



New Garden Community Church

Unitarian Universalist - a labor-peace church

312-405-9470 ♦ minister@NewGardenUU.org ♦ www.NewGardenUU.org
meeting at 6pm, UE (United Electrical workers), 37 S. Ashland, Chicago

May 31, 2007

"Love for the Earth, Justice for the People"

Calendar:

Peace Fair SATURDAY, June 9, 9am–4pm "Peace in Our Earth Community"

Union Park Field House, Lake and Randolph.
In the morning, **tools for inner peace:** dances of Universal Peace, yoga, meditation, nonviolent communication; afternoon, a **community conversation** about **peace in the world:** violence and what we can do about it, in our neighbor-hoods, our city, the world. For info, see the website: www.NewGardenUU.org.

- **Sunday, June 3, 6pm** – Flower Communion Sunday – if you can, bring a flower; take home a flower. Rev. Jean talks about **"What Feeds Your Soul?"**

Spirituality Book Discussion Group

Tuesday, June 5, 6:30-8pm – Read Jimmy Carter's *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*. Meet at the back table, Westgate Coffeehouse, 924 W. Madison.

- **Sunday, June 10, 6pm** - The First Person series continues with **Ron Kroll**, actor, man of heart, talking about his journey from Catholicism to Unitarianism, and the spiritual landmarks along the way.
- **Sunday, June 17, 6pm** - We celebrate **Juneteenth**, the anniversary of the anniversary of the day in 1865 that slaves in Texas finally were told they had been freed, two years before.
- **Sunday, June 24, 6pm** - For Movie Night, we watch **"The Secret,"** a film that describes the "Law of Attraction" – the idea that

whatever you are focused on comes back to you – whether it is positive or negative.

All services followed by potluck supper and conversation.

Saying Enough

The trick to getting along with others is getting along with yourself. Who are we most comfortable with? People who are at ease, who are comfortable with us, right?

I read about a Zuni medicine man who was perfect for the job, according to his peers, because "he talked a lot." Not in a dominating way, as speech is sometimes used in Western culture, but in an open, chatty way, so that the man was transparent to his fellows, not mysterious, not someone they had to wonder what he was going to do or say next.

It's true that some religions value mysterious power in their religious leaders, but in this case the man's power came from his compassionate capacity, his centeredness, not from frightening those who came to him with problems.

As we at New Garden continue to practice nonviolent communication over the months, I get, as one of my teachers has said, "progressively less stupid." The latest thing I've learned is that I have a tendency to listen to someone, and then react to what they've said, sometimes in a way that sounds like criticism. I don't tell them what my thought processes or feelings were while they were talking, only the result of all my thinking.

I think this kind of thing is at the root of a lot of conflicts and misunderstandings. Sometimes we have a strong reaction without even being able to identify why. In *The Barn at the End of the World*, a wonderful memoir about learning to take

care of sheep after a first career as an academic, Mary Rose O'Reilley writes about her grief at her daughter leaving home, how it parallels the grief of the nursing ewes at their lambs being taken away, and how she explodes in fury at her partner, before she is able to identify her anger as coming from her grief, unexpressed.

We learn not to be transparent in this culture, which seems to value secret power, unlike the Zuni. To be transparent makes you seem vulnerable, able to be hurt, apparently not a "powerful" person. But it's obvious that when we build walls to protect ourselves, they are also walls that cut us off from others.

Our power needs to come, not from invulnerability – an unreachable goal, in any case – but from that calm, centered place that we reach in knowing ourselves, in allowing ourselves to simply be, in accepting ourselves wholly.

Simply being is a perennial human problem, addressed by world religions in some form – prayer, meditation. Our worries and anxieties are our minds racing in circles, with no place to rest. In prayer we pour out our hearts, then wait in

silence for an answer. In meditation we invite silence, and keep brushing aside the thoughts as they arise, like gnats. The Sufis look for union with the divine, in music, dance, prayer that overwhelms the busy left brain, leaving room for silence. Silence that heals, that makes whole.

The Sufi poet Rumi writes, in "Quietness":

Inside this new love, die.
Your way begins on the other side.
Become the sky.
Take an axe to the prison wall.
Escape.
Walk out like someone suddenly born into
color.
Do it now.
You're covered with thick cloud.
Slide out the side. Die,
and be quiet. Quietness is the surest sign
that you've died.
Your old life was a frantic running
from silence.

The speechless full moon
comes out now.

peace, Jean

Rev. Jean Darling
New Garden Community Church (UU)
c/o 131 S. Humphrey Ave
Oak Park, IL 60302