

Chapel Hill Friends Meeting (Quakers) affirms that racism in the United States of America, North Carolina and Chapel Hill (to be specific) is real, harsh and damaging to all people of every race, ethnicity, color, nationality or immigration status. Friends affirm that the greatest, lasting harm has been to people of color, both born here and immigrant.

We acknowledge that we are racist, collectively and individually. We, the Society of Friends, are descended from people who, while they learned to abhor slavery, relegated people of color to a back bench in our Worship and mostly refused to allow them to become Members of the Society. It is still uncommon for people of color to join our Society. It is incumbent on the white members of our faith to address the truth that a person can be racist and abhor racism at the same time.

We are grateful to each and every person who has come out onto the streets to peacefully speak out against racism. We urge people to learn about all the harm that has been done to people of color down through our country's history, and continuing today. Our attention needs to be focused on repairing the damage done by racism itself to people of color and to our country.

We regret the vandalism and destruction that has happened. While we understand the righteous anger that may lie under some of it, we firmly believe violence will not help or further the just cause of ending racism.

Chapel Hill Friends applaud the removal of statues honoring specific or representative persons who supported or fought for slavery, white supremacy or segregation. We support the removal of symbols that represent these ugly ideals. It is our hope that new statues will be chosen for the pedestals that will honor people who championed or worked for freedom in any form – race, labor, sex, gender, disability, poverty – whatever characteristic is now or has ever been used to demean a person or hold them back from finding happiness, prosperity and justice.

Chapel Hill Friends agree and affirm that the structure of our police force and our justice system, in their present form, will not support the needed changes. Because much of both structures still reflect and manifest racist beliefs, they must be carefully disassembled and rebuilt from the ground up. We affirm that many of the current functions of the police – dealing with domestic disputes, mental health, child protection, prostitution, drug addiction, angry teens and civil protests being some of them – are not appropriately handled by an armed cadre but need to be handled by people who are primarily compassionate by their professional training.

It is a deep hole our ancestors laid our country down into when they established slavery and supported it with racism. We, the people of the United States of America, are not done clawing ourselves back out. Emerging from it will be long, messy and painful. It will bring us joy, laughter, good friends, great peace and a wider experience of life. Chapel Hill Friends know this; emphatically know this, from our lived experience.

Chapel Hill Friends affirm our pledge to work for the destruction of racism and to promote the healing and change needed in our country, in our community, in our service work and in our Meeting.