

Pledge Drive FAQ

What is a “pledge drive?”

The Pledge Drive is how most churches raise their operating funds. Our church raises funds in three major categories: Pledging from its members, rentals, and fundraisers (like our auctions). Pledging raises the bulk of our funds so that we can pay our staff, pay for our programming needs (including paying for the electric and gas heating costs of the Ukrainians which have skyrocketed), and of course keep the lights on.

How much should I pledge?

Unlike some churches, we do not require that you tithe or pledge a set amount. Rev. Sian asks that you give until it “gives you joy.” That is, what is the amount that makes you proud and happy to submit? People generally give anywhere from \$240 - \$20,000 per year. The UUA suggests \$240 as a minimum unless you have severe financial hardship. The Suggested Fair Share Contribution Guide has some guidelines to help you decide. The Pledge Drive brochure provides information on the ranges of how much members and friends pledged last year. This information may also help you to decide how much to pledge. Our bylaws simply state that you make a “good-faith effort” to pledge. We do not require a monetary pledge for membership, and we recognize that there are many ways to contribute to this beloved community.

Do I write my pledge check monthly or yearly?

It’s up to you. Most people who work tend to pledge a monthly amount. You can even have it taken directly out of your bank account if you prefer (contact our bursar at bursar@ocuuc.org to get it set up). People who are not working often give in one lump sum. The choice is yours.

Why are you doing it now? What’s the process?

Our church has a fiscal year that runs from July to June. Starting in March, we begin the pledge drive. We begin it this early because a) it can take a while for people to pledge - either they have been away or they forget and so the Pledge Drive Committee has to follow up with those that need it; b) The Finance Committee then has to then create the budget based on the projected pledges and other income; c) The Board has to approve the budget and then d) the budget must be voted on by the congregation in June. All of that takes a while to put together!

Does the UUA give us money to make our goals?

Um... no. In fact, we give them money. We are what is known as a “Fairshare Congregation.” That is, based on a mathematical calculation including our budget size, our membership size, and our geographical area, the UUA asks us to give them money so that they can keep supporting our congregations.

I gave last year, why do I need to give now?

Our operating pledge drive happens every year. Each year we ask people to give.

Err... I can’t pledge this year. Do I need to let people know?

Yes! Even if your pledge is “0” we need to hear from you. That way you won’t get a follow up call from the Pledge Drive Committee.

Can I see what everyone else pledges?

No, pledges are strictly confidential and information concerning pledges shall only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Only the Bursar and the Pledge Drive Chairperson see the pledges in order for them to complete the pledge drive. The minister has access to the information but prefers not to know unless it's necessary.

I pledged last year, why do you need another pledge? Why not just keep doing the same amount?

We ask people to pledge every year and our fiscal year is from July to June. We do not assume that you want to continue. It is part of our transparency and respect for your financial well-being that we ask that you make a pledge each year. Thank you!

I pledged to the Sanctuary, why do I need to pledge now?

These are two separate pledges. The pledge drive is about our operating budget. The pledge to the sanctuary is for our capital campaign and is outside the operating budget.

Do I just pledge the same as last year?

You can, but we encourage you to increase your pledge by 10% or by the cost of living so that we can do the same for our staff and pay our bills. We too are affected by inflation!

What happens if I can't continue my pledge?

We understand! People's situations change. Simply contact our Bursar at bursar@ocuuc.org and let them know. Only they and the Finance Chair will see this change. They might tell the minister if pastoral support is needed.

If you have other questions, please contact our Bursar at bursar@ocuuc.org.