

2022

Pledge Appeal



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

Table of contents

03 | Case statement

09 | Pledge form

04 | Appeal timeline

10 | Fair-share giving guide

05 | Letter from Rev. Eric

12 | Member testimonials

06 | Letter from Board President

07 | Budget highlights

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

Our mission is to offer a beacon to the religious seeker, supporting and nurturing the individual and collective pursuit of spiritual fulfillment; and create a more just, peaceful and sustainable world through our words of influence, constructive deeds, and engaging love.

Let's build a better future

As Unitarian Universalists we are used to finding our own truths and making our own spiritual paths. That journey – that seeking – is at the core of our faith. We each must find our own meaning and way in life, yet we may take great joy in doing so together.

The pandemic has brought new and significant challenges to achieving this joy. More than a year of coping with COVID-19 has left many of us spiritually disoriented and socially disconnected, traumatized and in pain. We may feel as if we have lost our way and may be filled with questions about what a “new normal” should be. One thing is clear: the future remains unclear. How do we plan in such times? The answer is the same now as before the pandemic: together, with resilience and dedication.

Our minister, board, staff, committees, and teams are working diligently to help build a more trustworthy future with you. We are planning for a cautious, safety-focused return to in-person congregational life with an emphasis on evidence-based risk management, equity, and inclusion. We cannot eliminate the ongoing risks of COVID-19, but we can understand and mitigate them. Together, we can transform this period of disorder into an opportunity to rediscover, redefine, and recreate what it means to be a healthy, thriving congregation. We can use this time to look at our fellowship with fresh eyes, to reacquaint ourselves with each other, reconnect with our community, and recommit to our principles and practices.

Of course, our efforts have costs. Most are the same, familiar ones that we have seen in years past – insurance, utilities, supplies, and so on. New or increased costs have emerged as well. Multi-platform, flexible Sunday services require new technology and music licenses in order to provide the high-quality worship experiences we have come to expect. Over the past year and a half, we have come to see just how much we rely on our exceptional professional staff, so our commitment to providing them with fair and just compensation is strong.

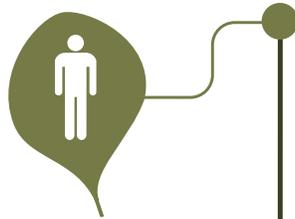
All told, we are proud that our finance committee, minister, and board have put together a proposed budget that funds our worship needs, pays a living wage to our amazing staff, and keeps the requested pledges virtually unchanged from last year. We are keenly aware that many have felt financial hardship through the pandemic, and we feel it is important to move forward this year without asking for increased giving.

Now is the time for us to come together to support our fellowship. The past year and a half has brought challenges and left many of us fatigued. We have worked hard to make supporting our faith community as easy and painless as possible. In a time of continuing chaos, your pledge brings fiscal stability and a degree of predictability to our congregation. It allows us to “find our way” together, to imagine and build a better future for one another, future generations, and the world. Please give as generously as you can. We hope your giving fills your heart with peace and joy.

Thank you! 3

Appeal timeline

**Stewardship
Kick-off**
September 5, 2021



**Commitment
Sunday**
October 10, 2021



Goal Celebration
October 17, 2021



**Our goal is to raise
\$178,370 with a 100%
response rate from our
members & friends.**

Can we count on *you*?

Letter from Rev. Eric

I am grateful for all who have kept us going through the pandemic, and am excited for who we might become in the coming year.

As President Beth's letter suggests, COVID-19 has caused great disorientation and disconnection, and we all have some healing to do. Through it all, you, our members and friends, our dedicated lay leaders, and our professional staff members have stuck with us, going above and beyond to maintain a sense of continuity.

Our pastoral care, religious education, and worship teams, especially, kept us in touch and helped us stay connected. Through the Zoom platform we even attracted visitors and friends, some of whom would like to become members!

Let's spend the coming year working toward a theme of "Finding Our Way." It is time to reorient, reconnect, and recommit ourselves and one another.

One of the ways to do this is by investing in our future. This year, we will have hired a new religious educator to help guide both the program and our children. We also will live out our values by making sure that each staff member receives fair, just, and livable wages, access to pension contributions if they choose, and health care if they are eligible.

We will continue investing in the ministries and programs that help us stay connected: religious education, worship, engagement, pastoral care, music, justice, small group ministries, and so on.

To make these connections happen, we rely on and appreciate your contributions of time, talent, and treasure. We can offer you recommendations for financial giving, but, as always, how and what you choose to pledge is up to you.

Whether you are a member or a friend of the fellowship, please take time to discern a giving level that will make you feel good and connected. I hope you will be as engaged as possible in activities and will give generously to make 2022 a vibrant and deeply meaningful year.

I look forward to celebrating with you all the many ways we give, on Commitment Sunday, October 10 – and beyond. Thank you!

Blessings,

Rev. Eric



Rev. Eric Severson
Minister

*Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Midland*

Letter from Board President

It's Stewardship Time again, but before we think about pledges, let's set our imaginations free. Let's imagine our next year together; gathered in person or virtually, battered from the past year and a half, but still here full of hope, still committed to each other and the Fellowship as our spiritual home. I hope we are all excited about the possibilities that lie ahead, and full of ideas about recreating who we are and how we want to be together.

"Only the imagination is deep and wide enough to open us to the profound healing in which we feel in ourselves the feelings of others." *THE WORLD COULD BE OTHERWISE*, Norman Fischer

We sure do need this healing.

If imagination creates possibilities, so does generosity. Generosity makes things happen. Generosity makes it possible for us to care for each other. Generosity feels good. Generosity benefits the giver and the receiver. Generosity stretches us. Generosity brings us closer together, and reminds us of "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

I have never thought of myself as a very generous person; that's a story I tell myself, and sometimes it's true. Stretching myself to pledge more than what I think I can afford helps me dismantle that story. I understand and honor that some of us are not in a position to do that, or give financially at all. We know that the past pandemic time has devastated many families. Time and talent are just as valuable as money, and we are grateful for what each person contributes.

If you can, please consider pledging again this year; maybe even increasing that pledge. We have increased expenses coming up in 2022. We're giving all eligible and interested staff raises and pensions. Because of our commitment to multi-platform services in order to make Sunday service available to everyone, we will have increased worship and tech needs. Even with these increased needs, the Finance Committee worked hard with Rev. Eric, and all of the ministries and committees to keep the pledge amount we're asking for roughly the same as last year.

It's been a challenging, often grueling, time to serve on the Board, and at times I wanted to run away. But it also feels great to have a job to do that's bigger than myself. I am grateful for the grace and patience you have given the Board as we have tried to do our best for you. Our commitment to each other is deeply rooted. I trust in that. Please give if you can.

In Deep Gratitude,

Beth

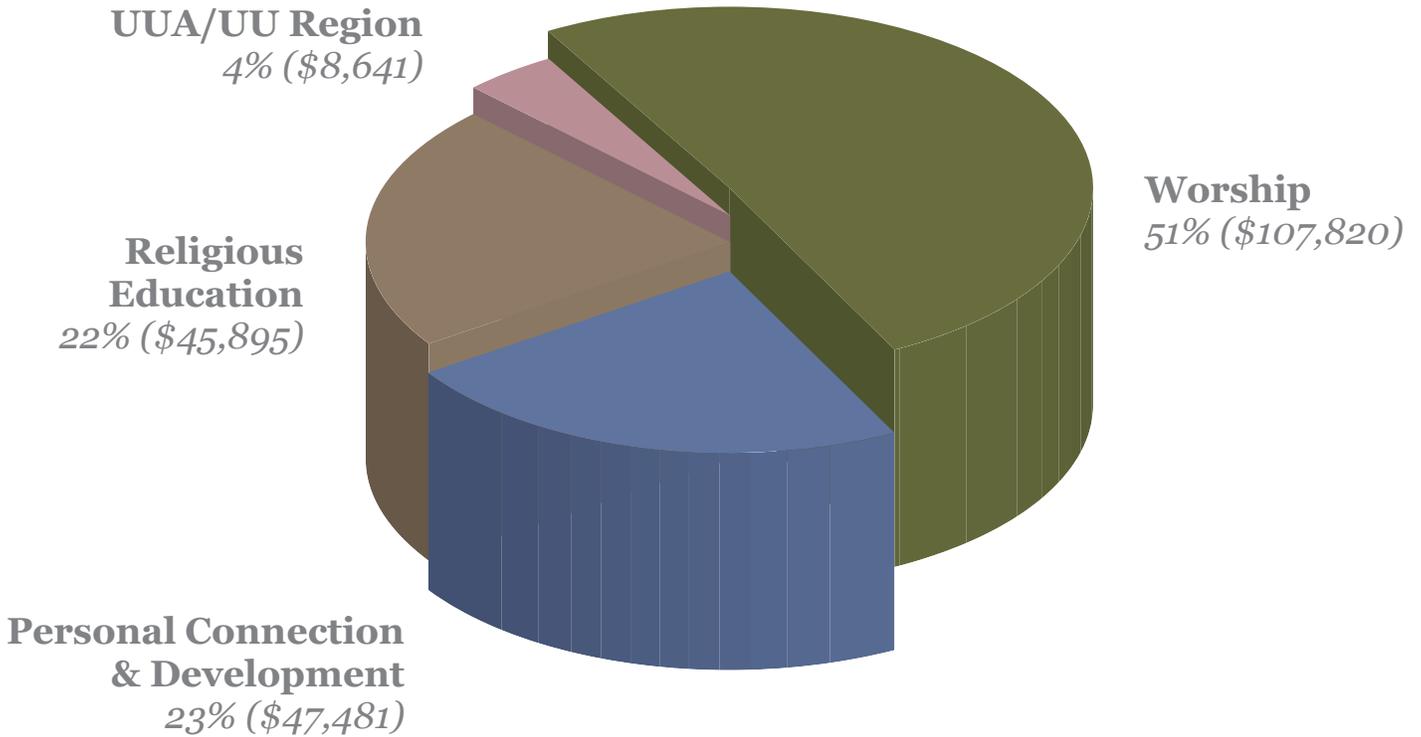


Beth Sperry
Board President

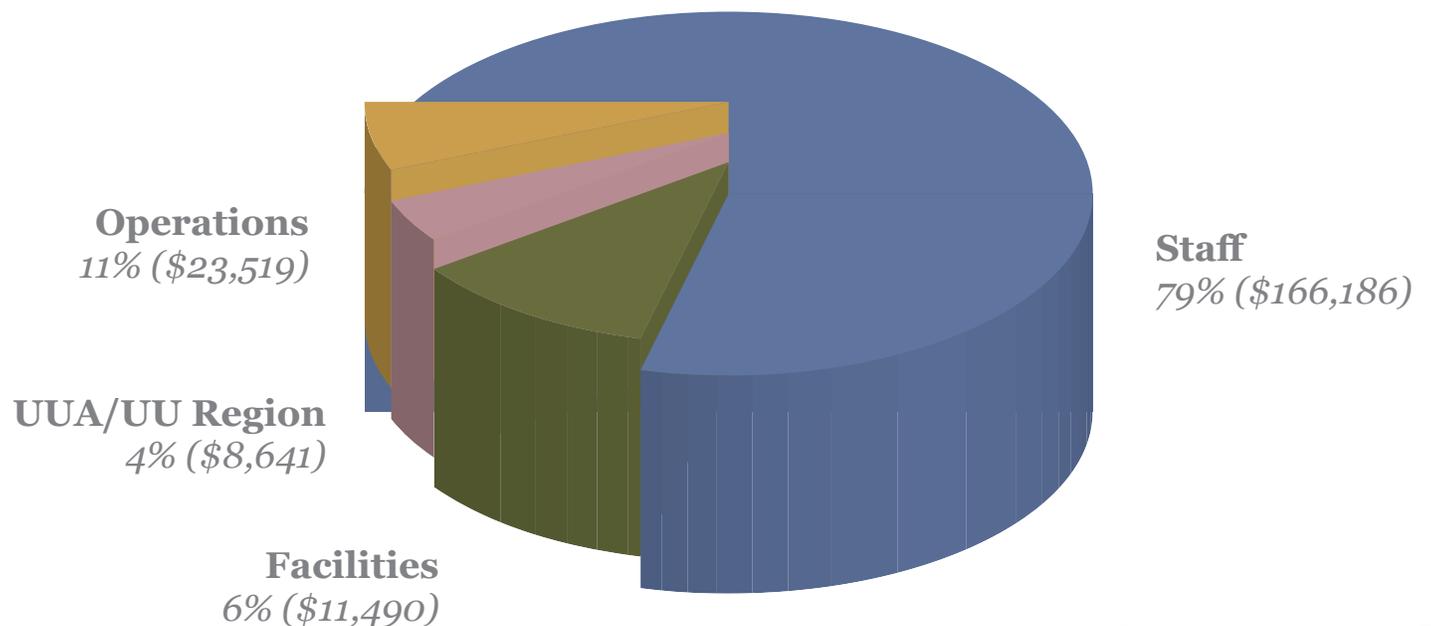
*Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Midland*

2022 Budget highlights

What our budget supports



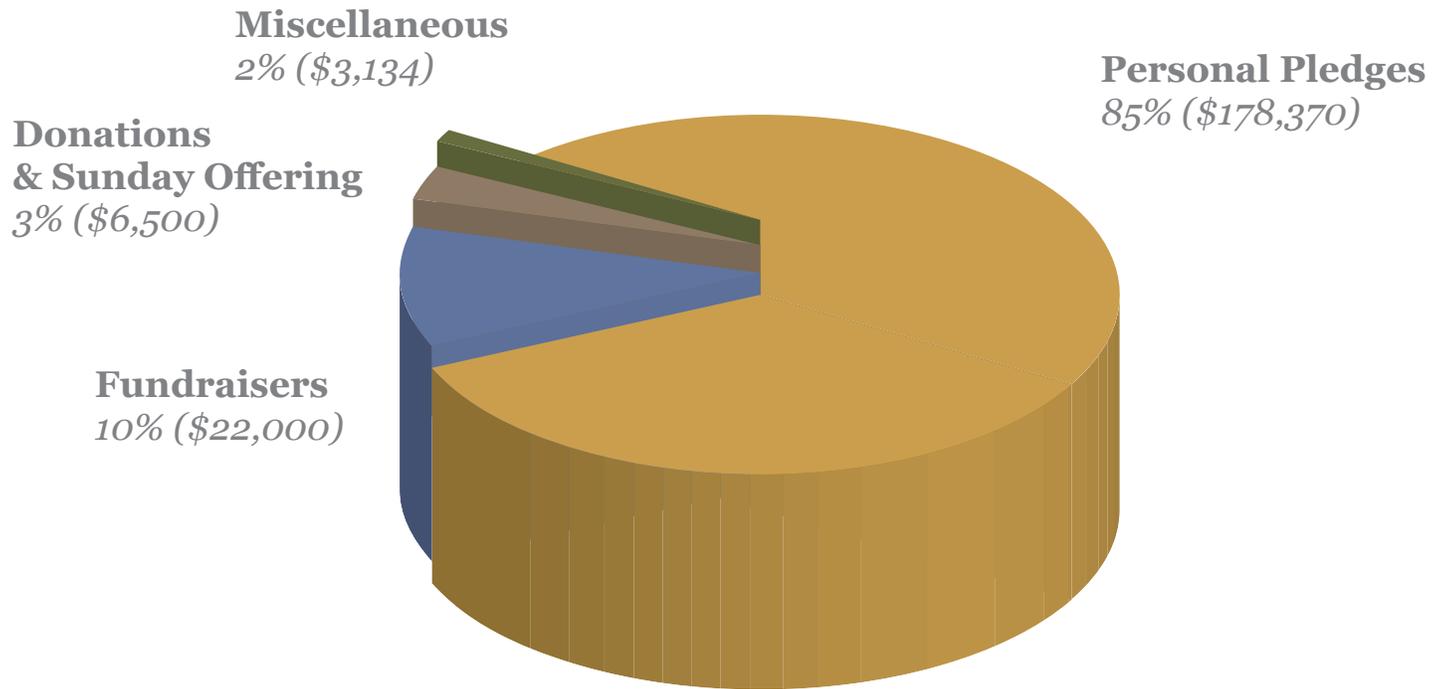
Where our pledge money goes



Continued on next page.

2022 Budget highlights, *cont.*

Where our income comes from



\$210,004
Total budget

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

Pledge form – January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022

Total pledge: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Would you like to learn more about UUFoM's Endowment Fund? **Yes.**

Form of payment

Check

Gift of stock

Cash in pledge envelope with my name

Automated bank bill-pay

or

I/We are unable to make a financial commitment at this time and wish to maintain my/our membership. Please affirm by signing below.

I/We will not be making a financial commitment to UUFoM this year and no longer wish to be a member(s).

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Comments: _____

Please submit your pledge by **SEPTEMBER 30, 2021** by following methods:

- Mail to **UUFoM, 6220 Jefferson Ave., Midland, MI 48640**
- Return by email to **office@uufom.org**
- Or fill out online at **<https://bit.ly/Pledge2022>**



Fair-share giving guide

Using this guide is a simple, 3-step process; giving is a function of commitment and resources.

1. Most of us budget our financial commitments on a monthly basis and the guide is organized accordingly, but you may calculate on any time frame that works for you. For convenience, the guide shows monthly and corresponding annual income levels. **Determine your monthly income or resource level:** \$ _____
2. **ADD** to your income level any unusual or periodic income, such as inheritances, business income, anticipated investment income, etc.
SUBTRACT any unusual expenses, such as large medical expenses, care of a parent, or a large financial expense, etc.
Result: \$ _____ **This is your Adjusted Monthly Income.**

Each of us will have our own unique circumstances to consider in making this calculation. The flexibility to include meaningful and unusual exceptions in your financial life (income and expenses) is what makes the guide fair and useful. This is a tool for you to use in the spirit of the Congregationalist tradition; we are individually and collectively responsible for resourcing our movement and our congregations. This is an honor system; only you know your circumstances.

3. From the Adjusted Monthly Income column (next page), move to the right to find a suggested giving level that you are ready to support, between 2% and 10%, depending on adjusted income and level of commitment. Interpolate between guide levels if needed.

In making your decision, consider the four commitment levels below and how they relate to your membership. Consider your UU values in thinking about your income and your financial commitment to the congregation, as expressed in the four levels below. Note that within each commitment level, the **guide is progressive**, with giving levels rising with capacity.

Wherever you find the right level, revisit it periodically and reassess whether it's still the right level for you or if you are ready to move to a deeper level of support.

Fair-share giving guide, *cont.*

Supporter: The congregation is a significant part of my spiritual and intellectual life that I want to support. My fair share financial commitment starts at 2% of my income and rises to 6% as my income and capacity rise.

Sustainer: The congregation is my central community; I am committed to sustaining the programs and ministries of my congregation. My fair share financial commitment starts at 3% of my income and rises to 7% as my income and capacity rise.

Visionary: My commitment is a clear demonstration of the unique importance of this congregation and of my spiritual principles. My fair share financial commitment starts at 5% of my income and rises to 9% as my income and capacity rise.

Transformer: I am deeply committed to the congregation; my contribution provides fuel for transformation and is part of my spiritual practices in living out my UU Principles. My fair share financial commitment represents 10% of my income.

		Supporter 2-6% of Income		Sustainer 3-7% of Income		Visionary 5-9% of Income		Transformer 10% of Income	
Adjusted Monthly Income	Approx. Adjusted Annual Income	Suggested % of Income	Monthly Pledge	Suggested % of Income	Monthly Pledge	Suggested % of Income	Monthly Pledge	Suggested % of Income	Monthly Pledge
\$1,000	\$12,000	2%	\$20	3%	\$30	5%	\$50	10%	\$100
\$1,500	\$18,000	2%	\$30	3%	\$45	5%	\$70	10%	\$150
\$2,000	\$25,000	2%	\$40	3%	\$60	5%	\$100	10%	\$200
\$3,000	\$36,000	2%	\$60	3%	\$90	5%	\$120	10%	\$300
\$4,000	\$50,000	3%	\$120	4%	\$160	5%	\$200	10%	\$400
\$6,500	\$80,000	3%	\$195	4%	\$260	6%	\$390	10%	\$650
\$8,500	\$100,000	3%	\$255	5%	\$425	6%	\$510	10%	\$850
\$10,000	\$120,000	3%	\$300	5%	\$500	6%	\$600	10%	\$1,000
\$12,500	\$150,000	4%	\$500	5%	\$625	6%	\$750	10%	\$1,250
\$17,000	\$200,000	4%	\$680	6%	\$1,020	7%	\$1,190	10%	\$1,700
\$25,000	\$300,000	5%	\$1,250	6%	\$1,500	8%	\$2,000	10%	\$2,500
\$40,000	\$500,000	6%	\$2,400	7%	\$2,800	9%	\$3,600	10%	\$4,000

What UUFoM means to members

Craig Murchison

In the severely divided country, where civil conversation is difficult to come by and so much nonsense prevails, what a pleasure it is to have the Midland UUF in our town, providing a beacon of hope, love and rationality. It is a joy to have an organization where progressive ideas can be spoken without fear of offending the listener and all contributions are welcome.

Shukchong (Estella) and Fred Thomas

We are deeply grateful for the connections UUFoM provides to the local, national and international community of UUs. We all start in different places and travel different paths, and we all need support and encouragement from each other in our commitment to spiritual growth, increased diversity and more justice.

Maxine Guettler

I joined the fellowship 20 years ago to give my children a religious home that would encourage free thinking. Our UU principles align with my beliefs. I've stayed because of the community.

Donna Wedge

Roy & I came to this Fellowship in the mid-1990's when we were seeking a religious community that would reflect our values and provide support for life passages. Our time at UUFOM has repeatedly exceeded our expectations and we have developed valued friendships and a sense of community. We pledge annually to provide financial support to our blessed community that we love and cherish. We feel privileged to do our part in keeping this Fellowship vital and active. We encourage everyone to pledge, as they are able, to keep our Fellowship strong. It is a wonderful place where old and new friends, alike, are lifted up and encouraged to seek their own religious truth.



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

6220 Jefferson Ave. | Midland, MI 48640-2934
(989) 631-1162 | office@uufom.org