



2024-2025 Stewardship Campaign

...and our service begins

Message from the Stewardship Team

Every Sunday Rev. Tara ends service with the beautiful phrase: *“Our worship has ended, and our service begins.”* Her phrase recognizes the fluid boundary between our faith and society. We are asked to consider how our spiritual journey affects ourselves, our congregation, and our community. We are called to examine how that week’s message can influence our perspective on life, the universe, and everything we do. This is important work and creating a thriving congregation depends upon your creative *and* financial support.

Our pledge drive has changed from prior years to simplify the pledging process. Each pledge unit (a single person, couple, or family) will receive a paper pledge form with three options: last year’s pledge plus an inflation adjustment; the same pledge as last year’s; or a different amount. Inflation has affected the church’s expenses as it has in all aspects. If your finances allow it, we ask that you increase your pledge to help us keep up. We know, of course, that some people are on fixed incomes and last year’s pledge is what is achievable. We appreciate this. There is also the opportunity to pledge a different amount if you wish. Perhaps you will decide that this is the year to increase your pledge to a new, higher level to reflect your commitment to our beloved community. We would like to make the pledge process as easy as possible.

Your pledge covers church operations for the period **July 2024 through June 2025**. We have fully recovered from COVID and are considering several upgrades this year: making the kitchen fully operational, deepening our support for religious education, and of course, supporting an extraordinary full time developmental minister (hurrah!). While upgrades are important, your pledge will also support essential, but mundane, things such as heating and snowplowing.

Our Treasurer has estimated that we will need a program budget of \$321,000 to cover all expenses for the next year. This booklet will provide more information about these anticipated expenses and why they are so important in allowing us to pursue the activities important to our community. If you are new to A2U2 our booklet will also provide guidance about how much you could consider pledging.

Steve Hansen, chair

Terri Grover, Silvia Hansen, Peter Reed, David Wilcock



Message from the President

Ann Packard

Each Sunday, Rev. Tara ends our worship service with “*Our worship has ended, and our service begins.*” What does this mean to you? To me this informs how I go out into the world in the week ahead of

me. How I act and behave in public. It grounds me in the values and beliefs as a Unitarian Universalist.

Many of our members are involved in volunteering in the community in various ways. Helping families in need, teaching, offering rides to elders through various organizations. Some donate money and goods to a variety of causes. Some show up at a protest or State House or to witness how the homeless are being treated.

Service to the church is vital for our community. Just volunteering to do a small thing is service. It does not have to be big. Perhaps you see something that needs to be done and you ask if you can help. Perhaps you read a request in the eBlast and you decide this is your time to join a team or committee. Or you decide it’s time to take a turn making coffee after the service. Or you realize you’d like to volunteer to help clean up the grounds, join the nominating committee or become the moderator.

At this particular time of the year, service means supporting the church financially, as best you can, by pledging.

Why do we need our members to pledge? A pledge is a promise to help with the expenses in running the church. The facility itself needs heat, lights, maintenance, supplies, etc. And the personnel (Minister, Director of Religious Education, Music Director and the Office Administrator) need to be paid to the best of our ability and within the guidelines of the UUA.

Will you please help? Your service is now specifically requested. Please be generous with your pledge. “*Our worship has ended and our service begins.*”



Message from the Minister

Rev. Tara Humphries

It’s that time of year where we have conversations about the time, work, and finances it takes to steward the mission and daily operations of our beloved church. I find these conversations invigorating.

As I look back at the church I arrived to in August of 2022 to the church we are today, in March of 2024, I am moved by the trust we’ve built, the conversations we’ve had, the ways in which we’ve served the community within and beyond our walls.

Though I had planned to depart after the end of this church year, I accepted the invitation to transition into the role of your Developmental Minister for an additional 4–7-year tenure. A new beginning! This reflects my belief in the power and potential of our shared ministry. This is my commitment to you. To us. We’ll need all hands on deck.

This year is critical. We as a church are moving towards health and vibrancy. At the same time, we face an intense election season that has many fearing for the future of democracy and basic rights. We live in a scary, broken world. And yet we are choosing to thrive. We have so much to offer. So much to share.

Your generosity and steadfast commitment make this ministry possible.

Thank you for all you have given. Thank you for all you will give.

And our service begins!



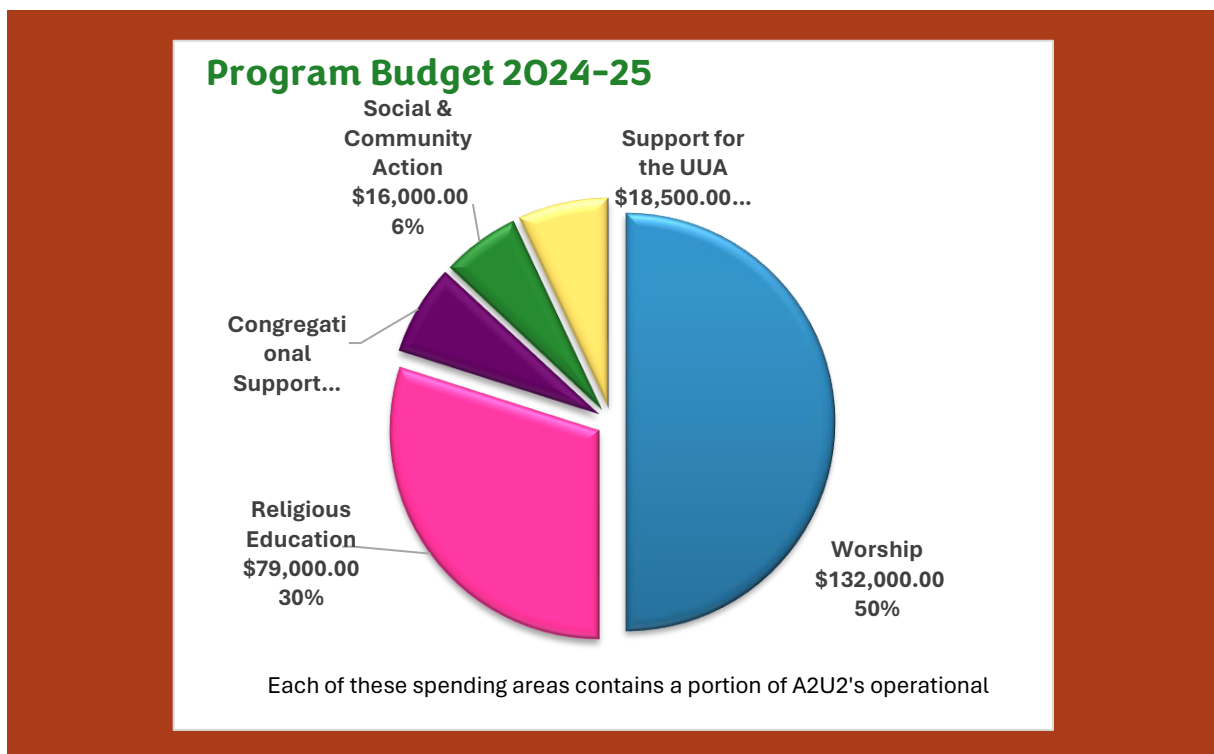
How much should I give to support A2U2?

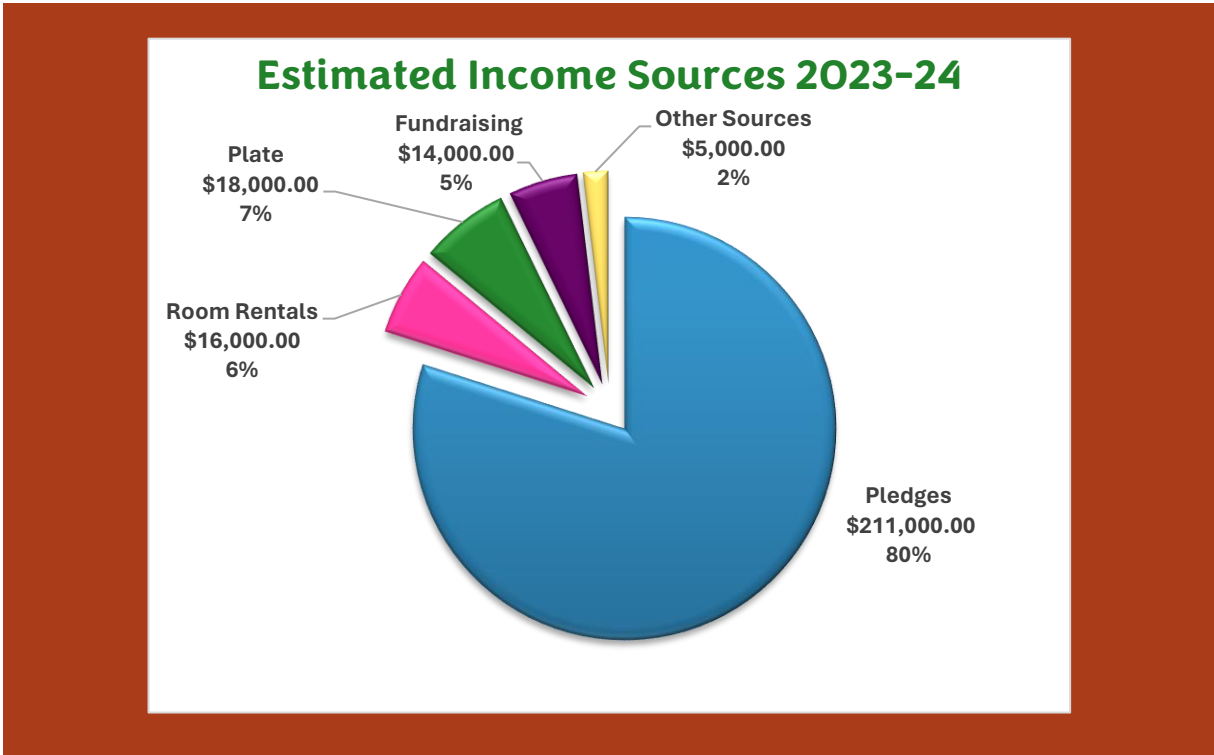
Your financial commitment is essential to the health of our community. Each household that helps to support our church knows best what they can afford. You have to decide the value of your association with this community of like-minded people and what you can afford to spend to keep our community functioning well.

The pie charts below show the anticipated amounts of spending on our programs and income from various sources for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. To give you an idea of the range of what your fellow congregational members and friends contribute, the table provides a picture of the pledge distribution for our *current year* (2023-2024). 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 113 pledges was \$1,840 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. Of course, not everyone can be among those who contribute \$4,000 or \$5,000 per year. However, increasing your pledge to join a higher group in our table below may be achievable for your household budget.





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 113 PUs pledged a total of \$207,910 to support the church through the end of June, 2024. We also have a much smaller number of non-member “friends PUs”, some of whom also pledge financial support.

The amount of each annual pledge varies greatly from under \$100/year to over \$13,000 per year. This is shown in the quartile analysis table below.

Analysis of A2U2 Support Pledges Made for FY24			
Quartile	Number of PUs	Total Pledges	Average Pledge
First	7	\$51,500	\$7,357
Second	14	\$50,276	\$3,591
Third	24	\$51,204	\$2,168
Fourth	68	\$48,930	\$720
Total	113	\$207,910	\$1,840



Giving Thoughts

Please remember that whatever you contribute, it is, and will always be, a much-appreciated gift to your community.

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 70 ½, 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.



Legacy Giving

Your pledge is appreciated and funds the church for the coming year. You might also consider a longer term gift via legacy giving (<https://www.a2u2.org/legacy-giving/>)

Legacy Giving (or Planned Giving) can transform the future of Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church and ensure that it thrives well into the lives of future generations.

