

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 19, 2016

Contact: First Parish in Concord, MA, Unitarian Universalist  
[blacklivesmatter@firstparish.org](mailto:blacklivesmatter@firstparish.org)

### **Black Lives Matter Banners Stolen from First Parish in Concord**

Our congregation is saddened that First Parish in Concord's Black Lives Matter banners were taken this past Saturday night. We are also saddened that we did not have the opportunity to have a conversation with whoever stole the banners. A community-wide conversation is what we were seeking when we hung the banners last December. Upon noticing the banners were gone, First Parish in Concord staff contacted police immediately. New banners have been ordered and will be hung upon arrival.

Together with Unitarian Universalists across the country, First Parish in Concord proclaims that Black Lives do, indeed, Matter. We acknowledge that through slavery, discrimination, segregation, and mass incarceration, our society has continued to tell black people their lives do not matter. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in promoting justice, equity and compassion in all human relations, and that all people have inherent worth and dignity. If there truly were racial equity in our society, there would be no need to say Black Lives Matter.

We at First Parish in Concord find it ironic that our banners were stolen the weekend before Patriot's Day. Two-hundred-forty years ago today, Concord's ancestors fought to free themselves from the oppressions of English rule. People of African descent in Concord and across the colonies fought in the Revolutionary War. Years after that, even while discrimination against freed blacks was alive in Concord, others of our Concord ancestors fought for abolition.

Today, we all live in a society that does not treat people equally. We are all complicit in this system. We at First Parish in Concord admit we are sometimes racist ourselves. And yet, we put ourselves firmly on the path to becoming more aware of our racial biases. We are working for a more anti-racist society.

During the Patriot's Day parade, when members of our congregation held Black Lives Matter signs, they had the opportunity to talk with many people about this moral stand First Parish in Concord has taken. If you wish to join this conversation, we will be hosting a forum with ACLU Massachusetts Attorney Carl Williams on Sunday, May 1 at 11:30 a.m. in our Sanctuary (located at 20 Lexington Rd). Williams will speak about the current Black Lives Matter movement and how it is relevant to Concord.

First Parish in Concord appreciates how the Concord Police Department was immediately attentive to our stolen banners. They are working diligently to investigate the case. Anyone with information should contact the Concord Police at [978-318-3400](tel:978-318-3400).