

## FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF DES MOINES

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Dear Friends,

April 25, 2023

Your church needs your help.

If you have not yet made a pledge to support the church in the coming year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024), please do so now. Send in your card or contact Alice Stewart in the church office. Unless you do this, the Board has no way to know how much money will be available to fund church programs, pay utilities, and compensate our small staff. Even if you can't give this year, or choose not to, please just let us know so we can plan accordingly. ([director@ucdsm.org](mailto:director@ucdsm.org); 515.244.8603)

To date, 172 out of 285 households (604) have contributed \$439,321 toward our goal of \$615,000 (71%).

This is not much different from returns in recent years. **What's changed is the Board's commitment to presenting a balanced budget at this year's Annual Meeting.** For too long, the congregation has operated on deficit spending. This was never responsible, **and it is no longer an option.** Occasional rentals and fundraisers cover a small portion of the budget, but this church runs on pledges.

If you have made your pledge, *thank you* for your generosity. **Today we are asking you if you can consider raising it.** Here's why.

This year's budget is practical, lean and mission-driven, reflecting your longstanding identity as a caring community and a beacon of progressive values. What matters here?

- *your commitment to AMOS, the Trans Lives Festival, and other justice partners*
- *the OWL curriculum and faith formation for children and youth*
- *Sunday services, with outstanding music and speakers*
- *memorials when beloved friends and members are grieving*
- *responsible care for our landmark building*
- *programs for adults, gatherings, dinners, and coffee together every single week*
- *inspiring, reliable ministry with a talented Minister to guide us through our next exciting chapter*

To cut any of these would diminish the very identity and the vibrancy of First Unitarian Church.

**Your church needs your help. We have got to balance this budget.**

Pledges are low right now. They were higher in the past. **If you have made a pledge and you are in a position to increase your gift, please just send an email to Alice Stewart in the office ([director@ucdsm.org](mailto:director@ucdsm.org)).** What we know is this: the average pledge this year needs to be about \$2500. And we rely on pledges much larger than that from those who can afford to give more, to balance those who cannot.

As I write, ministry candidates are already looking at your materials, thinking about coming here to serve you. From what I've seen this year, you are a remarkable, generous congregation. I tell my colleagues this when they call to ask about your church. A balanced budget is solid ground, rooting your bright vision in responsible reality. I know you can make this goal if you want to.



With respect and hope,

Rev. Victoria Safford and the Board of Trustees: Reba Eagles, Sally Merritt, Fern Stewart, LeeAnn Back, Greg Nichols, Crystal Loving, Jeremy Guenther, Kevin Boeckholt. Andrea LeMeuse

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