

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 •

Dr. Pauline Rose Clance Receives Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Lynchburg College

Dr. Pauline Rose Clance, a founding member of the First Existentialist Congregation, was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree May 12, 2012, by Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia, where she received her B.S. “In April, I heard from the president that the board of trustees and faculty voted to award me an honorary doctor of science degree. I was totally surprised and especially honored that it was a doctorate of science,” she says.

Doctor Clance has always worked for equal rights. She taught in the Psychology Department at Georgia State University until she retired in 2002, then served as Senior Faculty Associate for the Advancement of Women. This position gave her the opportunity to help make policy and create opportunities for women in the university.

She was one of the first professors at Georgia State to offer women’s studies classes. “I wasn’t so aware of feminism as an undergraduate. I was more involved in civil rights. But she became aware in graduate school that much psychological theory was anti-woman or not conscious of women’s psychology. “I was a feminist by the time I graduated.”

Her feminism has informed her therapy practice: “I look at how society and norms about gender and abilities affect people, how women’s roles and expectations about women have an impact on what is possible and what is not possible. I look at the social context. Depression, anxiety, feelings of not being okay are affected by gender expectations.”



*Dr. Pauline Rose Clance
Photo by Reis Birdwhistell*

Dr. Clance now practices part-time as a therapist. “It’s my mission and my passion.” Her 1985 book, *The Impostor Phenomenon*, is internationally known, and she receives e-mails from Iran and China from people who have read it. “I think the internet has done a lot to make it known,” she says. “Many people feel like impostors even when they have objective proof of their achievements. It’s all over the world.” ~

**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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We are a philosophically based
spiritual community
dedicated to
human liberation
and founded on existentialist
and feminist principles.



Notes From the Board

By Libby Ware, Board Chair

First E will be having a retreat at The Mountain in 2013, probably in the Spring. Marsha will have an article about the retreat in the next newsletter. Charlene and Bill Laney have been talking to electricians about fixing our lighting. At this time the estimates are quite high and we're looking at Congregation members doing some of the non-technical work. Even with members doing some of the work, the latest estimate was over \$9,000. Don Aiken has been helping with AC repair and we hope that we won't have to replace the AC or HVAC system this year.

Communications Guild has members, but no Chair. If anyone would like to be the Chair, please contact Charlene Ball or Jon Nye. It would be beneficial to have Facebook Event pages for special speakers. If anyone would like to take on this role, contact a member of the Program Guild (Patton White is Chair) or Communications Guild.

Remember that the Board represents the Congregation. Any member who has an item they wish brought to the Board's attention may (1) attend the monthly meeting, typically held the first Tuesday of each month, or (2) contact any Board member and ask that an issue be placed on the agenda. We welcome all members and friends to the meetings, even if you just want to sit in and see what we're discussing. ~

The Great Existentialist Annual Book and Bake Sale—Thank You

by Marsha Mitchiner

The Great Existentialist Annual Book and Bake Sale made over \$800.00 this year! The success falls in large part to the countless hours of volunteer time and energy. In addition to donating books and getting others to donate books, many put out the word about the sale via e-mails, Facebook, fliers, etc. A hardy group spent hours on Friday hauling boxes, sorting and setting up. Then there were the dedicated ones who showed up at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday to open the building, fix

coffee, set up the baked goods and hang around to sell to those who could not resist the yummy fare provided by yet again other volunteers. And thank you to those who came to buy even if you were unable to provide help in other ways. Every sale was important.

By 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, a group formed to consolidate the remains, move the tables to the side walls and set up the room for Sunday COL. But wait—the

**Third Friday Film
Series**

Presents

Tree of Life

Friday, September 21
at 7:30pm

Sliding Scale Donations Re-
quested \$1-\$10.00

No one turned away

Popcorn & Refreshments

Discussion after the film led by
Rev. Connie Tuttle of Circle of
Grace

continued on page 6

Guild Reports

Membership Guild

by Wilj Sturkey

The Membership Guild is planning another potluck, which will be held on August 19 after the service. All First E members and visitors are invited come and socialize. Please bring a dish to share.

We received permission from Andy W. to use his slogans to order more First E merchandise which we will sell. Elaine and Wilj are planning to order mugs, t-shirts, and bumper stickers.

Our Guild is organizing a New Member Orientation for people who have joined First E in the last few months. We will be working with Marsha Mitchiner to make this happen.

The next meeting of the Membership Guild will be at 10am on August 26 at First E. We are happy to report that Shannon Sanders will be joining us as the liaison from the First E Board. ~

Program Guild

by Charlene Ball

The Program Guild is pleased to announce that we have some exciting speakers for September. On September 2, we will hear Tim Franzen of Occupy Atlanta talking about poverty, housing, and the foreclosure crisis, and what Occupy is doing to fight it. On September 9, Kim Palmer will speak about being a seminary student who happens to be an atheist. We will hear Rev. Janna Nelson on September 16 with Scott Hooker on piano (always exciting, for me anyway). On September 23, Rev. Kate Hauk returns. And for Founders' Day on September 30, we will hear Rev. Marsha Mitchiner, with Cindy Lou Who facilitating.

We met on July 31 for our quarterly meeting to plan the Celebrations of Life for October, November, and December. Some speakers who have already confirmed are Rev. Marti Keller, Rev. Laura Arnold, and our own Rev. Marsha Mitchiner on October 28 for the Day of the Dead, one of our favorite holidays. On December 30, Mona Reeves will explore the meaning of Kwanzaa.

Guild Reports continued on page 6

Community News & Activities

--**Dr. Pauline Rose Clance** was presented with an Honorary Doctorate of Science from her alma mater, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia, at the May 12 Commencement Ceremony. Congratulations, Pauline! *See cover story in this issue.*

--**Karla and Phyllis are planning FUNdraisers for First E.** If you have ideas, contact them or a Board member. All ideas are welcome.

--**Anna Simonton**, filmmaker and daughter of First E member Stell Simonton, will screen her documentary "I believe in Atlanta" on September 14 at 8:00 pm in the Sanctuary at First E. See article on page 5.

--**Stephanie Murphy** has agreed to be the new chair of the Children's Program of the Education Guild. Welcome, Stephanie!

--**Stephanie asks parents to donate materials** for the children's program. When Eureka left, many supplies and materials went with it. The children's program needs scissors; construction paper; see-through containers for art supplies/materials; yarn, thread and needles; small recycled pieces of cloth, wood, metal, plastic to be creative with; glitter and glue; dress-up clothes, scarves, cloth; a lock for the cabinet; toys; containers for toys. Contact Stephanie at yoohoosm@yahoo.com.

--**Ashlea Davis** presents the 4th Annual Painting for Fun Art Show featuring 14 artists, many of whom are First E members, September 28-November 11, 2012.

--**Rev. Kate Hauk** is offering a seven-week class in Restorative Yoga with Meditation and Poetic Imagery August 15-September

Continued on page 4

Finance Report--July 2012

General Operating Account through July 31

Total Income	36,620
Total Expenses	(37,137)
2012 Cash Flow	(517)

Fund Types & Names Account Balances on July 31 < unaudited >

General Operating Account	216
Designated Operating Funds	8,865
Gay Dellinger Estate Gift	2,466
Handicap Access Ramp	925
Lanier Clance Lighting	1,044
Leadership Development	570
Community Garden	(443)
Building & Grounds	259
Woodland Sanctuary	1,069
Minister's Discretionary	332
Original 1st E History	68
Labyrinth & Garden	256
Social Justice	797
Attic Insulation Fund	1,250
Music Fund	150
Children's Program	122
Savings: Pat Hewatt Revolving Loan Fund	5,063
Total First E Funds	14,144
Old Stone Church History Project	
Bi-Racial History Account	1,909
Legacy Markers Account	1,431
Total History Project Funds	3,340

**Wednesday Night Suppers
each Week
6:30 to 8:00/8:30 pm
in the Sanctuary**

Welcome, Everyone!
**If you would like to provide a meal or
bring a covered dish, please contact
Elaine or Wilj
of the Membership Guild.**

Community News and Activities *Continued from page 3*

26. Ninety minute classes incorporate movement and meditation as well as the power of poetic imagery. All levels. \$85 for whole series; drop-ins welcome for \$15. Call 404-378-6288.

--**A fundraiser for Craig Rafuse**, local musician and friend of First E, will be held on September 8, time TBA, at 7 Stages Theatre, featuring music from Elise Witt, Kodak Harrison, and others.

--**Beacon Dance** and the Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia (mocaga.org) are collaborating on a series of performances for 9 weeks through October 6. For specifics, go to mocaga.org or beacondance.org.

--**Lisa Cottrell** is home recuperating from gallbladder removal, doing OK, and (occasionally) hoping to return to work.

--**Lorraine** is transitioning out of her job at Lambda Legal and is looking for a legal assistant to take her place at the end of September. ~

**If you would like to become a
member or friend of First E, please
fill out a pledge form located on
the sanctuary literature rack
or download the form
from our website at
<http://www.firstexistentialist.org> .**

Social Justice Corner



*Mrs. Mattie Carey Howard
on steps of the Old Stone Church
photographer unknown*

BiRacial History Project Continues Partnership with Neighborhood School

by Edi/th Kelman,
BiRacial History Project Manager

The Candler Park Biracial History Project is seeking a grant from the Georgia Humanities Council to help us organize the Project's research materials and educational tools into an accessible, user-friendly collection for school and community use based at the Mary Lin Elementary School Media Center in Candler Park.

The history collection at Lin looks to make its place by creating "Aunties' History Corner," an area of the school Media Center where we would like to honor the seminal participation and contributions of the Antioch East Baptist Church Elders—whose families were post Civil War pioneers in early Candler Park—well represented by Mrs. Mattie Carey Howard (pictured above) and Ms. Margaret Edith Latimore (both beloved Aunties), who passed away this summer of 2012. They, among others, generously shared their detailed memories, thoughtful observations, and historic photos; they continuously expressed their vision that the work of the BiRacial History Project connect with young people and their families for generations to come. ~



"I Believe in Atlanta" Documentary by Anna Simonton

Filmmaker Anna Simonton Returns to Atlanta with Documentary "I Believe in Atlanta"

Anna Simonton, daughter of First E member Stell Simonton, has made a documentary entitled "I Believe in Atlanta." In the film, based on Atlanta's history and her own experience growing up in "The City to Busy to Hate," she returns to to seek out the stories hidden beneath the city's many makeovers, a journey that calls into question the relationships between place, past, and identity, as well as the nature of time itself. In her quest to understand Atlanta, she attempts to better understand herself.

"My friend Joey says that people get stuck in Atlanta because it was originally the end of the line. That was all I knew about Atlanta's past, and it helped me understand the Atlanta I was tangled up in. I decided to keep looking for the past to help me make sense of this place. But in Atlanta, the past is hard to find."

So begins the push and pull between Atlanta's image and its reality. Through encounters with a local historian, old friends, a Confederate memorial tour guide, members of a Baptist Church and an Existentialist Congregation, and her own mother, Simonton weaves together a history of Atlanta Boosterism with stories of displacement, marginalization, and resistance to the race and class-fueled injustices that city promoters gloss over.

As the film unfolds, Simonton finds that Atlanta's first efforts to market itself arose in order to attract Northern investors whose capital was needed to rebuild the city after the Civil War. But the project of crafting a marketable image of Atlanta did not end with Reconstruction. Simonton discovers the Forward Atlanta campaign of the 1920's, organized by the Chamber of Commerce in order to, as one executive wrote, "sell Atlanta to its own people, as well as to the country at large." She learns she is a distant relative of an Atlanta mayor who created the slogan "The City Too Busy to Hate." She humorously uncovers the history of the CNN Center, which was originally a short-lived theme park intended to turn downtown Atlanta into the next Disneyland. And she finds the impossibility of branding this city manifested in the ambiguity of Atlanta's 1996 Olympic mascot, a blue blob named Whatizit.

Contrasting the marketed Atlanta identity, are grassroots stories from Atlanta's diverse communities that offer a different view of the Southern metropolis. Simonton's search for these stories takes her all over the city to Sweet Auburn, the historic African American neighborhood where Martin Luther King Jr. lived, now threatened by gentrification; to Vine City, an area heavily impacted by disinvestment resulting from White Flight where a 108-year-old

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If you would like to join the Program Guild or put us in touch with speakers or musicians you'd like to hear, contact us at a COL or email us: Patton White, chair (patton@beacondance.org); Charlene Ball (mcharleneball@yahoo.com); Linda Bell; Bill Laney; and Victoria Trestrail. ~

Book and Bake Sale *continued from page 2*

hardy band of helpers weren't finished yet! After service on Sunday there was more to do: packing up the leftovers and moving them to the walls for pick up this week by another non-profit. Oh, and then they set up the room for the renters coming in at 3:00. Whew! I'm tired just writing all this.

So, now to the names. THANK YOU to Libby Ware and Charlene Ball for providing the leadership for this annual fundraiser and being there, literally, from start to finish. We couldn't have done it without you. And to the following, many of whom put in time on multiple tasks: Judy Aehle, Braden Baker, Karla Crawford, Sandi Delrie, Lorraine Fontana, Andra Gailis, Carol Harter, Nathaniel Jones, Edi Kelman, Fred Konrad, Marsha Mitchiner, Jon Nye, Ted Pettus, Bill Read, Carol Sandiford, Robert Stewart, Helen Strait, Wilj Sturkey, Mary Turnpaugh, Phyllis Thakis, Karen Thornton, Andy Weiskoff, and those whose names I'm sorry that my addled brain can't remember. This long list reflects our community's need for many volunteers and the importance of each individual gift of time and energy. "It takes a village..." and we have a great one. Hugs, Marsha. ~

Birthdays in September

Name	Birthdate
Sharon Mathis	9/3
Elizabeth Henderson	9/6
Nancy Zumoff	9/22
Kay Leggett	9/24
Stell Simonton	9/25
Tom Blakeley	9/27

Tim Franzen of Occupy Atlanta to Speak on September 2

Tim Franzen, who will speak at First E on Sunday, September 2, is the program director for the American Friends Service Committee's Georgia Peace and conflict resolution program. For more than a decade Tim's work has been focused on helping young people develop skills to create the changes they want to see in their community, and exploring alternatives to the prison and military industrial complex our country continues to fund at an alarming cost to our communities. In the past year Tim has played a key role in the National Occupy Movement, providing important infrastructure locally, and building the Occupy Our Homes movement nationally. ~

An Atheist in Seminary on September 9

Kim Palmer is a third-year seminary student at Candler School of Theology, part of Emory University. Ms. Palmer is seeking ordination as a Unitarian Universalist minister and pursuing a vocational call to hospital chaplaincy. This new direction comes after earning a B.S. in chemical engineering and enjoying a successful 20-year career in environmental consulting. Ms. Palmer is a non-theist who, after spending 30 years unchurched, finds liberal religion to be a comfortable setting in which to affirm both reason and spirit. ~

Simonton Documentary *continued from page 5*

church faces eviction; to Stone Mountain, a former site of KKK ceremonies that is now a tourist attraction; and to her own childhood neighborhood of Candler Park where she discovers that places she considered her own have more complex histories than she'd imagined.

Throughout this journey, Simonton has experiences that lead her to question whether a linear conception of time can contain the multi-layered realities of the places she visits. These moments depart in form from the rest of the film, employing a more experimental style that reaches a climax at the film's end, when the filmmaker finds herself again in her old neighborhood, this time seeing the place, and herself with new eyes. ~

September 2012 Sunday Celebrations of Life

September 2 ***Confronting the Crisis of Priority***
Speaker: ***Tim Franzen, Occupy Atlanta***
Facilitator: ***Libby Ware***
Accompanist: ***Richard Rifkin***

September 9 ***An Atheist in Seminary: Unexpected Gifts of Religion***
Speaker: ***Kim Palmer***
Facilitator: ***Charlene Ball***
Accompanist:

September 16 ***TBA***
Speaker: ***Rev. Janna Nelson***
Facilitator: ***D. Patton White***
Accompanist: ***Scott Hooker***

September 23 ***Thoughts in Autumn***
Speaker: ***Rev. Kate Hauk***
Facilitator: ***Kitty Wimbish***
Accompanist: ***William "Bill" Chelton***

September 30 ***Founders' Day Celebration***
Speaker: ***Rev. Marsha Mitchiner***
Facilitator: ***Cindy Lou Who***
Accompanist: ***Charli Vogt***

If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the things I want to live for. Between those two answers you can determine the identity of any person. ~ Thomas Merton

The Back Page - First E Members Speak Out

By Phyllis Thakis

Dear Family and Friends,

This is a response to an email about prayer that was sent to me. I hope I don't offend anyone, but I hope you'll think about my—and others'—point of view, and I hope that least some of you share and respond to my thoughts. Let's have a discussion, respecting each other's thoughts, beliefs, and values, even when they might be different.

No one is keeping anyone from praying. Any American can pray anytime she or he wants. We live in the United States of America, a nation that was founded on the idea of freedom of religion and whose Constitution protects the separation of church and state.

If someone wants to pray before a football game or during school or while driving and texting or during a trial, he or she can. As I remember, God hears silent prayers as well as those that are shouted over microphones. The prayer can and should be between the pray-er and her or his God. If you really feel the need to pray out loud, then do so with others who believe as you do, in your or their home, in your section of the bleachers, or in your church, temple, mosque, or other house of worship. Like second-hand smoke, prayer should not be inflicted upon those who don't want to be around it or whose prayers may be different from yours.

So pray whenever and wherever you want. If I'm around and realize that you are praying, I'll respectfully hold my conversation and even my meal until you've finished your silent prayer. Will you please show me the same consideration and recognize that, as an American, I have the right not only to not pray, but also to not be held hostage to your prayer?

And one last thought: yes, the majority of America's founders were Christian, and Christianity was forced onto both the Native Americans whose lands were taken and the Africans whose freedom was taken. However, we are now a nation of many cultures, many heritages, and many faiths; that is our strength and our pride. In order to have your public prayers, would you be willing to hold up the kickoff while a representative of each faith that may be present – e.g., Abakua, Baha'i, Bole-Mar, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Lamaism, Obeah, Paganism, Panatheism, Peyotism, Rastafari, Santeria, Shamanism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Spiritualism, Taoism, Tschadam, Waashat, Wiccan, Yazdanism, Zoroastrianism, etc. (I haven't gotten near to listing them all, let alone break them down by sub-sects like Protestant, Orthodox, Reformed, Catholic, etc.)—broadcasts a prayer over the microphone?

Really, folks, pray whenever and wherever you want and concentrate on issues that really need your energy and effort, like child abuse, drugs, education, famine, guns, poverty, torture, war.

With love always,
Your sister, cousin, niece, mother, grandmother, friend,
Phyllis

The First E Newsletter is published monthly. The deadline for submission of material for the October newsletter is September 9. Send your articles and announcements to mcharleneball@yahoo.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any material submitted.



Before you speak to me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people. Before you tell me how much you love your God, show me in how much you love all His children.

- Cory Booker, Mayor of Newark, NJ