

to a synagogue and each year members are asked to come with their tax returns on an appointed date and time. They meet with someone who helps them figure out a particular percentage of their income. There isn't a "must" to pledge that amount, but members are given the sense to do so.

Are UU's to tithe 10% of their income or bring in their tax returns? No. Nowhere I've heard of, at any rate!

At Mission Peak we haven't had a formal system for sorting this out. In general, around the denomination, I've heard it said from a number of pulpits and from UUA financial advisors at conferences, that there is a recommended approach. It is by no means institutionalized as far as I have seen, but it's worth consideration. That approach suggests that as UUs we understand that so much must be done to minister to our people and to the larger world. We don't just pay for the lights and heat and computer in the office--that's not what we're here for. We need those things but they are in service to our programs, and those programs--existing programs and new programs too--we create and support in response to our vision and mission, the *why*, the *what for* of our community's existence.

And there are many vital non-profits in the larger world that also depend upon people like you and me to support their work on our behalf and on behalf of others (not a quid pro quo at work, neither the non-profits nor one's religious home). It's not about "what do I get for my money" but "what much needed financial support do I give to support my values and our shared values?"

So how to figure? Be generous for *your* vision and mission of how the world needs to be, the mending that needs to happen, the beauty, too, that needs support--not just to exist, but to thrive.

Tithing is a good thing to do overall, some say. What I've heard, and lived by myself as much as possible, has been striving for 5% of my "net net" (more about that later) to the congregation of my membership and 5% to other organizations doing the work of compassion and justice. I haven't always been able to stretch that far, I admit. Sometimes I've been able to do more. It may take some sacrifice and stretch, but it's one way to be engaged, to live the commitment.

So we don't have a rule. And neither does our Unitarian Universalist Association. It's all worth considering and considering deeply, though. It has a direct connection to *who and what do you believe this wonderful Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation needs to be into its tomorrows?*

Many people are uncomfortable with the topic of money; I get it. It's something to work through for our own and the greater good. Money isn't everything, but it is a real and important part of our lives. It's a critical tool. Sometimes talking money seems like the last great taboo or certainly one of them! But it mustn't be. So let's give it our best to be in conversation about money and to consider the matter of supporting our shared vision with *dollars, moola, cash, dough, treasure, l'argent, Schotter, dinero or dinheiro...* you get the idea. And adding to the congregation's financial resources ***according to your means,*** living into our values, is what matters.

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Rev. Benson