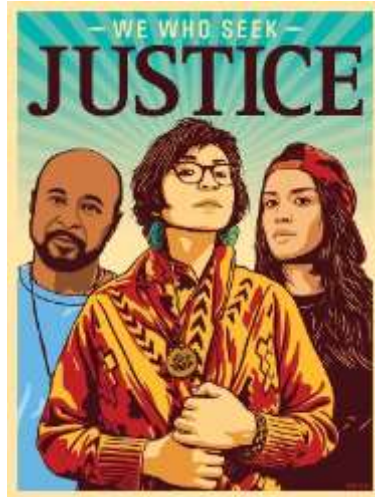




First Parish in Cambridge Social Justice News September 14, 2020



Mayflower Quadricentennial: Reflecting on the History

Starting 400 years ago, English ships brought white supremacy culture to the Dawnlands of Turtle Island. Authorized by a promise from their God, the Pilgrims and Puritans came to this “New Canaan” to make it their own. These congregationalists are our theological ancestors, evolving to become denominations including Unitarian Universalists and the United Church of Christ

When the Mayflower landed, it was nearly winter. The Pilgrims found the food they needed, ready and waiting. How? Much of the New England coastal population had recently been decimated by a strange new fever introduced by European fishermen and traders. The Mayflower settlers probably didn’t realize they were raiding the abandoned larders and fields of the Wampanoag people late of Pautuxet. Instead, they saw Providence at work.

Today, we are once again in plague times, struggling for what we need. Black and brown bodies are still bearing the brunt of disease. And the theological exceptionalism of our ancestors still infects our body politic with systemic racism and violence.

Here in New England, we are approaching the quadricentennial of the Mayflower landing. The divine entitlement baked into the American Founding Myth is deeply painful to the [United American Indians of New England](#). UAINE gathers at Plymouth every Thanksgiving to remember [what really happened](#) and educate on today’s struggle.

The Thanksgiving Myth was spun based on one shared feast in 1621. Sixteen short years later, colonizers were capturing and trafficking indigenous people as slaves. They shipped the “New Canaanites” down to Barbados and returned to New England with cargoes of black slaves. That part of the history has been swept under the rug. Learn more [here](#).

Black and brown bodies are still subject to state-sponsored violence. Out in the open for all to see.

At First Parish in Cambridge, we didn't need the events of 2020 to make us aware. Members of this congregation had already started actively working to learn the history that wasn't taught to us, to decolonize our minds, to practice being anti-racists, and to become teachers of anti-racism in our families and communities. Now, as the election approaches, let's redouble our commitment to racial equity and social justice.

--Nina Lytton, Racial Equity Team

Next Steps in Learning and Action

You can continue your learning journey by joining **Racial Equity Team** members every second Sunday this fall at 8:30pm EDT as we listen to the [Front Range POC speaker series presented by the Colorado UUs for Racial Justice](#). The dates are 9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1, 11/15, and 11/29.

Interested in the culture, art and wisdom of living Native Americans?

- Make a virtual visit to the [National Museum of the American Indian](#).
- Attend via Zoom [Harvard FAS Native Cultures of the Americas monthly series](#) featuring scholarship on topics both pre- and post-contact, from deep archaeology to contemporary politics and culture, as well as the implications of such work for law, education, environmental policy, and public memory. Dates are 9/30, 10/21, and 11/18.

You can get involved locally by supporting the United American Indians of New England in the effort to get the City of Boston to adopt Indigenous Peoples' Day. Join us for a socially distanced rally on Saturday, October 10, 2020 from noon to 3pm. Meet on the Tremont Street side of Park Street Station on the Red Line. More info here: [SINKING COLUMBUS: Boston Marches for Indigenous Peoples Day](#). And please check out and support the [Massachusetts Indigenous Peoples' Legislative Agenda](#).

Mark your calendar for the 51th Annual National Day of Mourning, a socially distanced rally on Thursday November 26. Join us in Plymouth or online. The UAINE is looking for volunteers who can help edit video submissions. Please contact Nina Lytton at ninalytton@gmail.com if you're willing and able to help.

Please contact the Racial Equity Team for more information or with any general questions at _____.



The **Social Justice Council** invites you to watch the General Assembly 2020 report from the UUA Commission on Institutional Change. At the New Orleans General Assembly in 2017, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Commission on Institutional Change was established and charged by the UUA Board of Trustees to conduct an audit of white privilege and the structure of power within Unitarian Universalism, and analyze structural racism and white supremacy culture within the UUA. This was completed in 2020. (Note: The First Parish Governing Board is currently studying this important document.) Here is a link to the GA presentation.

<http://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2020/business/general-session-3>



The **Environmental Justice Team** invites you to participate in **Climate Preparedness Week** – September 24-30. The theme this year is "Social Resilience is Climate Resilience." Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) is sponsoring a series of virtual events. This year the events will be focused on the intersections of climate resilience, racial justice and social resilience. You can join webinars on the role of social infrastructure in climate resilience; mapping which Boston neighborhoods are most vulnerable to climate change; the economics of climate change; organizing community "repair" events to combat our throwaway culture; resilient agriculture; and the links between racial justice and environmental justice. To learn more and to register for webinars you are interested in, go to [climate week events](#). Registration is free.



**From Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras
Let Our Families Drive!
March and rally in support of licenses for all
September 26, 2pm**

After months of organizing district meetings, actions, and demanding for the passage of the [Work & Family Mobility Act](#), thousands of black and brown immigrant families continue to live in fear of ICE detention for being stopped for a traffic violation and many are being deported. All families deserve the right to move freely in our state and live in dignity. On September 26th there will be a march and rally to hold legislators accountable to support expanding access to driver's licenses across the Commonwealth.

WHEN: Saturday, September 26

TIME: 2:00 PM

WHERE: Meet us outside the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) located at 136 Blackstone St, Boston (by the Haymarket T Station).

See [here](#) for more details.



**GBIO Racial Justice Campaign
Come Together to Celebrate and Prepare!**

From March to the end of July, we at First Parish, along with 2000+ other lay leaders and clergy in GBIO member institutions and beyond, "put feet to our faith" to push forward a holistic racial justice agenda in the Massachusetts legislature. Our collective work helped move key bills on police reform, healthcare and housing into joint Senate/House conference committees in August. The continuing Covid-19 crisis and assaults by police on George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake and so many others make winning these reforms one vital step on the long road toward racial justice. The final bills will be released soon, and we want to see a "yes" vote on strong bills, followed by the Governor's signature.

On September 24th from 6pm-7:30pm, we will gather on Zoom with members from across our 41 congregations to celebrate our progress and prepare for the last push on our legislative agenda. We hope you will join us, whether you have been active with GBIO or are joining for the first time and would like to learn more. All are welcome! We will

reflect on our efforts with in-district meetings with legislators, and our progress in leadership development, building power and advancing GBIO's Refounding. Please RSVP using [THIS REGISTRATION LINK](#).

In the coming weeks, please keep your eyes peeled for ways to take action on:

- **POLICE REFORM.** A bill on comprehensive police reform that includes enhanced training with certification/decertification of police officers, limits on excessive use of force, and reform to qualified immunity which currently shields police from civil suits.
- **HEALTHCARE.** A bill that expands telehealth, makes progress on mental health parity, and provides temporary relief from surprise out-of-network medical billing
- **HOUSING.** A bill that extends the moratorium on evictions/foreclosures for 12 months and provides relief for small and nonprofit landlords

Thank you to everyone for your heartfelt and determined participation!

Your First Parish GBIO Team

Please contact Marcia Hams (marciahams@gmail.com), Elizabeth Kline (elizkline@gmail.com) or Cassie White (cassondraywhite@gmail.com) if you would like more information, including how to get more involved.



This week the **Middle East Education Group** encourages you to attend a webinar on Tuesday September 15 at 7 PM sponsored by the Middle East Working Group at Massachusetts Peace Action. Featured speaker will be Rami Khouri, a notable journalist who will talk about current events and the overall situation in Lebanon and the region. Among the current positions he holds, Rami is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School. Click on the [link](#) for more details and to register.