

# Callings

in Church of the Saviour

Vol 10, Issue 3 • Fall 2021

## THE KAYLA MCCLURG HOUSE

By Bill Mefford

After several conversations with members of the Church of the Saviour community over the past couple of months, the Board of Directors of the Festival Center voted unanimously in March to change the name of Andrew's House, located at 2708 Ontario Road NW, to "The Kayla McClurg House" – in honor (and remembrance) of Kayla McClurg.

We chose to name the building after Kayla because of her long-time ministry of hospitality at the house. In addition to working part-time at The Potter's House, as an assistant to Gordon and Mary Cosby, Kayla was the creator and editor of the Inward/Outward website. Kayla was also the residential host of Andrew's House, which welcomed countless visitors to the community and multiple ministries accompanying people in need. Kayla taught classes at the Servant Leadership School (now named the School for Liberation) and, in 2016, she co-founded Overlook Retreat House (with Trish Stefanik) on the grounds of the church's retreat farm, Dayspring, in Germantown, Maryland.

In her memorial reflection on Kayla's life, Trish described Kayla's ministry this way: "Kayla touched innumerable souls around the world through her gifts of simple presence and service, faithful friendship, teaching, preaching, and writing. She believed that in being honest about human weakness and vulnerability – and having a good sense of humor about it – we can get on with allowing God to do amazing things through us; not in some grandiose way, she would say, but in the messy ordinariness of our lives and neighborhoods."

The work that will happen in the coming months and years at the Kayla McClurg House will, we believe, continue to honor her. The first floor tenant, Platform of Hope, works to amplify "the ability of families to define and pursue family success with the support of a platform of coordinated resources, in a close-knit community experience." On the second floor, Little Bird Community Acupuncture provides health and wellness. And on the third floor, Mike Little's Faith and Money Network works with individuals and churches, "leading reflections and discussions on the role of money in our lives" while offering a wide variety of resources that can be used to explore spirituality and money.

In addition to housing the above-mentioned organizations, the Festival Center is gifting a room on the third floor of the Kayla McClurg House to Church of the Saviour to be a space where historical documents can be safely stored as well as a space for Church of the Saviour members to do research and writing. We welcome all who wish to come and walk through the house to see the wonderful renovations and to see the office given to Church of the Saviour. In the spirit of Kayla, who's gracious and giving spirit blessed all who entered this house, the Festival Center is dedicated to continuing the ministry of hospitality, ministry, love, and laughter.

"Knowing Kayla, I see her smiling and supporting this new chapter in the life of the house. The one thing she would question would be naming the house after her. But in the end she would be happy to see the house filled with people and activity dedicated to the liberation and abundant life that God desires," said Trish, who continues Kayla's ministry at Overlook Retreat House on the Dayspring property.



Knowing Kayla, I see her smiling and supporting this new chapter in the life of the house. The one thing she would question would be naming the house after her. But in the end she would be happy to see the house filled with people and activity dedicated to the liberation and abundant life that God desires.

*Bill Mefford is the Executive Director of The Festival Center, which owns the Kayla McClurg House on Ontario Road.*

# Editor's Corner | Out of Print Books



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

When Gail Arnall asked me to offer a zoom class on JOURNALING for the 8th Day Community, I was reluctant to say yes because my own journal has evolved into a kind of short-hand of dreams, questions, noticings and even photos. Who was I to offer advice on this common practice? Or was it common today? Would people be interested? And what could we do in four sessions on zoom?

With these questions in mind, I wondered what revisiting Elizabeth O'Connor's books would yield, so I turned there first. Rereading her books, *Eighth Day of Creation*, *Search for Silence* and *Our Many Selves* was like opening a forgotten treasure chest! My own markings in all three books recalled my early days at Church of the Saviour, when I was just discovering the powerful connection between my inner journey (which had, until then, been almost entirely solitary) and my outer journey (which was full of questions as I approached the age of 40). I knew then that I would say yes to teaching the class.

The book which seemed most relevant for JOURNALING was *Our Many Selves: A Handbook for Self-Discovery*. It has been out of print for many years, and yet I suspect there are copies lurking on shelves that are being cleared as people age and move, thinning our libraries as we go. I asked members of the JOURNALING class to ask around their community for copies to borrow for the class – and that sparked an idea.

Now that we have a place to store Church of the Saviour papers, records and pictures – on the third floor of the newly-named Kayla McClurg House – I am wondering if we could also collect used copies of those primary books which could then be borrowed for a class at the School for Liberation or in one of the CoS communities. In other words, we need about 20 copies of each book, preferably hardcover in good condition.

Here is the list of books that we would like to collect for use in a class:

- *Eighth Day of Creation*
- *Handbook for Mission Groups*
- *Search for Silence*
- *Letters to Scattered Pilgrims*
- *Our Many Selves*
- *The New Community*

Questions? Email [klaso@aol.com](mailto:klaso@aol.com)

If you have a copy of one or more of those books, you could send it bookrate to our mailing address. We will happily receive your gift and list your name as a donor in our new office space at the Kayla McClurg House. Please do NOT send other books!

**You can still purchase in-print Church of the Saviour books at our website, [inwardoutward.org](http://inwardoutward.org), then click on "Resources" and scroll down to "CoS classics."**

With care,

**Marjory**

Marjory Bankson  
Chair, Church of the Saviour Council  
Send address changes to: [callingseditor@gmail.com](mailto:callingseditor@gmail.com)

## The Church of the Saviour Council

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

# A Space for Mystery

by Julie Wan

In January of 2020, a few dozen friends, friends of friends, and a good number of strangers gathered in a Capitol Hill row house to celebrate the launch of Vita Poetica: An Arts and Faith Collective. Vita Poetica is a community that connects artists of faith in the DC area and beyond. As a fairly new member of Seekers Church, I was delighted that Deborah Sokolove, a Steward of Seekers and a renowned artist and scholar, gave our inaugural talk, focused on the deep spiritual work of making art.

This was the culmination of a long journey for me. A number of years ago, I was part of a church small group where someone suggested we study *The Interior Castle* by the 16th-century Spanish mystic, Teresa of Avila. Part-way through the study, the group decided to abandon this odd, esoteric book. But I was secretly enthralled and quietly finished it on my own. The copy, still on my shelf, is full of underlining, and somewhere in my journals are notes and copied quotes. My insides were ablaze, but everyone else had already moved on.

More than a decade later, my friend, artist Lisa Shirk, sat at my dinner table, telling me about the nuns she'd gotten to know during her recent arts residency at a convent. She was struck by how *essential* the arts were to the religious life of the nuns.

I heard in Lisa's voice something of what I'd seen in *The Interior Castle* all those years ago. Teresa of Avila's description of her spiritual experience captured how I felt—not when I was in church or praying or reading scripture—but rather when I was writing. "There is a self-forgetfulness that is so complete," she writes, "that it really seems as though the soul no longer existed... so entirely is she employed in seeking the honor of God."

Lisa and I continued our conversation over the months. We connected in our experience of creativity not just as a tool or means of drawing closer to God, but where God's presence actually dwells. We dreamed of some kind of community where we could meet like-minded people within a framework that could facilitate these connections. We wanted to create a space where creativity and spirituality could co-exist as an invitation to encounter divine mystery.

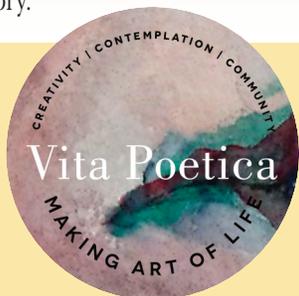
And so we gathered in that Capitol Hill row house where Lisa lives to launch Vita Poetica. We began a full menu of workshops, "salons," and open-mic nights . . . but then came the pandemic. When lockdown began in March, we shifted our activities to Zoom. A Growing Edge grant from Seekers Church enabled us to continue this online presence. Last December, a group of us curated a virtual Advent Calendar on the theme of Incarnation, with contributions from poets, writers, and artists from DC and beyond. And we debuted an online literary and arts journal which has just released its third issue this summer (visit "<http://www.vitapoetica.org/>"[www.vitapoetica.org](http://www.vitapoetica.org/)).

Now, almost 20 months and a pandemic later, we're discerning how we might get together in person again, how to move forward, what we are, and where we're going.

We'd love for you to join us. Visit the website, join our mailing list, come to an event, read and submit to the journal, and add your voice to a community of artists and makers from various creative disciplines, spiritual traditions, and life stages. We'd love to meet you and hear your story.



Lisa and I continued our conversation over the months. We connected in our experience of creativity not just as a tool or means of drawing closer to God, but where God's presence actually dwells. We dreamed of some kind of community where we could meet like-minded people within a framework that could facilitate these connections. We wanted to create a space where creativity and spirituality could co-exist as an invitation to encounter divine mystery.



**Vita Poetica is a community that connects artists of faith in the DC area and beyond.**

**Learn more about us at**

**<http://www.vitapoetica.org/>**

**where you can read and submit to our literary and arts journal, subscribe to our podcast, and register for events.**

# Tribute to Kent Klopfenstein

In the spring of 2014, when Catherine Gibson and I first spoke with Kent about coming to be the Director of Wellspring, we were honest with him about the challenges he would face. "That's actually what I like about this job," he said. "I like to take things that aren't working and turn them around."

Looking back over these past 7 years, that's exactly what Kent has done. Turned things around.

Before Kent came the Conference Center had seen little use in over three years since the Wellspring Mission Group ended. Dayspring Church was running a substantial operating deficit, even without the extra expense of caring for the Wellspring buildings. We needed someone with strong business expertise, someone who shared our Christian faith, and we needed God's grace in abundance. We needed it all, and that is what we got.

In the past 7 years plus a few months since Kent came, Wellspring has become a viable Conference Center business, running most years in the black, and with a healthy amount of funds now left in the bank. Janet Hudson has given the gift of her devoted cooking and hospitality. The summer camp, now in its sixth year here, has been both a wonderful ministry and a Godsend financially. With some bequest funding and volunteer help from Chuck Huffstetler, a carpenter from North Carolina, and volunteers from the Dayspring Church community, the buildings are now in better shape than when Kent came. The Center has had roof and siding repairs, a new kitchen range and refrigerator/freezer, new carpet, new tables and chairs, and the cabins have had extensive siding repairs and painting.

Kent's contribution to Dayspring has gone far beyond his work at Wellspring. One of the first things we asked him to do was put together a financial projection that would help reduce the Dayspring Church operating deficit. With this plan in place, we were able to build support for putting additional acres of forest into conservation easement that has brought in substantial funds for Dayspring. When the pandemic came, and grant funds to cover lost salaries became available from the Federal and County governments, Kent quickly got our applications in, and succeeded in getting over \$100,000 in funds for Dayspring (including Silent Retreat and Wellspring).



*Kent outside Wellspring.*

Turning things around financially at Wellspring has been a great achievement. But in a way, as critical as that has been, it's not what I'm most grateful for. I'm most grateful for the ministry that has happened at Wellspring. You need to hear about that ministry, to hear those stories. I recall beautiful stories from the several retreat programs I have led over these 7 years. But what touched my heart the most was participating in the "graduation ceremony" at a Veterans Coming Home Program at Wellspring a few years ago. Hearing the pain and suffering that these men and women had gone through during and after their "tours of duty," and also how their time together here witnessing and encouraging each other brought tears to my eyes. It made me remember my time in the service, my years of work at the V.A. Medical Center. All the welcoming home that had not happened, but at last in some magical way was happening. At Wellspring. At this sacred place, where magical things do happen. More often than we will ever know.

For all good things that have happened in these seven years, for Kent, for Janet and their faithfulness and devoted work I am truly grateful. Thanks be to God! In the words of Kent's favorite mystic, Meister Eckhart: If the only prayer you said was, "Thank You," that would be enough.

*– Jim Hall, July 3, 2021*

*In the spring of 2014, when Catherine Gibson and I first spoke with Kent about coming to be the Director of Wellspring, we were honest with him about the challenges he would face. "That's actually what I like about this job," he said. "I like to take things that aren't working and turn them around."*

Although Kent has been at Wellspring for eight years, I have known him for more than 25. One particularly grace-filled gift he brought predates his tenure here, and I believe was stretched, deepened and faithfully held to throughout - sometimes at no small cost. It is his commitment to call, to seek Guidance and to honor Its Promptings. That radical trust is something C of S communities have long understood as sometimes the only thing strong enough to continue the mission to which one has said, "Yes." Before Kent came to Wellspring and during his time with us, he has been testimony to such wisdom.

In addition, his business acumen is legendary, acumen he generously offered to Dayspring as well as Wellspring, with particular generosity during the pandemic. Camp Ramah has, from the beginning, felt inspired, and Kent's careful pursuit and oversight of this project have been key. He cultivated a robust roster of clients many of whom became repeat customers. He carefully managed both maintenance and improvement of the physical property.

His season with us revitalized Wellspring and leaves an imprint of Gospel truth that with God, all things are possible.

– **Karen Johnson**



When I first met Kent, I was struck by the simplicity of his office. The walls were freshly painted, and there was a telephone on the desk. That's it! Soon his residence had that same absolutely uncluttered look. I think the clarity and simplicity of that space reflected his way of thinking and working. Always focused and wide open.

In June of 2014, Dayspring's Wellspring Conference Center had essentially been shut down for 2 ½ years when Kent Klopfenstein was hired to get the facilities reopened. The life of the supporting mission group had come to an end, as have so many Church of the Saviour mission groups over the years. The mission of introducing visitors to the inward/outward life of this historic church was finding fewer participants as the life of Church of the Saviour evolved.

When I first met Kent, I was struck by the simplicity of his office. The walls were freshly painted, and there was a telephone on the desk. That's it! Soon his residence had that same absolutely uncluttered look. I think the clarity and simplicity of that space reflected his way of thinking and working. Always focused and wide open.

Dayspring Church provided some start-up funds, with a goal of Wellspring becoming self-sustaining as soon as possible. Within one year, that goal was achieved. The facilities were, and still are, in need of substantial maintenance and repairs, and that is the perennial challenge of this mission. But setting that budget item aside, Wellspring had a positive cash flow in 2015. I was always impressed with Kent's clear and constant attention to the bottom line. As a helpless perfectionist, and one of Dayspring's Caregivers at that time, I was constantly frustrated by the inability to keep everything in top condition, but I could see the wisdom of only taking on the jobs we could afford.

The buildings didn't fall down, and groups were coming and enjoying Kent's hospitality, as well as that of cook, Janet Hudson. Although there were long-standing groups, mainly CoS Sister churches, the most consequential new group Kent was able to invite was Camp Ramah, a Jewish Children's Camp with a strong program and lots of eager participants, but no physical property. The Camp is in its 6th year here as I write this, and income from this one group keeps Wellspring running, if tenuously. I know Kent spent many hours nurturing this important group along.

Kent was always looking for new sources of income to keep the books balanced. He was part of a community effort to put some Dayspring acres in a forest easement, which has provided several years of significant income. Kent was a strong supporter of the permaculture garden project, which remains strong and productive today. He negotiated two Stimulus grants from the Federal Government, which helped keep staff salaries coming during the epidemic. Other ideas were found to be inconsistent with Dayspring's mission, or otherwise not workable, but I'm sure ideas are still dancing in his mind today, and could yield fruit still.

– **Gayle Quist, retired Dayspring Caregiver**

**Kent will be leaving at the end of the summer. If you get to see him before then, do stop and thank him for his years of service to Dayspring/Wellspring.**

## Program Spotlight:

# The Potter's House Pay It Forward

None of us could have imagined that The Potter's House's sixtieth-anniversary year would have involved a global pandemic. The past sixteen months haven't been easy – but we've kept going, navigating by our North Star of values and vision for our service to the community.

One area of enormous and unprecedented growth has been our Pay It Forward free-meal program, which offers hot food and coffee to anyone in need, no questions asked. For context: in 2019, we gave away about 1,100 Pay It Forward meals over the course of the entire year. Now, we are giving away more than 1,200 meals every single month – and we have turned no one away.

We're honored to offer this hospitality to our neighbors. But we'd like to do more – and the need is real. Since the pandemic began, we've observed a deterioration in the mental and emotional well-being of many of our guests. We've seen people ill-dressed for the weather, grappling with addiction, and appearing more and more disheveled. We've noticed the abrupt absence of some guests we used to see every day.

And so we've asked ourselves: How might we make an even more meaningful difference to these neighbors? How might a simple meal, a cup of coffee, and a little human kindness become an entry point to offering more robust support, in an environment where we've already built trust and goodwill? And how might that then lead to meeting the needs of community members more fully?

In response to these questions – and as we recognize Pay It Forward's transformation from a comparatively small part of our operations to a fully-fledged food program – it's become clear that we need additional infrastructure and person-power to better support its operation and further increase its impact. So we've created a new Program and Outreach Manager staff position, which will include a specific focus on building relationships with Pay It Forward guests and helping to connect them to services and supports in the community.

Up to this point, Pay It Forward has been supported solely with donations from individuals – many of whom are reading this issue of Callings right now! – and we're deeply grateful to each and every one of you for sustaining this service to the community. We literally could not be doing this without you. Now, given the exponential growth of the program, and our commitment to creating a dedicated staff role for Pay It Forward, we will be seeking additional individual and institutional support to take this reimagined, reinvigorated effort to the next level.

Your ideas, questions, and energy will be most welcome as we move forward! Please reach out anytime to Leigh Tivol, Executive Director, at [leigh@pottershousedc.org](mailto:leigh@pottershousedc.org).



## Related Ministries

**The following ministries have grown from churches and mission groups of The Church of the Saviour. Each is independently organized.**

Academy of Hope • Becoming Church • Bethany, Inc. • Bokamoso Foundation • Caroll Café • Christ House • Columbia Road Health Service • Cornelius Corps • Cornerstone • Dayspring Earth Ministry • Dayspring Retreat Center • Dunamis Peace Institute • 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 • Liberation School • Life Asset Credit Union • Life Pathways • Manna, Inc. • New Community ArtSpace • New Community for Children • O.N.E.DC • Overlook Retreat House • Potter's House • Recovery Café • Samaritan Inns • Sarah's Circle • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Wellspring Conference Center

# Reopening of Earthen Hands at Dayspring



*Jean Brown*



*Mary Shapiro's band.*



*First fruits for the foodbank.*



*Abby Gordon, Intern*

**Dayspring Silent Retreat Center** is hiring a part-time cook to work as one of two cooks to prepare vegetarian, family-style meals for overnight retreats which are held from Friday dinner through Sunday lunch. This position is to cook for one to two weekend retreats a month. For more information and a full description, please email: [office@dayspringretreat.org](mailto:office@dayspringretreat.org).

*Callings*

Church of the Saviour  
1640 Columbia Rd., NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Sub MD 208  
Permit No 1

## Special Events

For information about events at the Potter's House,  
Google [www.pottershousedc.org](http://www.pottershousedc.org) .

While the Festival Center is being renovated, you can  
attend noonday prayers on Zoom from 12-1pm.

Google: [www.festivalcenterdc.org](http://www.festivalcenterdc.org) for the link.

**Sat, Aug 28 | Quiet Day, 10-2 pm** at the Dayspring Lodge. \$25. Full vaccination required. Bring your lunch. To register: email Nat Reid at [office@dayspringretreat.org](mailto:office@dayspringretreat.org).

**Wed, Sept 8 | Quiet Day**, 10-2 pm. Registration required. Details above.

**Wed, Sept 15 | Ember Day, 10-4pm** at the Dayspring Lodge. \$25. Vaccination required. Bring your lunch. Register with Nat Reid at [office@dayspringretreat.org](mailto:office@dayspringretreat.org).

**Oct 1-3 | "Seeding Hope in Transition,"** weekend silent retreat with Ann Dean.  
Already FULL.

**Wed, Oct 6 | Quiet Day**, 10-2 pm. Registration required. Details above.

**Tues, Nov 9 | Quiet Day**, 10-2 pm. Registration required. Details above.

**Tues, Nov 30 | Ember Day**, 10-4 pm. Registration required. Details above.



*Photo by Jean Brown.*