

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 



# VOTE

## *faithfully*

### *Election Engagement Toolkit*

“It is a Christian obligation to vote, and more than that, it is the church’s responsibility to help get souls to the polls.”

-Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Parts of this guide were prepared in collaboration with:



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST



Getting souls to the polls isn't just about casting our own vote, but about working together so we all can vote and vote faithfully. We can empower every voice in our congregations in this work.

Check out resources below for getting souls to the polls in your faith community! New resources will be added to [our website](#), so check back often.

Write to us with ideas at: [eppn@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:eppn@episcopalchurch.org).

Included in this toolkit:

#### Action Steps

- ✓ On COVID-19
- ✓ Register
- ✓ Mobilize
- ✓ Communicate
- ✓ Advocate

#### Worship

- ✓ Quotes
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Prayers

“Cast your vote, not on a partisan basis, not based on your biases, but vote your values. Vote the values of human dignity and equality. Vote the values of the rock on which this country was built. Vote.”

-Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Note: Churches, as nonprofit organizations, must follow certain guidelines when participating in elections. Churches may not campaign, openly or otherwise, for or against candidates for public office. IRS guidelines permit houses of worship to involve their members in the political process through education, voter registration, and candidate participation in town halls. Here are more [resources on what your church can and cannot do](#) during election season. The IRS also has a publication that you can use as a guide for your election engagement activities titled “[Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations](#).”

# On COVID-19

*Prepare to be nimble and creative in your voter engagement.*

The U.S. has successfully conducted elections during a pandemic, like [during the 1918 flu](#). And just like those 1918 midterms, we expect this year's election to look quite different depending on where in the U.S. you are. This is a result of expected variation in the severity of COVID-19 from region to region, prompting various levels of precautions, and due to the fact that most election decisions are made at the state level. A few additional points to keep in mind as you consider engaging in this election:

- ✓ **Become a Poll Worker:** In the 2018 election, [58% of poll workers were 61 or older](#). In the last presidential election, there were [over 917,000 poll workers](#). While age is not the only determining factor of risk for COVID-19, there is great concern that we will have a shortage of poll workers for the 2020 election. This trend is not just due to COVID-19, however, as there has been an growing [shortage of poll workers](#) in the past several elections. If you are able and comfortable, consider signing up to become a poll worker this year!
- ✓ **Monitor and Publicize New State Procedures:** States are already shifting election processes for primaries and the November election. We expect these shifts to continue between now and Election Day, regardless of any activity at the federal level. One barrier to voter access will be public education with credible information about these updated processes—for example, if a state has moved to no-excuse absentee (mail-in) ballots, updating people on this new process and associated deadlines takes real marketing work and funding. Make sure your community stays informed about these developments.
- ✓ **Equip Yourself Against Disinformation:** Use our new resource on combatting disinformation, an anticipating underlying problem that has been growing in severity for quite some time, independent of COVID-19.

## REGISTER

*You cannot vote unless you are registered! Don't procrastinate— get registered today!*

- ✓ Visit <https://vote.gov/> to **get registered NOW**.
- ✓ Even if you believe you are registered, [double-check your voter registration status](#) to make sure.
- ✓ You don't have to register alone! Find friends and fellow parishioners who are not yet registered and **sign up together**. You can even make it a virtual event if you are able to register online or request registration form by mail.
- ✓ Celebrate the fourth Tuesday of September as **National Voter Registration Day**.
- ✓ **Talk to youth and young adults** about the importance of registering and help get them registered. Many states [allow young people to register](#) as long as they will turn 18 on or before the next election.
- ✓ **Host a voter registration drive.** [Use this toolkit](#) from Rock the Vote for information on hosting your own voter registration drive, including state-specific information.

## MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

*Help your community members access polling stations on Election Day.*

- ✓ **Join Lawyers and Collars.** This initiative engages pastors, imams, rabbis, and other faith leaders to join together with lawyers to support citizens in areas where voter suppression and intimidation may occur. The presence of faith leaders and trained legal experts will provide needed support to communities fearful of

suppression and intimidation. [Check out their website](#) for more information. **Parishes and clergy throughout The Episcopal Church can partner with Lawyers and Collars in their selected states.**

- ✓ **On Election Day, give rides to the polls.\*** Not everyone has an easy means of transportation to get to their polling location. Use these signup sheets to match people willing to offer transportation with those who are in need of a ride to the polls.  
[Sign up sheet for transportation volunteer](#)  
[Sign up sheet for transportation needs](#)
- ✓ **Provide childcare service during election hours.\*** Voters with young children may need childcare so that they are able to vote. Use these signup sheets to find volunteers for providing childcare and identifying those who are in need of childcare.  
[Sign up sheet for childcare volunteer](#)  
[Sign up sheet for childcare needs](#)
- ✓ **Make sure your community members know where to vote.** Finding your polling location is simple: you can now search “find my polling location” via Google and you will be directed to provide your voting address. Google will provide early voting information, Election Day polling locations, and ballot information! You can also [go to Rock the Vote](#) for voting info.
- ✓ **Know the laws for community members with past criminal convictions.** Laws around voting eligibility relating to criminal record vary by state. Use and share [this resource](#) to inform people on their eligibility to vote.
- ✓ **Equip your community members with voter protection tools.** Make sure every member of your congregation knows where they can turn for help if they have trouble casting their ballot. Share [this information about election protection](#). **Include voter protection information in your church bulletin!**
- ✓ **Use the Civil Discourse Curriculum** to help your parish have conversations across political difference, finding ways to have productive dialogue with your neighbors, rather than letting political campaigns and elections polarize your community. Find the full curriculum [here](#).

*\*These actions may not be advisable on Election Day depending on health guidance for your area. Please follow public health official and Episcopal Church guidance regarding in-person contact before conducting any activities face-to-face.*

## COMMUNICATE

*Use common church platforms for quick and easy communication to encourage your community to get out the vote.*

- ✓ **Announce Election Day in your church bulletin** or newsletter. Familiarize your congregation with any services you are offering to help people get to the polls. We have [sample graphics on our website](#).
- ✓ **Put up signs** encouraging your community to #VoteFaithfully! Here is a sample:  
*Voting is service to our community. #VoteFaithfully this Election Day, November 3! Are you voting?*
- ✓ **Engage on social media.** Demonstrate to your friends, family, and community your church’s commitment to our common life this election season. Tell them that you #VoteFaithfully. Here are some sample posts:  
*When we vote, we publicly declare our commitment to love our neighbor and to seek the common good. Let’s spread the word that we #VoteFaithfully!*  
*I listen, I pray, and I #VoteFaithfully on Election Day!*  
*I #VoteFaithfully because voting is a commitment we make to our community.*

## ADVOCATE

*In a democracy, voting rights are fundamental to the dignity of every citizen, and the free practice of that right is necessary for the establishment of justice.*

We have an obligation through our Baptismal Covenant to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

General Convention policies lay out the importance of voting rights, opposing voter suppression, and ensuring that all U.S. citizens have the right to vote and to representation in Congress. Indeed, General Convention resolution 2012-C033 notes that, “The United States has been a vigorous human rights advocate for many years, opposing arbitrary restrictions on the right to vote and insisting on fairly conducted elections for legislative representatives.”

The Episcopal Church “supports equal treatment of the fundamental rights of similarly situated citizens, including the right to vote for elected representatives who decide tax and military service obligations, as well as deciding the benefits of citizenship”

- ✓ **Educate yourself.** Voting policies vary by state/region. Learn about your local, state and federal voting rules, locations and procedures, and any potential challenges certain people may face.
- ✓ **Call on your local, state, and federal representatives** to support policies that ensure every American is able to cast their vote. Be as specific to your local context as possible.
- ✓ **Do not miss opportunities to write elected officials!** Subscribe to the [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#) for action alerts or follow them on social media @TheEPPN on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Selected General Convention policies:

- ✓ [2015](#) Learn about ways that historic racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement are continued today through active and passive systems
- ✓ [2012](#) District of Columbia should be granted full representation in the Congress that taxes them and decides whether or not to go to war
- ✓ [2015](#) Call on the U.S. to truly accept those who have served their sentences as restored community members by allowing them to vote

## Bonus Action

**Ballot Measures** or referenda may appear alongside votes for candidates. These are opportunities to vote directly on an issue in your state. Make sure you do advance research on these initiatives before you go to cast your vote. The wording of ballot measures can be unclear, so it is not obvious whether a “yes” or “no” vote means you support the initiative or oppose it. Read carefully to make sure you’re making the decision you want to make. You can even go a step further and propose a ballot initiative of your own after learning the local process.

## VOTE FAITHFULLY SUNDAY

Observe October 25<sup>th</sup> as “Vote Faithfully Sunday” to help folks remember and prepare for Election Day. Reflect on our commitment to the common good, provide others with the information they need to register to vote and to cast their ballot, and prepare to vote as a community.

### Quotes for thought and communal reflection

*By Minister Jason Carson Wilson, M. Div., Justice and Peace Policy Fellow, United Church of Christ*

Ephesians 4:31-32: Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

John Quincy Adams, 6<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America: “Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost.”

Bayard Rustin: "If we desire a society of peace, then we cannot achieve such a society through violence. If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society. If we desire a society that is democratic, then democracy must become a means as well as an end."

Audre Lorde, *Our Dead Behind Us: Poems*: "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."

Isaiah 58:6-10:

Is this not the fast which I choose,  
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the bands of the yoke,  
And to let the oppressed go free  
And break every yoke?  
Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry  
And bring the homeless poor into the house;  
When you see the naked, to cover him;  
And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

## Music

- ✓ "Give Me Jesus" - Arranged by Garrett Hedlund
- ✓ "Somebody's Knocking At The Door" - Arranged by Ronald Melrose
- ✓ "Music Down In My Soul" - Moses Hogan
- ✓ "We Are Marching In The Light"
- ✓ "Cuando el pobre, When the Poor Ones"
- ✓ "Now, Behold The Lamb"
- ✓ "Lead Me, Guide Me"

## Prayers of the People

*By Rev. Shannon Kelly, Director Department of Faith Formation, The Episcopal Church*

Loving God, creator of this world who is the source of our wisdom and understanding, watch over this nation during this time of election. Help us to see how our faith informs our principles and actions.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

We give thanks for the right to vote. Help us to hold this privilege and responsibility with the care and awareness it merits, realizing that our vote matters and that it is an act of faith.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

Guide us through this election as a nation, state, and community as we vote for people to do work on our behalf and on the behalf of our communities. Help us to vote for people and ballot initiatives that will better our community and our world so it may reflect the values Christ taught us.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

Help us create communities that will build your kingdom here on earth – communities that will protect the poor, stand up for the vulnerable, advocate for those who are not seen and heard, and listen to everyone's voice.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

We pray for this nation that is deeply divided. May we come together for the common good and do as you have called us to do – to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you through creation.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

Help us act out of love, mercy and justice rather than out of arrogance or fear.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

Lord, continue to guide us as we work for the welfare of this world. We pray for places that are torn by violence, that they may know peace.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

We pray for communities who are struggling with inequality, unrest, and fear. May we all work toward reconciliation with one another and with God.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**

Help us to listen in love, work together in peace, and collaborate with one another as we seek the betterment of our community and world.

Intercessor: God, our creator,

**People: Guide us in truth and love.**