

September 14, 2023



Dear Church Members and Friends,

***Momentum is building at First Unitarian and YOU can help us keep ascending!***

**Where we started:** You may recall from the May congregational meeting that we faced a steep financial climb. Like many churches, we came out of the pandemic period with a net loss of members and financial engagement. However, we did not want to undercut our future ability to meet our mission with dire cuts to our staff or programs. Therefore, in May we approved a budget with a \$40,000 deficit and covered that deficit through a Board investment fund. It is a kind of rainy-day fund for emergency or visionary use.

**But there are positive signs ahead!**

**Leaps taken since then:** One family made a one-time, unrestricted gift of \$50,000 to the church. This will restore the Board investment fund and then some. Wow! Additionally, thanks to the foresight and care of Evelyn Whitehill and Judith Wright, the church received bequests totaling \$96,300. These one-time gifts will support investments like steeple repairs and a multimedia upgrade in the sanctuary. We are so grateful to the people who helped us quickly close this gap and keep our eye on the future. Yet we know that rare gifts from a few generous people is not a sustainable funding plan.

**Where you come in:** To achieve long term financial stability for our mission, continue connecting our members and shining a light of Love in the wider community – our church needs reliable income from *many* people on a consistent basis. That’s why we planned for a fall supplemental pledge campaign when the budget was approved. Please consider increasing your financial commitment to help us step up to the next level.

**Is this a realistic solution? We believe so:** Our Treasurer’s analysis of Second Unitarian, which is the nearest UU church to us, indicates that their members are pledging approximately 15% more than our current pledge commitments. We believe that by **stepping up together in this Fall pledge campaign**, we can meet or exceed our pledge deficit. We know that some people are already doing what they can – and we thank you. For those who can do more, please consider leaping up one or two levels, as shown in the enclosed chart. If we can do this together, our collective momentum will be unstoppable!

We invite you to consider what it means to you that this community is here, in your life and in the lives of others touched by its light, and to do what you can to help us close the gap for good. **Will you help build on the momentum** for our mission?

Please complete the enclosed form and return it to the church office or complete an online form at [firstuomaha.org/stewardship](http://firstuomaha.org/stewardship). You can also find a guideline for pledging and other information on this web page. If you indicate a monthly pledge increase, that amount will be added to your pledge for the remaining seven months of the church year (October – April). We appreciate responses by October 8<sup>th</sup>.

In commitment and gratitude,

Mark Loscutoff, President

Rev. Shari Woodbury, Minister