

First Parish in Needham Annual Budget Drive 2017-18 Frequently Asked Questions



Why should I pledge?

Our pledges allow Parish Committee to prepare a budget for the coming fiscal year, planning expenditures given members' expected contributions. Pledges from members and friends account for nearly 80% of the year's income. Our building is nearly self-sustaining, meaning your pledges are not used to keep the lights on, but to support our extraordinary staff and programs that connect you with our community of shared values.

Whether you can afford a little or a lot, we ask that all members and friends demonstrate your commitment to First Parish by making a pledge. Our bylaws call for every member to contribute.

How much should I pledge?

Your financial commitment should reflect both your personal situation in terms of financial ability and also the value you place on your experience as an integral part of our faith community. The average household gave just over \$2,100 last year, but this doesn't tell the whole story. For many years, almost exactly the same 20 households have been making up about 40% of our operating budget, that's too heavy a burden on too few.

We are asking each household to reflect on the role the church plays in connecting you to your values, and to give generously with that in mind. The UUA Fair Share Giving Guide suggests an annual giving range of 2-10% of household income. As a starting point, we invite each First Parish household to consider giving at a level of 2.5%, or whatever percentage feels right to you.

Thank you to those who took a 'leap' last year. As more members at each level step up to the next, and our newest donors participate generously within their means, our congregation will move toward a more healthy and sustainable financial path.

How do I pledge?

We will be collecting pledge forms at social hour **through Sunday, March 19**. You can also return the enclosed form to the Church office or pledge online at uuneedham.org. Sign in and click on the "Giving" tab.

How do I pay my pledge?

You select the method and payment schedule that works for you. Many parishioners mail checks to the office or place them in an envelope in the offertory plate. Others appreciate the convenience of electronic fund transfers (EFTs) from your bank directly to the church bank account. You also may pay by donating stock and other securities. For details about arranging EFTs or stock transfers, please contact Susanna Whitman in the church office.

What if my financial circumstances change and I cannot keep up with my pledge?

Should a change occur in your financial status and you are unable to meet your pledge, you may adjust your pledge during the fiscal year. Please contact Rev. Catie or Susanna Whitman in the church office.

Please contact the Budget Drive Committee members with any questions:

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