



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago

Newsletter for November, 2013

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Upcoming Sundays

- **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, with Rev. Jean Darling preaching.
- **Sundays, 11:30:** Chair Yoga with Brentan Schellenbach.

Other Events

- **Fri, Nov 8, 6:30pm: Second Friday** – meditation at 6:30, live music at 7:15 with **Kristin Cott**, Molly's Café.
- **Sun, Nov 10, 11:30-3pm:** "Burgers, Brats and Bears" fundraiser at Ollie's Lounge – keep Pastor Jean employed!
- **Tues, Nov 12, 6pm: Treasures of Uptown** interfaith steering committee, foyer.
- **Weds, Nov 13, 7pm:** Lawrence-Sheridan neighbors meeting, Molly's.
- **Thurs, Nov 21, 1:30pm:** 2 Li'l Fishes development committee, foyer.
- **Sat, Nov 23, 4pm: Spiritual Beans** interfaith discussion, at Golden House Pancakes on Broadway.
- **Sat, Nov 23, 7pm:** Joseph Bures plays American music for his **Thanksgiving recital**.
- **Sun, Nov 24, after service:** All church **Thanksgiving potluck dinner**. Ask Grace or Ludie what to bring.
- **Weds, Nov 27, noon-2pm:** 2 Li'l Fishes Community **Thanksgiving Dinner**, Roger Aurelio, hosting.

2 Li'l Fishes

2 Li'l Fishes serves a free hot lunch every day but Wednesday, downstairs in Anderson Hall. All are welcome.

To help out, contact Will Pruitt, volunteer coordinator, twolilfishes@yahoo.com.

Minister's Notes: Scary Stories and Mystery

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

In honor of Hallowe'en this year, there have been a lot of great scary stories on public radio in the last week – as in "Snap Judgment," whose host Glynn Washington tells us they help us cope with "the things that go 'bump' in the night."

And coincidentally, my bed-time reading lately has included a number of novels of a mystical bent – *The Seventh Telling: the Kabbalah of Moshe Katan*, and Paulo Coelho's *The Witch of Portobello*. Their main characters seek out mystical experiences which are frightening to most people – and can even be dangerous.

My question is, are these experiences real? And many of us still ask, do these experiences come from divine or diabolical sources?

We are fascinated by the kinds of stories where people are touched by something beyond normal human experience. And some of us are drawn by the possibilities of spiritual practice to take us there.

Why? Where does this longing come from? What are we hoping to get from meditation, prayer, painting mandalas, Sufi dance, or reading sacred texts? And is the "frisson" we get from ghost stories related?

Rumi, 12th century Persian poet and mystic, writes in his poem "The Reed Flute's Song":

Listen to the story told by the reed,
of being separated.

"Since I was cut from the reedbed,
I have made this crying sound.

Anyone apart from someone he loves
understands what I say.

Anyone pulled from a source
longs to go back."¹

We are like this flute, Rumi says – long since, we were cut from the reedbed – Eden, you might say – cut off from God, from our original sense of unity with everything in the world. And our feelings of longing, of yearning to be connected to something greater than ourselves, are a result of this long-ago loss.

For me, Rumi's analogy captures the meaning of the story of being driven out of the Garden – somehow, in our human arrival at some level of self-consciousness, we lost this embrace of the Universe, this sense of being held and contained and nourished by the Divine.

¹ *Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi, The Essential Rumi, trans. Coleman Barks*

cont'd...

Minister's Notes, cont'd

Ghost stories reference the thin veil between the prosaic life we lead and mystery. We fear powers beyond the human, or we long to connect with people we loved who have died. We may wonder if contact with this other world will "rub off" on us. Who hasn't at one time or another yearned for super-powers? Flying, or x-ray vision, or seeing the future – power that will give us an edge, or help us control the chaos that is real life?

Adepts in the world's mystical traditions do seem to achieve astonishing powers – Theresa of Avila was embarrassed when deep in prayer to find herself floating up, and asked her nuns to hold her skirts to keep her on the floor. Many adepts have described leaving their bodies and seeing or hearing things in far-away places.

But the teachers of these serious religious traditions always say that these things may happen, but they are not important – to achieve them is not why the student practices. To seek these powers for themselves is misguided.

Then why seek at all?

Through our spiritual practices we can hope to reconnect with the divine, to return to the reedbed from which we were cut – to feel at one with all other living creatures and the Universe, with the God who embraces this Creation, in love. This is not an illusion.

Perhaps ghost stories are a child's introduction to spirit, and as we mature we can approach the deep spiritual things that offer us much more than a thrill, a chill up our spine. Instead, we can find our way to calmness, deep contentment, and joy just in being alive.

peace, Jean



Kristin Cotts at the Coffeehouse

Second Fri, Nov 8

Join us in Molly's Café at 6:30pm for meditation practice with Rev. Jean, followed at 7:15pm by live music, plus fresh brewed coffee, and yummy baked goodies from Ludie's kitchen.



Burgers, Brats & Bears Fundraising Party

Sun, Nov 10, 11:30-3pm

Help keep Pastor Jean in the pulpit! At Ollie's Lounge on Berwyn. \$25 in advance, \$35 at the door. Call the office for details: 773-784-6633.

Carson's Community Days

Support the church and save money on your purchases at Carson's on **November 15 & 16!** See Dave Karcher, or the Peoples Church website to buy a coupon booklet!



"Spiritual Beans" interfaith discussion Saturday, Nov 23, 4pm

Treasures of Uptown meets at Golden House Pancake Restaurant for another lively discussion – a series on our various faiths: Baptist -- "Soul liberty." www.TreasuresofUptown.org.

Classical Piano Recital

Saturday, Nov 23, 7pm: Joseph Bures' monthly recital will include pieces by American composers, in honor of Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving Potluck Sunday, November 24

Join your fellow church-goers with delicious food from yours and everyone's kitchen for a Thanksgiving feast, following the service. Talk with Grace or Ludie about what to bring.



The Peoples Church of Chicago

941 W. Lawrence Avenue

P.O. Box 408319

Chicago, IL 60640-8319

www.PeoplesChurchChicago.org

773.784.6633



Calendar – November 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				HALLOWE'EN	1	2
3 10am Service 11:30 Trustees 11:30 YOGA	4	5	6	7	8 6:30pm Second Friday with Kristin Cotts	9
10 10am Service 11:30-3 "Burgers Brats and Bears" fundraiser at Ollie's Lounge, on Berwyn	11	12 6pm Treasures steering comm., foyer	13 7pm Lawrence- Sheridan Neighbors, Molly's Café	14	15	16 10 JustEmbrace Sole Care foot clinic
17 Rev. Patton 10am Service 11:30 Spiritual Formation	18	19	20	21 1:30 2 Li'l Fishes	22	23 4pm Spir. Beans at Golden House on Broadway 7pm – Joseph Bures recital – American composers
24 10am Service 11:30 Thxgiving Potluck	25	26	27 noon-2pm Community Thanksgiving Dinner <i>All are welcome!</i>	28 2 Li'l Fishes open THANKSGIVING DAY Office closed	29 Office closed	30