

community

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

December 2013

news

Reflections Dedicated to John McGrath

by Linda Jenkins, Congregational Director

Some months ago I started putting copies of the 1972 essay, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" (<http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>), out on the literature table. I got this essay at the first meeting of the Occupy Boston Women's Caucus and it was a corner-stone of that group's initial formation. The essence of the essay is that, in groups of people that exist for some time, where there is the absence of explicit, recognized structures and processes, cliques will inevitably form to fill that gap. These cliques will form by people of similar class, temperament, appearance, etc, gravitating to each other. And, in the absence of explicit, recognized structures and processes in groups that exist over time, the cliques of the power-holders in the dominant culture will be replicated in those groups. The power-holders in the dominant culture become the power-holders in the smaller groups within it, absent recognition and use of structures and processes that change that phenomenon. This, in some ways, resembles how children will imitate, replicate, their parents' values and behaviors, in areas where they do not choose to do otherwise.

I started sharing this essay because it is relevant to our community. CCB does have formal structures and procedures, but these are, in some crucial areas, not known and have not been recognized or used. Among these are the By-Laws and Personnel Policies. The Community Church is not unique in facing the challenge of trying to conduct its business without a shared understanding and use of the formal structures and procedures adopted by the group. I say this as one with experience as a founder, executive director, board member and consultant for a

variety of non-profits and faith communities. It's difficult for a volunteer board and committee members to have the knowledge of, and familiarity with, these essential underpinnings of community life. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of each person, in each role they assume to, to learn what is necessary to perform the role appropriately and successfully.

There have been for the past 7 months, and appear to continue to be, conflicts within the CCB community due to the situation I just described. These conflicts are not the result of "personalities," but of the organizational circumstances resulting from the failure to acknowledge and use the structures and procedures bequeathed to us by our predecessor board members and staff. These structures and procedures may need revision or even abandonment, but we can't know that until we are all familiar with them. Decisions about our structures and processes are ultimately decisions to be made by the whole community.

I dedicate this article to John McGrath, who, as truth-teller extraordinaire, is sorely missed. Embracing his example, I set forth here what I see.

There will be changes and the community will need to make decisions about them. If we don't recognize and use the structures and processes passed to us by our predecessors, modifying them so that they reflect the will of the whole community, we run the risk of replicating the dominant culture, a hypocrisy I believe none of us want.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

December 1st
THEATRE OF RELATIVITY
"Isolation," a play by John O'Brien

December 8th
JOHN TEMPLETON
"Campaign Finance Reform in Mass and the US: Get Money Out of Politics"

December 15th
HAYLEY REARDON
"Find Your Voice: The Journey of a Young Performer and Activist"

December 22nd
LINDA JENKINS
"Another Great Turning: The Still Point Between"

December 29th
LINDA JENKINS
"Pot Luck Service and Luncheon (no that's not an error!)"

Farewell to the CCB Office & Publications Manager

We bid a fond farewell to Mark Laskey, who leaves us at the end of the year. Thank you, Mark, for your years of dedication to our office, for your attention to the myriad of details involved in keeping our congregation and our building afloat. Thank you for almost ten years of monthly newsletters and weekly bulletins compiled and printed, ten years of deadlines kept. For staffing the phones and the door buzzer, for dealing with our tenants and with the many people who use this building. There is a lot of institutional memory that is going with you, as you go on to pursue your college studies. Yours is a multi-faceted, sometimes difficult and unpredictable job. Your no-nonsense way of handling challenges and people on the phone, online and in person has been a great thing for us, a real asset to this church. We wish you the very best as you seek other bigger opportunities.

Mark came to us during Betsy Rueda Gynn's presidency, during a time of crisis. He and Xinli, hired around the same time, were part of a solution to a very chaotic office circumstance, that both of them were tasked with taming. As a result, we are in a much better place administratively than we were back in that time. He also leaves us in a time of uproar, and some of the circumstances around his departure are truly unfortunate. Mark takes with him a storehouse of institutional memory that is not easy to recall or recapture. I'm hoping we can somehow rely on him for a smooth transitional period.

Folks, if you get a chance, call Mark during December office hours, preferably Monday or Tuesday, 11 to 4, and thank him for being there for us all these years.

- Dean Stevens

Upcoming CCB Meetings

The **Program Committee** will meet on Thursday, December 5th, 7pm, at Karl Rab's house in Somerville.

The **Growth, Membership and Social Action Committee** will meet on Thursday, December 12th, 3pm, at Joshua Tree Bar (Davis Sq, Somerville).

The **Prison Committee** meets on Wednesday, December 20th, 6:30pm, at Susan Mortimer's house in Arlington.

First Night Against the Wars

December 31st -New Years Eve!
in Copley Square

That's right! We're ramping up organizing for First Night Against the Wars. Join us this year on the steps of the Boston Public Library (corner of Boylston & Dartmouth) just as you have in the last six years.

Planning meeting is **Tuesday, December 3rd** at the **Community Church of Boston** at **6pm**. To help with the organizing, please call: (857) 272-6743.

A Report from the Prison Committee

by Susan Mortimer

Presently there are 10 Inside members, including newest member Lee U. who's at MCI-Concord. Stephen M. was released in late spring and is living in Rockland!

CCB Inside friends include Arnie K., Lynne Stewart, Tarek M. and Fantine R. Chuck T. is back at home.

Ralph H.'s play in 4 acts, *The Tinderbox* has been republished.

Ralph and Roger W. had articles printed in the current issue of *Mass Prison Voice*. Both also have been fighting for medical treatment for several months.

Tommy R.'s mother passed away recently; a card was sent from the church.

David J. is looking forward to a court date to address irregularities in his trial. He has asked for support in the court room. Roger has secured a new attorney to help him overturn lifetime civil commit-

ment (after finishing his original sentence 3 years ago).

Ron Shapiro has become pen pals with John C. John MacLeod corresponds with and visits Tommy R. Ruth Anna writes to Fantine R. and Susan & Roger W. are pen pals.

All Inside members would all love to have a CCB pen pal. Please let Susan, John or David know if you are interesting in finding out more.

In July money orders were mailed to ten incarcerated members to help defray the cost of paper, postage and needed supplies. This committee is requesting that funds be approved by the Board to purchase money orders for the coming holidays.

The next meeting of the Prison Membership Committee is Wednesday November 20 at 6:30, in Arlington. All are welcome. See Susan, John or David for more information.

Pastoral Care CCB-Style

by Linda Jenkins, Congregational Director

November 14, the Boston IWW held another of their pickets at *Insomnia Cookies*, a franchise on Mass Ave in Cambridge. They've been holding these since August, when one of their members who was working there shared the disrespectful working conditions there, including pay below minimum wage and unsafe bicycle delivery requirements. I'd been dimly aware of these pickets without knowing the details; IWW has been on the periphery of my awareness -- you can't do everything. But on that evening, Nov 14, I sat at my computer and, at about 11pm, a Facebook posting came through that there had been a violent police confrontation and if anyone was near the Cambridge police station, could they come and do jail support. Living a few blocks from the station, I threw on a coat, walked over. There I found about a dozen people, including some friends and acquaintances, and learned that Jason Freedman, a friend since Occupy Boston, had been attacked while peacefully standing on the sidewalk, beaten and arrested.

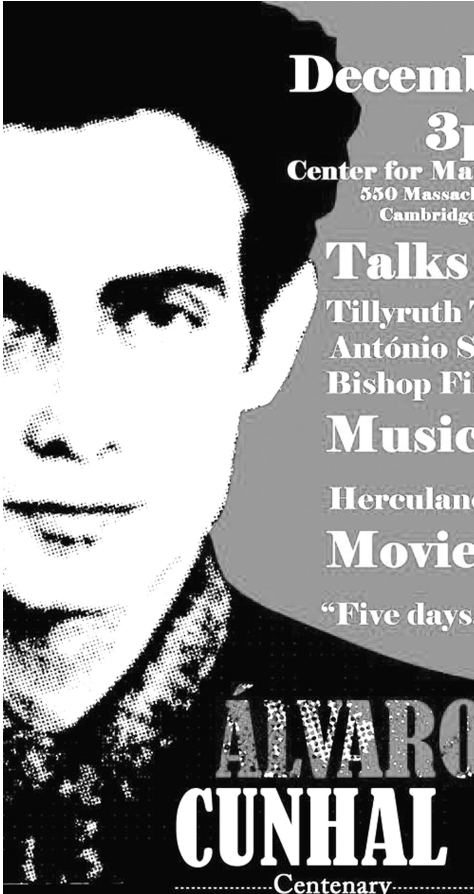


We stayed until Jason was released, about 12:30. Fortunately some street medics had been at the scene and were allowed to clean his wounds but his arm was injured and he had to pay not only the usual

statutory bail fee of \$40, but also an actual \$100 of bail bond.

His arraignment was the next morning in Medford (?) and since he didn't have a way to get there, I offered a ride and kept him company during that process. The IWW folks were grateful and I was

able to meet some new lefties and learn of new actions in which CCB might collaborate. The left has to come together; we all know that. Community Church offers a unique form of pastoral care to the social justice community.



December 14th
3pm
Center for Marxist Education
 550 Massachusetts Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02139

Talks by:
 Tillyruth Teixeira
 António Santos
 Bishop Filipe Teixeira

Music by:
 Herculano Fecteau

Movie:
 "Five days, Five nights"

ALVARO CUNHAL
Centenary.....

Celebrating 100 years of Álvaro Cunhal, Portuguese revolutionary and historic leader of the Portuguese Communist Party

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

Linda Jenkins, *Congregational Director*
 Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
 Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*

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

Board of Directors

Dean Stevens, *President*
 Ron Shapiro, *Vice President*
 Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*
 Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Mary Ann Cromer, Kevin Devine, Dian Lerman,
 Nancy Messom, Susan Mortimer



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