



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for March, 2010

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- **Fri, Feb 26, 6pm: "The Ground Truth"** – Our first documentary: Iraq veterans speak on their experiences overseas and back home.

Upcoming Services

- **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, **Rev. Jean Darling** preaching, with stories and poetry and music.
- **Sun, Feb 28, 10am: Dr. Carla Brown** speaks on transcendental meditation and links to healing.

Other Events

- **HAITI BENEFIT! Sat, Feb 27, 7pm:** Great music, with singer-songwriter **Joe Jencks** and jazz violin phenom **Sam Williams** playing; see the web site or call the church for info.
- **First Friday, Mar 5, 6pm: Taizé service** – in Molly's Café, followed at 7pm by **Coffeehouse**, with folk duo **"February Sky"** – **Susan Urban & Phil Cooper**.
- **Sat, Mar 20, 7pm, Piano Recital:** Joseph Bures plays **Mozart & Brahms**.

2 Li'l Fishes

Each Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, a free lunch is served in Anderson Hall. All are welcome.

If you would like to help, phone Will Pruitt, volunteer coordinator, 773-754-6102.

Minister's Notes:

"You are my sister; you are my brother"

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

There's a new way of doing church out there.

It seems to be growing up through the cracks in the old ecclesiastical models, like grass through neglected sidewalks. While mainstream churches are bemoaning the loss of members, and megachurches are making church into a one-way consumer product, there are little churches out there which are creating something that I think even Jesus would approve of.

I met the pastor of one the other day. Pastor Cyndi has been ministering to a small UCC church on the poor side of a town with a large Hispanic population, for three years. When she came, the congregation was graying, numbering only a few dozen on Sundays.

I imagine her coming in, looking around, rolling up her sleeves, dusting off her hands, and getting to work. She started with research: what were the needs of this community she found herself in, the neighborhood in which her church stood? Because it is poor, the needs were perhaps predictable: the youth had no activities for after school and summers, there were not enough providers of health care, and many people suffered from diabetes and poor diets.

Over the past two summers, the church has run a summer youth program called "Peace Players," where the kids – a mix of black, white and Hispanic – get to practice peace. They explore mind-body connections; they use art, music, and dance to express their feelings and ideas; and they create a play based on their own experiences to perform for family and community at the end of the two week program.

Parents have reported remarkable changes in their children – a shy child becomes outspoken and demonstrative, a surly child begins to find an outlet for his creative spirit.

Another new program is "La Mesa de Maria" ("Mary's Table") – a cooking class for Hispanic women. It is aimed at sharing how to make nutritious and inexpensive meals that will help address

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Minister's Notes, cont'd

issues of obesity and diabetes in the community, but it is far, far more than that.

Each evening the once-a-week class begins with a spirituality circle, where the women are welcomed and their spirits fed with simple ritual and sharing. Then they cook together, and eat together.

The women in the first class have enjoyed it so much that they want to continue to meet together, after the class is over.

But – this is the part about a new model of church: people who have been touched by these programs have been stepping forward to help the church with putting up drywall, or painting, or donating items for the new nursery; the mother of one of the kids in the Peace Players is in the cooking class; his father has just started working as the church custodian.

These programs are building community around the church, and having a transformative effect on those who participate in them.

These folks don't necessarily come to church on Sunday. But they are very much a part of the church. It's a new model of church – bigger than what church has been – harking back to what church used to be when our communities were tighter knit, and people less distracted and isolated.

This kind of church can be a place for people to get to know each other deeply, to grow, to explore, held in the nurturing arms of a community of faith, one that believes in the worth and dignity of every person, that lives out the belief that each person is a part of God.

peace, *Jean*

Letter from Botswana

Molly Waite
Feb 2, 2010

I was thinking of Peoples Church this morning. I have some Sikh friends who teach at my school. They have kindly invited me to visit their temple in Gaborone (Botswana Capital) on several occasions. I think the Peoples Church followers might like some of the temple practices.

When you arrive, after taking off your shoes, you are invited to sit on the floor, men on one side and women on the other. The men serve you breakfast. It consists of tea, a type of fried bread or vegetable mixture, along with a type of salsa or chutney. You also receive an Indian sweet. Today it was a jelly belly. (honey in an edible tube shaped like a pretzel.)

Then the men wash the dishes while the women make lunch. Today it was *aloo mata*, green peas and potatoes in a curry sauce. There was a cucumber *raita* or yoghurt mixture, along with a green salad. About 10 women worked for about 1 hour making and cooking *chapattis* (round bread). (I just buttered them since mine are not always round.) For dessert there was a sweet type of milk custard with raisins and almonds. While we cooked we heard the priest read from the holy book in Punjabi. At times there were drums and singing to accompany the chant. After cooking we joined everyone in the temple with women on one side and men on the other, while young children wondered around going from one side to the other visiting the parents or grand parents.

After the service the men served us lunch and washed the dishes. Everyone was invited to take home the leftovers in various types of makeshift containers.

I for one do not understand Punjabi but like the format of women and men both participating in the course of the morning by cooking or cleaning. Since there are those of us who like to eat, that is something else to enjoy. Of course, because the Sikhs are vegetarian generally, no meat was included in the meal. The temple, itself, is small. There are about 25 families, but generally three generations. There is also time for socializing.

So there is my food for thought for today. I applaud you for serving up a variety of different options for members to participate in the church, including music, movies, special services and a meal programs. Bravo.

So long from sunny warm Botswana,

Molly

Molly Waite is in Botswana, serving in the Peace Corps, where she does AIDS education in small villages in the schools. We look forward to Molly rejoining us here in Chicago in the not too distant future.



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Calendar – Feb-March 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		The tail end of <i>FEBRUARY</i>	24 <i>FEBRUARY</i>	25	26 6pm Film Night "The Ground Truth"	27 HAITI BENEFIT 7pm
28 10am Service Dr. Carla Brown 11:30 Dinner Peoples Church Annual Meeting	1 <i>MARCH</i> Roars in like a lion!	2	3	4	5 in <i>Molly's Café</i> 6pm Taizé svc, 7pm Coffeehouse, "February Sky"	6
7 10am Service 11:30 PC Trustees	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10am Service	15	16	17	18 7pm Book Group at Borders Books	19	20 7pm Joseph Bures plays Mozart and Brahms
21 10am Service	22	23	24	25	26 6pm Film Night	27
28 PALM SUNDAY 10am Service	29	30	31	1 <i>APRIL</i>	2 Good Friday 6 Tenebrae Service	3