

Voting Rights Team Annual Report 2023-2024

Committee Chair and Members: Sara Dalton (Leader), Anna Vijayan, Jamie McReynolds, Carolyn Rude, Deb Dickerson

Purpose of the Committee: The purpose of the voting rights team, formed in January 2023, is to promote and encourage voting by members of our congregation as well as the larger community.

Achievements During the Last Year: On multiple occasions, hosted voter information tables at UUC. Promoted the LWV and NAACP fall 2023 candidate forums. Hosted a Sunday Circle on Oct. 15 with Carolyn Rude presenting a program on the history of voting in Virginia. Posted information including voting dates and events in UU News and Updates, slides before Sunday services, UUC quarterly newsletters, bulletin board and Facebook. Created and updated UUC Voting Rights webpage. Collaborated with community organizations as individual members were active in community voter information and voter registration events. Team members collaborated with other existing UUC groups such as post carding with the anti-racism group and serving on planning team for Defending Democracy program and events. Followed General Assembly voter related legislation and sent alerts to team members and occasionally to public witness listserv. Updated materials for voter information table to include material on mis/dis information, resources, fall volunteer opportunities as poll worker and list of existing local organizations with a voter component through which one can volunteer.

Lessons Learned in the Last Year: We learned the value of collaboration on both the community level and internal collaboration. Also, we witnessed the interconnected nature of our various social justice issues and how voting is a critical component for all social justice efforts.

Committee Expenses for the Year: \$102 so far for post card stamps.

How the Committee Supports the Mission and Vision of UUC: Our goal, to promote and encourage voting by members of our congregation as well as the larger community, stems from our 5th UU principle: "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." The UUA has also identified voting as a major focus, noting that "directly or indirectly, the issues that many of us care about are part of every election and every ballot."

Goals of the Committee for Next Year: Our goals for the coming year remain the same with an increased emphasis on voting as a right and responsibility in the critical upcoming elections in the fall of 2024. We will continue our collaborative activities, internally and externally, and will be working on strategies to get out the vote. We would like to participate more actively in UU the Vote if we can find a volunteer to lead that effort. These goals further our mission and vision by living into our UU principles.