From the President

Important Follow-up Info on the 2023 Pledge Drive

The Stewardship Committee ran a lively campaign with Mary Fulton at the head buzzing around in her decorative socks. Thank you Mary, Sky Kimble, and Debbie Johnson.

We have some good news to share:
34 people increased their pledges from last year and we have 7 new pledgers! Thank you, thank you! Thank you, too, to all of you who had to decrease your pledges but still pledged *something*. Thank you to all who give your treasure in volunteer time. You are ALL appreciated! Truly.

We know this has been a hard year financially and rising prices of just about everything are affecting all of us. So, it is not a tremendous surprise that we did not reach our goal of $200K, or even our previous year total of $172K. So far, we have logged pledges totaling $162K. As President, I feel it is my duty to be honest with you and tell you what this means.

We will likely have to pass a deficit budget this year, something we have done in the past. Most years we have managed to end the year with a balanced budget. This year however, we have no reimbursement of PPE funds to expect later in the year. We can't depend on the random unexpected mid-year donation that helped us one year.

We *will* pay our bills. The Board *will* make some difficult decisions. Our wonderful staff *will* be paid. But it is important to note that if we take money from our savings account every year it will eventually cease to exist and the decisions will be much more difficult. We will need, in the next few years, to really start talking about this.

The reality is this: Staff costs comprise the majority of our budget. We own a very old building and there is some maintenance (expensive maintenance) that cannot be deferred any longer; the everyday maintenance of an older building is also expensive. Our congregation is aging and we have lost some very dear members, some of whom also happened to be very large pledgers.

This year though, I would like to get UUCSC a little closer to our goal. First, if you haven't yet made a pledge, please do so ASAP, even if it is a small amount. Secondly, if you have already pledged, please consider giving just a bit more. It is understood if you cannot, and I do not intend to make anyone feel guilty or uncomfortable. But if you can, please consider making a 13th month payment. Personally, I don't want to increase my monthly payment again, but I am going to give an additional one-month payment now to go towards the operating budget for 2023-24. And if you *can* increase your pledge that would most truly be appreciated. And if you have $10 or 20K that you want to go to a good cause, please see me or Rev Denis ☺.

With much appreciation for *all* gifts,
Elizabeth Donovan