

Northside Healing Space: Hope for persons who live with trauma

By Bebe L. Baldwin

No one is turned away from the Northside Healing Space. Located at 2100 Emerson Avenue North in Minneapolis, NHS is a ministry of Liberty Community Church (formerly Kwanzaa).

“We invite victims of sexual exploitation, persons suffering from longtime untreated trauma, and those whose lives have been ravaged by historic trauma,” says the Rev. Dr. Alike Galloway. “We provide gathering spaces where rest and remembering lead to healing, where persons can resist society’s treatment of them as objects. People come to be revived emotionally and spiritually.”

The need for this ministry is critical. Extensive research has shown the lifelong emotional and physical effects of untreated trauma. For African Americans, the legacy of slavery persists as the descendants of slaves continue to live with the daily realities of racism.

At the recent Westminster Town Hall Forum, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris spoke on the lifelong health effects of childhood trauma and the urgency for treatment. Dr. Galloway of Liberty Church and Dr. Lauren Martin of the University of Minnesota Urban Research Center conducted the research on sex trafficking that led to the founding of Northside Women’s Space, the predecessor of NHS. She discovered that the average age when girls enter the sex trade is 13. (Responding to a speaker at a workshop on sex trafficking sponsored by the Presbytery Kwanzaa Ministry Team, a participant said, “I thought we had put an end to slavery.”) The staff at NHS has undergone intensive training for this unique ministry.

Jesus’ healing mission was a ministry to the whole person — body, mind, and spirit. Healing took place as people were restored to their

communities. At NHS, clergy, trauma specialists, mental health providers, physicians, spiritual directors, life coaches, artists, and musicians collaborate to restore wholeness.

The center offers a variety of settings and opportunities to meet individual needs: personal healing sessions, support groups, and gatherings where participants find community, receive information on trauma, and learn strategies for resiliency. Victims of sexual exploitation find a welcoming drop-in space.

Funding for the NHS comes from local congregations, individual donors, grants from the philanthropic community, rentals from event and office space, and a monthly open market. The market will open in early 2019.

At the last PTCA Mission Fair, the keynote speaker asked “What is it that keeps God awake at night?” Jesus wept over the city and, surely, God must grieve over the broken lives of the most vulnerable among us. Liberty Church, through its healing ministry, is seeing Jesus in “the least of these” (Matt. 25:37-40). Thanks be to God!