



Green Notes: Register, Then Vote! You Can Change the World!

Fifty years ago this November, 18-year-olds stood in line at polling places across America for the first time, the voting age having just been lowered from 21. The experience electrified a generation of voters who are now retired from careers they had only begun to imagine on Election Day 1972. This November, a whole new generation of first-time voters has a chance to participate in democracy's most essential ritual, electing federal officials, saying 'yea' or 'nay' to local levies, deciding who'll sit as state and local judges and whether the state Constitution should be amended.

Young or old, voting remains a joyous experience. This is how we show ourselves to be Americans. We believe in the democratic process. We love those little “I Voted” stickers!

This Tuesday marks another important piece of that process – National Voter Registration Day. While you can register to vote in Montana until noon on Election Eve, Tuesday will see a big push to get as many names on the rolls as possible. Missoula County, in fact, will host a voter registration and election education event at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the Elections Center at 140 N. Russell St. Everyone is welcome.

In addition to providing an opportunity for voters to register or update their registration outside of regular business hours, the event will feature a presentation by Elections Administrator Bradley Seaman about the checks and balances that keep elections safe and secure. For residents who can't attend the event in person, Missoula Community Access Television will stream the presentation online at www.missoulavotes.com.

As Missoula Methodists, we can make a difference by registering and voting – and encouraging others to do the same. That work begins in our congregations and our communities – friend to friend, neighbor to neighbor.

This is how Mike Kennedy at Interfaith Power & [Light's Faith Climate Justice Voter Campaign](#) describes our task:

“As people of faith and conscience, we believe elections are a referendum on the values that will shape our future. How can we renew our fragile democracy? How do we honor the human dignity of every person? Will we protect God's Creation, our Sacred Earth, and our children's future? Many of the defining moral issues of our time are on the ballot: faltering democratic institutions, too much wealth in the hands of a few, damage to the climate, cruel immigration policies that tear families apart, mass incarceration that devastates communities of color, senseless gun violence, and threats to global public health and security. These challenges are daunting. We must move forward in a spirit of hope, and we must resist despair and cynicism.”

Let's register, then vote, Missoula Methodists! That's how we create a society based on our shared values.