



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for January, 2008

"Uptown's Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? Fourth Friday, Jan 25, 7-9pm.
"John Q," with Denzel Washington
– film followed by discussion.

Song and Hymn Sing –

- ? Every Thursday, 5:30 – 6:30pm.

Upcoming Services

- ? Sunday, Jan 13: 10am. **Grace Itter** speaks on "Jesus Was Human."
- ? Sunday, Jan 20: 10am. **"A Prophet for Economic Times"**
- ? Sunday, Jan 27: 10am. **"A Season for Nonviolence."** Bring a friend Sunday – service followed by **potluck dinner**.

All services followed by light refreshments.

Other Gatherings

- ? Sunday, Jan 13: 11:15 am. **P.C. Board meeting.** All are welcome.

2 Li'l Fishes

Each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, a free lunch is served in the lower floor Anderson Hall of the church. All are welcome.

If you would like to volunteer, come by after 10:00am, and Isaac will put you to work.

Minister's Notes:

The Power of Art

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

I had the good fortune the other night to hear the new opera "Doctor Atomic," about Robert Oppenheimer and the development of the atomic bomb at the end of WW II. The librettist, radical stage director Peter Sellars, developed it both from recorded dialog (letters, I imagine), and from Oppenheimer's favorite poets: Baudelaire, John Donne, and Muriel Rukeyser. The contrast of the poetry to the ordinary, banal conversation creates a wonderful contrast – makes me think of our inner life compared with the everyday.

One scene particularly sticks with me. Oppenheimer was the lead scientist, and had to keep his own fears and anxieties under wraps to effectively lead the others in accomplishing the project. At the end of the first act, he is alone with the bomb hanging from its gantry, in the New Mexico test site. He is gripped with the awfulness of its destructive capacities and his own doubts, and sings – so powerfully that "sings" seems a pale word to describe it – one of John Donne's "Holy Sonnets" (early 1600s).

Batter my heart, three-person'd God ; for you
As yet but knock ; breathe, shine, and seek to mend ;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

Physically, baritone Gerald Finley is battered by these words, which beat him down to the floor – you feel the power of his wrestling with himself and his conscience, as the bomb represents Satan, death and destruction, whom he worships by dint of his commitment to the U.S. government, to his sense of necessity.

In the music, each "knock", like a dagger to his heart, is followed by a soft, releasing "breathe"; each "break," a crushing weight, followed by a lifting "blow" that seems to show the possibility of release from this burden – and yet, Oppenheimer cannot accept it.

Wow.

How powerful our metaphors for good and evil; how powerful the medium of art – poetry, music, acting – to portray them.

peace, *Jean*

Prospecting for Gold

Bob Ford, Director, Preston Bradley Center

From books and movies if not from experience, most of us today have some knowledge of the Alaska and California gold rushes of the 19th Century, when thousands of adventurers made their way to the public lands of the far West and North intent upon seeking easy fortunes by prospecting for the mother loads of the gold which flecked the mountain streams. We also know that, not surprisingly, in most cases such fortunes did not come easily.

These days, we prospect mostly not for gold but for other things of value, or for opportunities to put to good use the wisdom and skills we have, or for opportunities to work together with others to inculcate our own personal values into our culture.

Here at Peoples Church we are prospecting for gold of a different sort—for new members. Our small and aging congregation is the faithful remnant of a once large and influential congregation, which in part because of embracing the care of the disadvantaged, and in part because of deciding to stay with the neighborhood and “be church to the neighborhood” as it went through its downscaling during the “white flight” to the suburbs which accompanied the civil rights movement, has had some very rough years.

We see ourselves now as Uptown’s spiritual home for people of conscience. We are in solidarity with the underfed, the under employed, and the ill housed. We are partners with REST, with whom we share our building, and as such are part of the City’s network of homeless providers. Our mission is to serve the disadvantaged of our neighborhood, while providing a progressive spiritual home for our members. Our primary ministry at this time, which we the church finance and operate ourselves, involves preparing and serving some 20,000 free hot meals per year, and as we gain more members we will re-institute some of our former ministries.

We are now again on an upswing. We have a new Unitarian Universalist pastor, and are still also affiliated with the United Church of Christ. We been renovating our building since the mid 1990s, and we invite you to join us for Sunday services (at 10:00) or to drop by at another time (best to call first). We are building the future.

Won't you come and build the future with us?

In Solidarity with the Disadvantaged, **Bob**

Coming Up: Future Events

New: “Movie Night”

We are introducing “Movie Night,” the fourth Friday of the month, with “**John Q**,” the story of a man fed up with the indifferent medical system, who takes matters into his own hands (see flier).

Join us for popcorn and the movie at 7pm, Jan 25, followed by discussion. Is this a moral/ethical issue? Where does the “right” lie? Has anything like this happened to you?

Workshop: “Spirit and Money”

On Saturday, March 8th, from 10am to noon, Rev. Jean Darling, Ed Feldmanis, and Mary Donoghue from the credit union join forces to lead a discussion on money and meaning, and to help you get a handle on budgeting.

This free workshop is meant to help you clarify your values and your attitudes toward money, and give you some concrete tools toward planning your spending so that you are in control of it, instead of it controlling you!

Call the church to reserve your place, 773-784-6633.

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