

# Callings

in Church of the Saviour

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## WORK HAS BEGUN!



Grace Dickerson reported to the Church of the Saviour Council that construction/demo work has finally begun on their new S Street Village project. Financing and permitting for this complicated project has taken much time and effort -- it involves the new construction and redevelopment of an existing church site owned by Manna and New Community Church located at 614 S Street NW.

Being steps away from the Shaw metro (green line), Manna and New Community Church are excited to bring affordable housing back to a formerly predominantly African American neighborhood. In 1982, Manna and New Community Church acquired the site, and by working with the District of Columbia, were able to prevent demolition in favor of this broader vision for redevelopment including preserving the long standing African American history associated with the site.

*See more on page 3*

## Council Chair | **Kate Lasso** — Living our Faith in the Nation's Capital



It's disconcerting to witness all that's happening in the DMV right now. There's a heaviness in the air—at least in the neighborhoods I pass through. We don't know how long this tension will last. But we do know that our commitment to walk in the way of Jesus shows us the way. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. To care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. To confront oppression and proclaim liberation. To be light and hope for all who cross our path.

I've been in Santa Rosa, California, for a couple of weeks—a beautiful town with no visible signs of the strain we feel in DC. During my time there, I had a conversation with a couple, and we quickly discovered our shared commitment to following Christ. But when we began talking politics, it became clear that our beliefs diverged significantly. Speaking mostly with the husband, I sensed that he was trying just as hard as I was to keep the conversation respectful. I mostly listened and asked questions. Though I don't agree with his perspective, I do believe he is sincerely trying to live out his faith with integrity, according to his understanding of what it means to follow Christ. In the end we did find common ground: the shared call to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, although we may have different interpretations of what that means.

As we said goodbye, I paused to wonder where I might be getting it wrong. We all miss the mark somewhere. While a longer conversation would have been more difficult, we both recognized that faith compels us to see the divine in every person—and to act with compassion and courage. In our church community, we also emphasize justice. That means advocating for affordable housing, accessible healthcare, and, in general, standing with vulnerable and marginalized communities. It means showing up—in council chambers, neighborhoods, and in the streets. These are difficult times in the DMV. But we are here. And we are called to bring light, mercy, compassion and justice, especially to the poor and disenfranchised. That gives us some pointers on how to show up for God in these difficult times.

*— Kate Lasso is the new Chair of the CoS Council*

## Editor's Note | **Marjory Bankson** — Pentecost Now



Against all odds, Church of the Saviour groups have begun three HUGE construction projects since the beginning of 2025. Recovery Café DC is now offering regular Thursday visits to their busy construction site in Anacostia. In Adams Morgan, Jubilee Housing is linking two rows of low-income housing with the King Emmanuel Baptist Church (KEB Project) property that will give them new space for community projects and a roof-top aquaponic farm. And now, New Community Church and Manna, Inc. have begun a major housing project on S Street which will bring beautiful low-income housing to this traditionally African-American neighborhood. All are tangible signs of hope!

All three of these projects began with prayer – and long commitment to making God's dream for humanity real in this time and place. It's the power of call and commitment, detachment from ego and instant results requiring servant leadership again and again. To stay connected with that kind of inward/outward journey even if you live in another part of the country, I hope you will sign up to get our weekly gospel reflection at [inwardoutward.org](http://inwardoutward.org) from the writers pictured on pages 6 and 7.

Let's BE the good news we want to hear!

Marjory Bankson [callingseditor@gmail.com](mailto:callingseditor@gmail.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

# WORK HAS BEGUN!

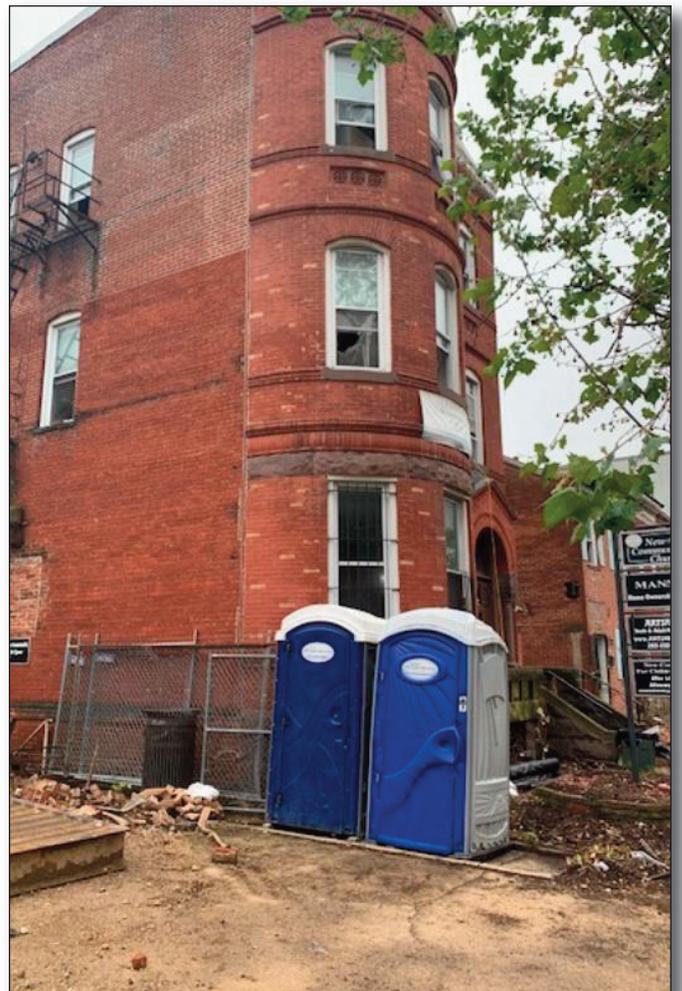
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The vision for S Street Village is to redevelop the site with a mix of uses that will bring an array of benefits to the broader community including:

- New construction of 100% affordable multifamily rental housing units
- Community facilities for programs and outreach
- New office space for Manna, Inc.
- Renovation of our NCC church worship and community space
- Restoration of the historic African American building  
(Jean Clores Guest House)

S Street Village is Manna's first mixed-use development to be located in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington DC where Manna opened its first office space in 1982. New Community church began worshipping there in 1984. That history is recounted in the book "S Street Rising" by Ruben Castaneda. Manna envisions communities where market rate housing and affordable housing exist side by side without detriment or disadvantage to either. Therefore, S Street Village will include a mix of uses including 90 affordable units in a seven story multifamily building designed with high quality amenity and community spaces, a centralized courtyard, green roof, and underground parking.

For the duration of this construction project, New Community Church is holding worship at the Whitelaw Hotel at 13th and T Streets, NW, DC in the historic ballroom, another project completed by Manna some years ago.



For more information on this exciting new venture, visit: [mannahomes.org](http://mannahomes.org) and/or [newcommunitychurchdc.org](http://newcommunitychurchdc.org)

# Sarah's Circle: Roots in Church of the Saviour

By Fern Edwards

Some stories in Callings are about organizations that have led the way and stood the test of time. Sarah's Circle is one of those. It is a mission to elderly people in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C. So many of these seniors were caught in the gentrification trend, turning apartment buildings into condominiums for suburbanites who wanted to live closer to their work in the city. Many times there was no affordable alternative for housing.

Twenty years before Sarah's Circle was thought of, Church of the Saviour (CoS) became involved in Adams Morgan. Although the building where CoS worshipped was on Massachusetts Avenue, often recognized as upscale Embassy Row, Adams Morgan was the center of much of the CoS life of outreach, beginning with the Potter's House on Columbia Road in 1960. The Potter's House was the first mission of the CoS, and for eight years its clientele was scattered around the metropolitan area – people attracted by the new concept of an upscale coffee shop run by a church.

## Sudden Shift

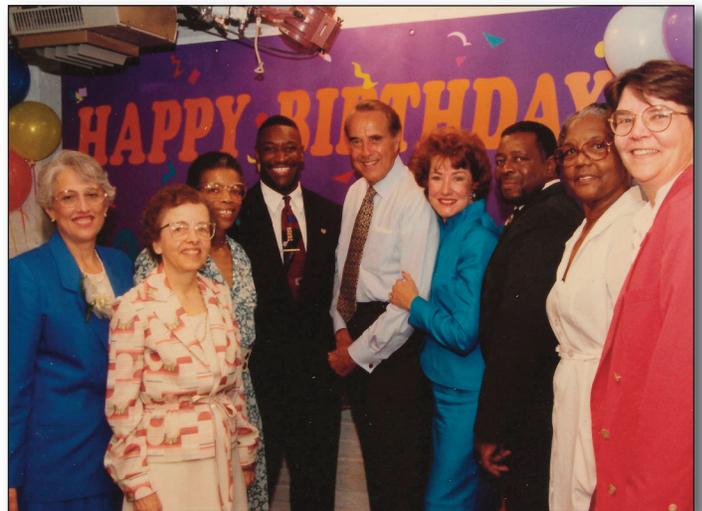
After Martin Luther King's killing in 1968, the atmosphere in Adams Morgan became frighteningly unsettled. Robberies and thefts touched the Potter's House, along with many other businesses. In response to these challenges, members of CoS acknowledged that the Potter's House needed to change along with the neighborhood or else they needed to close or move. They responded to the call to change.

In the 1970s, several CoS missions built around call formed to help meet basic needs of the those who were in danger of being displaced, beginning with affordable housing, health care, and employment. In 1976, the church gave birth to six smaller churches, each with a core of people who then held dual membership in CoS and their own congregation.

Early in the 1980s, Elizabeth O'Connor, Staff member of CoS and author of books about the church, made connections with some of the seniors in Adams Morgan who were living in undesirable and inadequate conditions. She was trying to decide whether she was ready and able to call together a mission group around the call she was feeling to serve that elderly population. Now that some of the most basic needs were being tackled by other groups, she felt called to help meet the immediate and unmet needs of this special group, elderly people with low income.

However, Elizabeth's ambivalence shows in this quote from her book about the founding of Sarah's Circle, *Cry Pain, Cry Hope*:

*Today I went through a deteriorating building near The Potter's House that had the possibility of being converted into a resident care center for older persons. The inflated price was \$600,000. We have no money for this purpose. The Potter's House is engaged in raising \$100,000 to make the next payment on its mortgage, and The Columbia Road Health Service is trying to raise \$83,000 so that it can do the necessary renovation work in its new location. Other missions are engaged in similar fund-raising programs. Another effort for still another project might be foolish to consider. (p 67)*



Second from left Fern Edwards; Center: Bob and Elizabeth Dole

## Shared Call

When I was 50 in 1982 I left my job as chief librarian at Gallaudet, feeling called to be more closely involved with one of the missions of the CoS that were currently developing in Adams Morgan, but having no idea which one. Soon I learned that Elizabeth O'Connor had called together a group of women to help her discern whether she was ready to issue a call to a mission to provide housing and other services for seniors with fixed income. I joined the group, and within a few months found myself in the organizing mission group for Sarah's Circle.

The enormity of this project weighed on Elizabeth and a few others (including myself) who were excited by her vision. During that time, she was struck by a mysterious illness that was variously diagnosed as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis or myasthenia gravis. She wrote of that period:



Elizabeth O'Connor

*More than any other illness this one had made me feel sad and alone. For months I was not able to sit at a typewriter, or clean my apartment. When I walked in the street it was the walk of a very old woman. In their conversations some of my close friends kept their distance, so little do any of us know about giving and receiving comfort. (p 129)*

But something important was happening inside. Elizabeth began to offer praise for the pain she was feeling and her health began to improve. Her book, *Cry Pain, Cry Hope*, published in 1987, details this process. Once again, she began to offer “growth groups” at the church. As happens sometimes, in addition to the encouragement of her church community, this effort was fortunate enough to attract the attention of important public figures, including Elizabeth and Bob Dole. At that time Elizabeth Dole (then U. S. Secretary of Transportation) belonged to a group led by Elizabeth O'Connor, where the two Elizabeths became friends.

Elizabeth Dole and her husband Bob (U.S. Senator from Kansas) shared the vision of service to elderly people, encouraging and supporting Elizabeth O'Connor in her discernment process. The Doles provided that extraordinary push that got Sarah's Circle off the ground and running.

## Money and Mission

The Sarah's Circle building, at its ideal location on 17th Street just around the corner from the Potter's House, was acquired with the help and guidance of Jubilee Housing. At that time the CoS missions in Adams Morgan had a loose connection called Jubilee Ministries which offered both shared resources (such as computer expertise) and the moral support of others serving the needs of people in Adams Morgan.

I became the Assistant Director of Sarah's Circle in 1983, which meant that I became responsible for the accounting and legal requirements. By then we knew that the current residents had no place else to go, and we wanted to include them in our effort to build community there. Elizabeth wrote:

*I tell them I am afraid of promising too much because we have no funds, that our dream for the building is*

*dependent on our raising money from foundations and individuals in the churches who care about what is happening in the cities, and who know that we are better human beings when we care for each other. (p 144)*

They were naturally suspicious of us as their new landlords because of neglect from previous owners. Then Gordon Cosby spoke to the Sarah's Circle group about fundraising in a way that inspired us even though we felt inadequate for the task of raising the funds needed for renovation:

*In interpreting the dream, you are helping people to redefine the way they relate to the poor and the old, as well as to redefine the way they relate to their own aging. Money is an exciting dimension of the mission and makes possible hundreds of wonderful conversations. Because your mission needs money you will be motivated to get out there and to talk to people about a whole new realm of things about which you would not speak in the ordinary course of events. Be glad you are not starting out with money. When you have it you attract people who are looking for work and who want to make a career out of serving the poor. They see the project as a way of breaking into the political arena. When you have money people want jobs with you for the salaries they will receive and the careers they will further. When you have no money there is no mistaking who is called. (p 154)*

We started renovating the aging building (built in 1917) one apartment at a time, as money and volunteer help became available. Through the years after Sarah's Circle was in existence, both of the Doles continued to express their excitement for the organization, visiting from time to time. Once, for example, Bob Dole celebrated a “reverse birthday party,” when on his birthday he brought gifts for the seniors of Sarah's Circle and celebrated with a great party.

When I retired from Sarah's Circle in December, 1997, Elizabeth O'Connor was able to speak of our journey together even though she was seriously weakened by cancer. She recalled the early days of overwhelm and doubts as well as the courage and miraculous events that deepened our faith that the work belonged to God and not to us. As the last staff member from Church of the Saviour, I wondered whether the story of those early days would be remembered. I knew that our role was to give birth to this place and then let it go as the need for more professional staff made that obvious.

A second redevelopment project began in 2017, which added 15 new studio and one-bedroom units for a total of 49 units.

**Today, Sarah's Circle continues its mission of providing community and care for low-income seniors at 2551 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009. Phone: 202-332-1400 and email address: [sarahscircle.org](http://sarahscircle.org)**

*Fern Edwards was the Assistant Director of Sarah's Circle from 1983 through 1997. She is currently a member of Seekers Church.*

# SHARING THE INWARD JOURNEY:

## Why I write for INWARDOUTWARD



When Kayla ended her InwardOutward (IO) column in 2017 as she neared the end of her life, I missed her voice and view. As chair of the Council then, I also knew there was no single writer who could really speak for Church of the Saviour because we now had a different form – seven small congregations, each with a different call and character. As the IO editor, I want each writer to speak in his or her own voice because that is who we are now: people who have been shaped by our commitment to the inward/outward journey in an intentional community. The current group of writers wonderfully represent our collective expression of how the journey of inner reflection supports conscious and intentional action in the world.

More personally, I write because it keeps me engaged with scripture and, because we use the common lectionary, with the life and ministry of Jesus. Community is where those words become flesh. That's why our personal stories are important. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome at [callingseditor@gmail.com](mailto:callingseditor@gmail.com).

–Marjory Zoet Bankson, Editor of InwardOutward

Writing for Inward/Outward is different than any other kind of writing that I do. These short, lectionary reflections are less formal than a sermon or an academic paper. And although they are both personal and immediate, it is not like journaling or writing a letter, either. What I like best about writing for Inward/Outward is that it is an opportunity to name what is true for me about a particular Gospel passage in a public way, and invite others to name what is true for them.

– Deborah Sokolove Yakushiji, Seekers Church



I value prayerful reflections on the Gospels because our first calling is to go deeper on the inward journey. I hope the reflections encourage our readers to a deeper intimacy with Jesus. The living Word of the Gospels is all about staying close to Jesus. The essential journey is knowing him, loving him, and following him on an alternative path, the kingdom way. The words and stories of Jesus illuminate the radical journey, inward and outward, of “living in the world but not of the world.” I believe an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus is the key to peace within, overflowing into inspired action for healing our broken world.

–Ann Dean, Dayspring Church

I love telling old stories in new ways, bringing them to life in a personal way. To paint pictures rather than describing how it looks, illuminating the perennial truth within each thing that Jesus did and said. To make new wine for new wineskins. I write for those who have never heard gospel stories or who are disillusioned with Christianity, or who have been wounded by it. I write for Christians who are yearning to hear Biblical stories in a fresh way. The universality of the gospels is what I most want to reveal to the reader. To write in such a way that something new blooms in someone's heart is the greatest desire I have. Thank you for reading!

– Jim Marsh, Wider Circle



What propels me in life is to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love my neighbor as myself. The inward journey is the heart of my life, the way to be in touch with the love of God and to be shaped by it. The outward journey is giving that love voice, hands and feet. I write for InwardOutward because it is a vehicle to share the blessing of a life open to surrender and deep communion with the Holy One and action in concert with God's Spirit. I am ever growing, I pray, in what it means to be human, and what it means to do what is particularly mine to contribute as part of God's beloved community of creation. The Church of the Saviour with its long and rich commitment to journey inward, outward, and together offers much opportunity for life-learning and practice.

- Trish Stefanik, Overlook Retreat House



I write for Inward/Outward to follow in the footsteps of Gordon, Elizabeth, Kayla and others of both reflecting upon the gospel message and sharing what that means to me in how I live my daily life. To me, this touches on the essence of the intention of our Christian commitment - to wrestle with God's Word and do our best to embody that message, as we understand it.

- Kate Lasso, 8th Day Community

Back when Kayla McClurg wrote Inward/Outward, I used to read it and each week I was astonished by what she had written. Her insights always struck me as so profound, so unique. Most weeks I felt that I could have read that same passage a hundred times and never come up with her insights. So I started writing for Inward/Outward simply because I wanted to learn how to do what Kayla did: to see beyond the Sunday School lesson, to zoom all the way in and meditate on the significance of one tiny detail, to zoom all the way out so that the facts of time and place and culture became blurry and all that was left was a universal human story, and above all, to not take the meaning of any particular passage for granted. Writing for Inward/Outward, and reading what my fellow co-authors write, is a discipline that doesn't allow me to get lazy in my relationship with scripture. It forces me to keep paying attention, for which I am incredibly grateful.

- Erica Lloyd, Seekers Church



## Another way to build community

### Community Song Circle and Potluck at Dayspring

Thursday, June 12th ... and Future Song Circles

Alexandra Nelligan and Jean Brown invite you to join us for a potluck meal followed by an evening of singing at the farmhouse at Dayspring. Those who are able will gather at 5:00pm for a potluck meal, and we will sing from 6:30pm until sunset around 8:35pm. This will be a sweet opportunity to enjoy the long daylight close to the solstice, and if the weather is comfortable, we will sing outside.

Alexandra and Jean will lead the group through songs that are simple-to-learn, that create space for joy, praise, and tender care to emerge, and move through in an embodied way. We cherish this opportunity to resource ourselves and turn our hearts toward Love, in community. It is a gift to witness what we create through weaving our voices together, joining members of the Dayspring community, the larger Church of the Savior community, and friends and family who love song. We hope you can join us.

We had a beautiful, joyous gathering last weekend with a group spanning seven generations. What a treat! Our hope is that these gatherings are accessible for all who want to join.

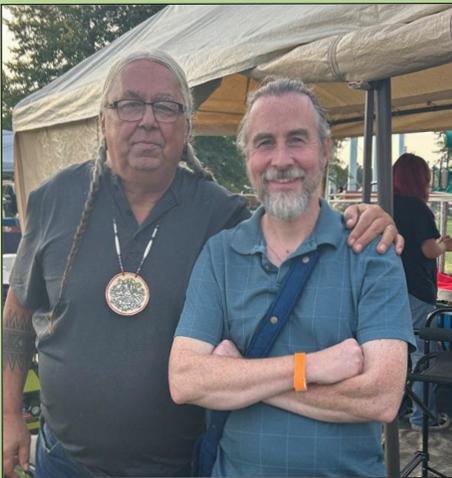
An important note: no singing/musical experience or talent is needed - your loving heart is all you need! This is a non performance based event, and welcomes every voice just as you are (especially if you've been taught you're a "bad singer"). If you'd like to bring some light percussion, that is welcome too.

If you are planning to come to future circles, please let Alexandra ([nelliganalexandra@gmail.com](mailto:nelliganalexandra@gmail.com)) or Jean ([EarthenHandsatDayspring@gmail.com](mailto:EarthenHandsatDayspring@gmail.com)) know. We look forward to singing with you!

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## Adam Greene Leaves Wellspring



*I have chosen to leave Wellspring and accept an appointment by the 29th Generation Hereditary Chief of the Piscataway Indian Nation Mark Tayac to serve as his Emissary to the Indigenous European People in the Western Hemisphere. It is my firm belief that Indigenous Peoples across the Earth are the protectors of the ways of living that will guide humanity from the brink of extinction. Now is the time to acknowledge with humility their leadership and for those of us who are not Indigenous to this continent—but who are Indigenous to the Earth—to reconnect to our own ancestral Indigeneity. Together, in friendship, we can build the kind of community that respects All Our Relations.*

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