



We Speak Now

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As the United States and Greater Boston confront the painful consequence of systemic racism, ignited by the deaths of innocent African Americans including George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and many named and unnamed others, the board of the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry stands as one to say this:

Through the UU Urban Ministry's 190-year history, we have predominantly been led by people who are white and our work framed by people with the privileges conferred by their whiteness.

And we have not said enough.

In the spring of 2020, we will not flinch.

We were birthed in a nation and community built upon racism and White Supremacy. The death of George Floyd tracks an unbroken line from slavery through lynching, Jim Crow and mass incarceration.

Systemic racism is baked into every single system of Greater Boston and this nation - our courts, politics, transportation, environmental protections, healthcare, education, economy and housing. One way these systemic inequities have manifested is the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people and communities of color.

And we have not said enough.

The UU Urban Ministry stands at the intersection between communities: Boston's historic African American community - directly and disproportionately impacted by economic, educational, social, environmental and health injustice; encircled by UU member congregations of predominantly white people who have inherited their privilege and power.

And we have not asked enough.

These past weeks may lead to an awakening of white people who hold power.

We resolve to claim this opportunity and live into our potential to challenge and dismantle institutional racism.

We speak now.

We commit to the following:

We will continue to transform our historic Roxbury campus - inherited in 1976 from a UU congregation that died by white flight - into a hub to serve the community of Roxbury. We will prioritize using our space to serve our programs and also groups working for racial justice. We will welcome artists and leaders speaking Truth about our nation's history, and use our historic Meetinghouse to highlight Roxbury artists and speakers of color.

We will interrogate the racial history of our inherited Meetinghouse, and investigate ways that First Church Roxbury and the UU Urban Ministry served and failed to serve people of color. And we will tell those multiple stories.



We will deepen our investment in programming that addresses racial economic injustice, in particular calling on member congregations to invest in cultural institutions and businesses led and owned by people of color.

We will ensure that before the end of 2022 we will welcome at least 5 new board members of color, bringing board racial composition to greater balance.

We will support and challenge member congregations to confront institutional racism in Greater Boston and in their own communities.

We will use our voice to speak up on critical issues that perpetuate the systems birthed in enslavement.

We will create a board accountability structure to ensure we remain focused on these priorities in the years to come.

In this time of great upheaval, we commit to being the change that we seek.

The time is more than 400 years too late.

The time is now.

In faith,

The Executive Committee of the UUUM Board

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