

First Universalist Church of Rochester

Stewardship Basics

Welcome to the First Universalist Church of Rochester!

Our church is funded primarily through the pledges of members and friends of the church. We conduct an annual stewardship campaign, asking for a financial commitment from each member or friend of the congregation. This helps us to plan our budget for the following fiscal year. Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about how stewardship works.

Why pledge? Doesn't it count that I put money in the collection basket each week?

Each time you contribute to the First Universalist Church, it helps our mission to *nurture the spirit and serve the community*. However, only about 2% of our needed income comes from the plate offering, and the amount can be difficult to predict. A pledge is a more substantial commitment which allows us to know how much collective income we can rely on in order to plan expenditures.

How do I decide how much to pledge?

Our members are diverse in their economic circumstances, and so are their pledges! While our average pledge is just under \$2,000, some are able to give many thousands of dollars each year, others much less. That's why we suggest calculating your pledge on a percentage of your total income, considering the level of commitment to the church as well as your family's specific circumstances. You'll find a suggested giving guide on the back of the pledge card and in the stewardship brochure each year.

That's a large check to write! I don't have that much right now.

Remember that when you make a pledge, we do not expect the payment now, but rather during the course of the next fiscal year (July 1- June 30). You are making a plan to pay the amount of your pledge during that upcoming time. Most of our members spread their payments out to weekly or monthly amounts. A pledge of \$500 is just \$10 per week, for example.

How do I pay my pledge?

Most members pay their pledges by check, payable to First Universalist Church, with “pledge” in the memo line. Checks can be mailed or dropped into the collection basket on Sunday. Our collector keeps track of your pledge payments and sends periodic statements for your records and for tax purposes. If you are paying with cash, please use a sealed envelope with your name and “pledge” on it. We are currently exploring ACH deductions as an option for pledge payments.

My work situation is a little shaky. What if I make a pledge, then lose my job next year?

Your pledge is simply your *plan* for what to give. If you make a pledge and then your circumstances change, you can change your planned giving to the church. So, for example, if you make a generous pledge and then lose your job, you can let us know you won't be able to fulfill your pledge. Conversely, if you win the lottery during the next fiscal year, you can adjust your pledge accordingly! Your pledge is not a contract, just a good-faith prediction.

I don't want my pledge made public. Who will know what I give?

Pledges are private. Only the collector and minister have access to pledge amounts.

I'm ready! How do I make my pledge?

Ask for a pledge card from the minister or any member of the board or finance team. Fill your pledge card out and sign it, then return it to the church office in person or via US mail.

Thank you for being a part of this beloved community!