

community

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

June 2008

news

Educating Against the Prison Industrial Complex

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Another season at the Community Church of Boston is coming to a close. This has been a year of growth. Together we have celebrated our programs, including the birth of the Justice School. We are continuing to celebrate our ten new members and the visioning for our future. Together we have also struggled over the hurdles of our break-ins and the loss of a pillar of our community, John O'Brien. We have had another incredible season.

We are closing the season with a three-Sunday focus on the prison industrial complex. The term, prison industrial complex, is jargon often used without enough explanation. Critical Resistance, an internationally networked grassroots organization struggling for prison abolition, defines the prison industrial complex as, "the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems. Through its reach and impact, the PIC helps and maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and similar privileges..."

The PIC survives and thrives off the exploitation of marginalized communities while creating huge profits for politicians and corporate powers. Over and over again lead organizers for prison abolition remind us that the 13th Amendment did not truly abolish slavery but rather transferred the plantation to the prison. In February the New York Times printed an article with the most recent statistics regarding incarceration in the United States. According to the article, "More than one in 100 adults in the United States are behind bars... One in 36 Hispanic adults is behind bars, based on Justice Department figures for 2006. One in 15 black adults is, too, as is one in nine black men between the

ages of 20 and 34." Whenever we speak about the prison industrial complex we must always remember to talk about systems of White supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, and all other forms of oppression. I often ask myself the question, if we were truly able to eliminate all forms of systemic oppression would the prison industrial complex still have a purpose?

Addressing the problems of the prison industrial complex goes well beyond the closing down of prisons, jails, and detention centers. We need to take power out of the State and put it back into the communities. We need to come up with real ways of dealing with the problems of our communities. While the PIC exacerbates violence, poverty, and addiction we need to be creative and learn from others who have established restorative justice structures and community accountability tactics for addressing community concerns. It is nearly impossible not to internalize the violence of the society we live in. Unfortunately this violence can be acted out interpersonally through intimate abuse, shootings in the park, drug addiction, etc. The PIC claims to be addressing these concerns; we need to be smart enough to know that we are being lied to. While we work to bring an end to the violence caused by the PIC we cannot forget to do the work of ending the violence happening in our own communities. We cannot do this work alone. We must build relationships in our neighborhoods, across communities, with loved ones, and with those we have not known before. As it has been said, "Once there were no prisons, that day will come again."



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

June 1st

REV. CANON ED RODMAN
*"Can Prisons Be Abolished?
How and Why it Can Happen"*

June 8th

JASON LYDON
*"Addressing Violence Behind
the Prison Walls"*

June 15th

*Annual Ethel & Julius Rosenberg
Commemoration*
LOIS AHRENS
*"One in a Hundred: What Drives
Mass Incarceration?"*

Sacco & Vanzetti Award Nominations

It is time to submit your nominations for the 2008 Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award. When thinking of nominees keep in mind the story of Sacco and Vanzetti. These were to Italian immigrant anarchists who were targeted by the state, given a faulty trial, and then executed. Sacco and Vanzetti are two men who stood by their ideals, organized in their community, and paid the ultimate price for it.

Nominations are due no later than June 3rd. Please send a name and (short) paragraph description of the individual you are nominating for the award. Please be as creative as you would like. Nominations can be mailed to the church or emailed to Jason at congregationaldirector@gmail.com.

The voting will occur during the annual meeting on June 8th.

CCB Board Meeting Notes

The Board of Directors met on June 18, 2008.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following board members and guests were present: Christina Braidotti, David Broeg, Kevin Devine, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Nancy Messom, Virginia Pratt, Ruediger Volk, and Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*. Guests included Dick Crowley and Ron Shapiro.

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason will attend the General Assembly of the Unitarian-Universalist Association and plans to take part in various workshops, especially those dealing with matters of growth and change within a church community, as well as end of life issues. He has been accepted as a transfer student from Andover Newton Theological School to the Episcopal Divinity School.



Financial Concerns: CCB bookkeeper, Xinli, reported that the Church has been withdrawing money from the PAX Fund for several years up to 2005, although since that time no money has been taken out.

Various Concerns: The congregation has voted Jim Harney as the 2008 recipient of the Sacco-Vanzetti Award for Social Justice.

The annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki event will take place on Sunday, August 3, at George's Island in Boston Harbor. The location and time of departure to the island are similar to that of preceding years.

The date and location of the CCB annual picnic has yet to be determined.

The three-part showing of the film, "Race - Power of Alliance" will be presented at CCB on three consecutive Sundays beginning August 10.

Virginia suggested that an effort be made to keep in touch with CCB senior members and others during the upcoming summer months.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk



The Gift the Justice School Brings to All of Us

by Joo Young Choi, Director of Children/Youth SJE Program

As the last few classes for the Justice School begin to be planned, I am in awe of how far the Justice School has come. Over this year I have been a witness to the growth of a group of intelligent, caring, creative and wonderful young people. Although my role as the director I am charged with the responsibility to teach, I have also been given the gift of learning. Our students have taught our community a great deal about the importance making space for young people within our church. I think to myself: where would our church be spiritually, emotionally and mentally if we were without these young people? I see their kindness, their participation in our service, their laughter, their thoughts and feelings, their willingness to learn from one another as an inspiration to us all.

Furthermore, I hope to continue to help this program grow, to invite new members to the Justice School and welcome new guests to share their knowledge with our children and youth. The gift the Justice School provides for young people is priceless, where else would they find themselves amongst a community of diverse ages, ethnic/racial backgrounds, sexualities, philosophies and political opinions, that is still rooted in a common statement of purpose? The Community

Church gives everyone an idea of what the world could be, if people worked towards upholding the importance of peace and justice.

I'm not saying that we are a perfect utopia, but what we are is a community that struggles together and finds wholeness in the sharing of opinions, the discussion of politics, the value of human life and an exploration of how best one can work towards creating a world rooted in peace and freedom.

If you have a chance this upcoming Sunday, thank our students for being part of our community. Often, people will thank me for being the director of this program, and I appreciate it, but I also see that I couldn't do my job without the participation of our wonderful Justice School Members. Their willingness to attend class, even though they have homework, school plays, piano and dance lessons, martial arts classes and active social lives, always amazes me. Their ability to manage their busy lives and still find time to be present at the Justice School has been the greatest gift for me as a teacher, but also, I think for all of us, it has been a gift to welcome their presence within not only our church but within our hearts.

CCB Hiking Group Being Formed

Three church members have been doing fall hikes together for several years now. It's been widely discussed that this might



turn into an annual Cynthia A. Foster Memorial Hike. Initial destinations could include--among many others--the Blue Hills, Middlesex Fells, Mt. Wachusett, Mt. Monadnock or Cynthia's beloved Mt. Watatic. The skyline's the limit!

If you're interested, please speak to Kevin, Lenny or Marty. More info will appear in the newsletter as fall approaches.

Nominating Committee Report

Following are nominations for the Board of Directors to be voted upon at June 8th's Annual Meeting (all named have accepted):

President - John MacLeod (two years)
Vice-President - David Broeg (two years)
Treasurer - Virginia Pratt (no term limit)
Clerk - Dick Keshishian (no term limit)

- *Directors* -

Christina Braidotti (elected for one more year)
Leonard Shames (elected for two more years)
Kevin Devine (nominated for three years)
Ruediger Volk (nominated for one year)
Nancy Messom (nominated for one year)



General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. General Assemblies shall make overall policy for carrying out the purposes of the Association and shall direct and control its affairs. Voting at each regular and special General Assembly shall be by accredited delegates from certified member congregations, certified associate member organizations, and trustees.

For more information contact:
generalassembly@uua.org

Our Purpose

Community Church of Boston is a free community of women and men 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*
 Joo Young Choi, *Director of Children/Youth SJE Program*
 Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
 Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
 Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
 Jim Casteris, *Superintendent*

Board of Directors

Dean Stevens, *President*
 Mary Ann Cromer, *Vice President*
 Ron Shapiro, *Treasurer*
 Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Christina Braidotti, David Broeg,
 Selma Ganz, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt



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