

# Unitarian Society of New Haven Pledging FAQs



## **What is a pledge and why are they solicited?**

A pledge is a promise to contribute a specific amount of money to USNH over the course of a congregational (fiscal) year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. Pledges of financial support provide approximately 75% of the congregation's operating budget, making it possible to provide worship, music, religious education, social justice programs, pastoral care, and much more. Your pledges are the foundation of our operating budget, through which USNH carries out its mission.

## **Are USNH members required to pledge financial support?**

Yes! All members are expected to contribute to support USNH's financial health. If your circumstances preclude a financial pledge, simply check the box on the pledge form to take a waiver. If you no longer wish to remain a USNH member, please email [office@usnh.org](mailto:office@usnh.org) so that we can update our records.

## **How much do people pledge to USNH?**

Annual pledges range from \$10 to more than \$20,000, with a median pledge of about \$1,200 (half of pledges below this level and half above). While stewardship gifts are not our only source of revenue, they do make up the largest, most stable share of our income. There is no minimum pledge required for membership, and finances should never be an obstacle to membership. Your commitment, at any level, is gratefully received.

## **Do my Sunday offering donations count toward my pledge?**

No. Only identified pledge payments count toward a pledge commitment. Payments towards your pledge should always include "pledge" on the memo line. Donations to USNH without a clear indication of their purpose are considered unrestricted gifts.

## **How can I pay my pledge?**

Most people make their pledge payments by personal check, automatic bank payments, or online. If you use PayPal, you may continue to do so but we encourage you to switch to [Breeze Giving](#). Cash pledge payments should be placed in an envelope with your name, the amount, and the word "pledge."

Making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from a retirement account or donating shares of stock to satisfy part or all of your pledge *may* have favorable tax consequences. Contact your retirement account firm to make a QCD. Jamie Ross ([office@usnh.org](mailto:office@usnh.org)) can provide directions for donating stock.

## **When should I pay my pledge?**

Most people make payments regularly throughout the fiscal year (July through June). However, pledges may be paid at any time before or during the fiscal year. If you wish to fulfill your pledge **before July 1, you must note the fiscal year** with your payment. Pledge payments are credited to the fiscal year in which they are made, unless specified otherwise by the donor.

## **Will I receive regular reminders to pay my pledge?**

No. Pledge statements will be sent by email in the fall, early January, and in the spring. Please watch for and review these emails. (If you do not use email, pledge statements will be mailed to your house.)

## **What should I do if my financial circumstances change? Can I change my pledge amount?**

If your financial circumstances change and you wish to increase or decrease your pledge, please contact Jamie Ross ([office@usnh.org](mailto:office@usnh.org)) to make the desired change.

**Questions?** Jamie Ross ([office@usnh.org](mailto:office@usnh.org)) or the Stewardship team ([stewardship@usnh.org](mailto:stewardship@usnh.org)) will be happy to answer your questions.