



## First Parish in Cambridge Social Justice News June 29, 2020

### Social Justice Council Update



Althea Bernstein, an 18 year old member of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI was the victim of a hate crime on Wednesday, June 24. Four men approached Althea's car as she was driving near downtown Madison. They sprayed lighter fluid on her face and neck and then threw a lighter at her, causing serious burns. She is recovering and asks that donations be made to three local Madison non-profits working on racial justice.

We encourage you to consider making a donation to one or more of these agencies:

- Freedom, Inc [www.freedom-inc.org](http://www.freedom-inc.org)
- Urban Triage [www.urbantriage.org](http://www.urbantriage.org)
- Foundation for Black Women's Wellness – [www.ffbww.org](http://www.ffbww.org)

Also, at last week's General Assembly, congregations were encouraged to send cards of support to Althea via the church. Please send a card or note to:

First Unitarian Society of Madison  
Attn: Althea Bernstein  
900 University Bay Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

### COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE – UUA UPDATE

At the New Orleans General Assembly in 2017, the UUA Board of Trustees announced and chartered the Commission on Institutional Change. The charge given was to conduct an audit of the power structures and analyze systemic racism and white supremacy culture within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

After 3 years of work the Commission submitted their report to General Assembly 2020 last week. More information will be forthcoming about how to engage with the findings of the report but you can order a full print copy from the [InSpirit UUA Bookstore](#) or view the pdf on the [UUA website](#).

## Make a Difference on Police Reform & Health Care with GBIO!

*Police Reform:* GBIO is backing police-reform legislation outlined by Massachusetts Elected Officials of Color. After receiving 350 phone calls and many emails from GBIO congregation members, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo agreed to support the Caucus's legislation. Now the House and Senate must pass it.

*Health Care:* We are excited to report that last week the Massachusetts Senate passed their third health care bill of the session, [S.2769, An Act Putting Patients First!](#) This bill includes fixes for out-of-network surprise billing as well as implementing telehealth as part of statute, not just the Governor's emergency order. Previously the Senate passed bills on the other GBIO priorities: [Prescription Drug Reform](#), and [Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Care](#). But these bills cannot become law without similar bills being passed in the House, which still has not acted.

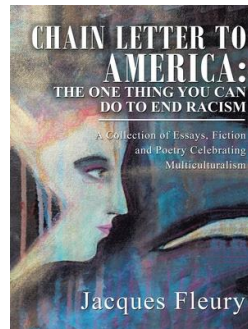
**Make our voices heard!** First Parish, and other Greater Boston Interfaith Organization congregations, are planning virtual IDMs (in-district meetings) in July with our state representatives to press for strong police reform legislation as well as health care and criminal justice reforms before the legislative session ends in this summer.

To be part of an In-District Meeting (from the comfort of your home!) and/or to share your stories about these issues or to help recruit other First Parish members to take part, please contact the First Parish person helping schedule your legislator's event:

- Rep Connolly and Decker: [Sharon deVos, Tod Hibbard, Elizabeth Kline](#)
- Reps. Hecht, Barber and Provost: [Marcia Hams](#)
- Reps. Rogers, Garballey, Lombardo: [Lois Markham](#)
- Rep. Elugardo: [Cassie White](#)

### Looking for a Summer Read?

Please join the Environmental Justice Task Force in reading *The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where We Go From Here* by Hope Jahre. Then, gather with us Zoom-style on **Tuesday, July 28 at 7:00 pm** to discuss it. Email [EJTF](#) to let us know you'll be joining us.



Written by First Parish attendee Jacques Fleury, **Chain Letter to America: The One Thing You Can Do to End Racism**

"I think that this book will appeal to most readers because of its timeliness as sociopolitical, religious and racial disunity in America continue to be a prevalent issue. With it, comes researched based principles of historical reference, relevance, honest self-reflection, and a celebration of cross-cultural contributions to our American society. Its consistent message of respect, dignity, compassion and understanding for our fallible civilization is especially crucial to its theme, especially as we witness disunity and social unrest in America and elsewhere." Fleury says.

The book is available at [Harvard Book Store](#).