

Love as Action

Quaker Witness



Organizer Guide

AFSC invites Friends across the country to gather in silent worship in public spaces once a month on a common day to give witness to the harm caused by rising authoritarianism and fascism in our country and the increased oppression that already oppressed communities here now face. This shared witness reflects core Quaker principles: peace, equality, integrity, and community and it is a visible commitment to justice and compassion. By standing together in quiet waiting worship, we affirm that every person has worth, that fear and violence must give way to love and fairness, and that our communities thrive when all are welcomed. Each month we will gather together on the same-day in solidarity with attention to a common issue, which will change each month as we turn in solidarity to support another community.

We will gather on January 17 with attention to resisting authoritarianism: bearing witness and building hope. We encourage Friends to bring attention to the impacts that authoritarian actions are having in your community.

How to Organize Your Event

Checklist for planning:

- Choose Location: Public, visible, accessible, safe and meaningful. Choose a place that has symbolic significance (give attention to the focus), or one that has high visibility (at a safe distance but alongside a busy road, in a busy public space)

- **Select Time:** Choose a time that maximizes participation and visibility. Keep safety from the weather in mind as well.
- **Gather Materials:** Signs with the message, blank signs, extra markers, water, seating if needed.
- **Assign Roles:**
 - **Site Coordinator(s):** This is probably you. These are the folks working directly with AFSC to organize the event.
 - **Worship anchor:** Helps guide the public worship with some initial framing and some words to close. We will provide a Worship Guide in advance.
 - **Community Engagement Ambassador -** Distributes handouts explaining Quaker worship, the purpose of Love as Action, and brochures about AFSC's work.
 - **Press contact:** Able to speak to media before, during and after the event. We will assist with local press releases.
 - **Safety and police liaison:** If law enforcement is present, speaks with them and defuses any conflict that may be present.
 - **Photographer:** Documents the silent witness with photo/video and sends to local organizers and LoveasAction@afsc.org.
- **Outreach:** Make sure to reach out to your local community groups and invite them to join us in this public witness, Friends and friends alike. Make sure to do some intentional outreach to the individuals and organizations that are working on our area of focus and let them know you are in solidarity with this action. Outreach templates below, graphics and other materials available from your AFSC contact or LoveasAction@afsc.org
- **Graphics and Sign Making:** We encourage you to make your own expressions of love as action on home-made signs. Consider hosting a sign-making party before the event and have supplies on hand for folks to make their own at the event.
- **Download and print signs here:** <https://afsc.org/love-action>
Given one-week notice, AFSC's Quaker Engagement staff can send signs and materials via mail. Please write to friends@afsc.org with requests.

What We Will Provide

- **Staff support:** If you have questions or need assistance you can reach out to LoveasAction@afsc.org.
- **Worship Guide:** We are finalizing this resource now and will send to all event organizers well in advance of the event.

- Signage and literature: We will send graphics that can be used for signage and provide printable handbills that can be used to engage bystanders that are interested in why you are worshipping in public. *Given one-week notice, AFSC's Quaker Engagement staff can send signs and materials via mail. Please write to friends@afsc.org with requests.*
- Planning and Support Meeting: On DATE we will convene a meeting of local hosts from all locations across the country to review our plan, answer questions, and address and issues or concerns. Stay tuned for more information.

Safety Guidance

Friends will be exercising their first amendment rights in this peaceful event, and in most cases, you will attract positive community support. But it is important to note that sometimes law enforcement or other community members may not respect those rights, depending on your local context. That is why we are recommending designating a Safety and Police liaison to handle anything that might develop.

If passersby try to taunt you or make comments, support each other to keep silent and peaceful. Speaking truth to power is your strength.

If law enforcement approaches you for any reason, have a designated police liaison to communicate with them, and assure them that you are there in silent, peaceful witness. Exercising free speech is your constitutional right.

If any serious safety concerns present themselves, we would ask that the group move together to a place of safety immediately and then contact AFSC's designated safety contact for this effort: Jacob Flowers – 901-517-8689 (via phone, text, WhatsApp or signal)

Comms Guidance (take pictures, send them here...etc.)

- Photos/Videos: Capture the spirit of the event respectfully. Obtain consent if individuals are featured.
- Sharing: Send media to the designated email or shared folder. Post on social media using hashtags #LoveasAction and #QuakerWitness. Tag your local meetings and the AFSC in your posts.
- Local media – If able, send out a press release to local media before your event and the morning of. We will assist with press release templates and media lists; you will just need to designate a press contact as described in the Roles section. Contact LoveasAction@afsc.org for a local press template.

Outreach Materials/Templates

Use these tools to invite participants and share the message. Making sure to send this out to any list-servs, putting it in the announcements and newsletter, and sending out through any social media accounts you have are a great way to spread the word. Please also make sure to announce at close of worship in the Sundays leading up to Jan. 17.

Note: We are providing location specific graphics and online invite links to include in any outreach as appropriate.

Promo Template:

Please join the American Friends Service Committee and [Local Mtg/Group] on Jan. 17 in one-hour of silent worship at [place & time] to bear witness to the disruption and dehumanization that authoritarian actions are inflicting in our communities.

INVITE LINK

Social Media Post Template:

Join the American Friends Service Committee and [Local Mtg/Group] on Jan. 17 in one-hour of silent worship at [place & time] to bear witness to the disruption and dehumanization that authoritarian actions are inflicting in our communities. #LoveasAction #QuakerWitness @afsc_org

Text for Email Outreach:

Subject: Love as Action – CITY NAME

Body: Quaker witness for public action has stood in silent opposition to cruel and authoritarian actions in our country before. It is time for us to show this love in action again.

Please join the American Friends Service Committee and [Local Mtg/Group] to bear witness to the destruction and dehumanization that authoritarian actions are inflicting in our communities.

On Saturday Jan. 17 at [time] we will gather at [place] for one hour of silent public worship.

REGISTRATION LINK INSERTED

Our hope is that our presence will give heart to all who see us - including through media and online - and remind everyone of our moral obligations to one another.

Once a month we gather in silent worship, showing love in action as a public witness of our Quaker values in a time of rising fascism.

Join us! REGISTRATION LINK INSERTED

For more info visit us at afsc.org/love-action or email LoveasAction@afsc.org

Follow-Up

- **Post-Event:** We will share a thank-you message with participants that registered online to provide some materials on how to continue to support migrant rights organizing in their community and across the country. If you have local resources to highlight in that follow-up, please send them to you AFSC staff contact or LoveasAction@afsc.org.
- **Debrief and Plan:** This is an ongoing project of public witness against the multiple signs of rising fascism we see in our country. We will gather for a debrief and planning meeting online following the January action. Invitation will be sent to all that sign-up online.