



# MUUSJA

MINNESOTA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

**Faith. Love. Action. Together.**  
**It's game on for 2024 UU the Vote Minnesota!**



## First Friday Films Against Facism

6:30 PM Central on the First Friday of the month, we'll get together on Zoom for a movie-watching salon followed by the question, how can we use this evening as inspiration for our own democracy struggle? Next up: "Suffragette" Friday, May 3rd. [Registration required.](#)

---

## Why do we talk politics at church?



**WE ARE A VALUES-FORWARD PEOPLE.** MUUSJA connects UU congregations to create an inclusive, multicultural democracy, as one way to shape a just and loving world. In this issue, we'll focus on Minnesota, with hopes to include North and South Dakota going forward.

We don't endorse specific candidates or political parties. But our UUA association of congregations explicitly affirms and promotes the inherent worth of all beings, so we do not condone making laws that harm people. We affirm and promote the democratic process so we do not tolerate threats to election judges, treaty-breaking, or the notion that "might makes right." We affirm and promote the interdependent web of which we are a part, so we seek to protect the water, woods, and endangered species. Most Minnesota UU congregations affirm and promote the proposed 8th Principle, so we are actively anti-oppression and antiracist in the policies and programs we support.

**"PUT ON YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK, FIRST".** We have work to do, within, alongside, and against the system, to improve lives in Minnesota communities. As a literal refuge for many people in the upper Midwest, Minnesota still has large inequities in jobs, housing, education, healthcare, policing and incarceration, as well as in voter information and access, for most Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Minnesotans and some other communities of color, as compared with most white Minnesotans. An inclusive multicultural democracy must narrow those gaps.

**SOME PROGRESS IS BEING MADE.** Last summer, [New York Magazine's Eric Levitz](#) wrote that in 2023, Minnesota's legislature had "enshrined [abortion rights](#), established paid [family and medical leave](#), restored the [voting rights](#) of ex-felons, extended voting access, invested \$1 billion into [affordable housing](#), imposed background checks on private gun transfers, initiated a [red-flag warning system](#) that confiscates firearms from those judicially deemed a threat to themselves or others, [legalized recreational marijuana](#), created a [refuge program for trans people](#) denied gender-affirming care in other states, mandated that utilities go [carbon-free](#) by 2040, provided a refundable tax credit (i.e., cash aid) to low-income households with children, [prohibited](#) non-compete clauses in labor contracts, barred employers from holding compulsory anti-union meetings, strengthened workplace protections for meatpacking and Amazon workers, empowered teachers unions to bargain over educator-to-student ratios, empaneled a statewide board to set minimum labor standards for nursing-home workers, directed [\\$2.58 billion](#) into improved infrastructure, made [school breakfast and lunch free](#) from all Minnesota K-through-12 students, and increased taxes on corporations and high earners, among other things."

**FREEDOM ISN'T FREE.** Minnesota's lawmakers were gridlocked for years and easily could become so again in 2025. Unfortunately, most advances made in 2023 resulted from party line votes won by just ONE voice in the state Senate and now just FIVE voices in the state House. That razor-thin margin favoring progressive policies depends entirely upon districts where fewer than 400 votes could mean a future reversal of gains made in protecting abortion rights, transgender rights,

carbon sequestration, gun safety, etc. Therefore, MUUSJA is laser-focused on protecting the people, in Minnesota, by preserving our status as a "state of refuge."

## So what are we going to do about it?

As one of the state action networks charged with implementing "UU the Vote" across the country, MUUSJA's job is to share what folks are doing nationally AND help Minnesota UU's understand our unique local & state context.

### The Key Elements of "UU the Vote - the Minnesota Edition" are:

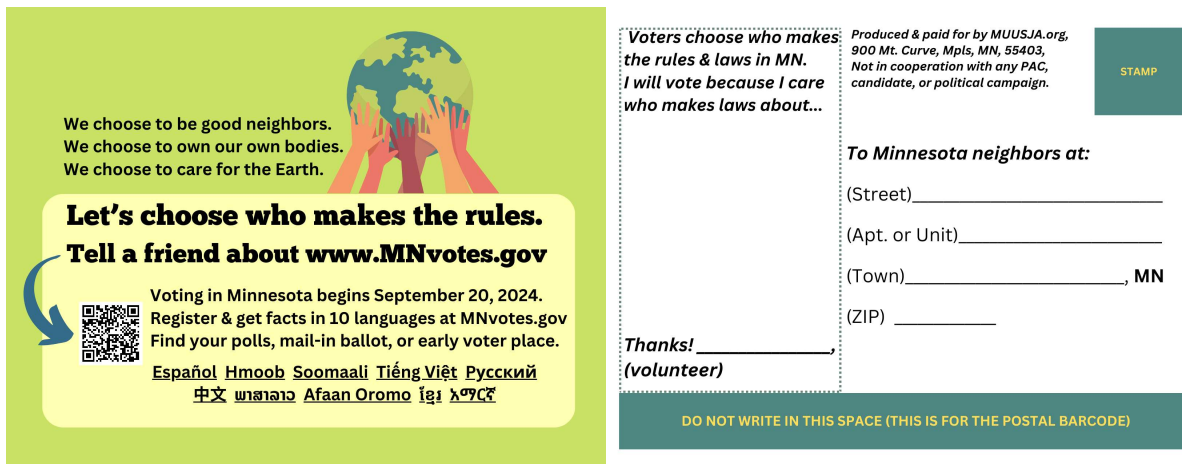
- 1.) **Congregational commitment** -- can you & a couple of friends involve 5% of your congregation? if so, MUUSJA can help you figure out the details!
- 2.) **Attend & participate in civic affairs** -- can the things you show up for, between now and November, engage 5% or more of the people in your congregation? (not necessarily all the same people at the same time, but 5% in total across all events!) For example, could folks attend an elections-related training with MUUSJA, UU the Vote, We Choose Us MN, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, or the Poor People's Campaign; join a Lobby Day (Day on the Hill) in person or virtually; put on those yellow Side With Love t's and show up for a rally or vigil for a bill or issue... Keep track of what you do and how many are involved. If you're going, be sure to invite a friend! The point is to mobilize & engage your own congregation with local partners for civic affairs.
- 3.) **Host or co-host 3 or more civic events** -- for example, can your congregation team with the League of Women Voters, Poor People's Campaign, or other local groups, to host or co-host a visit to your County Elections Board to assess how they plan to distribute polling locations; help sponsor and staff a voter registration table at a county fair, ethnic festival, Pride fest, on campus; host a postcard writing party, text or phonebank; host a forum on how to talk across political divides & invite another congregation in your community; hold an event that celebrates diversity in your county & table with nonpartisan or multi-partisan voter information; help your League distribute voter information to local apartment complexes, laundromats, cafe's and hair salons. The point is to reach out and connect with your community, and emerge with some leadership, in civic affairs.
- 4.) **Support election administrators** -- Can at least 2 individuals from your congregation volunteer as an election judge or poll observer? We know that UU's across the state already are leaders of election administration in Minnesota!
- 5.) **Directly contact voters**, person to person -- Can your congregation send 20 cards AND make 20 calls, per member, to voters in areas of Minnesota or others states that are vulnerable to anti-choice, climate-change-denying policies in 2025?
  - a.) Postcards or letters, from MUUSJA (cards to MN renters in key districts), Vote Forward, or Reclaim Our Vote (letters to young & BIPOC voters in key states).

b.) Phone (voicemails) and/or Text messages and/or Canvassing (door knocks), with MUUSJA (to MN renters in key districts), UU the Vote, and related groups.

### Reaching out to younger voters, women, & BIPOC communities in Minnesota:

Minnesota's postcarding program, coordinated by MUUSJA, aims to send 500,000 postcards this year. Some will be cards to Minnesota renters, which we are printing and distributing, for congregations to write and mail. They will go to younger (under 55) renters in key districts that are critical to preserving Minnesota as a "refuge" and preventing a roll-back of gains made in 2023. We will follow up with friendly, informative, brief texts or calls.

Here's an image of the front and back of the postcard for the UU the Vote in Minnesota "cards and calls" program.



### Reaching out to younger voters, women, & BIPOC communities elsewhere:

It's up to Minnesotans to keep Minnesota a "state of refuge." The national program for UU the Vote program is focused on states with key congressional and electoral college votes, such as Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, and Wisconsin, which will be the focus of massive spending and volunteer engagement, including for postcard campaigns. However, as in past years, we do have opportunities to call or write to voters in those states to help get out the vote in some key areas, teaming with the UUA & partners such as [Vote Forward](#) and [Reclaim Our Vote](#).

## How do we get involved?

**First, Minnesota's elections bill is being heard this week (Monday, April 8th).  
Use the button below to contact reps & expand democracy in Minnesota.**

All aboard the OmniBUS! This year's 2024 Elections Omnibus Bill includes the things we need to build towards the inclusive, multiracial democracy Minnesotans deserve. We need our legislators to get on board with us!

What's included in the 2024 Elections Omnibus Bill? Many of the [priorities of our statewide pro-democracy coalition, We Choose Us MN.](#)

1.) On-campus polling locations for college students to ensure everyone has access to the polls, regardless of access to transportation or time off from class (HF3447 Pursell & SF3616 Mitchell)

2.) The Minnesota Voting Rights Act to restore the section of the 1965 Federal Voting Rights Act that protects voters, particularly Black voters and other voters of color, from voter suppression (HF3527 Greenman & SF3994 Champion)

3.) Expanding pre-registration provisions in school districts so every student can get the information they need to register and pre-register to vote (HF4068 Kraft & SF3871 Cwodzinski)

4.) Eliminating prison gerrymandering so people can be counted in the places they call home rather than where they're incarcerated (HF4043 Agbaje & SF3878 Mitchell)

**Use the button below or past this URL to your browser to reach your legislators: <https://secure.everyaction.com/vVaYNwycmkiu61ofv3kQ3Q2>**

[Ask MN state reps to vote YES on the Elections Omnibus Bill](https://secure.everyaction.com/vVaYNwycmkiu61ofv3kQ3Q2)

**Next, it's time NOW to make Good Trouble with your congregation.  
Voting in Minnesota's state primary elections begins July 23rd & for the general election September 20th -- that's only 6 months from today.**

**Contact a congregational liaison for more information!**

If you have a listed congregational liaison, start by talking with them! if not, or if your team hasn't yet met, or has more questions, let's talk! MUUSJA's Democracy Strategist, Karen Wills ([kwmuusja@gmail.com](mailto:kwmuusja@gmail.com)) or (612)270-6559, has extensive training and experience as a campaign manager, political organizer, and nonpartisan faith-based issue organizer. Karen can meet with a few interested people from your congregation to develop a "UU the Vote" plan that works for you. Click the button below for the official UU the Vote Launch Guide from our friends at UUA's Side With Love "UU the Vote" program -- it's a "how to" manual full of great ideas and suggestions that will help your team develop a plan that works for your congregation. With help from MUUSJA, you can tailor it to your local context.

## UU THE VOTE IN MN: LIAISONS

- Arden Hills: Pilgrim House UU Fellowship (Liaison: TBD)
  - **Bemidji: Headwaters UU Fellowship (Liaison: Sarah Baker)**
  - **Bloomington: Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship (Liaison: Nan Corliss)**
  - **Brainerd/Pine River: Northwoods UU Fellowship (Liaison: Trish Miller)**
  - **Duluth: UU Congregation of Duluth (Liaison: Kathy Peterson)**
  - **Eagan: Dakota UU Church (Liaison: Kelly McKown)**
  - Excelsior: Lake Fellowship of UUs (Liaison: TBD)
  - **Fridley: Michael Servetus Unitarian Society (Liaison: Carol Whitman)**
  - Grand Rapids: Itasca Unitarian Fellowship (Liaison: TBD)
  - Hanska: Nora UU Church (Liaison: TBD)
  - **Mankato: UU Fellowship of Mankato (Liaison: Diane Dobitz)**
  - **Minnetonka: UU Church of Minnetonka (Liaison: Mike Elliott)**
  - **Mpls: First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis (Liaison: Mary Ann Lundquist)**
  - **Mpls: First Universalist Church of Minneapolis (Liaisons: UUFTE Team)**
  - Moorhead: Fargo-Moorhead UU Fellowship (Liaison: TBD)
  - **Northfield: UU Fellowship of Northfield (Liaison: Mairi Doerr)**
  - **Roch: First UU Church of Rochester (Liaison: Aleta Borrud)**
  - St Paul: Groveland UU Fellowship (Liaison: TBD)
  - **St Paul: Unity Church Unitarian (Liaison: Priscilla Morton)**
  - **St. Cloud UU Fellowship (Liaison: Judy Foster)**
  - **Underwood: Unitarian Church of Underwood (Liaison: Barb Honer)**
  - Virginia: Mesabi UU Church (Liaison: TBD)
  - **White Bear UU Church (Liaisons: Stephanie Tschida, Sharon Gooch, Laura Stone-Jeraj, & Jane Bacon)**
  - Willmar: UU Church of Willmar (Liaison: TBD)
  - Winona: UU Fellowship of Winona (Liaison: TBD)
- [this list was updated on April 5th, 2024, and is subject to growth and change!]

MUUSJA will be a critical force for mobilizing the vote and defending democracy in the upcoming election. Your financial gift of any amount to our small (but mighty!) organization will be put to immediate use and received with deep appreciation. [Click here to donate today.](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Donate](#)

[Website](#)



MUUSJA - Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance  
900 Mount Curve Ave.  
c/o First Unitarian Society  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
United States