



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for July, 2009

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? Fourth Friday, July 24, 6-8pm. Comedy **"Defending Your Life"** (1991) with Albert Brooks and Meryl Streep.

Upcoming Services

- ? Sundays, 10am: Worship Service, a blend of Humanist & Christian and world religions, with stories and poetry and music.
- ? Sunday, July 26, 10am: Service, followed by potluck lunch and the on-going **Sacred Conversation on Race**. We look at an essay by UU theologian **Thandeka**.
- ? Guest speakers in August – Rev. Jean is out of town.

All services followed by fellowship, with coffee and light refreshments.

Other Events

- ? **First Friday, August 7, 6pm: Taizé service** – in Molly's Café, 3rd floor.
- ? **Sat, July 25, 7pm: Joseph Bures, Classical Piano Recital.**

Minister's Notes:

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

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Bernie Siegel is a surgeon who very nearly gave up medicine. He found himself getting more and more depressed by his work, even though he was curing cancer patients.

He finally figured out that it was the persona he adopted at work, "Dr. Siegel," a cool-headed scientist, distant and cut off from the lives of his patients, that was making him feel so terrible. He decided to allow himself to care about them – a boundary he was taught not to cross in medical school. He shaved his head and asked the nurses and other staff to start calling him "Bernie" at work.

He has a natural penchant for teasing, for acting silly, for seeing the world as a child might: interpreting signs literally, for example:

If the form says "Sign Here," I sign H-E-R-E. If it says, "Print Your Name," okay, I print Y-O-U-R N-A-M-E. When someone says, "May I say who's calling?" I answer, "Sure, go ahead."

This habit struck me as extremely irritating – my father was all too often literal in his understanding of what we said, and he did it more out of obstinacy than playfulness (or so I thought!). But Bernie uses it to connect with people. When he says something silly like that, people sit up and take notice, and then he can talk with them, ask questions about their lives, enjoy the human contact.

One of his sons made and brought home a piece of art like the box inserted above, with "words" painted across the canvass again and again. And if you look closely, you notice that it also spells "sword." Words, sword. How words, which can be so healing, can also cut, at times. How swords – as in the form of Bernie's scalpel, can heal.

Like play, art can upset the boring grown-up appletart we are too often hitched to. It gets us outside our usual way of thinking, opens some door we didn't realize was there. Play keeps us from taking ourselves too seriously – and it can be a form of spiritual practice, when we become fully absorbed in some activity, like drawing or singing or making a birdhouse. **cont'd...**

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, cont'd

In Bernie's book, *Prescriptions for Living*, he suggests doing something creative every day:

I like talking to strangers and making deals with children in airports. That type of play may not appeal to you. You must find your own way to play and lose track of time and discover the wisdom of the ages... Make up a song. Repair something. Plant some flowers. Build a climber for your cats. This prescription should be followed faithfully. Every single day, it is critical that you create something. You decide what it will be.

What stops us from playing?

Maybe someone told us we couldn't draw worth beans, couldn't carry a tune, didn't have any talent for art. Maybe we kept hitting our thumb with the hammer. Maybe someone told us the world was a serious place, and we ought to "grow up."

There are plenty of "serious" people who will give you "the look" if you act silly – and who among us hasn't experienced that glare or look of contempt? And in a bad mood, who among us hasn't given it?

But life is short! Each moment is an opportunity to love – to love life, yourself, the stranger struggling to carry two 30 pound bags of rice up the el steps. I, for one, would like to give up wasting my time on being jealous of people who know how to be silly, and join them in that extremely important pastime. It only has to be combined with kindness, and voilà! It's a prescription for Living. Not just living, but living a full, funny, warm, loving life.

peace, *Jean*

Hunger Walk – Thank You!

We had 15 people in the June 20th Hunger Walk for the Greater Chicago Food Depository. It was a gorgeous day for several thousand of us to take a stroll along the lake, for a good cause.

We'll let you know at the end of July how much was raised to help 2 Li'l Fishes buy food this year.

Thanks to everyone who walked or donated cash!

First Fridays in Molly's Café:

August 7, 6pm, come to the monthly **Taizé** service in Molly's Café on 3 ½ West. It's a meditative service with songs and chants, poetry, candles and silence, to refresh you after a hectic week.

Get Ready, Set...

We're gearing up for the 16th annual Billy Hand Robinson memorial **Labor Day Picnic** in the park. This year it's on Monday, September 7, from 10am to 2pm.

Last year we gave away over 600 plates of ribs, corn, chicken, watermelon, I can't remember what-all.

We'll play softball again, from 10-noon – bring your bat and glove! Jean's bringing a dozen 14" balls...

Contact any of the old-timers to volunteer – Grace, Larry, Ludie, Virginia, Richard... Or sign up after church on Sunday... Or phone the church office during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm, **773-784-6633**.

And we cheerfully and gratefully accept any and all donations toward food and supplies for this great celebration of the end of summer, and remembering the powerful message of love and acceptance that Billy Hand Robinson provided to homeless people in his time – and that we carry on in his name!



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Calendar – July 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2 5:30 – music	3 6 – Taizé svc	4	5 10am Service 11:30 PC Trustees
6	7	8	9 5:30 – music	10	11	12 10am Service
13	14	15	16 5:30 – music	17	18	19 10am Service
20	21	22	23 5:30 – music	24 6pm: Film night: “Defending Your Life”	25 7pm Joseph Bures Classical piano	26 10am Service 11:30am Potluck Sacred Conversa- tion on Race continues
27	28	29	30 5:30 – music	31		