

LESSONS ON ELECTORAL ORGANIZING IN THE 2020 ELECTION



"The 2020 election will have direct consequences for democracy, for climate justice, for our future, for our children, for healthcare, for the lives of people who live with disabilities. It's a matter of life and death."

*Unitarian Universalist Association President the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray,
UU the Vote speech at the UU General Assembly in 2019*



UU THE VOTE: THE IDEA

UU the Vote was imagined as an “all hands on deck” project to articulate UU values in the public square and activate and organize Unitarian Universalists on a mass scale. It was motivated by two primary objectives:



Responding to the moral call to combat the rise of white supremacy and fascism and imagine a just society where all have inherent worth and dignity, where our communities are governed democratically, and where we live sustainably.



The opportunity to move Unitarian Universalists to embody our values by centering the marginalized and building organizing infrastructure across the UU ecosystem.

UU THE VOTE IS:

- ★ An integrated, multi-level, multi-strategy campaign to engage UUs across the United States beginning in the 2020 electoral cycle.
- ★ An unprecedented collaboration across congregations, State Action Networks (SANs), regions, national UU organizations and the UUA, with multi-faith and secular organizing partners.
- ★ An opportunity to provide on-ramps for all UUs to collaborate for concrete impacts in 2020 while investing in long-term leadership development, spiritual grounding, and organizing capacity for our faith.



“Let’s build the reputation that we are the people that show up and bring others to show up.”

UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray at General Assembly 2019

LEADERSHIP

UU the Vote was a program held by the UUA's Organizing Strategy Team. The program leadership was composed of a group of UUA leaders, consultants, State Action Network leaders, and core volunteer teams referred to as "squads," who constituted the UU the Vote Braintrust, Communications, and Field Teams.

AREAS OF WORK

Values-Based Issue Conversations

Voter Registration & Mobilization

Spiritual Sustenance

Open Door Congregations

Combating Voter Suppression

UU THE VOTE BRAINTRUST

Rev. Ashley Horan, Organizing Strategy Team Director (UUA)

Susan Leslie, Congregational Advocacy & Witness Director (UUA)

Nicole Pressley, National Organizer, UU the Vote (UUA)

Audra Friend, Communications Specialist (UUA)

Michael Crumpler, LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director (UUA)

Alex Sherwood, Youth and Young Adults Program Associate (UUA)

Christopher Hartley, Deputy Director of Stewardship and Development (UUA)

Nora Rasman, Wisconsin Organizer, UU the Vote (UUA)

Marchaé Grair, Director of Public Relations (UUA)

UU THE VOTE COLLABORATORS AND CONSULTANTS

Deva Jones, Senior Associate for Service Learning and Volunteer Placements (UU College of Social Justice)

Paige Ingram, Organizing School Consultant (BLUU: Black Lives of UU)

Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, Leadership Squads Consultant

B. Loewe, Political Consultant

All UU State Action Networks (SANs) were central to the groundswell of engagement in UU the Vote, creating essential entry points into the work. Some were key team members in moving UU the Vote strategy and programming. A small group of leaders helped shape programming at the national level and some state action networks were given "Tier 1, 2, 3" designation to focus on organizing targets. This core group of leaders includes:

Casey Clowes, UU the Vote Organizer, UU Justice Arizona

Kelsey Cowger, UU the Vote Organizer, UUs for Social Justice and The Reeb Voting Rights Project at All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, DC

Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson, Executive Director, Forward Together: The UU Justice Ministry of North Carolina

Janine Gelsinger, Executive Director, UU Justice Arizona

Sharon Pederson, Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network

Rev. Joan VanBecelaere, Executive Director, UU Justice Ohio



"For me, UU the Vote is fundamentally racial justice work."

Cal Ball, Squad Leader, First Unitarian Church of San Francisco, CA



UU THE VOTE: THE STORY

THE LAUNCH

This team's first organizing test was the January 12, 2020 virtual launch, with approximately 1,500 viewers, the largest gathering of Unitarian Universalists outside of the national General Assembly conference. The launch set a model for UU the Vote organizing that centered storytelling and lifting up frontline partnerships. The call to action was to review the comprehensive UU the Vote launch guide, a 53 page document that offered guidance, resources, and materials to support organizing in UU congregations and to join UU the Vote Office Hours in an effort to take part in the UU the Vote program.

COVID-19 AND THE RISE OF VIRTUAL UU THE VOTE



The emergence of Covid-19 was an unexpected and devastating humanitarian crisis and a blow to the plans that we set in motion. Trainings, mobilizations, events, voter registration drives, and regional partnerships had to be canceled or completely reimagined due to the rising pandemic and shifting capacities. Congregations redirected focus toward care and mutual aid work, and the new National Organizer, Nicole Pressley, worked with the Braintrust Team to design a relaunch of UU the Vote to reorient and motivate our base in the context of this new reality. Nicole Pressley's first project was a large-scale program activation to articulate the new shape and urgency of the work.

VIRTUAL UU THE VOTE RE-LAUNCH WITH "HOW WE THRIVE"

On May 12, 2020 the Braintrust Team hosted the "How We Thrive" virtual mobilization with approximately 1200 in attendance on Zoom and

social media. To date, the event has 2.3k views on YouTube. "How We Thrive" was designed to be an inspiring mass activation to coalesce and relaunch the UU the Vote brand during a time where canceled plans and national grief could have resulted in inaction.

The event was anchored in a culturally relevant and recognizable song, "We Shall Be Known." Leveraging the emerging virality of virtual choirs and music as a source of healing and imagination in uncertain times, we worked with Jen Hayman and her team from All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, DC to create a UU the Vote virtual choir to open the event. Today, congregations and UU organizations are still including the UU the Vote virtual choir in their services and social justice gatherings. The virtual choir video has received over 13k views on YouTube and has been used in hundreds of UU services.

The song and the visual storytelling through images and narrative created community and connection at a critical time during the emergence of Covid-19. Additionally, it served as a narrative engine of the campaign, inspiring and moving people to action with a clear focus and model for doing the work.

This was the first virtual event held on Zoom and simulcasted live to Facebook and Youtube. Pushing ourselves to test our virtual reach and technical abilities forged new ground for the UUA that sparked the interests of the IT and General Assembly teams as they planned the first virtual General Assembly. Audra Friend, Marchae Grair, and Christopher Hartley were essential to the tech and communications support of this event.

UU THE VOTE AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

Our first structure test was designed in coordination with the UUA General Assembly (GA) in June 2020. The UU the Vote team offered a pre-GA training with partners from Democracy Initiative, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Puente, and State Actions Networks, bringing together 600+ UU leaders online for an afternoon of skill building, analysis, and relationship building. We also offered a live workshop, “Practicing for the Year Ahead with #UUtheVote” during GA, which offered 180 participants spiritual grounding and political framing for both electoral efforts and long-term social justice organizing. Additionally, we launched the #GA100K Challenge, inviting all GA attendees to participate in a live phone banking experience to reach out to voters in Texas in advance of the upcoming primaries. We exceeded our goal of 100,000 calls. By the end of the week, participants made 117K phone calls with our partners, Reclaim Our Vote.

By offering an array of events designed to educate, motivate, train and mobilize UUs into action, we were able to successfully introduce UU the Vote to the widest possible network of UUs while building our base of volunteers and inspiring participants to go back to their own congregations and build UU the Vote teams that quickly sprang into action throughout the Summer and Fall.



*Gather a group and
learn together!
Run your own cohort
of Organizing School
using our videos
and materials.*



*Thanks to our Organizing
School facilitators:*

*Rev. Kathleen McTigue,
Rev. Lisa Garcia-Simpson,
Susan Leslie, Everette
Thompson, Janine
Gelsinger, Marchaé Grair,
Nicole Pressley, Nora
Rasman, Paige Ingram,
Rev. Ashley Horan*



IT STARTS WITH FAITH: ORGANIZING SCHOOL

Building off the power of the 100k GA Challenge and the UU the Vote training at General Assembly 2020, we launched “It Starts With Faith: Organizing School” to equip folks with deeper organizing skills and theory in an effort to ground UU the Vote in a larger vision of justice and grow organizing acumen and capacity across institutions and communities. Led and designed by Nicole Pressley (National Organizer), Nora Rasman (UU the Vote WI Organizer) and Paige Ingram (Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism), “It Starts With Faith: Organizing School, was a 7-week program with 2 hours sessions focused on building skills around: defining and mapping power, building relationships and partnerships, narrative strategy and communications, and asset mapping to prepare for possible contested election chaos.

With over 400 participants, this organizing and political education intensive surfaced and engaged leaders that were more diverse in age and race than other UU the Vote programming. The learning and deep connection fostered through organizing school spurred greater interest in volunteer leadership and served as an essential anchor for our volunteer leadership program, which was led and developed by Rev. Cathy Rion Starr.

Three cheers to these
congregations who
held Congregational
Phonebanks

Anchorage UU Fellowship, AK
Berrien UU Fellowship, St. Joseph, MI
First Unitarian Congregational Society, Brooklyn, NY
Follen Community Church, Lexington, MA
Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden, CO
Unitarian Society of Hartford, CT
Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Oak Park, IL
UU Church of Arlington, VA
UU Church of Birmingham, AL
UU Congregation of Atlanta, GA
UU Congregation of Las Vegas, NV
UU Society of Schenectady, NY

GATHER THE SPIRIT, HARVEST THE POWER

As the election got closer, we held monthly mass gatherings to gather our spirits, report on our progress, and inspire folks for the month ahead. “Gather the Spirit” coincided with National Voter Registration Day in September and featured DJ Carmen Spindiego, confetti to celebrate reaching over a million voter contacts, and stories to inspire the 900 attendees to more action.

We then held a week of action called “Harvest the Power” October 21st through 27th with nearly 50 events that included phonebanks with frontline and other partner organizations. The Week of Action was anchored by a series of phonebanks with New Florida Majority, and UU the Vote teams in NC, PA, DC/MD, and WI. A dozen congregations hosted their own congregational phonebanks, with the support of national volunteers, and hundreds of Unitarian Universalists and friends joined the daily national phonebanks in one of our final pushes to ensure we reached what was then our goal of 2,000,000 voters before Election Day.

The Week of Action included a powerful UU the Vote worship service that was a special offering to congregations to use in part or in full. The service was accessed by over 300 congregations, and Side With Love hosted the national service virtually on the Side With Love Facebook page.

By the time we held our “How We Win” UUtheVote national debrief on November 11th, we had contacted over 3 million voters – far surpassing our goals.

ELECTION DAY AND BEYOND

As election day approached, volunteers continued to call, text, and show up for our partners. Meanwhile, we began to work with existing partners as well as the newly formed Election Defenders (a project of The Frontline) to prepare for the possibility of a contested election. UU volunteers across the country participated in “Joy to the Polls,” a proactive election defense tactic at polling places on Election Day, and in #CountEveryVote and Protect the Results rallies in the uncertain days following the election.

As debriefs began, across our SANs and nationally, so too began the Georgia run-off organizing, with an additional 14 phone banks with Reclaim Our Vote, one of the few non-partisan efforts in the run-off.



INSIDE UU THE VOTE

DEVELOPING CONGREGATIONAL CAPACITY

Ongoing mass mobilizations and distributed actions created consistent opportunities for folks to enter UU the Vote on the national and local level. Our mass mobilizations (“How We Thrive”, National Phonebanks, Organizing School, General Assembly Training, 100k GA Challenge, and “Harvest the Power” week of action, and other pop-up opportunities) captured wide audiences where we could reinforce our politics, goals, and culture, and also call folks to action. Throughout the campaign we supported folks in building teams through our weekly Office Hours, toolkits, and one-on-one congregational consulting. Fundamentally, we knew that moving folks from individual action on the national level to local activity in self-organized teams would be the critical “structure tests” of the UU the Vote experiment.

450+
CONGREGATIONAL
TEAMS

Structure tests are strategic organizing “events” that are designed to test a program’s organizing infrastructure (volunteer capacity and skill, vision buy-in, etc.) We experienced early success with folks building teams around postcard writing. As tactics shifted to include text banks and phone banks, we knew that deeper organizing skills would facilitate the adoption of more difficult or uncomfortable tactics.

By the end of the project, 12 State Action Networks and 12 congregations hosted their own phone banks with their local partners or our national UU the Vote partners New Florida Majority, Wisconsin Voices, and Reclaim Our Vote. Given the level of organization, volunteer support, and specialized skill needed to carry out virtual phone banks, these sites demonstrate high levels of organization and should be identified as strong sites that could support ongoing organizing autonomously and/or with the leadership of the UUA.

The impact on the congregational level is immeasurable. This “all-in” moment has ignited more collaboration between congregations, de-siloed issue-based social justice groups, and created or deepened relationships between congregations and frontline partners.



UU the VOTE Georgia



FRAMING AND DESIGNING FOR ADVANCED LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

As activity began to pick up momentum in the Fall and drawing on the energy of Organizing School participants, we launched a team of Volunteer Squads to build our capacity—both our capacity to do voter engagement work and the capacity of our volunteers and leaders. The result was a robust Phonebank Squad of 80 volunteers who skillfully coordinated calls to constituents with minimal staff involvement. We also built a Data Squad of 10, ensuring that events on our website were clear, arranging reminder and confirmation emails, and more—making it easier for volunteers to participate and for organizers to track their events. Lastly, a Media Squad of 10 created and amplified our messages.

Not only did the Squads help to anchor the distributed organizing of the UU the Vote campaign leading up to the November elections,



they were critical in supporting efforts beyond the regular electoral cycle. When staff were exhausted in November, our Squads ran 14 phone banks for the Georgia run-off election, training and supporting over 800 volunteers to make calls to voters in Georgia. Thus, one of the few non-partisan voter contact efforts in the run-off ran with guidance from staff, but was truly and successfully volunteer-run! Squads have also supported virtual events and actions in other programs such as Side With Love and State Action Networks.

The power of the Squads has built an organizing infrastructure that is faith-rooted, joyful, humble, hard-working and capable that can continue to build strength in UU organizing. These Squads were coordinated and supported particularly by the Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, UU the Vote Leadership Development Specialist, who continues to skill-up and develop these teams to support continued organizing with Side with Love and the UUA's Organizing Strategy Team.

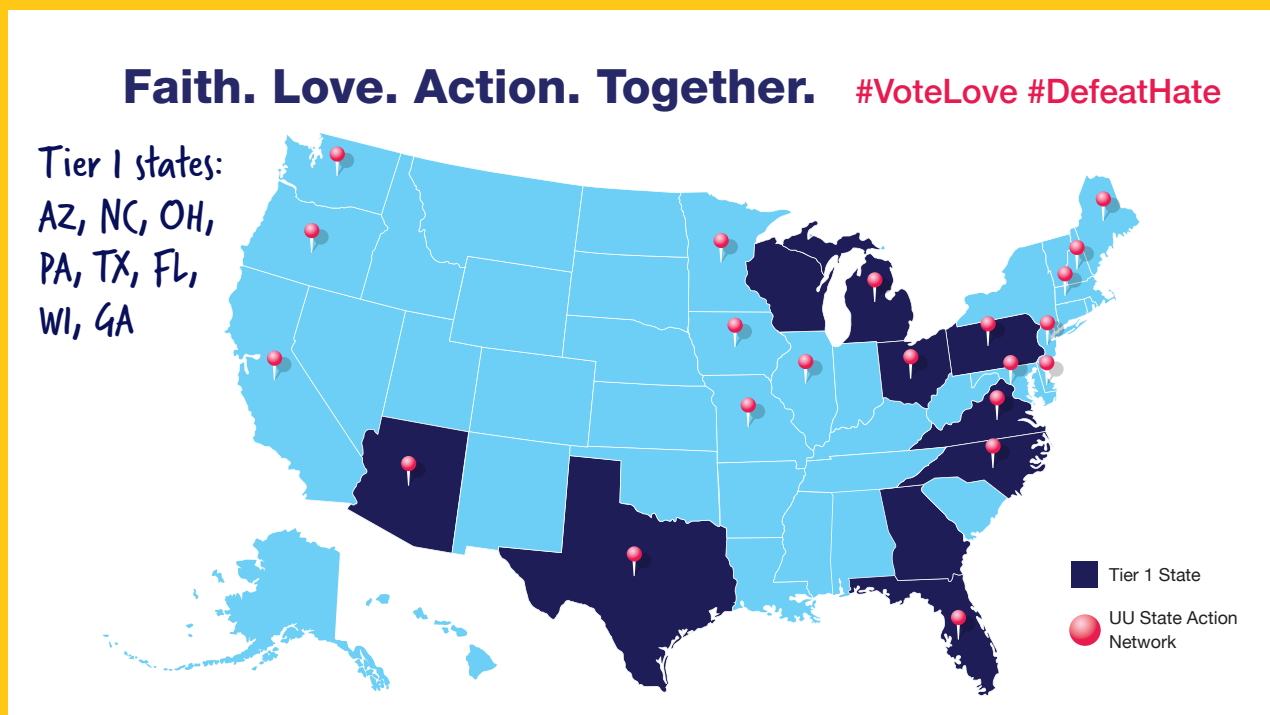
STATE ACTION NETWORKS

UU the Vote collaborated with the UU State Action Networks (SANs) from the start because success for our UU the Vote efforts and outcomes required getting out the vote in key states where UUs were energized about elections in 2020, states where voter suppression was a big problem, and states where there were partners that wanted to work with UUs on key justice and democracy campaigns. We were able to build on previous efforts between the UUA and the SANs to function together as a team.

Early on, we held one-to-ones and group meetings with the SANs to get their buy-in. We made initial assessments of each SAN's capacity and willingness to join the UU the Vote campaign. We helped the SANs do state launches of the campaign. UU the Vote staff participated in monthly field calls to brief SAN organizers on the campaign and upcoming events, to hear about developments in their individual states, and to share and solve challenges together. We had up to 35 organizers from 16 states attending. Together

we recruited volunteers, built infrastructure, and broadened and deepened the campaign.

UU the Vote also tapped SAN leaders and organizers to help carry out pieces of the national campaign, including participating in General Assembly programming, UU the Vote rallies and events, Organizing School, and Election Defense. We were able to fund UU the Vote organizers for 5 SANs (AZ, NC, OH, PA, and TX). Additionally, we placed a UU the Vote organizer in WI (Nora Rasman) who helped nurture and lead the emerging SAN there. UU the Vote also brokered the joint hiring of an organizer by UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ) and The Reeb Project of All Souls Unitarian DC. We also put some staff time (Susan Leslie) into organizing Florida, as the SAN was not strongly organized there. UU the Vote raised funds for key frontline partners of the SANs, such as BLOC (WI), Blueprint NC, Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, and Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights which also helped build solidarity and accountability in movement at national, state and local levels.



UU the Vote also co-hosted phone banks with SANs and their partners in AZ, FL, MI, NC, OH, PA and WI. The phone banks were important opportunities for all participants to grow skills and experience, but especially supported less experienced and more introverted UUs to develop interpersonal outreach and organizing skills. The mass rallies and worship services inspired people with their emphasis on spiritual grounding and nurturance, community building, emotive music and words, political education, and action. The UU the Vote messages were uplifting and

community-based as opposed to simply policy driven. SAN leaders learned a new way to engage our people.

Connect with
your local SAN!

UU the Vote helped move the traditional advocacy approach used by most SANs (a model that largely shares information and calls to action, asking individuals to participate independently), toward an organizing model that builds community among UUs and with community and state partners, particularly frontline partners; that community can be harnessed collectively at the national level as well. UU the Vote offered an organizing model that runs campaigns, sets goals, nurtures and unleashes volunteers, and always grows. In partnership, SANs and UU the Vote were able to plant the seeds of a national culture shift in the UU approach to justice-making, moving from simple policy advocacy toward faith-rooted organizing that includes advocacy, but is done in solidarity and accountability with impacted communities while building power.

Several SANs that are newly reorganized or in stages of formation (GA, KY, NC, & NY) will serve as the testing ground for new ways of organizing that can serve as models for other SANs that were created at a time when the dominant operational model was primarily siloed issue advocacy from a 'policy expert' perspective. Continuing to bring SANs and UUs from their states together in action for justice as we move into this new day of strategic campaigns and relational organizing will further train UUs in spiritually grounded justice organizing, leading to a more powerful contribution from UUs to movements for real social change and liberation.

UU STATE ACTION NETWORKS

We held one-to-one debriefs and next steps meetings with all 23 UU state action networks in January and February, 2021. The SANs have unanimously praised the campaign:

- ★ UU the Vote was conducted in a way that was mutually beneficial and led to growth in UU engagement broadly.
- ★ UU the Vote directly supported leadership development for SAN staff and leaders.
- ★ UU the Vote felt mutual and symbiotic, rather than top down.
- ★ It was extremely helpful that UU the Vote shared engagement, participation, and demographic data with each state.
- ★ SANs actively and successfully recruited volunteers for national efforts. Having national phone banks and postcarding set up by UU the Vote gave the SANs something they could easily plug their people into, especially for those from less strategic states who had lots of volunteers who wanted to participate in electoral justice.



DATA, DIGITAL, AND DATABASES

UUTHEVOTE.ORG

Given the new virtual nature of the program, UU the Vote needed a digital homebase that was designed around people taking action, instead of accessing information. If we were to have a successful organizing program, we needed a website that could capture emails and put folks in motion quickly. Nicole and the communications staff (Audra Friend, Marchae Grair, and B. Loewe) designed and executed the migration of the UU the Vote micro-site on UUA.org to a new external site with significantly more design and interactive capabilities. Moving the site allowed us to feature important calls to action, display resources and tools, and capture emails– all from a high-impact homepage. (www.uuthevote.org)

Over 530 UUtheVote events hosted across 35 states
with 5,000 unique volunteers participating

DATABASE

We invested in the EveryAction database that facilitated effective organizing. This allowed us to use tools to grow our list to over 11,000 in less than a year and prepare quick actions to build investment. The database enables us to run multiple campaigns and segment our list to focus on people based on geography, interest, level of engagement, and more. Running all of our events through the database sign up form allowed us to collect data that supports measurement metrics and evaluation, as well as a user-friendly interface to submit, register, and view events, culminating in over 532 events in 2020 alone. Our volunteer Data Squad supports the event set-up and follow-up, creating capacity for staff to focus on strategic use of our communications and engagement.

Join the action
or update your
info in our
Supporter Center

Our emerging digital program is a critical component to organizing, as it helps us understand how our base is engaging in our programs, what skills are being developed in our ecosystem, and support targeted leadership identification and engagement.



“Having the opportunity to participate in UU the Vote means that I can put my faith into action. To me, the work is about the inherent worth and dignity of every person.”

Vicki McGaffigan, Media Squad, UU Bay de Noc Fellowship, Escanaba, MI

KEY COMPONENTS OF OUR SUCCESS

COLLABORATION

The scale of collaboration in UU the Vote was vast. Frontline partners, state groups, and congregations worked together in new and innovative ways that will pay dividends in continued organizing. However, due to the fast-paced and virtual nature of the activity, tracking the scales and making sure all activity was coordinated was difficult. At times there were competing events or time-zone conflicts that stretched the capacities of groups and leaders. The facility to add an event to the UU the Vote calendar supported informal collaboration as folks from across the country could join any of the listed events and promote them to their groups.

SCALE

Leadership development is key to running national programs to scale. The pace and activity that needs to be generated in an electoral campaign requires a series of specialized volunteer teams to hold the work. This is necessary due to the small size of the national staff as well as the desire to empower our UU activist base to develop skills and leadership to grow our impact. With volunteers anchoring on-ramps like Office Hours and Slack, we're able to model leadership and invite more folks to get involved. Without these Volunteer Squads, we would not be able to run the quality or quantity of programming at scale. The scale also created an atmosphere of community that contributed to folks feeling powerful and necessary to the work.

ON RAMPS

We strategically designed entry points to UU the Vote to be measurable, to draw folks into action, and support volunteers' capacity to take ongoing and increasing action. Using multiple entry points, we are able to attract and involve folks with various motivations, capacities, and skills. For example, our weekly Office Hours allowed an opportunity to drop in and ask questions and learn how they could get involved. By tracking attendance we were able to identify repeat attendees and recruit and train those participants to become Office Hours volunteers, replacing the need for staff facilitation. As a result of our training, volunteers were able to recruit and self-organize to cover shifts.

DEBRIEF

Building in a culture of debrief from our national UUA staff to our volunteers unlocked our power by allowing us to refine our strategies, learn collectively, and implement for success. It creates a culture of excellence and collective learning while resisting a culture of criticism. These debriefs continue to offer essential data and lessons that we implement in our Organizing Strategy Team (OST) operations. Our Volunteer Squads have also adopted this critical tool which has created a culture of evaluation, shared learning, and vulnerability that is essential for transformation to occur.





STORYTELLING, BLOG, SOCIAL

By telling stories and reflecting back the impact of our work and designing actions that required community support, we created a cycle of on-going involvement. People feel essential to the work. Empowering folks to recognize that they are agents of change is the golden key to build organizing infrastructure. People want to feel powerful and like they matter. We designed events that constantly proved that their aggregated work had impacts and that they had a role in achieving the goals. Regularly uplifting and celebrating the numbers dialed, number of volunteers, as well as what our goals were, kept folks coming back for more.

The limited communications capacity through the UUA and the UU ecosystem made developing an amplified narrative strategy difficult. Story inspires people to action, demonstrates effective models of doing the work, and does the critical work of offering tools for political analysis. Aiden Wertz, a UU young adult, became our community reporter through an internship at his university. He interviewed volunteers and SANS leaders to develop stories for the UU the Vote blog.

We must continue to invest in communications skills and staffing throughout our UU organizations to support robust organizing in a digital world. It is a central vehicle, transforming how we understand the world, our social-political location in it, and what that means for our faith movement. Our Media Team has created a UU the Vote video library that catalogs all the video content and tags segments by issues. Support for developing a large OST library has been offered. While volunteers are adding capacity to ramp up our video content on socials, leadership is essential to moving this work in a strategic way.

Phone calls: 609,198
 Texts: 1,277,643
 Letter/Postcards: 1,116,225
 Voter Registration: 10,152

Volunteers
5000+

Congregations
450+

Partners
130+

States
50

The difference we helped make:

- WISCONSIN 20,000+
- MICHIGAN 148,000+
- PENNSYLVANIA 45,000+
- ARIZONA 14,000+
- NEVADA 36,000+
- GEORGIA 12,000+

NATIONAL VOTER CONTACT TOTAL = 3,044,839

“UUTV: UU the Vote illustrated the importance of each vote and the power of working together. It’s such a strong story of collective power.”

Mary Cummings, Phonebank Squad, First Parish UU, Arlington, MA

**COUNT
EVERY VOTE**

**IT'S
ABOUT
US**



KEY LEARNINGS

- ★ UUs have an appetite for bold organizing that lives into our UU principles.
- ★ There is desire to engage in explicitly anti-racist social justice work that is spiritually grounded and restorative.
- ★ UUs have skills, ideas, and relationships that can build stronger organizing if harnessed through deep connection.
- ★ UUs are not a monolith and our work must be clear in its vision while welcoming all who seek to engage without compromising the integrity of the vision.
- ★ Political Education is necessary for us to collectively grapple with our collusion with white supremacy AND live into our faith’s prophetic lineage with pride and commitment.
- ★ How we organize shapes our political imagination.
- ★ Urgency is a reality AND a threat to sustainability. You can’t sprint your way through a marathon.
- ★ People are our most precious resource.



WHAT'S NEXT

"It was great to have a collective national focus that energized people. It helped keep people engaged and allowed UUs to see the impact we can have when we all work together."

Laura Wagner, Executive Director of UU Mass Action and Board President for the Coalition of UU State Action Networks

All of our social justice projects have built the foundation that made our base ready for a robust program like UU the Vote. The engagement from the past year demonstrates an appetite for big vision, large-scale organizing that is rooted in our faith and has national and local impact. In the coming years we have the opportunity and responsibility to use our prophetic imagination to build a coordinated program to move our base(s), policy, and the political ethos to deeply impact grassroots UU activity.

Our campaigns have surfaced wells of skill, leadership, density, structure, and resources that can be organized to build power alongside partners, win battles that improve material conditions of the folks impacted by capitalism and white supremacy, and transform the culture and perspectives of our Unitarian Universalist base.

The 2020 elections were a critical moment that was set to determine the terrain of continued justice work and material conditions of marginalized folks. The new Biden/Harris administration along with the threats of the Covid-19 and economic crises are urgent opportunities for collective, coordinated action by all of our issue groups and campaigns.

By building our base—growing the number of UU and UU-adjacent folks who are engaged in cycles of learning, action, and reflection for justice work through programs run at the congregational, statewide, or national level—we can support deepened connection with our faith's justice work and become better able to respond to and advance movement asks.

Through intentional leadership development, political education, praxis-based action, and spiritual deepening, we offer differentiated opportunities for engagement and growth while building power and expanding the number of UU- and UU-adjacent volunteers and leaders who are aligned with specific political and policy goals.



BUILDING AN ACTION CENTER

As we move into “recovery” from the pandemic, we cannot go back to normal. Side With Love Action Center is a place to harness the power of our faith to build the communities we need to contend with the systemic oppression that creates multiple, intersecting crises. Our justice campaigns—Create Climate Justice, UU the Vote, LGBTQ ministries and Love Resists—are joining together to skill up our community and join actions to advance our values and build grassroots power to confront injustice on national and local levels.

The Action Center is an initiative of Side With Love to activate our UU and UU-adjacent communities to show up in one of the most defining movements in history. The violence of white supremacy and capitalism that was laid bare with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic crystallized when we watched insurrectionists attempt to overturn the election, can only be defeated by a well-organized network of people that are committed to bold and visionary alternatives to our unjust systems. Together we are building strong local networks to fight for democracy and accountability in all our systems, divest from policing and prisons and invest in communities’ safety and care. When we center the experiences and demands of the BIPOC communities, we can act in ways that disrupt the power structures that keep us all in a system of oppression.

The Action Center is set to launch in late summer of 2021. Be the first to get the announcement. Text “Ready” to 866-533-1494 or sign up for alerts here

Action Center is a call to action and call to faithful community. Together we are building strong local networks to fight for democracy and accountability in all our systems, divest from policing and prisons and invest in community safety and care, show up in solidarity with BIPOC communities to fight for climate justice, and continue to deepen our work for LGBTQ+ and gender justice so that we may all live in a world that affirms our inherent worth and dignity. Action Center is a place to learn, grow, and act to strengthen our faith’s capacity to meet this critical moment and tip the scales towards love and justice.



“Working with UU The Vote has been the best political action experience I have ever had in my many years of campaigning. This was not just campaigning but building relationships and a national infrastructure that will continue to grow and serve our causes well.”

Mary Cummings, Phonebank Squad, First Parish UU, Arlington, MA



PARTNERS

PRIMARY STATE AND NATIONAL PARTNERS

Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
New Florida Majority
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
New Georgia Project
Newtown Florist Club (GA)
CASA (PA)

POWER (PA)
Pennsylvania Stands Up
Pennsylvania United
Beloved Community Center of Greensboro (NC)
Blueprint North Carolina
Indivisible Asheville (NC)
Latin American Coalition (NC)
The Ministers' Conference (NC)

We Are Down Home (NC)
Ohio Organizing Collaborative
Wisconsin Voices: Liberate MKE Campaign
Voces de la Frontera (WI)
BLOC (WI)
Citizen Action (WI)
Freedom, Inc (WI)
Reclaim Our Vote (NC, GA, etc.)

500 voters
ACLU
All Voting is Local
AME Congregations
Arizona Center for Empowerment
Arizona Education Association
Battleground Iowa
Bend the Arc
Beth David Temple
Black Voters Matter
BLM
Blue Wave Postcards
Blueprint NC
CA
CAIR-MN
CASA
Central Texas Interfaith IAF in the Austin Area
Central Texas Interfaith in Austin
Centre County Democrats
Change Begins with Me
Cherokee County Democrats
Civic Nebraska
Common Cause
Community Centers
Community Renewal Society
COPS Metro in San Antonio
COPS/Metro
COPS/Metro IAF in San Antonio
Delta Sigma Theta Society
Democracy NC
Detroit Action
DownHome NC
DRMM
EJAM
Elders Stand for Fair Elections
Election Defenders
Election Protection AZ
Environmental Voter Project
Fair Tax Illinois
Faith in Place
Fort Worth Futures
Greater Boston Swing Left
The Metropolitan Organization in Houston
Indivisible
Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice
Interfaith Impact of New York
Interfaith of Lake County
Interfaith Power & Light

ISAIAH
Jackson County Housing Authority
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jews for Justice-Detroit
League of Women Voters
Libraries
Lift Every Vote
Local Coalitions
Local Food Banks
LoveHopeRise
March to the Polls
Mercer County Census Team
Mi Familia Vota
Minnesota interfaith power and light
Minnesota voice/we vote
Mission Arizona
MN Voices-WeVoteMN
MNIPL
Mokah for Georgia
Moms Rising
Mothering Justice
Movement For Black Lives' Electoral Justice Project
Movement Voter Project
MUUSJA
NAACP
National Organization of Women
National Voter Registration Day
Native Vote
NC NAACP
Blueprint NC
New Florida Majority
New GA Project
NextGen Florida
NextGen Virginia
NOVOC
Ohio Organizing Collective
Ohio Student Association
Ohio Votes
Ohio Voting Rights Coalition
ONE AZ
One Northside
Organizing together 2020
Our Revolution
PA Stand Up
PA United
PACT San Jose for voter education about state propositions parole

supervisors in 7 counties
PDs
People's Lobby
Peoples' Action
Poor People's Campaign
Postcards to Swing States
POWER
Powered by People
Race Unity Group of Carbondale
Reclaim Our Vote
Reeb
Restaurant Opportunities Center
ROC-MI
San Diego Organizing Project
SchoolsAndCommunitiesFirst
SEIU and a local postcard writing group in Davis
Senior Communities
Sheriffs
Sjembra
Sierra Club
SIU Law School
Sunrise
Sunrise Movement Tempe
SURJ
Swing Left
Tamir Rice Foundation
Team Wellness
The Metropolitan Organization
Together Colorado
Turn PA Blue
Two Proposition Specific Coalitions
UCC Congregations
Unsheltered Phoenix
UUJO (Ohio)
Voice of Westmoreland; PA United
Vote Forward
Vote Your Power
Vote2020
Voting Access for All Coalition (VAAC)
Voting Rights Lab
Warming Center
WAVE-MI
we make michigan
When We All Vote
Working Families Party
Yes15.org
You Can Vote
You Can Vote NC
YWCA



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

*All participating congregations
National, state, and local partner groups
Ma Muse, songwriters of "We Shall be Known"
All Souls DC Choir
Election Defenders and Peanut Gallery
Volunteers
Rev. Jonathan Rogers, UU the Vote, Georgia
Runoff Coordinator
Aiden Wertz, UU the Vote Blog writer
Phoebe Dubisch
Mathew Taylor
Karina Hurtado
UU the Vote Donors
UU the Vote Volunteers
DJ Carmen Spindiego
Donald Shorter
Jie Wronski-Riley
Rev. Maria-Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa
Monica Dobbins
Rev. Kimberley Debus
Lora Powell-Haney
Carlton Smith
Rev. Sana Saeed
Amanda Thomas
Aisha Hauser
Christina Rivera
Rev. Michael Tino
Rev. Mykal Slack
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray
Carl Kennedy
Rev. Meg Riley
Charles Du Mond
Jordanna Hertz*

TIER 1 SAN LEADERS

*Arizona: Janine Gelsing, Casey Clowes
Florida: Rev. Thomas Capo, Carlo Klopfer,
Chris Kirchner, Brigham Johnson, Martha
Hartgering, Steven Jens-Rochow
DC and UUs for Social Justice: Kelsey
Cowger, Pam Coukos, Pablo de Jesus
North Carolina: Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson,
Regional Team leaders in North Carolina
Michigan: Randy Block, Sharon Pederson,
Jennifer Teed, Jim Black
Ohio: Rev. Joan VanBecelaere, Kristen Beireis
Pennsylvania: Rev. Joan Sabatino, Rev.
Cathy Rion Starr, Rev. Abbey Tennis, Rev.
Terry Cummings, Caron Carnahan
Texas: Rev. Chuck Freeman, Ron Cooksto,
Mary Koch, Karen Speer, Ellen Norton
Wisconsin: Nora Rasman, Jim Black,
Barbara Pharr*

SQUAD LEADERS AND SUPERVOLUNTEERS:

*Ken Andrus
Dana Ashrawi
Cal Ball
Sarah Berel-Harrop
Wendy Cluse
Mary Cummings*

*Michael Dangerfield
Mria Dangerfield
Claire Deroche
Barbara Dickerson
Lurline Devos
Kathi Fletcher
Elisse Ghitelman
Ellie Handleman
Rev. Cassandra Howe
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Glenn Kimes
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Sandra Kosek-Sills
Rick Lathrop
Bob Lovell
Nancy Latimer
Vicki McGaffigan
Claudia Marshall
Ann Maxwell
Evan McLain
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Leni Nazare
Rev. Elaine Peresluha
Beth Posner-Waldron
Nancy Piedra
Rev. Jonathan Rogers
Darien Smith
John Smith
Florence Snively
Eileen Tintle
Paul van Valkenburg
Karen Wills*



**"We each need to do our own deep work – white folks, Latinos, Blacks,
etc – on our own and THEN go heading in to work together.**

Liz Alex, CASA Organizing Director at the "How We Win" UUtheVote national debrief

**"Don't be afraid to set high goals and encourage and inspire people
to meet them. We wrote 1,895 Vote Forward letters and set a goal for
1,000 (we were tempted to set a lower goal of 500!)."**

Gail Burgess, Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, PA