

## Apartheid-Free Churches, Congregations, and Communities Conference

Live Oak Friends Meeting, 1318 W 26th St, Houston, TX 77008

October 26-27, 2023

### Meeting Description

The AFSC Palestine Activism Joint Program invites pledged organizations of the Apartheid-Free Congregations/Churches/Communities coalition for our first face-to-face conference.

Some of the questions we will try to address during the meeting are the following:

1. What does it mean to be an Apartheid-Free Congregation, Church, or Community? What are the commitments and actions taken or planned so far? What are some successes, and what are some cautionary tales?
2. Who are the groups in the coalition? Who do we need to invite to the coalition? How do we communicate and work together?
3. What resources do we have so far, and how are they being used and received? What materials does your group find most helpful? How will we further develop our shared resources and support outreach to new groups, education, divestment, and other actions?

### Agenda

Thursday, October 26

4:00-4:30	Check in (Please take COVID tests before you arrive and/or mask inside to make the meeting accessible to everyone; please mask if traveling by air)
4:30-5:00	Opening words, introductions, community agreements
5:00-5:30	AFSC staff update on Palestine/Israel, report on meeting our goals so far: coalition pledge signatory numbers, website content, and other accomplishments, and opportunities [not deep dive, just summarizing]
5:30-6:15	Discussion: What does it mean to be an Apartheid-Free Community?  What are the commitments and actions taken or planned so far?  Ad hoc reports from group representatives with time for discussion.

6:15-7:15	Shared dinner (including setup and cleanup)
7:15-8:00	Cautionary tales: TBD Success stories: UCC Solidarity Circles and other practices
8:00-8:30	Group process and content evaluation; needs for tomorrow; sign up for shared Uber

Friday, October 27

9:00-9:30	Check in, refreshments
9:30-10:00	Discuss initiative development: Analyze who is participating and who we need to engage and how. How do we communicate and work together?
10:00-11:00	What resources do we have so far, how are they being used, and how are they being received? What is needed? Group feedback on elements of the Apartheid-Free Communities platform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Resources (educational materials, handouts, toolkit...)</li> <li>· Actions</li> <li>· Organizing and outreach</li> <li>· Anti-racist and intersectional approach</li> </ul>
11:00-11:45	Sharing, questions, and discussion
11:45-12:30	Break, shared lunch by geographies
12:30-12:45	Summary, group process and content evaluation
12:45-1:00	Sign up for working and other groups
1:00	Leave Live Oak Friends Meeting House Interest groups can continue to meet during the afternoon, perhaps at the hotel or outside the meeting house

## **Meeting Venue: Live Oak Friends Meeting**

Thanks to Live Oak Friends Meeting for hosting our gathering. From their website: “We are an open, welcoming community of [The Religious Society of Friends](#), commonly called Quakers. . . . Our meeting house is also a [James Turrell Skyspace](#) that is open to the public every Friday at sunset.” See <https://friendshouston.org/> for more information. There are some dedicated parking spaces for the venue, and street parking nearby.

## **Transportation**

Live Oak Friends Meeting is about six miles from the Hilton Post Oak Hotel which is where the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights will host its conference from October 27-29. Sign up for that conference [here](#).

Ride sharing or taxi will be the fastest way to travel. The price for a one-way ride share (Uber, Lyft) might be as low as \$9 and takes 10-16 minutes.

Houston has public transportation, but to get between the hotel and our venue you will have to ride two or three buses with about an hour of travel time each way. One-way fare is \$1.25, with free transfers for up to three hours in one direction. You can pay with exact cash or a mobile app. See <https://www.ridemetro.org/>. All buses are ADA compliant (wheelchair accessible).

## **Meals**

Dinner on Thursday evening and lunch on Friday will be available by pre-paid orders. More information about meals will be in a separate communication.

## **Childcare**

We are hopeful that we can provide childcare in a classroom of the meeting house. Advance reservations would be needed.

If you need assistance with the costs of meals and/or transportation, let us know, in case we are able to find some funding to help.

## **Houston Area Attractions**

Harris County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. You can find just about any kind of cuisine in the Greater Houston Area. Our meeting venue and the hotel for the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights conference are several miles west of downtown Houston. Memorial Park is one of the larger parks that is centrally located. Discovery Green is a park in the downtown area. The Museum District with multiple great places to visit is about eight miles from the meeting venue. Within that district is extensive green space. Many other museums are located in other areas. The Houston Galleria is nearby. The NASA Visitor Center is about an hour to the southeast.