

Stewardship Committee Report
25 May 2020

The purpose of the committee is to plan and implement the annual pledge drive. Current members are Andy Roberts (Chair), Wayne Neu, Meredith Hundley, Arthur Snoke, and Carol Kern. As part of their role in serving the UUC, Pam Phillips and Lisa Evanylo attend meetings and provide help and support to the committee and the stewardship campaign but are not officially members.

We achieved a modicum of success in our 2020 campaign despite the severe disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic. With an ambitious pledge goal of \$357,000 we ended the campaign with \$318,190 from 168 pledges (range = \$20 - \$11,500 with 19 first-timers). The 168 pledge units represent 240 individuals. While the number of pledges is higher than ever before, the amount pledged is \$5486 less than our 2019 total. So, more people are giving, but not as generously. This is not surprising given the unprecedented financial and emotional impacts the pandemic has had on people's lives.

I believe the most valuable, and encouraging, lesson we learned this year is that even when things go horribly wrong the UUC community will step up. We had to dramatically alter our stewarding model soon after the campaign began, and we had to approach people to give money during very uncertain and frightening times. Yet, we recorded very nearly the same pledge amount as last year, which I believe was the highest pledge total the UUC has ever received. In our quest to invigorate the pledge drive and reach the most people, this year we scheduled three group meeting specifically targeting different congregation groups: parents of RE children, newcomers, and the general congregation. Members of each group received an email invitation specific to their meeting, and these meetings were well publicized in UUC media. Except for one modestly attended general congregation meeting, nobody came. I believe we need to rethink our approach to these group meetings and consider whether they are worth the time and effort, or possibly find a winning approach that will entice people to come. Ironically, most people who do attend come say they were very glad they did. On a positive note, the early pledging is popular, with 67 pledges (40%) opting in early.

The stewardship committee has a budget of \$700. Typically, our expenses involve refreshments at group meetings during the fund drive, costs associated with thank you notes, and the Sunday Sundae celebration at the end. We spent \$79 of that on thank you note materials and postage. I did not submit a reimbursement request for group meeting refreshments because most of those items were not consumed and went back home with me. Of course, the Sunday Sundae did not occur this year.

In furthering our mission and vision, we do not address a specific component of the UUC, such as RE or mental health or lay pastoral care. Rather, because the committee is charged with obtaining financing for the entire UUCNRV, it can be said that our work touches every item in the congregational budget.

For the coming year, the committee's ultimate goal, of course, is to fully fund the budget handed down by the board. We will review and assess all the moving parts that comprise the pledge drive. We also will continue to incorporate stewardship related information and material into the congregation at times other than the few weeks of the actual pledge campaign.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Roberts