

There's an African proverb quoted often by the late Congressman John Lewis: "When you pray, move your feet." I love that.

These past 2 years, I've prayed a lot. The events that have assaulted us since March 2020 – like a succession of enormous waves crashing onto the shore with relentless repetition – stirred in me needs for comfort, connection, stability – and action.

So I've prayed – and tried to move my feet, too – although, under the circumstances, mostly virtually.

The Black Lives Matter vigil we held following George Floyd's public murder was a signature event for me – that pebble we picked up and took home to "put in our shoe" – to remind us to make ourselves uncomfortable enough to take a step each day toward justice – has made a lasting imprint.

Well before Covid hit, I was troubled by the approaching national election and its possible outcome. The prospect of unimpeded disregard for people of color, immigrants, poor people, incarcerated people, the climate, and our health – worried and angered me. By the summer of 2020, my concern was further intensified by the fires, the smoke, the hurricanes, the heat waves, and of course, the pandemic that was killing so many.

So, how to move my virtual feet? Well, I upped my election postcard-writing. Like many of you, I joined the Reclaim Our Vote campaign of the Center for Common Ground, a non-partisan organization dedicated to empowering under-represented voters. Volunteers sent more than 9 million cards, handwriting information about mail-in ballots, polling locations, and voting rules to voters of color in voter-suppression states.

As the election neared, I switched to phone banks. For an introvert, that was uncomfortable, but I remembered the pebble on my altar and I did it, day after day, to Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Texas. Mostly I left voice messages; when I reached people, the calls were almost always satisfying and felt like making community.

I rejoiced with 81 million others at the presidential results – and soon turned my attention to the pivotal Georgia senatorial run-off: more postcards, more phone calls.

Came January 6th – one hour of joy – and then z- the assault on the Capitol. And ever since, the extraordinary push to deny constitutional voting rights.

If I had ever thought it might be, I saw that the need for moving my feet was nowhere near over.

I added texting to my quiver – joining *FairFight*, the non-partisan organization founded by Stacey Abrams to advance voting rights and combat voter suppression. Amazingly, I was able to send thousands of texts per hour.

I don't feel partisan, exactly. The voting rights volunteering that I do comes directly out of the teachings of Dr. King and Congressman Lewis. It's soul-force, truth-force work, spiritually grounded in their faith tradition and their embodied practice of Love – which is what makes it possible for me to keep it at the front of my mind and spiritual practice.

The fight against voter suppression is about human worth. It's fundamentally anti-racist. I believe we as UU's have a moral and spiritual imperative to support it. For me, the cause of voting rights is sacred.

So, mostly, I move my feet. From time to time – like, last month – I sort of sag into streaming tv and chewing at the news. But that pebble on my altar keeps calling me back. “Karen! We've got work to do!”

I dearly hope, when we're back in person, a sizable number of us will gather regularly to help combat voter suppression. Maybe we can set up a table in the Atrium to write at after service every Sunday. This is crucial social justice work, and I look forward to seeing what we can do together. In the meantime, there are many organizations to link up with to help in the cause – including the Rev. Barber's **National Call-in for Moral Revival**. As the Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson has said, “This is where faith comes in.”