

# **Keep the faith, count every vote: Preparing faith communities for election season**

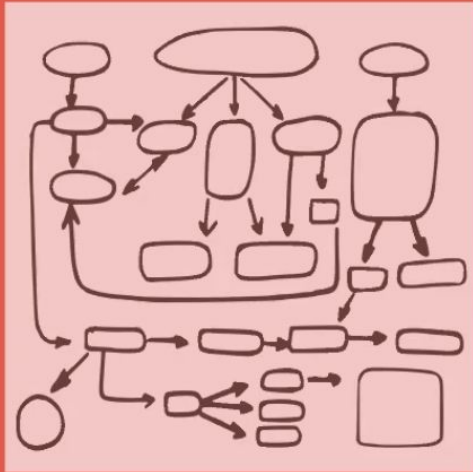
# Our purpose today

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- **Gain understanding of the process**
- **Messaging and modeling to keep people informed, empowered and resilient between now and a declared election result.**
- **Sharpen our communications skills.**
- **Opportunities for action.**

**There are key moments and processes  
to understand and prepare for.**



**Nov 3rd  
Election Day**

**Dec 8th  
Safe Harbor**

**Dec 14th  
Electoral College**

**Dec 23rd  
Electors to Congress**

**Jan 6th  
Congress counts  
Electoral votes**

**Jan 20th  
Inauguration Day**

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# Messaging

# Messaging principles for the moment

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**Regardless of how long the count takes:**

- **MORAL messaging is a must**
- **“Count every vote” is the key demand at the outset**
- **Composure and resolve are key -- we may be in for a very long season**

# Composure ≠ Passivity

# Do's and Don'ts

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## Do:

- Lead with what we're FOR
- Help people remain composed and ready to act
- Frame counting every vote as a moral issue
- Strive for clarity and simplicity

## Don't:

- Dwell on what we're against
- Dwell on doomsday scenarios. They are demotivating
- Frame counting every vote as a political fight
- Strive for nuance

# Lead with a values message

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As people of faith, we believe every person's inherent **dignity** entitles them to representation in our **democracy**. **Every vote is sacred**. Every vote must be counted, and it's worth waiting for.

Election officials must **fulfill their responsibility** to count every vote. Politicians and the media must **resist the temptation** to prematurely declare a winner before our votes are counted. Whether you're Black, Brown, Native, Asian or White, we all have a right to a say in our government. Counting every vote is **a matter of justice**.



# Values message, continued

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**“We the people are not only empowered, but have an obligation to hold our institutions accountable for delivering a free and fair election.”**

# Messaging formula!

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**Values → Explain the Challenge → Solution → Call to Action**

# Lead with values

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- **Lead with a values statement that frames the vote-counting process as a moral issue. Try to make it personal.**
  - **For example:** “As a faith leader, I believe every person’s inherent dignity entitles them to a say in our democracy. Counting every vote is a matter of justice. It’s a moral issue.”

## Second: Explain the challenge, deal with fear

- **Second, help people understand the ongoing delays and deal with feelings of anxiety.**
  - **For example:** “Millions of people voted absentee to protect their health during COVID. It takes election officials longer to count and verify absentee ballots because they have to be double-checked. In some states, counting absentee ballots can’t even begin until after the polls close. It’s natural to feel on edge right now, especially with so much on the line.”

## Third: Lay out the solution

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- **Inspire confidence in the count and hope about the future. This is essential.**
  - **For example:** “When election officials take the time to verify and count every ballot, as they have a responsibility to do, that’s a sign that our democracy is working. So this delay makes sense. No one in the media or either party should rush to announce a result about who has won until everyone’s vote has been counted. While we wait, we need to do our part by demanding that all of our neighbors’ votes are counted.”

# Close with a call to action

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- **Close by giving people a concrete action step they can take right away.**
- **This should be coordinated with local, organized actions.**

# Communication: Focus on your audience and context

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	<b>Sermon</b>	<b>Press conference</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>Keys to success</b>	Preparation, rhetorical skill, reading the room	Preparation; vivid, concise storytelling	Preparation, thinking on your feet, short catchy sentences
<b>Time</b>	As long as it takes	2-5 minutes	Short sound bytes
<b>Audience</b>	Your congregation, and folks they communicate with by word of mouth	News outlets' readers, viewers, listeners and social media followers; In-person crowd	News outlets' readers, viewers, listeners and social media followers
<b>Theological level</b>	Deep, comprehensive	Widely known stories, rich symbols	Universally recognized references



# Media tips

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- **Your look and sound matter as much as your message**
- **Reporters will only use a short segment of your interview/remarks -- so lead with your best sound byte.**
- **Remember, it's an opportunity to deliver a message -- it's not a conversation.**
- **Keep it short, and stay on message -- improvising or rambling leads to accidents.**

# Pivots -- the art of changing the subject

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- **“That’s an important topic, but right now I’m focused on making sure election officials count every vote...”**
- **“The real question I hear in my congregation is...”**
- **“I haven’t heard it put that way; what people in my congregation really want to know is...”**

# Media tips, continued

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- **Be yourself, remember your unique voice!**
- **Make your personal story easy to follow:**
  - **Beginning → Middle → End**
  - **Keep it simple: essentials only, no jargon**
  - **Avoid the negatives**

# Take action!

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*Oct 30 - Nov 1*

## **Keep the Faith:**

### **Count Every Vote Weekend of Action**

*Counting every vote is a matter of dignity and justice.*

# Stay connected to broader movement!

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[Sign Up for Count Every Vote List](#)

# PEOPLE OF FAITH DEMAND

## Nonviolent Civil Action for People of Faith 2.0

*Wednesday, October 28th, 7-9pm ET*

Join Graie Hagans, Vision Praxis Director at Bend the Arc for a nonviolence training for faith leaders where we will explore disciplined nonviolence for street mobilizations. In this training we will address how clergy and faith leaders can show up as safely as possible in actions.

## De-escalation Best Practices

*Thursday, October 29th, 6-7:15 p.m. ET.*

To do de-escalation well, you're going to need to practice. Come to this call to get what you need to practice on and how to keep things cool and calm at the polls when people are trying to be antagonizing. Learn how to keep your faith at the center of your response to chaos and how to help center those around you.

COUNT EVERY VOTE



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