



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for November, 2009

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? **Fri, Nov 20, 6pm:** “**Children of Men**” – in the tradition of “1984” and “Brave New World,” this film offers a new view of saving grace.

Upcoming Services

- ? **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, with stories and poetry and music.
- ? **Sun, Nov 15, 10am:** Rev. **Bob Ford** preaching, “Plain Talk from Truthful James.”
- ? **Thanksgiving potluck Sunday, Nov 22:** Potluck dinner after service, with all the trimmings.

Other Events

- ? **First Friday, Nov 6, 6pm:** **Taizé service** – in Molly’s Café, 3rd floor, followed by **Music Coffeehouse**, with “February Sky,” coffee, cake!
- ? **Sat, Nov 14, 7pm:** Joseph Bures, **Classical Piano Recital**, with music of Mozart and Saint Saens.
- ? **First Friday of December:** Taizé followed by **Music Coffeehouse** with folk/jazz duo **Steven Cole** and Campbell McNeal.

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:

Health Care for All

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

I’ve been visiting one of our members lately in the hospital, and it reminds me of the work I did as a chaplain during my training for ministry. It was good work, accompanying people through a particularly difficult time of their lives. But with our country now facing a choice about our health care future, those memories focus my attention on improving people’s **access** to health care.

I thank God every day for being healthy.

But it’s a gamble. And though I am “winning,” at present, there are hundreds, thousands, millions of people who suddenly find themselves on the losing side of that gamble.

- 46 million Americans have no health insurance. In Illinois alone, one and three quarter million people have no coverage, including nearly one fifth of full time workers in Chicago.¹
- Nearly half of all bankruptcies come because people get sick and can’t pay their medical bills. Half of all home foreclosures result from people being sick or caring for someone who is.
- We are the only industrialized democracy that doesn’t have single payer health care; our rate of infant mortality was the worst among 23 industrialized nations in 2006, and we were near the bottom on healthy life expectancy at age 60.²
- Health care premiums for employees have doubled since 2001 (though wages have certainly not),³ while the collective profits of 10 of the biggest health insurance companies quadrupled from 2001 to 2007.⁴

It’s a terrible situation. We’re grateful that Congress has taken it up, but so far I’m not very happy about what they’ve come up with.
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¹ www.cbhconline.org

² <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/PrescriptionForChange/story?id=2563381>

³ [Jay Rockefeller](#) on Monday, September 21st, 2009 in a column in the newspaper *Roll Call*.

⁴ <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter>, from the same source (*Roll Call*).

Minister's Notes, cont'd

When I started looking into the bill before Congress I was disturbed to find out that – a little like car insurance – people would be required to *buy* health insurance, and if they didn't, they would be assessed a tax. Except that – unlike car insurance, where you can choose not to have a car – you don't have any choice. Even for individuals making as little as \$15,000 a year the premium would be \$1200, and as much as \$6,300, for those with incomes above \$34,000.⁵

It sounds like a great booster to the insurance industry, which is now one of the largest parts of the economy – in 2009 we expect to spend more than one dollar out of every six on health care nationally (17.6%).⁶

A single payer system, like Canada's – something like expanded Medicare – would not only be cheaper than the plan, it would cost less than what we actually spend now.

I get sick of hearing people trying to limit who will be covered by this national insurance plan – under the Baucus bill there are still some 16 million Americans and another 8 million undocumented immigrants would still lack coverage in 2015. Why?

Aren't we called to care for each other, for everyone? As soon as we begin to draw lines, including some, and excluding others, we are setting ourselves up to create fear, dissension, and jealousy. It undermines our commitment to ourselves as a body.

In Chapter 10 of Mark, some of Jesus' disciples try to get him to choose which of them will be closest to him. They are trying to draw these same lines. But no, Jesus says, Don't behave like those rulers of the Gentiles, whose "great ones are tyrants over them." You must think of yourselves as servants, not masters.

The first commandment, Jesus tells us, is to love God with all our might and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We are designed, my brother says, to love our own tribe first – it's only natural to love best those who look like you. The stranger is an enemy. This may

⁵ <http://cboblog.cbo.gov/?p=363> – Congressional Budget Office
⁶ <http://www.nhc.org/facts/cost.shtml> National Coalition on Health Care

be hard-wired into part of our brain – perhaps the lizard brain, the old brain.

But that is the beauty of being human. We are also designed to create our own world – to change how we perceive reality, and thus to behave differently toward it.

Our faith helps us come to grips with our desire to do what the lizard brain tells us – to run, to fight, to see an enemy in another's face. Our faith tells us to love our enemy, not to fight him. Our faith tells us to overcome our first impulses, to open ourselves to something new, to something grander than the tiny lizard vision.

All month I've been talking about belonging, about community, about covenant. It's about the promises we make to ourselves and one another about who we are to each other, about who we will try to be face to face with God. It's about our neighbor – who is our neighbor? Is it the person sitting next to us in church? Is it the guy sitting on the stoop we pass every day on our way home? Is it someone who lives in another neighborhood, someone we've never met, or even someone on the other side of the world?

Yes, yes, and yes. God calls us to love all of these, to include them in our community. To me this means that we need to include them in our national polity – all who live here. We need health care for everyone – no exceptions – because we believe all are God's children, and there is **room** for everyone at the table.

Call your Senator now.

peace, *Jean*



The Peoples Church of Chicago
941 W. Lawrence Avenue
P.O. Box 408319
Chicago, IL 60640-8319
www.PeoplesChurchChicago.org
773-784-6633 fax 773-784-6760

Calendar – November 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1 10am Service 11:30 PC Trustees
2	3	4	5	6 Molly's Café: 6pm Taizé svc 7pm Coffeehouse: <i>February Sky</i> folk music	7 9am-3pm Chicago Area UU Council – Annual Mtg at North Shore UU Church	8 10am Service
9	10	11	12	13	14 7pm Joseph Bures classical piano	15 10am Service <i>Rev. Jean out of town</i>
16	17	18	19	20 6pm – Film Night “Children of Men”	21	22 10am Service Thanksgiving potluck
23	24	25 AURELIO THANKSGIVING DINNER In Anderson Hall	26 THANKSGIVING DAY	27	28	29 10am Service First Sunday of Advent
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