

Centers for Spiritual Living Guide to Voting

Prepared by the Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement
Committee

The world is perhaps at the point of the greatest crisis in all human history, and there seem to be two attitudes we can assume. One is calmness, faith, and conviction; the other would be despair. And despair is unthinkable. Let each, in [their] own way, dedicate [their] time, service, hope, and spiritual conviction to the common cause of liberty and justice for all. And let's work without tiring and pray without ceasing.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Essential Ernest Holmes, p. 179

PREAMBLE

The Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement Committee of Centers for Spiritual Living offers this voting guide for the first time as support for voters from our spiritual communities in applying our vision and values when making electoral choices. Centers for Spiritual Living, a nonprofit religious organization headquartered in the United States, does not endorse any candidates for public office. Instead, we encourage our spiritual community to apply Science of Mind teaching, vision, and values in making choices.

We do encourage everyone eligible to vote to register and to vote prayerfully, considering each candidate, ballot initiative, and policy in the light of our vision and values when selecting those who will serve in public office. Although references throughout this guide are made to nonprofit regulations and voting resources in the United States, the spiritual guide to voting may be applied to voting worldwide by adjusting content and nonprofit regulations to local laws and resources.

What is in this guide:

- **Voting Our Vision & Values:** Quick reference to CSL values and vision to consult when you complete your ballot, whether at home or a polling station.
- **Vision and Values One Pager:** Centers for Spiritual Living Values and Vision, as stated in our Organizational Design Model (appendices A and B and a printable one-page reference).
- **Engagement:** Quick and easy action steps to increase voter engagement and turnout in your community and to educate and inspire.
- **Legal:** Reminders on what 501c3 organizations in the United States can and cannot do.
- **Additional Resources:** External resources for reflection and information.

Voting Our Vision & Values

Centers for Spiritual Living Values and Vision Summary

Before voting, familiarize yourself with Centers for Spiritual Living's values and vision. A summary of our values and vision are included below for quick and easy reference. For the complete text, see appendices A and B.

CSL Values

Accountability - Open Communication - Financial Health and Prosperity - Integrity - Love - Community Service - Safety - Compassion and Caring - Spiritual Living - Diversity and Inclusivity - Education - Transformation and Evolution - Creativity - Continuous Improvement

CSL Vision (Summary points)

We see a world that works for everyone
Where all life is honored as expressions of the Divine
Where people live according to spiritual truth
Where unity and connection are emphasized
Where humanity awakens to spiritual magnificence
Where humanity rediscovers personal creative power
Where we live as one global family
Where kinship with all life prospers
Where spiritual guidance is valued
Where we are called to conscious social action
Where people have enough food, homes, and a sense of belonging
Where forgiveness is the norm
Where there is peace, harmony, and justice for all.
Where there is a renewed emphasis on beauty, nature, creativity, art, and aesthetics
Where resources are valued, cared for, and shared
Where communities are meaningfully involved in service to the world

Then, in preparation for voting, research candidates and issues (see personalized ballot information in the Additional Resources Guide section.) Next, set time aside to apply the spiritual practice of vision to your process (see tips and guides below). Finally, when ready to make your selection, ask yourself:

- Which of the candidates for this position display values consistent with those of CSL and its vision of a world that works for everyone?
- Does this ballot measure express the values of CSL and its vision of a world that works for everyone?
- Does this ballot measure reflect a positive direction for all in your community?

Before submitting the ballot - review and make sure you are at peace with your decisions. Check with your spiritual intuition, which our founder Dr. Holmes referred to as Divinity within humankind, about which of these candidates resonate most with your spiritual values. Visioning is one spiritual tool that can be used to access your spiritual intuition.

Guidelines for Visioning (from Centers for Spiritual living Department of Education Visioning Class)

- Determine the focus for the Visioning process, for example, "my vote."
- Center in Spirit. Enter the silence to establish your awareness of the Presence within. Anchor this awareness in Infinite Love, which is the overarching purpose for our lives.
- Open to the vision by asking a question or questions. Pause after each question to receive the vision. Choose four or five open-ended questions (see below) and allow for unknown possibilities to be revealed. Write (or draw) your responses after each question or after the process.
 1. What is Spirit's Divine Idea for this (the focus of your Visioning)?
 2. What does it look like, feel like, etc.?
 3. What qualities of Spirit are expressing through this vision?
 4. What is my part in this vision?
 5. How must I change to allow this vision to unfold?
 6. What gifts do I bring to this vision?
 7. What must I release to be this vision?
 8. What must I embrace to be this vision?
 9. What must I allow others to do?
 10. What spiritual work must I do to allow the vision to unfold?
 11. What must I become to embody the vision...to become the vision...to live the vision?

Visioning Tips

- Stay neutral during Visioning. Avoid judging, analyzing, or editing.
- Allow yourself sufficient, uninterrupted time to do your Visioning.
- Be patient and allow the vision to unfold and come into form in Spirit's time, not yours. Avoid drifting into planning, controlling, or attempting to "make things happen."
- Be alert to "evidence" that the vision is ready to reveal itself. Be prepared to flow with the vision as it manifests.
- Allow the vision to "speak" to you in a variety of ways: a color, a feeling, a sound; a smell; a thought or word(s); a knowing; an image, or nothing at all.

(You may want to print this page to refer to when you vote)

Centers for Spiritual Living Voter Guide on One Page

Prepared by the Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement Committee

CSL Vision Summary

- We see a world that works for everyone
- Where all life is honored as expressions of the Divine
- Where people live according to spiritual truth
- Where unity and connection is emphasized
- Where humanity awakens to spiritual magnificence
- Where humanity rediscovers personal creative power
- Where we live as one global family
- Where kinship with all life prospers
- Where spiritual guidance is valued
- Where we are called to conscious social action
- Where people have enough food, homes, and a sense of belonging
- Where forgiveness is the norm
- Where there is peace, harmony, and justice for all.
- Where there is a renewed emphasis on beauty, nature, creativity, art, and aesthetics
- Where resources are valued, cared for, and shared
- Where communities are meaningfully involved in service to the world

CSL Values

Accountability - Open Communication - Financial Health and Prosperity - Integrity - Love -
Community Service - Safety - Compassion and Caring - Spiritual Living - Diversity and Inclusivity
- Education - Transformation and Evolution - Creativity - Continuous Improvement

Questions When Completing Your Ballot

- Which of the **candidates** for this position best align with values consistent with those of CSL and its vision of a world that works for everyone?
- Does this **ballot measure** express the values of CSL and its vision of a world that works for everyone?
- Does this **ballot measure** reflect a positive direction for all in your community?

Before submitting the ballot - review and make sure you are at peace with your decisions.

*All Intelligence abides in your subconscious and awaits your call upon it.
You may say you do not know what to do. But at the center of your mind is the
clear decision that you should make.
It is right there.*

Raymond Charles Barker

Engagement

Centers for Spiritual Living Values

Suggestions for Clergy and Study Group Leaders

Getting out the Vote:

This Engagement Guide is to help you support the spiritual community that you serve to be informed about the vision and values of Centers for Spiritual Living when voting. We offer this guide to clergy, teachers, and study group leaders to help educate, enroll, and inspire individuals in your community. Although not the primary focus of this guide, this work will also help grow awareness of the Science of Mind in the area that you serve.

Educate

Educate your community on important deadlines, such as the deadline for counting the US Census, which has been moved to September 30. It is important that every person be counted.

Weave references to civic issues into your Sunday messages, study group discussions, and classes, noting that encouraging voting is in alignment with Centers for Spiritual Living vision and values. An excellent resource for civic engagement can be found in *The Essential Ernest Holmes*, chapter 9.

Offer classes on citizenship, voting, and local government structures and impact. Your state may have educational content available, like, for example, the [Institute for Local Government](#) in California, or [The Comprehensive Digital Course on History, Government & Economics](#) by the Bill of Rights Institute.

Enroll

Announce opportunities for volunteers to enroll in civic duties related to voting. Identify a leader or coordinator/liaison who can help research other local groups for possible collaboration. Tasks may include:

- identifying information sources for nonpartisan values-based descriptions of ballot measures and candidate positions
- brainstorming ways to support those who may be voting in person (while adhering to all local health directives)
- gathering & distributing voting and registration information sources in your local county
- gathering information about the registration requirements such as voting online, in person, and identification.

Inspire

Here are some Ernest Holmes quotes that you can use when talking about/posting information about civic responsibilities in a spiritual context:

We must think peace if we wish to express peace. The mind that is always confused and distraught is not at peace; the mind that is continuously upset and agitated by the little, petty things of life is not at peace; it is at war with itself. It is only when the individual mind ceases combating itself that it will stop combating others. We do not know when that far-off Divine Event will transpire which shall heal the world of the wounds of war, the memories of ancient strife and the anticipation of future struggle. All we know, as individuals, is that it is within our power to control our own thinking, to so order our own mind and thought that we, as individuals, shall be surrounded by peace.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Essential Ernest Holmes, p. 172

It is quite a burden lifted when we realize that we do not have to move the world – it is going to move anyway. This realization does not lessen our duty or our social obligation. It clarifies it. It enables us to do joyously, and free from morbidity, that which we should do in the social state.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Science of Mind (p. 270.5)

First, at home, in the silence of our own thought, let us heal ourselves of fear, of doubt, of uncertainty. Let our lives be peaceful; let our lives be whole.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Essential Ernest Holmes, p. 173

Those of us who believe in peace should work toward this end. Let us never forget that the very impulse of that movement is in the silent contemplation, the prayerful meditation, the sincere expectancy in our own minds. Are we ready for peace?

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Essential Ernest Holmes, p. 173

The power of choice with which man has been endowed is either his greatest blessing or his greatest curse. Properly understood, it can lift him to the heights; misunderstood, it can drag him to the depths. He is free to choose anything which he wishes, but he must accept the responsibility for his choices, because inexorable Law will create his experiences according to his choices. (p. 21.1)

Dr. Ernest Holmes
Practical Application of Science of Mind (1958) p. 21

We cannot afford to hold personal animosities or enmities against the world or individual members of society.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
The Science of Mind (1938) p. 431

New arts, new sciences, new philosophies, better government, and a higher civilization wait on our thoughts. The infinite energy of Life, and the possibility of our future evolution, work through our imagination and will. The time is ready, the place is where we are now, and it is done unto all as they really believe and act.

Dr. Ernest Holmes
365 Science of Mind (2001) p. 51

There can be no problem that cannot be solved unless we assume that Divine Intelligence does not know what It is doing. We must realize that every human problem, whether it is personal or the problem of the survival of civilization, is not a problem that cannot be solved, but merely one that has not been solved because it has not been properly presented to the Intelligence that knows everything. The Universe is one system and if any prayer has ever been answered since time began there was a principle, a law operating, and a way through which and by which it happened. (p. 72.4)

Dr. Ernest Holmes
Creative Living (1975) p. 72.4

Legal Centers for Spiritual Living

Currently, the law prohibits political campaign activity by charities and churches by defining a 501(c)(3) organization as one "which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office."

A Church Can:

- Conduct non-partisan voter registration, identification and "get-out-the-vote" drives, encouraging members to vote
- Take positions on, conduct petition drives on, lobby on, and make expenditures on legislation, referendums, or other issues
- Distribute non-partisan voter education information including educating church members on legislative and political matters
- Apply church teachings and values to politics, legislative matters, or candidate positions
- Introduce political candidates and allow them to address the congregation in their capacity as candidates as long as all candidates seeking the same office are given an equal opportunity to participate, and the church does not express support or opposition for any particular candidate(s)
- Host candidate forums where all candidates are invited and allowed to speak
- Support or oppose political appointments (such as judges or cabinet officials)
- Rent church member contact lists to favored lobbying groups
- Pastors may endorse candidates as individuals, but not on behalf of a church, (if title and church name are used, include a "title and affiliation for identification purposes only" disclaimer)

A Church Cannot:

- Endorse or campaign for candidates for elected office in the name of the church
- Contribute money or make "in kind" contributions, (such as resources or services), to a candidate, political party, or political action committee
- Distribute materials that endorse a candidate or political party
- Allow candidates to solicit funds from the congregation (from the pulpit)
- Create a church political committee that would do any of the above

More information/help with tough questions

- [If you want more information about this you can download documents and watch videos prepared by members of the Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement committee.](#)
- If you have further questions, you may email the Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement committee at spirituallyengagedcsl@gmail.com.

Internal and External Resources

SMSE Politics and Social Activism Legal PowerPoint 2019
[Politics & Social Activism Legal PowerPoint 11-2019](#)

Grace Communion International on Endorsing Political Candidates
<https://www.gci.org/articles/caution-against-churches-endorsing-political-candidates/>

Clarifying the IRS Rules about Endorsing Candidates from the pulpit
<https://www.clergytaxnet.com/clarifying-the-irs-rules-about-endorsing-candidates-from-the-pulpit/>

The Balance Small Business: How Political Activity by Nonprofits is Regulated
<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/can-nonprofits-engage-in-political-activity-2501879>

An informal review by our legal committee on 08-28-2020 of this section of the policies and procedures, especially paragraph C.1 below indicated that it needs to be revised to comport with existing law. See also the recommendations above in this guide prepared by the CSL legal committee which clarify that 501(c)(3) organizations may “take positions on, conduct petition drives on, lobby on, and make expenditures on legislation, referendums, or other issues.”

Centers for Spiritual Living Policies and Procedures

April 2020, rev. 04-23-20, page 9

1.8. Political Activities Strictly Prohibited

A. Member Communities and members of an affiliated group of Member Communities that are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code ("IRC") should refrain from political activities at all times. The Internal Revenue Code provides that one of the criteria for qualification as a tax-exempt organization under IRC §501(c)(3) is that the Organization must "not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office." The prohibition against political activities is applicable to politics at the federal, state and local levels. It is also applicable to political activities in foreign countries.

B. If a Member Community engages in political activities, it may be classified as an "action organization" and may be disqualified for federal tax-exempt status under IRC §501(c)(3). The Member Community may also be disqualified for state tax-exempt status. It is extremely important for Centers for Spiritual Living and its affiliated Member Communities to avoid engaging in activities that could be characterized as political activities. If your Community is considering an activity that involves a political issue, it is essential to seek immediate advice from legal counsel prior to engaging in the activity. The Internal Revenue Service will revoke the tax-exempt status of a Member Community that engages in political campaign activities.

C. Examples of activities that should be avoided by Member Communities include the following:

1. Contacting members of a state, federal or local political body to urge action for or against any legislation, including a proposed or current law, referendum, initiative or constitutional amendment.
2. Making oral or written statements in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office (whether local office, state or federal office).
3. Not allowing all candidates for a particular public office the equal opportunity to speak at your community (i.e. extending a speaking invitation to one candidate over another). Rev. Rul. 2007-41, 2007-25, I.R.B. 1421.
4. Placing web links on the Community's website or publications that direct people to websites supporting a political candidate.

Additional Resources

Polling Places.

The League of Women Voters put together a resource where people all over the United States can find out important voting information about polling places and deadlines for voting:

<https://www.vote411.org/>

VOTE411 is committed to ensuring voters have the information they need to participate in every election successfully. Whether it is local, state, or federal, every election is essential to ensuring our laws and policies reflect the values and beliefs of our communities.

Register to vote: [Register To Vote](#)
Check your voter status: [Search by State & Topic | VOTE411](#)
First Time voter checklist: [First Time Voter Checklist](#)
Personalized Ballot Info: [Personalized Ballot | VOTE411](#)

Interfaith Power & Light Voter Reflection Guide.

The Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement Committee recommends the [Interfaith Power & Light "Voter Reflection Guide."](#) Interfaith Power & Light ([interfaith power & light's mission & history](#)) is a US-based broad coalition of faith groups with similar values to Centers for Spiritual Living. The guide initially came together around climate change, however it has evolved beyond environmental issues. In it, they lay out an interfaith values-based approach to voting on matters of Democracy & Voting Rights, Climate Justice, Loving our Immigrant Neighbors, An Economy of Inclusion, Moral Health Policies in a Time of Pandemic, Restorative & Racial Justice, Respecting the Dignity of LGBTQ People, and the Global Common Good. They do not tell us what party or candidate to vote for. They give us a way to lovingly approach these issues that parties and candidates are talking about--we think it would be hard to create a better guide.

Appendices

Appendix A

THE GLOBAL VISION FOR CENTERS FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING:

SECTION TWO – Organizational Design Model, page 3:

- We envision all people, all beings, and all life as expressions of God.
- We see a world in which each and every person lives in alignment with his/her highest spiritual principle, emphasizing unity with God and connection with each other; a world in which individually and collectively we are called to a higher state of consciousness and action.
- We envision humanity awakening to its spiritual magnificence and discovering the creative power of thought; a world where each and every person discovers his/her own personal power and ability to create an individual life that works within a world that works for everyone.
- We envision a world in which we live and grow as One Global Family that respects and honors the interconnectedness of all life; a world where this kinship with all life prospers and connects through the guidance of spiritual wisdom and experience.
- We envision a world where personal responsibility joins with social conscience in every area of the political, corporate, academic, and social sectors, providing sustainable structures to further the emerging global consciousness.
- We envision a world where each and every person has enough food, a home and a sense of belonging, a world of peace and harmony, enfranchisement and justice.
- We envision a world in which resources are valued, cared for, and grown, and where there is generous and continuous sharing of these resources.
- We envision a worldwide culture in which forgiveness (whether for errors, injustices, or debts) is the norm.
- We envision a world which has renewed its emphasis on beauty, nature, and love through the resurgence of creativity, art, and aesthetics.
- We envision a world that works for everyone and for all of creation.

Appendix B

OUR SHARED VALUES

SECTION TWO – Organizational Design Model, page 6:

Accountability: We account for our activities, disclose them in a transparent manner, and accept responsibility for our actions and the obligations entrusted to us.

- Open Communication: We communicate openly with each other in an atmosphere of collaboration and inclusion.

Financial Health and Prosperity: We express order and balance in our finances and experience optimal financial well-being. Through the richness of our teaching and its application, we value the principle of abundance and its expression as prosperity as a means to provide resources to empower our personal and collective vision.

Integrity: We embrace the quality of being honest and strive to let our inner convictions match our outer actions. We express wholeness, honesty and fairness in our relationships and activities.

Love: We embrace Love as the Self-Givingness of God to all creation, moving through us into expression as compassion, caring, mutual respect and kindness. We express Love as:

- Community Service: We dedicate our time, talent, treasure, and expertise to the healthy and joyful evolution of our spiritual community, the community in which we live and the greater community of the world.
- Safety: We create a community wide climate conducive to honest reflection and deep and direct communication.
- Compassion and Caring: We express interest in and support for the well-being of ourselves and others. We express unconditional love when observing the suffering of others and do what we can to give aid and show compassion.

Spiritual Living: As we learn and practice our philosophy, the Science of Mind, we live principle-centered, Spirit-led lives and turn to our principles for guidance in all moments and all areas of our lives. We express Spiritual Living as:

- Diversity and Inclusivity: We value, embrace and celebrate the individual uniqueness and contribution of all people as they express through differences of gender, ethnicity, culture, history, experience, talents and sexual orientation. We

- include representatives from all our organizational constituencies in leadership, sacred service and decision making.
- Education: We walk a path of awakening, growth, and spiritual deepening through classes, workshops, seminars, and spiritual practices that allow us to embrace education as a lifelong endeavor.
 - Transformation and Evolution: We do deep inner personal work of self-discovery and healing to reveal the greater truth of our Divinity, wholeness, and freedom.
 - Creativity: We allow the ongoing activity of Spirit into our hearts, minds and activities to bring forth new forms and expressions to inspire and guide.
 - Continuous Improvement: We consistently welcome more and more of the Divine Nature to be realized within us and revealed through our relationships, our decisions and our contributions to the world.