

DECEMBER 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Simple Ways to Celebrate the Holidays This Year

1. Sit by the Hearth Indoors. Create a small fire in your fireplace (if you have one). Include plenty of hot cocoa.
2. Go ice skating.
3. Notice the smells of the season: pumpkin pie, eggnog, and the smell of pine trees. Walk through an outdoor Christmas Tree Village and notice the smell of pine.
4. Donate toys to Moorestown Meeting Local Toy Drive. Bring unwrapped toys to Meeting and leave them in the box provided. See Moorestown Friends Web-site for details.
5. Create a collage with old and new photos. If most of your pictures are on your phone, then go to a local Walmart or CVS and print them out via shutter-fly. Give the collage to a family member or friend whom you have not seen in some time.
6. Play an “old-school” board game, i.e, a game that you used to play when you were a teenager or youth. For example: Clue, Scrabble, or Trivial Pursuit are good group games.
7. Take a trip via car or foot around your town or other locale to admire the holiday decorations and the twinkling lights in your neighborhood.
8. Set aside an afternoon to make soups and stews. Provide a delicious meal to your friends and colleagues. Donate soups/stews to local churches.
9. Attend a community play.
10. Visit the beach with one or two others. Bring a kite, if you want, and a thermos full of hot cocoa. Walk along the water, sift the sand in your hand, and search for shells. When the cold air starts to hit, make sure to drink the cocoa and return to your car, turn the heat on and enjoy some holiday music for your ride home.
11. Visit a Holiday Market. However, instead of shopping, sit and watch the folks as they pass by. Appreciate the display of joy that you observed as people talk and interact.
12. Pick a person whom you haven't see in some time, but with whom you would like to re-connect. Send that person a handwritten card or letter and let them know you would like to reconnect.

NOVEMBER 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Mental Health Facts & Resources

Prevalence: In the United States, 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health condition in a given year, and 1 in 20 experience a serious mental illness.

Age of onset: Half of all mental health disorders begin before age 14, and 75% before age 24.

Treatment: Effective prevention and treatment options exist, but most people don't have access to them.

Risk factors: People who identify as two or more races are most likely to report a mental illness in the past year.

Suicide: Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-24.

Where can you get immediate help?

In life-threatening situations, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

If you are suicidal or in emotional distress, consider using the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988 or [chat online](#) to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. You can reach a specialized LGBTQI+ affirming counselor by texting "Q" to 988 or by calling 988 and pressing "3." Learn more: [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(disponible en español\)](#)

If you are a veteran, consider using the Veterans Crisis Line. Call 988, then press "1." You can also text 838255 or chat online. The Veterans Crisis Line is a 24-hour, confidential resource that connects veterans with a trained responder. The service is available to all veterans and those who support them, even if they are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare. Learn more: [Veterans Crisis Line \(disponible en español\)](#)

If you have experienced a disaster, consider using the Disaster Distress Helpline. Call or text 1-800-985-5990. The Disaster Distress Helpline provides immediate crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. The 24-hour, confidential helpline offers interpretation services in more than 100 languages. Learn more: [Disaster Distress Helpline \(disponible en español\)](#)

If you see concerning social media messages, contact the company's safety team. Social media companies have [safety teams](#) that can reach out to connect the person with the help they need. Learn more about [action steps to help someone having thoughts of suicide](#).

The National Alliance on Mental Illness HelpLine For more information about [mental health care resources and support](#), The NAMI HelpLine can be reached Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.–10 p.m. ET, at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or email at info@nami.org.

The Trevor Project For LGBTQIA+ youth looking for free, confidential crisis support, call 1-866-488-7386, text 'START' to 678-678 or [visit their website to chat](#) with a gender-affirming and queer-friendly counselor.

Substance abuse support Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have resources on their website, including virtual meetings. SAMHSA's National Helpline for mental and/or substance use disorders can be reached at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Oaks Integrated Care offers caring, compassionate programs for adults, children and families living with a mental illness. <https://oaksintcare.org/about/> or call [1-800-963-3377](tel:1-800-963-3377) Urgent care mental health services offered at 2051 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.

NJ Mental Health Hotlines

NJ Hope Line (suicide prevention) 855-654-6735
Reach NJ 844-732-2465
IME Addictions Access Center 844-276-2777

The Peer Recovery Warmline 877-292-5588.
National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255.
NJ Mental Health Cares 866-202-HELP (4357)

NJ Connect for Recovery 855-652-3737

Other Organizations and Resources

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/> The mission of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <https://www.nami.org> What started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979 has blossomed into the nation's leading voice on mental health. Today, we are an alliance of more than 600 local affiliates who work in your community to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need

Tips for talking to kids about world events <https://www.southridingpediatrics.com/from-storms-to-politics-how-to-talk-to-kids-about-world-events/>

OCTOBER 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Political Polarization and Ideological Conflict

Is election angst giving you the blues? Will polarization of the two parties lead to violence?

Consider some facts:

- Political partisans' negative views of the opposing party have risen from about 20% at the turn of the century to over 50% in 1922.
- American voters overall are less polarized than the politically engaged voters, but those more involved tend to hold misperceptions of the other side's beliefs.
- Extreme polarization is fed by misinformation and powered by social media.
- Polarization becomes emotional or "affective" polarization when people feel active dislike for those that don't agree.
- Causes of polarization are given as; rising economic inequality, polarized candidates, large amounts of money going to candidates, competition for power of the legislature, social media, differing levels of education, and to a lesser degree evangelicals, gerrymandering, and the electoral system.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/09/polarization-democracy-and-political-violence-in-the-united-states-what-the-research-says?lang=en>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/political-polarization-united-states>

Take Action:

- Watch Polarization in America https://youtu.be/F_Z5Rx-XiE8
- Get involved locally and focus on specific issues that can be shared by others with differing ideologies.
- Read or watch what an opposing party gets as its news source.

Go Further:

- Join Braver Angels www.braverangels.org
- Join Alternatives to Violence <https://www.avpnj.org/>
- Read **Hope for Cynics** by Jamil Zaki

SEPTEMBER 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Know How and Where to Vote this Election Season

Want to help protect democracy? Concerned about violence at voting sites?

Look into becoming a Poll Chaplain. Faiths United to Save Democracy (FUSD) “believes in safe, free, fair elections. Due to the concern with violence threatened at the polls, multi-faith, multi-racial, intergenerational poll chaplains will help to provide a calm and moral presence to vulnerable voters. “

Opportunities to train as a Poll Chaplain: www.turnoutsunday.com/volunteer-chaplain Trainings are Virtual; Potential training dates are September 9th, September 16th, or September 30th. Poll chaplains are needed primarily in Pennsylvania.

As the Election season is underway, be aware of registration deadlines and how to vote.

Can't remember your Polling place? Go to <https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-polling-location.shtml> and follow directions.

1. Election for President of the United States.

Date of Presidential Election: Tuesday, November 5th

Voter Registration Deadlines: Online registration deadline: **Tuesday, October 15, 2024**

Register by mail deadline: **Must be postmarked 21 days before Election Day**

- 2. Vote by Mail Option: Deliver your vote by mail ballot in person to County Board of Elections or drop off mail-in ballot at Secure Drop Box.**

Secure Drop Box in Moorestown:

Moorestown Town Hall

111 West 2nd Street

/// County Board of Elections

50 Rancocas Road, 1st Floor

Mount Holly NJ 08060

3. Early voting in New Jersey. Nj.gov

Every county in NJ will provide registered voters with early voting for the 2024 General Election. In-person early voting locations will be open Saturday, October 26, 2024 – Sunday, November 3, 2024 (the in-person early voting period). Hours will be Monday-

Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. and Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Need info on Early Voting location? Go to: <http://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-early-voting.shtml#Burlington>

JULY/AUGUST 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

School Supplies for Refugee Families

Following the Meeting's generous response last year, we are repeating our hands on call to action. We are again partnering with the Haddonfield Monthly Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee to collect **new** school supplies to equip the children of refugee families in South Jersey for the 2024-25 school year.

For many years, Priscilla Adams of Haddonfield Meeting, distributed school supplies to refugee students through her job working with refugees at Catholic Charities. With the Haddonfield Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Priscilla continues that work through the Refugee Assistance Fund of Haddonfield Meeting but they can use our help.

Last August, about 170 refugee students from pre-school through high school received backpacks with school supplies. Thanks to the help of many donors we are hopeful that we can provide for this many students for the 2024-25 school year.

This year the students come from Myanmar, Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Columbia, Uganda, and Haiti. These families are now living in Burlington, Camden, Cumberland and Gloucester Counties.

We welcome donations of all **new** school supplies such as those listed below. Starred items are especially in demand. **We will be collecting all of July and up to Sunday, August 11.** The supplies will be distributed to the students before the start of school in September.

We need: ***spiral notebooks & composition books***

 pens and pencils

 highlighters

 pencil sharpeners

Backpacks

erasers

markers

colored pencils

crayons

pocket folders

glue sticks

Donations can be left on the hallway bench inside the Moorestown Meetinghouse.

Our Meeting has a chance to make a real difference in the lives of these newcomers to our country. Please be generous!

JUNE 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Women's Health/Health Care

Did you know?

- Compared with women in 10 Western European and Scandinavian countries, US women report the worst physical health; 20% live with two or more chronic diseases, compared with 7% in Germany.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30896471/>

- “The United States has the worst maternal mortality rates of any wealthy nation. For Black Americans, maternal mortality has reached crisis proportions.”

<http://commonwealthfund.org>

- Not only have US women been known to lag in health care compared with other wealthy countries, but they also face disparities in access and status.

<https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101738966-pdf>

Recently, a decision by the Supreme Court that overturned Roe vs Wade (1972) has damaged accessibility of healthcare for US women by restricting and in some states completely eliminating a woman's right to choose. Illegal abortion is sending women back to poorer healthcare and loss of life as was common pre-1972. The right to safe abortion has been contested by those who don't accept that this is the same as denying women's right to health and gender equality. As far back as the year 2000, a briefing paper by the Center for Reproductive Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Committee called for governments/states to help women prevent unwanted pregnancies and ensure they don't have to undergo life-threatening abortions.

Despite these discouraging facts, there are prominent individuals and groups that actively advocate for women's health, healthcare, and gender equality. One example is the Alice Paul Institute that offers, among other things, girls' leadership programs. And there are members of Congress such as Patty Murray (D-WA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) that have brought women's health/healthcare issues to national attention. Finally, critical information about health and sexuality for women is now available HERE www.ourbodiesourselves.org

Still, there is much more to do.

Take Action:

- Write your senators and ask them to pass SJ Res 6 and demand ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. <http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/>
- Urge your senators to pass the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA)
- Visit and donate to the Center for Reproductive Rights. www.reproductiverights.org
- Read and donate to *The New Our Bodies Ourselves Today*. www.ourbodiesourselves.org
- Visit and donate to The Alice Paul Institute. <https://www.alicepaul.org/>

MAY 2024 CALL TO ACTION:

Gun Violence: Impact on Society, Proactive Policies for the Future

Gun Violence Facts:

- FACT: Guns account for **the leading cause of death** for children/adolescents in US.
- FACT: In 2020, gun-related deaths exceeded motor vehicle accidents as **the top cause of death** for those under 19 years old.
- FACT: In 2023, 42,967 people died from gun violence related injuries. In 2023, there were a total of **656 mass shootings** in the US.
- FACT: Although mass shootings are more publicized, **they are not the primary source** of gun violence. Most common acts of gun violence consist of suicides, household and community shootings.

Did you know that mental illness is not always a Predictor of Gun Violence?

- Mental Illness: Often stigmatized as the cause of gun violence. A small number of mass shooters experience mental illness.
- FACT: **95-97% of homicidal gun violence is not carried out** by individuals with mental illness. FACT: Fire-arm deaths committed by those with mental illness **are almost always suicides**. 85% of suicide attempts with firearms resulted in death.
- Gun Violence impacts the Health and Wellness of Individuals and Families:
- Increases in disorders, including substance use and psychiatric disorders, for those families who have suffered from gun related violence

What Has the Federal Government Done About Gun Violence?

President Biden signed **Bi-Partisan Safer Communities Act on June 25, 2022**

What The Act Does: **Expanded background checks** – requires federal criminal background check for gun buyers under the age of 21. **Incentives to States with Red Flag Laws:** provides for federal aid to states which create red flag laws that allow authorities to obtain court orders to temporarily remove guns from those deemed dangerous by a judge. **School Safety:** Federal aid for mental health support in schools including crisis services, violence prevention program, and mental health worker training

What Can Be Done at State Level: Policies to Protect Everyone's Rights

Enact Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO's) – States can enact legislation that temporarily restricts access to fund for individuals at elevated risk to harm self and others. **13 States currently have enacted legislation** to create **Extreme Protection Orders**

Provide public education on the importance of safe gun storage in the home. Assure that firearms have gun locks. **Provide training** to gun shop owners and shooting range employees to identify at risk persons whose only interest is to obtain a gun to die by suicide.

What Can You Do at the Local Level

Sign onto Take Action: Everytown for Gun Safety: <http://www.everytown.org/actions/>

Click on Link: Tell Congress : Reinstate The Assault Weapons Ban Now

APRIL 2024 CALL TO ACTION: WE SEEK AN EARTH TO BE RESTORED

On April 22 we will again celebrate Earth Day as we have for over fifty years. As Climate disruption becomes increasingly urgent, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has responded.

In March 2021 PYM approved Addressing Climate Change as a corporate witness. “A yearly meeting-wide witness is unique in that:

- There is an expectation that *every* friend, *every* household, *every* meeting, and the yearly meeting as a whole will each discern for themselves how they can respond to this call.
- It is the experience that our entire community and each of its members is asked to respond to God’s call, whether or not we experience the call as individuals.”*

Learn More

*Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Creating a Playbook for Climate Action: How to address climate change for individuals, households and meetings*. Download a copy of the Climate Action Playbook [here](#).

Take Action

Support a Green Amendment in New Jersey: A Green Amendment would guarantee NJ citizens the right to clean air, clean water, a healthier environment, and a stable climate. All government officials would be held accountable for protecting those rights by virtue of pledging to uphold the State Constitution. To learn more, watch a video of a recent educational webinar hosted by the League of Women Voters Camden County [here](#).

You can support getting a Green Amendment on the ballot in New Jersey by sending a League of Women Voters email to your legislators [here](#).

FEBRUARY 2024 CALL TO ACTION: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Each year we celebrate Black History Month in the US and around the world. We remember and learn about important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. **Did you know?**

- Black History Month was officially recognized by President Ford in 1976.
- Massachusetts granted African Americans the right to vote in 1780.
- In 1869, the 15th Amendment was passed granting Black men the right to vote.

African Americans and the Arts is the theme for 2024. “For centuries Western intellectuals denied or minimized the contributions of people of African descent to the arts as well as history – even as their artistry in many genres was mimicked an/or stolen.”
<https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2024-Black-History-Theme-African-Americans-and-the-Arts.pdf>

Learn more:

Listen to: Jazz, blues, gospel and other forms of Black and/or Black-inspired music. Check out Big Mama Thornton, Little Richard, and Otis Blackwell
<https://globalnews.ca/news/4321150/black-music-whitewashing-classic-rock/>

Watch: Videos on the History Channel <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history>, movies like **Elvis**, **Just Mercy**, **Selma**, **Eyes on the Prize** and **Rustin**, which was shown at Moorestown Meetinghouse in January.

Read: Literature by Alice Walker, Toni Morrison; poems by Amanda Gorman and Langston Hughes. Recent books like - [Christian Cooper's Better Living Through Birding](#).

Study Black Artists: [Alma Thomas](#), [Jacob Lawrence](#), and contemporary [Kara Walker](#) and [Faith Ringold](#).

Take Action:

- Join Moorestown Monthly Meeting's Anti-Racism Committee
- Get involved with www.blacklivesmatter.com
- Volunteer for the local NAACP <https://www.naacpnj.org/home>

JANUARY 2024 CALL TO ACTION: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

January is a good time to appreciate the value of a warm home to live in and to remember that this blessing is NOT shared by everyone.

Over the last twenty years the United States has experienced a decrease in available affordable housing. Now that temporary pandemic era assistance programs have ended, we are feeling the reality of this lack. According to the [Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University](#) “millions of households are now priced out of homeownership, grappling with housing cost burdens, or lacking shelter altogether, including a disproportionate share of people of color”.

Why don't we have enough affordable housing in New Jersey?

1. Rising building, rent and housing costs
2. Historically restrictive zoning and housing policies
3. Inadequate public assistance

Affordable housing in Moorestown

Moorestown has had a mixed record on providing affordable housing which is described [in this presentation by Moorestown Township](#). One of the more successful affordable housing programs in our town has been the work of MEND (Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development.) Founded in 1969, MEND provides affordable housing integrated within communities throughout South Jersey. You can learn more about the history of MEND from Warren Sawyer himself, one of the founders, in [this video](#).

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