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### **Thousands of Faith Communities Across the U.S. Pledge to Save Lives**

*Thousands places of worship and hundreds of thousands of faith community members join historic, one-of-a-kind national movement*

WASHINGTON, DC— The [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) (Action Alliance), the nation’s public-private partnership championing suicide prevention as a national priority, and its [Faith Communities Task Force](#) is leading a national and unprecedented movement aimed at uniting hundreds of faith communities across the U.S. for the [National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life](#). Corresponding with National Suicide Prevention Month (September) and World Suicide Prevention Day (Sept. 10), the national movement will bring the faith community together the second weekend of September (Sept. 8-10) to break the silence around suicide and help all who struggle.

This monumental effort aims to bring together faith communities – all traditions, regardless of creed – nationwide to offer prayers and focus on tangible ways to be there for those in distress. This organic and growing movement was started by members of the Action Alliance Faith Communities Task Force, which aims to equip faith communities with resources to help prevent suicide. Since the movement began several weeks ago, it has been able to reach thousands of places of worship and hundreds of thousands of faith community members nationwide.

“The National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life is a unique opportunity for faith leaders to address this important topic that impacts many of their faith community members and let them know they are not alone,” said Rabbi Ben Goldstein. “Rabbis, Ministers, Priests, Imams – *all* faith leaders – must play a role now and throughout the year in fostering mental health and helping to prevent suicide and suicidal thoughts among faith community members – especially those who are struggling or in crisis.”

Faith communities are in a unique position to reach a very large portion of the millions of Americans who struggle with serious thoughts of suicide each year. [Research shows](#) that individuals with mental health problems, including those who are suicidal, frequently turn to faith community leaders for help – before they will seek care from mental health professionals.

“Faith communities are natural settings for suicide prevention since we know that being a part of a faith community is a powerful protective factor,” said Rev. Talitha Arnold, Executive Committee member of the Action Alliance and co-lead of the Faith Communities Task Force. “Reaching faith communities is a

key strategy in helping to save lives and achieve the Action Alliance’s goal of reducing the annual suicide rate 20 percent by 2025.”

Suicide touches everyone – all ages, genders, races, ethnicities and religious groups – and in all parts of the country. More than 9 million adults reported serious thoughts of suicide in 2015, and at least one million people attempt suicide, however, the vast majority of adults who attempt suicide – with treatment and support – *do* recover. Having an active faith and a healthy involvement in a faith community have both been shown through research to help protect people from suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and death by suicide, and help care for those who have lost loved ones to suicide.

“After losing my son to suicide our family sought help, support and care from our church,” said Kay Warren, Co-Founder of Saddleback Church and a suicide loss survivor. “Since my son’s death we have encouraged greater open dialogue within our faith community about mental health challenges so together we can be there for someone within our community who may be struggling and provide a pathway toward hope.”

**More information about the National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life and how to get involved.**

The National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope & Life is part of [a larger national effort](#) spearheaded by the Action Alliance in September and during National Suicide Prevention Week. The Action Alliance and its many public and private partners are coming together September 11-16 to inform the public about simple actions, like offering resources to faith communities, that can support someone in crisis and potentially help save a life. The Action Alliance is encouraging organizations, like the Faith Communities Task Force, to step up to educate the public about the role anyone, anywhere can play in being there for someone who is struggling or in crisis.

Consider becoming involved in the National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life by:

- [pledging to participate](#) on the weekend of 9/8,
- [watching the video](#) about the National Day of Prayer effort
- [viewing sample prayers](#) from diverse faith traditions, and
- [promoting the hashtag #PrayFHL](#) (and [#NSPW](#)).

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**FOR MEDIA PARTNERS:**

Research shows that the media may influence suicide rates by the way they report on suicide. Evidence suggests that when the media tell stories of people positively coping in suicidal moments, more suicides can be prevented. We urge all members of the media working on these stories to refer to the [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#) for best practices for safely and accurately reporting on suicide. For stories of persons with lived experience of suicidality and finding hope, refer to [www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org](http://www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org).

**NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

The [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) is the public-private partnership working to advance the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) and make suicide prevention a national priority. Learn more at [actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org](http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org) and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following the Action Alliance on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

A key priority of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* is recognizing journalists for safe and responsible reporting of suicide and suicide prevention. We encourage journalists to consider applying for the [SAVE Award for Excellence in Reporting On Suicide](#).

**FAITH.HOPE.LIFE CAMPAIGN**

[Faith.Hope.Life](#) - Celebrating Reasons to Live, an initiative of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance), is an opportunity for every faith community in the United States, regardless of creed, to focus one Sabbath each year on the characteristics common to most faiths that also help prevent suicides. *Faith.Hope.Life* is supported by leaders in faith, business, health care, government, and social justice.