

community

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

May 2008

news

Mayday and the Struggle for Immigrant Rights

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Celebration! Liberation! Revolution! May 1st 2008 marks the annual commemoration of May Day, International Workers' Day, 122 years after the Haymarket rallies, riots, and martyrdom. Recently, May Day has strengthened a connection to the struggle for Immigrant rights in the United States. It was only two years ago that millions were in the streets around the country calling for an end to HR 4437 and for a path to legalization (without nearly enough support or discussion of amnesty). Today our job is to keep these struggles alive and connected in our minds, hearts, and actions.

I remember being a young high school anarchist and commemorating May Day by wearing all black to school (which wasn't likely that different from the colors I usually wore...). I did not understand exactly what I was commemorating, only that eight anarchists had been targeted (4 executed) by the State because they had been trying to organize working people into a more cohesive movement for the 8-hour day. I also remember the irony of wearing black to mourn the death of one group of resisters when I had Pagan friends who dressed in beautiful colors with flowers in their hair to honor the first planting of spring, a holiday outlawed by the Catholic Church in the 1700s. Consistently traditions from our many communities are in contrast to each other, even when we wish to stand in solidarity with one another.

Today, as May Day approaches, I think about ways our fragmented movements can come together. There will be a rally and march this May 1st, organized by the May Day Coalition that will begin in the

Boston Common and parade through to our neighborhood of Copley Square. The focus is on the continued ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids and the ongoing deportation of people from our larger community. It has been just over a year since the major raid in New Bedford. Unfortunately the oppression has not stopped. Families continue to be torn apart, individuals continue to be detained, and others continue to be deported.

It is essential for our congregation to stand in solidarity with those targeted by the ICE raids. One of the best overly quoted sayings from the U.S. labor movement reminds us, "An injury to one is an injury to all." A sign, quoting James Baldwin in an open letter to Angela Davis, hanging in our church reflects similarly, "Silence is not only criminal but suicidal... for if they come for you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night." Campaigns to end deportations and intimidation by ICE directly link to labor struggles, prison abolition, anti-racism work, global justice, environmental justice, and so on.

The Community Church of Boston is one of many sponsors of this march. It would be beautiful to see a large group of people standing behind the Community Church of Boston banner. Maybe some of us will be in black mourning the martyrs and others of us with flowers in our hair reminding us that resistance brings us growth and new life. At times those things that seem like contradictions may also bring us closer to balance and wholeness.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

May 4th

Marking the International Workers' holiday

SANDY EATON, RN

**"Support Safe Staffing at
Our Acute-Care Hospitals"**

May 11th

JOO YOUNG CHOI

**"Understanding Trans-Racial
Adoption Through Art and Experience"**

May 18th

CITY LIFE/VIDA URBANA

**"From Tenant Organizing to Eviction
Blockades: Building a Grassroots
Movement for Community Control
of Community Resources"**

May 25th

Memorial Day weekend

ALAA MAJEED

**"An Iraqi Woman's Courage
in Journalism"**

CCB By-Law Changes!!!

Many of you may know that a committee of four (John Mannheim, Mary Ann Cromer, Dick Keshishian, and Marty Lerman) have been meeting to review our by-laws. The Board is recommending that the congregation accept all the changes suggested by the committee, a congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, May 4 after lunch to discuss and vote on the changes.

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on April 17, 2008.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following board members and guests were present: David Broeg, Mary Ann Cromer, Selma Ganz, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt, Ron Shaprio, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*. Guests included Betsy Gynn, John Mannheim and Marty Lerman.

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason distributed a draft copy for he termed a "proposal for the growth and transformation" of CCB. The goals included increasing Church membership, more communication with social justice groups in the Boston area, and the continued development of the Justice School. He also suggested the establishment of a Building Renters Advisory Committee for the purposes of increasing the involvement of progressive organizations who rent or occupy space in the CCB building. Other organizations in the area, including Massachusetts Jobs With Justice, Massachusetts Senior Action Council and City Life/Vida Urbana would be invited to join.



Justice School Report: Joo Young Choi reported that the students are learning more about racism and its influence on the nation's culture. She appreciates the food that is donated to the School by the congregation.

Financial Concerns: Ron reported the soaring costs of heating and electricity in the CCB building and urged that the tenants be informed to check the thermostat and the lights before leaving the premises.

Various Concerns: The board voted to accept the proposal of the By-Laws Committee. The recommendations will be brought to a vote by the membership at the May 4 congregational meeting.

The Building Committee has consulted a roofing contractor for an estimate to install a "green roof".

Dean announced a concert featuring Danielle Scott to be held on Friday, May 9 at CCB.

The next meeting of the board will be held on Thursday, May 22, 2008 at Selma's home. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

A Welcoming Community and Congregation

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

Recently, I was filling out a survey about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people's experiences in church environments. This questionnaire focused on how well people in their youth felt accepted and welcomed by their church community. I was happy to say that in many ways I have felt supported and welcomed here at Community Church of Boston. I realized though, that in general, the skill of being a welcoming congregation is a difficult task. When I say welcoming, I am not only focusing on folks who fall under the queer identity umbrella but instead how we welcome people who come from all walks of life.

I believe that friendship is one of the greatest ways that a community can become closer. I have seen this with our students. Each student's ability to be kind, silly, considerate, and caring has helped our program become a supportive, creative and growing place for each Justice School member. I hope that what has been taking place in our classroom can permeate the culture of our church.

In some ways, I believe it already has. Our Seder was incredibly successful! The passing of knowledge from the elders to youth was done in a celebratory and fun way. I hope that we can continue to create fun traditions that will bring our intergenerational community

together. For the rest of our time together, until the Summer, I hope you will think deeply about how we can be welcoming to new folks at the church.

Here are a few things I have thought of:

-- Although name tags may seem unimportant to some, I feel that wearing one helps newcomers feel more comfortable.

-- In many churches people always sit near the same people each week, it would be wonderful for us to become more intentional in our seating and to befriend newcomers.

-- Also, it would be wonderful to have a youth and adult volunteer each week to be greeters at the door.

There are a number of other things we can do to help make our church a more welcoming and community-focused place. I hope that as we continue to welcome this beautiful warm weather we also welcome new traditions, new forms to kindness and hospitality and new comers to our church.

12th Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace

Mother's Day Sunday, May 11th, our service will begin at 11:15am to accommodate those who would like to join in the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute's annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace. We will have a Community Church of Boston contingent. If you would like to register and get a pledge sheet online please go to www.louisdbrownpeaceinstitute.org. More information will be available at church on Sundays and on our website. All money raised is given to fund the Survivors Outreach Services.

The Peace Institute has served a multi-level agenda to the academic community, the faith community and to other grassroots organizations. The Institute develops the leadership capacity of survivors and supports their efforts to participate in policy and programmatic efforts, while also serving the needs and addressing the pain of families, it has served more than 500 families, and is also providing support to families of the offenders.

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.



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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