

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*
NIV, Micah 6:8

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
NIV, John 15:12

Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) Minute as to Restorative & Retrospective Justice for Repair of the Harms of Racism, Statement of Ongoing Discernment, and Recommended Actions for Friends

(Minute approved, MfB 12/5/21, final edits accepted MfB 1/1/22)

MINUTE:

Annapolis Friends here reach unity that we are led to seek and speak truth as to injustice for the many past and present wrongs committed against African Americans, Indigenous Peoples, and others harmed by racial discrimination wherever we find it, in ourselves, our community, and our nation.

We are led to give full meaning to the promise that all are created equal, to repair systems that bring ongoing racial discrimination, and to heal harms of past oppression that persist among our neighbors, their families, ourselves, and our communities.

We will network in this cause with other Friends, neighbors -- especially those harmed -- and leaders for whom the way opens. We commit ourselves to revisiting this minute as our understanding evolves.

APPROVED by Annapolis Friends Meeting - Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business - 12/5/21

STATEMENT OF ONGOING DISCERNMENT:

AFM Friends will continue our discernment as to the historic and current context for this minute with revisions and additions as the way opens.

BACKGROUND:

We are a community of faith. We are called to hear and to follow the callings of the Spirit individually and communally, as we are given the grace to understand that calling. In these times, we are called to examine our roles as members of the Religious Society of Friends, as a monthly meeting, within a yearly meeting, and as individuals, with respect to historical and ongoing oppression and exploitation of Indigenous people, enslaved Africans, and their descendants. We are called to examine our roles, at all these levels, in the ongoing, systemic oppression of people of color. As we do so, we may recognize among ourselves, individually and institutionally, patterns of both faithfulness and oppression with respect to the call to be one people, rooted in justice and community.

We recognize that The Religious Society of Friends encompasses persons of many identities in many, many countries. We recognize AFM and BYM are only a small part of that greater whole. We recognize our responsibility to the many different types of greater communities of which we are part. We recognize that AFM, BYM, and other Quaker institutions in our region of the world are at risk of seeing ourselves as and operating as institutions predominately representative of white culture and European heritage. We recognize that by doing so, we have failed the call of Spirit and our non-European brothers and sisters. We recognize that, sometimes with positive intentions, we have contributed to both historical and contemporary harm. We recognize that we have a responsibility to actively contribute to the repair of both the historical and contemporary harms to which our meeting, and we individually, may be both heir and party. We recognize that at all levels, our Beloved Communities include both those who have harmed and those who have been harmed. We seek to heal and grow together.

While a work-in-progress, the following historic summary suggests these recognitions:

Early History of Quakers in North America

When European Quakers arrived in North America in 1655, they found a continent already populated by indigenous people and operating on an economy built on the labor of enslaved people.

Quakers and Indigenous People.

Predominantly European colonists displaced indigenous people from the land where they had resided for many centuries, disrupted their lives, and brought deadly diseases.

- <https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/chesapeake.pdf>
- [Click here to read more about myths and truths as to Indigenous Peoples in the Chesapeake region, European settlers, and the Papal “Doctrine of Discovery](#)

NOTE: In Pennsylvania, William Penn and some other Quakers met with Indigenous People and made agreements to purchase land. But Penn and his family also kept enslaved people for generations.

In 1795, Quakers in the northern Shenandoah Valley, following the model established by William Penn in Pennsylvania, set up a fund under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to pay local Indigenous Peoples for lands Quakers had settled. Unable to locate survivors of those tribes, the BYM Indian Affairs Committee distributes the interest income from this endowment to organizations which assist and advocate for Indigenous Peoples.

- https://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/indian/home.html

In the 1860s, indigenous children were subjected to cultural assimilation in federal government schools, at least 25 of which were operated by Quakers.

- https://swarthmorevoices.com/content-1/2019/11/20/the-quaker-indian-boarding-schools-facing-our-history-and-ourselves_

Annapolis Friends in recent years have taken no actions in relation to indigenous peoples of North America.

Quakers and Enslaved People

European Quakers arrived in North America more than 30 years after the first enslaved Africans were imported to the Virginia colony. Colonists found that enslaved laborers made their plantations of tobacco, cotton and

other business very profitable. Colonies and, later, the new U.S. and state governments passed a series of laws to reduce enslaved African-American individuals' legal status from that of indentured servants to that of chattel -- the equivalent of property or livestock.

Between the mid-1600s and the early 1800s, Quaker families, including Penn, Hopkins, and many others, participated in and benefited from the system of enslaving people. Importantly, Germantown, Pennsylvania Friends in 1688 began North American Quakers' long process of discernment with their minute urging that our testimony to "doe to all men like as we will be done ourselves" and calling for enslaved people to be "set free."

See <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.14000200/?st=text>

Local Quaker History in Relation to Abolition and the Civil War

Individual Quakers emancipated some enslaved people in the 1700s. Baltimore Yearly Meeting (then known as "West River Yearly Meeting" and holding Annual Sessions in southern Anne Arundel County) concluded in 1777 that any members holding slaves should be disowned. By 1790, nearly all Quaker slave-holders emancipated their slaves, although some Meetings made exceptions. For example, Johns Hopkins' father did not free his enslaved people until 1807. Many left Quakerism rather than free their enslaved people.

Life in slave states became more difficult for those who had freed their slaves. For this and other reasons, many Quakers from Maryland migrated north and west. West River Yearly Meeting, once centered on tobacco-rich Anne Arundel County, moved north to Baltimore and changed its name. With declining membership, by 1812 as journaled by traveling Friend Joseph Hoag, one abandoned Meeting House was converted to use as a tobacco barn, and the original Meeting House where the Yearly Meeting had gathered became

a desolate spot, the Meeting House almost rotted down—the graveyard lying common and briars and bushes growing over the bones of the dead and many of the graves rooted down with swine - so that mournful were my feelings and heavy was my heart.

Annapolis and Anne Arundel County History in Relation to African Americans from the End of the Civil War to the Present

In Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, over the years after the Civil War, separation and segregation of African American and white communities became entrenched. For example, there are five (5) documented cases of lynching of Black men in Anne Arundel County between 1877 and 1950. There are additional records of the legalized execution of several Black men charged with crimes they may well not have committed. At least one of these men has been posthumously pardoned.

- <https://eji.org/news/eji-dedicates-historical-marker-anne-arundel-county-maryland/>
- <https://www.capitalgazette.com/opinion/ac-ce-column-snowden-20180227-story.html>

Inferior public services were common in African American neighborhoods. In Galesville, sewers were installed on the white side of the street, but not on the African American side. African American schools' teachers and staff were paid less and used second-hand books and equipment. Eventually, the prosperous, predominantly African American Fourth Ward in the City of Annapolis was condemned for "urban renewal" with demolition of churches, hotels, a theatre, doctors' and lawyers' offices, a grocery store and more to make way for a parking garage, a new County jail, and low-income public housing.

- <https://oltannapolis.com/our-legacy-home-school/f/leading-ladies---sarah-v-jones-school-superintendent>
- <https://upstart-annapolis.com/ago-4th-ward-bound-brotherhood/>

Modern History of Annapolis Friends Meeting in Relation to African American Members, Attenders, and the Broader Community

No Quaker monthly meetings were gathered in Anne Arundel County for more than 100 years until the establishment of Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) in about 1963. While AFM makes the practice of welcoming people of color who attend, it continues to have a large majority of white members and attenders.

AFM Friends, over the years, have sought to recognize and repair the racial divides in our communities:

- AFM founder Caroline Martin joined protests in the early 1960s to integrate Annapolis restaurants being sprayed with hoses (and arrested.) Others later would join Rev. Martin Luther King's "March on Washington" and protests against local actions of the Ku Klux Klan.
- Other Friends played active roles in the founding of the Lighthouse shelter and job-training program to remedy and prevent local problems of homelessness and unemployment among both African American and white community members, as well as the Anne Arundel Conflict Resolution Center to provide mediation and other services in Anne Arundel County which encourage peaceful communication and conflict resolution.
- AFM Friends set the goal of establishing a "Peace and Justice Center (PJC)" to advocate for Quaker causes in the Maryland General Assembly.
- Property for a new Meeting House was acquired on Dubois Road in Annapolis. AFM Friends do not now know the specific history of how the land upon which the Meeting House is built was taken from indigenous people here; we do know that it was part of a tract occupied by European colonists who held enslaved people.
- A Deconstructing Racism working group was formed to assist AFM Friends in self-examination in the late 1990s. Throughout the early 2000s, Friends also increased their understanding of racism by viewing occasional videos shown after worship.
- A joint book club was formed in 2013 between AFM and St.Philips Episcopal (with a primarily African-American congregation) to read The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of colorblindness, by Michele Alexander. In 2014, this group agreed to propose legislation to shrink Md. prisons and use savings for treatment programs, etc. That proposal, although initially unsuccessful, led to formation of Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR - www.ma4jr.org) in 2015 with assistance from AFM's PJC. MAJR has grown into an all-volunteer, bipartisan, diverse statewide advocacy group which has initiated Maryland's milestone "Justice Reinvestment Act" and many other pieces of legislation that have begun reductions in the state's incarcerated population and have focused on reducing systemic racism in the criminal justice system.
- In 2019, AFM formed a "Change Group" with the purpose of welcoming and supporting people of color and youth in our meeting and in our community.
- In 2020, AFM adopted its [Anti-Racist Declaration](#) "on an ongoing basis to hold ourselves accountable, individually and collectively, in our decisions and practices, our actions and inaction" as to defacto systems of racism.
- In 2021 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide protests related to our growing awareness of racist and violent police practices, AFM began a series of monthly Zoom workshops for discernment as to possible actions that Friends might pursue as reparations. This minute, in part, is a product of our discernment.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Annapolis Friends will continue our discernment by faithfully considering the following—and other— possible steps, individually & collectively, as way opens for support of restorative and retrospective justice among ourselves and with our African American, Indigenous, and other neighbors harmed by racial discrimination. We also will review and update these considerations as needed:

AFM Next Steps

Annapolis Friends may create and maintain a reparations webpage including resources for Friends, attenders, and website visitors. These resources will include this Restorative and Retrospective Justice Minute; a link to the Anne Arundel County NAACP's Green Book of Black-owned Businesses, service providers, and organizations; and other educational resources such as links to books, webpages, and videos. Personal queries also might be included.

Annapolis Friends should seek to further understand the needs and perspectives of persons who have been harmed, both within our fellowship and in the broader community. We commit to listening to and to productively engaging with persons of color within AFM and BYM, and we may seek to participate with listening (or "truth and reconciliation") sessions hosted by other local organizations.

Part of this seeking may include support for elevating, promoting, and, as appropriate, helping document non-Eurocentric histories of Anne Arundel County.

Annapolis Friends also will seek possibilities for new and continuing efforts for reform of systemic racism in our laws, customs, and other institutions.

AFM Material Resources for Restorative Justice

Annapolis Friends, recognizing that material resources may be needed for retrospective and restorative justice, will pursue worshipful discernment of the path forward for such actions:

- In the near term, we might create an AFM fund to support the needs of impacted people in the community -- perhaps with seed money from an existing fund ("Founders Fund") and/or designated contributions from individual Friends. We will seek to work with those who have been harmed in discerning where and how such material resources should be allocated.
- Our meeting house is one of our greatest material resources. We will consider the possibility of new ways to share of our Meeting House and our other material assets more actively for reparative and restorative purposes.

Commitment to Continuous Re-evaluation

Annapolis Friends recognize that further discernment may be needed to pursue this testimony, so we intend to revisit and re-evaluate this Minute at least annually, anticipating that both we and the situation will change as a result of our commitment to restorative and retrospective justice to address racism.