



ON THE STREET

The Peoples Church of Chicago Newsletter for September, 2008

"A Spiritual Home for People of Conscience"

CALENDAR

Film/Movie Night –

- ? Fourth Friday, Sept 26, 6-8pm.
"Brother From Another Planet"
 – followed by discussion.

Song and Hymn Sing –

- ? Thursday, 5:30 – 6:30pm.

Summer Stroll in Uptown

- ? Thursday, 6:30pm, after singing.

Upcoming Services

- ? Sun, Aug 31, 10am: **Emanuel Blackwell: "Labor in the Pulpit."**
- ? Sun, Sept 7, 10am: Service.
- ? Sun, Sept 14, 10am: Service.
- ? Sun, Sept 21, 10am: Service.
- ? Sun, Sept 28, 10am: **"The Green Economy."** Potluck, and the **"Sacred Conversation on Race"** follow the service.

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

Other Events

- ? Sat, Sept 6, 7pm: **Classical Piano Concert with Joseph Bures.**
- ? Sat, Sep 27: **Jeanne Towns, Poetry Reading & Workshop**

2 Li'l Fishes

Each Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, a free lunch is served in the lower floor Anderson Hall of the church. All are welcome.

If you would like to volunteer, come by after 10:00am, and Isaac will put you to work.

15th Annual

Labor Day Picnic

Monday, September 1, noon to 2pm
 serving ribs, chicken, hot dogs and more!
Margate Park, 4900 N. Marine Drive
 between Lawrence and Foster.
Food, Softball, Fun!
in loving memory of Billy Hand Robinson

Minister's Notes:

Change In the Air

Rev. Jean Siegfried Darling

My sister, a singer, and her guitarist-ex-husband do a great number together called, "It's All Your Fault." It's a cute way of looking at how people have to live with the decisions they've made, and how often we forget that we were the ones who made the decision. It's cute because we know it does no good to blame others for where we've ended up, and sometimes we'd really, really like to blame them anyway.

Blame. A strategy whose time has come – and gone.

Last week three of us from Peoples Church attended a workshop put on by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, called "Here I Stand." It was an introduction for me to Murray Bowen's theory of family systems. He revolutionized psychotherapy by showing that a person was not individually to blame for his problems, and it wasn't his mother's fault, either. Instead, Bowen identified regular patterns of behavior in families that occur in healthy families as well as ones having trouble. We all do it, he showed.

The purpose of the workshop was to show us the value of claiming our interior strength, our intuitive knowledge of what is important to us, and learn to stand up to our families – learn not to rebel, not to behave like doormats, but to take a stand. If we do, they may not like it, they'll tell us we're wrong and we'd better change back! But if we stick with our newfound conviction, they will come around eventually. All we have to do is stay calm, stay in connection, and keep firmly on our path – they will accept it. And doing this consistently can help free us from some of the crazy games our families play.

cont'd...

Minister's Notes, cont'd

The idea was also that we might learn how to handle some of the relationships that develop in a congregation, which can be very much like a family.

But it seemed even more important to me, that we all learn more about how to think for ourselves and thus act in accord with our deepest values.

Our society sometimes makes people fearful of speaking out. I believe that it is important for us to gain the courage and independence needed to bring about the changes that will result in a more just and loving culture.

Watching the convention this week convinces me that there are leaders out there who know where they stand, and who can stand clearly for what they believe is just and right, without demonizing their opponents.

There's a new spirit in the air, a spirit not of blame but of accountability, a spirit not of rancorous opposition but of dialog. It gives me hope.

peace, *Jean*

2 Li'l Fishes Expanding:

Beginning in September, the **2 Li'l Fishes** lunch program will begin serving on Sundays as well as Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. In October we'll open our **new lunch space** in 3 ½ West, a pleasant sunny room a half flight up from the third floor. Our new lunchroom will provide four new opportunities a week for teams of people to help with the meal.

Can you help? Call Angie at the church office and get on the schedule, 773-784-6633.

The Sacred Conversation on Race

We'll resume the Sacred Conversation on Race at our September fourth Sunday potluck with a video of the amazing **Van Jones** speaking at the UUA General Assembly in Florida in June. He talks about building the "Green Economy" – where we can conserve energy **and** put people to work.

Poetry Reading and Workshop

CALLING ALL POETS! Poet Jeanne Towns will read from her works and lead a poetry workshop, Saturday, September 27, from 3-4:30pm in 3 ½ West. Bring some of your own work to share, or bring your creative mind. (*Funded in part by Poets & Writers, Inc., through a grant it has received from an anonymous donor.*)

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Into the New Millennium

Bob Ford, Ex. Dir., Preston Bradley Center

Picture a mammoth old ore boat, just in from a run down Lake Superior from the Virginia City mines. A tired old ship, crusted with the dirt and rust of years of service. Ready now for dry dock and repair. Now picture a large old stone and masonry building, similarly in dowdy condition from years of neglect caused by its owners' shrinking pocketbook. Now you're looking at The Preston Bradley Center, the once impressive home of The Peoples Church of Chicago. It too needs repair.

But The Preston Bradley Center started getting attention perhaps 15 years ago. During the years immediately after 1975 when its nationally famous minister Dr. Preston Bradley retired, its congregation dwindled first from 4,000 to 2,000, then to 200 and ultimately fewer. With dwindling membership, naturally, came a dwindling treasury. Although during that period other churches provided financial help, things came to a point where its vintage 1925 building needed major rehab, so that available funds went into places the public never saw and the public areas stayed dowdy.

In the early nineties things began to change again. At first it was hardly noticeable, but small improvements began to appear in public places. Stairwell chandeliers began to be replaced with ones that matched. Plastic window panes in interior doors magically became wired safety glass. In the mechanical areas also, sometimes critical improvements began to blossom. A new sewage pump miraculously appeared.

As we entered the 21st century and all us movie buffs waited breathlessly to see if 20th Century Fox would make the change, our finances got dicey again. Some of our biggest challenges come as a result of code changes or city enforcement guidelines, and 2006 brought a spate of these. Giving money to help inner city churches provide for the poor goes in and out of fashion, as do government appropriations benefiting the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Last year was a very difficult year, but with the help of a few very generous angels, we made it.

In 2008, however, several structural changes, some of which began in 2006 and 2007, are on their way to completion. After years of experimentation, we have solved a very troublesome problem inherent in the design of our overhead sewer ejector pump system. We have almost completed repair work on the near vertical copper section of the roof. We have excised the asbestos from the boiler room, removed an old non-functioning boiler, and are in the finishing stages of installing a new one. We have begun work on the front doors. We have begun kitchen renovations, and have several other things in the works.

The old building is regaining her self-respect.

In Solidarity, Bob

Calendar – September 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Annual Labor Day In the park	2	3	4 5:30 – music 6:30 – stroll	5	6 7pm Joseph Bures classical piano concert	7 10am Service 11:30 PC Trustees
8	9	10	11 5:30 – music 6:30 – stroll	12	13	14 10am Service
15	16	17	18 5:30 – music 6:30 – stroll	19	20	21 10am Service
22	23	24	25 5:30 – music 6:30 – stroll	26 6pm Film night: “Brother From Another Planet”	27 3pm Jeanne Townes – Poetry Reading and Workshop	28 10am Service 11:30 Potluck Sacred Con- versation on Race continues
29	30					