



# CHRONICLE

CELEBRATING OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY  
KOINONIAFARM.ORG

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## The God Movement Today

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove



AT THE CLARENCE JORDAN SYMPOSIUM FIVE YEARS AGO, we gathered to celebrate Clarence and Florence Jordan's 100th birthdays and Koinonia Farm's 70th. Dr. Vincent Harding shared his memories of the gift Koinonia Farm was to him and to the Southern freedom movement. Then he challenged us with a call: we need to have a conversation with Millennials about what Koinonia's legacy means for the 21st century.

I recalled Uncle Vincent's insight and foresight a few weeks ago when a few dozen Millennials met us in Charlottesville, took up the call of local clergy to confront white supremacy in America, and marched to D.C. For two weeks, they walked on the roadside to defy fear and challenge hate. In one small town where the county sheriff warned local pastors that he had "dealt with these people before," the marchers could not find a single church to take them in for dinner. But that didn't stop them. They met in an art studio and fellowshiped with locals who made them dinner and heard their stories.

Later I talked to a friend in that small town. "We couldn't find a church to take us in, but it was the best church I've experienced in a long time," he said. I thought about how often church leaders gather to talk about how to reach Millennials yet how hard it can be to welcome them when they show up uninvited.

*Rather than a traditional conference or symposium,  
we're going to have a gathering to read the  
signs of the times and discern our common call.*

Koinonia Farm turned 75 in 2017. In March 2018, we'll gather again for the second Clarence Jordan Symposium. We'll celebrate the legacy of Koinonia, and, even more, have a democratic conversation about what it means to build up community, peace, and racial justice today.

We've been reaching out and inviting some of the people who are doing the most important faith-rooted peace and justice work in America to join us. And some of them have said yes.

But something more is happening. A coalition of people are reaching back to the Poor People's Campaign of the mid-20th century's freedom movement and stepping forward to take up this campaign again. We're not only commemorating a legacy, we're committing together to live out the next chapter. And a conversation between elders and Millennials about what our shared legacy of freedom struggle means is very much alive.

So I'm heartened to invite you to join us not only for a symposium



but to join the conversation. Rather than a traditional conference or symposium, we're going to have a gathering to read the signs of the times and discern our common call. I can't think of a better group to do this with or a better place to do this in this moment in time. Clarence Jordan envisioned Koinonia Farm as a demonstration plot for the kingdom of God. She has been for 75 years and now we're going to kick off the next 75 years.

Y'all come. ☞



clarence jordan  
symposium 2018  
*Building Up a New World*

**PRE-SYMPOSIUM WORKSHOPS**  
THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018 | 7:30AM-4PM

**SYMPOSIUM**  
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY  
Opening at 5 on Thursday,  
closing at 6 on Saturday

**KOINONIA FAMILY REUNION**  
SUNDAY, MARCH 11 | 11AM-4PM

Register online at [koinoniafarm.org](http://koinoniafarm.org)

Register by March 1 using promotional code  
**PARTNER** and receive 15% discount.

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**clarence jordan  
symposium 2018**  
*Building Up a New World*

## PRE-SYMPOSIUM

### Thursday, March 8th at Koinonia Farm

- 7:30 am **Registration/Check in and Continental Breakfast at Koinonia Farm**
- 9:00 am **Workshops:**
- **Nonviolent Direct Action | Matt Meyer & Sahar Alsalahni**
  - **Moral Fusion Organizing | William Barber & Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove**
  - **Intentional Community | Shane Claiborne & Friends**
- 12:00 pm **Lunch**
- 2:00 pm **All participants come together for facilitated conversation on the Poor People's Campaign and building up a new world together.**

## SYMPOSIUM AT FIRST BAPTIST & FIRST METHODIST Thursday, March 8th

- 5:00 pm **Registration/Check in at First Methodist Church**
- 6:30 pm **Symposium Opening at First Baptist Church**  
Our opening night's mass meeting with the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, co-chair the "Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival" and Ruby Sales, resident elder of the Symposium.

## Friday, March 9th

- 9:00 am **Workshops & sharing circles**
- 11:00 am **Building Up Justice with Anton Flores, co-founder of Alterna, witnesses from the New Sanctuary Movement & Ruby Sales**
- 12:30 pm **Lunch at First Baptist & First Methodist**
- 2:00 pm **Building Up Peace with Kathy Kelly, veteran peace activist and founder of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, witnesses from the Fellowship of Reconciliation & Ruby Sales**
- 4:00 pm **Koinonia Farm tour**
- 8:00 pm **Cotton Patch Gospel Musical at the Rylander Theater**

## Saturday, March 10th

- 9:00 am **Workshops & sharing circles**
- 11:00 am **Building Up Community with Shane Claiborne, witnesses from the new monasticism & Ruby Sales**
- 12:30 pm **Lunch at First Baptist & First Methodist**
- 2:00 pm **Workshops, sharing circles, & Koinonia Farm tour**
- 5:00 pm **Closing Worship led by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove**

During the Symposium, resident elder Ruby Sales will facilitate on-going reflection and questions that will be processed in intergenerational sharing circles.

## KOINONIA FAMILY REUNION Sunday, March 11th

- 11:00 am **Welcome & Brunch**
- 12:30 to 4 pm **We'll gather around the farm to see old friends or make new ones, to reminisce, to watch Briars in the Cotton Patch, to meet with today's members for a question and answer session. Other than sharing a meal together, we are leaving the day fairly unstructured to leave plenty of time for conversation.**



## Happy Birthday, Koinonia!

*Jim Jordan*

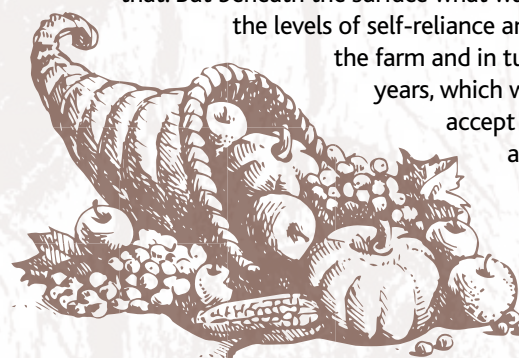
SAYING "HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY, KOINONIA" is sort of like when we were kids singing "Happy Birthday To Me!" I was hardly born when Clarence and Florence packed up in Louisville, KY, and headed south in the old car along with my sister Eleanor. With the England family, they set out to put down roots on those south Georgia acres that had already been named "Koinonia Farm, An Experiment in Christian Living". First stop was Talbotton where Florence, Eleanor and I stayed in the Jordan family home with my grandparents while a house was being built at the farm. The joy of my first birthday was overshadowed by the sudden death of my grandfather, Clarence's father, on that very day.

Actually, Clarence and Martin weren't building a house. This was during WWII and building materials were rationed with no new home construction allowed. Ever creative, they asked, "Could we get materials to build a farm garage?" "Sure." "Well, could it be a two-story garage?" "Don't see a problem with that as long as it's a garage for farm equipment." So the first new building at Koinonia was a two-story garage which just happened to have rooms and windows on the upper level! That was our home for about 20 years although the "garage" was also eventually closed in to become the first community kitchen and dining room.

As a young child, the high ideals and goals were far beyond my level of knowledge and interest. "Pacifism", "Segregation," and "Community" had little attraction to a young boy fascinated with cows, chickens, tractors, peanuts, and corn. A little sister, Jan, came along, and a few years later a brother, Lenny. Streams of visitors and summer "work camps" of college students added excitement to what could have been an isolated life. We never fully appreciated that our "vacations" were just Daddy using his travel allowance for minister training engagements at places like Ridgecrest, Green Lake, and Chautauqua. He drove hundreds of miles in old cars with Florence and 3 or 4 children eating bologna sandwiches for lunch and cooking on a camp stove beside the road so that the family could have new experiences. Mother was a "can-do" person who made it all work and improvised from the limited money available. I have often said, "We were poor, but we never knew it."

Much has been written about the life and mission of Koinonia and I won't repeat that. But beneath the surface what was invaluable to us as children were the levels of self-reliance and initiative that surrounded us on the farm and in turn the responsibilities, far beyond our years, which were delegated to us. The ability to accept almost any challenge with confidence and without fear is the greatest legacy received from the early days. I am grateful and can now see some of those gifts in our own children and grandchildren.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, KOINONIA! 🍷



## Bring a Group to the Symposium and Save!

**GROUP RATES INCLUDING  
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OF 10 OR MORE**

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## You Never Really Leave Koinonia Farm

*Katie Miles*

IT WAS A COLD, GRAY FEBRUARY DAY IN 2014 when I first stepped foot on the red Georgia clay of Koinonia Farm. My husband and I were beginning our three month internship and had never visited Koinonia before. My first thought upon entering our new Jubilee apartment was, "oh! I think I can do this for three months." I didn't realize how much I would learn and grow over those months.

For us, Koinonia Farm was a place of peace and quiet, growth, practicing Christian hospitality, and learning the thin, fuzzy line between work and fellowship. We took a deep breath after the fast-paced, production driven life of graduate school and sunk our hands into the red clay. And just about the time we felt we had settled into this unique rhythm of life, it was time for us to leave. But leaving Koinonia Farm isn't that easy.

I quickly learned there is something about the red Georgia clay that sticks with you, literally staining your clothes and metaphorically staying in your soul. There is something about the rhythms of life on the farm, the prayer bells, the chapel, the shared meals, the quiet moments, the busy moments, that reworks the rhythms of your own life.

We only lived at Koinonia Farm for three months. We were there for barely enough time to see the season change. But it was long enough to become part of the long line of guests, interns, and friends of Koinonia Farm. Since our brief stay there, we have remained in contact with some of our fellow interns. We've returned for a visit at least once a year. We convinced my sister to spend a year as an intern on the farm. We've shown my family around all our favorite spots. I've found myself working long distance for the farm. We just can't shake the connections we formed that spring. And we wouldn't want to. 🌿



## What Do You Get the Farm That Has Everything?

*Erica Moody Faircloth*

THIS YEAR KOINONIA FARM HAS GIVEN US A BLESSING. Instead of guessing what to get the farm for its 75th birthday or just sending a gift card, the community has asked for something specific: bricks. Each brick will tell a tale, honor time spent at Koinonia or a loved one, or simply a wish for 75 more years. Together the bricks will create a pathway and prayer garden at Clarence's Writing Shack.

Clarence's Shack is a building all Koinonia visitors and residents know well. A sense of history and peace surround it and make you want to sit and reflect for a while. The first time I walked past the shack, it was painted a brilliant green, a color that stood out even against the backdrop of pecan trees with full summer foliage. It drew me in, asking to be noticed, pleading to be used. A writing shack is like a tree house. It is built to be used, to hold people and their imaginations, and to give them a place to flourish.

The recent renovations make the Shack further available to writers, artists, dreamers, and anyone in need of reflection and prayer. But it still could use an easy pathway and adding a pray garden with seating will provide additional space for peaceful reflection, meditation, and prayer. So let's give Koinonia exactly what it has asked for this year.

Together, we can build a pathway filled with memories, prayers, dreams, and birthday wishes leading to one of our favorite places at Koinonia Farm.

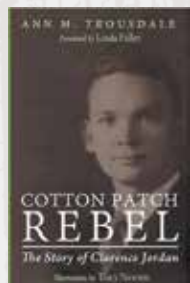
Bricks can be ordered online at [www.koinoniafarm.org](http://www.koinoniafarm.org). They are a perfect gift. 🌿

*Erica Moody Faircloth is a former intern who now resides in Americus, Georgia. She works for the Fuller Center for Housing.*



## Every Once in a While a Clarence Jordan

*Ann Trousdale*



I GREW UP IN A FAMILY OF OLD-STYLE SOUTHERN STORYTELLERS, and I know how powerful stories can be in shaping children's lives. Not only do they offer experiences of worlds beyond the boundaries of the child's own life; they offer characters whose values a child may resonate with and whose choices a child may want to emulate. It was this belief in the power of story that made me want to write a biography of Clarence Jordan for young readers, to present to them this person of such profound integrity and faith, of deep courage and humor, laced with down-to-earth practicality. After years of research and writing, I was overjoyed to receive the offer of a publication contract from Wipf and Stock.

The English writer and critic Lytton Strachey has called biography the most delicate of the arts: the biographer needs the ability to tell a good story, but more than that: to present an accurate portrayal of the person whose life is being told. It was very important to me to get Clarence "right," not to allow my own perspectives or biases or limitations to distort the portrait I was presenting. When the book came out, I sent copies to Clarence and Florence's three surviving children. Two of them wrote to me that I had indeed gotten their Daddy right. After the suffering they had endured because of the anger and misunderstanding directed at their father, for them to feel good about a portrait of him: well, I thought, I can die happy now. No, I realized; now I have something to live for.

I have shared the book through presentations in many venues and have been gratified by the enthusiastic reception it has received. I've been told by not a few people that this is not just a book for children, but for adults as well. One day recently, as I was feeling keenly the ways we humans have inflicted war and suffering on one another, have perpetuated cruel and unjust social practices, have polluted and torn apart our earth, I asked God, why do you tolerate us? Why do you have anything to do with us? And the thought came back, "Because every once in a while there comes along a Clarence Jordan." 🌿

*Ann Trousdale is a retired professor at Louisiana State University, a Deacon in the Methodist Church and a dear friend of Koinonia Farm. Tracy Newton illustrated the book while interning at the farm. To purchase Cotton Patch Rebel go to our online store — <https://koinoniafarm.3dcartstores.com>*





## A Word From Clarence

KOINONIA FARM BY ESTHER MOHLER HO IN THE CHURCH ADVOCATE, FEBRUARY 1967

So impressed was I with the courage and perseverance of Clarence Jordan and his followers in meeting the violence inflicted upon them without retaliation or bitterness that I naively asked whether he had ever been tempted to leave the South.

"Yes, many times," was his solemn reply.

In that instant I understood that the burden of estrangement from one's neighbors hangs heavily even upon a saint.

"What is the future of Koinonia Farm?" I phrased my concluding question.

"The future? That's not our business," replied the large sunburned man. "Christ said, 'Take no thought for tomorrow.' Only people looking for success worry about the future. We are called not to be successful but to be faithful. I hope the future will find us faithful."

*"We are called not to be successful but to be faithful. I hope the future will find us faithful."*

FAITH AT WORK APRIL 1970; PUBLISHED SIX MONTHS AFTER CLARENCE JORDAN'S DEATH

Interviewer: Do you ever wonder, Clarence, if your living out something in a small community in an obscure place has accomplished any good? What can any of us, or any small group of us, expect to accomplish?

Clarence: Well, one always lives with the hope that he is doing some good. But he never dares make his basic decisions on whether or not they will do good, but only in the sense of being a person of integrity.

I've wondered many, many times how much good we were doing by letting those people ride by here and shoot at us. You hope and pray that good will come of it, but you do it in your struggle for integrity. I don't suppose the disciples ever thought of the crucifixion as doing good. But ever since that Man on the cross prayed, 'Father, forgive them,' this world just hasn't been the same. Perhaps the thought went through His tormented mind, 'Well, what good is all this?' But you can't make your decisions on that basis.

To think in those terms becomes strategy. And love is never 'strategic.' The minute you love your wife so that she will cook you a steak, it isn't love any more but a polluted form of selfishness. You believe deep down that love does good, but that's not the reason you love. You love for love's own sake. Ours has been a struggle for integrity. What will come of it? I hope we can say, "We've been obedient." 🌿

## What Will I Miss?

Sara Litzell

THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT I WILL NOT MISS ABOUT KOINONIA. The feeling of being elbow deep in dirty dish water, scooping soggy food bits out of the drain. Or wrestling with fitted sheets, attempting to fold them. Or no matter how many times I sweep there always seems to be dirt in my room and in my sheets. I am surprised there is still dirt to farm with, considering the amount of dirt I swept up on a daily basis. But I think I will miss more things about Koinonia than not.

I will miss turning on the lights in the library and seeing all my hard work. I will miss Bren's quiet response "any clarifying questions or feedback?" during our weekly Examen practice. I will miss thinking over what gives me life and what takes it away. I will miss the sound of the match striking as we light the peace candle. I will miss the sound of the bell at lunch and listening to whoever made the delicious meal. I might even miss the smacking sound of a chair falling as someone has once again knocked one over, standing up to say who they are, where they are from, and what brought them to Koinonia. I will miss people's random questions while giving a tour. Many people asked me how I ended up here when I used to work for Disney World. I'm still not so sure myself.

All I know is that over a year ago I was miserable in my "dream job." I started trying to figure out what the heck I was going to do with my life. And then my sister suggested Koinonia. I was nervous about applying. I did not want to live in a place where I wasn't going to be accepted and loved for every part of me. My sister constantly reassured me that Koinonia was open to everyone "of all faiths, no faith, whatever you identify as." I worked harder on that internship application than I did for my college application. There were questions I didn't even have



answers to: my spiritual journey? Why I wanted to come to Koinonia? I was completely honest in my answers. I wanted Koinonia to know exactly what they were getting with me. An introvert, working on my depression, gay, questioning of the faith in which I was raised. And lo and behold Koinonia accepted me.

That's what I will miss most about Koinonia: it is one of the few places I found that truly loves and accepts everyone. I have seen people of all backgrounds, faiths, genders, races, and sexualities come together to work, eat, and fellowship. I can't really explain Koinonia in a few short sentences. I think the best way to learn about Koinonia is to visit. To fold those fitted sheets, so that our guests have somewhere to sleep. To scoop out that blocked kitchen drain, so we can keep making delicious food for people. To toil outside in that South Georgia weather and become closer to the land. To sit at table and laugh and learn with all sorts of people. To walk up to Clarence's Shack and experience the peace that I found there.

I hope that Koinonia will always be here for people like me. Who maybe are a little lost, and looking to live life differently. I know that I will be back to visit. After all, someone has got to look out for our chickens. 🐔

## A Brief Reflection: What I See

Bren Dubay

I LOVE BASEBALL — ESPECIALLY THE HOUSTON ASTROS. My second favorite team is the Chicago Cubs. It's been a great couple of years after many long seasons of drought. When the logo was created for Koinonia's Commemorative Brick Project in 2016, the Cubs got a congratulatory place on it for their World Series win. I was intent on having us redo the logo when the Astros won this past fall. Sensibility won out, though a brick celebrating the 2017 World Champs will find its way onto the walkway I'm sure.

I have been a faithful fan for a long time to two teams not known for being "successful."

I don't know if Clarence Jordan loved baseball, but I am certain he wasn't speaking of the sport when he said, "We [at Koinonia] are called not to be successful, but to be faithful. I hope the future will find us faithful."

It's been a special year as the community turned 75 to reflect on faithfulness, integrity and demonstration plot. The meaning of the Greek word koinonia is communion. The koinonia or communion is what holds brothers and sisters together in this life lived in community. This communion is meant

to be an image of that other communion — the one that exists between the three persons of the holy Trinity. Clarence had no small idea in mind when he said Koinonia Farm was to be a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God.

Have we been faithful? This is what I see — a life rooted in prayer fed throughout the day with the word of God; an unabashed welcome for ALL people. I see the soil of the land and the soil of the soul nurtured continuously. I hear music from Mennonite and Methodist Hymnals, from the Taizé ecumenical community in France to the Negro Spirituals from the South, from Bruderhof and Koinonia songbooks and occasionally even a little bit of Gregorian chant or a song in Spanish thrown into the mix. I know, too, if Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, Orthodox or any other hymnal shows up,

*Continued on page 8.*







## Breaking Bread

*Steve Krout, a novice member of the community*

WHEN I WORKED AT UNFI, I HAD TWO FRIENDS NAMED SHARIFF AND ADEN. The three of us sat together at almost every break and lunch. We talked, shared food, and watched soccer. They were the first Muslims that I knew on a personal level. In a time when I was hurt and disillusioned by the Christian Church, these two friends of mine showed me glimpses of God through their love for me. It reminds me of what Cesar Chavez said, "If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's house and eat with him...the people who give you their food give you their heart."

Here at Koinonia, everyone has a place at our table. Everyone is loved and welcomed regardless of their religion, race, gender, income, status, sexuality, or anything else. People come for a multitude of reasons: to heal, to rest, to search. We seek to give our hearts to these people by breaking bread with them. This is an essential part of our community because we believe it is a central tenet of Christianity. This isn't always easy if you live here — especially when you've had a long and difficult day. But it is a good and holy thing.

The Reverend Jennifer Bailey wrote in her article *The Power of Welcome in an Age of Loneliness*, "One dinner will not change the world. One conversation will not heal all wounds. Yet, it can be a start and beginning is half the battle." While eating with a someone, you might be the glimpse of God — the glimpse of Love — they need. It may not necessarily be something you say or do — it may simply be your presence with them. Listen. Be attentive. Engage. So, let us remember the two great commandments: to love God and to love our neighbor. Surely, when we observe them, Christ is revealed to us in a powerful way. For when we break bread with the stranger, we break bread with Christ. ✍



## Heal the Land

*Katie Miles*

FOR MUCH OF KOINONIA FARM'S 75 YEAR HISTORY, pecans have been a constant. The Jordans and Englands began Koinonia as a working farm with gardens, livestock, chickens, and anything else they could think of. By 1956, Koinonia Farm had a roadside stand selling meat, nuts, and other goods from the farm. Local pressure in the form of boycotts, bombs, and bullets forced the community to look outside their local area for income and they began selling their farm products through the mail. By 1957, boycotts forced them to shift their focus to pecans. A 1957 newsletter declared, "Because the boycott has already deprived us of three of our major sources of income—eggs, irrigated crops, and farm market — it is obvious that we must find some other means of livelihood. After thorough investigation of many possibilities, we have decided upon the processing and shelling of pecans. To us this seems the least

vulnerable to boycott of anything we might go into..." Over the next decades, Koinonia Farm's main crop became pecans and the community's main source of income remains the mail order business.

The product line expanded to include not just pecans, but "Pecan'dy," and fruitcake, and other handmade food from the Koinonia kitchens. 1965 was a good year for pecans. The community sold "almost 40,000 lbs. of shelled pecans and a little over 20,000 lbs. of fruitcake, along with several thousand boxes of spiced nuts and pecandy." (Newsletter April 1965). The product line continued to expand to include smoked pecans, different candies, cakes, and other goodies. Many of the products Koinonia Farm sells today are time-tested favorites from the early days of the farm.

From the very beginning, Clarence Jordan knew the

*Continued on page 8.*

## How Old Are Our Mixers?

*Katie Miles*

THE BAKERY IS THE HEART OF KOINONIA'S PRODUCTS BUSINESS. It's this magical space where people come together to make all of our delicious "bakery specialties" found on the pages of our catalog and website. Friends old and new join in to help Geneva Brown, our Bakery Coordinator, make and package Koinonia products. The bakery is always filled with not only mouth watering smells, but also the sounds of gospel music playing. Geneva keeps things moving by being sure everyone stays on task and being sure no one takes anything too seriously. When things get busy, she'll get everyone on their feet for a line dance to stretch legs and refocus.

Since 1956, the bakery has been a place to work together and a way to keep us going. Through boycotts, bombs, and bullets, the mail order business kept Koinonia afloat and it continues to be the main source of income for the farm. Ties to the past are all around the bakery. Clarence Jordan

*"When you walk into the fruitcake bakery or the candy kitchen you get a feeling of people working together...."*

himself bought the two big used mixers — they are from 1910 and 1919! — and they are still going strong! As we operate them we are reminded of our rich history, where we have been as a community, and how important quality, handmade products are to the Koinonia story.

We are not, however, only looking to the past. We are also finding new ways to tweak recipes and incorporate all-natural ingredients to be sure the food we make remains delicious, good for the land, and good for those who grow our ingredients. All of our chocolate is Fair Trade, our sugar is all organic, and we are always looking for ways to include more local and sustainably grown ingredients.

In 1974, a Koinonia Newsletter said, "When you walk into the fruitcake bakery or the candy kitchen you get a feeling of people working together...." The feeling is still the same. During the fall, the bakery is at its busiest, making products for holiday orders for our loyal customers. Community members, interns, guests, and neighbors all come together to use our 100 year old mixers, pour biologically grown pecans into our fair trade chocolate, and package everything up in bags that tell the story of Koinonia Farm. It is the perfect coming together of where we have been and where we're going. And the taste testing isn't too bad either. ✍



## Making a Gift to Koinonia REPLY FORM

- ☐ I would like to subscribe to the annual newspaper, \$10 a year.
- ☐ I would like to receive: (monthly e-mail updates, annual catalog.)
- ☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be used where most needed.
- ☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ that I would like to be directed specifically to (name project or fund):
- ☐ Internship Program
  - ☐ Hospitality Ministry
  - ☐ Biological Pecan Management
  - ☐ Hospitality Beyond Borders
  - ☐ Peacebuilders Camp
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I/we would like to be contacted about remembering Koinonia Farm in my/our will.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card information, if applicable: check one:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_



## Steps Towards Dignity and Justice at Peacebuilders Camp

Jonah McDonald

"HELLO, SIR."

With those simple words, Patrick made a profound impact for peace and justice. Sitting across from him, separated by plexiglass, inside the high security walls of Stewart Detention Facility was Kwesi [named changed to protect his identity], a large, tall West African man who had entered the United States after a long and treacherous journey and presented himself as an asylum-seeker.

Patrick describes himself as being on the autism spectrum and doesn't always feel confident interacting with other kids. He's a white teenager from Alabama who speaks with a deep drawl and whose number one love is inline skating.

It was the second-to-last day of 2017 Peacebuilders Camp and campers were learning about the Right to Asylum (Article 14 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). As part of the day's activities, Patrick had helped build a picnic table and play structure for families staying at El Refugio, a hospitality house for relatives of detained men. Now he was stepping way outside his comfort zone and visiting a detainee.

We counselors were struck by the simplicity and impact of Patrick's greeting, "Hello, sir." Kwesi was held in facility designed to take away a detainee's dignity. He was caught in the middle of an immigration system and racial climate that stripped away his dignity. But this young man still addressed him as "sir." How long had it been since Kwesi had been addressed with such dignity?

It's Kwesi who is the hero in this situation — for his bravery in the face of danger and his persistence as an asylum-seeker. But we hope our camper's small gesture of respect and dignity buoyed Kwesi in this difficult time.

At Peacebuilders Camp, we believe everything revolves around the right to dignity. Article 1 in the Universal Declaration states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and the word dignity appears five other times throughout the document.

Our camp rules ask everyone to treat each other with dignity. Our activities are designed to be inclusive, accessible, and dignified for all, no matter your ability, religion, or background. And we hope to inspire



campers to apply the right to dignity on a global level, where it can create lasting and systemic change. When people have access to their right to expression, their right to adequate housing and medical care, their right to equal pay, and even their right to rest and leisure, justice emerges. And we believe restoration of justice removes the conditions and cause for war.

All summer, campers strive to emulate and embody Koinonia's vision of "love through service to others, joy through generous hospitality, peace through reconciliation." Though from wildly diverse backgrounds — Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, atheist; white, Black, Latino, Asian, Native American; rural and urban; wealthy, poor, and everywhere in between; kids of all abilities and experiences — our campers develop deep friendships and are inspired by each others' stories.

During the week they are together, campers learn that their peers have marched for farm workers' rights, struggle with social anxiety, are amazing visual artists, have lost family members in war, or love reading Harry Potter. They become deeply committed to upholding each other's dignity. From our program facilitators, campers learn about food deserts, living lives of conscience, how children react to gun violence, and migrant workers' healthcare disparities. With this knowledge our campers are inspired to work towards the dignity of all humanity.

On the last night of camp, after days of practice, Patrick strapped on his inline skates and skated to a pop song, sung by fellow camper Ashana, counselor Elysee, and counselor-in-training Medinah. Ashana's smooth voice and Medinah's soulful piano filled the room and Patrick's skating became dance. It is through these small acts of dignity — skate dancing with your friends and addressing a stranger with respect — that we take the first steps to world peace.

Tell us about the path you're on to create more dignity, justice, and peace in the world. Contact us on our website and see videos, photos and stories from camp. We also invite you to contribute towards making this transformative camp accessible to all. [www.peacebuilderscamp.org](http://www.peacebuilderscamp.org) ☞



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## My Journey Takes an Unexpected Turn

Amanda Moore

Those of you who know me well know that I am a very versatile person. I do well in coffee shops and boardrooms, in one-on-one encounters as well as on the stage. One might even call me flexible, and they'd be right, on more levels than they know!

This Spring I discovered I have a genetic condition called Ehlers Danlos Syndrome — Hypermobility Type (hEDS). This connective tissue/collagen disorder can affect bones, ligaments, tendons, eyes, brain stem, organ tissue, heart valves, cartilage, skin ... well, you get the point. Collagen is found all over the body, from head to toe!

As of March 2017, there are 13 types of Ehlers Danlos identified. The most commonly diagnosed is Hypermobility Type. One hallmark sign is Hypermobility (or overly flexible) joints and skin. Indeed, I am flexible, too flexible. Ligaments and tendons have a hard time keeping joints and bones in place. So the muscles try to help out and end up working overtime, leading to more issues with alignment, stability, and pain.

So what does all this mean for me? Well, nothing good, I can tell you that. It does answer many questions, though, about odd health conditions, aches, and pains I've had my entire life. I've been diagnosed with at least 7 other conditions that commonly occur with EDS. Some days I literally cannot function. I often wear braces to help keep joints stable and prevent injuries. I wear compression garments for adequate blood pressure. I drink Pedialyte (or a homemade

version) every morning when I wake up. I eat lots of salt. I carefully read ingredient labels and cross-contamination info to avoid my many allergens. I rotate my foods to prevent new allergens. Anything cold causes me extreme pain. Heat makes me dizzy. I wear layers to help my body maintain an adequate temperature. I drink A LOT of water. I do countless physical therapy exercises daily. Sometimes I sleep almost half the day. Other times I lie awake all night. I don't walk very far distances. Pain and fatigue are my new norm.

I never, ever expected to be in this place of fragility. But then, no one does. My body has become a stranger to me. But, slowly, we are becoming acquainted. I wouldn't say we're becoming friends yet, but I've discovered a compassion for my body. I would do anything to go back in time and treat my body with more kindness. But I can't. All I can do is start now and be the friend to my body that I would like to have. So when my body says stop, I stop. When it says rest, I rest. When it says drink water, I drink a lot of water. I am no longer in control.

Many people in my situation would resent their body for failing them. And sometimes I do. Mostly, though, I feel regret and sorrow. I see an airplane fly overhead and think about all the conferences and friends I've missed over the last year. I see the beauty of fall foliage and think of the hike I'd love to take. I see the many books on my shelf I'd love to dive into if my

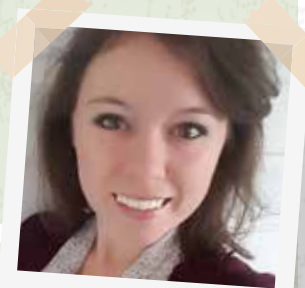
brain weren't so foggy.

I also feel fear. Will my conditions progress or stabilize in the coming years? Will I be able to walk when I'm 50? Will medical research find an answer to this faulty collagen? I worry about these questions not just for me, but for my entire biological family, who have also been diagnosed, and for the many friends I've made in support groups this year. I worry about my Koinonia family who have stepped up to help, love and support me even more. How can I help my community? They tell me not to worry.

I'm sure there is a spiritual lesson in all of this, but I'm not yet able to articulate it. It takes all my energy just learning and living it, I guess. And I'm ok with that. I mean, I am flexible, after all.

If you would like to learn more about EDS, this website is a good start: <https://www.ehlers-danlos.com/>. I always welcome questions, too, as I've spent a lot of my time researching and learning. 🐦

*Amanda loves hearing from folks, so please send cards and letters. She loves receiving email, too — [amanda@koinoniafarm.org](mailto:amanda@koinoniafarm.org). We are also raising money to help with medical expenses. If you can donate, please email or call Bren Dubay — [bren@koinoniafarm.org](mailto:bren@koinoniafarm.org); 229 924-0391.*



## Hospitality Beyond Borders

Elizabeth Dede

CLARENCE JORDAN ALWAYS HAD A PLACE IN HIS HEART FOR THE PRISONER. As a child he lived directly in front of a jail. On his way home from school he would visit with the men there and snack on cornbread that the cook always gave him. Even at a young age Clarence knew the importance of hospitality to the stranger. He experienced the joy that comes from visitation and knew that prisons were not an expression of God's love and forgiveness. Today we carry on that work of mercy.

We regularly visit at Stewart Detention Center. Men from all over the world have an opportunity to tell us their stories and to let us know about their needs and the

needs of others in prison. As we visit, we are also visited, welcomed into the lives of people who had been strangers to us. While waiting for a visit, we also have a chance to meet with family members, to learn that fathers and brothers, uncles and cousins, nephews and sons are torn away from their families, often leaving them with no means of support. We come to know that many of the men there are being returned to violence and threat of death. Others are going to a country where they were born but never lived. As young children they came to the U.S., and now they have no family or friends in their country of birth. Many never learned the language of that country. Imagine the shock and confusion of being sent to a place where you are unable to communicate and are completely alone.

In addition to visitation, we also provide bags of clothing for people who are going to be deported. Many of the men at Stewart Detention Center were arrested at work, so they come into the prison only with the clothes on their backs. Most of the people there are poor and some are a long way from any family members. They must rely on us to have clothes to wear when they are sent back to their country of origin. We are only allowed to give a backpack with a pair of pants, two shirts, a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, and two pairs of undershorts. All of these articles are given to us through gracious donations, and we pass on the love of God to hundreds of men each year.

Hospitality Beyond Borders helps us answer Jesus' call, found in the gospel of Matthew, to visit the prisoner and give clothes to those who have nothing to wear. We can meet both tangible and intangible needs as we provide clothing and supplies as well as the dignity of a conversation and a listening ear. The specifics of who and how Koinonia Farm serves may have changed over the past 75 years, but the heart remains the same: love through service to others, joy through generous hospitality, and peace through reconciliation.

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2) 🐦

## Read more.

*See Green Beans, Watermelon and Baths on Saturday Night by Beverly England Williams*

*See Koinonia Whispers by Lora Browne*

## WAYS TO CONNECT



Scan these QR codes to visit our website or Facebook page

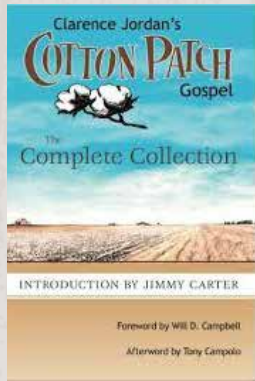
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## Friends of Koinonia

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE THE KOINONIA STORY with your local congregation, school group, Habitat conference, or other group? We'd love to offer a showing of "Briars in the Cotton Patch," set up a table to promote our products,

or speak about our community and work today. These events provide an opportunity for Koinonia's friends to connect, to learn more about Koinonia, and help new people learn about the community. We'd love to take our community "on tour" to all 50 states!

If you're interested in hosting a Friends of Koinonia event in your area, contact us at [info@koinoniafarm.org](mailto:info@koinoniafarm.org).



## The Story of Koinonia Farm

By Amanda Moore

KOINONIA, GREEK FOR LOVING COMMUNITY, was founded in 1942 to be a "demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God," sharing resources, work, and prayer much like the early Christian example found in the Book of Acts.

Our most deeply held beliefs are drawn from Jesus' teachings—peacemaking, radical sharing, and brother/sisterhood among people. In the 1950s and 60s, Koinonia was fiercely reviled by many for these beliefs. Enduring violence and rejection even from local churches, Koinonia survived only by God's faithful protection. Our mail-order pecan business brought us through years of local boycott, and it remains our main source of income.

Koinonia is also a haven of down-to-earth theology. Founding member Clarence Jordan was a farmer and a Greek scholar. He penned the "Cotton Patch

Version" into South Georgia vernacular, seeking to place the New Testament scripture in the 'here and now' of his day. His books and lively sermons are still beloved today, and his version of Matthew continues to be produced on stage as the "Cotton Patch Gospel Musical".

Our life of service has taken various forms through the years. In the early days, we extended friendship to our neighbors, mostly Black sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Partnership Housing, which later became Habitat for Humanity, was born here to help neighbors afford decent, simple homes.

Our current work is to Feed the Hungry, both spiritually and physically. We conduct an internship program and other educational offerings and, as always, we welcome people to walk with us on this journey. Come join our story. ☞

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## A Brief Reflection: What I See *Continued from page 4.*

we'll use them as well. We love to sing. I see us making the effort to be kind to those who are kind and those who are not kind. I witness a spirit of ecumenism. We aren't afraid to say a prayer from the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or any other tradition. This happens a great deal in the month of July when Peacebuilders Camp is in session and we have young people from so many different backgrounds here with us. Agnostics and atheists find their way here and are welcomed. We love Jesus so much and believe that Jesus loves everybody so shouldn't we? We pray for victims of crime and perpetrators of crime. We work for justice on the farm and off the farm. We visit with detainees at Stewart Detention Center. Members and interns deliver

clothing to deportees. Letters are written to prisoners. Meals are taken to the bereaved. Food is distributed to the poor. We sit with our neighbors and learn from and laugh with elders from the area. Most of what we do is small and humble and will garner little notice, but we are always cultivating a spirit of reconciliation along any line be it racial, interfaith, woman and man, Palestinian and Israeli, even Democrat and Republican, conservative and liberal. We commit to avoiding gossip and forming cliques. We are here to love and to serve.

Are we successful at all this? No. We fail. We fall down. But we get up. We fall down again. But we get up again. Have we been faithful? I see that many days we are. ☞

## Heal the Land *Continued from page 5.*

importance of taking care of the land. He often spoke of healing this particular plot of land that was broken and scarred when the community settled here. We are continuing this legacy today by using sustainable methods to grow and harvest our pecans. In 2012, we began a shift to biologically managing our pecans. We no longer use chemicals to treat our trees and our land. Instead, we focus on the health of the soil, the presence of beneficial insects, and treating the trees with a host of amendments and other biological sprays.

We are not without setbacks, however. This year Hurricane Irma swept through the farm and we lost

about 1/3 of our pecan crop. Our older trees continue to struggle against a fungus called scab, but the Elliott Orchard has an abundant crop despite Irma's best efforts. We are committed to treating the orchards and land with sustainable methods. We are determined to carry on Clarence's legacy to heal the land. There is much we know today about the impact of harmful chemicals on our planet. Our values leave us no other option than to work hard to grow nutrient dense, healthy food. It is right to do for plants, animals, humans, and the earth. ☞

## CHRONICLE

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