

community

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

February 2010

news

Meditation, Struggle and Community

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... BREATHE... The end of January has been an incredibly challenging time. The devastation in Haiti has been a powerful wake up call to many people who have forgotten or turned a blind eye to the poverty imposed upon Haiti by colonizing forces of globalization. The incredible loss of life in that nation should reach deep inside our bodies and cause us to wail for the justice that is essential for any real healing to happen in that country built on legacies of resistance. Moments of silence, lighting candles, and saying silent prayers are essential to adding intention to the work that we do and we need to remember that our prayers must be answered by our actions and the encouraging of others actions. The divine possibilities from this tragedy are rooted in communities' capacity to organize and provide authentic solidarity. We can tap into the power of what is holy by strengthening the potential of a response in Haiti that prioritizes the most marginalized, recognizes the history of white supremacy in shaping U.S. policies in Haiti, resists U.S. military involvement, and celebrates each victory along the way. As we send as much money as we can we will continue struggling for immigrant justice here in the United States so that Haitian immigrants in the U.S. have access to the resources they need. BREATHE...

BREATHE... The United States Supreme Court took some brutal stabs at the body of the people. The ruling to protect a corporation's first amendment rights is a continuance in the preferential option for corporations and the wealthy over the far majority of the people. This ruling gives multibillion dollar corporations a free run of their money to pressure and coerce politicians around the country to be even greater lap dogs to their agenda. The myth of U.S. democracy has been incredibly strong for a long time. The slogan, "one person, one vote," has been a joke since the founding of the colonial government however this new move is particularly devastating to the possibility of voice by actual people making their life in this country. The strongest suggestion I have heard for action was for a new Amendment to be added to the Constitution that defines corporations as non-persons not entitled to the rights of people. Another step is for

the U.S. congress to pass legislation that requires spending caps for any corporation that wishes to do business with the government. We can pressure "our" congress people to move on this immediately. BREATHE...

BREATHE... The Supreme Court not only expanded rights to corporations this week they also pushed the process of taking Mumia Abu Jamal's life away from him. Mumia has been locked up for over 25 years and has been fighting back the entire time. Mumia is the 2006 Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award recipient. At this moment the Supreme Court has said that the death sentence Mumia had originally been given should remain. The 3rd Circuit Court in Pennsylvania could still rule that Mumia is entitled to a new trial because of new evidence. Take time to write letters to Mumia and stay on top of up-to-date action steps at www.freemumia.com. BREATHE...

Coming to church on Sunday morning and being around one another is one of the ways we take care of ourselves and recharge after a month like January. We come together not only to hear the words of motivating speakers, we also come together to be with one another and to hold each other as we continue the struggle to keep our heads above water. One of the roles of the Community Church is to provide a comforting home that gives us space to breathe and be filled with the possibilities of hope. We come together to celebrate our victories and to comfort each other in our losses. If you have been away for some time and want to come back to be in a community that cares for one another please do. We wish to welcome you with open arms and a guarantee that we are stronger when we are together. As Marge Piercy reminds us, "it starts when you say We and know you who you mean, and each day you mean one more."

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

February 7th

Superbowl Sunday

DAVID CZESNIUK

**“Crouching Tiger, Hidden Demons:
Why Are So Many Athletes Being
Exposed for Personal Indiscretions?”**

February 14th

Valentine's Day

JASON LYDON

**“When Love Becomes Abuse:
Domestic Violence, its Roots, and
What We Can Do”**

February 21st

RICHARD BECKER

“Palestine, Israel and the U.S. Empire”

February 28th

Annual W.E.B. DuBois Address

CALVIN L. HICKS

“The Education of Black People”

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on January 21, 2010

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, Matt Osborn, Lenny Shames.

The board observed a moment of silence in memory of those who perished in the Haitian earthquake.

Congregational Director's Report: The Church has initiated a fundraising campaign to defray the costs within the CCB building. Over two-thousand dollars has been received from members and friends of the Church.

The Church has a property manager to deal with the insurance company, a real-estate attorney to deal with the first floor restaurant, and a contractor overseeing the work repair.

Rodney Burston, the building attendant, Jim Casteris, the building superintendent, and Dean Stevens have done an excellent job of maintaining a safe and clean environment during this period.

The most important issue, at present, is the requirement of codes in order to obtain a permit for assembly.

Financial Concerns: The treasurer presented a brief overview on the current financial status by means of a 2010 Budget - Second Draft.

Various Concerns: The board decided that Sunday programs would be held regardless of weather conditions. Those planning to attend the program on a stormy Sunday may telephone the Church office at 617-266-6710 to obtain information on whether the speaker is able to be present

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Thursday, February 18, 2010 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Stop The Profiling of Muslim People!

On March 30th, 2003, the FBI disappeared Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and her 3 children, ages 1 mo. to 7 yrs. at the time, from Pakistan. Her 2 youngest children are still missing, her oldest is still detained in Afghanistan, and there is massive evidence of the abuse and torture of sister Aafia at the hands of U.S. forces. Since 2003, sister Aafia has been caged in solitary confinement, shot and left without medical treatment, and faces charges with little to no evidence to back them up.

Sister Aafia was moved to New York City in Summer 2008, where her trial began on January 19th. Please join us to learn about ways we can support sister Aafia. For more info, please visit <http://www.draafia.org/>

There will be an informational event at Cambridge Public Library on Thursday February 11 from 7pm-10pm.

Howard Zinn: The Inspiring Life of a Radical Historian and Social Justice Activist

Howard Zinn, who has died of a heart attack aged 87, was a much-loved and celebrated icon of the American left. He was an activist and historian, and later a dramatist, but always a courageous and articulate campaigner for his vision of a just and peaceful America.

Zinn always said he was not a pacifist, because he thought it was too absolute a position. But he was a passionate and highly articulate critic of the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. As a bombardier during the second world war, he was involved in the first use of napalm as a weapon, and could never quite forgive himself for what he regarded as a crime against German soldiers, as well as French civilians.

After the war, he went back to interview victims, and later wrote about it in two books. His own experience and his subsequent interviews led him to conclude that the bombing had been ordered more to enhance the careers of senior officers than for any military imperative, and he later wrote about the ethics of bombing in the context of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Tokyo and Dresden, as well as Iraq.

In the 1960's he became involved with the SNCC and Martin Luther King's civil rights campaign. In 1964 he published *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*. The book ends with a statement of his creed. What made SNCC a threat to the establishment, he wrote, was "its rejection of authority; its fearlessness in the face of overwhelming power; its indifference to respectability". Its radicalism, he went on, "is not an ideology but a mood. Moods are harder to define. They are also harder to imprison."

He was soon involved in the campaign against the Vietnam war. While the war was still raging, Zinn travelled to Hanoi with the Rev Daniel Berrigan – one of the two Berrigan brothers, priests jailed for their anti-war activities – and successfully negotiated the release of three captured US airmen.

For decades, he poured out articles attacking war and government secrecy. His energy and generosity extended to writing introductions to more than 30 books by other writers.

When President Ronald Reagan bombed Tripoli in 1986, Zinn wrote: "There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people for a purpose which is unattainable." He denounced the invasion of Iraq and also criticized President Barack Obama's intensification of the war in Afghanistan.

In 1980 he published *A People's History of the United States*, an account that stressed injustices and oppression and resurrected forgotten voices, which has sold more than one million copies.

Not surprisingly, he has drawn fierce criticism from conservatives (and even some liberals!). But few can deny the tenacity of Zinn's commitment to his core belief – that people should stand up for their rights and their vision of the good

society. "Where progress has been made," he wrote near the end of his life, "wherever any kind of injustice has been overturned, it's been because people acted as citizens, and not as politicians. They didn't just moan. They worked, they acted, they organised, they rioted if necessary to bring their situation to the attention of people in power. And that's what we have to do today."

Howard Zinn was also a longtime friend and supporter of the Community Church of Boston. He has spoken here many times and was the recipient of the Sacco & Vanzetti Award for Social Justice in 2000. He will be greatly missed.

-- excerpted from *the Guardian*

Food For Thought When Giving Money to Support Haiti

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a charismatic populist priest, was overthrown by a military coup in 1991, and restored with US help in 1994. But the Americans were always suspicious of any sign of radicalism from this spokesman for the poor and the outcast and kept him on a tight lead. Tolerated by President Clinton, Aristide was treated as a pariah by the Bush administration which systematically undermined him over three years leading up to a successful rebellion in 2004. That was led by local gangsters acting on behalf of a kleptocratic Haitian elite and supported by the US.

Haitians are now paying the price for this feeble and corrupt government structure because there is nobody to co-ordinate the most rudimentary relief and rescue efforts. Its weakness is exacerbated because aid has been funnelled through foreign NGOs. A justification for this is that less of the money is likely to be stolen, but this does not mean that much of it reaches the Haitian poor. A sour Haitian joke says that when a Haitian minister skims 15% of aid money it is called "corruption" and when an NGO or aid agency takes 50% it is called "overheads".

- Patrick Cockburn

Support Immigrants Being Detained in Boston!

Wednesday, February 10th, 7pm
at the Arlington Street Church

People from the Boston area New Sanctuary Movement will get together to discuss the possibilities and structure for creating a visitation program with immigrants being detained by ICE at the South Bay House of Correction. We have gathered outside the building and marched with signs chanting for their freedom.

This is an opportunity to be part of a group of people visiting individuals who are locked up and taken from their families. You would be an especially valuable visitor if you speak fluent Spanish. Please consider attending this evening event if you could consider visiting someone being detained by ICE.



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, *Building 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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telephone: (617) 266-6710
fax: (617) 266-0449
email: info@commchurch.org
www.communitychurchofboston.org

Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

