



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



OUR FAITH, OUR VOTE RESOURCE TOOLKIT

UCC.ORG/OUR-FAITH-OUR-VOTE

About Our Faith Our Vote

The United Church of Christ's Our Faith Our Vote Campaign is designed to engage the faith community in elections. We engage participants in voter registration drives and candidate forums that get to the heart of the issues we care about.

Discerning the role of the church in politics has been a historically strong part of the UCC and our predecessor bodies. UCC General Synod resolutions and policy statements have spoken to the qualifications for the Office of the President of the U.S. (1960); ethics in public life and conflicts of interest among public office holders (1967) lobbyist disclosure (1977), and of course, a myriad of public issues that are decided on by elected officials at the local, state and national levels. Our Faith Our Vote work is being done across the U.S., as churches seek to faithfully respond to the call of a God who is still speaking.

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“Vote with Love”

A Reflection by Rev. Michael Neuroth

“Let us not love with words or speech, but in action and in truth”
— 1 John 3:18

The theme for the 2024 Our Faith Our Vote campaign is “Vote with Love.” Grounded in 1 John 3:18, this verse reminds us that above all else LOVE remains our north star. Love must ground all we do, as we seek to live out the most simple but greatest commandment to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40). Unfortunately, when we look today at our nation and our world, love is not always what we see. Our most vulnerable neighbors—immigrants, LGBTQIA+ siblings, black and brown communities, and many others—are too often threatened and portrayed as less deserving of love. In the face of these threats, we are called to stand together.

But 1 John does more than simply remind us to speak with love. It also challenges us to go beyond our words to love “in action and in truth.” We are called not simply to love with our words but also with our lives and actions. We are called to move, to organize, and to VOTE out of that love – and to do so grounded in truth. In our increasingly fast-paced world, it is critical to remain grounded in truth. As faith leaders and faith communities, we play an essential role as purveyors of accurate information amidst a sea of click-bait driven misinformation.

This election is critical for all of us! So much is at stake. In 2024, not only is this a Presidential election year, but 33 Senate seats and all 435 House seats are up for election. 11 states will elect new governors and hundreds of ballot initiatives will set policy on issues including reproductive justice, LGBTQIA+ rights, and many other issues. These policymakers and policies will shape our future and determine whether we as a nation will ever fully live into our highest ideals of equality, opportunity, and ensuring the common good.

We must see that our vote, our public voice, is a sacred act. An act of justice. An act of LOVE to ensure that we build a nation and “just world” for all. We hope this toolkit will be useful for you in your work in this election season and more broadly as a tool to strengthen our participation in our democracy, protecting it for future generations.

Please use and share this toolkit to help center LOVE this election season. Let us together continue the UCC’s mission to welcome all, love all and seek justice for all!

Let us Vote with Love on November 5th!



Rev. Michael Neuroth

*Director of the UCC Office of Public Policy
and Advocacy in Washington D.C.*



Guidelines for Congregations on Political Action

How can UCC congregations participate constructively in the political process during this election year? What are the opportunities and legal limits to faith inspired political activity? This guide will help you understand what kind of activities UCC churches can undertake to lift up our concerns and our witness in the elections.

Political Activities of Churches are Limited Due to IRS Tax Exempt Status

Almost all churches are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code on the basis that they are “operated exclusively for religious, charitable or educational purposes.” As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, a church:

- is exempt from paying corporate income taxes, and donations to it are tax deductible on federal tax returns;
- may expend funds for religious, charitable and educational purposes, and an insubstantial amount on lobbying and to promote legislation;

A 501 (c)(3) exempt organization may not “participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.”

Political Activity

Your church is restricted from engaging in some political activities because it is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. For example, your church is prohibited from expressing its support for or opposition to any candidate. Your church is also prohibited from making political contributions to candidates.

However, there are no restrictions on educating church members about election year issues and promoting discussion of public policy.

Other kinds of unrestricted political activity include holding nonpartisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, preparing and distributing nonpartisan voter guides and voting records, prayer vigils, public witness, and advocacy for a safe and accessible election, and sponsoring candidate forums and debates.

Clergy and church leaders have the same rights as every American citizen and may fully participate in political campaigns as individuals. “However, they must not participate in political campaigns by endorsing or opposing any candidate in a church publication or at a church function. When clergy do engage in a political campaign or political discussions as individuals, they should announce they are acting on their own and not on behalf of the church.” [from Internal Revenue Service 2007 ruling: Rev. Rul. 2007-41]

You can learn more about how to engage in nonpartisan political activities from our webinar:
“Be Prophetic, Not Partisan! Navigating Election Do’s & Don’ts for Churches”
bit.ly/be-prophetic-not-partisan

Guidelines for Congregations on Political Action

Discuss the position of candidates on public issues*	Yes
Endorsement of political candidates	No
Contributions to political candidates	No
In-kind expenditures in favor of or against political candidates	No
Independent expenditures in favor of or against political candidates	No
Contribution to PACs	No
Appearance of political candidate at church meeting or service**	Yes
Payment of expenses for candidate to appear	No
Distribute at church	
1) Nonpartisan candidate surveys or guides***	Yes
2) Voting Records	Yes
3) Candidate Political Statements	No
Rent church space at market value if offered at same rate for all candidates	Yes
Publish in church newsletter, bulletin, or magazine****:	
1) Political ads sold at market rate	Yes
2) Political ads sold at less than market rate	No
3) News stories	Yes
4) Editorials endorsing or opposing a political candidate	No
Nonpartisan voter education	Yes
Nonpartisan voter registration	Yes
Nonpartisan get-out-the-vote drives	Yes

*** Discussion of the position of political candidates is appropriate so long as the discussion does not involve an endorsement of, or opposition to, any particular candidate's position.**

**** A political candidate may appear at a church service. The appearance of candidate before a church service, however, is limited as follows:**

- Any other candidate for the same office that requests to appear must be given the same opportunity; and
- No solicitation for funds may be made by any representative of the church. In addition, a church may allow political candidates to use the facilities of the church for events or meetings on the same basis that civic groups and other organizations are allowed. If civic groups and other organizations are required to pay rent for using the church property, the political candidate should be charged the same amount.

For more information see "IRS Code Prohibitions on Political Campaign Interventions" from our UCC Office of General Council:
ucc.org/general-council-elections-memo

***** A church may publish or distribute the results of surveys of candidates on public issues. Such surveys, however, must be nonpartisan. As a result, 501 (c)(3) church groups should observe the following conditions in publishing or distributing the survey:**

- Publish the response of all the candidates for the particular office by use of 'yes' and 'no.' The survey should not specify what is the desired response.
- Do not include any words indicating either endorsement of or support for any of the candidates or their positions on issues.

****** Church publications:**

- **Political Ads:** A church newsletter or magazine may publish an ad for a political candidate, as long as the ad is purchased at the regular rate for ads in that publication, and as long as the church does not refuse to publish an ad by an opposing candidate
- **News Stories:** A church newsletter, bulletin or magazine may publish, without limitation, news stories on political candidates and political campaigns.
- **Editorials:** A church may not publish an editorial supporting or endorsing a candidate for political office or political party.

Voter Education

While it is true that churches as 501(c)3 organizations cannot support or oppose a candidate for political office, this does not mean that congregations cannot engage in dialogue about the issues at stake in the elections - including global security, economic policy, environmental safety, public education and health care policy.

In fact, participating in educational activities that help one to become a well-informed and thoughtful voter is a key responsibility for any citizen. There are many ways that congregations can create forums and spaces for dialogue, discussion, and faithful reflection on the issues at stake in the elections.

Use the issue-based one pagers that follow to learn more about UCC positions on election issues. Each one pager has been drafted by an issue expert on the national staff and offers resources on how to talk about these issues from a faith perspective. Consider how members of your church may raise these issues in town halls, public forums, or other contexts.

In Worship and in Church Education

- Address issue concerns in the worship life of the congregation, through prayers, sermons, and scripture.
- Invite members of the congregation with various kinds of expertise to speak about the issues from their experience and perspective - for example, invite public school teachers to talk about public education issues or health care workers to talk about healthcare issues.
- Discuss the issues in light of scriptural teaching and the resolutions of the UCC General Synod.
- Teaching congregants how to sort between trusted and untrusted news sources.

Congregational Education Activities

- Hold a candidate forum at your church.
- Visit nonpartisan websites that provide issue background. Sharing the task of finding and gathering issue information makes it easier!
 - Gather a group of people willing to be researchers, then have each person take an issue and follow that issue discussion in newspapers, magazines, and on radio and television. Share your findings with each other.
- Invite Sunday School children and youth to share their hopes and concerns on the issues.
- Organize a group from your congregation to attend candidate events and town hall meetings — share your reflections with each other after the event. (You can bring a question or two with you in written form that you have prepared ahead of time.)
- Post issue education material on church bulletin boards and include information in your church's newsletter.
- Talk about the issues with family members and friends.
- Hold deep listening sessions and dialogue across differences in your congregation and interfaith settings.

“Let us not love with words or speech, but in action and in truth”
— 1 John 3:18

Learn more about the resources offered through Our Faith Our Vote (OFOV):

Our Faith Our Vote Blog: bit.ly/our-faith-our-vote-blog

OFOV Issue Education Resources: <https://bit.ly/our-faith-our-vote-issue-education>

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager Immigration Justice



The UCC on Immigration

The United Church of Christ has a long history of solidarity in the struggle for dignity and human rights for immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. We do this through a network of grassroots leaders in the UCC National Collaborative on Immigration working to share a prophetic stance and lift up the voices of impacted leaders. General Synod Resolutions demonstrate our continued support for immigration justice:

- [A Resolution on Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Church](#) (General Synod 31, 2017)
- [Resolution Supporting Compassionate Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Protection of the Human Rights of Immigrants](#) (General Synod 29, 2013)

UCC congregations work closely with impacted leaders, immigrants' rights organizations, and service agencies to accompany asylum seekers and advocate for just immigration reforms that include a pathway to citizenship.

Questions for Candidates

How will you help keep families together and welcome migrants who come to this country for a better life?

The historic importance of the asylum program is embedded in U.S. and international law. How will you protect and restore the asylum program?

Take Action

This November, support candidates who will welcome immigrants and asylum seekers and pave a path to citizenship.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is launching a petition for people of faith to show their support for welcoming migrants seeking safety, asylum seekers and undocumented people.
<https://www.interfaithimmigration.org>

Become an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation and join the Sanctuary Movement.

Support Communities Welcoming Asylum Seekers!
<https://p2a.co/GtGaB6E>

Contact

Noel Andersen
Minister for
Immigration Justice

andersenn@ucc.org

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager LGBTQ+ Justice



The UCC on LGBTQ+ Justice

The UCC believes that the fluidity of God's design is wondrous and vast. No matter who you are, your sexuality or gender, God makes no mistakes. You are beloved and wonderfully made. The UCC seeks transformative justice for our faith communities and congregations by just action and love for all.

The UCC stands with those facing systemic oppression at the intersection of gender & sexuality by offering care, sex positive education & curriculum, gender & bodily autonomy education & programming, policy & advocacy, and partnership and outreach opportunities.

Take Action

This November, vote for candidates that will support and empower our LGBTQ+ siblings.

Take Action for LGBTQ+ Rights:

<https://p2a.co/m4I2hYM>

Take Action for Trans Rights:

<https://p2a.co/qXEZei9>

Questions for Candidates

How will you, as a candidate, help empower our LGBTQ+ siblings?

As we know, the rights of people of all genders are still under threat. How will you protect the autonomy of each of your constituents?

Contact

Rachael Ward
Minister of Gender &
Human Sexuality Justice

wardr@ucc.org

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager Environmental Justice



The UCC on Environmental Justice

Through past General Synod resolutions, UCC delegates have urged strong commitments to climate action at the federal level of the US government, such as:

- Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy by 2040
- Reducing plastic pollution
- Affirming the intersectionality of climate justice with all justice issues

Strides have been made in the last four years for climate justice with passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, new EPA emission standards for vehicles and power plants, and administrative commitments to remedying historic environmental injustices. We must consider how to maintain the progress already made and continue to advance toward a more sustainable and equitable future for all of Creation as we vote for the love of the Earth.

Take Action

Call on your Congressional representatives to support the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act (S. 3127/H.R. 6053) which would require large corporations to take responsibility for their pollution, create a national beverage container refund program, reduce single use plastics, and more.

Take Action Here!
<https://p2a.co/ZZdpUyr>

Questions for Candidates

If elected, how would you reduce the amount of plastic used in consumer products and remedy the damage done to the environment and our physical health by plastic waste?

Some communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution and environmental harm such as communities of color and low-income communities. What would you do to ensure environmental justice and equity if elected?

Contact

Rev. Brooks Berndt
Minister for Environmental
Justice

berndtb@ucc.org

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager Economic Justice



The UCC on Economic Justice

The United Church of Christ is deeply invested in the pursuit of economic justice because our living God is passionate about ensuring debts are canceled, abundance is made possible for all, and reparations are furnished for those robbed and wronged. This is the JAR (Jubilee, Abundance, Reparations) that we are called to fill! Over the years, UCC churches and conferences have passed numerous resolutions establishing our shared commitment to ensuring economic justice is made real, from our congregations to Congress. Budgets are our moral documents, and the federal budget is funded by our taxes.

As people of faith, those elected to steward our money are expected to fill the jars of economic justice: health care, sustainable food supplies, clean water, living wages, housing, relief of debts, transportation, worker protections, and much more. Let's make sure they do!

Questions for Candidates

If elected, how will you lead in passing legislation that raises wages to a living standard that ensures everyone can afford their own housing, food, and more?

What would you do to help remove the burdens of student and medical debt?

Where do you stand on Congressional and community needs to study and enact a program of reparations?

Take Action

This November, vote for candidates who will make economic decisions that benefits the whole, not just the wealthiest among us.

To take action in the name of equality for all, call your member of Congress and urge them to pass federal legislation to begin the process of federal restitution and nationwide reparations.

<https://p2a.co/2xeiwwd>

Contact

Rev. Seth Wispelwey
Minister for Economic Justice of
the United Church of Christ

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ucc.org/fillthejar

Our Faith Our Vote

Issue One Pager

Racial Justice



Racial Justice
Ministries



Voting is an Act of Resistance and Spiritual Practice. Justice cannot be achieved unless the rules for governing the democratic process are fair to all, yet voter rights have been significantly undermined in recent years. We have seen state efforts to restrict voter rights through stringent voter identification laws and rollbacks in early voting, and last year's Supreme Court decision eliminated key provisions of The Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Almost every ballot measure and candidate policy platform have implications for racial justice because racial disparities are woven into every part of our political system and common life. But those implications are often masked by the language being used. Here are some ways that questions of racial justice will likely show up in a ballot box near you this election season:

- **Voting Rights and Voter Suppression:** be aware of policies and legislation aimed at restricting voting access, including making mail voting more difficult, implementing stricter photo ID laws, curtailing registration drives, intimidating eligible voters, or creating obstacles to voting, all of which create racial inequities in the exercise of democracy.
- **Racial Equity Education:** The UCC's national body approved a resolution supporting public school educators, academic freedom and equity efforts in schools during General Synod 34. Racial Justice Ministries continues to watch for restrictions on education and book bans involving critical race theory, (multi)cultural education, ethnic studies, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). These efforts will often include language prohibiting the discussion, training, and/or understanding that the U.S. is inherently racist as well as any discussions about conscious and unconscious bias, privilege, discrimination, and oppression. Consider how your vote can support education toward a more racially just future with helpful resources, Anti-censorship tool kit, Anti-racist formation of children and youth, and movements against book bans.
- **A National Call for Reparations and Apology for the Enslavement, Systemic and Institutional Racist Policies, and Denial of Wages for over 250 years for People of African Descent in the U.S.** Reparations are measures that seek to rectify actions by English North American colonies and inhumane acts of enslaving people of African descent as human chattel. From local initiatives to federal commissions, the question of monetary and other forms of recompense to address and repair systemic and structural racial harm and inequity are emerging at every level of government. There are ongoing calls for national conversations, political action, and recompense for over 45 million African Americans in the United States. UCC Conferences continue to advocate for conversations to study and calls for actions for reparations for African Americans.

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager Affordable Housing



The UCC on Housing Justice

The UCC believes the right to decent, safe, and affordable housing is not just a policy issue; it is a moral imperative that cuts to the heart of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries' (CHHSM) mission to create a more just, caring, and compassionate world. Studies consistently show that housing insecurity is linked to higher rates of chronic illness, lower educational achievement, and increased mental health challenges.

More than 10 million households spend more than half of their income on rent, leaving little room for other essentials like food, healthcare, and education. The UCC believes we must elect representatives who understand that affordable housing is not just a social issue, but a critical public health concern as well.

Take Action

This November, vote for candidates who will fight for housing policies that align with our belief in the inherent dignity and worth of every person.

Take Action for Affordable Housing:

<https://p2a.co/eoLLSAM>

Questions for Candidates

How will you, as a candidate, advocate for humane and compassionate approaches to homelessness?

What will you do to increase the availability of affordable housing?

Contact

Jamar Doyle

**President and CEO of the
Council for Health and
Human Service Ministry**

doylej@chssm.org

Our Faith Our Vote Issue One Pager Reproductive Justice and Abortion



The UCC on Reproductive Justice and Abortion

The United Church of Christ promotes bodily autonomy for all people and supports the rights of each person to access health care that upholds their dignity and humanity. A [2023 resolution](#) proclaimed abortion as healthcare, forced birth an act of violence, and calls for systemic measures to increase access to the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare.

Additionally, the resolution calls upon Local Churches and their members to engage with the Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith curriculum to promote holistic sexuality education, including information and education about contraception, and to support and offer access to contraceptives.

Take Action

This November, vote for candidates that will support the rights of each person to access healthcare that upholds their dignity and humanity.

Advocate for
Reproductive Healthcare
<https://p2a.co/K2IF6Ho>

Take Action for Abortion
Access:
<https://p2a.co/5Yoj4go>

Questions for Candidates

How will you promote bodily autonomy and support every person's right to access healthcare that upholds their dignity and humanity?

How will you expand access to the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare?

Contact

Rachael Ward
Minister of Gender &
Human Sexuality Justice

wardr@ucc.org

Guidelines for Faithful and Respectful Discussion on the Issues

Realize that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the conversation and has given each participant a part of the truth you are seeking to discern

Follow the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” - even when you disagree with them

Listen respectfully and carefully to others

State what you think you heard someone say and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to understand each other

Speak honestly about your thoughts and feelings. Share personal experiences which help others more fully understand your concerns and perspectives on the issues. Conversation can be passionate and still be respectful, civil and constructive

Speak for yourself, rather than as a member of a group. Use “I”-statements rather than “You”-statements

Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people’s motives, intelligence or integrity

Lift up points of agreement as well as disagreement

Create space for everyone’s concerns to be spoken, even when they disagree

Seek to stay in community with each other even though the discussion may be vigorous and perhaps tense

Keep an open mind and heart. You may not hear if you judge too quickly

Pray for God’s grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all

Voter Registration and Empowerment Drive

The first phase of the Our Faith Our Vote campaign is to launch a voter registration and voter empowerment drive at your church. Our goal is to have every eligible voter at your UCC church registered and voting.

The publicity that your voter registration and empowerment effort receives in your church will likely spark a conversation about the importance of expressing our faith through civic participation and getting your church members out to vote.

Form a Committee

- Form a committee to implement the Our Faith Our Vote campaign at your church. Appoint a Team Leader(s) who can stay in touch with the congregation, local election officials, clergy, lay leadership, and the national UCC to get updates and support, and amplify trusted election information throughout the campaign. Follow @justice_ucc on X and Facebook, and sign up for email updates via the Justice and Peace Action Network on our website: bit.ly/UCCjustice.
- A good committee will consist of members of your church social action committee and/or people who you recruit to volunteer who are willing and able to help congregants register, make a plan to vote, and navigate any challenges at the polls. One person for every 50 people in your church is a good guideline. The more people involved, the more effective your campaign will be.
- Seek the support of your minister and church social action committee for the Our Faith Our Vote campaign. People will want to hear from the committee responsible for social issues, as well as your minister(s). Pastoral leadership is crucial for a successful campaign. And you may need to call on the moral leadership of your pastor to help spread trusted information and directly respond to any issues that arise during or after the election.

Getting Started: First Steps

- At the first meeting of your Our Faith Our Vote committee, set a timeline for your voter registration and empowerment drive. You can register and inform voters in the pews and/or set up tables before and after services. We strongly encourage holding these drives on more than one Sunday at your church.
- Before setting up your drive, contact your local Election Office to learn about how to check voter registration and registration deadlines, check polling locations and hours, learn about early voting or voting by mail options and timelines, and get briefed on local and state voter registration laws, keeping an eye out for ID requirements. You might even set up a meeting between local election officials and your Our Faith Our Vote committee members.
- You can also reach out to your local mayor's office to explain that your committee will be helping ensure things go smoothly for your congregation on election day and offer to amplify trusted and timely information from your city/town. Explain your congregation's size and your committee's ability to communicate and directly respond in relation to any issues that come up on or after election day. You should also use this as an opportunity to reach out to other faith communities and democracy nonprofits in the area to ensure you have partners you can work with if any issues arise during or after the election.
- If your church has a time when social services are delivered (i.e. a food pantry, homeless shelter or soup kitchen), talk to the coordinator of that program and offer to register and inform the people who come to your church. They should be given the same opportunities to learn about voting as everyone else in your church.

Launching the Our Faith Our Vote Campaign

- Ask your minister to help you launch the Our Faith Our Vote campaign in your church. On the first Sunday you plan to begin registering and informing voters, encourage your minister to give a sermon on the importance of civic participation. See the Sermon and Worship Resources section of our website for ideas.
- Announce the committee by writing an article for your church newsletter. Ensure congregants know that the people in this committee will help congregants register and make a plan to vote and will act as the point people for all election-related issues voters face. You can also ask any members who are Poll Chaplains or Poll Workers to reach out so that you can use them as a source of trusted information on election day and support them as front-line workers during the election. Place announcements in the church bulletin and arrange to give an announcement during your congregation's time for sharing concerns (e.g., Moment for Mission). Remember to keep the announcements nonpartisan.
- Put up posters or signs around the church to announce the Our Faith Our Vote campaign and indicate when voter registration tables will be available to church members.

Methods for Voter Registration in Your Church

Registering Voters During Worship Service

Registering church members in the pews during the worship service is the most effective way to promote basic voter registration and participation. We encourage every church to promote an Our Faith Our Vote Sunday where voter registration is included during the worship service. Speak with your pastor and necessary church leadership about registering voters in the pews.

On the designated Sunday, prepare ushers with a sufficient quantity of voter registration forms and the QR code/link to online voter registration (<https://p2a.co/oStmYpV>). At the appropriate time in the service, your minister should address the importance of civic participation and ask the ushers to distribute the voter registration information. Give people time to fill out the forms either online or by hand. Gather back any physical registration forms in a collection plate or ask church attendees to place the forms in baskets at the church exit. Once the registration forms are collected, turn them into the Our Faith Our Vote committee members at the voter registration table.

Voter Registration and Empowerment Tables Before or After Worship

Set up a table or booth in the main foyer of the church where people can stop by before and after the service. Ask the minister to give special attention to the importance of stopping by the table to register and make a plan to vote.

Collect Voter Registration Cards at Your Registration Table

Make sure people complete the registration forms by hand or online when they are at church. This will ensure that people actually fill out their voter registration form – if they leave without filling it out, they are less likely to complete it.

Check your voter registration and find your polling place here!



How to Turn In Voter Registration Forms

Most states require that voter registration forms be turned in within 10-15 days from the date of the signature. After you collect all the completed forms, mail them into your local Elections Office immediately so that the people you have registered can get their official confirmation.

Keep Your Efforts Nonpartisan

As a church and a 501(c)(3), your voter registration efforts must be nonpartisan in nature:

- Never mention a candidate's or a party's name. Do not wear buttons or stickers from any political party or campaign during the voter drive. If asked how you plan to vote, do not answer the question.
- If you are asked what party you prefer, do not answer the question. Explain that your purpose is to promote civic participation
- Do not ask the persons you are working with how they plan to vote or what is their party preference
- It is permissible to mention critical issues involved in elections as long as you do not present issues in support of particular candidates. The following are acceptable appeals: "The next election will set the country's course on civil rights, foreign policy, jobs, taxes, and the environment. Your vote counts. Register now!"

100% Voter Registration in Your Church: It's Possible!

The most important component of the Our Faith Our Vote campaign is to contact every member of your church to get them registered and voting. Your committee can do this through a phone banking effort in conjunction with the voter registration table. Phone calling is an essential element of the campaign because it offers an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations about the importance of expressing our faith through civic participation, and ensuring every congregant knows where, when, and how to vote. It is also the only way to guarantee that you have registered every eligible church member.

Sample Phone Script

"Hello, this is _____ from [name of your church]. We are calling every member of [name of your church] as part of the UCC's Our Faith Our Vote campaign to make sure that you are registered and prepared to vote in this fall's election. Are you registered to vote?"

If they say YES: Ask them if their registration is up to date. If they have moved or want to change party affiliation, they can do so by filling out a new voter registration form. Also ask them if they have made their voting plan. Are they going to vote early and do they know when early voting opens? Are they going to vote-by-mail and do they know when they need to request their ballot and when it must be submitted? If they plan to vote in person, how will they get to their polling location? Make sure they are aware of any ID requirements and the hours of their polling location.

If they say NO: Tell them about the voter registration and empowerment drive at your church and encourage them to fill out a voter registration form. If they can't make it to church when you have the registration table set up, offer to email them a link to the voter registration form. Thank them for their time and let them know that you will be back in touch to remind them to get out and vote.

Staying Organized

- Divide up the church directory for your committee. We suggest that each committee member take 25 names to “adopt” for the campaign. Each committee member or volunteer should be in touch with these members to get them registered, make sure they get out and vote, and help them navigate any barriers that come up.
- Make photocopies of your church directory or make and share a spreadsheet via email so that committee members can easily mark who they reached, whether they are registered and make notes for follow-up.
- You can hold a phone banking party and make calls together from the church or send committee members home with their lists to call. After every phone call, mark on your list if you spoke with the person and if they said they were registered or not. Send out voter registration forms or email registration links to those who requested them in a timely manner. Each volunteer is responsible for the church members they agree to call — so keep following up until every eligible voter on your list is registered.

*“Let us not love with words or speech, but in action and in truth”
— 1 John 3:18*

Celebrate Your Progress!

Keep track of the number of new voters you register or help make a plan to vote and mark your progress in the church newsletter or with a poster displayed at church!

Bulletin or Newsletter Sample Announcement

[Your church’s name] is joining the UCC’s Our Faith Our Vote campaign to register voters, educate ourselves on important issues at stake in the election, and encourage voter participation. The Our Faith Our Vote committee will hold a voter registration table at church [insert dates]. Please come by the table to register yourself and learn more about the importance of voting. If you would like to volunteer to be a member of the Our Faith Our Vote committee, contact [insert your contact info] or come to our next meeting on [insert date]. Learn more at www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote.

Organize a Candidate Forum

Many people do not vote because they don't feel connected to the candidates or issues at stake in an election. Holding candidate forums helps open up the communication between candidates and their constituents and gets people interested in an election. What better place than your church to hold an open dialogue?

Candidates for public office may be invited to speak at your church in their capacity as a candidate or as an individual. Candidate forums and debates held by UCC churches can help improve and redirect the public, political dialogue that has become increasingly shallow and mean-spirited. We have the ability to set the tone of the debate and demand a higher standard of discourse.

Planning Your Candidate Forum or Debate

Have your Our Faith Our Vote committee pick a time and date to invite candidates to a forum or debate. You might want to find out if other churches in your community are interested in working together to set up and publicize the event. You will be more likely to get candidates to attend a forum if it is sponsored by multiple churches and/or groups in your community.

Invite the Candidates

Send an invitation letter to the candidates well before the planned event and follow up with a phone call. Be sure to invite candidates from all parties in order to remain nonpartisan and 501c3 compliant. It may take some time to find a date that will work for the schedules of the candidates in a race. Be flexible.

Plan the Format

There are many ways to set up a candidate forum. Here are some of the common formats you can choose from:

- Allow the candidates to give prepared remarks and have people ask follow-up questions;
- Have prepared questions to ask the candidates on themes important to your church and community;
- Pass out index cards to the audience to write questions on and pass them in to be read on the day of the event or solicit questions from members via email or question box after services prior to the event. Leave enough time at the beginning for the candidates to give opening statements. Give candidates the same amount of time to make their closing remarks.

Make sure to have your moderator thank the candidates for their attendance and to remind people of voting day and encourage them to get out and vote.

Publicize the Event

Post on your church's social media. Include brief notices in the newsletters of churches, campus groups, community-based organizations, and other groups related to the ministry of your church. Ask radio stations to run public service announcements. Ask to be listed in calendars of events in the local newspapers. Display posters in places frequented by your target audience. Ask your minister to announce the event during church service. Ask the mission, social action or interest groups at your church to help get the word out. Make sure to invite the youth group and get them involved in planning the forum or debate.

Inform the Press

Invite the local newspaper and TV stations to cover your candidate forum or debate. This is a great way to get coverage of the issues out to a broader audience. It also helps demonstrate that UCC churches are engaged in the political process and secures press connections to use during and after the election.

Keep Your Event Nonpartisan!

Please remember the following when organizing your candidate debate or forum:

- Questions for the candidates should be prepared and presented by an independent nonpartisan committee or individuals;
- Topics discussed by the candidates should cover a broad range of issues that the candidate would address if elected;
- Each candidate must be given an equal opportunity to present his or her views on the issues discussed;
- Do not ask candidates to agree or disagree with positions, agendas, platforms, or statements of your church or organization; and
- Make sure the moderator does not imply approval or disapproval of the candidates.

Further Guidelines for Candidate Appearances at Your Church

Appearing at Separate Events

You are not required to have all candidates speak on the same Sunday, or at the same event. However, you must provide equal access to other candidates in the same race. It is permissible to invite them to speak on successive Sundays as part of the regular worship service or organize evening forums. Inviting one candidate to speak at a traditionally well-attended event while inviting another to speak at a normally sparsely attended event is not providing an equal opportunity. And no campaigning or fundraising should take place.

Limiting the Number of Candidates

If the number of candidates for a particular office is too large to be practical during a forum or debate, your church may limit the number of invitees provided that you adopt and consistently apply reasonable and objective criteria for deciding between candidates. For example, you may invite the candidates from the two major political parties and a number of other candidates who have attained a predetermined proportion of popular support based on a credible, independent poll.

Speaking as a Non-Candidate

Sometimes candidates who are public figures or are experts in a particular field outside of their candidacy are invited to appear at church-sponsored worship and functions (as they may be a member of your church). They are welcome to come and may be acknowledged just as any visiting dignitary might be provided that they are not invited to use the occasion as a platform for their candidacy and do not mention the election or the candidacy.

If you invite political candidates to speak in a non-candidate capacity, you are not required to provide equal access to all political candidates.

Get Out the Vote!

On average only 60% of the eligible voting population turns out at the polls.

There are a variety of reasons why people don't get out and vote: their job schedule does not allow it, they are away and didn't apply for an absentee ballot, they don't have reliable transportation access, they recently moved, disillusionment with the political atmosphere, among others. With the rise in popularity of suppressive voting legislation, we may see an even lower turnout than normal in this election. What can we do to get out the vote?

Tell Your Neighbors

Remind your friends, neighbors, family members, and congregations to vote on November 5th!

Let them know that voting is one of the best ways to make our voices heard. If the political system is not what they'd like it to be, they can change it through voting! Remind them that Election Day involves voting for more than the presidency - important local issues are also at stake. Offer to sit down with them and make a plan to vote.

Encourage them to vote early if it is possible for them, so they can avoid any issues that arise on election day. If your state offers early voting, provide the location and times when they can cast their ballot. A group of you and your friends can also get together and organize a night of phone or text banking before the election to call the families in your church directory and remind them to vote.

Help Out

Some people you know may not be able to make it to the polls. The Our Faith Our Vote committee at your church can offer to create a ride share system for those who may struggle with getting there, by recruiting members of the church to drive people to the polls.

If you know of someone who does not drive, offer them a ride to their polling place on Election Day or let your committee know. Single parents or working parents may not be able to leave their children alone to go to the polls, so recruit a group of folks willing to babysit. If there are teenagers at your church who are not old enough to vote but can watch younger children, ask them if they'd be willing to volunteer to babysit so parents can go vote.

Teach Your Kids

The largest block of eligible voters who don't turn out at the polls are young people.

Start talking to your children (and nieces, nephews, friends' children, and grandchildren) about voting. Explain to them why you believe it's important to vote and get their ideas on why some people may not vote. Let your children know that their political opinions and their vote matters so future generations will turn out at the polls. Even children who are too young to vote can take part in voter activism and write postcards, knock on doors with their grownups, or make phone calls. In some states, teens can preregister to vote as soon as they turn 16 years old.

Spread the Word About Election Protection Resources

Become a Poll Worker or Poll Chaplain

There are many ways you can help ensure a safe and accessible election. One way is for the Our Faith Our Vote committee to recruit poll workers and poll chaplains. Poll workers are election officers who volunteer to help run a polling location. Poll chaplains are lay people and clergy whose presence at the polls is meant to deescalate and keep the peace. Both roles can provide trusted information on election day and help the day go smoothly. Make sure your committee knows who in the congregation is a poll worker or chaplain so that they can help your committee stay informed, and your committee can help support these front line workers on election day. You can learn more at <https://www.powerthepolls.org/> and <https://www.turnoutsunday.com/volunteer-chaplain>.

Your committee can also organize congregants to provide food and water or act as faith observers at the polls by standing outside of the polling location with nonpartisan signs (check local election guidelines before planning).

Educate Others on the Election Protection Hotline

In advance of the election, your Our Faith Our Vote committee should also circulate the Election Protection Hotline to your congregation. If you have any questions about voting or if you or someone you see at the polls encounter difficulty when attempting to vote, you can call the Hotline and then reach out to your Our Faith Our Vote Committee to help find a solution. If you are at your polling location when you face this difficulty, find a poll worker or poll chaplain who should be able to help.

The national, nonpartisan [Election Protection](#) coalition of which the United Church of Christ is a member, was formed to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Made up of more than 100 local, state and national partners, Election Protection works year-round to advance and defend the right to vote.

Election Protection provides Americans from coast to coast with comprehensive voting information on how they can make sure their vote is counted. Election Protection focuses on the voter - not on the political horse race - and provides guidance, information and help to any American, regardless of who that voter is casting a ballot for.

If you have any questions about voting or encounter difficulty when attempting to cast your ballot call the Election Protection Helplines!

866-OUR-VOTE

Administered by the
Lawyers' Committee for
Civil Rights

888-VE-Y-VOTA

Administered by
the NALEO
Educational Fund

888-API-VOTE

Administered by
APIAVote & AAJC

Being a Civil Voice for Uncivil Times

“Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ... As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”

— 1 Corinthians 12:14-26

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of your redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as Christ has forgiven you.”

— Ephesians 4:29-32

While public discussion of political issues has the potential to bring out the best in us — by surfacing creative new ideas or developing effective problem-solving strategies — more often than not the opposite seems to happen. Whether around the office water cooler or the extended family dinner table, reasoned conversation is taking a back seat to personal attacks and replayed sound bites. Because we avoid these conversations, we miss out on deeper understanding.

As people of faith participating in the public square, we are called to a higher standard of engagement and interaction with our neighbors — even and perhaps especially those with whom we may disagree on an issue. Our faith provides us with spiritual resources to take the conversation to a different level. We can choose respect and hope over animosity and bitterness. We can choose to listen and learn rather than attack and insult. We can choose to have civic discussions in civil tones.

We do not have to avoid the hard issues. We can prepare ourselves for a better conversation by thinking about some of the following ideas to shape the conversation on difficult and emotion-filled issues of the day.

Show Respect

Rather than trying to “win” a debate with your arguments, judge your success by how well you demonstrate respect for other people and for the insights or interesting challenges arise for you. Stay away from insults and personal attacks, and keep trying to return to the substance of the issue. The more respect you show for someone else’s opinions, the more reason they have to respect yours.

Listen

One of the best ways to show respect is to listen. Focus on what the other person is saying, rather than focusing on what you are going to say next. Ask yourself, “What are they trying to express?” “What is important to them?” “Where do we agree?” Ask them questions about their viewpoint.

Seek Understanding

Try to understand the context from which other people are speaking — ask yourself why they see things the way they do. Ask open-ended questions that invite others to say more about why they believe what they believe.

Share Your Own Views Well

Put thought and energy into articulating your own views clearly and concisely. What do you believe and why? Statistics can be helpful, but often sharing your personal stories is most effective. Claim your own opinions by using “I” statements, such as “I believe ...” and “In my experience ...” Try to avoid exaggeration or the use of sound bites or slogans — use your own words.

Keep Your Head

Talking about public policy issues often taps into strong emotions and passions in all of us. Remember to pause, take a deep breath from time to time, and give yourself time to respond. Few people benefit or learn anything from a shouting match. You can help set the tone of the conversation by continuing to act with civility even when others do not. If someone is not showing respect—for instance, by interrupting or not listening to your comments — calmly ask that they do so. “You just shared your opinion and I listened without interrupting, could you please listen to mine?”

OUR FAITH OUR VOTE CIVILITY PLEDGE

I believe our communities, our country and our world are stronger and safer and when we treat each other with respect. I believe that my voice is important, and I believe that listening to the voices of others is important for a healthy, vibrant democratic process. I believe that insulting, attacking or demonizing people with whom we disagree is unproductive and unacceptable. As individuals and as community, we can and should do better.

As a person of faith, I pledge to participate responsibly and faithfully in the electoral process. I recognize my responsibility for supporting a free, fair and respectful democratic process, and I pledge to do my part. I commit to honoring my own voice and the voice of others. I commit to educating myself and others about the issues at stake in these elections. I commit to expressing myself responsibly, to seek to learn from different perspectives, to always offer respect to others, and to challenge hurtful, disrespectful behavior when I can.

<https://bit.ly/ourfaithourvotecivility>

Want more resources on how to have civil dialogue? Learn more here:

Webinar: Toxic Polarization & Partisan Divides: Holding on to Faith, Hope, and Love this Election Season
bit.ly/ucc-toxic-polarization

Article: “Civility Across Differences” by Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson
bit.ly/civility-across-differences

College Resources

College campuses are the ideal place for election work. Colleges are natural places to discuss ideas and they bring together a wide variety of people to one central location. Campuses are home to people from a range of backgrounds and faiths. Every member of the campus community can become part of the UCC Our Faith Our Vote campaign.

To be most effective we suggest that you try working with the college presidents, dean of students, student leaders, chaplains, registrars, and employee groups in developing creative and effective ways to both encourage voter registration and increase voter participation. They too will have ideas to share, and if your energy inspires them to get involved, they will be able to help strengthen and broaden your efforts.

There may be other organizations on campus registering voters, holding rallies and making phone calls to get out the student vote. If you have a group of UCC students or students of faith, it might be helpful to work as a group within a larger effort - unless of course your group is the only one doing election work or is large enough to run a campus program of your own!

Want to get out out the vote on your campus? Here's some ideas!

Voter Registration

Many college students are newly eligible to vote. Others might be registered at home but not in the state where they attend school. Students must live in the area a minimum of nine months out of the year to vote in that area so some may want to register locally. Here are some ideas for voter registration:

- Attach a voter registration form to each course registration form or set up a registration table by the registrar. If your school does online or phone course registration, ask to add message encouraging all students to register to vote and informing them of how to do so.
- Include voter registration information in paychecks, with student loan disbursements, and course catalogs.
- Work with the Dean of Students or head of student life to present to students on the importance of voting. There you can distribute voter registration materials and help students complete their forms.
- Mass mail registration forms to all students or send an email blast with a link to register to vote. Consider including faculty and staff!
- Encourage faculty to discuss and distribute voter registration materials in class. Having the support of the Dean or some Department Chairs will be useful.
- Have a party! Invite a local band to play, sponsor an ultimate Frisbee tournament or get student life or campus ministry to sponsor a cookout. While everyone is gathered get them to register!
- Set up a table outside of the cafeteria, sporting events, concerts, plays, activities, fairs, etc. Provide physical registration forms and a laptop or tablet for online registration. Ask students to complete their form in front of you so you do not have to chase down forms later.
- Go door-to-door in the dorms, or better yet, get Residence Assistants to help you get people registered! R.A.'s are typically required to host periodic social events with their residents. Ask them to do an election themed event and register everyone on their floor!

Things to Remember:

Encourage people to register locally - most students live in or around campus for nine months of the year for four years. They can establish residency and often stay close to school after graduation. They can vote where they live!

Include absentee ballot, mail-in, and early voting information with all voter registration material.

It's important that you have both federal and state voter registration forms on hand. Some people may register to vote locally, others may prefer to use their home address.

Even if you make registration forms available to everyone on campus, your work isn't done! You need to establish a system to collect all the completed forms. Set up secure drop boxes in high traffic areas or establish a campus mailbox the forms can be sent to.

The Big Finish: Completed Registration Forms

The most important step of all is to mail in the completed forms within 7-10 days of collecting them. To save time and postage, just bundle up all the forms, put them in an envelope or box, and mail them to the elections office in your state or local jurisdiction.

Opening A Polling Place On Your Campus

If you are interested in opening a polling place on campus, you will have to begin planning well in advance of election day. Here's where having the involvement and the buy in of your college administration will enhance the success of the project.

Contact the local elections officers and see what is required to operate a polling place on your campus. College campuses are ideal polling places because they offer ample space, usually have plenty of parking, and are accessible. Plus, opening a polling place will make it easier for people to vote between classes and will increase your voter participation.

Mail-In Ballots

Providing mail-in ballots will increase your voter participation enormously. Many students and even some professors may be registered to vote at their home address, or may be unable to make it to the polls on election day. You can help make it easy for them to vote by providing the website of their local election office so they can request an absentee ballot. Each jurisdiction has different laws and regulations for mail-in voting, so each person should look at their local election office website to get further information on when they can apply and when the ballots are due.

Keep a list of people who have registered to vote at their home address. Then you can contact them about three weeks before the election to be sure they have requested their mail-in ballot, and again about one week before the election to be sure they have mailed the ballot back to the appropriate elections office. It might be useful to send out campus wide email reminders or put up signs so people are reminded to vote by mail.

Organize a Candidate Forum on Campus

Invite the Candidates

Candidates for office at all levels love to visit college campuses. It gives them a chance to connect with young voters and be seen in an academic setting. Holding candidate forums helps open up the communication between candidates and their constituents and gets people interested in an election. Here's some ideas to help you get started.

Send an invitation email to the candidates well before the planned event and follow up with a phone call. It may take some time to find a date that will work for the schedules of the candidates in the race. Be flexible.

Plan the Format

There are many ways to set up a candidate forum. Here are some of the common formats you can choose from: 1) Allow the candidates to give prepared remarks and have people ask follow-up questions; 2) Have prepared questions to ask the candidates on themes important to your church and community; 3) Pass out index cards to the audience to write questions on and pass them in to be read on the day of the event or solicit questions from members via email or question box after services prior to the event. Leave enough time at the beginning for the candidates to give opening statements. Give candidates the same amount of time to make their closing remarks.

Make sure to have your moderator thank the candidates for their attendance and to remind people of voting day and encourage them to get out and vote.

Publicize the Event

Post on social media. Include brief notices in the newsletters of churches, campus groups, community-based organizations, and other groups. Ask your campus radio station and other media sources to run public service announcements. Ask to be listed in calendars of events in the local newspapers. Display posters in high traffic areas.

Inform the Press

Invite the local newspaper, campus media outlets and TV stations to cover your candidate forum or debate. This is a great way to get coverage of the issues to a broader audience. It also gives us a chance to show that your campus and UCC churches are engaged in the political process.

*“Let us not love with
words or speech, but
in action and
in truth”
— 1 John 3:18*

Debate Screenings

Screening a debate is a simple way to get people interested in the elections. Arrange a place to view the debate (maybe a large gathering in the theater or a small group in your dorm or student center). Promote the event with posters, campus-wide emails or a Facebook invitation. Provide food! Once everyone is gathered, watch the debate and leave time at the end for discussion. It may be helpful to invite a moderator to keep things ordered and respectful.

Screenings are great ideas for residence life staff who need to plan social events. They are also a terrific opportunity to get people to sign up to vote.

Voter Transportation

One of the most useful things you can do is provide voters a ride to the poll. Try to enlist the help of your campus transportation. Does your school have a shuttle? Does your University own buses or vans for transporting sports teams? See if you can get the college to pledge some time, vehicles and drivers. If not, maybe you can get together a crew of students who are willing to carpool. Arrange a meeting place and head to the polls. Make sure to publicize your transportation options.

Voter Files

A voter file is a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and party registration that is maintained by your local elections office. This is public information and can be purchased for a nominal fee to use in your Get Out the Vote efforts.

Most partner nonpartisan organizations will already have this information, so teaming up with another group, such as the [Poor People's Campaign](#) or the [Center for Common Ground](#) will save a lot of time and effort.

Phone Banking to Get Out the Vote

Phone banking is the easiest and fastest way to contact people and urge them to vote. You will need a list of names and phone numbers. You can begin calling now, and remind people to vote, remind them of any ID requirements, and give them clear directions to their polling place as well as its hours. Also provide them with the Election Protection Hotline, the deadlines to request and submit a mail-in ballot, and the timeline for early voting.

In general, if you call people the night before the election and remind them that tomorrow is Election Day, this will help ensure less likely voters get out to vote. Typically, one person can contact 20-25 people per hour.

Canvassing

Canvassing is walking through the dorms or the neighboring precincts and knocking on doors reminding people to vote in the election. Canvassing provides a cheap and effective way to distribute voter education materials. Using your voting list, start walking through the neighborhoods and dorms knocking on doors of registered voters. When you approach the door, identify yourself and tell them why you are there (to make sure they remember to vote). Leave materials with them - including directions to their polling place and the voting hours. Also provide them with the Election Protection Hotline, the deadlines to request and submit a mail-in ballot, and the timeline for early voting.

Remember: Do not endorse a particular candidate or political party. You are not advising people how to vote. If you want to promote a particular candidate, sign up with one of the campaigns to engage in this activity.

In general, canvassing should not be done on Election Day, since you can reach more people faster with a phone call than knocking on doors. Canvassing is a good activity for the weekend before the election or earlier as a voter education tool. Check out the [Poor People's Campaign](#) for opportunities to canvass near you.

Public Announcements

Ask your campus radio and TV stations to broadcast public service announcements in the days before the registration deadline and the election, reminding people to register and vote. Put up table tents in the cafeteria, the library, and the student union urging people to vote. Make sure to list the date of the election, polling locations, and what time the polls open and close.

Utilize social media to share information about how to register and when and where to vote. You can inspire other students by participating in our [#TheUCCVotes Campaign](#):

- [Print out the template](#) or find a blank piece of paper (but make sure to add 'I'm Voting with ❤️ For...'),
- Write down a word, issue, short phrase, or something you feel represents why it is important for you as a person of faith to vote,
- Take a photo and send to santosh@ucc.org or post on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram with the hashtags [#TheUCCVotes](#), [#UCCVotamos](#), and [#VoteWithLove](#) (learn more at <https://bit.ly/47R9khd>).

On Election Day

Make yourself visible - This could range from standing on the side of the street with signs saying "VOTE," to leafleting the parking lots with fliers reminding people to vote before the polls close. Emails and table drops in the cafeteria can be helpful. Be creative!

Be a poll watcher or faith observer. Some states permit representatives of nonpartisan citizen organizations to observe polling places. Contact your local elections officer to find out requirements your organization must meet to serve as poll watchers/faith observers.

Youth and Young Adults in Action

Not 18? You can still make your voice heard!

Just because you're not old enough to vote doesn't mean you can't be involved in the elections. In fact youth voices are needed more than ever in politics. Throughout history, political leaders have looked to young people as a source of inspiration. Elected officials love to talk about what youth "want" or "need." In the elections, youth can speak for themselves.

There are a number of ways to get involved in the elections and make an impact on our country's future. Get together with your youth group and engage your local congregation and community. Here's some ideas from OFOV:

Registration Ideas

Just because you can't vote doesn't mean others shouldn't. Sometimes people just need to be reminded that it is their privilege and duty to vote. Jog their memory and sign them up!

- Set up a voter registration table before and after church.
- Register people at church dinners, coffee hours and other events.
- Go out into your community and register voters at the local shopping center, grocery store, fair, baseball game, etc.
- Encourage your school administration to hold a registration drive or include voter registration forms with high school diplomas.
- Plan a coffee house or a concert. Not only will this provide an opportunity for your friend's band to perform in front of a live audience, it will provide you with a room full of people ready to register to vote.
- In the weeks leading up to the election, invite your congregation to a series of movie screenings. You can show fun election-related films or serious documentaries on issues you're interested in - However you want to do it! Set up a location, invite your congregation, pop some popcorn and get them signed up to vote!

Get Out the Vote

- If you have a license, volunteer to drive individuals to the polls. You've finally got your license - put it to good use!
- Organize or participate in phone banking or canvassing.
- Volunteer to provide childcare or to walk peoples' dogs while they vote.
- Make signs and put them up around town reminding your community to go to the polls. Maybe even put an election day countdown outside your church!

Youth Ministries or Sunday School

Discussion Questions

Do you lead the youth in your congregation or teach Sunday School classes? Why not use that as an opportunity for discussion. Here are some sample questions to get you started.

- Why do you think voting is important? Why do you think some people don't vote?
- Who is running for office and what do you think they stand for?
- How do you believe people should be treated in our society?
- What things do people need to live a good life?
- What are a few local, national, and international problems (that you see on TV or in the newspaper), and what can we do to help solve them?
- What are some examples of public policies from that past that were harmful to people (e.g. slavery, the Holocaust, lack of voting rights for women and minorities)? What does our faith or ethics tell us about these policies?
- What are issues being discussed in the campaigns that have moral or ethical dimensions (e.g. hunger, environmental protection and education)? Explain both sides of the debate.
- What did Jesus say about taking responsibility for our society?
- Can you name some New or Old Testament figures who were part of the political debate of their time? (Moses and the law, the prophets, etc.)

Group Activities

- Have a "Love Your Neighbor: Vote" poster contest in your church or community or ask youth to create posters or fliers that inform their congregation and community about the upcoming elections.
- Create an "investigating political reporter sheet" and have youth interview family, congregation, or community members with several questions: Have you ever voted? Are you registered to vote? Did you vote in the last election? Do you plan to vote in this election? Is it important we vote? If so, why? What issues concern you? Which presidential candidate do you think best represents your views? Why?
- Become media watchdogs and examine election coverage.

Vote Faithfully Sunday Worship Resources

We invite you to join us in observing the Sunday, November 3rd as “Vote Faithfully Sunday.” This is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our commitment to the common good, ground ourselves before election day, and prepare to vote as a community.

You are welcome to use and adapt the materials available on our website (ucc.org/vote-faithfully-2024) for use in any ecumenical setting. Voting is a commitment we make to each other. In our democracy, it is the vehicle by which we express our love of neighbor. We hope you will join us in working to uplift all the voices in your congregation and community on Election Day.

Vote With Love Prayer by Rev. Amy Johnson

Holy Author of Life,

We pause to breathe your Spirit in and we pray for all bodies.

Bodies ravaged by legislation removing choices.

Bodies needing care that has been villainized and vanquished.

Bodies healing from physical, emotional, spiritual, medical and political assault.

Bodies shamed and stigmatized for their size, their shape their color, their experiences.

We pray for love for all bodies.

We pray for love for bodies of all ages.

We pray for love for queer, cis, intersex, disabled and non-disabled human siblings in bodies descended from cultures around the globe,

We pray for love for all bodies, created in your image, breathed into and proclaimed very good. Amen

To access more [Vote Faithfully Sunday](https://www.ucc.org/vote-faithfully-2024) worship resources, check out our webpage at <https://www.ucc.org/vote-faithfully-2024>

