JUBILEE JOBS WELCOMES CHRISTINE GOSSENS

By Terry Flood

Jubilee Jobs welcomes Christine Gossens as new Executive Director with great delight. Christine brings over 15 years on the staff of Jubilee Jobs and a deep love and commitment for helping unemployed but eager and ready to work persons find work for sustenance, dignity and hope. After 38 years as cofounder/director Terry Flood has stepped into a new role as Founder.

Christine brings not only her deep caring for the very poor, but also experience as chief job counselor and organizational operations management with Jubilee Jobs. Her early life living in Africa, work in the Peace Corps in Niger, and master’s degree in social work give her a strong base for leading Jubilee Jobs with its highly diverse applicant community. Of course she had no idea her beginning days would also include a world pandemic!

As job counselor Christine expressed her sensitivity and compassion along with astute knowledge of the job market in placing Jubilee Jobs’ vast array of applicants in appropriate positions. Her skills extended to coaching new staff and close attention to the needs of applicants in relationship to a challenging and rapidly changing economy. She brings a unique empathy with immigrant applicants and is able to draw on her fluent French to develop trusting rapport.

What drew Christine to Jubilee Jobs in the beginning, and then to continue, leading to her becoming the new ED? She says, “The mission of Jubilee Jobs helping applicants with the basic human need to support themselves and their families has always connected with my own desire to serve those most in need at a crucial place in their lives. On the outside, job placement looks simple, but in reality is highly complex and connects with so many aspects of a person’s life.”

Truly Christine’s call to Jubilee Jobs is the place where her deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.

Christine’s leadership will include continue the core mission of job placement for everyone. She will also be guiding employment and career exploration with young adults, ages 16-30 (Emerging Leaders) including partnership with Ballou High School in Anacostia. Job placement for reentry citizens will continue as a major priority. We know as the economy struggles and unemployment reaches an extreme level, the days ahead will call for the creativity, compassion, and a leap of faith and hope. Christine’s leadership will build on Jubilee Jobs long history moving forward in a rapidly changing world.

Gratitude is at the heart of this transition. A deeply committed and wise Board of Directors continues to guide the organization. The strong diverse staff welcomes Christine’s leadership with support and energy. Because of the generosity of donors, volunteers, and support from foundations, corporations, and faith communities, the organization is in a strong financial position to continue.

Finally, because of many years of working together and commitment to the essence and values of Jubilee Jobs, the transition is a time of appreciation for what has been and anticipation for new and exciting next steps forward. Terry continues to serve as job counselor and focus on development in her new role as Founder.

Christine Gossens

“\"The mission of Jubilee Jobs helping applicants with the basic human need to support themselves and their families has always connected with my own desire to serve those most in need at a crucial place in their lives. On the outside, job placement looks simple, but in reality is highly complex and connects with so many aspects of a person’s life.\""
Paying attention to the covid-19 pandemic has become a spiritual practice for me. It certainly is Nature’s way of saying “stop, look and listen to life and death on this planet.” It may also be God’s way of getting our attention. Then the question becomes, “What shall we do with this invitation?”

A first step might be to simply pay attention. Notice what we miss the most. Ask what we really need, and what we could let go of in order to share what we have more equitably. Instead, we see ads for distractions and hear anger at the “loss of freedom” to congregate. It is tiring to watch postage-stamp faces on zoom for hours a day. However, I’ve also noticed how much easier it is to breathe with less pollution in the air, and how stunning this Spring has been – because I’m walking in the neighborhood and not driving past on the way to a meeting. Noticing the benefits, simplifying our needs, and savoring the quiet has been a gift.

Next, the gaps in our public policies have become painfully obvious. It’s one thing to clap or howl in appreciation for the heroic medical people who are working long dangerous hours, but we can also see the gaps in medical coverage, how important service workers are, and how important good safe childcare really is. The biblical mandate for a society where “in Christ there is no Jew or Greek, no male or female, no slave or free” is just as important today as it was for the apostle Paul.

In this issue of CALLINGS, we see that several long-standing missions of Church of the Saviour are welcoming new leaders. The inward/outward journey is still at work. At Jubilee Jobs, Terry Flood is stepping back after 38 years at the helm – to become a volunteer there. At Jubilee Housing, there is a new development director to assist Jim Knight in keeping that important cluster of ministries operating during this lean time. At the Festival Center, Bill Mefford has already started zoom classes and a Third Thursday discussion on social justice issues under a new name: The School for Liberation. And there’s a reminder that the Recovery Café, our cover story in the last issue, is continuing recovery programs even during this time of social distancing.

Although we haven’t generally offered book reviews in this quarterly newsletter, I want to highlight Gayle Boss’s new book, *Wild Hope: Stories for Lent from the Vanishing*, because it’s much more than a Lenten book. It’s become my daily prayerbook during this pandemic, a reminder that we humans are not the only species being threatened right now. And finally, Matthias Everhope offers a meditation on his sojourn at the Pine Ridge Reservation with other students from Wesley Seminary.

This issue is a rich reminder that these and other Church of the Saviour missions need our financial and prayer support. All of them model a different way of doing business, and most have websites that will tell you more about their current offerings.

Marjory

Marjory Bankson
Send address changes to: CALLINGSeditor@gmail.com
2020 CALLINGS deadlines: July 31 and October 31
Interview With Jim Knight, President & CEO of Jubilee Housing

Greg Rockwell, Director of Development: So COVID-19 has impacted lots of nonprofits and how they do business. How has it impacted Jubilee and our operations?

Jim Knight, President & CEO: Significantly. The work of providing a diverse, compassionate community where everyone can thrive is still up and running, but we are impacted. You know, I would say that a good portion of our team is now teleworking from home, but some of the essential work still goes on on-site like caring for properties or distributing resources like food. So it’s a tough balance. A lot of this work can be done remotely, but so much of it requires on-site care.

Greg: How are we balancing risk vs mission?

Jim: Risk vs mission is the name of the game for so many of us right now. You think about a front door to an apartment building that serves 60 families...how many times is that door grabbed and pulled open and shut? Or how many times is the elevator button pushed in a day? Certainly we have increased the time and attention to physical care of the properties. At the same time, we’ve been in position to share resources with families, but the process of receiving food, getting it ready, and then delivering it, increases the interactions and the possibility of risk. So it has been a challenge to get our arms around how to balance the benefits of sharing resources with the risks of providing them.

Greg: There’s a lot that’s challenging about this moment. But what have you seen that’s been uplifting or encouraging?

Jim: Well, there’s a bunch of things. One of them is watching our talented teams remake themselves on the fly here. So much of our work is supporting families and kids, and so with schools closed our after-school programming is closed and many kids are disconnected. But whether it’s through the use of a new app called Remind where we can be in contact with a push of a button, or really re-imagining the way that we do programming remotely over a medium like this, these are critical things that our program teams are able to offer and retooling them for this difficult time has been a real lift.

Greg: How have you seen residents step up in unique ways?

Jim: Well, that might be the best part. I guess it was one week into the shutdown, I received an email from one of our most active resident leaders. She invited me to a prayer call that residents were hosting, and I tell you I was feeling discouraged and a little bit isolated, and the opportunity just to be on the call with so many voices was really just what I needed. That being with and helping each other I think is so much of what it’s all about.

Greg: That’s really beautiful. On a bigger level, so many nonprofits have been hit hard financially by the virus and its consequences. How has Jubilee been affected?

Jim: You know, I imagine similar to so many other organizations, whether they’re for-profit businesses or nonprofits, we want to keep our people employed. We want to keep them active delivering mission-critical work. The biggest challenge for us right now is that we rely on the rents that are paid each month from residents to support the cost of operations. As residents are furloughed, or losing jobs, or seeing wages diminish, there’s no way that rent can be kept current. So that’s one pressure we face...however, I am pleased to say that we are one of that lucky first group who did receive Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) money from the Small Business Administration, so that helps us a lot. That gives us some breathing room to really retool and figure out what things are going to look like, and how long this process is going to last?

Greg: We’ve seen a lot of people reach out for ways that they can help and we’ve seen them provide meal access to residents, support with rent relief, and provide general operating support to Jubilee Housing as an organization. And if anybody has resources that they can share with Jubilee, they can contact us at info@jubileehousing.org, and help us get things like personal protective equipment or cleaning supplies.

Jim: Keep communicating with us through info@jubileehousing.org! The other big inspiration that I have received is so many comments from so many of you, good wishes, resources, all of it. Please. Keep it coming! We need each other!

See the original interview at: https://jubileehousing.org/2020/04/22/interview-with-jim-knight/
During the Pandemic:

Before I started as the Executive Director of the Festival Center in February I made several lists: one of everything I hoped to accomplish in the first few months, one of all of the assets already in place thanks to past excellent leadership at the Festival Center, and one for the challenges I expected to face as I began. On none of those lists did I include a worldwide pandemic. I guess I am not a good prognosticator.

While I was not able to predict the future, I am now faced with the myriad of challenges this dangerous pandemic presents and so we, like so many other organizations and ministries, are changing the forms in which we do our work. But even in the midst of such danger, our mission remains the same: our calling is to serve as a generative source for all people to stand against all forms of oppression and to strive for a just world. This is who we are and this is what we do.

Towards this end, we have taken a couple of important steps. One is simple, we have kept all of our staff employed. I have an amazing team I work alongside with to achieve our mission and even though our revenue has been dramatically cut these past weeks, we have chosen not to pass on the harm. Our staff will remain fully employed and fully paid no matter how long our building is not open for large meetings.

Festival Center Welcomes Bill Mefford

Bill Mefford and his wife and sons.

Before the Pandemic:

Dear Friend,

Last Monday, February 3rd, I began as the new Executive Director of the Festival Center and could not be more excited to be here and provide leadership for this vital missional work in Washington DC!

The values of the Festival Center are values that I hold dear and aspire to in all areas of my life: to be in mutual solidarity with those working for justice, to show generous hospitality to ALL people working for justice, to aid in the collective formation of all those struggling for a just city, and to commit to joyful celebration among those working for justice because nothing is more meaningful or fun than working for concrete change in our world.

Before I tell you a little bit about me I want to invite you to join us at the Festival Center by contributing to our future work with either a one time gift or to become a monthly giver. This invitation is about you joining us in our mission to faithfully participate in the struggle for justice by supporting the leaders, activists, organizers, and dreamers who lead our movements in DC and the larger DMV.

Now, the most important thing you should know about me is that I am married to my best friend, Marti, who is a social worker in Arlington, VA, and we have two amazing sons - Eli who is 21 and Isaiah who is almost 18. Also, I am a faithful, if sometimes frustrated, Browns and Cubs fan.

I have lived in the DC area (Arlington, VA) since 2006 and before that I lived in Kentucky and Texas.

I have worked in all positions in the church - pastor, youth pastor, campus minister, urban missionary, community organizer, and all-around rabble-rouser - and firmly believe that local groups of people committed to sharing their passions and gifts for a common purpose are the primary conduit for God to bring about transformation to this world.

Since I have spent most of my life bridging the mission of the church with movements for justice happening on the fringes of society I have found this quote from Gordon Cosby, the founder of Church of the Savior, to be particularly meaningful:

"To really belong to one another and to depend on one another—to really share a common destiny—is difficult for a community that wants to be diverse. It is also the community's only hope of survival."

This means we welcome ALL people, love ALL people, and work for peace and justice alongside ALL people.

And that is why I think the Festival Center is poised to help make Washington DC a just city. There are so many amazing people - leaders, activists, organizers, and dreamers - building needed movements and our work is to support them practically and spiritually. Through welcoming, encouraging, loving, and coming alongside these leaders we fill a crucial gap that will not be filled any other way.

The good thing is that I am not in this alone - thank goodness! The Festival Center has excellent staff, an amazing board, and we benefited tremendously from the leadership of Jay Forth, our previous Executive Director. Many of you reading this have been supportive of us and we are so thankful for that. I look forward to getting to know you personally, and finding ways we can join together to make justice a reality.

If you have yet to support us, today is as good a time as any to begin!

Please come by and say hi and let's dream together how we can answer the transformative call to be a faithful participant for the common good.

In Solidarity,

Bill Mefford, Executive Director
Expanded Programming

Instead of shrinking back, we are expanding our work. Our programming has steadily increased just during the past few weeks. While we might be hunkered down individually for the time being – and rightly so – the need for faith-driven justice movements has never been more important. To support movement-building work we are currently offering two six-week courses and we have students from across the country and even Melbourne, Australia participating! We have started an online Wednesday noon prayer time where we pray for those directly impacted by COVID19. And we have started a new series dedicated to connecting our Christian faith with effective participation in struggles for justice called Third Thursday Teach-Ins.

And more plans are under way to expand more!

Force for Change

I have worked the last fourteen years in Washington DC for faith-based non-profit justice organizations that are national in scope. I have focused on issues like immigration, mass incarceration, gun violence, religious freedom, LGBTQ equality, and church-state separation. I loved my time there, but the most formational times in my life have been in serving local churches in local contexts. As a youth pastor, college pastor, senior pastor, and urban missionary I learned that the greatest force for change in the world is most often found in local communities of Jesus-followers who are bound by a common passion and fueled by love for God, one another, and their communities.

More than political parties or politicians, more than megachurches or large denominations, I believe the locus of God’s transformation for the world comes through local bands of believers who are committed to shared passions and shared dreams for concrete change. This shapes a great deal of the work we are doing at the Festival Center and pandemic or no, I could not be more excited about where we are and where we are going. You are invited to join us. Though we might not be able to lock arms or join hands and journey forward, we can journey together in solidarity and especially with those directly impacted by injustice. I believe this is our highest calling.

Bill Mefford is the Executive Director of the Festival Center. He lives with his wife, Marti, and two sons in Falls Church VA.

Recovery Cafe DC: Celebrating Hope & Healing in a Challenging Time

When DC’s Mayor Bowser announced social-distancing, we immediately closed our on-site programming, and created a rigorous phone recovery support structure for all our Members. Our RCDC team connects by phone with every Member at least twice a week to check in and hear if there are any specific resource needs. We’ve also started back up our Recovery Circles, now by conference call-in, and the whole RCDC community constantly calling each other for encouragement and reminders that love, hope and healing bridges social distancing. Most of our Members are in high risk categories for COVID-19 and its been deeply moving to see how everyone is working hard to maintain their own recovery, as well as encouraging and supporting others.

We’re excited to start our three School for Recovery Classes again by conference call-in: Prayer and Journaling, Art Therapy, and Move Your Body.

Felecia, a Recovery Cafe DC Member and gifted leader, shared: “Being a part of the phone recovery support circles makes me still feel connected with my Recovery Cafe DC family. Even though we are not in the building, there’s still a connection between us as we share our struggles and joys in the Virtual Recovery Circles. All I can say is that I am looking forward to when I am able to get back together in our cafe with all of my Recovery Cafe DC family.”

We are so thankful for the Recovery Cafe Network, based in Seattle. While their team responded to COVID-19 social-distancing needs at the Seattle Recovery Cafe, they also reached out to every Cafe in the Network (now 22 across the US and one in Canada) to help us prepare for what was coming. This has helped the Recovery Cafe DC community stay a refuge of hope and healing, even when we can’t be together in person.

By Jacqueline Conerly and Kim Montroll
Jacqueline@recoverycafedc.org and Kim@recoverycafedc.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 • Discipleship Year • Dynamis 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 Jum Start • 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 • Sounds of Hope • Wellspring Conference Center
Gayle Boss has written 24 “stories for Lent” which are even more appropriate for this extended season of isolation during the covid-19 pandemic. Titled Wild Hope: Stories for Lent from the Vanishing, it is a heart-breaking account of individual species that are disappearing from this earth. The vignettes are tellingly grouped as “the hungry,” “the sick,” “the homeless,” “the poisoned,” “the hunted” and “the desecrated.” Each entry brims with accurate information and the sheer beauty of God’s complex creation. She ends the book with a glimmer of hope, a resurrection story.

Like her earlier book, All Creation Waits, Gayle’s luminous prose is anchored by the original wood-cuts of David G. Klein, an award-winning graphic artist and printmaker. Together, David and Gayle offer “vivid accounts of an ark-full of wild lives in danger,” as the poet, Luci Shaw, describes Wild Hope.

Arriving at Church of the Saviour in 1980, Gayle and her husband were members of the Eighth Day Community until they moved to Michigan, where they live now. Just before the planned book launch at the Potter’s House, Gayle preached at Eighth Day on March 15 (you can read the full sermon on 8th Day’s website). She said that the first working title was not “Wild Hope,” it was “All Creation Groans,” from Romans 8:22, because that is all she expected to hear from her investigation of mass extinctions around the globe. In her sermon, she related how the title began to shift:

I didn’t expect to see or hear in all that groaning any impending birth—any new life. To my surprise, as I did my research, I kept finding signs of birth, of new life, of hope—the wild hope that calls into being the things that are not. I found people around the globe in love with species from orangutans to olms, devoting their lives to them under conditions that would do most of us in, giving these species a shot at resurrection.

In 1972 there were thirty Amur leopards left in a slice of land in southeastern Russia. Conservationists called their demise a “classic extinction pattern,” and waited for those thirty to die out. Remarkably, for three decades, they did not. The number held steady at thirty. Astounded, the conservationists lobbied the Russian government to set aside land for them and in 2012 it did... Scientists thought their population might double, to sixty. Remarkably again, it tripled.... Conservationists made a reality TV show focused on one mother leopard and her 3 cubs.... It was such a hit all across Russia that the conservationists developed a sponsorship program for leopards in the park.... Money has allowed the park to improve the habitat for leopard and improve enforcement of poaching laws.... And across the border in China, the Chinese have begun competing to be better leopard protectors than the Russians They’ve set aside six times as much land as the national park in Russia, land that adjoins the Russian park, to protect leopards. Leopard numbers have risen now to over one hundred. Love has called into being things that were not.

And yes, in those same decades that the Amur leopard has been rebounding, hundreds of species went extinct in the wild, like: Costa Rica’s golden frog, Spix’s macaw in Brazil, the Yangtze River dolphin in China.

When the Lenten season ended, I started reading Wild Hope again, one entry each day, as scripture for our current confinement. Although despair lurks beside each page, I am humbled by the fragility and resilience of these wild creatures. And surprisingly, I have found myself strangely hopeful that the pandemic may bring new awareness that we are all part of a luminous web of life. There are things we can do to change the tide of destruction. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans, “All creation groans in this one great act of giving birth. (Rom 8:22).

This is a book to share with your children and grandchildren, as well as cynical friends who will scoff at any notion of hope for the vanishing. It will touch them all. The book is dedicated “For the scientists and conservationists devoted to Earth’s wild creatures.” Hopefully, that means all of us.

Reviewed by Marjory Bankson, author of Stalking the Spirit

Order your copies of Wild Hope: Stories for Lent from the Vanishing (Paraclete Press, 2020) by going to the Potter’s House website: pottershousedc.org and click on “radical bookstore.”
Listen, Heal, Teach, Give, Pray.
This is Love

By Matthias Everhope

‘What will you do with the gifts I have given you? How will you honor me?’ As I prayed on the morning of my 35th birthday in January, a quiet and cold dawn looking into me through the frosty window in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, Great Spirit gave me a clear message. Grace descended.

There are places on this earth where God’s Spirit feels more palpable. For me, the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota is such a place. The presence I hoped I would feel emerged more powerfully than I expected, so much it caught me off guard, as it always does. Thanks be to God.

Words cannot express the feeling of standing atop the Wounded Knee burial site, a mass grave of 200 or so Lakota people. The exact figure is unknown because the U.S. Army regiment did not take the time to sort through the names of the men, women, and children they slaughtered on December 29, 1890. As our immersion group stood there in reverence, led in Lakota prayers by tribal Elder Kelly Looking Horse, he assured the ancestors that we came there with good hearts. The wind died down for a moment.

In time, the ruach wind blows that smoke away. Its bitter taste passes, fresh air returns. We can see clearly. Teach me inspired ones! Teach me how you do not give up. What strength! You who raise hands to the heavens and cry out “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.” (Psalm 37:10a) Wakan Tanka, Great Spirit, lives in the hearts of the believers who have not lost hope.

Yet, “hope is not a strategy” (Rick Page). We must have it, it is part of our faith to affirm that “now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13) Paul speaks well in this chapter to what that means. Christian love isn’t passive. Like Paul, I must step into the breach and become vulnerable as Jesus did. I must share the vulnerability of the “poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3) And I must sacrifice of what I take for granted, so that I know the depth of my commitment. Otherwise I eat my own spirit instead of the Bread of Life. God and God’s people deserve nothing less than my best.

When we at Wesley “draw the circle wide”, I imagine us drawing it across the four arms of the cross, connecting horizontally all the people of the earth, and connecting vertically the earthen ashes of our lenten being to the transfigured Glory of Jesus on the mountain. What’s this? I’ve drawn a medicine wheel. A sacred symbol not only to the Lakota but to many Indigenous peoples all over the world. Great Spirit is at work friends. “Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.” (Matthew 13:16)

Matthias Everhope is a member of Jubilee Church, and the Webmaster for Church of the Saviour. He is a Master of Divinity candidate at Wesley Theological Seminary.

The Lakota and the native people of this nation live on, as do the many other communities of people that have in their differences been demeaned and discarded by the dominant culture. This pluralism of Creator’s handiwork has much to teach us if we will hear their message. It is each other’s message. It is the Holy Spirit’s message. Prophecy has foretold this time, it is the time. By grace I have heard the message and continue to transform. I pray that you will too. Creator’s peace be with you.

Mitakuye ocyasin, we are all related.
Callings
Church of the Saviour
1640 Columbia Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20009

For the time being, most Church of the Saviour activities have moved online.

Below is a listing of the churches which have websites:

Bread of Life ..........................breadoflifedc.org

Dayspring Church....................dayspringchurchmd.org

Eighth Day Faith Community .................8th-day.org

New Community Church..newcommunitychurchdc.org

Seekers Church ........................seekerschurch.org

Potter’s House
We were touched that close to 70% of you said the thing you miss the most about The Potter’s House is the physical space. Though we can’t invite you in to sip a latte and chat for a few hours, we are gearing up to reopen for takeout in the coming weeks in a way that keeps all members of our community comfortable and safe. We’re still working out the details of exact dates, times, and menu, but we know you won’t be disappointed! Coffee, books, biscuits, puzzles, and other tastes of The Potter’s House are only a few weeks away. Follow us @pottershousedc for updates.