

Domestic Giving

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Domestic Giving 2022



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Domestic Giving 2022

Seekers Church donates generously to missions and ministries within the United States, with an amount this year that equals a bit over 22% of expected offerings for the year. The

community has agreed to several conditions to ensure that our giving is connected to and reinforces our personal efforts and passions. These connections should reinforce Seekers values, involve significant personal support from Seekers' members, and foster a change from charity to solidarity. We want to support systemic and lasting change. Smaller grants may be given to incubate new ideas for mission, support emergence of call, bear witness to God's work in the world, or support Seekers' members living out their call to mission. Once the Domestic Giving budget is determined by Stewards of Seekers Church each year, all members of the faith community are invited to request support for missions or ministries in which they are personally involved, and all are invited to come to an annual meeting to determine the final giving budget, usually in the first quarter of each year.

For 2022 the community affirmed support for 29 domestic missions and ministries listed here. For easy access to more information on each group, the name of each organization is linked to its website.

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Here is a brief description of each organization and the connection to Seekers Church. To visit their web sites, click on the name of the organization.

HOUSING

[Center for Wisdom's Women and Sophia's House](#)

In the middle of Lewiston, Maine lies one of the poorest census districts in the state, one of the poorest in the country. Forty percent of the residents live at or below the poverty line. Within that neighborhood the Center for Wisdom's Women is a safe and sacred space run by and for women. At the Center, local women from the neighborhood learn social skills and job training to help them in recovery.

Now Sophia's House, an updated convent, has added small apartments for low-income residents and returning citizens post-incarceration. Klara Tammany, the visionary director, visits Seekers when she comes to DC. The Banksons and Cynthia Dahlin have been long-time sponsors.

[L'Arche of Greater Washington](#)

L'Arche is an inter-denominational Christian community that welcomes people of all backgrounds to share life together. In the Washington DC area, community life is centered around four communal homes and the 14 members who have intellectual disabilities, known as "core members." L'Arche is unique among residential service providers in that core members and assistants (people without intellectual disabilities who support core members) choose to live life together like a family. They come together around the dinner table, for house meetings, and for weekly celebrations. Core members lead the

community through their creativity and compassion. As core members' needs change each community responds by adapting their routines and their physical spaces. Each community member is encouraged to discover and deepen his or her spiritual life and live it according to his or her particular faith and tradition. Those who have no religious affiliation are also welcomed and respected in their freedom of conscience.

L'Arche of Greater Washington, D.C. is a faith community; a licensed provider of professional services; an advocate with and for people who have intellectual disabilities; and a member of the worldwide federation of autonomous L'Arche communities. Emmy Lu Daly was head of household for the Euclid Street home, and her son Fritz has been a long-time core person.

[Manna, Inc.](#)

MANNA, Inc. is a nonprofit developer of quality, affordable housing in the District of Columbia. The mission of MANNA is "to help low and moderate income persons acquire quality housing, build assets for families through homeownership, revitalize distressed neighborhoods, and preserve racial and ethnic diversity."

The mission of MANNA is not one of simply building and selling houses. They focus on revitalizing entire neighborhoods through homeownership. MANNA's strategy also includes educating first-time homebuyers for the process of home purchase and for continued success as homeowners. They also train homeowners and their neighbors throughout the city to become community leaders and advocates. Currently MANNA is developing more condominium projects than any other nonprofit developer in the District.

Since 1982, MANNA has been serving low and moderate-income families, assisting them to fulfill the dream of homeownership

in Washington, DC. In that time, they have created and preserved nearly 1,200 units of affordable housing for low and moderate-income DC residents and their homeowners have accrued over \$160 million in equity. Their financial literacy and homeowner training program has been replicated more than 200 times across the nation.

Manna's work focuses on three principal areas:

- Renovating or building affordable homes for rent and homeownership;
- Educating first-time homebuyers for the process of home purchase and for success as homeowners; and
- Training first-time homeowners and their neighbors throughout the city to become community leaders through MANNA's Housing Advocacy Team.

Manna supports the commitment of Seekers Church to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need. Doug Dodge is a founding member of the Manna board of directors.

[N Street Village](#)

N Street Village began as a women's shelter on 14th and N Streets in Washington DC in 1972. It has grown to a group of 8 separate programs serving women with HIV, mental illness, recovery from addiction, recovery from domestic abuse, and just women dealing with hard lives and little community to support them. The goal of N Street Village is to meet each individual woman exactly where she is on her unique journey to healing and recovery. They recognize that those they serve face a variety of challenges, and some individuals may face numerous obstacles simultaneously. Some of the most common challenges for the women of N Street Village include: health or mental health problems, substance abuse or addiction, a history of trauma, a lack of educational and vocational opportunities, job loss or eviction, domestic violence, a criminal background or other barriers to employment, or

functional illiteracy. And sometimes the biggest challenge for a woman arriving at their front door is the loss of her own sense of dignity, self-worth, and hope.

N Street Village has two values very central to Seekers' values: to be in community with the women who come to seek services and a place to stay, and to try to meet women where they are, needing detox services, a temporary place to stay, or long term housing if their problems have no solution, for example if they are mentally ill or are elderly or sick.

Cynthia Dahlin, a Steward of Seekers Church, has been a part of the N Street Village community for 21 years, leading poetry and autobiography classes at N Street Village until the pandemic began and classes had to be suspended. These classes helped women who have been on the street get in touch with their own deeper selves and be able to share themselves and open to relationships in community, Since 2020, Cynthia has been a member of the N Street Village Ambassadors Council.

[Silver Spring Village](#)

Silver Spring Village is a nonprofit [501(c)(3)] organization that offers programs and needed services for adults who wish to "age in place" – to remain as long as possible in their own homes, amid familiar people and surroundings, and engaged in the community. Our network of "neighbors helping neighbors" supports individuals and also builds a stronger community. Mirroring the neighborhoods within our service area, Silver Spring Village is a welcoming organization with a diverse membership and volunteer corps. They offer their members opportunities for enrichment and social engagement as well as access to "neighborly" assistance that supports their independence. Members make new friends, learn new things, and have easy access to needed help.

Silver Spring Village provides examples and opportunities that

support the “Down the Road” ministry of Seekers Church. Jackie Wallen is currently serving on the board of directors.

EDUCATION / CULTURE

[For Love of Children \(FLOC\)](#)

For Love of Children (FLOC) has been part of Church of the Savior’s mission from the time Fred Taylor co-founded it more than 50 years ago. Many Seekers Church members have been involved over the years. The late Kate Cudlipp used to serve on the FLOC Board and was very committed to this mission. For several years, Seekers had a mission group that worked with the FLOC Hope and a Home program.

FLOC’s commitment to the new model of taking students all the way from early education on through college has had proven results, increasing grade levels on an average of one grade per 22 hours of tutoring, and the Outdoor Education program provides inner city children with vital experiences. FLOC has a college prep program which has graduated 100% of their students from high school (DC graduation rate tends to be around 69% or lower) and an after-school program to train youth leaders, in addition to the tutoring programs in math and reading. Their Fred Taylor Scholarship Fund has provided more than \$300,000 towards scholarships since 2000. And they follow up with the students from the Scholars Program once they go on to higher education to help ease the transition and provide personal resources. The work they do to encourage students to stay in school to continue their education decreases the drop-out rate, and the support they provide to students wanting a college education is invaluable.

When the pandemic hit, FLOC pivoted virtually overnight to a distance learning model to ensure that they could continue to support their students safely. While other organizations were cutting back, FLOC leaned in. The new virtual model allowed FLOC to open their volunteer opportunities, and they were able to pair students with tutors from across the country. In September, they had an in-person festival for school reopening.

At the beginning of the pandemic, FLOC helped raise money to get Chromebooks for all of their students who didn't have any way to access virtual learning. In total, eight students received Chromebooks and were able to complete their online learning programs with the rest of the students. Even though they are at home many of FLOC's expenses have not changed.

Else Sizemore served as a reading tutor with FLOC for 15 years. She says: "My initial involvement with FLOC was as a volunteer in the 90's, when I spent 8 years working in the Seekers Hope and A Home mission group – Seekers was the reason I found FLOC. In later life when I was searching for a more meaningful mission again, tutoring at FLOC was the most natural and best service I could have found." Else and the Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group maintain an active relationship with FLOC.

[Justice Arts Coalition](#)

Justice Arts Coalition (JAC) unites teaching artists, arts advocates, currently and formerly incarcerated artists, and allies, harnessing the transformative power of the arts to reimagine justice. Through the sharing of resources, stories, and learning opportunities, JAC is building a nationwide

collective of people who are committed to increasing opportunities for creative expression in carceral settings, amplifying the voices of those most impacted by mass incarceration, and shaping public dialogue around the intersection of the arts and justice. Initially formed by veteran teaching artists in 2008 as the Prison Arts Coalition, JAC has remained a grassroots, volunteer-led project throughout its recent transformation into a national 501c3 nonprofit organization.

The work of Justice Arts Coalition is grounded in the beliefs that creative expression is both a human need and a human right; essential to healing, reconciliation, and community-building. Participation in the artistic process significantly affects a person's self-worth and sense of purpose and meaning. And, art is an individual expression of universal human experience, increases empathy and serves as a bridge between diverse groups.

Justice Arts Coalition values human dignity, equity, and integrity. Artists and advocates inside and outside of prison come together to share our passion for art experiences that welcome a multitude of voices, inspire creative expression, embrace authentic dialogue, and reveal our shared humanity. JAC puts relationships first, and will not sacrifice human connection and direct support for organizational expansion. They remain committed to amplifying the voices of system-involved artists. Their leadership and guidance in all JAC activities is sought and encouraged. Sandra Miller serves as the Seekers Church link with the Justice Arts Coalition, promotes at Seekers and beyond, and participates in the pARTner Art Project, a pen pal relationship between artists inside and outside the carceral system.

[Maryland Choral Society](#)

The Maryland Choral Society (MCS), founded in 1971, is a community choral group dedicated to quality performance of a wide repertoire of musical styles and periods. A mixed chorus of approximately 40 members, MCS is based in Prince George's County, Maryland, and has members from throughout Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, it raises most of its operating funds through ticket sales, fundraisers, individual patrons, and selling business ads that are printed in its concert programs.

MCS strives to be a leading force in the advocacy and enhancement of the choral arts industry, to cultivate educational opportunities, to nurture intergenerational experiences, and to create musical excellence throughout the DC/Metro region.

The work of MCS is as much about community as it is about the chorus. Music is a shared language, transcending politics and economics, overcoming warfare and personal tragedy. Throughout history, human beings have looked to music to soothe pain and to announce great joys. Choral singing is one of the most powerful unifying forces known to humankind. In lifting our voices together in song, we cross boundaries that exist between groups of people, we learn more about each other, and we celebrate our very existence.

Katie Fisher and Lucy Slater sing in the chorus, and a number of Seekers attend and appear to be uplifted by the concerts!

[Museum of the Palestinian People](#)

The Museum of the Palestinian People is the first museum in Washington D.C. devoted to preserving and celebrating Palestinian history, arts, and culture. For decades, the story of the Palestinian people has been told by others; until now.

The Museum of the Palestinian People is here to tell their stories; stories that encompass the rich history, vibrant arts and culture, of a people who thrive even in the face of adversity.

The Palestinian people hail from an ancient land with over 4,000 years of history. Empires have come and gone, only to make Palestinian culture richer and more colorful. The Museum of the Palestinian People started in 2015 as a traveling exhibit, visiting over 50 locations across the country, and has now found a home in the heart of the nation's capital. By sharing the stories of the Palestinian people with those who walk through their doors, they invite the world to discover what unites us all. Immigrants to the United States yearn for a space to tell their stories, yet for Palestinians there has been no such space. In fact, the story of who they are has been told by others; until now.

The museum shares Palestinian stories through historic artifacts, personal narratives and artistic expression to transcend separation, fragmentation, and boundaries. They connect Palestinians in the US, Palestine and the diaspora with each other to evoke pride and dignity and to impart this to future generations. And they partner with other institutions and connect with broader audiences committed to our shared humanity. In connecting with other institutions and broader audiences the museum is exploring intersections of cultures through the arts and history.

Like the ancient olive trees of Palestine, we they are rooted in the heritage of ~~our~~ their land and culture. It nurtures and sustains them. Just as the olive tree produces new fruit from one season to the next, we too flourish into new expressions of what it means to be Palestinian.

The Palestinian story is a story of resilience and renewal. While they bear a responsibility to the past, they also want to bring to life those stories that have not been told. And they will not stop there. Wherever there are borders, whether political, religious, or racial, they will invite their visitors to transcend them. They will collaborate to co-author a new story.

The Museum of the Palestinian People is bringing—Palestine home. The museum creates a space where people are not marginalized because of the artificial distinctions we use to create borders between us. In fact, they dissolve those distinctions so that people feel safe and open their hearts to truly see the Palestinian people and discover what unites all of us. This is what they want to share with the world: the possibilities that emerge when, together, we create a world without borders. Our stories are many, our hearts are one.

Bshara Nassar, the founder of the museum, first came to the attention of Sandra Miller, and hence the Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group when he was a participant in the New Story Leadership program in 2011. Since that time Sandra has met with Bshara three or four times a year, including by phone during the pandemic, to offer support and encouragement. Eyes to See met with Bshara once a year for 4 years through 2020, including meeting at the museum.

[Pyramid Atlantic Art Center](#)

Pyramid Atlantic is a 501c3 nonprofit center for contemporary art, fostering the creative disciplines of papermaking, printmaking, and book arts within a collaborative community. They equip, educate, and exhibit in their historic

Hyattsville, MD home. Pyramid brings groups of all ages into the space for educational tours, and also takes its educational show on the road, offering all ages of youth in schools the opportunity to learn more about creating art, offering guided tours to children and adults of exhibits in area museums and galleries, participating in national conferences about the arts, and offering opportunities to study with internationally recognized experts in various artistic disciplines. Pyramid is a vital participant in the Hyattsville Arts District, taking part in that organization, as well as joining various street fairs serving the entire DMV.

Seekers is committed to fostering the many facets of connection to the Grateful Soaring Spirit through the arts. Additionally, Seekers is committed to education. Both of these guiding principles are in direct relationship to the work of Pyramid Atlantic Arts. One of the stewards of Seekers Church is a member of Pyramid in order to feed the creative spirit shared with Seekers Church, as well as volunteering with the organization.

[Vita Poetica](#)

Vita Poetica grew out of a longing for community among artists of faith and a desire to journey with others who experience God's presence through their creativity. This vision partly stemmed from the felt need of Seekers member Julie Wan, who sees the creative process as a spiritual journey, and one that can oftentimes be quite lonely. The hope of Vita Poetica is to create a space where creativity and spirituality can co-exist as an invitation to encounter divine mystery. To that end, the community offers opportunities to engage with others through salons, workshops, and open mic nights, as well as collaborative projects such as their quarterly online journal. A number of Seekers are also on Vita Poetica's Board of

Directors, and many Seekers are frequent participants in Vita Poetica.

Women Involved in Re-entry Efforts

WIRE (Women Involved in Reentry Efforts) is a new initiative, working with the children of incarcerated parents one day a week to create an original program that can showcase their stories with the larger community, to help them find a healthy path into the future.

Roy Barber from Seekers Church and Leslie Jacobson are bringing their many years of experience working with young people in the Bokamoso project, to this new initiative. They meet at Brighter Day Church in Southeast Washington on Wednesdays. The money would be used for supplies, and publicity materials, and transportation for performances.

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR

Christ House

Christ House opened in December 1985 as the first 24-hour residential medical facility for homeless persons in the United States. Today, after 35 years of faithful service, Christ House is still providing quality health care service to people living without a home. Last year there were 167 patients admitted for care, 42 long-term residents at Kairos House, and over 29,000 meals served. Since our inception, we have had over 9,700 admissions.

Patients are admitted to Christ House from area hospitals, shelters, clinics, and medical outreach projects. They suffer from a variety of illnesses and injuries including cancer, hypertension and stroke, liver disease, kidney failure, diabetes and related amputations, HIV/AIDS, respiratory

disease, major lacerations, fractures, and ulcerations of the skin. Many are malnourished, anemic, depressed, and desperately disconnected from healthy sources of support.

Jean Adams, a longtime member of Seekers Church taught in the art program for many years and sustains our contact.

[Dayspring Overlook Retreat House](#)

Overlook Retreat House (at Dayspring) is available for individual and small group self-guided retreats, and is open year-round. Retreatants share a 3-bedroom living space (sleeps up to six people) with a kitchen and dining area, as well as a small library of books and art materials for soulful and playful exploration. Overlook is near the farmhouse on Dayspring Farm, overlooking Lake of the Saints, in the midst of 210 acres of natural beauty. The Banksons and Kolya Braun-Greiner sponsor this request.

[Festival Center](#)

The Festival Center is an organization rooted in a faith that compels them to be a meeting place and a participant in the struggle for the common good. Their call is to be in solidarity with God, each other, and all of creation. Through hospitality, education, spiritual development, and practice, the Festival Center serves as a hub for all people to work against all forms of oppression and to strive for a just city and a just world.

The Festival Center shares with Seekers a deep commitment to shared leadership empowering others within the normal structures of our daily lives (work; family and primary relationships; and citizenship) as well as through special structures for service and witness. They desire and welcome participation in all aspects of Festival Center life of people of every "race", gender identity, and sexual orientation, in pursuit of deliverance from bondage to freedom in every personal and corporate expression. Sandra Miller has served as

Board Chair, Board Secretary (currently on sabbatical), and currently serves as the art coordinator, as well as an ad hoc advisor. Additionally, members of Seekers have taught in its School for Liberation (formerly known as Servant Leadership School) and participated in many Festival Center events.

[Potter's House](#)

The Potter's House is a nonprofit café, bookstore, and event space in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, DC. As the very first Church of the Saviour mission (in 1960), The Potter's House has been a key place for deeper conversation, creative expression, and community transformation. In our rapidly changing city – one in which development so often means displacement – The Potter's House has birthed many other CoS ministries over the years. It bears a strong family resemblance to Seekers Church as another place of support for creative, inclusive people working for peace and justice. Marjory Bankson provides active, ongoing support.

OTHER

[Arlington THRIVE](#)

Arlington Thrive is the only organization in Arlington County, Virginia that provides same-day, emergency financial assistance to County residents who experience sudden financial crisis such as temporary unemployment or illness. Most clients are the working poor, elderly and disabled people on a fixed income, and the homeless and formerly homeless who need funds as a “safety net” until they are able to get back on firmer financial footing. Arlington Thrive's clients are among Arlington County's most vulnerable residents. Families with children are given the highest priority, and one-third of the individuals served by Arlington Thrive are children. During the coronavirus pandemic this emergency support is more important than ever. The commitment of Seekers Church to be in

solidarity with those in need supports the mission of Arlington Thrive. Cynthia Dahlin is a longtime volunteer and supporter of Arlington Thrive.

[Caron Foundation LGBT/AIDS Retreats](#)

The Caron LGBTQ/AIDS retreat began in the 1980s as a safe, supportive place for those with HIV/AIDS and in recovery to come together. Over the years, the retreats have expanded to be inclusive of all in the LGBTQ community, regardless of whether they are impacted by HIV/AIDS. Their core group of faithful participants has grown into a special extended family and welcomes others to join the family. Although the in-person retreats were postponed due to the pandemic, they resumed this year. The Foundation is also having mini socials periodically on Zoom. Larry Rawlings is a long-time supporter of the Caron Foundation.

[Worthy Sox](#)

Worthy Socks is a non-profit organization that purchases quality, cotton socks at bulk prices, stretching donor dollars while benefitting our partners and their guests, who are living on the street. New cotton sox donated by Worthy Sox are an important part of one member's outreach to those who are homeless. The member has been giving needed items to homeless people for many years. He regularly enlists the help of other Seekers to deliver new sox to those who need them.

ADVOCACY

[Black Swan Academy](#)

The Black Swan Academy (BSA) empowers black youth in under-served communities through civic leadership and engagement, giving them a comprehensive set of tools needed to succeed in life and become active social catalyst in their communities.

BSA creates a pipeline of Black youth leaders that are committed to improving self, as well as their communities. They train 6th to 12th graders to be socially responsible leaders in the public, political and private sector. They raise awareness on social issues disproportionately affecting Black Americans and highlight the many positive examples that are often overlooked. They advocate for the elimination of structural barriers impacting the Black American community.

The Seekers Anti-Racism Group is building a relationship with BSA as part of their work to deepen our commitment to nurture peace AND justice in the wider community.

[Center for Medicare Advocacy](#)

The Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. is a national non-profit, non-partisan organization that provides education, advocacy, and legal assistance to help elders and people with disabilities obtain Medicare and necessary health care. The Center was established in 1986. The Center focuses on the needs of Medicare beneficiaries, people with chronic conditions, and those in need of long-term care. The organization is involved in writing, education, and advocacy activities of importance to Medicare beneficiaries nationwide. The Center's central office is in Connecticut, with offices in Washington, DC and throughout the country.

The Center's work is in keeping with Seekers' values, especially our commitment to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need, and with our affirmation a few years ago for policy advocacy concerning the social safety net. It is also in keeping with our ongoing conversations about aging under the rubric "Down the Road". Sustaining

Medicare as a strong social insurance program is a justice issue because the program's core design is one that promotes equality of opportunity and access to healthcare for all older people and people with disabilities. Moreover, about half of all Medicare beneficiaries are poor or near poor. The Center's work to ensure fair access to Medicare, a social insurance program, is in line with Seekers' commitment to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need. Trish Nemore worked at the Center from 2000 – 2012 as a Senior Policy Attorney and continues ties with the program.

[Congregation Action Network](#)

The Congregation Action Network (CAN) is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. The Network acts in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants, demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. CAN was created in 2017 primarily to defend undocumented immigrants from detention and deportation. Since then, this collective of more than 70 Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Humanist, Hindu, Buddhist, and other congregations, has brought its faithful resistance to bear in the DC/MD/VA region to provide support and solidarity to neighbors, friends, and family who fear being detained, deported or profiled.

Since many of the harshest immigration policies have been mitigated by the change in administrations, CAN has redirected its focus to broader local and state legislative protections for immigrants and to supporting a national strategy for a pathway to citizenship for about eight million of the approximately 11 million undocumented residents of the U.S. The Montgomery County Cluster of CAN, to which Seekers belongs, has also focused on various actions needed to help Afghan refugees. MoCo Cluster joined other groups in

successfully lobbying the MD General Assembly to pass The Dignity Not Detention Act to keep ICE detention facilities out of Maryland and the Maryland Driver Privacy Act to prevent Maryland Vehicle Administration from sharing information about Maryland drivers with ICE or other federal immigration enforcement entities. Late in 2021, the General Assembly overrode Governor Hogan's veto of those bills.

Seekers Church has been a member of CAN since its inception and members of the community are active in the Montgomery County Cluster of congregations. Trish Nemore and the Eyes to See Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group nurture our partnership with CAN.

[CreatureKind](#)

CreatureKind is a nonprofit organization that invites Christians to love God and their neighbors—all of them—by attending to the welfare of farmed animals. CreatureKind meets Christians where they are for conversations about the treatment of animals who are farmed for human consumption. It encourages Christians to consider what they—as members of the body of Christ—believe about God's creatures and how they might move toward living out those beliefs more fully. CreatureKind supports a network of partner organizations, providing information, prompting discussion, sharing stories, and offering recommendations for flourishing as human creatures without denying the flourishing of animal creatures. CreatureKind inspires vegans, vegetarians, omnivores, farmers, fishers, and friends to learn from each other about how each can be part of a church that follows Christ into the reconciliation of all creatures.

In 2021, CreatureKind helped 14 emerging global leaders develop community animal advocacy skills, deepen their theology of animals, and connect them with like-minded leaders and mentors. They gave or hosted more than 20 public talks, published five articles in outside publications, and gave seven interviews, equipping Christians to embody the interconnection and interdependence of God's whole creation.

Seekers Church became a CreatureKind partner organization in March 2022. As a partner community with CreatureKind, members of Seekers are creating a small group, facilitated by John Morris, to help us carry this dimension of our commitment to care for the natural environment by supporting community educational activities and conversations.

[Equality Virginia](#)

Equality Virginia, is an organization which educates about and advocates for policies to support the human rights of LGBTQ people of all ages in Virginia. Equality Virginia has worked on local and state policies concerning safety for LGBTQ youth in schools, marriage equality, housing discrimination, police violence against transgender persons, employment discrimination and harassment, and services for older LGBTQ persons. Last year, Equality Virginia helped to suggest and support bills building specific programs and rights in housing, health and employment to take advantage of the Democratic majority in the House of Delegates.

The organization staff helps coordinate events for education and advocacy around the state, leading up to a highly respected lobby day which combines education of the many volunteers who come to lobby and sessions for legislators on

particular issues. Particular groups are organized to help gather energy around an issue which will be focused on in the future. Last year, there were " Bills and Bagels" sessions every Monday morning, which were well attended by Delegates and Senators. Energy is a bit lower this year, as the new governor is eliminating many advances by executive order, but EV will continue to push on the key components. Cynthia Dahlin has been an active participant in the work of Equality Virginia since 2013.

[Interfaith Action for Human Rights](#)

IAHR represents people of faith who educate and advocate in Maryland, DC and Virginia for corrections systems that avoid unnecessarily punitive practices such as solitary confinement and that instead focus on rehabilitation and successful reentry.

IAHR envisions a societal system of corrections that is free of racism, rehabilitative rather than punitive, and that honors the dignity of each human being, helps people return to society well prepared to carry on with fulfilling and productive lives and holds those in power in the system responsible for implementing these principles. IAHR also envisions a society that minimizes the use of corrections by addressing the need for economic opportunity, education, and healthcare of all of its members.

IAHR contributes to the realization of our vision by bringing interfaith-based action to bear on prison reform in MD, DC (and the Federal Bureau of Prisons), and VA by advocating for the end of all forms of brutality & torture in prisons and jails; limiting the use of solitary confinement to 15

consecutive days and working toward its elimination; the development of rehabilitative alternatives to the current system of mass incarceration and improvement of education, medical care, and mental health services for those incarcerated, providing supportive correspondents as well as legal and other services to those who are incarcerated and educating the general population on prison reform.

Sandra Miller is an active link between IAHR and Seekers Church, and has successfully promoted within Seekers and beyond the pen pal program, as well as being an IAHR pen pal.

[Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake](#)

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) educates, supports and inspires people and communities of faith to advocate for the land and waters of the Chesapeake through policies and practices that promote a healthier environment and healthier people, aiming to fulfill a commitment to environmental justice by (as author Wendell Berry says): *Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.*

IPC continues to grow a network of congregations committed to its Partner Congregation Pledge (now 100 congregations!), which Seekers endorsed last fall. Through this action faith communities commit to serve as good stewards of the land and waters of the Chesapeake, and sustain the life and health of all creatures.

IPC's work, supported by Seekers, bears witness to God's restoration of the world by engaging diverse faith communities

in environmental stewardship, strengthening congregation green teams through its Faithful Green Leader Training, equipping them to plan actions and projects which will reduce water pollution, foster wildlife habitat and conserve energy. IPC offers ways for Seekers community to “put our faith into action” by participating in actions and advocacy that support the healing and flourishing of God’s Creation, rooted in our own watershed of the Chesapeake Bay. Through our support of this work we are fulfilling our Commitment/Call to care for every part of God’s creation. Kolya Braun Greiner, who has served as IPC staff since 2014, will maintain our link to IPC beyond her departure from IPC in May when she shifts to a roll of consultant.

[Silver Spring Justice Coalition](#)

Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC) is a community response for Montgomery County, Maryland to end profiling, brutality, and other misconduct by police. SSJC envisions a state and county where community and individual needs for safety are met while harm by police is eliminated. They aim to create a paradigm shift in police-community engagement. Race, class, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and mental health status must never again put people in Montgomery County at risk of state-sponsored discrimination and violence.

SSJC has actively and effectively advocated for: policing reform in Montgomery County and the state of Maryland; removing armed officers from county high schools and replacing them with social workers, restorative justice practitioners and other student support services; and demanding investigations of and accountability for local killings and abuse by police in Montgomery County. Paul Holmes, a member of

Seekers, is our link to SSJC.

Texas Nicaraguan Community

The mission of the Texas Nicaraguan Community is to provide humanitarian assistance to Nicaraguan nationals in Nicaragua that are suffering from hunger, lack of medical attention, persecution, and any other lack of human rights. They help meet the needs of Nicaraguans inside and outside Nicaragua. Their campaigns include a food bank, anti-hunger campaigns and medical support for those most in need. Oswaldo Montoya and Rosa Campos are active links between Texas Nicaraguan Community and Seekers Church.

[Young People for Progress](#)

Young People for Progress (YPP) is a community organizing and social justice organization of people under the age of 35, residing in Montgomery County, Maryland. YPP strives to empower youth and young adults by engaging in issue campaigns and voter education campaigns.

Since its founding in 2019 YPP has: helped win youth and young adults seats to the Montgomery County Policing Advisory Commission; held 'know your rights' trainings and restorative justice workshops; advocated for police reform at the local and state level; created the Police Incident Documentation Project (PIDP) to collect civilian accounts of incidents with police in Montgomery County; and continued to build the case for systemic changes to policing in the county.

Amidst heightened outrage and renewed attention to police

violence and misconduct, both nationally and locally, YPP leaders have participated in public demonstrations and issued countless statements and social media posts expressing solidarity with the victims of such misconduct. Current priority campaigns are focused on removing police from county schools and reducing the role of police in traffic enforcement. Other efforts include: providing mental health crisis teams and other non-police alternatives for responding to nonviolent and non-emergency issues; decreasing the Montgomery County Police budget; and increasing investments that strengthen communities and prevent crime, such as affordable housing and services for the unhoused, workforce development, youth support programs and free, accessible, and safe public spaces.

Our work with Young People for Progress supports the Seekers commitment to “foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need” and to see youth as “valuable and valued parts of our community.” The Seekers Anti-Racism Group is working with YPP to help Seekers better understand and struggle to address the racial disparities and injustices that persist right in the Seekers Church community.

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