

# community

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

Summer 2008

# news

## Summer Updates and Reflections...

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Happy summer to everyone. I hope all are enjoying the heat, the fickle New England weather, and visits to the beach. Last year I wrote the cover to our summer newsletter from a library on bicycle route from Portland, Oregon to San Francisco, California. This year I write to you from a moving train car in the middle of nowhere Nebraska. I have been sitting in this train for two days as I travel home to Boston from San Francisco. It is quite incredible to see how beautiful our country is. I have been glued to my window like one of those window decorations, enjoying the beauty of desert, mountains, the Colorado River, and the lights of cities as we pass at night.

As I appreciate the beauty I try to think of the, primarily, Chinese and Irish workers whose labor was stolen and exploited to build the rail. I try to think of the people who lived on the land the train tracks divided. I wonder about the never-ending consequences of Manifest Destiny. A land that is so beautiful has so many sad stories. However, we know, as radicals, that there are stories of resistance that stretch even farther than the train tracks. We know that people always struggle for their liberation. As I watched the Rockies disappear into the West I thought of you all and all of those who inspire me to do justice. I like to think that the land holds our stories and the rivers pass them along for others to learn from. If we can learn to listen I think there is much for us to learn from the whispers of warning, celebration, and mourning.

Right after I left Boston I went to the UU General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. My primary jobs at General Assembly were to co-lead the youth anti-racism/anti-oppression training with two incredible co-trainers, Elandria Williams and Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers and

representing the Community Church of Boston. I had the pleasure of attending the Ware Lecture, the yearly big-time speaker, and see Van Jones, co-founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. He was an incredible speaker and offered some fantastic suggestions on how we can get involved in a Green Economy. Some of his ideas directly touch us at the Community Church. We need to ask ourselves what we are doing with our building. We need to ask ourselves how we are contributing to the environmental and economic justice. Dean Stevens has been pushing us to ask these questions while he was president, we cannot forget to continue asking these questions and start coming up with some answers.

I also went to a candidates' forum with the two possible presidential candidates for the UUA. I must tell you I am very concerned. I know that we, as the Community Church of Boston, are not deeply connected with the UUA. However, I do think we could have some real effect in pushing the UUA to remember some of the radical politics it once held, 10 years ago, 20 years ago, and more. Unfortunately neither of the two presidential candidates are going to bring that vision forward. There are some people considering running a no-confidence campaign; asking the UU faith community to consider relieving the presidential position and establishing a stronger commitment to true democracy within Unitarian Universalism.

There is much more to report back from General Assembly. Please do sit down with me and ask questions if you have any. I will pull together a more formal report back early in September. I am so looking forward to seeing you all soon.

# Community News Briefs

## Tragic shooting at UU church in Knoxville, Tennessee

On Sunday, July 27th, during a children's production of Annie Jr. at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, a gunman entered the congregation and opened fire on the congregation with a shotgun-seriously injuring five (critical) and killing two. None of the witness or victims could identify the man, as he was unknown to anyone. These acts have yet to garner any explanation as the only words heard from the gunman were, "I have it. I've got it."

Please keep all the families and individuals in your hearts and prayers. Please think of the congregation that is suffering and aching in this time. Please think also of the shooter who we many never know why he did what he did. May we remember all those who fall victim to violence every day. Whether it's a loving congregation in Tennessee, the streets of Boston, the city of Baghdad, or anywhere else we must come together to create communities that foster compassion instead of continuing the cycle of violence.

## New Orleans still needs our help!!!

It is three years after Katrina/Rita hit and the ongoing effects of the storm have not ended. People are still displaced from their homes. People of Color continue to be targeted for police violence. Homes are still in disrepair. Many are still homeless.

We have been invited to pull together a volunteer contingent and go down to New Orleans to be helpful. Regardless of age, hands are helpful. We are being called to get our hands dirty and put ourselves out there for our family in New Orleans. Please let Jason know if you would be interested in going to the Gulf in the winter. Not only would it be good to volunteer and be helpful, we could also get out of the snow for a while.

## Next CCB Board Meeting

The next meeting of the CCB Board will take place at Dick Keshishian's house on Saturday, August 16th, 5pm.

# CCB Board Meeting Notes

*The Board of Directors met on June 18, 2008.*

*Following are highlights of the meeting.*

The following board members 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

September will be "Back to School" Month, with Sundays forums about education and more!  
Watch for details.

**Community Church of Boston**  
*A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920*

# sunday forums

August 2008

## **August 3rd -- HIROSHIMA/NAGASAKI REMEMBRANCE DAY - GEORGE'S ISLAND**

We will take the 10:00am Ferry to George's Island to hold a service in commemoration of the atrocious human rights abuse and atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The Ferry dock is located at Long Warf at Christopher Columbus Park. Ferry tickets are \$14.00 for adults and \$10.00 for seniors. If you would like to come but cannot afford the ticket, no problem, let Jason know. Please bring picnic food to share.

## **August 10th -- RACE THE POWER OF ILLUSION (part I) - THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US**

Everyone can tell a Nubian from a Norwegian, so why not divide people into different races? That's the question explored in "The Difference Between Us," the first hour of the series. This episode shows that despite what we've always believed, the world's peoples simply don't come bundled into distinct biological groups. We begin by following a dozen students, including Black athletes and Asian string players, who sequence and compare their own DNA to see who is more genetically similar. The results surprise the students and the viewer, when they discover their closest genetic matches are as likely to be with people from other "races" as their own.

Much of the program is devoted to understanding why. We look at several scientific discoveries that illustrate why humans cannot be subdivided into races and how there isn't a single characteristic, trait - or even one gene - that can be used to distinguish all members of one race from all members of another.

## **August 17th -- RACE THE POWER OF ILLUSION (part II) - THE STORY WE TELL**

It's true that race has always been with us, right? Wrong. Ancient peoples stigmatized "others" on the grounds of language, custom, class, and especially religion, but they did not sort people according to physical differences. It turns out that the concept of race is a recent invention, only a few hundred years old, and the history and evolution of the idea are deeply tied to the development of the U.S.

"The Story We Tell" traces the origins of the racial idea to the European conquest of the New World and to the American slave system - the first ever where all the slaves shared similar physical traits and a common ancestry. "The Story We Tell" is an eye-opening tale of how deep social inequalities came to be rationalized as natural - deflecting attention from the social practices and public policies that benefited whites at the expense of others.

## **August 24th -- RACE THE POWER OF ILLUSION (part III) - THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN**

If race doesn't exist biologically, what is it? And why should it matter? Our final episode, "The House We Live In," is the first film about race to focus not on individual attitudes and behavior but on the ways our institutions and policies advantage some groups at the expense of others. Its subject is the "unmarked" race: white people. We see how benefits quietly and often invisibly accrue to white people, not necessarily because of merit or hard work, but because of the racialized nature of our laws, courts, customs, and perhaps most pertinently, housing.

**COMMUNITY**  
CHURCH OF BOSTON

**Jason Lydon, Congregational Director**

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Park at the Back Bay Garage for \$3 on Sunday until 1:30 with a special sticker available from the church.

By public transportation, Community Church is minutes from the Back Bay station (Orange line) or Copley (Green line).

# Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance Day

August 3rd - George's Island



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For more information: [info@commchurch.org](mailto:info@commchurch.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

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

Christina Braidotti, Nancy Messom,  
Lenny Shames, Ruediger Volk



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
DATED MATERIAL

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