

community

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

December 2008

news

A Season of Celebration and Responsibility

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Winter is fast approaching. The days are continuing to get shorter and the cold chill of the air cuts through layers of clothing reminding us of our human frailty. I hope everyone is drinking hot cocoa, tea, or coffee to warm you from the inside out.

During this season of celebration from Hanukkah to Solstice; Christmas to New Years this is a time of celebrating the miracles of light. These images of light, of candles, of lights on the Christmas tree, of the light coming into the world are reminders of ways light is vital to our every-day existence. We depend on lights for getting around, whether that is street lamps to illuminate our paths, car headlights to open our eyes to what is in front of us, bike lights to make ourselves known to the people behind us, lamps in our homes that allow us to see what is happening at night, and on and on. As we realize how important light is to our lives it is also our responsibility to remember those without access to the same light.

Thousands of homes in the greater Boston area have had their utilities shut off due to their inability to pay. Household after household has had to make the inhuman decision of food or fuel; feed the mouths of the children or keep the lights on and heat going. We live in a country where we can bail out destructive corporations with billions of tax dollars but we will let low-income and poor folks in our communities freeze and be without lights.

Virginia Pratt has, generously, compiled information for us about the many resources available around the city for utility assistance and food services. You can

find the information within this newsletter. If these numbers and this information is not helpful for you directly I ask you to put in a place where you think others who need it can find it. Sometimes it can be hard for individuals to ask for help and assistance when they need it. If emergency numbers and information about free weatherization are available freely more individuals and families will be able to find access to the things they need. I ask you to please do your part.

People like Al Gore are heralded for their work on addressing climate change yet he hardly ever holds corporations accountable for the destruction they are causing to the planet. Certainly it is a good thing to do to replace your light bulbs with energy saving bulbs however consumers make up such an incredibly small percentage of the energy consumption. As we work to make changes to the entire energy consuming industry we must make it so that those who do not have access to energy can get that access. Middle class and rich people who change their light bulbs and drive hybrid cars need to start challenging the corporations that manufactured the equipment they use in their lives and also stand with poor and low-income people who are forced to stand by as utility companies like NStar shut their power off.

In this season of light I encourage us to remember that the word radical comes from the Latin word *radix*, meaning root. We must get to the root of our global energy crisis and continue to care for those who need the light to shine in the darkness of their homes through this season.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

December 7th

*2008 Sacco & Vanzetti Social
Justice Award Ceremony*
presented to **JIM HARNEY**
(with special guests **Jeanne Gallo,**
Dean Stevens, and more!)

December 14th

Sr. CLARE CARTER and
the **FOUNDATION MOVEMENT**
"The Three-Month Peace Walk
from Hiroshima to Tokyo"

December 21st

JASON LYDON
"Saturnalia: The Holiday Christmas
Desperately Tries to Hide"

December 28th

Rev. ROBERT MURPHY
"The Green Revolution in Religion"

CCB Board Meeting

*The Board of Directors met on November 20, 2008.
Following are highlights of the meeting.*

The following board members were present:
David Broeg, Kevin Devine, Dick Keshishian, Jason
Lydon, John MacLeod, Nancy Messom, Ruediger
Volk. Guests included: Adam Machson Carter, Dick
Crowley.

CCB Matters and Concerns: The roof work on the
Church building is due to be started in spring. Volunteers
are needed to clear the roof of debris before the start of the
project.

Jeanne Gallo will be the principal speaker at the Sacco-
Vanzetti Award for Social Justice observance. She will
receive the award on behalf of the recipient, Jim Harney,
who is unable to attend due to ill health.

Reverend Bob Murphy from
the Falmouth Unitarian
Universalist Association will pres-
ent a program, including the
showing of a video on the aspects
of "energy Justice" and its effect
on the general population. Representatives from several
organizations may take part and discuss the many ways
working people are bringing energy into their homes. The
program will be part of the CCB open house on
December 31, from noon until 7:00pm.



The formation of a committee to set up a library within
the Church building, to be named in honor of the late
John O'Brien, has been proposed.

*The next meeting of the board will be on Thursday,
December 18, 2008 at 7:15om, to which CCB members
and friends are invited to attend.*

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Small Office Space Available

Well-suited space for grassroots groups, activists,
unions, etc. \$400/month includes heat and electricity;
free wireless internet; use of common rooms for
meetings/trainings; use of auditorium twice yearly
for large events. Available immediately. For more
information contact: info@commchurch.org

2009 Calendars for Sale!

Once again you can help to support groups with
whom we have been friendly for many years, and
whose stuff has continued to be popular at CCB: the
Syracuse Cultural Workers, War Resisters' League,
I.W.W. and Cat Lovers Against the Bomb. There will
also be other political, environmental, indigenous and
art calendars/datebooks--as available. Look for them
on our book table throughout December and January,
as gifts or for yourself!

Preparing for a Long Cold Winter and Getting Service Year Round

by Virginia Pratt, CCB Treasurer

We all know that prices for basic services have risen. The cost of food, shelter, and utilities has gone up dramatically in the last couple of years. These increases are especially hard on poor and working class people. There are some services that can help. They are not perfect, but they can help lessen the sting of the rising cost of living.

Beginning in early November, agencies across the city including ABCD will start accepting fuel assistance applications. Anyone income eligible should apply for Fuel Assistance. Approval for Fuel Assistance results not only in lowering your heating bill but also qualifies you for a reduced rate on your utilities and eligibility for conversation services and maintenance on your heating systems. For more information Boston residents should contact ABCD tel. 617-357-6012. People outside of Boston can call tel. 1-800-632-8175.

People who are low income and not eligible for the LIHEAP programs can sometimes get help through the Salvation Army's Good Neighbor Program, tel. 617-236-7233. The City of Boston offers both the "HEAT Works" and "HomeWorks" programs that provide emergency grants and low or no interest loans for heating system and other home repairs, tel. 617-635-4663.

For discount heating oil contact Citizens Energy Corporation, tel. 617-951-0450. They provide one tank of heating oil per season beginning mid December at half the usual cost. Citizens Energy Corporation has applications along with other information on their website: www.citizenenergy.com. Home heating oil can also be purchased at discount throughout the year with MassEnergy, formerly known as the Boston Oil Consumers Alliance, tel. 617-524-3950. Mass Energy does not have any income requirements, and has a sliding scale for membership along with an array of services. Membership is for people who qualify for Fuel Assistance/LIHEAP.

During the winter neither NSTAR nor Kespern can shut off service. The moratorium is typically in effect from November to April. However, the bill continues to accumulate even if you are not paying it, and service can be shut-off after the moratorium. Elders and people with serious and or chronic illness can apply for hardship and "protected accounts." Households with a child under one year of age can also request protection from shut off. Verification of hardship/eligibility is required. Low income households may qualify for discounts on their utilities if members receive any of the following

benefits or services: Food Stamps, SSI, Transitional Assistance, Emergency Assistance, Medicaid or MassHealth, Veteran's Benefits, Mass. Commission for the Blind, Head Start, National School Lunch, Public Housing, and School Breakfast.

To find out if you qualify for food stamps or to get information about local food pantries call the Project Bread Hotline: tel. 1-800-645-8333. The Food Source hotline tel. 1-800-645-8333 can provide information about local food pantries. Seniors age 60 and older are eligible for Meals on Wheels along with other Senior Services, tel. 617-635-4366.

Lower cost telephone service can be arranged. The Life Center, through the Brockton United Way offers 1,000 minute telephone cards for \$5, tel. 508 - 587 - 4651. Both AT&T and Verizon are said to offer discounted telephone service at \$15, and \$16 a month. tel. 1-800-222-0300 and tel. 1-800-870-9999.

City of Boston residents who own and occupy their properties should double check to make sure they are getting "Residential Exemptions" on their property taxes. The exemption can save you up to \$1,500 a year in property taxes. For more information check the website "City of Boston Assessing" and or call tel. 617 - 635 - 4287. The city also has programs for seniors to defer taxes as well.

Remember there will be lots of completion for these scant resources. Good Luck.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Health Care for All: 1-800-272-4232

Mass Coalition for the Homeless: 781-595-7570

Disability Law Center: 617-723-8455

Office of Child Care Services: 617-245-6543

Department of Transitional Assistance: 800-249-2007

Mayor's Hotline: 617-635-4500

Substance Abuse Hotline: 800-327-5050

Battered Women's Hotline: 800-235-2331

AIDS Action Hotline: 800-235-2331

Rape Crisis: 617-492-7273

Fire, Police, and Ambulance: 911

City of Boston Foreclosure Prevention: 617-635-4663

Alcohol and Drug Services: 800-327-5050

Energy, Justice & Peace for 2009!!

New Years Eve at the Community Church of Boston

The Community Church will open its doors on New Years Eve, December 31st, from noon to 7:00pm. We will show a number of films/documentaries about the energy crisis, we will hear from a local Peak Oil activist, listen to music, and more.

Come to start off the new year with a commitment to engaging more with the church and spreading the good word about energy justice and the possibility for transformation and change in 2009.

Bring food to share if you would like, hot cocoa will be available (vegan versions too).



Our Purpose

Community Church of Boston is a free community of women and men 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

Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*
Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
Jim Casteris, *Superintendent*

Board of Directors

John MacLeod, *President*
David Broeg, *Vice President*
Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Christina Braidotti, Kevin Devine,
Nancy Messom, Leonard Shames,
Ruediger Volk



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DATED MATERIAL

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COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON

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