

Community Church of Boston
A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920

sunday forums

January 2009
Sundays at 11:00a.m.

January 4th -- DEAN STEVENS, SUZIE GIROUX and COMMUNITY VOICES

"Singing in the New Year"

Please join us on this first Sunday of the New Year and the New Era. We must believe that a new day is upon us and sing our hopes for the days ahead; add voices to our everlasting pledge that, just as this time brings darkness, we can infuse the dark with our light; transform our gloom into hope for good things to come.

January 11th -- MATTHEW P. DUMONT, M.D.

"Hope Amid the Ruins"

Matt Dumont, a long-time friend of Community Church, has also become our prophet. In December, 2004, he encouraged us by observing correctly that "even in the heart of The Beast there are self-defeating forces". In December, 2006, after a few Democratic victories, he warned that it was "time for some thoughtful reflection about who the Democrats really are and what they are capable of." And now he asks, "What are our best expectations of a promising new administration which carries the burdens of corporate influence that caused the desolation of our world?"

Matt is author of *Treating the Poor: A Personal Sojourn through the Rise & Fall of Community Mental Health* (1994), an account of his decades of experience as a community psychiatrist in Chelsea, MA.

January 18th -- Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

LORETTA J. WILLIAMS

"To Save the Soul of America: Reflections on Sheroes and Heroes"

A sociologist, educator and activist, Loretta Williams directs the Gustavus Myers Center at Simmons College. She is president of Racial Justice Connection, a national anti-racism consulting organization, and served as founding chair of the National Interreligious Commission on Civil Rights. Dr. Williams has taught at the Univ. of Missouri, SUNY-Buffalo, Brandeis & the Women's Theological Center. She was director of the Dept. for Social Justice of the Unitarian Universalist Assoc. from 1980 to 1989.

December 28th -- NANCY MURRAY

"The Destruction of Gaza"

Nancy Murray, who has visited Gaza a dozen times over the past 20 years, was denied entry in late October. She and 100 international health workers and academics tried to enter the Gaza Strip to speak at a conference, but ended up demonstrating at its border. She will talk about the recent history of Gaza and prevailing conditions today. Why has Jimmy Carter called the siege "an atrocity, a crime, an abomination" and Israeli activist Michel Warchawski declared that "Israel is conducting a rampant genocide against the people of Gaza"? What is our responsibility?

Dr. Murray is founder and president of the Gaza Mental Health Foundation, which raises funds for the work of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program founded by Dr. Eyad el Sarraj. She is also on the advisory board of U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, as well as a member of various activist groups including the Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights.

COMMUNITY
CHURCH OF BOSTON

Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Community Church of Boston * 565 Boylston Street, Boston MA (in Copley Square)
tel. (617) 266-6710 * fax (617) 266-0449 * www.commchurch.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

January 2009

news

Committment to Solidarity in the New Year

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... Happy New Year! We are finishing the excitement of 2008 and waiting, together, with anticipation of the great potential of 2009. The New Year, like many holidays, is a celebration of the ordinary becoming extraordinary. Each 365 1/4 days the Earth makes its journey around the sun. Depending on where we are on the planet we can experience freezing weather, torrential downpours, 100-degree heat waves, or any assortment of seasons as the Earth travels. This cosmic and deeply earthly experience provides a time for a ritual of questioning, a ritual of planning, a ritual of reflecting. How have I spent the last year of my life? How do I want to spend the next one? What did I learn from my own journey through the year? How have I loved to my fullest ability? How many tears did I cry in the sight of injustice? How will we get another step closer to liberation this coming year?

As we come into this holiday of possibility, Israel has decided to attack and bombard Gaza with bombs and more bombs. Hundreds of people have been killed, hundreds more injured, and even more left without homes or access to basic resources for surviving. This is not a time for sitting back, this a time for standing up and taking action. The hands of those of us in the United States are dripping with the same blood as those in Israel. Our government funds the planes that fly over Gaza and drop bombs indiscriminately. When an imperialist nation rears its ugly head the death toll rises and rises. 2009 must be a renewed commitment to understanding the impacts of Zionism and U.S. involvement in Israel's occupation of Palestine. Standing by is not an option for those seeking justice. For us at the Community Church of Boston this means taking direc-

tion from those most affected by Israel's violence. We must listen to those from New England Committee to Defend Palestine, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and others committed to the liberation of Palestine.

As we engage in this struggle we must not back down when our commitment to Palestinian liberation leads some to question our affirmation of the Jewish faith. We must pay attention to the writings of Jewish liberation theologians who have a commitment to struggling against Zionism. There are those, such as Marc Ellis, who have written about the need for "deZionising" Judaism in the religious text and the cultural context. There must be a transformation of much Jewish and Christian theology from looking through the eyes of the oppressed People of Israel to the eyes of the oppressor and occupier. We must remember that all forms of oppression are linked to the concept that it is right and okay for one to have domination over another. For those of us who are not Jewish or Palestinian, our commitment to Judaism **MUST NOT** justify Zionist imperialism and our commitment to Palestinian liberation **MUST NOT** justify anti-Semitism.

As you read this letter, if you are a praying person I ask you to take a moment and say a prayer. Say one for hope, for possibility, for liberation. Say a prayer of commitment to challenging oppression wherever it is. Say a prayer to remind yourself and your community to take action. Prayers in mind and heart are only as powerful as the action they inspire. Transform your prayers of intention and healing to solidarity actions with the people of Gaza.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

January 4th
DEAN STEVENS, SUZIE GIROUX
and **COMMUNITY VOICES**
"Singing in the New Year!"

January 11th
MATTHEW P. DUMONT, M.D.
"Hope Amid the Ruins"

January 18th
Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.
LORETTA J. WILLIAMS
"To Save the Soul of America:
Reflections on Sheroes and Heroes"

January 25th
NANCY MURRAY
"The Destruction of Gaza"

CCB Board Meeting

*The Board of Directors met on December 18, 2008.
Following are highlights of the meeting.*

The following board members were present:
David Broeg, Kevin Devine, Dick Keshishian, Jason Lydon, John MacLeod, Nancy Messom, Virginia Pratt, Lenny Shames, Ruediger Volk. Guests included: Adam Machson Carter

Financial Considerations: CCB has sent out reminders to those who have pledged to the annual fund, hoping they will fulfill their financial obligations as soon as they are able. The Church must look into ways on how to reduce expenses and increase income. Due to the decline in oil prices the Church is, at present, saving approximately six-hundred dollars a month on heating fuel.

PAX funds have decreased due to the stock market decline. The letter of verification for CCB monetary contributions during 2008 will be mailed by the end of January, 2009.

Various Concerns: Suresh Naidu, a recent speaker at CCB, has turned over his honorarium to the Church. John Schuchardt, a Veterans Day speaker, has given his honorarium to an Iraqi living in his home.

The board voted to send a letter to Governor Deval Patrick expressing disappointment at the failure to release Arnie King from prison after thirty-six years of incarceration. A letter of protest to the Boston City Council chairperson Maureen Feeney will be sent to her regarding the apprehension of Counselor Chuck Turner.

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

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

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

Calendar Support Group

We'll continue selling calendars and datebooks on Sundays through January. Most of those we carry are from organizations we help support by our purchases: the Syracuse Cultural Workers, War Resisters' League, Nebraskans for Peace, Sierra Club, Audubon, Greenpeace, Amnesty International et al. Some of the others: Inuit art, African American artists, women, environmental/nature, international, "inspirational" and coffee!

Jim Harney, Presente!

(excerpts from Jeanne Gallo's 'Reflections On Jim Harney' address)

On the Posibilidad home page, Jim is described as follows: "Jim Harney, works as an Artist in Residence for Posibilidad, a Bangor based nonprofit that prioritizes engaging people in conversation around the excluded of society. His photography, engaging storytelling, and group facilitation-skills allow discussions that provoke people to speak from the heart, in ways that often surprises them. The power of his stories revolves around people engaged in redefining power in their own lives. His photos complement the stories in a visceral way."

This description captures some of Jim's talents and gifts. Jim loves to engage people in conversation – he loves to talk but about serious things. He is a photographer – just look around this room. He is a storyteller. He moves people to speak from their souls. If you want to enter a little of Jim's world, go to the website www.posibilidad.org.

But Jim is more than this. During these last weeks, I have been remembering my time both "hanging out" and working with Jim. I have been reading and reflecting on his writings, as well as on some of his (and my) favorite writers.

What I have gleaned from these last weeks is that: Jim is a writer. In 1975, he founded Overview Latin America, and then wrote most of its articles, which were edited by his dear friend, Irma Wagner. Many of his recent essays and reflections can be found at www.posibilidad.org.

Jim is a printer/producer. In the 70s, Jim learned how to run a printing press, with the help of his good friend, David Weinstein, so that he could produce the materials needed to do educational work. Today, instead of a printing press, Jim produces his materials and slide presentations using computer technology.

Jim is an educator. He has given talks, classes, conferences, etc. to thousands of people across the country. He sees everyone in the group as both teacher and learner, himself included. Because of his pedagogical method, he makes difficult ideas easy to grasp by both adults and the very young.

Jim is a theologian. He breathes and lives a theology of liberation that comes out of the reality of Latin America where he has spent so much time.

Jim is a philosopher. He thinks deeply on the meaning of life, on what it means to be a human being, on what it means to be non-human in today's world and why it is so. In his essay, Reflections During a Night in Jail, Jim writes about his experience of community: "My peers were tutoring me. My community taking the

time to craft hard and difficult questions for me, never mind Senator Snow. I appreciated the painstaking work presenters did to illustrate the signs of the times: war, growing military budget, breath-taking deficit, national rumblings about institutionalized lies and groundswelling demands to end the war, bring the troops home. Presenters shared data, emotions, and spirituality in a way that fed me, allowed me to stand a bit taller and say to myself, this is one of the finest demonstrations that I've ever attended: an experience I'll never forget, now etched into who I am."

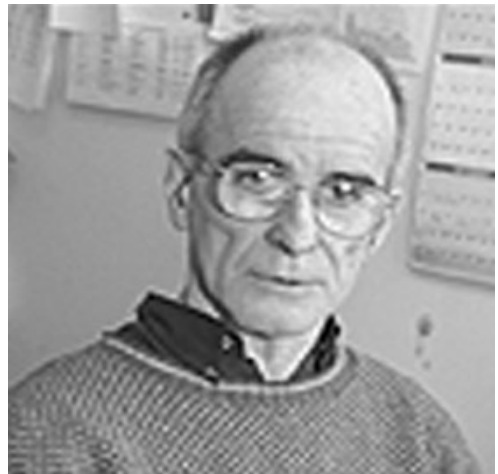
Jim is an economist. He is an avid daily reader of the Financial Times of London. Words such as derivatives and hedge funds are not alien to him. Two years ago, he predicted the present collapse of capitalism that we are now experiencing. And, Jim knows more about trade agreements than anyone I know: NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA, etc.

Jim is an environmentalist. He, like many who have made an "option for the poor," as Jim certainly has, has also made an "option for the earth" which is also exploited and being destroyed. He addresses the life and death of all of creation, living and nonliving.

Jim is a socialist. He sets his sights on a more just world where the basic needs of all of its people are met because the wealth of society is shared by all.

Jim is a poet. Many of his writings, even though written in prose, read like poetry. He creates language, uses language that moves deeper, that pushes one's emotions, that makes one feel what he is feeling.

One final word: I would also say that Jim is a saint.



Our beloved compañero Jim Harney died at 10:45pm on Friday, December 26, 2008

In January We Remember The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny" - MLK

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



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