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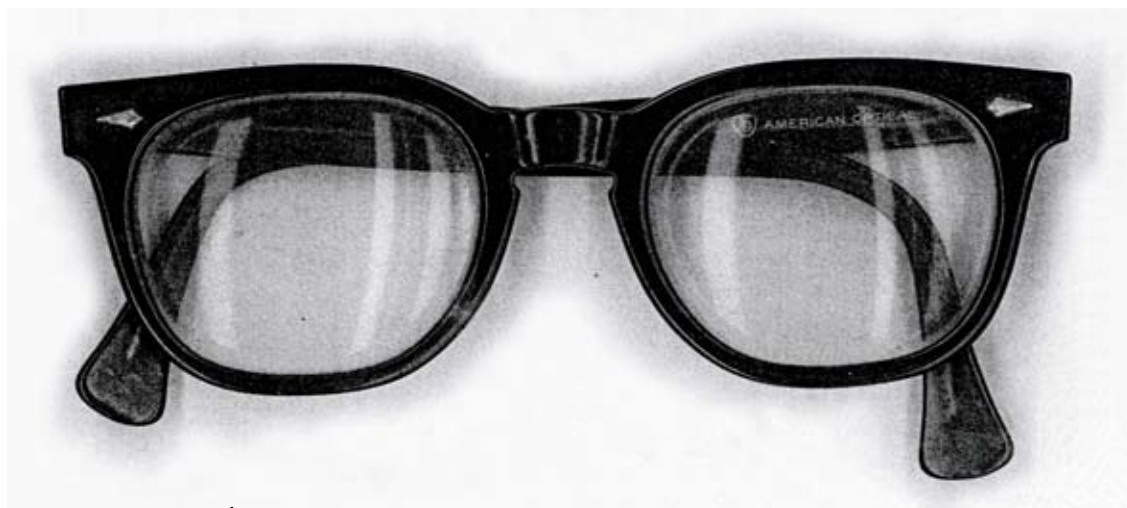
# HOSPITALITY

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

**Vol. 32, No. 10**

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 404.874.9652 [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) **November-December 2013**



## Through Smitty's Eyes

### 30 Years of Executions in Georgia

**By Murphy Davis**

*"There remains an experience of incomparable value. We have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcasts, the suspects, the maltreated — in short, from the perspective of those who suffer. Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behavior. Christians are called to compassion and to action."*  
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

On my office wall, propped on a picture frame, hangs a pair of brown horn-rimmed glasses. I see them every day. They belonged to John Eldon Smith, the first man to be executed in Georgia since 1964. Smitty died on December 15, 1983, now 30 years ago. He wore the glasses until he sat down in the electric chair. They remain on my wall as a reminder: never forget what you learned from this man and his journey, and always look at what comes next as if peering through Smitty's glasses.

Smitty was my friend — my very good friend — and had been since 1978, when I first corresponded and visited with him at the old death row at the Georgia State Prison in Reidsville. In those years he was known by some as Tony Machetti, and he had been married to Rebecca Machetti, who was also on death row, at the Georgia Women's Correctional Institution in Hardwick, just south of Milledgeville.

Smitty was a small white man, mostly bald with a fringe of brown hair. If you had met him on the outside, you might have assumed he was a midlevel bureaucrat in an office somewhere, or the corner druggist, or even an insurance salesman, which he once was. He had a friendly face and manner and got along with almost everybody. I don't recall ever meeting anybody who disliked him — except of course the families of Ronald and Juanita Akins, for whose deaths he had been convicted and sentenced to die.

It was an awful crime. Ronald Akins had previously been married to Rebecca, and they had three daughters, who lived in North Miami with Rebecca. There were allegations

that Rebecca aspired to be part of the Miami Mafia and took on the name "Machetti" and urged her new husband, Smith, to change his name to Tony Machetti. The story was that to get into the Mafia circle, "Tony" and an acquaintance, John Maree, would have to commit a murder, to show themselves worthy of the life of the underworld.

I got to know Smitty and I got to know Rebecca. And the attorneys who took on their appeals were good friends. It was clear for a long time that Smitty was likely to be one of the first in Georgia to be executed following the reinstatement of the death penalty by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1976.

Three people were accused of the crime. Rebecca was accused of setting it up so that she and her daughters would receive \$20,000 from Ronald's life insurance. At her behest, Smitty and Maree drove from South Florida to Macon and lured Ronald and his wife of 20 days to a secluded area, where they killed both with a shotgun at close range.

When the three were arrested several months later, the police had a full handprint of Maree's from the victims' car. It was the only physical evidence in the case. Maree made a full confession and fingered Rebecca as the mastermind and John Eldon as the trigger man. He turned state's evidence and testified against both and received concurrent life sentences. Maree was paroled in 1987, four years after Smitty was killed. Rebecca served 36 years in prison and was paroled in 2010.

In 1978, I was invited by the American Civil Liberties Union of Middle Georgia to take part in a debate on the death penalty with Don Thompson, assistant district attorney of Bibb County, who had assisted in the prosecution of Maree and the Smith/Machettis. It was quite a vigorous debate before a large crowd at Christ Episcopal Church in downtown Macon. In making his points, Thompson often referred to the murder of the Akinses as one of the worst ever and referred to the three accused in equally disparaging terms. He never mentioned that Maree had received a different

## Goodbye, Tom Watson — and Good Riddance!

**By Mary Catherine Johnson**

In May we published the article "Tom Watson Must Go!" in support of *Creative Loafing* writer Joeff Davis' effort to have the statue of Watson, a notoriously racist and anti-Semitic Georgia politician who died in 1922, removed from the grounds of the state Capitol, where it has occupied a prominent place since it was erected in the 1920s. And we are overjoyed to report that, in October, Gov. Nathan Deal announced that the statue will be removed from the Capitol grounds in January 2014! It will be relocated to Plaza Park, a fenced area across the street from the Capitol.

Although Deal's executive order cites construction and renovation plans as the reason for the removal, the fact that it will be permanent indicates that there was more to his decision than that. The people have spoken, saying that we will no longer tolerate a racist presence on grounds that belong to all the people of Georgia. We are deeply grateful to our many readers who signed Joeff's petition on Change.org. Every signature was communicated to the governor.

In an email to Open Door Partner Eduard Loring and me, Joeff made his excitement about the decision very clear:

"I have some fantastic news. Thanks to your love and support, WE DID IT! After standing in front of the Georgia Capitol for 81 years, the Thomas Watson statue is finally being taken down!!!! . . . .



Calvin Kimbrough

*Prayer on Good Friday 2013 beneath the Tom Watson statue.*

"This is a huge victory. We have deeply impacted Georgia history and how our Capitol will be viewed in the future. Please continue to encourage people to sign the petition at [www.change.org/petitions/georgia-legislature-remove-white-supremacist-statue-2](http://www.change.org/petitions/georgia-legislature-remove-white-supremacist-statue-2). Now we need to focus on getting it removed from the Capitol grounds permanently.

"Your article had a huge impact on the signatures to the petition. CONGRATULATIONS! and THANKS!"

**Through Smitty's Eyes** *continued on page 8*

**Goodbye, Tom Watson** *continued on page 10*

## Basta! Converge on Fort Benning November 22-24



SOA Watch

Join the SOA Watch movement at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia as we continue to speak truth to power and demand a real change in US foreign policy!

# SOAW.org

### Please Help!

#### Men's shoes sizes 11-15



We need gently used running and walking shoes for our friends from the streets.

### Thank You!

# Balancing the Inward Journey With the Outward

By Catherine Meeks

The challenge to take the inward journey is always before us. But our culture and even our religious communities discourage that journey in many ways. There is always too much to do, and it is very easy for the time and energy that it takes to travel on the journey inward to be used up in our busy lives, which have been constructed around the notion of helping the kingdom to come into being and of giving up our lives for that work.

"Be still and know that I am God" is lost on us so much of the time because the daily pace of our lives often leaves no space for being still. One of the most powerful images from Scripture is the report of Jesus going out early, before daybreak, to a lonely place to pray. If Jesus could take the time to do this, surely we can. Our work is important, but think about our work in comparison to his work and the short time in which he had to do it. Though we don't really know how long we have to do our work, we are not as driven by the reality of time constraints as by the cultural mandates to burn the candle from both ends.

We are caught in a collective way of being that wants to determine achievement, and thus personal worth, by how busy we are and how many tasks we have to juggle at one time. It takes a great deal of letting go of this notion in order to allow days to ebb and flow and to have days that are not filled up from morning until night with all the tasks we have put before ourselves.

The journey inward requires time and space. Howard Thurman says that "we go down into the depths of ourselves and what

we see there is universalized in the world." So it is very important to know what is being universalized. The effort to get to know one's deepest parts is crucial because, if this important work is not done, one's life is lived unconsciously. God is always seeking us, and in our effort to make a response to that seeking and to be open to seeking God, we have to be open to learning about ourselves.

The journey outward, the giving away of one's self for others, is empowered by the pilgrim knowing himself or herself. It is actually a rather shameful thing to see unconscious people out in the world trying to do good and thinking of themselves as saviors instead of realizing that this is not the case. The conscious person has some understanding of the reasons why a particular path of service has been chosen and is aware of the personal benefit that comes from having chosen the path. This type of awareness does not detract from the power of one's witness; it actually makes it stronger. People who are unwilling to go on the inward journey often invite great suffering into their own lives, because this work is required and attempts to avoid it only result in unnecessary suffering.

Actually God's desire for us is that our lives will be balanced between the inward journey and the outward. They nourish each other and bring great joy to the life that is lived within the boundaries of balance between them. The fear of losing out on



The Prayer

Susan MacMurdy

something that makes it appear necessary to try to embrace everything at the same time, and the effort to do more than any one person can do, are lost as we face our limitations and make more reasonable assessments of our personal resources.

This practice leads to peace and healing. Then we have our experience of peace and healing to share as part of the outward journey, and this can help to open the same doors for others as we joyfully embrace our work in the world. ✦

*Catherine Meeks is a community and wellness activist and an active member of the Open Door Community. Now retired from academia, she taught African-American Studies at Mercer University and was the Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies at Wesleyan College. She is the author of five books and a columnist for The Macon Telegraph and The Huffington Post.*

## 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.

### Open Door Community

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Calvin Kimbrough

The worship table at Dayspring Farm on August 24.

### Newspaper

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**Gladys Rustay:** Jackson Prison Trip  
**Dick Rustay:** Dayspring Farm Coordinator  
**Zachary Crow and Terry Kennedy:** Food Coordinators  
**Lorna Mauney-Brodek:** Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic Coordinator  
**Eduard Loring:** Street Theologian  
**Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough:** Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators  
**Sarah Humphrey:** Coordinator for Administration, Volunteers, Hardwick Prison Trip and Resident Volunteer Applications  
**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry



# Part 4

## Eucharist

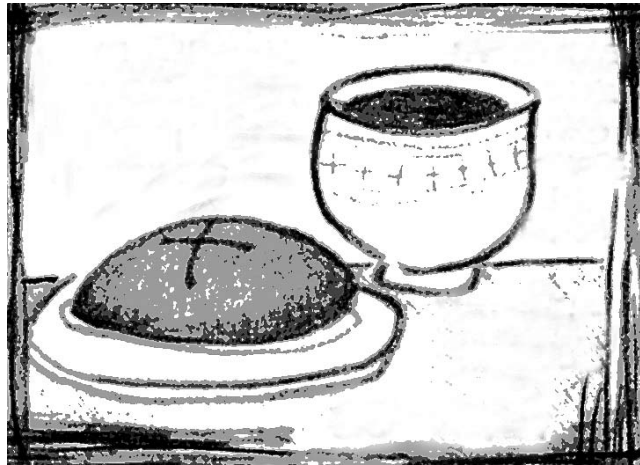
### Counter-Liturgies of the unKingdom

By Nathan Dorris

Each of the liturgical trajectories we have been focusing on in this series — community, weakness and grace — can be seen in the sacrament of Eucharist, a practice commonly understood as foundational to the existence of the *ekklesia*. It is, as Alexander Schmemmann puts it, “not only the ‘most important’ of all the offices, it is also the source and goal of the entire liturgical life of the Church.” A deep and complex act, Eucharist is both real and symbolic, concrete and mystical, physical and metaphysical; it is, as Richard Beck says, “the realization of new social and political arrangements, the embodiment of the social leveling seen in Jesus’ ministry, most profoundly in his acts of table fellowship.”

At the Open Door Community we break bread together, black and white, gay and straight, male and female, as St. Paul enjoined us to so long ago. Eucharist is irreducibly communal, for in it the disparate individuals of the community are brought to unity through the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the fruit of the vine. At the same time that it calls us into being as a community, it also works on our imaginations about the boundaries of that community, leading us toward embrace rather than exclusion. In this way we begin to enact resistance against the forces of incarceration, homelessness and racism.

Working against the liturgies of consumer capitalism, which reduce our identities to those of mere consumers, Eucharist is a liturgy of consumption in which we, as individuals, are consumed *by* and *into* the body of Christ. “In the Eucharist,” says William Cavanaugh, “we do not simply stand apart, as individuals, from the rest of creation — appropriating, consuming, and discarding.... We are absorbed into a larger body.” As 1 Corinthians 10 says, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of



Nelia Kimbrough

the one bread.”

If the Eucharist does, indeed, join us into the body of Christ, the nature of that body is certainly not the body of a triumphant war hero or some violent avenger from the skies. In Eucharist we become the body of the Executed One, united in solidarity *with* those who suffer, not our ability to inflict their pain. In resistance to the doctrines of might and strength, we remember that the unKingdom, as Cavanaugh says, “must [always] first of all stand at the cross,” which “remains revelation — not a mere pointer to something else.” And though we know that our lives constitute the presence of Christ *in this world*, we are also aware that, after he rose, Christ’s body still bore the marks of his torture and suffering, and always will.

Finally, in the Eucharist we are gifted with grace. For it is in the Eucharist, Schmemmann says, that “all merits ... disappear and dissolve. Life comes again to us as *Gift*, a free and divine gift.... Everything is free, nothing is due and yet all is given. And, therefore, the greatest humility and obedience is to *accept* the gift, to say yes — in joy and gratitude.”

If Christian communities are to take seriously the act of communion as a significant one for the body, we must not cast aside its economic implications. Ched Myers comments, “Bread breaking rightly stands at the center of the church’s life as an invitation to ‘remember’ — to remember the

economy of grace practiced by our ancestors in the faith, and to remember what we ourselves must do to embody an ethic of equality in a world deeply divided by ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots.’”

These are counter-liturgies of the unKingdom, which challenge the logic of the market, coercive strength and meritocracy. They are first and finally embedded within the Eucharist, the center of life at the Open Door. They are shaping us ever more into the likeness of Christ, as we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Enacted in concrete practices rooted in the rhythms of our common life, they challenge us to resist the powers and principalities of this present darkness, which consigns 20,000 men, women and children to sleep on the streets of Atlanta, puts its own citizens and those of other nations to death, and pits us against one another, competing for things we don’t need.

We proclaim our freedom from the Domination System through our lives, struggling daily to liberate ourselves from our own tendencies toward domination and oppression. We are trying to bring a holy anarchy to this land, one of freedom, equality and justice for all. So it is with an early Plowshares Collective confession of faith (slightly adapted) that we proclaim:

We believe that God has already intervened in this dark history of ours.

We believe there is hope.

We believe that God rules our common history. Not the market. Not the United States. Not the industrial economy. Despite their big and competing claims.

We believe that human beings (so says Easter) are free from the power of death in all its forms and delivery systems.

We believe that God who raised Christ from the dead will also quicken our imaginations, and thereby our bodies and our lives.

We believe this is the meaning of the resurrection. And we’ve come to say so. ✚

*Nathan Dorris is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community. This article is the last of four parts, based on a paper he delivered on the panel “Theopolitical Boundaries: Anarchism and Christianity” at the Christian Scholars’ Conference in Nashville in June.*

## The Sacred Right to Pee for Free

By Terry Kennedy

There are some things in life that are a given, things that don’t need ordinances or executive orders or amendments, things that are a natural right.

One of these natural rights is, in a phrase coined by Edward Loring in an action against the city of Atlanta in 1996, the right to “pee for free with dignity as Jesus did in Galilee.”

If I didn’t know any better, I would think the issue of public restrooms in Atlanta has been in City Hall and been filibustered for 17 years. After so much talk, the time is *now* for the city to stop dragging its feet and do something that is vital to the health and well-being of a place that the powers-that-be want us to believe is an international city. A few nice toilets *are* now available downtown but only from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Bayard Rustin, an adviser to Martin Luther King Jr. and the chief organizer of the March on Washington in 1963, was fond of saying that the proof of what a person believes is in their actions. So if Atlanta wants to believe that it’s different from other Southern cities, then it must stop acting like the idiots in Columbia, South Carolina — who wanted to force all homeless people to live in a camp outside the city — when it comes to how we treat our homeless brothers and sisters.

We must separate ourselves from the apathy that most

cities feel when it comes to those who have been affected by the violence of poverty. The action that we want from Atlanta is to put public toilets throughout the city and stop arresting homeless people for relieving themselves in public when they have nowhere else to do it.

It would save the city millions of dollars if it put money toward this instead of building a billion-dollar sports stadium and throwing millions at two churches to make them get lost. The city needs to put its focus on the needs of its people and not on one billionaire who doesn’t give a damn about people but whose only concern is making more millions and displacing poor Black and white citizens.

Finding a place to pee should not be like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. In Atlanta, finding a public restroom is as difficult as finding a drink of water, which I wrote about in the August *Hospitality*.

Contrary to popular belief, the homeless are part of the public. They are members of our community. When we stop looking at the condition of a person and look at the person as a person, then and only then will we be outraged at the way the homeless are treated. I believe we can all learn a valuable lesson in how to treat the homeless if we look at the Open Door Community and how, from the beginning, its members have put themselves on the streets with those who are already there.

As we at the Open Door know, any time you are in solidarity with the poor and disenfranchised, the possibility of jail is real. So the question we must ask ourselves is what we are willing to do to get the city of Atlanta to provide public restrooms for all its citizenry. As for me, I am willing to repeat history and sit on a toilet in Mayor Kasim Reed’s office. Who is with me?

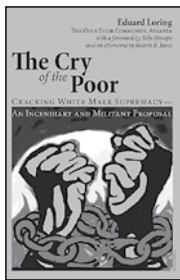
### This is not just a homeless issue; this is a people issue.

The consciousness of the people who control the purse strings in this city must be seared by the ridiculousness of a person not being able to pee with dignity. This is not just a homeless issue; this is a people issue.

Have you ever needed to pee to the point of feeling that your bladder was about to burst? Imagine this situation if you’re out on the streets. You spot a restaurant and have a salvific moment. You enter the restaurant, afraid to breathe because you might pee on yourself. You approach the restroom, only for it to say “For Paying Customers Only.” So then ... you pee on yourself!

**The Right to Pee for Free** *continued on page 10*

# The Open Door Community Press Books



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Cracking White Male Supremacy —  
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

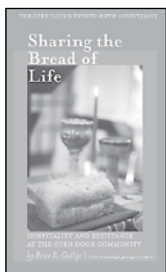
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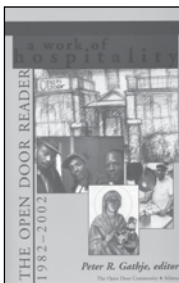
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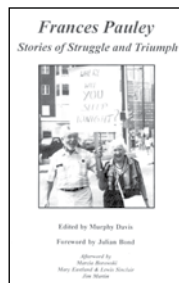
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## Moving Toward Abolition



# State-Ordered Death and the Two Crosses of Christ

**By John Harrison**

Murphy Davis once told me that she can recognize when a group of death penalty abolitionists are from Texas by the look of exhaustion in their faces. I'm beginning to understand what she meant.

In 13 months as a seminary student in Texas, I have called a community together to mourn, pray, sing and worship through 22 execution days. As we gather so frequently to raise a Christian witness against the death penalty, a liturgy has emerged that gives meaning to both our hope and our lamentation.

Each of the 22 mornings before an execution has found me at the front door of the seminary, draping our most public cross with a black shroud and placing a card at its foot to explain why. Good Friday was an execution day, and Jesus was a victim of the death penalty. He was crucified to deter any who would follow in his path, just like folks on death row in Texas are being injected with poison to deter anyone who would follow in their path. Jesus endured the same shame, humiliation and violent death that Texas plans to inflict on a human being with every scheduled execution.

only how this hope in power has misled us and how it continues to bring about the slow and cruel deaths of our friends. We can see only that the power of violence present in the cross has failed to produce righteous fruit. This power has failed those it holds in captivity. This power sets no one free.

We of the Open Door see all of this, and we put our faith in a different kind of power. We see the cross from the side of Jesus Christ. The power of our cross is in the testimony that, though the powers of sword and death can scare the whole world into submission, Jesus remains undeterred. Our power is that in Jesus, deterrents and fear don't work on us anymore. The power we see in the cross gives us the freedom to be righteous even under threat of death.

To be a Christian in Texas, then, is to be confronted with two different crosses from two different Kingdoms of two different Gods. Which Kingdom do we belong to, and which God do we look to for deliverance?

Those who place their hope in the State that built the cross cannot help but read Moses and the Prophets and find a God who enforces righteousness with violence, who punishes with captivity and the promise of death. Those who place their hope in those who die on the cross can read Moses and the

## Yet what does it say if a state can call itself Christian while defining hope and justice in terms of its power to inflict violence and death?

Each of the 22 evenings after an execution has found me in the chapel preparing for worship, lighting candles for the deceased and draping a second cross in black. This cross carries a different meaning. It wears black to mourn the death of another child of God, and yet it testifies stubbornly to the hope that Jesus will remember the people we execute when we come into the Kingdom. While the first cross names the crucifixion as a deterrent implemented by the State, the second testifies that Jesus was not deterred, and that, in Jesus, deterrents are doomed to fail. This cross is our testimony that only Jesus can condemn us and that he died to redeem us. Every evening after an execution, this second cross is draped with the question, "Have our actions today done justice to the blood of the lamb?"

After so many repetitions, this liturgy of mourning gives us eyes to see two very different crosses and two very different symbols of power. When we look to the cross, we as Christians must make a choice of which cross we look to for hope. When we look to the cross, the power we choose to place our hope in will show us how we hope righteousness will come into the world.

Today finds Texas governed by the hope that the threat of a violent death will prevent people from committing murder. In effect, Texas has wedded its hope for a just society to its power to inflict violence on people who commit acts of violence. The state of Texas looks to the cross and sees hope in its power to deter. Yet what does it say if a state can call itself Christian while defining hope and justice in terms of its power to inflict violence and death? What does the first cross say about our Christian faith? In short, it says that Texas looks to the power of the cross from the side of Rome. In Texas, children learn to look to the cross from the side of power.

We friends of the Open Door Community, though, can see only where this hope in power has failed us. We can see

Prophets only to find a God who sets the captives free, who delivers us into righteousness with the promise of Life. Those who build the cross look for the presence of God in power. Those who take up the cross look for the presence of God in Jesus, the Crucified One.

After each execution, when the vigil is over and the body of Christ goes home to rest, I blow out the candles and walk between the two crosses to remove the black shroud from each. As the black of night adorns them both alike, I look to the Bible for my light. How to mediate the two dominions that every execution day finds me in? Paul tells us to be all things to all people, that we might be better able to reach them. How can we lead people from the first cross to the second without understanding them both? Moses and the Prophets, after all, pronounce both punishment and the promise of reconciliation from the hand of God.

Perhaps this liturgy, then, is not about walking between two crosses as much as it is about walking around one cross and seeing it from both sides. Christians who support the death penalty aren't looking at the wrong parts of the Bible so much as at the wrong side of the cross. I call this side of the cross "wrong" because one can stand there only if one forgets that all have sinned and that all have fallen short of the glory of God. One can judge the cross to be righteous only if one can judge oneself to be righteous.

As I ponder how best to say this message, perhaps the most gracious reminder I can offer to the people of Texas and of Georgia is that in days to come, our society and the crosses we build will be judged by a victim of the death penalty. ✠

"Moving Toward Abolition," usually written by Mary Catherine Johnson, is a regular column that tracks the fight to end capital punishment. Our guest columnist this month is John Harrison, a former Open Door Resident Volunteer who now attends Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas.

## poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

# Last Christmas for Death Row

"Neither in the hearts of men nor in the manners of society will there be a lasting peace until we outlaw death."

— Albert Camus

## I

In the Pacific a Polish tanker goes down,  
All hands are lost, are drowned.  
In Nicaragua the city of Managua weeps rivers  
And the salt of dreaming children fills the Caribbean.  
In Hanoi, presents from the Pentagon whistle from the sky  
Piling corpse-ash and despair before the door of the world.  
In Missouri, old Harry's giving up the ghost —  
So goes the news of Christmas at 6 p.m.  
But who's to say that the sea is not our home?  
That life is not eternal?  
That a determined people are not protected?  
That Hiroshima is not endless forgiveness?  
Or that the smiles and dreams of children  
Cannot redeem this Christmas?  
Not I.

Out there beyond this prison a vision goes on  
That we in here and the self within the we  
Seem not to be a part of  
Though we are.  
We too  
Walk in the light and shadows of days and nights,  
Have smiles and tears, dreams and nightmares,  
Are unique equal fragments in a greater dream —  
We too need to share in tomorrow.

In here 1,400 men dwell in the silence of their cells,  
Alone.  
Thinking thoughts of what and when and why,  
Having feelings about who and where and how,  
Just like people everywhere.  
Even closer to it in here sometimes,  
For what are prisons but social metaphors  
That say we're all imprisoned in unreal ways.  
And what are walls and bars but physical symbols  
That those out there impose on those in here.  
In here the symbols are visible and real,  
They are steel and concrete.  
It's not difficult to see  
A small cage holding racial antipathy,  
A gun tower structured along poverty lines,  
Or a sexist angle on a thirty-foot wall —  
Not difficult to see at all if you care to look.  
Look, prisons are not in tomorrow,  
They're wrong, and the recognition of a wrong means nothing  
Until it becomes the need to amend it.  
To ignore or fear what is known to be wrong  
Is to give substance to its false existence.  
To face it and transform it is the only real choice  
For everyone; everyone  
In structured steel or mental form  
Is imprisoned till everyone is free.

## II

Tonight I hesitate to celebrate.  
The Christmas obscured in department stores  
Has little to do with Christ.  
Yet there's always cause for celebration,  
Every moment is worthy of praise — Christ said that.  
Tonight I indulge my death row appetite,  
Write as I feel, and say that despite all the problems in life  
It's a good journey.  
Tonight I give praise to my cell,  
It's my home in standard Bethlehem, good steel.  
My lightbulb is at least a star.  
Tonight I give praise to Joseph, my brother,  
To Mary, my sister,  
To my mother and father, the Oneness,  
Keepers of the Keys, arbiters of time and space  
Wherein I travel.  
I give praise to the passing of death row,  
Last Christmas for the electric chair —  
It was nothing but a mistake, the mystique of death is gone.  
600 lives later, I give praise to the whitewashed room above,  
Wherein sits a wooden lifeless tree of civilized insanity —  
And it shall take no more life in New York.  
Give praise to the demise of mindless and spiritless power,  
Give praise to the death of legalized murder.

I give praise  
To the enlightened though belated and ambivalent  
U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Furman v. Georgia*,  
To Anthony Amsterdam, Jack Himmelstein, Jack Greenberg,  
To Douglas Lyons, to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund,  
To all persons in the fight against death in this country,  
To the day when Nigeria and South Africa stop the killing,  
To the day when France stops chopping off heads,  
To the day when Greece and Spain, Iraq and Iran stop the killing,  
To the day when Russia and the Philippines outlaw firing squads,  
To the day when the death penalty is universally abolished,  
To the recognition of this as essential to human evolution,  
To the great significance and sanctity of all life forms.  
I give praise to New York for almost electrocuting me.  
I give praise to my wonderful family and their endless love.  
I give praise to the courage and innocence of my friend Gary,  
To Raheem, Bubba, and Fitz, brothers on the row.  
I give praise to the wealth we found in this poor place.  
I give praise to the knowledge that I am not bitter.  
And lastly, I give praise and dedicate this poem to my friend Joan  
With love and light at Christmas and always.

Green Haven, 1972

— Chuck Culhane

*Chuck Culhane wrote this poem while in prison in New York state, shortly after his death sentence was set aside as a result of the Furman v. Georgia Supreme Court decision in 1972. He spent 26 years in prison, three of them on death row, before being paroled in 1992. He is now a nationally recognized poet and playwright, having won multiple PEN Awards for his poetry and two PEN Awards for his one-act plays. He collaborated with Paul Simon on the play "The Capeman," which was performed on Broadway in 1998. Chuck also has taught criminal justice at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He now chairs the Prison Action Committee for the Western New York Peace Center and works ardently for abolition of the death penalty.*

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 30306-4212  
or by email to [hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com](mailto:hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com).





Photographs by Laura Emiko Soltis



## Picketing Publix

On October 2, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers brought their "Truth Tour" to the Publix on Ponce supermarket, not far from the Open Door. As we have done several times before, we joined them and others in urging Publix to participate in the Fair Food Program, with other food companies such as McDonald's, Subway, Sodexo and Whole Foods Market. The program seeks to end modern-day slavery among farmworkers. *Top left:* Open Door Partners **Murphy Davis** and **Ed Loring** walk the picket line. *Top right:* Partner **Dick Rustay** says the supermarket chain's time to act fairly is up, and Novice **Mary Catherine Johnson** (*far right*) says no to tomatoes picked in slavery. *Center:* While **Jorge Lawton** speaks truth to Publix, Resident Volunteer **Nathan Dorris** (*bottom right*) tells onlookers what the store chain loves. You can learn more about the coalition's work at [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org).

## In, Out & Around 910

Compiled and Photographed by Calvin Kimbrough



## Immunity!

Every year a crew of nurses from the Good Samaritan Health Center comes to the Open Door to give free flu vaccinations to our guests, volunteers and household members. They came in October, working with Bhavesh Patel, one of our Harriet Tubman Clinic coordinators. *Right:* **Laura Layne** administers the shot to our friend **J.W. Whitehead**.



## New Leadership

Every October we get new student coordinators for our two Harriet Tubman Medical Clinics, staffed by students from the Emory University School of Medicine. *Top left:* **Bhavesh Patel**, **Rebecca Packwood**, **Rishi Sekar** and **Beryl Manning-Geist**. Bhavesh and Rebecca are the new coordinators for the Wednesday night general medical clinic, replacing Rishi and Beryl. *Left:* **Julia Shinnick**, **Helen Ashton**, **Rachel McCandliss** and **Nikki Sutton**. Helen and Rachel are the new coordinators for the Tuesday evening Women's Clinic, taking over from Julia and Nikki. With thanksgiving for their work we send our former coordinators on to continue their educations; with anticipation we welcome the new ones.



## The Herb Bus

**Lorna Mauney-Brodek** is a longtime volunteer at the Open Door, having coordinated our Wednesday night Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic for several years. She is also an herbalist, medicine maker, wildcrafter and teacher. This spring she began bringing her Herbalista Free Clinic (*left*) to our back yard once a month, meeting with a wide variety of residents and friends. *Left below*: Lorna checks the quality of Open Door Resident **David Christian**'s pulse. Lorna's website is [www.herbalista.org](http://www.herbalista.org).



## Exonerees Share Their Stories

We were privileged to have death row exonerees **Delbert Tibbs**, **Ron Keine** and **Shujaa Graham** speak at our Sunday worship on October 27. *Top right*: Delbert Tibbs was wrongly convicted in Florida in 1974 and released in 1977; his story is told in the play "The Exonerated." *Below left*: Shujaa Graham was wrongly convicted in 1973 in California. His death sentence was overturned in 1979, but he was not found innocent and released until 1981. *Below right*: Ron Keine was wrongly convicted in New Mexico in 1974 and exonerated in 1976. These men gave powerful testimony for the abolition of the death penalty. Their stories, and those of other exonerees, can be found at [www.witnessstoinnocence.org](http://www.witnessstoinnocence.org).



## Through Smitty's Eyes: 30 Years of Executions in Georgia *continued from page 1*

sentence, and he certainly was not aware that I knew the case and the people sentenced for the crime.

Toward the end of the debate, when Thompson and I were given time to question each other, I laid out my understanding of the crime scene. I said, "If it is true, as you have said, that John Maree was the only defendant against whom you had *physical evidence*, how can you explain the fact that his testimony against Rebecca Machetti and John Eldon Smith was rewarded with a life sentence? If he was the only defendant of the three who could clearly be placed at the scene of the crime, how can you explain his life sentence in terms of the equal distribution of justice?"

Thompson was undone. He stood at the podium opening and closing his mouth. Finally he blurted out, "Well ... well, it was the only way we could *get* the Machettis!" The audience let out an audible gasp.

And the debate was over. I would hate to admit how much I enjoyed the moment.

But my enjoyment of "winning" the debate was worth very little in the broader scope of things. At one point, the district attorney who had prosecuted the Smith/Machettis, who had since retired and had changed his views about the death penalty, was prepared to testify on Smitty's behalf at one of his last hearings. But the state attorney general's office threatened to pursue a perjury charge and disbarment proceedings against him if he did. So he didn't.

Don Thompson was himself murdered in 1980.

### 'A Game of Roulette'

The American Bar Association has cited the case of the two Smith/Machettis as a prime example of what a difference there is in the quality of a defendant's lawyer at trial. One lived and the other died because they had different lawyers.

The process is not guided by the principles of law,  
nor is it a process that involves fairness or truth.  
The process of death sentencing is almost entirely political and is thoroughly corrupt.

Rebecca Machetti's attorneys claimed at her trial that the jury composition was unconstitutional. An appeals court later agreed and ordered a new trial. The second time around, she was sentenced to life in prison.

Smith's jury was chosen from the same tainted pool, but his attorneys failed to raise the issue. The federal courts said that the matter could not be appealed. Smitty's was one of the cases that led the 1991 ABA report to brand the nation's death penalty process "more a game of roulette than ... a rational system of review," particularly in the seven Southern states known as "the Death Belt." Because of the omission of what might have appeared to be one small legal claim by his trial lawyer, John Eldon Smith had to die.

And so he did. It was a very stressful period. Smitty was very smart and very clear

about the politics of his situation. In Jack Boger, then of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, he had the most excellent legal representation in his appeals. But Smitty was white. He knew that the U.S. Supreme Court had struck down the Georgia death penalty in 1972 on the basis of its history of racial discrimination. The state could hardly kick off a new era of executions by executing another black man. Smitty's case was pushed to the front of the line for execution because he was white.

A death warrant was signed in August 1983. He came down to the wire before he received a stay. Again a death watch in September; a stay came just in the nick of time. By December, when a third death watch was set, Smitty and all the rest of us were exhausted. We had worked feverishly for many months. Boger and several cooperating attorneys were in the courts working on every possibility.

And there was the untested ground of the final appeal to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles. Since that time a very creative field has been developed for "mitigation specialists": lawyers, paralegals and investigators who are trained to investigate and articulate why a particular defendant should be spared from execution. But in 1983 there was no such field. Boger talked with Steve Bright, who connected him with Betsy Biben-Seligman, a forensic and clinical social worker in the office of the Washington, D.C., public defender. She was one of the visionaries in the process of creating the field of mitigation, but I'm very sure I had no name for what we were about to be doing.

Over several months, Betsy and I spent many hours on the phone. I told her everything I knew about Smitty: his life, his family and friends, his life since going to prison. She would give me a list of questions to ask him, and when I reported back to her, she continued to piece together the story of his life.

By that time I understood my ministry among the poor and marginalized as one which required that I learn more about the law. I had been educated in theology in seminary; there the "practical" education was very heavily tilted toward pastoral counseling and psychology. That is all well and good for pastors who go into middle- or upper-class churches. But the more I worked with the poor, the more I understood that I needed to know the law. Betsy was one of my very fine teachers.

By December, when Jack Boger and Robert Glustrom were ready to make an argument for clemency, we had a large binder to present to them that told the whole story of Smitty's humanity, making him more than a one-dimensional cardboard figure whose worst act defined the totality of who he was.

But of course it mattered very little.

Georgia was itching to fire up the electric chair and Smitty was the candidate of the hour. When the death watch came along in December, there was no stopping it. We sat for many hours over many days in a little room where Smitty smoked one cigarette after another, sometimes lighting two at once and handing one to his friend Ophelia.

At 8 a.m. on the fourth day of the second week of Advent they killed him: 2,300 volts through his body. They proclaimed it "antiseptic — a nice clean execution."

### Stealing From the Dead

The night before, I unwrapped the suit that his 83-year-old mother had mailed from Pennsylvania. The next day we put the suit and a casket in our old red van and Ed and I drove to the white funeral home in Jackson. (We soon learned: white bodies to the white funeral home, black bodies to the black funeral home. It was the same year Jackson took down the chain-link fence between the black and white graves in the municipal cemetery.)

But first we stopped at the prison. Smitty had asked us to bury him in the Jubilee Community's cemetery and asked me to pick up the box of his possessions from the prison and take it to Ophelia. Walking into the long, cold corridor leading into the prison and coming face to face with the executioners themselves was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I was so very thankful that Ed came with me — I might otherwise have turned and run.

After we were seated in the warden's conference room, the captain of the guard from death row came in all smiles. "You see, Reverend Davis, that the box is all sealed up; Smith packed it himself before he left the cellblock." I nodded. Ed whispered into my ear, "It's *not* sealed — the tape has been broken." But I couldn't deal with it. I had to grab the box and get out of there. Willis

Marable, assistant to the warden, handed me a check made out to me for \$11.73. It was the remainder of Smitty's funds.

When we got to the van and opened the box, we were shocked to see everything — his books and papers, sweatshirt and his few other personal items — in one big jumble. Several plastic bags were crumpled in the mess. "This doesn't look like anything Smitty would have packed," I hissed to Ed. We drove away.

I held the check and stared at it. "What's the best thing I could do with this?" I wondered aloud. Ed said quickly, "Don't cash it." Yessss! I finally smiled.

At the funeral home, the officious morticians took the suit and dressed our friend and laid him in the casket, which we had obtained through the St. Vincent de Paul Society. They got him into the back of the

van and we left for Jubilee for the funeral.

We arrived in Comer to find the Madison County sheriff waiting for us. Only then did we learn that someone at the prison had called the State Patrol reporting that "Murphy Davis has stolen the body of the executed prisoner and she and her husband are driving with the body in a red Ford van." The patrol had been searching the back roads for us. Soon after we arrived, whoever had started this madness called it off and the sheriff left.

We joined with the Jubilee Community, our community members from the Open Door, several lawyers and advocates, Smitty's mother and his friend Ophelia. When Ophelia looked into the box, she said immediately, "No siree, Eldon didn't pack this. He was the neatest, most meticulous man I ever knew!" As we looked through the box, we realized that everything of value had been taken. The glasses that he wore until the moment he went to his death were in the very bottom of the box.

I felt dirty — and physically ill. Realizing that the prison had allowed someone to steal from our friend after he was dead was sickening. They had killed him: how much indignity had to be piled on? But all of my swirling emotions had to be shoved back. I was walking through the tumultuous events of those days with a growing numbness. His family and friends needed me to get us through the funeral, to take care of the details, and to find some words of comfort to help us on our way.

We carried the coffin up the dirt road to the edge of the pasture and over to the wooded area where the cemetery had been lovingly prepared. We got through it somehow. Smitty was buried with love and dignity. We called his name and never again let him be referred to by a state prison number.

In the months that followed, I continued to visit at the prison in Jackson. Everyone was numb and many of our folks were very, very frightened. They were hard days, for everyone knew that this was just the beginning.

There was only one bit of comic relief that I can remember. Every time I would arrive at the front desk of the prison, Willis Marable would bustle down the hall and approach me with a throaty growl: "Uh, Ms. Davis, the financial office tells me that check of Smith's hasn't been cashed yet. Could you please see that it gets cashed so we can close the account?" "Oh?" I would reply with all the feigned sincerity I could muster. "Well, I'll check into that right away, Willis." The next week the same thing would happen. This went on for some time.

Finally, as I was leaving the visitation room one day, here he came again. This time he didn't say anything. He just shoved a small brown envelope into my hand and walked away. On the envelope was written "\$11.73, John E. Smith account closed.

It was a small satisfaction. For weeks after they had killed him, I had forced them to have to continue to call his name. The little

*continued on page 9*



envelope stayed in my desk drawer for years. Finally I deposited it into the account for prisoner aid. I smile every time I see the canceled check, which of course I still have.

### Love or Violence

I have kept trying, through these 30 years, to see things through Smitty's eyes — through those glasses that were thrown into the bottom of the box after it had been plundered.

I have seen that if you look closely at any one death penalty case — no matter how certain the guilt, no matter how horrendous the crime — you will find enough reason to turn against the death penalty. The process is not necessarily guided by the principles of law, nor is it a process that demands fairness or truth. The process of death sentencing is almost entirely political and is thoroughly corrupt. Seeking a death penalty is rarely a process that seeks the truth. More often it seeks a desired result. That desired result is often the enhancement of the political careers of prosecutors, law enforcement officers, judges, legislators or governors.

I have seen that the victims of violent crime are objects of the process almost as much as the perpetrators. Those vic-

only thing that can heal the wounds of violence and stop the vicious cycle of revenge.

"Faith, hope and love abide. But the greatest of these is love."

God loves John Eldon Smith, in spite of whatever he did in his life on earth. God loves Troy Davis, aside from any questions of guilt or innocence. God loves William Henry Hance, in the very depth of his mental illness and anguished heart and mind. God loves Rebecca Machetti in all her complexity and confusion. God loves Emma Cunningham in her captivity and in her freedom. God loves Christopher Burger, executed for a crime committed when he was 17 years old and which he neither planned nor understood. Those who are created and loved by God, while we must all be accountable for what we do, should not be treated as objects or killed at our discretion.

And God loves you and me in our wrestling with what is right and what is wrong: how it is that we are to be mature disciples and human beings and what we are to do with all this suffering, violence, misery and evil among us and within us. God loves us when we live well into whom God created

God calls us to be more today than we were yesterday  
— more loving, more response-able, more compassionate,  
living with greater integrity (purity of heart),  
more deeply able to be beggars to God (poor in spirit).

tims who are filled with revenge and hatred are often used by prosecutors in their quest for judicial revenge. Those who do not cooperate with the process are often disrespected or shut out of the process altogether.

At the time of an execution, victims are sometimes dragged through a media circus. But when the circus tent folds up, the interest in the victims is "yesterday's news." At the time of Smitty's execution, the media set up television cameras in the living room of Ronald Akins' brother. The family gathered to watch the television reports of the execution. They were encouraged to express their rage and their desire to see Smitty suffer and die for his crime. They cheered enthusiastically when his death was announced. The next day, the Akins family was of no interest to anyone. I have always felt sad for the way they were pumped up, used and abandoned.

I have seen — and I remember — that "the only solution is love." Is that trite? Is that simplistic? Is that a silly little platitude in light of all the years of unnecessary suffering and cruelty? I think not. I think it is at the same time the simplest and the most profound thing that we can say. Love. The beginning and the end. The first and the last. It is the

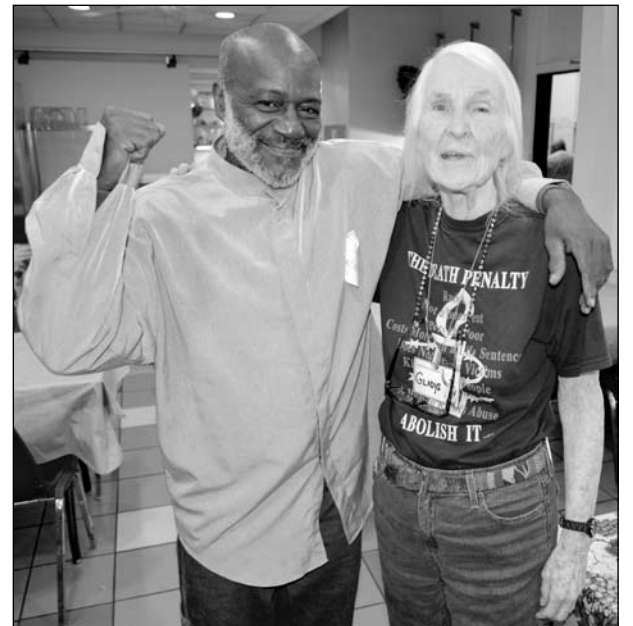
us to be, and God loves us when we fail to live in the image of God who is Love.

And always God calls us to be more today than we were yesterday — more loving, more response-able, more compassionate, living with greater integrity (purity of heart), more deeply able to be beggars to God (poor in spirit). God created us to hunger and long for justice and mercy on earth as it is in heaven. God created us to reach out to one another across the deepest chasms and boundaries that separate us — race, class, gender, sexual orientation, judicial decree and condemnation — seeking understanding, transformation and the common ground from which to end the cycle of violence and revenge.

I will always remain grateful to John Eldon Smith for all he taught me and helped me to learn. I am sorry that he killed. I am sorry that he was executed. I hope with all my heart that it will not be long until we stop the insanity that is the death penalty and turn toward healing the wounds and stopping the cycles of violence. ✠

*Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community and director of the Southern Prison Ministry, based at the Open Door.*

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Death row exoneree **Shujaa Graham** and Open Door Partner **Gladys Rustay** invite you to join them in abolishing the death penalty.

**Live in a residential Christian community.**

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

**Join street actions and loud and loving nonviolent demonstrations.**

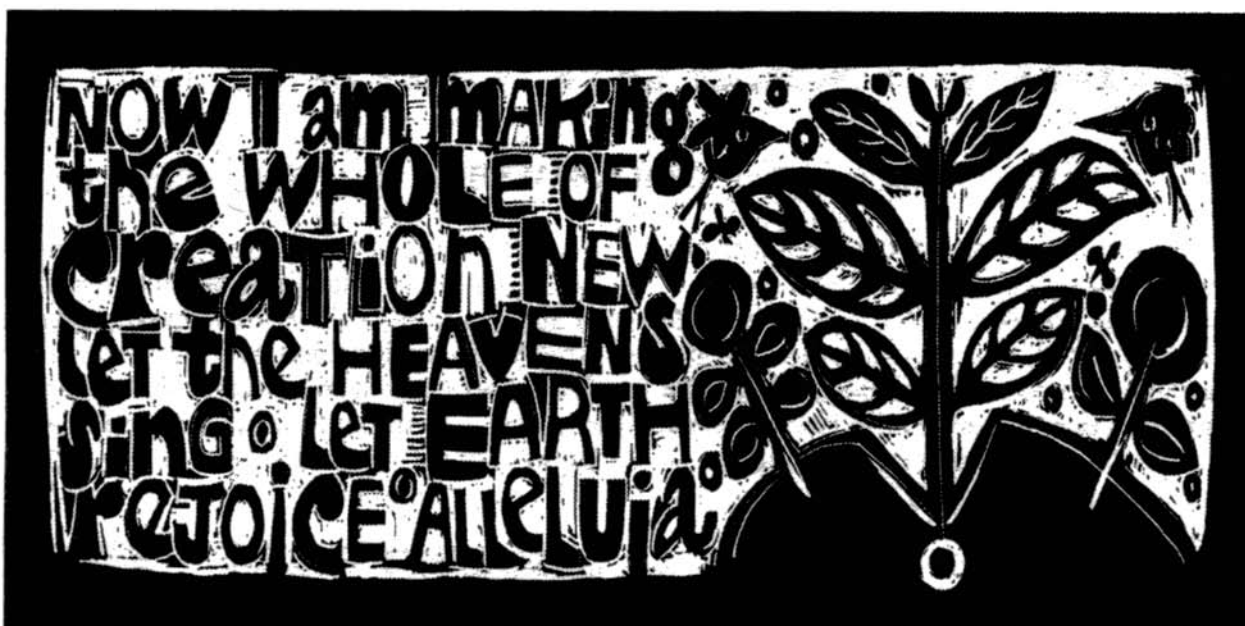
**Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.**

**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](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)  
or 770.246.7618

For information and application forms visit  
**[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)**



Meinrad Craighead

## 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 helps to cover 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://www.opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_



## volunteer needs at the Open Door Community

**Volunteers for Tuesday (8:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) and Wednesday Soup Kitchen (9:45 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](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)**  
**or 770.246.7618**

## Goodbye, Tom Watson — and Good Riddance! *continued from page 1*

We are also pleased to republish Joeff's *Creative Loafing* article about the statue's removal.

Come January, we will never again have to stand in the shadow of Tom Watson's statue when we gather outside the Capitol in opposition to a state-sanctioned execution or when

we circle there in remembrance of Good Friday every year. Power to the people! ✦

*Mary Catherine Johnson is a Novice at the Open Door Community.*

## Golden Dome's Thomas Watson statue to be permanently 'relocated'

By Joeff Davis

The statue outside the Georgia Capitol that honors former U.S. senator, author and self-described white supremacist Thomas Watson is being relocated from its prominent position as part of a construction project, state officials say. And it won't be coming back.

Earlier this month, Gov. Nathan Deal signed an executive order that allows crews to relocate the 12-foot-tall statue from its current location in front of the Capitol to Plaza Park, a fenced-off, state-owned park across the street.

The executive order says the move is the result of the statue's being "in the middle of the construction area" where "important renovations must take place." Georgia Building Authority Spokesman Paul Melvin says the statue will remain in Plaza Park once the project is completed because it's too expensive to transport it a second time.

During the last legislative session, I wrote an editorial calling for the removal of the Watson statue, which includes a plaque calling him a "champion of right who never faltered in the cause," from the front of the Capitol.

The Thomson, Ga., native was an attorney and considered a prolific author. But according to the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, his "public life has been considered one of the most perplexing and controversial of all Georgia politicians."

Watson's newspaper published editorials and articles, which the historians I contacted say were written by him, arguing that the lynching of African-Americans should be legal and that black people should not have the right to vote. The newspapers were also known for anti-Catholic writings which included calling the pope "an old dago" and alleging that priests imprisoned nuns in dungeon-like convents for "immoral purposes."

The newspaper also launched a hate-filled campaign against Leo Frank, the Jewish businessman who was convicted in 1913 of murdering Mary Phagan, a young girl who worked in Frank's downtown Atlanta factory. Watson's writings were said to have contributed to an anti-Semitic frenzy that climaxed in Frank's lynching by a mob made up of prominent Georgians. He later called them "bold true men."

I started a campaign, "Thomas Watson Must Go," which

included members of Georgia's Jewish and African-American communities, and started a petition drive that has collected close to 1,000 signatures supporting the removal of the statue. Every time the petition is signed, a letter is sent to Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and House Speaker David Ralston detailing Watson's history and calling for the statue's removal from the front of the Capitol.

Melvin said the decision to permanently relocate the statue had nothing to do with Watson's past. Rather, it was too expensive to remove it during the renovations and then relocate it after the renovation project. He said the project would begin before the start of the upcoming legislative session. The statue's precise new location in Plaza Park has not been determined.

Senior Rabbi Steve Lebow of Temple Kol Emeth in Marietta, who for several decades has tried to prove that Frank was innocent, called the statue's relocation "unbelievable." He thanked Deal, saying it is "an extremely progressive move on behalf of our governor to recognize the inappropriateness of having a statue of Tom Watson directly in front of the Capitol. Tom Watson was a racist and a vicious anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic politician and does not deserve a central place in the life of Georgia's history. I commend the governor on his vision of what is truly a greater Georgia and a more welcoming place to people of all backgrounds."

State Rep. Tyrone Brooks, D-Atlanta, an early supporter of the Thomas Watson Must Go campaign, applauded the relocation as well.

"And I hope it is permanent because Thomas Watson does not belong in front of our state Capitol," Brooks said. "He really does not belong anywhere on state property. But I certainly applaud the move from the front door of the main entrance of Georgia's Capitol."

Efforts to reach state Rep. Tommy Benton, R-Jefferson, who last year sponsored legislation prohibiting the removal of statues and monuments from prominent places to non-prominent places, were unsuccessful. ✦

*Joeff Davis is an editor and writer for Creative Loafing, where this article first appeared.*

## The Sacred Right to Pee for Free *continued from page 3*

No, you probably haven't done that unless you have been homeless. But you get the point. Even if you've never had to pee on yourself, there should be a sense of solidarity with being denied something that is as essential as taking a breath.

As I go around Atlanta, I find many places where people have had to relieve themselves because a restroom was not available. I can't count the number of times I've gotten onto a MARTA elevator and gagged from the stink of pee. If you think I'm lying, try riding any elevator in any MARTA station in Atlanta. MARTA restrooms close at 6 p.m., and of the 37 MARTA stations, only seven even have public restrooms. So where are people supposed to go?

This lack of MARTA restrooms really hit home during

the Open Door's monthly trip to Milledgeville in September, when we take family members to visit their loved ones in prison.

We pick up the family members at the Candler Park MARTA station. On this September day, a woman in her mid-60s needed to use the restroom after she got off the train. The Candler Park station doesn't have one, so she had to go behind a tree with her daughter standing in front of her with her coat covering her, which didn't cover her at all.

I leave you with this visual, and this visual should lead you to outrage. Atlanta and MARTA, I say, SHAME, SHAME, SHAME! ✦

*Terry Kennedy is a Novice at the Open Door Community.*

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Murphy,

Your eulogy to “Brother Will” in the June 2013 issue of *Hospitality* is a masterpiece of historical reflection, as well as a fitting tribute to one of God’s true “saints.”

Many thanks!

Pickney “Buddy” Ennis

Pastor Emeritus, Central Presbyterian Church  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Ed and Murphy,

There is atomic power in your last mailing regarding the Death Penalty! Thank God, we do celebrate your tenacity. We cannot give up now nor even relax the tiniest bit!

My mother and all our family were very kind to, and prayed for, this one lady’s conversion. After 50 years the dear lady had the grace to be baptized and anointed on her deathbed and buried in a Christian cemetery next to her dear God-fearing husband!

In hope,

S. Dorothy Droessler  
Madison, Wisconsin

Thanks for the great poem via Howard Thurman in this month’s *Hospitality* — great work as usual! We’ll be in Seattle in the summer for David’s PhD graduation [from the University of Washington].

Peace and love,

Nibs Stroupe  
Pastor, Oakhurst Presbyterian Church  
Decatur, Georgia

Dear 910 Friends,

How I wish I could be with you in body on October 5, to hear Mike Vosburg-Casey stories. Mike came to breakfasts when I was there (’98-’99) and played the piano for worship. So friendly and full of life. I am grateful for my Mike memories. I know as you witnessed him decline it was painful. He was surrounded in love all the way, and also so are Amy and Elena and the others in his blood family.

I have so many questions and angers that seem to have no answers.... Then I think of Ed Loring saying “Choose Life.” And that is what I do and I hope I will keep doing that until those Everlasting Arms beckon me. There’s a wonderful crowd up there applauding the work of 910, and I choose to think of Mike as our balcony cheerleader, urging you and all of us on in the work of justice and peace for all.

I love you,

Betty Jane Crandall  
Weaverville, North Carolina

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your living witness to the kin-dom that’s surely on the way.

Peace to Us All,

Rev. Pamela Shepherd  
First Congregational UCC  
Ashland, Oregon



Dear Murphy,

Thank you for the June 2013 issue of *Hospitality*. I learned to know Will Campbell quite well. At a small conference of Wake Forest professors high up in the mountains we shared a room together and he shared his bottle of bourbon with me. He sang protest songs, played his guitar and told his “tacky” story. The other one [his opponent in the debate at Florida State University] was Richard Rubenstein, who defended the death penalty. He also told us why and how he celebrated the Eucharist with Klansmen before they had to go into prison. He was a great character of the old South.

Thanks also to Ed. His “Summer in the City” gave a realistic picture of the everyday life in the Open Door Community. I admire you both. It is only for people like you that I “love” America.

Jurgen Moltmann

Tübingen, Germany

Thank you kindly for the *Hospitality* that arrived in today’s mail! Ever refreshing, illusion shattering, and soul connecting, with the Jesus in you all knocking on the doors of readers’ and observers’ and participants’ hearts as you share longings for the Long Haul. Y’all are in my prayers and heart thoughts.

Gentle blessings of lovingkindness,  
In the Light of Christ’s Heart,  
Wendy Geiger  
Jacksonville, Florida

The people of the Open Door Community,

I would like to say “thanks” first and foremost to all of you who are doing such noble work in this darkened world. You have been in support of saving my [brothers] from the hungry maw of the Georgia Death Machine. With all that you have done I feel a great debt to all of you, [with some of you] named as “true-saints” from a source I trust and love. This letter was actually formulated, though, because of the article “At the Gun Show” in the October 2013 issue of *Hospitality* by a fellow named Patrick Blanchfield. As a Catholic I believe less in coincidence and more in the moving of the Holy Spirit, and I believe this is one such case. The article was about a gun show and the veritable parade of death that goes on there as people mingle about weaponry whilst not truly accepting or understanding the ramifications of it.

A certain portion at the end of the article really got to me: “And we leave, without ever getting a chance to ask everybody what they’re so afraid of.”

That was so odd to me! I had just [been thinking about writing to] advocate for stricter gun laws. At this point I think it may be a good time to try and give you a bit of an explanation. Please take into account that this may not be 100% accurate as to the timeframe but that all other aspects are reasonably as accurate as you could hope for.

... I am one of [several] people who were charged with a home invasion gone wrong/homicide [several years ago]. [We] were involved in a drug-related campaign that left two innocent people dead in their home.... We were teen-agers and one of us was 21. Most of what went on has already been rehashed and is well-known. What has come to bother me is the fact that through [the oldest] we had acquired a sizeable little arsenal. In the span of 60-180 days we had bought a Colt AR-15, 12ga Mossberg, 9mm S&W SA, 9mm Ruger P95, .38 Charter Arms, .44 Colt Anaconda, .380 Bryco and a .22 Lorcin. This is bad because [two of us had been in mental hospitals and one of us had attempted suicide]. I distinctly

recall [while we were at one gun store that] the cashier eyed us nervously and said “Y’all don’t kill nothing that don’t need killin.”

I am by no means implying that the firearms are themselves the problem, but do I feel it was an important factor? Definitely. In this high-tech age, information and communications are constantly breaking new plains and yet none of the institutionalizations or suicide attempts or history of violence as juveniles registered a blink as [we] young men equipped ourselves with weaponry.

This leaves me with the last [line in Blanchfield’s article], “What are they so afraid of?” In a word, “Society.” I sincerely hope that what I am about to say isn’t misconstrued. I have no defense in what I was a part of and I got exactly what was coming to me. But it is of vital importance (I believe) that it be said that victims generally learn to fear, and that fear very easily translates into hatred. Such was *my* case in all this. I was an 18 year old carrying guns, knives, tasers, you name it. All those things were my shield. I only felt secure when I could see myself being able to lash out. To a greater or lesser degree I think that’s precisely the fascination with guns today. The relationship between fear/hate I feel is closely mirrored in the difference between the responsible use of guns and the explosive violence they have gained notoriety for.

There is no atonement for what I [was] part of. I will forever recall [the victims] as the greatest tragedy of my existence. But out of all of this I have learned something I never thought of. It is impossible to love with fear in your heart. That is exactly why I admire all of you at the Open Door Community. Much as my Patron Saint Kolbe, you love fearlessly and carry on in the face of adversity. I hope and pray that sharing this with you can help in any way your work.

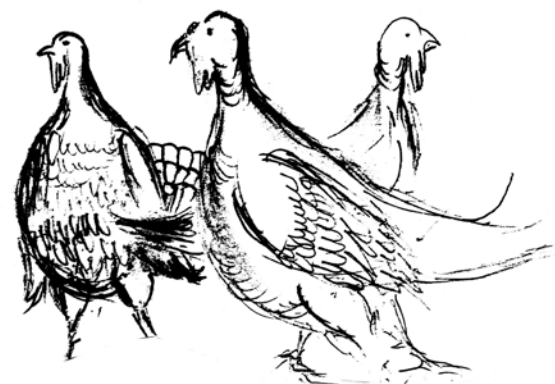
Thank you all again.

Peace Be With You,

A friend in a Georgia Prison

## Turkeys & Hams

The Open Door Community needs turkeys and hams to serve for our holiday meals for our friends from the streets!



**turkeys for our**  
**Thanksgiving Meal**  
*Friday, November 29*  
**Christmas Meal**  
*Thursday, December 26*  
**Turkeys already cooked and sliced are most helpful.**

**hams for our**  
**New Year’s Day Meal**

contact **Sarah Humphrey** at  
**opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net**  
or **770.246.7618**



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Soup Kitchen:** Tuesday, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon  
**Men’s Showers:** Tuesday, 10:15 a.m.  
**Women’s Showers:** Wednesday, 11 a.m.  
**Trusted Friends Showers and Brunch:** Thursday, 9 a.m.  
**Harriet Tubman Free Women’s Clinic:** 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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

November 3	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Robert McGlasson speaking	December 1	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Nelia Kimbrough preaching
November 10	4 p.m. Worship at 910 a poetic celebration of the saints Zachary Crow leading	December 8	No Worship at 910 Advent Retreat at Dayspring Farm
November 17	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Carter Garber preaching	December 15	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Visioning Christmas in a Cage PAX-People Against Executions leading
November 24	No Worship at 910 Join us at the SOA Watch Vigil at Ft. Benning, Georgia <a href="http://www.SOAW.org">www.SOAW.org</a>	December 22	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Service of Lessons & Carols Nelia & Calvin Kimbrough leading
		December 24	6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist & Supper Tuesday (please call ahead if you would like to join us)
		December 29	No Worship at 910



Rita Corbin

## Needs of the Community



Autumn Dennis

we need  
**T-Shirts**  
especially **XL-5XL**

**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** 30-34 waist  
and 46-60 x 32 long
- ☐ long sleeve  
shirts with collars
- ☐ work shirts
- ☐ belts (34" & up)
- ☐ **men’s underwear**
- ☐ women’s underwear
- ☐ **reading glasses**
- ☐ **walking shoes**  
(especially sizes **11-15**)
- ☐ **T-shirts** especially  
**XL through 5XL**
- ☐ 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

- ☐ **backpacks**
- ☐ **MARTA cards**
- ☐ **sweaters, jackets**  
and **winter coats**
- ☐ warm **gloves,**  
**scarves, hats, and**  
**socks**
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ **a home for every**  
**homeless person:**  
every woman,  
man and child

## Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification  
on selected Tuesday evenings.



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and  
scheduled topics, please call  
770.246.7620  
or visit  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://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  
non-scented/allergen-free soap  
(*Dr. Bronners Baby Mild or similar*)  
shoe inserts  
(*men’s larger sizes*)  
apricot scrub  
(*St. Ives or similar*)  
pumice stones  
vitamin A&D ointment  
lavender essential oil (pure)  
tea tree essential oil (pure)  
Smart Wool (or equivalent) socks

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