

Prestonwood

CULTURE IMPACT



MISSION STATEMENT

Instilling in our communities a persuasive influence that is in line with biblical principles and serves as an agent of change in protecting the basic human right to life, strengthening marriages and the family as the foundation of our society, and protecting **religious freedom**

Your vote. Your voice. Your biblical values.

UNDERSTANDING TEXAS ELECTIONS

It seems as though Texas elections are constantly occurring, which can lead to much confusion. This guide will help inform and educate voters about these elections as they all have a purpose and timeframe. At Prestonwood, under the leadership of Senior Pastor Jack Graham, we believe voting is an act of stewardship. What a gift from God that *We the People* can vote for our leaders! The Bible calls us to be good citizens, and it begins with being an active and informed voter.

IN THIS DOCUMENT, WE WILL EXAMINE:

- I. What Does the Bible Say about Being a Good Citizen?
- II. Primary Elections
- III. General Elections
- IV. Municipal Elections
- V. Texas State Constitutional Election
- VI. Special Elections
- VII. Voter Registration
- VIII. Voting Resources
- IX. Prestonwood Culture Impact Team

1. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BEING A GOOD CITIZEN?

The Bible addresses the concept of being a good citizen primarily in the context of submitting to governing authorities, living peaceably, and fulfilling civic duties as an extension of one's faith in God.



Submission to governing authorities is clearly addressed in Romans 13:1–7 where the apostle Paul states:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.... Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Simply put, citizens should obey laws and authorities as part of God's ordained order. This includes paying taxes and showing respect, unless obedience directly contradicts God's commands (Acts 5:29). It is at this point where we, as citizens of God's kingdom here on earth, have a right and responsibility to engage in the culture and have our voices heard.

*But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."
—Acts 5:29*

Even when our preferred political party is not in charge, we are to heed the words found in Jeremiah 29:7 (to exiles in Babylon):
"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."





This means that even in a hostile land, God's people are to promote societal good through work, prayer and stability.

We are to pray for our leaders promoting peaceful, godly living for all as 1 Timothy 2:1–2 states: *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”*

Simply put, the Bible calls us to be good citizens. We do that by submitting to governmental bodies and their leaders, and by praying, engaging in the culture, and seeking common good. Above all, however, we are to be obedient to God. If the actions of governmental bodies drift from our biblical worldview, it is critical that we engage in our civic duty to seek change. This applied under monarchies, empires and (by extension) modern democracies/republics. Believers are “sojourners and exiles” (1 Peter 2:11) whose ultimate citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), yet they model exemplary earthly conduct.

As stated earlier, being a good citizen in the United States starts with being an active and informed voter. You will learn more about the elections we have in Texas in this booklet.



II. PRIMARY ELECTIONS

The purpose of primary elections is for each political party (Republican, Democrat) to select its candidates who will run in the general election later in the year (November). The Libertarian Party and the Green Party (since they are smaller in size) hold a convention to select their candidates of choice for the general election, and if they meet all the standards to be placed on the general election ballot, they will run against the Republican and Democrat candidates.

Primary elections take place in the early March timeframe with early voting beginning in February.

There is no limit on how many candidates can run for their party's nomination, but the winner must receive 50-percent-plus-1 votes to be declared the winner. So, primary elections that have more than two candidates will most likely be forced to hold a runoff election. Runoff elections will be held in June between the two top candidates to determine the winner of the primary.

Primary elections are conducted by each political party, and the Republican and Democrat parties use county election resources to conduct their party elections. The winner of each party's primary election will represent that political party in the general election. Sometimes, "ballot propositions" appear on the ballot. These are simply opinion polls from the political parties on key issues such as property tax reform, border security, amnesty for illegal aliens, closed primary elections and much more. These ballot propositions merely provide the political parties insight on where voters stand on the issues.

Examples of elected offices that use primary elections are – on the national level, president and vice president, representative, senator; on the state level, governor, lieutenant governor, representative, senator, supreme court, district court, railroad commissioner, agricultural commissioner; and at the local level, county judge, county commissioner, constable, and precinct chair.

III. GENERAL ELECTIONS

The purpose of the general election is to elect the political party and candidate who will take office for the official term. This election is held in November with early voting starting in October. Once elected, most of the winning candidates will be sworn into office in the January timeframe.

IV. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The purpose of municipal elections is to elect local leaders. These races are nonpartisan, meaning candidates do not represent political parties. These elections take place in the May timeframe with early voting in April.

The local offices to be decided are mayor, city council, school trustee, and community college trustee.

Some discredit these municipal elections, not considering them as important as the primary

and general elections. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Whereas the powers that be in Washington, D.C., and Austin can make decisions and laws that could take years to impact our lives, a local city council or school trustee can pass a law or policy that can change the quality of citizens' lives overnight. Imagine if a city council voted that trash would no longer be picked up every week! It is imperative we elect qualified candidates to these local positions who represent our values.

V. TEXAS STATE CONSTITUTIONAL ELECTION

The Texas Legislature meets in regular session in odd-numbered years. The session begins at noon on the second Tuesday in January and lasts 140 calendar days. The governor can call special sessions to consider specific issues. Special sessions last no longer than 30 days and are limited to the topics designated by the governor. The governor can call an unlimited number of special sessions if he or she sees fit.

During the regular and special sessions, laws are passed that require change to the Texas State Constitution. Any change to the

Texas Constitution requires a statewide vote in which voters can confirm a bill and its required constitutional changes by a *simple majority* of the vote. These elections take place in November with early voting in October in the odd year when the legislature meets. Unfortunately, voter turnout is extremely low for this type of election, and it reminds us that being an engaged citizen begins with our being faithful to vote in *all* elections.

VI. SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Special elections can occur for any national, state or local municipal office. If an elected official cannot fulfill his or her term due to resignation, health concerns or recall (although difficult to do, a recall is a legal process where voters can remove a candidate during his or her term), this will trigger the need for a special election to be called. Whoever is elected will fulfill the term of the person being replaced.



ELECTION SUMMARY

As noted above, the following is a quick summary of the elections we have in the state of Texas.

Primary Election – Each political party elects its candidate for general election

Early Voting in February / Election Day in March

Runoff Election – If no candidate receives 50-percent-plus-1 votes, the top two candidates have a head-to-head election in June.

General Election – Determines which party and candidate will fulfill the office term

Early Voting in October / Election Day in November

Constitutional Election – Determines changes to the Texas Constitution by a simple majority of the vote

Early Voting in October / Election Day in November

Special Election – The office holder cannot fulfill the term of office; a replacement is chosen.

Voting on date selected by the governing body



VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

In order to vote, a resident must be registered. The office of the Secretary of State offers a great resource to assist in this area. The website votetexas.gov provides:

- Dates for elections
- Voter registration and updates to a registration
- Details for voting by mail
- Details for voters with disabilities
- Frequently Asked Questions

Voter registration details may also be found at county election websites. These links are:

- Collin County – www.collincountytx.gov/elections
- Denton County – votedenton.gov
- Dallas County – dallascountyvoters.org
- Grayson County – www.co.grayson.tx.us
- Tarrant County – tarrantcounty.com

Lastly, in its commitment to assist people in fulfilling the right to vote, the Prestonwood Culture Impact Team hosts Voter Registration Drives before all elections.

VIII. VOTING RESOURCES

One of the roles of the Prestonwood Culture Impact Team is to provide resources to help equip people to vote. This does not mean people are instructed how to vote, but instead are encouraged to always vote biblical values. To assist voter preparation, “Vote Cards” are provided that outline:

- Election Type (primary, general, municipal, special or constitutional amendment)
- Election and Early Voting Dates
- Links to county election websites (see above) to find voting locations, times and sample ballots (A note on sample ballots: In each county, there could be up to 75 or more different ballot combinations so it is imperative to print a sample ballot to see what exactly is being voted on.)
- Free Voters Guide to be better educated on the candidates’ positions. The Culture Impact Team has partnered with ivoterguide.com to share a candidate’s rating based on his or her positions on key issues.

The Prestonwood Culture Impact team has also partnered with Christians Engaged (christiansengaged.org), which has an initiative called “Take the Pledge” to remind voters who sign up of upcoming elections. Those voters agree to:

PRAY – Commit to pray for five minutes a week for our nation.

VOTE – Commit to vote in every election (local, state, national).

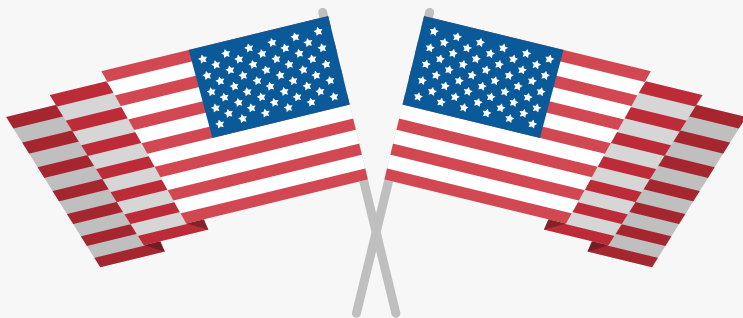
ENGAGE – Commit to engage in some form of civic education and involvement for the well-being of our nation.


Lastly, the Prestonwood Culture Team conducts faith-based Candidate Forums where the public can meet candidates in person and hear where they stand on the important issues of the day.

IX. PRESTONWOOD CULTURE IMPACT TEAM

The mission statement of the Prestonwood Impact Team is to instill in our communities a persuasive influence that is in line with biblical principles and serves as an agent of change in protecting the basic human right to life, strengthening marriages and the family as the foundation of our society, and protecting religious freedom. We serve under the leadership of our pastor and our church.

To learn more about our work, or if you are interested in becoming a team member, please contact Ron Kelley at rkelley@prestonwood.org or 972-820-5439.





*IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY
NAME HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY
AND SEEK MY FACE AND TURN FROM THEIR
WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM
HEAVEN AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND
HEAL THEIR LAND. — 2 CHRONICLES 7:14*



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