

# A Few Stewardship FAQs

**What is a “pledge”?** A pledge is a promise to donate a certain amount of money to the congregation within the congregational fiscal year, which runs from April 1 through March 31.

**Why pledge and how is my pledge used?** Pledges support the annual budget of our congregation, providing worship and music, lifespan religious education, our many social justice projects, pastoral care, community events, and much more. Pledge income also pays the salaries of our minister and staff and for the operation and maintenance of our facilities. When members and friends of the congregation pledge to give a certain amount, it allows us to project the funding for our operating budget for the coming year. Traditionally, pledges provide about 75% of the income for our budget.

**Do I need to be a member to pledge?** Anyone can make an annual pledge to the UUCS, member or not.

**Do I have to pledge to be a member of the congregation?** Our bylaws require that we have a record of some financial contribution during the current fiscal year in order for you to retain status as a voting member of the congregation. However, there is not a required amount. If your financial situation precludes you from making a contribution, you may obtain a waiver from our minister.

**How much should I pledge?** Using round numbers, the church budget is about \$400,000. Around \$300,000 of that comes from church members, and we have about 300 members. So, for the year, we are looking for an average pledge of \$1000 per member or \$2000 for a couple. Of course, some people are better off financially and can give more, and some people have very limited financial resources and cannot contribute that much. Our Giving Guide\* might help you determine what you want to pledge.

**What if I become a member and want to pledge after the fiscal year has begun?**

Based on the numbers for a full year (above), if you joined, say, in June with three quarters of the fiscal year remaining, we would hope for a pledge of about \$750 from new individual members, \$1500 from couples. That would take you through the current fiscal year, and you could make a full year pledge in February, for the next fiscal year that would begin April 1.

**Will I receive a bill or statement?**

We encourage pledges by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or direct deposit from your bank account, so that a monthly transfer takes place automatically. We will also have payment by credit card available shortly (we will notify the congregation as soon as this is in place). Regardless of how you pay your pledge, you will receive a quarterly statement indicating how much you have pledged for the year and how much of that pledge has been received. And for tax purposes we send out a statement at the end of January showing your contributions for the previous calendar year.

**When do I need to pay my pledge?** At your convenience between April 1 and March 31. We encourage you to sign up for and use Electronic Funds transfer (EFT) or automatic payment from your bank account\*.

**How can I find out specifically where the money goes?** A copy of the current operating budget including line item amounts is available on the UU website\* and upon request at the church office. Or, our church administrator\* will be happy to discuss this with you (it's best to set up an appointment beforehand so you will be assured of her full attention when you meet). Also, UUCS members are always welcome at the monthly finance committee meetings (see church calendar\* for details).

**How does the budgeting process work?** Each year, beginning in December, the finance committee and church administrator begin assessing income and expenses for the following year. Based on their assessments, a preliminary budget is assembled and presented to the congregation for review and discussion after services on either the third or fourth Sunday in January. A pledge campaign begins in February, and depending on the results of this campaign which is critical for ensuring we cover our expenses for the year, the budget may be adjusted and revised. A final budget is presented in detail at the Annual Meeting held on the last Sunday in March, and members of the congregation vote to approve or disapprove this operating budget for the coming fiscal year.

Some  
Frequently  
Asked Questions  
about Giving  
at UUCS



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**Is it possible to “ earmark” a pledge for a specific purpose?** No. As a democratic community, our budgets are created to serve the whole of our work together. All pledges support the work of the entire congregation.

**What about non-monetary gifts to the church?** You can donate stock directly to the church, and there may be certain tax advantages for doing so. Please contact our church administrator for instructions on how to donate stock. Note that in-kind donations, such as items donated for the Serendipity Auction and Flea Market, do not count toward your pledge because they can't be converted to cash to be used for our operating expenses.

**How does a pledge relate to the weekly collection during Sunday services?** The money raised in the offering serves as additional income to benefit our annual budget. However, some people pay their pledge by putting a check or cash into the weekly collection plate. You should write “pledge” on the memo line of your check, or in the case of cash, place it in an envelope that includes your name. This will insure your pledge is appropriately allocated.

**Why do we pay almost \$100 per member to the UUA\*?** We pay dues to our national and local UU associations to support among other things: ministerial settlement; building loans and grants; fundraising consultancy; growth resources; RE curricula and training; the Washington Office for Advocacy and Witness; anti-oppression programs; the *UU WORLD* and *InterConnections*; Skinner House and Beacon Books publishing; young adult and campus ministries; and a resource-rich web site. Please take this into consideration when setting the amount of your pledge or contribution.

**What is the UUCS Endowment Fund?** The Endowment Fund\* is a tax-exempt corporate affiliate that holds the church's endowment. The congregation controls its bylaws\*. Our church president and treasurer, our minister, and five other at-large directors elected by the congregation compose its board. Jim Craig is the Fund's president. The Fund holds our parsonage, Rose's House, and additional investments worth about \$500,000, which are mainly in the UUA Common Endowment Fund, a diversified fund of about \$130 million, professionally managed for the UUA and its congregations. Our Fund's annual earnings go to the church to support the annual budget.