**Statement on the Killing of Black Men**

June 1, 2020

The reality of the systemic and ever-present racism that has withered the soul of our country, destroyed the dignity of humanity, and defaced the beauty of diversity has once again profoundly surfaced in the senseless and aimless killing of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd.

Arbery, a 25-year-old unarmed African American man, was shot to death by two white men while jogging in Brunswick, Ga., as a third white man drove a pick-up truck and recorded videos of the encounter and the shooting. Floyd, also African American, was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, when the officer, who had him in handcuffs and on the ground, kept a knee to Floyd's neck for 8 minutes, 46 seconds while three other officers looked on, despite Floyd’s pleas that he could not breathe, and until he died.

These atrocities are continued evidence of racism in America and compel us to uphold that black lives matter, equal to and as important as all lives. We at InterFaith Works affirm the dignity of all people, and we hold out that all lives are sacred. We pray for the families and the communities that have been devastated by these acts of violence.

To work towards a brighter future, it is mandatory that those who support and defend social justice, equality, dignity, the least, the lost, and the last in our society remain centered and focused as we face these grave matters. For we are reminded of how needed and necessary our personal commitment must be to ending the source of racism, with the equal demand that must be placed on those who hold political, economic, legal and law enforcement power to do the same. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught, “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

*– InterFaith Works Board of Directors and Round Table of Faith Leaders*