

community

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

November 2008

news

Political Action Doesn't Stop at the Ballot Box

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Clergy people and religious leadership around the country will use their November newsletters and Sunday sermons to encourage their congregation, mosque, or temple to "vote their values." The conservative and fundamentalist clergy will pretend not to be endorsing McCain as they tell their membership that if they vote for a pro-choice candidate then they are going to Hell or cannot partake in sacraments. Liberal, progressive, and mainstream clergy will pretend not to be endorsing Obama when they tell their membership to vote for an end to the war in Iraq and for the candidate who will bring the responsible change our country needs. Technically clergy and religious non-profits are not allowed to endorse candidates or preach in favor of particular candidates from the pulpit. However, we should not be so naive as to believe that these endorsements are not happening each Sunday and with each newsletter. There are some things I can promise we will talk about as a congregation. We have talked about the impacts racism and White dominant culture has on this election. We have talked about the detriments of the two party system. We use each Sunday to tell stories about those seeking justice around the world. We certainly talk about the impacts militarism has on our country and in worldwide imperialism. One thing I can assure you is that you will not receive candidate endorsements from your congregational director.

With that understanding I am using my role as a Unitarian Universalist/secular/humanist leader to celebrate those in our larger community who understand that voting and electoral politics are not enough. We will spend the last Sunday of October and the first Sunday of November looking at the strategy of voting;

is it a strategic option for bringing about change or is it just distracting us from the possibilities of true communal/global transformation? Regardless of how one feels about the strategy of voting I believe this congregation understands that our political action cannot end at the ballot box. If we wish to live our faith in justice then there is always more that we can do.

Our Board of Directors and Officers recently voted in favor of joining the new sanctuary movement. We were a sanctuary congregation in the 1980's and provided space for a man in need of refuge from Guatemala and then in need of protection from the U.S. government's attempts to deport him back to Guatemala. As we continue to understand the impacts of neo-liberalism and the rights of corporations to move feely across borders through the avenues of free trade we must also hear the stories of those who are forced to leave their homes because of governmental and economic exploitation. Taking a stand against the brutality of the Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) must be accompanied with a commitment to end corporate greed and colonization through globalization and "structural adjustment" policies. As a sanctuary congregation we join the Arlington Street Church as the only other church in Massachusetts part of this rebirth of a movement. Thus, along with the many other justice issues you find yourself involved in we are going to need members and friends to stand up and help our commitment as a sanctuary congregation be more than a signature on paper. Please be sure to let me know if you want to get involved. Our potential as a community is bountiful, let us find our greatest potential.

p.s. For those of you who are curious, yes, I do vote.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

November 2nd

To Vote or Not to Vote? (part 2)

JAMES HEROD

**“Discrediting Representative Government,
Fostering Direct Democracy”**

November 9th

Honoring Veterans for Peace

JOHN SCHUCHARDT

“War: The Bridge to Nowhere”

November 16th

SURESH NAIDU

**“The \$700 Billion Question:
What is Going on with the Economy?”**

November 23rd

THE THEATRE OF RELATIVITY

“Two Doors”, a play by John O'Brien

November 30th

World AIDS Day

TONIA HINES

**“Health Care Access in
Communities of Color”**

Small Office Space Available

Well-suited space for grassroots groups, activists, unions, etc. \$400/month includes heat and electricity; free wireless internet; use of common rooms for meetings/trainings; use of auditorium twice yearly for large events. Available immediately. For more information contact: info@commchurch.org

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on October 16, 2008.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following board members and guests were present: David Broeg, Jim Casteris, Dick Keshishian, Jason Lydon, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt, Lenny Shames and Ruediger Volk

Financial Matters: The board has approved a monetary withdrawal from the PAX funds in order to meet the payroll and other expenses. The board has also voted to apply funds for the repair of the CCB roof. Two companies have been consulted and their respective cost estimates are due shortly.

Building Concerns: The Building Committee has recommended retaining the services of Eagle Elevator Company since they were the initial installers of the elevator and are perhaps more knowledgeable about its workings.

Congregational Director's Report: CCB will be connecting with City Life, an organization that aids those in foreclosure procedures, as well as protecting the rights of tenants, to appeal to Sheriff Andrea Cabral to prevent people from being evicted from their homes.



The congregation will express its views on a proposal entitled New Sanctuary Movement put forth by the Unitarian-Universalist Association of Congregations, which, in part, urges the public “to take a moral stand for immigrant rights and to protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination and unjust deportation”.

Various Concerns: Ruediger has withdrawn his resignation and has rejoined the board.

At the conclusion of the meeting Virginia, who works as a foreclosure prevention counselor, presented a lengthy and concise analysis of the present foreclosure situation in the Greater Boston area.

The next meeting of the board will be on Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 7:15pm, to which CCB members and friends are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Question 1: Why Vote 'No' to the Income Tax Proposal?

The income tax question on the ballot this fall is a reckless proposal that will have severe and immediate consequences for all of us. This binding referendum will take more than \$12 billion—nearly 40 percent—out of the state budget, driving up local property taxes and leading to drastic cuts in services. Our communities will suffer sweeping education cuts, steep reductions in public safety personnel and further deterioration of roads and bridges.

Here is what we know

- * The income tax proposal will cost the Commonwealth more than \$12 billion in revenues
- * That's 40 percent of the state budget
- * This is a binding proposal that will become law effective January 1, 2009

This reckless proposal will:

- * Drive up local property taxes
- * Have dire consequences for our communities, putting education, health care, public safety, and our state infrastructure at risk.

What to do about it

1. Pledge to VOTE NO
2. Sign up for email from VoteNoMA.com to stay informed. You can do that here. As volunteer opportunities arise we will contact you.
3. Tell your friends and family to VOTE NO. Let them know that you think this is a reckless and bad idea. Send them to VoteNoMa.com and ask them to learn more and sign up to help as well.

Times are hard enough. Let's not make them worse.

New Tenant: WILPF – International Office

After searching for quite some time it is a joy to announce that the International Office of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom will be moving into the 2nd floor office. The incredible work of WILPF parallels the work of the Community Church. They will be an excellent addition to the social justice framework that holds up our building.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20th is recognized throughout the country as the Transgender Day of Remembrance, which honors the memory of those murdered because of anti-transgender violence. The first Transgender Day of Remembrance was a candlelight vigil held in San Francisco in 1999 to commemorate the anniversary of the murder of Rita Hester, a transgender woman from Boston. On Nov. 28, 1998, Hester was stabbed 20 times in her home and died from cardiac arrest as a result of her wounds. Her attackers were never found. Hester's death set off a national reaction amongst activists looking to create an organized response to the troubling trend of violence against transgender people.

On the one-year anniversary of Hester's death, the first Transgender Day of Remembrance was held. In addition to coordinating the vigil, Gwendolyn Ann Smith also launched the Web site "Remembering Our Dead" to recognize those killed by anti-transgender violence. The number of dead honored on the site has since grown to more than 240. For more information please visit the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition's website for information about this years vigil: <http://www.masstpc.org>

Stop the Evictions!

As the U.S. Government chooses to bail out the banks with billions of tax dollars people in our community are continuing to be targeted by these same banks for foreclosure and eviction. Virginia Pratt is deeply engaged in this work by trying to help individuals and families avoid foreclosure. Tragically there are thousands of homes that are set to be foreclosed on this year in Boston alone! This is an epidemic around the country. Fortunately in Boston City Live/Vida Urbana is one of the organizations working explicitly with its tenant organizing committee to stop the evictions of families from their home. The banks are continuously putting their absurd profits before the human right to a safe and secure place to live. We have the opportunity to stand with City Life and others taking a stand. Please get in touch with the people at City Live/Vida Urbana, www.clvu.org or 617.524.3541.

There will be more information in the coming weeks about what we, as Community Church of Boston, can do to specifically challenge the impacts these evictions are having on low-income folks, poor folks, and People of Color.

This year's *Sacco-Vanzetti Social Justice Award* honors **Jim Harney!**

Sunday, December 7th, 12pm
at the
**Community Church
of Boston**

*Please join us for a day of
honoring Jim Harney
while remembering the
legacy of Sacco & Vanzetti.*



Invitations will be mailed to church members and friends soon. As this is the Community Church of Boston's major fundraiser for the year tickets are available for \$15 (\$5 for seniors, youth, and students). However, all are welcome regardless of ability to pay.

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*
Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
Jim Casteris, *Superintendent*

Board of Directors

John MacLeod, *President*
David Broeg, *Vice President*
Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Christina Braidotti, Kevin Devine,
Nancy Messom, Leonard Shames,
Ruediger Volk



DATED MATERIAL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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