



# SACRED SEASON OF VOTING

A Voter Action Toolkit by the  
Faithful Democracy Campaign for the  
2020 General Election

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OF  
VOTING



# The 2020 Sacred Season of Voting

## Background:

This year COVID-19 will lead many people to vote early-in-person or vote-by-mail. Special circumstances call for mass voter education and mobilization efforts to amplify the importance of voting early.

Accordingly, Faithful Democracy invites you to participate in a multi-faith voter action campaign from Thursday, October 1st through the election. Each week, a simple toolkit is posted with strategic faith messaging, social media, and reflections grounded in key religious markers to communicate the significance of this season of voting to people of faith.

***“As trusted messengers, faith leaders have the unique opportunity to mobilize, educate, register, protect and inspire communities to vote in the 2020 election.”***

- [Faithful Voter Toolkit](#), Faith in Public Life

All three Abrahamic traditions and other major world religions incorporate seasonal celebrations, observed holy days and other markers for times of special importance to the faithful. Communally moving through these events with focused intentions serves to deepen faith and solidarity among believers. Collective observances help communities of faith maintain cohesion, fortify collective memory, and provide grounding in a greater power at work. Faithful Democracy and our multi-faith partners bring this familiar practice to bear for the 2020 general election.

The Sacred Season of Voting is meant to be a resource to ground voters in faith during a turbulent, anxious time and to energize people of faith around the power of the vote in this extended 2020 election season. Our accompanying toolkit aims to help voters take the necessary steps to ensure they cast their ballots safely and successfully while avoiding the common pitfalls seen in some 2020 primary elections. The Sacred Season of Voting moves us through the difficult weeks leading up to November 3rd and prepares us for the potential uncertainty as results are certified.

Each week we will pull from themes of holy celebrations observed by our multi-faith partners, including: Sukkot, the Feast of St. Francis and St. Luke, Mawlid al-Nabi al-Sharif, Navaratri, and the Feast of All Saints. Weekly reflections grounded in the religious holy days are combined with messaging around key election benchmarks, online resources and helpful tips that can be shared on social media.

In a secular democracy, participating in the political process through voting is a similarly sacred, communal, and familiar experience. We hope that by tying sacred themes to this period of voting, we can mobilize more voters of faith into action. We encourage participation and use of this campaign in whatever way is most helpful. Let us know how you'll use the Sacred Season of Voting: [\[link\]](#)

## Week 3 Contents

- [Title & Theme for the Week:](#)
- [Faith Messaging:](#)
- [Strategic Messaging for this Week](#)
- [Engagement Opportunities](#)
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## Faith Messaging:

We are well into the Sacred Season of Voting when nearly [10 million](#) Americans have already cast their ballots in the general election! This third week we look to our Christian and Hindu sisters and brothers in faith for inspiration with the Feast of Saint Luke and the beginning of Navratri, the Hindu Festival of Nine Nights.

**The Feast of Saint Luke** is Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> on the Christian liturgical calendar in remembrance of one of the four authors of the New Testament Gospels. St. Luke was an Evangelist, the writer of the third Gospel, and is the patron saint of physicians, artists, and students. Luke was a doctor and early disciple who traveled with St. Paul. He was known as the “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14).

In Christian Scripture, each Gospel of the New Testament is a different telling of the life, ministry, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ—the central story of Christian faith. Taken together, the Gospels convey the truth of the Good News of salvation for Christian believers. While they generally tell the same story, each has its own lens and can vary significantly in places. Luke contextualizes his telling to consider God's overall historical purpose and the place of the church within it. Luke's Gospel also helps us gain a deeper appreciation of the compassion Jesus feels for others, particularly the “little people” prominently featured in his account. Luke is also the author of the *Acts of the Apostles*, an important book of the New Testament which follows the Apostles after Jesus and the origins of the Church in early communities. What wisdom can we glean from St. Luke in reflecting on this election?



We know that the ravages of COVID 19 continue to require the tireless efforts of frontline physicians and healthcare providers even into this election season. Many voting protocols have changed to allow voters to avoid unnecessary exposure to the virus. Vulnerability to or fear of COVID should not deter American voters from exercising the right to cast their ballot. Voting early or by mail are the best ways to help socially distance voters and minimize exposure at crowded polls on Election Day. There are still many options and ample time to vote early in whatever way accommodates your health concerns so make a plan and vote.

St. Luke reminds us that the entirety of truth is never held by only one storyteller. Christians hold all of the Gospels as equally true—even where they differ or seem to conflict. Taken together they provide a more nuanced and rich understanding of the complex truth of our faith. This Sacred Season is a time to reflect on the truth of our nation. It has been a beacon of freedom to the world, with 250 years of advancement towards a more equitable, inclusive democracy where all citizens have the right to vote. It was also founded on a system of slavery which even today perpetrates systemic injustices and disenfranchisement onto communities of color, Native peoples and other marginalized populations. In 2020 Americans are called to confront the complex truth of our development and our shortfalls as a nation. Insisting that every vote counts—and that every vote is counted—is a testament to the deeper truth of our ideals.

As St. Luke knew, context helps us make sense of a story. It is all too easy to be consumed by the confusing, disconcerting barrage of warnings about this election. To be sure, there are unprecedented challenges, but it is also true that the 2020 election is only the latest test in the grand experiment in American democracy. In fact, a century ago we successfully held elections during a deadly contagious pandemic. We also managed to conduct an election in the middle of the Civil War! These challenges are not insurmountable, and in 2020 they are ours to overcome, thus paving the way for the next act in our national story.

**Navratri - The Festival of Nine Nights** begins on October 17th and is a significant Hindu festival. It is a nine day celebration of the triumph of good over evil, of light overcoming darkness. Large numbers of Hindu believers across the globe pray for good health, prosperity, purity of mind, love, and peace during this time—prayers for us to amplify during this Sacred Season of Voting in the U.S.

In this election, the struggle between light and dark should not be framed as a partisan battle. For people of faith, we hope for an election that is transparent, clear, open, and safe followed by a nonviolent and methodical counting of the votes to determine the outcome. However, forces from within and outside of our government are using debunked narratives and disinformation to sow chaos, fear and confusion among the electorate. These same forces push voter suppression and intimidation tactics to taint the election outcome. Next week's reflection will delve more into the wisdom that **Navratri** can offer for our own will to prevail in having a free, safe, fair and peaceful election.



## Week 3: Early Voting Is Here

October 12 - October 18, 2020

This election comes with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. For one, COVID-19 has raised additional barriers to an already complex political process. COVID-19's social distancing measures require people to observe six-foot distances in most public spaces and some jurisdictions may have fewer polling places open. COVID has also tragically affected people's livelihoods and many voters are losing their homes. This is just one of many interrelated issues that may amplify barriers to voters in marginalized groups since the voting system in the U.S. tends to favor access for those with racial, economic, and social privilege.

Fortunately, the national landscape has dramatically changed with COVID and may yet result in permanent positive changes to public life and civic engagement. For their part, many local, state and federal governments have responded generously to the reality of COVID by expanding access to the ballot box through no-excuse absentee ballot voting, approving longer periods of early voting, and educating voters about their options. These positive examples of changes under COVID are counterbalanced, unfortunately, by cases of states limiting access to the ballot box.

This week our messaging centers on early voting, which has taken new life under COVID with more than 10 million voters having already cast their ballots. It is with new hope that we embrace elections where voting takes place over multiple weeks, thus making the ballot more accessible to large numbers of voters.

It is still early in the season and there are still many opportunities to energize, inform, register, protect and inspire communities to vote in the 2020 election. The following resource provides opportunities for engagement and offers interreligious spiritual grounding.

## Strategic Messaging for Week 3:

**Early Voting is Here to Stay:** Early voting kicked off for more states this week. You can vote now in-person in Arizona, California, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming. Early voting is a safe way to guarantee your vote is counted and avoid crowds on Election Day. No one should have to choose between exercising the right to vote and their health. Many states are approaching their registration deadlines; it is time to ensure that everyone is ready to vote early and safely, whether in person or by mail.

### Registration

**Register to Vote:** It is likely not too late to register to vote! You cannot vote unless you do--so get started today. It takes around 4-minutes.

- Visit <https://www.vote.org/?campaign=FaithfulDemocracy> to get registered NOW.
- Always [double-check](#) to make sure you're registered.

- 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.

**Registration Deadlines:** Many states have voter registration deadlines that pass this week!

**Deadlines to Register in Week 3:** Oct 12 - Oct 18

State	Registration Deadline	Notes
Alabama	10/12	Registration by mail
Alaska	10/12	Registration by mail
Arizona	10/12	Registration by mail
Arkansas	10/12	Registration by mail
California	10/12	Registration by mail
Colorado	10/12	Registration by mail
Connecticut	10/12	Registration by mail
Delaware	10/12	Registration by mail
District of Columbia	10/12	Registration by mail
Florida	10/12	Registration by mail
Georgia	10/12	Registration by mail
Hawaii	10/12	Registration by mail
Idaho	10/12	Registration by mail
Illinois	10/12	Registration by mail
Indiana	10/12	Registration by mail
Iowa	10/12	Registration by mail
Kansas	10/12	Registration by mail
Kentucky	10/12	Registration by mail
Louisiana	10/12	Registration by mail
Maine	10/12	Registration by mail
Maryland	10/12	Registration by mail
Massachusetts	10/12	Registration by mail
Michigan	10/12	Registration by mail
Minnesota	10/12	Registration by mail
Mississippi	10/12	Registration by mail
Missouri	10/12	Registration by mail
Montana	10/12	Registration by mail
Nebraska	10/12	Registration by mail
Nevada	10/12	Registration by mail
New Hampshire	10/12	Registration by mail
New Jersey	10/12	Registration by mail
New Mexico	10/12	Registration by mail
New York	10/12	Registration by mail
North Carolina	10/12	Registration by mail
North Dakota	10/12	Registration by mail
Ohio	10/12	Registration by mail
Oklahoma	10/12	Registration by mail
Oregon	10/12	Registration by mail
Rhode Island	10/12	Registration by mail
South Carolina	10/12	Registration by mail
South Dakota	10/12	Registration by mail
Tennessee	10/12	Registration by mail
Texas	10/12	Registration by mail
Utah	10/12	Registration by mail
Vermont	10/12	Registration by mail
Virginia	10/12	Registration by mail
Washington	10/12	Registration by mail
West Virginia	10/12	Registration by mail
Wisconsin	10/12	Registration by mail
Wyoming	10/12	Registration by mail

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

State	Registration Deadline	Notes
Alabama	10/12	Registration by mail
Alaska	10/12	Registration by mail
Arizona	10/12	Registration by mail
Arkansas	10/12	Registration by mail
California	10/12	Registration by mail
Colorado	10/12	Registration by mail
Connecticut	10/12	Registration by mail
Delaware	10/12	Registration by mail
District of Columbia	10/12	Registration by mail
Florida	10/12	Registration by mail
Georgia	10/12	Registration by mail
Hawaii	10/12	Registration by mail
Idaho	10/12	Registration by mail
Illinois	10/12	Registration by mail
Indiana	10/12	Registration by mail
Iowa	10/12	Registration by mail
Kansas	10/12	Registration by mail
Kentucky	10/12	Registration by mail
Louisiana	10/12	Registration by mail
Maine	10/12	Registration by mail
Maryland	10/12	Registration by mail
Massachusetts	10/12	Registration by mail
Michigan	10/12	Registration by mail
Minnesota	10/12	Registration by mail
Mississippi	10/12	Registration by mail
Missouri	10/12	Registration by mail
Montana	10/12	Registration by mail
Nebraska	10/12	Registration by mail
Nevada	10/12	Registration by mail
New Hampshire	10/12	Registration by mail
New Jersey	10/12	Registration by mail
New Mexico	10/12	Registration by mail
New York	10/12	Registration by mail
North Carolina	10/12	Registration by mail
North Dakota	10/12	Registration by mail
Ohio	10/12	Registration by mail
Oklahoma	10/12	Registration by mail
Oregon	10/12	Registration by mail
Rhode Island	10/12	Registration by mail
South Carolina	10/12	Registration by mail
South Dakota	10/12	Registration by mail
Tennessee	10/12	Registration by mail
Texas	10/12	Registration by mail
Utah	10/12	Registration by mail
Vermont	10/12	Registration by mail
Virginia	10/12	Registration by mail
Washington	10/12	Registration by mail
West Virginia	10/12	Registration by mail
Wisconsin	10/12	Registration by mail
Wyoming	10/12	Registration by mail

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

## Vote Early by Mail

Request a Mail-in Ballot: Vote-by-mail (VBM) or “Absentee voting” looks different in each state. Some states send these ballots automatically, but most do not. It’s important to take steps now to request a ballot to vote by-mail, particularly as more [states move to expand VBM eligibility](#) due to COVID-19, and to return your mail-in ballot by the deadline.

- Simple Vote-by-Mail Instructions:
  - ◆ Request your mail-in ballot by the deadline
  - ◆ Receive your mail-in ballot via USPS
  - ◆ Follow the instructions carefully and be sure to use the security envelope
  - ◆ Return your mail-in ballot by the deadline (whether via USPS or to a drop-off location)
- Visit <https://www.vote.org/?campaign=FaithfulDemocracy> to request a ballot now!

**VBM Deadlines:** The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is different for each state, and they can differ if you’re requesting a VBM ballot online or by mail. Request your ballot TODAY to avoid any possible delays. Rejoice in the simple act of requesting and casting a ballot by mail in your state.

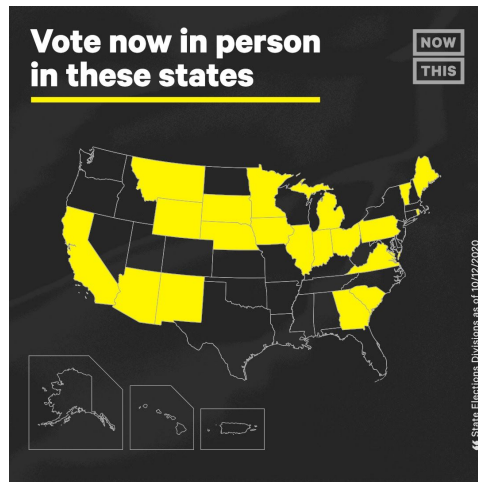
- Visit <https://www.voteamerica.com/vote-by-mail-deadlines/> to see these deadlines.

## Vote Early In-Person

**Where to Vote:** As many states are already offering early in-person voting, voters may go to early-voting polling locations to cast their ballot before election day, saving time, and possibly saving lives.

**Early Voting Starting Times:** Unlike vote-by-mail, you do not need an excuse to vote early.

- Visit <https://www.voteamerica.com/early-voting-calendar/> to see when early voting starts in your state.
- Visit <https://www.voteamerica.com/local-election-offices/> to contact your local election office.
- Visit <https://www.vote.org/?campaign=FaithfulDemocracy> to find your local polling location.



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## Managing Election Day Expectations

**Projecting Confidence in Your Messaging:** This year has also raised new questions around election security. With the likely delay of the election results past November 3rd due to the historic levels of vote-by-mail, many are expressing concern about public demonstrations and disorder. While some form of civic engagement and public witness is likely after the election, it is important to express confidence in the electoral process. Sowing doubt about the results at this stage may dissuade voters from casting their ballot. Sharing worst-case scenarios can engender fear and anxiety and discourage voters by making them feel as though their vote won't make a difference. As your communities prepare messaging to help manage election day expectations, consider creating an environment of empowerment and hope over one that plants seeds of doubt and discord.

**Initiate Positive Community Dialogue:** Begin the process of talking to your communities about what to expect on election day and the days after. **If it takes time to count ballots for the results that indicates that our systems are WORKING!** Programs that share voter education information like how to request a vote-by-mail ballot should include follow up invitations to discuss what the post-election reality will look like. Search for points of commonality where there are large gulfs in opinion, and as always approach each conversation with cordial respect for the other's dignity and rights.

- Join us on **Thursday, October 15** to hear from national faith leaders about what to expect when democratic freedoms come under threat.
- This resource by our partners has important messaging guidance to help manage post-election expectations
  - ◆ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MaDjBLCi4c-nryUi4pX4XH5TFaA9p6-X/view> and,
- This tool-kit with social media
  - ◆ [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MFTIx3PBn0x7wxQ\\_kAHWDqz1e57r07A70jsysv3AS1E/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MFTIx3PBn0x7wxQ_kAHWDqz1e57r07A70jsysv3AS1E/edit#)



# ELECTION SECURITY

## A CONVERSATION WITH FAITH LEADERS

October 15, 2020 11 AM-12 PM ET    REGISTER: [bit.ly/electionsecurityconvo](https://bit.ly/electionsecurityconvo)







Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner  
Director,  
Religious Action Center of Reform  
Judaism

Kristen Clarke  
President & Executive Director,  
Lawyer's Committee for Civil  
Rights Under Law

Vanita Gupta  
President & CEO,  
The Leadership Conference on  
Civil and Human Rights

Chris Crawford  
Senior Program Associate,  
Democracy Fund

Rev. Jennifer Butler  
CEO,  
Faith in Public Life

Sponsored By:




THE WASHINGTON  
INTERFAITH STAFF  
COMMUNITY (WISC)

Election season is underway.

Join us for an important conversation about what you can do to respond to potential threats to democracy as we work to ensure that we can all vote safely and securely during this election season.

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

## Engagement Opportunities:

### Election Security: A Conversation with Faith Leaders

Join us for an important conversation about what you can do to respond to potential threats to democracy as we work to ensure that we can all vote safely and securely during this election season.

→ RSVP: [https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Bt-ddYx\\_RTigCf1PSPio9A](https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Bt-ddYx_RTigCf1PSPio9A)

## Advocacy:

### ADVOCATE FOR A FAITHFUL DEMOCRACY

This election is like no other. A successful election will rely on advocacy targeting all levels of decision-making.



#### Federal Level Advocacy (As of Sept 27, 2020):

The most pressing need is for federal funding in the upcoming stimulus package for resources and programs at the state and local levels that will protect our health and ensure voters can safely cast their ballots. Call your U.S. Senators at 1-888-415-4527 to urge them to pass \$3.6 billion in the next package.

#### State Level Advocacy:

Since all states have their own rules that determine voting requirements and procedures, find out what is most needed in your state. Our Faithful Democracy partners at the Mormon Women for Ethical Government (MWEG) have created a portal for state specific advocacy actions where you can personalize your message. Visit their CTA advocacy page to find out the priority actions in your state.

<https://www.mormonwomenforethicalgovernment.org/protectthevotecoordinatecta>

#### Advocacy in your Local

##### Jurisdiction:

Many choices and responsibilities are left to your local election official, which is why building relationships now can be pivotal. Sometimes your county or other local officials will have jurisdiction over critical decisions to make the election run smoothly. Your local election official can also help identify problematic rules and shortages to help target local advocacy.

[[Download Graphic](#)]

## Sample Social Media:



[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

## Additional Resources:

### Key Accounts To Follow

Faithful Democracy	Facebook: <a href="#">/FaithfulDemocracy</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@Faith_Democracy</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@faithdemocracy</a> Website: <a href="#">faithfuldemocracy.us</a>
Vote.org	Facebook: <a href="#">/votedotorg</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@votedotorg</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@votedotorg</a>
Declaration for American Democracy	Facebook: <a href="#">/DFADCoalition</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@DFADCoalition</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@dfadcoalition</a>
Democracy Initiative	Facebook: <a href="#">/democracyinitiative</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@Unite4Democracy</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@unite4democracy</a>
Election Protection	Facebook: <a href="#">/866OurVote</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@866OURVOTE</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@866ourvote</a>

Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights	Facebook: <a href="#">/civilandhumanrights</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@civilrightsorg</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@civilrightsorg</a>
Common Cause	Facebook: <a href="#">/CommonCause</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@CommonCause</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@ourcommoncause</a>
The Civics Center	Facebook: <a href="#">/TheCivicsCenter</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@TheCivicsCenter</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@thecivicscenter</a>
Verified Voting	Facebook: <a href="#">/VerifiedVoting</a> Twitter: <a href="#">@VerifiedVoting</a> Instagram: <a href="#">@verifiedvoting</a>

## Hashtags

- #FaithfulDemocracy
- #MyVoterPlan
- #2020SacredSeasonOfVoting
- #SacredSeasonOfVoting
- #VoteEarlyVoteSafely

## Partner Resources

- The Episcopal Church, "Vote Faithfully Tool-Kit"
  - ◆ [https://episcopalchurch.org/files/vote\\_faithfully\\_2020\\_election\\_toolkit\\_updated.pdf](https://episcopalchurch.org/files/vote_faithfully_2020_election_toolkit_updated.pdf)
  - ◆ <https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/plan-your-vote>
- United Church of Christ, "Our Faith Our Vote" Election Engagement Toolkit
  - ◆ <https://p2a.co/zv3KyIE>
- Islamic Relief USA "Your Vote, Your Voice" Election Toolkit
  - ◆ <https://irusa.org/govote/#POSTCARDS>
- Faith in Public Life "Faithful Voter" Toolkit
  - ◆ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR6euVliPiNlixOkYtzYY1xbfBMYBEqmgz-j0Lf0zZRXgzkiO-qxTVOjVli5ZLGcLIb4PObjiQ94sJp/pub>
- Friends Committee on National Legislation "Headcount" Election Resources
  - ◆ <https://www.fcni.org/vote>
  - ◆ <https://www.fcni.org/updates/elections-2020-2562>
- Social Media Toolkit: Make A Plan To Vote, Vote Early, & Be An #OctoberVoter
  - ◆ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jGFYtiBHzFb6W-18LFcMiQL3Q0ghwoA3choeDQ7C9ug/edit>
- Social Media Toolkit: Managing Expectations for Election Results & Why We Must #CountEveryVote
  - ◆ [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MFTIx3PBn0x7wxQ\\_kAHWDqz1e57r07A70jsysv3AS1E/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MFTIx3PBn0x7wxQ_kAHWDqz1e57r07A70jsysv3AS1E/edit#)