

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

2026-2027

Love Holds Us Together



ALLEN AVENUE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

(207) 747-3299

www.a2u2.org

524 Allen Avenue

Portland, ME 04103

LOVE HOLDS US TOGETHER



As Unitarian Universalists,
We say that we are standing on the side of Love.
This year, we want to extend that vision in our UU community and
our wider community with our Stewardship theme –
LOVE HOLDS US TOGETHER.

In our current times, this is vital work for all of us. Helping us
expand our thriving congregation depends on the time, talents
and financial gifts that we can offer.

Your financial gifts will enable the Trustees vision for the 2026-27 year:

- ✚ To spiritually support our members and friends.
- ✚ To make our Sanctuary more inviting to everyone who comes to us.
- ✚ To sustain fair compensation for our Minister & Staff to keep doing their important work.
- ✚ To build on the Social Justice work at A2U2 and our neighbors in the Portland community.

Our pledge drive for July 2026 through June 2027 will follow a simplified pledging process. Each pledge unit, (a single person, couple, or family) will receive a Pledge Form in an email, to fill out, or use a paper pledge form that will be available on Stewardship Sunday, March 1st. The form will have three options:

- last year's pledge plus an inflation adjustment
- the same pledge as last year's
- or a different amount if you wish.

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. 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.

Our Treasurer has estimated that we will need a program budget of \$325,000 to cover all expenses for the next year. Our stewardship booklet provides 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 a new member at A2U2 our **stewardship booklet** will also provide guidance about how much you could consider pledging.

2026 MINISTER'S STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Rev. Tara Humphries

A2U2 Community –

We've arrived at the time in the church year where we reflect on the role of this beloved congregation in our own lives and its role in the broader community. And we consider our own role as stewards of this community, ensuring that we have what we need to thrive today and in the generations to come.

This past year has been the most challenging of my ministry thus far. And my commitment to our Unitarian Universalist living tradition and shared ministry, my faith in us, has grown stronger.

Federal budget cuts have increased the needs of so many in and beyond our community. And, we have collected and distributed carloads and carloads of groceries, toiletries, money, and other lifesaving supplies to our neighbors to bridge the gap.

We have grieved significant losses this year, losing ten of our A2U2 community members in just six months. And, I have watched you all come together in deep care and love to care for one another in the face of such loss.

We experienced a surge of immigration activity in our city where hundreds of our New Mainer neighbors were abducted and many more traumatized. And the outpouring of organized resistance and rapid response efforts has renewed my belief in grassroots power.

Our faith in the greater good has wavered at times. And still, we come together to laugh, cry, sing, reflect, play, pray, engage in ritual, smile at babies, and remember that we are not alone.

Our UU faith, this congregation, was made for such a time as this. We have so much to offer. And, it takes significant resources to steward this spiritual safe harbor, this beacon of justice and radical love. Please consider how you can support our shared ministry in the year to come with your financial resources as well as with your time and talent. We will need all hands-on deck. I give thanks for all you have given and for all you will give. I give thanks being by your side in this holy work.

With love and commitment,
Rev. Tara

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

This past year has been a long one of many changes and much uncertainty. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) initiated significant government cuts, while the Trump administration implemented new tariffs. The rise of “AI” has caused the Internet to become more vitriolic and even less reliable. We are currently enduring an ICE siege against our vulnerable neighbors, rules of law are being broken by the administration, and much more... So far 2026 looks to continue the need to be outspoken in our support for our UU values, with each other, and out in the world. **Our task is to continue to make our church a beacon and a refuge in these troubled times.**

It is a time of growth and strong community in our church. Our attendance has risen and we continue to welcome new members and friends. The Board of Trustees has been working hard to increase community events and community interaction. We have restarted the Thanksgiving potluck and introduced the All-Person Dance and Board Game party! Our Middle Generations potlucks are going strong. Our Social Action committee and the FACA (Friday Afternoon Call to Action) group continue to work constantly to push back against unjust policies, we also continue to have thriving religious education and spiritual enrichment groups.

Our building is used for many different purposes beyond Sunday services. The child-care program Art Play has been with us for more than twenty years. This summer there will be a new kids’ program, Art Camp. And - we are investigating updating the sanctuary!

We are fortunate to have Reverend Tara’s inspiring leadership that keeps the fabric of our community from unravelling. In their second year of developmental ministry Reverend Tara has challenged us to live by our principles and reconnect with each other. Their commitment to publicly engaging in social justice has raised the visibility of our congregation and serves as a beacon for those looking for a spiritual home that centers love and justice.

As you consider your pledge, please reflect on these things and consider how A2U2 supports you and those you care about. **Your financial support makes it all possible.**

Thank you,
Pam Jackson & Steve Hansen

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

THE STATS Pledges for the 2025-26 church year are grouped into five categories:

Contributors

Pledges of \$500 or less come from 26% of A2U2's members and accounts for 4.7% of pledge income.

Supporters

Pledges ranging from \$501 to \$1,000 come from 19% of A2U2's members and accounts for 7.5% of pledge income.

Sustainers

Pledges ranging from \$1,001 to \$2,000 come from 25% of A2U2's members and accounts for 21.2% of pledge income.

Partners

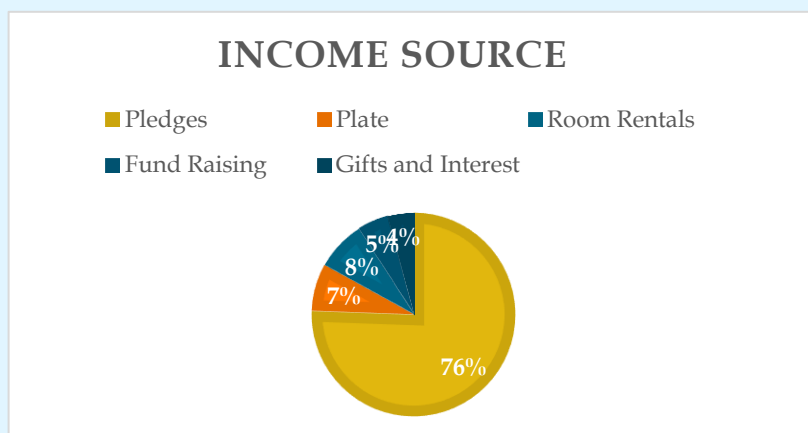
Pledges ranging from \$2,001 to \$3,000 come from 18% of A2U2's members and accounts for 24.8% of pledge income.

Visionaries

Pledges ranging from \$3,001 and above come from 12% of A2U2's members and accounts for 41.8% of pledge income.

OUR ASK

If you are able, increase your pledge by at least the higher of 5% or \$50.



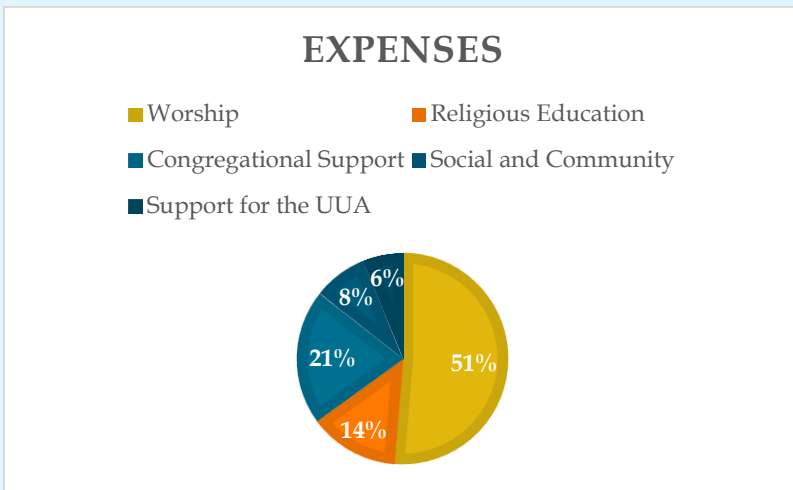
Your pledge allows A2U2 to plan for the coming year and will ensure we are able to continue and expand our work, maintain our facilities and adequately compensate our minister and staff. Your financial commitment is essential to the health of our community.

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 keep our community functioning well.

Pledge income is our single biggest source of income – 76%.

It is your generosity that keeps us going.

Shown here is a pie chart of the anticipated spending on our programs for the current fiscal year:



The average value of our 115 pledges was \$1,812 per year. – **THANK YOU!**

As a member or friend who pledges to support our A2U2 community, you know where you are in this array and what you can afford. We know that making decisions to raise or lower your pledge are not easy. Of course, not everyone can be among those who pledge \$4,000 or \$5,000 per year.

If increasing your pledge to join a higher group is achievable for your household budget, your added support is greatly appreciated! “Love Holds Us Together!”



A paper pledge form will be available on Stewardship Sunday, March 1st.

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 through these troubled times!**

Please consider these questions:

- ✚ Where is A2U2 in your giving priorities based on your spiritual and secular beliefs?
- ✚ 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
- ✓ Breeze: credit cards, bank transfers, one-time or recurring payments
- ✓ Using your financial institution's Bill Pay to A2U2

You can choose the number of payments that fits your budget. Our Treasurer, Naneen Chace-Ortiz, 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 wish to pledge through a gift of appreciated stock or investments, that can also be done through a tax-free transfer to A2U2.

Talk to our Treasurer, Naneen Chace-Ortiz, for details on the steps to take for this option.