

Callings

in the Church of the Saviour

Vol 6, Issue 3 • Fall 2017

After Charlottesville



The events in Charlottesville and the murder of Heather Heyer show that America still has a long way to go in improving race relations with all of her people. As people of faith, we are called to be reconcilers. What does that look like in a country that seems to thrive on division? Where do we go that is a safe space to listen to various sides of the issue? For me, one of those places is the Festival Center, which I believe is called to be a beacon of light in the darkness that is racism. A place where people of all stripes and hues can come together and learn how they are more alike than different; sharing stories and journeys, finding solace and uplift; participating in programs that enable them to build up their communities and share resources that will enable this country to live up to the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, in spite of the fact that those ideals were written by men who did not, in fact, believe in them for all people. The Festival Center can be a place where the tough conversations that most people avoid, the conversations concerning race, education, criminal justice, economics, the distribution of this country's resources, and others, can be dissected, undergirded by a faith in a Creator who has provided everything needed so all her people can thrive and then be a blessing to others.

Gayle Fisher-Stewart is a member of the Board of Directors of the Festival Center.

Editor's Corner | Change and Continuity



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

Callings

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

Fresh winds of the Spirit are blowing through The Festival Center, and this entire issue of CALLINGS is devoted to those changes.

What has not changed is the mailing address for Church of the Saviour (see sidebar), which is still located at The Festival Center. Although Kayla McClurg has retired from her position as the "point person" for Church of the Saviour, Mike Little, whose Faith and Money Network office is at The Festival Center, has volunteered to be the contact person for visitors who want to see some of the ministries which have grown out of our deep commitment to the inward and outward journey.

Church of the Saviour today is a collection of small, independent communities, each with its own charism and call. Our decision-making body is the Church of the Saviour Council (see below), which meets regularly to provide a coordinating function rather than doctrinal guidance. As the second-generation Church of the Saviour, we are gradually finding a new form for being parts of this Body of Christ.

The CoS Council is responsible for publishing CALLINGS and we hope to have a new Church of the Saviour website soon. Kate Lasso, of the 8th Day Community, is our new CoS treasurer. She handles gifts for CALLINGS and bequests, which are divided among the eight churches. Together we own the Dayspring property, but not the Festival Center, which was organized separately as a non-profit from its beginning. If you have questions or comments, please let me know. I'd love to hear from you.

Marjory Bankson

Editor of CALLINGS, Chair of the CoS Council

Next CALLINGS deadline: November 30

Nurturing the Festival Center

The Festival Center has been a beacon in the life of the larger Church of the Saviour community of churches and missions for decades. When I worked at Potter's House in 2001-04, I relished the times when I was able to get away for noon prayers at The Festival Center. All these years later I am feeling that part of the Holy One's call on my life is as part of a team nurturing The Festival Center into the next phase of its existence, planning in the times we find ourselves but planning for the future. I have certainly been known to say, and firmly believe that for me, any contributions I might actually make to The Festival Center are an act of stewardship for the generations that follow me and those of us who have known and loved it for years.

My dream is that the board and other contributors of many kinds are setting an example of flexible, adaptable servant leadership

as we envision and put in place a responsive structure for spiritual growth, compassionate and truthful relationships across the many barriers society and circumstance have constructed between peoples and all of creation, a structure that invites and welcomes active participation and joy in the lives and issues of an evolving society.

My dream and desire are for The Festival Center as a place of endless possibilities for joy, community, growth, and support for the human spirit, and partnerships and alliances for social justice. If you share my vision, and believe we have a legacy to pass on I hope you will consider the many ways or the one way you might contribute, please be in touch with us. Our board is a working board and needs more members - we would love to receive an application from you!

Sandra Miller is a member of the Board of Directors of the Festival Center.

The Church of the Saviour Council

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

Called to Solidarity

Earlier this year, the Festival Center re-wrote its vision statement. In the new version, it states that “our call is to be in solidarity with God, each other, and all of creation.” Solidarity stands centrally in the work of the Festival Center. As a faithful response to the God who first showed solidarity with us in the life of Christ, our solidarity with God, each other, and all of creation is nothing less than faithfulness to heart of the Christian tradition.

On one hand, by solidarity, we are referring to the interdependence of our oppressions and the interdependence of our liberation. Solidarity is not the option of the privileged, but the recognition of our mutual entanglement with one another. On the other hand, by solidarity we are referring to our responsibility to work alongside those who work for justice and to struggle alongside those who struggle. Solidarity is our mutual entanglement with each other that demands we cultivate partnerships with others for our common liberation.

Through its programs, Festival Center aims to be an organization that enters into solidarity with movements for justice and equips others to do the same. In 2017, the Festival Center has made strides in this direction in terms of meeting space, Soteria Community School, and Disciple-

ship Year. In these few months, the Festival Center has provided meeting space to HIPS, the organizers of Resist This, People’s Climate March, a local Immigrant Rights Coalition, Bread for the City, and the Queer and Trans Night of Healing and Resistance. Soteria has organized events such as a panel discussion about the challenges of the nonprofit industrial complex, a lecture by Dr. Drew Hart who authored *Trouble I’ve Seen: Changing How the Church Views Racism*, as well as provided classes on topics such as Christianity and Islam, Language and Oppression, and Black and Liberation Theology. Discipleship Year continues to do the work of connecting volunteers with local DC organizations which prepare them to identify racism and other systems of violence.

In truth, solidarity has always been an implicit part of the ministry of the Festival Center. However, our aim is to bring this element to the fore, to make solidarity central to our values and our programming, and to be an active partner with movements for justice, in particular local movements. We are excited to embody our faithfulness by joining hands with others in the fight for liberation

Jay Forth is the Executive Director of the Festival Center.



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Discipleship Year Program: Unique Volunteer Experience

By Dawn Longnecker

Discipleship Year started when Charles Demere, a member of the Church of the Saviour, gave his property on 16th St. NW to The Festival Center in 1995. He was a very generous man to whom we are eternally grateful. Throughout the years, many Directors have provided leadership to the program including Jenny Buckingham, Susan Burton, Elizabeth McMeekin, and Marisa Stubbs. I came on in 2007. Approximately 107 volunteers have served here, committing themselves to working in non-profits dedicated to reducing poverty and injustice, along with serving in the area of environmental sustainability.

This program has a special depth that we nurture intentionally. We provide a weekly seminar for the group which has three parts: community, justice, and faith. Along with this, Soteria Community School provides classes for the volunteers to engage. These classes also mirror the Church of the Saviour's main centerpieces, the inward journey, the outward journey, and community. We draw on the Church of the Saviour members, the volunteers, and the wider community to lead seminars.



Volunteer Jiayi Wang from China

doubted, continued to be loved by him. Community and individual growth happens in Discipleship Year and it is beautiful to witness.

In 2017, the Discipleship Year house was sold and we moved to Andrew's House in February. Andrew's House had been operating as a Church of the Saviour house of hospitality since 1985. For 19 years, Kayla McClurg managed this house. Trish Stephanik moved in and joined her during the last few years. At the end of 2016, Kayla and

This program is rooted in our Christian tradition, but open to learning from others who do not identify as Christian. We recognize that all people have important questions and truths to share. Discipleship Year is a wonderful web of interacting energy where we listen, draw from, struggle, engage and help each other grow. The groups remind me of the earliest disciples of Jesus who struggled to understand him, worked to follow him and, when they



Volunteer Clara Debnam from North Carolina

Trish moved to Dayspring Farm to open Overlook House in order to make Andrew's House available to the Discipleship Year volunteers. We are grateful for their graciousness throughout this transition period. We wish them the best on the retreat property, praying and hoping that their new ministry becomes all they hope it will be in coming years.

Some years I wonder how we will find enough volunteers for the program; but we do. This August we're welcoming an exceptional diversity of volunteers: Jiayi Wang is coming from China to serve at Academy of Hope, Clara Debnam from North Carolina will be at Joseph's House, Jamie Reich from California is working at Potter's House, and Grayson Hester is joining us from Tennessee to serve at Briya Public Charter School. Jake Short will also be with us this year. He works part time as an administrative assistant at Hyattsville Mennonite Church, works at a local boutique, and serves 10 hours/week at the Center for Consciousness and War.

Discipleship Year continues to be thankful to the Church of the Saviour community for all of its support. Without a wide base of support, this kind of program would flounder; instead we thrive. In particular, much thanks goes to Discipleship Year's Local Support Team: Paige Reuber, David Hilfiker, Dixcy Bosley-Smith, Matthias Martin, Rachel Nerger, Lawrence Taylor, Trish Nemore, and Meade Hannah.

Dawn Longnecker is the Director of Discipleship Year, a program of The Festival Center.

Living into the Questions

By Catherine Goggins

“What does supporting you through this look like?” “Can you say more about that?” “Want me to cover grocery shopping this week?” “How is your self-care recently?” “As a Catholic, what do you think about that?” And one of my favorites, “Can I make you a cup of tea?”

What a blessing to live in a house with women who ask such thoughtful questions, are willing to wrestle with the weighty realities we face, committed to growing in faith and love, as individuals and in community. It is impossible and foolish to attempt to “do justice” alone. On every level, my own understanding of that word fails to capture the fullness of how God desires us to be in the world with one another. Asking open and honest questions, in prayer, contemplation, and relationships can help us glimpse more of that desire along the way.

The witness of my community mates and their openness to questions, contemplation, and curiosity have encouraged me to stay rooted in the heart of the Gospel’s call - to do justice, love goodness, and walk humbly with God. Having been overwhelmed by the barrage of attacks on climate policy and recent threats to communities of faith, I’ve struggled with how to respond, in my work with Interfaith Power & Light and in my day-to-day life.

At home and at work, I’m trying to be more conscious not to assume that everyone agrees with me. In trying to walk humbly (and speak more thoughtfully), questions have once again become my tool of choice.

I attended a meeting for a newly formed coalition on one of my first days at Interfaith Power & Light. Questioned about what a more just world would look like if we were wildly successful in spurring a just transition to clean energy, we were given time to ponder. Before ever mentioning campaign or policy goals, we asked questions, envisioning together the reality we hope to help bring about. Throughout our work in the months since then, it is clear that our communal contemplation has made a difference.

Through engaging with faith communities in Interfaith Power & Light, it would be hard not to love and appreciate and learn from the goodness that abounds there. Growing in relationships to people of other faiths has allowed for explorations of my own understanding of the common good and that of others. Conversations and our shared stewardship work highlight for me the goodness in others. In creation too, I can’t help but be struck by its inherent goodness when allowing myself to wonder about pieces of what Pope Francis calls “our common home.” The garden Kayla left us at Andrew’s House con-



stantly surprises me. My unspoken questions about what it holds are answered as I gain glimpses of daffodils revealing themselves (quite early this irregularly warm winter) and beautiful yellow hearted roses with pink petals, in full display as I write this now. Unanswered questions too are helpful, leaving me in awe as I run through Rock Creek poplars and pawpaw trees, whose origins I do not know. In wondering about creation, I gain a better understanding of the Creator who first called it all “good.”

At home and at work, I’m trying to be more conscious not to assume that everyone agrees with me. In trying to walk humbly (and speak more thoughtfully), questions have once again become my tool of choice. When asked in an open and honest way, questions allow for wonder, yielding fruitful conversations. By wondering aloud with others, I’ve been blown away by the responses. Simply by not assuming that we’re all in agreement, I’ve been humbled, invited to wrestle with the divisions in the body of Christ in ecumenical and interfaith spaces and challenged to confront restrictive definitions of feminism. I’ve learned a great deal from people and politicians of different persuasions reminded that the way I interact with others impacts my relationship with God.

The posture of asking open and honest questions and making time for contemplation as a spiritual discipline has revealed a great deal to me this year. The Discipleship Year community, lovingly supported by Church of the Saviour, has been a witness to me of what doing justice, loving goodness, and walking humbly can look like. Though there is still work for me to do in responding and becoming a more generous listener, I’m seeking, as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke encourages, to “live the questions now.” For the time, space, and support to do just that, I am deeply thankful.

Catherine Goggins was a Discipleship Year Volunteer who served with Interfaith Power & Light during the 2016-17 program year.

Soteria Class Descriptions

Title: Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and Christianity

Teacher: David Hilfiker

Dates: Tuesdays from 7pm-8:30pm, Oct. 3rd - Dec. 5th

“Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and Christianity” is a critical look at our economic system in the light of Christian values. The class will examine the basic assumptions of free-market capitalism (that underlies our mixed-capitalist economic system) along with the economic strengths and weaknesses of the capitalist model. We will then explore the conflict between the fundamental assumptions of capitalism and values crucial to our Christian faith.

In the present, capitalism has been hijacked by the neoliberal radical free-market theology that fundamentally distorts the capitalist model. Capitalism is not just an economic system; its assumptions have seeped their way into our political and moral thinking in ways that most of us don't recognize. While capitalism is easily the most powerful engine for economic growth in human history, there are crucial issues that it cannot handle: inequality, environmental destruction, care of the vulnerable, and so on.

Furthermore, neoliberalism has become a primary tool of oppression, fundamentally attacking and eviscerating American democracy. Christians in their role as citizens must understand what capitalism can and cannot do and how neoliberalism threatens our country. Finally, we will examine possible futures: What is the likely future if we continue with the current economic system? What are the alternatives to free-market capitalism? Is it too late to upend the capitalist project?

David Hilfiker was trained as a Family Practitioner and spent seven years in a rural Minnesota clinic and ten years at Community of Hope Health Services, an inner-city clinic in Washington, DC. David's family lived for five years at Christ House, a 34-bed medical recovery shelter for homeless men. In 1990, David left Christ House to found Joseph's House, an eleven-bed home and community for formerly homeless men with AIDS, where his family lived until 1993. He continued working there until 2005. No longer in active medical practice, David works toward the creation of a just society through teaching, writing and speaking. David is also the author of several published works.

Title: Christian Ethics for the day-to-day*

Teacher: Ray McGovern

Dates: Wednesdays from 7pm-8:30pm, Oct. 4th - Nov. 29th

Moral theologians often describe ethical behavior in words like these: “We are called to do good and avoid evil.” But wait. If Jesus of Nazareth followed that guidance, he could have died comfortably in his bed. Jesus did not avoid evil, he confronted it – and is counting on us to do the same.

We will take a close look at how Jesus behaved, share of our own personal experiences, and try to figure out what we are called to do when evil stares us in the face. Our sharing will be

supplemented by films and guest speakers, including whistleblowers. Readings/assignments will be distributed weekly.

Ray McGovern leads Speaking Truth to Power/Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the Church of the Saviour. A former CIA analyst of Russian affairs, he holds a Certificate in Theological Studies from Georgetown University. His website is raymcgovern.com.

*This course fulfills one of the COS core membership requirements

Title: Faith and Money: Making the Connection

Teacher: Mike Little

Dates: Wednesdays from 7pm-8:30pm, Oct. 4th - Nov. 15th

Money is an emotionally charged issue, often generating anxiety and guilt mixed with gratitude. What is your relationship to money? Do you love it? Hate it? Do you abuse it? Ignore it? What does the Bible say about money? What does Jesus teach about money? What does our culture say? Do you live with a sense of abundance or a sense of scarcity? We will help each other wrestle with these questions and more as we explore the biblical, personal, and cultural dimensions of our relationship to money.

Our time together will be spent in exercises, small group discussion, sharing of weekly written reflections, as well as specific practices that help us discover how we can live in God's economy of enough for all.

Mike Little is the Director of Faith and Money Network. Mike fosters relationships with individuals and churches, leading reflections and discussions on the role of money in our lives as people of faith and in our work as the community of faith. Mike has spent more than two decades working with Church of the Saviour ministries and is co-pastor of Bread of Life Church.

Title: Confronting Racism Discussion Group

Teachers: Julian Forth and Zach Spoerl

Dates: Wednesdays 7pm-8:30pm, Oct. 11th - Nov. 29th

This group is being formed in order to encourage those who are carrying forward the work of racial justice in their faith communities. We know this work can be hard, discouraging, and often unsupported by the very people you are hoping to work with. We have met with many people who feel they are part of a very small group within their church/non-profit/community committed to confronting racism. This group is meant to accompany these people on their journey, offering weekly teachings to empower their work, as well as space to process and decompress from the difficulties along the way. This course is inspired by the recent lecture given by Dr. Drew Hart at the Festival Center.

This group will be facilitated by The Festival Center's Executive Director Jay Forth, and Soteria Director Zach Spoerl.

Soteria Community School is a program of The Festival Center.

Listening to this Place

By Caleb Rollins

In my first two months at The Festival Center, I spent much of my time greeting guests as they come through our doors. Occasionally, a stranger to our space would sheepishly wander to my desk and ask, “So, what is this place?” As a stranger myself, I often stumbled through my explanation of this unique and wonderful ministry.

And so in order to more clearly answer this question, and frankly to better understand my own calling in this place, I began to listen intently for the words and experiences that tell the story of The Festival Center.

My colleagues Tommie, Dawn, and Kevin have graciously taken the time to share with me their experiences at 1640 Columbia Road. Their memories have shed light on the special history of this place and community.

These conversations left me in awe of the transformational impact of magnetic people like Gordon Cosby and Elizabeth O'Connor. Further listening and reading brought me disbelief that the likes of Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, and Jim Wallis regularly walked and talked in these halls. And other stories birthed my pride in the numerous ministries connected to this organization and the countless people they have walked alongside.

This incredible history has shown me that The Festival Center stands with a rooted foundation of faith and justice that I am proud to proclaim and build upon. But of course, I also have come to know that The Festival Center is much more than a place with a vibrant past.

In my short time at The Festival Center I have witnessed the current iterations of our work for faith and justice. At the end of year celebration for Discipleship Year, volunteers shared their inspiring testimonies of how their experiences formed their relationships, beliefs, and callings. In early August, I supported the gathering of a



group of young people for the joyful celebration of the arts of dance and rap. And at the end of my first month, we hosted an author who called on people of faith to name the white supremacy in their churches and stand in solidarity with their neighbors oppressed by the insidious structures of racism.

Listening to and observing the stories and experiences of people in this community has given me the conviction to boldly share what The Festival Center is and hopes to be: a place that serves as a generative source for all people to stand against all forms of oppression and to strive for a just world.

I am not sure what the future holds for this space and community and my role in it. But at least I can now give a clearer answer to the curious guests entering this building; knowing all the while that their story and experience may just change what this place is.

Caleb Rollins is the Administrative Assistant at The Festival Center.

Related Ministries

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

Academy of Hope • Becoming Church • Bethany, Inc. • Bokamoso Foundation • Caroll Café • Christ House • Columbia Road Health Service • Cornelius Corps • Cornerstone • Dayspring Earth Ministry • Dayspring Retreat Center • Discipleship Year • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Hope and a Home • Institute of Radical Reconciliation • Inward/outward • Joseph's House • Jubilee Housing • Jubilee Jobs • Jubilee JumpStart • Kairos House • L'Arche • Life Asset Credit Union • Life Pathways • Manna, Inc. • Miriam's House • New Community ArtSpace • New Community for Children • O.N.E.DC • 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

Callings

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

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Fall Special Events

Oct 7-8 | 8th Day Community 40-Year Reunion. Wellspring Center, Dayspring Farm. Go to www.8th-day.org to learn more and to register for the event. If you cannot register online, contact Kate Lasso at klasso@aol.com. Questions? Contact Gail Arnall at gailarnall@oaronline.org.

Oct 10 (Tues) | "Hey, Can I Have That?" Faith & Money workshop, 6:30-8:30 at the Potter's House. \$20. Register with Mike Little at: mike@faithandmoneynetwork.org.

Oct 13 (Fri) | Reggie Harris & Ken Whiteley at Carroll Café, Seekers Church in Takoma DC. Tickets at Carrollcafe.org

Nov 10 (Fri) | Skylark Celtic Band at Carroll Café, Seekers Church. See Carrollcafe.org.

Nov 10-12 | "Making Connections," Faith & Money retreat, Wellspring Center, Germantown MD. \$275. Scholarships available. Register with Mike Little at: mike@faithandmoneynetwork.org

Dec 8 (Fri) | Trifillio Tango Trio at Carroll Café, Seekers Church. Carrollcafe.org.

