



100% Voting Congregation Tool Kit

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Background

Who are we?

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and Virginia’s oldest and largest faith-based advocacy group. VICPP has members, congregational partners, and chapters all over the state, and is committed to non-partisan voter education and mobilization.

VICPP’s Mission is to engage people of faith and goodwill to advocate for racial, social, and economic justice in Virginia’s policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.

Why this year?

2023 is a critical time to participate in state elections. This will be the first election following redistricting, so candidates for State Senate and House of Delegates are running in newly configured districts. Virginia’s redistricting process has created a space for fairness in the new election, as districts are less shaped by partisan gerrymandering. However, many long-time legislators took advantage of the moment to retire, so many districts have new candidates. This makes this year the perfect time to educate potential legislators about the VICPP priority issues and concerns.



Thank you for agreeing to be a 100 Percent Voting Congregation!

VICPP is working with faith communities to ensure that their members honor their sacred privilege of voting in a democracy. Congregations help by ensuring that people are registered, encouraging voting, and equipping people to advocate with candidates and elected leaders.

100 Percent Voting Commitment:

- Develop a plan to ensure that every eligible member is registered to vote, (either manually or electronically by working with VICPP).
 - *More information on matching membership lists with the voter files on page 4. Other ways to make sure everyone is registered on pages 3 and 8.*
- Distribute information about ways to vote through congregational sources (bulletins, newsletters, and social media posts).
 - *Sample announcements on page 5, or on VICPP's social media.*
- Promote the sacred privileges of voting (through sermons, prayers, litanies, and other appropriate opportunities).
 - *Preaching support on page 7.*
- Learn about candidates (by meeting them, asking questions, attending/ hosting candidate forums, and distributing information in candidate questionnaires).
 - *Candidate forum information on VICPP's website, www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/get-involved/civic-engagement.*
- Participate in community-wide efforts to register people and to get them to the polls.
 - *Resources to plan a "Souls to the Polls" event on page 6.*
- Engage those who are not eligible to vote to participate in civic life and encourage others.

Registration and Voting Resources

Virginia Department of Elections

(vote.elections.virginia.gov)

- Find your polling location.
- Confirm voter registration (or update with a new address).
- Register to vote.
- Request an absentee ballot.

Virginia Public Access Project

(vpap.org)

- Type in your address.
- Find information about your new district.
- Find information about candidates.

Setting up a voter registration table at your congregation

- Download registration forms from: www.elections.virginia.gov
- Schedule a time with your congregational leadership at the end of September or beginning of October.
- Set up a table in a communal space for weekend services.
 - If possible, bring a laptop so folks can register online.
 - Bring paper registration forms and pens.
 - Remind people of early voting (September 22 – November 4), and that election day is November 7.
 - Encourage people to make a plan to vote!
 - Consider providing envelopes, stamps, return stickers, and address label stickers for mailing (“Virginia Department of Elections, 1100 Bank Street, Richmond, VA 23219”).
- If someone misses the table at your congregation, share the news about same-day voter registration. They can register when they vote!

Other resources

- virginiainterfaithcenter.org/get-involved/civic-engagement
- Robert Lester (Civic Engagement Coordinator):
Robert@virginiainterfaithcenter.org
- Sheila Herlihy Hennessee (Faith Organizer):
sheila@virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Support checking voter registration

VICPP can help you identify who is registered and who is not within your congregation, as well as who might be registered but is an “infrequent voter” and might need encouragement. VICPP can match members with publicly available voter data through the Voter Activation Network, or VAN. A faith community exports its membership list in an Excel format and shares this spreadsheet with VICPP. This data remains private to your congregation. This gives data on who is registered to vote, how frequently members vote, and what legislative districts members reside in, which can help with advocacy.

See the VICPP Voting Data Agreement:

<https://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023-100-Voting-Data-Agreement-SH-edits-8.11.23.docx>

Sample spreadsheet for submitting congregational member data:

<https://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/100-Voting-Spreadsheet-VAN.xlsx>

Sample Website information

VICPP has created a ready-made set of resources for your congregation’s website to share your commitment and give support to members.

See our website information for sharing:

<https://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Congregational-Web-Page-resources.pdf>



Announcements & Social Media Posts:

- How to create your own social media
 - There are great graphic design tools on the internet, including Canva (www.canva.com)
 - Some strategies:
 - Include graphics in every post.
 - Post surprising facts about elections and civic engagement.
 - Share important dates.
- Re-post VICPP's Civic Engagement posts, shared every Monday on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (and occasionally on TikTok)
 - **Make sure you follow us @vainterfaith**
- Join the Voting Congregations in Virginia Facebook Group.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1359705921651308>
 - Brainstorm ideas and participate in discussion with other faith communities.
- Sample Bulletin Announcement
 - **100% Voter Commitment!** Our faith community has signed up with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy as a 100% voting congregation. Learn about the importance of this year's state legislative elections, and sign up to get involved, at virginiainterfaithcenter.org/get-involved/civic-engagement.
Make a plan to join us in voting on November 7!

Sample graphics:



QR Code to VICPP's Civic Engagement web site



Souls to the Polls Event

The purpose of hosting a “souls to the polls” event is to get your congregation and the community excited about voting. By hosting a community event you can bless and celebrate participation in the 2023 election or encourage members to vote early. Additionally, the event is a call to justice, compassion, and civic engagement.

How to Host?

- Consider hosting on **October 28** or **November 4**, when most localities offer weekend early voting. Otherwise, pick a date during the early voting period (between September 22 and November 4).
- **Option 1: Caravan to the polls**
 - Meet at your congregation in the morning, and plan for your clergy person to offer a blessing of the vote.
 - Offer carpools to members to registrar locations (independent cities and counties will have separate registrars).
 - Reconvene at the congregation after voting for lunch (or donuts)
 - Consider canvassing your neighborhood to turn out additional voters for election day.
- **Option 2: Souls to the polls festival**
 - Find an area on your congregation’s property where you can safely host a large gathering.
 - Allow the event to be open to all, as this can also be a way to engage more with the community.
 - Provide music, food and games.
 - Offer an award system for those who show up to the event wearing an “I Voted” sticker.
 - Have a table on voter registration, how to vote, and how to find out about candidates.

Preaching Support

Why Justice?

At the core of various religious teachings lies the fundamental value of compassion, empathy, and equality for all individuals. These principles motivate congregations to take an active stance in pursuing justice for marginalized and vulnerable populations. It is a part of their civic duty during this year's state election to represent diverse voices, promote inclusivity, address systemic injustices, and impact local communities.

Resources for Preaching (alphabetical order by faith tradition)

- Abrahamic faiths: [Voting & Faith Liturgical Guide – Texas Impact](#)
- African Methodist Episcopal Church: [Voter Alert Initiative](#)
- Catholic: [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)
- Church of God in Christ: [COGIC Counts](#) as well as [Statement on voter suppression efforts](#)
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship: [Faithful Election Resources](#)
- Disciples of Christ: [General Ministries take election seriously](#)
- Episcopal Church: [Vote Faithfully](#) & [Episcopal Election Activators](#)
- Islam: [Muslims Vote Resources](#) as well as [Friday Sermon: What are the priorities of the Muslim voter? \(UK based\)](#)
- Judaism: [What's so Jewish about voting?](#) As well as [Voting & Elections: Jewish Values](#)
- Lutheran: [ELCA Votes](#)
- Mennonite Central Committee: [Election resource 2020](#)
- National Council of Churches: [Voting Rights Are Human Rights](#)
- Presbyterians: [Christian & Citizen resources](#)
- Progressive National Baptists: [Progressive National Baptists gain partners to address voting rights, gun violence](#)
- United Methodist Church: [Bishop's statement on equal voting rights](#)
- United Church of Christ: [Voting Rights](#)
- Unitarian Universalists: [UU the Vote](#)

Same day voter registration

Last year, a new law went into effect in Virginia that allows people to register as a voter all the way up to election day. This allows Virginians to cast a provisional ballot, even if they hadn't previously registered, and will keep them on the voter rolls for all upcoming elections. People can utilize same-day registration for both early voting and on election day. This flyer is available on VICPP's website, and you can publicize it in your faith community.



**Election Day is
November 8!**

**Not registered yet?
No problem!**

Virginia's new same-day registration law allows you to register and cast a provisional ballot at the same time! Vote early or on election day!

Find where to vote and other details at tinyurl.com/vicpp-election



Need any more support? Have additional questions?

Don't hesitate to reach out! This year's elections are so important, and VICPP is making civic engagement our top priority.

- Robert Lester (VICPP Civic Engagement Coordinator):
Robert@virginiainterfaithcenter.org
- Sheila Herlihy Hennessee (VICPP Faith Organizer):
sheila@virginiainterfaithcenter.org

Also, find a bunch of resources, including regional events, on our website:
virginiainterfaithcenter.org/get-involved/civic-engagement.