SAYMA-URJ Report: March 2020

Guiding Query: “How does this decision support FGC/SAYMA’s goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?” --FGC Institutional Assessment of Systemic Racism

I. Accomplishments: How URJ is fulfilling its mission

A. The Paul Cuffee Friends of Color Worship Group was established, in fulfilment of URJ’s mission to “provide safe space for Friends of color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their Monthly Meetings and SAYMA, to find support and advocacy.” The Paul Cuffee Worship Group acts as a Meeting community for people of color who wish to worship in the manner of Friends, if/when they are uncomfortable doing so in SAYMA’s all or mostly white Quaker Meetings. It is named after Paul Cuffee, a Black and Wampanoag Quaker (1754-1812), because two members of URJ, are direct descendants. There are currently about six regular attenders.

The Paul Cuffee Worship Group is unified in the belief that it would not benefit them to be under the care of a SAYMA Monthly Meeting. They feel it is fitting and proper for the worship group to be under the care of URJ and the Friends Center for Racial Justice (FCRJ).

B. URJ has partnered with the Abolitionist Center, in Sumter SC. SAYMA-URJ and the Abolitionist Center share work and living space. It is also where the Paul Cuffee Worship Group meets for Worship. As part of the partnership agreement with the Abolitionist Center, URJ has committed to financially support the Abolitionist Center’s work.

Thus far, URJ has assisted the Abolitionist Center with property maintenance and utility costs, the funds to file non-profit 501(c) (3) papers, and money to build a sound studio for recording and broadcasting, in fulfillment of their educational mission.

C. SAYMA-URJ is formally affiliated with the Friends Center for Racial Justice (FCRJ). There has been constant contact between FCRJ and URJ since June 2019. Sharon “Star” Smith, the clerk of URJ is now a member of FCRJ’s Coordinating Committee (board). Angela Hopkins, Executive Director of FCRJ has visited the Abolitionist Center in Sumter SC and Worshiped with the Paul Cuffee Worship Group.

D. URJ and the SAYMA Racial Justice Working Group have been collaborating to create an Anti-Racism Resource list for SAYMA. Look for it
II. Announcements

A. URJ does workshops: On April 25th URJ, in collaboration with the Abolitionist Center will be in Barea KY for “Connecting the Dots Between Racism, Modern Day Slavery, Colonialism, and What You Can Do About It: A Workshop” If you would like URJ to visit your Meeting, contact Sharon "Star" Smith, the clerk of URJ at star smith13@gmail.com.

B. Save the Date: SAYMA-URJ is hosting a SAYMA anti-racism retreat May 1-3 at AZULE in Hot Springs NC. http://azule.org/ URJ is hiring skilled facilitators for this event. All SAYMA Friends are invited. There will be a $70.00 Registration Fee for white Friends, while Friends of color can attend FREE. Two or more White Friends can get a group rate, of $50 each. It’s first come first served for 30 sleeping spots at AZULE. Camping space is also an option though it may be cold or raining on the mountain in early May.

III. Recommendations and Requests

A. URJ strongly recommends that SAYMA approve an ad hoc committee comprised of the clerks of URJ, the SAYMA white Friends anti-racism working group, Ministry and Nurture and Finance, to draft a conflict resolution policy and process for SAYMA. In addition, URJ recommends that SAYMA hire Angela Hopkins, the Executive Director of FCRJ (Friends Center for Racial Justice) as a consultant to assist in the process.

B. The theme for SAYMA Sessions 2020, "Feed, Shelter, Serve: Our Bucket List Now!" involves examining ways to mitigate environmental damage, including its effects upon those disproportionately contributing or disproportionately affected by it. Therefore, URJ requests that SAYMA commit itself, its resources and technical knowhow to a project that would actually help those most affected by environmental racism, beyond simply examining the problem or paying lip service to it.

To that end, URJ requests that SAYMA approve and direct SAYMA Earthcare Action Network to take action, by providing the necessary technical
assistance to help the Abolitionist Center in Sumter SC become environmentally sustainable. [https://www.sayma.org/earthcare/](https://www.sayma.org/earthcare/)

As you know, The Abolitionist center has been adopted by URJ as a special project. Members of URJ, including the clerk, live and Worship on the property. As Friends of color, they are vulnerable to all the disparate environmental issues and problems as those most affected by climate change and environmental racism.

IV. Finance Requests

A. URJ Requests $10,000 of set-aside funds for fiscal year 2020, and another $10,000 for fiscal 2021, for a total of $20,000.

B. In addition, URJ is requesting a line item in SAYMA’s annual budget of $10,000 each year, or unless URJ requests a different amount.

C. As per recommendations from the FGC Institutional Assessment of Systemic Racism to create an endowment to provide funding for People of color engaged in social change, anti-racism and/or counter-colonial work, URJ is soliciting donor restricted funds from individual Friends and Monthly Meetings for the Uplifting Racial Justice Fund.

The Racial Justice Fund will enable URJ to provide support for Friends of Color to participate in SAYMA and FGC sponsored events, including sponsoring their own events and projects in support of people of color who are most impacted by systemic white supremacy and settler colonialism.

D. White supremacy is maintained by controlling the NARRATIVE, the PROCESSES and all RESOURCES. Therefore, SAYMA can only become an anti-racist faith community by giving Friends of color the freedom to control their own resources. This was the original reason for items 10 and 11 of SAYMA-URJ’s Goals. URJ has not given up on these goals and will continue to push for them. URJ goals 10 and 11 read as follows:

10. URJ needs financial autonomy, its own bank accounts, to prevent well-meaning unconsciously racist white Friends on the Finance Committee from delaying or withhold URJ’s funds over differences of opinion as to
how URJ’s funds can or should be used. URJ will have unlimited access to its own set-aside and donor restricted funds which only URJ will decide how to spend.

11. URJ will create a **Racial Justice Fund** with enough cash to dispense “grass roots reparations,” as needed. Such as: occasional rent/mortgage money, auto repair and maintenance, travel expenses, and any other purpose Friends of color request financial assistance for. Also to cover the cost of Friends of color retreats and skilled facilitation for Friends of color. In short, any legal use for which money can be used to address issues of economic injustice which disproportionately impact People of color.

March SAYMA-URJ Report was approved by URJ and submitted by Sharon “Star” Smith, clerk of URJ.