

UUCK Community,

I hope this letter finds you well. As we enter into our church's 159th year, I would like to invite you to participate in continuing to grow into our mission to inspire love, to seek justice, and to grow in community.

As you know, we continue to be in a liminal time of considerable change. In addition to the recent loss of Reverend Steven, the COVID-19 pandemic had already changed the dynamics of our community. We completed Hobbs Hall and added Zoom services (which continue to permit a broader community of worshippers to participate in our live services). These milestones increased costs, and some of our prior pledging members became inactive, relocated, or passed on. Along with macro-trends like inflation, over the past few years these dynamics have led to a deficit between our operating costs and our income. Some of our staff members are paid below UUA's standards for fair pay and have not received cost-of-living adjustments.

The good news is that we have made progress in decreasing that deficit over the last year and our vibrancy has grown. Our music ministry, under the direction of our new Interim Music Director, Emily Hall, has blossomed. RE continues to be a strong core program, engaging young families in the community and helping to develop the next generation of good stewards of our world. We welcomed several new members to our congregation this year, and have welcomed numerous visitors to our services, many who have stayed. We are testing a new two service model in February and March in the hopes that we will both make it easier for more folks to attend Sunday services and revitalize our Adult RE program (which has served to help connect people more fully to our community in the past). Meanwhile, we have multiple long-term rentals either in place or in development, which will help both financially, as well as in service to the "Not For Us Alone" spirit in which Hobbs Hall was built. We are confident that as we continue to grow in service to our broader community, and in membership, we will eliminate the budget deficit in the next two years.

As the Generosity Campaign for Fiscal Year 2025 begins, the Board is presenting to you a budget, developed by a dedicated and thoughtful group of members (lead by Kay Eckman) who have volunteered to serve on our Finance Committee. This base budget incorporates unavoidable increases in costs of things such as utilities, a small cost-of-living increase for staff (which still leaves some at well below fair pay standards), and a draw on the Hobbs bequest that is smaller than the draw made to date in Fiscal Year 2024. It also includes funding for a ministerial position at 3/4 time. In the spirit of transparency, given a shortage of UU ministers post-pandemic, we may or may not be able to find an interim or contract minister who is willing to accept a 3/4 time role. With an understanding of the dynamic tension between needing to support growth for future fiscal health and the need to be fiscally responsible in the present, we ask that you make a generous pledge or consider increasing your support from last year's levels, as you are able.

I would also like to extend our recognition and appreciation for the countless hours of time that members and friends donate to keep our UUCK community vital and thriving. Your in-kind contributions are as critical as your monetary ones in helping us strive towards our mission.

As always, we appreciate each of you and look forward to seeing you on Sunday morning or at another upcoming UUCK event!

With Thanks,

Kara Kramer, Board Moderator
on behalf of your UUCK Board of Trustees
(Kay Eckman, Ginny Horvath, Kara Kramer, Heidi Shaffer Bish, Susanna Smart, David Weaver, and Carol Weigand)