



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for January-February, 2010

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? **Fri, Feb 26, 6pm: "The Ground Truth"** – Our first documentary: Iraq veterans speak on their experiences overseas and back home.

Upcoming Services

- ? **Sundays 10am:** Worship Service, **Rev. Jean Darling** preaching, with stories and poetry and music.
- ? **Sun, Jan 31, 10am: Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis** brings her message of hope and action; the consort **Spirit of Gambo** plays Bach on their *violas da gamba*.
- ? **Sun, Feb 28, 10am: Dr. Carla Brown** speaks on transcendental meditation and links to healing.

Other Events

- ? **First Friday, Feb 5, 6pm: Taizé service** – in Molly's Café, followed at 7pm by **Coffeehouse**, with big-names-for-a-small-venue folk singers **Kristin Lems & Joe Jencks**; coffee & cake for cheap!
- ? **Sat, Feb 20, 7pm, Piano Recital:** Joseph Bures plays all **Chopin**.

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:

Season of Busyness – Just when we thought...

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

Here we are, halfway through "meteoric winter" as Tom Shilling calls it; we've battened our hatches, pulled tight the shutters; we're well-muffled and mittened, anti-frozen and insulated... We survived the holidays, with fewer gifts perhaps, but more cheer, more fellowship and good food with friends and family.

I feel a little like the groundhog, whose day is coming soon – cautiously poking my head out to see how things are. We've been ensconced here in our church-fortress, celebrating the winter season with Advent and our annual Christmas pageant (with children this year!) and the Winter Solstice and Kwanzaa.

We celebrated Martin Luther King Day with guest preacher from the UU seminary, Qiyamah Rahman, and shared a quite amazing meal with our Ghanaian neighbors from the fifth floor church. We traded stories of how we came to be here – here in America, or here in this church. This shared meal was so inspiring that someone suggested we do a joint religious service the next time we get together.

We are like the trees here in our Northern clime, which may look bare and dead-looking on the outside, but the sap is stirring, roots growing, preparing for the time of buds swelling and flowers and greenery bursting forth.

In February the Coffeehouse is hosting Kristin Lems and Joe Jencks, two nationally and internationally known singer-songwriters who've teamed up locally for the first time. We're lucky they live here on the North side. And in March the wonderful group "February Sky" returns. These performances will each run two hours, from 7 to 9pm, after the 6pm Taizé service.

We plan to hold a book reading and reflection series over the coming year, using novels to spur discussion, focusing on the Middle East, and Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan. We'll meet at Border's, one Thursday night a month. It's a great way to learn about the area, the issues, the cultures, and be moved by the art as well. See the website for the book list and dates.

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Minister's Notes, cont'd

I've been doing some work behind the scenes with the Community Renewal Society to make life better for children whose parents are in prison, and it seems to be paying off. The Illinois Department of Corrections Director Michael Randle assures us that he wants to make the department family-friendly.

We are optimistic that soon visiting children will be able to hug and kiss their parents, that more than two will be able to visit at one time, that guardians will be told that a visit is cancelled before they've made the long trek downstate.

Other beneficial changes depend on a tax increase making it through the Illinois legislature – so urge your representatives to support HB174. (For more information, see www.CommunityRenewalSociety.org.)

Some of the immediate financial anxieties facing our historic building have been relieved by the generosity of old friends, while we are making new friends for the Preston Bradley Center board. We are deeply engaged in a strategic planning process funded by the Chicago Community Trust, and developing relationships with such groups as Partners for Sacred Places, which can give us needed expertise and advice.

These are some of the stirrings.

What is stirring in your life?

peace, *Jean*

The Universal appeal of Music

A good musical presentation, whether by one or many, draws people like a pied piper. Music is a universal leveler which draws. People may come for entertainment, but may stay to hear the message. Churches vie with each other to have the best choirs. Some, including Peoples, also sponsor coffee houses, offering folk, jazz, and contemporary music. We also offer free monthly classical piano recitals.

Faced as we are with a very diverse local population, we need to attract people from a wide variety of cultural environments. Every trustee of the church has voiced a desire for a choir to draw people into the church. We particularly need to attract younger people into our midst, and younger

people place a great premium on music. People also like to be entertained in church, and no matter what the theological offerings may be, and like to leave church on an emotional upbeat.

We have found that our most effective drawing card has been having instrumental and vocal "special" music as a part of our Sunday services. A regular choir would enhance that. Similarly, although our monthly Friday evening Taizé Services draw a few regulars, our Coffee House which follows the Taizé service and features mostly jazz and folk music is a bigger draw and brings more new people.

I have often heard it said that the reason the civil rights movement succeeded so brilliantly in the South but failed to take hold in the North is that the Southern people sang. Particularly in the African-American culture, vocal music, individual and group, was ingrained in the culture. Churches sang in choirs, protesters sang in rallies, marchers sang in the streets, workers sang in fields and factories, and slogans were set to music. A common background of singing the same hymns, the same spirituals, the same blues, and the same patriotic songs brought people together.

Whether sacred or secular, soul, folk, or jazz, singing ties people together, promotes adhesion, through shared emotion, through laughter or tears. Music engages the soul and attracts every age. Music supports happiness. It assuages melancholy, soothes sadness and despair, and feeds the soul.

In solidarity,
Bob Ford



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Calendar – February 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 JANUARY 10am Service Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis; <i>Spirit of Gambo</i> plays Bach	1	2	3	4	5 in <i>Molly's Café</i> 6pm Taizé svc, 7pm Coffeehouse, <i>Kristin Lems and Joe Jencks!</i>	6
7 10am Service 11:30 PC Trustees	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10am Service	15	16	17	18	19	20 7pm Joseph Bures plays an all-Chopin recital in honor of the composer's bicentennial
21 10am Service	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 10am Service 11:30 Dinner Peoples Church Annual Meeting	1 <i>MARCH</i>	2	3	4	5 in <i>Molly's Café</i> 6pm Taizé svc, 7pm Coffeehouse, <i>"February Sky"</i>	