

# 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 •

## ***"Mixed Media" ~ Art by Teresa Crowder***

***Artist statement on Page 7***



*"Still Life with Pink Flowers" by Teresa Crowder. Photo by the artist.*

**First Existentialist  
Congregation of  
Atlanta**

470 Candler Park Drive,  
NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30307  
404-378-5570  
[www.firstexistentialist.org](http://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

Fellowship Minister:  
Marsha Mitchiner,  
[revm@bellsouth.net](mailto:revm@bellsouth.net)  
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Board of Directors:  
D. Patton White,  
Chair; Stell Simonton,  
Recorder; Mark White,  
Treasurer; Charlene  
Ball, Linda Bell, Saralyn  
Chesnut, Bill Laney,  
Mary Howard, Ted Pettus  
Newsletter Editor:  
Charlene Ball,  
[mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com)

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 Charlene Ball*

**The Board of Directors met on on September 12, 2016**, at 6:30 p.m. Board Chair Patton called the meeting to order. The Board approved a proposed "40 for 40" Fundraising Campaign. We will ask our community to show their support by donating \$40, \$400, \$4,000, or whatever they are comfortable with giving. The campaign will be kicked off on Founders' Day for our 40th anniversary. We will ask for support in three key areas: Building and Grounds Capital Improvements, The Accessibility Fund Capital Improvements, and a new Endowment Fund.

Bill Laney has a quote for the floor refinishing. We asked Bill to proceed with the floor. Rev. Marsha Mitchiner sent out a letter to past members and friends inviting them to Founders Day. Andy has designed new T-shirts for our 40th anniversary. Edith reported that Primavera has over 40 children now and are back at paying 15% of their intake. Patton reported for the Art Guild that the exhibit of Lanier's work is up. Bill Read has reorganized the space behind the stage and in the sound room, and Andy and Bill Laney have worked to reorganize the sound room. Andy purchased a sound box, but it is too powerful. He will send it back and order a smaller one. Bill R has been doing basic inventory. An arbor is being constructed in the garden area. It is paid for from the second part of a grant written a few years ago.

Bill Read gave the finance report, reporting that we are in the black. We are up from last year at this time and from the three previous years. We can pay for improvements to the building, but we need project managers to volunteer their time and expertise. We have changed our pay scale for ministers. Starting October 1, ordained ministers will be paid \$200.00 to speak; other speakers will be paid \$100.00. In January 2017, accompanists' honoraria will go up from \$75.00 to \$100.00.

The Program Guild reported that Rev. Angela Denise Davis will be taking a break until January, when she will again return once a month. Stephanie will be away from the children's program for the next 2 Sundays taking care of her mother. Jeannie Lovelady will fill in for her.

The Board will next meet on October 3 at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend. ~

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## **Community News & Activities**

--"Mixed Media," art by Teresa Crowder, will go up on the First E walls the week before October 16.

--"Standard Deviation, Together Again." On October 29, Scott Hooker and Janna Nelson will reunite with Jeff Crompton and other musicians in a concert at First E. Show starts at 8:00.

--For T-shirts to celebrate our 40th year, please contact Marsha immediately to place orders.

--If you have news of interest to the Congregation, please drop me a note @ [robertstew-art359@gmail.com](mailto:robertstew-art359@gmail.com)

--Submissions and news for the November newsletter are due to Charlene by Sunday, October 16. Send to [mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com).

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## ***Guild Reports***

### ***Art Guild***

***By Charlene Ball***

**The Art Guild** announces a new art show by Teresa Crowder that will go up the weekend of October 16. The Guild arranges for exhibits of visual art on the walls of First E as well as other kinds of artistic expression throughout the year. Members of the Art Guild are Glen Lopez, Chair; Charlene Ball; Elaine Gale; Patton White, and Kitty Wimbish. We welcome feedback. ~

### ***Fundraising Guild***

***By Charlene Ball***

**The Fundraising Guild** seeks volunteers for September's Fiddler's Green on October 15 at 8:00 p.m. at First E. If you would like to volunteer to help with concessions this month, contact Stell ([simontone@bellsouth.net](mailto:simontone@bellsouth.net)). For more information about the concert or if you'd like to help with setup of the concert, contact Chris Moser at [chrismoser@bellsouth.net](mailto:chrismoser@bellsouth.net). ~

### ***Membership Guild***

***By Charlene Ball***

**The Membership Guild** organizes kiddushes and potlucks and arranges for Sunday greeters. Greeters include Carol Sandiford, Elaine Gale, Robert Stewart, Wilj Sturkey-Mercado, Mary Howard, and others. If you're interested in joining Membership or being a greeter, us, contact Mary Howard at [iamarymae@yahoo.com](mailto:iamarymae@yahoo.com). ~

### ***Program Guild***

***By Charlene Ball***

**The Program Guild** secures speakers, facilitators, and musicians for Sunday Celebrations of Life. Our members are Patton White (chair), Linda Bell, Charlene Ball, and Saralyn Chesnut. Rev. Marsha Mitchiner also gives input. If you would like to recommend a speaker, you can contact any member of the Program Guild. If you would like to recommend a musician, contact Patton [patton@beacondance.org](mailto:patton@beacondance.org). If you would like to facilitate, contact Charlene at [mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com). The next meeting of the Program Guild will be on at 5:00 p.m. in the First E Sanctuary. All members and friends are welcome to attend our meetings. ~

### ***Social Justice Guild***

***By Lorraine Fontana, Linda Bell, and Charlene Ball***

**The Social Justice Guild** meets bi-monthly, so our next meeting will be on October 2 downstairs after the COL service. On August 7, the SJG met to hear a presentation by Jumoke Ifetayo, a representative of N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America) and the Reparations Movement. SJG members are 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. Guild members are Katrice Baker, Linda Bell, Saralyn Chesnut, Lorraine Fontana, Edi Kelman, and Libby Ware. We welcome new members, and all are welcome to attend our meetings. ~

*I cannot endure to waste anything as precious as autumn sunshine by staying in the house. So I spend almost all the daylight hours in the open air. ~ Nathaniel Hawthorne*

# August 2016 Finance Report

<u>2016 Cash Flow</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Designated</u>
Total Income	50,818	11,961
Total Expenses	(44,983)	(3,013)
<b>Net thru August 31</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>8,948</b>

**Fund Types & Names    Account Balances on August 31**

<unaudited>

**2016 General Operating Account** **5,835**

**Designated Purpose Funds** **37,437**

Use Where Needed Fund	1,461
In Memory of Estelle Wychoff	10,000
Sanctuary Accessibility	14,600
Children's Program	692
Leadership Development	430
Community Garden Labryrinth	274
Building & Grounds	4,051
Woodland Sanctuary	2,634
Minister's Discretionary	920
Social Justice	771
Attic Insulation Fund	1,250
Music Fund	255
Endowment Fund	100

**Pat Hewatt Revolving Loan Fund** **8,068**

**Total First E Funds** **51,340**

**Old Stone Church History Project** **2,983**

## First E's 40 for 40 Campaign!

To kick off a year-long celebration of our 40th anniversary as a congregation, First E is excited to announce a fundraising campaign to celebrate our first 40 years and to lead us into our next 40. This campaign will seek to raise funds for a variety of priorities identified by the Finance Committee and the Board. We are asking our community to show support by contributing \$40, \$400, or \$4,000--or any amount you are comfortable with giving.

We are asking for support in three key areas:

### **Building and Grounds Capital Improvements**

Contributions to this area will go to improve our beloved building--The Old Stone Church. We have cracks to repair, a floor to refinish, and other things for the building to be back into "ship shape."

### **The Accessibility Fund Capital Improvements**

While we have made great strides in increasing our accessibility by installing an automatic door opener on our front door, we still have the enormous task of completely re-doing our ramp. We have a sizable amount already set aside for this undertaking, but we will need considerably more to complete this work.

### **The Endowment Fund**

Every journey begins with one step. And to this end, we have begun the process of building an endowment fund that will eventually serve as one of our financial legs to support our continued existence. Ted Pettus has pledged a matching gift up to \$2,500 for any contributions towards our Endowment Fund to help get our fund drive kicked off. Our goal is to continue to grow the Endowment Fund for many years so that the fund will serve as a pillar in our funding strategy.

Please consider contributing to one or more of these three areas in the coming days, weeks, or months as we celebrate our history and look forward to an exciting and fulfilling future! ~

***Guns are not allowed on the property  
belonging to the First Existentialist  
Congregation  
of Atlanta.***

## **FUND OF THE MONTH CLUB**

*The Fund of the Month  
is the Endowment Fund. ~*

# Social Justice Corner

## ***Social Justice Guild Hears Speaker on Reparations***

***by Lorraine Fontana, Edi Kelman, and Charlene Ball***

As most First E members know, the Social Justice Guild has long been focused on issues of racial justice and have read and discussed books and articles on this subject. On August 7, the SJG heard a presentation by Jumoke Ifetayo of N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America) and the Reparations Movement.

Ifetayo is a second generation activist, mixing spirituality and culture with activism. In 2010 at the History Project's Legacy Markers Unveiling event in our Sanctuary, Ifetayo performed the opening ceremony invoking the Ancestors. We learned N'COBRA began in 1988 when Japanese-Americans were granted reparations under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which included 1) an apology, 2) \$20,000 to each person or child of those put into U.S. internment camps, 3) an education fund, 4) amnesty for political prisoners.

***There has been a reparations for slavery movement in some form or other even before the end of chattel slavery.***

There has been a reparations for slavery movement in some form or other even before the end of chattel slavery. In 1989, Illinois Senator John Conyers introduced H.R. 40, proposing a commission to study reparation proposals for African-Americans Act at the federal level. Conyers, the longest serving Senator today, has been submitting H.R.40 every year since then, but it has never gotten out of committee. The Congressional Black Caucus has held hearings on it, and Ifetayo spoke at one hearing. In 2008 the House passed a resolution apologizing for slavery, and in 2009 the Senate followed suit. The last sentence of the resolution declares that "nothing in this resolution authorizes, supports, or serves as a settlement of any claim against the United States," making it clear that reparations was not being authorized by this resolution. President Obama is being lobbied to establish a commission by executive order to examine reparation proposals. The State of Illinois legislature recently passed a Resolution to be presented to the President on November 5. The City of Atlanta passed a resolution supporting HR-40 under Bill Campbell's term; N'COBRA called the press conference announcing that action.

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The SJG discussed what we might do in support of reparations work and will discuss this more fully once we reconnect with N'COBRA concerning any local action they pursue. ~

Here is the link to the text of HR-194, a resolution to formally apologize for slavery, which passed the House July 29, 2008: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/110/hres194/text>

Here is Senate Concurrent Resolution 26, which passed the Senate June 18, 2009: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-concurrent-resolution/26>

Here's the link to the Illinois resolution asking Obama to commission a study on the economic impact of slavery: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/99/HR/09900HR1011.htm> ~

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### ***FIDDLER'S GREEN SCHEDULE***

***September-December 2016***

Oct. 15, '16     *Caledonia Swing, The Red Wellies*  
Nov. 19, '16     *Benson & Leinweber, Knightsong*  
Dec. 17, '16     *TBA, The Lost Boys*

*All Fiddler's Green concerts will be at First Existentialist. Shows start at 8:00 p.m.*

*If you would like to volunteer to help with concessions, contact a member of the Fundraising Guild: Stell ([simontone@bell-south.net](mailto:simontone@bell-south.net)), Libby ([toadlibby@yahoo.com](mailto:toadlibby@yahoo.com)), or Charlene ([mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com)). ~*

## **Minister's Corner**

### **By Rev. Marsha Mitchiner**

## **FOUNDERS DAY # 40**

September 18th was a big day at 1st E: we celebrated our 40th Founders Day! The stage was adorned with pictures from all eras, different events, people who are still E members as well as those who have passed. The original sign and 6 various Tee shirts helped remind us of where we've been. Patton White announced the 40 for 40 Campaign that suggests donations of \$4, \$40, \$400, or whatever you are able to contribute for our future (see separate article on the 40 for 40). Following the service, tables were set up to provide a place for people to enjoy the wonderful pot luck offerings while they shared conversation with each other.

We honor our past as our foundation and use our present to create our future. On to an exciting, creative and successful #41! ~



*The original sign that hung outside "The First Existentialist Church of Atlanta" with Rev. R. Lanier Clance as minister, flanked by photos of members from years past. Photo by Rev. Marsha Mitchiner.*

## **Care and Concern**

**\*Stephanie Murphy is in Michigan with her mother who is ill.** The plan is to move her mother here as quickly as circumstances allow. Wishing her a quick process so she can return home.

**\*Glen Lopez lost his close friend of 30 years, Don Boots,** and is feeling very sad. Keep him in your thoughts and make contact when you can.

**\*Lee Rowley, wife of Dean, has recently recovered from surgery that involved some postoperative complications.** Good news is she has been given a clean bill of health.

**\*Bill Read's brother, Silas, is dealing with a recent fire at his home** and his wife who has Alzheimer's has moved into hospice care. Keep them in your thoughts and hearts.

**\*Rita Furman had knee surgery in August and is recovering well.** Congratulations on being a good patient!

**\*Saralyn Chestnut has been very busy with selling her house and moving.** Besides feeling exhausted she has also had a cold. Send her healing energy. ~

## **40th Founders Day Tee Shirts**

**Andy Weiskoff created a new design for our 40th year Tee shirt.** It will be printed on a tie dye designed tee. (See pictures) Deadline to order is October 2nd. **Thank you, Andy!** ~

# ***Teresa Crowder: Artist Statement***

*I am always trying to create interesting combinations of color and texture in my work. I love the way colors bounce off and change one another. The way a rippled texture on the left side of a canvas can play off a curved line on the right. It's a constantly evolving process and a continual experiment in technique. So my style, materials, and choice of subject matter are continually changing. I always begin a painting with one thing that feels true; most often some discarded piece of paper or scrap of old, rusty metal that strikes me as beautiful in its decay. From that starting point, I let a painting take over and, each time, hope to learn something new.*

*Teresa Crowder's show "Mixed Media" will be on First E's walls from October 16 through November. ~*

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**Atlanta Area Friends of Folk Music presents  
A CELTIC EVENING  
with Caledonia Swing and The Red Wellies  
Appearing at October 15  
FIDDLER'S GREEN  
Monthly Coffeehouse Concert  
First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta**

**Show begins at 8:00 pm**

**General Admission: \$10, AAFFM Members \$8 (Minimum. All proceeds beyond our rent go to the performers. Please be generous!)**

Samhain (pronounced "SAHwin") is a Gaelic pagan festival marking the end of the harvest season. Celebrated on October 31, it's the holiday that gave rise to Hallowe'en. Come celebrate Samhain a few days early with us as we proudly feature two of the Atlanta area's finest Celtic music ensembles!

**Caledonia Swing** plays a unique style of contemporary and traditional Celtic music with a jazzy twist. **Marie Dunkle** and **Margie Swint** will be joined by percussionist **Owen Devine**. This will be a fun filled evening of traditional and contemporary Celtic music and some storytelling.

**The Red Wellies** are a unique collaboration between Irish, Bulgarian and American-born musicians who have decades of experience playing in the Irish tradition. **Claudine "Beanie" Odell** (fiddle), **Vincent Fogarty** (bouzouki), and **Bella Issakova** (fiddle) have received critical acclaim in *The Irish Times* and *Irish Music Magazine* for their 2008 recording. Folkworld's reviewer Alex Monahan included "The Red Wellies" on his top 10 folk recordings of 2009. ~

# **Speakers in October**

## **October 2: Anthony Knight**

**Anthony Knight is the President & CEO of The Baton Foundation**, a Georgia nonprofit organization that serves the emotional, intellectual and cultural needs of Black boys in grades five through nine. Mr. Knight worked for twenty-two years as a museum educator and consultant. He has extensive experience with and interest in African American history and culture, public and living history, informal education and Black youth. His work with The Baton Foundation reflects his ongoing interest in collecting, preserving and interpreting information about and material culture from the African Diaspora. His undergraduate work was in Spanish and English (Ohio Wesleyan University), and his graduate work was in museum education (George Washington University). He also holds a degree in Spanish-to-English translation from the Núcleo de Estudios Lingüísticos y Sociales, Caracas, Venezuela. Mr. Knight is a New York City native. He will speak on October 2 on "The Value of Being." ~

## **October 9: Dr. Saralyn Chesnut**

**Dr. Saralyn Chesnut was the first Director of Emory University's Office of LGBT Life**, a position she held until she retired in 2008. She was also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Emory's Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts from 1994-2010, and taught Women's Studies as well as the first courses in Lesbian and Gay Studies ever offered at Emory. She is now a freelance writer, editor and researcher. She will speak on October 9 about "Pride." ~

## **October 16: Rev. Duncan Teague**

Rev. Duncan Teague's topic on October 16 is "Oklahoma, Really?" Rev. Teague is an ordained Unitarian Universalist (UU) minister and has spoken at First E numerous times. 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. ~

## **October 23: Rev. Janna Nelson**

Rev. Janna Nelson is an ordained Existentialist minister who served as full-time minister at First E from 2003 to 2005. Her groundings are in Existentialist and feminist principles, which she presents in a clear, understandable way. Since moving to Albuquerque, NM, Janna and her husband, noted jazz pianist Scott Hooker, have continued to perform music. Janna Nelson will speak on October 23 on "Being Alive in this World Right Now." ~

## **October 30: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner with Day of the Dead**

Rev. Marsha Mitchiner grew up in middle Georgia and was an active member of her church. In her teen years, she became disillusioned with organized religion but felt a need to find a community of individuals seeking answers without dogma. She found her spiritual home when she came to First E in 1980 and joined Rev. Lanier Clance's ministerial training program. She was ordained by First E in 1993, and now serves as our Fellowship Minister. She will speak on our Day of the Dead (*Día de los Muertos*) Celebration. ~



# **October 2016 Sunday Celebrations of Life**

- October 2**      *The Value of Being*  
*Speaker: Anthony Knight*  
*Facilitator: Robert Stewart*  
*Accompanist: Aviva and the Flying Penguins*  
*Member Moment: Joseph Verdell*
- October 9**      *Pride*  
*Speaker: Dr. Saralyn Chesnut*  
*Facilitator: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner*  
*Accompanist: Alan Dynin*
- October 16**      *Oklahoma, Really?*  
*Speaker: Rev. Duncan Teague*  
*Facilitator: D. Patton White*  
*Accompanist: Aviva and the Flying Penguins*
- October 23**      *Being Alive in This World Right Now*  
*Speaker: Rev. Janna Nelson*  
*Facilitator: Dr. Saralyn Chesnut*  
*Accompanist: Scott Hooker*
- October 30**      *Day of the Dead Celebration*  
*Speaker: Rev. Marsha Mitchiner*  
*Facilitator: Barbara Van Helsdingen*  
*Accompanist: David Tyberg*

# The Back Page

## Standard Deviation, Together Again!

**On Saturday, October 29, Janna Nelson and Scott Hooker will be reunited with Jeff Crompton, reeds; Ben Gettys, bass; and Mike Dana, drums—the band known as Standard Deviation—in a concert at the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta. We have learned some new music since we moved here and are looking forward to share it with all and sundry.**



*Above left: Scott Hooker; right: Janna Nelson. Photos courtesy of the photographed from Facebook.*

**The show starts at 8:00 p.m. Refreshments will be available for donations.**

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**The Existentialist** is published monthly. Deadline for the November 2016 newsletter is October 16. Send your articles and announcements to [mcharleneball@yahoo.com](mailto:mcharleneball@yahoo.com). The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.