

The Existentialist

Newsletter of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta

470 Candler Park Drive, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307 • Founded in 1976 •

A Philosophically Based Spiritual Community

Dedicated to Human Liberation

and Founded on Existentialist and Feminist Principles •

In Memory of Hank Pfadenhauer

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner

It was with shock and sadness we learned that long time member of First Existentialist, Hank Pfadenhauer, had died at his home unexpectedly of an apparent heart attack in early March. He was born in Brooklyn, NY, on Christmas Eve, 1943. Hank was currently on the Board of Directors and on the Membership and Program Guilds. He also served on the group that opens and closes the sanctuary on Sundays before and after our Celebration of Life (COL). Whenever there was a special event at First E, Hank was usually there and volunteering to help. He was rather quiet but ready and able with a sharp mind to engage you in an energetic discussion on many topics, especially those philosophical in nature.

Hank served in the Army during the 60's as a surveyor traveling to other countries, spending several years in Africa, specifically Ethiopia. He loved the countryside and native people he came to know. He spoke at a COL talking about that time in his life. It was there that he lost his best friend from childhood who had enlisted with him and was also a surveyor. He said he didn't talk about it very often because it was such a painful memory—and that pain was evident in his face. He was proud of his military service and soldiers in general.

Hank and his friend, Lisa Ryan, met at First E and shared a home for many years. Lisa was disabled and Hank became her caretaker. When we were having regular Wednesday night suppers, Hank would often bring a dish cooked by Lisa. Lisa died in 2015 which was another very difficult loss for Hank. They had 3 cats which have been adopted by other First E members.



Hank Pfadenhauer. Photo by Karla Crawford.

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**First Existentialist
Congregation of
Atlanta**

470 Candler Park Drive,
NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30307
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www.firstexistentialist.org

All Are Welcome
Join us in our
Celebrations of Life on
Sundays at 11:00 a.m.
Children's Program
during Sunday services

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Bill Read, Treasurer
Stell Simonton,
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*We are a philosophically based
spiritual community
dedicated to
human liberation
and founded on existentialist
and feminist principles.*



Notes From the Board of Directors

By D. Patton White, Board Chair

The Board of Directors met on Monday, March 7, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. The board approved the following proposals: A book swap to happen on Sundays, facilitated by Arlene Arp; the purchase of a Black Lives Matter banner by the Social Justice Guild; closer management of the First E Facebook page, facilitated by Mark White. Bill Laney reported that he intends to install the automatic door opener when he has the time available and the space is not in use. Edith reported that rentals continue to be a strong source of revenue for the First E. Guilds and Committees reported on activities. Of note: several upcoming art exhibitions in the sanctuary; the significant bequest left to First E by Estelle Wyckoff (\$10,000); 8 new members have joined First E. The board will meet again on Monday, April 4, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary—all are welcome to attend. ~

Annual Meeting of The First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, Sunday, April 24, 12:45 PM

The Annual Meeting of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta will be held on Sunday, April 24, following the Celebration of Life at 12:45 p.m.

All voting members are requested to attend to share in the decision making of the organization, including the selection of the members of the Board of Directors for 2016-2017. Other topics on the agenda will include the presentation of the financial report on the 2015 fiscal year, the presentation of the 2016 Budget, reports from our fellowship minister, office administrator, guilds and committees, and a summary of a preliminary visioning process the board has undergone over the past 6 months. All interested people are welcome to attend the meeting, but only current members are eligible to participate in the voting process on any business needing a vote. If you are uncertain of your voting status, please check

with Bill Read. ~

Community News & Activities

--"Activism in Atlanta," a photography exhibit by Atlanta activists including First E member Lorraine Fontana, will go up on May 1. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, May 7, at 5:00 p.m. at First E.

--The Art Guild will meet on April 13 at 5:00 p.m. in the first E Sanctuary.

--Art by Claire Vohman will be on First E's walls through April.

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Guild Reports

Art Guild

By Charlene Ball

Artist Claire Vohman's work will remain on First E's walls through April. In May, "Activism in Atlanta," a photography exhibit of photos by Atlanta activists, will go up. The opening reception will be on Saturday, May 7, at 5:00 p.m. And in June and July, an exhibit artist Helen DeRamus will be featured. We are thrilled about these exhibits and hope that First E will continue to be a venue for exciting and beautiful art. The Art Guild will meet on April 13 at 5:00 p.m. at First E. Members are Glen Lopez, Chair; Charlene Ball, and Patton White. All are welcome to attend. ~

Membership Guild

By Wilj Sturkey

The Membership Guild hosted a kiddush on Sunday, March 20 after Marsha's thought-provoking talk. There was a delicious array of cheese and other kinds of snacks and cakes. Many people stayed after the service to chat and catch up. Our next kiddush will be at the annual Membership meeting on April 24, when Pauline Clance will be the featured speaker.

We are happy to welcome our newest Guild member, Sherry Durren. She will definitely be an asset to our guild. If anyone would like to know more about the Membership Guild, contact Wilj at cincodemayo55@comcast.net or Elaine at ergale@hotmail.com. ~

Program Guild

By Charlene Ball

The Program Guild is pleased to announce the speakers, facilitators, and musicians for April. On April 3, Rev. Duncan Teague will speak, D. Patton White will facilitate, and Bill Chelton will play accompaniment and special music. On April 10, Rev. Marti Keller will speak, Dr. Saralyn Chesnut, will facilitate, and Aviva and the Flying Penguins will provide music. Rev. Angela D. Davis returns on April 17, Dr. Charlene Ball will facilitate, and David Tyberg will return with his guitar. And on April 24, Dr. Pauline Rose Clance, clinical psychologist and a charter member of First E, will speak, Dr. Sharon Mathis will facilitate, and Alan Dynin will provide music. On April 24, we will also hold our Annual Congregational Meeting to elect the new Board and vote on matters important to the Congregation.

The Program Guild welcomes members and friends to attend our meetings. Our members are Patton White (chair), Linda Bell, Charlene Ball, and Saralyn Chesnut. Rev. Marsha Mitchiner also gives us input. If you would like to recommend a speaker, contact any one of us. To recommend a musician, contact Patton (patton@beacondance.org). If you would like to facilitate, contact Charlene (mcharleneball@yahoo.com). ~

Social Justice Guild

By Linda Bell

The Social Justice Guild meets every other month. Members remain active in various social justice projects, including writing for the Social Justice Corner in *The First Existentialist Newsletter*, sponsoring the Book Discussion Group, and taking part in community social justice activities. At its last meeting, the Board approved a proposal by the SJG to purchase and hang a Black Lives Matter banner on the outside of the building.

Guild members are Katrice Baker, Linda Bell, Saralyn Chesnut, Lorraine Fontana, Edi Kelman, Jan Lister, and Libby Ware. Our next meeting will be on April 3 downstairs after the COL service. All are welcome to attend. ~

Social Justice Corner

Radical Hospitality

By Rev. George Tatro

But seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you, and pray on its behalf, for in its shalom you will find your shalom. - Jeremiah 29:7

Thank you again for your generous invitation to share with you my passion for a community where radical hospitality breaks down the walls that separate us from our full potential. The question we all face in the current political environment, where immigrants and refugees face pressure from federal, state, and local politicians, is this: how do we, as thoughtful and reasoned people and communities, respond to the anger, lies, and oppression directed at the immigrant and refugee communities in our city?

The two things that stand out for me in the quote from Jeremiah are "shalom" and "the city (where you live)." Shalom can be translated in many ways: peace, welfare, well-being, prosperity, wholeness, completeness. Each choice brings with it a nuanced understanding of how we might respond to the rampant xenophobia and racism in American culture. But our response as individuals, first and foremost, must be local, in the city where we live, in the communities where we work, play, create, and dream. My hope is that our conversation helped to grow the bounds of your sense of community geographically and culturally. As a community committed to reason, the full flourishing of all people, with intentionality towards people who have been marginalized, First Existentialist is uniquely positioned to counter the narrative of fear and xenophobia.

[H]ow do we, as thoughtful and reasoned people and communities, respond to the anger, lies, and oppression directed at the immigrant and refugee communities. . . ?

What does wholeness, prosperity, completeness, peace, look like for an undocumented immigrant living in Chamblee? What about their children, some of whom came here as infants, some who were born here and are American citizens by birth? What about the Dreamers, who came here as undocumented infants, graduated from high school, and are seeking to go to state colleges, but are prohibited by law from receiving in-state tuition even though Georgia is the only home they have ever known? How does their shalom differ from that of a refugee living in Clarkston who is welcomed by the United States?

I posit that we cannot really begin to answer these questions or address the systemic problems in our community in a vacuum - isolated from their experiences and knowledge. This brings up one of the challenges we face that arises from our varying degrees of privilege. Simply put, it is the temptation to offer solutions to these prob-

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Minister's Corner

By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner, First E Fellowship Minister

Loving Thoughts Go Out To:

Those who have lost loved ones, close friends-

Barbara Van Helsdinger-father

Elaine Gale-several friends

Nancy White-friend

Those dealing with health issues-

Sharon Sanders

Martha Renfroe Garner

Kaya Erbil

Support Your First E Member/Friend:

Arlene Arp, who provides home schooling and tutoring

Nathaniel Jones who is looking for work, odd jobs

Katrice Baker who is looking for work, odd jobs

Victoria Trestrail and Bennett's Market

Charlene Ball on "Go Fund Me" to publish her book

Congratulations to

Lynn Tippetts and Barbara Van Helsdinger who bought a house

Elaine Gale and Randy Pimsler who are on a trip to Australia

Patton White who has been in Israel for work (and fun, I'm sure)

Libby Ware who continues to earn honors for her first novel, Lum

Save the Date--Celebrate May Day with Activism in Atlanta Photography Exhibit

By Barbara Joye

Celebrate May Day – also known as International Workers' Day - by enjoying a new exhibit of photographs: "Activism in Atlanta," that will hang in the sanctuary throughout the month of May. Sponsored by Metro Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America, the show features the work of six of Atlanta's best photographers of people's street action, including

Hank Pfadenhauer ~ Continued from Page 1

Hank was a complex man with many talents and interests. He was an internet entrepreneur. He built and sold high-end stereo speakers and repaired watches. His interests ranged from photography to poetry to playing guitar and ukulele. He worked for 15 years preparing food at the Clifton Men's Shelter, using his skills to give back to those less fortunate.

He was quiet but ready with a smile and hug. He considered himself an existential Christian and found no contradiction in that. He was a proponent of racial inclusion, believing we all have a place at the table.

There are many who will miss Hank, his sense of humor and interesting conversations.

Join us on May 1 following the Sunday COL for a Memorial Service to honor Hank's memory. ~

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE

The National Museum of African American History and Culture will open September 24, 2016, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. "The full story of the African American experience has long been ignored, forgotten, and even actively suppressed...denying all Americans a critical understanding of who we are as a nation and how we can build a better future together. The Museum will explore African American history in its entirety, providing an important addition to America's understanding of who we are as a nation and how we can build a better future together."

Private funding is being sought to complete the Museum and open on schedule. Information above from/donations accepted by: **Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 96832, Washington, D.C. 2000-6832**

Submitted by Rev. Marsha Mitchiner

First E member Lorraine Fontana. The show is presented in conjunction with the #MayDayATL festival being organized by Atlanta Jobs with Justice and many other progressive local groups (see **AtlantaJwJ.org**). Meet the photographers at a reception with light refreshments at 5 p.m., Saturday, May 5.

Radical Hospitality ~ Continued from page 5

lems from our cultural biases. If we approach our relationships with others thinking that we can solve their problems, then we are operating out of what I am sure Martin Buber would characterize as an I-It paradigm. We must see our relationship with the other as intimately connected, for our shalom can only be found in the shalom of others. We must move from an I-It to I-Thou paradigm. Paulo Freire addresses this challenge in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, writing:

[T]he more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.

My hope is that my talk will encourage First Existentialist to continue being a place of radical hospitality. That you will find ways to extend this hospitality beyond the doors and out into the community. Perhaps some will volunteer with the numerous refugee resettlement agencies helping newly arrived refugees assimilate. Perhaps others will work with organizations like G.A.L.E.O. and advocate for Dreamers. Perhaps you will head out to Clarkston and have a meal at one of the many ethnic restaurants, making sure to start up a conversation with others, as a way to begin to appreciate and understand the rich diversity of our community. Perhaps it will be a conversation at the Dekalb Farmer's Market that brings a smile to the person behind the counter. Always remembering that we will find our peace in the peace of our community. ~

Rev. George Tatro is the pastor of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, which is located in one of the most diverse square miles in the United States. He spoke at First E on March 13 on "Refugees and Immigrants: Building Community and Dispelling Fear." ~

Community News & Activities ~ continued from page 2

--**Aviva is Back at Mojo Pizza in Oakhurst with her own songs as well as a traveling One Man Banjo Band, Sean Lee on Thursday, April 7, 2016 7-10 p.m.** You can go to her website for future show details at www.avivaandtheflyingpenguins.com. Feel free to email her song requests before the show. Mojo Pizza is at 657 E Lake Dr., Decatur, GA 30030

--**Arlene** would be happy to know of anyone whose **kids need tutoring**.

Community:

--**Sister Harriet**, a women's spirituality circle, meets on the second Sunday of every month in the First E Sanctuary at 2:00 p.m. Rev. Angela Denise Davis leads the circle.

--**Sunday Assembly** holds its monthly meeting on at 6:00 p.m. in the First E Sanctuary. Sunday Assembly meetings are usually on the third Sunday of the month. To RSVP, go to <http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/events/226671093/>

--**Submissions and news for the May Newsletter** are due to Charlene by Sunday, April 17. Send to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. Contact **Robert Stewart** with your news and activities for his weekly e-newsletter: robertstewart369@gmail.com. ~

Speakers in April

April 3: Rev. Duncan Teague

Rev. Duncan Teague is an ordained Unitarian Universalist (UU) Minister and a longtime friend of and speaker at First E. He has more than twenty years of work in HIV/AIDS advocacy, prevention, education and research and is a recognized leader in the GLBTQ community. He is happily married to his husband, David Thurman.

Duncan's talk on April 3 will be entitled, "Just Us in a Time of Justice." April 3 has been named "Justice Sunday" by UU congregations, and Duncan says, "There is a strong need to investigate how we can support our fellow workers all over the world. While we do so, there may be as much need to do so right here at home on 'Justice Sunday.'" ~

April 10: Rev. Marti Keller

Rev. Marti Keller's topic will be, "A Short History of Snarkers . . ." She says, "Even before this political season, there were pundits and prophets who called our attention to these types and these behaviors. What were their predictions and solutions? And what are some individuals, faith groups, and even television networks doing to turn this around?"

Marti freely admits to being snarky and curmudgeonly, both in her private and public life. ~

For more background on Rev. Marti Keller, go to www.revmartikeller.com. ~

April 17: Rev. Angela Denise Davis

Rev. Angela Denise Davis will speak on "Love and Home Maintenance 101 on April 17." Angela is a regular speaker at First E. She is a certified rehabilitation counselor and an ordained minister and facilitates a spiritual collective, Sister Harriet, which she started in 2010. (CVI). She has also been a freelance graphic designer for over 20 years. She is a graduate of Clark Atlanta University and has a master of divinity from Vanderbilt University Divinity School and a master of science in rehabilitation counseling from Georgia State University. She lives in East Point with her partner Mary Anne Adams and their canine child Kasi. ~

April 24: Dr. Pauline Rose Clance

Dr. Pauline Rose Clance is a founding member of First E. She is a psychotherapist and the author of the book *The Imposter Phenomenon*. She will speak on the topic, "Do We Dare?" ~

April 2016 Sunday Celebrations of Life

April 3

Just Us in a Time of Justice

Speaker: Rev. Duncan Teague

Facilitator: D. Patton White

Accompanist: William "Bill" Chelton

April 10

A Short History of Snarkers and Curmudgeons:

The Rise of Rude, Crude, and Attitude (and ways we might actually save civility for a more polite planet)

Speaker: Rev. Marti Keller

Facilitator: Dr. Saralyn Chesnut

Accompanist: Aviva and the Flying Penguins

April 17

Love and Home Maintenance 101

Speaker: Rev. Angela Denise Davis

Facilitator: Dr. Charlene Ball

Accompanist: David Tyberg

April 24

Do We Dare?

Speaker: Dr. Pauline Rose Clance

Facilitator: Dr. Sharon Mathis

Accompanist: Alan Dynin

Annual Congregational Meeting to follow the service

Understanding a person does not mean condoning; it only means that one does not accuse him as if one were God or a judge placed above him. ~ Erich Fromm

The Back Page

Members and Friends Speak

Earth Month

Earth Month is an important reminder that we need to keep a dialogue open around how we can all do more to preserve our resources and live more sustainably. Here are some "R's" that help us think more about what we can do:



RESPECT: *It all starts with respect. First have esteem for one's self, then others, property, our natural, physical, cultural, social and economic environments; and our earth's delicate ecosystem.*

REFUSE: *Reject the idea of utilizing anything that may cause harm to oneself, someone else, or our delicate ecosystem. Refuse to use food items and products that are falsely represented.*

REDUCE: *Decrease, cut, lessen or diminish the utilization of natural resources.*

REUSE: *Reclaim or reprocess items that have been used.*

RENEW: *Repair, rebuild, reconstruct used items so they can serve a useful purpose once again.*

RECYCLE: *Reclaim or reprocess items so they may once again be useful, and reduce the need for raw materials and expending energy to make new products.*

RESPONSIBILITY: *Mental, moral, or legal accountability of individuals, business, and government with a view to transparency.*

RETHINK: *Change one's mind, thought, and heart so they will not cause harm to another or to our environment.*

REPLANT: *To replace vegetation on land and waterways that has been removed.*

RESTORE: *Return damaged systems to their original or better condition.*

So go out, work hard and have fun, enjoy yourself and our wonderful environment by improving it. Along the way, you will touch others and be better for it. ~

The above was adapted from an email from Radial Cafe. Thanks to Frank and Keith for permission to use it.

The Existentialist is published monthly. Deadline for the May 2016 newsletter is April 17. Send your articles and announcements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.