

Community Church of Boston
A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920

sunday forums

December 2010
Sundays at 11:00a.m.

December 5th -- Marking World AIDS Day

MORRIGAN PHILLIPS

"The Unspoken Connection Between Incarceration and AIDS"

Oprah and others continuously blame Black men who are "on the down low" for the rates of HIV/AIDS in Black communities. This story that has been created simply builds upon homophobia and forces men of color deeper into the closet. Not only is this insinuation homophobic, it is also not accurate. Incarceration is one of the highest contributors to the rise of HIV/AIDS in Black communities and it continues to do so with no accountability. We will discuss the realities of AIDS in our culture, the benefits and negatives of a "World AIDS Day," and what must be done to stop the increasing rates of HIV/AIDS in marginalized communities.

December 12th -- GUNTRAM MUELLER

"Starting with START, Can We Think Outside the Bomb?"

Guntram Mueller is convener of the United for Justice with Peace task force on Nuclear Abolition. He is also a member of the Massachusetts Peace Action board and very familiar with both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the New START Treaty. Guntram will give an up-to-date report on New START ratification and an overview of plans for getting to "zero nuclear weapons" in the future.

The new treaty between Russia and the U.S. is a follow-on to the original START Treaty, which cut nuclear weapons and initiated an inspection regime so each side could monitor the other. That treaty expired last year. The New START Treaty would reduce nuclear weapons somewhat, but more importantly will again allow inspections, which reduce uncertainty and suspicion and make for a more stable situation.

December 19th -- MUSLIM AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BOSTON

"Confronting Islamophobia: The Realities of Muslim Life in Boston"

We will explore Muslim traditions and practices together while learning about the ways Islamophobia impacts the lives of Muslim people. We will learn how Islam calls Muslims to do justice and how that work happens locally and internationally.

The Muslim American Society (MAS Boston) is committed to providing a broad range of social services for the local Muslim and non-Muslim community. Successful projects in the recent past include the diversity training of hundreds of police officers and law enforcement officials, the distribution of 'udhiya meat to local Muslims and non-Muslims, reaching hundreds of youth with leadership and spiritual development programs, mobilizing Muslims to become civically and politically active, establishing a Speakers Bureau to address hundreds of requests for speakers on Islam, and initiating interfaith projects with local Christian and Jewish communities.

December 26th -- Rev. JASON LYDON

"HOPE: The Story of Christmas from the Perspective of the Angels"

This year the Theatre of Relativity brings to life another morality play by our late friend John O'Brien: two teachers, one bad student, a thorny situation. What's the right thing to do? It's an ethical dilemma! The cast will be made up of Jason Taylor and Jim Loutzenhiser. This staged reading is being directed by Michelle Markarian.

Jason Lydon is the minister of the Community Church of Boston.

COMMUNITY
CHURCH OF BOSTON

Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

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tel. (617) 266-6710 * fax (617) 266-0449 * www.communitychurchofboston.org

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).

community

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

December 2010

news

The Power of Myths and Stories

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Dear Friends and Members... Happy Holidays! We are in a time of celebration, hope, possibility, and joy. The stories told over the next month are stories that have been told for generation after generation. Telling stories, creating myths, and sharing our own life narratives is an essential aspect of creating community. Listening to one another, truly hearing one another's experiences, provides witness to the power of relationships. It is through these moments, especially during holiday seasons, that we can be rejuvenated and continue the work we are called to do.

I am an unashamed lover of Christmas music. I actually sing along and bob my head to the tunes when I'm standing in line at a store. My car has 105.7 regularly blaring, forcing any passengers to hear Mariah Carey sing, "All I want for Christmas is You" every fifteen minutes. I love Christmas music even as I understand its overwhelming presence to be a reminder of Christocentrism and religious intolerance in our country. I love the joy proclaimed in Christmas music even as I understand that Christianity has been used to justify great violence around the world. I love the tunes reminding us that we better be good for goodness sake even though the idea of Santa Claus watching my every move is incredibly creepy.

I grew up celebrating Christmas. I grew up thinking that I was Santa's helper and that every night beginning in October until Christmas Eve I was picked up by Rudolph or Comet and brought to the North Pole to work in Santa's factory. One might have been concerned that my imagination was a little too good and I likely should be embarrassed that I believed this until middle school, but that is all beside the point. In my little mind's imagination I was learning that Christmas was about creating gifts for others and sharing the joy of the holiday. The Santa Claus myth is one that I think is just as important to reflect on as any religious one.

There is no singular Santa Claus story, just as there is no singular story of Jesus' birth or the miracle of Hanukkah. One of my favorites is the suggestion that Santa Claus is one of the surviving gods, Odin, of Germanic Pagans. Odin was the god of wisdom, magic, poetry, and prophecy. He was closely associated with Yule and would bring presents to children in exchange for their assistance feeding his horse (not unlike the carrots one leaves for some flying reindeer I know). As Christians theologically colonized the Germanic people they, like many other colonized people, transformed their traditions to appear Christian while actually holding on to their own rituals right under the noses of the colonizers. This form of resistance is common around the world, especially in response to Christian expansionism, and leaves morsels of hope and resilience for us to uncover through the ages.

Much of the modern myth of Santa Claus is complex to navigate. I remember a friend of my sister's asking her mother if the kids down the street were bad because Santa never brought them very good presents. Her mother decided it was more important to tell her child there is no Santa Claus because the family down the street was poor and she did not want to raise a child who thought that Santa Claus only brought presents to children who came from families with money. I have learned from many Christmas specials and fantastically predictable Christmas movies that the spirit of Santa Claus is not the receiving of expensive or fancy gifts. Rather the spirit of Santa Claus is the spreading of joy, the belief in magical possibilities, and the sharing of love with friends and strangers. As we continue in this holiday season I look forward to learning what traditions each person our community values. Please join me in uncovering hidden stories and making choices about your traditions that accentuate your values, illuminating a path towards hope and justice.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

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CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on November 9, 2010

Following are highlights of the meeting.

Minister’s Report: The minister outlined the responsibilities of the board which were stated as (1) ensuring organizational continuity, (2) setting organizational policy, reviewing and evaluating organizational plans, (3) doing strategic planning, (4) maintaining fiscal accountability, and (5) setting and reviewing personnel policies.

Contributions from membership and friends of the Church should amount to 20% of the total budget.

Financial Matters: It is necessary to curtail expenses in order not to dip into the PAX Funds. The Church is running a deficit every month. We have cut staff hours and pay by 20%.

BAGLY has terminated its tenancy and WILPF is searching for an alternative venue.



Various Concerns: Dean Stevens has offered to do a fundraiser for CCB’s 90th anniversary celebration.

The Fundraising and Stewardship Committee has been convened; if you are interested in becoming involved, please speak to the minister.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, 2010 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

2011 CALENDARS

We are about to begin the year marking the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day and, fittingly, many calendars and datebooks we are ordering reflect that feminism. We expect to have again:

- The War Resisters League datebook, this year entitled "Not Your Fodder!: Organizing Against the Militarization of Youth"
- The Cat Lovers Against the Bomb calendar published by Nebraskans for Peace, entitled "The Dream of Peace"

- The Labor History calendar from the Industrial Workers of the World, called "Solidarity Forever"
- From the Syracuse Cultural Workers, three items—their popular Peace calendar, entitled "Together We Are Strong"; the Women Artists datebook, with art and poetry by 30 women; and a calendar for a cause, "A Year of Trading Fairly"
- A new (to us) calendar from the Center for Cuban Studies, featuring "Cuban Women Artists".

There may also be a smattering of environmental, Native American, African American and more, so avoid the malls and shop here. Yes, you!

Fundraising Begins in Earnest... Pizza Included

by Betsy Gynn, Fundraising Committee

It has begun! In November, a small group of church members got together to eat some delicious Upper Crust Pizza and to initiate a Fundraising Committee. The committee formed because of a simple fact: the church spends more than it makes each month, and needs to raise more money to cover its operating expenses. Before launching into all kinds of great fundraising activities, the committee made a few decisions:

1) We defined our role: The Fundraising Committee will raise money primarily for the church's regular operating expenses, not for building renovations, code upgrades or other capital expenses.

2) We set two fundraising goals:

-- The committee plans to raise \$2,000 per month -- \$24,000 over the year -- through a variety of fundraising ideas including holiday letters, email appeals, houseparties, grant writing, fun events, and other activities.

-- We will help raise an additional \$16,000 through the church's annual pledge drive, which we hope to start in early 2011.

3) We brainstormed priorities and started some fundraising activities right away: To raise \$2,000 per month, we knew we'd have to hit the ground running. So...

-- Look for a holiday fundraising letter in your mailbox or inbox soon! And please contribute as best as you are able - no amount is too small, or too large. Also consider passing the word to other family members. If folks in your

family make a holiday contribution each year to a certain activity, nonprofit or group, consider asking them to give to Community Church this holiday season. www.communitychurchofboston.org has a "Donate" button right on its homepage.

-- We have one grant proposal being written right now, and more proposals on the way.

-- We plan to have creative parties -- running charades, birthday party fundraisers, etc. -- to raise awareness about Community Church, help fund our work, and have fun!

-- We will begin "Stewardship Sundays" in February, March and April as part of the annual fund drive -- to talk together about why we give to Community Church, so that our annual pledge drive succeeds beyond our wildest dreams!

The Fundraising Committee will meet again in mid-December (date to be decided) and would love to see more people participate in this work -- you can help us formulate our 2011 fundraising plan, help with an event, hold a houseparty, edit a grant proposal, help make connections with funders... so many ways to be part of this work! Currently the Fundraising Committee members are: Rev. Jason Lydon, Mahsa, Adam, Matt, and Betsy. We'd love to see more faces at our next meeting. To find out when and where the December meeting will be, contact Jason at ccbminister@gmail.com or 617.266.6710. Please join us ... pizza included!

An Update on the CCB Building

by Dean Stevens, Building Committee

It has been a long strange trip, restoring our auditorium, but I believe that we are getting there.

The flood that we suffered last December was an enormous wake up call. A call to update our building; to bring it up to the safety standards of today; to update its long neglected systems, to make the building more useful to us and safe for all the people who pass through the doors. It has been a long and difficult process, but we finally are at a place where we have the permits in place to begin the restoration and the code upgrade work. We believe that we are all set to go on this work.

We started the installation of the sprinkler system with an excavation of Boylston St. to tie into the fire hydrant water. This was not a simple task; it involved a civil engineering study, another permit process with the Boston Water and Sewer Department.

Last week a crew of 8 workers, a police detail and lots of trucks and a backhoe fenced off the area and spent 4 days digging for a pipe they couldn't find, because the drawings directed them to the wrong place. Finally, the work is done, the pipe installed and connected into our

basement, and the sidewalk rebuilt.

Last week we completed a long list of overdue plumbing work on every floor of the building, top to bottom. The next step is the installation of the sprinkler system, which had to be designed by yet another engineering firm. Lots of pipes will be brought in, cut and fit to size, and installed in the basement kitchen, the restaurant and the auditorium, as well as in the stairwell. Then we will work on resurfacing the stairwell walls, and installing fireproof doors. And finally, we will restore the auditorium. Our dream is to also come out of this with a wheelchair accessible bathroom in the Guatemala Room.

At some point, soon, we will run out of the insurance settlement money. We have to decide if this is the moment to dip into our meager endowment fund. We also have to get into serious fundraising gear. Please be in touch with our fundraising committee with ideas for our enormous task at hand. If you are able, give generously to Community Church during this holiday season. We have our work cut out for us. We'll get there!

A Night of Caroling!

Wednesday, December 15th, 7-9pm
Community Church of Boston

Ruth Anna Welch will lead an evening of caroling in the spirit of the winter holidays! We will gather at the church to sing together, eat sugar cookies, and drink hot cocoa.



Bring friends, family, comrades, and anyone else to join in the cheerful time of singing with one another. Bring your favorite carols with you as we can all take turns leading our favorite songs and telling our favorite holiday stories!



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

Rev. Jason Lydon, *Minister*
Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
Rodney Burston, *Building Maintenance*

Board of Directors

David Broeg, *President*
Mary Ann Cromer, *Vice President*
Virginia Pratt, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Jim Casteris, Kevin Devine, Nancy Messom,
Susan Mortimer, Matt Osborn



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