

## Pledge Drive FAQ

### What is a pledge, and how do I make one?

A pledge is a promise to donate a certain amount of money to the church within a 12 month period. Our pledges are not considered “continual”, meaning that they expire at the end of the fiscal year (June 30), therefore, the pledge drive is everyone’s opportunity to revisit the amount they pledge for the following fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Nearly 90% of our income is raised through individual giving. This makes pledging especially important so that we can create a budget and plan for the future. Although pledges can be paid in any timeframe or increments, it is very helpful to think of your pledge in terms of a monthly amount of financial support.

### How will my pledge be used?

The money from pledges is used to support the mission and vision of First Church. Pledges directly support our operating budget, paying for the nuts and bolts of transformation: worship and music, children’s and adult religious education, social justice projects, young adult and youth programming. Pledges pay the salaries of the ministers and staff and for the operation and maintenance of our building and grounds. Pledges also help us contribute funds to support our membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association, the MidAmerica Region, and MICAH. Those who pledge receive written quarterly statements that they can use for their own budgets and for tax purposes.

### How much should I pledge?

We believe that generosity is an important part of spiritual growth. We encourage people to consider a gift of 5% of their net income. There is no minimum required for pledging. A pledge should be meaningful to you, and within your means. Individuals are encouraged to base their giving on an “adjusted annual income” which is defined as income after taxes, medical expenses, childcare costs and other expenses that are considered necessities. This proportional giving allows everyone to feel good about their ability to contribute. All gifts are valuable.

### What a 5% pledge looks like:

Adjusted Annual Income	Monthly Gift	Annual Gift
\$10,000	\$41.67	\$500
\$25,000	\$104.16	\$1,250
\$50,000	\$208.33	\$2,500
\$75,000	\$375	\$4,500
\$100,000	\$541.66	\$6,500
\$150,000	\$812.50	\$9,750
\$200,000	\$1,166.66	\$14,000

### Must I be a church member to make a pledge?

Anyone can make a pledge to our church- you need not be a formal member. People who pledge but are not members are known as “Friends”. Pledging, however, is one of the responsibilities of membership.

### **What if I cannot pay my pledge?**

Everyone faces financial challenges from time to time. You can change or adjust your pledge at any time if your financial circumstances change. Your pledge is your statement of intent- it is not a legally binding obligation.

### **Is it possible to “earmark” a pledge for a specific purpose?**

No. Pledges go into the church’s general operation fund. People interested in supporting a specific purpose are welcome to make an additional targeted donation via our Wish List.

### **Is my pledge tax deductible and will I receive a bill or statement?**

Because First Church is a 501 (c)3 non-profit religious organization, recognized by the IRS, your contribution is tax deductible. Our office issues quarterly pledge statements and end-of-the-year tax letters showing the contributions recorded under your name for the tax year. We encourage pledges by direct deposit from your bank account, so that a monthly transfer takes place automatically.

### **Can I substitute volunteer time for money?**

Volunteer work sustains this beloved community and is a rewarding and significant part of church life that is highly valued, but it does not replace a pledge. The church requires financial support in order to fund our operating budget and our bylaws set an expectation that all members will give. No gift is too small.

### **When do I pay my pledge?**

Although you can pay your pledge in any timeframe or increments that you wish, it is most helpful to arrange for your pledge to be paid on a monthly basis. Signing up for and using an automatic payment from your bank account is the easiest way to accomplish this

While pledges can be paid in any increments, it is most beneficial to the church when money is given on an ongoing monthly basis. Some members have electronic transfers arranged through their bank. Some mail a check to the church office or bring their gift to the Sunday service. If you put cash in the collection plate on Sundays and you wish it to be used towards your pledge, you must put the money in an envelope with your name and check the box marked “pledge” on that envelope.

**We strive to be open and transparent about all our  
finances, operations, and programs and want our  
members and friends to understand that all money  
pledged makes the work of this church possible**

**Thank you for your outstanding generosity  
Which helps us transform lives as we:  
Nurture the Spirit, Engage the Mind, and Inspire Action**