

Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner (UUSG)
Financial Commitment Form
for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Name(s): _____

(Contact information below is optional if there is no change from the current directory listing.)

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email(s): _____

As a financial sign of commitment to the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner,
I/we pledge \$ _____ for the fiscal year 2011-2012.

This financial commitment is made in good faith and I/we agree to continue this pledge until I/we notify the Finance Committee in writing of any changes*.

Signature(s): _____

Please check here if you are a member and would be willing to pay your portion of the UUA and Clara Barton District Fair Share amounts (about \$80 per member) in addition to your annual pledge to UUSG.

Please check here if you would like to discuss your financial commitment with a church leader. You will be contacted to schedule a convenient time to meet.

Your pledges are kept confidential, however, amounts may be shared anonymously for congregational purposes.

Please return your Financial Commitment Form in a sealed envelope to Finance Committee members Priscilla Ericsson or Chris Pera. Forms may also be mailed to:

UUSG Finance Committee
PO Box 637
Gardner, MA 01440

* If you have a change in your financial situation during the year, please feel free to change your pledge appropriately and notify the Finance Committee so the church budget can be adjusted.

See the attached pages for “**Some Frequently Asked Questions About Pledging.**”

UUSG Stewardship Pledge Form for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Some Frequently Asked Questions About Pledging

1. What is a “pledge”?

A pledge is a financial commitment to donate a certain amount of money to the congregation within the congregational year, which begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. A “pledge” or “pledging unit” is considered to be an individual or a family or household.

2. Why should I pledge and how is my pledge used?

All pledge payments are used to support the mission of our congregation and in helping people search for intellectual and spiritual growth within our community. Pledges support the annual budget of our congregation, which provides worship and music, religious education, social justice opportunities, pastoral care, community events, and more. Pledge income also pays for the salaries of our minister and church staff, and for the operation and maintenance of our property. As an independent congregation, we do not receive any money from the larger Unitarian Universalist Association, so when members and friends of the congregation pledge, we can establish a realistic operating budget for the coming year. In some instances, showing the percentage of pledging units of the church may be a requirement for potential grants that the church applies for.

3. Is it possible to “ earmark” a pledge for a specific purpose?

No. As a democratic community, our budgets are created to serve the whole of our work together. All pledges support the work of the entire congregation.

4. Do I need to be a member to pledge?

No. Anyone can make an annual pledge to UUSG, whether a member or not. Those who pledge, but have not chosen to become members, are commonly known as Friends.

5. Do I have to pledge to be a member of the congregation?

No. Unlike some church organizations, UUSG does not require financial pledges in order to be a member. Although we do not require this, we ask everyone to seriously consider the idea of giving a percentage of their income to support the mission of our congregation.

6. When should I pledge?

Each year in April, we hold a service reminding us of our financial commitment to the church community. During this service, or shortly there after, you will receive a pledge form. We encourage everyone to complete their pledge form within a couple of weeks so the Finance and Executive committees can prepare a budget for the Annual Meeting in June. If you are a new member, you should pro-rate your pledge based on the remainder of the fiscal year, and then join the rest of the congregation in pledging in April for the next fiscal year.

7. How much should I pledge?

The amount of the pledge is decided by you based on your considerations and your financial means. Your pledge is a strong way of showing your commitment to the church, its programs, and its importance to you in your life. As a general guideline, and if you are able, it is suggested that your pledge amount should be between 3% and 5% of your annual income. If you have financial situation that precludes you from making a contribution, please return your pledge form anyway and state that you can not make a definitive pledge at this time.

8. When do I need to pay my pledge?

At your convenience between July 1st and June 30th of the fiscal year, although regularly scheduled giving throughout the year helps with the payment of church bills which need to be paid year-round. Mindful weekly giving may also help with your practice of generosity.

9. Can I change my pledge during the year?

We realize that our financial situations may change throughout the year and because of this you may not be able to meet your initial pledge amount. If this is the case, please fill out another pledge form and return it to the Finance Committee. Your old pledge will be updated with the new one. By letting the Finance Committee know of a change, we can better budget the remainder of the church year. A member of the Finance Committee or the church office can provide you with a new form.

10. What about non-monetary gifts to the church?

While giving of your time and other items are important to ourselves and the church community, these gifts and other donations, such as items donated for the church fairs, Minister's Discretionary Fund, or other special collections, do not count toward your pledge since we rely on pledge amounts to cover our operating expenses. If you would like however, depending on the gift, please let the Finance Committee know so you can receive a tax receipt for your gift.

11. How does the pledge relate to the weekly collection during Sunday services?

The money raised in the offering serves as additional income to benefit our annual budget. However, some people pay their pledge by putting a check or cash (in an appropriately marked envelope) into the weekly collection plate. Please indicate in some way that this money should be tracked as part of your pledge so it can be reflected in your tax statement. This will insure that your pledge is appropriately allocated. We can make no guarantees that it is attributed to you correctly without this information. If you decide to pay your pledge through the weekly collection, it is still very important that you complete a pledge form to allow us to establish a budget for the coming year. We cannot establish a budget without your pledge.

12. Will I receive a bill or statement?

Those who pledge receive written acknowledgement of contributions that they can use for their own budgets and for tax purposes. Statements may also be mailed toward the end of the fiscal year reminding those who pledged of their financial commitment to the church community.

13. What do I do with my completed pledge form?

Please place your form in an envelope and give it to either Priscilla Ericsson or Chris Pera, as members of the Finance Committee. Pledge forms may also be mailed to the church, attention to the Finance Committee. Your pledges are kept confidential, however, amounts may be shared anonymously for congregational purposes.

14. What if I would like to discuss my pledge with someone or have additional questions?

Please check the appropriate space on the form and a church leader will call you to set up a time to meet with you and discuss your questions. Or if you feel more comfortable, please contact the minister to discuss your questions.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting UUSG and its mission and work to provide the greater Gardner area with a spiritually innovative ministry through a caring and welcoming spiritual community. With our continued support, we can keep our church and faith vibrant, strong and growing!