

community

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

February 2011

news

Uprisings Abroad, Inspiration for Home

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Dear Friends and Members... As I write this letter there are nearly 2 million people rallying and standing together at Tahrir Square in Cairo calling for the end of the Mubarak regime. This is an incredibly exciting moment. Since the end of 2010 the spark of revolution has grown into a fire. Or, as Che Guevera reminds us "The revolution is not a fruit that falls when it's ripe. We have to shake the tree. We will make it fall." Because of the mass mobilization of people the fruit of revolution is falling in Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Tunisia, Syria, Sudan, and the trees they are coming from are ready and ripe for even more shaking. This is a thrilling moment to be alive and our voices of support are essential. We need to be pressuring our own government to keep its hands out of the affairs going on and, if anything, simply support these popular uprising as they come.

These incredible uprisings are coming as we are also dealing with the deep sadness of our friend and community leader, Chuck Turner's, three year prison sentence. Unfortunately the judge and the government prosecutors tried to use their power to discredit the years of work Chuck has done for his community by calling him a liar and insinuating that he *tricked* us into believing that the case was about race and political repression. I hope that we are all very aware that this case has absolutely always been about racism and the maintenance of white power and has been about Chuck's outspokenness about capitalism, the housing crisis, white supremacy, police violence and all these intersecting forms of oppression that tear at our wholeness. It is our responsibility to hold this understanding and allow it to fuel our continued commitment to Chuck and also to the work we have all stood side-by-side with him in over the years

Over the internet, in conversations on the street, and from facebook status updates the call has come for our own country to stand up and revolt like the people in Egypt and else where. I must add my voice to that chorus and add the question, how do you imagine revolutionary change looking in the United States? In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Comrade Pillai suggests that revolution "is not a dinner party. Revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence in which one class overthrows another." Is this the only possibility for revolution? The Last Poets say that we shouldn't speak of revolution until we are ready to eat rats to survive. Is that truly a requirement for excitement about revolutionary change? While I was at the US Social Forum I heard Grace Lee Boggs share about her understanding of (r)evolution as the process by which we begin exercising our own power and taking the power we have to create the world we wish to see while not becoming part of or mimicking the system we abhor. For Boggs, there are those who are creating the revolution right now even within the belly of the beast.

The uprisings in the world are beautiful inspirations for what is possible when humans organize together. In Egypt there are stories of Christians protecting Muslims during prayer and Muslims protecting Christian churches during worship. Images are being collected of women, children, and older people in the streets part of the uprising, it is not a revolution of only young men. There is much work to be done in our own country and within our own communities before we will see a similar uprising here in the United States. Recognizing this reality need not cause despair or hopelessness, rather encourage us to strengthen our organizing and relish in the beauty of each revolutionary moment. This is our time to feel inspired and fuel the fire, shake the tree, and support the evolution of revolution right here.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service &
Speakers Forum

February 6th

Superball Sunday

DANIEL LEBOWITZ

**“15 Rounds in Search of Humanity:
Reflections of a Weightlifter and Fighter
in a Soulless World”**

February 13th

Rev. JASON LYDON

“Why We Still Honor Black History Month”

February 20th

AVI CHOMSKY

**“Immigrant Justice from ‘Secure
Communities’ to In-state Tuition”**

February 27th

29th Annual W.E.B. DuBois Address

MARGARET BURNHAM

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on January 11, 2011

Following are highlights of the meeting.

Minister’s Report: The minister has proposed the creation of a loan program from members and friends of the Church by means of multiple one-to-one conversations with individuals and organizational leaders. A sum of \$139,000 is needed to finish the repairs on the building. Individuals and organizations would be asked to make loans in the following categories: 25, 15, 10, 5, or one thousand dollar amounts. The loans would be given with a legal contract with the stipulation that the money would be repaid by the Church within a certain amount of time; that time needs to be

discussed with the individuals or organizations making the loan.

The Church would create a plaque to be displayed in Lothrop Auditorium listing the names of the contributors; any organization or individual who makes a loan is entitled to three free rentals of Lothrop Auditorium within the course of five years.

All repair work on the Church must be completed by August, 2011 in order to retain the building permits.

Financial Matters: The treasurer detailed the several line items in the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statement. It was also noted that individual pledges and actual contributions exceeded the amount budgeted for 2010.

An ad-hoc committee consisting of David Broeg, Adam Machson-Carter, Jim Casteris, Jason Lydon and John MacLeod will discuss the possibility of obtaining 0% loans from Church members and friends in order to reduce money taken from the PAX Funds. The idea of receiving interest free loans from various unions was also discussed.



Various Concerns: The board voted to rent the fourth floor office space to Justice At Work - a non-profit organization, headed by an attorney who is working on behalf of undocumented workers; he has asked for a six-month lease and will pay a rental fee of \$400 monthly.

The Church has decided to work with BK Enterprises and will meet with them to acquire multiple bids from sub-contractors in order to cut \$10,000 from the projected \$139,000 renovation costs. The issue of hiring minority workers will also be taken into account.

The board voted to grant John McGrath a space within the Church building, on a short-term basis, to record and archive people’s stories regarding their prison experiences.

An announcement will be forthcoming concerning the fiscal constraints about the Church’s plans to encourage those who want hard copies of the CCB newsletter to pay a subscription fee in place of free email.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, February 8, 2011 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Prison Justice on the Table for 2011

Families Against Mandatory Minimums is heralding the possible passage of legislation to decrease mandatory minimum sentences for convictions considered "nonviolent." There is also excitement about the possibility of decreasing the school-zone area, which leads to a sentencing increase, from 1000 feet to 100 feet. There are also disastrous proposals about placing the Department of Corrections and Probation under the Executive, creating legislation similar to three-strikes laws that will lead to more lifers behind the wall, and the ongoing attempts to make parole more and more difficult. As the Community Church of Boston strives to meet the needs of our incarcerated membership and those who have loved ones behind bars, we must stay vigilant and push for responsible changes that will bring more people back to their families and decrease the power of the prison industrial complex. The following is an excerpt from a letter to Governor Patrick from Jason,

"One of our members, Stephen Metcalf, who is incarcerated in Gardner, wrote an article entitled, "The Case Against Parole." His argument is very different from yours. He is familiar with the system as he is directly impacted by it. He suggests that,

"parole is so defective and bureaucratically dysfunctional that it should be disbanded. The millions of dollars freed up will be infinitely better spent on 'presumptive probation.'" This concept, presumptive probation would best serve all of us. All prisoners, all people incarcerated, need to live with the hope of returning back to their loved ones. All of us on the outside must be prepared for the challenges and joys of getting our loved ones returned to us. If you want to radically transform parole, make it so that all prisoners are given the resources they need to return back into their communities."

Please consider writing your own letters to Governor Patrick, the Boston Globe, and your representatives at the State House.

The 2011 CCB Fiscal Meeting will happen on Sunday, February 13th at 1:30pm following the service.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers to Tell Stop and Shop: "Do the Right Thing!"

Florida farmworkers have long faced brutal conditions in the fields, including sub-poverty wages,

widespread labor rights violations, and even modern-day slavery.

Today, however, there is hope on the horizon, thanks to

the efforts of farmworkers, Fair Food activists, Florida tomato growers, and nine food industry leaders who have joined in support of the CIW's Fair Food principles, including a strict code of conduct, a cooperative complaint resolution system, a participa-

tory health and safety program, and a worker-to-worker education process. But Stop and Shop's parent company, Ahold, is refusing to

do their part, and if they have their way, the unprecedented farm labor transformation promised by the CIW's landmark agreement with the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange would be significantly diminished. Farmworkers' hopes for an end to the decades-long "Harvest of Shame" would be dashed.

Join the Coalition of Immokalee

Workers on Sunday, February 27th at 1:00pm in Copley Square! We will join the rally and march to hold Stop and Shop accountable right after lunch, Join us!



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If so, please send your email to:
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If you would like to continue receiving the paper newsletter we are requesting that you help us off-set costs by contributing \$25 per year for a subscription. Many thanks for your commitment to our congregation. You are important to our continuing work and we look forward to staying in touch.

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

Rev. Jason Lydon, *Minister*
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Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
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