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The Open Door Community – Hospitality & Resistance in the Catholic Worker Movement

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January 2012

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Cross: Part 1

By Jim Douglass

Jim Douglass is a longtime activist for peace and justice and a friend of the Open Door Community. He and his wife, Shelley, founded the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and the Pacific Life Community, both in Washington state, and Mary's House, a Catholic Worker house in Birmingham. In 1997, they received the *Pacem in Terris* Peace and Freedom Award.

Jim's books include "Resistance and Contemplation," "The Nonviolent Coming of God" and "JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters," which we have reviewed twice in Hospitality, in September 2008 and again in November-December 2009.

On January 15 we celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., and to mark the occasion we are publishing the reflection that Jim delivered at the Holy Week Faith and Resistance Retreat in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 2007 — the 39th anniversary of King's assassination and the 40th anniversary of his momentous "Beyond Vietnam" speech in New York City.

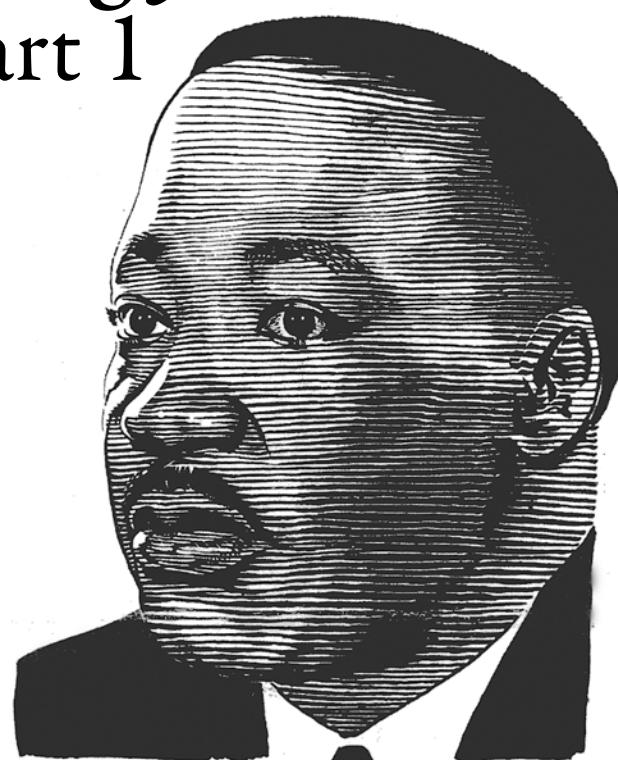
This reflection originally appeared online at www.jonahhouse.org/archive/DouglassKingandCross.htm. We are publishing it in three parts.

I can think of no better place to be this Holy Week than on this Faith and Resistance Retreat. What better way could there be to celebrate Holy Week than to reflect on and practice the way of nonviolence summed up by Jesus' death and resurrection, and re-enacted by Martin Luther King Jr.? I am deeply grateful to be here.

As we can see from the rest of his journey, and from the government's plot to kill him, that speech marked the beginning of his walk to Calvary.

Forty years ago tonight at Riverside Church in New York, Martin Luther King gave the speech of his life, titled "Beyond Vietnam," which took him beyond civil rights, beyond political calculation and, in the eyes of our violent system, beyond redemption. With that speech, which drew a prophetic line between real peace and our national security state, Dr. King went beyond his own security net as a civil rights leader. He became a national security threat. At Riverside Church, he went not only beyond Vietnam but also beyond any hold he had on a future of his own. As we can see from the rest of his journey, and from the government's plot to kill him, that speech marked the beginning of his walk to Calvary that would end exactly one year later, 39 years ago tonight.

After the Riverside Church address, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote a memorandum to President Lyndon



Kerry Dugan

Johnson that stated, "Based on King's recent activities and public utterances, it is clear that he is an instrument in the hands of subversive forces seeking to undermine our nation." ("Bearing the Cross" by David J. Garrow, page 555) At Riverside Church, by going beyond Vietnam to identify "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government," Martin Luther King Jr. became a target for assassination by that same government.

It has taken me a long time to see just how important that assassination was. When it happened, I was a 30-year-old professor of religion at the University of Hawaii. I had a seminar on "The Theology of Peace" with a dozen students.

At our first class after Dr. King was killed, several of the students failed to show up on time. When they came in, they made an announcement to the class that, in response to the assassination of King, who had given his life for peace and justice, they had held an impromptu rally on campus where they had burned their draft cards, thereby becoming liable to serve years in prison. They said they were forming the Hawaii Resistance.

They asked whether I would like to join their group. It was a friendly invitation, but it bore the implication, "Put up or shut up, Mr. Professor of Nonviolence."

A month later, we sat in front of a convoy of trucks taking members of the Hawaii National Guard to the Jungle

The Church in the World and the Church in Prison

By Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann is Professor Emeritus of Systemic Theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany, and one of the world's leading Protestant theologians, having authored such books as "Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology," considered one of the most influential theological works of the second half of the 20th century, "The Crucified God" and "The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology." He has been a good friend of the Open Door Community since 1983, and his life and theology have touched us deeply.

In October, at age 85, Moltmann traveled from Tübingen to Atlanta to deliver the annual Reformation Day lecture at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible. While in Atlanta, he spent a day with us at the Open Door, in conversation with community members and volunteers.

On the day after his Emory lecture, Moltmann and former Open Door volunteer Jenny McBride, who formerly directed Candler's Certificate in Theological Studies program for women in prison, visited Lee Arrendale State Prison near Alto, Georgia, for the graduation ceremony for women who had completed the Candler certificate program there. The graduates included Kelly Gissendaner, who is living under a sentence of death and who has had a regular correspondence and friendship with Moltmann.

With his permission, we are pleased to share Moltmann's remarks to the graduates with our readers — especially those of you who are imprisoned theologians!

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

You have invited me to your graduation ceremony. I am very grateful and happy to be here with you this morning. It is for me not only a privilege but also a precious gift. Your community is important for me. Therefore I came.

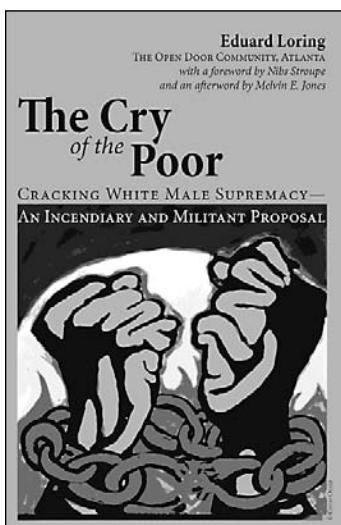
You will receive today your Certificates in Theological Studies. When I first heard of your study of theology in prison, pictures of my youth and of the beginning of my own theological studies emerged from the depth of my memory.

Yes, I remember. My theological studies started in a poor prisoner-of-war camp after World War II. I was 18 years old when I became a prisoner of war for more than three

Martin Luther King Jr. *continued on page 5*

The Church *continued on page 6*

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The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy —
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

By Eduard Loring

In "The Cry of the Poor," Eduard "the Agitator" Loring challenges each of us to ACT, and in doing so, to reduce the distance between ourselves and our sisters and brothers on the streets, behind prison bars, in the grip of mental illness, on the edge. He asks a lot, but it is the least we can do for the least of us. The Open Door Community shows us the way.

What ya gonna do?
— Mary Sinclair, human rights activist

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“Cry” Against Racism Hits Home

By Wendell Franklin Wentz

Eduard Loring received the following letter in response to his book "The Cry of the Poor," and we are publishing it with the writer's permission. Mr. Wentz now lives in Rockwall, Texas.

Dear Servant of Jesus,

Several years ago Con Browne told me about you and your ministry at the Open Door Community, and he requested that you send me a subscription to *Hospitality*. I have been receiving it for several years, and I agree with all the articles, poems, statements and your mission.

Con recommended your book "The Cry of the Poor: Cracking White Male Supremacy — An Incendiary and Militant Proposal." I found a copy on the Internet and have read it twice, with great interest, because I agree with you in every area.

I am enclosing a money order and would like to receive six copies of your book. I am going to share them with friends, because I want them to read it and learn more about the Open Door.

I was born and reared in the White Male Supremacy society of Barbour County, Alabama, and I knew George Wallace from the time I was 12 years old. He used to visit my daddy at Wentz Market in Eufaula when he came to town, before he was elected governor.

The first gift that society gave me was racism, and it took me some time to overcome the myths and lies taught me from the cradle. When I entered Mercer University in Macon in 1957, my world began to change.

It was difficult, very difficult, learning truth, because it was a traumatic experience unlearning the errors, myths and lies that I had been taught. My professors were graduates of Yale, Harvard, Emory, Vanderbilt and Union Theological Seminary in New York. I encountered the truth for the very first time, and there were times I could not sleep and had headaches from confronting it. But I made the trip all right, and today I can tell anybody that Mercer University changed my life and put me on the road of justice.

After leaving Eufaula, I learned that racism covered this land in every state I visited, from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans, and it seemed as if people had to have

somebody to hate. I saw the oppression of workers wherever I went, and I spent more than two years traveling to 46 states meeting the writers of the books I had read and studied. I talked to men and women in the courthouse squares, in the cafes and working in the streets. I learned how the owners of factories and corporations used the workers' prejudices to keep the unions out, so that the workers voted down the unions and continued to live with poor wages and working conditions.

The present governor of Georgia is a graduate of Mercer, and he could have saved the life of Troy Davis, but he sat on his hands in order to save and promote his political future. In the early 20th century, Leo Frank, who had been convicted of killing a 13-year-old girl, was lynched in Marietta after the governor commuted his death sentence to life in prison. Tom Watson, the racist newspaper editor, future U.S. senator and sage of McDuffie County, Georgia, used the case to help revive the Ku Klux Klan and convinced the citizenry that Frank was guilty because he was a Jew. Now we know that Frank was innocent, but he paid with his life for the sins of White Male Supremacy in Georgia.

I regret that Georgia, Governor Nathan Deal and the justice system did nothing to save Troy Davis' life. His murder by lethal injection has stirred the consciences of many people across this land and the world.

From 1964 until 1970 I lived in Atlanta, on Virginia Avenue N.E., and I spent many hours reading and growing while living there. I heard the best speakers who came to Atlanta to speak, and I worshipped at Wheat Street Baptist Church listening to Dr. William Holmes Borders, and I would visit Ebenezer Baptist Church to hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his daddy preach. I saw the demonstrations and marches on Peachtree Street against the war in Vietnam. Atlanta was good for me during those days.

Your book expresses exactly what I think and believe, and I want to share it with friends.

God bless you always, and in all ways.

Peace and love,

Wendell Franklin Wentz
Rockwall, Texas



HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published by the Open Door Community, Inc., an Atlanta Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with and advocacy for the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

A \$10 donation to the Open Door Community would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality** for one year. A \$40 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

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Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
www.opendoorcommunity.org
404.874.9652; 404.874.7964 fax



Calvin Kimbrough

Newspaper

Editor: Murphy Davis

Photography and Layout Editor: Calvin Kimbrough

Poetry Corner Editor: Eduard Loring

Associate Editors: Jason Ebinger, Eduard Loring, Gladys Rustay and Anne Wheeler

Copy Editor: David Mann

Proofreaders: Julie Martin, Gladys Rustay and Barbara Segal

Circulation: A multitude of earthly hosts

Subscriptions or change of address: Anne Wheeler

Open Door Community

For more information about the life and work of the community, please contact any of the following persons.

Anne Wheeler: Administration and Finance

Gladys Rustay: Jackson Prison Trip

Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator

John McRae: Food Coordinator

Lorna Mauney-Brudek: Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic Coordinator

Eduard Loring: Street Theologian

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Sarah Humphrey: Coordinator for Administration, Volunteers, Hardwick Prison Trip and Resident Volunteer Applications

Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry

Tickets and the Healing at the Pool

By Eduard Loring

After this, Jesus went to Jerusalem for a religious festival. Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool with five porches; in Hebrew it is called Bethzatha. A large crowd of sick people were lying in the porches — the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed.

A man was there who had been ill for 38 years. Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been ill for such a long time; so he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

The sick man answered, “Sir, I have no one here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first.”

Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.” Immediately the man got well; he picked up his mat and started walking.

The day this happened was a Sabbath, so the Jewish authorities told the man who had been healed, “This is a Sabbath, and it is against our Law for you to carry your mat.”

He answered, “The man who made me well told me to pick up my mat and walk.”

— John 5:1-11 (Good News Bible)

Might makes right. Hardly a question about it. In the jumble-jangle world of ethical and moral thought and practice in the USA, we learn daily and often put into practice the “bottom line” of the top musclemen, from biceps to nuclear bombs, from police brutalizing the peacemakers of Occupy Atlanta to the child in Guatemala grabbing the last mouthful of beans from her little brother. We will not say it in the light, but we are a people whose moral stance is clear: *might makes right*.

We Catholic Workers know that there is a tension between hospitality and coercing the blind, lame, hungry and paralyzed guests into a line. Many of us do not collapse that tension, but out of a perceived necessity we do order the line. At the Open Door Community, we give out tickets to folk in the line and then the line disperses about our yard until the guest hears her number called from our opened front door.

Rob Johnson, a founding member of Clifton Night Hospitality and of the Open Door, learned the hard way, along with a few others. Even with love and servanthood as the base of our hospitality to the stranger, we encountered “might makes right” over and over again. This became a hard reality of our lives 32 years ago, shortly after this gift of Catholic Worker hospitality was birthed into the center of our lives.

One or two of us would drive our old 15-passenger van to the Municipal Market, pull up to the curb and face 60 to 70 hungry, cold, angry men. We would get out of the van and ask the blind, lame, hungry and paralyzed to step forward, as “the last will be first” had priority for the 13 seats in the van. Shouts of anger would occur: “I’ve been standing here in the rain for two hours! Are you telling me that this fake is getting in front of me in line?” From shouts to shoving, from pushing to elbows with violent threats as the stronger and more assertive of these forgotten human beings steamrolled toward the door of our van.

One night, when Rob responded with a trembling “yes” to the preferential option for the injured ones, he took a mighty blow to the left eye. The time had come to devise another way. Tickets for seats became the ordering tool for crowd and violence control. After a period of transition that took us up the rough side of the mountain, our method began to work. Tickets still work at the Open Door. To paraphrase Reinhold Niebuhr: order is the prior norm, though hospitality is the higher norm. How else can we intervene against the firmest ethic of human experience, *might makes right*?

In the Sabbath healing story (Jesus did not obey many

of the religious laws), we learn about the behavior of those in line for healing. Their suffering and loss is so great that they can only and instinctually struggle to survive. The neighbor-competitor be damned.

So Jesus enters the temple which he was sent into the world to tear down. Jesus comes as the Good Samaritan. Like the Good Samaritan, his wounds and pains are not visible to the ordinary eye. The Uninvited Jesus intervenes on behalf of the weakest one among the weakest ones. He asks, “How may I be helpful?”

For 38 years no one had asked, taken time to stop, listened to the cry of this disabled man. He cried out, which is the first step to healing of the body, relationships and the nations. “Sir, I have no one here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first.”

No one helped. “Might makes right” ruled . . . until Jesus the outcast broke into the system and changed the equation. Did someone thereafter institute a plan for tickets? An order

to break the bone of “might makes right”? Should Wal-Mart have helped the Christmas idolaters with a little line at midnight?

The text connotes the miracle. Jesus is ordinarily human and divine like you and me. The healing did not occur by getting the man to the Sheep Pool. Healing was the fruit of Jesus’ act of hospitality, which is love, care and action. Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.”

“Might makes right,” as the ethical force and institutionalized lie of personal and corporate life, is here to stay until the final Advent. Might as right belongs to the powers of death and the means of abuse, hatred, violence and corporate capitalism. Yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit who is the breath of the crucified and risen Jewish peasant, we can chink the stone wall of the powers. Maybe a revolution will occur. But if we stop, look and listen, we may be able to say and see: get up, pick up your mat, and walk. ♦

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

National Day of Prayer

Thursday May fifth, two thousand eleven,
Eleven days after Easter and three
Days before Mother’s Day; mine’s in Heaven,
Just look in our Chaplain’s datebook and see.

I was thanking God we got to sleep late
And had not been blasted by loud P.A.
When wait! Our Fate of Hate this Date at Eight
Crashed in our gate, me and roommate — “Good Day!”

“Strip and spread your crack! Hands behind your back!
Take them earplugs out!” he shouted at me.
“Throw them on the floor!” I must give back flack.
“I have a profile and paid the store fee.”

Got CAT scanned in a non-electric chair;
With flip-flops and shorts we’re packed in a cold room.
Shoulder-length sand “Blues” more than we could bear.
[musical notes] “Please release me let me go,” we assume.

A daddy dog walked on my bunk to smell
My first prison onion; cost my last soup.
And found the roll of tape I’d hid so well.
We thanked God he did not drop more poop.

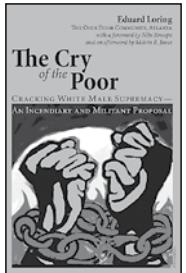
CERT team left “great taste” in the mouth, like Certs should.
“Pray, prison is a PRIVILEGE,” as our warden would.

— Walter Lee Powers

Walter Powers is a prisoner in the Georgia prison system, and we are pleased to publish this firsthand account of a cell search conducted by our state’s Correctional Emergency Response Team, or CERT — riot-gearied men and women whose searches are often random, capricious and used more for vengeance than to maintain safety.

Hospitality welcomes poems from people in Georgia prisons or living on the streets in Georgia. Send submissions to Eduard Loring, Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30306 or by email to hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com.

The Open Door Community Press Books



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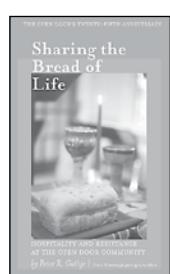
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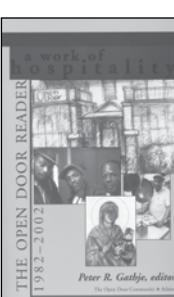
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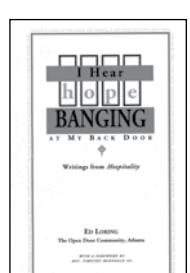
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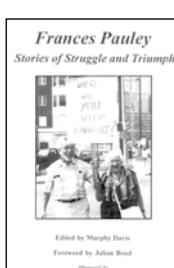
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Moving Toward Abolition A Letter to Troy Davis

By Mary Catherine Johnson

November 21, 2011

Dear beloved brother who was murdered by the State of Georgia on the 21st day of September 2011, dear Troy Davis,

I am writing this on the two-month anniversary of the day you were taken from this world, and the pain of losing you feels as fresh as it did at the moment in September when I learned that all hope was lost and you would die that night. I miss you so much, Troy. Not a day goes by when I don't think about you, when I don't visualize your huge smile and beautiful face looking at me through the glass in the visiting area on Georgia's death row.

I want to tell you what you have inspired, and to reassure you that your death was not in vain. You were powerless to stop the State of Georgia from killing you, despite tremendous doubt surrounding your guilt, but as it turns out, you had power beyond your wildest dreams and deepest hopes — power that I believe will be remembered by future generations as a primary catalyst that finally brought an end to the death penalty. I want this letter to be a written testimony to everything that you have inspired, and a call to action to everyone who loves you as well as anyone who cares about justice.

I found inspiration for this letter in an essay by one of my favorite writers, Rebecca Solnit, in which she pens a letter to Mohammed Bouazizi, the young Tunisian vegetable seller who burned himself to death earlier this year to protest his poverty and humiliation. She tells him how his actions ignited revolution and change across the world and are at the core of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Likewise, I want to tell you what your life continues to mean in the struggle for justice.

Is what's happening with the Occupy Wall Street movement connected with what happened to you? Of course it is. You know it, I know it, and the members of the general assembly of Occupy Atlanta not only know it, but they affirmed it in the most visible way possible. On October 9, on what would have been your 43rd birthday, they renamed their occupation site in downtown Atlanta. Woodruff Park, named for a former president of Coca-Cola, became Troy Davis Park.

We both know it's not likely that the city of Atlanta will ever officially recognize the new name. But the people have spoken, and they want their park — the vibrant gathering place of activists, many members of the homeless community and countless workers in downtown Atlanta — to bear your name, the name of a man whose senseless death came at the corrupt hands of the big-money interests and power bases that hold undue sway over decisions affecting us all. I hope everyone reading this letter will support the Occupy movement in any way they can, as a tribute to you, and in solidarity with everyone who lives on the margins and suffers the injustices of our unbalanced power system. The death penalty and its attendant injustices will inevitably be among the many casualties of a successful Occupy movement.

If you were here, Troy, what would you be asking people of conscience, the readers of *Hospitality*, to do to help move us closer to abolition of the death penalty?

Your powerful final words provided the charge: "I ask, to my family and friends, that you all continue to pray, that



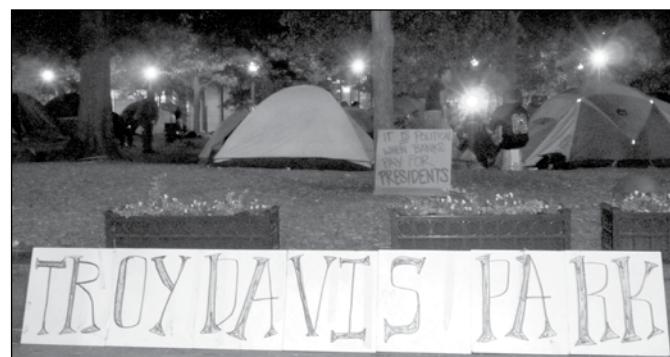
you all continue to forgive and continue to fight this fight."

But what can we specifically do? What does fighting the fight entail? I cannot speak for you, but can only look to the person you were to find answers.

You were a man who cared deeply for your brothers on death row at Jackson, a man who was seen by many of them as a mentor and a friend, and from this I think you would want us to pick up where you left off: to be their friends and mentors. You were also a man who understood the power of letters, who was sustained by the thousands of letters you received from all over the world, and I think you would want those you left behind on death row to receive support of a similar magnitude. I think we should flood the prisons with letters, empowering the men and women on death row with messages of hope and love, and reducing the distance between us and our incarcerated brothers and sisters. As a tribute to you, I will gladly help connect interested people with pen pals on death row.

What else can we do, Troy? If you taught us anything, it's that one person can stand up to the power structure, and even though you did not prevail in a literal sense, your struggle has incalculable positive implications. A global movement has galvanized around you and your case, as we find ourselves in a watershed moment to move forward in abolishing the death penalty.

In Georgia, abolition once felt like a distant goal many years away, but because of you, it now feels as if it's within our reach. Seizing the moment, state Senator Vincent Fort will introduce a bill in the 2012 legislative session that would end capital punishment in Georgia. This will provide a forum for



Mary Catherine Johnson

publicizing the intractable problems with the justice system that led to your execution. I am asking everyone within driving distance of Atlanta to mark Tuesday, February 14, 2012, on their calendars to participate in the annual Lobby Day sponsored by Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (www.gfadp.org) at the state Capitol. We need to tell our lawmakers that we will not tolerate capital punishment in our state any longer, and then we need to make sure they receive the message loud and clear when we vote in November.

My dear Troy, we fought the good fight with you to save your life, but it was not enough. But what is enough — what will be enough — are the people you left behind to continue fighting the good fight. I've seen these people, and they are thousands, if not millions, strong. You brought us together, and now it is up to us to keep fighting. We are still Troy Davis, and we cannot rest until the death penalty is abolished.

With peace, hope and love,

Mary Catherine

With gratitude to Rebecca Solnit ♣

"Moving Toward Abolition" is a monthly column that tracks the fight to end capital punishment. Mary Catherine Johnson is on the Boards of Directors of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty and of New Hope House and is a volunteer at the Open Door Community. She can be emailed at mcjohnson78@yahoo.com.

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Cross: Part 1 *continued from page 1*

Warfare Training Center in Oahu, on their way to the jungles of Vietnam. I went to jail for two weeks—the beginning of the end of my academic career. Members of the Hawaii Resistance served from six months to two years in prison for their draft resistance, or wound up going into exile in Sweden or Canada.

King's martyrdom was our baptism into nonviolence as a way of life. But our beginning choice of nonviolence did not mean we recognized the deeper questions that his murder had opened up. If one kept probing his assassination, one would wind up at the cross, in spite of our government's efforts to bury that cross forever.

A Global Nonviolent Revolution

King's last book, "The Trumpet of Conscience," published after his death, began to help me understand why he was killed. In a series of lectures delivered over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in late 1967, he envisioned first a national and then a global nonviolent revolution against corporate wealth and military power. He wrote:

"Nonviolent protest must now mature to a new level to correspond to heightened black impatience and stiffened white resistance. This higher level is mass civil disobedience. There must be more than a statement to the larger society; there must be a force that interrupts its functioning at some key point.... It must be open and, above all, conducted by large masses without violence. If the jails are filled to thwart it, its meaning will become even clearer."

"Mass civil disobedience as a new stage of struggle can transmute the deep rage of the ghetto into a constructive and creative force. To dislocate the functioning of a city without destroying it can be more effective than a riot, because it can be longer-lasting, costly to the larger society, but not wantonly destructive. Finally, it is a device of social action that is more difficult for the government to quell by superior force."

As the U.S. government knew well, King wasn't just talking about "dislocating the functioning of a city without destroying it." That was a concrete plan that he and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference had for the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, in the following spring of 1968. They wanted to dislocate the functioning of Washington until the government took the steps necessary to abolish poverty in this country.

King's other goal, the other side of the abolition of poverty, was the abolition of war. That too was a goal of the Poor People's Campaign. King told his staff that what was important, "after we get [to Washington] and stay a few days," was to "call the peace movement in, and let them go on the other side of the Potomac and try to close down the Pentagon, if that can be done."

He was thinking in Gospel terms. He said, "I don't know what Jesus had as his demands other than 'Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.' My demand in Washington is 'Repent, America.'" (Garrow, page 593)

The expression of that demand would be "a new stage of massive, active nonviolent resistance to the evils of the modern system." (Garrow, page 48) He took as a model for the Washington campaign the crisis the Civil Rights Movement had created in Birmingham in 1965. "Without violence," King said, "we totally disrupted the system, the lifestyle of Birmingham and then of Selma, with their unjust and unconstitutional laws. Our Birmingham struggle came to its dramatic climax when some 3,500 demonstrators virtually filled every jail in that city and surrounding communities, and some 4,000 more continued to march and demonstrate non-violently. The city knew then in terms that were crystal clear that Birmingham could no longer continue to function until the demands of the Negro community were met." (Garrow, page 54)

When 1968 began, King was ready to take that model of creating a moral and political crisis, by nonviolently dis-

locating the functioning of a city, to a national level in Washington, and finally to an international level in cities around the globe. He meant, specifically and concretely, a global nonviolent revolution to abolish war and poverty.

When I read "The Trumpet of Conscience," I suspected that King was not killed by a lone assassin. He had the vision, the commitment and the organization to pursue the reign of God in a global Beloved Community. That threatened both a national and an international power structure. The powers that be knew they had to kill Martin Luther King Jr. But I would have no proof for 30 more years.

A Government Assassination Conspiracy

"The Trumpet of Conscience" repeated themes from King's Riverside Church address. It included a description of how he came to take a radical stand against the war in Vietnam. He talked about his failure to stop the rioting in the ghettos of the North:

"As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion, while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But, they asked, and rightly so, what about Vietnam? They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government." (Garrow, page 24)

King was creating a crisis of conscience in our national security state that went deeper than dislocating the functioning of our capital. He was dislocating the functioning of our ideology. To confront our contradictions, from the jungles of Vietnam to our city ghettos, he drew upon the deepest spiritual and democratic values that the country claimed it stood for. He insisted that we walk our talk. If not, our government should be nonviolently disrupted and shut down. He would do all he could to accomplish that end, regardless of the consequences to himself.

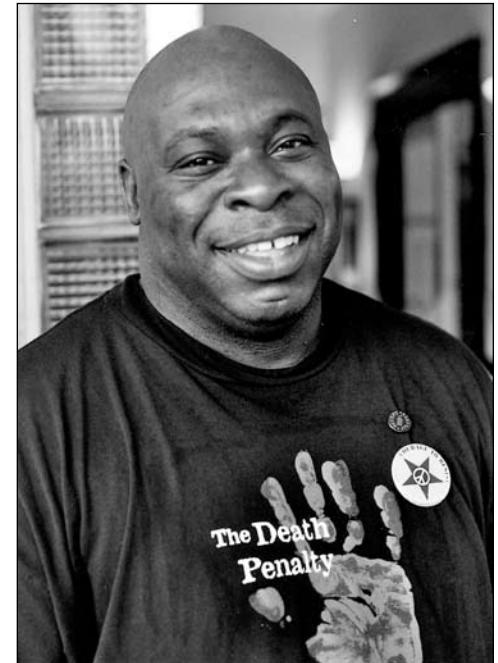
I learned those consequences in detail in November and December 1999, when I attended the only trial ever held for the assassination of Martin Luther King. It took place in Memphis, only a few blocks from the Lorraine Motel, where he was killed. In a wrongful-death lawsuit initiated by the King family, 70 witnesses testified over a six-week period. They described a sophisticated government plot that involved the FBI and CIA, the Memphis police, Mafia intermediaries and an Army Special Forces sniper team. The 12 jurors, six black and six white, returned after two and one-half hours of deliberation with a verdict that King had been assassinated by a conspiracy that included agencies of his own government.

For years now, the evidence and verdict of that trial have been public knowledge. The trial's entire transcript has been posted at www.thekingcenter.org. It has been massively ignored. No one wants to deal with its implications. An understanding of the nature of King's assassination would threaten the roots of our systemic violence.

Martin Luther King Jr. was following the path of Jesus. He knew that unless he and we were willing to risk the cross, unless we chose the way of the nonviolent cross, there could be no transformation, no miracle of peace, no resurrection for us as a people. As a prophet of nonviolence, he chose the cross in his Riverside Church speech. He was raised on it one year later in Memphis. The process of King's cross and resurrection, a personal transformation, has helped make possible our cross and resurrection, which would be a social transformation. ♦

Part 2 will appear next month.

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Join us for a season and learn about compassion from Open Door Community Novice John McRae.

Live in a residential Christian community.

*Serve Jesus Christ
in the hungry, homeless, and imprisoned.*

*Join street actions and loudandloving
nonviolent demonstrations.*

*Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time
at Dayspring Farm.*

*Join Bible study and theological reflections
from the Base.*

*You might come to the margins
and find your center.*

Contact: Sarah Humphrey
at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7618

For information and application forms visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Please Help!

The Open Door
needs **2,000**
sandwiches to
serve each week!

We need
meat with cheese
sandwiches
**(no bologna, pb&j or
white bread, please)**
individually wrapped
on **whole wheat** bread.

Thank You!



this year give **HOSPITALITY**

A \$10 donation covers a one-year subscription to *Hospitality* for a prisoner, a friend, or yourself. To give the gift of *Hospitality*, please fill out, clip, and send this form to:

**Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212**

Please add me (or my friend) to the *Hospitality* mailing list.

Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

I would like to explore a six- to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please contact me. (Also see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

name _____

address _____

email _____

phone _____



volunteer needs at the Open Door Community

Volunteers for **Tuesday** (9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) and **Wednesday** Soup Kitchen (9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.).

Volunteers to help staff our Foot Clinic on **Wednesday** evenings (6:00 p.m. for supper, 6:45-9:15 p.m. for the clinic).

Individuals to accompany community members to doctors' appointments.

Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat with cheese sandwiches on whole wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends (**no bologna, pb&j or white bread, please**).

People to cook or bring supper for our household on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

**For more information,
contact Sarah Humphrey
at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7618**

The Church in the World and the Church in Prison *continued from page 1*

years. I was lucky: I was imprisoned in Britain, not in Siberia!

In a camp of forced labor in Kilmarnock, Scotland, I read for the first time in my life the Bible and encountered Jesus. I had not decided for Christ, but I am certain Christ found me there when I was lost in sadness and desperation. He found me, as Christ has come to seek what is lost.

I tried to understand what had happened to me. We had a "theology school behind barbed wire." This camp was like a monastery. Excluded from time and the world, imprisoned professors taught imprisoned students "free" theology. We studied the Bible, church history and theology, but we also tried to come to terms with our death experiences near the end of the war. Theology was for us at that time an existential experience of healing our wounded souls.

This was the beginning of my theological studies and my first experiences of the church of Christ: the church in prison camps. Later I became a pastor and a professor of theology, but deep in my heart there is still sitting a frightened and sad young prisoner of war.

I think this was always the case with the church of Jesus Christ: there is the church in the world and there is the church in prison. There is the church in society and there is the church in the monastery. And this dual existence is also true for the experience of God: there are God-experiences on the way outside and there are God-experiences on the way inside.

On the way inside, we are seeking God in the recognition of our inner self. There is a ring around God and the soul. The more we recognize ourselves, we recognize God. And the more we recognize God, we recognize ourselves. Why? Because we are the "image of God."

On the way outside, we are seeking God in other human beings, because whatever they are, they are images of God

Apostle Paul quoted the first Easter hymn.

Hundreds of young men followed Antonius, until a former soldier, a veteran, whose name was Pachomisch, built the first Christian monasteries and brought discipline to the wild "desert boys." These God-seeking Christians lived no longer in natural caves, but in man-made cells. Since that time we have had the dual formation of Christianity: monastery and world Christianity, monastic theology and world theology, the way inside and the way outside, the church in prison and the church in the world. And both need each other.

**God is our pain, God is our joy,
God is our longing.
We are theologians for God's sake.
Every Christian who believes
and understands is a theologian.**

You will receive your Certificates in Theological Studies today. Let me say a word about what theology is. "I believe in order to understand" is a famous characteristic of theology. The Monk-Father Anselm of Canterbury told us this. To believe is good — to understand is better.

Why does the Christian faith in a particular way press for understanding? I think because for a Christian, faith is only the beginning of a new world. It is a longing for God and a desire to see the truth face to face. "For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now I know only in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Christian faith is no blind faith, but a faith with open eyes. We pray with open eyes. We are not always happy with what we see here. All the more are we longing to see through the horizon of this world into the shining face of the coming God. God has seen us already and will never let us out of His eyes. Therefore the desire is in us to see God face to face and "enjoy God forever."

Theology has only one problem: God. God is our pain, God is our joy, God is our longing. We are theologians for God's sake. Every Chris-

tian who believes and understands is a theologian, not only the professionals at Candler or Tübingen. Every Christian!

Allow me to congratulate you. You are really theologians, and in fact excellent theologians. I have read a paper that Jenny McBride sent me, and I was impressed. My students at Tübingen could not have made it better. I would like to encourage you: go on and take the next course in Theological Studies. And you must not only learn from other theologians, but develop your own thoughts. We need your spiritual insights and theological reflections.

There is a worldwide fellowship of all theologians. There is an age-old community of all theologians. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are our brothers and sisters in the spirit of God. We need you: the theology in the world needs the theology in prison. The way outside would become a wrong way without the way inside. Without self-experience, there is no experience of God. You are the church! We are sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus.

Friede Mit Euch! (Peace be with you!) ♣



Jürgen Moltmann shares during the reflection time after we served Soup Kitchen together:

too. And we are seeking God in the beauties of God's creation and in the suffering of our fellow creatures.

The way outside, into the blessings and troubles of the world, is dangerous and adventurous, as we surely all know. But the way inside is dangerous and adventurous, full of temptations and blessings, because the soul is a broad place and a rich land. Teresa of Avila went this way and told us in her book "The Inner Castle," and in our time Thomas Merton went this way and told us, in his "Seven Storey Mountain," what he experienced in the monastery of Gethsemani in Kentucky.

When did Christians start to seek God on the way inside? It was the so-called "Desert Fathers," in fact young men from villages in Egypt in the fourth century. They wanted to follow Jesus into the desert.

The first was a young man named Antonius. The desert was in old Egypt, not the home of the gods but the land of death and demons. Antonius lived in a cave in the desert, fought for his survival, fought against the demons, fought against his anxieties and saw the victory of Christ. "Death, where is your sting? Hell, where is your victory?," as the

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Before and after Troy Davis was executed on September 21, we heard from friends and colleagues all over the United States and from several other countries who called and wrote to share the grief and outrage over Troy's killing by the state of Georgia. We are sharing just a few reflections here, in the deep hope that the lasting reverberations and growing outrage over the utter corruption of our judicial system will move us finally toward abolition of the death penalty. Resist! — Murphy Davis

Last Wednesday night, Troy Davis was put to death by the state of Georgia. Thousands of people all over the world tried to stop it to no avail. One of my Facebook friends wrote, "All I know is, if Pope Benedict, Jimmy Carter and Bob Barr all agree on something, somebody should listen." I am very much opposed to the death penalty, and in this case it's possible that an innocent person was killed.

All this brought back memories for me. In the 1990s, I began visiting a man named Terry Mincey who was on death row in Jackson. Murphy Davis, who is often responsible for setting people up with someone to visit in prison, chose Terry for me because she knew he would understand my challenges and be willing to work with them. Because I live with a traumatic brain injury, visiting Terry was difficult. I have learned that if I want to remember something, I must write it down, but pencil and paper are not allowed in the prison visiting room. Terry knew about my memory challenges and often wrote me letters about our visits. This helped immensely.

When Georgia switched its execution method to lethal injection, Terry was the first man killed. As a result, the event garnered quite a bit of attention. There is always a vigil outside the prison during an execution, but this time there were news cameras everywhere. At one point I got angry and screamed, "Stop taking my picture!" Immediately a group of people stood in front of me to block the cameras, but it was too late. A picture of me ran in the Atlanta newspapers. I must say, it captured my sadness perfectly.

Afterwards, I preached a sermon at the Open Door Community about my experience with Terry and his execution. I'm very glad I took the opportunity to visit Terry, even though it pushed on all my deficits. In the early years of being a traumatic brain injury survivor, I didn't know how to pace myself. Sometimes I did more than I really was able, and then I had to sleep for days. Now I know where my limits are and try to plan for them.

However, sometimes things don't go as planned. Troy's execution was one of those times. It was postponed for hours, and instead of going to bed early like I always do, I stayed up and watched "Democracy Now," which was broadcasting from the prison. I was hoping the Supreme Court would stop the execution. So I stayed up and watched till the bitter end. And the end was indeed bitter.

Tamara Puffer
Asheville, North Carolina

Tamara Puffer is a Presbyterian minister. She volunteered at the Open Door Community while she was a pastor in Atlanta and met her husband, Michael Galovic, while he was a Resident Volunteer.

A little over two weeks ago, I stood across the street from the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson, joining hundreds of others in prayer for a miracle. It's tragic that justice should ever be considered miraculous, especially when we live in a country that claims to be the ultimate champion of human rights. But that's the paradox I stepped into, along with thousands of others around the world who were taking a stand for Troy Davis, the Georgia death row inmate whose conviction raised so much doubt that even avid death penalty proponents were calling

for clemency.

Yet it wasn't merely a case of innocence that attracted international attention and inspired passion among activists; it was the way Troy and his family consistently met injustice — his 20 years of imprisonment and three prior execution dates — with faithful determination and active compassion. Although I often heard anger in the voices from both sides (especially on that final night, when we faced the most flagrant and unnecessary show of police force I've ever seen), the Davis family refused to falter in cynicism or fear. Even in the midst of state-sponsored madness, strapped to a gurney for four straight hours while the Supreme Court justices debated his life as if it were no more than a theory, Troy chose to bless those responsible for his death, to show mercy toward his killers.

With unprecedented vigils around the globe and massive media coverage, Troy may well have been, paradoxically, the most powerful person in the world that night. Though he couldn't preserve his own life, he sheltered the souls of so many others by modeling forgiveness. In the shameful shadow of vengeance, he shone the light of love.

For me, that was the miracle — not the outcome we had all so fervently worked and prayed for, but perhaps something even greater: a foundation upon which to build a movement that will not only save lives but will sanctify life itself, releasing our collective conscience from the burden of brutality, and freeing us to see, through the wide eyes of empathy, the Sun of our Oneness shining in each heart.

Roxanne Ivey
Atlanta, Georgia

Roxanne Ivey is a writer, performing artist, activist and founder of Poets for Positive Change in Atlanta.



Rita Corbin

I had to serpentine my way around a row of massive concrete barricades on Sunday morning, September 25, to get to the prison that houses Georgia's death row. Four days before, this line of defense was upstaged by an army of prison guards, sheriff's deputies, state troopers and riot police wearing blackened face shields and bearing high-powered rifles. A helicopter hovered overhead, and throughout the evening, police cruisers roared past the crowd, their lights flashing and sirens blaring. In all my years, I'd never seen such a massive display of force.

Just before 7 p.m., the scheduled hour of Troy Davis' execution, the hundreds of us who had come to protest and pray outside the prison went to our knees and grew silent. A bell rang the hour, and someone close to where I knelt began singing "Amazing Grace." And then, at the other end of the line, a great cheer went up. A reprieve! Hope. It turned out to be only temporary.

Troy Davis was pronounced dead at 11:08 p.m. His last act on this earth was to ask for mercy for those who killed him. Moments later, the heavens opened up with a downpour of rain, a great, cosmic weeping for this gentle soul and a cleansing for all of us who are in need of showers of mercy.

The compelling doubt about Troy's guilt had drawn together a community of support that included the pope, the Dalai Lama, a former U.S. president, and even conservative, pro-death-penalty members of Congress, along with hundreds of thousands of ordinary folk who signed petitions and organized protests. Four hours before the execution, Troy's greatest advocate, his sister Martina Correia, who has been in a decade-long battle with cancer, struggled from her wheelchair to her feet, declaring, "I am standing today on behalf of my brother. I am Troy Davis." Surrounding her was a sea of young people wearing T-shirts emblazoned with those words: "I am Troy Davis."

Outside the prison that night, in the face of the tension and fear and overwhelming firepower, I understood the vulnerability that those young people feel. Our cruel world seems to have lost its compassion, its kindness, its moral center.

Four days later I returned to the prison to see my dear friend who has been on death row for 38 years. I've been visiting him for the last 15. This brother was like a father to Troy.

My friend told me that the loss was going to "hurt for a long time." But then he shared something extraordinary. "The guards all know that Troy called me 'Pawpaw,' and I called him 'Junior.' They make rounds of the cellblocks every hour. And all that night and during the next day, they stopped at my cell and asked, 'Are you doing all right?,' wanting to know if I needed anything." This is not always the behavior of prison guards, and I give thanks for this small gesture of kindness, which deeply touched my friend.

A community was conjured around a person and a cause. Our greatest hope was not realized. But if Troy's death can move people to kindness, he did not die in vain. If we can learn to embrace the grace, patience, compassion and forgiveness that marked his life, then we are all Troy Davis.

Joyce Hollyday
Asheville, North Carolina

Joyce Hollyday is the co-pastor of Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville. She was a member of the Open Door worship community for several years during her degree program at Candler School of Theology and while she was on the staff of the Southeastern Conference of the United Church of Christ. Her blog can be found at www.seekingcommunity.ca.

Dear Open Door Community,

These vases were used as centerpieces at our wedding. We have been holding on to them so they could be used in another meaningful capacity, which I assumed would be a joyous occasion. It never occurred to Josh and me that they could also possibly provide comfort during a time of mourning. We hope you can use these small flower arrangements around the Open Door Community as little reminders of hope and faith during this difficult time. [This was received September 22, the day after the execution.]

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Love,
Ashley and Josh Erwin
Atlanta, Georgia

Ashley Erwin is a long-term volunteer and the co-coordinator of our Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic on Wednesday evenings.

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon

Men's Showers: Tuesday, 10:45 a.m.

Trusted Friends Showers & Sandwiches: Thursday, 10 a.m.

Women's Showers: by appointment

Harriet Tubman Free Women's Clinic:

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinics:

Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Mail Check: Tuesday – Wednesday, during Soup Kitchen

Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 1 p.m.

Use of Phone: Tuesday – Thursday, during services

Retreats: Five times each year for our household, volunteers and supporters.

Prison Ministry: Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, Georgia, in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville; monthly Jackson (Death Row) Trip; pastoral visits in various jails and prisons.

Sunday: We invite you to join us for **Worship** at **4 p.m.** and for supper following worship.

We gratefully accept donations at these times.

Sunday: 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Monday: 8:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 8:30 until 9:30 a.m. and 2 until 8:30 p.m.

Friday and Saturday: We are closed. We are not able to offer hospitality or accept donations on these days.

Our **Hospitality Ministries** also include visitation and letter writing to prisoners in Georgia, anti-death penalty advocacy, advocacy for the homeless, daily worship, weekly Eucharist, and Foot Washing.

Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 4 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together. If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 770.246.7628.

Please visit www.opendoorcommunity.org or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

January 1 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eduard Loring preaching

January 8 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service

January 15 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Carlton Mackey preaching

January 22 No Worship at 910
Worship with the Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship

January 29 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Connie Bonner preaching

February 5 No Worship at 910
Baptism of Linda Moore at Dayspring Farm

February 12 No Worship at 910
Winter Retreat at Dayspring Farm

February 19 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service

February 26 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service



Needs of the Community



We need **caffinated coffee** to serve our friends from the streets.

Pill containers: Your generosity has supplied us with enough pill containers for the next several months. We ask that you **NOT** send any more until we again request them. **Thank You!**

Living Needs

- jeans
- work shirts
- short & long sleeve shirts with collars
- belts (34" & up)
- men's underwear
- socks
- reading glasses
- walking shoes** (especially sizes **11-15**)
- T-shirts** (L, XL, **XXL, XXXL**)
- baseball caps
- trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

Personal Needs

- shampoo (all sizes)
- lotion (all sizes)
- toothpaste (all sizes)
- lip balm
- soap (all sizes)
- disposable razors

Food Needs

- fresh fruits & vegetables
- turkeys/chickens
- hams
- sandwiches:** **meat with cheese on whole wheat bread**

Special Needs

- blankets
- backpacks
- MARTA cards**
- postage stamps
- futon sofa
- goose-neck floor lamp for our clinic exam room
- scale for our medical clinic

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification on selected Tuesday evenings from 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 770.246.7620 or visit www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medical Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

ibuprofen
acetaminophen
Lubriderm lotion
cough drops
non-drowsy allergy tablets
cough medicine (alcohol free)

Foot Care Clinic

Epsom salts
anti-bacterial soap
shoe inserts
corn removal pads
exfoliation cream (e.g., apricot scrub)
pumice stones
foot spa
cuticle clippers
latex gloves
nail files (large)
toenail clippers (large)
medicated foot powder
antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

We also need volunteers to help staff our Foot Care Clinic on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 - 9:15 p.m.!