

March 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, 404-378-5570

All
Are Welcome
Celebrations of
Life Sundays
11 am



Women Civil Rights Activists of the 1930's and 1940's

by Charlene Ball and Libby Ware for the Social
Justice Guild

Many of us are aware of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950's and 1960's, but in honor of Women's History Month, we'd like to highlight two women who were active earlier: Pauli Murray and Ella Baker.

Pauli Murray was in Howard University Law School in 1944 when she led a sit-in at Thompson's cafeteria, which was located near the historically black university, but did not serve African Americans. She and the other students picked up trays and when the staff refused to serve them, they sat down at tables. Quietly, some read textbooks and poetry. Others looked out the window at another group of students who were picketing the cafeteria. The manager of Thompson's begged them to leave, but the students refused to leave until they had eaten. By suppertime, the cafeteria's trade had dropped by half. Eventually the cafeteria's national headquarters ordered the staff to give food to the students. For the first time since Reconstruction, a downtown DC whites-only eating establishment served black customers.

This demonstration is significant for two reasons: first, it was conceived by, and led by, women. Second, the students had been rigorously trained in the nonviolent principles and tactics of Mahatma Gandhi. Each student had signed a pledge to not retaliate against harassment or violence, and the tactics worked. Not until sixteen years later would civil rights demonstrators use the

Continued on page 3

Open Mic at the First E.: Important Women in our Lives

By Patton White

In Celebration of Women's History Month, D. Patton White will facilitate an 'Open Mic' focusing on The Important Women in our Lives. If you would like to share a story, poem, work of visual art, song, dance, performance that in some way reflects one or more of the important women in your life, this is the time to do it!

Our time is best utilized if you contact Patton ahead of time to let him know you'd like to share something, but it is not a requirement. You can still request a time 'at the mic' if you have not let him know beforehand.

Janet Metzger, a local actress, singer, musician and generally multi-talented person will be joining us for the first time as an accompanist and musician. She brings with her a Special Music Guest: Virginia Schenck.

Inside this issue...

2. Chalice Lighter Grant Received
3. History/Walking Tour
4. Finance Report
5. Minister's Corner
6. Coffeehouse / Sugarbakers
7. Ramp Proposal

Notable dates... (Celebrations of Life noted on back)

- March 8, Board meeting at First E (p. 7)
- March 10, 9am - 5pm, need crew to salvage materials from Emory (p. 3)
- March 18, 7:15pm, come see "Brother Outsider: the Life of Bayard Rustin," part of the Friday film series (p. 5)
- March 20 after service, discussion group downstairs; tai chi upstairs

FIRST EXISTENTIALIST CONGREGATION

470 Candler Park Drive NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30307
(404) 378-5570

www.firstexistentialist.org
office@firstexistentialist.org

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. Childcare provided Sundays.

Communications Volunteers

Victoria Trestrail, Newsletter Editor
victoria@tmkatlanta.com

Ashlea Davis, Logos and Design
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.

First E Staff

Marsha Mitchiner, Fellowship Minister
revm@bellsouth.net
Rick Westbrook, Administrator
office@firstexistentialist.org

Board of Directors

Edith Covington
edithcovington@gmail.com
Karla Crawford
crawfordhands@gmail.com
Elaine Gale egale@hotmail.com
Bill Laney bill3391a@yahoo.com
Jonathan Nye jnye@emory.edu
Hank Pfadenhauer
wolrametep@bellsouth.net
Shelby Smith sas_25@hotmail.com
Dominic Thomas dzt@me.com

FIRST E RECEIVES A CHALICE LIGHTER GRANT FROM THE UUA MSD TO SUPPORT OUR RAMP/LIFT PROJECT

Coordinated by Shelby Smith and Marsha Mitchiner; summarized by Dominic Thomas from msduua.org for the newsletter

The Chalice Lighter Program assists the growth of both emerging and existing congregations in the Mid-South District (MSD) through contributions from Unitarian Universalists who participate as Chalice Lighters. The Chalice Lighter Program is administered by the MSD Growth & Support Committee, which believes that UUs have hidden our light under the proverbial bushel for too long. The time is now to share our message of religious freedom, reason and tolerance with friends and neighbors in the heart of the South. We need to advance the light, spread the word and share the faith of hope and courage.

The Mid-South District Growth and Support Committee knows that at special times in their development, Unitarian Universalist congregations take big steps. In a very real way each step is the lighting of a new flame to spread the concepts of our faith. The Committee believes that it is our obligation to help a congregation at these crucial times to grow and prosper so that UUs may continue to be a force for progressive change and forward thinking within our communities.

Chalice Lighter funds are intended to help new congregations or growing congregations by providing funds to assist in one of the following ways:

- to organize a new congregation.
- to support full or part-time professional leadership.

- to finance the first building or significant expansion of a current building.

Now is your chance to contribute to the Chalice Lighter Call for the **FIRST EXISTENTIALIST CONGREGATION OF ATLANTA!**

You can contribute to this Chalice Lighter Call by sending your contribution to:

**Chalice Lighter Program
Mid-South District Office
9 Meaders Lane
Oxford, MS 38655**



Mid-South Chalice Lighters support UU congregations with contributions of \$10 (or more) for a MSD Chalice Lighter Call three times a year. Read more about the the MSD Chalice Lighter Program and find an enrollment form at msduua.org



The Labyrinth

Notice that there are multiple paths through the First E labyrinth. The design emphasizes that we respect and accept that there are multiple paths through life.

WALKING TOUR CO-SPONSORED BY OUR BIRACIAL HISTORY PROJECT

by Edi/th Kelman

Early Edgewood-Candler Park Walking Tour - Early Edgewood-Candler Park BiRacial History Project

You are invited to a guided historic walking tour of 1880s-1980s African American legacy sites in Candler Park, Atlanta – researched in collaboration with BiRacial History Project, Antioch East Baptist Church, First

Existentialist Congregation, Unitarian Universalist Funding Program, local schools and colleges.

Reservations required: 404-222-0801 (Limited to 20)
Date/Time: March 10, 2011, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
www.biracialhistoryproject.org
Neighborhood: East of Downtown
Venue: Candler Park

Directions:
Tour begins at the Old Stone Church, 470 Candler Park Drive NE, Atlanta 30307. Free street parking is available on both sides of Candler Park Drive. No parking is allowed in driveway next to Old Stone Church.

Presented By:
The Early Edgewood-Candler Park BiRacial History Project supports community-based restorative justice work in today's Candler Park neighborhood. Our mission is to tell the deeper story of the pioneering African American community here, in collaboration with Elders who lived it

and their descendants. The complex racial dynamics of the Candler Park neighborhood have been veiled from the collective memory for too many years. The little-known biracial origin of the neighborhood is our platform for respectful, interactive education within the larger multi-cultural community. Now is our time to honor historic truths with fresh eyes, humane hearts, and meaningful actions.

Note:

This event will be canceled in the event of rain. For more information visit www.biracialhistoryproject.org

Free Materials from Emory!

by Dominic Thomas

Emory is demolishing a dormitory at the end of March. I applied for us to be able to go and remove materials. We have received blanket permission to remove materials on one weekday between now and late March. We are planning to go on **Thursday, March 10th**. If you are available during the day and can help, please contact Dominic (cell 404-277-6200, dzt@me.com) and plan to meet us. Among other things, we plan to get high quality doors to replace some of the doors downstairs, perhaps a toilet for the broken one downstairs, and some other fixtures. We will meet at First E at 9 am on March 10 and then drive to the old Turman dorm site to start.



Continued from page 3

same kind of nonviolent resistance used by the Howard University students.

From an early age, Murray rebelled against Jim Crow laws by refusing to ride segregated streetcars and didn't go to movies because she resented having to sit in the "colored balcony." She hated the South and went to Hunter College in New York. Since she graduated in the middle of the Depression, finding a job was difficult. After a period of unemployment, she went to work for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of Roosevelt's New Deal agencies to combat unemployment during the Depression, as a remedial reading teacher. In 1938 she decided to enlist in the struggle for racial equality. She returned to North Carolina and applied for admission to the University of North Carolina. When she was rejected, with the explanation: "Members of your race are not admitted to the University," she wrote a letter to President Roosevelt. She was surprised to receive a response from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Although Mrs. Roosevelt cautioned Murray to not "push so hard," she and Murray exchanged many letters over the years, and Murray became a major influence on the First Lady's evolution into one of the most influential white advocates of racial equality of the mid-20th century. In 1940, when Murray was arrested and jailed for refusing to get up from a whites-only seat on a Greyhound bus, Eleanor Roosevelt called the Governor of Virginia to investigate.

Continued on page 6

Finance Report

Submitted by the Finance Guild and Annotated by Dominic Thomas

We have had a great start to the year. Currently, we have a positive cash flow for January. Below the cash flow table you will see a table listing balances in the main accounts we keep in our ledger for special purposes. For many of the members, you may be unfamiliar with these accounts. Here is a summary, explaining as much as I know about them, having sat on the Board for three years now.

The General Operating account is our main fund for running our Congregation. Funds to pay utility bills as well as to pay musicians, speakers, and childcare providers for Sunday Celebrations of Life come from these funds. In general, we can expect to spend at least \$2,000 on those basic expenses out of this account every month. I like to see \$5,000 as a minimum in this account.

The Gay Dellinger Gift and Pat Hewitt Loan were both given to First E by long-time members who passed away. The Dellinger fund is being allocated by the Board under Elaine Gale's supervision, to enhance First E's capabilities and programs. The Hewitt Loan helps in times of need, such as when we needed to replace our roof and when we need a large chunk of cash to replace the ramp / install a lift. The Hewitt loan is full when it equals \$8,000. The Dellinger Gift will only decrease as it gets spent.

The Clance lighting fund was started by our Founder / Minister Emeritus in 2009 to help improve the lighting in the Sanctuary. Currently, Buildings and Grounds is in the process of testing an improved programmable stage lighting system that will probably be funded by these funds.

Years ago a member dedicated \$500 per year for leadership development at First E. These funds are typically used to pay registration fees to conferences for First E volunteer leaders.

The Buildings and Grounds fund is a bit unclear as to its purpose, since many [B&G] needs are actually paid from the General Operating Account. The Woodland Sanctuary Fund is overseen by Ashlea Davis and is used to maintain and improve the Woodland Sanctuary.

The Minister's Discretionary Fund is overseen by Marsha Mitchiner and is used to provide flowers and cards to members in need as well as other discretionary expenses. The First E History Fund as well as the Old Stone Church History Project are funds used to advance our historical understanding and cooperate with partners through the project. These funds have largely been raised through grants and are overseen by Edi/th Kelman.

The Labyrinth and Garden fund is dedicated to the garden in the side yard. If you want to get involved,

please let Karla Crawford, Jon Nye, or Shelby Smith know!

The Finance Guild meets regularly. Please contact a member such as Edith Covington, Jon Nye, or Bill Read to find out when the next meeting is and to join the Guild. As with all our guilds, we are thankful for the work they do as volunteers.

CASH FLOW	JAN.
Operating Income	\$9,122
Operating Expenses	\$6,702
Cash Flow	\$2,420

ACCOUNT	JAN 31
General Operating Account	\$5,001
Gay Dellinger Estate Gift	\$7,648
Pat Hewitt Revolving Loan	\$8,000
Lanier Clance Lighting Fund	\$1,044
Leadership Development Fund	\$240
Buildings and Grounds Fund	\$700
Woodland Sanctuary Fund	\$1,299
Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$527
First E History Fund	\$68
Labyrinth & Garden Fund	\$557
Social Justice Fund	\$797
Old Stone Church History Project	\$5,406

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 (available on the Web site and in the Sanctuary or from the Office) 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.

Minister's Corner

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner

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 an 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.

Thank You to Our Members/ Friends Who Continue to Volunteer

THANKS to:

- * Karla Crawford, Shelby Smith, and Jon Nye for keeping the garden going. We hope that others will join them and help make our garden vigorous and successful this year!
- * Randy Pimsler for donating architectural services toward the design and analysis of our ramp / lift project. Your contribution has been tremendous!
- * Kitty Wimbish for carefully and constantly tending the plants in the Sanctuary as well as frequently opening and closing for Celebrations of Life.

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 any Guild member, any Board member, or the office to connect and volunteer.

office@firstexistentialist.org



THIRD FRIDAY FILM SERIES

(NEW SPEAKERS = clearer sound!)
at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta.

Friday, March 18, 2011

Nancy D. Kates & Bennett Singer's
**Brother Outsider:
The Life of Bayard
Rustin (2003)**

Nominated for Grand Jury Prize at Sundance; Won Audience Awards at the San Francisco, Philadelphia and

NYC Lesbian & Gay Film Festivals, and for Outstanding Documentary at the GLAAD Media Awards

Doors open 7:00 pm – film starts at 7:30 pm sharp; Popcorn and refreshments available; We welcome donations - \$1 to \$10 sliding scale; No one turned away

Stay to discuss the film – the second in our new series on
LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL & TRANSGENDER FOLKS

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



Calling all First E Talent for...

The First E Coffeehouse!

Do you have a talent you'd enjoy sharing? Singing, making music, puppetry, juggling, literary talent, telling jokes, dancing, acrobatics? Or do you know someone you think would be happy to share their talents? We'll be holding our Second Annual Coffeehouse in May again this year (date to be determined), and we're looking for acts of approximately 4-5 minutes in length each.

We're also looking for items to put into our Silent Auction. Do you regularly visit your neighborhood restaurant and think they might donate a certificate? Or, maybe you might have a piece of artwork that you'd like to donate? Items are tax-deductible.

Email Shelby Smith at sas_25@hotmail.com or Elaine Gale at ergale@hotmail.com if you'd like to share your talents or help provide an item for the auction! Looking forward to an evening of fun. Spread the word!

Flaming Sugarbaker Sisters @ First E

by Rick Westbrook a.k.a. Sister
Divine Cox, Office Manager

It is with Joy and Indulgence that I write this article today to inform everyone that "The Atlanta Sisters" are now a FULLY PROFESSED HOUSE of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence!!!

The Atlanta Sisters aka **The Flaming Sugarbaker Sisters** were formed in 2009 by Novice Sister Gunza Blazin, Novice Sister Ivana Pocahotass, Novice Sister Fiddle D. Dee, Novice Sister Anita Mandablough, and Novice Sister Rapture Divine Cox.

The past year through the guidance of the UNPC (United Nuns Privacy Counsel) operated as a mission based at 1st E. The year flew by doing fundraisers, condom ministry, and education for the community - all the while completing the paperwork to become a nonprofit and House. The approval came through and last month the UNPC voted unanimously to make a House.

The sisters are an order of 21st century nuns dedicated to the manifestation of cosmic joy through freedom of expression, charitable acts, community outreach, and social activism. The Sisters now boast a membership of over 20 that constantly work to make our community a better place and we love calling 1st E our home base.

Wishing you - Peace, Love, and Indulgence



Continued from page 3

Pauli Murray had been refused admittance at the University of North Carolina because of her race and at Harvard due to her gender. She has said that she suffered as much from Jane Crow as from Jim Crow. She was disturbed that although women were active in the Civil Rights movement, they were not seen by male leaders or the public as leaders or policymakers. When she found out that none of the speakers at the 1963 March on Washington would be female, she was infuriated. She felt that African American women could no longer postpone or subordinate the fight against sex discrimination to the civil rights struggle, but must fight both simultaneously. In 1966, Murray was one of the founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Ella Baker was one of the most important African Americans of the twentieth century and perhaps the single most influential woman in the Civil Rights Movement. Yet many people still have not heard of her. Granddaughter of slaves, she studied at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., then moved to Harlem, the center of African American intellectual and artistic life, where she met other young black intellectuals, including Pauli Murray and Dorothy Height, and became part of an informal network of women activists who were involved with many different issues. She became friends with socialist writer George Schuyler, and the two of them formed The Young Negroes' Cooperative League (YNCL), based on the concept of cooperative economics. She founded the Negro History Club and a youth education group at the Harlem Library. She studied at the Brookwood Labor College, founded by socialists and pacifists to train labor organizers, where she learned about socialism and theories of social change.

In 1936, Baker took a job with the Workers' Education Project, a branch

Continued on page 7

Buildings and Grounds Updates By Dominic Thomas

Last month, I wrote an article explaining the various details we know about our current ramp and its condition. Both an architect and a structural engineer have analyzed it and recommended we remove it and install an ADA conforming solution. It is highly important for our Welcoming Congregation to enable all interested participants to come and be part of our activities. As such, we must have a means for people to get into our Sanctuary with equivalent access using a wheel chair. On March 8 at the Board Meeting, Buildings and Grounds is proposing to the Board that the congregation remove the old ramp and install a new lift at the location of the upper landing. This lift will have battery and manual backup and will be designed to fit in with the outdoor appearance of the front of the building. It is going to cost close to \$35,000. Shelby Smith has already headed up the successful effort to get a Chalice Lighter grant to help. This could bring in as much as \$10,000. We are seeking funds from the Neighborhood Association and hope they will help. If you know of other funding sources, please let us know. This project will take us some time to pay off, but following our successful payment for the roof last year, we

Continued from page 6

of the WPA. She taught courses in consumer education, labor history, and African history and wrote articles on consumer issues. Questions she asked in her workshops included: "Some consumers organize to save money, others to save the world—what does consumer education mean to you?" and "Why so much poverty in so rich a country as America?"

In 1940, Baker went to work for the NAACP as a field secretary. She traveled all over the country conducting membership and fundraising drives. Despite her hard work and ability, she found herself undervalued as a woman. Assigned to Virginia to conduct a membership campaign, she found that the local chairman had written to Walter White, NAACP national director, asking for a man instead of her. She won over the chairman, however,



**INPUT RECEIVED:
LET'S GET A LIFT.**

Community members provided input / feedback. Buildings and Grounds proposes we get a lift to be installed at the location of the upper landing of the existing ramp. This will cost about \$35,000 including an auto-opening front door.

believe this project can be accomplished in a timely manner. It will be done by contractors and scheduled to minimize downtime during which wheel chairs would not be able to access the Sanctuary.



**LIFT MIGHT LOOK
SOMETHING LIKE THIS**

The next Board meeting is at 7 pm at First E on Tuesday, March 8th. Please come, listen, and add input.

and he became one of her staunchest allies. In 1943, Baker became the director of branches of the NAACP, becoming the highest ranking woman in the organization.

Baker worked with Bayard Rustin in SCLC, as well as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other more well-known leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. She worked in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi on voter registration campaigns, and she served as SCLC's interim director. In 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed by students from southern universities. Baker was one of the older people who encouraged the leadership of SCLC to listen to young people. Known as the "Godmother of SNCC," Ella Baker was, along with Howard Zinn (white professor at Spelman) one of the student organization's most

respected advisors. She mentored younger civil rights activists such as Rosa Parks, Diane Nash, John Lewis, Stokely Carmichael, and Bob Moses.

Ella Baker always saw issues of racism, poverty, and sexism as interrelated. She pointed out inequality and injustice wherever she found them and sought to create alliances among diverse groups of people. She wrote in 1969, "In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed.... I use the term radical in its original meaning—getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system."

MARCH CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

March 6

Open Mic at the First E:

Important Women in Our Lives

Speaker: *open mic*

Facilitator: D. Patton White

Accompanist: Janet Metzger

Special Music: Virginia Schenck

March 13

Art Activism, and Feminist Theory

Speaker: Julie Kabala

Facilitator: Sue Wilkinson

Accompanist: Shelby Smith

March 20

Calling Women and Men to an Inclusive and Empowering Understanding of Feminism

Speaker: Janna Nelson

Facilitator: Bill Laney

Accompanist: Scott Hooker

March 27

Thoughts in Early-Spring

Speaker: Kate Hauk

Facilitator: Ted Pettus

Accompanist: Sue Wilkinson

Musician Highlight: Janet Metzger is an actor, a singer, a voice talent and a teacher. But more than that, she's a storyteller. She tells stories through the songs she sings, the characters she plays on stage and film, the programs she narrates, and the products she promotes. And when she teaches, she uses story to illuminate and educate. **AS AN ACTOR** A proud member of Actors' Equity, Metzger's theater credits span over 25 years in the greater Atlanta area. Credits can be found in her Actor-Singer resume on this page. Her on-camera work includes principal and spokesperson roles in industrial films, commercials and television. **AS A VOICE TALENT** She has recorded audiobooks for Brilliance Audio and ListenUp Audio. In addition to a lengthy career as a commercial voice actor, for 5 years she was the voice of CNN Headline News, as well as voicing promos for CNN and CNN International. **AS A SINGER** Janet has appeared professionally throughout the Southeast. In 2002 she sang as part of The Millennium Series at The Kennedy Center. Her favorite music comes from the Great American Songbook, Jazz Standards and the popular music of Brazil (MPB). janetmetzgersings.com

EXISTENTIALIST

First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

470 Candler Park Dr. NE

Atlanta, Georgia 30307