

# Top 10 Stats Explaining the Evangelical Vote for Trump or Clinton

(UPDATED) These surveys suggest how—and why—evangelicals will split more than usual in 2016 election.

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Last week, Donald Trump [said](#) that if evangelicals vote, he would win the 2016 presidential election. But while he commands a clear lead over Hillary Clinton for their support, surveys also show that American evangelicals are [much more divided this year](#) compared to previous elections.

With the election just days away, here are CT's picks for the recent survey

findings that most caught our eye on not only *how* evangelicals are voting in 2016, but *why*.

## **1) How Evangelicals (By Belief) Plan to Vote**

Most surveys allow evangelicals to self-identify, which [produces consistent majorities](#) for Trump. But surveys that study evangelicals based on their beliefs and actions are much more mixed:

45% of Americans with evangelical beliefs plan to vote for Trump  
31% plan to vote for Clinton  
23% plan to vote for a third-party candidate, or haven't decided  
[Source: LifeWay Research #1 (links at bottom of page)]

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45% of born-again Americans plan to vote for Trump  
37% plan to vote for Clinton  
15% plan to vote for a third-party candidate, or not vote at all

48% of born-again Americans *who worship weekly* plan to vote for Trump  
34% plan to vote for Clinton  
14% plan to vote for a third-party candidate, or not vote at all  
[Reuters #2]

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4 in 10 evangelicals are reluctant to vote for either Trump or Clinton  
[Barna Group #3]

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## **2) How Evangelicals (By Race/Ethnicity) Plan to Vote**

65% of white Americans with evangelical beliefs plan to vote for Trump  
10% plan to vote for Clinton

62% of African/Hispanic/Asian Americans with evangelical beliefs plan to vote for Clinton

15% plan to vote for Trump

2 in 5 Americans with evangelical beliefs are African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, or another ethnic minority.

[LifeWay Research #1]

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47% of Hispanic evangelicals support Clinton

34% support Trump

[Pew Research Center #4]

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### **3) How Evangelical Pastors Plan to Vote**

44% of evangelical pastors are undecided

38% plan to vote for Trump

9% plan to vote for Clinton

4% plan to vote for Gary Johnson

2% plan to not vote

Most likely to support Trump:

61% of Pentecostal pastors

50% of Church of Christ pastors

46% of Baptist pastors

Most likely to support Clinton:

50% of Presbyterian/Reformed pastors

44% of Methodist pastors

59% of evangelical pastors believe that Christians who vote their conscience will not all vote for the same candidate

63% believe that Christians are not obligated to vote for a candidate with a reasonable chance of winning

[LifeWay Research #5]

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#### **4) The Empathy Gap**

47% of Protestants who support Clinton say they “have a hard time respecting” Trump supporters

42% of Protestants who support Trump find it hard to respect Clinton supporters

58% of all Clinton supporters say they “have a hard time respecting” Trump supporters

40% of all Trump supporters find it hard to respect Clinton supporters

[Pew Research Center #6]

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#### **5) Politics & Bedfellows**

13% of self-identified white evangelicals have argued with their spouse about the election

87% have not

75% of self-identified white evangelical couples are voting for the same presidential candidate

6% are voting for different candidates

76% of couples who attend church weekly are voting for the same presidential candidate

69% of couples who rarely attend church are doing likewise

78% of Protestant men believe their household is voting for the same

presidential candidate

66% of Protestant women believe likewise

69% of Catholic men believe their household is voting for the same candidate

76% of Catholic women believe likewise

[Pew Research Center #7]

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## **6) Voting *For* Trump vs. *Against* Clinton**

In October:

45% of white evangelical Trump supporters are voting FOR Trump

51% are voting AGAINST Clinton

[Note: This matches the split among Trump supporters overall.]

37% of white mainline Trump supporters are voting FOR Trump

60% are voting AGAINST Clinton

49% of Catholic Trump supporters are voting FOR Trump

48% are voting AGAINST Clinton

62% of black Protestant Clinton supporters are voting FOR Clinton

36% are voting AGAINST Trump

57% of Protestant Clinton supporters are voting FOR Clinton

42% are voting AGAINST Trump

52% of white mainline Clinton supporters are voting FOR Clinton

45% are voting AGAINST Trump

56% of Catholic Clinton supporters are voting FOR Clinton

43% are voting AGAINST Trump

[Pew Research Center #13]

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In June:

Among white evangelicals planning to vote for Trump:

38% said their vote was for Trump

57% said their vote was against Clinton

Among white evangelicals planning to vote for Clinton:

35% said their vote was for Clinton

59% said their vote was against Trump

Among white evangelical weekly church attenders planning to vote for Trump:

44% support him strongly

53% support him not strongly

Among white evangelical weekly church attenders planning to vote for Clinton:

25% support her strongly

75% support her not strongly

[Pew Research Center #8]

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Among born-against Christians who support Trump:

26% are voting for Trump

41% are voting against Clinton

Among born-again Christians who support Clinton:

43% are voting for Clinton

32% are voting against Trump

[Barna Group #9]

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## 7) How Evangelicals Feel About Trump

41% of *all* white evangelicals say Trump is “a good role model”

55% of white evangelicals *who support Trump* say the same

55% of all white evangelicals say Trump is “hard to like”

46% of white evangelicals who support Trump say the same

67% of all white evangelicals say Trump is honest

81% of white evangelicals who support Trump say the same

58% of all white evangelicals say Trump is well-qualified

77% of white evangelicals who support Trump say the same

For comparison, among black Protestants (two-thirds of whom are evangelicals, according to Pew):

8% of black Protestants say Trump is a good role model

77% say Trump is hard to like

5% say Trump is honest

6% say Trump is well-qualified

[Pew Research Center #6]

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59% of registered voters think Trump has respect for evangelicals

51% think Clinton respects evangelicals also

81% of Clinton supporters think Clinton has respect for evangelicals

37% think Trump respects evangelicals also

85% of Trump supporters think Trump has respect for evangelicals

19% think Clinton respects evangelicals also

[Pew Research Center #13]

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## 8) Does Trump's Morality Matter to Evangelicals?

CT asked in 2011 whether marital infidelity should disqualify a candidate for public office. The US religious group that has shifted most since then: self-identified white evangelicals.

*Q: Can elected officials behave ethically and fulfill their public duties even if they have committed immoral acts in their personal life?*

30% of self-identified white evangelicals said yes in 2011

72% said yes in 2016

[PRRI/Brookings #10]

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56% of white evangelicals are less likely to vote for someone who had an affair

42% don't care

[Pew Research Center #11]

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44% of self-identified white evangelicals think Trump has strong moral character

49% think Trump does not

18% of white evangelicals think Clinton has strong moral character

79% think Clinton does not

[Washington Post/ABC News #12]

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51% of all white evangelicals say Trump is moral

68% of white evangelicals who support Trump say the same

12% of black Protestants say the same

[Pew Research Center #6]



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## **9) Does Trump's Faith Matter to Evangelicals?**

*Q: Is it very important for a presidential candidate to have strong religious beliefs?*

49% of self-identified white evangelicals said yes in 2016

64% said yes in 2011

[PRRI/Brookings #10]

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83% of white evangelicals want their presidential candidate to share their religious faith

72% of black Protestants say the same

49% of white evangelicals think Trump is religious

44% think Trump is not religious

[Pew Research Center #11]

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15% of born-again Christians view Trump as "authentically Christian"

13% view Clinton the same way

4% said they are equally "authentically Christian"

48% said neither is an authentic Christian

20% said they didn't know

[Barna Group #9]

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## **10) Which Issues Matter Most to Evangelicals**

Evangelical pastors are much more concerned about the personal character of Trump and Clinton, as well as their Supreme Court picks, than the people in

their pews.

Among evangelical pastors:

27% said personal character was the most important issue to vote on

20% said Supreme Court nominees

12% said religious freedom

10% said abortion

6% said the economy

5% said national security

2% said immigration

13% said none of these

Among Americans with evangelical beliefs:

26% said improving the economy was the most important issue to vote on

22% said national security

15% said personal character

10% said Supreme Court nominees

7% said religious freedom

5% said immigration

4% said abortion

44% of evangelical pastors (a plurality) were undecided on Trump vs. Clinton

36% said personal character would be the top determiner of their vote

14% said Supreme Court nominees

[LifeWay Research #1 and #5]

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Abortion ranks low among white evangelicals' top election concerns (% saying each issue is "very important" in deciding who to vote for):

89% terrorism

87% economy

78% immigration

78% foreign policy  
77% gun policy  
70% Supreme Court appointments  
70% health care  
70% Social Security  
62% trade policy  
59% education  
52% abortion  
51% treatment of racial/ethnic minorities  
34% environment  
29% treatment of LGBT community  
[Pew Research Center #8]

Sources:

1. LifeWay Research [survey](#) of 1,000 respondents from Sept. 27 to Oct. 1 (evangelicals based on four core beliefs)
2. Reuters [polling](#) 5-day rolling average as of Nov. 1 (respondents self-identified as “born again” and self-reported worship attendance from 2-3 times per month to more than weekly)
3. Barna Group [survey](#) of 1,023 adults from Sept. 12-19 (evangelicals defined by eight conditions)
4. Pew Research Center [survey](#) of 1,500 adults from Aug. 23 to Sept. 21 (evangelicals based on [denomination](#) or self-identity)
5. LifeWay Research [survey](#) of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors from Aug. 22 to Sept. 16
6. Pew Research Center [survey](#) from Oct. 20-25
7. Pew Research Center [survey](#) of 4,000 respondents from Sept. 27 and Oct. 10

8. Pew Research Center [survey](#) of 1,655 voters from June 15-26
9. Barna Group [survey](#) of 1,023 adults from Sept. 12-19 (evangelicals defined by eight conditions)
10. PRRI/Brookings [survey](#) from October
11. Pew Research Center [survey](#) from Jan. 7-14
12. Washington Post-ABC News [poll](#) from Oct. 10-13
13. Pew Research Center [survey](#) from Oct. 20-25

[Donald Trump image courtesy of [Gage Skidmore – Flickr](#)]

[Hillary Clinton image courtesy of [Gage Skidmore – Flickr](#)]