Statement from General Secretary and Clerk of QEW

Shelley Tanenbaum and Mary Jo Klingel

Following the killing of George Floyd, the arrest of a Minneapolis police officer, and worldwide outrage, Quaker Earthcare Witness General Secretary Shelley Tanenbaum and Clerk Mary Jo Klingel issued the following statement:

We are once again witnessing the ongoing pattern of confrontation and violence that is symptomatic of the institutional violence and racism that communities of color face daily.

Our hearts ache along with the family and friends of George Floyd, Ahmed Arbury, and Breonna Taylor. Tragically, these are just the most recent victims of a pattern of systemic racial profiling, undue use of force, murder at the hands of police, and the ineffectiveness of our society in preventing these outrages.

We focus on our work as Quaker Earthcare Witness on advocating for ecological integrity and environmental justice. Our core belief is that we are all connected, seeing that of the Light, God, in all of us and in all of creation. Just as we are all connected, our movement for environmental justice is connected to racial and economic justice. We cannot work for a better future for our planet and all life without addressing the deep, systemic harm caused by colonialism, slavery, and racism. We must root our Quaker values and our love for the Earth in a better understanding of these issues, and follow the lead of those most affected.

COVID-19 has now killed more than 100,000 in the US, and a quarter of those deaths are Black Americans due to racism, social inequity, and environmental injustices that have robbed the Black community of health and well-being. The climate crisis impacts vulnerable communities disproportionately because too often polluting and extractive facilities are located in communities of color.

As Friends and leaders of a Quaker organization, we commit to working for justice and to dismantling white supremacy within our communities as we work for justice for all those who share our home, our Earth.

Mary Jo Klingel, Clerk and Shelley Tanenbaum, General Secretary

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