

community

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

January 2013

news

Looking Forward, Looking Back

by Linda Jenkins, Congregational Director

When Abraham Joshua Heschel came back from marching alongside Rev. Martin Luther King in the voting-rights march in Selma, in the spring of 1965, he said, "I felt my legs were praying," another way to talk about faith of feet, topic of my past two newsletter articles. Following those and looking toward the year ahead, we began, in the last two Sunday services of 2012, to focus on how we might walk the walk together.

Critically acclaimed artist and activist Letta Neely and I designed the December 23rd service together on "The Spiritual Roots of Social Justice." What are the roots of our commitment to, our energy for, social justice work? Does our energy have its sources in early experiences or in more recent developments? What implications arise from identifying the source(s) of that energy?

We noted how we are the spiritual and physical roots of CCB. How do we help hold up and feed this community? What do we need to nourish it? After sharing thoughts in small groups, we put words on paper roots and attached them to a paper tree trunk. They included: an artistic imagination; work; coffee; criticism without falsehood; love; music; compassion; solidarity; courage; understanding; share; wakeup; knowledge & activism; protest against war, phone calls against war, cuts in services, benefits; ancestors; respect; preserve our community and share our lives for; trust; sensitivity/humanizing; truth. These are first steps in identifying nutrients for/from our community and giving them a way to be seen by each other. The health of the roots determines the health of the whole organism, whether it flowers and what kind of fruit it bears.

The theme of the service on Sunday, December 30th, was "Another world is possible! What will it look like?" We heard from several community members about their visions, then broke into 4 groups and recorded answers to the questions: What is your vision? What are conditions needed to realize it? What are the obstacles? What ideas, strategies and plans can make it so?

The visions included: disarm, get rid of capitalism or transform it into a socialist society; truth & reconciliation committees; no NRA; co-operation; education; fun; adventure; education; neighborhood; friendly; Earth; money without interest; arts; sharing; cooperation; share food;

solar energy; laughter; coops; happiness; embrace practice of different kinds of silence; cultural change beyond ending capitalism & imperialism; gifting, mass awareness; remembering history; passion for change.

Listed conditions needed to realize the visions were: educate population to reclaim our histories; food & money for all; stop labeling each other; recognize, resolve class war; culture of change; challenge social class system; inform, inspire, resist; less stress; selflessness; no apathy; appreciate life and don't stop learning; respect of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Obstacles identified were: government; military; no free press; sexism: women denied equal pay, equal access; prison-industrial complex; education/democracy; fear; can we listen; think beyond the way things are; don't think local; getting rid of anger at the system; rigid thinking.

And finally we listed the ideas, strategies and plans that could give rise to our visions: change public schools from indoctrination to independent thinking-educate to minority perspectives, class issues; CCB to increase participation in and promotion of Occupy movement; focus on spot-shot to deter arms build up in schools; CCB to travel to other congregations to dialogue; CCB Sunday services to be in a circle instead of rows with podium; find, create, participate in progressive interfaith organization; take turns talking; stop interrupting and talking over each other; mobilize media ahead of direct actions and events; start where you live-local initiatives; secession from USA; local autonomy-local control of & participation in everything; participatory budgeting; free access to everything we need; collapse old systems; bartering; community; mutual aid; Love Love Love & Ideas; think globally, act locally=> think locally, act in families.

These activities and the information will help us, in the year ahead, to be more aware of ways we can better take care of ourselves, each other and the world around us. How we can act together.

These activities and the information gathered will help us in the year ahead to be more aware of how we can better take care of ourselves, each other and the world around us and how to do all this more faithfully than acting together alone.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service &
Speakers Forum

January 6th

36th Annual Sacco-Vanzetti

Award for Social Justice

HONORING TAREK MEHANNA

January 13th

DR. MATT DUMONT

**“Who Are We, Where Are We Going,
What Are We Going to Do?”**

January 20th

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

BOSTON YOUTH

ORGANIZING PROJECT

“National Student Bill of Rights”

January 27th

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

**“CCB Memories: Gems From
The Archives”**

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on December 11, 2012

Following are highlights of the meeting.

Congregational Director's Report: The Congregational Director presented an outline regarding topics to be taken up at board meetings in the coming months. Those include Mission Related Work, Pastoral Care, Committees/Community Life, Administration, and Building Matters. Some of the categories under these respective topics, ie Occupy Boston, Occupy Sandy, Jobs With Justice, City Life/Vida Urbana, and Insurance, amongst others, will be discussed eventually by the board.

Financial Matters: The treasurer reviewed the November 2012 Profit & Loss Budget Performance report, reviewing the annual fund drive, salaries-benefits expenses, building expenses, and maintenance costs.

The next scheduled meeting of the board is January 8, 2012 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

- Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Upcoming Events

Occupy Boston's 'Debt Group' is hosting a community discussion and potluck on Monday, January 14th, 6-9pm at the Community Church of Boston.

Songs of Solidarity and Struggle on Saturday, January 19th, 3pm at the Democracy Center (45 Mt Auburn St, Cambridge). Bring your songs. Bring your instrument. Ballads from the Occupy. Songs of the workers. Songs of the people rising around the world. Proletarian Songs. Songs of the 99%. Activist and protest songs. Songs that carry messages. Create culture. For more information, call: (617) 731-8725

JP Forum: "Crossing the Class Divide" on Tuesday, January 15th, 7pm at First Church Jamaica Plain (6 Eliot St, JP). Barb Jensen spotlights classism in her new book *Reading Classes*. For more information: www.jamaicaplainforum.org

Jobs With Justice Volunteer Open House on Thursday, January 24th, 6pm at the JwJ Offices (3353 Washington St, JP). Want to join the fight for workers' rights? Then join us to learn about the work we do and how you can get active. Food will be provided. For more information call: (617) 524-8778

CCB Prison Member Program

The Community Church recently sent cards and gifts of \$25 money orders (for stamps, stationery etc) to our prison members in time for the holidays. In response we have received some heart-felt letters of thanks. Here is an excerpt from one:

“There are those who give little of much which they have, [...] but there are those who who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life and their coffer is never empty. Thank you for thinking of me on these holidays. Your coffer will never be empty.”

The Community Church Archives

by Dean Stevens, Vice President

Every time I'm at the CCB with a few moments to spare, I go into the broom closet also known as the mezzanine, also known as the archive room, and pick through the archives of our history. I dream about a day when we can have them organized and categorized in a systematic way. We could either seek a grant to have it done here, or else hand it all over to a university library that might have more resources to do a thorough job with cataloguing and archiving this type of material. It's a big question to resolve.

A box I open contains reel-to-reel audio tapes. The one on the top is labeled "Q and A with WEB Dubois", perhaps 1960 or so, soon before he moved to Ghana, maybe the last time he spoke to us. I don't know what else that box contains.

A binder full of board meeting minutes talks about the early seventies, when an angry City of Boston Board of Assessors was questioning CCB's legitimacy as a church, threatening to withdraw our tax exempt status.

Another box contains documents from Rev. Bill Alberts' lawsuit against his psychiatrist, and against the Methodist denomination that had defrocked him (for marrying two men in 1973), before he came to be with the Community Church of Boston. His case went all the way to the Supreme Court.

Another box has photos of labor union activists bloodied by police at a demonstration in Lawrence. I find another book full of press clippings from when James Michael Curley and Leverett Saltonstall debated at Community Church in the late forties. I find binders with old programs with deeply inspiring responsive readings, and lyrics of songs and hymns that I want us to sing. I find several volumes of transcripts from the Julius and Ethel Rosenberg Trial, but not a mention of them in the Board Minutes from all of the early 50s.

One of the things I love about being part of this endeavor is that we can, as Letta Neely eloquently expressed last month, "make up our own religion". Or we don't even have to call it a religion. It is clay in our hands to do what we will, to create deep, powerful and challenging community. At the same time, we don't act in a vacuum. There is profound inspiration in seeing what moved our founding leaders and members to action and to worship, to inform our present and inspire our future. There are stories of CCB's most difficult moments, and of our proudest activist efforts. It's all there for the finding. On Sunday, January 27th, we will talk about CCB's history, and take a look at these documents. Do you remember those days? Join us to tell us your stories.

Remembering Sara Sue Koritz

We are greatly saddened by the recent loss of life-long class-conscious trade unionist, socialist and peace advocate Sara Sue Koritz. She passed away on December 3rd in Greensboro, NC at the age of 91.

As her son Richard noted in his piece *Sara Rebecca Koritz -- In Memoriam* (see back of Sunday Forums), Sara Sue will be remembered most for her "ability to integrate her devotion to the cause of the liberation of the oppressed and exploited with her earnest, honest and steadfast role as daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, cousin, friend, neighbor and citizen of the world."

Beginning in the late 1990's she served several terms as President of the CCB's Board of Directors and remained on the Board until she left in 2006. During her time here she was a much loved and leading light. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

A Memorial Tribute will be held for Sara Sue by her family at the Community Church of Boston on Saturday, May, 18th at 11:00am.

Donations in Sara Sue Koritz' memory can be out made to the following organizations:

International Civil Rights Center and Museum
134 South Elm Street, Greensboro, NC 27401

The Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston St., Boston, MA, 02116

North Carolina Triad Jobs with Justice
PO Box 20002, Greensboro, NC 27420

Keep Maine and the Northeast Tar Sands Free!

Saturday, January 26th
TBA, Portland, Maine

ExxonMobil is gearing up to move dirty tar sands oil east through Ontario and Quebec into New England to reach a shipping port in Portland, Maine. But the people of eastern Canada and New England have their own plan and are forming a wall of opposition to keep the east tar sands free.

Working together - including in a powerful unified protest - we will insist that all of our neighbors, elected officials and other decision makers support sustainable energy sources... and block Tar Sands oil. More details will be revealed soon.

For further information: www.350maine.org



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

Reed Miller, *President*

Dean Stevens, *Vice President*

Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*

Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Jim Casteris, Mary Ann Cromer, Kevin Devine,

Nancy Messom, Susan Mortimer



DATED MATERIAL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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