



# ON THE STREET

## The Peoples Church of Chicago

### Newsletter for April, 2012

“A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience”

#### CALENDAR

##### Movie/Film Night

- **Fri, Apr 27, 6pm:** “**Jesus Christ Superstar**” – 1972 movie version of the hit musical. Popcorn, discussion.

##### Upcoming Sundays

- **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, with Rev. Jean Darling preaching.
- **Sun, Apr 1, Palm Sunday:** Rev. **Jacki Belile**, preaching, procession of the palms.
- **Sun, Apr 8, EASTER:** 9am **Easter breakfast**; 10am, service.

##### Other Events

- **Thurs, Apr 12, 6:30pm:** Treasures of Uptown steering committee, foyer.
- **Sat, Apr 14, 11:30-5pm:** “**Baseball and Hot Dogs**” fundraiser at Ollie’s Lounge for Peoples Church. \$25.
- **Sat, Apr 21, 10am:** Preston Bradley Center (PBC) board Annual Meeting, Molly’s Café.
- **Tues, Apr 24, 6:30pm:** **Soup with Pastor Jean**, Molly’s Café. We talk about Babylon and themes of exile.
- **Sat, Apr 28, 7pm:** **Joseph Bures** classical piano recital.

#### Minister’s Notes:

##### The Ides of April

*Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling*

I’m REALLY late getting this newsletter done – I was inspired by the date March 15, plus my recent work putting together a presentation on the federal budget that we gave at the North Shore Unitarian Church that week.

You might remember that March 15 used to be tax day – mercifully moved to April in 1955 (did my dad keep mentioning it every year?). But ever since Shakespeare, the Ides of March has been a dark day, a day of reckoning.

According to the Roman historian Plutarch, made famous by the Bard’s *Julius Caesar*, the soothsayer predicted that Caesar would not survive through the Ides of March – halfway through the month. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, Caesar met the seer and joked, “The Ides of March are come”, meaning to say that the prophecy had not been fulfilled, to which the seer replied “Aye, Caesar; but not gone.”<sup>[1]</sup> On his way to the Forum, he was waylaid and stabbed to death. So much for tax day.

And of course there is the assertion of “nothing certain but death and taxes.”

So I’ve been mulling over the U.S. budget and looking for signs of hope. Chicago billionaire Kenneth Griffin in that Sunday’s Chicago Tribune said, “This is a very sad moment in my lifetime. This is the first time class warfare has really been embraced as a political tool.”

I confess it made me giggle. The first time? Hardly.

Mr. Griffin belongs to the 1% - and in fact, he belongs to the .01%, whose average income ballooned to \$27 million per year, while wages were stagnant or declined, and the average income for the bottom 90% is \$31,244 per year. Since the 1940’s, the tax rate on the top 1% has been cut from 90% to 35% today (and that doesn’t count deductions).<sup>[2]</sup>

I would advise Mr. Griffin to read his history.

#### 2 Li'l Fishes

Each Tues, Thurs, Sat and Sunday, a free hot lunch is served downstairs in Anderson Hall. All are welcome.

To help out, contact Will Pruitt, volunteer coordinator, [twolifishes@yahoo.com](mailto:twolifishes@yahoo.com).

[1] Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, Caesar 63

[2] These are 2008 numbers.

*cont’d...*

### **Minister's Notes, cont'd**

Class warfare is often waged without any talk about the disparity in wealth and income, by those who engineer the kind of long-term changes in tax policy that make it worse.

One reason I and others are concerned about the increasing concentration of wealth at the top, is the deleterious effect it has on our democracy. The middle class – people without much wealth, without much power – tend to get along pretty well because our power is about the same. When individuals can use enormous sums of money to influence the political process, regardless of what others need, regardless of the common good, then the very nature of our democracy is distorted.

Back in the early 1970s there was a reprint of a 1930's era poster that progressives loved to put up in our kitchens or offices – it showed a garter-sleeved, pencil-thin-mustached man drying his hands on an inadequate towel with the nastiest look on his face, and read, "Is your bathroom breeding Bolsheviks?" Now, that's class warfare. (ha, ha)

In an earlier life I made videos for community and labor organizations. I was a volunteer producer for Labor Beat television, which covered rank and file labor stories for community access television.

In witnessing their work, I was always most impressed by labor activists who are not afraid of those who they see as being on the "other side" of their efforts to unionize workers. They approach it with humor, they see it as a kind of game (though one that has been deadly, in past times). They are absolutely committed to getting the best deal for the workers they are organizing, and are not thrown off track by arguments that they be "fair" to the other side.

Now that I'm in ministry, I struggle with how to preach to those who own, those in the 1% who have so much control over the economic lives of the ones much further down in the economic food chain. I don't believe in demonizing anyone. And yet good wages and fair treatment are a justice issue, not a matter of opinion.

We need to think of taxes – not as an onerous burden unfairly imposed on us – but as an investment in America, in our future. If our taxes help make our society more fair, help more children go to college and improve their lives over what their parents had, if they help our cities and states take care of people who are too sick to work, if they help

maintain our infrastructure – roads, bridges, the electric grid, if they help us develop green technologies so we aren't left in the dust by new economic powers, like China or Brazil... then I will pay my taxes gladly.

But I'm also going to do what I can to get us back on a footing of greater equality – let those who are doing well, do more to contribute to the greater whole that they are a part of, to contribute to the health of the commonwealth.

peace, Jean



### **Sue Fink, fiddler Jordi Kleiner at the Coffeehouse**

Join us on Friday, April 13 for our Second Friday in Molly's Café (floor 3 1/2). Begin with a respite from your hectic week, the meditative

**Taizé service** with chant, candles, poetry, and silence. The Peoples Church **Coffeehouse** follows at 7pm, where singer-songwriter **Sue Fink** brings her unique voice, along with the talent of fiddler **Jordi Kleiner**.

Besides the live music, the Coffeehouse features cheap eats: fresh-brewed coffee and Ludie's fabulous desserts.

### **Interfaith News...**

#### • **Spiritual Beans**

Spiritual Beans (a project of Treasures of Uptown) continues its lively interfaith conversations around the table at Inspiration Kitchens, 4715 N. Sheridan. The next gathering will be on Saturday Apr 28 – stay tuned for details. See you there!



### **The Peoples Church of Chicago**

941 W. Lawrence Avenue

P.O. Box 408319

Chicago, IL 60640-8319

[www.PeoplesChurchChicago.org](http://www.PeoplesChurchChicago.org)

773.784.6633

# Calendar – April 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 PALM SUN.</b> 10am Service Rev. Jacki Belile, preaching 11:30 Trustees	2	3	4	5	6	7
				← Pastor Jean In D.C. for Passover →		
<b>8 EASTER</b> 9am Breakfast 10am Service	9	10	11	12	13	14
				6:30 Treasures steering comm.	6pm Second Fri with Sue Fink	<b>11:30 Baseball and Hotdogs fundraiser</b> at Ollie's Lounge, 1064 W. Berwyn
<b>15</b> 10am Service Seth Fisher, preaching 11:30 Potluck	16	17	18	19	20	21
			6:30pm Worship committee			<b>10 JustEmbrace Sole Clinic</b> <b>10-12 PBC board</b>
<b>22</b> 10am Service Rev. Qiyama Rahman, preaching	23	24	25	26	27	28
		6:30 Soup with Pastor Jean		1:30 2 Li'l Fishes Development committee	6pm Movie Night "Jesus Christ Superstar"	7pm Joseph Bures recital
<b>29 FAMILY DAY</b> 10am Service	30	1 MAY	2	3	4	5