

## **Atlanta Friends Meeting Anti-Racism Minute, approved 7/19/20**

In the wake of recent killings of Black people by police and white vigilantes, Atlanta Friends Meeting stands with Black Lives Matter, and we work to bring about a life without fear and racism. As Quakers, we believe in the equality and worth of every person, and today we honor the sanctity of Black lives and work for justice and equity . We condemn police violence. We are deeply disturbed by the militarization of police and use of military troops. Black and interracial families rightly fear that their loved ones could be harmed by racist actions not only by police or extremist groups, but also by white people complicit with or in denial of racism. We protest the racism that results in disproportionate incarceration of Black people ; disparate health , environmental, and economic impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color , and continued devaluing of Black lives and Black voices. The voices and agency of Black people are excluded, omitted, ignored, considered unimportant, silenced, or otherwise sidelined . In response, and in keeping with our Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, integrity, and community, we recommit to uprooting systemic racism and white supremacy both externally in our communities and nation, and internally, in ourselves, our Meeting, and the Religious Society of Friends.

Lasting change requires a long-term commitment to undoing systemic racism, and the removal of unjust policies, practices, and laws.

We urge local, state, and national leaders to immediately demilitarize law enforcement, for example, by stopping programs that give free military equipment and weapons to police departments, and by changing police training.

We call on our local, state, and federal elected officials to reimagine public safety. Although there is a need for a strong public safety response on occasion, the overwhelming problems are brutal responses of police to alleged minor offenses and police killings of Black people.

So we call for officials to create a system that establishes standard codes of behavior, including use of force policies, promotes accountability, and ensures equitable treatment for all.

We call on local, state, and national elected officials to redirect many of the funds currently going to police departments and jails/prisons to public safety programs that make available unarmed social workers, health workers, mental health support, and negotiators.

We call for communities, institutions and governments to work on systemic changes that prioritize investing in young people, health, education, housing, living wages, and transformative justice. We call for all of us to dismantle the interlocking web of structurally racist policies, laws, practices, and norms among institutions such as law enforcement, the legal system, education, housing, health, elections, and business that harm Black, Indigenous and People of Color and maintain the system of white supremacy.

Undoing more than 400 years of racism is up to all of us. Since 1660, Quakers have expressed abhorrence of violence in war and the refusal to kill or take lives. Yet white Quakers have allowed violence toward Black people in the form of enslavement and exclusion, and by being silent for too long about personal, institutional, and systemic racism. Atlanta Friends Meeting commits to continue addressing racism in ourselves and our predominantly white institutions and to working in multiracial coalitions for an equitable and racially just society for all.