



SACRED SEASON OF VOTING

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

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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 4 Contents

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Faith Messaging:

We begin this fourth week of the Sacred Season of Voting celebrating nearly [30 million](#) votes cast. We join our Hindu friends in reflecting on Navratri, the Festival of Nine nights, which marks a most auspicious moment in the lunar calendar according to Hinduism.

Navratri is a commemoration of action and agency in the face of conflict, and celebrates the conquest of divine power to preserve and protect love, virtue, prosperity and knowledge in the world. The Goddess Durga brings the positive force of feminine energy into battle to protect and safeguard her devotees against the negative forces of evil and wickedness.¹

The nine day festival is celebrated with fervor and festivity in Hindu communities the world over, with each day dedicated to the nine divine forms of the Goddess Durga. Her nine forms vary significantly in the power they manifest: ranging from a fierce black goddess valiantly prepared for battle to a healing, sustaining mother figure that nurtures creative power. With her variety of divine forms, the Goddess Durga displays “the vulnerability of a mother who can turn into a storm cloud when the need arises to protect her child”.²

The festival provides Hindu believers rich opportunities to reflect on the Goddess Durga and her battle with the demon Mahishasura, a symbol of egotism whom she ultimately annihilates.³ This victory protects humanity from evil and misery by destroying our negative energy and vices like arrogance, jealousy, prejudice, hatred, anger, greed and selfishness.

Many Hindu communities have particular devotions associated with their prayers and offerings for each day. Prayer for the longevity of family members gives way to prayer for improved intellect and decision-making ability. Prayer for safety from unnatural events moves into prayer for peace, tranquility and prosperity in life.

As the Sacred Season of Voting progresses, this Hindu celebration gives us much to consider in reflecting on how our actions and agency as faithful citizens can support goodness in these times. Feminine and protective energy, represented by the divine light, is an apt force to contend with evils like disinformation campaigns and sinister plots to turn humanity against itself.

To be sure, forces inside and outside our institutions are working to undermine the vote and foment chaos, confusion and discord among the people. There are forces at work trying to diminish and suppress the voice of a discerning people. They sow doubt, amplify cynicism, and deny our humanity to pit us against one another. A relentless drive for power in this election is amplifying misogyny and racism,

¹<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://indiacurrents.com/what-does-goddess-durga-symbolize/&sa=D&ust=1603137914211000&usg=AOvVaw3ecYZ57QaYKY-uinmbqGFP>

²<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.indiatoday.in/lifestyle/culture/story/what-is-navratri-festivities-hinduism-hindu-festival-maa-durga-puja-indian-goddess-1049219-2017-09-21&sa=D&ust=1603137914210000&usg=AOvVaw0g2vWpXtoFymTRFeV6fz7r>

³<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/events/happy-navratri-2019-images-wishes-messahes-cards-greetings-quotes-status-pictures-gifs-and-wallpapers/articleshow/71349202.cms&sa=D&ust=1603137914216000&usg=AOvVaw13EHaOg9PM75MH-2cZveRA>

false narratives of fraud and threats of violence. All who care about our democracy should be alarmed and ready to defend it by combating these efforts.

The multifaceted representations of agency and resistance celebrated during **Navratri** can provide inspiration in this election. National and local campaigns offer an array of options for each person to find the right way to engage on the side of goodness within the current context:

- Monitoring at or near polling places to ensure no voters are being intimidated;
- Providing food, water and other accommodations at polling places to nurture voters in long lines;
- Supporting voters to successfully cast their ballots as poll-workers;
- Voicing insistence that all votes are counted;
- Combating misinformation by flagging and reporting it;
- Praying for the well-being of voters, election officials, and all people working for a safe, fair election;
- Bringing nonviolent resistance in the public square in protest, if necessary.

The Goddess Durga brought several manifestations to bear in defeating Mahishasura in battle. During this fourth week of the Sacred Season, **Navratri** encourages people of faith to consider what is ours to do to meet this moment as steadfast, courageous citizens. **How will we be faithful to the truth of a democracy where votes determine leadership and where peacemakers occupy the public square? How will we use our agency to resist a politics of division and fear?**

Since our founding as a slave-holding nation, Black Americans have engaged in every form of resistance possible to prove and exert their humanity and their entitlement to equal rights in the law. In 2020 we are called to follow the leadership of civil rights partners and communities of color with their deep historical wisdom in overcoming oppression and combating violence. Their grace in adversity teaches us that maintaining personal and collective joy and celebration in the face of threat and division is its own powerful form of resistance.

Week 4: Keep Faith in Early Voting

October 19 - October 25, 2020

Every day the U.S. reaches new record levels of turn-out through early voting. Nationally, voters have already cast [20%](#) of the total votes counted in the 2016 general election--signaling the embrace of early in-person and absentee voting. Early voting has outpaced expectations for the 2020 election, but the surge has also created unique challenges.

The expansion of vote-by-mail (absentee) ballots has improved accessibility among Black communities, particularly in North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia. However, we are still seeing long lines at early voting booths create obstacles for many voters. Long lines for early voting and administrative errors in absentee voting have made both options appear more daunting, but the historic levels of early voting suggest that voters are approaching this Sacred Season of Voting with generosity and patience in their hearts.

This week our messaging centers again on early voting, which has taken new life under COVID with nearly 30 million voters having already cast their ballots. 2020 is a hopeful embrace of elections where voting takes place over multiple weeks, thus making the ballot more accessible to larger numbers of voters.

This week will also dive into resources around election security. As daunting as voting may seem this year due to the pandemic and growing political tension, the integrity and security of our election systems remain solid. Across the U.S., each state has implemented reliable safeguards and mechanisms to protect from vote tampering and ensure secure vote-by-mail. Maintaining confidence in our election systems is key; misinformation and false narratives about the integrity of vote-by-mail is corrosive to our democracy and for turnout. People of faith are called to bolster faith in our democratic systems and patience as the election process unfolds.

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 along with interreligious spiritual grounding.

Strategic Messaging for Week 4:

Early Voting is Underway: 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.

Registration Deadlines Are Drawing Near

Register to Vote: Registration deadlines are passing with each day--although some states offer same-day registration--voters should be making every effort to register now. Unfortunately, voter registration saw a [steep decline](#) during the pandemic, but in most states there is still time to get registered to vote and vote today!

It is likely not too late to register to vote! 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 4: Oct 19 - Oct 25

A graphic titled "2020 VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES" showing a list of states and their respective deadlines. The states are listed in two columns, with deadlines ranging from October 19 to October 25. The graphic uses a color gradient from blue to red to indicate the urgency of the deadline.

State	Registration Deadline	State	Registration Deadline
Alabama	10/19	West Virginia	10/24
Alaska	10/24	Wisconsin	10/24
Arizona	10/19	Wyoming	10/24
Arkansas	10/19	Yemen	10/24
California	10/24		
Colorado	10/24		
Connecticut	10/24		
Delaware	10/24		
District of Columbia	10/24		
Florida	10/24		
Georgia	10/24		
Hawaii	10/24		
Idaho	10/24		
Illinois	10/24		
Indiana	10/24		
Iowa	10/24		
Kansas	10/24		
Kentucky	10/24		
Louisiana	10/24		
Maine	10/24		
Maryland	10/24		
Massachusetts	10/24		
Michigan	10/24		
Minnesota	10/24		
Mississippi	10/24		
Missouri	10/24		
Montana	10/24		
Nebraska	10/24		
Nevada	10/24		
New Hampshire	10/24		
New Jersey	10/24		
New Mexico	10/24		
New York	10/24		
North Carolina	10/24		
North Dakota	10/24		
Ohio	10/24		
Oklahoma	10/24		
Oregon	10/24		
Pennsylvania	10/24		
Rhode Island	10/24		
South Carolina	10/24		
South Dakota	10/24		
Tennessee	10/24		
Texas	10/24		
Utah	10/24		
Vermont	10/24		
Virginia	10/24		
Washington	10/24		
West Virginia	10/24		
Wisconsin	10/24		
Wyoming	10/24		

State Registration Deadlines

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

A graphic titled "Election Day Registration" showing a list of states that offer same-day registration. The states are listed in two columns, with their respective registration dates. The graphic includes a logo for "FAITHFUL SACRED SEASON VOTING".

State	Registration Date	State	Registration Date
Alabama	10/24	West Virginia	10/24
Alaska	10/24	Wisconsin	10/24
Arizona	10/24	Wyoming	10/24
Arkansas	10/24	Yemen	10/24
California	10/24		
Colorado	10/24		
Connecticut	10/24		
Delaware	10/24		
District of Columbia	10/24		
Florida	10/24		
Georgia	10/24		
Hawaii	10/24		
Idaho	10/24		
Illinois	10/24		
Indiana	10/24		
Iowa	10/24		
Kansas	10/24		
Kentucky	10/24		
Louisiana	10/24		
Maine	10/24		
Maryland	10/24		
Massachusetts	10/24		
Michigan	10/24		
Minnesota	10/24		
Mississippi	10/24		
Missouri	10/24		
Montana	10/24		
Nebraska	10/24		
Nevada	10/24		
New Hampshire	10/24		
New Jersey	10/24		
New Mexico	10/24		
New York	10/24		
North Carolina	10/24		
North Dakota	10/24		
Ohio	10/24		
Oklahoma	10/24		
Oregon	10/24		
Pennsylvania	10/24		
Rhode Island	10/24		
South Carolina	10/24		
South Dakota	10/24		
Tennessee	10/24		
Texas	10/24		
Utah	10/24		
Vermont	10/24		
Virginia	10/24		
Washington	10/24		
West Virginia	10/24		
Wisconsin	10/24		
Wyoming	10/24		

States That Offer Same Day Registration

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

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 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.

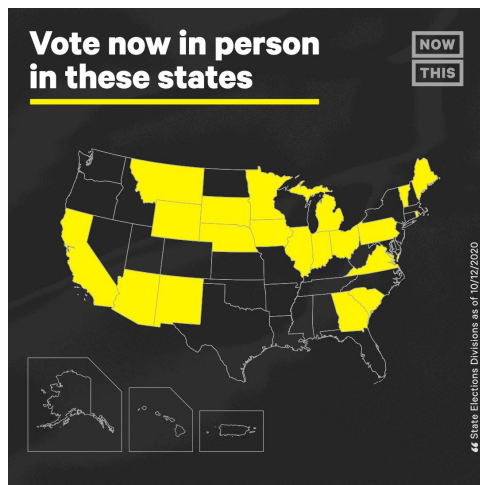
- Visit <https://www.voteamerica.com/vote-by-mail-deadlines/> to see these deadlines.

Vote Early In-Person

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

Early Voting Starting Times: 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 for assistance.
- Visit <https://www.vote.org/?campaign=FaithfulDemocracy> to find your local polling location.



Early in-Person Voting States (As of 10/15)

[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

Managing Election Day Expectations

Project 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. It is important to express confidence in the electoral process. Expressing doubt about the results before the process has unfolded 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, lean into 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. Share the resources below to discern the best way for your community to help uphold the integrity of our elections.

If it takes time to count ballots for the results that indicates that our systems are working! The time it takes to certify the results of the election is a huge unknown. The extent of mail-in voting and unprecedented voter turn-out means it could take several days or even weeks before the final outcome is known. We need to be patient and allow election officials the grace to count every last vote in line with their administrative procedures.

Promote Honest Election Systems: As with all election systems, there are openings for abuse. We encourage everyone to research their state's Ballot Collection Laws and Ballot Harvesting Prohibitions to

ensure that all activities promote safe and honest elections and that they are complying with local and state laws if working to deliver ballots for voters that need assistance.

→ <https://lincolnpolicy.org/2020/ballot-harvesting-laws/>

General Resources

Audiences are increasingly looking to faith leaders for guidance on election security. These election protection resources for the religious community are available as trustworthy guidance.

→ This clearinghouse includes voter education information, tips for countering voter intimidation and suppression at the polling station, guidance for active measures to protect the vote, and more. This is a live working document, updated daily. Contact Maggie Siddiqi (msiddiqi@americanprogress.org) for feedback or questions.

◆ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H6KuXz7wjfrtfD8lHndfCe2edthwA2tb4yTZYMbdWR/edit>

→ This one-pager by our partners has important messaging guidance to help manage post-election expectations.

◆ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MaDjBLCi4c-nryUi4pX4XH5TFaA9p6-X/view> and,

→ The toolkit can help prepare people for unknown results on election night and remind them that counting every vote is more important than speedy election results.

◆ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MFTIx3PBn0x7wxQ_kAHWDqz1e57r07A70jsysv3AS1E/edit#

Engagement Opportunities:

Faith in Public Life

Faith in Public Life continues to create spaces and opportunities for real engagement from communities of faith with diverse resources and hands-on trainings.

FPL is co-hosting multiple trainings on election engagement, led by experts in the field.

→ [Nonviolent Civil Action for People of Faith](#): Thursday, October 22nd, 7-8pm ET

→ [Media and Messaging Training for Faith Leaders](#): Tuesday, October 27th, from 2-3 PM ET

Lawyers and Collars

L&C are recruiting clergy, poll workers and lawyers in the following states: GA, PA, MI, WI, FL, AL, OH, and NC

→ Focus has been on faith leaders of color but they are welcoming/seeking allies at this stage

→ Sojourners and the National African American Clergy Network will also be hosting de-escalation trainings for clergy that are serving as chaplains at the polls on Election Day.

→ www.lawyersandcollars.org

→ www.turnoutsunday.com

Mediators Beyond Borders

Faith communities have played an important role in Early Warning/Early Response networks globally - Mediators Beyond Borders are inviting faith communities to be sources of information in hot spots at community levels to help avoid the escalation of violence.

Faith leaders have the unique ability to instill calm, to reach out to key players, elected officials and the police in tense situations. Mediators invite faith leaders to serve as trusted informers, responders and messengers.

→ <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/trust/faqs/>

National Vote Early Day: Saturday, October 24

Vote Early Day is a national day of mobilization to get out the vote early to avoid crowds on November 3rd.

- Join media companies, nonprofits, technology platforms, election administrators, influencers, and other businesses to help all eligible voters learn about their early voting options and celebrate the act of voting early: <https://www.voteearlyday.org/get-involved>
- Encourage people to vote early and make a plan to vote with October Voter messaging: [Here is a great compilation of resources](#), including sample social media and email blasts and resources in Spanish.
- There are [marches planned throughout Florida](#) to the polls led by the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition on this day led by returning citizens. Here are [sample outreach materials](#) and [graphics](#).
- When We All Vote is having [Vote Together Celebrations](#) nationwide in key cities to build energy around the launch for early voting. Here are [outreach materials](#).

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:

Every Vote is Sacred

Insisting that every vote counts—and that every vote is counted—is a testament to the deeper truth of our ideals as a nation.

Trust #VoteByMail
Vote this #SacredSeasonOfVoting


**SACRED
SEASON
OF
VOTING**

4 Ways Religious Communities Can Ensure a Safe and Fair Election

voter registration 

 mail-in voting

voting early 

poll watching 


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VOTING**

[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

Additional Resources:

Key Accounts To Follow

Faithful Democracy	Facebook: /FaithfulDemocracy Twitter: @Faith_Democracy Instagram: @faithdemocracy Website: faithfuldemocracy.us
Vote.org	Facebook: /votedotorg Twitter: @votedotorg Instagram: @votedotorg
Declaration for American Democracy	Facebook: /DFADCoalition Twitter: @DFADCoalition Instagram: @dfadcoalition
Democracy Initiative	Facebook: /democracyinitiative Twitter: @Unite4Democracy Instagram: @unite4democracy
Election Protection	Facebook: /866OurVote Twitter: @866OURVOTE Instagram: @866ourvote
Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights	Facebook: /civilandhumanrights Twitter: @civilrightsorg Instagram: @civilrightsorg
Common Cause	Facebook: /CommonCause Twitter: @CommonCause Instagram: @ourcommoncause
The Civics Center	Facebook: /TheCivicsCenter Twitter: @TheCivicsCenter Instagram: @thecivicscenter
Verified Voting	Facebook: /VerifiedVoting Twitter: @VerifiedVoting Instagram: @verifiedvoting

Hashtags

- #FaithfulDemocracy
- #MyVoterPlan
- #2020SacredSeasonOfVoting
- #SacredSeasonOfVoting
- #VoteEarlyDay

Partner Resources

- The Episcopal Church, "Vote Faithfully Tool-Kit"
 - ◆ 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-1vR6euVliPINlixOkYtzYY1xbfBMYBEqmzg-j0Lf0zZRXgzkiO-qxTVOjVli5ZLGcLIb4PObjQ94sJp/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#