



## Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry

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February 2023

### From Our Executive Director & Senior Minister



Members of the congregation at UU Wellesley Hills stand for their weekly Black Lives Matter stand out.

A few weeks ago I visited one of the UU Urban Ministry's member congregations where, every Sunday since George Floyd was killed, they hold a quiet streetside Black Lives Matter vigil.

After the service, members pick a sign from the stack they keep, and stand on the sidewalk as cars pass. Every Sunday for 144 Sundays, or thereabouts.

They held the signs through the killing of 10 people in a Black neighborhood in a Buffalo neighborhood, and through the killing of Tyre Nichols.

It's not a flashy event, and it hasn't stemmed the violence against Black people. But in the deepest part of my heart I believe that witnessing matters, and faithful witnessing matters even more. And that when we show up again and again without ceasing, that we create the space for change to move in.

This week at the UU Urban Ministry we shared a report on the history of enslavement at First Church in Roxbury. The report found 58 people of African and Indigenous heritage had been enslaved by the church's white parishioners from 1631 to 1775. Even the first minister was an enslaver. There is an unbroken line from this history to the present day, and how racism shows itself in every single system in Greater Boston.

Witnessing, listening, hearing. These will not, of themselves, make the change that's needed.

But they make way. They make a path.  
And may we move our feet onto it, faithful and without ceasing.

Mary Margaret

**Click here to Support the UU Urban Ministry**

## Examining our History



Former state representative Byron Rushing, Harvard PhD fellow Aabid Allibhai and Rev. Mary Margaret Earl stand outside the First Church in Roxbury. Photo from the Feb. 7, 2023 The Boston Globe

Earlier this week, the final report on the [\*Race and Slavery at the First Church in Roxbury\*](#), authored by Aabid Allibhai and commissioned by the Roxbury Historical Society and the UU Urban Ministry, was released. For months, Aabid, a graduate student at Harvard, has been writing this look at the history of enslavement as it pertains to our history here in Roxbury. A draft of the report was presented to a group of local historians, educators, and others last month in order to garner feedback that would be used to complete the narrative.

Then on Monday, February 6th, a group of our neighbors and supporters gathered in Putnam Chapel (on the UUUM campus) for a presentation of the final report.

This report tells about the history of slavery in New England during the period of 1631-1775. Plus, the report tells the story of at least fifty-eight human beings—Black and Indigenous men, women, and children—who were enslaved by First Church's white parishioners.



This truer look at our history than those that have been told in the past - is one that deserves light, examination, and deliberation. That is why we were happy to have reporters from The



Boston Globe and The Bay State Banner here to join us. This commitment, to a truer examination of our history, was put in writing by UUUM's board and leadership in 2021's "[We Speak Now](#)". Although we have made progress, there is much to do, and this examination of our history will continue. We invite you to join us in this work.

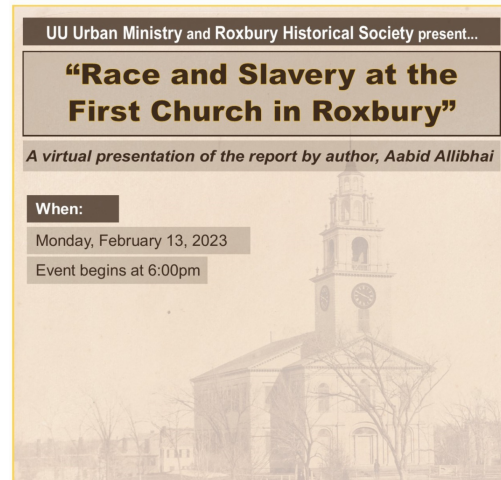
In case you missed them, click [HERE](#) for the article from The Boston Globe, and [HERE](#) for the article from The Bay State Banner.

## Virtual Presentation of the Report

Join us on **Monday, February 13th at 6:00pm** via Zoom when Aabid Allibhai and Byron Rushing will join us for a virtual presentation of the report.

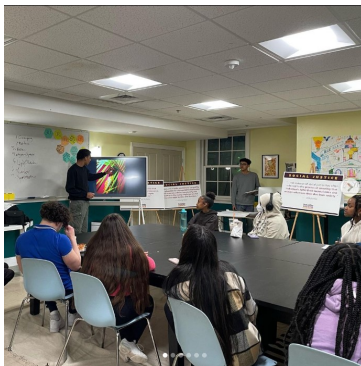
No RSVP's are needed for this event, and we hope that you can join us.

All of the event information, including the Zoom link and the link to the full report, can be found on the UU Urban Ministry's website [HERE](#).



## Program Updates

### Roxbury Youth Programs



The new semester of Roxbury Youth Programs (RYP), our after school and internship program, began last month after winter break.

Our RYP After School programming again began to welcome all students who drop by during the week for tutoring and homework help, daily workshops, hot meals, and van rides home.

Our RYP Internship program was excited to welcome **24 youth artists** who will learn skills in leadership, self-efficacy, and creativity through a lens of Roxbury community history and social change.

### Believe in Success

Since the last edition of our e-newsletter, Believe In Success, our trauma-informed, career development program for survivors of domestic violence completed its Fall Semester graduating 18 participants.

In December, BIS celebrated its graduates with a celebration in Putnam Chapel. Participants celebrated with certificates, pictures, individual highlights and of course, food! It was the first

large group in person event for BIS in a couple of years.



## Renewal House



Recently, Renewal House, our domestic violence shelter for individuals and families who are fleeing from domestic violence, welcomed its fifth family.

Through services and advocacy, our staff will work with and support these families as they build their own safe futures free from violence.

Program participants are excited and anticipating events we have scheduled for the upcoming months.

## Upcoming Events

### [Annual FUUSN Musician Concert](#)

[to benefit the UU Urban Ministry]

**February 12, 2023, 2:00pm**

Join us at FUUSN on Sunday, February 12, 2023 at 2:00pm for a concert featuring classical chamber music and FUUSioN (aka the FUUSN Band).

This is a wonderful event and we hope you will join us. All details can be found on FUUSN's website [HERE](#).



# Virtual Lunch with an Artist

Part of the UU Urban Ministry's Roxbury Artist Amplification Project



Wednesday, February 15  
1 - 1:45 pm

Designer Ayana Mack joins  
UUUM's Bithyah Israel  
to share work samples and  
inspiration behind her work.

Join us using this link:  
[bit.ly/uuumlunch2](https://bit.ly/uuumlunch2)  
or visit: [uuum.org/attend](https://uuum.org/attend)

## We invite you to join the conversation!

Join us for lunch and 45-minutes connecting with the featured artist.  
Together, we will look at their virtual gallery and hear more from them about their work.  
Questions? Contact: Bithyah Israel, [bisrael@uuum.org](mailto:bisrael@uuum.org)

Made possible by a gift from the Polly Thayer Starr Charitable Trust



## Lunch with an Artist

### Virtual Lunch with an Artist (w/ Ayana Mack)

**February 15, 2023 | 1:00pm - 1:45pm**

Designer Ayana Mack joins UUUM's Bithyah Israel to share work samples and the inspiration behind her work. Join us for the discussion and the interactive Q&A.

Part of the UU Urban Ministry's Roxbury Artist Amplification Project

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST URBAN MINISTRY  
*presents*

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

### Jackie Jenkins-Scott

**Education: Do access and affordability  
level the playing field?**



**Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00pm - 7:00pm**

Join us for this virtual event at [www.uuum.org/attend](https://www.uuum.org/attend)

Jackie Jenkins-Scott is the interim-president of Roxbury Community College. Prior to this, she was the 13<sup>th</sup> president of Wheelock College as well as its first African-American president. She is the founder and president of JJS Advising, a consulting company specializing in leadership development and organizational and corporate strategy.

Jackie was also president and CEO of Dimock Health for 21 years, and has deep ties to the Roxbury community.

Event sponsored by: First Parish in Lexington and Follen



UU Urban Ministry | 10 Putnam Street | Roxbury, MA 02119 | [www.uuum.org](https://www.uuum.org)

## Community Conversations

### Education: Do access and affordability level the playing field? (w/ Jackie Jenkins-Scott)

**February 21, 2023 | 6:00pm - 7:00pm**

Join us and our guest, interim president of Roxbury Community College, Jackie Jenkins-Scott, to discuss: Education: Do access and affordability level the playing field?



## In the Neighborhood



**Roxbury Heritage State Park**  
Dillaway-Thomas House  
183 Roxbury Street  
Roxbury, MA 02119

### Kiddleidoscope: City Critters!

**Friday, February 10**  
**& Saturday, February 25**  
**10:30am-11:30am**

Join Scooter the dog on his storybook adventures through the city, as he learns about the many other critters that live all around him. We'll read aloud Carol L. Mahnor's beautifully illustrated story, *Wild Ones, Observing City Critters*. What wild animals do you see in Roxbury? Create a hand puppet of your favorite city critter!  
FREE program. For ages 3 to 6 accompanied by an adult.



Program takes place at the Dillaway-Thomas House. For more information, call 857-399-1225 or 857-399-1224, or email [roxbury.heritage@mass.gov](mailto:roxbury.heritage@mass.gov).

Roxbury Heritage State Park  
183 Roxbury Street, Roxbury, MA 02119. Tel. (857) 399-1220

## Coming Event



Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts State Parks

### From our friends at the [Dillaway-Thomas House](#)

You're invited to join them this **Friday, February 10**, or **Saturday, February 25, 10:30-11:30am**, for story hour and puppet-making with a focus on "city critters"--our furry and feathered Highland Park neighbors!

They are planning other special activities for February school vacation week. More information about this and other programming this month can be found [HERE](#).

## Support the Transformation of the Meetinghouse



### [THE PEWS PROJECT](#)

As of today, 50% of the pews in the Meetinghouse have been sponsored. **Thank you** to all those who have supported this initiative - and the restoration of our Meetinghouse. For those who haven't yet, there is still time...

#### **Sponsor the work that restores the Meetinghouse pews.**

- Your \$1,000 donation will help fund the work that brings the 106 box pews back to life, and ready to welcome guests again.
- When you sponsor a pew, we will send you a photo of "your" pew, along with any historical information that we know about it.
- Then when the work in the Meetinghouse is completed, join us for a celebration and sit in the pew you helped restore

The restored Meetinghouse will be a home for the arts, humanities, and civic engagement in Roxbury - and one that our neighborhood needs and deserves.

Questions?

Email Vinnie Myles, Director of Development and Communications: [vmyles@uum.org](mailto:vmyles@uum.org)

[CLICK HERE TO SPONSOR A PEW](#)

## Stay Connected with Us

Stay connected and up-to-date about:

- all things UUUM
- our member congregations
- opportunities and resources in Roxbury and the Boston-area

Follow us on social media!

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## Words for your consideration...

A poem that Aabid Allibhai included in his report



why people be mad at me sometimes

they ask me to remember  
but they want me to remember  
their memories  
and i keep on remembering  
mine.

- Lucille Clifton

*Response when asked to write a poem "celebrating our colonial heritage" for Maryland's 350th anniversary*

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