

2018 Annual Giving Campaign

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Why is making a pledge important?** The church is self-funded by its members and friends (a little over 200 households currently). The 2018 budget will be around \$600,000. While a portion of our annual income comes from rental fees for use of our building space, fundraisers during the church year, and a draw from the Endowment, the Annual Giving Campaign is the primary fundraising effort that sustains the Congregation, our programs and services to the community. We set our budget based on the pledges received from our members and friends. The church belongs to each of us.
2. **When should I make my pledge?** Now. The pledge campaign this year runs from October 1 to 22. During that time, it is hoped that you will pledge (i.e., make a promise) to give your chosen amount during the next calendar year. After the campaign, we will be glad to accept new pledges at any time.
3. **How do I make a pledge?** If you have not received a pledge form in the mail or if you have misplaced it, you can download a [pledge form](#). Your form can be mailed to the church office or dropped off at the church during the week or at Sunday services. On the form, you will choose the amount and schedule of pledge payments and the method that you wish to use to pay your pledge. If you have any questions, contact the church bookkeeper, Terrie Atkinson at 860-233-3669, ext. 103, or email terrie@westhartforduu.org.
4. **How do I pay my pledge?** Your pledge is for the 2018 calendar year which is the church's budget year. You can make payments on the schedule you choose, even before January if there is a tax advantage for you. You may choose weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual payments or some other variation. You can pay with check, credit or debit card, automatic withdrawal, automatic bill pay or a gift of stock. Call Terrie Atkinson for help at 860-233-3669, ext. 103.

You may be able to make contributions to the congregation using an IRA or donor advised fund (DAF); however, you should consult with your financial and/or tax adviser before committing these resources to your pledge. Also call Terrie Atkinson for help at 860-233-3669, ext. 103.

5. **Do I get bills or statements from the church?** The church sends out quarterly statements to show how much of your pledge you have paid.
6. **Can I just give money to the church without pledging?** Of course, and your donations are needed and appreciated! But only with financial pledges can our church depend on how much income it will have to cover our programs and expenses. We set our budget according to our expected income and adjust it during the year as those pledges are fulfilled.
7. **What if my financial situation changes?** Changing financial situations are a fact of life. If your circumstances change such that you cannot afford to meet your pledge, simply contact the minister or the church bookkeeper to amend your pledge. This is a confidential activity. We care about your situation. On the other hand, you may have benefitted from a financial windfall (e.g., a bonus, an inheritance). There are always projects that we can't fund through the budget, but would love to get funded – maybe you can be the angel that allows us to get something done we could not have done otherwise.

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8. **How much should I give?** Consider your values, your commitment, your income (or, if you are retired, your assets) and your needs. Then give as generously as you can! We have prepared a **suggested guide for giving** to help you. It is very useful as you discern your annual gift to the church. We encourage members to think of the church as a member of their family, rather than just a charitable organization. Many of us make our largest contribution to the church because it plays a vital role in our lives and we want it around for generations to come. Whatever the size of your contribution, it will be greatly appreciated. Only together can we keep our church a strong and vibrant community.
9. **Are donors recognized formally?** We do try to show our appreciation to all our pledgers and send thank you notes to each one. We ask that you indicate on the pledge form whether you want to be acknowledged for your gift in our church communications or if you want your gift to be anonymous. We will do what is comfortable for you. We do want to encourage generous giving and will sometimes invite our larger givers to a special event.