

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PLEDGING



Why do I need to pledge if I put money in the offering?

Just like you need to know your income to plan your household budget for the year, the UUFWC needs to know how much income it can expect so it can create a budget. In addition to the mortgage and utilities many of us pay, the UUFWC also must plan for staffing and programming.

How do I pay my pledge?

Most people pay a portion of their pledge weekly or monthly. You can write a check and place it in the offering basket on Sunday or mail it to the UUFWC. Be sure to put "Pledge '09-'10" on the memo line. If you pay your pledge in cash, be sure to use one of the envelopes across from the name tags so your contribution can be recorded. Both your pledge and contributions toward it are confidential.

What if I can't fulfill my pledge?

Everyone understands that unforeseen circumstances may prevent you from paying your pledge as intended; it can happen to any of us. Your unpaid balance will not be carried into the next year. Your presence in this community is more important to us.

How much is this year's budget?

The total budget requested for the 2009-10 fiscal year (July 1–June 30) is \$194,602. Copies of the budget presented in two ways, by 1) program areas and 2) line item expenses, are available at the UUFWC and online (www.uufwc.org).

What are the largest increases in this year's budget?

Personnel expenses have increased as we continue to work toward our goal to meet Fair Compensation guidelines (see details below). In addition, we will be contracting to have our grass mowed so that we do not have to rely on volunteers for this large task. Other increases include RE curricula, insurance, utilities, and denominational dues, as membership has increased 14% and we pay dues to the larger associations for each member.

How does the UUFWC decide salaries?

The Unitarian Universalist Association has adopted suggested compensation guidelines for congregations. Congregations that adopt and meet these guidelines are designated Fair Compensation Congregations (Practicing). Congregations adopting the guidelines as a goal to be reached within a 5-year period are designated Fair Compensation Congregations (Committed).

Two years ago, the UUFWC Board decided that we would make that 5-year commitment. This meant that a significant increase in our salary package would be needed each year. The main needs were to bring Elaine Strawn's salary up to full-time – she is paid $\frac{3}{4}$ -time despite working what amounts to full-time – and to ensure that her salary met fair

compensation criteria. In addition, modest increases would help the salaries of other staff reach fair compensation levels, cover cost of living adjustments, and make some minor changes to things like vacations. Last year was our first year on the plan, and, except for a one-time gift, we were not able to make any progress toward meeting this commitment.

The Finance Committee estimated that the 2011-2012 budget would have to have \$50,000 more for salaries than the 2006-2007 budget. This would have included inflation and the new sexton position, as well as increases to meet the Fair Compensation commitment. The original plan was to increase compensation by \$15,000 in 2008-2009. We were not able to do this and what increases we were able to muster beyond small cost of living adjustments were made possible from the aforementioned one-time gift.

How is that different from being a Fair Share Congregation?

Fair Share denominational dues are paid for each member of the congregation. For this year, we will contribute \$56 to the Unitarian Universalist Association, our national organization, and \$21 to the Ohio Meadville District, our regional organization, for each of our members. These organizations provide a larger voice for Unitarian Universalism, as well as numerous programming resources for individual congregations. The UUFWC is proud to have been a Fair Share Congregation since 1973.

Won't pledges from the newer members and friends cover the increase in the budget?

It's true that our membership has increased by 14% during the past year and that the budget request is a 5% increase over last year's request, so it would appear that the answer is "yes". HOWEVER, last year's actual pledges were significantly less than what was requested. Some of the difference was made up by a generous gift from an anonymous donor and the rest was realized through cuts in the proposed budget, but the needs did not disappear. This year, we need to make up that difference, plus the 5% increase, as we continue to reach for our goals of fair compensation and meeting the needs of this growing community. So, no, we can't just rely on the newcomers; it's up to all of us.

Are pledges our only source of income?

Other sources include open plate collections (\$13,000), an anonymous donation from 2008 (\$7,000), fundraisers (\$5,000) and a few minor sources. But 87% of our income is from pledges, which means pledges must total \$169,202 if we are meet projected expenses.

What happens if we don't meet our goal this year?

Difficult choices will have to be made. The Finance Committee will work with all the committees to make the decisions about what expenses can be postponed. The final budget for 2009-10, based on pledges, will be provided at the annual meeting on May 17, 2009 at which time all members will vote on whether or not to accept it.