



# The First Church in Belmont, Unitarian Universalist

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## ***Living our Values, Every Day***

The 2017 March Stewardship Drive

February 24, 2017

Dear First Church Members and Friends,

*“Now, more than ever, we must engage together....”*

In these challenging times, First Church – our vibrant, welcoming, spiritual community – provides a solid foundation. Our enduring Unitarian Universalist values reinforce with renewed importance what is just and fair. And the actions we engage in together - building better understanding, strengthening our community, standing for the neglected and oppressed and the environment – help us live our values, every day.

Today, in our annual March Stewardship Drive, I ask you to reflect on the impact of First Church in your life and in the lives of others, and invest in these values. You may be drawn to the rich worship services, the excellent programs for all ages, opportunities for fellowship, mutual support, and outreach, or First Church's importance to the wider community. Yet none of these programs can exist in isolation; they depend on our energy and financial support for First Church as a whole.

Our 2017 March Stewardship Drive goal is \$610,000, to support First Church's 2017-18 fiscal year. To reach our goal, we need generous increases at all levels of pledging. If you made a pledge or donation to the Stewardship Drive last year, would you consider increasing by 20% or another increased amount? If you are new to pledging at First Church, would you consider making a generous pledge to the 2017 Stewardship Drive? You can use the attached Pledge Form to make your pledge - page 2 of the form has further Giving Guidelines.

Why do we ask for increased pledges? First, in the current (2016-17) year, the church is operating at a deficit, which the congregation approved last May. Second, with overall pledge revenue fairly flat the past three years, it is difficult to meet even modest increases in program and other costs. Third, for pledge revenue to rise, we need to make up for the normal but significant annual attrition in pledge support as longtime, generous members retire, pass away, or move on. All told, to reach our goal, we must increase our pledge revenue from active members and friends by an average of over 20%. Many will increase their pledges by more.

Thanks to your generosity, our church will continue to be the cherished and consistent foundation we depend on, now more than ever.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Roger Read, *for the Stewardship Committee*