

The U.S. Election: Nonviolence, Your Meeting, and You



By Barry Crossno and FGC Staff | 10/14/20

Dear Friends,

In the United States, one of the most important elections of our lifetime is almost upon us. Tensions are high and many of us, not just in the U.S. but across North America and the world, have a great deal of concern about what will happen on November 3rd and the days that follow.

Having talked with many Friends, I'm aware that we as a community carry a wide variety of political views. With

that said, **we share a deep spiritual commitment to peace and nonviolence.** We share a commitment to seeing and hearing that of God in one another, even if we are sometimes imperfect at doing so. These commitments are vital.

As we live into the challenging days ahead, we urge everyone to approach this situation by answering to that of God of each and every person, to center yourself through spiritual practice, to lift up nonviolent solutions, and to think ahead to your safety and the safety of those you love even as you discern engaging in nonviolent direct action. We also encourage you to consider, should there be post-election instability, how you, your neighbors, and those around you—who might be more affected or at risk than some because of your location, race, health needs, or other factors—might address these risks or want to be in relationship with those you love around these issues. **Conscience, duty, and Spirit may call upon many of us to work across the political divides and with other groups to de-escalate the situation.**

Please remember, depending on how Election Day unfolds, it could be days or even weeks before all votes are counted, recognized, and the election hopefully resolved. Our shared efforts to ensure a peaceful resolution are needed throughout this time.

If you feel called, the way you may go about this could vary greatly. Many Friends have told me they will join peaceful demonstrations and try to de-escalate public flashpoints. Some of you may make calls to relatives and friends who feel differently than you do in an attempt to humanize one another even if you can't reach agreement. You may use your social media accounts to counter misinformation and escalation while encouraging cooperation and listening. You might collaborate with your local interfaith council. You may contact your local, regional and national government representatives. There are so many ways that you can contribute to what will hopefully be a peaceful and equitable outcome to this election.

There are also numerous resources for you to deepen your understanding of the spiritual basis of nonviolence, as well as to learn practical tools for de-escalation and to cultivate peaceful outcomes to difficult situations. We've included a listing of these resources following this letter.

We know from thousands of years of human history that should violence become widespread, it will have very negative multi-generational impacts. Let us act now to help create a foundation upon which we can lessen our divisions and work towards a peaceful world of equity and justice.

In Service,

Barry Crossno, General Secretary of Friends General Conference

Nonviolent Direct Action Resources, Training, and Workshops

Compiled by FGC's Communications Team, with appreciation to FGC staff and volunteers for their contributions!

- **QuakerSpeak Video** - [A Spiritual Response in Times of Division](#)
- **The Frontline Virtual Training on October 19th, 2020** - 2 Weeks Out: Election Defense On and Off the Ground
- **Beacon Hill Friends House Virtual Event Series** - Quaker Preparation & Response to the Election
- **Pendle Hill Virtual Event Video Recording** - [Can Quakers and Others Help Prevent an American Slide Into Dictatorship?](#) presented by George Lakey
- **American Friends Service Committee resource** - Bystander Intervention 101 (PDF)
- **Swarthmore College web resource** - Global Nonviolent Action Database
- **Waging Nonviolence article** - [10 things you need to know to stop a coup](#)
- **Pendle Hill Virtual Event on November 2nd, 2020** - [What Happens Wednesday? Preparing Ourselves for the Work Ahead with Eileen Flanagan](#)
- **Workshop by East Point Peace Academy on November 14th** - Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation
- **Choose Democracy Training with George Lakey** - [What to do if there's a coup/power grab \(multiple dates in October 2020\)](#)
- **Letter from FGC's Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee** - [Message to the National Council of Churches regarding Election Day 2020 in the U.S.](#)
- **Pendle Hill Pamphlet #397** - Quaker Witness as Sacrament
- **Pendle Hill Pamphlet #420** - [Waging Peace: Discipline and Practice](#)
- **Pendle Hill Pamphlet #424** - [Nonviolent Direct Action as a Spiritual Path](#)
- **Pendle Hill Pamphlet #431** - [Revelation and Revolution: Answering the Call to Radical Faithfulness](#)
- **Pendle Hill Pamphlet #451** - [Humanity in the Face of Inhumanity](#)
- Book Recommendations available at **QuakerBooks**:
 - [Waging Peace](#) by David Hartsough
 - [Lives That Speak](#) (anthology)
 - [Active Peace: A Mindful Path to a Nonviolent World](#) by G. Scott Brown
 - [Practicing Peace](#) by Catherine Whitmire
 - [The Essential Gandhi](#), edited by Louis Fischer
 - [Transforming Power for Peace](#) (anthology)
 - [This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century](#) by Mark Engler and Paul Engler
 - [Quakers and the Search for Peace](#), edited by Sharon Hoover
 - [The Peace Class: A Study of Effective Cheek-Turning, Neighbor-Loving and Sword-to-Plowshare Conversion](#) by Diana Hadley and David Weatherspoon
 - [For Children: Peace is an Offering](#) by Annette Lebox, illustrated by Stephanie Greagin
 - [For Children: Grandfather Gandhi](#) by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus

Strategies & Resources for Before, During, and After Election Day 2020

By Marta Rusek

Before the Election

- **Make a Self-Care Plan AND a Safety Plan** (one is for when you're having a bad day, the other is for when you're in crisis). [This resource from The Mighty](#) can help.

- **Write a personal statement on what the Peace Testimony looks like to you**, now and if there is a contested election. For inspiration, [check out these statements from Early Friends and Contemporary Quakers](#).
- **Check out AFSC's Bystander Intervention Resource here**, to stand with and advocate for community members who are most vulnerable to violence due to scapegoating and hate speech.
- **Check in with your monthly meeting or church** to see if there are plans for nonviolent direct action in the days after Election Day, support systems set up for members of the community that are most vulnerable to violence, and if your meeting space will be open for worship or if there will be virtual worship sessions available on Election Day and beyond.

During Election Day

- **Practice self-care.** Schedule a Zoom call or Netflix party with loved ones if watching the news conflicts with your self-care and safety plans.
- **Check in with loved ones who expressed the most concern or are fearful of a contested election.** If they feel unsafe and need to leave their home, make a plan with them (if you're willing to open your home to them, let them know that).
- **Communicate regularly** with your employer if you need time off (this is a stressful time), and consider re-scheduling or postponing meetings and deadlines, if you have that sort of flexibility.

After Election Day

- **Be mindful of your feelings and physical health.** Drink more water, take breaks as you need them, eat foods that give you energy, make time to move your body at home or take a walk, keep your safety plan handy, and get lots of sleep at bedtime. If there is a need and you decide to engage in nonviolent direct action of whatever sort, you will need to be rested mentally and physically.
- **Check out this virtual event from Friends Committee on National Legislation: [Thursdays with Friends, with Diane Randall - After the Elections, Now What?](#)**
- **If you are called to take to the streets with other Friends to protect our democracy through non-violent direct actions, plan ahead.** Let your loved ones know where you will be and how they can reach you. Bring snacks and water, and don't forget to mask up and socially distance as best as possible.
- **Regardless of the outcome of the election, stay vigilant and keep the momentum for peace, nonviolence, and the recognition of our shared humanity going in the years ahead.**

Did we miss anything? [Send us your recommended nonpartisan resources for nonviolent direct action, peace, and self-care here!](#)