

## **SAYMA.URJ Report. June 2025**

Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) is a standing committee of the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA), comprised entirely of Friends of color.

### **Who We Are**

Mission: ***SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ)*** provides space for Friends of color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism and to find support and advocacy. The committee also works to raise awareness about white supremacy/racism among Friends by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

### **How URJ Fulfills its Mission:**

**URJ established the Paul Cuffee Worship Group (PGWG)** for people of color who wish to worship in the manner of Friends in fellowship with other Friends of color. The PCWG meets virtually for worship twice a month, on New Moons and Full Moons. Friends of color who wish to join us in worship can contact us at [urj@sayma.org](mailto:urj@sayma.org) to request a schedule.

**The Interactive Racial Justice Resource List at sayma.org** was created in collaboration with the SAYMA Racial Justice Working Group. Find the full interactive list on the SAYMA website at [www.sayma.org](http://www.sayma.org), under Committees/Racial Justice. (URJ feels that the resource list is not easy to find on the SAYMA website; therefore, URJ requests that it be made accessible from the front page.)

**Racial Conflict Transformation Program: Understanding Racism/White Supremacy: What it IS, How it WORKS, and What Friends Can DO About it.”** This program is a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and transformative experiences aimed at expanding our capacity to hold space for uncomfortable conversations about race and racism in Quaker circles and what it takes to resolve racial conflicts between Friends.

## **Program Details:**

3-Module Systemic Racial Analysis Training Series: thoughtfully curated and led by the SAYMA Racial Conflict Transformation team, and monthly facilitated worship/study Affinity groups.

Module #1 What IS Racism/White Supremacy/Racism and How it Works?

Module #2 How to Do Your Own Anti-Racism Audit

Module #3 Where Quaker Social Change Theory Meets Anti-Racist Praxis

The systemic racial analysis training sessions provide invaluable insights and practical tools for identifying, analyzing, and addressing racial conflict in Quaker spaces, toward understanding and dismantling systemic racism as part of the process of becoming an anti-racist faith community, competent to welcome diverse peoples of color and families.

We have already observed dynamic outcomes from this program, which was developed by Quakers for Quakers. Though we are still laboring through SAYMA's racial conflict, we are witnessing a loving and growing power of embodied anti-racist praxis in our meetings as a result of this racial conflict transformation program.

**The Racial Justice Fund:** Offers mutual aid for Friends of color experiencing racism—ALL people of color experience racism.

In past years, URJ has been fortunate to provide mutual aid to Friends of color in need. We paid rent during the pandemic, helped several Friends repair vehicles, and covered moving and travel expenses. We have given aid to start-up businesses, emergency operating funds to a FOC-led non-profit, and contributed to bail funds for a young Friend in need of legal support. We are proud of our record.

URJ started with a healthy budget of over \$20,000 in 2018. Yet after five (5) plus years of organized opposition from a few Friends in positions of authority standing in the way of URJ funding, URJ has less than \$2,000 left to fulfill its mission to provide mutual aid support and advocacy for Friends of color experiencing racism.

## Point of Information:

In a rogue white supremacist colonial settler state, founded on crimes against humanity such as genocide, slavery, rape and theft, maintained by ongoing and relentless racially motivated violence, ALL BIPOC experience racism 24/7/365. In other words, all day, every day, and every hour, there is an individual, a family, or community adversely impacted by settler colonial white supremacy. And now there are actual Nazis in control of our government.

Therefore, SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) asks Friends—individuals and meetings--to contribute according to your capacity as generously as you can to URJ's Racial Justice Fund. Thereby fulfilling your commitment to our Quaker testimonies of Integrity, Equality, and Community. We aim to raise \$20,000 in mutual aid funds for Friends of Color this year.

## Why?

We are living in unprecedented times—even for white people. As the old saying goes, “When the rest of America catches a cold, Black folks end up with pneumonia.”

White supremacists in power are deliberately violating the Constitution the Bill of Rights, and the civil and economic rights of Black and Indigenous Americans. Ever since what Bishop William Barber calls “that twice impeached criminally convicted felon-in-chief” was inaugurated, racism, xenophobia, exploitation, and corporate greed have run amok amid “epidemic poverty in the wealthiest country in the world”. Corporate greed has gone unchecked, exacerbating already extreme inequality, as “our political leaders abdicate their moral and civic responsibilities.”

**DATA:** Supplied by Bishop William Barber (Not for the faint of heart.)

Poverty is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest cause of death in America. 800 people die every day from poverty. Out of 140 million poor and low-income people, 60% are Black (26 million), and 30% are white (66 million).

Meanwhile, according to Musk, all jobs will be replaced by computers and smart machines by 2035, while cutting the nation's social safety net. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, and HUD are being cut, in the name of waste and abuse, to give tax breaks to billionaires and even more money to the military-industrial complex. 3.9 million families receive eviction notices in a typical year, and now those numbers will only go up.

68 million people receive Social Security and Medicare benefits. As of 2021, 42% of Americans aged 56 -64 have zero retirement savings, and BIPOC have always had lower median incomes in their retirement years than white Americans.

72 million people are enrolled in Medicaid as of October 2024. 7 million are enrolled in CHIP (Children's health Insurance program). 60% of nursing homes depend on Medicaid. (36 million people are impacted).

Food Assistance: 230 billion in cuts. In 2024, SNAP and WIC served 41 million people: 1 in 5 children, 37% white, 26% Black, 16% Latino, 3% Asian, and 2% Native American.

Head Start: serves 650 thousand children.

Assaults on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a blatant attack on federal workers in the name of eliminating waste and abuse, intentionally targeting the Black Middle class: 1 in 5 federal employees are African American. Qualified and often overqualified BIPOC are being fired or forced to resign and replaced by unqualified white supremacists.

Violations of First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, attacks on the Voting Rights Act, due process, and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment birthright citizenship are blatant assaults on the Black, Latino, and Native American communities.

Each day brings more alarming news for everyone, especially Friends of Color, who tend to be predominantly Black and middle class. This is just not a good time for feel-good performative allyship. IF you care to be in right relationship with our most impacted community members, now is the time for comfortably middle-class white people to put your money where you say your values are.

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our Friends.” --Martin Luther King, Jr.

**How YOU Can Help:** Speak out, speak up. Demand more from your elected officials: Call this # 202.224.3120, and give them a piece of your mind, regularly.

Use your economic power: Boycott organizations, institutions, and corporations with no working Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies in place. Boycott Walmart, Target, Amazon, and Starbucks. (NO DEI =NO BUY!) DO support small local BIPOC owned businesses, buy second-hand, reuse, recycle, repurpose, instead.

Generously support the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Fund.

### **Ways to Support URJ**

Remember, SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) provides support and advocacy for Friends of Color experiencing racism--ALL Friends of color are experiencing racism. To that end, URJ established an Uplifting Racial Justice Fund in 2019. It is a donor-restricted, tax-exempt fund. Donors may specify the purpose of donor-restricted contributions to the URJ Racial Justice Fund in one of three ways:

1. Memo line of check
2. Note or letter accompanying check
3. SAYMA Square Contribution: [Link](#)

*For finance questions about URJ, please email [treasurer@sayma.org](mailto:treasurer@sayma.org).*

For questions about URJ's operations, contact the URJ clerk at [urj@sayma.org](mailto:urj@sayma.org).

In Friendship,

Star Smith, clerk of URJ

Approved by URJ on March 11, 2025