



Rise Up for Voting! 10/26/20

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this resource will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

Our weekly resources will appear in your inbox once a week, and you can access an archive of past resources by logging onto your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via videoconferencing.

In the meantime, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs virtually. While we hope that this weekly resource will spiritually sustain your community while distancing, [now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs](#). The call to seek justice is just as important now as ever!

Last but not least, generosity is, at its core, a benefit to everyone. When you donate, your gift helps us sustain and equip individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out](#). Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

In solidarity,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around a short reflection before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a moment of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds.

Still I Rise by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

*Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise" from And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems
Copyright © 1978 by Maya Angelou*

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

Ask these open-ended questions. If you're by yourself, journal about them.

Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in. Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

Reflection (20 minutes or so)



Play **either** the video “Election 2020: Longer voting lines may be a sign of voter suppression, Just The FAQs” (1:51): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tl9Zr443r0> OR “What is voter suppression?” (1:17): https://youtu.be/5b0W_5K7Kyk

Then play “Voter suppression continues 55 years after 'Bloody Sunday’” (5:54): <https://youtu.be/zwf1EYKjHP0>

Let us pause for silent meditation.

Pause for 30 seconds.

Then ask:

- How did your state respond to the 2013 Supreme Court decision on Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act?
- What are the voting requirements/restrictions in your state? Have any polling locations closed in your state? Where do you see room for improvement to ensure all citizens in your state have the right to vote?
- In the second video, Dr. Joseph says, “There is no right more fundamental for our democracy than voting rights in the United States and we should really be pushing in a nonpartisan way for voting rights protection.” Do you agree voting rights are fundamental for democracy? What can you do to ensure all who qualify to vote have the opportunity?

Announcements (5 minutes-ish)

- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff in order to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. In order to support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- JustFaith Ministries is currently hosting a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice While Sheltering in Place,” in which an expert on a justice-related topic will offer tips for taking action during COVID-19. Visit the [JustFaith Ministries Facebook page](#) or the [JustFaith Ministries Website](#) for more information on times and topics.
- What are the opportunities to assist with voting or the elections in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways they can assist with the election process.
- Watch for our prayer service for the upcoming election, which you can engage with on the evening of the election or the week leading up to it. Like all of our Network resources, the election prayer service is intended for small groups, individuals, and even families.



Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)

Then say: Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

Pause for 30 seconds.

Let us Pray.

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.

*Rev. Shannon Kelly, Director Department of Faith Formation,
The Episcopal Church, Vote Faithfully 2020 Election Toolkit*

https://episcopalchurch.org/files/ogr_vote_faithfully_2020_election_toolkit.pdf

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Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

We are disciples on a journey.

We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.

We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.

If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world.
Amen.

Close with the song “Rise Up” by Andra Day:

<https://youtu.be/kNKu1uNBVkU?list=PLk6n90VAXJUaHR9AzQfuASgPegJ-YXsL5>