

September 2008 Soundings

This issue of Soundings includes:

Calendar

Numerous fall events, sermon summaries

CALENDAR

Sunday, Sept. 7–InterPlay, 1 – 4 p.m., Seekers Sanctuary. Leaders, Kate and Billy Amoss. (See story for other sessions.)

Sept. 9 – Oct. 11–Seekers School of Christian Living. Tuesday evenings, 7:45-9:30 p.m. (see story).

Saturday, Sept. 13–Seekers Singalong, June Gable’s house in Takoma Park, 7:30 p.m. Bring a snack to share, and sing from Rise Up Singing. Glen Yakushiji plays guitar and facilitates.

Sunday, Sept. 14– Jesse Palidofsky at Takoma Park Folk Festival (see story).

Friday, Sept. 19 – Sunday, Sept. 21–Silent Retreat at Dayspring, with Deborah Sokolove as Retreat Leader. Only a few spaces remain. \$165/person. Register by Sept. 7. Contact Nancy Lawrence or Marjory Bankson for information or to register.

SEEKERS EARLY FALL SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Jacqie Wallen sends our SCL fall first-term preview.

Seekers School of Christian Living

Fall Semester 2008

First Term, Sept. 9 – Oct. 11, Tuesday evenings, 7:45-9:30p.m.

All are invited to share a light dinner before the class beginning at 7 p.m.

Classes:

Global Warming: Changing CO2urse

Led by Jeannine Caracciolo and Ruth Alice White

This discussion group will explore the history and science of global warming, personal values and habits as they relate to climate change, and personal actions to curb the effects of global warming. How does our caring about climate and adverse climate changes and their effects on the vulnerable and poor worldwide relate to our faith and our core spiritual values? We'll use a discussion guide from the Northwest Earth Institute (www.nwei.org) and supplement it with material from Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light (an interfaith resource for faith-based learning and action). We'll also draw on Brian McLaren's *Everything Must Change*, *Jesus and the Global Revolution of Hope*, and other sources. Jeannine and Ruth Alice, as the course conveners, will provide the structure and materials for lively exploration and discussion. The discussion guide is \$20, and there are a few free loaner books.

Semi-Secrets of Seekers

Led by Marjory Bankson and Margreta Silverstone

Do you ever wonder "Who's really in charge around here?" Do you long for a simple organizational chart rather than a personal story? Are you intrigued by the invitation to offer a class? Display your art? Preach a sermon? Ask for money from the Growing Edge Fund?

Join us for a six-week exploration of the culture and practices that make Seekers a viable spiritual community with distributed leadership. Together, Marjory and Margreta will bring lots of experience and creativity to leading the class.

You can expect weekly reading assignments (biblical and otherwise), writing and sharing in class. Whether you've been coming to Seekers a long time or a short time, you can expect to learn and grow in your understanding of this particular Body of Christ.

GORDON COSBY WILL END HIS FORMAL ROLES AT CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR

Keith Seat, a member of the C of S Ecumenical Council, writes to us.

GORDON'S ENDING OF HIS C OF S ROLES

Gordon Cosby has sent the attached letter to the Ecumenical Council of the Church of the Saviour stating that he expects to end his formal roles at C of S by the end of the year. This means that Gordon will no longer be preaching at 2025 Mass. Ave. on Sundays.

Although Gordon strongly feels that "retirement is a secular concept," as I've heard him describe it in the past, I'm hopeful that there will be some suitable way to honor and celebrate his transition. Gordon's letter indicates that he does plan to continue to be involved in some way.

GORDON'S LETTER

August 8, 2008

Dear Ecumenical Council Friends,

This letter is being sent to you and your church communities with deep appreciation for many wonderful years of ministry through the Headquarters office at 2025. Hanging out with you “characters” has been the most fulfilling and gratifying experience anyone could have with a church community.

My wisdom now is that I should not continue in any official capacity after the end of this year. I will support the Ecumenical Council in any way possible as you work with the issues surrounding disposition of the building and any other tasks that lie ahead.

I hope to continue to be available to God and some remnant of our community in the weeks and months to come for as long as I am able. I feel the urgency of Christ’s message as strongly as ever.

May we continue to find ways to encourage and challenge on another in pursuit of Christ’s realm among us.

Faithfully and with much love,

Gordon

N. Gordon Cosby

DISPOSITION OF THE 2025 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. BUILDING

The plan of the member churches of the former Church of the Saviour has long been to sell the building at 2025 Massachusetts Ave., C of S headquarters since the 1950s, once Gordon is finished preaching there and the Ecumenical Service is no longer supporting the building. The end of Gordon’s formal leadership and the disposition of 2025 is the end of an era that will bring a great deal of emotion to many of us.

Kate Cudlipp, as Moderator of the Ecumenical Council, is gathering information and getting recommendations on how the Council may want to proceed in preparation for the next Council meeting on September 28. Apparently, however, there have been a few creative or unconventional ideas percolating among some individuals or communities which may not make this process as straightforward as it otherwise would be.

Gordon's letter will be a topic of our September 7 Stewards Meeting at Seekers. More information and updates certainly will be circulated to the community in the weeks and months ahead. Please let Kate and/or me know if you have any questions or comments about this development.—Hugs, Keith

NEWS OF THE WIDER SEEKERS COMMUNITY

Jane Leiper has moved from California to Washington state to be near her son Bruce, who has returned from long-term work in education in Asia. Jane was a longtime member of Seekers who initiated our Christmas Eve and Easter community meals and was one of the members keeping us internationally focused and aware. Before and after retirement, she was involved in work and volunteer service in Asia. Jane's new address:

Jane Leiper

1133 E. Park Ave.

Port Angeles, WA 98362

SEPTEMBER 11 PRAYER CIRCLE

The Seekers group Eye to See, Ears to Hear, along with The Gandhi Brigade, will hold a prayer circle on Thursday, September 11, 7 – 8 p.m. All are invited to join us as we pray for peace and justice. We will begin and end with a prayer and

hold a Quaker-style circle. Those who feel compelled will offer their individual prayers and thoughts into the circle as we remember and honor those who died, those who served tirelessly in the aftermath, those who lost loved ones, those who felt compelled to act with such violence, and all peacemakers who work to bring about a lasting world peace.

CELEBRATION CIRCLE'S REFLECTIONS—IT MUST BE FALL

Sunday, September 7, marks the beginning of the Recommitment season and the community's bringing once again a Word for the children. The Children's Word is an integral part of our worship time together as an opportunity for everyone—the bringer of the Children's Word, for the community at large, and, finally and very important, for our children to hear the Word of God.

A few months ago many of you participated in a Third Sunday discussion about how Seekers can best hold the lives of our children in community and how we can offer them lessons of our Christian faith. Celebration Circle has been discussing the ideas offered in that conversation in conjunction with our call to bring meaningful and creative worship services to the community.

As we mined our institutional memory, we realized that many in Seekers have never signed up to offer the Word to our children. We realized that we have heard any number of people say that it isn't that they don't want to be engaged in this way, but that they don't know where to begin. This proved to be a catalyst for our dialogue about creative ways for the whole community to hear the lections each week.

For both the Recommitment and Jubilee seasons, Celebration Circle invites each one of you to consider bringing the Word for the children by retelling the Hebrew Scripture for the week. Bring your creativity and skills of storytelling to our

children! Bring the Hebrew Scripture reading as only you know how to do. If you have any questions, please contact anyone in Celebration Circle (Peter Bankson, Ken Burton, Sandra Miller, or Deborah Sokolove). Jackie McMakin will be back with the signup sheets soon—get your pens ready!

HELP THE HOMELESS WALKATHON AND MINI-WALKS

Sandra Miller writes—It's fall, and that means that many of the nonprofits that Seekers Church helps to support through our Domestic Giving are in the midst of what has become a landmark local happening now in its 26th year—The Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon campaign. This campaign serves two major purposes. The first is to educate people, especially children, in the larger Washington, DC, Metro Area about issues of homelessness. The other is an opportunity for nearly 400 local nonprofits to raise significant funds to use in the continuation of their work in addressing those issues.

One of the beauties of this fundraising campaign is that the funds earned are unrestricted, the hardest kind of funds for nonprofits to raise. That is, the funds are not restricted for use in a specific program or project of a nonprofit. The funds can be used for rent and basic expenses, salaries, capacity building and of course, programs and projects. Every Seeker has the opportunity to get engaged in a number of ways with the nonprofits we support that are beneficiaries in this campaign. Those nonprofits are:

N Street Village

Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place (CCHFP)

Sarah's Circle

Silver Spring Interfaith Housing Coalition (SSIHC)

Christ House

Hope and a Home

L'Arche of Greater Washington

First and foremost, you can register to walk. Your registration fee (\$15 for youth up to age 25, \$25 for adults) goes directly to the nonprofit of your choice. Additionally, each nonprofit earns incentive money directly from Fannie Mae, based on the total number of walkers. You can walk on Saturday, November 22, with tens of thousands of people on the National Mall and around the tidal pool, which is an awesome experience. Or you can take a shorter walk in one of the many mini-walks hosted by congregations and organizations in support of the beneficiaries. These take September through November 9. You can support multiple nonprofits by walking many times. Registration for the National Mall walk is simple and done online at www.helpthehomelessdc.org. Encourage everyone you know to walk!

If you can't walk, you can write a check to "Help the Homeless" to cover low-income walkers who can't afford the registration fees, and give it to the nonprofit you'd like to support. Like Seekers, you can become a sponsor of your favorite nonprofit, also accomplished at www.helpthehomelessdc.org under the "partners" tab. Minimum sponsorship level is \$1500 and can be made by individuals and companies.

For small nonprofits like Silver Spring Interfaith Housing Coalition, whose annual budget is just \$417,000, this is the single largest fundraiser of the year. Please consider getting involved as you are able.

DISCIPLESHIP YEAR INTERNS

On August 31, some of the seven people who are this year's Discipleship Year interns made a visit to Seekers and had many

lively post-service conversations with our community.

Kate Cudlipp writes in an August 29 email—The Discipleship Year is a program of the Festival Center, and interns come to DC to spend a year working in a nonprofit organization—some related to the C of S and some not. They live in a group house on 16th St. We have a former intern in our midst in Seekers—Jeannine Caracciolo, who came to DC a few years ago as part of the DY program and stayed on! Also, Aeren Martinez participated in the group that selected this year's interns.

In her email, Kate attaches names and brief biographies of the interns.

INTERPLAY—FALL 2008

Sue Johnson sends a fall overview of InterPlay: September 7, First Sunday Playgroup & Bodyspirit Celebration of InterPlay will take place 1 – 4 p.m. at Seekers. Kate and Billy Amoss will be leading this monthly gathering that is open to all. It's a great way to get a taste of InterPlay's creative process, which uses easy-to-learn forms of movement, storytelling, and voice—that anyone can do. Free for first-timers. Suggested donation for others is \$10 – \$20 for the 3-hr. session.

A Weekend Untensive will take place September. 19 – 21, 2008, "Playing With Politics." Join Phil Porter (co-creator of InterPlay) for a weekend of playing around with politics. Bring your knowing and not-knowing about the issues that move you. Laughter guaranteed! Sue Johnson has flyers, or you can check out the website, www.interplay.org, for more details and to register. Early registration is \$250. After 9/5 it's \$280. Call Body Wisdom, Inc. at 510-465-2797 to register by credit card. Friday night and Saturday at Seekers, Sunday at a Silver Spring venue.

InterPlay Performance, "Playing with Politics", Sat. night, 9/20, at Seekers. Performance by The Big Yes (our own DC area troupe that performed for Jean Adams' birthday party at Seekers) and Off the Deep End from NC. \$15 for performance only; included in the Untensive registration. If you're a little nervous about participating in InterPlay, come and participate by being a witness. It's amazing to see what these performers create in the moment!

Coming in November: "Seeding Cultures of Peace," with Masankho Banda. 11/15/08 at Seekers.

JESSE PALIDOFSKY AT TAKOMA PARK FOLK FESTIVAL

Jesse writes—I wanted folks to know I will be at the Takoma Park Folk Fest. My performance time listed on the TPFF website is between noon and 1:45. I've been unable to confirm so far exactly when I will be on. Hopefully I can be more specific soon.

Sunday, September 14—Jesse Palidofsky

Takoma Park Folk Festival

Political Songs Showcase

Takoma Park Middle School

7611 Piney Branch Rd. (near Rt. 410)

Takoma Park, MD

12 noon – 1:45 pm Grove Stage

Free

www.tpff.org

www.jessepal.net

ANNA GILCHER JOINS A NEW FAITH COMMUNITY

Anna Gilcher, who has been at Seekers for 4 years with her children Beatrice and Julian Drumwright, is returning with them to the Episcopal church in College Park, MD, where she and her husband George were married and the children were baptized. The family, after much discernment, decided on a church with more children to share community life with Beatrice and Julian. Anna was Seekers' Sunday School director, was a member of Learners and Teachers, and co-taught classes in our School of Christian Living, which L&T coordinates. Anna won't be leaving completely, as she will still be involved in L&T and the School of Christian Living. She preached a final sermon on August 28 (see Seekers Sermon link on the Seekerschurch.org website).

We all prayed, and will continue to pray, for the family's future life at their new community.

You'll be greatly missed!

SERVANT LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

Kate Cudlipp writes in an August 16 email—I am attaching an electronic copy of the brochure for the fall term at the Servant Leadership School. There are classes offered for 10 weeks beginning September 9. Many are on Tuesdays and so would conflict if you are planning to attend a Seekers SCL class, but there is one on Wednesdays and a couple on Thursdays. You can also go to the School website at www.slschool.org for information on the fall classes. Late summer blessings, Kate

POTOMAC CONSERVANCY OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

Are the members of your congregation looking for a great opportunity to get outside this fall and give back to the community? If so, you don't need to look any further than Potomac Conservancy's Growing Native! It's a year-round volunteer project that helps to restore and protect rivers and streams in the Potomac River watershed. Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds participate by collecting native tree seeds and planting trees along streams and rivers across the region. Not only are participants creating forests for tomorrow, they are also experiencing the important connection between healthy, forested lands and clean waters.

Since Growing Native's inception in 2001, nearly 30,000 volunteers have collected more than 94,000 pounds of acorns, walnuts, and other hardwood tree seeds. These seeds have generated seedlings that will be used to restore sensitive streamside lands.

Growing Native's efforts culminate in the fall, while seeds are dropping on the ground! We invite people to volunteer by acting as Growing Native ambassador, seed collection event coordinators, and drop-off site coordinators. Growing Native is an easy and flexible project to be a part of. Volunteers can get involved in any capacity, by collecting seeds in their backyard as an individual, by joining their family and friends together to collect at a park, or by attending one of Potomac Conservancy's public seed collection events.

I encourage anyone who would like to meet other people with a passion for the environment, an interest in acting as a community leader to protect the Potomac River, and a desire to volunteer, to attend. In October, Potomac Conservancy's Growing Native will also host a number of public seed collection events. I will follow-up with you as we get closer to October to supply you with the flyer. I hope the members of your congregation will get involved with this great project!

Visit www.growingnative.org for more information. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you! Kate McNamee, Outreach Coordinator, Potomac Conservancy, 8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 612, Silver Spring, MD 20910. 301-608-1188 x211. www.potomac.org

SEEKERS SERMONS IN AUGUST

The sermons that appear on the Seekers website are listed below, with brief thoughts on their themes. You can read these sermons and archived sermons as far back as 1995 at seekerschurch.org. At the home page, find the tab "Worship" near the top. Click on this tab, and the drop-down menu will list both Sermons and Sermon Archive.

August 31, 2008. Farewell sermon, Anna Gilcher. Rumi wrote—and I have quoted this before at this pulpit: "If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words alone, then seek to be cooked by the fire itself. Don't abide in borrowed certainty. There is no real certainty until you burn; if you wish for this, sit down in the fire."

This is what Jacqie and Linda and Kate invited us to do last week in the Seekers service sacred conversation on race and diversity. To sit down in the fire and allow ourselves to burn...not to be consumed but to be transformed.

August 24. Third Sacred Conversation on Race and Diversity. On May 18, Seekers Church, Covenant Christian Community, the Divinity Center for Better Living and the National Spirituality and Science Center, who all call the building at 276 Carroll Street NW their faith home, joined to form a community of communities and began a sacred conversation about race and diversity. The second conversation took place on July 27 during the sermon time of Covenant Christian Community. Today Seekers extended its worship time to embrace the third conversation as the sermon time.

August 17. "Chosen, Blessed, Broken, Given," The Guatemala Pilgrims of Seekers. Henri Nouwen, a Roman Catholic priest, has written about the idea of "chosen, blessed, broken, and given" as essential to the Christian life. This mirrors the story of Jesus, and of the Eucharist. We pilgrims to Guatemala this year were asked to reflect and pray about this powerful concept, and allow it to inform our journey. Here are some of our reflections.

August 10 (on the occasion of the baptism of Nathaniel Ogle at Seekers). "Baptism and Beautiful Feet," Kevin Ogle. As I was beginning to think about what I would say to you today, Deborah informed me of Seekers theme for this liturgical season. "Chosen to Live, Choosing to Serve."

August 3. "Freedom Versus Oppression," Rachel Smith. I had this thought a while back—about all the trouble that goes into the creation and enforcement of rules. There are rules against driving anything over 65 even on the interstate, but only in certain states; rules against wearing brown shoes with a black outfit but black pants and a brown sweater is okay; rules against wearing open-toed shoes at work except on Fridays its okay, rules for how the proper way for children to stand and walk in line back and forth to the lunchroom at school, rules you make for your dog that he is allowed to eat scraps from the table, but only if Dad puts them on a plate on the floor. The list goes on.