
A Faithful
VOTER
Reflection
GUIDE



Interfaith Power & Light
A Religious Response to Climate Change

Introduction

As people of faith and conscience across the country, we believe elections are a referendum on the values that will shape our future. How can we renew our fragile democracy? How do we honor the human dignity of every person? Will we protect God's Creation, our Sacred Earth, and our children's future? What policies will prioritize the common good and confront future crises that remind us of our interdependence?

Many of the defining moral issues of our time are on the ballot: faltering democratic institutions, too much wealth in the hands of a few, damage to the climate, cruel immigration policies that tear families apart, mass incarceration that devastates communities of color, senseless gun violence, and threats to global public health and security. These challenges are daunting. We must move forward in a spirit of hope, and we must resist despair and cynicism.

Using our voices to fulfill our civic duty and vote in every election makes a difference in our communities - and our world. Your vote is how you can speak up for our common home and our neighbors. Voting is how we create a society based on our shared values.

This reflection guide is intended to spur discussion and discernment. Whether you use it at a kitchen table, in a house of worship, at a community forum, or at an event with political candidates, we hope it helps you navigate the urgent moral questions raised by this election.

The issues we address here are not exhaustive, but we believe they provide a framework for evaluating issues and candidates in a way that prioritizes solutions that promote dignity and the common good. Each section includes suggested questions to guide your conversations and spark ideas for questions to ask political candidates.

Voter Guide Endorsers

National Organizations

Center for Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation
Faith in Public Life
Green Chalice of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
GreenFaith
Green Muslims
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
The Freedom BLOC
United Women in Faith

Interfaith Power & Light Affiliates

Georgia Interfaith Power & Light
Michigan Interfaith Power & Light
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light

Protecting God's Creation and Our Sacred Earth

Creating A Better World for Our Children and Future Generations



As people of faith and conscience, our values call us to be good stewards of Creation. But climate change is destroying our common home, harming our communities – especially the most vulnerable – and putting future generations at risk. From historic wildfires to record-breaking extreme weather to air pollution, climate change is devastating our health and destroying our environment. Climate impacts are being experienced by everyone, regardless of zip code or political affiliation.

We know that the fossil fuel industry has polluted our air and water, endangered our environment, and jeopardized our children's future. For too long we've seen our neighbors' air, water, and land become polluted and

suffer from the effects of a warming climate.

This is the result of greed. Polluters pick and choose where to dump toxins based on the contents of our wallets and the color of our skin, hoping to avoid accountability for the crisis they created for all of us.

Two out of three Americans are worried about global warming. American voters, including voters of faith, overwhelmingly support policies to protect our communities. Our elected leaders have a moral responsibility to take care of the Earth and respond to the climate crisis. We still have time to avert its worst impacts if we act now to shift to clean energy and help communities prepare for more powerful oncoming storms.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What does your faith teach about our responsibilities for our Sacred Earth and for taking care of our neighbors? How are they interdependent?
2. How can your faith community better advocate for policies that address climate change at the state and local level?
3. Has your faith community made an effort to cut emissions, save energy, or practice environmental stewardship?

Question for Candidates:

1. What specific policies do you support to protect Creation and secure a safe climate for our children and future generations?

Protecting our Democracy and Voting Rights

This election is more than a choice between parties and ideologies. An even more foundational question is at stake: How do we preserve democracy in the face of serious threats to fair elections and our fundamental right to vote?

Voting is the very foundation of representative democracy. By ensuring people a voice in their government, the right to vote promotes human flourishing and provides an essential safeguard against tyranny. But this most basic right has been undermined by courts and politicians who make it harder for citizens to participate in the political process. Those who erect obstacles to voting are violating one of our most sacred values and damaging our democracy.

Loving Our Immigrant Neighbors

Our holy texts repeatedly make clear that immigrants must be treated with dignity. For example, strong admonitions to provide hospitality to strangers and foreigners appear 36 times in the Jewish Torah or Christian Hebrew Bible alone. Most of us seek to live by the Golden Rule – to treat others the way we want to be treated.

As Pope Francis reminded us during a historic address to Congress in 2015 – the Golden Rule has political implications and requires action: “This Rule points us in a clear direction. Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities, which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves.” Our nation is stronger because of immigrants and refugees. How will we honor our immigrant neighbors and family through our vote?

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do you see democratic values at risk today?
2. How do systemic barriers to voting undermine our most sacred democratic values?
3. How can your faith community better advocate for stronger voter protections at the state and local level?

Question for Candidates:

1. What are your specific plans for protecting and strengthening voting rights?

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can we create an immigration process for people moving here to make a better life for themselves and their families that affirms the dignity of all people?
2. What can we do to heal the wounds inflicted on immigrant communities by political rhetoric that portrays them as a dangerous “other”?
3. If there are immigrants in our community who are feeling isolated and under threat, how can we show support and build connections?

Question for Candidates:

1. What will you do to defend the dignity of all immigrants, and how will you create an immigration process that keeps families together?



Building An Economy of Inclusion

Our economic systems should work for all Americans, not only the wealthiest few. This is a matter of justice and human dignity. All religious traditions recognize the importance of caring for the most vulnerable through charity, but helping our neighbors in poverty also compels us to address its root causes. "Charity is no substitute for justice withheld," St. Augustine wrote centuries ago.

In order to build a just economy that enables all people to flourish, political leaders must promote policies that honor the dignity of work through fair compensation and paid time to care for family; ease inflation; protect social safety nets that help the most vulnerable; and create a just tax system that serves the common good, not simply a privileged few. The teachings of diverse faith traditions make clear that unjust treatment of workers and extreme inequality are signs of a sinful society. The Hebrew prophets denounced greed and the hoarding of wealth.

Our political leaders should invest in the future we vote for - one with a safer climate, an economy where everyone can earn a good living and have a good life, and modern clean energy infrastructure that improves the lives of all Americans.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What can we do to ensure that all Americans are able to provide for their families and to live with security and dignity?
2. How do we create a just tax system that is fair to all Americans, including working families who are trapped in poverty?
3. Why does the United States lag behind most developed countries on paid family leave, which would allow us to care for our loved ones when they need it?

Question for Candidates:

1. What are your specific plans to ensure workers are paid enough to provide for a family and have economic security now and in the long term?



Pursuing Restorative and Racial Justice

Justice and redemption are at the very heart of faith. Restorative justice begins with listening to and empowering communities that have been exploited, excluded, and denied equal representation and freedom. The ideology of white supremacy shaped our nation from its founding and continues to impact policies and communities today - especially in the criminal justice system.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and so many other Black people at the hands of police have provoked a growing, multi-racial moral movement for accountability and systemic reforms for racial justice.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can we dismantle the ideology of white supremacy in our culture and political systems?
2. What can be done to end racial profiling and police violence against people of color?
3. What steps can be taken to ensure formerly incarcerated people have voting rights and fair access to employment?
4. How do we build safe communities for everyone, particularly people of color?

We must hold accountable our elected officials who choose to look away from the persistent racial bias and unconscionable killing of unarmed civilians perceived as a threat, who are almost always people of color. We want a country where our rights are respected and where every one of us can live healthy lives without fear, no exceptions.

"O humankind! We have made you...into nations and tribes, so that you may get to know one another. The noblest of you in God's sight is the one who is most righteous." - Quran 49:13.

Question for Candidates:

1. What are your specific plans to ensure racial justice is prioritized in the criminal justice system?

Respecting the Dignity of LGBTQ People

It is a moral imperative that all people's human rights are respected. Our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender family members, neighbors, and co-workers deserve equal rights. They also deserve the right to live without fear or discrimination simply for being who they are.

Elected officials who have the power to shape policies should ensure LGBTQ people are protected from all forms of discrimination. Politicians also should consistently speak out against those who use hateful rhetoric to demean the dignity of LGBTQ people.

"The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it," said Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can your faith community more fully support the equal dignity of LGBTQ people in your state and local area?
2. What are the greatest threats to LGBTQ people in your community and the nation?

Question for Candidates:

1. What are your specific plans to ensure that LGBTQ people have equal rights and are treated with dignity?

Protecting Everyone's Health

Despite our nation's stated values of life and equality, the United States is the only industrialized country in the world that does not guarantee universal access to care, treatment, prevention, and medicine to help people get and stay well. This is a failure of political and moral imagination. All of us deserve to live healthy, full lives that reflect the full dignity of our humanity.

Faith communities have long been at the forefront of providing direct medical services, and have advocated for universal access to quality health care. We must continue to insist that everyone deserves coverage and access to care that protects their health and heals them when they are sick.

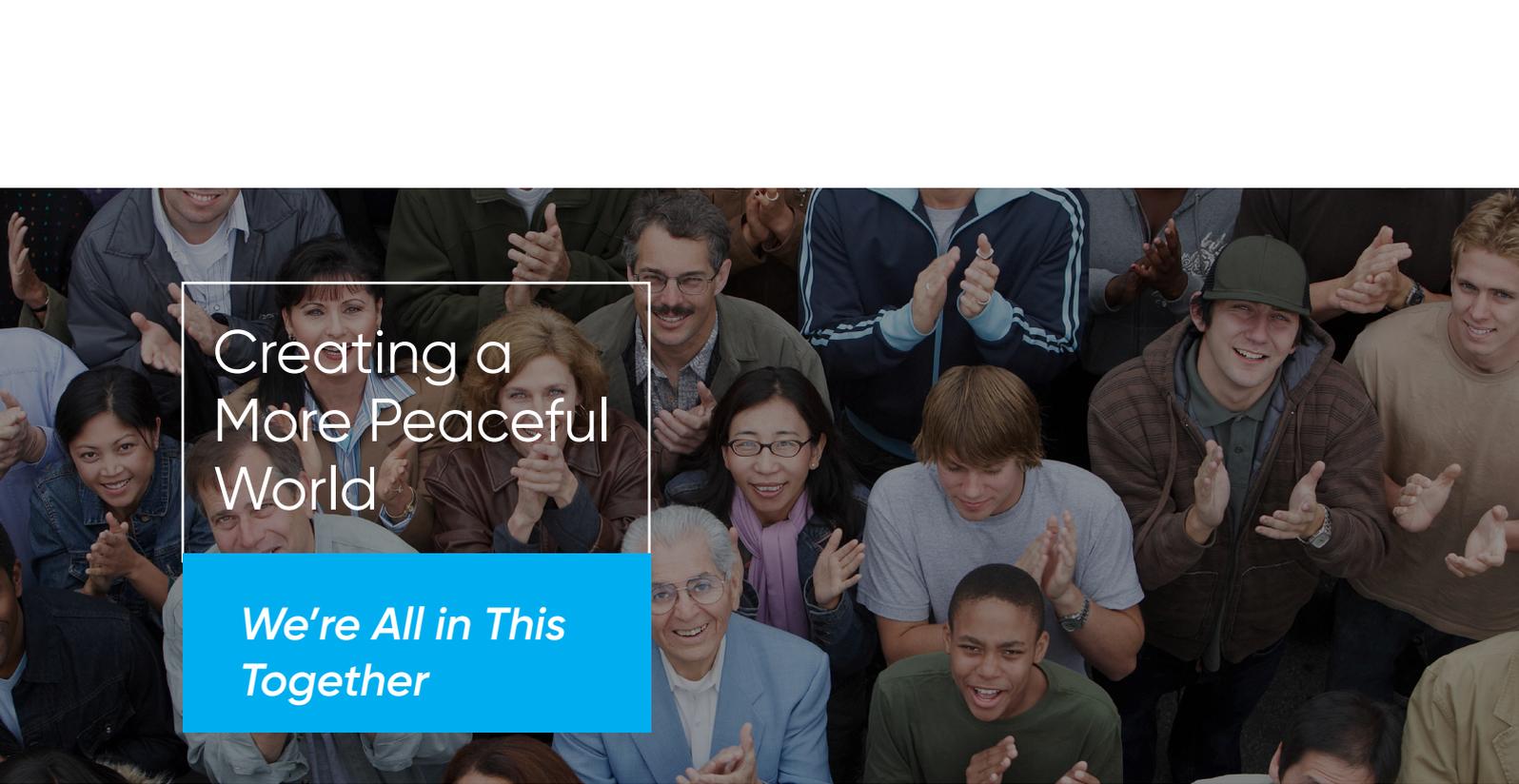
"Keeping your body healthy is an expression of gratitude to the whole cosmos – the trees, the clouds, everything," said Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How can people of faith be most effective in using our stories, our congregations, and our power to advocate for health care reform?
2. What do you struggle with the most when it comes to our healthcare system?

Question for Candidates:

1. What are your specific plans for making sure that quality, affordable health care is available for all?



Creating a More Peaceful World

*We're All in This
Together*

What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves in a globalized world? The health and future of our country and communities are interconnected to the health and security of other nations. Our fates are bound up in what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., called “an inescapable network of mutuality.”

Americans have understandable fears about violence at home and around the world. But many leaders have stoked fear in ways that lead to misplaced priorities and disproportionate funding for the U.S. military budget, which now accounts for nearly half of the world’s total military spending. In contrast, less than one percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid, which includes initiatives to fight the spread of diseases and poverty in developing countries. If we want peace, we must also work for justice here and around the world.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What policies do you think are most important for creating security for your family and community?
2. What role should the United States play in the world to help build global peace and security?
3. How can your faith community advocate for policies to create a more peaceful world?

As we watch the events in Ukraine with sadness and fear, one thing is clear: we must push for a swift transition away from fossil fuels and build a peaceful, clean energy future. The energy consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine prove the world can’t wait for a global transition to clean energy. Authoritarians like Vladimir Putin use fossil fuels as a weapon. It’s time to take that weapon away, and protect our families and our economy, by transitioning to clean energy. We are feeling the impact of this war in the volatility and rising price of fossil fuels at the gas pump and in home heating fuel. Clean energy will protect people around the world from the volatile and dangerous fossil fuel economy.

Question for Candidates:

1. What programs and policies would you prioritize to help build secure communities and a peaceful world?