



VOTE *faithfully*

Election Engagement Toolkit 2024

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

-Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Parts of this guide were prepared in collaboration with:



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

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



 **Interfaith
America**

Participating in our country’s political life isn’t just about casting our own vote – it requires working together so we can all vote and vote faithfully. There are many ways to get involved – from participating ourselves to supporting others in our congregations and communities. We can all play a role in getting “souls to the polls!”

Check out resources below for how you can participate in this year’s election in a number of different ways. getting souls to the polls in your faith community!

Write to us with ideas at: eppn@episcopalchurch.org.

Included in this toolkit:

Special Section

- ✓ Episcopal Election Activators

Action Steps

- ✓ Help Run Elections
- ✓ Register
- ✓ Mobilize
- ✓ Communicate
- ✓ Advocate

Vote Faithfully Sunday

- ✓ Quotes
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Prayers

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

-Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Note: The recommendations in the Vote Faithfully Election Engagement Toolkit have been vetted to comply with 501© (3) regulations from the Internal Revenue Service. Churches, as nonprofit organizations, must follow certain guidelines when participating in elections. Churches may not campaign, openly or otherwise, for or against candidates for public office. IRS guidelines permit houses of worship to involve their members in the political process through education, voter registration, and candidate participation in town halls. Here are more [resources on what your church can and cannot do](#) during election season. The IRS has several resources that that you can use as a guide for your election engagement activities: [Publication 1828 \(Rev. 8-2015\)](#); [Political Campaigns and Charities | Stay Exempt](#); and [IR-2003](#).

SPECIAL SECTION: EPISCOPAL ELECTION ACTIVATORS

Go above and beyond in your Episcopal get out the vote efforts.

Episcopal Election Activators is an Episcopal Church program, run by the Office of Government Relations, that seeks volunteers to help promote and facilitate local non-partisan voter engagement efforts. The second cohort of the program involves a commitment to engage in this work from January 2024 to December 2025, with applications open throughout that timeframe. This team of dedicated volunteers across the Church is helping Episcopalians and local communities cast their votes.

[Go here](#) to learn more about who we're looking for, what we expect of Election Activators, and how to apply.

HELP RUN ELECTIONS

The U.S. successfully conducted elections [during the 1918 flu pandemic](#) and again for [the 2020 election with COVID-19](#). A significant part of that success, and the success of any election, are the hundreds of thousands of poll workers/election judges and others who help facilitate the process of the election itself. Poll working is one way you can spend time with your neighbors and build community. In most places, working the polls is also a paid gig, and in some locations, high school students can receive course credit for doing this job.

As our elections are state and locally run, with over 5,000 local jurisdictions, details and terminology for this role vary. But across the U.S., there is an election staffing shortage, and unfortunately, threats and harassment of election workers have meant that many local officials and volunteers have resigned over the past few years.

Too few poll workers can mean longer lines, closed polling locations, and longer vote-counting times that can make it harder to vote and risk reducing trust in our elections. Signing up to work the polls will allow you to learn more about the process, to support your community, and to facilitate our democratic system. It is only because of thousands of citizens of goodwill that our elections remain free and fair, that every eligible person has the opportunity to vote, and every valid vote is counted.

So, consider these additional points for engaging in the 2024 election:

- ✓ **[Become a Poll Worker](#)**: For the 2024 election, there is continued, widespread concern about a [shortage of poll workers](#), as many long-time poll workers are retiring and threats to people working election systems have increased. However, primarily from the effort [Power the Polls](#), an estimated 700,000 poll workers were recruited in 2020 boosted in part by companies offering employees time off if they did so. If you are able and comfortable, consider signing up to become a poll worker this year!
 - From the Faith in Elections Playbook, here is a sample message you or your faith leaders can [send to your congregation](#). And [another for networks](#).
 - Your organization or congregation can become an official partner with Power the Polls at this [link](#).
- ✓ **[Monitor and Publicize New State Procedures](#)**: Many states have passed new laws on election processes in recent years, the majority of them expanding voting rights. But whether expanding or restricting access to voting, the public will need to learn those changes. One barrier to voter access is public education with credible information about these processes—for example, if a state has moved to no-excuse absentee (mail-in) ballots, updating people on this new process and associated deadlines takes real marketing work and funding. Make sure your community stays informed about these developments. Sharing trustworthy information is critical to keeping our communities informed and crowding out misinformation. Sharing links

to your local or state election administration's website instead of writing it out yourself is important as information may change over time.

Helpful pieces of information may include:

- How to [register to vote](#) and [check registration status](#).
 - Options for voting, such as early voting, [mail-in voting](#), or dropping off their ballot on Election Day.
 - The [dates, times, and locations](#) for voting early and on Election Day.
 - What [types of identification](#) may be required in your county and state.
 - Checking the status of mail-in ballots that have been requested or the status of mail-in ballots that voters have returned.
 - Where to call if you are having issues casting your vote. (+1-866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (en Español))
- ✓ **Equip Yourself Against Disinformation:** Use our resource on combatting disinformation, an anticipated underlying problem that has been growing in severity for quite some time, independent of COVID-19. Additionally, The United States Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) has a [handy two-page resource](#) on this, as well as a [guide to dealing with disinformation](#).

REGISTER

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

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

MOBILIZE

Help your community members access polling stations on Election Day.

- ✓ **Engage with Civic Holidays.** National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, Election Hero Day. While we make references to these four days throughout this toolkit, they recently united under a new umbrella "Civic Holidays." [Dive into the rich resources](#) they each offer for guiding your GOTV efforts.
- ✓ **Engage as a Poll Chaplain.** Pastors, priests, imams, rabbis, and other faith leaders are joining together with lawyers to support citizens in areas where voter suppression and intimidation may occur. The presence of faith leaders and trained legal experts will provide needed support to communities fearful of suppression and intimidation. Check out this [Faiths United to Save Democracy resource](#) for more information.

- ✓ **On Election Day, give rides to the polls.*** Not everyone has an easy means of transportation to get to their polling location. Use a signup sheet to match people willing to offer transportation with those who are in need of a ride to the polls.
- ✓ **Provide childcare service during election hours.** Voters with young children may need childcare so that they are able to vote. Use a signup sheet to find volunteers for providing childcare and identifying those who are in need of childcare.
- ✓ **Make sure your community members know where to vote.** Finding your polling location is simple: you can now search “find my polling location” via Google and you will be directed to provide your voting address. Google will provide early voting information, Election Day polling locations, and ballot information! You can also [go to Rock the Vote](#) for voting info.
- ✓ **Know the laws for community members with past criminal convictions.** Laws around voting eligibility relating to criminal record vary by state. Use and share [this resource](#) to inform people on their eligibility to vote.
- ✓ **Equip your community members with voter protection tools.** Make sure every member of your congregation knows where they can turn for help if they have trouble casting their ballot. Share [this information about election protection](#). **Include voter protection information in your church bulletin!**
- ✓ **Provide food and water for people at the polls.** This [helpful guide](#) outlines what you should do to do this legally and effectively.
- ✓ **Build relationships with election officials.** Not only do we want to see Episcopalians stepping up as poll workers, but we can also build constructive and supportive relationships with election officials as well. [This helpful guide](#) compiled by Interfaith America with A More Perfect Union resources outlines ways and reasons to build such relationships from getting an accurate assessment of the needs and concerns of your particular community, to determining exactly how best to do voter engagement, to simply saying thank you. Speaking of gratitude, [don't miss Election Hero Day](#) and their resources for celebrating those who run our elections.

Bonus Action

Help address polarization by taking our [Make Me an Instrument of Peace civil discourse training](#) and encouraging your church community to join you. Brought to you by the Office of Government Relations and Department of Faith Formation, in partnership with ChurchNext, a ministry of Forward Movement, this interactive, five-part curriculum offers hope that by using the tool of civil discourse, we can find new ways to love our neighbor.

COMMUNICATE

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

- ✓ **Announce Election Day in your church bulletin** or newsletter. Familiarize your congregation with any services you are offering to help people get to the polls.
- ✓ **Put up signs** encouraging your community to #VoteFaithfully! Here is a sample:
Voting is a service to our community. #VoteFaithfully this #ElectionDay, November 5! Are you voting?
- ✓ **Be Ballot Ready** by encouraging others to check their registration, make a plan to vote, and in particular research who and what will be on their ballot with [BallotReady](#). Note: this resource will be more and more useful the closer it gets to Election Day as primaries pass and candidates are added to ballots.
- ✓ **Engage on social media.** Demonstrate to your friends, family, and community your church's commitment to our common life this election season. Tell them that you #VoteFaithfully. Here are some sample posts:

When we vote, we publicly declare our commitment to love our neighbor and to seek the common good. Let's spread the word that we #VoteFaithfully!

I listen, I pray, and I #VoteFaithfully on Election Day!

I #VoteFaithfully because voting is a commitment we make to our community.

ADVOCATE

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

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

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

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

Selected General Convention policies:

- ✓ [2022](#) Expand voter registration, increase voter eligibility, and make voting processes more accessible
- ✓ [2022](#) Combat misinformation, inaccurate education, and hate speech
- ✓ [2021](#) Support the provisions of H.R. 4, also known as the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act
- ✓ [2020](#) Advocate for policy to ensure free and fair elections and to promote government accountability in providing this necessary service
- ✓ [2018](#) Support reforms that achieve “one person, one vote”
- ✓ [2018](#) Oppose voter suppression and increase voter participation, including opposing partisan gerrymandering
- ✓ [2016](#) Advocate for campaign finance reform and other efforts to increase transparency in election finance and to reduce the influence of special interest money in politics
- ✓ [2015](#) Learn about ways that historic racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement are continued today through active and passive systems
- ✓ [2012](#) District of Columbia should be granted full representation in the Congress that taxes them and decides whether or not to go to war
- ✓ [2015](#) Call on the U.S. to truly accept those who have served their sentences as restored community members by allowing them to vote

Bonus Action

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

VOTE FAITHFULLY SUNDAY

Observe November 3rd as "Vote Faithfully Sunday" to help folks remember and prepare for Election Day. Reflect on our commitment to the common good, provide others with the information they need to register to vote and to cast their ballot, and prepare to vote as a community.

Quotes for thought and communal reflection

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

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

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

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

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

Isaiah 58:6-10:

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

Music

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

Prayers of the People for an Election

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

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.

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

Intercessor: God, our creator,

People: Guide us in truth and love.