

# Callings

in Church of the Saviour

Vol 14, Issue 3 • Fall 2025

## Dayspring Saved!

By Margaret Schoap

On July 29, the Montgomery County Council voted 10 to 1 to remove the M83 highway from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. This decision lifts a major threat to the existence and purpose of Dayspring. It came, after 60 years, by God's grace and the work of many people and groups.

Church of the Saviour purchased the Dayspring Farm property in 1953, before there was a development plan for this part of Montgomery County. But in the mid-1960s, Frank Cresswell learned that a master plan was being developed with a road penciled in that would run right through the Lodge at Dayspring. Frank raised his concern with Gordon and the CoS Council and began a letter-writing campaign to the Montgomery County Council, but there was little urgency about development around Dayspring at that time.

When Church of the Saviour divided into six smaller communities in 1976, the Dayspring property was held in common as the core of our inward journey and Dayspring Church became the de facto steward of the land. Then, as I-270 became a major traffic corridor, various groups (including Dayspring) began to resist the idea of ceding land for new roads. Neighbors became pitted against each other on where to build the M83 highway, saying, "Not in my backyard."

Care of the Dayspring land was then held by Gale Quist (Caregiver), Jim Hall and Cheryl Hellner, Carol Wilkinson Martin, Barbara Nance, David Coolidge, and Myra Flood (Wellspring Center). Their main focus was to establish Dayspring as a retreat property in an effort to protect the spiritual nature of the land. Gale played a key role during this period with three crucial actions: joining the Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Committee to discuss the M83 highway plans, ensuring that Dayspring Creek was officially named on the County's environmental map, and working through the County to move the planned M83 highway to the other side of the creek, adjacent to the Dayspring property but not on it.

When Dayspring Church officially became responsible for the land in the mid-90s, business interests were pressuring the County

*See more on page 3*



## CoS Council Chair | Kate Lasso — Being a Good Neighbor in Extraordinary Times



In these uncertain, extraordinary times, I've been asking what it truly means to be a good neighbor. In Mark 12, Jesus summarizes God's two greatest commandments: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Simple enough—until we ask: Who is my neighbor? How can I be a good neighbor now?

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, “neighbor” took on a radical meaning in a time of entrenched hostility between Jews and Samaritans. A neighbor isn't just someone who looks like me or agrees with me. It's anyone whose need I can see and respond to—friend, stranger, even enemy. The Samaritan crossed ethnic, religious, and historical boundaries to help someone left for dead. He didn't just feel compassion; he acted on it, taking on the risk, cost, and inconvenience that love demanded.

Our community embodies that spirit in many ways— this CALLINGS has an article on The Family Place reaching out to immigrant neighbors, a future edition will include a reflection on standing with indigenous groups, many of us support the emerging Earthen Hands ministry at Dayspring, and the affordable housing units now under construction at the New Community church site! The list goes on.

In extraordinary times like these, a good neighbor asks: Where is God at work? How can I join God's healing work? Sometimes it's as simple—and as hard—as being present to someone's pain. Other times, it requires courage to stand for truth and justice, showing up for the vulnerable and speaking truth to power.

Fortunately, being a good neighbor is not about perfection. It's about presence, empathy, and action—offering what we have and trusting God to make it flourish. So I leave you with the same questions I am wrestling with: Who is my neighbor? How can I be a good neighbor in these times?

## Editor's Note | Marjory Bankson — Choosing Hope



Is hope more than wishful thinking? Happy endings? Being rescued from a bad situation? Has the hope for heaven and salvation undermined Jesus' call for social justice in churches across America? As violence and political polarization spreads, hope seems to be in short supply – unless we have a choice. Then hope is available to everybody.

Margalea Warner's new book, *Choosing Dance over Despair*, is a remarkable story of joy and recovery while living with serious mental illness. I was in mission group at Seekers with Margalea many years ago, when her schizophrenia flared and another member, Christine Weaver, encouraged Margalea to explore her writing gifts in Iowa. There she found a stable caring community at First Mennonite Church, good medical help and work she could manage. She also wrote and spoke at many mental health events. Now, more than three decades later, Margalea has identified 29 keys to health and sanity in a way that will give any reader a road-map to hope. \*

Our lead story is also about choosing hope and listening for Spirit's guidance over time. Margaret Schoap describes the now-successful effort to remove the M83 highway from transport plans that would have destroyed Dayspring's quiet space and hallowed ground. Indeed, all of the stories in this issue are about choosing hope, not as wishful thinking but as a roadmap to action and reflection.

Choosing is an active verb. Choosing hope means knowing when to push and when to rest, trusting that God's Spirit is at work in the world, through us, in us, and around us.

\*You can purchase Margalea's book from her website at <https://margalea.com>.

## 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 • Earthen Hands at Dayspring • Faith & Money Network • Family Place • Festival Center • For Love of Children • Good Shepherd Ministries • 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 DC • Samaritan Inns • Sarah's Circle • Sign of Jonah • Sitar Arts Center • Wellspring Conference Center

# Dayspring Saved!

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Council to relieve congestion along I-270. By then, Jim and Cheryl were living next to Gale and Barbara at Dayspring in their solar cottages. I arrived with my 3-year-old daughter, Madeleine, in May 2000 and soon after felt called to join the group in Montgomery Village who were working with Dayspring's Gale, Carol and others.

## TAME Coalition Forms

In 2009, Jim named our goal as “No highway. Not in anybody’s backyard.” That meant saying “No!” to the highway itself. Jim, Gale and I came up with a name for our effort to find alternatives for the highway. It would be the TAME Coalition (Transit Alternatives to Midcounty Highway Extended).

By 2013, the Montgomery County Council adopted a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Master Plan, but no concrete action has been mandated toward its build-out to this day. However, the BRT gave us a clear alternative to simply increasing the number of cars on the road as new homes were being constructed further north in the County.



Margaret Schoap

In 2019, the TAME Coalition learned that we had just missed an opportunity to remove the planned M83 highway from the Master Plan. We also learned that the Master Plan was open for adjustment every 6-8 years and if the Planning Board made a

recommendation, the County Council was obligated to address the matter. That meant we had a window of about five years to build support for removing M83 before that document opened again for review.

In addition to sponsored walks around Dayspring and along the 5+ mile M83 highway alignment, TAME folks produced 15 videos, wrote 7 research reports, and gave endless presentations to many groups in those five years. TAME also began recruiting high school students to build a next generation of protectors. Jim was already mentoring some IB students on environmental issues like water quality, so TAME invited them to expand their concerns. Local schools were eager to place students in meaningful projects and the kids loved it.

By 2024, when the Master Plan opened the possibility of removing M83 again, TAME recruited more than 50 people to testify at various hearings. By then there was a ground-swell of support from neighborhoods and organizations, more diverse by

then with people from all over the world and younger people who were more passionate about protecting the environment from climate disaster. Also environmental laws were stricter than before and the Planning Board seemed more ready to listen.

Over the years, we learned about the many factors influencing both the Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council. That’s where the constant prayers of all concerned were so critical. We were surrounded by prayer support when our hopes flagged, and we relied on the Spirit’s guidance for when to push and when to rest. It was truly divine intervention that put our hard work in front of the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

This was a spiritual journey for me. I was led into places I did not want to go, talked with people who thought differently than I did, and researched projects that were not on my “personal growth” list. I grew up in the Episcopal Church walking the Stations of the Cross and have used them throughout this long 25-year journey to remove M83 from all plans. At each crisis point, there would be one Station that spoke with discernment. And God, Creator, Sustainer and Sanctifier, provided the perfect people to walk with me on the journey. They changed too. We were not alone. We had each other and we were surrounded with holiness.

In the end, on July 29, our cause prevailed. And two days later, a rainbow appeared over Dayspring and Montgomery Village – the sign of God’s unfailing presence through every moment.

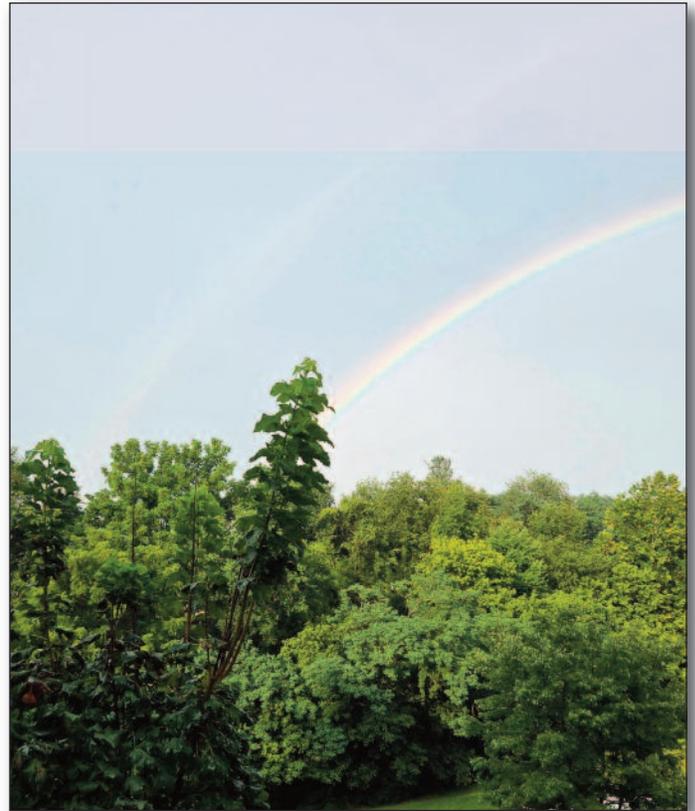


Photo by Tim Goodfellow, TAME Coalition core member

*Margaret Schoap is a member of the Servants of the Light Mission Group and is a Caregiver at Dayspring.*

# The Call to Make Something Beautiful

*“Maybe the desire to make something beautiful is the piece of God inside each of us...”*

– Mary Oliver

**By Cheryl Hellner**

I want to tell you a story. It's a story about call. It's a story about the way call emerges in a life out of our heartfelt longing to respond to a place of suffering in our world.

This story begins with my friend Bud Wilkinson. Bud was a large man with a big heart, strong hands, and a passion for watching hawks. For Bud, the hawk has a spirit like the Spirit that woke him in the middle of the night during a silent retreat saying: “You are a potter. You will always be a potter.”

Bud had never held a ball of clay in his life! But he had been praying for “a simple identity.” He enrolled in the Corcoran School of Art and following an intense period of study he began working as a potter in the old stone barn at Dayspring.

I was drawn to Bud's pottery from the first time I held one of his beautiful ceramic chalices in my hands. In the spring of 1986, I interviewed Bud for a piece I was writing about Dayspring. That's when I first heard the story of the pot sculpture Bud had shaped and loved called “Wounded Knee.”

Throughout his life, Bud was drawn to and inspired by Native American writers and their wisdom. Bud's great-grandmother was part Miami (Myaamia) Indian and Bud cherished this ancestral connection.

When the 1973 armed conflict between members of the American Indian Movement and federal authorities at Wounded Knee, South Dakota occurred, Bud created a sculpture. It's the head of an Indian warrior. “He's not pretty,” Bud told me, “His face shows all the pain, all the determination, the integrity.”

Of all the ceramic work Bud created over the years, this sculpture was his favorite. On December 8, 1973, a mysterious early morning fire destroyed the old stone barn and Bud's studio. When it was safe to go back inside, Bud found shards of other pieces he had made; but not a single shard with the distinctive red glaze that had covered Wounded Knee.

This story remained, like a cherished ancestral seed waiting to be sown, in my heart and my storyteller's imagination for years.



Then in the great mystery of the way call begins, I turned back toward it. And a story of creativity, heartbreak, and ultimately hope, began to take shape.

My call to children and their inborn sacred relationship with our living Earth was being nourished at that time by my monthly storytelling in our Dayspring Church worship services. With five to ten young ones gathered on the floor in front of the hearth, I told stories—some biblical, some from children's picture books that I loved.

The sense of urgency was growing in me.

We live in a time of immense change and impoverishment of the Earth and the whole sacred community of Life. How do we

strengthen our children's bond with nature and give them hope for their lives, and the lives of all creatures, rivers, mountains, forests, in these challenging times?

One way I knew, was through stories. Stories that lift-up the possibility of new life emerging out of a time of chaos and destruction. Stories that inspire creativity in many different forms. Stories that plant seeds of hope in our children and in our own hearts.

Sing Up the Earth! the picture book story that will be published by Paraclete Press in February 2026 has been a long time in the making. As I look at it now, I see the way Bud's story of becoming a potter and my story of becoming a storyteller intertwine like the roots that give life to a great oak tree.

As Robin Wall Kimmerer wrote in Braiding Sweetgrass: “all flourishing is mutual.” As any one of us dares to step out into the unknown and embrace the call that is emerging in us others will also be strengthened to do the same.

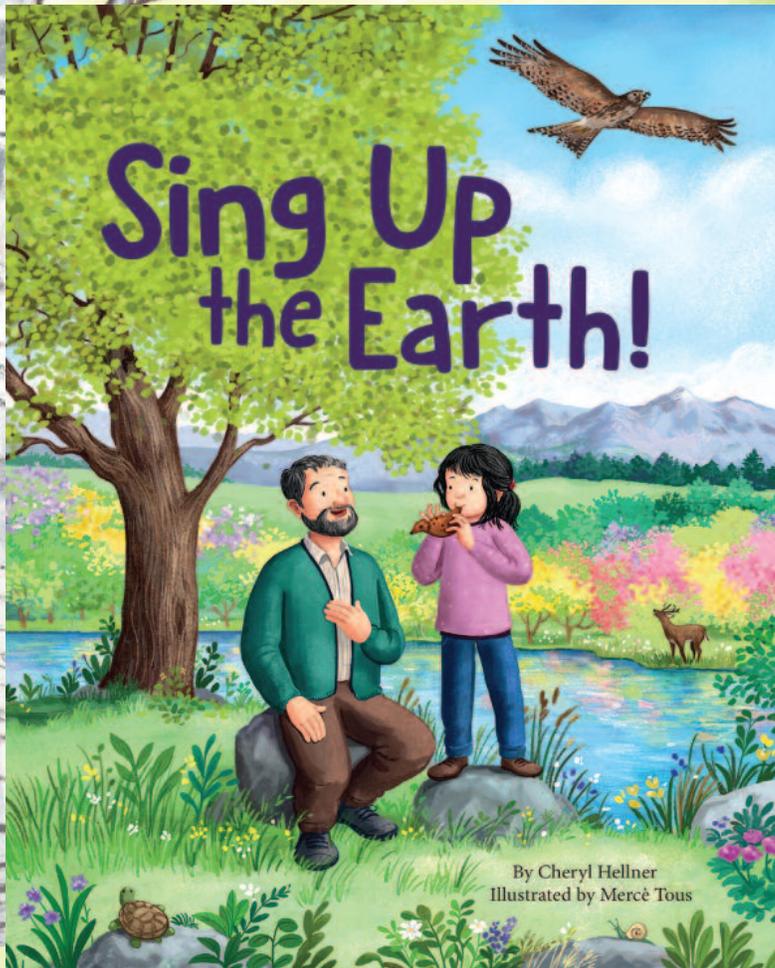
That's how the inexhaustible love and creativity of God works. In this troubled beautiful world in which we find ourselves, we can lean into, we can trust, the One Great Love that holds all things.

And so, it is. And so, it is meant to be.

We are all called to make of our lives something beautiful.

*Cheryl Hellner is a core member of Dayspring Church and author of Sing Out the Earth!*

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# FESTIVAL CENTER'S CALL TO JUSTICE ON SEPT 20

By Bill Mefford

I know a woman, a friend, whose husband was picked up by ICE and detained just a couple of months ago. The husband has not committed any crime. He is like over 70% of current immigrant detainees who do not have a criminal record; not even a speeding ticket. The overwhelming number of migrants in this country work hard, they have families, and they contribute to their communities in many ways. But on a day two months ago, eight vans filled with ICE, HSI, and other federal agency officials surrounded the husband's pickup, pulled him out of it, put him in one of their cars, and literally left the pickup truck in the middle of the street.

The only way the wife knew of what happened was that a friend of the family called her to say her husband's truck was sitting in the middle of the street. The only way she found out where he was being held was because she knows people with political connections who made numerous calls. Otherwise, he would have just disappeared in the middle of the day. In an instant he was gone, leaving behind his wife and two children, both of whom are receiving therapy now for the trauma of having a father one day and losing him the next.

## Safe Spaces.

This is increasingly the context that we live in. But as the danger and terror grows, so does the need for safe spaces. The Festival Center has become that for many, many activists and organizers in DC who are directly impacted by the federal government's actions. For the staff of the Festival Center, our highest priority every day is to ensure that the thousands of people who enter our doors every month are safe and are free to be their most authentic selves. Long before we work towards spiritual awakening or self-actualization we must feel a sense of security – the feeling that we are free from harm.

Accordingly, the Festival Center has a protocol when we know that state-sponsored danger is in our area. We have had to initiate that seven times already this year.

The challenge for us is that our front doors automatically open when people approach. I love that honestly. We literally welcome anyone and everyone into our space. And there was no problem with this approach until January 20 of this year. But now the automation of the doors is indeed a problem. We need a new front door. We need a door that is fob-controlled and where you have to be buzzed-in to enter. I have spent numerous hours talking to the over 25 nonprofits housed in our space and the over 50 nonprofits who lean on us in some way. The responses to the need for a new door we control from the inside are unanimous. The cost is \$20,000 and I need your help on this.

## Our Call to Justice

On September 20 at 3 pm the Festival Center is hosting a fundraiser. The theme is Our Call to Justice in the Midst of Empire. As followers of Jesus living out our call to justice in the midst of empire should be in our DNA because the Jesus movement began in the midst of an empire. We are there once again, and just as the Spirit powered the first resistance to empire by building communities of love, creativity, and safety, so we continue this work now.

I hope you will come to our fundraiser. We need your help to ensure that the people who are inside our doors can move towards spiritual awakening, self-actualization, and the building of new beloved communities. So, **join us on September 20 at 3 pm so together we can move forward in our shared call of doing justice in the midst of empire.**

*Bill Mefford is Festival Center's Director and Chief Activist*



# The Family Place

# Celebrates 45 Years

By Gail Arnall  
Founding Family Place Board Member

The Family Place began as a call upon the heart of Ann Barnet, a call from God that was recognized, nurtured and affirmed in the Church of the Saviour. This call began when Ann, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital, stood up in church one evening in 1978 and shared her concern that so many babies were being born in DC at very low birth weight. Although low birth weight can occur in any pregnancy, it was much more common in young low-income mothers, and often these mothers were entering parenthood with few resources and support. She invited anyone who wanted to talk about what could be done to come speak with her.

Two women responded and soon two others followed, forming a Mission Group. In 1980, The Family Place (TFP) opened its doors in a basement on Columbia Road in Adams Morgan. Six years later, with help from generous Board members and donors, TFP purchased a row house on 16th Street. The house has been renovated over the years to create more and more classrooms for both parents and children. Responding to the needs of the many Spanish-speaking immigrants who were coming to Washington, services were offered in both English and Spanish and we began a new focus on English language learning to help both adults and children meet the demands of their new environment. (By the way, The Family Place was one of the first such centers in the country and it serves as a model for other communities.) started by a few faithful people can enrich the lives of many?

## Services Provided

From the beginning, a major focus of TFP was to provide support and encouragement to parents. Within the walls of TFP and through our Home Visiting program, parents are helped to actively prepare their children for success in school. Recognizing that English-language competencies are a key both to parents' success in employment and their children's success in school, TFP added an Adult Public Charter School years ago.

Today, The Family Place Public Charter School (TFPPCS) offers high-quality courses where adults at all levels of literacy can learn English as well as basic math, civics and citizenship. The school also gives courses leading to a Child Development Associate (CDA) degree. While parents are attending class, their children – infants, toddlers, and preschoolers – are gaining crucial developmental skills (motor skills, general cognitive skills, language development, emergent literacy, and number skills.) All of the educational efforts are supported by wrap-around hospitality and case management services. Here are a few statistics from 2024:

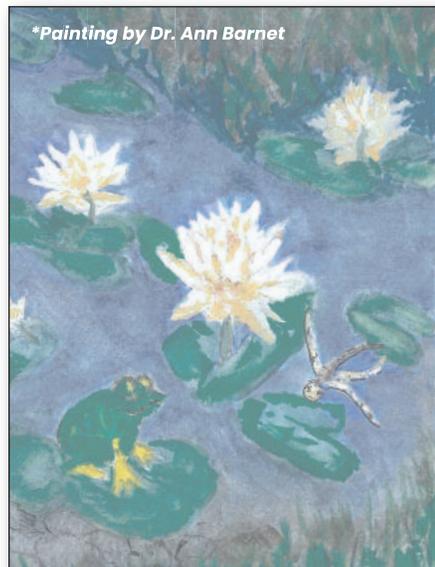
- 100% of pregnant women and children are linked to medical care providers.
- 170 children participate in our Early Childhood Education Program and/or HIPPY Home Visiting Program.
- 50% of adults in ESL class successfully complete a level on their ESL exam.
- 458 families received case management support
- 40+ women received domestic violence support including court advocacy assistance, e.g., obtaining civil protection orders, child support, or child custody every year.
- 221,834 pounds of food were distributed to families (over 10,000 bags of food)
- Over 10,000 diapers are distributed each year.

In the first four months of 2025, TFP served over 1500 individuals – more than all of 2024.

## ABC Plans

The lower level of the new School building will house the Ann Barnet Center, ABC – a place where children, ages 0 to 5, will be enrolled in comprehensive early childhood educational programs. The Center will also provide a place where CDA (Child Development Associate) students in the Charter School will be able to complete their practicums for accreditation. The Boards of both The Family Place and the Charter School are so excited to be opening this much-needed early childhood center. And we are especially happy to name the Center in honor of the founder who followed the call that brought this amazing mission into being.

If you would like to support the launch of the ABC, in honor of Ann's faithful leadership, please consider making a gift or pledge to The Family Place. If you would like more information on our 45th Anniversary Fundraising Brunch to be held on October 5th, please let me know at [gailarnall@gmail.com](mailto:gailarnall@gmail.com). We'd love to have you celebrate with us.



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## Book Launch at the Festival Center

### THE SOULWORK OF JUSTICE: FOUR MOVEMENTS FOR CONTEMPLATIVE ACTION

By Wes Granberg-Michaelson  
Wednesday, September 24

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Hear Wes describe his early encounter with the inward journey  
at Church of the Saviour  
With comments by Jim Wallis and Q & A afterwards  
Reception begins at 5:30 pm – Author speaks at 6:30 pm

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