



## Friendship West's Response to the Guilty Verdict in the Derek Chauvin Trial

Since the inception of this nation, black bodies have been under constant surveillance and physical attack from policing systems and subjected to dehumanization in every aspect of American society. We cannot neglect the fact the policing system has historical roots in the slave patrols of the South. The same system we know as policing is undergirded and upheld by white supremacy. The entire system must be deconstructed and built anew, and we must radically reimagine public safety. As a congregation, we support the George Floyd Act at the federal and state (TX) level. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III, Senior Pastor, and social justice activist, has testified on the George Floyd Act in committees during the 87th legislative session in Texas. We have been and will continue to actively engage in dismantling a policing system that does not protect and serve our communities.

The ongoing assaults on black men and women at the hands of police officers call us to continue moving into the streets and into the corridors of power to bring about substantive and sustainable change. Today's verdict was a start. There must always be police accountability for the unjust murder of unarmed Black people. The verdict by the twelve jurors was a rejection of the defense's notion that:

1. George Floyd was superhuman (black men as superhumans only exist in action movies, comic books, and racists' incomprehensible imagination).
2. George Floyd was responsible for his death.
3. Bystanders were the cause of his death.

They, rightly, listened to the "46th witness – their common sense and believed their own eyes." We thank God for the guilty verdict today. We thank God for Darnella Frazier (a young teenager) who bravely filmed the murder of George Floyd. Without her bravery, we may not have received the guilty verdict.

Also, we remember those who have joined the realm of the ancestors and their families who never received justice – a guilty verdict or no charges filed. We continue to #sayhername and #sayhisname. We continue to hold the Floyd family and all the families we don't know in prayer. We will continue to push for accountability in the cases of Ataiana Jefferson, Duante Wright, Adam Toledo, and Pamela Turner. As a state and nation, we must pass the federal and state of Texas versions of the George Floyd Act. Lastly, as a faith community, we will continue to participate in activism and advocacy efforts to push for policies that address many social ills in our communities and nation.

### Vision Statement

*Friendship-West will be a game-changing Christian movement connecting people to Jesus Christ and fighting for justice while creating the Beloved Community.*

**#blacklivesmatter**