How do I know what is the right amount to pledge?

The right amount for each person or family to pledge is a personal decision. One way to think about this is to try to make your standard of giving reflect your standard of living.

Given your budget, what can you contribute on a weekly or monthly basis? We ask everyone to consider making a pledge that is both responsible and significant. A pledge commitment in our faith tradition often ranges from 3% to 7% of household income. And some folks are working toward a 10% tithe. Some households already pledge at these levels. For those who do not, we ask you to consider working toward this goal over time.

Please consider pledging an amount that reflects a serious commitment to the place you have chosen as your spiritual home— not simply making a donation to yet another charity. Whatever amount you lovingly choose, we hope you will give until it feels good.

How much does it cost to operate our church?

The current year’s budget is $571,484, and we have approximately 390 formal members in 242 pledging units. We also have 127 children & youth registered in the RE program. A few benchmarks to consider, based on Jan. 2020 data:

- Cost per member: $1,465
- Cost per pledging unit: $2,361
- Average current pledge per pledging unit: $1,948
- Ave. cost of Lifespan RE program per student: $1,000
- Total pledges for current year: $471,323

Total pledge GOAL for 2020-21: $495,000

Where does the budget money come from?

Pledges 80%

- Trust funds distribution 11%
- 2019-20 Income Sources
  - Facility Rentals 2%
  - Fund Raising Events 2%
  - Sunday Offering 2%
  - Other 3%

Shaping Our Future

“Look closely at the present you are constructing. It should look like the future you are dreaming.”

Alice Walker

Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady

Unitarian Universalism is not a passive faith. Here we focus more on deeds than on creeds, on how we live rather than on what we believe. By participating, we shape our faith, our congregation, our community, and our future world.

Actively shaping our faith and our world is especially important now, as we watch continued attacks on the rights and values that our nation has worked so long and so hard to build. Issues like discrimination, hatred, climate change, inequality, and homelessness will not be resolved unless we are willing to act.

These challenging times make it clear why we have chosen to be Unitarian Universalists and why we join and support the UU Society of Schenectady. Here we connect in love to speak truth to power, to explore our values and our spirituality, and to give one another the courage to live our values in the world. Here we come together intentionally, knowing that we must act now to

(Continued inside.)
shape the future and to shape the world that our children will inherit, knowing that our collective voices carry more power than any individual voice alone.

We have accomplished much, but have much more to do. As described on the right, we have ambitious goals for 2020-21 at UU Schenectady, goals that will require the generous participation of all our members in the annual pledge drive that starts on March 8.

Recent Accomplishments

Thanks to your generosity and participation, our congregation has accomplished A LOT in the past 12 months. (See the photo display near the coatroom for more evidence!) A few highlights include:

- The congregation formally welcomed 26 new members.
- We have collectively learned much about white supremacy culture and have nurtured and encouraged one another to act in these challenging times.
- We are actively engaging in meaningful Open Questions to be able to give input to the Board of Trustees.
- The co-ministers and Caring Team have provided pastoral care to members in times of illness, increased caring visits to members who can’t get to Sunday services, and offered support to families who lost a loved one.
- Our staff & financial volunteers have successfully written and are adopting improved procedures for pledges, investments, and tracking the budget income and expenses.
- We are offering a more diverse music program with increased opportunities for our choirs.

How will our pledges impact 2020-21 goals?

The Board of Trustees and Finance Advisory Committee have begun work to create a 2020-21 budget that reflects the congregation’s values. Here are some of the goals the Board of Trustees hopes to accomplish during 2020-21 if the pledge drive is successful:

- Continue support for Lifespan RE, worship, social justice, and the music program.
- Continue to prioritize paying our wonderful staff at Fair Compensation rates, which have increased this year.
- Provide support for efforts to “UU the Vote” during 2020.
- Continue to be a “Fair Share” contributing congregation of the UUA.
- Increase the hours of the Congregational Life Coordinator to support member engagement.
- Analyze the actual FTE (full time equivalent) ministerial needs of the congregation, and as appropriate, develop a plan for beginning to increase the co-ministers’ FTE and salary in a sustainable way.
- Support ongoing and more proactive maintenance of our buildings & grounds.

Your level of generosity directly impacts what we can and cannot do within the congregation and in the wider community. (See data charts over.)

Now is the time to grow and shape our congregation’s capacity and activity level. Now is the time to come together, worship together, and mobilize our collective intentions together like never before.

Questions? Forums to discuss the 2020-21 draft budget are open to all on March 22 and 29. Stewardship Team chair Mark Hyland can answer questions about this year’s pledge campaign at mark.e.hyland@gmail.com. Also, please contact the co-ministers if you need to request a pledge waiver due to your financial situation.