

Frequently Asked Questions about Stewardship at Birmingham Unitarian Church

How do I make my pledge?

To submit your pledge online, click [here](#).

To download and print a pledge form, click [here](#) and mail to:

Birmingham Unitarian Church
38651 Woodward Ave.
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

If you select Electronic Funds Transfer as your method of payment, please download and complete this [authorization form](#).

How do I fulfill my pledge?

Beginning July 1, 2026, submit your payment as you've indicated on your pledge form. Note that monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual payments are most helpful to BUC for planning cash flow, with advance payments extremely useful.

How much should I pledge?

The Board of Trustees approved a 2026-27 budget of \$749,000, of which \$540,000 is needed from pledge revenues. This represents a 7% increase over 2025-26's pledge revenues. Other categories are also expected to raise additional funds to achieve an overall balanced budget. Anything less will require cuts to the expense budget. More detail is in the "What is BUC's financial status and plan" FAQ below and in Keith Ensroth's presentation.

First, consider what benefits you and your family/friends derive from your association with BUC.

Think of your pledge not as "another charitable gift" but as support for regular (often weekly) beneficial events/activities, such as spiritual growth and music during Sunday services, Religious Education for your children, social activities including coffee hour after church, and numerous events such as Sharing Dinners.

A pledge increase of 7% from your 2025-26 pledge (**from every pledge unit**) would enable meeting the Board's proposed budget. Since not every pledge unit will be able to increase 7%, please pledge more if you can.

Why are pledges essential for members AND friends?

All are welcome to attend and participate in BUC's activities. The church campus and all programming are open to members AND friends. All people who attend services, send children

to Religious Education, and participate in any church activities such as coffee hour, choir, small groups, and Living by Heart use church resources. BUC appreciates financial support from all participants, regardless of membership status. Your pledge represents your commitment to BUC ideals and activities whether you are a member or a friend.

How does pledging differ from Sunday morning offering?

While donations via the weekly offering are greatly appreciated, and 50% are used to help support the church, they are unpredictable and BUC cannot rely on them in budgeting. Except for donations identified as “pledge payment” in the collection plate, 50% of our plate collection is donated to local non-profits that align with our values.

I volunteer a lot: Doesn't this compensate for financial giving?

Your volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated, and often they save money by handling jobs the church would either have to pay for or do without. Such volunteering provides personal satisfaction and engages volunteers with other BUC members and friends. Both your monetary contributions and your time/volunteer efforts are essential.

Why is it important to make my pledge during the annual Stewardship Campaign?

BUC's budget for our church campus and all church programming relies heavily (around 70%) on pledges.

Pledges made during the annual Pledge Drive are the basis for the coming year's budget (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027), which the Board of Trustees oversees. The Board is committed to having a balanced budget.

Your pledge by March 15, 2026, gives BUC's Board the ability to establish staffing and program levels. While later pledges are gratefully accepted, they can't be factored into the 2026-27 budget.

What if I can't afford to contribute financially?

If you are unable to make a financial contribution for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at this time, please contact BUC's Minister, Rev. Connie Grant at connie.grant@bucmi.org to receive a waiver.

What is BUC's financial status and plan? How does the Montessori School fit in?

In his presentation following the Pledge Sunday Brunch, BUC Treasurer Keith Ensroth will describe BUC's financial picture.

Beginning in 2025-26, the Board of Trustees has mandated a balanced budget, meaning that staffing, programming, and facilities expenditures will be limited by revenues.

The Board of Trustees has approved the following budget, **provisional on pledge revenues**:

<i>revenue source</i>	2026-27		<i>expenses</i>	2026-27
Pledges	\$ 540,000		Ministerial Services	\$ 184,000
Plate Collection	\$ 30,000		Religious Education	\$ 70,000
Rentals	\$ 60,000		Music	\$ 77,000
Endowment Draw	\$ 70,000		Congregational Life	\$ 55,000
Fundraising	\$ 44,000		Administrative Staff	\$ 128,000
Other income	\$ 5,000		Facilities	\$ 197,000
			Fundraising Expenses	\$ 20,000
			Social & Environmental Justice/Plate Sharing	\$ 15,000
TOTALS	\$ 749,000			\$746,000

Montessori School income for 2026-27, in the amount of \$96,000, will continue to be allocated to deferred maintenance. This will continue through 2029. A more detailed explanation including Q&A will be part of Keith's presentation on February 15; the recording will be posted on the Stewardship web page.

Who can answer my other questions?

- Rev. Connie Grant (connie.grant@bucmi.org; cell 847-840-8542)--waivers, worship service and programming questions
- Valerie Phillips (valerie.phillips@bucmi.org; 248-647-2380, ext. 215)--pledge forms, questions related to your pledge and/or contributions, general day-to-day matters
- Keith Ensroth (keith.ensroth@gmail.com), Board of Trustees Treasurer