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# HOSPITALITY

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

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July 2008

## Lewis Stewart Sinclair October 1, 1914-June 8, 2008

By Murphy Davis

The remarkable life of our dear friend Lewis Sinclair came to a peaceful close on Sunday, June 8, at Emory University Hospital with Mary Brown Eastland Sinclair, his beloved partner of 27 years, at his side. He died of complications from the lymphoma he had fought for more than 18 years. He was 93 years old and full of life to the end. Eduard and I were privileged to share the final five days of his life with him as we joined Mary and several other friends and family in a loving circle around his bed.

The many who have been blessed to call this man “friend” are wondering day by day how in the world we will get along without him. Steve Bright of the Southern Center for Human Rights put it well when he said that it was Lewis’ combination of “outrage and humor” that made him such an irreplaceable part of the struggle for justice. Lewis was the kind of person who made you *want* to be a part of the movement.

So many of us are afflicted with a sort of terminal earnestness — but not Lewis! He definitely took the issues and problems seriously, but he didn’t take himself (or any of the rest of us) too seriously. He knew all the way along that we’d better be able to see the irony, the ridiculousness, the absurdity of injustice and be ready to throw our heads back and laugh. He, more than anybody else I can name, attracted other people to the movement, because it was always clear that he was having a great time, and it made everybody want to be a part of whatever made him so full of joy.

Lewis Sinclair was born in Pass Christian, Mississippi in 1914. He finished a bachelor’s degree at Mississippi’s Alcorn College in 1936 and served in the Army during World War II. In 1955, he earned an M.S. in statistics and economics, becoming the first African-American to earn a graduate degree in economics from the University of Tennessee.

Though he did not dwell on it, Lewis grew up in the Jim Crow South — Mississippi, in fact! He lived through our particular brand of American apartheid, and he was a big part of the movement that brought significant changes. But there was not a bitter bone in his body. He always kept his eye on the prize and wanted to encourage everybody else to do the same.

He worked as an economist for the Tennessee Valley Authority from 1950 until his retirement in 1976. During those years, he served as a Presbyterian elder, worked with the National Conference of Christians and Jews in Knoxville, and began his legendary work with the Highlander Center in Tennessee, first in Monteagle and later in New Market. He served on its board of directors (for many years as its chair) until he was made an emeritus member of the board. ([www.highlandercenter.org](http://www.highlandercenter.org))

Highlander was one of the few places in the South



Calvin Kimbrough

*Lewis and Mary, Mardi Gras 2008, cooking up gumbo!*

where blacks and whites could meet, work and share meals together, and its purpose is to organize and teach creative problem solving. Marginalized people and advocates have gathered there since 1932 to work together to find the collective resources to define particular struggles, to organize for nonviolent resistance against the structures of domination, and to seek progressive social and cultural change. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr. and many young people from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee were among Highlander’s students during the 1960s.

Those of us old enough to remember the 1950s might recall billboards along many Southern highways that displayed a photograph labeled “Martin Luther King at Communist Training School.” The picture on the billboard was taken at the Highlander Center, and Highlander has dealt with charges of communism throughout its history — pretty much a given for any individual or organization that struggles for justice. The anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, “We

## The Death Penalty’s ‘Acceptable Risks’

By David Walsh-Little

*Editor’s note: David Walsh-Little is a Baltimore attorney and represents John Booth-El on Maryland’s death row.*

Someday, in some future Supreme Court, the death penalty will finally go. The United States will rid itself of this miserable, violent reality that represents the worst of our society. The most powerful government in the history of the planet tying an always poor, usually African-American, often railroaded, sometimes innocent person to a table and pouring poison through his blood — cruel and unusual it is. But the Supreme Court’s recent decision in *Baze v. Rees* clarifies how far we are from this long overdue end to capital punishment.

Since 1976, when the death penalty was revived in its modern form, the courts have experimented with eliminating the “arbitrary and capricious” nature of the ultimate punishment — changing the rules to make it fair and just. But case after case has proven this experiment to be a total failure. Reading the Supreme Court’s 7-2 decision upholding Kentucky’s lethal injection protocol once again raises serious questions about the persuasiveness of the court’s tenacious grip on the death penalty.

## Why is it constitutional for people to be killed with drugs that are banned from use on our pets?

Challenged in *Baze* was not the existence of capital punishment in Kentucky but the lethal injection protocol used there — a process used in 30 other states. A three-drug potion of sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride is used to first induce unconsciousness (the sodium thiopental), stop all muscle movements including breathing (the pancuronium bromide), and then stop the inmate’s heart (the potassium chloride). This process is designed to bring about a painless death *when it works as designed*. What becomes clear in the discussion by the court is the failure of Kentucky to ensure that it works properly, and the pain inflicted when it fails.

Much of the debate in this case turns on the effects of the second drug, pancuronium bromide, when the first drug, sodium thiopental, is administered improperly and does not sufficiently sedate the condemned person. It is clear that a conscious inmate would suffer an unbearably painful death by slow asphyxiation if this happens. Because pancuronium bromide paralyzes all muscles, the inmate would have no

Lewis Sinclair, continued on page 8

Death Penalty, continued on page 8



# When Coincidences Multiply

By Dick Rustay

*"Whenever I pray, I find that the coincidences multiply."*

— George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community in Scotland

*"Coincidence: A seemingly planned sequence of accidentally occurring events."*  
— Webster's New College Dictionary

Before we at the Open Door Community have our noon meal, we often share our experiences of the morning or the night before. Many of these sharings are in story form. So... "Let me tell you a story."

Every fourth Saturday of the month, the Open Door takes friends and family members to visit loved ones on death row in Jackson, Georgia. Several of us who live at the Open Door are part of this group. I have been visiting Daniel Greene for several years. These monthly meetings have deepened over time, and I find myself eagerly waiting each visit.

Now to get into the prison at Jackson is a long, time-consuming process. First you have to sign in on a sheet that is handed to you at the front door before you can enter. You must write your name and the name of the person you want to visit, and the type and color of car you came in with its license plate number. One member of our party, Mary Pace, usually writes the number on the palm of her hand so she and the rest of us can remember.

Next you stand outside the door waiting for your name to be called. When it is called, you go around to the side of the building, where another door is unlocked and you enter a small room and immediately begin emptying all your pockets and showing the money you've brought to buy snacks and sandwiches for the person you are visiting.

The only things you can bring into the prison are a handkerchief to carry your quarters and dollar bills to put into the vending machines, your driver's license or other state ID, and your car keys. If you have anything else, such as a comb or hat, you have to take it back to the car you came in, thus losing your place in line and starting the process all over again.

After going through a metal detector, you again sign your name on another sheet of paper and write the name of the prisoner you're going to visit. The guard stamps an invisible ID on your left hand. Next you wait for the steel-barred door to slowly open. When it does, you enter the "sally port," a small room with bars at both ends. As the barred door closes, you hand over your ID and car keys to another guard, who is behind bulletproof glass. She takes your keys and ID and gives you a small sheet of paper with the name of the prisoner you're going to visit and a small round token with a number on it so you can reclaim your keys and ID after your visit.

Then the steel doors at the other end of the room open and you walk down a long, long carpeted corridor with posters on either side encouraging the reader to take chances in order to succeed in life: "Be Daring," "Face Challenges," "Be a Team Member," "Take Risks," etc. These are interesting signs when you are on your way to visit death row!

After you walk to the end of the corridor, a distance of 200 feet, you climb two flights of stairs to the next floor, where you enter another sally port., give your slip to a guard behind a glass enclosure, and wait for the sally port gate at the other end to slowly open. It can't open until the gate you entered has closed.

You then enter a large waiting room lined with food and drink machines and two microwave ovens. Here family members are visiting with prisoners not on death row. They

sit on movable chairs and can arrange them in ways most comfortable for visiting. Those of us visiting on death row make our purchases and warm up the sandwiches, not forgetting the condiments when available. Sometimes they are there and sometimes not.

We wait for our prisoner's name to be called. When it is, we again wait for the guard to open another sally port. We enter and can see our friend in one of four rooms. The guard then opens the door of the room where our prisoner is and finally we get to visit him.

I hug my friend Daniel Greene and we sit down and talk. Daniel eats while we visit, and I join in with a soft drink and sandwich. The prison does not provide a noon meal on visiting days, so if a prisoner doesn't have a visitor, he gets nothing to eat until supper.

On this visit, Daniel tells me that he has some packages for me to take back to the Open Door. An edict has just come out allowing each prisoner no more than four pairs of shoes. Daniel is giving us his extra shoes, but he has collected them from others in his cell block. I leave with eight pairs of shoes, a gift from our friends on death row.

Now the story gets interesting! Several days before my visit to Daniel, a new resident, Shon Pope, had joined the Open Door Community. He is a large man and was badly in need of shoes. Our shoe closet didn't have any size 16s at the time, and we were working on finding some for him.

Daniel Greene is a very large man. When I told him of our need for a size 16 shoe, he smiled and said, "I have a couple of size 15s here, and I think they should fit." He was absolutely right! Shon tried the shoes on and they were a perfect fit.

But our story doesn't end here. A few days later, Troy Davis, another prisoner on death row, sent Murphy Davis a package of shoes he had collected. What a gift from

our friends on the row, who are outcasts, demonized, treated as forgotten people until their execution date nears.

I started this story with a quote from George MacLeod, that great Scottish visionary, who was larger than life. He had a deep prayer life and had had some amazing events occur in his life when he shared his statement about coincidences. We at the Open Door find that, time after time, when needs occur they are met. As we meet for lunch we raise our hearts in prayer for needs that we have.

The incident with Daniel and the shoes is just one of many "coincidences" in the life of the Open Door Community. I've lived at the Open Door long enough to see these so-called coincidences pile up. George MacLeod was right. "Whenever I pray, I find that the coincidences multiply." ♦

*Dick Rustay is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



## Thank You!

Dear friends,

In the April issue of *Hospitality*, we asked for your help in meeting our growing financial needs as we struggle to meet the growing needs of our household and our homeless and imprisoned friends. You responded with great generosity. We thank God for you all and the partnership that we share.

**The Open Door Community**

## HOSPITALITY

**Hospitality** is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), 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.

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Calvin Kimbrough

*Dick Rustay lovingly spreads mulch around the blueberry plants at Dayspring.*

### Newspaper

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## King's Corner

## One of His Biggest Mistakes

By Eduard-the-Agitator Loring

*Editors note: "King's Corner" is an occasional series of Eduard's observations on Martin Luther King Jr. The title reflects the fact that it is from the streets and street corners that we come to our understanding of King.*

Though Black and abused, Martin Luther King Jr. believed in America. The stated aim and purpose of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference was "to redeem the soul of America." Why else would he weep in Marks, Mississippi? And make plans with Marian Wright Edelman to shut down DC with a million poor people, all colors, all ages, with the unifying power of poor people who are ready to ACT for justice? Yes, he learned from Malcolm X and Mayor Richard Daley that the American Dream dripped with the blood of Black and poor people. He woke up, and looking out the window from his home in his Vine City neighborhood, he saw the nightmare. He was unable to go back to sleep. We killed him.

"Everybody makes mistakes," Big Birds and Cookie Monsters have taught us on "Sesame Street." That is all that remains of the wisdom of the ages regarding the "tragic dimension" of our shared human condition. "I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do." (Romans 7:19)

Martin made a mistake, a big mistake. It is the same mistake that the suffragists made. It is the same mistake that his hero Thomas Jefferson made. They trusted the vote to be the primary source of equality and justice for all.

The women franchise fighters believed that women voters would purify and justify the government, culture and home life and bring compassion to the realm. The 19th Amendment was directly tied to the peace movement and the final "war to end all wars" and "to make the world safe for democracy."

Dr. King is horrified in his death and abused as an icon of middle-class respectability at the use of the vote and political office to further the aims of the White Male Supremacist system in Atlanta.

Thomas Jefferson, benighted in his white maleness and slave ownership, not to mention dipping in the sugar bowls down in the slave cabins (rape, rape, rape), believed that an informed electorate plus a little revolution every 20 years would keep the American Experiment on the road toward fulfillment that "all men [and women] are created equal" as we build a "more perfection union" from the vast diversity of the American nation. "E Pluribus Unum." The means to the end were twofold: a public school system that would give citizens the tools of citizenship, and the vote.

We have now moved in this country from democracy to plutocracy, from levels of caring and organizing for justice to greed and apathy. It is very easy now to judge our leaders of the optimistic past, Blacks, women and whites of the past, who have placed too much emphasis on the vote. The vote is not strong enough to carry the weight of the demand for more justice. Electoral politics is not able to provide the depth of love and sacrifice that is required for the peace and

compassion that underlie the pursuit of equality and justice for all. White racism is too racist, sexism and pornography are too explicit, war is too profitable, greed is too convenient and titillating for the vote to correct.

When Martin Luther King Jr. saw Lyndon Baines Johnson sign the 1965 Voting Rights Act, he believed that a major stride was taken toward democratic values and Black political power. He believed that a resource had been set ablaze that would burn the evil from racism, militarism and materialism. He believed that Black folk in government would bring resources of justice and love to the political order. King believed that the hungry would be fed, that decent housing would be available to all, that job discrimination would be mitigated beyond recognition. To put it simply, Martin Luther King Jr. believed that the vote was a primary tool for the establishment of the Beloved Community in the USA.

Well, my friends, we now know it was a mistake. Perhaps an illusion. We are not supposed to serve food in Woodruff Park to the poorest of the poor, because our Black mayor, Shirley Franklin says so. We cannot give alms, as Hebrew piety and Jesus command, because of our majority-Black City Council, whose president, Lisa Borders, provided feisty and police-cracking leadership to the passage of the anti-Jewish-Christian-Muslim ordinance.

Ms. Borders is the granddaughter of Rev. William Holmes Borders of Wheat Street Baptist Church on Auburn Avenue, two blocks south of Ebenezer Baptist Church. As a teenager, Martin would sneak down to hear Rev. Borders preach. He was one of King's favorite pulpites.

Ms. Borders is not hesitant to use this civil rights and human rights heritage to exploit the poor and homeless, to crush public housing and "put teeth" into the laws banning the presence of the homeless (read poor Black men) from downtown and intown neighborhoods. "Where have all the homeless gone? Long time passing." Dr. King is horrified in his death and abused as an icon of middle-class respectability at the use of the vote and political office to further the aims of the White Male Supremacist system in Atlanta. How ghastly for us to watch over the last 30 years the transmogrification of Rev. Andrew Young from civil rights advocate to pawn of the capitalistic system, a tool in the toolbox to make Atlanta an elitist city of upper-class Blacks and whites together. The vote? A resource for justice for the poor and oppressed?

Dr. King made a big mistake. We all do. We must vote. It helps the poor to have Democrats in office. The poor and the puritocrats don't vote. They are either suffering in despair or they are too pure to contaminate their political ideologies of resistance. All the while, Clarence Thomas and his cronies vote for execution in every death penalty case; the poor languish in anguish for a while and then die. Urban police forces beat and bully the poor.

Please vote: not for color, not for gender, not for class. Vote for those who promise justice and peace. For those who turn their heads toward progressives, activists, artists, singer-songwriters, poets, social gospellers and the marginalized to create a culture of love and human values that will build a nation of equality and justice for all in the human heart and amidst human history.

But voting is not enough. "The opiate of the middle class," Dorothy Day liked to call it. We must go to the streets; we must stop the war by disrupting the military bases and recruitment centers; we must stop the death penalty by stopping the traffic on the night of a Braves game. We must disobey our government.



Chuks Okeke

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference went north to Chicago in 1965 to fight like hell for housing and justice in urban ghettos. There he found Blacks huddled and wired into despair, and housing gated by white police forces who kept an eye on the Blacks in Chicago and another eye on the browns in Vietnam. Chicago, King said, was the meanest city where he had acted for peace and justice. As he said this, images of biting dogs, bombs bursting in air, four dead little girls and fire hoses ran across his angry imagination. Yes, the poor frightened racists like Bull Conner and Jim Clark could not compare with Richard Daley and his thugs.

Please do not repeat the voting mistake.  
Please vote.  
Please resist and bring political power to the streets.

In the North, King became an American atheist. He no longer believed the propaganda of the rich classes who were killing his people and writing history books. He woke up. He gave up his vision of justice as "my fair share of the American pie" in favor of the radical quest for a Bill of Economic Rights as the basis of the Beloved Community.

He now believed we needed a new political party that claimed democratic socialism as its platform. For such a party he could vote with hope. Dr. King would not stand for the pro-war "Star-Spangled Banner," but for whom would he vote in the 2008 presidential election?

Please do not repeat the voting mistake. Please vote. Please resist and bring political power to the streets. ✦

*Eduard-the-Agitator Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

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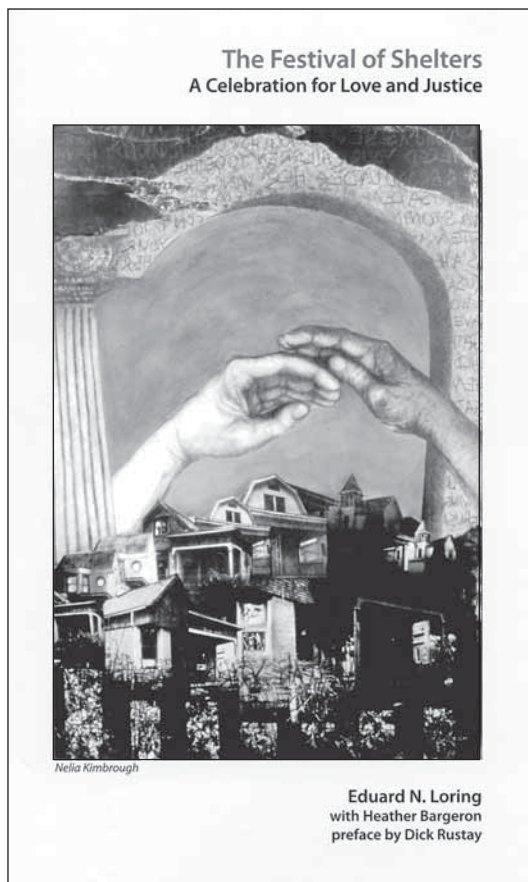
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# Thank You!





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## The Festival of Shelters A Celebration for Love and Justice

By **Eduard Loring**  
with Heather Barger  
preface by Dick Rustay

Dear Ed and Murphy,

The beautiful "Festival of Shelters" book brought me close to tears — of gratitude to be sure. What a gift in our distempered days! You are blessed in blessing us.

So gratefully,  
Dan Berrigan  
New York, New York

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# The Old Law and the New

By **Steven Andrews**

*Editor's note: Steven Andrews is a student at Columbia Theological Seminary and a volunteer at the Open Door Community.*

According to Dr. Charles Cousar of Columbia Theological Seminary, "Nothing says 'party' like Galatians!" And he's absolutely right about that. Paul's liturgically neglected epistle to the Galatian churches deserves more attention in Christian communities. Taken as a whole, it contains one massive invitation to the great party that will be God's Beloved Community, and it may even be a proof text for gay liberation.

Paul's letter was written to a group of churches that faced a bigger problem than they realized.

## Are those who seek to exclude the queer community from full fellowship in the church following an old form of the law that was annulled in Christ?

According to Robert Jewett, after a missionary journey led by Paul resulted in the founding of several Christian communities in Galatia, in Asia Minor, a group of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem (or at least Judea) came up to finish the work Paul had started. Jewett contends that these other teachers were facing persecution by Zealots, who wanted to cleanse Israel of all unrighteousness, including those who made themselves unclean by associating with the uncircumcised.

For these Christian teachers, persuading the uncircumcised Gentiles in Galatia to bear the physically painful and socially odious burden of circumcision would serve two purposes: bringing the Galatian Christians into kinship with Abraham, and getting the Zealots off the teachers' backs.

This group of teachers seems to have presented its view as a completion of Paul's work, arguing that Paul had left the Galatians with a beginner's manual on the Christian gospel and that they had come along to complement it with the more advanced version. Paul strongly disagreed, and the result is one of the most passionate letters in his already fiery repertoire.

Paul argued that if the Galatian Christians submitted to circumcision, they would be responsible for fulfilling every letter of the Old Testament law, and this was a burden they would find impossible to bear (Galatians 5:3-4). He also contended that kinship with Abraham comes through following the original desert father's example of faith, rather than obedience to an outmoded form of the law, especially when it comes to circumcision (3:6-7).

But the letter to the Galatians is not just about circumcision. If it were, it would *deserve* to be liturgically neglected. But in fact, circumcision is a flashpoint for the literarily prodigious apostle to talk about the Old Testament law and its place in Christian communities — an issue that is still very relevant in the postmodern age.

In Galatians, Paul does not say that the law should be abandoned. He simply argues that the six-hundred-and-some-commandment form of the law found in the Old Testament has been replaced by a new form.

In Galatians 5:14, Paul writes, "The whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" The word we translate as "summed

up" is the Greek word *peplerotai*, and it means something like "fulfilled" or "completed." So, according to Paul, the new Christian communities must submit to a new form of the old law, fulfilled and completed when it grows into what it is now — just as a seed is completed when it grows into a tree.

To further the point, Paul compares the old form of the law to a pedagogue (3:24). The Greek word is *paidagogos*, and my Bible translates it as "disciplinarian," but that translation misses the mark a bit. The pedagogue in ancient Greek society was an adult servant, often a slave, who shepherded a child from around the age of 5 until she or he reached maturity. This servant was not a tutor. In fact, the purpose of the pedagogue was to protect the child from danger and teach her basic manners, such as how to conduct oneself at the table, how to walk down the street in a dignified way, and so on. This was a necessary role in Greek society, but it was as necessary as it was temporary. Everyone eventually outgrows their pedagogue.

For the Apostle Paul, it was important to progress beyond the other Christian teachers' limited view of who should adhere to the old law and how, because these limited views were standing in the way of the unity of the church. While Jewish Christians were trying to decide whether or not Gentile converts should submit to the *barzel*, they were often refusing to share table fellowship with their Gentile sisters and brothers (2:11-14). For Paul this was unacceptable, and that is why he worked so hard to convince the Galatians not to submit to this manifestation of the old form of the law.

So the apostle's metaphor about the pedagogue in 3:24 leads naturally to the best-loved verse of this epistle, 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Of course, for us at the Open Door, the list might as well be expanded: "There is no longer homed or homeless, educated or uneducated, black or white or Asian or other; there is no longer gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, transgendered, queer, questioning, or other; no longer young, old or middle-aged, ordained or unordained; for all of you — yes, even you — are one in Christ Jesus."

In the postmodern Christian church, we stand in the midst of a debate about the full recognition and affirmation of those who (like me) are blessed with same-sex attraction. I think we can turn to Galatians for some guidance on that question. Of course, it's a dangerous game to try to guess what a dead man might think about a contemporary debate, so I won't claim to speak for Paul, but Galatians shows us an apostle's wisdom in dealing with a similar controversy.

Are those who seek to exclude the queer community from full fellowship in the church following an old form of the law that was annulled in Christ? If we take Galatians 5:14 seriously, then the answer is yes. And in light of 3:28, we can do nothing less than everything it takes to break down the walls that have divided us. At the Open Door, we try to do that on a number of levels, and we're not all the way there on questions of same-sex attraction and queer identity. But we're talking about it. And we're trying to get to the place where Paul's words seem to be leading. ✠



Michelle Dick



# Jesus Died for Our Sins

By Nibs Stroupe

*Editor's note: Nibs Stroupe is the pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, where he preached this sermon in March 2007.*

**Amos 9:1-3; Romans 5:6-11**

*"The God that holds you over the Pit of Hell, much as one holds a Spider, or some loathsome Insect, over the Fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his Wrath towards you burns like Fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the Fire; he is of purer Eyes than to bear to have you in his Sight; you are ten thousand Times so abominable in his Eyes as the most hateful venomous Serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn Rebel did his Prince: and yet 'tis nothing but his Hand that holds you from falling into the Fire every Moment."*

I remember the first time I read those words. It was in 11th-grade American Literature class, and they scared me to death. They come from a famous sermon titled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," by the great American theologian Jonathan Edwards. He preached it during the Great Awakening, in July 1741. His text was the reading from Amos that we heard this morning, in which God tells the people of Israel that He is pursuing them to kill them. If the people dig into Sheol, God will snatch them out of there. If they hide at the bottom of the sea, God will send a poisonous snake to bite them.

Edwards's sermon touches a deep and powerful theme in the church and in the Bible: the Cross is an expression of God's anger at our captivity and our injustice and our sinfulness. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah puts it a bit more gently than did Edwards: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way."* (Verse 6) The Bible emphasizes that we are estranged from God, that we are alienated from one another, and that we are even out of touch with ourselves.

The Bible restates this alienation and estrangement over and over again: the fall of Adam and Eve and their banishment from the Garden of Eden, and the prophetic witness of Israel concerning its fall into exile, as we heard from Amos today. And Paul's lament in Romans 7: *"I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate...wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"*

And in our own time, too, these biblical lamentations reverberate throughout our lives: the useless and demonic war in Iraq, the 20,000 children who will die today from a lack of food, the growing ecological crisis – the list is endless. As we move into reflections on the meaning of the Cross during this Lenten season, we must always start here: the Cross is an expression of our captivity to

sin and our resistance to God's love. The Cross is a stark reminder that we would rather kill Jesus than be transformed by his love. The Cross is a reminder that there is no self-help guide for this fundamental problem. We cannot rescue ourselves from our captivity to death.

Perhaps we Protestants should revisit the Roman Catholic approach to the Cross. If you look around our sanctuary, you will see several crosses. All of them are empty – there is no crucified Jesus on any of them. The Roman Catholics still have Jesus on the Cross. It is a reminder of our continuing resistance to God's love. If Jesus were among us today, we'd crucify him, too.

We Protestants, though, have an empty Cross, and we do it for at least two reasons. First, we believe that the Cross is not the final definition of our lives. The Cross is central, but it must always be put into the context of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The last word in our lives is not our resistance, but rather God's love. And we must always remember that what fired those first disciples was the life of Jesus and then the resurrection of Jesus. The Cross stunned them and caused them to flee in terror. If was the Resurrection that called them back to that passion and fire that Jesus had kindled in them in his earthly ministry. So we Protestants have taken Jesus off the Cross, because while it's an important word, it's not the final word.

But there is a powerful word about God and about us in the Cross, and that's why it is such a universal symbol in the church. And that brings us to the second reason that Protestants have an empty Cross. We believe that in the death of Jesus, something happened to reconcile us to God, to help us find a new way of living our lives. For us Protestants, it was a "once and for all" event. We don't repeat it every Sunday in the Mass. It was a once and for all event, a stunning development in the life of the world and, we are bold to believe, in the life of God. Paul put in succinctly in the passage from Romans that we heard today: *"Jesus died for our sins."* Over the next few weeks, we'll be looking at the meaning of those five words, a short sentence that has been interpreted in many, many ways: *"Jesus died for our sins."*

We must begin our reflections today in the Jewish context in which Jesus lived his life, in the idea of sacrificing animals in the Temple for human sins and for release from the power of those sins. It is an image rooted in the Passover, in the memory of how Israel was liberated from slavery. It is a memory in which our sacrament of the Lord's Supper is rooted.

In the Passover, the blood of the lamb was spread over the doors of the Hebrews in Egypt, and when the angel of death came upon the land of Egypt, the blood of the lamb spared the Hebrews from the visitation of death. And thus developed the idea of sacrificing animals in the Temple

as payment for sin. The lamb became a substitute for the sins of the people, appeasing the angry YHWH who watched the poor being exploited over and over again. Indeed, in some rituals in the Temple, the person offering the sacrifice placed his hands on the head of the lamb, confessing his sinfulness and thus transferring his sin into the lamb.

In this memory is rooted the "substitution" theory of the meaning of the Cross. We are sinners, and we deserve to be executed and sent to hell. No one said it better than did Jonathan Edwards in his words that led off this sermon. We deserve to be executed, but because of Jesus' great love for us, he, like the Passover lamb, took upon himself the punishment that we deserve. Again, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah says it well in the fifth verse: *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed."*

In this substitution theory of the Cross, its power resides in the idea of its ability to appease the angry God that Edwards described, the God who wants to throw us like a spider into the fire. Someone has to pay the price to God for our sinfulness, and Jesus steps up to pay it for us. That's how the substitution theory works. And all we have to do is believe in this idea, to have faith in this Jesus who died for our sins. If we do that, we'll go to heaven when we die. That is the power of the substitution theory of the Cross.

That's the idea that I grew up with and that most of us grew up with in American culture. That the purpose of Jesus Christ was his death, that in his death we have been reconciled with God and are assured of salvation *if* (and it's a mighty big "if") we just believe it. And "salvation" means going to heaven when we die, and that passage through death becomes the most important thing in our life. When someone asked me "Are you saved?" they meant – and I took it to mean – "What will happen to you when you die?" Thus the meaning of Jesus came to be centered on his death, and the meaning of my life comes to be my death, of what happens to me when I die. Under this substitution theory, the meaning of my life is not found in the love I received nor in the love I shared, not found in compassion or caring or justice, but rather in what will happen to me when I die – whether that angry God will hammer me or welcome me at my death.

In a strange but powerful way, the power of death once again comes to dominate my life. What happens at my death becomes the most important part of my life. Just as the *life* of Jesus has become unimportant in this substitution theory of the Cross, so my life becomes unimportant except that I believe that Jesus died for my sins.

Over the next few weeks of Lent, we'll be looking at ways to reconsider the meaning of the Cross, to move it out of the individualistic, meaning-about-life-after-death context that it has taken on in American culture. For now, I want to say this. The God



Ade Bethune

we have derived from Jonathan Edwards' sermon is not the God we see in Jesus Christ. Whatever Edwards meant in his sermon 266 years ago, we have taken his words and fashioned God into an angry tyrant who must have blood. We have made this approach a central principle of life, that killing is at the heart of life because killing is at the heart of God. That's why we love guns and killing so much in this culture. We believe that killing and violence are at the center of the life of God. If God must have blood, so must we have blood. And so we send our soldiers to Iraq to collect that blood as payment for September 11.

What we'll be considering over the next few weeks is a different view, that the God we see in Jesus Christ – in his life, in his death, in his resurrection – is a loving, welcoming God who seeks us out. The God who longs for us to be reconciled, the God who loves us deeply and profoundly. The God we see in the Cross is not the angry, punishing tyrant who longs for blood and who kills Jesus instead of us. The God we see in the Cross *is* God, the One who gives Himself for us, the God who shows us the cost of our resistance.

*"Jesus died for our sins."* We'll explore this short phrase more in the coming weeks, but for now, let us hear this good news rooted in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When God looks at us, She does not see a loathsome spider or a scary snake. When God looks at us, what She sees is Her own daughter and Her own son. That is the meaning of Jesus Christ. That is the meaning of the Cross. That is the meaning of our lives. Amen. ✠

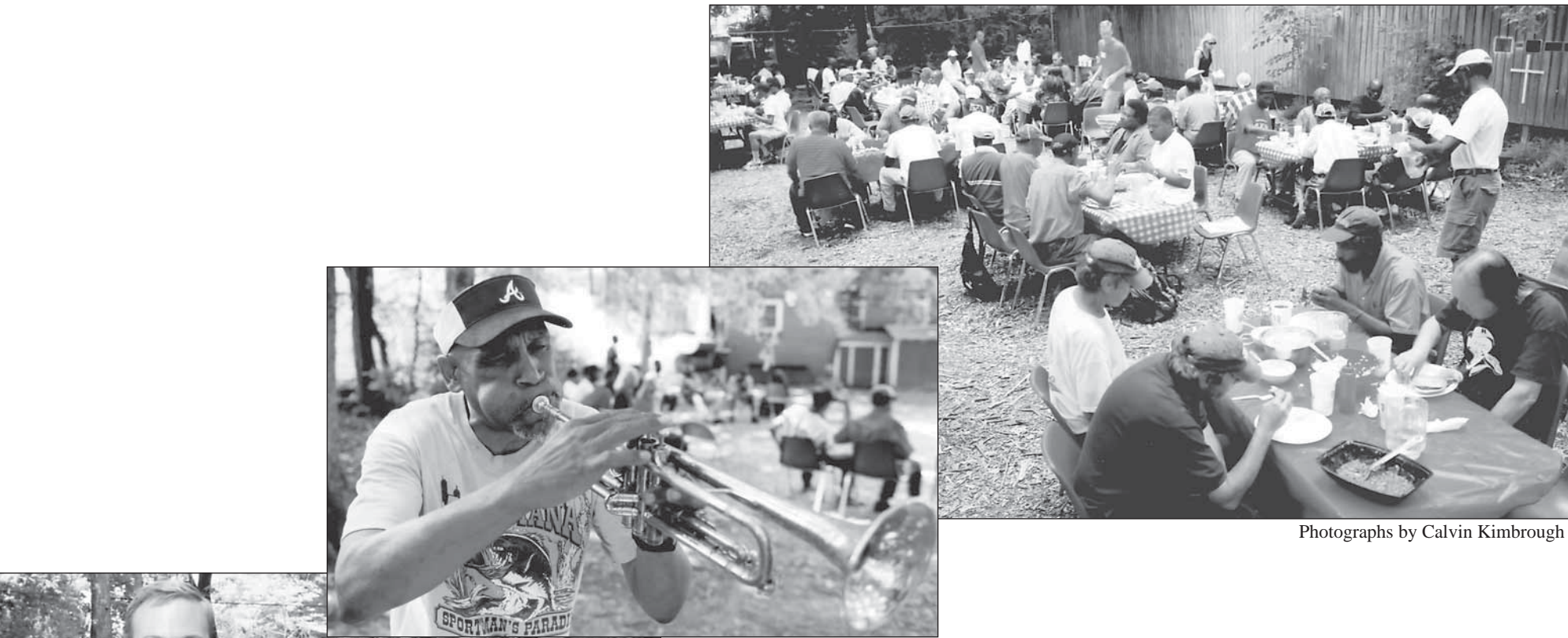


# Clemency

On May 22, 2008 the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles granted clemency to David Crowe. This decision came 2½ hours before his planned execution. He was granted life without parole. Instead of going to the State Capitol for a death vigil we had a celebration of life in front of our home on Ponce de Leon Avenue during the afternoon rush hour. Joining the celebration were Ira Terrell (*right*) and Robert Clayton, Rob McCulloch, Tom Monahan, Jonathan Hovey, Craig McDonald, Harley Hayden and Winston Robarts (*far right, left to right, holding the banner*).



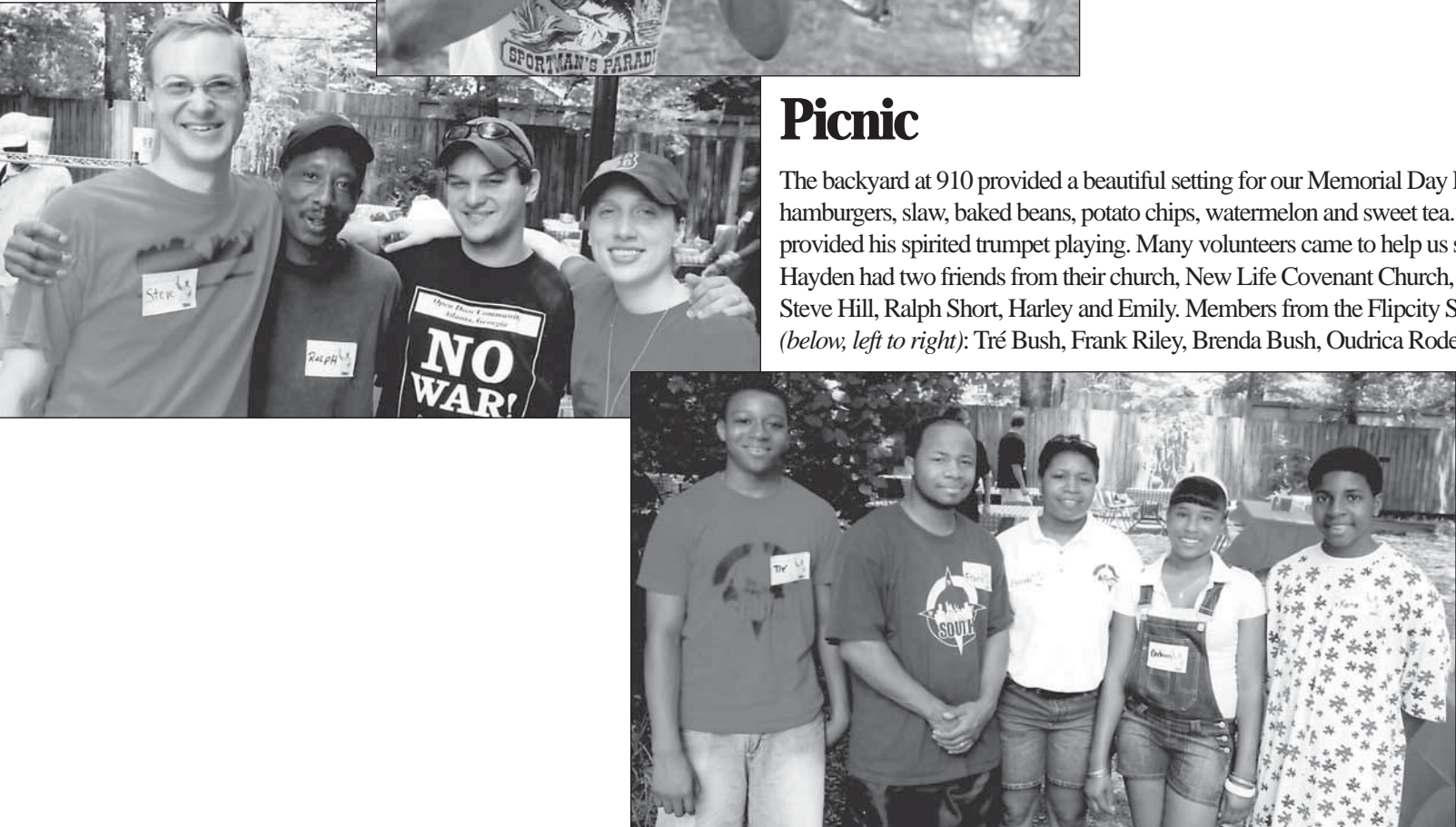
Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

# Picnic

The backyard at 910 provided a beautiful setting for our Memorial Day Picnic. We served 500 of our friends hamburgers, slaw, baked beans, potato chips, watermelon and sweet tea. Our friend Mitch Green (*above left*) provided his spirited trumpet playing. Many volunteers came to help us serve the meal. Emily and Harley Hayden had two friends from their church, New Life Covenant Church, join them (*left, left to right*): Steve Hill, Ralph Short, Harley and Emily. Members from the Flipcity South Tumblers also joined us (*below, left to right*): Tré Bush, Frank Riley, Brenda Bush, Oudrica Roderick, Kene Mba.



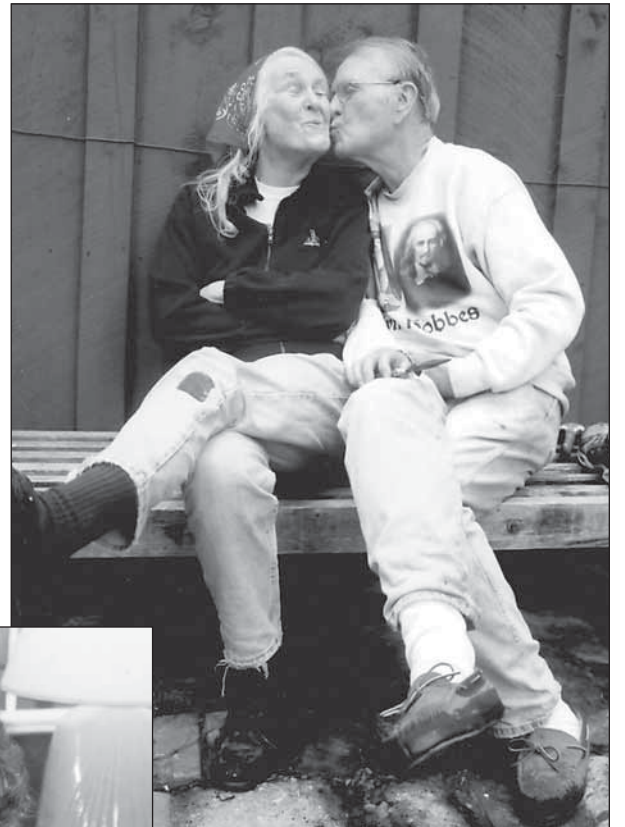


# In, Out & Around 910

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough

## Kisses

Dick Rustay celebrated his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 30 at Dayspring Farm during our spring retreat. He got to do many of the things he loves during the day: working in the compost; spreading wood chips (see photograph on page 2); cooking us a supper of blueberry pancakes with turkey sausages; and giving Gladys a kiss after supper! Then on June 11, Gladys and Dick celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss! Also during the retreat, on May 31, Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We all had our fill of ice cream cones to honor the occasions.



Calvin Kimbrough



Gladys Rustay



Photographs by Amanda Petersen



## Lewis Sinclair

A Service of Appreciation for Lewis Sinclair was held on June 15, 2008 in the gym at First Iconium Baptist Church (see "Lewis Stewart Sinclair" on page 1). Murphy Davis hosted the gathering (upper left) and Eduard Loring spoke about his friend Lewis (above). Friends of Lewis came from all over to celebrate his life. Joining in the singing with the Dixieland Jazz Band were Elise Witt (left, behind the trumpet), Candie (second from left) and Guy Carawan (seated, playing the guitar), and Joyce Brookshire (behind Guy, clapping). Guy and Candie came with others from the Highlander Center in New Market, Tennessee to sing and honor Lewis. Guy came to Highlander in 1959 as their music director and met Candie there in 1960. Lewis joined the Highlander Board in 1959.



**Lewis Sinclair**, *continued from page 1*

Shall Overcome,” was adapted and taught at Highlander. From there, the song has gone out across the globe to be sung anywhere people struggle for life, justice and human dignity. Lewis was always in the midst of it all, to support, challenge and help keep everyone singing, laughing and moving forward.

Eduard Loring often says that you can really tell who a person is by how they live when they retire. By that standard as well, Lewis was a leader and a model. He moved to Atlanta in 1977 and spent the last 30 years serving the least, the last and the lost in the struggle for justice. His friend Palmer Singleton said, “There was no cause too unpopular for that guy.”

Lewis demonstrated against war and imperialism. He worked tirelessly on death penalty cases, served on the board of directors of the Southern Center for Human Rights ([www.schr.org](http://www.schr.org)), got arrested for demonstrating against the death penalty, and helped to bury those who have been executed by the State of Georgia.

He worked for many years at the Open Door Community, using his best culinary skills to welcome the homeless poor. He also helped to agitate for housing, public toilets and an end to police harassment and Atlanta’s harsh “quality of life” ordinances, fashioned to criminalize poverty and hide the poor. His gumbo, lovingly prepared for Mardi Gras every year, became an Open Door tradition that brought joy to us all. Lewis was one of the only people you’d find who could stir the pot, sing and dance — all at the same time! And if you stayed around long enough, you’d find yourself doing it too.

Lewis also served on the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia and gave support and encouragement to every movement for justice and peace.

Our friend Lewis never quit. To his last illness, he showed up at the School of the Americas Protest (joining 20,000 in front of Fort Benning to protest the teaching of torture and military domination), he went to every anti-war march, he vigiled in protest of every execution, and he often waited at the truck stop across the highway from death row to see the visitors, hear the stories, spin a few yarns himself, and keep us all laughing and loving each other.

In December 1983, we had the first of a long string of executions in Georgia as the state resumed imposition of the death penalty after a pause of some years. Lewis, Mary and a number of other activists decided to resist the execution of John Eldon Smith with civil disobedience. They went to the Sloppy Floyd Building (I’m not joking — that’s the actual name of the building that houses the Department of Corrections, the Board of Pardons and Paroles and many other government offices!) and held a mock execution in the large dining room where hundreds of state employees gather to eat. Each demonstrator wore a button that said: “Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?” Lewis

volunteered to be the one “executed,” and it was done.

The group was, of course, quickly scurried away by the police, and Lewis couldn’t wait to say, “Guess what they charged us with!” (What, Lewis?) “Interrupting a Lawful Gathering — LUNCH!” Well, who woulda thunk it? But the criminal defendants were quickly dragged before a magistrate judge at the courthouse.

The judge actually thought that the demonstrators had done a good thing, so he promptly dismissed the charges. Then he gestured to the lawyer to approach the bench, and all of them went forward. He whispered, “Where can I get one of those buttons?” They all quickly took off their buttons and offered them gratefully to the judge. Lewis couldn’t have had more fun at a picnic. Except that Smitty was killed. But the grief, the tears and the laughter were always mingled; and for this we are more than grateful.



*Lewis and Francis Pauley at the Imperial Hotel Occupation in 1990.*

The love of Lewis’ life was Mary Brown Eastland Sinclair, with whom he spent the last 27 years of his life. All of us who have treasured their friendship have been richly blessed. When they fell head-over-heels in love in 1981, it was a joy to behold. Lewis was, by this time, 66, but we could have sworn they were a couple of teenagers! He told me once that he had never even imagined that it was possible to experience such a partnership. Their care for each other was beautiful, and we hold Mary close in our hearts as she lives on without her best friend and partner at her side.

For the past 18 years, Lewis had fought lymphoma. But he managed to laugh even about that. When he was diagnosed, he quickly said, “‘Indolent lymphoma,’ huh? Well, what else would you expect for a lazy old man?!” He was cared for lovingly in the Emory Winship Cancer Clinic and came to love and be loved by his nurses, technicians, cleaner-uppers and doctors. He always had special words of appreciation for Dr. Elliott Winton and his own personal doc, Henry Kahn.

We also remember Lewis’ son, James, his sister Connie, his three grandchildren, Cary, Amelia and Tiffany, and his five great-grandchildren.

Several hundred of us celebrated and appreciated Lewis’ life with many songs and stories, a New Orleans brass jazz band, and dinner in the gym of First Iconium Baptist Church (please see page 7).

Lewis Sinclair was a great and loving spirit, and he lived his life to the full. What a great gift and legacy he has left for us all. ♦

*Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

**Death Penalty**, *continued from page 1*

ability to scream or display any outward sign that he is in extreme pain.

To call this a disturbing situation would be an understatement. So much so that several veterinarians filed a brief in the case explaining that this three-drug cocktail does not meet even veterinary standards. Kentucky and 22 other states bar veterinarians from the use of drugs like pancuronium bromide. But not for the folks on death row. Why is it constitutional for people to be killed with drugs that are banned from use on our pets?

Because the third drug, potassium chloride, causes cardiac arrest, there is no medical reason for the use of the pancuronium bromide. Yet Chief Justice John Roberts tells us that we have an interest “in preserving the dignity of the procedure, especially where convulsions or seizures could be misperceived as signs of consciousness or distress.” We ignore the possibility that pancuronium bromide is actually masking intense suffering and use it to make the execution look good for the audience. How much lower can we go?

The ability to justify the death penalty is at its core an argument for the disposability of certain people. Not everyone is disposable, but the pariahs, the people we need to blame for our social ills, are fair game. The importance of this most recent case is that the argument about the mode of execution is inextricable from the existence of execution. If you can reach the conclusion to support the death penalty, why concern yourself with the potential pain to the inmate along the way?

**I think it reflects a deep-seated disdain for the value of the lives of the people on death row. . . . Who really cares if the poor suffer pain?**

The Supreme Court of course says none of this in its decision. Instead, the decision concludes that the risk of pain to the inmate is not substantial enough to violate the Bill of Rights. Really? This is so despite the fact that pancuronium bromide serves no identified therapeutic purpose in the execution process. Instead, the court focuses on the administration of the first drug, sodium thiopental, and concludes that its use sufficiently protects the inmate from pain. But does it? What is the likelihood that a mistake will be made? Acceptable risks for whom?

The state of Kentucky did a grand total of zero medical and scientific tests before implementing the three-drug killing cocktail now in use. They simply copied it, as most of the states have, from its development in Oklahoma in the late 1970s. In addition, Kentucky received no medical

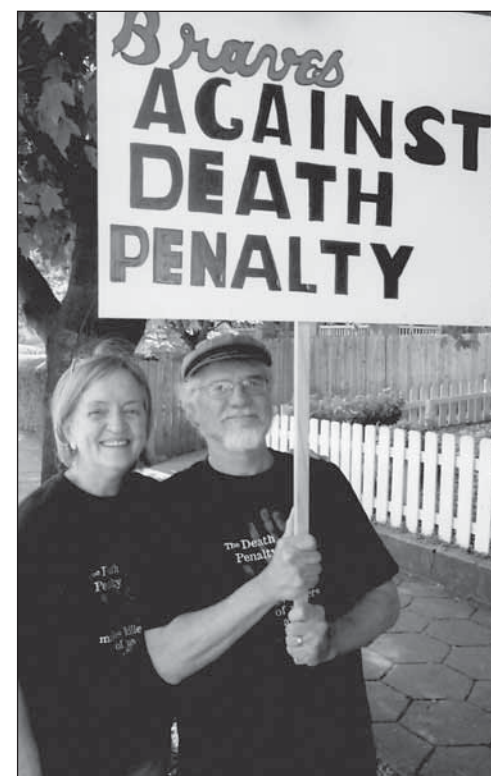
input on the appropriate doses of each of the three drugs. Doctors are precluded from participating in these killings, so Kentucky decided to have untrained people simply follow the instructions on the package of sodium thiopental. Not exactly an airtight argument for getting it right. But the majority of the Supreme Court is constitutionally unconcerned.

If the wrong dose of sodium thiopental is given, the condemned person dies a horribly painful death, all of which is masked by the second drug, pancuronium bromide. What steps are taken in Kentucky to ensure that the inmate is unconscious before his breathing is stopped? The warden and deputy warden stay in the execution room and observe whether or not the inmate looks unconscious. Readily available medical monitoring equipment, such as an EKG or blood pressure cuff, is not used. No one calls the inmate’s name, shakes his body, uses smelling salts or brushes his eyelashes — all simple, no-cost methods to determine the state of consciousness or lack thereof.

The warden and the deputy warden are present, though. As described in the Supreme Court decision, the warden testified in the trial court in Kentucky that “I honestly don’t know what you’d look for.” Further reassurance that the ban on cruel and unusual punishment is in less than competent hands.

You can read this most recent case as simply and only a discussion about the methods of execution. Instead, I think it reflects a deep-seated disdain for the value of the lives of the people on death row. The risks of pain are acceptable only for them, not the decision makers. Acceptable risks only for the marginalized. Who really cares if the poor suffer pain?

Our courts don’t lead; they follow. Some day, they will finally get in line with the rest of the civilized world and do what is right, but only when the dignity of all people is recognized: a simple truism that the justices of the Supreme Court don’t understand. ♦



Calvin Kimbrough

*Nelia Kimbrough and Eduard Loring celebrate the clemency granted to David Crowe on May 22, 2008.*

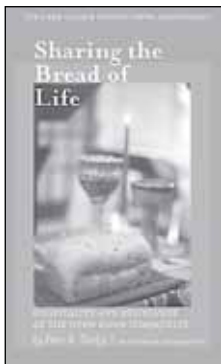


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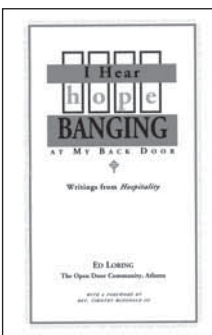
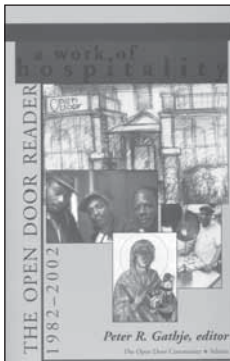
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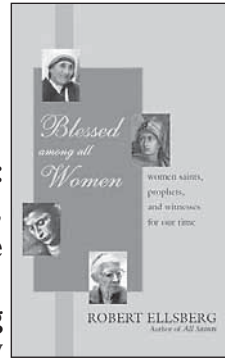
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## Book Review

### Blessed Among All Women: Women Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time

By **Robert Ellsberg**  
The Crossroad Publishing Company



Reviewed by **Judy Beisswenger**

*Editor's note: Judy Beisswenger is a loving friend of the Open Door Community. She comes to us several weeks per year to volunteer and raise hell on the streets with us. She is a radical Presbyterian who attends Edgehill United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. She often visited Don Beisswenger while he was in prison. Upon release, Don fell into her arms.*

Several years ago I was given a book titled "All Saints" by Robert Ellsberg, and for over three years I used it daily in my meditation. In this book, 365 "saints" are profiled, one for each day. By no means are all of them Catholic saints, nor are some "saints" in the traditional sense. Thomas Merton, Dag Hammarskjöld and even Vincent van Gogh are presented. Each day I could immerse myself in the life of an individual and think about his or her life in the world he or she was part of.

Then a little over a year ago, another book in the same genre by the same author appeared, titled "Blessed Among All Women: Women Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time." Here was another perspective on saints that was from the female consciousness. We have a gift, a compelling book that lets us look at familiar stories, and some we probably have never heard before, as we look at the power and accomplishments of women.

These women sought wisdom, found courage, and spoke to their belief in their religion and in their particular culture and century. Ellsberg has arranged their portraits in an intriguing way, by using the Beatitudes as the focus for each group that is highlighted. Let us look at some of these stories and how they are evident in our lives.

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit."** In this group the author has included many of the women who Catholics in particular consider to be saints, such as Mary, the mother of Jesus, and St. Katherine Drexel. But also included is Ade Bethune, the Catholic Worker artist, who died in 2002. It was Dorothy Day who could find in Ade's inspirational pictures messages that she could use in the Catholic Worker newspaper, and Ade would say that her work for Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker was her very salvation.

**"Blessed are those who mourn."** Many saints were attuned to the pain of the world, but Jesus also said that those who mourned would be comforted. Here we find a diverse group of saints, from a devoted disciple in Hagar the Egyptian to the "mothers of the disappeared" in Argentina, who lost innumerable family members under that country's military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. Here too is Karla Faye Tucker, a penitent, who was put to death in Texas for murder but came to say "yes" to God. Sister Helen Prejean said that Karla bore witness to the gospel message that God's love is greater than any sin and that God's love is freely offered to any who will

Book Review, continued on page 10

# Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Amanda Petersen began her work as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community in June. You have already seen her photography in Hospitality (April & June, 2008 and page 7 of this issue). We welcome her to our household at 910.

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volunteer  
needs  
at the  
Open Door Community

People to accompany Community members to doctors' appointments.

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

People to cook or bring supper for the Community on certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings.

Volunteers for Monday and Tuesday breakfasts (5:50-9:30 a.m.); Wednesday soup kitchen (9:50 a.m.-1:30 p.m.); Thursday showers (7:30-11:00 a.m.) and bag lunch (8:00 a.m.-12 noon).

Volunteers to help staff our foot clinic on Wednesday evenings (6:45-9:15 p.m.).

**For more information,**  
**contact Chuck Harris at**  
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**or 770.246.7627**

### Book Review, continued from page 9

accept it.

**"Blessed are the meek (gentle), for it is they who will inherit the earth."** This group includes several mystics, such as Mechthild of Magdeburg and Sister Julian of Norwich, but here we also find Emily Dickinson, who used nature and her belief that "each life converges to some centre" to highlight her deeply personal approach to the world. Certainly one of the most famous witnesses here is Anne Frank, as a chronicler of the Nazi Holocaust and her firm belief that everyone is good at heart. Also, how could one forget the Martyrs of Birmingham, those young people whose lives were lost in the Baptist church during the Civil Rights Movement? It is in their martyrdom that we realize these gentle souls in all their suffering did inherit eternal life.

## It is with great joy that I lift up each of these women whom Robert Ellsberg profiles.

**"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: they shall be satisfied."** Some women pay a high price for their courage, and here we see those who defend the oppressed and those whose ideas were well ahead of their time: Rahab, the faithful prostitute, St. Joan of Arc and St. Theresa of Avila, who relying on prayer surmounted all obstacles in her path in 16th-century Spain and later became a Doctor of the Church. Ann Hutchinson, a Puritan prophet; Margaret Fell, a 17th-century Quaker; Lucretia Mott, abolitionist and feminist; Sojourner Truth, abolitionist preacher; Mother Jones, labor agitator; Viola Liuzzo, martyr for the Civil Rights Movement; Fannie Lou Hamer, prophet of freedom, and more are profiled in this section as representatives of women of commitment and courage, willing to face unbelievable challenges in themselves and in the time and place they lived in.

Who are those who are blessed and merciful? Those who shared what they had, not looking for any other reward, nothing in return. These are the St. Brigids, the Louise de Marillacs, the Florence Nightingales of the 1900s and today. Not to be forgotten are Harriet Tubman; Satoko Kitahara, a Japanese woman dedicated to the people around her; Corrie ten Boom, rescuer and witness; and of course Mother Teresa of Calcutta, dedicated to charity and finding an end to poverty wherever it may be.

**"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they are celebrated for their focus and concentration."** Many saints held to their principles even if it meant death. They are mystics, women who fled persecution, women who stood out from their neighbors and who stepped out of their islands of safety to live their dreams. Mollie Rogers, founder of the Maryknoll Sisters, was convinced of her plan to establish a mission seminary and persisted through much resistance from the "powers that be." Flannery O'Connor, in her fiction, opened up a lens on the world that not only showed the horror and mystery of lives but the redemption that might be found in God.

**"Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God."** Ellsberg describes peacemaking in today's world as a social imperative with an urgency that fills one's being. It is here that we find Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker, and Penny Lernoux, a journalist whose short journey in life was tied to the struggles against dictatorship in

Latin America and being a voice for the voiceless in solidarity with the poor.

**"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake ... the kingdom of heaven will be theirs."** The cost of discipleship is high, and there are Catholic women who have had their blood shed, Quakers (Mary Dyer) who have been martyred, and "witches" (Rebecca Nurse) put to the gallows. There have been women in Latin America such as the Maryknoll sisters Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel, put to death in El Salvador for defending their Christian values.

It is with great joy that I lift up each of these women whom Robert Ellsberg profiles. He highlights that there are saints, prophets and witnesses in every age, from the earliest women in Bible stories through recent times — women who have borne their witness as their particular way of living in the world. To classify them as only Christian would be a disservice, for there are women from many different cultures and religious backgrounds who represent each of these Beatitudes.

These reflections help us to focus on their lives and witness. But is not each of us called to live out our place in the world as a "saint," a witness to the injustice we see? These reflections should resonate and evoke a response to our fears and anxieties around our own families, friends, neighbors and those with whom we inhabit this planet. ✚

### poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

## Imprisoned and Forlorn

Cold steel,  
 unholy comforter, pitiable pillow of despair,  
 caging all but fitful thoughts that flit  
 through unyielding bars to a loved one  
 or a bit of remembered joy.

You kneel,  
 grasping frantically for the billowing hope  
 just out of reach, the garbled speech  
 of a passionate prayer tossed  
 toward an unknown God  
 Who doesn't seem to care.

The Wheel  
 of days turns slowly and in the maze  
 of your regret for deviant ways do not forget  
 that you are loved and not forgotten.  
 Cupped in holy Hands

the hunger in your ravaged face betrays  
 the depth of long-pent sorrow,  
 the height of new-born praise,  
 in the promised reprieve  
 for one so long forlorn.

**R. Bedford Watkins**

Eastpoint, Florida  
 August 16, 2007

*Send us your poetry!*  
*We especially welcome poetry from*  
*people in prison and on the streets.*



# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Please accept this offering in memory of your dear friend George Britt. And please thank “RoboCop” for the fine story about him (“Goodbye George,” *Hospitality*, May 2008).

I used to live near you, in an apartment on Myrtle Street, and would drop off clothes occasionally — that was from about 1976 until 1982, when I bought a house on Cherokee Avenue in Grant Park. *Hospitality* has followed me from Myrtle Street to Grant Park to Alabama, where I moved in 1997, and I enjoy it still.

Keep up the good work and the good fight. Thank you all for all you do.

Kathy Mullally  
Lineville, Alabama

Dear Murphy,

I’ll miss seeing George leaning on the wall at the bottom of the steps of 910, cigarette smoke billowing, or lingering in the post office or on its portico, waiting to engage someone in conversation and where I often got a bear hug, or sitting on the steps of the church across the street from the post office, worldly possessions piled around him.

Thank you for sharing a wonderful remembrance of a brilliant, charming, maddening, wacky, lovable, heartbreaking man — beard, hair, cap, layers of clothes, funny names, history and all. Thank you for the generosity of heart and hospitality, caring and love, patience and forbearance you gave him. And thank you for the opportunity you gave me to have known George. I’ll miss him.

Name withheld by request

Jenny and I both are saddened by the news of George’s death. She loved to hear him always say to her, “Go back to Chicago,” in reference to some TV show he knew, and I was called “Peter Parker,” a Spider-Man reference I think. George will be remembered in prayer at Manna House as he was today, and again next week when we are open. He was for so long a constant presence at the Open Door that I always looked forward to seeing him, and on occasion ran into him on the bus when I’d be riding in from the North Avenue station taking the train from the airport.

Hope you all are well.

Peace,

Pete Gathje and Jenny Case  
Emmanuel House Catholic Worker  
Memphis, Tennessee

Phil Leonard,

I don’t understand how Atlanta has “betrayed” murderers, thieves and rapists (“Betrayal and Denial,” *Hospitality*, April 2008) and why Atlanta has to provide housing and health care to these criminals (which they do). Provide jobs also?

How can you compare these people to Jesus?

Hugh Taylor  
Newnan, Georgia

Dear Open Door Friends,

Our “dream team” of high-powered lawyers obtained a \$2.3 million settlement in federal court on behalf of the homeless in Fresno who were subjected to unconstitutional raids conducted by the city of Fresno.

Liza was the key expert witness in the case. She was also named the “settlement administrator” to use the money to help the homeless with a combination of direct cash payments, first and last month’s rent, advance rent payments, utilities, advance utility payments, transportation, etc. Details are on our Web site at [www.sbcw.org](http://www.sbcw.org), on the “What’s New” page.

Bryan Apper  
St. Benedict Catholic Worker  
Fresno, California

Dear Murphy,

What a beautiful tribute for George Britt in the recent *Hospitality*. His name tag in Greek letters is a parable in itself.

Thanks and peace,

Woody McKay  
Retired Presbyterian minister  
Stone Mountain, Georgia

Calvin,

Goodness, we had not yet heard. Neither Melissa nor I can really imagine 910 or the yard without George. We will offer up a prayer for him, and trust he is wholly at rest in peace and joy. We offer up a prayer of thanks for all the love George received and gave at the OD for years too. Our prayers are with all of you as well, and hope that everyone is holding up okay.

Love and peace,

Robbie Turner  
Lexington, Virginia

*Robbie and Melissa are former Resident Volunteers at the Open Door Community.*



Brian Kavanagh

Dear Eduard,

Your prejudice against Catholicism, manifested at the end of your March article, “Angola Bound II,” is unfortunate.

Who are you to judge? “These men” absolutely know that both abortion and the prison system are murderous. As should all people. Who are you to point a finger?

It is interesting that your house was founded on the Catholic Worker House tradition. No Catholic says that one life is more important than the other. All life is of equal worth and dignity.

Your anti-Catholic sentiment is not part of the love, tolerance, acceptance and humility that Jesus taught. The same prejudice you fight against is one that you practice.

Check your ego, pride and prejudice before you point fingers. We’re all human and broken in our own individual ways, and your sin shines through glaringly in this article. A Christian apology to a denomination that you don’t approve of is necessary. Print this letter along with your apology.

I have lost interest in and respect for the Open Door Community, both of which I’ve had for years.

A proud Catholic

Dear Open Door Community,

When we received our tax stimulus refund, we discussed the implications behind it. There are services that are constantly being taken away from those who need them most, and we feel that this money does not belong to us. We have done nothing to earn this, and if anything we feel it has been taken away from people who are so generous in Spirit but poor in financial support. So we are returning this money to you, hoping it will help to alleviate your financial burdens.

In peace and love,

The Malley Family  
Renton, Washington

Dear Ed (I feel like I know you after reading your articles!) —

Please accept my donation to help with your good works. I would like for a generous portion of the amount to be used to send *Hospitality* to women prisoners, please.

Good will to you, your family, your staff and your clients

Sincerely,

Isabel Fleming  
Springfield, Tennessee

Dear Ed and Murphy,

What can I say? I will keep you in prayer each day this week and especially pray for the people on death row facing their executions. How barbaric! Your faith is an inspiration in a world gone mad in the name of “justice.” Blessings to you. Tell David [Crowe] he is being remembered in prayer in New Zealand.

Blessings,

Jim Consedine  
Christchurch, New Zealand

Ed,

I really enjoyed your “April 8, 1968: A Personal Reflection” (*Hospitality*, April 2008). Stood there and got choked up. Good, good journey this life.

Love,

Richard Hill  
Washington, D.C.

Calvin,

Greetings from Athens! Hope you are well. I wanted you to know that you have played an important role in my son Gabe’s confirmation. One of the class requirements was to present a reflection on someone in the church who is a helpful witness to Jesus and the Christian life. We told the young people this could be a “saint” from church history or someone more contemporary. Gabe went with the contemporary option and chose you! He told the class about some of his experiences at the Open Door and about this great banjo player and photographer he knows there. Then he showed off some of your photography from *Hospitality*.

I just wanted you to know that ... and to say thank you! Please give our love to all.

Grace and peace,

Mark Harper  
Athens, Georgia

*Mark Harper is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens. He was a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door from 1985 to 1987, where he met his wife, Susan Grine Harper. Gabe is one of their three children.*

Dear Murphy,

I got your letter, the pretty picture, and really appreciate all of the help. I also appreciate the prayers for all of us here on the row.

Yes, the *Baze* ruling was bad, but until attorneys argue that the death penalty is unconstitutional, instead of the way it’s carried out, it will never end. The justices mentioned several times in the *Baze* ruling that (in so many words) the constitutionality of the death penalty itself was not before them, only the method of execution, as if they were begging some (any) attorney to simply raise that it’s unconstitutional because of the same exact reason it was in *Furman v. Georgia*. I guess it’s too much money in it to get rid of it? As in job security, perhaps? That’s what most of us on the row believe, anyway, even though all will not admit it.

In any event, thanks again for everything.

Sincerely,

L.  
Death Row  
Jackson, Georgia



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Breakfast & Sorting Room:** Monday and Tuesday, 7 – 8 a.m.  
**Women’s Showers & Sorting Room:** Wednesday, 8 a.m.  
**Soup Kitchen:** Wednesday, 10:45 a.m. – 12 noon.  
**Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinic:**  
Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
**Men’s Showers & Bag Lunch:** Thursday, 8 – 11:30 a.m.  
**Use of Phone:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.  
Wednesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. – 12 noon.  
**Retreats:** Four 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.

**We are open...**  
**Sunday:** We invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m., and join  
us following worship for a delicious supper.  
We are open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. for donations.  
**Monday through Thursday:** We answer telephones from 9 a.m.  
until 12 noon and from 2 until 6 p.m. We gratefully accept  
donations from 9 until 11 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 and weekly Eucharist.*

## Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

July 6	Worship at 910 Pete Gathje preaching	August 3	Worship at 910 Eucharist Service
July 13	Worship at 910 Eucharist Service music with Elise Witt	August 10	Worship at 910 Weldon Nisely preaching
July 20	Worship at 910 Nelia Kimbrough leading	August 17	Worship at 910 Hiroshima Remembered Dick Rustay leading
July 27	Worship at 910 Murphy Davis preaching	August 24	No Worship at 910 Retreat at Dayspring Farm
		August 31	Worship at 910 the Singing Labor Movement Calvin Kimbrough leading



Calvin Kimbrough

*Come join us on July 13 for another  
fine evening of singing with Elise  
Witt following our Eucharist service  
at 5:00 p.m. at the Open Door  
Community. Then stay for supper!*

### 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  
404.874.9652  
or visit  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

### Medicine Needs List

#### Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

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

#### Foot Care Clinic

epsom salt  
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 are also looking for  
volunteers to help staff  
our Foot Care Clinic  
on Wednesday evenings  
from 6:45 - 9 p.m.!**

## Needs of the Community



**we need sandwiches  
meat & cheese on  
whole wheat**

#### Living Needs

- ☐ jeans
- ☐ work shirts
- ☐ men’s belts (34” & up)
- ☐ men’s underwear
- ☐ socks
- ☐ reading glasses
- ☐ walking shoes  
(especially 9 ½ and up)
- ☐ T-shirts  
(L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
- ☐ baseball caps
- ☐ MARTA cards
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ trash bags  
(30 gallon, .85 mil)

#### Personal Needs

- ☐ shampoo (full size)
- ☐ shampoo (travel size)
- ☐ lotion (travel size)
- ☐ toothpaste (travel size)
- ☐ combs & picks
- ☐ hair brushes
- ☐ lip balm
- ☐ soap
- ☐ multi-vitamins
- ☐ disposable razors
- ☐ deodorant
- ☐ vaseline
- ☐ shower powder
- ☐ Q-tips

#### Food Needs

- ☐ turkeys
- ☐ hams
- ☐ sandwiches:  
meat & cheese  
on whole wheat  
bread
- ☐ quick grits

#### Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ single bed  
mattresses
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ sheets (any size)

*From 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate  
your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 a.m. or after 2 p.m., it would be helpful. THANK YOU!*