

2023/2024 Pledge Drive Renew, Nurture & Grow

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why do we have a pledge drive each year? Why should I pledge?

Pledges allow us to develop an operating budget for the upcoming Church Year possible. Because of our combined financial support we are able to pay our staff, provide benefits and support the programs that help us live into our UCM Mission. Pledges also help pay for keeping the lights on and heating our building.

What is the goal for this year's pledge drive?

We have set an ambitious goal of \$378,000 for this year's pledge drive, which is just over a 12% increase over last year's goal.

We have a very ambitious pledge goal this year. What will happen if we don't meet the goal?

The Executive Team with input from the Finance Committee has put together a draft budget which was presented to the Governing Board at the end of January. There have been numerous in-depth discussions about setting such a high goal. The reality is if we want to pay our staff equitably and we want to avoid tapping into the Cash Reserves and LTIF so we have a sustainable budget then we must increase our pledge amount in addition to our fundraising efforts.

Once the pledge total has been determined at the end of March then the ET, with assistance from the Finance Committee, will develop a budget based on a realistic expected income.

I have never pledged before - what is the average pledge made?

The average pledge made during the 2022/23 Pledge Drive was \$1,756. The most common pledged amount was \$1200 (this has been the most common pledged amount for the past 3 years).

Do I need to be a member of UCM to pledge?

Anyone who wants to financially support UCM can pledge.

Is all the money I give to UCM part of my pledge?

Any payment you identify as a pledge is part of your pledge, but additional money you spend at the Holiday Fair, Fall Rummage Sale and other UCM events including money given to the Community Pouch is not part of your pledge.

How do I determine how much to pledge? Is there someone I can talk with about this?

In your pledge packet you will find a Suggested Fair Share Contribution Guide on the back of Rev. Joan's letter. You can use this guide for determining your pledge amount. If you need assistance you can contact a Steward during the Coffee Hour or visit the Stewardship table in the vestry.

I am on a limited income and can't contribute as much as I would like to.

We are grateful for any amount you can contribute. We are very aware that there are different giving capacities within our congregation. We hope you will give within your means to help support our staff and the mission of UCM.

I am on a fixed income; how do I figure out how much I can pledge?

In your pledge packet you will find a Suggested Fair Share Contribution Guide on the back of Rev. Joan's letter. You can use this guide for determining your pledge amount. If you need assistance you can contact a Steward during the Coffee Hour or visit the Stewardship table in the vestry.

What factors have led to such a large increase?

This year we have not included in the initial budget an amount from Cash Reserves which was \$45,000 in last year's budget. Relying on the use of Cash Reserves each year to balance the budget is not sustainable in the long term.

We have strived to meet the UUA's Fair Compensation Guidelines over the past several years and while we have not met all of the benefits we are now able to provide health care benefits. These guidelines were established 1995 and ranges updated annually.

Additionally, UUA has issued new compensation guidelines for staff. These guidelines address past inequities between staff positions; basing compensation on the level of responsibility, cost of living in our community, and making the salary ranges more uniform across staff positions.

How does my pledge support UCM?

Over 80% of the UCM budget provides staff salaries and benefits. In this year's draft budget all of the salaries and benefits are provided by the projected pledge amount.

Is this year's pledge drive unique in any way?

Our building is fully open and we are meeting in person! The installation of our new ventilation system is complete and fully functioning. Of course, continuing to mask indoors is your option and is not discouraged. We will have Stewards available during Coffee Hour after Sunday service.

We can't give as much as we would like to; what other ways can we support UCM?

Stewardship takes many forms and the Annual Pledge Drive is just one part. You can volunteer and participate in a wide variety of ways to help UCM meet its Mission by providing your time and your talents. Appeals for volunteers are often made in the Sunday announcements and in the weekly e-newsletter from UCM. Opportunities to participate also come about organically, through connections with friends at UCM and following your interests.

What are the ways we can make our pledge?

There are several ways to make your pledge.

1. You can complete the form on the remittance envelope included in your pledge packet and bring it to the Stewardship Team in the vestry on Sunday or mail it to UCM.
2. You can go online and make your pledge at <https://tinyurl.com/UCM-pledge-2023>

In what ways can I pay the pledge?

You can:

1. Mail a check to UCM with the notation that it should be applied to your 2024 pledge.
2. Log into your Breeze account and select how you would like to pay your pledge. You can select a **one-time payment** or set it up to be a **recurring monthly payment** - which can be taken out of your bank account. There are lower fees associated with transferring from a bank account than using a credit card.

3. Put a check in the offering during Sunday Service. (Please note on the check that this is part of your pledge).

Where does UCM's income come from? Typically, how much of UCM's income comes from pledges?

The primary income source for our budget is pledges. In the current 2022/23 budget pledge income accounts for 71% of total income and this year's draft budget the pledge amount accounts for 82%.

What are the Budget Priorities that can we expect to see this year?

We will strive to:

- support our staff with equitable salaries and maintain health care benefits
- provide appropriate staffing to support our vibrant and varied programming
- reduce the use of cash reserves in meeting our income needs
- replace cash reserve income with increased income from pledges, fundraising and building