

Callings

in Church of the Saviour

Vol 8, Issue 2 • Summer 2019

ARTSPACE CELEBRATES CREATIVITY

By Rachel Dickerson Brunswick

Before ArtSpace came into being at New Community Church, others paved the way with their caring and commitment. Their passion for the arts has helped to sustain ArtSpace's ongoing programming and all that it offers in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington DC.

Bud Wilkinson

The ArtSpace pottery studio is named after Bud Wilkinson. At mid-life, Bud became a potter and retreat leader for Washington DC's Church of the Savior retreat center, Dayspring, in Germantown, MD. He embodied our commitment to earth, to art and the inward journey, but none of that came easily from his background.

ArtSpace is now home to many of Bud's books and supplies. But most importantly, it is the home to two of his pottery wheels which he donated before his death. Bud's story lives on through the other potters who have come after him:

Hope Hodges, Marilyn McDonald, Terry deBardelaben, and many others have spent many hours at the pottery wheel and invited others into the process of transformation that Bud traveled himself.



Maybelle Bennett (right) teaching weaving

I saw ArtSpace as an artistic extension of the principles of service that I learned growing up in New Community Church. Thankfully, the programming started with some great resources that were left for ArtSpace to use. An earlier program, Shooting Back, left a photo lab in the area that was once the shower room. Another program, Arts in Action, which was run by Wendy Dorsey, had installed a kiln and ventilation system in the furnace room and cleared out a storage area for a pottery room.

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Editor's Corner | Fully Human, Fully Alive

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Church of the Saviour

(In Memo line put "Callings")

1640 Columbia Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20009



To be made in the image of God is to be made creative, and spiritually fed by color and shape. But for many of us, that desire to make things has been stunted by criticism or simply the lack of materials. I remember a second grader who said to me, "I don't like art. My teacher said I can't draw."

It made me sad to think that, by the age of seven, this child had already internalized a judgment about his creative spirit and, I suspect, about his relationship with God. To say that "I don't like art" easily translates into "I don't like the riotous colors and textures of the natural world, of God's good creation AND I don't like being a beginner."

Brain scientists tell us that whole-brain development requires movement, color and images, as well as words. Unfortunately, that's what makes screen time so addictive for children. But science also tells us that it is physical action, not passive watching, that creates the neural network necessary for full human development. Making art is essential then for making us fully human, fully alive.

In this issue of CALLINGS, we celebrate the importance for all people, young and old, of making art. Within Church of the Saviour, we know that the New Community Church has been the heartbeat of Manna and housing rehabilitation in Washington, DC, but we may not know as much about its ArtSpace program. That's why we've devoted more space than usual in this issue to celebrate the 20-year history of this important ministry in the Shaw neighborhood.

Marilyn McDonald started the program as a way to develop community among isolated seniors, but she did not stop there. When Rachel Dickerson graduated from college with an interest in print-making, Marilyn invited her to start a more robust art program in the ground-floor space at New Community Church. NCC already had an active after-school program for latch-key children and others from Hope and a Home, at the very time when schools were cutting art from the curriculum. The kids were eager for a chance to be creative at ArtSpace.

Over the years, various programs have been offered, depending on available volunteer teachers. Now there is a new challenge. Rachel is being called to focus more attention on her young family and her own art-making, and Maybelle Bennett is getting ready to retire from her position at Howard University (and ArtSpace). Beginning soon, there will be space for artists who might want to rent space in the well-equipped studios, or for teachers who might feel called to offer their gifts in new and creative ways.

As you ponder the impact of New Community's ArtSpace program on young and old alike, I hope you will listen to the creative spirit within you. Maybe it's time for you to pick up materials that you have set aside. Maybe it's time to offer a knitting circle or a cooking club or an evening of poetry reading aloud. Art has always been the seedbed for community, for connection and joy. In this season leading up to Pentecost, the Spirit is always at work in the world, birthing newness. May something new be born also in you.

Marjory Bankson

Editor of CALLINGS and inwardoutward.org

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CALLINGS deadlines for 2019: July 31 and October 31.

The Church of the Saviour Council

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

InwardOutward.org Writers Group

Each week, a small group of writers provides a gospel reflection for readers who have signed up on the Church of the Saviour website, InwardOutward.org. Each of the five writers speaks in his or her own voice, and chooses five related quotes for your reflection during the week. Subscribers can choose a weekly or daily Email prompt. Our webmaster, Matthias Martin, has recently added Facebook and Twitter accounts to the Email capability, so people can receive reflections that way too. You can visit the website to sign up.

Inward Journey Together

Initially started by Kayla McClurg as “a project of Church of the Saviour,” InwardOutward became a companion to many beyond our local area. Using the common lectionary scriptures, Kayla’s writing most often sparked self-understanding and questions for one’s inward journey. After Kayla died last year, the Council decided to gather the archives of Gordon Cosby’s sermons and Kayla’s reflections in one place, and invite a small group of writers to continue her weekly ministry for its 5,000 or so subscribers.

As a group, we represent different communities within Church of the Saviour. We know that God calls each person to a contempla-

tive inner journey, a clear commitment to others in a small community, and a particular work of service in the world. We hope that our writing reflects those values.

Outward Journey Together

In a small way, the discipline of writing a short, personal reflection on the gospel text is part of the outward journey for all of us. We are called to this task. Birthing words for others to read is never easy. Deadlines come regularly. And we are conscious of carrying the legacy of Church of the Saviour in these offerings.

Saturday Mission Feature

There is one additional piece of InwardOutward.org which is more open to a wider number of people. We would like to encourage people to write a short, 300-word piece about how CALL brings hope and newness for you. We do not currently have a coordinator for this feature, but I have just established a new Email address where you can send your offering if you’d like to participate.

Write: CALLINGSeditor@gmail.com



Marjory Bankson, editor of Callings and Inward-Outward.org; Chair of the CoS Council and member of Seekers Church.



Ann Dean, member of the Dayspring Retreat Mission Group.



Jeanne Marcus, alumna of several CoS communities and currently attending Bread of Life Church.



Jim Marsh, member of Bread of Life Church and the Recovery Café mission group.



Trish Stefanik, Host of Overlook Retreat House at Dayspring.

Related Ministries

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

Academy of Hope • Becoming Church • Bethany, Inc. • Bokamoso Foundation • Caroll Café • Christ House • Columbia Road Health Service • Cornelius Corps • Cornerstone • Dayspring Earth Ministry • Dayspring Retreat Center • Discipleship Year • Dunamis Peace Institute • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Hope and a Home • Institute of Radical Reconciliation • Inward/outward • Joseph’s House • Jubilee Housing • Jubilee Jobs • Jubilee JumpStart • Kairos House • L’Arche • Life Asset Credit Union • Life Pathways • Manna, Inc. • Miriam’s House • New Community ArtSpace • New Community for Children • O.N.E.DC • Overlook Retreat House • Potter’s House • Samaritan Inns • Sarah’s Circle • Soteria [Servant Leadership School] • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Sounds of Hope • Tell The Word • Wellspring Conference Center

ArtSpace from page 1

Marilyn McDonald

Marilyn was a core member of NCC for many years and a visionary for much of what we see at NCC today. Marilyn died of cancer in 2007, but her

presence in this community has not left. She planted the ArtSpace seed by securing the initial funding and encouraging Rachel Dickerson to start the program. Marilyn



knew that art is essential to a healthy and holistic way of life and she wanted to bring the creative spirit alive at New Community and the surrounding neighborhood, especially to children.

Marilyn had many gifts and she had a special connection to seniors in the city. Marilyn started CARE, a ministry for low income, isolated and forgotten elderly in the Shaw neighborhood. She developed a creative arts program for seniors at ArtSpace at mid-day on Mondays. She brought many seniors who were up for the trip to participate in gentle stretches, meditation and prayer, lunch (usually consisting of her famous soup and cornbread), and finally an art session.

Along with this work she found time to develop her own artistic skills. Many of us at New Community have a series of photographs that she has taken and shared with us. She also really loved to get her hands in clay and spent time in the pottery studio. A lot of her clay creations show up on the altar on Sunday mornings.

Rachel Dickerson Brunswick

Marilyn planted the seed in me, Rachel Dickerson, a small, shy, girl who was born and raised in DC, riding the metro bus to public school since 3rd grade, growing up in New Community and graduating from Woodrow Wilson Senior High School in 1995.

In my senior year at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, I came home for winter break. My dad, Rev. Jim Dickerson, wanted me to touch up the mural around the fireplace of the NCC sanctuary, and do a few odd jobs while I was in town. I remember when Marilyn came into the sanctuary while I was working. She wanted to know if I would be interested in starting an art program when I graduated.

As a printmaker, primarily, I believe the arts have the power to transform the lives of



Rachel wearing a shawl by Maybelle



individuals as well as their communities and the world that hold these communities. I was intrigued by the opportunity Marilyn proposed to me because I wanted to give something back to the place and people who helped shape me as a person in this world, to provide opportunities in the arts for a community where art is not easily accessible on a regular basis. We began after my graduation in 1999.

I saw ArtSpace as an artistic extension of the principles of service that I learned growing up in New Community Church. Thankfully, the programming started with some great resources that were left for ArtSpace to use. An earlier program, Shooting Back, left a photo lab in the area that was once the shower room. Another program, Arts in Action, which was run by Wendy Dorsey, had installed a kiln and



ventilation system in the furnace room and cleared out a storage area for a pottery room.

For three years I led this art program for children and adults in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington DC. Annual performances, evening adult classes, kid trips to a farm on Ohio and a retreat house in West Virginia are just a few of my favorite highlights.

In 2002, I traveled to Italy to take a printmaking and bookmak-



ing course. I began dreaming of a program called the Center for Community Based Art (CCBA) for the Shaw neighborhood, funded through and in collaboration with Manna CDC (now One DC). This program provided opportunities for local artists to have resources to make their own artwork while offering their gifts and skills with others in the community through art workshops to educate, gain support, and create arts awareness throughout Washington, DC's underserved communities.

During this time, I was also a part of an art-focused mission group that Mary Lee Barker started. Mary Lee, a long time core member of New Community Church, incorporated yoga and meditation to a support group for artists or those interested in tapping into their creativity on a regular basis. As a singer, cellist and painter, Mary Lee is an incredible artist. Her most well know works are wa-



tercolor portrait paintings of those who attended a hot meals program called Loaves and Fishes on Saturdays at St. Stephens Episcopal Church. I have been inspired by her faithfulness to her call as an artist and community facilitator.

As time and funding became limited for community-based arts, I became the manager for public art at the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. ArtSpace has stayed alive with the help of the coordinators who came after me: Mara Wilson, Anyahlee Suderman, Artis Mooney, and Kristian Whipple.

Maybelle Taylor Bennett

As the Director of Howard University's Community Association and the former chair of the DC Zoning Commission, Maybelle Taylor Bennett, is always up for a challenge. While the Shaw neighborhood is not her neighborhood of residence, she has shown a deep commitment to the community. Through her work, she learned about ArtSpace and began to volunteer her many skills.

Maybelle got her start with fibers from her mom, Ruby Mills Taylor. Since childhood, she developed a love for fiber arts: knitting, weaving and design. She is the first to praise each student for the success in each step of a project, but she can also spot the slightest deviation from a pattern



a mile away. Some call her the "take-out queen." She has not only taught students to do amazing work, but she has produced many masterpieces herself as well. The fiber arts class often takes time for "show and tell".

For more than a decade, Maybelle has kept the ArtSpace program alive. She has a gift for gathering "heavy" equipment and supplies needed, as well as the gift for weaving community among the students. Exhibitions have been another way to invite the larger community it to see what's happening and inspire creativity in adults and children alike.

Conclusion

For 20 years, ArtSpace has served as a central space for curiosity, healing and connection. From that center, many people and their creative stories have rippled out into the world to create more art with restorative powers. Through the ongoing support of New Community Church, ArtSpace has been committed to providing an affordable avenue for artists of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels to express themselves.

We often talk that things happen "organically" at ArtSpace. The users of the space and our partners inform what happen at ArtSpace. Now we are in the midst of another change. Both Maybelle Taylor Bennett and Rachel Dickerson are stepping away from their roles at ArtSpace. Rachel is moving into more studio practice but will continue the exhibition program for the church sanctuary, and Maybelle is moving into retirement.

As these changes unfold, we are opening up the space for new possibilities to emerge. Starting in September, our fiber arts class will be an open studio model - where artists who have experience and want to continue working on the loom and with our other fiber supplies can do so on a regular basis. We also have a dark-room for traditional black white photography and a ceramics studio with three electric wheels and a large kiln available to artists with experience.

If you have ideas, thoughts, concerns we would love to hear from you. If you are looking for space to rent or use for meeting, studio, classroom space please contact Rachel at dc.artspace@gmail.com or Ginger, the church administrator at newcommunitychurchdc@gmail.com or 202-332-0220. We would be happy to visit with you, show you the space and hear more about what you are dreaming up. You can find more info on our website: www.artspacedc.org



A Place at the Table

By Emmy Lu Daly

My son, Fritz, and I have been a part of L'Arche in the Greater Washington area for a long time. He is a founding member of the Highland Street home, and I was head of the D.C. Euclid home almost 15 years ago.

With the strong encouragement of Dottie Bockstiegel, my dear friend, I applied to become actively involved. I was in my 70's – and was warmly welcomed. Little did I know how intimately sharing a home and other people's lives would open me in a deeply spiritual way – it would change me forever in very positive ways. I learned quickly that in L'Arche everyone is respected, loved and cared for and enjoyed for each one's unique personality. Laughter is a big part of daily living.

In my role there, I got real. And I got physically challenged, driving folks to work, art class, family outings, doctors appointments, ball games. I remember how happy Mo was on coming home from a family Thanksgiving dinner in Fairfax, and how Gene loved and cared for his cat, Joseph. There was love all around. We were, and are, a welcome part of the community. Neighbors would enjoy coming around for meals and invite us to their homes. I retired after seven years but L'Arche will always be a part of me. It truly is a powerful (wonderful) sign of hope so needed in these turbulent times.

Certainly, the beautiful memorial service for Mo (Maurice Daniel as I called him; he called me Grandma Louiy) was L'Arche at its best. It was standing room only at the Festival Center. There was live music, singing, many great stories about Mo's unique character and preferences. There was much laughter – and tears too. It was a L'Arche light shining.

Meanwhile, Fritz, who had been living in an Arlington, Virginia, group home, became a founding core member of the Highland Street home 13 years ago. When he first came to Highland Street, he was very quiet and kept to himself. Because he

was so quiet, he didn't get much attention paid to him in his previous group home. As he began to recognize that the Highland folks, his caring companions, really wanted to know him and care for him, he gradually opened up and became eager to participate in a full life. Now he is a happy, self-confident man. What he especially enjoys is singing, dancing, riding horses, blessing folks, and going to the beach.

Fritz will be 58 years old in June. He has retired from 25 years of washing county police cars and is now attending the day program at Woodmont Community Integration Center. He socializes with the group, Adults Going Places. He loves to visit his sister, Lisanne, and brother-in-law, Richard in Michigan.

Fritz and I are both happy with and grateful for L'Arche. As a mother, I have the peace of mind that Fritz will have a place at the table for life. With help from L'Arche, Fritz advocates for himself and others, by participating in the National Down Syndrome Society Buddy Walk in Washington, an annual event that brings the Down syndrome community together to support legislation that impacts their lives.

Let me close with a poem that I wrote a few years ago.

A Sacred Supper

You've been invited for a meal.

Dinner is over. The prayer candle passed.

You probably didn't hear half of the prayers;

Fritz mumbles, Linda too. Eric is loud though.

Hazel sometimes doesn't feel like praying.

Their companions pray and all

join in the Lord's Prayer.

This is L'Arche.

How they love a visiting stranger, and outings to the beach;

fishing, swimming, baseball games,

parties, dancing and sharing their lives.

You leave. You are not the same.

Something special has happened.

You've had a sacred supper.

Emmy Lu Daly is a member of Seekers Church.

Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche movement in 1964, died on May 7 at the age of 90. There are now 154 L'Arche communities across 38 countries, linked as L'Arche International.

Maurice Higgs

Maurice Daniel Higgs, known to most of us as “Mo”, was a beloved member of both L’arche and 8th Day Faith community. I had the immense gift of sharing these two communities with Mo, and so had the privilege of getting to stand back and see his radiant impact on the people around him. Though Mo arrived to us 35 years ago from Forest Haven, the infamous institution known for its ill treatment of people with intellectual disabilities, it did not stop him from delighting in the world around him.



For the 8th Day community, Mo was a burst of don’t-take-yourself-too-seriously joy, greeting each person by their “secret” name, be it Bagel, Chewgum, Grandma or Old Man. To me and so many others Our Beloved Creator used Mo to say to us again and again, “I have called you by name and you are mine.” He looked forward to Sunday every week: the singing, the fellowship, and above all, the potlucks.

For L’arche, Mo was the resident “cool guy”. He was magnetic. There was something about Mo that was irresistible. You wanted him to steal your ring, to pull your leg, to pretend to cut your hair. The same old tricks never got old, and neither did Mo. He died at 83, but was always young at heart.

One of the gifts of L’arche is that we share life in such a daily way that we grow to know each other through and through. Mo liked his potato salad with pepper, his coffee with two sugars, and his showers not too cold or too hot. He prayed for his family everyday without fail, noticed beauty in the world around him and loved his people with a deep knowing.

Maurice once told me, “You see that moon. It follows me everywhere.” I hope that I can remember that lesson from Mo, that I am never alone. That that darn light follows each of us everywhere too.

Crisely Melecio-Zambrano has been a member of the L’Arche community since 2013 and 8th Day since 2015. She also regularly spends time at Joseph’s House.



**HAVE YOU HEARD?
BREAD OF LIFE IS MOVING TO
THE POTTER’S HOUSE**

**JOIN US EVERY THURSDAY
AT 7:00PM**
In the Community Room
All are Welcome

WORSHIP BY JUBILEE CHURCH

WEDNESDAYS, 6PM-7:30PM

Join us every Wednesday night at 6pm in The Potter’s House back room for a relaxed, intimate service sitting around a table, connecting scripture to our everyday joys and struggles.

Leadership is shared, theology is open, soup and bread is provided free. All are welcome and invited.

Callings

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Special Events

Visit The Potter's House (pottershousedc.org) and Festival Center (festivalcenterdc.org) for special event listings.

May 22@12pm – May 23@ 11:59 am | DoMore24 Online Fundraiser for Christ House. See blog at www.christ-house.org.

June 1 | Common Threads Art Show Opening, 5-7pm at ArtSpace, New Community Church, 614 S St. Show will be up until June 30, then at Touchstone Gallery.

June 15 | MANNA'S 5K Race for Affordable Housing. 9am at the C&O Canal in Georgetown. Check details at mannadc.org.

June 21-23 | "Radiant Love: Praying with the Prayers of Teilhard De Chardin," silent retreat led by Ann Dean. \$225. Register at dayspringretreat.org.

July 19-21 | "Being Welcomed to the Table," silent retreat led by Margot Eyring, specializing in community around the table. \$225. Register at dayspringretreat.org.

Sept 20-22 | "Living With Gratitude," open silent retreat led by Rev. Fay Acker. \$225. Dayspringretreat.org.

