



The Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst

A liberal religious light since 1893



Dear UUSA Congregation,

The UUSA—Onward and Upward!

Everyone knows calendar officially changes on January 1. But it is only in springtime that we begin to feel that a new year is truly upon us, with new opportunities for growth and regeneration. That's why spring is the perfect time for our annual stewardship campaign—the canvass. We are again asking you to join us as we face our future with enthusiasm and a generous spirit.

Like seeds in the ground, we need to grow and establish roots that will support our blossoming society. We need an outstanding minister and staff to provide leadership and service; we must have a well-maintained facility to shelter us and our community. We must continue to realize the possibilities of what we can become and offer to our community.

YOUR monetary gifts support the foundations of our community:

- The Minister—and our search for a settled Minister—and *Sunday morning worship*
- Our hard-working and talented *Congregational Administrator*
- Lifespan *Religious Education* from preschool through high school, and adult
- An inspiring & beautiful *music program*
- Our beautiful *meetinghouse*

With these foundations, we provide many ministries:

- *Caring ministries*, supporting one another through difficult times
- *Green Sanctuary* projects, such as the Connecticut River Cleanup, monthly Green Action table, and Climate Action initiatives
- Wednesday morning community breakfast and the Veterans and Families Ministries
- *Social Action Committee*, which provides a framework for volunteers for the cot shelters, soup kitchen, and donations to other local organizations
- *Dedicated offerings*, which provide financial support to worthy causes
- An *environment of support* for each of us on our own spiritual journeys
- *Fellowship events*, such as social suppers, pancake breakfasts and pot lucks.

Please fill out the enclosed form and mail it in, leave it in Judy Mitrolka's mailbox or give it to one of us as soon as you are able. We don't like to rush this important decision, but we have only a couple short weeks to finalize our budget. **You might also consider an "EZ-pledge" – just email office@uusocietyamherst.org with your pledge amount.** Questions? Check out our *Frequently Asked Questions about Canvass* list on the back of this letter. Or contact us.

YOUR support makes us the vibrant, caring community and congregation that we are!

In gratitude, the Stewardship Committee

121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA 01004-0502
(413) 253-2848 office@uusocietyamherst.org www.uusocietyamherst.org

Frequently Asked Questions about Canvass

What is canvass? Each year, our members and friends support our society financially by making a pledge. Our operating budget and all the amazing work we do is funded by these donations.

It's only April. Why are you asking now? We are raising money now to fund our operating budget that begins July 1st. We actually have just a couple weeks to tally our pledges in time to allow our finance committee to plan for the coming fiscal year.

When do I need to pay my pledge? You will be paying your pledge between July 1st, 2017 and June 30th 2018. Many people divide their pledge into several payments that they send in at convenient times throughout the year.

What does my money pay for? Every dollar you pledge goes directly to fund the life of our congregation - our minister, religious education, maintaining our building, music, and administrative work.

Who should pledge? We hope that every member and friend of our society will make a contribution – small or large. When everyone participates, we continue to grow as a unified community.

Doesn't the society get money from other sources? Yes, we also receive money from renting our meetinghouse spaces and from fundraising (like the service auction, tag sale and bazaar), but donations are our major source of income. We do not receive any funding from outside or larger organization such as the UUA.

I volunteer my time. Why should I also give money? So many people in our congregation give their time and energy! We are so grateful for this, and we also need funds to pay our bills, maintain our building and support our minister and staff.

How do I pledge? To make it easier on you there are a couple of ways to choose from. You will receive a pledge form in the mail. You can complete it and mail it back, or you can bring it in and leave it in Judy Mitrolka's mailbox, or you can give it to a Stewardship Committee member (Steve Rive, Karen Mack, Elliott Kelley, Rachel Peterson, or Peter Lacey). **You can even email your pledge to office@uusocietyamherst.org.** Regardless of how you deliver it – your pledge information is kept confidential.

How much should I give?

Because our congregation has diverse economic resources, pledges vary widely. Last year the pledges ranged from \$100 to many thousands of dollars, with the mean pledge being \$1660. See the guide on the pledge form to help you calculate an amount that is appropriate for you. Please know that every dollar counts so give whatever you are able. We deeply appreciate your generosity!

What if I have questions or suggestions? Feel free to forward questions to any member of the Stewardship Committee by sending an email to the attention of the Stewardship committee at office@uusocietyamherst.org.

Please Support Your CommUUnity.

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