

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. We affirm that the greatest, lasting harm has been to the people of color, both born here and immigrant.

We are grateful to each and every person who has come out on to the streets to speak out against it. We regret the vandalism and destruction and we affirm that it is minor (as great as it is) compared to the harm that has been done to people of color down through our history. Our attention needs to be focused on repairing the damage done by racism itself.

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

We agree and affirm that the structure of our police force and our criminal courts will not support the changes that need to be done. They must be disassembled and rebuilt from the ground up. We affirm that many of the current functions of the police – domestic disputes, mental health, child protection, prostitution, drug addiction, angry teenagers and civil protests being some – are inappropriately handled by an armed cadre and need to be handled in an entirely different manner.

We affirm that it is the right and proper use of public money to provide compassionate help to people in difficult situations because our community is stronger when everyone in it is healthy, fed, clothed and housed. It is also cheaper and easier on the eyes and hearts than leaving the “least of these” to fend for themselves.

This is a long and difficult work to which we pledge ourselves and our Meeting. It is a deep hole our ancestors laid our country down into and we, the people of the United States of America, are not done clawing ourselves back out of it. It will be messy and painful. We are in it for the duration.