

community

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

October 2006

news

Celebrating Over 500 Years of Dignity and Struggle...

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members, around the time you receive this newsletter you should also be receiving an in depth survey created by the Planning Committee. If you do not receive this survey and are interested in getting one please get in touch with Mark Lasky, our Office Administrator. This survey is your opportunity to really express some ideas about the forward movement of this congregation. We had a retreat nearly 8 months ago and have moved forward on numerous ideas presented there. We need your help to make decisions about our next steps. Please do join in this process, as your voices are essential for our success.

October is filled with small holidays and days of remembrance. Halloween has always been my favorite holiday. Little children running around in little plastic masks they picked up at CVS is possibly one of the most adorable things I get to see all year. National Coming Out day is October 11th, a day held to honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer folks. Towards the end of October we have the National Day of Action against Police Brutality.

The "holiday" I want to look at in this letter is everyone's favorite, Columbus Day. This holiday has enjoyed federal recognition since 1971. The resistance against Columbus, what he stands for, and the holiday has a deep and important history. It saddens me that children in our schools are still taught little songs about Christopher Columbus sailing the ocean blue in 1492. It saddens me that the advertisement placed in the New York Times about the situation in Darfur, which listed numerous genocides in history, chose not to recognize the experience of Indigenous people of what is now South, Central, and North America. It outrages me that the United States still chooses to build statues,

celebrate with a day, and honor in any form a man who helped open the doors for the genocide of a people who were living on the land we live on today. What is even more outrageous is the ongoing systems of racism created to continue the oppression of Indigenous people.



When looking at state sponsored violence and oppression I find it very important to look at the resistance that is going on. The organizing against Columbus Day is part of a much larger strategy to address the rights stolen from

Indigenous people in the Americas. Organizations are working for the freedom of Leonard Peltier. Grassroots groups are working to stop the sterilization of Indigenous women. High School youth have organized to get their schools to drop the racist mascots they have had for years. Community groups are working to end the tragic portion of Indigenous youth committing suicide.

Since 1992 many have reorganized Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day. Consider using this year as an opportunity to educate yourself and take action in support of the work going on in our communities and in the larger movement for justice. Please feel free to contact me for resources and direction.

Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

October 1

JONATHAN MCINTOSH

*"Indonesia: A Case Study
on Corporate Globalization"*

October 8

BEHROOZ GHASSEMI

*"Iran: Religious Fundamentalism,
Nuclear Energy and the U.S
Imperialist Response"*

October 15

SKIP SCHIEL

"Gaza Scorched and Stretched"

October 22

**BEATRIZ RIVERA, HECTOR PIZARRO
& ALLISON COLLONA**

"The 'Don't Wait 'til We're Dead!' Campaign"

October 29

**LINDA MARIE WEIBRECHT
& THE COVEN OF CAULDRON**

"Celebrating Samhain: The Coming of Winter"

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on September 14, 2006.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following board members were present: Mary Ann Cromer, Selma Ganz, Karl Jones, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Lenny Shames, Ron Shapiro, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason is working with the Planning Committee to complete the survey emanating from ideas put forth from the March 2006 retreat.

Following an art exhibit by Skip Shiel, the Gallery of Social and Political Art will present a display of art works, which is in the initial stages of preparation. It is also hoped that a number of CCB congregants will be able to put forth a show of Cynthia Foster's art work in the near future.

Jason is in touch with Klare Allen of *Safety Net*. The Church is underwriting another contract for a couple of grants to be received from the *Haymarket Fund* and *SEIU, local 1199*.



Please note that the 'Dinner With Spirit', a chance to discuss how faith and spirituality affect our everyday existence, is continuing to be held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

Financial Concerns: The PAX Funds have generated a two-percent gain during the past few months due to a rising stock market.

Various Concerns: The board expressed its appreciation to Jim Casteris, who oversaw the installation of a new water heater, and to Andrea Hornbein and Dick Crowley for replastering and painting the ceiling in Lothrop Auditorium.

The subject of recipients for the annual Sacco-Vanzetti Award was also discussed. Thoughts for a year-round discussion on the matter and Lenny's suggestion that the Church membership involve itself in the decision-making process were informally endorsed by the board. The board also concurred that the Program Committee needs much more energy and initiative in carrying out its tasks and responsibilities.

- Dick Keshishian, Clerk

From the Building Committee

Jim and members of the building committee and volunteers have been busy repairing structural items throughout the church and have begun to give the Lothrop Auditorium a fresh coat of paint.

Volunteers are always welcome. Please contact Jim Casteris at (617) 964-7932.

The 2006 Sacco and Vanzetti Award

by Dean Stevens, President

We have, in our annual event known as the Sacco and Vanzetti Award, a marvellous tool to celebrate an activist for their lifetime of radical work. It is also a perfect vehicle for us to celebrate Community Church of Boston, because it draws attention to our beginnings in struggle and organizing, and our rich history on the forefront of a very long line of just causes. You might call it the high holiday of our church's year.

Typically the Sacco and Vanzetti Award has been conferred during one of our Sunday Forums in early December, and it was not that different from any other Sunday, unless it was a higher profile, or better known activist, say, Howard Zinn, or Leonard Peltier. These would draw a bigger crowd, yet still be a morning forum event. Last year we did things a little bit different. We held an early afternoon event, followed by an amazing potluck. Lynne Stewart was our award winner, and we pulled off an amazing gathering. It combined our 85th Anniversary celebration with the award ceremony. Several speakers introduced Lynne from several perspectives, and Lynne spoke to us.

It was a marvellous thing we pulled off last year. It got us to thinking that this should be something that we should pay more attention to all year around. We'd like people to be constantly thinking about who should receive the award. This should be a year-round process: the more lead time we have, the better are our chances of getting the person we want for that year.

There was talk at the last Board Meeting that the selection and the booking of the recipient should be completed by May of the previous year, so that it can be announced at our annual Congregational Meeting. We also need to come up with some definite criteria as to how we pick the candidates and the recipient. We will be looking at this carefully in the upcoming weeks, as we get ready for the upcoming S/V event.

I hope we can make a point of rising to the occasion of the Sacco and Vanzetti Award every year as grandly as we did in 2005!!

Incarceration in Massachusetts: Did You Know...

by the Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition (SHaRC)

- That Massachusetts spends \$43,000 average per year to lock up one individual; and spends more on imprisoning people than it does on higher education?

- That the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world; and that in 2004 one out of every 33 people were incarcerated, on parole or probation?

- That the Sheriff of Middlesex County wants \$253 million to build 'temporary' and permanent cells in Somerville and Lowell to lock up even more people? That the Sheriff does not deny that he wants federal money to detain immigrants including "aliens", lawful permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, and visa holders with valid immigration status?

- That half of all detainees in county lock-ups are awaiting trial for non-violent crimes? That public policy and laws cause overcrowding in jails and prisons?

- That the sheriff of Middlesex County agrees that building more prisons will not solve any crime problems? (Somerville News, June 21, 2006)

- That Suffolk County Sheriff Andrea Cabral will not place human needs funding before jail expansion for women? (Boston Neighborhood Network TV, May 22, 2006)

Community solutions are less expensive and more effective.

WE DEMAND: QUALITY SCHOOLS--not jails. HOUSING--not jails. JOBS--not jails. HEALTH CARE--not jails. MONEY FOR DRUG TREATMENT--not jails. A LIVING WAGE--not jails. AFFORDABLE HIGHER EDUCATION--not jails. AN END TO CORI--not jails!

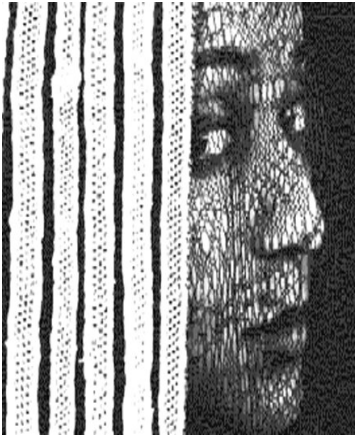
Join SHaRC and become a part of this growing, powerful statewide movement of people working to create restorative and healing justice for all the people in our communities.

SHaRC c/o ARISE for Social Justice
94 Rifle Street
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 348-8234

Songs of the Sand:

Visual Perspectives of the Middle East

Curators Skye Schulte and Joseph Oliveira, along with the Gallery of Social and Political Art, invite you to join us for Songs of the Sand. This exhibition showcases the modern Middle East from both native and U.S. perspectives. Songs of the Sand encompasses a more personal view of the region than the usual sound bites and news images allow. These are the voices that won't be silenced; songs just waiting to be sung; the Songs of the Sand.



Opening Reception:
Saturday, October 21 (6-9pm)

Location:
Gallery of Social and Political Art
565 Boylston Street, Boston, MA
<http://www.gspaboston.org>

Gallery Hours:
October 22 – December 3rd
Wednesdays (5-8pm) ;
Saturdays & Sundays (2-6pm)
Free Admission

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

Dean Stevens, *President*
Mary Ann Cromer, *Vice President*
Ron Shapiro, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*
Christina Braidotti
Lenny Shames
Audrey Coulter
Kevin Devine
Selma Ganz
Sara Sue Koritz
John MacLeod



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

565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON

