St. Paul's Church in the Village of Flatbush Invites you to its Annual

## HOMECOMING & INTERNATIONAL DAY WEEKEND CELEBRATION

September 10-11, 2016

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 4:00 PM

The Homecoming Lecture: "African-Americans In & Out of The Episcopal Church: From Absalom Jones to Michael Curry"

Presenter: **The Hon. Byron Rushing,** the Massachusetts House of Representatives, House Majority Whip & Vice-President of the House of Deputies of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 9:00 AM

Holy Eucharist followed by a multi-cultural celebration: International Food Festival

Preacher: **The Hon. Byron Rushing**Presider: **The Rev. Sheldon N.N. Hamblin** 

St. Paul's Church in the Village of Flatbush

157 St. Paul's Place (St. Paul's Place & St. Paul's Court)

Brooklyn, New York 11226

718-282-2100 office@stpaulsflatbush.org

## The Hon. Byron Rushing

State Representative Byron Rushing was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1982. In The Episcopal Church he is the Vice-President of the House of Deputies of the General Convention. He comes to this work with a background of community organizing and of African-American history.

In the legislature, Byron's priorities are human and civil rights, and the development of democracy; local human, economic and housing development; and housing and health care for all. He is the House Majority Whip.

Byron has been an elected lay deputy to the General Convention of The Episcopal Church since 1973; he was the chaplain to the House of Deputies at the 1994 General Convention--the first layperson to hold this position. In 2012 he was elected (and reelected in 2015) Vice-President of the House of Deputies—-the highest elected position presently held by a layperson in The Episcopal Church. In the legislature, Byron was an original sponsor of the gay rights bill and the chief sponsor of the law to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in public schools. He was one of the leaders in the constitutional convention to maintain same sex marriage in Massachusetts. He successfully co-sponsored the transgender civil rights bill. His work in these areas of civil rights is the subject of the short film, "Marriage Equality: Byron Rushing and the Fight for Fairness."

Byron is a spokesman against the restoration of the death penalty in Massachusetts. He leads the effort for size acceptance and anti-discrimination on the basis of height and weight. He was a leader of the Commonwealth's anti-apartheid efforts and is a sponsor of the Commonwealth's twinning relationship with the Province of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. He was the chief sponsor of the Massachusetts Burma law.

Byron also successfully sponsored legislation to create the Commission to develop a comprehensive plan to end homelessness in the Commonwealth; that Commission which he co-chaired released its report and its plan has been adopted by the Deval Patrick administration.

He sponsored the law for the over-the-counter sale of sterile needles and the law creating statewide guidelines for hospitals dealing with violence victims. He is a chief sponsor of legislation for substance abuse "treatment on demand." He co-chairs the state's Health Disparities Council.

From 1972 to 1985, Byron was President of the Museum of Afro-American History. Under his direction, the Museum of Afro-American History purchased and began the restoration of the African Meeting House, the oldest extant black church building in the United States. In 1979, Byron oversaw the lobbying effort in Congress to establish the Boston African American National Historical Site, a component of the National Park Service. Byron led the Museum in the study of the history of Roxbury; the Museum conducted the archaeological investigation of the Southwest Corridor for the MBTA. Byron stays involved in this work: as a legislator he sponsored the creation of Roxbury Heritage State Park and serves on its Advisory Committee. He occasionally leads walking tours of African American and working class neighborhoods in Boston and Roxbury.

Born in New York City, Byron has lived in Boston since 1964. During the 1960's he was active in the civil rights movement--working for CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) in Syracuse, NY--and as a community organizer for the Northern Student Movement in Boston. He directed a group of organizers, Roxbury Associates, who helped to found the Lower Roxbury Community Corporation, one of the first CDCs in the nation, and who began some of the earliest organizing in a black community against the war in Vietnam.

Byron is a member of St. John's, St. James' Parish in Roxbury and frequently attends St. Stephen's Mission in the South End of Boston. He is parliamentarian of the Diocesan Convention. He serves on the Council of Advice to the President of the House of Deputies, Gay Jennings; together with the Presiding Bishop Michael Curry they serve on the committee for racial reconciliation. He is a well-known advocate for the ministry of all the baptized.

During all his time in Boston, Byron has worked for and with community- and faith-based organizations--for greater political participation and against neighborhood debilitation. He serves in his office with an understanding of the history of poor and working class people and with a belief in democratic citizen control.