

YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

FAITHFUL VOTER REFLECTION GUIDE: COLORADO



Colorado Council of Churches
Walking together in faith, working together for justice.

INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Council of Churches offers this Faithful Voter Guide to help people of faith connect our faith claims with the policy systems that bracket our lives. As people of faith, we are called to pursue God’s justice for our communities grounded in the Hebrew prophets and the Christian Gospels. The privilege of voting gives us the ability to shape society by supporting candidates who will promote policy initiatives that give each person the tools needed to flourish to that person’s God-given potential.

This guide offers a snapshot of the most crucial policy decisions facing Colorado in the immediate future. We hope it will spark discussion, inspire reflection, and boost discernment in our families, congregations, and communities.



THANK YOU!

CONTACT US



**North Carolina
Council of Churches**

We extend our gratitude to the dedicated staff members of the North Carolina Council of Churches who created a Faithful Voter Guide from which this one was adapted.



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Colorado Council of
Churches



OUR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

We believe that we're far more effective when we collectively express the following shared values in the public square.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOUSING JUSTICE

We support legislation and initiatives that will provide, build and create affordable housing, especially for low-income persons. In a just world, all people would have decent affordable and safe housing.

CRIMINAL/RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In his ministry, Jesus advocated care for those who were in prison. His concern was not tempered by the cause of their incarceration. He encouraged the disciples to visit those imprisoned. As disciples of Christ, we respond to Jesus' mandate by visiting those in prison and jails, by praying for those incarcerated, and by providing spiritual care services.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Well into the 21st Century, one in four of Colorado's children lives in poverty and attends a school that is likely to be poorly funded, that is likely to marginalize children who are not of the dominant culture, and that may not be able to afford well-qualified teachers. Further, these schools, due to lack of funding are not able to provide a comprehensive educational program equipped to meet the changing needs of all the children who attend.



OUR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

ENVIRONMENT

God is the creator and the redeemer of all creation, and humanity exists as a part of the complex web of ecological relationships that God has created. Humans, with our unique place in creation, are called to caring and responsible stewardship of the earth. As stewards, we are called to preserve and nurture the natural environment, and to be gentle and just in our use of the earth's resources. Key principles for stewardship that we bring to the legislative arena are sustainability, ecological diversity, justice, and choice.

HEALTH CARE

The Christian Church is called to be an active participant in fashioning a just and effective health care system. Responding to those who were sick was integral to the life and ministry of Jesus and has been a central aspect of the Church's mission throughout its history. Health care and healing are concrete manifestations of God's ongoing care for and redemption of creation. Regardless of the means used to provide health care and ensure access to it, we must diligently preserve the nature of health care as a shared endeavor. This means that we recognize our mutual responsibilities and guard against the ways in which motivation to maximize profit and to market health care like a commodity jeopardizes health and the quality of health for all.

IMMIGRATION

The Colorado Council of Churches wants comprehensive immigration reform that recognizes the humanity and value of everyone within our borders, whether they are here legally, or not. As Christians, the call to treat one another with hospitality and compassion is primary, especially when someone is a "stranger":

- The story of the Good Samaritan;
- The question of who is my neighbor (the answer, everyone);
- What you do to the least of these, you do unto me;
- To treat your neighbor as yourself.

All of these scriptures entreat us to be especially kind to those who are different from "us." The Council must stand on these values of hospitality, inclusion and compassion taught to us by Jesus Christ, especially in the context of the immigration issue as it faces our state and nation.



OUR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

POVERTY

Economic life pervades our lives: the work we do, the income we receive, how much we consume and save, what we value, and how we view one another. An economy is meant to meet people's material needs and the current market-based economy has done that to an amazing degree—for some people. Others have been affected adversely, to the point of lacking even what is needed for basic subsistence. The member denominations of the Colorado Council of Churches feel a moral imperative to seek a just, sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all.

RACISM

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus read from the Book of Isaiah,
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of
sight to the blind,
To set a liberty those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Isaiah 61:1-2).
It was both a manifesto and a mission statement. We believe that
oppression is often the result of systemic and institutionalized racism.

SEXUALITY, FAMILIES AND ABUSE

Our Christian faith and traditions affirm that:

- Human sexuality, gender identity, and the need to be in relationship are gifts from God in our creation.
- We are called by our faith to invest ourselves in relationships that are based responsibly in love, mutuality, faithfulness, and creativity.

Therefore, the member denominations of the Colorado Council of Churches support legislation affirming that adults and children shall live their lives in households free from violence, fear, or abuse in any physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual aspects of their relationships



VOTE YOUR VALUES

FAITH IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

One of the founding principles of our country is freedom of religion, meaning simply each person is free to participate in a religious tradition that suits that person or is free to participate in no religious traditions. The nation cannot force any person to practice a particular religion or adhere to certain religious beliefs. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees this freedom. Additionally, Thomas Jefferson clarified the meaning when he explained the "separation of church and state." However, this constitutional principle does not require people of faith to abandon their beliefs when participating in the democratic process. On the contrary, our biblical values emphasizing justice and care for the marginalized, the pursuit of peace, and just economic principles should guide our civic engagement.

Meanwhile, Christian nationalism, sometimes called dominionism theology, is a threat to both our democracy and our Christian principles. By fusing religious ideology and cultural nationalism it has the potential to damage our diverse society and undermine the rights of individuals who do not adhere to that dominant ideology. By promoting a singular religious worldview within the public sphere, proponents of Christian nationalism risk marginalizing minority religious groups and non-religious individuals and compromising the principles of equality and inclusivity upon which our democracy thrives.

The CCC deeply believes we must address this misuse of the Word of God and issue a direct challenge to this insidious ideology. We welcome you to join justice-seeking people across Colorado who are naming the truth and denouncing these tactics.



*"You shall love your
neighbor as yourself.
There is no other
commandment
greater than these."*

Mark 12: 31





DETAILS ABOUT CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

The tenets of Christian nationalism do not derive from conservative values; they stem from the purposeful misappropriation of Christian values in the very places where people live and worship. Typically, the designation “Christian nationalism” refers to a militant political movement fueled by narrow religious worldviews that often overlap with white supremacist ideas. This form of nationalism is not Christian; it is authoritarian and exclusive, replacing human rights with exclusionary legislation and reversing social well-being with bigotry toward minority groups.

The most obvious manifestation of Christian nationalism is the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). The NAR promotes a form of theology called “dominionism,” defined as the “theocratic idea that Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over every aspect of society by taking control of political and cultural institutions.” The “Seven Mountains Mandate,” defines the institutions essential to dominate: government, business, religion, family, education, media, and arts and entertainment. Those who oppose NAR dominionism teachings are often branded by NAR leaders as under demonic control.

Demonizing people with different opinions shuts down conversation and makes compromise impossible, both of which are necessary for an inclusive democracy. Christian nationalists believe their faith community, not the government, holds true political power and guards social policy. This authoritarian and religious supremacy central to Christian nationalism and groups like the NAR are no longer a fringe concern. More and more, political candidates and elected officials are parroting the talking points of such groups.

There are things you can do to counter this anti-democratic movement.

- Local power: Such groups are trying to gain power by acting locally. Find some friends, or perhaps start a group in your religious community, to go to town council and school board meetings. This is currently where the conflict often is. Listen to what is being said, and make sure others present, including your political leaders, know that Christian nationalists do not speak for everyone.
- Elections: Spread the word that our election system is in fact secure. Volunteer for candidates that stand up to such ideology. If there are no candidates, consider running yourself.
- Witness: If there is a community event or educational event that is being protested by Christian nationalists and others, go and lend support to those being silenced.
- Further Resources
 - [The Baptist Joint Commission on Religious Liberty](#) has resources for faith communities, including podcasts and discussion guides.
 - [Faithful America](#), an ecumenical Christian organization, has a list of resources, including sermon talking points.
 - “[Steeplejacking](#): How the Christian Right is Hijacking Mainstream Religion”, written by former United Church of Christ President and General Minister, John Dorhauer, explores how some congregations have handled conflicts with Christian nationalism.
 - The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has a “[Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith](#)” exploring how civic life and our faith intersect.



WAYS TO COUNTER CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM



ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO COUNTER CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

While this list is in no way exhaustive, the hope is that it can serve as a guide and give you some direction on where and how to start.

The work of the faith can be tiring and even sometimes dangerous, but it is rewarding and fulfilling every step of the way.

Individual
Learn more about the history and language.
Research local communities of faith that are connected to this tradition.
Discern and reflect our own contributions to Christian Nationalism
Pray and repent, moving from piety to pursuing justice and peace
Invite others onto the journey



WAYS TO COUNTER CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Congregation	Annual Conference	Community/ State
Host a webinar series/sessions	Draft strong language countering the practice	Draft letters to state legislature and Congress on national security threat
Be in community with congregations of another race or ethnicity from a learning posture.	Host a lament segment within the AC session	Inform and educate your representatives (state and federal)
Engage in a book study on Christian Nationalism	Develop resources for local congregations on the concern	Build community with your neighbors, to better understand them, their faith, culture, etc.
Preach a series on the tenets of Orthodox Christianity	Partner with other AC's in the Connection	Start a book club to develop resources
Reflect and interrogate church practices that might be rooted in Christian Nationalism rather than the character of God	Host webinars, workshops, and seminars on the topic (solution and resistance oriented)	Host a lobby day to collaborate with other faith traditions and to build a local movement.

STATEWIDE BALLOT INITIATIVE GUIDE

The Colorado Council of Churches takes a position on statewide ballot measures where our denominational leaders agree, by consensus, that they fall within our public policy priorities. For the 2024 election cycle, we recommend the following :

NO AMENDMENT 80--CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO SCHOOL CHOICE

This proposed amendment could significantly affect public education funding. School choice should remain in statute so that legislators have more flexibility to implement policy.

NO PROPOSITION 128--PAROLE ELIGIBILITY FOR CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

This measure removes the flexibility that parole boards currently have to assess individual cases. We shouldn't foreclose the opportunity for rehabilitation and redemption.

NO PROPOSITION 130--FUNDING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Though well-intended, the creation of a new dedicated \$350 million dollar fund would put tremendous strain on the current state budget and would decrease funding for other public priorities.



GET READY TO VOTE!



REGISTER TO VOTE OR UPDATE YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION

VISIT WWW.GOVOTECOLORADO.COM TO FIND OUT MORE.

VOTE IN PERSON

YOU MAY VOTE IN PERSON AT ANY VOTER SERVICE AND POLLING CENTER (VSPC) IN YOUR COUNTY.

VOTE YOUR MAIL BALLOT

YOU CAN COMPLETE YOUR MAIL BALLOT AND EITHER RETURN IT BY MAIL OR DEPOSIT IT AT A DROP BOX OR VOTER SERVICE & POLLING CENTER (VSPC).

IF YOU RETURN YOUR BALLOT VIA MAIL, MAKE SURE TO AFFIX POSTAGE. ALL BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 7 PM ON ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5. POSTMARKS DO NOT COUNT.

GET READY TO VOTE!



VOTER SERVICE AND POLLING CENTER (VSPC)

- REGISTER TO VOTE OR UPDATE YOUR REGISTRATION
- VOTE IN PERSON
- GET A REPLACEMENT BALLOT/ TO-GO BALLOT
- DROP OFF YOUR MAIL BALLOT
- SOLVE ANY ELECTION-RELATED PROBLEM. NEED MORE HELP? CALL OR TEXT 866-OUR-VOTE.

TRACK YOUR BALLOT

WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR BALLOT? YOU CAN KEEP TRACK OF IT THROUGH [BALLOTTRAX](#). YOU CAN ALSO LOOK UP THE STATUS OF YOUR BALLOT ON THE COLORADO SECRETARY OF STATE'S [WEBSITE](#).

IMPORTANT 2024 ELECTION DATES



The “Blue Book” made available to voters

The purpose of the ballot information booklet , known as “The Blue Book,” is to provide voters with the text, title, and a fair and impartial analysis of each initiated or referred constitutional amendment, law, or question on the statewide ballot.



Voters begin receiving ballots.



Early Voting Period

To find mail-in ballot drop-off locations, polling places and voting times for your county, check with your county’s Clerk and Recorder Office.



Host a “Blessing the Election Workers” service at your church!

Invite election workers in your community to your worship service to share their prayer requests and receive a blessing. There a sample service on pages 14-16 of this guide.



Election Day!

Polls will be open across the state from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. You may register to vote and drop off your mail-in ballot any time before 7 p.m.

If you encounter any difficulty in registering or voting, call Just Vote Colorado at 866-687-8682.



A SERVICE FOR BLESSING ELECTION WORKERS



We encourage churches to host a "Bless the Election Workers" service for election workers in their congregations and the broader community.

Below is a template for a "Blessing of Election Workers" service. Feel free to tailor it to the needs of your own church. If you use the template, please indicate that it is "Courtesy of (Adapted from) the Colorado Council of Churches."

We encourage churches to have this service on Sunday, November 3rd, but it can be done at any time. Please share this with others!

THE OCCASION

Election workers are an essential part of our democratic republic. Without them, our political system cannot function and citizens will not have the opportunity to shape their government and elect leaders who reflect their values. In recent years, election workers have increasingly been subject to suspicion, threats, and violence towards them and their loved ones. We gather at this time to show our appreciation and bless these election workers as they do their civic duty during the election cycle. We pray for their comfort and safety



A SERVICE FOR BLESSING ELECTION WORKERS

MUSICAL SELECTION (Suggested songs):

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love
We are Many, We are One

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Psalm 23

COMMUNAL PRAYER

Gracious God,
We come before You with gratitude for the privilege of participating in the democratic process. We ask for Your guidance and protection for all those involved in the elections—workers, volunteers, and officials.

Grant them wisdom to perform their duties with fairness and integrity. Shield them from harm and any form of intimidation or deceit. Inspire them to work diligently and with a spirit of service, so that the election process remains transparent and just. May Your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard their hearts and minds, and may the election process reflect Your will for justice and harmony in our community.

As we ask for prayers and blessings upon those who are actively participating in the election process, let our requests be a reminder for us as well that we are abundantly blessed to live in a country where we can vote. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be the ones who will be known by our love of neighbors, community, and You.

We place our trust in You and ask for Your blessings upon this important process.

In Your Holy name we pray,
Amen.



A SERVICE FOR BLESSING ELECTION WORKERS

PRAYER OF BLESSING

At this time, election workers will be asked to come forward to the altar. Election workers will be asked for their prayer requests. After hearing the prayer requests, clergy and laity will stretch out their hands toward them and pray:

“Bless, O Lord, this (these) election worker(s), and fill our hearts with thanksgiving for what they do to aid the functioning of the voting process and our democratic republic. Keep them and their loved ones from danger and harm.”

CLOSING SONG (Suggested):

Bind Us Together
What a Fellowship

BENEDICTION

We end this service with the words of the Psalmist: “The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”
Psalm 121:7-8

For an electronic, or downloadable, version of this service, please visit the Colorado Council of Churches blog at www.cochurches.org.



OUR COVENANTING DENOMINATIONS

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE ROCKY
MOUNTAINS**

CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

ECUMENICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF COLORADO

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

PRESBYTERY OF DENVER

PRESBYTERY OF PLAINS AND PEAKS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

