



★ 2020 Launch Guide ★

“For Unitarian Universalists, this is faithful, moral action because democracy and the right of all people to have a voice and a vote are at the very heart of our Seven Principles. This work is about the inherent worth and dignity of every person; it is about restoring right relationship with the planet; it is about our commitment to justice and equity for all people. We are called to courageously embody the deepest values of our faith with our hearts, bodies, and spirits while building toward an abundant future in which all are free and flourishing.” - Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

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*Special thank you to UU's for Social Justice who contributed to this guide and developed additional materials available at <http://uusj.net>

Another world is possible.

*We say it, again and again,
even when the proof lies somewhere
beyond the horizon,
beyond our reach,
beyond our imagination.*

*This is our faith:
Another world is possible.*

*Not somewhere else--
another world, another lifetime--
but here, and now,
for us and for all.*

*Another world is possible.
There is no single path
toward that world;
no one strategy or approach
that will restore balance,
heal brokenness,
sow wholeness,
free creation.
There are many routes
toward liberation;
toward freedom.
But the abundance of options
does not absolve us of
the responsibility of acting.*

Another world is possible.

*The call--the duty--
of each moment in history
Is to discern:*

*Who are we, and what can we bring
with humility, integrity, faith?
What is the context, and how can we address it
with agility, resilience, skill?
What is the vision, and how can we realize it
with accountability, relationship, joy?
Another world is possible.*

*In this time of despair, of fear, of collapse--
this time that is both like every other era
and like no other time in history--
It is audacious
to declare our faith
and to commit our work
to a world that is
 more free,
 more just,
 more whole.*

*But we are an audacious people
in good company, with many kin,
and we are ready to show up
and work hard
and stay humble
and make friends
and hold the vision
starting here, now, today, with us
and persevering--
however long it takes--
until that other world
Is not only possible, but*

Another world is here.

*- Rev. Ashley Horan,
UUA Organizing Strategy Director*



Introduction

The 2020 national elections are perhaps more important than any other in living memory. Without stopping the harms caused by the rise of authoritarianism and fascism, progressive movements have little chance of any effectiveness for the next generation and beyond. Therefore, these 2020 elections are not another “issue area” competing for resources and volunteer time alongside a dozen others; they are a “movement moment” in themselves, and our ability to bring to bear the experience and fierce commitments of activists, organizers, and people of conscience who care deeply about a wide range of progressive causes will determine the future of the human species and the planet.

Progressive people of faith can take up a meaningful role in election years without being partisan by shaping the public discourse with a values-based framing, rooted in our theology and principles. As UUs specifically, our deepest beliefs in interdependence, democracy, human worth and dignity across difference, the richness of pluralism and diversity, and the inborn right of all peoples to access self-determination and agency are a life-giving, life-saving, life-sustaining alternative to the narratives and policies of domination, supremacy, exceptionalism, and exploitation that are on the rise.

Many Unitarian Universalists are already beautifully and powerfully carrying out justice ministries on multiple issues and working in their communities for civic engagement. Many more want to do more of that together in 2020.

This UUtheVote Launch Guide offers concrete ways for our UU community to seize the opportunities that the current electoral cycle offers us to meet and talk with our neighbors, fight for our values, expand democracy and be part of organizing on the many issues we care about for justice.

Applying electoral strategies to our justice organizing is a key priority at this time and we do so with an orientation of building movement to build power so that we can win for all people and all be free. **2020 is a benchmark, not an endpoint, in our long-term work toward justice.**

We can't and need not do this alone, but we can do our part. Let's **#UUtheVote** and help move the country to **#VoteLove** and **#DefeatHate**.



Grounding in UU Values & Principles

We UUs have a legacy of working to expand democracy and to shape a world in which all people are free and flourishing. From our work for women's suffrage, the abolition of slavery, for civil and voting rights, to advocating for a path to citizenship for immigrants, to taking on the 'New Jim Crow' and white supremacy today. Our UU values of interdependence, democracy, and the inherent worth and dignity of all people are direct antidotes to the fear, bigotry, and inequity that define our world.

Participating in our democracy is not only about our fifth principle. **As UUs, our deepest beliefs are a life-giving, life-saving, life-sustaining alternative to the narratives and policies of domination, supremacy, exceptionalism, and exploitation that are on the rise.** We are moved in our justice work and electoral engagement by principles of:

- **Interdependence:** We believe that all life is sacred and interconnected, and that human beings are radically dependent on one another and on our precious earth and its creatures. This interdependence calls us to build societies that care for all species, and to enact policies that privilege cooperation and solidarity over individualism and competition.
- **Democracy:** We believe that decision making must be done in a way that allows all communities to be heard, especially those who have historically been silenced. We believe all people should have a right to elect leaders and shape policies that directly impact the quality of their lives and their access to resources.
- **Inherent Worth and Dignity Across Difference:** We believe that all people are born from love, and that nothing a person is or does can separate them from that inherent belovedness. We believe explicitly that people of all races, genders, abilities, sexualities, nationalities, and religions deserve to have their inherent belovedness mirrored back to them by the societies, structures, institutions, and policies that shape their lives.
- **Pluralism and Diversity:** We believe in the teachings of the natural sciences that teach that the richest and healthiest ecosystems are those with the greatest diversity. While there are many commonalities that draw us together as humans across experiences and identities, we believe that our differences are fundamentally beautiful, and our diversity—of race, gender, belief, practice, culture, ability, sexuality, and more—is to be celebrated with curiosity and affirmation, not minimized or flattened.
- **Self-determination and Human Agency:** We believe that each and every person is an expert in their own experience and should have uninhibited access to the material conditions that ensure lives of belonging, safety, wellness, and joy. We believe that any system, structure, or policy that prevents people from making decisions about their own lives, or accessing what they need to be free and whole, must be dismantled.



50+ ways you can #UUtheVote

1. Form an electoral justice committee at your church
2. Contact justice organizations in your community and volunteer for their voter outreach efforts
3. Donate to partners and front-line community organizations
4. Help collect signatures on justice-oriented ballot initiatives for raising wages, criminal justice reform, climate justice and more
5. Pass the plate for local groups doing voter outreach
6. Invite speakers from different issue-based campaigns to speak at your worship service
7. Hold a fundraiser event for local groups doing voter outreach
8. Send invitations to local groups letting them know meeting space is available at your church
9. Hold a non-partisan forum in your church
10. Have a special skill like legal, marketing, or accounting? Volunteer pro-bono time to a local group
11. Phonebank with a justice partner organization
12. Connect with your UU State Action Network (if your state has one) See www.cuusan.org
13. Research voter registration and voter turnout rates in your community and make an outreach plan - in consultation with partner groups is best
14. Register high school students who will be 18 by Nov. 2020 - contact local high schools and student groups and work with your congregation's youth group (use UUtheVote.org/register)
15. Work with campus groups to setup voter registration tables at area colleges and canvass the dorms
16. Create a playlist of songs that give you the will to persevere and be brave
17. Organize a text banking party to send text messages to selected groups of voters
18. Go door-to-door in your own neighborhood talking to neighbors about what issues matter in the next election
19. Sign up to be an elections monitor in districts with known voter suppression issues
20. Connect with other denominations to participate in a "souls to the polls" mobilization day
21. Offer to drive people to the polls or be a driver for GOTV volunteers
22. Attend a training on get-out-the-vote
23. Create a spiritual support circle to share, discuss, and be nourished by theological grounding to support your social justice work
24. Sign the pledge to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate in 2020
25. Recruit friends to sign the #VoteLove pledge
26. Make and share a video about why it's important to you to vote this year
27. Send a letter to the editor
28. Share or make a guide to local ballot initiatives in your area
29. Volunteer with groups opposing unjust ballot initiatives such as anti-immigrant and anti-reproductive justice measures

30. Set up a weekly dinner to support community members deeply involved in justice work
31. Organize movie nights at your church or community center to show films about the fight for the right to vote like *Suppression* by Brave New Films
32. Host a book club on books about electoral justice
33. Interview members of your church who were involved in the past movements like civil rights, anti-apartheid, sanctuary, LGBTQ, women's rights, and environmental to capture that history and learn its lessons
34. Interview young members of your church who are involved in current movements to capture that history and learn its lessons
35. Hold a sign-making party the night before big events like climate strikes or women's marches
36. Create memes about justice news of the day and use the #UUtheVote hashtag
37. Include UUtheVote regularly in worship services and give updates and keep up momentum
38. Hold a UUtheVote Kickoff event in your congregation
39. Provide at least 4 opportunities for congregational members to UUtheVote together
40. Send out notices to your congregational lists and groups from partner organizations who need volunteers
41. [Join the UUtheVote Facebook Group](#)
42. [Sign up on the UUtheVote Slack Channel](#)
43. [Subscribe to UUtheVote email list](#)
44. Help meet the 2020 challenge and raise funds for UUtheVote
45. Apply for a UU Funding Program Voter Project Grant <https://www.uufunding.org/get-out-the-vote.html>
46. Hire a part time coordinator for your UUtheVote efforts
47. Pay a stipend to someone already doing voter engagement work to help coordinate your volunteers
48. Compensate a partner group to provide voter registration and GOTV training and maps and lists of where to go
49. Learn how to use new voter apps, practice with friends, and train others
50. Connect with other UU congregations in your area to join forces and expand your volunteer pool
51. Work on local ordinances that impact your community and will motivate people to vote (get creative - one congregation facing proposed bus line shutdowns sent teams to bus stops and also rode the buses to talk with people and gather signatures)
52. Be part of Early Voting Drives
53. Talk with and register voters at your food pantry and/or meals programs
54. Use your second language skills and help register new citizens
55. Join efforts to reach out to voters who have been purged to get them re-registered
56. Register voters using on-line tools such as UUtheVote.org/register
57. Post a Facebook message to your friends asking them to [check to see if they are registered](#) and tell them how to register at UUtheVote.org/register
58. Use [Vote Forward](#) to send letters to voters in other states
59. Send teams to other states when asked for help
60. Share YOUR suggestions with our UU community on our UUtheVote Facebook and Slack channel.



Prophetic Not Partisan - How UU Congregations & Organizations Can Be Bold

Progressive people of faith can be powerful and prophetic without being partisan. We can engage our neighbors, educate our communities, mobilize voters, rally around ballot initiatives, and shape the public discourse with values-based framing, rooted in our theology and principles. Electoral cycles offer heightened opportunities to engage and inspire people, mobilize around key issues, and to strengthen democracy, and win real advances on key issues on the ballot.

When we #UUtheVote, Unitarian Universalists boldly engage our values in the electoral cycle in ways that are appropriate for churches and nonprofits.

As 501(c)(3) organizations, the UUA, UU congregations and organizations CAN:

- Engage in issue advocacy and organizing for justice
- Voter education
- Voter access through voter registration
- Get Out the Vote drives
- Combat voter suppression
- Support or oppose ballot initiatives
- Educate candidates on issues
- Sponsor candidate forums
- Prepare and distribute non-partisan voter guides
- Lobby elected officials
- Host a variety of activities at our congregations

501(c)(3s) CANNOT:

- Have advocacy as their only activity
- Endorse or oppose candidates running for elected office
- Intervene in campaigns to influence the outcome of an election

What 501(c)(3) organizations can and can't do:

Religious individuals and groups have played a prophetic role in public life throughout history by calling attention to oppression, demanding change, organizing for justice, and holding leaders and institutions accountable for their actions and policies. We have a moral responsibility and are fully within our legal bounds to be a voice in the public policy arena and a force in mobilizing communities to advance our values 365 days a year. But when it comes to electoral engagement, we know there are common concerns and at times misunderstanding that require simple guidelines to help us move forward.

The UUA, UU congregations, and many UU organizations have tax exempt status designation with the IRS known as 501(c)(3) (the section of the IRS federal tax code exemption guidelines). Being a 501(c)(3) means that a particular nonprofit organization has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, charitable organization. "Charitable" is broadly defined as being established for purposes that are religious, educational, charitable, scientific, literary and more.¹

**Without an issuance of exact rules, the IRS tax code has varying interpretations.
The information contained within this section reflects the best analysis from legal counsel retained by the UUA.

¹ See the Alliance for Justice Bolder Advocacy Election Checklist for 501(c)(3) Organizations
https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Election_Checklist_for_501c3_Public_Charities.pdf

Collaboration and Partnerships with 501(c)(4)s

Coalitions and partnerships between 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations and broad justice campaigns whose missions align are a powerful way to work for justice. Many of the non-profit justice issue-based and community organizing groups and democracy partners that UUs work with are 501(c)(3) organizations that also have 501(c)(4) arms, among them are some of our UU State Action Networks. These organizations can do everything that 501(c)(3)s can do and additionally they can engage in unlimited amounts of lobbying, endorse and oppose candidates, and engage in political campaigns (provided that such activities are not the organization's primary activity).

Frequently Asked 501c3 Questions

Can we work to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate in 2020?

YES. Working for justice is a consistent and integral part of our Unitarian Universalist faith. One of the clearest and most important ways for us to fulfill this calling is to promote and protect access to the electoral process. According to the IRS guidelines, it is entirely acceptable for congregations to engage in a variety of non-partisan activities to help educate, mobilize, and protect the vote, including voter registration drives that focus on communities with low participation rates, get out the vote campaigns, canvassing on issues such as climate, the minimum wage, or criminal justice reform, and actions to combat voter suppression. What congregations cannot do is engage in partisan activity, defined as supporting or opposing a candidate or party.

The issues we care about are on the ballot and so we will be getting out the vote. It's that simple.

Can we collaborate with a c4 organization or a union?

YES. When officially acting on behalf of the church, you can partner with a c4 organization or a union to carry out charitable, non-partisan activities consistent with the church's 501c3 status. Non-501c3 organizations regularly participate in activities that are suitable for 501c3 organizations. You cannot partner with the c4 organization or union to carry out partisan activities that fall outside the charitable mission of the church.

Can an organization host partisan activities at the congregation?

(Partisan means in support of a specific candidate or intended to influence the outcome of a candidate's election. It should be distinguished from non-partisan activities like get out the vote phone banks or issue based canvassing training)

Yes if either:

- a. the organization pays the church for the use of your space at the usual rate or
- b. Your church has an event use policy that outlines criteria for unaffiliated groups to utilize your space AND this instance is consistent with your on-going policy. (See facility use agreement on [page 11.](#))

No if either

- a. The church usually charges a fee for space usage and the group is seeking to use the space for free
- b. The church is selectively allowing groups of a certain partisan nature to utilize its space but not allowing other groups who would otherwise fit the church's space usage criteria. (See facility use agreement on [page 11.](#))

Can I express my own personal views even though I'm affiliated with the Congregation?

YES. Ministers and other members of a congregation can engage in partisan activity, including speaking at events and rallies, penning letters to the editor, and otherwise promoting a candidate or election outcome of their choosing as long as and only when:

- a. No congregation resources are used for such activity
- b. Any named affiliation with the congregation is clearly and explicitly for identification purposes only
- c. Such activity is clearly and explicitly apart from the roles and activities performed for the congregation

Can I forward emails for activities that endorse a candidate or recruit for partisan activity from an official UU email account or to an official congregational group?

No. Church resources cannot be used for partisan activities, including sending or forwarding emails. You cannot use official accounts, equipment, or resources to promote partisan activity.

Using your official email and congregational resources, you can promote a non-partisan voter registration drive or a community canvass on a non-partisan issue such as climate, the minimum wage, or criminal justice reform. You cannot promote a voter registration drive or community canvass aimed at electing or removing an individual from office.

**As an individual, using your own personal email and your own personal phone or computer, on unpaid time, you can share, promote, and advocate however you choose.*

[See the Real Rules for more details.](#)

Is there a difference between official congregational business and the activities of members or ad hoc committees operating individually?

Yes! The rules referenced here oversee the use of official resources of the congregation (physical space, finances, supplies, official staff time, anything paid for). These rules DO NOT APPLY to individuals or ad hoc unofficial groups acting in their own personal capacity without the use of church resources.

Facility and Building Use Policy

Purpose

_____ Unitarian Universalist congregation's primary purpose is to carry on the mission and values of the Unitarian Universalist faith. Part of that faith is serving as an asset to our community. Our buildings are not just houses of worship, but homes to all of the ways we manifest our faith, not just there for the worship service but also service to each other and our broader community. To this end, the [NAME] will make its facilities available to groups both inside and outside of our congregation. The facilities may be used by non-member groups and individuals as outlined in this policy.

The _____ [Position] reserves the right to consult with the [Property Committee or other decision-making body] as to whether or not a group may use its facilities. Use of facilities by outside groups on a regular basis must receive the approval of the _____ [Position].

Sample Facility Use Priorities

_____ Unitarian Universalist Congregation values being a space where members of our congregation and of the broader community can find hospitality, build relationships, and work for justice. When deciding how to prioritize requests for use of congregational space, we consider the event requests in the following order:

- Congregationally sponsored activities, hosted by and for all members of the congregation and scheduled meetings of the [CONGREGATION NAME] and its subgroups
- Space use by individual congregation members and their affiliated groups, whose values align with [UU principles and purposes](#). [NOTE: Members may have free use of space for [kind of events] up to ____ time(s) a year, as approved by _____. Use of space for rites of passage (memorials, weddings, child dedications) is free to members as needed.]
- Activities held by unaffiliated organizations, accompanied by a referral from a congregation member
- Unaffiliated groups who request the use of congregational space, and whose values align with [UU principles and purposes](#).

FEES

[Unitarian Universalist Congregations may elect a variety of policies for charging fees or providing space at no-cost. It is important to apply the fee policy consistently and across the board. Below are three different examples of fee for facility use policies that you may choose from or adapt for your purposes.]

=====

Option 1: Free for everyone

Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an integral part of this community, and seeks to make its space available to all who share our mission and purpose, free of charge.

=====

Option 2: Charge All Outside Groups

Unitarian Universalist Congregation provides free space to its members as a perk of belonging to this Beloved Community. We are happy to make our space available to community groups and organizations that share our values for a small fee [see fee scale].

=====

Option 3: Free for Outside Groups 501c3, Not-for-Profit, or whose activity is considered Charitable; Charge for everyone else

Unitarian Universalist Congregation is an integral part of this community, and as such, seeks to share its space for free with both its own members and community organizations (501(c)3s, nonprofits, and other charitable groups) whose mission and values are deeply compatible with our own. Other groups (private parties, for-profit groups, or other organizations whose missions are significantly different from ours but whose values are not contradictory to UU principles) are welcome to rent our space for a fee [see fee scale]. Please note that the congregation reserves the right to decline a request for use for many reasons (staff costs, etc.), even if the organization requesting is a 501(c)(3) or mission-aligned organization.

FACILITY USE REQUEST

Date of Event: _____

Contact Person: _____

State whether you are a: Church member Church sponsored ministry
 Unaffiliated individual Unaffiliated organization

Sponsoring Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Event Description:

Time of Event:

Begins at _____ am or pm Ends at _____ am or pm

Event is: one time or recurs: weekly or monthly

Number of people attending: _____

Equipment/services requested: _____

Neither this event nor my organization promotes activities or beliefs contrary to [Unitarian Universalist values and principles](#).

For Office Use

Date Received:

Submitted for Approval:

Approved by:

Fee (if any) to be assessed for rental use:

[UU CONGREGATION NAME] FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

Model for Paid Use

1. _____ (“Renter”) shall pay to _____ (“Congregation”) the sum of \$ _____ no later than _____ (recommended: 30 days before the commencement of the rental period). Of this amount, \$ _____ is a non-refundable deposit that will be applied to rental charges upon final settlement of accounts. The remainder, \$ _____, is for damages/security deposit which will be returned to the Renter upon settlement, minus any charges for actual damages done to the venue by Renter or their associates. If no fee is to be charged, this section can be removed.
2. Renter shall have access to and use of _____ (be specific, if they only have access to certain rooms, restrooms, etc not that here) from _____ o’clock on _____, to _____ o’clock on _____, for the sole purpose of hosting the Renter’s event. Congregation shall provide to Renter all keys, access control codes, and other items necessary to give Renter such access no later than _____.
3. Renter acknowledges that the purpose of the event to be hosted at the congregation, and the renting organization’s mission, are not contradictory to Unitarian Universalist principles and values. By signing below, Renter affirms that their use of the facilities are so aligned. [NOTE: A link to the UU core values should be included here for electronic forms of this document, and attached for paper forms.]
4. Within _____ of the rental period’s expiration, Renter shall tender to Congregation the rental fee balance due, and all keys and other access control devices in their possession.
5. Renter shall remove all personal property, trash, and other items that were not present in the venue when Renter took control of it.
6. Renter shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Congregation, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all losses, costs, expenses, claims, liabilities, actions, or damages, including liability for injuries to any person or persons or damage to property arising at any time during and/or arising out of or in any way connected with Renter’s use or occupancy of the facility, unless solely caused by the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the Congregation or its officers, employees, or agents.
7. Renter shall procure and maintain general liability insurance against any and all losses, costs, expenses, claims, liabilities, actions, or damages, including liability for injuries to any person or persons or damage to property arising at any time during and/or arising out of or in any way connected with Renter’s use or occupancy of the Congregation’s facilities and adjoining property in the amount of _____ per occurrence. Such insurance shall name the Congregation, its officers, employees, and agents as additional insureds prior to the rental date of the facility. Renter shall file certificates of such insurance with the Congregation, which shall be endorsed to provide notice to the Congregation of cancellation or any change of coverage or limits. If a copy of the insurance certificate is not on file prior to the event, the Congregation may deny access to the Facility.
8. Renter shall report any personal injuries or property damage arising at any time during and/or arising out of or in any way connected with Renter’s use or occupancy of the Congregation’s facilities to _____, in writing and as soon as practicable.
9. Renter waives any right of recovery against Congregation, its officers, employees, and agents for fires, floods, earthquakes, civil disturbances, regulation of any public authority, and other causes beyond their control. Renter shall not charge results of “acts of God” to the Congregation, its officers, employees, or agents.
10. Renter waives any right of recovery against the Congregation, its officers, employees, and agents for indemnification, contribution, or declaratory relief arising out of or in any way connected with Renter’s use or occupancy of the Facility, even if the Congregation, its officers, employees, or agents seek recovery against Renter.
11. Any disputes arising under this contract shall be adjudicated in the Congregation’s local jurisdiction.

In witness of their understanding of and agreement to the terms and conditions herein contained, the parties affix their signatures below.

Renter's Signature, date	Representative of Congregation Signature, date
Printed Name	Printed Name
Address	Address
City, State, Zip Code	City, State, Zip Code

[UU CONGREGATION NAME] FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

Model for Free Use

1. Renter shall have access to and use of _____ (be specific, if they only have access to certain rooms, restrooms, etc not that here) from _____ o'clock on _____, to _____ o'clock on _____, for the sole purpose of hosting the Renter's event. Congregation shall provide to Renter all keys, access control codes, and other items necessary to give Renter such access no later than ____.
2. Renter acknowledges that the purpose of the event to be hosted at the congregation, and the renting organization's mission, are not contradictory to Unitarian Universalist principles and values. By signing below, Renter affirms that their use of the facilities are so aligned. [NOTE: A link to the UU core values should be included here for electronic forms of this document, and attached for paper forms.]
3. Within _____ of the rental period's expiration, Renter shall tender to Congregation the rental fee balance due, and all keys and other access control devices in their possession.
4. Renter shall remove all personal property, trash, and other items that were not present in the venue when Renter took control of it.
5. Renter agrees to be liable for any physical damages or legal actions that Congregation may incur as a consequence of the actions of Renter or any of Renter's guests while Renter is in control of the venue, and shall indemnify and hold harmless the Congregation against any and all legal actions which may arise from Renter's use of the venue.
6. Any disputes arising under this contract shall be adjudicated in the Congregation's local jurisdiction.

In witness of their understanding of and agreement to the terms and conditions herein contained, the parties affix their signatures below.

Renter's Signature, date	Representative of Congregation Signature, date
Printed Name	Printed Name
Address	Address
City, State, Zip Code	City, State, Zip Code



Organizing Your Congregation and Working in Partnership

UUtheVote is an opportunity to integrate electoral engagement into our strategies for change so that we are advancing our vision of a just world and beloved community in every arena available to us. It is not about abandoning the justice ministries we've been engaged in and switching all our work to working for voting rights and democracy defense. Nor is it only facilitating voter registration drives or get-out-the-vote campaigns in our congregations or broader communities. It's a powerful chance to combine and expand them. And it's most effective when done in partnership with community, state, and national justice organizations.

Many congregations already have justice partners whose efforts include voter outreach. Using your congregation as a source of volunteers for voter registration, door knocking, data entry, phone calling, can have a big impact with a relatively modest investment of organizing time and energy. You can also find out what other help they need - from designing flyers to researching voter guides to organizing transportation to raising money and more. Partnering with an existing organization that has a successful track record and a goal that aligns with UUtheVote is one of the best ways to keep building the movement for justice as we work for electoral justice in 2020 on the multiple issues that motivate people to vote.

Build Your Team

Change happens when we work together. That means the first step toward participating in UU the Vote is to find and connect with others who are also interested in making sure voters who support racial, migrant, climate, economic, LGBTQ and gender justice are registered, active, and prepared to participate in the democratic process this year.

Identify others who are interested and get to know each other. This can happen in multiple ways:

- Start with your Board and staff and then discuss who in the congregation could be invited to start a UUtheVote Team.
- Connect with leaders and members of climate, racial, and migrant justice, Muslim solidarity, and LGBTQ rights teams to come together to develop an intersectional UUtheVote organizing team.
- Create opportunities for multi-generational organizing with your congregation's RE, Youth and Young Adult programs.
- Invite the whole congregation to a UUtheVote Conversation either following a UUtheVote Worship Service or before one.
- Plan events about electoral justice at the congregation to identify and recruit attendees. Examples include inviting a grassroots organization or multi-faith coalition to speak to your congregation about their work or showing movies such as *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*. Include some specific ways that UU's can get involved

at the meeting. Have a sign up sheet for attendees and send follow-up opportunities afterwards. This can be as simple as inviting everyone who comes to an organizing meeting at the church.

- Have one on one meetings with people who express initial interest to find out how they can best contribute.

Once you form your team, delegating roles can help make you more effective and better organized. And organizing is about creating roles for others. People are more likely to participate when they feel they have a meaningful role in the group.²

Specific roles for team members can include:

- Liaison to partner groups
- Event coordinator
- Volunteer orientation and coordination
- Logistics: carpools, meals, childcare
- Data entry and management
- Outreach and Promotion

One person should be responsible for coordinating meetings and communication with the team members, with different team members taking the lead on specific events, actions or tasks.

Have regular meetings - in person or by phone, with an agenda and a follow up email to everyone. You may want to rotate the team coordinator role and/or meeting facilitator role. Make sure you organize your meetings so the team can make the decisions necessary to move forward.

Remember, your deadline to have an impact is November 3, 2020.

Shared ministry is a critical element of success. Identify and support lay leaders and make sure there is strong communication between lay and ministry members of the team.

Establish Movement Partners

Partner groups can help train congregational volunteers for voter registration, canvassing and GOTV activities from door knocking and phone-banking to data entry. **They often obtain lists of unregistered and infrequent voters, provide maps, forms, software, and track progress. They will most likely be the easiest way to develop plans that UUs can plug into.** And most importantly, they are often organized within and representing front-line communities. If your partner is not a grassroots community organization, it's important that they are in relationship with and taking leadership from those communities.

At the end of this guide we provide an initial list of potential national partners. However, all politics are local and you will know best groups in your area. In many states, non-partisan voter engagement groups have organized statewide tables as part of the [State Voices network](#).³

If you need support identifying and connecting with a potential partner organization, make sure to seek help in either the facebook, slack, or weekly office hours.

Considerations for choosing partner groups include:

1. Is the group or organization actively seeking support and partners? Do they want and need volunteers?
2. Do they have the respect of communities that are impacted by injustice? Are they known in the community and do they take action in the public arena?
3. Are they open to working with a faith community? Do their values resonate with Unitarian Universalism?

² Find more on team building in the UUtheVote team building toolkit: https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/uuthevote_team_building_toolkit_1.pdf

³ If you need support connecting to a local partner organization, the UUtheVote team can help via the communities of practice on facebook or slack or during the weekly office hours calls.

4. Is there a current campaign or activities that the congregation can join and support? Or services that the congregation can provide?
5. Is there a match between what the partner group needs and the congregation's resources, aspirations, and ability to make a real difference?
6. Do they have the capacity to utilize volunteers or need help from a partner who can create them? This requires staff or volunteer leaders at the potential partner organization who are organized and can provide a meaningful experience for volunteers.
7. Are there opportunities for community-building, through mutual work, attending each other's meetings, activities, worship services, events, and celebrations? Are there opportunities for healing and reparations that can come through partnership? For longer term justice initiatives and organizing?
8. Does the congregation have the leadership capacity for orienting and training its volunteers to act in right relationship and multicultural sensitivity with partners?

Initiating Partnerships

- Reach out to the potential partner group and offer your support. Trust that offering your love and support will be received as a gift but understand if it is not needed at this time.
- If you are approaching a faith community have your minister or board president make the first contact to reassure them of the 'legitimacy' of your invitation.
- Approach this new relationship as you would any relationship. Find out if there is interest, mutual concerns and goals, and opportunities to do things together.
- It's fine to send a note but do so with a promise to call and then pick up the phone!
- Meet up and explore your mutual concerns and where you can provide support.
- Follow through on one next step. For example, have a few members of your team volunteer for an event or action held by the partner group - this will give you a clear understanding of what the work will be like and provides a chance to start building relationships.
- Make sure to check-in and get your potential partner's feedback.

Elements of Effective Partnerships & Potential 'Bumps' to Be Aware of:

1. Be aware of you and your congregation's 'social location' and how your experiences regarding race, sexual orientation, class, citizenship status and other identities influence your assumptions about situations and solutions.
2. Remember that being a good ally often means stepping back, and taking leadership from those most impacted.
3. Consider the comfort and safety of individuals and communities currently facing criminalization, repression, and/or violence. Some actions, events or publicity can be problematic for certain communities.
4. Be creative in planning actions. If you are uncertain whether an event or action is appropriate, ask.
5. Be sure to follow through on all promised actions or be transparent and re- negotiate when you cannot.
6. Make sure to check-in and get feedback on how things are going.
7. Approach inevitable conflicts calmly and directly. Prioritize long-term relationships over short-term differences of opinion.

8. Know that your partner may not be familiar with the timelines and capacity of your congregation and what you can and cannot deliver and in what timeframe. And do not commit before you know your own capacity and how your team will show up.
9. Expect to make mistakes, 'own' them and start again.
10. Respect, mutual support, and trust are the keys to effective partnership and know that it takes time and commitment for these to grow and flourish.
11. Prioritize self reliance so that your presence does not tax capacity
12. Remember that you don't need to know the whole context in order to follow well - sometimes there is time for you to understand the background for why a request is being made, sometimes there is not

Prioritize and Set Clear Goals

Once you have a core team together and have identified partners, create a clear plan with concrete tactics and clear results you can measure over time.

To determine your priorities and goals, you may consider

- What aspect of UU the Vote work are we most excited about? What are we best positioned to carry out?
- What issues are we committed to for the long-term? How can we use the focus on the elections to advance them?
- Are there ballot initiatives that need to be supported or opposed?
- Are there areas with low voter registration and voter turnout where people are not usually contacted by canvassers that we can help reach?
- Are there high school and college campuses where we can help students register and access the vote?
- Are there UU congregations located near areas where our building can serve as a hub?
- What is our capacity?
- Is there a UU State Action Network in your state?

Choose concrete numbers and make a plan to achieve them over the course of 2020. See the sample timeline at the end of the toolkit and add your events and benchmarks to it.

Get (and Stay) Organized

- Set up an easy way to for anyone in the congregation to contact you or get updates (like a dedicated Gmail account or a place on your congregation's web page).
- Use the event map at uuthevote.org to post and publicize your activities so that people can sign up in advance to attend - that way you can know how many people to expect and follow up with them. You may also use Google Forms, Facebook event, Eventbrite or other free tools to set these up. Post your events widely, and set up a newsletter or regular email to everyone who expressed interest about what's coming up.
- Send REMINDERS in advance and THANK YOUs after your events.

- Make sure you have a way to keep connected with each other. Start with a list of everyone who is interested in participating and their contact information. A basic Google Sheet is an easy way to do this.
- Always have a sign-up sheet at every event to track who came and get their contact information for follow up. You can also use these sheets to sign them up for the next event. Here's an [example](#) of what that can look like.
- Have a calendar or spreadsheet of your planned events and actions, and make it accessible to everyone on the organizing team. Include the sign up links.

Track Your Progress

We want to know our collective impact AND we need to be able to measure our success to learn and improve. Be sure you have a way to track your progress. Each time you do something together, keep a record. How many people came? If you contacted voters, how many conversations did you have? And don't forget about taking pictures and recording stories.

After every activity, please take two minutes to fill out the [UUtheVote event report form](#). As time goes on, we'll be creating a live-updated visual report of numbers registered, doors knocked, etc and we want you and your congregation to be included!

Create Your Own Materials

Find a branding guide and logo files for you to make your own UUtheVote materials here: <http://bit.ly/uuthevotegraphics>



Join the Communities of Practice with Other UU's

UU's know what we can achieve when we all push together in the same direction. Neither you nor your congregation is alone. To facilitate connection and create space for collaboration and learning, we have three practice spaces you can join.

UUtheVote Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/509770206273429/>

You must have a facebook account to participate. Ask to join at the link above and enter the group to share articles, discuss news, and ask questions and find real-time support as you implement your plan.

UUtheVote Slack

Slack is like if your inbox and your text messages had a digital baby. It allows you to organize specific conversations in "channels" such as rural organizing, southern organizing, tools and tech, etc.

You can access Slack via your desktop browser and/or download the app onto your computer and phone to receive notifications in real-time.

Click on the invitation link at: <http://bit.ly/uuslackinvite> and follow the prompts to join. Make introducing yourself in the "introduction" channel your first step!

Weekly Office Hours Phone Call

Every Tuesday at 8:00pm Eastern // 5:00pm Pacific, a UU the Vote experienced volunteer will host office hours where anyone can call in to ask questions and get support. Simply RSVP at: <http://bit.ly/UUVoteOfficeHours>

**If you are interested in volunteering to host office hours, [fill out this form](#).*

State Action Networks

SANs are state-level coordinating groups for local and statewide efforts to UUtheVote. They can strategize with partner organizations to assess where UUs can have the most impact, provide training and opportunities for engaging in voter outreach as part of ongoing and stepped-up advocacy, and organize for justice. Connect your congregation to be part of a statewide strategy. <http://cuusan.org/sans-directory/>



Voter Registration and Mobilization

There are over 50 million people in the US who are eligible to vote but who are not registered and many millions more of registered voters who are infrequent voters. Registering people to vote is an important way to combat voter suppression. Getting people registered, gets them to vote. Once they are on the rolls they are contacted by campaigns, they receive voter guides, and they get reminders to vote.

The Fair Elections Center has excellent state specific resources for Voter Registration - just click on your state for:

- Election dates and registration deadlines
- Links for more election information
- How to register to vote
- ID requirements for registering and voting
- Links to look up your voting site
- Options to vote
- And specifically, for student voters, their option to vote at their home or campus address, and answers to common student voting questions

See <https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/state-specific-resources> for background information.

Save uuthevote.org/register as a go-to link for helping anyone register to vote.

Tips for an Effective Registration, Canvassing & Get Out the Vote Campaign

(Best Practices from UU congregations that have engaged in electoral work)

- Recruit volunteers with personal requests. General announcements—whether electronic, oral or printed—can be helpful, but nothing is more effective than a direct, personal invitation.
- Link voter registration and election work into ongoing congregational social justice projects.
- Integrate voter registration into every congregational activity.
- Have voter registration tables at all events, soup kitchens, and Sunday services.
- Work with your minister to find creative ways they can support election activities from the pulpit and within the congregation.
- Set concrete goals and timelines. For example, schedule four weekends before Election Day to Get Out the Vote. Find out your state's voter registration deadline and make sure you get involved early enough to get folks registered.

- Keep a database (or at least contact list) of everyone who expresses interest in volunteering.
- Invite volunteers to take on specific tasks.
- Involve youth and young adults. The energy and expertise of the young people in your congregation can help make your campaign wildly successful.
- Support your volunteers. Provide clear information well in advance about what's expected, from the date and times of the commitment(s) to what they will be doing.
- Make sure that each and every volunteer receives adequate training about the relevant legal guidelines and procedures!
- Keep in mind basic human needs: make sure that volunteers have sufficient access to water, restrooms, and food (even if this means letting people know that they need to bring their own).
- Thank volunteers and make time to celebrate and build relationships by getting together for meals, highlighting actions during worship, and sharing photos and videos of your activities.

Voter Registration Drives

Use uuthevote.org/register to help register anyone to vote.

Non-profit voter registration drives can focus on historically disenfranchised, under-represented, and low-voter turnout areas and populations including young people and students, people of color, low-income, low wealth communities, new citizens, and women. Groups like New Georgia Project make it easy by creating a "voter registration box" that includes all the paperwork, technology, signage, and a bowl of candy so that any volunteer can pick up and go.

When conducting voter registration drives groups usually decide to go to high foot traffic areas or specific locations to reach key constituencies such as high schools, colleges, neighborhoods that are home to historically disenfranchised people and have low voter turnout, homeless shelters, busy social service agencies, cultural and community events. And of course voter registration should always be part of justice organizing events from marches and strikes to forums and teach-ins. Prepare voter registration kits, get voting apps on people's phones so that they can always easily register someone.

Thirty-eight states plus Washington, DC now or will by 2020 have on-line voter registration. These include: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

This eliminates the need for paper forms when conducting voter registration drives.

There are easy to use free on-line platforms that are mobile friendly that navigate people who sign up to their state on-line voter registration site.

You can direct anyone to uuthevote.org/register to register to vote.

Usually people will need to enter their license number or last few digits of their social security number. If they do not have these forms of ID they can request that a voter registration form with instructions for other forms of identification that prove the person is a citizen and a resident be sent or e-mailed to them. It takes just a few minutes to register someone on these platforms. They can be shared among people to make sure their friends and family are registered to vote and be used in conducting voter registration drives.

When registering people who don't have IDs particularly in states with Voter ID laws voter registration can be conducted with support from [Spread the Vote](#) to obtain Voter IDs for people. In some instances, congregations have provided the congregation's address for people to use on registration forms.

Map Apps for Finding People Who Are Unregistered. An exciting new development for voter registration is new tools that can locate the addresses and sometimes the names as well of people who are unregistered to vote.

- MAPtheVote <https://mapthe.vote> provides a map from your location on your phone of addresses of people who are probably not registered. MapTheVote is a project of the 501c4 non-profit Register2Vote. MapTheVote aggregates publicly available data and provides analysis on locations that are likely to have unregistered, eligible voters living at them. The map is a guide to help coordinate and improve voter registration around the country. It has been built primarily by volunteers from many organizations, and is funded by Register2Vote. MapTheVote doesn't expose any personal data -- it's just a way for those who wish to register voters in their communities to more easily connect with potential voters. MapTheVote is completely free for anyone to use.

Voter Education:

People who get registered are sure to have questions. Be sure to tell voters:

1. What's Next in the registration process according to the laws of your state or community. Should they expect a card in the mail? How will they know they're registered?
2. How to Find Their Polling Place.
3. What to Bring to the Polls. Will they need a photo ID, proof of residency, or any other documentation?
4. Where to Find Information on Candidates and Issues. Congregations may provide nonpartisan voting guides as well as online information. Project Vote Smart (www.VoteSmart.org), has a comprehensive website with information on thousands of candidates.
5. Set up an internet connection at your registration table and invite voters to look up relevant election information immediately!

Get-Out-the-Vote Mobilization

The best way for UU's to participate in Get Out the Vote mobilization is with a partner organization who will bottom line the targeting, literature development, turf cutting and volunteer training, and is likely already part of a planning eco-system with other groups to make sure we avoid duplication.

Ballot Initiatives

Ballot Initiatives -- Ballot initiatives are allowed in 24 states. Efforts are underway for 2020 ballot initiatives on a wide range of issues including election reform, clean energy, raising wages, criminal justice reform, voting rights, and decriminalization and legalization of marijuana. There are also potential ballot initiatives that threaten reproductive justice, immigrant rights, and unions. As of January 4, 2020, **47 statewide ballot measures** had been [certified for](#)

[the 2020 ballot](#) in 22 states. [Click here to read](#) about potential measures that could be on the ballot in 2020 in your state. There are also county and local ballot initiatives.

Our friends at the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (ballot.org) keep a running list of ballot initiatives for you to see what's in play in your state.

***A Note on How We Show Up:**

- Sometimes people are embarrassed that they are not registered. Reminding people that there have been voter purges of the voting rolls and that they should make sure they are registered helps with this.
- Sometimes people think they can't register because they have a record. If eligible in your state, let them know if they can and let them know you think everyone should be able to vote.
- Before doing registration work in communities other than your own connect with local organizations. Reaching out and asking is the most important first step when trying to do voter registration in a community that is not your own.



Values-Based Issue Conversations

Beyond mobilizing voters, Unitarian Universalists can be especially positioned to have the courageous but necessary conversations that change hearts and minds within our own social circles and neighborhoods.

For many people, the most effective messenger is someone we already know and have a relationship with. That means our justice ministry is not just mobilizing unfamiliar people on a list but actually engaging in our relationships to move them over time toward a more caring worldview and/or more active civic life.

Especially for UU's who may live in places of economic and racial privilege or segregation, your access to your neighbors, other parents at your children's schools, colleagues, and others can be one of the few things that pierces the filter bubbles that shape people's lens of the world and otherwise reinforce divisions and disparities.

That can take place through:

- Attending and speaking at public events, townhalls, and forums
- Going door-to-door
- Engaging specific people in your life in on-going conversation

Groups like Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), People's Action, and others have developed "deep canvassing" techniques to hold longer in-depth conversations with people on their doorsteps to shift their perspective on issues like immigration and healthcare. Several of our congregations have practice at empathetic listening and deep conversation around themes like reproductive justice. While a whole host of apps and digital tools have been created to allow you to reach out to your contacts and invite them to action.

You may choose a specific issue that's on the ballot, like Florida's \$15 minimum wage, or want to talk about how things are going in the country at a more meta level:

- Who are 6 people in your life who you want to engage in values-based issue conversations over the course of the next year?
- What are the assumptions, values, and beliefs that inform their position on the issue you want to engage?
- What do you need to understand better to be able to connect with them in an authentic way?
- How did you arrive at your own opinions? Was there a time you thought differently? Is there a story of what shaped and moved you to where you are now?
- What are blindspots, missing information, or gaps between professed values and positions that you may be able to reflect back in ways that are illuminating?
- Who can you practice and role play with to be best prepared for such conversations?

Election Protection and Countering Voter Suppression



“Because all... progress... rests on the ability of voters to be heard and to participate in our process. You cannot have an effective health care system or laws that move our health care system forward, you cannot pass laws to address climate change if we do not have the right to vote.” - Stacey Abrams, Chair of Fair Fight

What is Voter Suppression?

Voter suppression is a strategy to reduce the number of people eligible to vote and make it more difficult for voters, disproportionately Black voters and voters of color, to cast their ballot.

- **Voter Purges:** Over 17 million voters have been purged from the voter roles between 2016 and 2018 and thousands more face the prospect of being disenfranchised this year.⁴
- **Voter ID requirements:** States with voter ID laws, especially the 10 with extremely restrictive laws block millions of Americans, especially transgender voters, residents of reservations and those who rely on tribal ID that may not be accepted, from exercising their vote.⁵
- **Shutting Down and Under-resourcing Polling Places:** Before 2013, the Voting Rights Act required federal pre-approval for states' changes to polling locations. But now, states have closed polling stations, limited early voting, or reduced polling hours. In Georgia in 2018, wide reports of unplugged machines and unmanned voting stations contributed to the allegations of a stolen election.
- **Voter Intimidation:** In recent elections, we've witnessed individuals carrying guns outside voting locations as a tactic to intimidate and deter people from voting

What can you do?

- **Ahead of Election Day:**
 - Volunteer with groups who are notifying and re-registering individuals targeted by your state's voter purge
 - Attend County Board of Elections meetings to advocate for sufficient and well-resourced voting locations and adequate notification plans for voters
 - Support groups litigating for fairer elections and to stop the purges
 - Study issues that occurred in 2016 and 2018 and brainstorm how to address them in 2020
- **On Election Day or During a Recount**
 - Volunteer to be a [poll worker](#) or [poll monitor](#) to be vigilant for corruption or negligence
 - Write down 1-866-our-vote and be prepared to report any issues
 - Volunteer with groups to make voting locations in targeted communities festive, fun, and fed in anticipation of longer lines, misinformation, and potential harassment
 - Offer your church as a voting location or a staging site for voting rights groups

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/14/stacey-abrams-voter-suppression-campaign-states>

⁵ <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression/voter-id>



Open Door Congregations

Our buildings are not just houses of worship but homes to all of the ways we manifest our faith, not just there for the worship service but also service to each other and our broader community. Our congregations can be invigorated with new life when they become hubs of community activities carried out by UU's as well as community partners and unaffiliated groups.

In many of the places we live, meeting space is a rare commodity that we can offer readily.

Our church buildings can be used for candidate forums that provide a platform to hear from all candidates on the issues, non-partisan phone banks and canvassing operations, sites for educational events, community fundraisers, and much more.

Beyond our own activities, a clear facility use policy enables unaffiliated groups to host their meetings, events, and activities in our spaces.⁶

When we open our doors, we are of service to the broader community and become more filled with the broader presence and purpose they bring.

Beyond the physical buildings we gather within, our congregations may also be able to be a greater resource to community groups and partners with the various tools, skills, and materials we maintain.

Asset-Mapping Your Congregation:

As part of an ecosystem of organizations, institutions, and changemakers, our work is more powerful when we know how we're positioned and what our unique contributions can be. Begin asking yourselves, what resources (space, equipment, human resources, infrastructure) might be useful to people in our community who are aligned with this effort? How can we make those resources available on a regular basis? How can we let people know they can access them?

Complete the Congregational Asset Mapping Tool. Identify the organizational and personal resources you can use to raise your voice, grow solidarity, and engaged in issued-based electoral organizing in your community. Created by [Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance](#) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

⁶ See the section on Frequently Asked Questions for 501c3's for guidance on hosting unaffiliated groups at your facility.



Spiritual Sustenance and Movement Chaplaincy

The vision of the world we are fighting for -- free, inclusive, just, sustainable, and equitable -- is deeply grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith. Therefore, the political and organizing work of electoral and civic engagement IS faith work. To do it, we need to be deeply spiritually grounded and nourished ourselves, clear in the deepest values that compel us to engage in this work.

Providing this grounding and nourishing is the explicit role of UU the Vote's **Spiritual Sustenance Working Group** -- an emerging group of lay and clergy leaders who hold three main roles:

1. To facilitate regular online **Spiritual Nourishment Groups** where people doing the on-the-ground work of organizing can come for connection, rejuvenation, and support.
2. To create and curate **spiritually uplifting and sustaining content** for use by organizers, worship leaders, small groups, and individuals.
3. To serve as theological consultants to the UU the Vote campaign, exploring and framing **contemporary political issues through a Unitarian Universalist lens**.

Watch for written/artistic resources for use in your congregation or community, opportunities to join spiritual nurturance groups online, and theological framing of issues through a UU lens! Resources will be available online at <http://www.uuthevote.org>.

Are you interested in contributing to UU the Vote by volunteering for one or more of these roles? Please complete our Spiritual Sustenance Working Group intake form [here](#)!



Tech and Tools

Organizing is made easier today with the help of new technologies. The national UUtheVote team is dedicated to investigating, vetting, and distributing platforms that can help you accomplish your goals. We'll be working with the State Advocacy Networks and local congregations to determine and share the most useful contributions in tech.

If this is a special interest to you, join the tech tools channel in the UUtheVote Slack channel.

Event Planning and Registration: Add and find activity to uuthevote.org. The interactive map function allows you to add events and create a registration page you can share and promote to collect RSVP's. You'll receive an email with a link to see who's registered and even be able to check them in at the event. This is a terrific addition to a facebook event that will actually allow you to follow-up with contacts who register.

Voter Activation Network (VAN): You may have heard of the "voter file" or the "VAN." It is a comprehensive list of registered voters, their history, and address with the ability to "cut turf" for volunteers to go door-to-door and record the results of their conversations. Administering the VAN is time intensive and is one part of a comprehensive voter outreach plan. We strongly encourage groups who want to do voter contact to connect with local partner organizations who are already carrying out this work. The [State Voices Network](#) is an excellent starting place and a hub for coordination of non-partisan voter outreach in most states.

Relational Organizing: Starting in March, we will roll out the [Organizing Empowerment app](#) with UUtheVote local teams who want to use it to share prompts with members to have 1:1 conversations with people in their social circles.

Phone Banking: If phone banking will be one of your primary activities and your partner organization is providing you with a paper list, UUtheVote can provide a dialing tool that makes reaching voters on the phone through an automated computer console much more effective. You can request this capacity through the communities of practice (facebook or slack) starting in February.

Peer-to-Peer Texting: Many organizations use peer-to-peer texting to do voter outreach. They may enlist you to use hustle, relay, textout, or another platform. It can also be a helpful tool for volunteer outreach if your list of volunteers has gotten bigger than your normal text chain. We are currently determining which platform to deploy for internal coordination. You can request this capacity through the communities of practice (facebook or slack) starting in February.

Reporting Activities: We're tracking our data nationally! Make sure after any activity, to report your numbers at: <http://bit.ly/uuthevotereports>.



How We Move in a World of White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Capitalism

Feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Florenza coined the phrase “kyriarchy” to describe the many interconnected systems of oppression and domination that define our world. When we talk about “the kyriarchy,” we’re referring to white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, ableism, transmisogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, sizeism, and more--and the way all these systems work together to place power in the hands of a few at the expense of the many.

Because the kyriarchy is everywhere, even our organizing is shaped by the systems of domination we seek to dismantle.

Elections, voting, and civic engagement are no exception. (While we can talk about how important it is for everyone to exercise their right to vote, we also know that the history of enfranchisement up to the present day has been unceasingly marked by white supremacy, misogyny, xenophobia, and economic inequality, for example.) In many ways, working for systemic change through the electoral process is a form of harm reduction, rather than the path toward liberation and justice. We must understand electoral work as one strategy among many that can counter injustice and shift the balance toward freedom and flourishing. And, in every single one of those myriad strategies, we who work for justice must also be humble and self-reflective about the ways the kyriarchy can shape our mindsets and our work, even without our conscious awareness.

We Unitarian Universalists have been grappling with the uncomfortable gap between our aspirational values and our current practices for some time--a struggle which has been hard for many of us, but has also brought deep clarity about our non-negotiable commitments to justice, to solidarity, to humility, and to repair.

Rooted to those commitments, we understand that UU the Vote (just like any other kind of justice work that is an attempt to make our values a little less aspirational and a little more embodied) is an invitation for us not only to work on shaping the world “out there,” but to adopt a posture of humility and self-awareness. This is a moment of invitation, in which we are being asked not just to see the ways we can work for justice beyond our walls, but the possibilities for more deeply and faithfully embodying our values within ourselves and our congregations.

In that spirit, we invite you to hold the following questions front-and-center when doing the work of UU the Vote in 2020. Share them at meetings, use them as check-in questions, post them on the wall, ask people to journal about them--but use them as an opening, and invitation to reflect on the ways we are all constantly growing, unlearning, re-learning, and beginning again.

- Who do we mean when we say “we” in this context? What kind of assumptions are included in that?
- Whose voices are loudest and most frequently heard in this space? Who haven't we heard from? Why might that be?
- Who has decision-making power here? Who is powerless?
- Who is setting the agenda for this [program/meeting/project]? Are they someone(s) who traditionally have access to power?
- Are we more frequently using the language of “us” or “them” to refer to the communities we are fighting for, and who are impacted by the issues we prioritize?
- How diverse (racially, economically, generationally, gender/sexuality, etc.) is our congregation? What does our makeup teach us about where we are called to lead, and where we are called to follow? And what opportunities we may have to flank?
- Are we working in deep partnership beyond our walls, or are we acting like “lone rangers” and setting our own agenda?
- Are the issues, strategies, campaigns, programs we're prioritizing being called for by impacted communities?
- How are we making space for good-faith disagreement about tactics and strategies while being rigorously disciplined about what values we hold most central?
- When conflict arises, what strategies do we have in place to handle it healthily?
- Do we have processes for asking people--both internal participants and external partners--for real, honest feedback? What do we do when that feedback shows that our impact has been harmful, or otherwise different from our intent?
- How are we recruiting, supporting, and uplifting the leadership of those who have historically not been invited to lead?
- How are we building a culture of joy, of shared vision, of mutual aid and respect?
- How are we fortifying relationships, gaining skills, learning lessons, deepening faith for long after the 2020 elections?



Bring Your Passion to the Polls: How Your Issue Relates to the 2020 Elections

UUs Were There:

- when California passed Proposition 8 denying full marriage equality we fought back
- when Arizona passed an anti-immigrant racial profiling bill, we engaged in civil disobedience
- when organizers declared “Black Lives Matter” in response to police murders, we hung banners and took to the streets in solidarity.
- at the Women’s March
- at the Climate Strikes
- outside the Kavanaugh hearing
- for voting rights restoration in Florida
- for an end to the “war on drugs” in Ohio

In 2018 UUs worked with partners to:

- urge elected officials/candidates to support a Green New Deal
- decriminalize poverty
- defend the rights of LGBTQ people
- fight for reproductive justice
- end migrant detention and deportation and mass incarceration.

We canvassed, gathered signatures, phone-banked, registered people and got out the vote for justice ballot initiatives.

This year, UUs will continue our justice ministries focused on the issues that matter most to each of us. And we will bring our passions to the polls.

We will UU the Vote:

For Trans Lives; Migrant Justice; Reproductive Rights; Confronting White Supremacy; For the Future of the Planet.

In this political moment, we can powerfully show what's possible when we move together as determined faith communities in relationship with movements for justice. Not all of us can vote, but all of us can be part of organizing.

When it comes to the various justice issues many UU's and congregations work on, we asked individuals to share with us what they thought the stakes were and how electoral justice relates to their on-going work. Here are their answers:

Climate Justice

“Every election is a climate election. Vote for your children. Vote for the planet. Vote for future generations. Vote for humanity.” - Greta Thunberg

We are on the brink of runaway climate change. More than half of the “[tipping points](#)” that lead to devastating, unstoppable climate change are already taking place, and [glacial ice loss](#) is occurring at rates that align with the United Nation scientists' worst-case scenario. Millions of people are already suffering and being displaced from their homes due to climate change.

Rather than taking this situation seriously, the United States government has been withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, rolling back environmental protections, and pushing for increased fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure development.

The 2020 elections will be crucial to the fate of our planet. Establishing the political will to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis is a life or death issue for billions of people, plants and animals. Federal, state, and local elections are all significant. A ballot initiative in Oregon would require the state to phase out and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel and industrial sources by 2050. Potential ballot initiatives in Arizona, California, Florida, and Missouri would help states fund climate change mitigation efforts and require percentages of electricity to be produced from renewable resources.

Unitarian Universalists are committed to building the movement for a [Green New Deal](#) as part of a strong, multi-sector coalition. This involves laying groundwork for strong climate and environmental justice policy at the local, state, and national level --- and electing leaders with the courage and commitment to put these proposals into action.

Unitarian Universalists are committed to solidarity with Indigenous [Water Protectors](#), with youth activists, and with environmental justice communities that are most impacted by the causes and the consequences of climate change.

Our faith calls us to create Climate Justice by honoring these commitments as we #UUtheVote for the 2020 elections.

To connect with other UUs who are gearing up to #UUtheVote for Climate Justice, create an account on [CreateClimateJustice.net](#) and request to join the group “UU the Vote for Climate Justice #UUtheVote”.

Climate justice organizations include [the Sunrise Movement](#), [People's Climate Movement](#), [Earth Day Network](#), and [350.org](#)

--Aly Tharp, Program Director, UU Ministry for Earth <https://www.uumfe.org>

LGBTQI Justice

Despite the great progress that has been made on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community, queer and trans rights are under attack like never before.

- Transgender service members are being disqualified from military service.
- Queer and trans lives are on trial before the Supreme Court to determine if it is lawful to fire them for being queer and trans.
- LGBTQ would-be parents are being denied the right to adopt.
- Trans/non-binary persons are being forced out of public accommodations.

On April 12, 2019, the United State government began implementing the [trans military ban](#), ruining the careers of 15,000 otherwise qualified military personnel. Thus, jeopardizing U.S. military effectiveness and undermining the dignity of LGBTQ+ troops.

On May 17, 2019, the [Equality Act \(H.R. 5, S. 788\)](#) passed in the House of Representatives, but has since stalled in the Senate. The Equality Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service.

On October 8, 2019, [The Supreme Court heard the cases of people fired](#) for being gay or trans. In question is whether or not it's lawful to fire a skydiver or a child welfare services coordinator for being gay, or a funeral director for being trans. The Supreme Court's decision could eliminate current employment protections for LGBTQ+ people, discourage future protections to states where they don't currently exist.

And on November 1, 2019 the [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) announced that it's considering a rule](#) that would allow federally-funded programs to turn away those in need because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. The HHS grant budget is more than \$525B, and includes major health initiatives such as grants for HIV/AIDS prevention and support programs, community health centers, immunization services, and services for youth experiencing homelessness.

If we do not change course in 2020, the damage to the life and liberty of the LGBTQ+ could be irreparable. In this political moment, UUs are called to join forces with all people who want to organize our communities and our nation to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate.

Let's #UUtheVote for LGBTQ equity in 2020 in order to:

- Elect a senate that will pass the Equality Act!
- Elect an administration that will evoked any HHS ruling that will allow discrimination!
- Prevent the appointment of activist judges that will trample the rights of LGBTQ persons and repeal Roe v. Wade.

With so much at stake for LGBTQ and all peoples, UUs must #VoteLove and #DefeatHate

Groups to connect with for information and organizing campaigns:

- Queer the Vote <https://www.them.us/branded/queerthevote/>
- LGBTQ Victory Fund <https://victoryfund.org>
- The National LGBTQ Task Force <https://www.thetaskforce.org/>
- Human Rights Campaign <https://www.hrc.org/resources/register-to-vote>
- Center for American Progress <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/politics-and-elections/view/>

-- Rev. Michael Crumpler, LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Manager,
Unitarian Universalist Association <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq>

Trans Lives

The 2020 elections will be crucial for many issues that directly affect transgender, nonbinary and other non-cisgender people. Trans people are currently in the position of being insecure in their access to basic healthcare in the face of rules that would allow federally funded healthcare workers to deny service to trans and nonbinary people on “moral” grounds. Our leaders and policy makers have the power to decide whether these public servants have the right to refuse to give care to trans people based on personal feelings, and we will decide who those leaders are with our votes.

While many mourn on Transgender Day of Remembrance, it's important to remember that year-round, many trans people who experience violence are afraid to seek help out of fear of further discrimination by law enforcement or social services. Programs and policies to educate social workers, as well as police and criminal justice reform could massively shift outcomes for many trans people experiencing violence.

Though there are about 15,000 trans people serving in the military, they are currently facing a policy that would ban them from serving openly. Additionally, trans soldiers face additional blocks in receiving medical care, as the Pentagon has refused to fund gender confirmation surgeries with military or homeland security funds.

Transgender rights are also under attack in state legislatures. In South Carolina, Georgia and Kentucky, legislators are planning to submit bills that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to get gender reassignment surgery, even with parental permission.

It's vitally important for trans people and their allies to vote this election cycle. The future depends on it!

For more information:

<https://transequality.org> The National Center for Transgender Equality was founded in 2003 by transgender activists who recognized the urgent need for policy change to advance transgender equality.

<http://www.transgenderlegal.org> Founded in 2003, Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to end discrimination and achieve equality for transgender people, particularly those in our most vulnerable communities.

<https://transgenderlawcenter.org> Transgender Law Center changes law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression. Transgender Law Center (TLC) is the largest national trans-led organization advocating for a world in which all people are free to define themselves and their futures. Grounded in legal expertise and committed to racial justice, TLC employs a variety of community-driven strategies to keep transgender and gender nonconforming people alive, thriving, and fighting for liberation.

--Jade Sylvan, Intern for LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs, Unitarian Universalist Association <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq>

Racial Justice

2020 invites us to really discern our commitment to racial and social justice. The world is suffering from a historical lack of principles that lead to daily assaults on the quality of life and indeed life itself for communities of color. Not only are not enough people working to dismantle systemic racism but not enough people are even questioning it. This moment is begging us to act with courage, lead with dignity and employ tactics that will provide tangible gains for those most impacted. This is the moment for us to make a recommitment to anti-racist pedagogy and Black liberation. The 2020 electoral cycle affords many opportunities for us to do so.

The current social, economic and political landscape is grim. We are experiencing an increase in a police state that continues to target and control the bodies of black and brown people disproportionately to those of white people. We witness economic instability across the country. We see the lawlessness from our elected officials from the federal level to our local city councils. Families are in the dire position of choosing between paying medical bills or food. Police departments are utilizing integrated surveillance and databases and our courts are filled by judges that adhere to a right-wing conservatism that threatens the foundation of our republic. At every level at this time of our current history, we are being asked to uphold the universal value of dignity of all people.

Even in the shadow of the grimness of 2020, we have the power to confront this injustice with grace and perseverance. We are invited to join the chorus of frontline movement leaders that are fighting back through various tactics including electoral justice. We know we need reform on all levels and this election year offers us the ability to shift power and invest in building a world that is just. Now is the time to support the work of Black-led organizations that have a long-term commitment to changing the social, political and economic realities of Black communities. We know this work has to be done in right and accountable relationships with a myriad of organizations that will utilize short-term gains for long-term change. During the 2018 elections UUs worked with the Black-led Ohio Organizing Collaborative, the Florida Second Chances Coalition and others on ballot initiatives to end mass incarceration and restore voting rights and to get out the vote. We need to increase these kinds of efforts ten-thousand fold in 2020 and beyond.

Follow Side with Love to connect with this work. Join us as we continue to commit to an anti-racist approach to building an integrated faith-based and social justice movement. We continue to offer the [timeless work from DismantlingRacism.org that provide a breakdown of characteristics and antidotes for challenging white supremacy](#).

Find out more from organizations such as:

- BlackPAC <https://blackpac.com>
- The Movement For Black Lives Electoral Justice Project <https://ejp.m4bl.org>
- Mijente <http://Mijente.net>
- The Rising Majority <https://therisingmajority.com>

--Everette Thompson, Side with Love Campaign Manager, Unitarian Universalist Association <https://sidewithlove.org>

Resisting Criminalization

The legislation and legalization of criminalization continues in insidious ways, but there are opportunities to do electoral organizing work leading up to our time at the polls to enact criminal justice reform in our communities and across the country.

Our current administration has a dangerous "law-and-order" agenda that furthers criminalizes communities already vulnerable: Black folx and other people of color, trans/gender nonconforming individuals, immigrants, the formerly incarcerated, poor/cash poor/working poor, among others. Since 2016 we've seen an increase in mass detention and incarceration including the use of child detention centers for migrants and refugees; illegal searches and detention of individuals based on religious belief or location of origin; and the further militarization of local police forces.

We must resist -- and end -- the refrain of "locking" anyone up. Our Unitarian faith reminds us that none of us are free unless all of us are free.

Love Resists in local elections by using an anti-criminalization frame when considering candidates for sheriff and district attorneys. In town halls and other candidate forums, we have the opportunity to live our values by making sure our elected officials know we want a world with no jails and detention centers. We want communities where all are welcome and where restorative justice is practiced when we cause each other harm.

Learn more about how to push district attorneys to commit to not prosecuting certain kinds of crimes by reading ACLU's [Power of Your DA](#). Love Resists will be releasing surveys for congregations to submit to candidates in local DA races to offer scorecards and commitments to reduce low-level prosecutions if elected.

Additionally, more and more communities are recognizing that money bail perpetuates a cycle of imprisonment that unfairly targets Black and Brown people, and has immense reverberations beyond the cost of bail. Learn more at Love Resists' [End Money Bail campaign](#) page.

The movement to decriminalize and legalize marijuana is another way to push back on the mass incarceration that has resulted from the "war on drugs." Ballot initiatives to legalize recreational and/or medical marijuana use have been certified or in process to be on the up for vote in November in AZ, AR, FL, ID, MO, MS, NE, ND, NJ, OK, and SD.

For guidance on electoral justice organizing, please see:

- [Love Resists](#) - we will be developing electoral engagement resources
- The Movement For Black Lives Electoral Justice Project <https://ejp.m4bl.org>

--Audra Friend, Organizing Strategy Team & Love Resists Communications Strategist, Unitarian Universalist Association <https://www.uua.org/loversists>

Migrant Justice

Immigrants and asylum-seekers have become a political flash point, and anti-immigrant moves [driven by a white supremacist agenda](#) have had devastating consequences for the lives of millions of people, including children. In August, a gunman killed 22 people in a Walmart in [El Paso, Texas](#). Before the rampage, the shooter uploaded a racist manifesto online, stating that he was targeting Mexicans. So much harm has already been done, but a lot of it has occurred through Executive Orders and the Department of Homeland Security -- changing policies and practices without actually changing the laws yet means they can still be reversed if we push candidates locally and nationally to commit to immigrant rights in the 2020 elections. We cannot romanticize the Obama administration's treatment of immigrants; [many immigrant organizers call Obama the "deporter-in-chief"](#) for deporting over 3 million undocumented immigrants during his term and bringing back family detention. As we set our sights on the 2020 elections, we must also aim for higher standards than simply returning to what we had before.

Immigrant rights are at stake in many ways in the 2020 elections, including:

Protect Access to Asylum & Refugee Resettlement

Asylum as we know it is in the process of being completely dismantled, and people who turn to the U.S. for protection from danger and persecution in their home countries are facing more barriers than ever before. We need candidates that firmly back long-standing U.S. and international laws guiding the asylum process, who will end [harmful programs like the "Remain in Mexico" policy, the Asylum Ban 2.0, and the "safe third country" agreements deporting Hondurans and El Salvadorians to Guatemala](#).

Gain Permanent Status for Dreamers & Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Holders

Dreamers (young people without immigration documents who have grown up in the U.S.) and people with Temporary Protected Status (immigrants unable to return to their countries of origin due to natural disaster or armed conflict) are facing imminent threats to their right to stay in the U.S., the country they call home. All 2.5 million of them had forms of legal status that the current administration has tried to strip away from them. [In 2019 the House of Representatives passed the Dream & Promise Act](#) which would provide them with a pathway to citizenship, but it has stalled in the Senate. A change in the 2020 elections could help it pass before it's too late.

Cut Funding for Immigration Detention and Deportations

[Immigration detention reached an all-time high in 2019 with over 55,000 people imprisoned at once in ICE facilities](#). The majority of immigration detention occurs in for-profit facilities at taxpayers' expense. This is dramatically higher than the number approved by Congress, and to fund them ICE has appropriated funds from other areas of the Homeland Security budget like FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. After intentionally overspending their budget each year, ICE comes back to Congress requesting more money. They have succeeded each time. In the 2020 Elections, we need politicians at every level who will fight to de-fund immigration detention and support on-the-ground calls to #AbolishICE. We need some champions in Congress and in our State Houses and local government offices.

Where you can get more information and involved:

[The Migrant Justice Platform](#) - Coordinated by the National Day Labor Organizing Network (NDLON) and RAICES, 20 grassroots immigrant leaders came together to create this widely comprehensive set of principles and actions that can be taken by the Executive Branch and by Congress as a national roadmap for immigrant rights.

[Mijente & El Chisme 2020](#) - [Mijente](#) has partnered with NowThis to hold a series of conversations with to inform the public about the Presidential candidates from a Latinx perspective.

Migrant Justice organizations are gearing up to talk to voters during the 2020 season - see <https://www.uua.org/loversists/partners> for a list of partner groups.

--Hannah Hafter, Senior Grassroots Organizer, UUSC <https://www.uusc.org>

Economic Justice

The United States economy is humming. It has been ten years since the last recession ended in mid-2009, but an increasing share of the benefits are going to the top quintile of the population, and much of that to the so-called 1% at the very top. The belief of many is that these trends must be reversed. Topics such as raising the minimum wage and raising taxes on the wealthy to a universal basic income or a federal jobs guarantee have all been discussed in the context of the 2020 elections as ways to redistribute our country's wealth. In Florida there is a ballot initiative that will allow voters to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and Arizona has a proposal to raise wages for hospital workers. Idaho has proposals to increase the minimum wage and to increase taxes on individuals with incomes over \$250,000 as well as to increase the corporate income rate. Illinois has a ballot initiative to allow for a graduated state income tax.

The rising cost of housing has been precipitous. Nearly a third of American households now spend more than the recommended 30 percent of their income on their mortgage or rent. Meanwhile, urban rents in cities are skyrocketing while student debt prevents many young people from buying homes. Many theories, including using federal funds to build more houses, subsidies for renters and homeowners, rent control and taxes in an effort to curb speculation have been discussed. In California, a ballot initiative proposal for rent control has gathered about one million signatures and is awaiting validation.

As medical costs continue to spiral upwards, proposals have been made to require the giant pharmaceutical companies to negotiate with the Federal government over prescription costs. The idea of expanding Medicare to include everyone is increasingly popular. Both Missouri and Oklahoma may have Medicaid expansion on the ballot this year.

Banking, Wall street, and tax cuts are all central to the discussion this year. Finally, global warming has highlighted the need to recognize climate injustice and its economic impact, wherein impoverished people, refugees from flooded and agriculturally depressed areas, are being left bereft of both livelihoods and places to live.

Unitarian Universalists have long believed that our country's health depends on both liberty and equality. If we wish to live into those beliefs, we need not only greater equality, but investment in our communities.

Resources:

UUs for a Just Economic Community <https://uujec.org>

United for a Fair Economy <http://www.faireconomy.org>

Poor People's Campaign <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>

People's Action Network <https://peoplesaction.org>

-- Rev. Stephen H. Furrer, Minister, East Shore Unitarian Church, Bellevue, Washington, Member of UUs for a Just Economic Community

Reproductive Justice

In 2020, reproductive oppression is rampant. Maternal death - [particularly for Black women](#) - and barriers to affordable health care access and coverage for all are areas of major concern.

The Reproductive Justice (RJ) framework- which Sistersong defines as “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities”- seeks to combine reproductive rights with social justice principles.

It uniquely asks, what good are rights when innumerable social and environmental barriers block populations from accessing them?

Neither RJ - nor the Unitarian Universalist [embrace of the movement](#) for bodily autonomy and self-determination in one's reproductive and parental life - are new concepts.

Reproductive Justice is the intersection where all UU justice issues meet. In the case of advancing RJ, a multi-directional strategy is a wise strategy. The electoral process must be a part of our battle plan to make the country safe for all families.

What better way to achieve this than voting to create public offices that align with our personal values in 2020?

State legislators around the country are gearing up for the upcoming legislative sessions. You better believe there are several Reproductive Justice related measures up for vote. (Protip: [GovTrack.us](#), a site that tracks the United States Congress and helps Americans participate in their national legislature is a great resource.)

In Georgia for example, the [YWCA's Georgia Women's Policy Institute](#) is working to effect change around maternal mortality and law enforcement response to family violence calls.

Many organizations have Policy agendas available for review. Reading them provides tools to amplify programs that reduce reproductive oppression-like making midwives and doulas accessible to all regardless of region, income and gender identity, and doing what we can to stop restrictive [Targeted restrictions on abortion providers \(TRAP\) laws](#) and other barriers to reproductive liberty.

There are several ballot initiatives in the 2020 cycle that would restrict or prohibit abortion that are moving in Louisiana, Colorado, Florida, and Michigan. In Missouri there is a progressive ballot initiative that would require state funding for Planned Parenthood if federal funding is discontinued and also expands Medicaid. (For more detailed information, see https://ballotpedia.org/2020_ballot_measures.)

Nearly every issue is a Reproductive Justice issue

If it impedes the development of healthy families - especially based on one's race, class or other identity factors- it's an RJ issue.

Everything from access to quality education to climate issues and criminal justice impacts families. Person efforts make ripples but organizing has the potential to make waves.

How to help: Become a member of a Reproductive Justice organization when possible. Donate. Donate. Donate. Invite them to speak in your local community or congregation.

[SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective](#): a Southern-based, national membership organization; our purpose is to build an effective network of individuals and organizations to improve institutional policies and systems that impact the reproductive lives of marginalized communities.

[Black Women's Health Imperative](#): is dedicated to promoting physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being for the nation's 19.5 million African American women and girls.

[Forward Together](#): has been fighting to dismantle the ways our society marginalizes us based on race, sexuality, and gender since 1989.

Bonus: Subscribe to [Black Mommas Matter Alliance](#) and [National Network of Abortion Funds](#) to stay informed about birth equity.

The RJ framework allows us to envision a world that works better for all people. Let's do our part.

--A. Rochaun Meadows-Fernandez, Reproductive Justice activist and writer.

[Award-winning Healthcare Journalist](#)

2018 NABJ Salute to Excellence Award Winner

she/hers/they pronouns

Building Democracy

Democracy is on the ballot in 2020.

Winning progressive policies depends on a fundamental truth: We must fix our democracy first. Until we do, progress on any topic—from healthcare to climate justice—will be blocked by the special interests who hold the power to thwart changes to the status quo. Everything for which we fight is intrinsically linked to the struggle for a democratic future.

The past decade was largely defined by anti-democratic efforts in states across the country to suppress the vote, gerrymander districts, and unleash big money in politics. But make no mistake, democracy fought back. Reformers across the country won major campaigns to unrig our system.

Automatic voter registration, for instance, has spread to 16 states and Washington, D.C. just since 2015. And over the past nine years, nine states enacted laws allowing sixteen or seventeen-year-olds to pre-register to vote and twelve states and Washington, D.C. adopted same-day registration. The movement to restore rights to people with felony convictions won multiple victories, too—the largest of which was in Florida in 2018 with the passage of Amendment 4, a campaign that many UUs supported. There were also many efforts to restrain partisan gerrymandering and democratize political financing.

This new decade will continue to be defined by the battle over the rules of our elections. And in 2020, there will be more opportunities for progress.

Federal regulation of elections is critically needed. Last year, the House of Representatives passed HR 1, the "For the People Act." This bill, if enacted, would establish public financing of elections, nationwide requirements for same-day registration, automatic voter registration, limits on voter purges, re-enfranchisement of people with felony convictions, and independent redistricting commissions for Congressional elections. In short, HR 1 would revitalize American democracy.

Unfortunately, this landmark policy is languishing in the Senate. Working to elect pro-democracy senators is therefore imperative. A change in Senate leadership could move HR 1 from the legislative graveyard to the law books. State level reforms have tremendous consequences, as well, and in 2020 there will be plenty of opportunity to advance these efforts.

Voters will weigh in on various pro-democracy ballot initiatives. In Colorado, there will be a fight to keep a law in place to eventually award presidential electoral votes to the national popular vote winner. Oregon will decide whether to authorize campaign finance restrictions. And Nevada could create a constitutional right to protect voting procedures and policies. As Election Day approaches, more initiatives will likely reach the ballot, too. Alaska and Massachusetts may vote to implement ranked choice voting. Arizona may decide on campaign finance laws and automatic voter registration. And there are efforts in Arkansas, Nevada, Oregon, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, Virginia, and California to put reform on the ballot, too. To stay up-to-date on these efforts, visit ballotpedia.org/2020_ballot_measures.

In addition to these ballot initiatives, state races are critical. Breaking unified partisan control in the state houses in Florida, Texas, and Arizona, for instance, could prevent another decade of disastrous gerrymandering. There will also be State Supreme Court races in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, and Texas. Given the anti-democratic composition of the US Supreme Court, it is imperative to work to elect a state-level judges who will protect democratic rights. (State judiciaries have become even more important in the wake of *Rucho v. Common Cause*, which blocked federal courts from striking down partisan gerrymanders).

To learn more about democracy initiatives and organizing campaigns in 2020, visit:

- The Democracy Initiative <http://www.democracyinitiative.org> - A 2020 Democracy Field Guide is coming soon.
- Demos - For a Multiracial Democracy <https://www.demos.org>
- Public Citizen <https://www.citizen.org>

-- Adam Eichen is the Campaigns Manager for Equal Citizens <https://equalcitizens.us> and co-author of *Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want*. (Beacon Press, 2017)

Disability Justice

The 2016 campaign cycle saw some shockingly ableist events, perhaps most notably in the open mocking of New York Times reporter Serge Kovalski. In the past few years, the United States government has been increasingly adversarial to disability rights in many areas, including health care, education, and the Department of Justice's reluctance to enforce rights granted by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Thanks to disability justice activists and the direct action of ADAPT <https://adapt.org> on Capitol Hill we were able to keep the Affordable Care Act in 2017. The disability justice community is energized. Disability justice activists understand that people with disabilities are an oppressed group, and there is a need to fight for equity and inclusion. Furthermore, the presence of disability need not be viewed as negative. Rather, disability should be seen as a valued aspect of human diversity bringing value to the world. Disability justice is a call for action to address the inequities and injustices inflicted on people with disabilities as violations of their human rights.

Advocates have been trying to get the federal Disability Integration Act (DIA) passed but it has still not gotten a hearing in the House of Representatives. The DIA would require both public and private insurances that cover any kind of long term care to give equal coverage to home and community support services, so people could simply

choose that option if it's what they want. While many disability advocacy groups have made passage of the DIA their primary focus, everyone, especially those households with a member from the baby boomer generation, ought to be concerned that this proposed legislation becomes law. Most importantly though, the DIA was written in a civil rights framework, that is, it's the civil right of people with disabilities to live in the community. The bill addresses transportation, housing, services, and supports in the community. Insurance companies will have to pay.

Opponents of the Americans with Disabilities Act are trying to resuscitate the so-called "ADA Education and Reform Act" that would gut the ADA. It would result in people with disabilities not having equal access for weeks, months, or possibly years, and it removes any incentive for businesses to comply proactively with the ADA. This change in the law would be a boon for businesses at the expense of people with disabilities.

Although disability-related organizations have done voter outreach and issue advocacy for many decades, there is a new activism that is demanding that candidates running for office address disability justice in their platforms. This was seen in the 2016 and 2018 elections as activists attended candidate forums with their demands for justice and now in 2020.

A new movement, #CripTheVote, is a nonpartisan campaign to engage both voters and politicians in a productive discussion about disability issues in the United States, with the hope that disability takes on greater prominence within the American political landscape. Today, the movement has become a crucial part of elevating the disability voice in political discourse. In fact, during the October 15, 2019 Democratic debate, over 1,500 participated in a [#CripTheVote](https://www.wright.edu/event/sex-disability-conference/crip-theory) Twitter chat, resulting in over 3,800 tweets. Read here <https://www.wright.edu/event/sex-disability-conference/crip-theory> about why the movement used the word Crip.

Accessible voting is a vital need for people with disabilities and inaccessible polling stations are a real problem. However, in a truly cynical move, the Department of Justice Disability Rights Section and some elections officials have cited the ADA as a reason to target and close polling places in Black neighborhoods and on Native American reservations. Disability advocates have refused to be used in voter suppression efforts and have logically and emphatically urged that counties should work on updating the voting facilities that require greater access rather than shuttering the polls.

Let's fight for disability justice in the 2020 Electoral Season!

Resources for talking points to use with voters and to join campaigns:

- ADAPT Activist Handbook <https://adapt.org/the-adapt-activist-handbook/>
- Disability Visibility Project <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com>
- #CripTheVote Blog <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com>
- 10 Disability Questions Every Candidate Should Answer <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/disability/news/2019/10/15/475859/10-disability-policy-questions-every-presidential-candidate-answer/>

--Susan Leslie, Congregational Advocacy & Witness Director, Organizing Strategy Team, Unitarian Universalist Association <https://www.uua.org/offices/staff/ost> in consultation with Shaya French, a Boston-based disability rights activist and Senior Organizer at the Boston Center for Independent Living which focuses on disability issues

A note on intersectionality

The Unitarian Universalist Association has a commitment to organizing at the intersectional engagement of the multiple identities of our humanity and unapologetically centering the dismantling of white supremacy. In the context of our times, it has become clear that the lack of an intersectional approach is harming our movements for justice. Our work is deeply informed by and narrated through both liberatory theology and a critical analysis of the political moment we are living in, grounded in prophetic faith and in solidarity with those suffering from and on the front lines of disrupting white supremacy. As we work on our justice priorities and electoral engagement we act from an intersectional analysis to strategically build power for creating justice at this time.

Intersectionality can be seen in the movement for a Green New Deal, reproductive health and justice organizing, and an abolitionist approach to ending mass incarceration and mass detention and deportation. Having an intersectional lens doesn't mean we don't work on specific justice issues but it does mean that we understand them in a context of frame them intersectionally, looking at the various impacts and ramifications on diverse communities depending on age, gender, orientation, race, class, income, location and other factors. An example of intersectional framing is one that acknowledges that while climate change threatens us all, there are frontline communities that are the most impacted. Solutions to climate change must include a just transition so that workers in the fossil fuel industry can be retrained to work in sustainable energy industries and respect for indigenous people's lands and way of life.

We can't all do everything and we need strategies and tactics, including electoral ones, to build power through responding to the critical issues of our times, and unleashing people's energy and passion for where they feel most called to act.



Attending Public Forums and Educating Candidates on the Issues

From UU's for Social Justice, find more at uusj.net

The public campaigning of each candidate is a great way for UU's to learn about their positions on various issues AND educate the candidates themselves on our priorities.

Create and engagement plan for each candidate you want to reach.

Consider seeking out candidates by “bird-dogging,” or co-sponsoring or hosting a candidates forum:

- **“Bird-dogging”**- follow, watch carefully, seek out candidates, pin them down with specific questions, and document their views. Work in teams of 2 to-4. Find out where candidates are speaking, show up and ask questions. Put yourself in the path of a candidate. Two types of bird-dogging: intercept -- stop them wherever they are and be prepared to ask questions, and at scheduled public events.
- **Recruit team members.** Questioner(s), documenter, spokesperson, researcher.
- **Prepare a calendar of events.** Researcher(s) gather information.
 - Follow candidates on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to learn where they are publically appearing to raise your questions and
 - Identify their positions and issues are important to them so you can customize your questions. Includes voting records for incumbents. This helps you customize your questions. See Research tips below.
- **Host or Co-Host a candidate forum** - This is a great way to engage the community and discern common issues that we share. Start four months out. Keep it nonpartisan. We strongly recommend that you partner with a credible organization with experience hosting forums and includes people most impacted by the issues. To ensure a successful turnout, include several co-sponsors.

Research the candidates' positions on the issues you've identified to help tailor your questions.

If candidates are congressional incumbents, research their records at justfacts.votesmart.org.

Prepare several questions in advance in writing.

Have several people to ask questions. Personalize questions for each candidate for bird-dogging. At a forum you may need to submit your question(s) in writing.

Tips on asking questions and ideas on other ways to reach candidates.

- **Asking questions (bird-dogging or at a public forum):**
 - Arrive early. Be prepared. Ask questions early. Raise your hand high at forums and get in the path of the candidate as they pass. Get noticed. Work in teams.
 - Make your questions provocative without being rude. Angry, rude or sarcastic questions may be ignored or counterproductive.
 - Keep questions short. The longer you speak leaves less time for the candidate to talk and will lose the audience.
 - Do not lecture. If you must cite a fact or share a personal story frame your question, keep it on point, brief and compelling.
 - Wearing campaign buttons supporting a candidate may reduce your chances of being called on. If you are hosting a forum, avoid wearing political buttons.
 - Agree ahead of time on speaking on behalf of your congregation or wearing buttons or clothing identifying it. Best not to wear clothing that indicates your congregation unless agreed to in advance.
 - Find more tips for speaking in public meetings [here](#) or at the end of this Guide.
- **Write a letter to the editor or a response to an article or commentary.**
Keep your responses short—150 words or less.



Let's Get Moving!

Timeline & Calendar

Create a Timeline and Start Planning.

Identify concrete, attainable goals. It may be helpful to see your campaign as having two components: congregation and community. Consider starting with a calendar and working backwards: What will we do on Election Day? The weekend before the registration deadline? How will we launch the campaign? How will we educate our congregation?

Date	Event or Activity
January 18th	Women's March
January 20th	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
On-Going	State Primaries
On-Going	Spring Registration Drives
March 1st	UUtheVote Giving Day
March 18th	Finding Our Way Home
March 31st	Suuper Tuesday: Faith-wide Goal Setting Day
April 22	50th Anniversary Earth Day
April 23rd	Revolutionary Love Conference
May 1	UUtheVote State Action Fund Deadline
June 24-28	General Assembly
July 13-16	DNC in Milwaukee, WI
August 24-27	RNC in Charlotte, NC
on-going	Voter registration deadlines
September 22	National Voter Registration Day
on-going	Get Out the Vote starts with early voting
Weekends before election day	Souls to the Polls
November 3	Election Day
November 4th on	Possible recounts in certain states
On-going	Issue advocacy and accountability for the next administration



Resourcing UU the Vote

The power of UU the Vote as a large-scale, decentralized campaign is it moves our UU faith communities into new or deeper action and partnerships by leveraging our greatest resources—our people and our passion—and focusing them where they can have the greatest impact.

Rather than trying to replicate what other movement organizations are already doing, the work of the UU the Vote national team is to: amplify the work already happening on the ground, equip each other with the skills and tools, coordinate our common activities, and to channel resources to parts of the country where the imbalance between the work that is needed and the resources that are available is the greatest.

This will include, among other things, offering organizing grants and funding fellowships for individuals, congregations, and UU State Action Networks—as well as deploying paid statewide organizers, such as we have committed to in Wisconsin.

This work is only possible when we all come together and contribute.

UU the Vote State Action Fund

That's why we're asking our UU congregations to form the backbone of a \$300,000 State Action Fund to bolster our existing resources so we can build out the state infrastructure, electoral technology, and on-the-ground organizing we need to make a difference this year.

Much of this work will happen at the state and local level, especially around ballot initiatives, and since we won't know which initiatives will qualify for the ballot in 2020 until spring or early summer, the fund will also provide us the flexibility to allocate resources where ballot initiatives and other local issue-based campaigns threaten our UU values.

With the State Action Fund, we will be better positioned to protect reproductive rights, voting rights, or other liberties, and to mobilize support to in areas where progressive measures (e.g., \$15/hour living wage in Florida) will be voted on.

Here's how your congregation can contribute:

Step 1) Set a Goal

In this all-hands-on-deck moment, we invite each UU congregation to support the UU the Vote State Action Fund at whatever level they can. To meet our \$300,000 goal, we need a minimum of 350 congregations contributing \$500 or more:

\$300,000 Goal	50 congregations giving \$2,000+	+	100 congregations giving \$1,000+	+	200 congregations giving \$500+
	=		=		=
	\$100,000		\$100,000		\$100,000

Step 2) Devise a Plan

Once your congregation (or UU community) has set its goal, the choice of how to meet that goal is up to you. In addition to conducting share-the-plate or dedicated plate collections, consider additional ways to engage as many members of your community as possible, such as:

Tie-ins to UU the Vote activities

If your congregation is planning to conduct any UU the Vote related activities prior to May 1, your volunteers can invite others to pledge \$1 for each new voter registered, or \$2 for each hour spent door-knocking or phone-banking, etc.

Additional Fundraising Options

- Invite youth members to save spare change each week
- Host one or more house parties, and set a fundraising goal for each circle of participants
- Conduct a rummage or bake sale, trivia night or karaoke party
- Host a screening of **Suppressed: The Fight to Vote** (www.bravenewfilms.org/suppressed), or another voting-related film, and ask for suggested donations as an entrance fee
- Invite the crafters among you to hold a craft fair and donate proceeds to UU the Vote
- Be creative!

Step 3) Participate in UU the Vote Giving Day

Sunday, March 1, 2020, the weekend before Super Tuesday, UU the Vote will sponsor a nationwide Giving Day for UUs around the country. We'll provide helpful materials and sample scripts, including text-to-give instructions (congregant giving via text-to-give will be credited to your congregation's State Action Fund contribution).

More information about supporting the UU the Vote State Action Fund and participating in the March 1 Giving Day will be posted on uuthevote.org in late January.

Step 4) Fulfill Your Pledge by May 1, 2020

Whether you choose to fulfill your congregation's pledge in installments or send one check at the end, as soon as possible after May 1 mail a check made out to UU the Vote State Action Fund to:

UU the Vote State Action Fund
Attn: Gift Processing
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210

Additional Funding Options

Of course, congregations involved in the organizing work of UU the Vote will need to find financial support for their direct efforts. Consider launching a unified fundraising effort to support your congregation's own work and its State Action Fund goal. Many of ideas listed in Step 2 above can be utilized as part of unified fundraising. Other resources include:

Faithify Campaign (www.faithify.org)

Many congregations are already familiar with the UU crowdfunding platform, Faithify.org. Since Faithify launched in 2014, social justice campaigns have consistently been among the most successful categories.

With Faithify, you can define your campaign needs, set your goal amount, and start fundraising. Once your goal is met, your campaign is funded (you can also set a stretch goal and keep going), and the proceeds (less credit card processing fees) are transmitted directly to the congregation.

You can utilize Faithify to fund your congregation's own UU the Vote activities as well as roll your State Action Fund commitment into a combined fundraising goal.

UU Funding Program (www.uufunding.org)

The UU Funding Program provides [\\$500 micro-grants](#) to UU congregations for local Get Out the Vote efforts, awarded on a rolling basis starting January 1, 2020. You can also seek funding for your bigger project idea related to electoral engagement through the [Fund for UU Social Responsibility](#) (applications due by March 15, 2020).

The UU the Vote Team is excited to help shape your grant proposal for this work!

Funding Frontline Communities

We are as strong as our partners in the work for justice. In addition to supporting UU's engagement in electoral justice, we have the opportunity to be a major source of support for the front-line organizing and community partners anchoring it. Make researching and contributing to local non-partisan efforts and grassroots projects part of your work.



Partner and Resource Groups

See uuthevote.org for a continually updated list.

UU congregations and organizations can learn from others to protect the vote, register people to vote, advocate for our shared values, and organize for justice, and get out the vote.

- 350.org
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), [Let People Vote](#)
- [Ballot Initiative Strategy Center: Find what issues will be on your state's ballot](#)
- [Ballotpedia](#)
- [Brennan Center for Justice](#)
- [Center for Popular Democracy](#)
- [Color of Change](#)
- [Common Cause](#) - election monitoring
- [Congregation-Based Multifaith Community Organizations \(National networks with state & local chapters\)](#)
- [#CripTheVote](#)
- [Democracy Alliance](#)
- [Democracy Awakening](#)
- [Democracy Initiative](#)
- [Demos](#)
- [Earth Day Network](#)
- [Fair Elections Center](#)
- [Fair Fight 2020](#) - Stacey Abram's voting rights project
- [Florida Rights Restoration Campaign](#) (Second Chances Campaign to restore voting rights)
- [Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [Indivisible](#)
- [League of Women Voters](#)
- [Mijente](#)
- Movement for Black Lives [Electoral Justice Project](#)
- [Movement Voter Project](#) maintains an extensive list of local groups
- [NAACP](#)
- [The National LGBTQ Task Force](#)
- [People's Action](#)
- [Non-Profit Vote](#)
- [Ohio Organizing Collaborative](#)
- [Queer the Vote](#)
- [Poor People's Campaign](#)
- [Project Vote](#)
- [The Rising Majority](#)
- [Rock the Vote](#) – Getting out the youth vote
- [Spread the Vote](#): Helping potential voters obtain state ID
- [State Voices](#) - Non-partisan civic engagement coordination
- [Sunrise Movement](#)
- [Texas Organizing Project](#)
- [UU State Action Networks](#)
- [UUSJ](#): Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice: Your Voice in the Nation's Capital
- [Vote 411](#)
- [VoterRiders.org](#) Help with ID's and voter ID issues
- [Voto Latino](#)
- [Women's March](#)
- [Youth Voter Movement](#)