

# Bethlehem Interfaith Group statement on the George Floyd murder: “to achieve positive change and an end to racism, we must act”

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing June 5, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing* 

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## **Statement on Racism and Solidarity with the African American Community**

The killing of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis law enforcement officers has become the tipping point for grief, outrage, and protest across our nation. Floyd’s death, the most recent in a long line of suspicious and wrongful deaths of black people at the hands of those sworn to protect, has galvanized the American social conscience and so requires reflection and concurrent action by people of faith.

For over 400 years we have wrestled with the scourge of white supremacy in North America which has enslaved, colonized, dehumanized, marginalized, abused, repressed, and murdered people of color and minorities solely due to the color of their skin. From the end of slavery to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s, we hoped that progress would end systemic racism in the United States. Sadly, we have known—and bear witness to once again—the brutal treatment of black people and other people of color and minorities in the United States. At its core is an entrenched discriminatory system which disproportionately targets people of color and minorities in the United States, burdening them with oppression and violence, injustice in our legal system and by law enforcement. This in turn perpetuates poverty, loss of freedom, disadvantage, and systemic societal inequality. It has fostered a culture of fear against people of color. It has made African Americans, particularly males, fear for their lives every time they leave their homes and parents wonder if their children will safely return.

As members of the Bethlehem Interfaith Group (B.I.G.), we raise our voices in support of and solidarity with those who are peacefully demonstrating for racial justice, and commit ourselves to being partners

and allies for systemic change. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, “In a free society, only some are guilty but all are responsible.”

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*Tip o’ the hat to the Lehigh Valley Meeting (Quakers) for passing this statement on to the Gadfly.*