

SACRED VOTES

A Guide to Election Participation,
Justice and Social Transformation



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

LivingFAITH SeekingJUSTICE PursuingPEACE

This tool provides a framework to help individuals understand the importance of civic engagement. This framework includes education, mobilization, voter activation, communication and advocacy.

Included in this toolkit:

- Introduction
- Voting Action to Mobilize
 - How to Register to Vote
 - How INDIVIDUALS Can Increase Voter Turnout
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“Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the Gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good. We acknowledge that such political engagement demands humility and mindfulness of our own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It also necessitates compassion, prayer, and a willingness to discern God’s guidance.”

UMC Social Principles - Political Community

For further reading and an understanding the social and political concerns of the United Methodist Church, checkout the [UMC Social Principles](#).

INTRODUCTION

The UMC has historically emphasized social justice, civic responsibility, and engagement in public life as part of its teachings on Christian ethics and social responsibility.

In a democratic society, our Methodist faith calls us to actively engage in the political process as part of our Christian witness, including the crucial act of voting. Guided by the Wesleyan Quadrilateral—Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience—we are compelled to support laws and policies that safeguard and extend the rights of all citizens to vote and ensure that every vote is counted. We also uphold efforts to eliminate barriers to voting and advocate for fair and transparent elections, believing that such participation aligns with our call to seek justice and love mercy in all aspects of life.

Participating in our country's political life isn't just about casting our own vote—it requires working together so we can all vote and vote faithfully. There are many ways to get involved—from participating ourselves to supporting others in our congregations and communities.

In fact, what would it look like if all congregations took a pledge to become a 100% voting congregation. This toolkit will offer you a way to issue this challenge—so pastors, leaders and laity get on board and declare that your congregations will take the OUR VOTE MATTERS pledge.

We can all play a role in getting “souls to the polls!”

Explore the resources below to discover how you can engage in this year's election with faith and purpose. Together, let's turn our prayers into action and lift every voice at the polls!

The image is a composite. The top half features a bright orange background with a pattern of large, semi-transparent white letters, including 'A', 'T', 'O', 'M', and 'B'. Overlaid on this is the text 'VOTING ACTION TO MOBILIZE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The bottom half of the image shows a group of people from behind, sitting in a circle on green folding chairs. They appear to be in a meeting or discussion. The person on the left is wearing a teal jacket and holding a book. The person in the center is wearing a light blue shirt. The person on the right is wearing a brown top. The background shows a doorway and a wall.

VOTING ACTION TO MOBILIZE

Voting Action to Mobilize

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE

You cannot vote unless you are registered! Don't procrastinate—get registered today! Visit [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) now to register or go to [U.S. Vote Foundation](https://www.usvote.org) to get started.

Even if you think you're already registered, take a moment to **verify your voter registration status** to ensure everything is accurate.

And don't register alone! Encourage **friends, family, and fellow parishioners** who aren't registered yet to sign up together. You can even make it a virtual gathering if you're registering online or request registration forms by mail.

Let's also recognize the fourth Tuesday of September as **National Voter Registration Day**. This is a perfect opportunity to engage with youth and young adults on the importance of registering and assist them in getting signed up.

Many states allow young people to register **if they will turn 18 on or before the next election**, so let's make sure they're ready.

Consider organizing a **voter registration event** within our congregation. You can use this [toolkit from Rock the Vote](#) for guidance on **hosting your own voter registration drive**, with state-specific details included.

To check if you are already registered, visit [U.S. Vote Foundation's verification page](https://www.usvote.org/verify).

Let's be proactive and ensure that our community's voice is strong and heard this election season!



Voting Action to Mobilize

HOW INDIVIDUALS CAN INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT

Actions You Can Take Before and During Elections

Voter Registration Drives

- Host registration events: Organize in-person and virtual voter registration events within the community.
- Assist with registration: Provide resources and assistance for those who may have difficulty registering, such as elderly or disabled members.
- Promote online registration: Share information about online voter registration platforms through church communications.

Education and Awareness

- Informational sessions: Host workshops or seminars that educate congregants on the importance of voting, the electoral process, and key issues.
- Distribute voter guides: Provide non-partisan voter guides that outline candidates' positions on issues relevant to the community.
- Bulletin and social media updates: Regularly include voter education content in church bulletins, newsletters, and social media posts.

Voter Verification

- Encourage verification: Urge members to verify their voter registration status and update any necessary information.
- Provide verification tools: Offer assistance and tools for congregants to check their registration status, especially for those who may not have internet access.



Early Voting and Absentee Ballots

- Promote early voting: Encourage members to vote early or use absentee ballots, reducing the pressure on Election Day.
- Assist with absentee ballot: Help congregants understand the absentee voting process, including deadlines and how to request a ballot.

Transportation to Polls

- Organize rides: Set up a system to provide transportation to and from polling places, particularly for those without access to reliable transportation.
- Carpool initiatives: Encourage members to carpool with others to the polls, making voting more accessible.

Poll Worker Recruitment

- Volunteer as poll workers: Encourage congregants to serve as poll workers, ensuring that polling places are adequately staffed and operate smoothly.
- Partner with local boards: Collaborate with local election boards to recruit and train volunteers from the congregation.

Prayer and Reflection

- Host prayer vigils: Organize prayer gatherings focused on the election, asking for guidance, wisdom, and justice.
- Incorporate election prayers: Include prayers for the nation, voters, and leaders in regular worship services leading up to the election.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

- Collaborate with local organizations: Partner with other community groups to amplify voter participation efforts.
- Advocate for voting rights: Support local and national initiatives that seek to protect and expand voting rights, particularly for marginalized communities.

Follow-up and Accountability

- Check-in post-election: Follow up with congregants after the election to discuss the outcomes and the importance of continued civic engagement.
- Encourage ongoing involvement: Urge members to stay engaged in community issues and advocacy work beyond the election cycle.

Celebrate Voting

- Create a celebratory atmosphere: Celebrate the act of voting by recognizing those who have voted in services or through church communications.
- Share stories: Encourage members to share their voting experiences and the impact it has had on their sense of community and civic responsibility.

Voting Action to Mobilize

HOW CONGREGATIONS CAN INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT

The following actions below can be taken by leaders and congregations to mobilize their membership and communities in voting as well as civic engagement.

Covenant Groups for Civic Engagement

Methodist Connection: Reflecting John Wesley’s practice of forming small groups (class meetings) for mutual accountability and spiritual growth, congregations can create “Civic Covenant Groups.” These groups would commit to regular prayer, study, and action focused on voter education and mobilization. Members could pledge to register to vote, encourage others, and discuss faith-informed perspectives on key issues.

Mobilization Impact: These groups would foster deep community bonds and create a network of committed, informed voters who support one another in civic engagement.

Social Holiness Campaigns

Methodist Connection: John Wesley’s emphasis on “social holiness” teaches that faith is not just a private matter but must be lived out in public, particularly in addressing social injustices.

Congregations can launch “Social Holiness Campaigns” centered around key issues like poverty, healthcare, and education. The campaign would connect these issues to voting, urging members to support candidates and policies aligned with social holiness.



Mobilization Impact: This approach would frame voting as a key aspect of living out one's faith, encouraging congregants to vote in ways that promote justice and the common good.

Methodist Heritage Pilgrimages

Methodist Connection: Drawing inspiration from Wesley's itinerant ministry, congregations could organize "Heritage Pilgrimages" to historical sites significant to the civil rights movement or other key moments in the struggle for voting rights. These pilgrimages would be coupled with voter registration drives and discussions on the legacy of Wesleyan activism.

Mobilization Impact: These pilgrimages would deepen participants' understanding of the connection between faith and social action, inspiring them to honor the legacy of those who fought for voting rights by participating in elections.

"Do All the Good You Can" Pledge Drives

Methodist Connection: Inspired by Wesley's famous quote, "Do all the good you can," congregations could initiate pledge drives where members commit to specific actions like registering voters, volunteering at polling places, or providing transportation on Election Day. These pledges could be made publicly during worship services as a way to encourage communal accountability and support.

Mobilization Impact: This public, communal commitment would galvanize the congregation to take concrete steps towards increasing voter turnout and engagement.

Watch Night Services for Voting Rights

Methodist Connection: Building on the tradition of Watch Night services, which have historically been times of prayer

and reflection on the eve of significant events, congregations could hold special Watch Night Services dedicated to voter mobilization. These services could include prayers for justice, voter education, and the signing of voter pledges, culminating in a collective commitment to participate in the electoral process.

Mobilization Impact: By linking voter engagement with a sacred time of prayer and renewal, these services would underscore the spiritual significance of voting and motivate the congregation to take action.

Voting Action to Mobilize

HOW TO BECOME AN ELECTION AMBASSADOR

Strive to exceed expectations in your local efforts to encourage voter participation.

United Methodist Church Election Ambassadors play a vital role in bringing a spiritual presence to the democratic process, embodying the values of justice, love, and community at the polls. As Election Ambassadors, they serve not only as advocates for fair and free elections but also as beacons of hope and encouragement, ensuring that every voice is heard. Their presence at the polls is a powerful witness to the Church's commitment to social holiness and the belief that civic engagement is a vital expression of our faith in action.

One of the key responsibilities of United Methodist Church Election Ambassadors is to assist in registering voters, particularly within their own congregations and communities. Ambassadors actively work to ensure that everyone eligible is registered, informed, and ready to vote. By educating others about the voting process and the importance of participating in elections, they help empower individuals to make informed choices that reflect their values and beliefs.

In addition to registering voters, Election Ambassadors also play a crucial role in helping community members develop a clear plan for voting. This includes providing information on voting options, such as early voting, mail-in ballots, or in-person voting, and ensuring that voters understand the necessary steps to cast their ballots effectively. By offering this support, Ambassadors help to remove barriers to voting and ensure that all members of the community can participate in the electoral process with confidence and clarity, fulfilling their civic and spiritual duty.

**[Learn more and to register](#)
for a two-day, one hour a
day training on how to
become an Election
Ambassador in the United
Methodist Church!**

Voting Action to Mobilize

HOW TO HELP RUN ELECTIONS

The United States has successfully conducted elections during challenging times, such as the 1918 flu pandemic and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, largely due to the dedication of hundreds of thousands of poll workers and election judges. These individuals are vital to the integrity of our electoral process, ensuring that every eligible voter has the opportunity to cast their ballot.

However, there is currently a nationwide shortage of election staff, worsened by the resignation of many officials due to threats and harassment. This shortage can lead to longer wait times, polling location closures, and delays in vote counting, which erode confidence in our democracy.

As we approach the November election, the need for poll workers is more critical than ever. Volunteering as a poll worker not only helps strengthen community bonds and ensures the smooth operation of our elections but also supports the very foundation of our democratic process. If you are able and willing, please consider signing up to serve as a poll worker this year. Your commitment can make a significant difference in ensuring that our elections remain fair, inclusive, and transparent.

Below is an example of a message you can send to your congregation to encourage them to serve as poll workers or volunteering with your local board of elections.

Good morning, beloved community,

I encourage you to consider serving as a poll worker or volunteering with our local board of elections as both an act



of faith and a vital expression of your civic duty. As followers of Christ, we are called to be active participants in the work of justice and to ensure that every voice in our community is heard and respected. By stepping into these roles, you are not only supporting the democratic process but also living out our commitment to love our neighbors and uphold the values of fairness and equity.

Serving as a poll worker or volunteer is a tangible way to make a difference in these critical times. It allows us to be the hands and feet of Christ, ensuring that our elections are conducted with integrity and that everyone has the opportunity to vote. I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this important work, knowing that your service will help to strengthen our community and reflect the light of God's love in the world.



VOTING RESOURCES



Voting Resources

CLERGY SERMON STARTERS

PREACH

Sermon Examples on Voting and Voter Participation as Christian Witness

Sermon 1: "A Faithful Witness: Voting as an Act of Discipleship"

Scripture: Micah 6:8 - "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Thesis: Voting is not merely a civic duty; it is a profound act of discipleship, where our choices reflect our commitment to justice, mercy, and humility before God. As Christians, our participation in elections is a way to advocate for policies and leaders that align with the values of the Kingdom of God, making our vote a testament to our faith in action.

Direction: The preacher could explore the ways in which voting is a reflection of our responsibility to pursue justice, as outlined in Micah 6:8. Emphasize the importance of using our vote to stand up for the marginalized, protect the vulnerable, and promote the common good.

The sermon could also discuss how voting is an opportunity to demonstrate our love for our neighbors by supporting policies that contribute to the well-being of all people.

Sermon 2: "Render to Caesar: Navigating the Tensions of Faith and Politics"

Scripture: Matthew 22:21 - "Then he said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'"



Thesis: Christians are called to navigate the often-complicated relationship between faith and politics with wisdom and integrity. While we render to the state what belongs to it, we must also ensure that our allegiance to God informs our political decisions and actions, including voting.

Direction: The preacher could delve into the tension that exists between fulfilling our civic duties and maintaining our ultimate allegiance to God. Discuss how Jesus' teaching in Matthew 22:21 encourages us to engage in the political process without compromising our faith. The sermon could also address common challenges, such as when political choices seem to conflict with our Christian values, and offer guidance on how to approach these dilemmas prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Sermon 3: Lift Every Voice: The Power of Collective Action in Voting"

Scripture: Proverbs 31:8-9 - "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Thesis: Voting is a powerful tool for collective action, allowing us to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves and to advocate for justice on behalf of the marginalized. As Christians, we are called to use our vote to defend the rights of the poor and needy, ensuring that their voices are heard in the halls of power.

Direction: The preacher could highlight the biblical mandate to advocate for justice and how voting is a means of fulfilling that mandate. Explore the historical struggles for voting rights, particularly within the Black community, and the importance of continuing that legacy of advocacy. The sermon could also emphasize the collective power of the

church when its members are united in their commitment to justice, encouraging congregants to mobilize and vote in solidarity with those who are often overlooked in society.

Sermon 4: "Choose This Day: The Spiritual Significance of Voting"

Scripture: Joshua 24:15 - "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Thesis: Voting is a significant act of choosing whom we will serve and what values will guide our society. Just as Joshua called the Israelites to choose whom they would serve, we too are called to make decisions that reflect our commitment to God's will for justice, righteousness, and peace.

Direction: The preacher could draw parallels between Joshua's challenge to the Israelites and the decisions we face in the voting booth. Emphasize the weight of our choices and how they reflect our deeper commitments to God's values. The sermon could also encourage congregants to approach voting with the same seriousness and prayerfulness that they would any other significant decision in their spiritual lives, reminding them that each vote is an opportunity to choose justice and righteousness over indifference and apathy.

Voting Resources

TEACHER BOOK STUDIES

TEACH

Voting Book Study Options and Outlines

Book Study 1

Subversive Witness by Dominique DuBoisGilliard

Week 1: Understanding Privilege and Power

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1 "Naming Privilege"

Discussion Topics

- What is privilege, and how does it manifest in our lives and communities?
- How does Scripture address the concepts of privilege and power?
- Reflect on the ways in which privilege can be used both positively and negatively.

Activity: Identify and discuss examples of privilege in our church and local community. Consider how these privileges impact our ability to witness and serve others.

Week 2: Biblical Narratives of Privilege

Reading: Chapters 2-3 "Joseph: The Privileged Prisoner" and "Moses: The Reluctant Advocate"

Discussion Topics

- How did Joseph and Moses use their positions of privilege to serve others and further God's mission?
- What lessons can we draw from their stories about using privilege for justice and liberation?
- Discuss the concept of "subversive witness" and how it applies to modern-day contexts.



Activity: Reflect on a personal experience where you've witnessed or exercised privilege. How did it shape the situation, and what could have been done differently?

Week 3: Jesus and the Ethics of Privilege

Reading: Chapters 4-5 "Jesus: The Privileged Redeemer" and "Paul: The Apostle with Dual Citizenship"

Discussion Topics

- How did Jesus and Paul navigate their privileges, and what can we learn from their examples?
- Explore the tension between privilege and discipleship. How does privilege influence our Christian walk?
- Consider the ways in which privilege can be leveraged for kingdom work.

Activity: Discuss ways in which the church can be a subversive witness in today's society, particularly in addressing issues of privilege and power.

Week 4: Practical Applications and Community Action

Reading: Chapters 6-7 "The Church's Call to Steward Privilege" and "Subversive Witness in Action"

Discussion Topics

- How can the church steward its collective privileges to serve marginalized communities?
- What practical steps can individuals and congregations take to become subversive witnesses in their daily lives?
- Discuss the importance of repentance and reparation in the process of stewarding privilege.

Activity: Develop a community action plan or project that puts the principles of subversive witness into practice. Identify key areas where privilege can be used to uplift and serve others.

Book Study 2

Public Faith in Action by Miroslav Volf

Week 1: Foundations of Public Faith

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1 "A Vision of Public Faith"

Discussion Topics

- What does it mean to live out our faith in the public sphere?
- Discuss Volf's vision of public faith and the role of Christians in shaping society.
- How can faith inform our engagement with public issues?

Activity: Reflect on how personal faith has influenced your views on social and political issues. Share examples of where faith and public life intersect in your experience.

Week 2: Core Commitments of Public Faith

Reading: Chapters 2-3 "Justice and Compassion" and "Truth and Love"

Discussion Topics

- How do justice and compassion shape our public witness?
- Explore the balance between truth and love in public discourse. How can Christians navigate this tension effectively?
- What challenges arise when trying to embody these commitments in a pluralistic society?

Activity: Analyze a current event or social issue through the lens of justice, compassion, truth, and love. Discuss how these commitments should influence a Christian response.

Week 3: Public Faith and Political Engagement

Reading: Chapters 4-5 "Freedom and Hospitality" and "Power and Humility"

Discussion Topics

- How should Christians approach the concepts of freedom and hospitality in public life?
- Discuss the use and misuse of power in political engagement. What role does humility play in our approach to power?
- Consider the implications of these values on public policy and social issues.

Activity: Develop a hypothetical policy or community initiative that embodies freedom, hospitality, power, and humility. Discuss how this initiative could impact your local community.

Week 4: Living Out Public Faith

Reading: Chapters 6-7 "Solidarity and Witness" and "Hope and Courage"

Discussion Topics

- What does it mean to stand in solidarity with others, especially the marginalized?
- Explore the role of witness in public faith. How can Christians bear witness to the Gospel in the public square?

Discuss the importance of hope and courage in sustaining public faith in action.

Activity: Create a personal or group action plan for living out public faith. Identify specific ways to practice solidarity, witness, hope, and courage in your community.

Book Study 3: Our Unfinished March by Eric Holder

Week 1: The History of Voting Rights

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1 "The Fight for Voting Rights"

Discussion Topics:

- Explore the historical struggles for voting rights in the United States. How have these struggles shaped the current political landscape?
- Discuss the role of the church and faith communities in the fight for voting rights.
- What are the ongoing challenges to voting rights today?

Activity: Research a key figure or event in the history of voting rights. Present their story to the group and discuss its relevance to today's voting rights issues.

Week 2: Modern Threats to Voting Rights

Reading: Chapters 2-3 "Modern Voter Suppression Tactics" and "The Impact of Gerrymandering"

Discussion Topics:

- Examine the current tactics used to suppress voting rights. How do these tactics disproportionately affect marginalized communities?
- Discuss the role of gerrymandering in undermining democracy. What can be done to address this issue?
- Consider the moral and ethical implications of these modern threats to voting rights.

Activity: Analyze a recent voting rights case or legislation in your state or region. Discuss its impact on voter access and how it aligns with or challenges democratic principles.

Week 3: The Role of Citizens and Communities

Reading: Chapters 4-5 "The Power of Civic Engagement" and "Building Coalitions for Change"

Discussion Topics:

- What role do citizens and communities play in protecting and advancing voting rights?
- Discuss the importance of coalition-building in addressing systemic issues like voter suppression and gerrymandering.
- How can individuals and congregations contribute to the fight for fair and free elections?

Activity: Develop a strategy or campaign for increasing voter registration and turnout in your community. Discuss ways to build coalitions with other local organizations or churches.

Week 4: Moving Forward: A Call to Action

Reading: Chapters 6-7 "Strategies for Change" and "Our Unfinished March"

Discussion Topics

- What are the key strategies for advancing voting rights in today's political climate?
- Discuss Holder's vision for completing the "unfinished march" towards full voting rights for all.
- How can the church be a leading voice in the ongoing struggle for voting rights?

Activity: Create a group action plan to support voting rights in your community. Identify specific steps your congregation can take, such as organizing voter registration drives, educating the community about voter rights, or advocating for fair voting practices.

Voting Resources

ABSENTEE VOTING AND VOTING BY MAIL

Absentee Voting

Although most states have absentee voting, deadlines and rules on who can take part vary. Some states require an excuse to vote absentee. Others do not. In most states, you will need to request an absentee ballot to vote in each election. But in some states, you may qualify to sign up to receive absentee ballots for every election.

[Learn if your state offers permanent absentee voting.](#)

Voting by Mail

Instead of absentee voting programs, some states offer vote-by-mail (also known as all-mail) programs. They automatically send ballots to all registered voters in the state before Election Day.

[See which states offer vote-by-mail programs.](#)

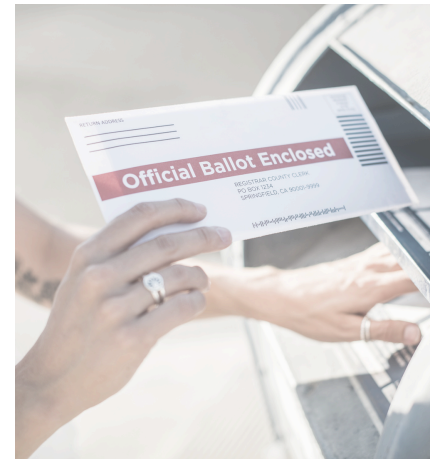
Absentee Voting Deadlines by State

[https://www.usvotefoundation.org/state-election-dates-and-deadlines.](https://www.usvotefoundation.org/state-election-dates-and-deadlines)

Request absentee ballot

[https://www.usvotefoundation.org/vote/request-absentee-ballot.](https://www.usvotefoundation.org/vote/request-absentee-ballot)

Source: <https://www.usa.gov/absentee-voting>



Voting Action to Mobilize

VOTING COMMUNICATIONS EXAMPLES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

- Utilize familiar church platforms to effectively communicate and encourage your community to participate in voting.
- Include Election Day announcements in your church bulletin or newsletter. Inform your congregation about any services available to assist individuals in reaching polling stations.
- Display signs promoting #SacredVotes! Here's an example: "Voting is a service to our community. #VoteFaithfully this #ElectionDay, November 5! Are you voting?"
- Promote being Ballot Ready by encouraging others to verify their registration, create a voting plan, and research candidates and issues using BallotReady. Note: This resource becomes increasingly valuable closer to Election Day as primaries conclude and ballots are finalized.
- Engage on social media. Showcase your church's dedication to our collective civic life during this election season to friends, family, and your community.



When we cast our vote, we publicly affirm our dedication to caring for our neighbors and working towards the common good. Let's spread the word that we are **#SacredVotes!**

Examples of Social Media posts

- "I listen, I pray, and I #SacredVotes on Election Day!"
- "I #SacredVotes because voting is a commitment we make to our community."

- "Your vote is your voice in action. As people of faith, let's honor our responsibility to seek justice and love mercy. Register, vote, and encourage others to do the same.

#SacredVotes"

- **Image Idea:** A hand placing a ballot in a box with the words "Faith in Action" overlaid.
- "Every vote is a testament to our commitment to justice, peace, and the common good. Let's stand together and make our voices heard. **#SacredVotes"**
 - **Image Idea:** A diverse group of people holding "I Voted" stickers in front of a church.
- "Faith and civic duty go hand in hand. Let's ensure every voice is heard this election season. Have you registered? **#SacredVotes"**
 - **Image Idea:** A close-up of hands in prayer with the words "Pray. Register. Vote." overlaid.
- "The change we seek begins at the ballot box. Let's make our votes count for justice, mercy, and love. **#SacredVotes"**
 - **Image Idea:** An open Bible with the words "Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly" and a voting sticker beside it.
- "Our ancestors fought for the right to vote. Honor their legacy by making sure your voice is heard this election season. **#SacredVotes"**
 - **Image Idea:** Historic photos of civil rights marches blended with modern images of voting lines.

Voting Action to Mobilize

VOTING ADVOCACY EXAMPLES FOR VOTER PARTICIPATION

The items listed below are examples of actions that can be taken to advocate for voting rights, voter participation, and civic engagement. Feel free to adapt to your context!

Faith-Based Voter Education Circles

Example: A church organizes “Voter Education Circles” where small groups meet weekly to discuss the moral and ethical implications of key issues on the ballot. These circles are structured around the Wesleyan tradition of class meetings, blending scriptural reflection with civic education. Participants study candidates’ positions in light of their faith, discuss the impact on their community, and make a collective commitment to vote and encourage others to do the same.

Vigil for Voting Rights

Example: A coalition of local congregations holds a “Vigil for Voting Rights” at a prominent location in the community. The vigil includes prayer, song, and testimonies from those who have faced barriers to voting. It serves both as a public witness to the importance of voting and as a rallying point for community members to pledge their commitment to vote. The event culminates in a march to the local election office where participants hand-deliver voter registration forms.

Community Visioning Sessions

Example: A community center hosts “Visioning Sessions” where residents come together to articulate a shared vision for their neighborhood’s future. These sessions involve collaborative discussions on pressing local issues, followed



by action plans that include voting as a key step in achieving their goals. The process empowers participants by linking their votes to tangible improvements in their community, fostering a deeper sense of civic responsibility and agency.

Art as Advocacy: Murals and Performances

Example: Local artists partner with advocacy groups to create murals and street performances that highlight the history and importance of voting rights. Murals are painted on prominent buildings, depicting scenes from the civil rights movement alongside modern voter engagement efforts. Performances, such as spoken word poetry and theater, are held in public spaces to draw attention to voter suppression issues and inspire community members to take action. The art serves as a powerful visual and emotional reminder of the ongoing struggle for voting rights.

Interfaith Canvassing and Storytelling

Example: An interfaith coalition organizes “Canvassing and Storytelling” days where volunteers go door-to-door, sharing personal stories of how voting has impacted their lives and communities. Rather than simply asking people to vote, they engage in meaningful conversations about the power of voting and the moral responsibility to participate in the democratic process. The initiative includes a digital storytelling component where these stories are recorded and shared on social media, amplifying the message and reaching a broader audience.

Voting Action to Mobilize

VOTER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT USING THE ARTS

The arts serve as powerful catalysts for voter and civic engagement by inspiring and mobilizing communities through creative expression. In local congregations and communities, art forms like murals, spoken word, music, and theater can vividly convey the significance of voting and social justice, turning abstract ideas into tangible, emotional experiences. These artistic endeavors not only educate and motivate but also create shared spaces for dialogue and reflection, fostering a deeper connection to the civic responsibilities and spiritual imperatives of community members. By harnessing the transformative power of the arts, congregations can ignite a collective passion for active participation in the democratic process.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

“Lead Me, Guide Me” by Doris Akers

Connection: This hymn is a prayer for divine guidance and strength, which aligns with the need for spiritual discernment in making informed and just decisions in the voting booth. As believers seek God's direction, they are called to vote in ways that reflect their faith and commitment to justice.

“Take Me to the Alley” by Gregory Porter

Connection: Porter's song speaks to the importance of caring for the marginalized and forgotten. It calls on faith communities to engage civically by advocating for policies that uplift the vulnerable, ensuring that the needs of the "alleys" of society are not ignored in the political process.

“We’re Marching To Zion” by Isaac Watts

Connection: This hymn celebrates the journey toward a heavenly city, symbolizing the collective march towards



justice and equity in society. Voter engagement becomes a vital part of this journey, as congregations march together towards a vision of a just and righteous community.

“Higher Ground” by Johnson Oatman, Jr.

Connection: The call to reach “higher ground” reflects the aspiration for moral and ethical leadership in society. Voting is an act that can help elevate communities to higher standards of justice, peace, and righteousness, embodying the faith-driven pursuit of a better world.

“Down by the River” by Bishop Ronald Brown

Connection: This spiritual invokes the imagery of baptism and renewal. Just as the river symbolizes cleansing and new beginnings, voter engagement represents a chance for renewal and positive change in the community, grounded in spiritual and communal values.

“We Shall Overcome” by Joan Baez

Connection: A song of resilience and hope, “We Shall Overcome” has historically been tied to the civil rights movement. It reminds faith communities that civic engagement, particularly voting, is a powerful tool in the ongoing struggle for justice and equality.

“Battle Hymn of the Republic” by Julia Ward Howe

Connection: This hymn's themes of divine justice and truth marching on resonate with the fight for righteousness in the political sphere. Voting and civic participation are seen as ways to ensure that God's truth and justice are reflected in society's laws and governance.

“Go Down Moses” (African American Spiritual)

Connection: The song's call to “let my people go” symbolizes the struggle for freedom and liberation. It encourages congregations to engage civically by fighting against oppression through voting, advocating for policies that protect and empower the oppressed.

“I Done Done What You Told Me To Do” (African American Spiritual)

Connection: This spiritual reflects a sense of fulfilling divine duty. In the context of civic engagement, it speaks to the responsibility of voting as a sacred task that God has entrusted to believers to carry out justice and righteousness in society.

“May the Work I’ve Done Speak For Me” by Sullivan Pugh

Connection: The song emphasizes the lasting impact of one’s actions. Voting and civic engagement are seen as crucial works of faith that will speak for the believer in advocating for justice, mercy, and the common good long after the ballots are cast.

Poems

"The Hill We Climb" by Amanda Gorman

Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem is an inspiring reflection on the resilience and responsibility of citizens in shaping the nation’s future. It calls on everyone, especially young people, to take part in the democratic process and to believe in their power to effect change.

"I, Too" by Langston Hughes

This poem is a declaration of hope and equality, emphasizing the importance of every voice, particularly those historically marginalized, in shaping the nation's future. It can inspire communities to ensure their voices are heard through voting and civic participation.

“We Are Not Responsible” by Sonia Sanchez

Sonia Sanchez’s work often speaks to the power and responsibility of collective action. In the context of voter participation and civic engagement, her poem “We Are Not Responsible” can be seen as a powerful reminder that apathy and inaction allow injustice to persist. It encourages

communities to take ownership of their role in shaping society, highlighting the importance of voting as a means of resisting oppression and advocating for justice. Sanchez's voice can inspire individuals to see voting as a critical act of resistance and responsibility in the ongoing struggle for equality.

"Democracy" by Langston Hughes

Hughes' poem underscores the urgency of achieving true democracy, not through passive waiting but through active engagement. It encourages voters to see their participation as essential to the fight for freedom and equality.

"Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

Although not directly about voting, this poem's themes of resilience and empowerment are universal. It serves as an encouragement for communities to rise above obstacles and to use their votes as a means of asserting their dignity and power.

Prayers

Liturgical Prayer for Civic Engagement

O God of justice and peace, in this season of Ordinary Time, we pause to reflect on the extraordinary call You place upon our lives to be faithful witnesses in all we do. As we approach the time of decision in our nation, we ask for Your guidance and wisdom. Help us to discern what is right and just, and to engage with a spirit of love and humility. May our participation in the civic process be a reflection of our commitment to Your Kingdom, where righteousness and equity dwell.

We remember the sacrifices of those who came before us, who fought for the rights and freedoms we now hold. May their courage inspire us to be vigilant and proactive in ensuring that these rights are protected for all. Let our voting be an act of faithfulness, not only to our beliefs but also to

the future generations who will inherit the decisions we make today. Strengthen our resolve to work for a society that mirrors Your compassion, justice, and peace.

As we prepare our hearts and minds to engage in this civic duty, remind us that our actions are a testament to the faith we profess. May we be instruments of Your peace in our communities, advocating for justice and mercy with every step we take. Guide our nation, O Lord, and help us to be Your hands and feet in this world, committed to building a future that honors You and uplifts all of Your children. Amen.

Prayer for Social Transformation

Spirit of the Living God, breathe upon us as we approach the sacred act of voting. Empower us to see our civic duties not as mere obligations, but as opportunities to partner with You in the work of justice and renewal. May the choices we make be guided by Your wisdom, aligning our hearts with Your desire for a world where peace, equity, and love prevail.

As we cast our votes, let Your Holy Spirit move through us, transforming our communities and our nation into a reflection of Your Kingdom. Stir within us a deep commitment to the common good, that through our engagement, we might sow seeds of hope and justice for all people. Lord, use our hands, our voices, and our votes as instruments of Your grace, bringing forth the social transformation that honors You and uplifts the least of these. Amen.

Prayer for Social Holiness and Civic Engagement

Gracious and loving God, we come before You, inspired by the teachings of John Wesley and the example of Jesus the Christ, who called us to a life of social holiness. As we prepare to engage in the civic duties before us, remind us that our faith is not confined to personal piety but is lived out in the public square, where justice, mercy, and love must

take root. Empower us, O Lord, to cast our votes with hearts that are fully aligned with Your will, seeking not only our own good but the good of all Your children.

Jesus taught us that true holiness is found in loving our neighbors as ourselves, in advocating for the oppressed, and in working tirelessly for the liberation of all who are bound by the chains of injustice. May our engagement in the political process be a reflection of this holy calling. Let our votes be acts of love, bringing light to the darkness of inequity, and liberation to those who are marginalized and forgotten. Through our collective action, may we draw closer to the materialization of Your Kingdom here on earth, where Your love, justice, and peace reign.

Holy Spirit, move within us and among us, guiding our decisions and actions. Let the flame of Wesleyan zeal burn brightly in our hearts, driving us to transform the world through the power of Your love. As we vote and engage civically, may we do so with the deep conviction that our actions can help bring forth Your Kingdom—one where all people experience the fullness of Your grace and the liberating power of Your truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

“OUR VOTES MATTER” PLEDGE

VOTE

VOTE

VOTE

Voting Resources

“OUR VOTES MATTER” PLEDGE

We invite you to take a stand for justice and civic engagement by joining the OUR VOTES MATTER pledge, signifying your commitment to becoming a 100% civically engaged and voting congregation. By signing this pledge, your congregation will affirm its dedication to empowering every member to participate in the democratic process, ensuring that our collective voice is heard, and our values are represented in every election. This is an opportunity to strengthen our community bonds, advocate for the common good, and embody our faith's call to justice and action.

As a congregation that pledges to be fully engaged in voting, you will not only honor the legacy of those who fought for our right to vote but also set a powerful example for others to follow. We encourage you to join us in this vital mission, ensuring that our faith communities lead by example and contribute to a more just and equitable society. Together, let us make our votes matter and our voices heard, demonstrating our commitment to the values we hold dear and the future we envision for all.

Laity: [Complete the pledge](#) today!

Clergy: [Complete the pledge](#) today!



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