



## Confessions of a First-Time Voter

Jessica Quinn

Online Communications Specialist

I remember vividly the last presidential election. I was in Burlington attending my final year of undergrad at the University of Vermont. The week leading up to the election was a tremendous challenge for me. It became clear the race would not have an obvious outcome, and as the votes were counted, I became increasingly regretful. You see, I had made a mistake. I had missed the deadline to register for an absentee ballot in my home state of New Hampshire, and here I was, facing the first presidential election in which I was old enough to vote, unable to do so. In an election in which I had so much to say, my voice went unheard. I was angry with myself and embarrassed to admit my error.

Since that election, I have faithfully voted at every opportunity. I have voted for governor, senator, school board, and judge, all in eager anticipation of 2020. I have come to appreciate the importance of my vote. My vote is my voice. My voice for reproductive rights, my voice for environmental justice, my voice for peace, my voice for workplace equality, my voice for criminal justice reform, my voice for gun safety. Last election, I missed out on using my voice. I am reminded of this each time a new rule is proposed or a federal judge is appointed.

As a member of the United Church of Christ, I am also aware of my responsibility to vote as a person of faith. Each time I walk into a polling station, I carry with me my values and my belief in love of neighbor and working toward a just world for all. The UCC's [Our Faith Our Vote Campaign](#) offers resources for worship, tips for being active in elections, and helpful videos and links on the do's and don'ts for engaging in the political process. I hope you will join me in using these tools to be informed about the issues and to encourage others in your community to vote.

Election Day 2020 is a big day for me. It will be my first time participating in a presidential election, but more than that, it will be a crucial opportunity for me to use my voice. In this pivotal year, I pray for God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to remain open to the vision God holds for all of us.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Quinn is Online Communications Specialist for the United Church of Christ.

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