

community

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

December 2011

news

The Many Beards of Santa Claus

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Dear Members and Friends, as we prepare for our biggest celebration of the year, the Annual Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award, we do so in a time of great holiday spirit. This month of December is a time for wisdom sharing across faiths. We are called upon to hear the messages of feminist Earth-centered traditions, ancient Hebrew prophets, and the surviving story of a young couple bringing new life into the world. It is with attention to these festivals of life that we enter into this month; I encourage everyone to share with each other about aspects of this holiday season that speak to you.

Among the many traditions of this month is that of Santa Claus. While Santa is directly connected to Christmas he has, in many ways, become a secular symbol. There are seemingly endless stories about the origins of this jolly present giver. Certainly the Germanic Pagan story of Odin has shaped the modern visions and stories of Santa. He was one of the most revered gods of the Germanic people and his magical eight legged horse makes a wonderful ancestor of the modern Santa's eight tiny reindeer.

I am, however, partial to the story of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Beit Jala in the West Bank. The stories of Saint Nicholas in Palestine date back to 312 when he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Legends of his miraculous presence extend to modern times. I found the following passage on the website of the St. Nicholas Center, "Locals [in Beit Jala] also report that he was seen with hands outstretched, catching bombs aimed at Beit Jala following the State of Israel's 1948 declaration of independence. Many residents took refuge in the church and once again St. Nicholas was seen to block bombs from destroying the church, protecting the people. One resident says, 'No bombs reached Beit Jala. Only the tower of the St. Nicholas Church was damaged.

We know it was St. Nicholas that saved Beit Jala from any problems." Regardless of our own understanding of how the miraculous occurs, this is a story of triumph in a community that continues to fight back. In 2004 the Israeli government stole nearly 35% of the land in Beit Jala by running the apartheid wall through the town. However, in the spirit of St. Nicholas, the people continue resisting occupation through creative action including religious rituals on the Feast of St. Nicholas each December. I like the idea of celebrating this kind of Santa Claus.

There is also a Santa Claus that I am a bit afraid of, the COINTELPRO or Patriot Act Santa Claus. This is the Santa Claus who "sees you when you're sleeping, knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good." He is the Santa Claus who's "gonna find out who's naughty and nice." In this congregation, our own island of misfit toys, I find us taking the side of the naughty far more often than the nice. Too often those who are "nice" are the ones who smile in our faces while attacking our communities behind our backs; not unlike many of the liberal legislators in the State House who voted in support of the 3-strikes law for Massachusetts. It is the naughty ones who get things done. It is the naughty ones who stand up out of turn and demand justice. It is naughty ones who link arms and protect their communities. It is naughty ones who turn to underground economies to care for their families. It is naughty ones who are part of the 99%!

As you see the Coca-Cola inspired red and white Santa Claus celebrating capitalism, I invite you look past the fake white beard and find another message. Look for the Santa Claus of Palestinian resistance, the Santa Claus on the side of the naughty, and the Pagan Santa Claus who can give us another message of hope.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service &
Speakers Forum

December 4th
The 35th Annual Sacco & Vanzetti
Social Justice Award Ceremony
Presented to **ARNIE KING**

December 11th
Marking World AIDS Day
SPEAKER TBA

December 18th
STEVE SCHNAPP
"Shrink, Shift & Shaft:
Destabilizing the U.S. Economy"

December 25th
Christmas Day
Rev. JASON LYDON
"Choosing the Side of the Naughty"

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on November 8th, 2011
Following are highlights of the meeting.

Minister's Report: The first hour of the board meeting was presided over by Beth Miller, the facilitator for the upcoming December 12th retreat at the Peace Abbey in Sherborn. She asked each individual board member his or her reasons for wishing to attend the retreat, as well as various topics which may be discussed during the sessions. Snacks will be served beginning at 9:00am until 10:00am, at which time the retreat will get underway and continue until 3:00pm.

The minister stated that many needs must be met by the Church and that the members should take an active part in carrying out those functions.



Arnie King, the recipient of the Sacco-Vanzetti Award for Social Justice, will select the speakers for the December 4th function. Several musicians have also been invited to participate. Twenty-five percent of the monies received from the event will be donated to Arnie King's commissary fund.

Various Concerns: Two members of the Church have volunteered to partake in a photo project documentary concerning the CCB membership.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Don't Miss Out on the 2011 CCB Congregational Retreat!

The Community Church of Boston's congregational retreat will be on Saturday, December 10th from 9:00am - 3:00pm at the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, MA (2 North Main St). We will gather together to share, learn, and plan as a community.



The Community Church of Boston belongs to those who wish to make it what it can be and it is through dialogue and storytelling that we can shape the future of our work in the world. Please bring food to share.

The day will be facilitated by Rev. Beth Miller from the Massachusetts Bay District of Unitarian-Universalist congregations.

If you have any questions, contact Rev. Jason Lydon:
ccbminister@gmail.com

Celebrating and Honoring Christina Braidotti

After a long fought battle against cancer Christina Braidotti passed away the night of Monday, November 21st while surrounded by family and loved ones. Christina was a beloved member of the Community Church of Boston, and former Board member, who brought a ray of light and love into the community. Christina worked closely with the international organization One by One, a collective of people "transforming the legacies of conflict, war, and genocide through dialogue among descendants of survivors, perpetrators, bystanders and resisters."

Christina was a woman who forged her own way and juggled the complexities of caring for family and following her own passions. Up until her passing she was working diligently on a PhD at Northeastern

University in Sociology, focusing on the cultural resilience of Jewish communities in Argentina.

Christina is survived by two loving children and many friends who will miss her. A

memorial service will be planned and held at the Community Church of Boston, details to come.



Christina and Phil Donahue at the United Nations screening of David Rothauer's film, *Hibakusha*

Social Justice Calendars for 2012

On Sundays from December through February, look for calendars and datebooks for sale at church which reflect our politics. Familiar sources will include: The 29th annual "Cat Lovers Against the Bomb" wall calendar published by Nebraskans for Peace; From the War Resisters League, their 57th and final peace calendar; The Center for Cuban Studies has produced a magnificent desk calendar to commemorate the 40th anniversary of its founding, as well as 53 years of the Cuban Revolution's art, photography and graphic design; From the popular Syracuse Cultural Workers, three items--their 41st peace calendar, this year entitled "Become the Revolution!"; their very own Women Artists datebook, with art and poems by more than 30 women; & a new wall calendar, "Murals of New York City", created by the noted Groundswell Community Mural Project. as well as various Native American, African American, peace, environmental and international calendars as available.

Healing Service Offered

Our November 20th speaker, Ricky Simaratana, has offered to donate time to members of the church in need of healing services. His work is organ-specific, i.e. heart, lungs, kidney, etc.

For contact information, please check out his website: www.medicinewheelmatrix.com

*Community Church of Boston presents:
1999 Sacco & Vanzetti Award Recipient*

Charlie King/Karen Brandow & Rebel Voices

Thursday, January 26th, 8pm
at Community Church of Boston

Tickets: Advance \$10, at door: \$15 (sliding scale)

Charlie King and Karen Brandow are musical storytellers and political satirists. Their repertoire covers a century and a half and four continents. They perform with the sweet and precise harmonies of life partners. They sing and write passionately about the extraordinary lives of ordinary people. "Two voices that complement each other beautifully & instrumentation that is spare, acoustic & just right" (Victory Music Review)

Rebel Voices, featuring Susan Lewis and Janet Stecher, immerse their audience in a program of songs, humor and theater woven together with wit and intricate harmonies.

For ticket information:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/203876>

Justice At Work Open House/Fundraiser

Thursday, December, 8th, 5:30pm

at the SEIU 615 Office
26 West Street (Boston, MA)



Justice At Work seeks to build low-wage worker power by providing strategic legal services to grassroots organizations that educate, organize and advocate on behalf of workers.

All are welcome. Free admission (suggested donation of \$25). We hope to see you there!

For more information:
<http://www.justiceatwork.info>

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.

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