

Nine Reasons Why You Should Vote (and Tell Other People to Vote Too)

by Katie Adams

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We are confronted with injustice every day and sometimes the problems of our world seem too big to confront. But our faith is infused with hope and built on a foundation of action. While it is tempting to disengage from the political process, as people dedicated to creating a just world for all we know that we cannot. One of the best ways we can work for change is by voting. Not convinced? Here are 9 reasons that you should vote (and tell your friends to vote too):

9. Your voice may be missing - Nonprofit VOTE and the U.S. Elections Project calculated that in 2016 only 60 percent of eligible voter actually cast their votes – that means 40 percent of the electorate stayed home. Those who cast the votes elect our representatives.
8. Your vote could tip the balance - Some elections come down to the wire. Each vote is vital.
7. There's more at stake than you might think - Voting doesn't just effect who gets elected; there are often ballot measures in local and state elections on everything from funding for schools to changing local ordinances. Voting helps you participate and have a voice in what's happening at every level of government that affects you.
6. Its fun – Going to the polls is a great way to get to know your neighbors.
5. Cold, hard cash - Congress holds the purse strings on the U.S. budget and determines how our taxes are allocated. It's your money, you should have a say in how it's being spent. This applies at the state and local level too.
4. Bragging rights – Think of the Insta-cred you'll get when you share your "I Voted" stickers. #doitfortheagram
3. People fought and died so you could cast your ballot - For many groups of people, the right to vote was hard fought. Less than 100 years ago women couldn't vote and while the 15th Amendment, which was passed after the civil war granted the right to vote for citizens regardless of race, it wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that many African Americans were able to vote. Today we still see voter suppression in many states, which makes it harder to vote or register to vote.



2. You can shape the policy debate - An active and engaged electorate requires our government to pay attention to us. It often feels like one vote is meaningless, but all of those drops in the bucket add up to something remarkable. Is there an issue you care about A LOT? Do you work in a soup kitchen or food pantry? Have you been involved in the immigration debate? Is your heart breaking over families separated at the border? It is your vote that determines who will respond to the challenges that our country faces.

1. Our faith calls us into the world to be salt and light – Voting is an important part of our civic lives, but also our faith lives. By voting we can proclaim the values we hold as part of our faith, those uplifting the dignity and humanity of each person, love of our neighbor, and love of God.

Now that you're jazzed about voting – I've got more good news for you! The United Church of Christ has a number of resources to help you and your congregation get the word out about voting. Visit the Our Faith Our Vote website for information on elections and to download or order the "Our Faith Our Vote Toolkit." This includes worship resources, guidelines for faith communities on political action, materials for youth/campus groups and other important voter education materials.

Engaging with the electoral process and voting is such an important part of living into our call to love our neighbor. Please join us in this important work to create a just world for all and to make sure that everyone's voice is heard!

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