



Dear friends,

Our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is the "BEE-loved" Community, and I cannot think of a better way to describe what we love about this congregation.



Part of being a *beloved community* is to be a thriving congregation, and we are, in so many ways! Our Sunday worship services are dynamic and engaging, from the excellent sermons and lively worship leadership of our dear Rev. Denis Paul, and the wide variety of Sunday services (examples include Christmas Eve Eve, Mother's Day, and the Negro Spirituals service), to the wonderful way that we include our children in so much of what we do on Sundays. For many of us, the music of our own Mike Galib and the choir he directs are an important part of what adds meaning in such a beautiful way. And we have found a way to embrace those who want to join us remotely on Sundays, by simulcasting our services to them. The Sunday Zoom conversations after services are genuine and deep, and people really treasure this way to connect. We love the Joys and Concerns during Sunday services. Our Closing Circle, where we join hands and sing together of our commitment, is such a meaningful way for us to re-connect to the spirit of life, and to truly feel ourselves to be a part of this BEE-loved community!

Activities *beyond* Sunday mornings are another important area in which our staff and our wonderful volunteers contribute to making UUCSC truly a beloved community. We engage with the wider community, for example, when we host a local legislative forum, or conduct a non-violence workshop with URI. Our small groups continue to provide stimulating discussion, support and a sense of belonging. Rev. Denis has gone *above and beyond* to get to know each of us individually. Lee Cowan is doing a superb job of helping to *build our future* as our DRE. She continues to show her commitment to quality religious education, and she has a deep, caring relationship with our children and young folks. A big accomplishment (funded by our own Hurdis Legacy Fund) was the training and classes for the *Our Whole Lives* (OWL) sexuality education programs for middle school students. And the OWL version for adults is in the works! All of our staff are outstanding, which is a rare gift for which we are very thankful. (I'm looking at *you*, Sara Kaplow, Sue Rogala and Jenny Rebecca!)

In addition to what we do, it is important to highlight how well we are able just to be together. It sounds so simple, but much of what makes this congregation function so well is the acceptance, warmth, generosity, kindness and caring we find here—all of which are a testament to us as a community.

We have an ongoing engagement with the *future*, too. We aspire to do so much! In our own UUCSC congregation, it is our BEE-loved community, working together, that is helping us to realize these aspirations. We can do so much, because we stand metaphorically *on the shoulders of giants*. As a recent example, many of us saw with renewed clarity the need for fundamental social change around racial justice, and we are committed to that goal. As a congregation, we have already adopted the new *Eighth Principle* that talks about both the Beloved Community and dismantling racism. Our anti-racism group is *super-active*, and they are involved in creating social change locally, statewide and nationally.

There is so much we are already doing, so much to appreciate, and so much we still hope to do. To bring that into focus, our Board of Directors is annually responsible for creating a *realistic financial plan—a budget*—for the coming year. To support that, we ask you to take stock of where you are, and decide whether you are in a position to contribute financially, and if so, how much.

To be clear: we know that some people are not financially secure enough to make a pledge, but we hope that they will be able to be generous with their time and talents. As a community, we also value these types of contributions very highly.

If you are able to make a pledge, we ask you to write the amount on the Pledge Form that is enclosed with this letter. If you are not in a position to be able to pledge at this time, please let us know and indicate that on the Pledge Form. Next, please return the form to UUCSC as soon as possible. It's really a very simple process! And of course, if your financial circumstances change later on, you are free to revise your pledge.

We need to emphasize that as a congregation, we are in a time of *significant financial challenges*. If you find that you can afford to increase the amount you pledge, it will be received *very gratefully*. If you have questions about this, feel free to ask anyone on the Stewardship Committee, the Board of Directors, or Rev. Denis.

To sum up, we are asking you to decide what your financial pledge will be, if any, for the 2023-2024 church year. Then, please let us know by *writing* it on your Pledge Form, *signing* the form, and *returning* it to us as soon as possible.

We thank you sincerely for helping us by doing this, for being a part of this wonderful community, and for contributing whatever—and however—you can.

In faith,

Sky Kimball  
Member, Stewardship Committee  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County