Shepherdstown Friends Meeting

Minute on BLACK LIVES MATTER

We Quakers declare — as a matter of conscience and with the promptings of the Inner Light — that Black Lives Matter. The members of Shepherdstown Quaker Meeting are grieved and heartbroken by on-going racism which destroys lives and crushes the fabric of families and communities throughout our nation.

The brazen, public murder of George Floyd by police after years of similar killings of Black persons clarifies for us that racial oppression is systematic in our society. Born of slavery 400 years ago, it continues today in forms that are endemic, insidious and appallingly overt. Locally, an unarmed man in Martinsburg, Wayne Jones, was shot in the back 22 times by police for jaywalking while black.

As Quakers, we honor and hold dear the dignity and sacred worth of each person. Our Meeting has been struggling with the poison of racism for years and this has energized our resolve to speak out and to act now. We commit ourselves to challenge the intersecting mechanisms of societal oppression, economic exploitation, mass incarceration, inadequate education and militarized policing. We resolve to understand how our own unconscious biases help perpetuate racial oppression in our society. On an individual level we will engage in one anti-racist act each day.

May Divine Light open our hearts and minds as we discern the way forward. We stand in solidarity with our Brothers and Sisters of color and pledge to create needed change in ourselves, our families, our communities, and our nation. We dedicate ourselves to justice, working to create a beloved community that honors the dignity and divinity in every single person. Indeed, our common humanity demands it.

Adopted by Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, July 26, 2020.