



ALLEN AVENUE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



**Stewardship Campaign
2023-2024**



*Your Beliefs. Your Community.
Our Commitment.*

Greetings from the Stewardship Pledge Drive team!

Welcome! Whether you have been coming to the Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church for years or are relatively new, our community depends on *you* for its sustenance. We support one another as individuals, families, and community on our life journeys. Here at A2U2, we strive to provide an environment which celebrates life, stimulates creativity and fosters spiritual and intellectual exploration.

Your beliefs and *your* commitment create *our* community. What happens here in the present and in the future depends on your creative gifts *and* your financial support.

Your pledge of financial commitment covers church operations for the period from ***July 2023 through June 2024***. We are finally entering a post-COVID world. There will be greater demands placed on our staff and on our unique six-acre church grounds and buildings in these inflationary times. This re-emergence will present a challenge to the community that we are eager to meet.

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Our Finance Committee and Treasurer have estimated that we will need a program budget of approximately \$270,000 to cover staff salaries and necessary material costs for the coming church year. This booklet will provide you with more information about these anticipated expenses and why they are so important to allowing A2U2 to more fully reopen and allow members and friends to return to those activities that are most important to our community.

When I attend our Sunday services, whether led by Reverend Tara or members of our brilliant worship committee, I always experience an inspirational mental lift that allows me to survive the ups and downs of daily life and the harsh echoes of our divisive political environment for many days. That sense of A2U2-inspired hope and optimism and being in a community I enjoy are what keep me coming back year after year and it is certainly worth the financial contribution that my wife Karen and I make to the church every year.

Here are two key facts from A2U2's financial "back office" where I spend a good bit of my time: 1) eighty percent of the church's budget comes from pledges from members and friends; 2) our average "Pledge Unit" (a single person, couple or family) commits to giving the church \$1,748 a year to support our staff, building and programs. That works out to about \$34 a week. Some give substantially more than this. If you are not already giving at that level, can you increase your pledge to help financially build our beloved UU community?

David Wilcock, Chair

Terri Grover John Howard

Steve Hansen Peter Reed

<https://a2u2.breezechms.com/form/FY24-Pledge-Form>

Message from the President

Ann Packard, President Board of Trustees



We support one another as individuals, families, and community on our life journeys. This church has become “home” in so many ways for many of us, and hopefully, for you too.

There are so many reasons to be as generous as you can when determining your financial commitment this year. As we emerged from the COVID pandemic, unsure of our church’s financial stability, the Board recommended hiring a 3/4 time transitional minister, and the congregation agreed. After experiencing this for several months, we now recommend we return this position to full-time. Volunteers are doing tasks that would be better served by the minister. For example, managing and guiding the staff; offering deeper pastoral care; and becoming more involved in the overall life of the community.

Volunteers have also been filling in for our office administrator. We are committed to hiring an experienced, fully-qualified person dedicated to providing a strong professional presence in the office 25 hours per week. In addition, we are lucky to have talented and dynamic leaders for our Religious Education and Music programs. We have also hired a cleaning service to provide consistent, high quality maintenance of our building. Yet as it ages, it is also in need of some repairs and improvements.

Hiring and retaining quality staff is so important. The UUA recently

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published guidelines to offer a fair and living wage to all employees. We want to move forward following these guidelines and adjusting salaries where necessary. There have been many years when we did not provide an annual cost of living increase because we felt that our budget could not support it. We hope to end this practice and follow the new guidelines.

Your Beliefs. Your Commitment. Our Community. All of these are intertwined to make A2U2 a supportive, warm and generous place for all of us. Every contribution is greatly appreciated. Please be generous in your financial commitment.

**Thank you. Ann Packard,
President, Board of Trustees**
Reflect, Re-energize, Rejoice



Message from the Minister

Reverend Tara Humphries Transitional Minister



What an exciting time in the life of this faith community! Since my arrival in August we have been emerging from pandemic life, joyfully re-connecting, and rebuilding this place so many of us call our spiritual home. It has been an incredible gift to witness your steadfast commitment, your willingness to embrace the unknown of liminal times, your care for one another, and your vision for what this community can be and become. A2U2 is a vibrant place these days! We are back worshipping together with a full sanctuary and a screen full of Zoom faces. We are singing together, eating together, checking in on one another. We are learning, growing, taking risks, listening hard, deepening spiritually. There is a palpable sense of joy and energy here when we gather. I can't express enough how proud I am to be your minister in this transformational time. You are on your way!

In 2018 our UUA President, Rev. Susan Frederick Gray, spoke about the challenging times we are living through. "Two things" she writes, "are absolutely clear to me right now." The first - "this is no time for a casual faith." And the second, "this is no time to go it alone." This is no time for a casual faith, and this is no time to go it alone. We need one another, this community, and this faith that both roots and guides us. Now more than ever. Your generosity and your commitment make it possible to sustain our ministries and widen our welcome as we journey forward together.

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How much should I give to support A2U2?

Your financial commitment is essential to the health of our community. Each household that helps to support our church knows best



what they can afford. You have to decide the value of your association with this community of like-minded people and what you can afford to spend to keep our community functioning well.

The pie charts on page 10 show the anticipated amounts of spending on our programs and income from various sources for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Given the impacts of the COVID pandemic, this budget will depend

even more heavily than usual on your contributions. To give you an idea of the range of what your fellow congregational members and friends contribute, the table on the next page provides a picture of the pledge distribution for our *current year* (2022-2023). We have divided all pledges into four groups or quartiles and shown the number of “pledge units” in each group. A *pledge unit* is a pledge made by a family or individual member or friend of the church. The average value of our 117 pledges was \$1,748 per year. As a member or friend who pledges to support our A2U2 community, you know where you are in this array and what you can reasonably afford.

We know that making decisions to raise or lower your pledge are not easy.



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Of course, not everyone can be among those who contribute over \$2100 per year. However, increasing your pledge to join a higher group in our table below may be achievable for your household budget.

So this year, we will ask: can you stretch a bit and increase your pledge by 5 percent to help us do more of the things the congregation would like to do as we recover from COVID?

Pledges in our Current Fiscal Year

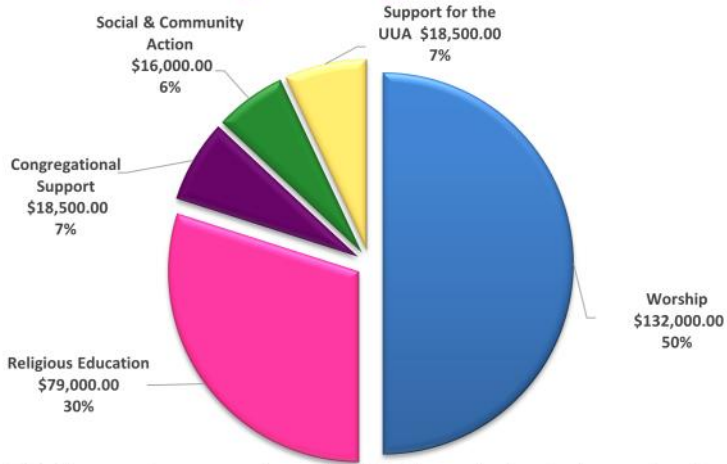
A2U2 has about 150 Pledge Units on the books (made up of single persons, couples and families). For the current fiscal year 117 PUs pledged a total of \$204,555 to support the church through the end of June, 2023. We also have a much smaller number of non-member “friends PUs”, some of whom also pledge financial support.

The amount of annual pledges varies greatly from \$100/year to over \$10,000 per year. This is shown in the quartile analysis table below.

Analysis of A2U2 Support Pledges Made for FY23			
Quartile	Number of PUs	Total Pledges	Average Pledge
First	6	\$50,450	\$8,408
Second	14	\$51,172	\$3,655
Third	25	\$51,636	\$2,065
Fourth	72	\$51,297	\$712
Total	117	\$204,555	\$1,748

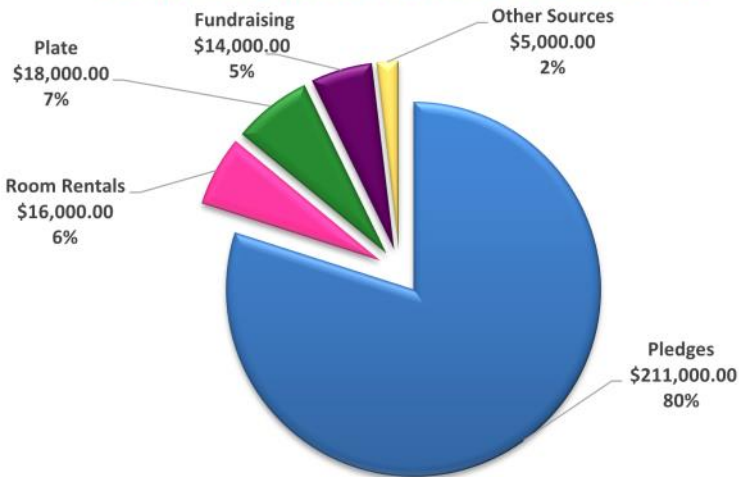
<https://a2u2.breezechms.com/form/FY24-Pledge-Form>

Program Budget 2023-24



Each of these spending areas contains a portion of A2U2's operational overhead costs, estimated at about \$70,000/year or about 27% of the budget

Estimated Income Sources 2023-24



<https://a2u2.breezechms.com/form/FY24-Pledge-Form>

Giving Thoughts

Please remember that whatever you contribute, it is, and will always be, a much appreciated gift to your community. Give what you can as our community moves beyond the pandemic! Please consider these questions:

- **Where is A2U2 in your giving priorities based on your spiritual and secular beliefs and commitments?**
- **What motivates you to support your values and convictions at A2U2?**

How to Pay Your Pledge

There are three ways to pay your pledge: by check; in Breeze (which can accept credit cards or bank transfers, one-time or recurring payments), or by payment from your financial institution Bill Pay to A2U2. You can choose the number of payments that works for your budget. Our Treasurer, Peter Reed, is happy to help you if needed.

If you have an IRA or other retirement funds, and are over age 72, you can also make a tax-free transfer directly from your retirement fund administrator to A2U2. This is an easy way to satisfy your Annual Required Minimum Distribution. Talk to your retirement planner or financial consultant if you need help with this.

If you can make your pledge through a gift of appreciated stock or investments, that also can be done through a tax-free transfer to A2U2. Talk to our Treasurer, Peter Reed, for details on the steps to take for this option.





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