

community

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

December 2009

news

Hope With Expectation...

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... It is with excitement and anticipation that we enter this season of joy, remembrance, and celebration! Our excitement and anticipation may be about the presents we get to give to those we love, the possibilities of a fresh slate for starting anew, the opportunity to be with family, or the time to remember struggle and triumph.

During the Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award celebration Mel King referenced the need for us to change our language. He spoke of multiple aspects about our language and the part that hit me strongest was about hope. I heard Mel caution us about the inaction that can come from hope and the lack of accountability that accompanies hoping for "leaders" to make change we desire. Rather than rely on hope Mel encouraged us to strengthen our expectations. When we expect change, expect justice, expect compassion, expect freedom, the emphasis is placed on proactive involvement of all involved in the expectations. Rooting ourselves in the power of expectation can fill us with the capacity to overcome our fears of losing or fears of being let down.

I think there is a lot of wisdom in Mel's words and yet I have the need and desire to hold on to the feelings, conceptions, and language of hope as well as turn to the power of expectation. I do not understand hope to be a passive expression of feeling but as an equally strong motivation toward action as expectation. Matt Dumont shared with us some time ago about the story of Pandora's Box and the great evils that spread throughout humanity from that box, hope being the greatest evil of them all that was released last in order to quell despair. Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche suggests that hope is the, "most evil of evils because it prolongs [humanity's] torment." Again, if we are to think of hope as a passive feeling that negates action then certainly we should throw out hope with the rest of the garbage that immobilizes us from moving forward with transformative action.

Let us look at hope more closely. Each Sunday on our prayer sheet we have two quotes that preface the prayer and the first sentence of each apply equally to hope as they do to prayer. John Haynes Holmes reminds us that, "prayer is attention unfolding into intention," and Ivone Gebara suggests that, "we pray because it helps us live better." In many traditional prayer settings the idea is to petition the Divine for personal intervention or for miraculous relief of suffering. When I pray it is for the strength to be in community and be as authentically part of loving justice as possible. When I reflect on hope it is with the same expression as when I pray. Hope is incredibly powerful and fulfilling both to individuals and to communities. Hope is part of expectation. Hope also plays a role when expectation feels impossible. When a loved one or our own selves are sick, battling with AIDS or with cancer, often hope for wellness, health, or easy passing is our only refuge from tragedy. Hope for scientific coincidence, magic, or the miraculous can be the greatest gift we can open within ourselves. It seems to me that hope can often pick up where expectation leaves off or before expectation can take root within us. Rather than hope being a sign of weakness I imagine it as the loving arms that warm me when I feel myself falling into the weakness of apathy.

I agree that hoping for politicians to make change, for wars to end, for single-payer healthcare, or for any number of movement causes may be an incorrect use of hope. We must expect better of those in power. We must expect better of ourselves. We must expect better of each other. We must expect better of our movements. As we grow in our expectation and strategize for the endless possibilities of change let us also allow ourselves to hope for those things that are more beautiful than our imagination has even allowed us to consider possible. Let us hope for the ability of love to overcome fear. Let us empower this hope within us and within our communities to inspire us to action and presence in each moment of our lives. This is a season of hope, let us relish in it.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

December 6th

ELIZABETH MARIE RIVERA-VALENTINE
“Sex Worker Justice: An Essential Part of
the Struggle for Workers Liberation”

December 13th

Prof. SMRITI RAO
“Putting 'Global' in the Global
Economic Crisis”

December 20th

JASON LYDON
“The Holiday Special: Finding Comfort in
Darkness and Wisdom in Light”

December 27th

No Sunday Services

New Years Eve - First Night Event at Community Church

December 31st, 1-7pm

Like last year we will be joined by our friends from the Falmouth UU church, including Rev. Bob Murphy, for a day of environmental justice, economic justice, and global sustainability.

Come and join us at the church from 1pm to 7pm to drink hot cocoa, cider, and be in community to welcome the celebration of a New Year with new possibilities! Talk to Jason for further details.

CCB Board Meeting

*The Board of Directors met on November 19, 2009
Following are highlights of the meeting.*

The following board members were present: David Broeg, Kevin Devine, Dick Keshishian, Jason Lydon, John MacLeod, Nancy Messom, Susan Mortimer.

Congregational Directors Report: The prisoner membership development program will hopefully be promulgated by the first Sunday of January, 2010. The Committee on Ministry is conducting inquiries about the Church's senior members in regards to their specific needs and wishes as the winter season approaches.

The 90th anniversary of CCB may be an opportune time to launch a new title for the Church, namely: *The Community Church of Boston: A Center for Community Organizing, Popular Education and Spiritual Growth*. For those who increasingly think of CCB not only as a church but a community center, a stronger and larger membership, as well as an increase in donations could fulfill our intentions.

The community archivists from Simmons College Library who recently examined the Church's archives suggested examining all of the material collected throughout the Church's existence and turning them over to Harvard Divinity School. This includes the beautiful sketches and drawings of our late member Guna Oster, which were donated by her daughter and son-in-law Janice and Peter Hanson. The archivist at Harvard Divinity School stated that the archives are open to the public for viewing. They would take excellent care of our materials and individuals who have an interest in left religious movements would have access to them.

Building Committee: The roof repair was completed at the beginning of November. According to the building committee chairperson, the roof should last thirty to forty years. There were a few flaws in the work which will be corrected immediately.

Various Concerns: The toilets in the CCB building must be cleaned everyday, even if it means increasing the hours of the custodian. Two of the four toilets will be replaced at the beginning of the new year with the two remaining ones to follow shortly. Hot water units will also be installed.

It was also emphasized that the Sacco-Vanzetti Events Committee is a year-round committee which begins its tasks during September of a given year.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2009 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Obama's War: Troop Escalation in Afghanistan

At a White House meeting with military leaders on Sunday, President Barack Obama formally issued the order to send at least 30,000 additional US troops to Afghanistan. Underscoring his contemptuous attitude toward popular opposition to the war or any other democratic considerations, Obama did not wait to issue the order until he had offered his explanation for the escalation to the American people in tonight's nationally televised speech.

The new "surge" follows the 21,000 additional troops Obama ordered to Afghanistan in the first weeks of his administration. It will bring the total US troop deployment to 100,000—the highest since the invasion eight years ago.

In escalating US violence in Afghanistan and threatening more direct military involvement in Pakistan, the administration is defying public opinion in the two countries, where popular opposition to US military operations is pervasive, and in the US itself, where opinion polls show that a majority of the American people is opposed to the war.

In its contempt for the will of the people, as in its policies on the economy, war and democratic rights, the Obama administration is continuing without a hitch the basic policies and methods of the Bush administration, which were repudiated by the electorate when it voted for Obama on the basis of his claim to be the candidate of "change."

The new deployment is a major escalation of an unpopular war that will lead to the deaths of countless thousands of Afghans and Pakistanis and a significant

rise in US casualties. Indeed, many of the West Point cadets who were assembled to listen to the president's speech will be sent to Afghanistan to fight in a war that the majority of Americans oppose.

The cost to the peoples of Central Asia is incalculable. The American people are to pay for the war policy of the US ruling elite with the loss of thousands more lives, the squandering of trillions in resources, unprecedented attacks on social services, and the further erosion of democratic rights.



Obama's escalation is yet another flagrant violation of the will of the American people. In one election after another, they have gone to the

polls to express their hostility to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In every case, their will has been ignored and the wars have been expanded.

Obama won the presidency by running as an opponent of the Iraq war and appealing to popular opposition to militarism. Once in office, he quickly increased the US deployment in Afghanistan by 21,000, while reneging on his promise to carry out a rapid withdrawal from Iraq. Now he is increasing the total US troop level in Afghanistan to 100,000, more than double the level under Bush.

2010 Calendars

It's been ten years since we all made it safely into the new millennium; here we go again! Are you ready for the next decade? You will be, if armed with one of the special calendars or datebooks that will be available at our book table in December and January. They will hopefully be for sale most Sundays, as well as at Solstice and First Night events.

Look for your past favorites from the following: Syracuse Cultural Workers (peace calendars and women artists datebooks); Industrial Workers of the World ("Solidarity Forever" calendar); War Resisters League ("Sparking Change: Poster Art & Politics" desk calendar); and Nebraskans for Peace ("Cat Lovers Against the Bomb" calendar). Also, look for a variety of environmental, indigenous, international and art calendars as well.

Support Lynne Stewart!

In a travesty of justice Lynne Stewart, our 2005 Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award recipient, was sentenced to prison. Lynne is a long-time human rights advocate and often called "the people's lawyer." Her conviction and sentence is a threat to defense attorneys around the country who are striving to defend their clients. It is people like Lynne who are able to squeeze even small drops of justice out of our penal system and the prison sentence she is beginning to serve is the penalty she is given for her work.

Please take time during this holiday season to send a card, letter, or note to Lynne. She needs your love. You can send her letters at:

Lynne Stewart #53504-054
MCC-NY
150 Park Row
New York, NY NY 10007

20th National Homeless Persons Interfaith Memorial Service

December 21st, 1:00pm
138 Tremont Street, Boston

Each year since 1990, on or near the first day of winter, which is the longest night of the year, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has sponsored National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless friends who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness.



This year there will be an interfaith memorial service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, near the Boston Common. For more information: moxie12794@aol.com

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

Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*

Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*

Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*

Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*

Jim Casteris, *Superintendent*

Rodney Burston, *Building Maintenance*

Board of Directors

John MacLeod, *President*

David Broeg, *Vice President*

Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*

Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Kevin Devine, Nancy Messom, Susan Mortimer,
Matt Osborn, Leonard Shames



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON

