



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago

Newsletter for April, 2013

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Upcoming Sundays

- **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, Rev. Jean Darling preaching.
- **Sun, Apr 7:** Peoples Church **Trustees Meeting.** Visitors welcome.

Other Events

- **Mon, Apr 8, 6-8pm:** 46th Ward Participatory Budgeting Project Expo.
- **Weds, Apr 10, 6pm:** **Treasures of Uptown** interfaith steering committee.
- **Thurs, Apr 11, 7pm:** **TIF Illumination** Town Hall Meeting.
- **Fri, Apr 12, 6:45pm:** Second Friday: Meditation with Jean; 7:15: folk artist **Marilyn Middleton Mellor.**
- **Sat, Apr 13, 8pm:** Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band plays "**City Trees.**"
- **Sat, Apr 20, 10am:** PBC Board meets, Molly's Café.
- **Thurs, Apr 25, 1:30pm:** 2 Li'l Fishes development committee, foyer.
- **Sat, Apr 27, 4pm:** **Spiritual Beans** discuss'n, at Golden House Pancakes.
- **Sat, Apr 27, 7pm:** Joseph Bures classical **piano recital.**

Minister's Notes:

Our Worst Enemy, Our Best Friend

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

In 1958 a friend of Rachel Carson's was disturbed that numerous songbirds around her property had died after it was sprayed for mosquitoes with DDT. Carson, already a well-known naturalist, began investigating, and her studies resulted in her worldview-shattering 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, about the dangers and abuse of pesticides. It led directly to the Kennedy administration's immediate strengthening of chemical pesticide regulations.

The title was reportedly inspired by a poem by John Keats, "La Belle Dame sans Merci," (The Beautiful Lady without Mercy) which contains the lines "The sedge is wither'd from the lake, And no birds sing."

Curious, I looked up Keats' poem to find out what it was about. It's a love poem, allegorical, perhaps, about a man falling in love with a fairy maiden, who captures his heart and then abandons him. He dreams of all the other men who have encountered her:

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—"La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!"¹

He awakes on the hillside overlooking the lake, where winter's chill has flattened the grasses and chased away the birds.

Wikipedia informs us:

History professor Gary Kroll commented, "Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* played a large role in articulating ecology as a 'subversive subject'— as a perspective that cuts against the grain of materialism, scientism, and the technologically engineered control of nature."²

Since this book was published – arousing alarm and action at the time – we've been hearing predictions of disaster just around the corner, including the Club of Rome's alarming 1972 report *The Limits to Growth*. Some of the deadlines have come and gone, and perhaps the fact that disaster hasn't arrived has lulled us into a false sense of security. It feels like there is less sense of

cont'd...

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Belle_Dame_sans_Merci

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_Spring

2 Li'l Fishes

2 Li'l Fishes serves a free hot lunch Tuesday, and Thursday through Sunday, downstairs in Anderson Hall. All are welcome.

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

Minister's Notes, cont'd

urgency about environmental issues now than at any time since before the first Earth Day in 1970.

This lassitude comes partly, I think, from confusion caused by a lot of anti-environmental propaganda, such as the assertions that global warming is a hoax (when nearly all scientists agree that human generation of CO₂ is mostly responsible for it).

But it also comes from a carefully taught sense of helplessness about big problems. If we feel that there is nothing we personally can do to solve a problem, then we'd rather not even think about it.

It struck me that Keats' poem – *la belle dame* – could represent our love affair with material excess, our being in thrall to the comforts we take for granted, to the lure of ever fancier cell-phones and cars, to air conditioning and foods from exotic places – and to our learned helplessness.

We know from George W. Bush's first response to 9/11 that the most important thing Americans can do for national security is shop.

That sounds absurd, of course, but it also reminds us of the cynical remark of the 2nd century Roman writer Juvenal, that the common people—rather than caring about their freedom—are only interested in “bread and circuses” (*panem et circenses*); i.e. food and entertainment).³

The Club of Rome has continued to issue reports periodically about the state of the environment, updating their previous predictions – sometimes in a positive direction. They look at political aspects of global problems. Their 1991 offering, *The First Global Revolution*, suggests a new perspective:

According to this book, divided nations require common enemies to unite them, "either a real one or else one invented for the purpose." Because of the sudden absence of traditional enemies, "new enemies must be identified." "In searching for a new enemy to unite us, we came up with the idea that pollution, the threat of global warming, water shortages, famine and the like would fit the bill....All these dangers are caused by human intervention, and it is only through changed attitudes and behavior that they can be overcome. The real enemy then, is humanity itself."⁴

I know that eventually we will stop seeing enemies in other people – our brothers and sisters – and recognize the face we see in the mirror. Not as an enemy, but as the friend who can help change the hearts and minds of others. We are not powerless; no, we are “powerful beyond measure,” as Marianne Williamson so beautifully said.

We are all brothers and sisters on this little planet, and we need to keep reminding ourselves that we have the power to love each other and this planet into health and well-being.

peace, Jean

Marilyn Middleton Mellor at the Coffeehouse Second Friday, April 12

Join us at 6:45pm for a little quiet meditation with Rev. Jean, followed at 7:15pm by live folk music, plus fresh brewed coffee, and goodies from Ludie's famous kitchen.



“Spiritual Beans” interfaith discussion

Saturday, April 27, 4pm, Treasures of Uptown meets at Golden House Pancake Restaurant for another lively discussion – check the website, www.TreasuresofUptown.org for further info.

“April in Paris”

Saturday, Apr 27, 7pm:
Joseph Bures' monthly **piano recital** will focus on all French composers. Come enjoy this spring treat.



The Peoples Church of Chicago
941 W. Lawrence Avenue
P.O. Box 408319
Chicago, IL 60640-8319
www.PeoplesChurchChicago.org
773.784.6633

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juvenal>

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Club_of_Rome

Calendar – April 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 10am Service 11:30 Trustees 11:30 YOGA	8 6-8pm 46 th ward Participatory Budgeting (PB) Project Expo	9	10 6pm Treasures steering comm., foyer	11 7pm TIF Illumin- ation Town Hall Meeting	12 6:45pm Meditation 7pm Coffeehouse with Marilyn Middleton Mellor	13 8pm Lakeside Pride concert
14 Family Day 10am Service 11:30 YOGA	15	16	17	18	19	20 10 JustEmbrace Sole Care foot clinic 10-noon PBC board meeting Noon – building users meeting Molly's Cafe
21 EARTH DAY 9am Liturgist Training 10am Service 11:30 YOGA	22	23	24	25 1:30 2 Li'l Fishes	26	27 4pm -Spir. Beans @Golden Pancake 7pm Jos. Bures piano recital
28 10am Service Brian Chenowith speaking 11:30 YOGA 12 POTLUCK 1pm Concert by Renee Baker	29	30				