

community

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

Summer 2011

news

Enjoying the Summer While Thinking About the Future

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Dear Friends and Members, I hope that everyone is having a good summer and survived the New England heatwave. Please do remember to take care of your bodies. Sit by a fan, take a dip in some cool water, remember to hydrate yourself, go to the movies to get some air conditioning, whatever you need to do. Your body belongs to you and I am hopeful that each of us does what we need to treat it gently and with love.

I have had the pleasure of being away from Boston for the end of June and beginning of July. It is amazing how a break can be both rejuvenating and also remind me how much I love being on the streets of Boston. I know that I am grateful to be back and look forward to beginning things up at the church again, knowing there is much work to be done both in our building and on expanding our collective ministry in the Greater-Boston area.

When I first left Boston in mid June I drove to North Carolina to attend the 50th Anniversary General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is hard to believe that an institution that has played such a strong role in the life of so many people is still quite a baby in age. There were many happenings at this General Assembly, workshops to attend, worship services to take part in, social witness actions to march with, and conversations over coffee to reflect on the possibility of our shared faith.

Of the many conversations I had the pleasure to participate in was a reflection on the role our congregations can and should be playing with young adults and campus ministry. I found myself wondering about our congregation and our location right in the heart of one of the most academic centers of the world. How can we engage with the colleges and universities on a substantial level? Are we ready for what it would look like to

include the needs of young adults into our congregation? Realizing that young people are not only the leaders of tomorrow but can, and are, be incredible leaders right now, how do we engage authentically in becoming a more intergenerational space? Are there people in our community ready to take this question on? We have a number of young adults who attend Sunday mornings, but what would it mean for us to expand the inclusion of young voices? What are we willing to do to make that happen? What power are we willing to share?

During General Assembly there were also important conversations about race, racism, and white culture within Unitarian Universalism. The youth and young adult caucuses came together to talk about the way anti-racism work has been defunded and the ways we want to bring the work back.

Intergenerational communities came together to tell the history of the last time General Assembly was in Charlotte, North Carolina and the "Thomas Jefferson Ball" that encouraged people to come in "period dress" - leading many African American and white ally UU's to question how Black people should come to the ball, in chains and with scars? This year, 2011, the Thomas Jefferson District announced that now, 18 years after that ball, they are changing the name of their district to the South East District. The power to name and rename is an essential piece of reconciliation. I am proud of a faith that can transform its failures and harms into growth and justice.

I hope the Community Church of Boston can spend some of this coming season reflecting on our role in Boston and the ways our relationships can be transformative both for us and those we build with. May the summer end well for each of us and the renewal available keep us strong in the work to be done.

Recent Grants Awarded to the Community Church of Boston

The CCB is proud to announce that we were awarded \$10,000 from the **Unitarian-Universalist Social Responsibility Funding Program** to expand our prison ministry program, which fosters connections between free world church members and prisoners through the exchange of letters and visits.

We also received generous grants from **Haymarket People's Fund** and the **New England War Tax Resistance** to help further the social justice mission of the Community Church of Boston.

Annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration on George's Island

On August 7th the Community Church of Boston will hold our annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration on George's Island. People wishing to attend should gather together at the Long Wharf North Pier (right next to Columbus Park) at 10:30am to get on the 11:00am ferry to George's Island. Tickets can be purchased before hand or at the Pier.

Everyone is encouraged to bring food to share and other picnic related things. We will have a short service together while we eat and share time with one another, living for a world free of nuclear weapons!

Visit www.bostonharborislands.com to learn more about the different islands.

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on June 14th, 2011

Following are highlights of the meeting.

Ministerial Matters: The Theater Offensive group will be occupying the third and fourth floors of the Church building, beginning on July 15, 2011, after having signed a two-year lease.

The Church has received a \$15,000 gift from an anonymous donor to be used at the discretion of the Church.

Financial Report: The treasurer reviewed and discussed the line items on the Profit and Loss Budget Performances statement for May, 2011 as well as the Transaction by Account statement for June, 2011.

The Fundraising Committee announced that it has received grants from the following organizations: (1) New England War Tax Resistance, (2) Unitarian-Universalist Funding Panel, monies designated for prison work, and (3) Haymarket Fund.

Various Concerns: The Church is in immediate need an intercom system and is awaiting estimates from the companies who have been contacted.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, August 9, 2011 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Introducing the New CCB Building Tenants!

Justice At Work (4th floor, back office): Organizing direct action campaigns is only one side of advocacy work. Groups working to change the current power structure often need legal assistance and that is where Justice at Work fits in. Justice at Work helps low-wage workers in Eastern Massachusetts who face situations where employers have not fulfilled their obligations to pay for services rendered.

In order to help these workers J@W has partnered with the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative, a collection of immigrant rights groups, to help their clients with legal issues. Workers may chose to file legal cases against the employers or organize rallies and protests against those employers to draw public attention to the employers poor practices.

The Theater Offensive (3rd & 4th floors): Guided by our mission, The Theater Offensive has driven our ambitious programming to the cutting edge of queer culture and politics since 1989. Grounded in our commitment to build an activist-based artistic forum, our groundbreaking programming has become a vital arena for the unique voices of diverse queer cultures, and has led to lasting coalitions between the varied communities under the queer umbrella.

We accomplish this work through meaningful ongoing relationships with a range of arts and organizing initiatives locally and throughout the country, and by using any and all cultural tools to make a difference in the minds, hearts, and libidos of the queer and straight communities.

For more information:
www.facebook.com/JusticeWork/147966601930858

For more information:
www.thetheateroffensive.org

The CCB Summer Speakers & Community Discussion Series

by Mary Lynn, Summer Series Co-Coordinator

The Community Church of Boston Kicked Off Summer Speakers Series on July 3rd, with a presentation by John Macleod and Susan Mortimer, speaking on the topic of "Prisons, Repression, and 'Public Safety.'" Ruth Anna Welch provided lovely musical interludes with her guitar and sweet voice. We began the event with a community brunch. Members and guests contributed a delicious array of foods including baked casserole, fish cakes, veggy salad, fruit, olive bread and cookies. Coffee, juice and tea were also provided.

Over twenty people attended— not bad for a summer holiday weekend-- and listened with rapt attention to our two very engaging speakers for over an hour, followed by twenty minutes of Q&A. Many lingered to talk informally with the speakers and each other after the presentation. Several guests had contributed tasty foods which were enjoyed prior to and after the presentation. Ruth Anna's musical talents also added to the harmonious ambiance of the event.

The second in the Series (July 10th), was entitled "The Impact of Street Performances: Celebrating Self-Expression as a Basic Human Right". Our speaker was Stephen H. Baird, founder and director of Street Arts and Buskers Advocates and Community Arts Advocates. Stephen shared with us the daring details and colorful antidotes of his more than three decades of performances, arts advocacy and grassroots arts administration experience. He also taught us about the legal processes he has been involved with fighting for street performers rights in Federal court cases in Boston, New York, Chicago, Seattle, New Orleans, and numerous other cities where he continues to work tirelessly to protect artists' rights to perform in public spaces.

Rose Anna Welch also told us of her earlier years of experiences with arrest and challenging the laws limiting public performances. She also again graced us with her talents on guitar, piano, and vocals. Some 15 people attended this event, sitting "cabaret-style" at small tables. This was truly a unique and inspiring presentation.

For our third Series event (July 17th): "Challenging the Siege of Gaza Aboard The Audacity of Hope," we were indeed fortunate to have as speaker, Ridgely Fuller, just back from the the Second Freedom Flotilla where she joined with hundreds of world citizens representing some 22 countries, who came together to insist that Israel end its illegal blockade of Gaza, and to demand that international law and human rights be applied equally to all people. She and other flotilla activists also joined with citizens of Athens to demonstrate against the Greek government's willingness to serve as the enforcer of Israeli's naval blockade of Gaza.

Our lovely new auditorium was filled almost to capacity with at least forty guests. Ridgely's slides and first-hand experience during her several trips to Palestine were of great interest to all. We were treated to a musical interlude by CCB member, Ruth Anna Welch.

Our fourth series event (July 24th) was a panel addressing the topic of "AGELESSNESS, AGEISM, AND AGING." We were fortunate to have, facilitating our exploration of this topic, a panel from the Community Church of Boston members and friends who have wide ranging, and in depth experience with the realities, myths and facts of all three of these aspects of growing up and getting older in America. Our panel members ranged in age from mid sixties to late nineties: Mary Lynn Cramer, celebrating her 73rd birthday, moderated and presented on Health Care and the Economics of Aging; David Broeg, addressed Sexuality, and Eroticism: Essentials of Healthy Aging; Gwendoline O'Brien focused on the Strengths Required and Fears People Have for Aging; Julia Mitchell, most likely the oldest member of CCB at age 97, talked to us about Staying Healthy While Aging: Diet, Exercise, and Counting Your Blessings;

Ruth Anna Welch wrapped up the presentations with personal comments on her own experiences with Romance, Relationships, Good Choices and Bad Ones. She also treated us to a moving song she had written and recorded many years ago about an elderly gentleman who enjoyed her music when she was a younger street performer.

The audience of CCB members and friends contributed to a very lively and informative discussion facilitated by our multiracial panel of male and female senior citizens. Despite the gravity of some aspects of this discussion, more than the usual amount of amusement, laughter and enjoyment was shared by audience and panelists. Mary Lynn published her comments as an on-line article in, *Countercurrents.org* and can be read at: <http://www.countercurrents.org/cramer230711.htm>

For our fifth topic in this weekly summer series, (July 31st), we will be hosting an Open Meeting to review all the remaining proposals for the Summer Speaking Series. There are 3 dates to fill in August, as one of the Sundays in August is reserved for the for the annual picnic. Everyone who wants to propose an event for August that they are willing to organize and produce, will be asked to give a short summary of the proposed speaker, film or panel. Those in attendance, will vote on their preferred topics to be produced and presented in August.

Say NO to the “Secure Communities” Program!

Boston-area community, social justice and faith-based organizations are organizing in favor of immigrant rights and against the Secure Communities program (S-Comm).

The S-Comm program espouses the deportation of dangerous criminals but then more than half of the time deports people with no criminal convictions. Since the statistics revealed that the program appears to be targeting all undocumented immigrants, it became clear to us that this was an effort by the Obama administration to increase their deportation statistics. Cities like Boston find themselves stuck between developing good community relations and enforcing Federal Immigration law.

Join Centro Presente, and over 50 other organizations, in encouraging Mayor Menino to have Boston join the growing list of cities that have opted out of the program!



For more information:
www.cpresente.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

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Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
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