leadership of our past – difficulty sharing deep appreciation, acknowledging and celebrating gifts and opportunities in building God's Kingdom together, and splits that have been allowed and cultivated between communities -- is also critical work. It's the work of confession, authentic repair and readiness for forgiveness that can forge the kind of bonds that in Christ we know transcend the wrongs committed and the hurts deeply felt.
- Bless the ritual container. The lived Eucharist of our covenant was shared and blessed. What we did here can and must be repeated. The "confession of Good News" on Friday night, the ritual and sacred space created by the silence and reflections, the opportunity for depth sharing; all of these respect and resonate our profound tradition and help us provide the "water of life" necessary for this part of the journey.
- Create and renew. Invite and celebrate with integrity in the moment of practice. Allow for depth creativity to come from seeing and celebrating one another's charismas, revealing and inviting what's "told, right and true" to be grown among and between us. Hold the opposites together, manifest the explosive creativity and desire to draw near to God and one another in community.

Give-aways:

- Appreciation for those who called us together and those who responded.
- Continued confession and healing, as readiness for forgiveness arises, for exposing hurts, separations, wounds, losses and contractions to the Body of Christ, so that authentic wholeness can be achieved.
- Grace and faithfulness to be mentors and ministers of a tradition that speaks with the vitality, new life and enthusiasm of Jesus' first resurrection-responding community.
- Open doors of solidarity to the wider church. Unveil the betrayals, mistaken and deliberate harms and hatreds done in "the name of Jesus" in order to restore an entirely grace-filled and loving community, capable of entering the wildness of both specific and vast possibility.
- Deep gratitude for the participation wisdom and loving convictions of those present and resonant with one another and our tradition, with particular appreciation for the birthing of this experience for us all.
- Blessings and multiplying nurture for all of us in building the Kingdom of God thru these times of silence and sharing.

My personal take-away/give-away:

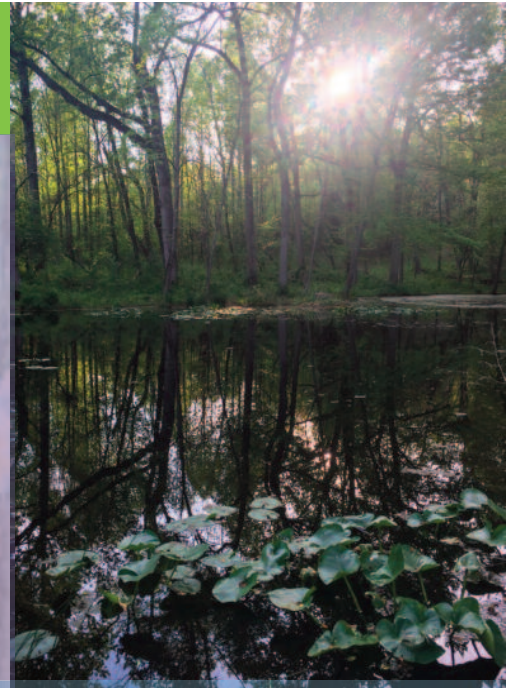
- Listen, in silence, individually and together, to the deeper voice of the Spirit.
- Let us be active witnesses to the pain and suffering of the earth and of people in the ways that we are most called...
- Let us be kind to ourselves and to one another, be amazed at sharing a life of many blessings...
- May I/we learn to move fully, let go of fear, learn to cross new boundaries, create new spaces for the young to lead us, and always come together in love and openness.

We need the strength of togetherness.

We need the strength and power of all our CoS communities at this stressful time in our country. Those of us who are white are experiencing a sense of loss of control that oppressed people have felt throughout their lives. We need to deeply understand their pain; the need to welcome all into our churches and open our hearts to people of all faiths; to learn from each other.

It is a powerful path to focus on each action we take and how it will affect people seven generations from now. Understanding the wisdom of our Native Americans and following it. We need to ask for forgiveness for old wounds that have not been healed – Seekers, New Community, Church of Christ, Right Now ... others.

Our faith is challenged to deepen as we deal with Trump and the directions he is leading our country in. We need to open our hearts to refugees and provide a safe place they can call home. We need to open our hearts to those who have suffered because of our oppressive political, economic and justice systems. We need to name the evil of Trump's plans and speak truth and love to his power and hate. We are God's harvest, growing love and justice in our world.



What I have to give/want to give:

To the world at this Kairos moment

- Witness to the 3rd way
 - That it “works,” is a viable option
 - As evidenced by the CoS story/ testimony/life/missions
 - Including and based on our spiritual core/church life
- To the CoS community
 - A deepening into that 3rd way together
 - Growing in appreciation of the political relevance of doing so

What I long for:

- It was said well – Within this community, I want the laying down of each of our lives to count to one another.
- I want to forgive and be forgiven as relates to those hurts and heartaches among us

There is a depth of praying, feeling, action in this community that is for the world to see. We have a purpose and call here to share the hope that Christ is.

- *We are benefiting from the grace shown by the leaders of CoS in the past, and are striving to carry it into the future. In talking about Wellspring, Dayspring, the gatherings and the communities, there is much good news!*

- *I feel empowered by the silence although it is hard to carry it through for 2 days. I can leave this place a new person on the inside. I'm very full of fear and don't feel I make a difference personally. The process of taking time in silence to listen and pray, I am confident, will guide me going forward.*

- *I need people who are so different from my children and siblings politically. I wonder how I will continue relationship with them, but that is the challenge – be the light to those who can appreciate light, and pray for the others. Face to face is really hard at this time.*

- *Mentoring is important. I have been a mentor for 7 years with an African-American family. I share it with another person. We have grown to a deep friendship and commitment because of it. A real blessing that I hope to share somehow.*

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 • 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 • 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

Climate March Participants from Dayspring, 8th Day and Seekers

On April 29,, 2017, thousands of marchers gathered in Washington and other major cities to protest new government policies that roll-back environmental protection legislation.



Callings

Church of the Saviour
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Summer Events

Check pottershousedc.org for their packed schedule of events every week.

Wed, Jun 21 | Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat, 10-2pm. Bring your lunch. No charge.

Jun 23-25 | "Saying YES to God," led by Rev Fay Acker of Howard University. \$210. DayspringRetreat.org/events.

Thurs, Jul 6 | Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat, 10-2-m. BYL. No cost.

Jul 21-23 | "Longing for Transformation," led by Carol Martin, Bread of Life Church. \$210. DayspringRetreat.org/events.

Thurs, Aug 7 | Quiet Day at Dayspring Retreat, 10-2pm. BYL. No cost.

Wed, Aug 9 | Quiet Day at Dayspring

Tues, Aug 22 | Quiet Day at Dayspring.

Sep 15-17 | "The Journey of Descent," led by Bob Sabbath of Sojourners. \$210. DayspringRetreat.org/events.

Wed, Sep 20 | Ember Day at Dayspring Retreat, led by Carol Martin or Merrill Carrington. 10-4pm. BYL. No cost.

Sep 20-24 | "Faith, Mountains and the Economy," a trip of perspective to Wise County VA with Faith and Money Network. \$500. Contact: mike@faithandmoneynetwork.org.



Silver & Light

Nature photography throughout this
issue by Keith Seat
www.silverlightArt.com

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

Callings

Church of the Saviour, 1640 Columbia Rd. NW,
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