

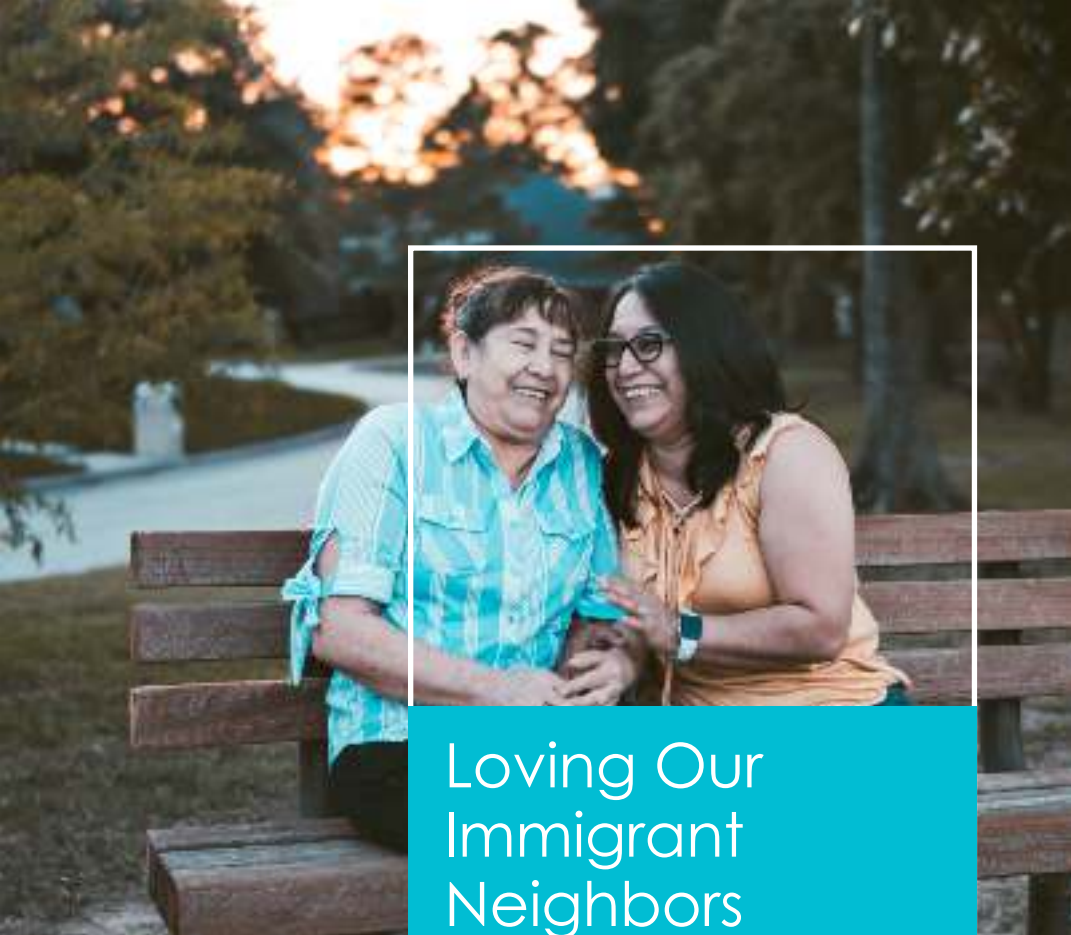
Democracy Values & the 2020 Election

A Reflection Guide for Faith Communities

FAITH
IN PUBLIC LIFE



Interfaith Power & Light
A Religious Response to Global Warming



Loving Our Immigrant Neighbors

Scripture repeatedly makes clear that immigrants must be treated with dignity. Policies that rip children from their parents' arms, lock people away in inhumane conditions, and ban desperate families from entering the country should keep us awake at night. As people of faith, we believe that the way we treat our immigrant neighbors is a sign of how we treat God.

In 2013, the U.S. Senate passed bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform, which then failed to pass the House. Since then, legislation to fix our broken immigration system has been supplanted by nativist policies and the politics of white nationalism. Programs to

protect young immigrants, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are still at risk. We must reject the fearmongering and punitive measures that traumatize our immigrant communities and separate families. Migration is also a complex global reality with root causes that include religious persecution, political oppression, poverty and violence. Criminalizing people for seeking physical safety undermines human rights law, and our moral imperative to provide asylum and refugee resettlement.

Our nation is stronger because of immigrants and refugees. How will we honor our immigrant neighbors and family in 2020?

Questions for Reflection and Candidates

- 1 How can we replace immoral immigration policies that tear families apart and cause trauma with an immigration system that values families and 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?
- 4 As a candidate, what will you do to defend the dignity of all immigrants, and how will you further policies that keep families together?



The Last Shall Be First

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 that charity is essential to care for the most vulnerable, but

helping our neighbors in poverty also compels us to address its root causes. “Charity is no substitute for justice withheld,” St. Augustine observed centuries ago.

In order to build a pro-family economy that enables all people to flourish, political leaders must promote policies that honor the dignity of work through living wages and paid family leave; 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. Pope Francis reminds us that an “economy of exclusion” literally kills people.

Our nation’s policies too often fail to honor these values. The wealthiest and most powerful get tax breaks while food assistance programs are slashed. Millions of Americans have lost jobs, and many work hard but struggle to stay above the poverty line because they are not paid living wages. CEOs of the largest companies in the United States now make over 300 times their average worker’s pay. The U.S. is the only developed country without guaranteed paid family leave for workers who need to care for a newborn, a sick spouse or a dying parent. At least 43 million working Americans don’t even have a single paid sick day.

All of these injustices are made worse by the coronavirus pandemic, which has exacerbated deep inequalities and fallen hardest on low-wage employees. We must ensure that essential workers such as health care providers and grocery store cashiers receive more robust social and economic support. Relief packages that respond to the pandemic must not only help shareholders and corporations. This crisis is an opportunity to fundamentally reimagine how we create a just economy.

Questions for Reflection and Candidates

- 1 What can we do to ensure that all Americans are able to provide for their families and 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 when it comes to providing paid sick leave and paid family leave?
- 4 As a candidate, what are your specific plans to ensure workers have living wages and economic security while the coronavirus pandemic continues, as well as for the long term?