

community

The Newsletter of the Community Church of Boston
A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920

April 2011

news

Spring is a Time of Growth and Renewal

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Dear Friends and Members, Happy Spring! I know it can be hard to recognize springtime when temperatures scarcely get out of the 40s. However, the Spring Equinox has come and gone, hope of new life is on the way and we get to watch the resilient perennials break through the thawing ground.

Spring is when we begin to put seedlings in the ground knowing they will sprout vegetables in our community gardens. The soil is key for growing nutritious and healthy foods that can sustain our bodies. The soil gives a home for the life of the plants that grow from it. Just like plants we, as humans continuing to grow in many ways, need a soil to expand our roots in. The reality is that not all soil is rich and filled with life giving properties. Because of environmental destruction, including the recent disaster in Japan, there is soil that can cause harm to the life trying to grow within it. The Unitarian Universalist minister Victoria Safford writes, "soil in which evil flourishes is a rich compost of ignorance, arrogance, fear, and delusion, mostly self-delusion. Sunlight beats it back. Humility stunts its growth. Truth telling, truth seeking, truth speaking, brave naming, bearing witness - these things weaken its resolve." As farmers of our own and each others growth we need to cultivate new life in soil rich with loving justice and radical truth. Spring is a reminder of our need to continue growing.

Assuredly the the spring metaphor is used over and over again. However, unlike bell-bottom pants or bedazzled jean jackets, spring does not go out of style, when spring comes back we rejoice rather than roll our eyes or turn the other way. Ritual and sea-

sonal remembering are important practices for our holistic health. We honor our own transformation by marking the passage of time. As a congregation we see the ways our Sunday services have grown and our membership has changed. We are, with great joy, watching our building transform into a safer and

more accessible space. These are moments to recognize and celebrate.

For us to best tend our gardens we need strong tools. One of the purposes of the Community Church of Boston is to provide some of these tools. I had the opportunity to

deliver the charge to a newly settled minister in Beverly at the end of March. While sitting in the pews I heard another minister give the charge to the congregation. She, humorously but truthfully, said one of the most important things the congregation can do is come to church. For the church to do its work, to live into its purpose and ministry, the members of the church need to be present. Showing up, being present, this is one of the greatest way we can share our tools with each other. Our shared space can nurture one another's spirits, minds, and bodies. On weeks when you are unable to join us at church I hope you find other moments when you feel as though you get your roots watered, self-care is essential as we are in this struggle towards justice for the long haul and you are an essential part of it.



COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service &
Speakers Forum

April 3rd

JAWAD HUSEIN

**“Shaking off Colonialism & Tyranny:
The Dawn of a Revolution for Dignity
and Unity in the Arab World”**

April 10th

MATTHEW P. DUMONT, M.D.

**“An Aging Psychiatrist Examines
a Crazy World”**

April 17th

LEE FICH

“Liberation Seder”

April 24th

Easter Sunday

REV. JASON LYDON

**“Cracking the Cadbury Egg:
Rebirth and the End of Lent”**

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on March 8th, 2011

Following are highlights of the meeting.

Minister's Report: The Church has applied for grants from a couple of organizations.

The minister is coordinating a number of responses to pastoral issues in the congregation. Significant time was spent during February coordinating Church involvement with solidarity actions in Boston.

Financial Matters: The Finance Committee is making arrangements to cover the upcoming renovations with the amount approved during the most recent congregational meeting.

February pledge and contribution amounts are less than anticipated, although the Sunday collection is higher. Speaker honorariums are running high. There is currently no fundraising income.

Building Concerns: Boiler heads have been replaced. A locked thermostat has been installed; the temperature will remain at 69 degrees during the day, and lowered to 55 degrees after 9:30pm. The maintenance supervisor is looking into purchasing shower head heaters for the fourth floor bathroom.

Various Concerns: The treasurer suggested the idea of a CCB yard sale (i.e. art work, used books, etc).

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

CCB Building Update

There is really thrilling work happening our building. While looking inside the hallway and around the building might be a little scary as it's filled with debris, know that what you are seeing is the beautiful beginnings to a soon-to-be finished building! The sprinkler system, that will keep all the people in our building safe, is essentially done. Piping extends through the entire building and the sprinklers themselves hover over the restaurant patrons and will soon hang over everyone in the building. Work has begun to create our wheelchair accessible bathroom. After far too long of not meeting the needs of people with disabilities we are finally constructing a bathroom on the third floor that will be fully accessible! We are creating a building that will help us better live our values.

As for the people doing the work, they are fantastic. Wayne Smith of BK Enterprises has been incredibly transparent about what is going on and we have weekly meetings on Tuesday mornings to get updates about the work. The workers themselves have been respectful and as flexible as possible, even working in the middle of the night so as to minimize the impact on the acupuncture office. If you are in the building while the workers are around please take a moment to say hello, they are the ones rebuilding our church home. One of the most exciting parts of this work is the work schedule itself. There is a beautiful end in sight. In May our church building will be safe, secure, and ready for us to return to the Lothrop Auditorium.

Many, many thanks is due to all of the building committee people, to the Board, and to our entire membership who have carried the burden so well and with great patience.

Instead of Bombing Dictators, Stop Selling Them Bombs

by Medea Benjamin and Charles Davis

When all you have is bombs, everything starts to look like a target. And so after years of providing Libya's dictator with the weapons he's been using against the people, all the international community – France, Britain and the United States – has to offer the people of Libya is more bombs, this time dropped from the sky rather than delivered in a box to Muammar Gaddafi's palace. A US F-15 fighter jet. "In 2009 alone, European governments -- including Britain and France -- sold Libya more than \$470 million worth of weapons, including fighter jets, guns and bombs. And before it started calling for regime change, the Obama administration was working to provide the Libyan dictator another \$77 million in weapons, on top of the \$17 million it provided in 2009 and the \$46 million the Bush administration provided in 2008."

If the bitter lesson of Iraq and Afghanistan has taught us anything, it's that wars of liberation exact a deadly toll on those they purportedly liberate – and that democracy doesn't come on the back of a Tomahawk missile.

President Barack Obama announced his latest peace-through-bombs initiative last week -- joining ongoing U.S. conflicts and proxy wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia -- by declaring he could not "stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people that there will be no mercy, and ... where innocent men and women face brutality and death at the hands of their own government."

Within 24 hours of the announcement, more than 110 U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired into Libya, including the capital Tripoli, reportedly killing dozens of innocent civilians -- as missiles, even the "smart" kind, are wont to do. According to The New York Times, allied warplanes with "brutal efficiency" bombed "tanks, missile launches and civilian cars, leaving a smoldering trail of wreckage that stretched for miles."

While much of the media presents an unquestioning, sanitized version of the war, the truth is that wars, even liberal-minded "humanitarian" ones, entail destroying people and places. Though cloaked in altruism that would be more believable were we dealing with monasteries, not nation-states, the war in Libya is no different. And innocents pay the price.

If protecting civilians from evil dictators was the goal, though -- as opposed to, say, safeguarding natural resources and the investments of major oil companies -- there's an easier, safer way than aerial bombardment for the U.S. and its allies to consider: simply stop arming and propping up evil dictators. After all, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi reaped the benefits from Western nations all too eager to cozy up to and rehabilitate the image of a dictator with oil, with those denouncing him

today as a murderous tyrant just a matter of weeks ago selling him the very arms his regime has been using to suppress the rebellion against it.

In 2009 alone, European governments -- including Britain and France -- sold Libya more than \$470 million worth of weapons, including fighter jets, guns and bombs. And before it started calling for regime change, the Obama administration was working to provide the Libyan dictator another \$77 million in weapons, on top of the \$17 million it provided in 2009 and the \$46 million the Bush administration provided in 2008.

Meanwhile, for dictatorial regimes in Yemen, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, U.S. support continues to this day. On Saturday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even gave the U.S. stamp of approval to the brutal crackdown on protesters in Bahrain, saying the country's authoritarian rulers "obviously" had the "sovereign right" to invite troops from Saudi Arabia to occupy their country and carry out human rights abuses, including attacks on injured protesters as they lay in their hospital beds.

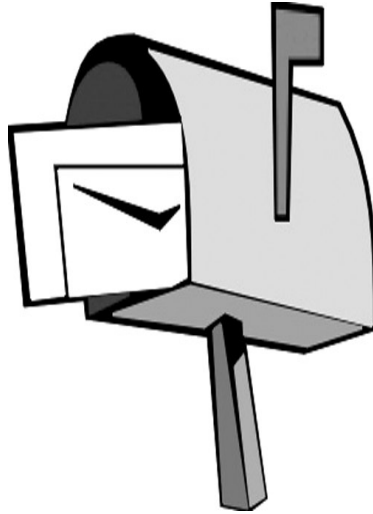
Rather than engage in cruise missile liberalism, Obama could save lives by immediately ending support for these brutal regimes. But for U.S. administrations, both Democratic and Republican, arms sales appear to trump liberation. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute documented that Washington accounted for 54 percent of arms sales to Persian Gulf states between 2005 and 2009.

Last September, the Financial Times reported that the U.S. had struck deals to provide Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman with \$123 billion worth of arms. The repressive monarchy of Saudi Arabia accounts for over half that figure, with it set to receive \$67 billion worth of weapons, including 84 F-15 jets, 70 Apache gunships, 72 Black Hawk helicopters, 36 light helicopters and thousands of laser-guided smart bombs – the largest weapons deal in U.S. history.

Instead of forking over \$150 million a day to the weapons industry to attack Libya or selling \$67 billion in weapons to the Saudis so they can repress not just their own people, but those of Bahrain, we – the ones being asked to forgo Social Security to help pay for empire – should demand those who purport to represent us in Washington stop arming dictators in our name. That might drain some bucks from the merchants of death, but it would give non-violent protesters throughout the Middle East a fighting chance to liberate themselves.

The U.S. government need not drop a single bomb in the Middle East to help liberate oppressed people. All it need do is stop selling bombs to their oppressors.

It's time for Community Church's annual pledge drive. Look for our pledge letter in your mailbox soon, and please contribute as you are able. Many thanks!



Our Purpose

Community Church of Boston is a free community united for the study and practice of universal religion, seeking to apply ethical ideals to individual life and the democratic and cooperative principle to all forms of social and economic life.

Staff

Rev. Jason Lydon, *Minister*
Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*

Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
Rodney Burston, *Building Maintenance*

Board of Directors

David Broeg, *President*
Mary Ann Cromer, *Vice President*
Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Jim Casteris, Kevin Devine, Nancy Messom,
Susan Mortimer, Matt Osborn



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