



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for May, 2008

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? Fourth Friday, May 23, 6-8pm.
"Smoke Signals" – followed by discussion. Post the flier!

Song and Hymn Sing –

- ? Every Thursday, 5:30 – 6:30pm.

Upcoming Services

- ? Sun, May 11, 10am: Pentecost:
"Speaking Tongues of Fire."
- ? Sun, May 18, 10am: **"The Free Pulpit: Rev. Wright's Right."**
- ? Sun, May 25, 10am: Patti Nakai, from the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, speaks on **"Oneness with Community."** Service followed by **potluck lunch.**
- ? Sun, June 1, 10am: **"Celebrating 2 Li'l Fishes"**

All services followed by Coffee Hour.

Other Events

- ? Sat, May 10, 3pm: The annual **Peoples Music School Concert.**
- ? Fri, May 23, 6pm: Film/Movie night, with **"Smoke Signals."**
- ? Sat, June 14: **23rd Annual Hunger Walk.**

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.

Special Trainings!

If you have done this or would like to, you're invited!

Greeter training, after service, this Sunday, May 11.

Liturgist training, after service, Sunday, May 18.

Minister's Notes:

Democracy hurts... but less than the other thing...

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

Many of us have been following the U.S. presidential primary elections closely, and found the wrangling between Hilary and Barack sometimes painful. "Why doesn't she drop out?" cry some frustrated voices. "He should wait his turn!" cry others, equally frustrated.

But I find the close race exciting – nothing is more boring than an election that is decided early on, with one's favorite candidate forced to withdraw without firing a shot, so to speak. As is often the case in other arenas of life, the pressure can cause people to perform beyond their usual level – and we've heard some very inspiring words.

But like you, I've been aware of the situation in Zimbabwe, in Kenya and Burma/Myanmar, where the democratic process is more tenuous or even non-existent, where a hard-won election is no guarantee that the winner can take office, where pro-democracy demonstrations in the street result in mass arrests, or in thugs terrorizing political activists, in midnight disappearances.

In Kenya what looked like a rigged election in December led to violence around the country, but then to the formation of a "unity" government. Though some are suspicious about whether the power-sharing will really take place, it is a step in the direction of democracy ruled by debate and not by force of arms.

In Zimbabwe, we are seeing the on-going drama of an election in which President Mugabe seems unwilling to recognize his electoral loss. When he came to power in the early 1970s he seemed to be something of a hero for African nationalists. A long proxy war took place there, with U.S. arming one side and the Soviets the other. At least the country has finally arrived at having elections, though the outcome is not looking good so far.

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Minister's Notes – cont'd

But then we have a country like Burma/Myanmar. Wikipedia states, "In May 1990, the government held free elections for the first time in almost 30 years. The National League for Democracy (NLD), the party of Aung San Suu Kyi, won 392 out of a total 489 seats, but the election results were annulled by SLORC, which refused to step down." Suu Kyi won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her work for democracy, but has been under house arrest almost continuously since that time.

We see the destructiveness of such a government as it ignored warnings of the devastating typhoon that struck its shores May 1st, and still is holding up deliveries of aid from the world, as a million of its people suffer.

Within the last six months, Bangladesh suffered from Cyclone Sidr, a similar Category 4 typhoon, in which 3000 lost their lives, and the rice crop was devastated. In contrast to Myanmar, Bangladesh has "a government that participates in the international community, had worked for years to prepare hurricane evacuation procedures, and was generally credited with doing all it could to limit the damage from the deadly storm." (bellaciao.org)

You can help with the relief effort through the UCC at <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/update-ucc-opens-100000-app.html> or the UUA at: <http://uuscc.org/>

And you can thank God we have an interesting – and open – election in this country. peace, *Jean*

Music Ensemble Incubation

Bob Ford, Ex. Dir., Preston Bradley Center

In 1997, my phone rang late one evening, and it was a young man from our church's denominational office with a personal request. Jon was a trombone player, and he and four friends who were starting a band needed a place to rehearse. They had no money, and were looking for free space. Could we help them?

As some of you know, our 1500 seat sanctuary has wonderful acoustics, having been built in the days before amplified sound. In the 90s it got very little use in the evenings, and we were thrilled that someone recognized its value. And who better to accommodate than people from our own denominational headquarters. So we agreed. Jon and his friends moved in, practicing one day a week. They were considerate guests, and we sort of forgot about them.

About two years later, my phone rang again, and this time it was Rhonda, a saxophonist. She shocked me with her opener, which was, "We've gotten bigger now, and we think it's time we started paying you rent." We had never asked for compensation, so felt doubly pleased that we were so valued by the band. Over the years as the Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles have grown and prospered, they've taken more office and storage space and now practice in our sanctuary three evenings a week.

It's been ten years now, and what started off as a fledgling group of friends with a dream has blossomed into a bouquet of musical ensembles, all carrying the Lakeside Pride name. There's now the marching band (now called the Freedom Band), the symphonic band, the wind ensemble, the orchestra, the jazz ensemble, the clarinet choir, the saxophone ensemble, the women's ensemble, and the holiday season Toyland Band.

More than 300 musicians have played in the group over the years, with people coming and going as they change jobs and move into or out of the area. At the moment, membership approximates over 100, with many members active in more than one group.

Lakeside Pride is somewhat of a trend setter among LGBT musical organizations in major cities. Although many organizations have difficulty attracting younger people, women, and people of color, Lakeside has achieved a degree of diversity which brings two advantages. The diversity of ages and cultures causes it to have a more lively repertoire, and makes it easier for people to socialize outside their usual social circles, which allows the bands to serve broader audiences and helps members to integrate more successfully into urban culture.

After playing with Lakeside Pride, a number of members have gone on to play or teach professionally, and have credited the opportunities and experience provided by the Lakeside Pride organization with helping them break into their professional careers.

In Solidarity, *Bob*

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