

A MATTER OF FAITH

Message Starters, Prayers, Litanies, and Other Resources
for Considering Voting Through the Lens of Faith



Interfaith Power & Light

Putting Faith Into **Action** for a Safe Climate

This resource is part of Interfaith Power & Light's nonpartisan Faith Votes Campaign, which inspires and mobilizes people of faith and conscience to express their faithful values through voting.

Learn more at faith-votes.com.



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THIS RESOURCE IS MEANT TO SPUR DISCERNMENT,
DISCUSSION, AND, ULTIMATELY,

ACTION.

Whether you use it at a kitchen table, in a faith community, at a community forum, or at an event with political candidates, we hope it helps you reflect on what your faith tells you about civic engagement and navigate the urgent, faith-centered responses that this election season inspires in your community.

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VOTING IS A MATTER OF FAITH

REFLECTIONS FROM REV. SUSAN HENRY-CROWE, UMC

Voting is a matter of faith, citizenship and democracy. It is a kind of prayer and faithful testament to the belief that every citizen bears a responsibility and equal right to determine the future of governance in society.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

As a young woman in South Carolina, I vividly remember the first election in which I could vote. Living two hours from my home in Greenville, I drove one Monday night from Winthrop College, where I was studying, in order to vote the next day. This was only a few years after Aug. 6, 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which outlawed discriminatory voting practices adopted in many states after the Civil War. Southern states predominantly had employed literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses and other tools to keep African-Americans from voting.

As a young woman born and raised in the South, I was no stranger to the racism that fueled these practices and the difficult work it took to defeat them. While landmark political and legislative outcomes were born out of the struggle, the Civil Rights movement did not begin as a legislative revolution. The passage of the Voting Rights Act followed the tireless and bold actions of countless individuals, communities and organizations – including many churches – standing up for voting rights.

I remember the sense of responsibility and consciousness of my own human dignity in contributing to society. My family and The United Methodist Church had instilled in me the value of making the world better through voting. As an 18-year-old, I knew that my grandmothers, my mother and my aunts were born into a world in which they could not vote. When I first did so, other communities had just recently secured the enforcement of suffrage: the right to vote in political elections. We might know the word suffrage to mean the right to vote, but the second definition is worth noting: suffrage is also a series of intercessory prayers and petitions. Voting offers a way to create change, but it can also be an act of prayer and faith.



VOTING TODAY: FAITHFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Today, however, this right to vote is not secured for all. In the United States, threats to voting rights are emerging. They range from limiting polling hours to requiring documentation that costs money to the stripping of voting rights from formerly incarcerated people to the Supreme Court's decision to strike down Section 4b of the Voting Rights Act in 2013.

Our belief in restorative justice calls us to care for the incarcerated and those returning to life in society. Returning citizens have a right to be seen, heard and to take part in the political process; they have a right to exist fully as a part of society. Voting rights are commensurate with full restoration.

Because we believe in racial justice and non-discrimination, we are committed to ensuring African-Americans, immigrants and other minority communities have equal access to voting. The targeting of minority communities with voter ID laws, intimidation, purging voter rolls and other tactics must be stopped. "All people are created equal" – and this extends to voting rights.

Because we believe in economic justice, we must work to ensure everyone, especially the working-class and those in rural and inner city communities, has the opportunity to vote regardless of access to paid time off and accessibility of polling locations.



Dan Budnik/ Contact Press Images

CASTING THE VOTE, TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

On Election Day and in the spirit of suffrage, I always utter a little prayer for my grandmothers and the women of that era who worked for their right to vote, for the civil rights leaders who pursued prayer and voting rights, and for all of the clergy, laity and other citizens who are engaged in the ongoing efforts to preserve this right for all.

One way to transform the world is through the enactment of policies aimed at fostering justice and peace. As people of faith, we must never take for granted the right to vote and must honor the memory of those who fought for suffrage.

May we remember both definitions of suffrage and continue to vote prayerfully at all levels and for all offices so that we might transform the world.

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe recently retired from her position as the general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church.



Message Starters

- Servant Leadership | Deuteronomy 17: 14-20
- Justice for All | Deuteronomy 16: 18-20 & Micah 6:8
- Answering the Call to Good | Qur'an 3: 104
- Everyone Counts | Exodus 30: 11-16 & Exodus 38: 25-26
- Standing for Freedom | Galatians 5:1
- Caring About Government, Caring About Community | Ethics of the Fathers, 2:16 & 3:2
- Our Shared Humanity | Qur'an 49:13 & 2:30

“When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,” you may indeed set over you a king whom the Lord your God will choose. One of your own community you may set as king over you; you are not permitted to put a foreigner over you, who is not of your own community. Even so, he must not acquire many horses for himself, or return the people to Egypt in order to acquire more horses, since the Lord has said to you, “You must never return that way again.” And he must not acquire many wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; also silver and gold he must not acquire in great quantity for himself. When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests. It shall remain with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, diligently observing all the words of this law and these statutes, neither exalting himself above other members of the community nor turning aside from the commandment, either to the right or to the left, so that he and his descendants may reign long over his kingdom in Israel.”

The book of Deuteronomy sought to mediate God’s will for the people in a new period of crisis and transition that was partly religious, partly social, and partly political. These crises included the falling away of people of God from the God of Israel, the widening wealth gap between the rich and poor, the need for organizations that were intended to protect the poor to be restored, and the brokenness of a judicial system in which justice could not be obtained by those that needed it most. The authors believed that the power and wealth of the monarchy [those in charge of the government] were major issues.

The book of Deuteronomy envisioned a new society based on renewed dedication to God and God’s law. In part, the king [governmental leaders] would become an ordinary citizen who would study and lead according to God’s law.

Notice how the King, or the leader of the government, must be someone of their own community.

Also, notice the three restrictions on the leader of the government:

- (1) The leader cannot accumulate weapons/conduct war (in the ancient world, horses were used for war and chariots)
- (2) The king can’t conduct treaties (in the ancient world, the king has wives because of treaties with other nations)
- (3) The king can’t multiply gold and silver for himself. These restrictions are in stark contrast to what was expected of kings in the ancient world, where they would wage war, make treaties, and regulate commerce.

So, Israel can have a king, but the king cannot do anything that a king does. When the king takes the throne, the king will “have a copy of the law,” and “it shall remain in him and he will read it all the days of his life” so that “the king and his descendants may reign long over Israel.”

QUESTIONS

Do the issues the authors of the book of Deuteronomy were facing correlate to any of the issues we have in contemporary American society?

What parts of the government envisioned in Deuteronomy correlate with how America’s government is structured? What parts are different? Has the American government turned away from any of our founding principles that correlated with the book of Deuteronomy?

How would our government look differently if we voted for elected officials that could not conduct war? What about if elected officials were not permitted to financially benefit from their public service?

What would America be like if we voted to elect public officials that did their best not to exalt themselves above other members of the community nor turn from God’s commandments, either to the right or the left?

What if we voted for officials and policies that actually reflect our belief in loving our neighbors as ourselves?

DEUTERONOMY 16: 18-20

“You shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes, in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall render just decisions for the people. You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

MICAH 6:8

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Deuteronomy lays out a structure for the Hebrews' fledgling society so they will thrive in their new land. A cornerstone of this society was justice. “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord Your God is giving you.”

The Hebrew word for justice in this particular scripture from Micah is mishpat, which fundamentally means to treat people equitably and to give them their rights. Of course, we know that the story of human history is littered with instances in which people who are vulnerable, poor, or otherwise marginalized are treated unfairly and denied their rights. We see God in the pages of scripture responding to this harsh reality by siding with the vulnerable, poor and marginalized, being their Defender, and demanding mishpat.

As people whose faith is in the God of the Hebrew scriptures, we are called to “do justice” as it says in Micah 6:8 and, in so doing, reflect the heart of God. This means listening to the voices of the marginalized when they cry out about a lack of fairness, having a heart that is moved by their cries and that is filled with compassion, and making personal sacrifices to serve their interests, needs, and causes.

Any law that stifles the voices of citizens in this country by creating unreasonable barriers to exercising the right to vote is not mishpat. Any laws that create steps for voting that present a disproportionate burden on marginalized communities are not mishpat. Mishpat is using one’s power to defend every citizen's equal opportunity to vote.

QUESTIONS



What are examples in your community’s history of people not being treated fairly or being given their rights?

What are examples across history of the same?

Who is an example of someone from American history who was faithful to the call to “do justice” on the issue of voting equality?

What is lost when the voices of the vulnerable, poor, and marginalized are not heard through voting?

QUR'AN 3: 104

Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones.

Muslim scholars categorized obligations in two broad categories: Fard-ayn (individual obligation) and Fard-kifayah (societal obligation). Fard-ayn includes prayers, zakat, fasting, hajj, earning from lawful sources and consuming lawful and clean things, upright character generally to Allah, family and the community. These individual obligations are mandatory on all Muslims who meet the criteria of moral responsibility and are mukallaf (morally responsible as a result of intellectual and physical maturity).

Fard-kifaya (societal obligation) includes working to first eradicate the harms in a society and then establish good broadly. Scholars captured the essence of the above verse in the legal maxim dar' al-mafasid wa jalb al-masalih. They took pains to order the process of societal obligation as dar' al-mafasid (removal of harms) and then jalb al-masalih (accrual of benefits) because good cannot accrue until harms are removed that prevent the emergence and sound establishment of good. And benefits cannot be realized and sustained unless the harms that prevent their emergence are removed and a vigilance is established to continuously guard against the establishment of those harms.

Good cannot accrue until harms are removed that prevent the emergence of good. Benefits cannot be realized and sustained until primary harms are eradicated.

Muslim organizations that work to empower the American Muslim community toward this seminal responsibility of amr bil-ma'ruf and nahi-an al-munkar - to implement our societal obligations – continually call for American

Muslim voter participation as a crucial act in a full framework of fulfilling our societal obligations - our fard-kifaya. The full framework is the commitment to work in every sphere of societal engagement including change through political participation and engagement.

Do not let your hatred for the people who barred you from the Sacred Mosque induce you to break the law: help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility. Be mindful of God, for His punishment is severe.

Qur'an 5:2

How do we help each other towards birr-- which denotes all notions of good (fighting income inequality, fighting environmental degradation, fighting political corruption, embracing peoples of all backgrounds)--and taqwa--reverence? The Qur'an doesn't specify in detail—however, our creativity, our intelligence CAN and SHOULD be unleashed in working to figure that out, to organize ourselves, to advocate, to amplify our voices. One of the many means by which other communities are able to achieve their ends-- and therefore American Muslims can learn from those experiences--is by engagement in the political process. And the most basic engagement in the political process that only takes little time once every year is VOTING.

May Allah guide us to take our societal obligation – our fard-kifaya – in the most serious manner and give this community the tawfiq to make a difference in the direction of our country.

QUESTIONS

In your experience, what prevents members of your community from voting? What are some perceived barriers or challenges to engaging in the democratic process?

How does your community currently pursue birr– good in society? Where are there opportunities to harness that energy for greater participation in electoral processes?

EXODUS 30: 11-16

“The Lord spoke to Moses: When you take a census of the Israelites to register them, at registration all of them shall give a ransom for their lives to the Lord, so that no plague may come upon them for being registered. This is what each one who is registered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the Lord. Each one who is registered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the Lord’s offering. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you bring this offering to the Lord to make atonement for your lives. You shall take the atonement money from the Israelites and shall designate it for the service of the tent of meeting; before the Lord it will be a reminder to the Israelites of the ransom given for your lives.”

EXODUS 38: 25-26

“The silver from those of the congregation who were counted was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred seventy-five shekels, measured by the sanctuary shekel; a beka a head (that is, half a shekel, measured by the sanctuary shekel), for everyone who was counted in the census, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred three thousand, five hundred fifty men.”

God commanded Moses to take a census of the Israelites just before the building of the Tabernacle. The Children of Israel were to give a half-shekel as a way of counting. This is considered a sort of census in the Israelite camp. However, it can also be seen as an early practice of voting. Each person in the camp, whether rich or poor, no matter their background and station, offers the same half-shekel. Each offers a vote—a testament to the fitness of the camp itself.

Aside from this census, there are numerous instances in which God counts the Israelites. God is counting each person because they are worthy and dear to God. Imagine the pride and comfort each person in the camp must have felt.

As citizens, it is our job to protect our democracy. By voting, we exercise our inalienable right to choose our government. Voters take pride in exercising these rights, protecting our democracy and knowing their voice is being heard and counted.

QUESTIONS

What are the consequences in your community when citizens’ voices are disallowed or disfavored?

Historically, what are some examples of the consequences of disenfranchisement?

What are some reasons that you can think of that people in power would seek to disenfranchise people qualified to vote?

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There is already a system in place in which scrupulous and meticulous measures ensure the sanctity of each vote.

Stony is the road we trod if we open the door to fear and intimidation of voters and election workers. Empowering all citizens to vote to choose our representatives is the greatest strength of our democracy and is a stronghold against despotism and tyranny. Let us not think otherwise.

When access to qualified voting for qualified citizens is disallowed or disfavored, we open the door to indemnity and strife. The ballot box is where our dispute should be resolved, not the streets.

In this account from Exodus, in order to make the camp run, God demanded that each person participate. Now, all who are able to vote should be able to do so freely and without coercion. We the people who love our democracy must work to keep our democracy open for every voice and every vote. Just as God recognizes the significance of each of the Israelites’ contributions, we should regard each vote as precious—holy, even.

What is the impact on an individual when they know their vote is being counted and/or their voice is being heard? What is the impact on society?

In American history, what societal progress and inspiration have we seen from empowering all citizens to exercise their right to choose our government? How has society suffered when qualified individuals have been disenfranchised?

GALATIANS 5:1

“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

This sermon starter is inspired by Fannie Lou Hamer, one of the most profound civil rights and voting rights activists of our time.

In 1961, Fannie Lou Hamer received a hysterectomy by a white doctor without her consent while undergoing surgery to remove a uterine tumor. She was forcibly sterilized.

In September of 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer delivered these words at a meeting at Indianola’s Negro Baptist Church in Indianola, Mississippi: “You can pray until you faint, but if you don’t get up and try to do something, God is not going to put it in your lap.” People of faith needed these powerful and challenging words during the civil rights movement in 1964, and such words are still needed today as we navigate new challenges related to voting rights and civil liberties.

We are sensing there is a movement afoot to reduce the population of black and brown voters. And, we will not have it. Do not let the power of historical and present witness be lost on you. Do not let the importance of the declaration of the words emancipation and freedom be lost on you. The right to vote is a freedom.

The Bible says it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

My role as a pastor is to do what I can to make sure the people whom I serve have the unhindered, unrestricted freedom to vote. In doing so, I cannot support voting laws that only make sense for those who are privileged and in power. I cannot support voting laws that are against the well-being and good for all of God’s beloved. Voter suppression and disenfranchisement are against and antithetical to the call of Jesus Christ that we love one another and that we be people who are free.



Fannie Lou Hamer

QUESTIONS

Why are we still fighting and arguing about, protesting for, and trying to obtain freedom for people of color? Particularly, black and brown people.

How does the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves relate to emancipation, freedom, voting rights, and American ideologies on the same?

How and why does your faith community struggle with turning prayer into action that brings about voting and freedom into your community at large? How and why does your faith community struggle with turning prayer into action that brings about voting and freedom for people of color?

How can your faith community stand against voter disenfranchisement and suppression?

ETHICS OF THE FATHERS, 3:2

“Rabbi Chaninah, deputy to the kohanim, would say: Pray for the integrity of the sovereignty, for were it not for the fear of its authority a man would swallow his neighbor alive.”

ETHICS OF THE FATHERS, 2:16

“You do not need to finish the work, but you are not free to desist from it.”

As Judaism evolved, the [Jewish] people gained more and more of a say in who would rule them. After the exodus from Egypt, Moses declared: “[B]e sure to place over yourselves the king that God elects for you” (Deut. 17:14–15). God chose the first king, Saul (1 Sam. 9:16–17), but God’s choice for the second king, David, was confirmed by “all of Israel’s elders” (2 Sam. 5:3). And the third king, Solomon, ruled in David’s bloodline but “all the people” together ratified his accession (1 Kings 1:39).

This democratic shift is evident in the Talmud, where the rabbis opine that not even God would select rulers without consulting the people (B.T. Berachot 55a).

After the destruction of the Temple and the loss of sovereignty in the Land of Israel, the role of the people in selecting their leaders and the supporting civil government slowly expanded. As in ancient days, we continue to “pray for the government’s welfare, for without fear of it [we] would swallow each other alive” (M. Avot 3:2). In fact, support of government became one of the few duties that Jewish law recognizes for all, regardless of Jewish status (B.T. Sanhedrin 56b).

To R. Moses Maimonides (the “Rambam,” 1135–1204), the purpose of the creation and support of government is to ensure public order (Mishneh Torah, Melachim 9:14). The Talmud extended the purpose to include all social welfare (B.T. Avodah Zara 4a). This is even more evident today, when public safety, health, social equity, the rule of law – the very fabric of life in an interdependent world – require wise, effective, and democratically accountable government.

As citizens, we bind ourselves to a contract with that society. Jewish choice of residency also triggers a duty to help provide the benefits of society, lest anyone’s non-participation cause what economists call free riding. That is to say: If anyone could take a public good without giving, then all would have the same incentive – and the public good itself could disappear. For this reason, Jews are not only obliged to pay for public benefits they receive (B.T. Bava Batra 8a), but also take an active role in serving the public good (B.T. Bava Metzia 108a).



Excerpts from *The Commandment to Vote: Jewish Texts on Voting and Fair Elections* by Rabbi Ed Stafman and Rabbi Mark Hurvitz

CARING ABOUT GOVERNMENT, CARING ABOUT HUMANITY CONTINUED

It is via government that Jews fulfill their civic duty to communities where they maintain residence and citizenship – not only by paying taxes, but also through public service, and especially by voting. For this reason, how effectively our government performs its duties – public health and safety, social policy, criminal justice, environmental protection, and more – is a “Jewish issue.” That is the Jewish commitment to our nation, whatever our personal politics may be.

This Jewish requirement to honor the social contract by voting implies the expectation of a fair and just process that allows for and counts all votes accurately. Indeed, even before the advent of modern election mechanics, it was well-settled in Jewish law that an election’s legitimacy would be undermined and its outcome thus unenforceable, if the election was inadequately publicized or if some eligible voters were inhibited by others from voting.

Judaism’s wisdom tradition teaches that “You do not need to finish the work, but you are not free to desist from it” (M. Avot 2:16). While there may be no easy fixes to ensure that elections are fair and just, we must exercise the right to vote as a sacred Jewish duty and demand that all ballots are fairly counted.



QUESTIONS

What does the democratic evolution of the selection of kings reveal about the nature of God? What does it say about the nature and role of us as God’s people?

What can our community do to ensure the legitimacy of elections?

In what ways does our community already take action to serve the public good? Where and how might we expand our efforts?

What does integrity look like when it comes to our government? Why is it important that we pray and take action for the “integrity of the sovereignty?”

QUR'AN 49:13

“O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

QUR'AN 2:30

“And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: “Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth.” They said: “Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood – while we glorify You with praises and thanks (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners) and sanctify You.” He (Allah) said: “I know that which you do not know.”

The Prophet Muhammad teaches us you must help your neighbor or sibling who is oppressed, and you must also help your neighbor or sibling who is the oppressor. When asked how we can help someone who is an oppressor, he told them that you help them, by helping them prevent the oppression they inflict on others. You help them by preventing the oppression that they caused to the people who are oppressed. Islam teaches us about the value of removing obstacles from a road. Removing anything of harm from the road is the opposite of putting something harmful on the road. You do not improve a road or a way of transportation by putting spike strips on it. You do not improve it by putting a roadblock on the path of those seeking to cross that road. So when we look at disenfranchising people from voting, we must consider and remove the obstacles being put in the path that are preventing them from voting.

Coinciding with this teaching, Islam teaches us that as human beings, our duties are to be stewards. This is a shared value amongst all of our interfaith religious traditions. We are to be stewards not just to our land or ourselves, but we are taught to be stewards to the people around us.



So when it comes to voting, something that is an inalienable, civil right, we cannot remain silent because that is something that is fundamental to each of us. If one of our neighbors does not have the ability to vote, then we do not have that ability ourselves.

The Prophet Muhammad taught us that no one is a true believer who goes to sleep at night while their neighbor goes to sleep hungry. Which of us can go to sleep at night knowing that some of our neighbors cannot vote, when we can? When you disenfranchise the least of us, you disenfranchise everyone.

Voter disenfranchisement is not a question about religion or theology, it is a question about humanity. This is a question about whether or not you are going to leave this world a better place than you found it.

QUESTIONS

What are you saying to those folks who are in the most marginalized positions among us? Those who have been relegated to the fringes since our country's founding? Those who work day and night, in and for this country, but because of their skin tone or accent they do not enjoy the same rights or ease of civic participation?

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What ramifications does voter disenfranchisement have on our society?

What ramifications does voter disenfranchisement have on people of faith when we say we are proud Americans?

When we say America is the bastion of democracy, what does this say about us?

Prayers

1. A Prayer Concerning Voting Rights in the United States
2. Six Prayers for Elections | World Vision
3. The Voting Prayer | Rabbi David Mevorach Seidenberg
4. A Muslim Prayer for Peace
5. Prayer for State, Provincial, and Local Governments
6. A Voting Prayer from the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia
7. A Prayer for Our Community | Rabbi Andrea Goldstein
8. An Election Season Prayer | Fr. James Martin, SJ, with Michael D'Amico
9. Catholic Voting Prayer

A PRAYER CONCERNING VOTING RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

God, we thank you for our great nation. Thank you for the liberties we have through our Constitution. Thank you for the right to vote. Thank you for giving us the wisdom, discernment and knowledge to vote intelligently.

Despite this, God, there have been grievous acts of injustice and unrighteousness in our nation regarding voting rights. That is why we call on you to help us stand up against these injustices. We ask you to support our work of resisting the spirits of pride, division, confusion, hatred and deception that keep American citizens from voting.

Holy Spirit, help every voter to understand the importance of voting in our elections. Empower our citizens to overcome the barriers that have been set to make voting more difficult in our country, including requiring unnecessary forms of identification and voter fraud. God, turn the hearts of lawmakers, judges, and attorneys towards justice and righteousness. Help them to be fair and not discriminate against others because of party politics and personal agendas. Transform the hearts of those who have created voter suppression laws that will impact students, people of color and older Americans. Help us to reverse actions that have been committed with malicious intent.

God, forgive us as a nation for all our sins of injustice. Forgive those who endorse corruption in our political system. Forgive judges, lawmakers and leaders who are trying to manipulate the election for their own selfish purposes. Forgive those who have taken the law into their own hands instead of relying upon you to guide them. Forgive those persons who take bribes and give preferential treatment. Holy Spirit, remind us of all those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive.

Amen.



SIX PRAYERS FOR ELECTIONS FROM WORLD VISION

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

It seems too simple. And sometimes our voices feel too small. But when we pray, we allow God to start growing our capacity to love each other as Jesus does — even people who are the most different from us.



PRAY FOR CANDIDATES TO SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE

More than 8 in 10 members of Congress claim faith in Jesus. But like all of us, they're susceptible to losing sight of what's most important to God. Pray that they would seek God first as they seek to serve our country. For those who don't publicly follow Christ, pray that they would seek wise counsel and be encouraged toward good perspectives and actions by the Christians around them.

"Dear Lord, thank You that we have government representatives who believe Your truth. Remind them to seek Your guidance as they make decisions that affect our country and world. Send them godly wisdom and good counselors. And give election candidates the strength to choose integrity in both their campaigns and their terms in office."

SIX PRAYERS FOR ELECTIONS FROM WORLD VISION

2

PRAY THAT CANDIDATES (AND ALL OF US!) WOULD HAVE LISTENING EARS AND SOFT HEARTS

Most of us have been guilty of preparing an answer before someone has even finished asking a question. Or we've been so concerned with promoting our own agenda that we fail to understand the big picture. During elections we see this even more, in our personal lives and in political campaigns. We all — our leaders included — need the humility to listen first.

“Lord Jesus, forgive us for the times we've entered a conversation without really listening. Show us how to listen with open and humble hearts, especially to people different from us. Help our leaders to do the same. Teach us as a nation to focus less on getting our way and more on loving our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable among us. Lord, give our leaders and prospective leaders the strength to be humble, soft-hearted, and willing to listen to every voice.”

3

PRAY FOR CANDIDATES TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND JUSTICE ISSUES

This election will have lasting effects on issues deeply important to Americans. People with money and power will have an easier time promoting their perspectives, but the election will also affect others without the means to amplify their voices. God calls us to speak up on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8). We can start by praying that leaders would care about issues affecting the most vulnerable and work to address them.

“God, we are grateful that You love each of us no matter our status or abilities. Thank You that You walk with children and families struggling against poverty and injustice, calling us to do the same. We ask that candidates running for election would speak out about poverty and listen to the voices of the vulnerable. Give our leaders wisdom to create solutions that empower people living in poverty to survive and thrive. Help us to answer Your call to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You.”

SIX PRAYERS FOR ELECTIONS FROM WORLD VISION

4

PRAY FOR STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR LEADERS AND ELECTION CANDIDATES

Public service is exhausting in the best of times. People who hold, or are running for, positions of power expose themselves to high levels of scrutiny. It's easy to become discouraged and lose sight of what inspired them to run for office in the first place. As Christians, we can encourage our leaders even when we don't agree with them, and even when we didn't vote for them. We show Christ's love when we choose to pray for our leaders — no matter what.

“Holy Father, thank You for creating each of us with unique gifts, and for gifting some with leadership abilities to help guide our country. For everyone running for office, whether they win or lose, refresh their spirits and encourage them. Give them the strength to make good decisions both in and out of the public eye. Help them readily give grace — and receive it. Protect their families from sickness, bitterness, and discouragement. May every leader be encouraged by the truth that Your love is always stronger than hate.”

5

PRAY THAT OUR LEADERS WOULD COMMIT TO WORKING TOGETHER (AND THAT WE WOULD, TOO)

God purposely created us with differences and designed us to work together. “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

We are one nation, but made up of many different parts — so it's easy to become divided. We hear “us vs. them” rhetoric on TV and in the news. And sometimes we're guilty of buying into it. But we pray against the idea that we cannot work together. We pray that, with God's grace, we would work as a nation toward unity.

“Jesus, thank You for humbling Yourself to walk alongside us as a man. Help our leaders be willing to walk alongside each other, their constituents, and especially the marginalized. Our leaders have different opinions and priorities; give them the wisdom to navigate differences and work together to strengthen our country. Remind us in this election year that You have called Christians to be one body.”

SIX PRAYERS FOR ELECTIONS FROM WORLD VISION

6

PRAY THAT WE WOULD SEE EACH OTHER THROUGH JESUS'S EYES

Imagine how different our lives would be if we loved each other like Jesus loves us. It's not always easy to love our own family and friends, let alone people who seem to insult us or our beliefs. During the election, we'll see people default to anger, and we may do the same ourselves. But Jesus' call to love makes no exceptions for election season.

"God, forgive us for the times we've failed to treat each other as Your creation. Forgive us for celebrating unloving behavior in our candidates and our leaders. Call our leaders and political candidates to a new level of respect and civility. Remind them that You are sovereign and that the wisest choice we can make is to serve You and serve others. May there be a new movement of collaboration and respect in our nation's capital and throughout the country. Give Your people the strength to lead by example with radical, world-changing love."



THE VOTING PRAYER | RABBI DAVID MEVORACH SEIDENBERG

Behold, I am intending through my vote / through my prayer
to seek peace for this country, as it is written (Jer. 29:7):

“Seek the peace of the city where I cause you to roam
and pray for her to YHVH (Adonai/God),
for in her peace you all will have peace.”

May it be Your will, YHVH, that votes be counted faithfully,
and may You count my vote as if I had fulfilled this verse
with all my power.

May You give a listening heart to whomever we elect
and may it be good in Your eyes to raise for us a good government
that will bring healing, justice and peace to all living in this land
and to all the world, and upon Jerusalem,
a government that will honor the image of God
in all humanity and in Creation,
for rulership is Yours.

Just as I have participated / Just as I will participate in the election,
so may I merit to do good works and to repair the world
through all my efforts,
and through the act of... [add your pledge]... which I pledge to do
on behalf of all living creatures,
in remembrance of the covenant of Noah's waters
to protect and to not destroy the earth and her plenitude.

** Give to all the peoples of this country the strength and the will to pursue
righteousness and to seek peace as a unified force to uproot racism and violence
and to make healing, good life and peace flourish here and throughout the world
and fulfill for us the verse (Ps. 90:17): “May the pleasure of Adonai our God be upon
us, and establish the work of our hands for us; make the work of our hands endure.”

A MUSLIM PRAYER FOR PEACE

Based on the Qur'an 49:13 & 8:61

In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful.

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations, that we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things. And the servants of God, Most Gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say "PEACE."

PRAYER FOR STATE, PROVINCIAL, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Lutheran Book of Worship, p. 77

Almighty God, we lift before you all who govern this [state/province/city/town]. May of those who hold power understand that it is a trust from you to be used, not for personal glory or profit, but for the service of the people. Drive from us cynicism, selfishness, and corruption; grant in your mercy just and honest government; and give us grace to live together in unity and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A VOTING PRAYER FROM THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST VIRGINIA

O bountiful and merciful God: you have blessed your people with great prophets and leaders to advance the cause of equality under law in this nation and in the world. By their teaching and preaching; by their action and example; by their marching, demonstrating, and sitting in; by their organizing, praying and singing, they have made themselves and the dream of non-discrimination impossible for opponents to ignore and possible for those marginalized to dream. Give us such leaders always, Lord. Let the cry for justice always be heard in our land until, by your gracious will, your children live together in freedom, justice, and equality.

A PRAYER FOR OUR COMMUNITY | RABBI ANDREA GOLDSTEIN

Source of All Being, Creator of All Life, may Your goodness find its way into the hearts of all Your children.

May those who wield power do so with a balance of wisdom, justice and compassion. May those who feel powerless remember their intrinsic worth, and also act with a balance of wisdom, integrity and compassion.

May we all feel called to action based on the injustices of racism, and see ourselves not as enemies of one another, not in struggle with one another, but as human beings, created in the image of God, connected to one another's well-being.

May all of us come to acknowledge the racism that is pervasive in our region and our nation.

May we commit to sitting down with one another in honest dialogue, opening our hearts in compassion to one another, bearing witness to the pain and fear of one another, even if ... and especially if ... "the other" looks and seems so different from ourselves.

May we commit to joining together in acts of justice that will bring about equality in education, economic opportunities, law enforcement and judicial proceedings.

May each of us come to understand that, ultimately, "my" experience of freedom, justice and peace is inextricably linked to the freedom, justice and peace of every other person in our county and city, our country and our world. May we open our eyes to the invisible lines of connection that unite us, and with clarity of vision, continue to work for a world where every person's life is valued, cherished and loved.

Amen.



AN ELECTION SEASON PRAYER | FR. JAMES MARTIN, SJ, WITH MICHAEL D'AMICO

God, I know that I don't have to get angry.
I don't have to get worked up.
I don't have to get depressed.
And I don't have to throw anything at the TV.
I just have to use my conscience and vote.

So help me remember
what Jesus taught in the Gospels,
and what our church teaches,
especially about the poor, the refugee,
the migrant, the sick, the homeless, the unborn,
the disabled, the hungry, the elderly and the lonely.

Help me remember the "least" among us,
and help me ponder in my heart
how to cast my vote for the good of all.

God, I know that no candidate is perfect,
because I'm not perfect either,
the last time I checked.

So free me of the burden of having to
vote for someone who satisfies
all my desires for a candidate.
My candidate will be imperfect,
like me.

Help me to be grateful for the ability to vote,
because not everyone has that privilege.
And when I meet people voting for someone else,
help me to take a deep breath and
give them the benefit of the doubt,
because they are following their consciences, too.

Help me remember
that even though they sometimes drive me nuts,
I don't have to argue with them,
I don't have to convince them,
I don't have to hate them,
And I don't have to demonize them.

Then, after the election, help me work for unity.
Because I know that's what you want.



CATHOLIC VOTING PRAYER | UNKNOWN

Loving God, I ask you to guide me during this important election season:

Help me to understand the Gospels, in which Jesus Christ reveals his path of love, mercy and compassion, especially toward those who are poor, sick or struggling in any way.

Instruct me on what the church teaches on the important issues of our day: abortion, racism, migration, war and peace, health care, the death penalty, economic justice, care for the environment and on all those questions that I must ponder with your help.

Enable me to form my conscience so that I may vote wisely.

Loving God, I ask you to help me to live peacefully with others:

Allow me to be open to the opinions of others with whom I disagree.
Fill me with a spirit of charity toward those who may oppose me.
Give me patience in times of struggle.

Loving God, I ask you to help me stand with those who are marginalized or persecuted:

Increase my courage so that I can stand up in times of danger.
Create in me a new heart that I might be brave in times of turmoil.
Make me someone who is ready to care for, advocate for and suffer with those on the margins.

Loving God, I ask you to aid our civic leaders:

Grant them good health and a spirit of wisdom.
Open to them paths of reconciliation.
Teach them your ways of love, mercy and compassion.

Loving God, I ask you to bless our nation:

Crown it with your compassion.
Support it with your care.
And nurture it with your love.

Amen.

Each of the message starters and prayers included in this resource can be employed beyond the pulpit within faith communities. Consider integrating them in educational and communal settings throughout your congregation, including:

Religious education classes

Small groups

Special committees, including those focused on social justice & community engagement



Liturgies and Litanies

1. Our Faith, Our Vote: Trusting in the Source | United Church of Christ
2. The Belhar Confession | The Reformed Church
3. Voting Prayers (Intercessions) from the Catholic Diocese of San Jose
4. Seeds for a Prayer of Confession (of a sort) or a Pastoral Prayer (of a sort) or a Litany for Election Season | United Church of Christ
5. Faithfully Litany | Minister Jason Carson Wilson, M. Div., United Church of Christ
6. Quotes for Thought and Communal Reflection | Rev. Kwame Pitts, ELCA

OUR FAITH, OUR VOTE: TRUSTING IN THE SOURCE | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Hear, O people of God: our God is one.
Hear the commandments of our God.

All: First, love your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

Leader: Hear, O people of God: our God is one.
Recite the commandments to your children
and hold them in your hearts.

All: Second, love your neighbor as yourself.
There is no commandment greater than these calls to love. Amen.

INVOCATION

O Holy One, Source of all life and Ground of all love,
we thank you for your love that never lets us go.

Thank you for the privilege of gathering in this space
with these, your people –our neighbors –to worship you.

We do not come merely to open the doors of the church,
but we come that our hearts might be opened to you and to one another.

As we worship you today, help us to respond to the call of love-
to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves.

May we be transformed from individuals to members of your one body.

We pray for our nation that we be united as a people tied to a single garment of
destiny.

We pray for those who we elect to serve all citizens
that they may be guided not by ego, politics or money,
but by compassion for all people.

Guide us as families, as a community of faith, as a nation
to follow the path of love. Amen.

OUR FAITH, OUR VOTE: TRUSTING IN THE SOURCE | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONT.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Again and again you call us
to care for widows and orphans,
to advocate for those in prison,
to welcome the strangers.

God, we hear your call,
but all around us we hear the cry
that there is not enough for all, and that some are undeserving.

Again and again you call us
to love you with our whole heart, understanding, and strength;
such love demands that we seek justice
for those who are oppressed, poor, and forgotten.

God, we hear your call,
But all around us are competing calls
of worldly loyalties, political parties, and public acclaim.

Again and again, you urge us to seek you first.
We long to trust the path of love for you and our neighbors as ourselves.
Yet we fear that our “land of milk and honey”
has become a land of moral famine and economic hardship,
and we wonder at times if you have abandoned us.

Again and again throughout this election season,
we have seen the divisions in this nation become great.
At times, we have been more inclined to debate than pray.

Again and again you urge us not to lean on our own understanding
but in all our ways to acknowledge you, and yet
we are often distracted by the clamor of fear dressed up as reason.

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the upcoming elections,
at times we forget to observe
your statutes of compassion and your ordinances of justice.
Again, you remind us to follow you
so that it may go well for us, our neighbors, our nation, and our world.

Amen.

OUR FAITH, OUR VOTE: TRUSTING IN THE SOURCE | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONT.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sisters and brothers, God is at work in us and with us!

We know that you are the one who lifts up those who are bowed down. We know that you promise to uphold us, and yet, again and again, we get caught up in the ways of those who put their trust in politicians, power-brokers and pundits instead of the Ruler of Peace.

Hear the word of God for this season and all seasons:
“Do not be afraid! I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Know that our God who began a good work in us is able to complete it. As we open ourselves to the Spirit of God, may we see more fully the wonder of God already at work in us.

And so it is. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

Brothers and sisters, Dr. Martin Luther King reminds us:

“I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”

The invitation to bring our tithes, pledges, and offerings is an invitation to support one another, those within this community and beyond, to become all of what we are called to be.

Our tithes, pledges, and offerings—both monetary and other—enable us to give thanks to God for the resources we have been given and enable us to be resources for others.

As we give to this ministry, we help others become what they can be and we become more of what we can be.

Give generously and watch the miracles of God unfold in our lives and our ministry together.

OUR FAITH, OUR VOTE: TRUSTING IN THE SOURCE | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONT.

DEDICATION

Thank you, O God, for the gifts of your people.

Help us that we rely not on our own understanding in the use of these gifts, but to seek your wisdom.

Knowing that as we do,
your will be revealed and your people near and far will be blessed. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Go forth, following as the Holy Spirit leads you,
moving in love and compassion, pursuing justice and mercy,
and trusting in the God of peace.

For the Source of all life and love is as close as your very breath.

Breathe deeply.

Amen.



THE BELHAR CONFSSION | THE REFORMED CHURCH

1. WE BELIEVE

in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

2. WE BELIEVE

in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe:

- that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another (Eph. 2:11-22)
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain (Eph. 4:1-16)
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted (John 17:20-23)
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and up-build one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity (Phil. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; John 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-6; Eph. 3:14-20; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 1:3-4)

THE BELHAR CONFSSION CONTD.

- that this unity can be established only in freedom and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Eph. 4:7-13; Gal. 3:27-28; James 2:1-13);
- that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine:

- which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation
- which professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation
- which denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin
- which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

3. WE BELIEVE

- that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ, that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Cor. 5:17-21; Matt. 5:13-16; Matt. 5:9; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21-22)
- that God's life giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's life giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world (Eph. 4:17-6:23, Rom. 6; Col. 1:9-14; Col. 2:13-19; Col. 3:1-4:6)
- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity

- that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine:

- which, in such a situation, sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.

4. WE BELIEVE

- that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged
- that God calls the church to follow him in this, for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind
- that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly
- that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering
- that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right (Deut. 32:4; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; Eph. 2:14; Isa. 1:16-17; James 1:27; James 5:1-6; Luke 1:46-55; Luke 6:20-26; Luke 7:22; Luke 16:19-31; Ps. 146; Luke 4:16-19; Rom. 6:13-18; Amos 5)
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream
- that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

Therefore, we reject any ideology:

- which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

5. WE BELIEVE

that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence (Eph. 4:15-16; Acts 5:29-33; 1 Peter 2:18-25; 1 Peter 3:15-18).

Jesus is Lord.

To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

Note: This is a translation of the original Afrikaans text of the confession as it was adopted by the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa in 1986. In 1994 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa united to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). This inclusive language text was prepared by the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



VOTING PRAYERS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE

INTERCESSION 1

Let us pray for the world and all its leaders [silence]:

May leaders of nations have the courage to walk the path of peace together so that the most vulnerable in their lands may live with dignity and hope. We pray.

Let us pray for our nation in this time of discernment, election, and transition [silence]:

May all citizens cast their vote in a spirit of reverence for this right, charity for those they disagree with, and concern for the good of all as we strive for a more perfect and peaceful union. We pray.

Let us pray for all Christians and people of faith and goodwill [silence]:

May the Father of all grant us in Christ a spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and knowledge, fortitude, right judgment, patience, and kindness, as we discern what is good and just and follow our conscience. We pray.

Let us pray for all candidates who desire to serve in our national and local government [silence]:

May all seeking election commit themselves to the common good and encourage a peaceful response so that our nation may be faithful to its pledge of liberty and justice for all. We pray.

Let us pray for our presidential candidates [silence]:

May those who seek the immense responsibility of the highest office of the United States know the peace that comes from God alone. May they and their families be protected from harm, the hearts of their opponents be softened by mercy, the people they seek to lead show them respect, and may God forgive them and each of us our faults. We pray.

Let us pray for reconciliation among families and friends divided [silence]:

May we learn to love each other despite our differences and focus on the work that continues beyond this election: the work of unity, respect for one another and for all life, and peace in our land. We pray.

VOTING PRAYERS FROM THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE CONTD.

Let us pray for the ones most affected by the choices we make [silence]:

In all we do, may we keep the merciful face of Christ ever before us who is seen in those who are poor, refugees, or migrants, those who are sick or without homes, those without food or meaningful work, those unborn, and those whose lives are unvalued. We pray.

INTERCESSION 2

For the nations of the world, to engage in a cooperative spirit toward lasting peace and justice for all, we pray to the Lord...

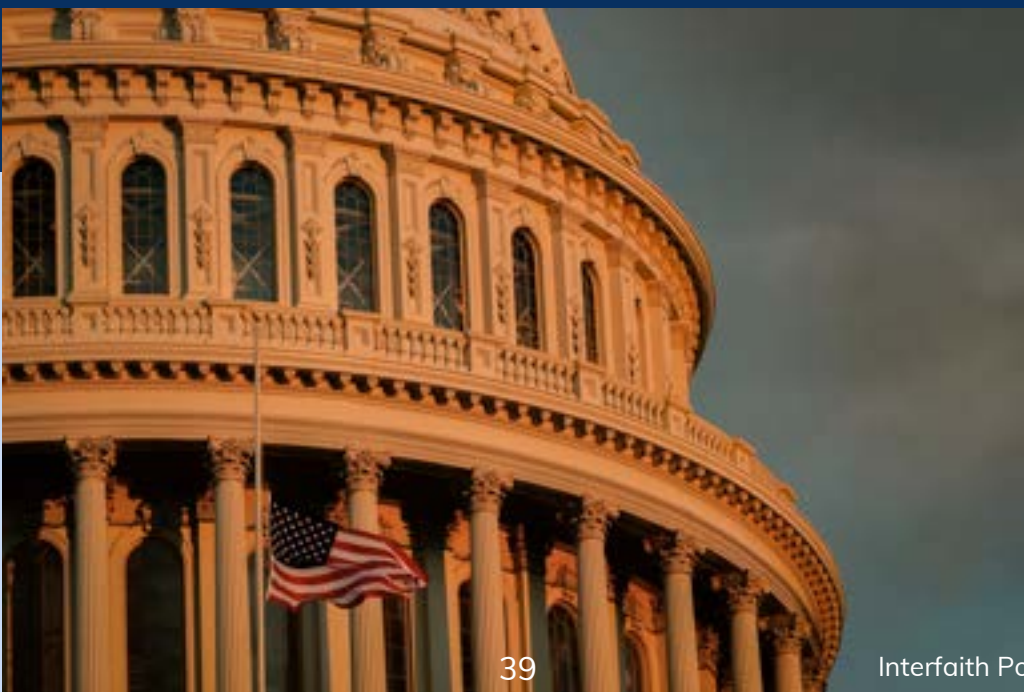
For our nation, to continue to promote liberty and freedom, justice and peace for all, we pray to the Lord...

For the people of the United States, to engage in a spirit of cooperation, tranquility, and respect for one another and for all human life as good stewards of the gifts God has given us, we pray to the Lord...

For the one who will be elected our new President, to have before them at all times the charge to protect and defend the rights of all citizens, especially the weakest and most vulnerable among us, we pray to the Lord...

For all civic authorities, entrusted with care for the common good, to act with loving care in all they do, we pray to the Lord...

For the Church and its leaders, to serve as beacons of the light of Christ in a world in the shadows of fear, violence, poverty, and death, we pray to the Lord...



SEEDS FOR A PRAYER OF CONFESSION (OF A SORT) OR A PASTORAL PRAYER (OF A SORT) OR A LITANY FOR ELECTION SEASON | UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Gracious God, we are blessed to live in a democracy where each citizen has the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in our decision-making processes. Our faith belongs in the voting booth as well as in the sanctuary!

Justice-Seeking God, we know that our policymakers impact our lives: they have power to ensure that all your children are equally part of this society; they can require that taxes are just and that our nation's income goes to benefit the many; they can help to make all jobs good jobs that pay living wages; they can send us to war or foster peace. Our faith belongs in the voting booth as well as in the sanctuary!

Community-Building God, we know that questions of public policy are also matters of faith, for they help us to give substance to the Beloved Community which you have called us to shape. You desire each of us to live a life of wholeness; to have the opportunities to fulfill our potential and become the persons you have created us to be; to live securely in the knowledge that if we fall on hard times, a strong, public safety net will be there to support us. Our faith belongs in the voting booth as well as in the sanctuary!

But Holy One, This election season has gone on too long! We are turned off by a circus which obscures critical issues, reduces complicated choices to sound bites and encourages personal attacks. We want this election season to be over! Help us to find a way to cut through the confusion and the spin. Give us patience to consider and make wise choices that will lead ever closer to your vision of the Beloved Community. Our faith belongs in the voting booth as well as in the sanctuary!



FAITHFULLY LITANY | MINISTER JASON CARSON WILSON, M. DIV., JUSTICE AND PEACE POLICY FELLOW, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Oppression silences voices and hampers dreams and ambitions for ourselves and our neighbors. Liberation lets those voices be heard. God's liberation opens the door for dreams and ambitions rooted in justice to have the chance to become reality. Casting a ballot is one way to proclaim liberty to the captives and to let the oppressed go free. Let your faith liberate you. Let our faith inform our vote.

We remember when our nation's foremothers had no agency, no voice, no vote. They were considered property, enslaved and not. We remember when white women got the right to vote, while others waited a few more decades. We confess the ways in which we did not reflect that we are all equal in the Creator's eyes. Let our faith inform our vote.

We remember when someone's personhood and reality became a campaign issue. We still face someone's personhood and reality being a campaign issue. The Creator doesn't love creations with the most votes. We are loved regardless. Let our faith inform our vote.

God loves us all, regardless. Let us learn from the times when the color of our skin, our gender, our educational attainments or our wealth or poverty determined the ability to have a voice. Let us repent and affirm the God-given dignity in all people. Let us protect and further the ability of all persons to be heard in society and through their ballots. Let our faith inform our vote.

Let us liberate ourselves from bigotry and divisiveness. Let our faith inform our vote.



QUOTES FOR THOUGHT AND COMMUNAL REFLECTION | REV. KWAME PITTS, ELCA

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."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 16TH PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.

"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 not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

SPIRITUALS

- "Give Me Jesus" – Arranged by Garrett Hedlund
- "Somebody's Knocking At The Door" – African American Spiritual, arranged by Ronald Melrose
- "Music Down In My Soul" – Moses Hogan, African American Spiritual

HYMNS

- "We Are Marching In The Light"
- "Cuando el Pobre, When the Poor Ones"
- "Now, Behold The Lamb"
- "Lead Me, Guide Me"

STUDY GUIDES & TOOLKITS

- "Creating Change Together: A Toolkit for Civic Engagement" | Church & Society, The United Methodist Church
- "We Shall Not Be Moved: Advocacy in the New Age of Voter Suppression" | Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
- "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy" | Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- [The Reform Jewish Movement's Every Voice, Every Vote Campaign](#) | Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
- [Faith on the Ballot Sermon Series](#) | Sojourners

DO YOU USE OTHER RESOURCES TO EXPRESS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR FAITH WITH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

Share them with us! Send your tools and thoughts to faithvotes@interfaithpowerandlight.org, and let us know if and how you use the content we've compiled here.

STAY IN TOUCH!

FAITH VOTES

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