

First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Shared Ministry: Stewardship and Pledging 2015



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why should I pledge my time, talent and treasure?**

As a member, friend or ally of this church you are part of a spiritual community that seeks to put faith into action for the benefit of the church and the wider community, as well as the web of life, of which we are a part. Ministry happens when we act on the belief that our good works and volunteerism, our money and our passions are what bring the mission, vision and ends of our church alive. In short, we, all of us, are the church.

We are all Sowers of the dream of a *spiritually alive, radically inclusive and justice centered world*.

And what are the fruits of our gifts of time, talent and treasure? We believe that right here, on the corner of 14th and Castro we reap in abundance the gifts of spirit, love, healing, joy and community. With open hands and hearts we share this bounty within, among and beyond our walls. And there is still much more work to be done to create the world of our dreams....



- **How much should I pledge?**

Church members are expected to make meaningful contributions of their time and money within their means.

We are also beginning our second year of asking the congregation to help sustain and meet the matching fund raising goals for the Mary Ann and Tom Haw Fund for Community Ministry. This Faith in Action fund is a way for you to specify monies that will go directly to support the ministry of our newly called pastor, Rev. Jacqueline Duhart. You have an opportunity to continue the promise we made to sustain our Faith in Action Ministry by making an elective contribution in addition to your 2015 pledge amount.

Your 2015 Pledge form includes the total of your 2014 pledge and a convenient box to indicate an additional pledge increase or your additional support for the Faith in Action Fund if you choose to do so.

- **What if I'm a new pledger or wish to revise my pledge amount?**

We all have different financial means, challenges, and abundance. One tool to use to determine giving *where we are all giving on an equal basis* is called the "Our Future is in Our Hands" Fair Share giving guide. Generally, a good starting point is 3% of whatever you determine your baseline to be.

Please note: How you calculate your income or baseline is up to you. The Bay Area is very expensive so many of us use after-tax income minus any large expenses that we find challenging. We then take the appropriate percent of the amount left. Most of us find that the amount calculated that way is more manageable due to the high cost of where we live. And many of us find we actually end up increasing our pledge as a result of this approach. The First Unitarian Church of Oakland has developed a great pledge calculator that takes into account individual circumstances. Refer to the "Our Future is in Our Hands" Fair Share giving guide.

- **What does it take to sustain our church?**

Our operating budget for 2015 is anticipated to be about \$650,000. This includes minister and staff salaries, building maintenance, denominational contributions, and payment on our mortgage. In addition, the congregation devotes over 10,000 hours to worshipping, and 50,000 hours learning, teaching, rehearsing, caring, organizing and being together each and every year. Supporting our community with time, talent and treasure is necessary for its viability.

• **What does it mean to be a Voting Member?**

Section 3 of the church bylaws states: *Any Member shall be entitled to vote at any meeting of the membership duly called pursuant to these Bylaws, provided that the Member has recorded contributions at the minimum rate of \$100 per annum in the preceding six months. In specific circumstances any Minister, in his or her discretion, may waive the financial contribution required for voting eligibility.*

• **How can I learn more about our church's finances?**

First Unitarian's Ministers, Executive Team (ET), and Board are entirely committed to sharing with any and all members of the congregation our church's financial picture, including operating budget, past expenses and revenues, debt (mortgage), and plans for the future. Please, feel free to ask any questions in person, on the phone or through email. The executive team: executiveteam@uuoakland.org. The board of trustees: board@uuoakland.org.

We believe that shared financial ownership of our church is part of our shared ministry, and believe that a better understanding of our organization's financial situation will help our congregation more fully participate in our church, including prioritizing our activities, going through our discernment process to understand our vision for ministry going forward, and, yes, sharing their personal financial assets. We are working to create more opportunities for this work.

• **What if I can't give \$100 per year (per adult) but still want to be a voting member?**

You may not be able to give the minimum rate but we ask that you give any amount, whether it's one dollar or five per year, and then obtain a ministerial pass for the rest. Your contribution is meaningful and means that you are sharing in the support of our community. This contribution, combined with a ministerial pass for the remainder, will allow you to be a voting member. If you find that you need a full ministerial pass, please talk to a minister as soon as possible.

My Commitment Level

We invite you to spend some time discerning your commitment level by reading over the following table. If you find that your commitment level does not yet match your pledging ability, that's okay! Every gift counts. When times are better, you can reassess your pledging level using the "Our Future is in Our Hands" Fair Share giving guide.

Pledging Circles	My Commitment Level	Pledging definition One or more may apply to you
Visionary Circle	As a visionary, I am making a very large gift to the church to ensure its future viability as a community that will forever seek to stand on the side of love.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endowment, large donation, property or planned giving and/or • Pledgers who are maintaining their current pledge level of 10% or higher of their baseline (see "Our Future is in Our Hands" giving guide).
Sower's Circle	I believe in the mission, vision and ends of my beloved community and am committed to sowing seeds for the present and future growth of UU Oakland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledgers who are maintaining their current pledge level of 5% or higher of their baseline (see "Our Future is in Our Hands" giving guide).
Sustainer	I am committed to sustaining our programs within, among and beyond our walls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledgers who are maintaining their current pledge level of 3% or higher of their baseline (see "Our Future is in Our Hands" giving guide).
Supporter	The church is a significant part of my life and promotes my spiritual growth. I am committed to supporting this nurturing community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledgers of at least 100.00 per year, per adult (this allows you to be a voting member, see explanation above) • Pledgers who can afford less than 100.00 per year and receive a ministerial pass for the difference (this allows them to be a voting member) • Pledgers who receive of a full ministerial pass (this allows them to be a voting member)

All levels of pledging are valuable and valued. Please, give what you are willing and able.