

February 2011

# EXISTENTIALIST

A newsletter of the  
First Existentialist  
Congregation of  
Atlanta

An independent affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Founded 1976  
470 Candler Park Dr. NE, Atlanta, Georgia, [www.firstexistentialist.org](http://www.firstexistentialist.org), 404-378-5570



## WE HAVE NAME TAGS!

**As part of our efforts to become a more welcoming congregation, we have recently created and started using name tags. by Cindy Roesel**

You may be thinking we know each other; and name tags are just something to keep up with. If you are nodding your head in the affirmative, congratulations on your status as a long term member with a photo perfect memory for those who do not come frequently and new friends. Some of us just need a little help, as we struggle to put the right last name with duplicate first names. OK, I admit it. "Some" of us are just terrible with names.

We also want to help those new to the group to feel welcome and comfortable. When confronted with a sea of new faces, a name tag makes a world of difference. Wearing yours is

helping someone else and a small part of the key to our group's growth.

The contact person for corrections or replacements is Cindy Roesel [ckroesel@gmail.com](mailto:ckroesel@gmail.com)

(Just as a point of interest, the cost is about a dollar each. The plastic sleeve accounts for most of that so if you go to a conference and come home with a now useless plastic sleeve - donate it to our "return name tag" bag.)



### Inside this issue...

**History Articles (pages 2 and 5), Social Justice Articles (pages 3, 4, and 5), Finance Report (page 6), Minister's Corner (page 7), Buildings and Grounds proposal concerning ramp (page 8).**

## FIRST E OFFICE



**First E Founder Lanier Clance Discusses the History of First E during an interview with Rev. Marsha Mitchiner as part of an on-going history project at First E. Winter 2010-11**

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Rita Furman, Copy Editing  
Dominic Thomas, Guest Editor & Communications Chair

**Are you willing to help with the Web site or newsletter? Please email Dominic or Victoria to volunteer.**

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by Ashlea Davis  
Why history papers about First-E? Our history provides the foundation for who we are today and gives us reason to feel proud of our existential values. [Reprinted from a feature story in Southern Voice in 2001 just before we celebrated our 25th anniversary.]

### Existentialist Congregation is Candler Park Good Citizen

Few neighbors have served our community as well as the First Existentialist Congregation. A philosophical and psychological spiritual community (here) since 1980, the E-Cong has been a community center for the arts, for activism, for celebrations, for learning and caring.

Existentialists are a dogma and religion—free group of the most diverse bunch of folks you would hope to meet. Believing that existence precedes essence and that we are in charge of our lives is at the heart of their beliefs. How to live fully and freely in community and still be individuals who are loving, nurturing and caring is a challenge. They own some of the prettiest green space in our neighborhood and maintain a memorial garden and playground.

They have always stood for being good stewards of the earth, led campaigns for social justice, co-sponsored activities with Charis Books, and held the first Candler Park Festival in 1987. Speakers include Gloria Steinham, John Lewis, and bell hooks. The congregation was at the forefront of “Stop the Road” campaign and founding minister Lanier Clance went to jail along with other protesters. Clance, who retired at the end of last year, led the congregation in many protests through the years.

Other notable activities have included:

- Community support—first home of YouthPride;
- Circle of Healing an early nurturing and support group for people with HIV and Aids; Stop the Road Protest project; Bi-Nature/BiFriendly monthly support group.
- Co-Sponsored Events and Benefits include town hall meetings; ACLU benefits; ZAMI African-American Lesbian Writers-Audre Lourde Scholarship Fund benefits; Charis Circle of Friends with Gloria Steinham, bell hooks; Amnesty International Zimbabwe Project; American Friends Service Committee projects; Men Stopping Violence; Black and White Men together; National Organization of Woman—first temporary offices; Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebrations; annual Day of the Dead celebrations; Existential discussion groups, and more.
- Visual Arts Center—the Existential Art Gallery has for 20 years offered exhibitions by local, regional international artists including Tom Ferguson, Maurice Clifford, King Thackston, Jane Doe Collection, Art in Odd Places site during the 1996 Olympics, and an annual Holiday Art Show.
- Music Venue—including CoffEhouse, Music in the night concerts, Cowboy Envy, Atlanta Feminist Women’s Chorus, Scott Hooker and Janna Nelson, Dede Vogt, Angela Motter, Zrazy, Pauline Oliveros concert and Deep Listening workshop and more.
- Conferences include 3 annual overnight conferences for Unitarian Universalist Teens from the Southeast.

The Existentialist services are Sundays from 11 to 12:30. All are invited to attend. They were voted the most welcoming congregation by Southern Voice and if you go you’ll know why!

# HEARING ON FORECLOSURES AT FIRST ICONIUM

By Charlene Ball

On July 22, some members of the Social Justice Guild went to a hearing about home foreclosures in Atlanta held at First Iconium Baptist Church, organized by the national and North Georgia AFL-CIO and the Atlanta Fighting Foreclosure Coalition. The Atlanta Fighting Foreclosure Coalition consists of over 40 progressive, labor, and civil rights organizations. The hearing in Atlanta was one of five such events held by the AFL-CIO with community partners nationwide.

The hearing was moderated by AFL-CIO Vice President Arlene Holt Baker. Others who spoke included Rev. Timothy McDonald, pastor of First Iconium; Charlie Flemming of the North Georgia Labor Council; Barbara Easterling, President of the Alliance for Retired Americans; John Eaves, Chair of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners; and Senator Vincent Fort. Also speaking was William J. Brennan, Jr., Program Director of Atlanta Legal Aid, who has been instrumental in helping all of the local people who testified.

Local people who testified about their own experiences with foreclosure were Mrs. Gloria Sims, Mr. Gary Ahmed Ali, Mrs. Gloria McAlpine, and Mrs.

Teresa Bowman. Mrs. Sims said she had owned her home since 1957. She refinanced in 2004 to pay for repairs and medical bills. Her new mortgage was sold and converted to an adjustable rate mortgage. Mr. Gary Ali is in the Transport Workers Union. He retired in 2005, but went back to work to meet mortgage and medical expenses. He couldn't keep up with mortgage payments and filed for bankruptcy. He talked to SunTrust and believed that they were going to negotiate with him, but they foreclosed. Mrs. Gloria McAlpine worked in a bank and her husband was a police officer. They both developed health problems and were living on disability. They got an adjustable rate mortgage which began at 62% of their income. Two years later it adjusted to 67% of their income, which they could not pay. Atlanta Legal Aid helped save her home, but her husband died a month later. Mrs. Teresa Bowman had two subprime mortgages. Her monthly payments were \$800, but when the mortgage adjusted from 5% to 7%, the payment rose to \$1,100, which she could not pay. She tried to get a loan modification, but was foreclosed on anyway. She was facing eviction, but the day before this hearing, she was



1,000,000+  
Foreclosures  
Expected in  
2011

notified that foreclosure had been stopped. William J. Brennan wrapped up the testimonies by telling of his 40 years working in housing and consumer issues and the work that Georgia Legal Aid does in assisting families facing foreclosure.

Immediately after the hearing, some participants went to the Wachovia/Wells Fargo downtown Atlanta branch to demand that the bank modify home loans, inform tenants in foreclosed homes of their rights, and expand access to affordable interest loans to communities.

I was moved by the testimony of the people who told of their experiences. This is an issue close to me, as I am now retired. I resolved to keep up with developments about foreclosure and to do what I can to help make everyone aware of unfair predatory loan practices.

## All Are Welcome

Join us in celebrating life on Sundays at 11 am. We also have Wednesday night dinners, a reading group, films and discussions every month on the third Friday, and Guilds who meet periodically. Please check our website or email the office to get involved and learn more.



## FIRST EXISTENTIALIST

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# The Yoga-what?

By Lorraine Fontana

**The Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** is a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, intended to address documented evidence of abuse of rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, and further of intersexuality requested by Louise Arbour according to the International Human Rights Law. The outline of the Principles was drawn at a meeting of International Commission of Jurists and human rights experts from around the world at Gadjah Mada University on Java from 6 to 9 November in 2006. "It contains 29 Principles adopted unanimously by the experts, along with recommendations to governments, regional intergovernmental institutions, civil society, and the UN itself".<sup>[1]</sup> The principles are named after Yogyakarta, the smallest province of Indonesia (excluding Jakarta) located on the island of Java.

In alignment with the movement towards establishing basic human rights for all people, the Principles specifically address sexual orientation and gender identity. The Principles were developed in response to patterns of abuse reported from around the world. These included examples of rape, torture, extrajudicial executions, medical abuse, denial of free speech and assembly as well as a range of discriminations in work, health, education, housing, access to justice and immigration.

The Principles that developed out of this meeting were adopted by human rights experts from around the world, and included judges, academics, a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, NGOs and others. Michael O'Flaherty was rapporteur responsible for drafting and development of the Yogyakarta Principles produced from the meeting. At the meeting, Vitit Muntarbhorn and Sonia Onufer Corrêa were the co-chairpersons.

The Yogyakarta Principles was presented at a United Nations event in New York on 7 November 2007, co-sponsored by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Human Rights Watch explain that the first step towards this would be the decriminalization of homosexuality in 77

countries that still carry legal penalties for people in same-sex relationships, and repeal of the death penalty in the seven countries that still have the death penalty for such sexual practice.

The Principles influenced the proposed UN declaration on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2008.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a document titled "Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity" on 23 March 2010, they have responded the idea that "homosexuality is immoral" to be a "subjective view usually based on religious dogma and that in a democratic society it cannot be basis for limiting the rights of others" regarding the article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and against the idea that "homosexuality is worsening the demographic crisis and threatening the future of the nation" to be "illogical" and against the idea that "legal recognition of same-sex couples is a danger to the traditional family", they respond that "granting legal recognition to same-sex couples has not influence on whether heterosexual marriage or having children."

LF NOTE: This last statement sounds much like some of what Judge Walker wrote in his recent District Court decision in the CA federal case finding Prop 8 unconstitutional. Wonder how long it'll take for our government to acknowledge these rights?

The actual text can be read at [http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles\\_en.pdf](http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.pdf)

## Are we or aren't we a Unitarian Congregation?

By Dominic Thomas

For the past three years as a member of our Board, I have had several occasions to encounter the question of whether we are or are not a "full" Unitarian Congregation. The question seems to appear primarily as a question of identity. Can we be an "existentialist congregation" and also be a "Unitarian Universalist" Congregation? Secondly the question seems to arise as an extension of anti-theistic feelings... desire among some members to very carefully avoid connecting with any organized religion. Since, I have been

pursuing organizing our archives for several years and have encountered this question, I have been organizing my understanding of these questions and present my findings to you in this article.

First, let me say I need help continuing to organize our archives. There is no clear organization right now. The boxes are only gradually being collected into a single place. Some are still stowed in hidden corners of the building and in members' houses. Interestingly, I have looked to see where our letter of incorporation as an organization is. I cannot find it. The only evidence I can find of our official existence as a charitable organization is our charter as a Unitarian Universalist Association ("UUA") affiliate. If someone has a copy of our original charter document, please make a copy and send it to me, as well as any other early key documents, such as our official certificate of occupancy for our building and the certification of our tax ID from the IRS and State of Georgia.

In January of 1978 the membership unanimously voted to join the UUA with the understanding that some members may consider themselves Existentialist/UU while others may be Existentialist only as well as the understanding that the Congregation may at some point in the future decide to leave UUA if it found the relationship no longer prudent. So, since 1978 we have been an "affiliated" congregation within UUA. What does that mean? Exploring this, I ran into a somewhat troubling piece of news. In 2009 the UUA voted to end the affiliate program and sever the relationships with UUA Affiliate Organizations!

The alarm was not merited, as we are not considered an affiliated organization but rather an independent affiliate congregation. An "affiliated organization" is a retreat center or other institutions not celebrating life on a weekly basis. The "independent affiliates" appear to be groups like us who remain autonomous yet see value in the unity of participating in the larger UUA humanist umbrella. We are an independent affiliate UUA congregation, which makes us a full UUA congregation, since all UUA congregations are actually independent affiliates as far as I can tell (see C-3.1 of the UUA by-laws\*), and the only other class of UUA organization is the Associate, which is distinct in that it consists of members throughout the UUA. Thus, the associates are the groups such as

the UU Service Committee, the UU United Nations Organization, and the UU Women's Federation.

What does this mean in terms of our initial question? We are a UUA Congregation. We are independent. We do have an existentialist, philosophical basis. To address that initial concern that we cannot do both, it is not a problem regarding our membership in the UUA umbrella. In fact, we have neither requirement nor guideline from UUA as to how we run our organization except that we follow our own inclusionary and humanistic mission statement in our by-laws. Concerning theistic religion and membership in a larger religion, I believe there is no anti-theistic conflict here either. We need not support nor espouse theistic religion so long as we are inclusionary, as we have ourselves stated that we are in our by-laws. So, why does this question come up from time to time? Perhaps it is healthy, because we are questioning our identity, where we are in our life as a congregation, and how we are dealing with our day-to-day existence.

\*<http://www.uua.org/aboutus/bylaws/articleiii/6910.shtml>

*Special thanks to Karla Crawford, Ashlea Davis, Edi/th Kelman, Marsha Mitchiner, and Shelby Smith for reviewing and providing feedback on this article prior to publication.*

**2011 Membership Drive!  
Please Join or  
Renew Now!**

**Every year we affirm our connection to First E by renewing our pledges. Please fill out the form on page 8 and mail it or submit it with the offering during a Celebration of Life.**

**We are a conscious choice community. We provide a warm welcome for those seeking community, a secure sanctuary for those seeking safe harbor, and acceptance of individual beliefs for those seeking spiritual growth.**

# Finance Report

Submitted by the Finance Guild and summarized by Dominic Thomas

In 2010 First E had its best year since 2006! We have seen increases in all major categories.

We are in the black for the year. Some of this funding has already been allocated by the Board toward some critical improvements, such as making the attic walkway safer and matching funds from

“RAMP” *continued from page nine*

We spent approximately 1 hour discussing the Ramp situation and next steps. Given that this is an important, personal and somewhat emotional situation for those who rely on the ramp for access to our community, we determined as a group that we will seek further community input with an eye to submitting a proposal to the Board in March. Basically our proposal is to remove the current ramp and to add a lift that would have battery backup as well as manual backup, an emergency phone line, keys for members needing to use it, as well as a key in the kitchen for renters and usage by guests. The lift would be located where the first landing of the ramp is if you walk out the front doors of First E and take a left.

We expect the lift to cost approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000, and Chalice Lighter and CPNO grants would be sought to aid in the costs. In fact, Shelby Smith confirms that we are approved for the Chalice Lighter grant, which could bring in close to \$10,000. In addition to the lift, we would examine installing a front door opening mechanism as well as a stair stretcher evacuation device. The justification for this proposal was the following:

- The current ramp **location** causes mold and damage to the building, blocks the light and entrance to the downstairs, and impedes the HVAC system.
- The current ramp **design** has some serious problems in terms of the structuring, with single supports

the Social Justice Guild to purchase new speakers for the Sanctuary.

CATEGORY	2010 VS 2009
Pledges & Gifts	+\$3,505
Sundays	+\$151
Rentals	+\$2,412
Fund Raising	+\$1,149

under some joists, posts landing on open earth or split in the middle, inadequate joists spanning too far, lack of handrails and slip protection, lack of lateral bracing. Additionally, for each 30 feet of ramp, there should be a landing. The current ramp has a landing every 60 feet.

- The current ramp **condition** has some serious problems in terms of the decay, warping and sagging of the wood as well as loosening of the fasteners used for decking boards, the metal mesh and bracing.

We discussed designs and proposals for replacement of the ramp. We had a proposal from a company to replace the ramp with a metal one for \$35,000. This would address the design and condition issues, but not the location issues. Replacement with another pressure-treated ramp would cost at least \$20,000 and would also have the same location issues. Since important community members who rely on the ramp were not present at the meeting, the Guild is presenting this article and calling members who rely on the ramp to discuss prior to forming the final proposal.

**The next B&G meeting, which is at 9:30 am downstairs at First E on Sunday, February 27th. Please join us for the meeting or contact a member with your input.**

# Minister's Corner

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner

## Woodland Sanctuary Report

With the thousand dollars we received for a Gay Delinger Memorial, ten trees were planted in the R. Lanier Clance Woodland Sanctuary. Two magnolias and eight cedars were planted by Linda and Tony Scharko and crew on December 30, 2010.

The trees are approximately five feet tall now and are expected to grow as tall as forty feet in ten years. We anticipate seeing enough height in the next two years to provide a noticeable screen between the woodland and the neighboring apartment complex. A Gay Delinger Memorial stone has been ordered and a date will be scheduled for a dedication service. Thanks to Ashlea Davis for organizing and managing this project and to the Scharkos for their always awesome professional help. When you have some time, wander through the woodland and enjoy these new additions.

## Minister Contact

Would you like to learn more about First Existentialist? looking for a wedding officiant? need to talk over a congregational or personal issue? I am available to meet at First E or outside location to answer your questions, discuss issues or be a good listener. You can contact me through the office at 404-378-5570 or e-mail me at [revm@bellsouth.net](mailto:revm@bellsouth.net).

## Thank You to Our Members/ Friends Who Continue to Volunteer

### THANKS to:

- \* Elaine Gale for the donation of two comfy chairs for the minister's office.
- \* Penelope, Sarah, Owen, Olivia, Kitty, Dominic, Jon, Bill L., Bill R., Edi, Shelby, Hank, Dustin, Linda, Charlene, John T., Marsha, and everyone else who helped for making First E's first national community service celebration successful for the MLK Day of Service on January 17, 2011. (Actually, we had a work day and many good tasks got done. A new walkway is being made in the attic, the backstage was cleaned out, the ramp was maintained, archives were sorted, etc.)



## Loving Thoughts

**LOVING THOUGHTS go out to: Betsy Henderson in the loss of her sister, Rita, following a long battle with cancer.**



## Volunteer!

There are many ways to volunteer and help First E. We always need help with Opening / Closing the building before and after Sunday Celebrations of Life. Our Guilds and their Groups / Projects also welcome participation and new leaders. These guilds include: Art, Buildings & Grounds (History Project, Garden, and Woodland Sanctuary), Communications (Newsletter and Website), Congregational Care, Education (Child and Adult), Finance, Membership, Program, and Social Justice. Contact the office to connect and volunteer. [office@firstexistentialist.org](mailto:office@firstexistentialist.org)

## Editorial Policy

The First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta newsletter ("The Existentialist") is a free outreach and community news service provided by volunteers. We intend to publish monthly, but due to volunteer limitations, the newsletter is sometimes as infrequent as quarterly. All efforts are made to assure the factual accuracy within each issue published, but The First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta cannot be held responsible for changes, omissions or errors. Articles / letters are published for educational purposes and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization nor its members. The contents of the newsletter are available for reprint and reuse under the Creative Commons license so long as they are not modified nor used for commercial gain and proper attribution is included.

To submit something for the newsletter, email it or print it and hand it to Victoria Trestrail, newsletter editor. [victoria@tmkatlanta.com](mailto:victoria@tmkatlanta.com)



**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
DAY OF SERVICE JAN 17, 2011**

Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE**

# A Real Socialist Movement

by Carol Sandiford, Social Justice Guild member

For a number of months, I have been increasingly troubled by the hateful rhetoric and disruptive actions of some of the people who identify themselves as “tea party members”. Given the continuing dismal economic situation; unemployment rates; home foreclosures and other **controversial** issues such as the “financial bail-out”; “stimulus package”, “healthcare reform”, etc. I could understand some of the frustration and discontent being expressed; however, the rage and at times, irrational nature of the positions taken by these individuals caused me to be deeply concerned about what was taking place in our country.

It was increasingly difficult to reconcile these divergent feelings---disdain for the mean-spirited, narrow-minded, divisive hate speech---yet, empathy and even agreement with some of the core issues being raised. Then I read an article in the June, 2010 edition of **The Hightower LOWDOWN** publication which finally shed some light on this existential confusion I was experiencing. With the permission of The Hightower Lowdown, I am going to share below excerpts from this June, 2010 edition, Volume 12, Number 6, edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer:

\* “If a political pollster came to my door and asked whether I consider myself a conservative or a liberal, I'd answer 'No'. Not to be cute—I have a bit of both in me---but because, like most Americans, my beliefs can't be squeezed into either of the tidy little boxes that the establishment provides.

Also, most of the big issues that our country faces defy right-left categorization. As I've rambled through life, I've observed that the true political spectrum in our society does not range from right to left, but from top to bottom. This is how America's economic and political systems really shake out, with each of us located somewhere up or down that spectrum, mostly down. Right to left is political theory; top to bottom is the reality we

actually experience in our lives every day---and the vast majority of Americans know that they're not even within shouting distance of the moneyed powers that rule from the top of both systems, whether those elites call themselves conservatives or liberals.

For me, the 'ism' that best encompasses and addresses this reality is populism. What is it? Essentially, it's the continuation of America's democratic revolution. It encompasses and extends the creation of a *government that is us*. Instead of a 'trickle down' approach to public policy, populism is solidly grounded in a 'percolate up' philosophy that springs directly from America's founding principle of the Common Good. Few people today call themselves populists, but I think most are. I'm not talking about the recent political outbursts by confused, used, and abused teabag ranters who've been organized by corporate front groups to spread a hatred of government. Rather, I mean the millions of ordinary Americans in every state who're battling the real power that's running roughshod over us: out-of-control corporations. With their oceans of money and their hired armies of lobbyists, lawyers, economists, consultants, and PR agents, these self-serving, autocratic entities operate from faraway executive suites and Washington backrooms to rig the economic and governmental rules so that they capture more and more of America's money and power.

You wouldn't know it from the corporate media, but in just about every town or city in our land you can find some groups or coalitions that, instead of merely shouting at politicians, have come together to find their way around, over, or through the blockage that big money has put in the way of their democratic aspirations. This is the historic, truly democratic grassroots populism of workday folks who strive (and, more often than not, succeed) to empower themselves to take charge economically as well as politically. With the rebellious spirit and sense of hope that have defined America from the start, these populists are directly challenging the plutocratic order that reigns over us. This populism is unabashedly a class movement—one that seeks not merely to break the iron grip that centralized corporate power has on our country, but also to build cooperative democratic structures so that ordinary people—not moneyed interests---define and control our country's economic and political possibilities.

To make the whole of our efforts greater than the sum of our diverse, dispersed parts, we urgently need to be more unified. It could begin simply by having some serious conversations among our groups, media sources, organizers, funders and other resources about how we can produce a bit more cooperation and slightly more coordination.

It seems to me that the rallying point is a focus on the populist possibilities presented by the corporate arrogance and avarice that is crushing our country's potential. With that, we might actually become a movement that moves.”

\* Excerpts from The Hightower LOWDOWN, Volume 12, Number 6, June 2010. Edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer.



Photo Credit: Edi Kelman

# AFFIRMING OUR EXISTENCE IN 2011 Pledge Form



This is to affirm that I / We will support the First Existentialist Congregation in 2011.  
List me / us in Congregation records as (*circle one*):

**First E Member (voting)/      First E Friend (non-voting)**

First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta pays annual dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association of \$76 for each First E member who also identifies as UU. **So that we will have accurate records, please let us know if you also consider yourself UU:** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

My / Our contribution to the Congregation operating budget in 2011 will total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This amount will be paid (*circle one*): By check enclosed      By checks during year      Paypal (online)

**Bond Transfer      Cash (envelopes available)      Other**

Name(s) <Please Print> \_\_\_\_\_

Birth(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Mo. \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Yr. (optional)      \_\_\_\_\_ Mo. \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Yr. (optional)

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Other # (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please include my / our contact information in the 2010 Congregation Directory (*circle one*):      Yes      No

Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The meanings of Member and Friend in our annual Congregation records are:**

A **Member** is a person who circles Member (voting) and signs an annual Affirming Our Existence form. Only Members are eligible to vote in Congregation elections, or to or to serve on the Board of Directors, or to vote on the ordination or selection of ministers.

A **Friend** is a person who circles Friend (non-voting) and signs an annual Affirming Our Existence form. Friends are not eligible to vote in Congregation elections, or to serve on the Board of Directors, or to vote on the ordination or selection of ministers. A person who makes a gift to First E. without doing an Affirming Our Existence form is also listed as a **Friend**.

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**COMMUNITY INPUT NEEDED ON DRAFT PROPOSAL: LET'S GET A LIFT...**

### Energy Audit Results

Jon Nye oversaw an Energy Audit of our facility co-sponsored by Georgia Interfaith Power and Light. The audit report suggests improvements in insulation, lighting fixtures, and heating controls. The Board voted to begin with insulation.



**ATTIC VIEW:  
VERY LITTLE INSULATION**

**(ALSO PRETTY DANGEROUS)**

### Buildings and Grounds Updates By Dominic Thomas

As a Congregation, one of our most-treasured assets is our “Old Stone Church.” The Buildings and Grounds Guild with its various groups focusing on the Garden, the Sanctuary (historical preservation stewards), and the Woodlands, maintain and renew this asset so that it can continue to serve our needs. The Buildings and Grounds Guild has had a very active year. Projects have included a vegetable garden, new trees in the Woodland Sanctuary, new stairs stage left, a new door between the First E offices, five work days, and participation by more than 30 different people in Guild activities. We even paid off the new roof, a project costing more than \$12,000. Now, we are turning our attention to a new, large capital project that impacts a large portion of our community, our ramp.

Our ramp has served for nearly three decades and was built through the efforts of First E members. We are thankful for those efforts. Recently, a group met to discuss the access ramp on the North side of the main building. Randy Pimsler, a licensed architect and long-time member, conducted an analysis of the ramp on the request of the committee, which consists of Karla Crawford, Edi Kelman, Bill Laney, Glen Lopez, Marsha Mitchiner, Randy Pimsler, Bill Read, Dominic Thomas, and Rick Westbrook. Joining the committee for discussion on January 9 were Charlene Ball and Linda Bell. We determined at that meeting that it would be best to install a lift in the place of the ramp within the next few months. *For details, please continue reading on page five...*

WAVES OF CHANGE AT FIRST E	NEW SPEAKERS	NEW LIGHTING	MEMBERSHIP	OFFICES
	<b>The Social Justice Guild</b> provided \$500 from Friday Films proceeds to purchase new speakers!	<b>The Clance lighting fund</b> enabled purchase of new theatrical lighting.	<b>In 2011 we gained</b> members over 2010!	<b>The Offices downstairs</b> have been cleaned and rearranged with Internet and computers.

## FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

### February 6

*Killing Time: An 18 Year Odyssey From Death Row to Freedom*

Speaker: Ronald Gauthier

Facilitator: Lorraine Fontana

Accompanist: Sue Wilkinson

### February 13

*What Makes a Hero/ine? A Salute to our "Patron Saint" and Others*

Speaker: Marsha Mitchiner

Facilitator: Carol Sandiford

Accompanist: Charli Vogt

### February 20

*The World is Open Source*

Speaker: Dean Rowley

Facilitator: Victoria Trestrail

Accompanist: William Chelton

Member Moment: Hank Pfaedenhaur

### February 27

*Thoughts in Mid-Winter*

Speaker: Kate Hauk

Facilitator: D. Patton White

Accompanist: Charli Vogt

### Speaker Highlight: Ronald M. Gauthier

was a library branch manager in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina forced him to relocate to Atlanta. In addition to working in the library, he has served as an adult literacy instructor for the prison system in Louisiana and a social services counselor. He is the author of *Hard Time on the Bayou*, a prison novel based on his experiences working in corrections, *Prey for Me: A New Orleans Mystery* and its sequel, *Crescent City Countdown*, which is the only work of fiction depicting the slavery reparations issue as part of the storyline. He is also co-author of *Killing Time: An 18-year Odyssey from Death Row to Freedom*. The recipient of a master's in library and information science from LSU and a master's in counseling from Xavier University, he is presently a librarian in Georgia. His books are being reviewed in forthcoming issues of *New Orleans Review*, a literary journal at Loyola University, and the *Callaloo: Journal of African American Literature*. He currently resides in Atlanta.

## EXISTENTIALIST

First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

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