

# Elizabeth Warren launches interfaith initiative, hopes to appeal to faith communities

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Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., campaigns December 7, 2019, in Rochester, New Hampshire (AP Photo / Mary Schwalm)

Democratic presidential hopeful Elizabeth Warren has announced an interfaith advisory council and forthcoming endorsements from more than 100 religious leaders from across the country.

“I’m proud to announce a committed group of faith leaders that will lead my campaign’s Interfaith Advisory Council,” Warren, a United Methodist and US senator

from Massachusetts, told Religion News Service in a statement on January 24. “If we want to restore communities, what better way than to influence systemic injustices that will break generational strongholds of poverty and oppression. The Warren for President Interfaith Advisory Council will answer the call for social, racial, and economic justice by working together to build an America that works for everyone.”

The 16 members of the council hail from various states and include several black Christian leaders and women clergy.

“Elizabeth Warren envisions an America for all of us,” Jeffrey Brown, associate pastor of the Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, said in a statement. “A place where dignity and respect is a basic right, where neighborhoods are free of gun violence and full of opportunity, and a place where we can build the beloved community. We need a president with the tenacity, brilliance, and determination to transform this nation.”

Some members of the council lead congregations that are lesser known but have regional influence, such as Miniard Culpepper of Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Massachusetts, William Flippin Jr. of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Georgia, Dawnique Daughtry of the House of the Lord Fellowship in New Jersey, Bonnie Myotai Treace of Hermitage Heart Zen center in North Carolina, and Rabbi Matthew Soffer of Judea Reform Congregation in Massachusetts.

A Warren spokesperson said council members work on get-out-the-vote efforts and help give the campaign advice “on policies and positions specific to the faith community.”

The religion initiative appears to be geared toward helping Warren garner support among key religious demographics such as black voters in South Carolina, many of whom attend church regularly. According to a Fox News poll conducted in early January, former vice president Joe Biden currently enjoys support from 43 percent of black voters there, while Warren claims only 6 percent.

In December, Biden’s campaign announced the endorsement of 100 faith leaders in South Carolina, where his campaign has had a staffer dedicated to faith outreach since August 2019.

Warren isn’t a neophyte to God-talk. She has invoked her Christian faith often on the campaign trail, speaking at churches and recalling her experience as a Sunday

school teacher. She also regularly quotes Matthew 25 as a scripture passage that inspires her by calling her “to action.”

“I fight to uplift and protect the divine in every single person,” Warren told a group of pastors gathered in Washington, D.C., for the Festival of Homiletics in May 2018.  
—Religion News Service