

Community Church of Boston
A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920

sunday forums

March 2012
Sundays at 11:00a.m.

March 4th -- BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT CENTER

"Building the Domestic Workers Rights Movement in Massachusetts"

Following in the steps of California and New York, the Brazilian Immigrant Center of Boston has been heading the fight to secure a bill of rights for domestic workers in Massachusetts. Domestic workers are largely from the Brazilian immigrant community so it was natural that the Center is interested in ensuring they are respected and protected as all workers. Too often domestic workers are exploited by their bosses, forced to work in slave-like conditions, sexually harassed, and denied simple human rights. Organizing, education, and policy change are all part of the movement to protect Domestic Workers.

March 11th -- Marking International Women's Day
SUSAN McLUCAS, A.K.A. MARIAM SACKO

"Working to Stop Female Genital Mutilation" (with special music and dance of Mali)

Sini Sanuman is a Malian NGO dedicated to eradicating female genital mutilation. In Mali, they started the Pledge Against Excision. They have music videos on television by famous Malian artists. They've organized a growing number of villages that have decided together to stop excising and keep a list of other such villages to work together.

Susan McLucas is director Healthy Tomorrow, a Boston group that helps Sini Sanuman.

March 18th -- St. Patrick's Day weekend
EDWARD CHILDS & JAN CANAVAN

"The Legacy of Ireland's Struggle from the Past until Today"

The Irish struggle has been inspired by--and has in turn inspired--many struggles around the world. In Asia, Africa and South America, the Irish connections are deep and well-known. The ties in the U.S.A. are less well-known, but also run deep in the Labor Movement here. It has touched even more deeply the historic black Civil Rights struggle, from Frederick Douglass to Marcus Garvey and from Martin Luther King to Chuck Turner.

Ed Childs and Jan Canavan are long-time activists focused on Ireland and its troubles; each has spoken on these issues at Community Church before.

March 25th -- EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS ABORTION FUND

"The Fight to Make Abortion Available to All"

Women's bodies are constantly the target of political debate whether it's access to contraception, access to abortion, or simply having basic control over their own choices. National attention was recently given to the congressional hearing on contraception that had an overwhelming lack of women's voices.

The EMA Fund is an all-volunteer group of fifty people who want to make sure that women and girls in eastern Massachusetts have access to abortion. We know that if you don't have money, abortion might as well be illegal. For us, access to abortion is a matter of social justice, reproductive justice, economic justice, fairness, and human rights.

COMMUNITY
CHURCH OF BOSTON

Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

Community Church of Boston * 565 Boylston Street, Boston MA (in Copley Square)
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

March 2012

news

Lions and Serpents and Sheep, Oh My!

by Rev. Jason Lydon, Minister

The beginning of March always reminds me of a crafting activity my class was made to do in fourth grade. Our teacher gathered us around and demonstrated how she wanted us to give birth to a ferocious lion face and a tender lamb out of construction paper and glue. The two distinct images were then used as our betting instruments, choosing whether we thought March would come in like a lion and go out like a lamb or vice versa. This weather folklore comes from a time of balancing a farming community's multigenerational knowledge of seasonal change with their suspicious theology of a God who would punish them with bad weather and a miserable crop if they were sinful. The lion and the lamb were symbols of a cosmic dual between good and evil but also a reminder of a larger balance; suffer the early winds and snow of March and be rewarded with gentle days for preparing the planting season.

While I do not find lions to be particularly evil or lambs overtly pious, I do think the question of cosmic balance is an interesting one. I know we have all asked, why did this thing have to happen to that person; they are such a good person, they don't deserve that. This concept is engrained deep in ourselves. Yet it makes me wonder who the ones are who do deserve to suffer and how do we all juggle our different justifications for who has earned their suffering. How would any one of us create a just accounting of earned suffering? This question often falls under the bigger concept of theodicy, the question of why "bad" things happen. Looking at pictures of the February 20th Occupy the Prisons rallies around the country I saw a number of signs with some version of the slogan, "Jail the Bankers Not the Poor." If we know that the prison industrial complex functions on the torturing of human bodies and the suffering of all it touches, how will we find justice by sending bankers, or dare I say, even war criminals like former US presidents, to prison? If we do not believe there is a God in charge of punishment, how do we decide who deserves suffering?

I ask this question as someone who is not committed to nonviolence. I do believe that individuals and communities who are under attack have every right to fight back, by any means necessary. I believe there have already been more than enough suffering martyrs and sacrificial lambs whose lives have been taken through systems of capitalism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and other faces of systemic violence. I understand the need to rise up and fight back and I am hopeful that those who have experienced suffering have the capacity to be merciful, fighting for freedom and liberation not domination and revenge. The place for revenge is within the realm of fantasy. I know that I have fantasized about many things I would do to those who have caused harm to people I love, I imagine you have done similarly. Fantasies are powerful manifestations of desires that do not have to be lived out in order to have their healing effect. When we get lost in our revenge fantasies we can be wrapped up in greater suffering, but if we are truthful with ourselves and trusted people we can move from revenge to a place of greater justice. This is a maze that does not present an immediate solution, but with support from others we can make it through.

The lion/lamb dichotomy is just one of many animal metaphors created for our reflection. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples that he is sending them out like sheep among wolves but that they need to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves. It seems to me that as justice seekers we are often sent like sheep among wolves and it would be a great advantage to us to take advice from Jesus and strengthen our tools of wisdom while continuously committing to a loving gentleness. We are all in this life journey together and we will do well to be patient with one another and patient with ourselves. As we answer questions about suffering, revenge, good and evil we can do so in relationship with one another, we need not journey alone.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service &
Speakers Forum

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CCB Board Meeting

*The Board of Directors met on February 16th, 2011
Following are highlights of the meeting.*

Minister's Report: The Prison Membership Committee had a successful event at the First Church in Cambridge; four other churches in the area also participated.

The minister met with members of Christina Braidotti's family concerning a memorial service which is scheduled for March 24 at 3:00pm.

Arnie King, the recipient of the 2011 Sacco-Vanzetti Award for Social Justice wishes to become an ex-officio of the CCB board.

Various Concerns: The Growth & Membership Committee must expand. Membership must increase and hopefully there will be a creative process and a hope for more personal sharing and relationship amongst members.

The March 31 CCB retreat will most likely be held at the home of Dean Stevens in Chestnut Hill or Spontaneous Celebrations, the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Roxbury or CCB as possible back-up locations. It is hoped that many members and friends of the Church will attend. There will be music, food and people entering into discussion about their experiences at CCB throughout the many years of its existence. The history of the Church and the work of its several committees and the manner of how they can be expanded will hopefully be part of the agenda. More support is also very much needed on planning to increase the number of members and friends to participate actively on the Program Committee.

The next meeting of the board will take place on Tuesday, March 13th, 2012 at 7:15pm. Members and friends of the Church are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, Clerk

2nd Annual WOMEN TAKE THE REEL Film Festival

WTTR film festival celebrates films made by women. MIT is the lead host institution and will screen one film per week during the month of March to commemorate Women's History Month. WTTR is a roaming film festival involving various academic women's and gender studies programs in the Boston area. All screenings are free, open to the public and followed by a Q & A with filmmakers and/or faculty.

The festival's goals are to promote women's and gender studies courses/programming, the visibility of women in the film industry and women's history month.

For more information:
<http://web.mit.edu/wgs/filmfest2012>

St. Patrick's Peace Parade

People's Parade for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Social & Economic Justice

Sunday, March 18th, 1pm

Assemble on "D" Street between 1st and 3rd Streets, South Boston

Last year, Veterans For Peace were denied permission to walk in South Boston's traditional St. Patrick's Day Parade. The stated reason given by the Allied War Veterans Council was that the organizers "did not want the word peace associated with the word veteran".

Seventeen years ago the gay and bisexual community applied to be in the parade and they too were denied. They sued and it resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that any group that organizes a parade can exclude whomever they like.

Last year with only three weeks to go, Veterans For Peace applied for their own permit and invited the gay and bisexual community to join the peace movement in a parade. The parade had over 500 participants, a Duck Boat, Grand Marshals, The Leftist Marching Band, five divisions, Veterans, peace groups, Join the Impact (GLBT), religious groups and labor. It was a grand success and warmly welcomed by the residents of South Boston. It was also front page news in practically all the Boston Newspapers and was reported on TV and radio.

This year, once again, Veterans For Peace were denied. This year they were not given a reason why, just denied. So if you are a veteran of the U.S.

Military and carry a gun or drive a tank you are invited to participate, but if as a veteran you stand for peace you are summarily denied permission to participate.

We invite all progressive groups (Peace, Environmental, Occupy Everywhere, Civil Rights, Women's Rights, GLBT Rights, Labor, and Faith



Groups) to please join us in the St. Patrick's Peace Parade: the Alternative People's Parade. Please join us in this show of solidarity against bigotry and exclusion in the City of Boston.

This is the largest Saint Patrick's Day Parade in the country, attracting in excess of 700,000 people, and is an excellent opportunity to get our messages of Peace, Equality, Inclusion, Jobs, Social and Economic Justice out. Please Join Us! Send endorsements to info@mass-peaceaction.org.

For more information:
<http://smedleyvfp.org>

CCB Fiscal Meeting, February 12, 2012

The meeting was chaired by the treasurer, Virginia Pratt. The CCB budget was discussed in detail by the members attending the meeting. Feedback and reflections were offered concerning the line items in the budget report. The treasurer and the minister explained and clarified the issues at hand. Following a lengthy discussion, the budget passed by a vote of 20-1 with one abstention.

Many thanks to Virginia Pratt and to Betsy Rueda Gynn, as well as to the Finance Committee for their work in formulating the 2012 budget.

The second part of the meeting was ably chaired by board member Reed Miller, who proposed the formation of a transition committee to oversee plans

for the minister's departure in June 2012. The following members volunteered to serve on the committee: David Broeg, Mary Ann Cromer, Kevin Devine, John MacLeod, Reed Miller, and Virginia Pratt. Adam Machson-Carter suggested outreach for individuals who may be interested in contributing their efforts outside the scope of the committee. Transition director Beth Miller from the Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA) will assist in the search through the UUA process. It was proposed that applicants present a sermon on various Sundays during the month of May so that CCB congregants may form their opinion on the candidates.

- DK

Ending Violence Against Women:

Pathways to Power, Resilience and Leadership
International Women's Day Breakfast

Thursday, March 8th, 7:30am

Simmons College, Linda K. Paresky Conference Center
(300 Fenway, Boston, MA)

Join dozens of organizations around Boston in celebrating the city's 15th Annual International Women's Day Breakfast.

Panel will include Purnima Mane, CEO and President of Pathfinder International, Boston City Councillor Ayanna Pressley, Audrey Porter of My Life My Choice and Ann Fleck Henderson from Simmons College.



For more information: <http://www.unagb.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

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,

Reed Miller, Susan Mortimer



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telephone: (617) 266-6710
fax: (617) 266-0449
email: info@commchurch.org
www.communitychurchofboston.org

Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

non-profit
organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
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