

Center and Library for the Bible and Social Justice

Annual Report: 2021

Connecting scholars & students, activists & organizers, artists and faith leaders for justice

A year of Growth and Innovation

2021 was an amazing year for CLBSJ, in which old friends and new comrades came together to help galvanize a process of growth and reimagining. We ventured into new territory, including by launching a lectionary reflection praxis, initiating Lent and "Black August" programming, and experimenting with extra-cannical and multifaith scripture study. We held our first "hybrid" online and real-space event at the Society for Biblical Literature, and we successfully obtained our first foundation grant from the H.C. Gemmer Christian Family Foundation. On the home front, we expanded our space at Stony Point Center into a cooperative workspace by formalizing partnerships with several organizations. One of these groups is Proyecto Faro (proyectofarorockland.org), a local immigrant-led organizing project which during 2021 quadrupled their staff and secured a lease for an adjacent building on the Stony Point Center campus. The picture included here shows CLBSJ and Faro folks enjoying the synergy that our partnership creates! As part of welcoming Proyecto Faro, our Library Team created a separate shelf to house our Spanish-language titles.

Success in Capacity Building

At the start of 2021, the CLBSJ Board adopted a growth budget that would have quadrupled our income from 2020, and from most previous years. We not only made that budget and finished solidly in the black, but we exceeded it, bringing in a figure that was nearly six times our income in 2020. Amongst the expenditures that this success allowed for are: an expanded media services contract, the engagement of 17 new speakers, and an expansion of our director's hours to half-time. We are extremely grateful to all the donors who helped propel us toward and beyond our goals.



Left-to-Right: Maria Marasigan, Amy Dalton, Will Summers, Sherly Fabre, Sphynx Eben, Charo Ureña share a moment of connection in the CLBSJ stacks.

Leadership

Board: Nicholas A. Johnson, President • Rick Ufford-Chase, Treasurer • Elisabeth Simpson, Co-Secretary • Dong Hyeon Jeong, Co-Secretary • Thomas E. Boomershine • Matthew J. M. Coomber • Laura Gottwald • Sharifa Vernice Meytung • Hugh R. Page • Cass Shaw
Advisory Committee: Hillel Arnold • R. Douglas Bendall • Laurel Dykstra • Jennifer Henry • Ched Myers
Staff: Amy Dalton, Executive Director

Lectionary Reflection Praxis

Part of reclaiming the Bible is reclaiming the lectionary. This year CLBSJ has jumped into that work by launching a weekly lectionary reflection practice in which we focus on galvanizing engagement with the scripture with and for social justice activists. A small team posts reflections on our social media pages each Tuesday. We sometimes use the Revised Common Lectionary, and other times we use the Conference of Catholic Bishops daily lectionary, or experimental lectionaries. Here is one example that was published by Jennifer Henry on October 4, 2021:

This upcoming Sunday offers us the story of Jesus and the rich young ruler. There are two words that have always stuck out for me. These words come from Mark 10:21: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." Loved him. An affirmation for me that love and justice belong together. Jesus puts a provocative challenge to the young man, a challenge to live economic justice, to redistribute wealth, and how does Mark characterize this challenge? As an act of love. I wonder if we hear calls to daring justice or challenges to greater integrity as love songs? I wonder....

Join the conversation at [facebook.com/clbsj](https://www.facebook.com/clbsj), twitter.com/clbsj, and [instagram.com/clbsj1](https://www.instagram.com/clbsj1)



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What's Next? Get Involved!

As we enter the second decade of CLBSJ's existence, we are working to carve out more opportunities for participation and partnership. Do you have ideas and visions for what is needed to unlock the power of Scripture for justice? Please get involved! Currently we have five active committees that volunteers can join: Library, Program, Media, Publications and Fundraising. Specific tasks we need help with include:

- writing lectionary reflections for social media
- writing book reviews
- assisting with social media / publicity
- locating photos of people reclaiming the Bible in the streets (as above!)
- copyediting / proofreading
- book cataloguing - physical help needed in the NYC and Bay Areas
- contributing programming ideas
- outreaching to like-minded individuals
- outreaching to like-minded partners, especially activist organizations

If you are interested in helping with any of these, please email clbsjorg@gmail.com

Are you getting our emails? If not, please send us a note with the enclosed reply envelope, or email us at clbsjorg@gmail.com.