



# SACRED SEASON OF VOTING

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

# The 2020 Sacred Season of Voting

## Background:

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.

## Week 6 Contents

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

## Faith Messaging:

Beginning the sixth and final week of the Sacred Season of Voting, we again look to the Catholic faith for inspiration about this moment in our nation when a record [95 million](#) Americans have voted early. The observance of the Feast of All Souls, also known as the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, offers rich wisdom for moving forward.

The month of November is traditionally a time that the Catholic Church affords special attention to the dead, to souls that have passed on. Catholics believe in an ongoing, benevolent communion between those of us living on earth and the souls of the dearly departed, often referred to as the “cloud of witnesses”. Beginning with the Feast of all Saints, Catholics remember the dead and honor the impressions their lives had upon this world and its trajectory—and pray for their ongoing advocacy on our behalf.

The solemn commemoration of **All Souls' Day** falls on November 2nd, the day after the Feast of All Saints which celebrates the departed souls who have attained Heaven. Less familiar than its predecessor, on **All Souls' Day** believers are called to pray for all those who have died—especially for the souls of our sisters and brothers that have yet to make it to their heavenly destination.

**All Souls' Day** focuses on the faithful departed—good people who lived good lives, but who also made mistakes. The root of the word “sin” means to “miss the mark”, which is a quintessential part of the human experience. Catholicism teaches that the souls of persons who die while carrying those sins will go to purgatory. So purgatory provides an intermediate state in which the souls of most people are purified in order that they may enter the joy of Heaven.



The theology of purgatory offers a way to understand how grace continues to operate even after death. Purgatory provides an opportunity to gain freedom from any unresolved ways that a person has “missed the mark” during a lifetime—thus enabling reconciliation post-mortem. Notably, Catholicism teaches that the faithful on earth may help usher these souls toward their destination, bringing them into eternal sublime happiness through the power of prayer and intercession. So **All Souls' Day** is a time when many Catholics remember the dead through actions like prayer, Mass, and almsgiving made on their behalf.

What wisdom does this commemoration offer us as we move through the final days and into the aftermath of the Sacred Season of Voting? American culture is not known for dealing well with death. The personal loss and the void created by the death of a loved one often goes unattended as Americans are urged on by the demands to perform and to “keep up”. This penchant, combined with the hard-to-imagine scale of the American deaths from COVID, calls us to reflect deeply on the loss of lives experienced up to this point. Hundreds of thousands of unexpected and unnecessary deaths are the tragic backdrop for the election. What impressions have these dearly

departed souls left on our nation and on our collective psyche in 2020? How do we commemorate those 230,000 people who have died from COVID 19?

America as a nation has collectively missed the mark and is in urgent need of a space for reconciliation, to make amends for having lost our way. Regardless of the election's outcome, Americans will soon move into a post-election world—with the same lingering ordeals of partisan division, systemic racism, rampant misinformation, economic crisis, and additional COVID deaths. Even when the election is settled, we will still find ourselves a very long way from our destination.

The path to national healing and reconciliation will be challenging and uncertain, even with leadership intent upon rebuilding civic trust and controlling the spread of the coronavirus. Americans will be called to wrestle with all the discord and estrangement within and between our parties, movements, cultures, generations and regions. If we are to become the more perfect union envisioned by the founders, one which garners a sense of mutual belonging, faithful citizens will need to courageously lead the way into the meaningful, painful debates that go beyond partisan identity. Drawing from the wisdom of **All Souls' Day**, that path will require mercy and forgiveness among people of goodwill who want to repair a nation that has gone so far astray. Our efforts in this critical post-election space will be critical in ushering the nation towards its destination of "A More Perfect Union".

## Week 6: The Fruits of this Election

November 2 - November 6, 2020

Over [95 million people](#) have voted thus far in the 2020 general election. This year's general election has been unprecedented in many ways. University of Florida Professor Michael McDonald, a researcher studying voter turnout in the 2020 election, believes that more than [150 million](#) people may cast a ballot this year. With a turnout of over 65% anticipated by the end of the season, the enormity of this election is testing the foundations of our nation's democracy. Despite the obstacles, millions of voters have insisted upon casting their votes and making their voices heard.

The last week of the Sacred Season of Voting will focus on Election Day and its aftermath, placing special emphasis on the roles and moral obligations we have to ensure that every vote is counted and that our election runs smoothly for everyone. The Season of Voting has been defined by special circumstances; Election Day and its aftermath will be just as exceptional.

We anticipate a huge surge in in-person voting for Election Day. With a record number of voters going to the polls, there are bound to be [more brushes of conflict](#) with social and political tensions running high. Faith leaders have a unique and important role to play in helping overcome these challenges while being true to the principles of a faithful democracy. Voters will need to be equipped with information to know their rights and to push back against voter intimidation, and combating disinformation will be critical. Maintaining confidence in our election systems is key. This will be especially important in the hours and days after tallying begins on Election Day. We'll present a few scenarios to be prepared for, and ways to continue to protect the vote.

Misinformation and false narratives about the integrity of vote-by-mail are pervasive, meant to corrode faith in our democracy and to suppress turnout. Doing our part to mitigate the spread of misinformation/disinformation continues to be crucial for bolstering faith in our democratic systems and patience with the process. Publicly modeling patience and composure during this time reflects confidence in a faithful democracy. There are multiple ways to have a peaceful presence. We will discuss a few of the ways the faith community is planning to show up before and after the election.

### Strategic Messaging for Week 6:

**Voting Safely Before Election Day:** As the hours tick by, the options for voting before election day are narrowing, but it is still possible in many places. Some states will have early voting booths, and others, easily accessible drop-boxes for yet-unsent mail-in ballots. **Any submission of your ballot should be done in person at this point, not delivered by mail.**

### Same Day Registration is Still An Option in Some States

**Register to Vote:** Registration deadlines have passed--although some states offer same-day registration. Many states allow voters to register in-person on election day.

- Always [double-check](#) to make sure you're registered--if you've moved, lost your home, or haven't voted in a while. If you're not, check if you can register the same day you vote!

Election Day Registration					
These states offer same-day registration on Nov.3					
Alabama	---	no	Mississippi	---	no
Alaska	---	yes	Missouri	---	no
Arizona	---	no	Montana	---	yes
Arkansas	---	no	Nebraska	---	no
California	---	yes	Nevada	---	yes
Colorado	---	yes	New Hampshire	---	no
Connecticut	---	yes	New Jersey	---	no
Delaware	---	no	New Mexico	---	no
District of Columbia	---	yes	New York	---	no
Florida	---	no	North Carolina	---	no
Georgia	---	no	North Dakota	---	no
Hawaii	---	yes	Ohio	---	no
Idaho	---	yes	Oklahoma	---	no
Illinois	---	no	Oregon	---	no
Indiana	---	no	Pennsylvania	---	no
Iowa	---	yes	Rhode Island	---	no
Kansas	---	no	South Carolina	---	no
Kentucky	---	no	South Dakota	---	no
Louisiana	---	no	Tennessee	---	no
Maine	---	yes	Texas	---	no
Maryland	---	yes	Utah	---	yes
Massachusetts	---	no	Vermont	---	yes
Michigan	---	no	Virginia	---	no
Minnesota	---	yes	Washington	---	yes
			West Virginia	---	no
			Wisconsin	---	yes
			Wyoming	---	yes

States That Offer Same Day Registration

[\[Download Graphic\]](#)

## Vote by Mail - Options for Returning Your Ballot

**Drop-Off Your Ballot In Person:** Vote-by-mail (VBM) or “Absentee voting” looks different in each state. All but three states have some system for dropping off your ballot--many have easily accessible drop-off locations or dropboxes. Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee do not have remote drop off returns at all. In some places you may be able to deliver your mail-in ballot to your Board of Election, or drop it off at a polling place.

→ Find Your Local Drop Box Location: <https://www.vote.org/dropbox-locator/>

### Options for Returning Your Ballot:

→ Research Your State’s Drop-off Options.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LLT35dKXTUohlSx3dGuBDKjZRXwd4Xc7fdJPwuF0ghI/edit?usp=sharing>

**Voting In-person When It’s Too Late To Drop Off Your VBM Ballot:** Though vote-by mail is a secure and safe process, it should be considered a last option to return a ballot via the United States Postal Service at this time. Some states allow counting ballots after election day if postmarked by Nov. 3, but many do not and will discard ballots. In fact, counting ballots postmarked by Nov.3 AFTER election day has become the subject of numerous [lawsuits](#). We encourage you to stick to your voting plan, but if you change your mind to vote in-person as time runs short, you should be able to without much hassle. According to ProPublica, in some states, you’ll be allowed to cast a regular ballot, and in others you’ll cast a “provisional” ballot, which is just a ballot that is kept on hold until eligibility is confirmed.

**You’ll want to bring your mail ballot with you to the polling place or election office** in case it needs to be voided or destroyed, and you might be required to sign an affidavit stating that you did not already vote by mail.

→ Research Your State’s Voting Guidelines if you do change your mind:

<https://www.propublica.org/article/what-to-do-if-you-change-your-mind-about-voting-by-mail>

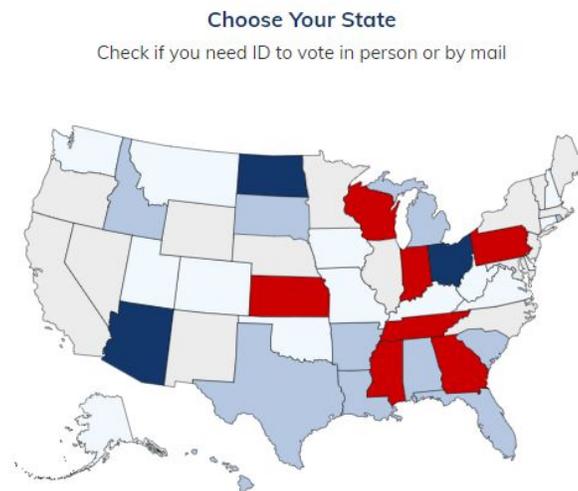
## Voting In-Person on Monday or Tuesday

**Where to Vote:** There is likely to be a surge in in-person voting in the coming days. Consider the best time for you to head to the polls and come prepared! Brace yourself for long lines, tough weather, and any possible voter ID requirements.

→ Find your [local polling locations](#).

**Be Prepared to Vote In-Person:** Expectations about in-person voting differ by state, county, and even local polling station. Geographical location is one factor to consider. There are also: Voter ID requirements, weather, and COVID-19 regulations to keep in mind as you plan to visit the polling station. Bad weather is known for depressing turn-out which may inform your timing if you want to avoid crowds. Make sure you come prepared. Below we'll discuss what to do if you experience other kinds of obstacles to voting, like people obstructing your path, harassment, or other forms of voter intimidation.

- Visit <https://www.voteriders.org/staterules/> to research your state's Voter ID Requirements.
- View this [list of supplies](#) before you brave those long lines and stay safe.
- Visit <https://www.vote.org/covid-19/> for an overview of your state's COVID-19 changes to election procedures



Voter ID Requirements by State by VoteRiders

[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

## Election Outcomes

This election has been unprecedented in so many ways, and it could get even more complicated! Luckily, with foresight we can take each scenario head on, and trust in our ability to move through it with grace and confidence. On Election Night:

→ Scenario 1: The Election Outcome is Uncertain

- ◆ Just like we've been expecting, we won't know the results of the presidential election tonight--and that's okay! We're going to make sure we give our full support to local election administrators who are working very diligently to count every last vote. Insisting that every vote is counted is a testament to the greater ideals of our nation--to deny one's vote is to deny one's humanity.

→ Scenario 2: The Election Outcome is Certain

- ◆ The election outcome looks certain on or shortly after election night--the American people have decided the race . What follows is likely to be a period of much internal division and coming together. What this looks like and feels like is still not clear, but there may be protests, solidarity marches, and other forms of public demonstration. What's important to remember is that the next president will be inaugurated on January 20 and it's up to all of us to make sure that person was elected by the voters.

**If it takes time to count ballots for the results that indicates that our systems are working!** The time it will take 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.

## Managing Election Day Expectations

**Project Confidence in Your Messaging:** With the likely delay of the election results past November 3rd, there are concerns about public demonstrations and disorder. It is important to continue expressing confidence in the electoral process. Expressing doubts before the process unfolds and sharing worst-case scenarios engenders fear and anxiety and discourages voters by making them feel as though their vote won't make a difference. As your communities prepare messaging to help manage expectations, lean into messaging that strengthens voter confidence.

**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, even if that means just being a faithful messenger of calm as the process unfolds.

### 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](mailto:msiddiqi@americanprogress.org)) for feedback or questions.
- [This one-pager](#) of important messaging guidance to help manage post-election expectations.
- [This toolkit](#) helps prepare people for unknown results on election night with reminders that counting every vote is more important than speedy election results.
- This [toolkit](#) by the Election Security TaskForce provides must-know information about what scenarios to expect on Election Day, post-election talking points, and more.

## Know Your Rights At the Ballot Box

Voter suppression has historical and systemic roots in the U.S., going as far back as the founding document of our nation. But it is unacceptable in elections today; creating a threatening presence or negative experience at the polls cannot stand. It's anathema to a faithful democracy.

**Helping Your Neighbor Have a Positive Voting Experience:** Voting on Monday and Tuesday will call for diligence and vigilance around the experiences of voters. If you see or experience voter intimidation meant to suppress the vote, please report the incident.

- Call the [Election Protection Hotlines](#) or Your State's Election Office
  - ◆ ENGLISH 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683)
  - ◆ SPANISH/ENGLISH 888-VE-Y-VOTA (888-839-8682)
  - ◆ ASIAN LANGUAGES/ENGLISH 888-API-VOTE (888-274-8683)
  - ◆ ARABIC/ENGLISH 844-YALLA-US (844-925-5287)

**Supporting Election Witnesses:** Misinformation, politicization of government agencies, and attacks on our right to vote are threatening our free and fair election process and chipping away at our democracy. Whistleblowers who witness and report wrongdoing are the best defense against abuses of power that betray public trust. The Democracy Protection Initiative is providing educational materials and pro bono legal support for courageous employees that speak up for truth.

Over the next several days and weeks, government employees may observe illegal activity, threats to the integrity of the election process, and abuses of power to taint results and may need legal support to speak out. For more information please visit [democracy.whistleblower.org](https://www.democracy.whistleblower.org) or contact Sarah Hubbard at [sarahh@whistleblower.org](mailto:sarahh@whistleblower.org).

- Learn more about what this non-partisan non-profit whistleblower protection and advocacy agency is doing to help combat retaliation against election witnesses:  
<https://www.democracy.whistleblower.org/>



[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

## Engagement Opportunities:

### Faithful Democracy Prayer Vigil: “The Faith Community is Still Here”

Faithful Democracy is hosting a post-Election multi-faith prayer vigil to close-out the Sacred Season of Voting on **Friday, Nov. 6th from 3pm-5pm ET**.

The faith community will pivot from the election to calling for bold, comprehensive democracy reforms for our broken foundation. Having seen the attack on Voting Rights and the historic influx of dark money to influence the outcome of this election, we will demand reforms that restore elected officials’ accountability to the people.

→ The vigil will be livestreamed on Faithful Democracy facebook page as well as those of our partners. <https://www.facebook.com/FaithfulDemocracy/>

### Election Protection During the Sacred Season of Voting

[Faithful Democracy](#), the Washington Interfaith Staff Community, and the Religious Action Center recently held a webinar for religious and congregational leaders on election security. [If you missed that webinar, you can watch it here.](#)

Additional election security resources from The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights:

1. Brennan Center for Justice, "Dangers of 'Ballot Security' Operations: Preventing Intimidation, Discrimination, and Disruption," 2020. [Here](#).
2. ICAP, Addressing the Rise of Unlawful Paramilitaries," 2020. [Here](#).
3. Everytown for Gun Safety, "Preventing and Responding to Illegal Armed Voter Intimidation and Election Interference," 2020. [Here](#).
4. 1st Amendment Implications re: Voter Intimidation, the following from ICAP has a helpful Q&A: ICAP [sheet](#).
5. CJI Report, "Preparing for the 2020 Election." [Here](#).
6. Giffords Law Center: Preventing Armed Voter Intimidation: A State-by-State Analysis. [Here](#).
7. Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) [fact sheets](#) for 50 states about militias and paramilitary activity near polling places.
8. ICAP's [fact sheet](#) on voter intimidation laws
9. ICAP's 50-state [catalog](#) of anti-paramilitary laws
10. ICAP's legal toolkit, [Protests and Public Safety: A Guide for Cities and Citizens](#)
11. ICAP's [successful litigation](#) against unlawful paramilitary activity, Charlottesville, Virginia, August 2017.
12. Safeguarding Your Vote: A Joint Message on Election Security, Chris Wray. Video available [here](#).

## Sample Social Media:



[\[Download Graphics\]](#)

## Additional Resources:

### Key Accounts To Follow On Election Day

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>

