

community

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

November 2007

news

The Importance of Closing the SOA..

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... It is incredible how time goes by when there are so many things to do. November is already here and our celebration of Chuck Turner and the legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti is a short month away. I am more than half done with my first semester at school. At the church we have had a significant list of incredible Sunday morning speakers who have challenged us, educated us, and inspired us toward action. Hopefully fall will eventually start so we can begin preparing for the cold days of winter.

November always makes me think about a particular protest that happens each year. Each November, since the early 1990's, community organizers, people of faith, survivors of torture, and many others have gathered in front of the gates of Fort Benning in Georgia to protest against the School of the Americas (SOA). This year the convergence begins on November 16th and ends with the solemn vigil and nonviolent civil disobedience on the 18th.

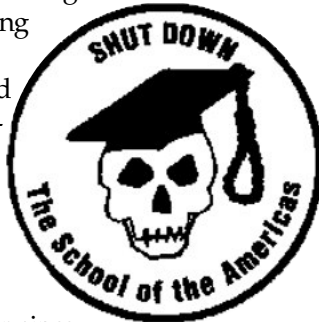
SOA Watch provides extensive resources for self-education about what the SOA is and the atrocities it is responsible for. If you have never visited their website, www.soaw.org, I would suggest you do so. There are many actions you can take in support of the campaign to close the SOA and the website is a helpful tool for staying involved.

The SOA was opened in 1946 in Panama as a "response" to rising communist organizing and uprising. The SOA was kicked out of that country in 1984 under the terms of the Panama Canal Treaty. Former Panamanian President, Jorge Illueca, stated that the

School of the Americas was the "biggest base for destabilization in Latin America." Since its inception the SOA has trained over 60,000 soldiers in counter-insurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare. In 1996 "torture manuals" were released and printed by the New York Times. This publicity galvanized support for the closure of the school. Since that time bills have been introduced in nearly every session of congress to cut funding from the school and shut its doors forever.

In 2001 the SOA was replaced with the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Proponents of the SOA have made it clear that the changes were only "cosmetic". The SOA was closed for less than one month before WHINSEC opened its doors in the same buildings with the same teachers but with new titles for their courses. No one was fooled by the renaming of the school and the movement to close the SOA has only grown since 2001. While we have been unable to close the school success is coming as countries stop sending people to be trained. Bolivia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Argentina, and Uruguay have stopped sending officers to be trained at the school.

Closing the SOA is one campaign in a larger movement to transform the way the United States engages in foreign policy with Latin America. The SOA/WHINSEC has often been called the military arm of the Free Trade Agreements. Opposing the SOA is often the first step for some people into a radical political analysis. The SOA is one of many military training schools in the United States. When we close the SOA it is essential that we move right along to close all military training camps and continue struggling for a just foreign policy.



COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON



Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

November 4th

KEVIN KNOBLOCH

"As the World Warms: Climate Change and the Human Condition"

November 11th

Honoring Veterans for Peace

IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST the WAR

"Bring Our Brothers and Sisters Home Now!"

November 18th

Prof. MICHAEL AVERY

"Holding the American President Accountable"

November 25th

A play by JOHN O'BRIEN

"Villianous Minority"

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on September 27, 2007.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following members and guests were present: Christina Braidotti, David Broeg, Mary Ann Cromer, Selma Ganz, Karl Jones, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt, Ron Shapiro, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*, Dick Crowley, John Mannheim, Nancy Messom

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason declared that Sunday evening services were attracting between five and ten people, including some new-comers. He gave a brief account of his studies and background of some of his fellow students at Andover-Newton Theological School where he is pursuing a masters of divinity degree.

Financial Concerns: Ron stated that the annual pledge drive has netted approximately \$12,000 to date.

CCB is switching its banking to Wainwright Bank & Trust Company which, unlike most banks, offers favorable terms to non-profit organizations and makes financial contributions to progressive groups.

Various Concerns: The Peace Abbey has closed its offices in the Church building.

The Sacco-Vanzetti Memorial Award to Councillor Chuck Turner will be held on Sunday, December 2, 2007. The Award Committee consisting of David Broeg, Karl Jones, Jason Lydon, John MacLeod, and Dean Stevens has started undertaking preparations for the event.

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on October 18, 2007.

Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following board members were present: David Broeg, Mar Ann Cromer, Karl Jones, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt, Ron Shapiro, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason discussed several aspects of the recently initiated Sunday evening service and emphasized that its intention is to "provide space for individuals to search their own experiences, struggles, celebrations and real life moments for meaning". He asserted that the service would hopefully result in the growth of the CCB community.

Jason concluded by recognizing the work of the Unitarian-Universalist Social Action Committee and its humanitarian services throughout the world. A representative from the organization may be a future Sunday speaker at CCB.

Financial Concerns: Ron presented the financial report and noted that the net ordinary income over the past ten-month period exceeded \$10,000.

Various Concerns: The Sacco-Vanzetti Award Committee has sent letters to several progressive organizations seeking sponsors and endorsers for the upcoming Award event. Betsy Gynn will compose 4-500 invitations to be mailed to members and friends of the Church.

Jim Casteris, the CCB building superintendent, introduced Mr. Hal Davis, a roofing contractor, who discussed several details concerning the repairs and installation of the roof and drainage system.

The Committee on Ministry convened on October 14, to discuss the pros and cons of the September 23 and 30 congregational meetings. They are meeting with various members of the congregation to help facilitate better communication between the membership and several CCB committees.

- Dick Keshishian, Clerk

Note: Selma Ganz is at home doing well after a brief stay in the hospital. The board and membership wish her a speedy recovery and hope to see her soon at the Sunday programs. -DK

A Few Words from the President...

by Dean Stevens, President

Let's congratulate ourselves. We just got married. To our congregational director. Bring out the cake, the decorations, let's have a big party. The deed is done! It was not an easy process, getting there, but let's celebrate that it is behind us.

Actually, we are mostly too busy and life is too full, rich, or harried to even stop and think on this. But let's, for a moment, do just that. We made a decision as a congregation, to accept Jason as our leader, to support him through his divinity school years, to put up with the reality of how impossible a task it is to do both us and school at the same time, while at the same time doing what CCB's leaders have always done, take on lots of leadership roles for Boston's progressive community. It's a big job, and we wish him well.

I write this the day after, in the absence of a Sunday speaker, Jason rose to the occasion to give us a very moving account of his experience as a young, out, gay teenager in high school, learning about the struggle against injustice

and oppression, harassment and intimidation, at an age when most of us were still totally naive to such things. I was always baffled by how a man at such an early age could have such a clear vision of leadership and organizing. I, for one, believe I understand a lot better now. Thank you, Jason. We look forward to your presence, and your leading voice among this community.

I want to highlight two upcoming marvellous events to you. (not to mention that every one of our Sundays is marvellous). Kevin Knobloch, the director of the Union of Concerned Scientists, will address us on Sun. Nov. 4, culminating an entire weekend of citywide climate activism organized by the Step it Up Campaign (www.stepitup07.org).

And then on Dec. 3, we proudly bestow our Sacco and Vanzetti award to City Councillor Chuck Turner. Be with us for these, as well as so many other inspiring events that go on at Community Church of Boston.

The Community Church of Boston Minutes of Congregational Meeting September 30, 2007

The meeting began at 11:30am with twenty-three (23) members present, constituting a quorum. The former board president, Betsy Gynn, facilitated in a professional and orderly manner.

Discussion referred to the Letter of Understanding, affirming the relationship of the Church membership with the congregational director and detailed his responsibilities to the congregation as well as outlining the compensation package to be presented to the congregational director on behalf of the CCB membership.

Following a lengthy discussion regarding the pertinent points in the Letter of Understanding, a motion to accept the report was made by David Broeg and seconded by Dick Keshishian. The motion carried 21-1 with one abstention.

[Note: All CCB members may feel free to contact the Committee on Ministry or the clerk for further details regarding the full contents of the Letter of Understanding]

Various Concerns: It was noted that the congregational director makes several annual trips to New York City to consult with his mentor. Wouldn't the Church save funds if a local mentor were made available?

Another member noted that the newly introduced late

afternoon Sunday service was initiated at an inappropriate time which could result in taking away hours from the congregational director's administrative responsibilities which have already been reduced due to his studies at seminary.

A letter of grievance circulated by CCB member Dick Crowley explaining resentment at the congregational director's lack of returning an emergency telephone call as well as "interfering with the process of the workshop/evaluation survey committee" was referred to the Committee on Ministry and to the board for further inquiry.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10pm.

- Dick Keshishian, Clerk

GROWING FAITH, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Evening Services at 5:00pm
Sundays at the Community Church of Boston

This month's forums:

11/4 - Freedom
11/11 - Confronting fear
11/18 - Thanks "taking"
11/25 - Thanks "giving"

31st Annual Sacco & Vanzetti Award: Chuck Turner

speaking on the topic:
“Where Do We Go From Here?”

Sunday, December 2nd, 12pm
at the
**Community Church
of Boston**

Please join us for a day of honoring City Councillor Chuck Turner while remembering the legacy of Sacco & Vanzetti.



Invitations will be mailed to church members and friends soon. As this is the Community Church of Boston's major fundraiser for the year tickets are available for \$15.00 (\$5.00 for seniors, youth, and students). However, all are welcome regardless of ability to pay.

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*
Joo Young Choi, *Director of Children/Youth SJE Program*
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, David Broeg, Kevin Devine,
Selma Ganz, Karl Jones, John MacLeod,
Virginia Pratt



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COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON

