



# American Friends Service Committee

## AFSC Midwest Digest – May 2026

*Stories of work from around the region*



### **New report calls for clemency for long-serving women in Michigan**

We're very pleased to share with you AFSC Michigan's newest resource: [Women's Clemency Initiative: A Report on Liberating Long-Serving Women](#). Please check it out, share it with your networks, and take action for liberation.

The report urges Governor Whitmer to prioritize the release of long-serving women and address gender disparities in extreme sentencing. It also calls for righting past harms caused by state systems and our communities.

The report argues that Michigan's reliance on extreme punishment has disproportionately harmed women and urges the state to realign its power toward healing, accountability, rehabilitation, and release.



A recent Chi Peace Youth Action Project (YAP) cohort

## Youth with AFSC creating their own community spaces in Chicago

A recent [article](#) describes how young people in Chicago are using third spaces to address mental health concerns in their communities. “The young people, pretty consistently, said they wanted these spaces to be pop-ups all across the city because things are so concentrated on the North Side or ... held in spaces that, honestly, are not that welcoming to young people,” said August Funk, AFSC Chi Peace McConnell Peacebuilding Fellow. “So they wanted to have their spaces in a more community-oriented, less carceral space that young people would feel comfortable coming to.”



## Resisting the criminalization and incarceration of young people

Alex Jones of AFSC reports that [St. Louis Peacebuilding](#) hosted a Love as Action weekend in April that featured a focused activation and grounding space. The event contextualized and grounded our action in resistance to House Bill 888 that would certify people as young as 12 as adults in the juvenile system. Three days later, St. Louis Peacebuilding and community partner Expo MO hosted an action in front of the St. Louis Juvenile Justice Center to raise awareness and rally around the issue.



### **AFSC volunteer asks: Are Quaker meetings safe for Black people?**

Billie Wade serves on the AFSC Midwest Regional Group, the Corporation, and the US Programs Group. In the latest [Quaker Speak video](#), she says, "I am accustomed to joining communities where I am the only African American present. That's been a common thread throughout my life. Coming to Quakerism and discovering that that thread was going to continue was not a surprise... Fortunately, Des Moines Valley [Friends Meeting] has been an open, welcoming community to me. That said, I still feel lonely sometimes."



### **Upcoming Love as Action vigils – and action to fund human needs, not war**

Upcoming Love as Action witnesses include [Chicago](#) on May 16, [Des Moines](#) on May 17, and [Kansas City](#) on May 12 and June 9. Organize your own at AFSC's [Love as Action page](#). And please [tell Congress](#) to reject funding for war and militarism and instead invest in the communities they were elected to serve.

## Short takes

Join AFSC's [Global Voices for Peace: Defending Peace, Democracy and Human Rights](#) online program on Thursday, May 21 at 9 am CT...Check out AFSC's latest [Acting in Faith newsletter](#)...Read AFSC alums [Arnie Alpert](#) on automatic Selective Service registration and [Rabbi Brant Rosen](#) on why Zionism is a moral issue... Learn about AFSC's [Why We Record exhibit](#) currently on display in Wausau, WI...RIP long-time AFSC Chicago ally [Amisa Patel](#).

## [DONATE TO AFSC MIDWEST PROGRAMS](#)

AFSC Mission Statement: *Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with people of all faiths and backgrounds to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.*