What Now? To many, the 2016 election was like a social/cultural earthquake followed by a Tsunami. It shook up and then washed over everything with destruction, leaving dangers lurking all around. However, in the midst of this mega-change is a historic opportunity to rethink, reimage, re-spirit, and rebuild neighborhoods, communities and localities across this land. In fact, it is the challenge and the opportunity for “the people” to redirect our nation toward a more compassionate, equitable and just direction. Please read this entire End of Year Brochure, especially the letter from our co-directors on page two.

The Renaissance Co-op Opens in Greensboro: A Great Accomplishment!

The Food Co-op is an example of what can happen when a community works together. When Winn Dixie Grocery chain moved from the community, the community “stopped begging and started building!” Although the Beloved did not play a major role in the co-op. We joined and supported it from the beginning. Congratulations to those who nurtured the vision to overcome a food desert in a mostly Black neighborhood. Now we all have the responsibility to support the co-op: clergy, churches, neighborhood folk and people from all walks of life, buy from and build up the co-op. It is located at 2517 Phillips Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27405.

We Must Rebuild Our Community.

Black Lives Matter was a refrain that rang out all across the nation in 2016. Pictured at right are multiple images of 300 people convened on June 12, 2016 for a Citywide Town Hall Meeting at Providence Baptist Church. The gathering focused on police accountability, community safety and healing. This meeting was convened by the Community-City Working Group (CCWG), co-chaired by Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan and BCC’s Co-Director Rev. Nelson Johnson. A more complete report on our police accountability work can be found on page five.
By Nelson and Joyce Johnson, Co-Executive Directors of the BCC

What does the end of an era look like? It looks chaotic! Things appear to be knocked out of joint. It is loaded with uncertainty, manipulation, confusion, fear, falsehoods, threats and force. The predictable and the normal are no more. Hardships intensify. Blaming and scapegoating ensue. These are signs that something is dying, reflecting all the pain and twitching of death, even as something new is straining to be born. Where will this epoch-changing period take us? No one can say for sure. It could take us backward into fascism or forward into a more just society and a more peaceful world. What we do know, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught us, is that a new era will not roll in on the “wheels of inevitability.” An end to the “hierarchy of human value” that fuels our neoliberal economic system, distorts our education, and undergirds racism, misogyny, and all other forms of abuse and domination, requires that “we the people” become the midwives of that which is straining to be born. Let’s come together to give birth to a beautiful new community, where all are cherished and all can thrive!

Every national, state and local social justice organization, as well as all racial, ethnic, religious, LGBTQ, and other identity groups have important roles to play in the transformative work required in this period. It is so important for this broad array of organizations and groups to grow the orientation and capacity to become and remain connected for the well-being of all. We all must build a broad range of capable, non-hierarchical leadership. While there are important, positive roles for state, regional, national organizations and movements to play, we believe, however, that a key (if not the key) in the coming period is strong, comprehensive, local organizing. People tend to experience the failures and pain of systems and structures (jobs, police, housing, etc.) in local places. It is also at the local level that grassroots folk are most likely to unite around a compelling vision, reinventing themselves and evolving new ways of thinking and living.

The Beloved Community Center (BCC) of Greensboro, NC is a place-based organization with state and national reach. Local organizing must, as Dr. King said, promote a “revolution of values.” We must begin to see ourselves in each other. That’s a major revolution of values. New values will lead to corresponding new forms of grassroots democracy and popular education for rebuilding neighborhoods, for justice, and for equipping people to live in this new period. Our work includes developing creative approaches to jobs and economic development, education, police accountability, community safety, health, wellness, and environmental stewardship as part of forging creative alternatives. Electoral politics, connected to values and issues, is a vital component of local organizing.

In 2016 the BCC more fully launched the Beloved Organizing Training and Healing Institute (BOTHI) to equip young and older organizers to undertake the critical work described above. Our focus is training a density of organizers in Greensboro, but we will also train organizers and healers in NC and, as our capacity allows, across the nation. (More on BOTHI on pages three & four).

The BCC has been in existence now for 25 years. We played the leading role in organizing the nation’s first Truth and Reconciliation process based on international models that has now inspired other truth initiatives in the United States. We ask you for a generous donation to help us continue our work, hopefully making Greensboro a model that, not only promotes the welfare of Greensboro, but also inspires and equips others across the nation. Thank you and have a very productive New Year!

Nelson & Joyce, December 2016
BOTHI
The Beloved Organizing Training and Healing Institute (BOTHI)

One of the key goals of the Beloved Community Center is to help train the next generation of young people to grow in engaging the work of community building and social transformation. Over the past year we have worked hard to build good relationships with the local, state and national leadership of Black Lives Matter and other emerging youth groups. The BCC held a welcoming dinner for the two-day conference for the national and local leadership of Black Lives Matter in August. While we support protest we are increasingly seeking ways to “bend” protest energy towards building local alternatives.

The Beloved Organizing, Training and Healing Institute (BOTHI)

Try to imagine a Greensboro where we have greatly reduced or even eradicated the hierarchy of human value that undergirds racism and all forms of abuse. Imagine a Greensboro where we learn to value the dignity, worth and potential of all. Imagine this community working together to insure a good standard of living. BOTHI is dedicated to training community building organizers. That training will include helping to heal the “soul” wounds and scars inflicted upon all of us growing out of our tortuous yesterdays, in particular people of color. Our process involves, drawing the best from our 50 years of continuous organizing in Greensboro and across the nation, blending it with the beautiful, new, militant, and creative energies growing out of the struggles of today and systematically sharing the learnings with communities, sectors and cities to forge better tomorrows. We believe we are in an epoch-changing period of crisis, chaos and collapse involving structures, systems and culture.

Our training will not focus mainly on making a few adjustments to “fit in” better to a collapsing social order. Instead, we will reimagine what it takes to make the changes necessary to forge a better quality of life for all, especially the most marginalized. This period will certainly require, protest and resistance, but we are convinced that we must “bend” protest and resistance energy into building transformative ways of thinking, building alternative institutions, and rebuilding broken neighborhoods and communities. We will offer our training to all sectors, races, faiths, and ages. But, training youth in the most marginalized neighborhoods and communities to rebuild their own neighborhoods and communities, with emphasis on community safety, neighborhood based economic enterprises, health and wellness, education for life are all central to our approach. If you are interested in exploring training for your group or wish to learn more about Beloved’s BOTHI, e-mail joycej@belovedcommunitycenter.org or call us at 336-230-0001.
Charlotte NC Planning a Truth, Equity and Reconciliation Process

On November 28, 2016 a group of about 65 people held a two hour meeting at Johnson C. Smith University to further plan a Truth Equity and Reconciliation Process in Charlotte. That city has been plagued with police killings, mass revolts, racial inequality and racism over the years. BCC’s Rev. Nelson Johnson (pictured in the center) along with the President of Johnson C. Smith University, Dr. Ron Carter (on the far right) led a planning discussion on truth and reconciliation. Others pictured are part of the Charlotte leadership team. Bree Newsome (to the right of Rev. Johnson) rose to national prominence when she climbed the flag pole after the church murders in Charleston to take down the confederate flag on the State Capital grounds in South Carolina.

Bold, New Moves—NC and Beyond

Pictured at the top left is a delegation of Greensboro Black Lives Matter Youth in dialogue with the Ben & Jerry’s Foundation Social Action Committee about the significance of race, at the invitation of the Beloved Community Center. Part of BCC’s mission is bringing together diverse groups to engage in transformative work.

Pictured at the bottom left is the NC Youth Organizing Institute (YOI) standing beneath the statue of the A&T Four Sit-In Heroes during a Grassroots History Tour, led by BCC’s Veteran Organizer Lewis A. Brandon. YOI visits BCC annually for intergenerational sharing, training and inspiration.

An Injustice Anywhere Is a Threat to Justice Everywhere!
The two iconic pictures to the right reflect the life and death struggles of Native American People, whose water, sacred land, and traditions are being violated by big oil interests. BCC joins with this bold, spiritual act of resistance. BCC representatives Cherrell Brown, Wesley Morris and TC Muhammad stood in solidarity with the resistance numerous times. Pictured above is part of 10,000 gathered in support of the Standing Rock struggle. At the bottom, US military veterans bow before Native American Elders to ask forgiveness for the death and destruction inflicted upon Native Peoples.
An overflow crowd of determined, diverse people stood down the Board of Elections.

Local Organizing Matters!

On Monday, August 8, 2016, several hundred people crowded into a specially called Guilford County Board of Elections (BOE) meeting to fight against the BOE’s attempt to suppress their right to vote. Board of Elections in NC sought to circumvent voting rights and the federal court’s order by restricting the number of voting sites and reducing early voting days. The BOE was met with fierce resistance from Guilford County Citizens. Beloved Community Center (BCC) led a march to the BOE meeting with the chant “stop suppressing the vote; shut the meeting down.” NAACP, Democracy NC, Black Lives Matter, Queer People of Color, League of Women Voters, Delta Sigma Theta, and clergy played key roles. Greensboro/Guilford County citizens were able to significantly reduce the BOE’s effort to suppress voters’ access to the ballot. This was the largest and most successful citizen resistance effort by any county in the state.

TRANSFORMATIVE POLICE WORK MUST BE CONTINUED AND STRENGTHENED!

There is a tendency to "grow weary in well doing" as we press forward with the difficult, stubborn struggle to transform the culture of policing. We in Greensboro have made progress. We have won cases, forced broad public discussions (see front page article on town hall meeting). We have mobilized thousands in protest marches, conferences, rallies, church meetings, etc. The City of Greensboro has paid over $7 million in 2016 alone for police wrongdoings. The work has been impressive. Yet, the culture of police abuse of power remains stubborn.

The belief in the hierarchy of human value (the false view that some are intrinsically superior to others) that undergirds neoliberal economics, biased education, racism and all forms of domination is deeply entrenched in US culture, especially police culture. Much of this is disguised to many of the police officers who abuse their power in day to day work, especially when it comes to people of color. Much of the abusive police culture is disguised (implicit bias) to many of the police officers who were born into this culture. They have not been helped to see how the stories they are told, the movies they see, the education they receive, the books they read, the churches they attend, even their police training all pass on biased messages. We must challenge negative police behaviors, even as we develop better ways to conduct training and change the false narratives (stories) of human hierarchy.

Whether from implicit or explicit bias, the experience of being “suspected” and wrongly treated is no less devastating to lives that experience the disrespect and brutal realities inflicted upon them. This is especially true of young people of color, who are seven generations from legal chattel slavery, two generations from Jim Crow bondage, and currently endure captivity under mass incarceration as they continue to suffer under a flawed, double-standard version of integration. In the current political atmosphere, we must redouble our efforts to transform a culture that is rotting from the inside. There must be consequences for police and judicial misconduct! In the center picture is Rufus Scales, who was dragged across a concrete parking lot by police during a false arrest. His face was severely scarred. Eight months later he was again accosted by police, falsely charged, and jailed. After much public outcry, Greensboro paid $50,000 but refused to admit that the officer had broken the law.

2017 PACSHI* MEETING SCHEDULE
All Meetings will be held at the Beloved Community Center, 417 Arlington Street, at 6:30pm, unless otherwise notified.
All are invited. All are welcome.

January 19
March 17
May 19
July 21
September 21
November 17

*Police Accountability, Community Safety and Healing Initiative

This work is not easy but it is among the most important social justice work being done. If you are in Greensboro we invite you to join us any Wednesday, 12 Noon–2:00 pm, at a welcoming BCC roundtable to acquaint you with our work, community developments, and, most importantly, to hear your voice and your views.
The Moral Revival Launched: Rev. Dr. William Barber (center), together with other national interfaith clergy leaders, staged simultaneous gatherings of the Moral Revival Movement in 31 states on September 12, 2016. The NC Moral Revival was held on the Capital Grounds in Raleigh. To Rev. Barber’s left is Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and on his right is Rev. Nelson Johnson. Mr. Wilson-Hartgrove and Rev. Johnson were the Co-Coordinators for NC. The Moral Revival seeks to uphold the moral values of our various religious traditions.

In Memory of Two Powerful & Loving Persons
Revered and remembered by many, Rev. Z. Holler, BCC Charter Member and Chair Emeritus succumbed at 88 on December 8, 2016. At his memorial service, Greensboro showed its love for Z as hundreds turned out. A man of vision, wisdom, and a treasure dedicated to justice, peace and love, Z was a force in building the beloved community and forging authentic relationships between Black, White, Brown and All People. Cynthia Brown, Co-Chair of the Greensboro Truth & Reconciliation Commission, the first of its kind in the US, died in Durham in November. A Bennett Alumna, Cynthia accepted the challenge of doing something powerful and new in this nation.

Please donate to BCC in their memories to continue their work.

Support the Mission and Work of the Beloved Community Center Today!
Mail Your Tax-Exempt Donation to Post Office Box 875, Greensboro, NC 27402 or Donate Online at www.BelovedCommunityCenter.org