

Our Message: What Are We Asking of You?

The First Universalist Pledge Team asks you to consider the following general points, and then commit to our specific request. [This is an eight-page document, and all references are to material within this document.]

GENERAL POINTS:

- Consider generosity as a spiritual practice (see *Reflections on Generosity* on page 3).
- Align your giving with your values, which are carried out by the work of this Church (see *Great Things Happening at Our Church* on page 4).
- Help us realize our dreams as a faith community (pledges provide approximately 80% of the Church's operating revenue — see *State of Church Finances* on pages 5–7).
- A few of us give most of the money while many of us give much less; thus, there is a need for all of us to step up and pull our share (28% of pledges provide 72% of revenue, while three-quarters of pledges are less than the average pledge — see *The Giving Curve* on page 8).

SPECIFIC REQUEST:

- **Make, or move toward, an annual pledge at the Sustainer Level of the Fair-Share Giving Guide (on the next page).**

Fair-Share Giving Guide

The Fair-Share Giving Guide provides a framework to help discern your appropriate level of giving. The guide, along with an explanation, is available at www.uua.org — enter “Fair-Share Giving Guide” in the search box.

| Adjusted Annual Income | Supporter The church is a significant part of my life and promotes my spiritual growth. | | | Sustainer The church is central to my identity, and I am committed to sustaining our programs. | | | Visionary I am committed to both the present and future growth of my church. | | | Full Tithe I designate 10% of my income to the church as a way to live out my spiritual principles. | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------|--|-----------------|----------------|--|-----------------|----------------|---|-----------------|----------------|
| | Suggested % of Income | Monthly Payment | Annual Payment | Suggested % of Income | Monthly Payment | Annual Payment | Suggested % of Income | Monthly Payment | Annual Payment | Suggested % of Income | Monthly Payment | Annual Payment |
| \$10,000 | 2% | \$16 | \$200 | 3% | \$25 | \$300 | 5% | \$42 | \$500 | 10% | \$83 | \$1,000 |
| \$25,000 | 2% | \$42 | \$500 | 3% | \$63 | \$750 | 5% | \$104 | \$1,250 | 10% | \$208 | \$2,500 |
| \$50,000 | 3% | \$125 | \$1,500 | 4% | \$167 | \$2,000 | 5% | \$208 | \$2,500 | 10% | \$417 | \$5,000 |
| \$75,000 | 3% | \$188 | \$2,250 | 4.5% | \$281 | \$3,375 | 6% | \$375 | \$4,500 | 10% | \$625 | \$7,500 |
| \$100,000 | 3.5% | \$292 | \$3,500 | 5% | \$417 | \$5,000 | 6.5% | \$542 | \$6,500 | 10% | \$833 | \$10,000 |
| \$150,000 | 3.5% | \$438 | \$5,250 | 5% | \$625 | \$7,500 | 6.5% | \$813 | \$9,750 | 10% | \$1,250 | \$15,000 |
| \$200,000 | 4% | \$667 | \$8,000 | 5.5% | \$917 | \$11,000 | 7% | \$1,167 | \$14,000 | 10% | \$1,667 | \$20,000 |
| \$300,000 | 5% | \$1,250 | \$15,000 | 6% | \$1,500 | \$18,000 | 8% | \$2,000 | \$24,000 | 10% | \$2,500 | \$30,000 |
| \$400,000 | 6% | \$2,000 | \$24,000 | 7% | \$2,333 | \$28,000 | 8.5% | \$2,833 | \$34,000 | 10% | \$3,333 | \$40,000 |
| \$500,000 | 7% | \$2,917 | \$35,000 | 8% | \$3,333 | \$40,000 | 9% | \$3,750 | \$45,000 | 10% | \$4,167 | \$50,000 |

Determining Your Income

Start with Adjusted Gross Income
(from IRS form 1040) _____

Add

- Tax-exempt pensions and annuities _____
 - Tax-free income _____
 - Depreciation on rental property _____
 - Other _____
- Total Additions _____

Deduct:

- Non-reimbursed major medical expenses _____
 - Care of parent(s) _____
 - Costs of higher education _____
 - Costs of child care _____
- Total Deductions _____

Income to determine financial commitment _____

Reflections on Generosity

This is the first reflection from the full set that can be accessed via the “Reflections on Generosity” link.

If pressed to define the purpose of our Church, what would you say? First Universalist Church means many things to many people, but we believe that the purpose of our Church is to develop spiritually mature members: people who challenge themselves to create better lives for themselves, their families and their fellow citizens.

The First Universalist Pledge Team is committed to fostering stewardship within our Church community. To us, “stewardship” means acknowledging that we have a shared responsibility toward the Earth — including our lives, our possessions and the communities of which we are a part — and that we are called to express our gratitude by being generous with these blessings.

Secular organizations solicit financial support from members and friends.... But we believe religious organizations have a stronger authority — indeed, a moral authority — **to challenge people to lead generous lives.**

Indeed, the Pledge Team hopes to transform our Church into a congregation of generous people. We recognize that *personal* transformation occurs gradually as one considers new ideas and begins to incorporate them into one’s life; *institutional* transformation follows a similar process. There has been significant personal and institutional transformation occurring within our Church during the past few years (e.g., inward engagement through Community and Practice Circles and outward engagement through the “House that Love Built” project). **Embracing generosity is the next step in this ongoing transformation.**

We believe that there are many others like us in our Church. They need to be asked to make a substantial financial commitment to the Church. If they are not asked clearly, then they will continue in their present situation. The exact amount of 5% is not the key thing here, instead, it is **the engagement with the question of the role of generosity in our lives.** Sometimes people need to be pushed a bit, and we believe that we should push them on this — not in an aggressive way, but instead, in an invitational way. . .

Generosity flows from feelings of abundance & gratitude, while stinginess flows from feelings of scarcity & fear. May we envision the world as a place of abundance.

~~~ First Universalist Pledge Team, Fall 2013.

## **Great Things Happening at Our Church**

How are we giving, receiving and growing into Love's People? How are we becoming spiritually mature? What is happening at First Universalist that is changing you, engaging you and deepening you?

- Amazing worship stories from our worship associate program.
- Chalice Lighters — having our children involved in worship every Sunday.
- Sunday morning worship continues to touch and transform, through music, word, and sermon. Sunday morning worship invites us to give, receive and grow into Love's people.
- Teaching Church — we've had ministerial interns the past 4 years.
- Taking on Racial Justice work.
- House that Love Built — we surpassed our monetary goal, now let's get that thing built!
- Over a thousand people have participated in Community Circles, and it has been a profound experience for many. It has changed the culture of the Church, created a space to go deep, reflect, and listen to where Love is calling us next.
- Serving 1000 plus people every Sunday.

All of these great things require staff resources, leadership, and support. The growth of the Church has outstripped our resources. We need to compensate staff fairly, and help fund the programs and initiatives we love and care about. All of these efforts are aligned with our efforts to give, receive, and grow into Love's people in the world.

## **State of Church Finances**

Paul Robinson, Church treasurer, summarizes the financial health of the Church, and the role that pledges play in maintaining and enhancing that health.

### **What Are the Net Assets of the Church?**

The total value of our building, cash and investments minus our liabilities is \$4,651,404 as of 12/31/2013.

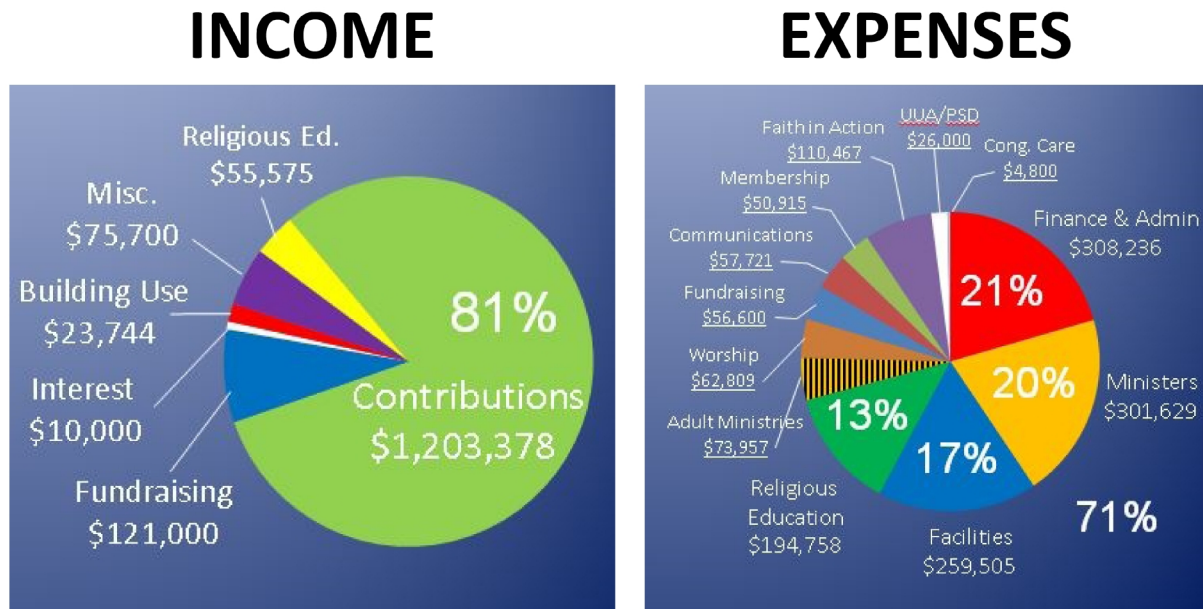
### **How Much Money Does the Church Have, and Where Is It Kept?**

The Church keeps its monies in the following three funds, with much of the money being dedicated to specific purposes.

- **The General Operating Fund** pays for the general operation of the Church, but also includes additional monies that can only be spent on specific items. A general indication of the health of such a fund is the amount of reserves. We have approximately \$400,000 in reserves, which is an appropriate amount for an organization of our size.
- **The First Universalist Foundation Fund** is dedicated to supporting social-justice activities in the wider community. This fund has approximately \$1,300,000 in equity (cash and investments). Annual spending is limited to no more than 5% of the total fund value.
- **The Legacy Fund** is dedicated to support and enhance the mission of the Church. This fund has approximately \$350,000 in equity (cash and investments). Annual spending is limited to no more than 7% of the total fund value, and it has generally been the practice to designate a specific expense to be supported by these funds each year.

## Where Does Our Money Come From, and Where Does It Go?

Most of our money (81%) comes from the financial support of our members and friends primarily in the form of their annual pledges (see the Contributions item in the INCOME column below). Our money goes to pay for Church programs with salaries of Church staff being the largest single expense (see the EXPENSES column below).



The 2013–2014 budget (income and expenses).

## So, How Are We Doing Financially?

The Church is in good shape financially. We have a solid pledge base and a good amount of reserves. We also recently refinanced the loan on our building at a lower rate than the previous loan. However, we still have a number of financial needs that should be met in order to fulfill our mission and vision as a faith community. Here follows a summary of those needs.

- **Capital Projects and Deferred Maintenance.** We need to address some deferred building maintenance and fund our Capital Improvement Plan. To that end, we recently negotiated an option to increase our building loan to help fund capital needs. Practically, this means an increase in the annual budget, likely between \$10,000 to \$30,000.

*Our Message: What Are We Asking of You?*

- **Staffing.** As our Church grows, so do the administrative and staffing needs to support the programming and infrastructure. We also hope to expand the Faith in Action position to 30 hours a week, depending on the outcome of the pledge drive and other competing budget priorities.
- **Wages.** The board and staff have just completed a comprehensive compensation evaluation. The board is committed to paying employees fairly, and to do that the Church will need to make several salary adjustments.
- **Other.** We are looking to increase our financial commitment to the Unitarian Universalist Association and Mid America Region, to fund our Racial Justice Journey, and to be an active and vital presence in the Minneapolis community.

**This is Where You (Those Reading This) Come In.**

We rely on the generosity of our members and friends to meet the needs of the Church. As Treasurer, I believe that you should be aware of what it takes to operate the Church. If you take the total revenue from last year's pledge drive (\$1,074,031), and divide it by the number of pledges (648), you get **\$1,657 per pledge**. Another way to look at this is to divide the total revenue by the number of members (1,032) to get **\$1,041 per member**.

These pledge averages provide a framework for thinking about your pledge. We recognize the socio-economic diversity within First Universalist. Obviously, some pledges are below these averages, and some are above them. In the end, we are grateful for each and every pledge, because it helps us live into our mission to Give, Receive and Grow.

## The Giving Curve

The financial results from last year's pledge campaign are summarized as follows.

