

# community

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

November 2006

# news

## A Community of Faith?

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members, as I write this letter I am sitting in my office on the fourth floor of our building looking out over Copley Square. There is an amazing tree with leaves changing from deep green to a vibrant red. It is a beautiful thing to look at after a great church service. Autumn is such a colorful time in New England. Trees changing colors surround us; apple and pumpkin pies bake in the oven; and marvelous shades of blue and gray paint our brisk fall skies. These are our last days before the cold winter air calls us to bundle up for warmth.

While we are sitting around wrapped in blankets it is an excellent time for us to think some about our relationship to Unitarian Universalism. What do we, members and friends of Community Church, see as Community Church's relationship with Unitarian Universalism? I have heard a story numerous times about the reason for Community Church joining the Unitarian Universalist Association. I was told that Donald Lothrop was going to need a pension and that the UUA would provide an opportunity for Rev. Lothrop to get what he needed. I was told, originally, that this happened quite a while after the Unitarians and Universalists came together but actually we joined only a couple years after the "merger", sooner than many historically Universalist congregations. Since the late 1960's we have contributed financially to the Unitarian Universalist Association. Contributing to the UUA maintains a church's 501(c)3 status, but it also symbolizes much more than that for many congregations.

Our heritage is both Unitarian and Universalist. Clarence Russell Skinner, our founder and minister emeritus, was a well-known and vital theologian within Universalism. Rev. Skinner published *The Social Implications of Universalism*, in which he discussed how the "kingdom of heaven" needed to be understood as a

socialistic and justice focused vision to be lived on Earth. John Haynes Holmes was another founder of Community Church of Boston with his vision of establishing the Community Church of New York. Rev. Holmes established the Community Church movement after the American Unitarian Association did not respond well to his outspoken opposition to World War I and violence as a whole. Rev. Holmes was a committed pacifist and vocal supporter of Gandhi. After his retirement from the Community Church of New York Rev. Holmes rejoined the American Universalist Association, just one year before the merger with the Universalists.



Two of our founders were very strong leaders of the Unitarian and Universalist movements. We have also welcomed important Unitarian Universalist ministers throughout our past as well. What about today? How many people connected with Community Church feel connected to Unitarian Universalism? How many of us have done theological reflection on what it means to be Unitarian Universalist? What do we say to the Unitarian Universalist Association that we pay dues to and let represent us? Each summer there is a General Assembly of Unitarian Universalist Churches where decisions are made and direction is shifted. We have the right to a voice there. Is that a voice we are interested in using? Do we have a responsibility as a Unitarian Universalist congregation with a radical past to challenge the UUA today to remember our voice on the Left? Let us ask ourselves these questions as we stay in from the cold and make some decisions together as the leaves begin to green again.

# COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



## Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium  
Sundays at 11:00am

**November 5**  
**DANNI WEST AND JASON LYDON**  
*"Gentrification by Genocide"*

**November 12**  
*Honoring Veterans for Peace*  
**MILITARY FAMILIES SPEAK OUT**  
*"Bring the Troops Home Now!"*

**November 19**  
**MAHTOWIN MUNRO**  
*"Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?"*

**November 26**  
**EVAN HEMPEL**  
*"Transgender Day of Remembrance"*

## Jan Solet: Writer, Editor and Lifelong Advocate for Social Justice

We are saddened by the news of the passing of CCB member Jan Solet, who died August 11, after a brief illness at Emerson Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Watertown. She was 86.

From her beginnings as a housing advocate in New York in the 1930's through her continued work with the National Lawyers Guild (she was a founding member of the Massachusetts NLG chapter), Jan spent most of her life working for peace and social justice. She will be greatly missed.

## CCB Board Meeting

*The Board of Directors met on October 12, 2006.  
Following are highlights of the meeting.*

The following Board members were present: Mary Ann Cromer, Audrey Coulter, Kevin Devine, Selma Ganz, Karl Jones, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Ron Shapiro, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*. Guests included Jim Casteris, Dick Crowley and Betsy Gynn.

**Congregational Director's Concerns:** The Planning Committee, which was formed at the March 2006 retreat, has created a survey which will be mailed out shortly to the CCB membership. Replies will hopefully be forthcoming by the congregants at the earliest possible time.

Jason supported the Burlington workers' hunger strike and attended the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization candidate action which featured gubernational candidate Deval Patrick.

**Financial Concerns:** Rentals are needed to create more income. It is imperative that those groups which are renting arrive and depart on time. Betsy has suggested the possibility of hiring a part-time building rental person to facilitate and oversee the rental space at CCB.



**Various Concerns:** After having interviewed several candidates for the newly created social justice youth program, the Personnel Committee has chosen Joo Young Choi, who will be working twelve hours a week directing the new youth program for an age group of six to fourteen years old. She will begin her employment sometime between January and February, 2007.

A proposal was introduced for CCB to endorse the Massachusetts Ballot Freedom Campaign question which will appear on the November ballot. The question implies that "any group of citizens will be able to use cross-endorsement voting to build their grassroots support and then seek to create independent parties that can fight for their issues". The initiative has been endorsed by over fifty groups, mainly trade union organizations. The board decided to postpone any action until the Church's 501(c)3 status was fully examined.

*- Dick Keshishian, Clerk*

# The Vindication of Lynne Stewart

by Stephen Lendman

Years from now, Lynne F. Stewart's name will be spoken of with even greater reverence than it is today. On October 17, this courageous and redoubtable soft-spoken civil rights defense lawyer was vindicated in the same Foley Square New York federal courtroom where Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were unjustly framed, convicted and sentenced to death in April, 1951 in an act of state-sponsored vengeance for the crime of conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act. It was done in that earlier age of hysteria in the name of national security against an invented threat of that era that didn't exist.

On October 17, Lynne Stewart faced the possibility of 30 years in prison because of a modern-day state-sponsored campaign of intimidation using her trial to set a precedent allowing the government the right to deny those it accuses of "terrorism" their right of due process represented by competent counsel. [She] was charged under the 1996 Antiterrorism Act with four counts of aiding and abetting a terrorist organization. She was unjustly accused of providing material support for terrorism and violating Special Administrative Measures (SAMS) imposed by the US Bureau of Prisons, which included a gag order on Sheik Abdel Rahman whom she represented in his 1995 trial. At the request of former US Attorney-General Ramsey Clark, she was serving as a member of the court-appointed defense team for Sheik Rahman, known as the blind (Egyptian Muslim) Sheik. He was convicted in 2005 and is now serving a life sentence for "Seditious Conspiracy" in connection with the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Because he was a Muslim and accused of being a "radical" cleric, he was practically radioactive and not the kind of client most defense attorneys have the courage to accept in this era of anti-Muslim hysteria. Rahman was connected with the Islamic Group, an organization on the State Department's terrorist list that this country accuses of supporting militant Islam and advocating replacing Middle East secular governments with an Islamic caliphate.

The Rahman case was so high-profile, it made Stewart herself a target, and her ordeal began on April 9, 2002 when FBI agents came to her Brooklyn home, handcuffed and arrested her. They also searched her Manhattan office and removed boxes of papers and files on all her cases. It was the beginning of a long struggle that included Stewart's battle with breast cancer. It played out in the Foley Square courtroom resulting in her conviction on all four counts of her indictment on February 10, 2005. Stewart's trial was a gross miscarriage of justice in a proceeding with echoes of the worst of McCarthyist tactics. Inflammatory terrorist images were displayed in the courtroom to incite the jurors,

and prosecutors demonized Stewart as a traitor condemning her for her "radical" political views which have always embraced the letter and spirit of justice for all under the rule of law. Still, prosecutors falsely accused her of making statements that violence is sometimes justified to overthrow oppressive governments and that she advocated regime change in Egypt under President (and de facto dictator and close US ally) Hosni Mubarak.

October 17 was Stewart's date to be sentenced. The Justice Department hoped it would get the harsh 30 years it asked for to set the precedent it wanted. Judge John G. Koeltl had other ideas and refused to comply. Instead, he vindicated Stewart in the sentence he gave her, effectively rebuking



Justice Department prosecutors and handing them a major defeat. The government wanted the 67-year-old Stewart put away for what would have been a life or even a death sentence. Her cancer is in remission, but she still remains in fragile health following her illness and major surgery. Judge Koeltl took everything into account and sentenced her to 28 months, allowing her to remain free pending her appeal to a higher court which he acknowledged might overturn the case that he clearly implied was a gross miscarriage of justice for a woman of such noble stature in her long career fighting for justice.

Lynne Stewart left the courtroom on October 17 a proud and vindicated woman who spent a lifetime advocating for society's most disadvantaged. She now has a chance to overturn a malicious and wrongful conviction that represents an appalling miscarriage of justice. She may even be able to regain her license to practice law that she lost through disbarment after being convicted. If she does, it will be a further stunning rebuke to a rogue administration and a major victory for the rule of law. It will also prove Lynne Stewart is only guilty of being a courageous advocate for justice and those in society least able to achieve it. Everyone of conscience supports her and hopes for the day she'll be fully exonerated and able to resume the vital work she spent so many years doing admirably and honorably and that so many of society's most disadvantaged need her for.

*Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). Also visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com).*

# 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.



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  
Audrey Coulter  
Kevin Devine  
Selma Ganz  
Karl Jones  
John MacLeod  
Lenny Shames



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