



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

November 16, 2006

"Love for the Earth, Justice for the People"

Calendar:

- **Sunday, November 19, 6pm – "Thanksgiving"** – This week, you're invited to reflect on the signs of the times, and bring **tales of encouragement and hope** to share with the rest of us.

Meditation Class

Sunday, November 19, 4pm – Marilyn Myles, long-time practitioner, group leader, leads this session on meditation. The class meets once a month, **3rd Sunday**.

You are invited to join a short meditation **each Sunday** at 5:30pm – we ring the chime, we sit, we stare at the flame. Be early for a short intro reading.

- **Sunday, November 26, 6pm** – It's **Movie Night!** Join us to watch **"Smoke Signals,"** the all-Indian movie – writer, director, actors, all Native-American – and experience the heartbreak and humor of growing up Indian in America.

How to get what you want in your relationships – and not be sorry later

Intro Relationship Workshop – Two more sessions, Tuesdays, November 28, and Dec 12. To register, phone 312.405.9470 or email minister@NewGardenUU.org.

Re-forming Ourselves

The election last Tuesday was a relief to me, on the one hand, and a puzzle on the other.

I was grateful that people voted for change – mainly meaning they were fed up with how the war has been handled (not that there's any

agreement on how/when/where to bring the troops home).

But in Wisconsin, my home state, people voted to ban gay marriage (as well as civil unions), and for an advisory referendum to reinstate the death penalty, which has not been in effect since the 1850s – in fact, only one man has ever been executed by the state, according to the local Madison paper *Isthmus*.

One young woman, interviewed on the radio, said that she had voted for the gay marriage ban, and voted for the Republican for governor (who lost), but that otherwise she had voted for the Green Party candidates. She voted Green because she's a vegetarian and an environmentalist, she said. But she is also a Christian, and believes that gays should not marry, that her religion forbids it.

The last few years we have seen some profound shake-ups on the political scene – some kind of major realignment is taking place. "Liberal" and "conservative" no longer adequately describe people – if asked, people will say, "what kind?" or simply decline to be described by those words.

The Democratic and Republican parties have both been moving to the right, according to the pundits. Yet a socialist – Bernie Sanders – was just elected to the U.S. Senate. By talking with people about economic issues such as a living wage and health care for all, he even won over people in heavily Republican areas. Amazing.

What is going on?

It seems that people have resonated with the conservative critique of liberal lawmakers, that they do not demand enough accountability for

their largesse. Liberals have failed, I think, to take into account people's feelings about some programs, failed to adequately address fears and envy in a way to bring out our real generosity and compassion. Too many liberal politicians have fallen for the conservative critique, instead of articulating their passion in values that uphold the best of human qualities.

On the other hand, more people have been finding conservative lawmakers too punitive, too mean-spirited. They want people to be paid fairly for their labor; they don't like fighting, and want conflict to be mediated.

Benjamin Page, professor at Northwestern and author of *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*, describes the kind of foreign policy people say they want in surveys including both liberals and conservatives:

- for the U.S. to support international bodies, from the U.N. to the WTO to the International Court;
- for the U.S. to cooperate with other nations to achieve its objectives, not act unilaterally;
- for the U.N. to intervene more to keep the peace and stop violence internationally.

Page said, in an interview on WBEZ's "Worldview," that political leaders seem to make decisions based on interests and values that don't match those of most Americans. (http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/audio_library/wv_ranov06.asp#06)

I suppose we shouldn't have any illusions about that gap being bridged any time soon. Politicians are like wheat blowing in the wind, says *Sojourner* founder Jim Wallis – so it's up to us to change the direction of the wind.

And it seems that the wind **is** changing. But just how is not yet clear.

The most obvious effect: as the inevitability of climate change (with its huge costs) is recognized by business people, money will begin to be poured into research and marketing of alternative energy.

That is a relief. But what about social issues? There isn't yet a coherent articulation of humane values getting through. I'm hoping that more people concerned with climate change will also begin to see the world in a new way – not as a gift we are to care for – but as something we are an intimate part of, that we depend on for our very existence. Perhaps if we can foster a more relational view of ourselves and the Earth, we will also begin to treat one another with more care and respect.

peace, Jean

p.s. Check out David Korten's new book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*.

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