

# MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**

**Board of Trustees Meeting**

**January 15, 2026**

**6:30 - 9:00 pm**

**First Universalist Church**

**Cummins Room & Zoom (multiplatform)**

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	<b>Call to Order</b>	<b>Marc</b>
		<i>Lighting the Chalice</i> <i>May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.</i>	<b>All</b>
6:35 PM	5	<b>Agenda Approval</b>	<b>Marc</b>
6:40 PM	20	<b>Executive Session</b> Somatic Grounding Spiritual Community Building	<b>Cameron</b> <b>Ashley/Jen</b>
7:00 PM	15	<b>Status of 2025-26 Board goals and next steps</b>	<b>Marc</b>
7:15 PM	20	<b>Stewardship Committee Report</b> 2026-27 Pledge Goals Board role	<b>Emily W</b>
7:35 PM	15	<b>Mid-year meeting planning</b>	<b>Marc</b>
7:50 PM	5	<b>Consent Agenda</b> Approval of December meeting minutes Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers & trends Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes Monitoring: Congregant grievances Monitoring: Staff & Volunteer grievances	<b>Marc</b>
7:55 PM	10	<b>Break</b>	<b>Emily to bring snacks</b>
8:05 PM	30	<b>Finance Committee Report</b>	<b>Cameron</b>
8:35 PM	5	<b>Governance Committee Report</b>	<b>Lou</b>
8:40 PM	5	<b>Executive Committee Report</b>	<b>Marc</b>
8:45 PM	10	<b>Meeting review and Gratuities</b> Covenant IDI	<b>All</b>
8:55 PM		<b>Adjourn</b>	

DRIVE model for decision making:

D: Who is the decision-maker? If not an individual, how will the decision be reached (e.g., consensus, majority vote, etc.)

R: Will there be a recommendation sought, and if so, from whom?

I: What input will be solicited? How? From whom?

V: Does the decision need to be vetted with anyone before it is finalized?

E: Who is responsible for executing the decision?

Helpful questions to consider, given our intercultural orientation of minimization, to promote equity and inclusion in moving our goals forward:

- What is our role in obtaining this goal?
- What are our values we need to consider as we think about our approach, particularly concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion?
- How have we structured our approach to ensure we are considering all points of view?
- How conscious, intentional, and transparent are we about our guidelines for interaction in our meetings? How might we be reinforcing a “go along to get along” approach?
- What do we think we already know about this topic? What assumptions are we making? What is the data to support what we think we know?
- What else do we need to learn? How are we going to get this information? From whom?

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### **Roles, Responsibilities, and Resources for Board Members**

[2025-26 Board Handbook](#)

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**December 18, 2025**  
**6:30 - 9:00 pm**  
**First Universalist Church**  
**Cummins Room & Zoom (multiplatform)**

Start	Duration	Topic	Lead
6:30 PM	5	<b>Call to Order. Absent Ada, Zoe</b>	Marc
		<i>Lighting the Chalice May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.</i>	All
6:35 PM	5	<b>Agenda Approval Approved</b>	Marc
6:40 PM	30	<b>Executive Session</b> Somatic Grounding Spiritual Community Building. <b>Discussion around what our congregation needs to do next around race in spiritual community building.</b>	Emily Ashley/Jen
7:10 PM	30	<b>Board Covenant.</b> Discussed the final draft. <b>Approved</b>	Katherine, Jeanne, Cameron, Ashley
7:40 PM	15	<b>Status of 2025-26 Board goals and next steps - small group discussions</b> <b>Updated progress on goals.</b>	Marc
7:55 PM	5	<b>Consent Agenda Approved</b> Approval of November meeting minutes Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers & trends Monitoring: Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes Monitoring: Congregant grievances Monitoring: Staff & Volunteer grievances Approval of Ministerial housing allowance Approval of First Univ. sponsorship of David Leppik as ministerial candidate	Marc
8:00 PM	10	<b>Break</b>	Emily to bring snacks
8:10 PM	10	<b>Finance Committee Report</b> See Finance Committee Report. <b>ESG Funds do just as well as standard market performance investments . Will start discussing the 26/27 budget early in 2026.</b>	Cameron
8:20 PM	5	<b>Governance Committee Report</b> GPH review in proces	Lou
8:25 PM	5	<b>Stewardship Committee Report</b> Kick off pledge season early February with a goal to complete the pledge season by end of March. Discussed having the shape of the 2026/27 budget planned.	Emily W
8:30 PM	5	<b>Executive Committee Report</b>	Marc
8:35 PM	15	<b>Thank Yous</b> - write notes to congregants <b>Marc will send out a list with assignments for the board to write thank you's. We can also write notes to teams at church as well as individuals.</b>	All
8:50 PM	10	<b>Meeting review and Gratuities</b>	All
9:00 PM		<b>Adjourn</b>	

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### **Roles, Responsibilities, and Resources for Board Members**

[2025-26 Board Handbook](#)

## December Attendance

**First Universalist Board of Trustees**  
**2025-26 Annual Goals**  
**Approved 10/16/25**

Board Goal	Congregational Health Survey Theme/Desired outcomes	Visionary Goal(s)	Annual theological theme(s)
<b>1. Strengthen Board governance practices to enhance trust</b>	<b>Trust, Governance</b>		
1a. Develop and practice a Board covenant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By November meeting, approve a <b>board covenant</b></li> <li>• Incorporate covenant review into monthly meetings</li> <li>• Share our process with the congregation in a SmorgasBoard column in the spring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> </ul>
1b. Review and update Governing Policy Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By December board meeting, Governance Committee to share a plan for comprehensive review and update</li> <li>• Monthly progress report at board meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> <li>• Humility</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve revised handbook by the May meeting</li> </ul>		
1c. Expand communications with the congregation through a regular Board column in the Liberal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin semi-monthly column in September</li> <li>Solicit feedback from members on communications by the mid-year meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> <li>Provide meaningful presence to one another in times of joy, grief, and change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences of Beloved Community</li> </ul>
1d. Implement and model a decision-making framework (DRIVE*) for key Board decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate DRIVE into monthly agendas</li> <li>Describe the framework for the congregation in a SmorgasBoard column and at least one small group meeting (e.g., after Community Supper) by end of December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building resilience for the long term</li> </ul>
<b>2. Deepen the sense and practice of belonging among members of First Universalist</b>	<b>Welcoming and Belonging</b>		

<p>2a. Follow up on survey results through individual follow up to respondents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All respondents to survey will receive follow-up email from a board member by the end of October</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Provide meaningful presence to one another in times of joy, grief, and change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> </ul>
<p>2b. Learn more about the state of belonging in the church and about who we are through individual conversations and focus groups with broad representation, and share the insights gained with the congregation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 3 small group meetings by the end of January</li> <li>• Describe the process in a fall newsletter column</li> <li>• Share initial insights in a winter newsletter column and at mid-year meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> <li>• Provide meaningful presence to one another in times of joy, grief, and change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> </ul>
<p>2c. Collaborate with staff to develop tactics to increase participation in shared ministry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create at least one opportunity for staff/board interaction by end of December</li> <li>• Expand Nominating Committee charge to include identification of lay leaders for shared ministry activities</li> <li>• Board members to collaborate with staff to invite identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen the opportunities for leadership participation and engagement</li> <li>• Practice Beloved Community among us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Humility (truly knowing ourselves)</li> <li>• Building resilience for the long term</li> </ul>

	individuals into lay leadership roles		
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\*DRIVE framework for Board decisions:

- D: Who is the *decision*-maker? If not an individual, how will the decision be reached (e.g., consensus, majority vote, etc.)
- R: Will there be a *recommendation* sought, and if so, from whom?
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**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**January 8, 2026**

**6:00-7:30 pm | Online**

Members present: Cameron Smither, Marc Gorelick, Dan Berg, Dick Niemiec

Staff present: Brad Schmidt, Jen Crow, Nico Van Ostrand

Stewardship liaison present: Ginny McAninch

Members not in attendance: Amelia Marquez

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Meeting convened at 6:00 pm

**1. Chalice lighting and grounding led by Cameron and Jen**

- On an extremely difficult week for our community and the country (RIP Renee Good), we are feeling very grounded in the purposes of church in this moment.

**2. Review prior meeting minutes led by Cameron**

- Minutes approved

**3. Review Year-to-Date Finances led by Brad**

- Members were presented core financial statements reflecting July through November 2025. No significant flags present in the finance data. Major topics of discussion included:
  - For revenues: annual pledges continue to be ahead of budget by approx. \$40,000. Postponed Boston trip registration fees (offset with avoided expenses) make variance look lower. Give to the Max day was very successful, raising \$14,175. Overall, Revenues are approx. \$25,000 above budget.
  - For expenses: generally close to budget. Personnel right on budget; Administrative expenses show a large positive variance but much of that is reflecting expenses avoided from the Boston trip; professional fees and volunteer development Buildings and Grounds have a similar moderate negative variance from safety/security and property tax expenses (see October and December minutes for details). Overall, Expenses are approx. \$19,500 below budget.
  - First U's property taxes (now approx. \$18,000 for the year) are significantly higher than other community churches; Brad and Jim are engaging the assessor to appeal this amount in an attempt to adjust it down; some of this may stem from changes in classification (for-profit vs not-for-profit) of some of the organizations using the building; suggestions were made to re-engage the law firm we engaged on this in the past, solicit lay leadership from the congregation to help, and explore the potential of budgeting for a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) contribution to the community if taxes get reduced.
  - Looking ahead: next month's numbers will reflect the end of the second quarter of the church's fiscal year; Brad will do his best to use those numbers for the congregational mid-year meeting on Feb 8.

#### **4. Financial Policy Review led by Cameron**

- Cameron oriented the committee around its responsibility to monitor and review the financial governing policies established by the board and shared recommended language changes for the following policies:
  - Gift Acceptance Policy *[Last updated 3/21/24]*
  - Reserves Policy *[Last updated 3/17/22]*
- The contours of these recommendations focused on adding flexibility and some minor grammatical adjustments. The committee approved these recommendations; Cameron will make these recommendations to the full Board of Trustees at its next meeting and share the outcome with the committee at its next meeting.

#### **5. Insurance Considerations led by Brad**

- Brad shared how he (with support from member Christa Anders; thank you Christa!) reviewed the church's insurance coverages recently; he proceeded to present potential areas where additional coverage may be useful. Highlights included:
  - Cyber Coverage—currently \$50k limit; recommends increasing to max \$100k; increased annual cost of \$65.
    - Brad will confirm this is the max coverage we can purchase.
  - Physical and Abusive Behavior Coverage—excluded from current coverage; recommends adding \$500k per incident, \$500k cap for the year; increased annual cost of \$148.
    - Brad will reach out to confirm who is/isn't covered by this, esp. re: strangers
  - Legal Defense Coverage—currently \$5k per incident, \$15k cap for the year; recommends increasing to \$50k per incident, \$150k cap per year; increased annual cost of \$10.
- Governance-wise, given the small total dollar amount, this is a change Jen can make as Senior Minister. The Finance Committee's monitoring role extends to communicating its recommendation to the full Board of Trustees that it's comfortable with the management of these risks to the organization via the insurance coverage we discussed.

#### **6. Staff Compensation and Benefits Considerations led by Jen**

- Jen introduced how, as part of crafting the budget for next fiscal year, she builds all positions into the UUA recommend ranges; currently, we use the minimum of these ranges. Building in 3% cost-of-living increases.
- Jen asked for support in conducting a review of the UUA's recommendations on benefits; Cameron offered to support. Areas of focus include:
  - Share of health insurance premium covered and for whom – currently, FU pays 100% of the employee premium and 0% of family premium(s); it's believed FU can offer multiple options if at least one employee is in plan.
  - Contribution to retirement plans
  - Share of long-term disability, accidental death and dismemberment, and dental premiums covered and for whom

#### **7. Next Fiscal Year Budget, Pledge Goal Discussion led by Jen**

- Jen is gathering input from the Finance and Stewardship Committees on next year's proposed budget, which will inform the pledge appeal in the coming weeks. This is an important moment to consider both sound financial planning and the story these resources tell about our church. Priority topics included:
  - Expected increases from inflation and rising health insurance rates – approximately \$40k; these support living our values regarding staff compensation and benefits

- Increases to cover expenses previously funded by building and capital reserves – approximately \$86k; these fund the cost of the building and its maintenance, important for caring for our shared home as a space for community and sanctuary.
- Increases to personnel expenses – approximately \$50k to facilitate shifts in staffing structure to enhance pastoral care, belonging, and shared ministry and leadership from the congregation; these would help the church live our vision and support where the congregation's needs are today, including helping non-staff efforts reach further.
- All told, in the ballpark of 13-15% increase from last year's budget.
- The committee discussed expected questions likely to be top of mind when discussing staffing; important topics included implications from Glen Thomas' recent departure as Director of Worship Arts, how we live our values in our budgeting, opportunities for structural changes in addressing our vision as a church, and the value of discussing these when sharing budgeting details in the future.
  - Praise was shared for beginning the budgeting planning earlier, to support the formation of a more compelling narrative for pledge season; this is one part of the legacy left by Rev. Arif; thank you, Arif!
- The committee also briefly discussed the need for one-on-one conversations about sharing financial resources and the benefit of a "philosophy" of sorts about the connection of financial support to building a sense of belonging

## 8. Looking Ahead/Next Steps

- The next committee meeting will focus on Quarter 2 finances.
- The mid-year congregational meeting is on February 8.
- Concrete next steps included:
  - Brad will work to revise the church's property tax-exempt status to lower its property tax liability; Cameron will connect with Brad about potential congregational support.
  - Brad will update the Legacy Investment Policy document on the website.
  - Brad will clarify questions related to insurance coverage (see section 5 notes).
  - Jen and Cameron will review staff benefits.
  -

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Next meeting scheduled for February 12, 2026, online from 6:00-7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Smither, Treasurer

# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Balance Sheet

**Actual  
As of  
11/30/2025**

### **Assets**

#### **Current Assets**

Cash	\$87,236.00
Investments	\$3,491,463.02
Accounts Receivable	\$4,316.28
Other Current Assets	\$45,113.71
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$3,628,129.01</b>

#### **Non-Current Assets**

Fixed Assets	\$5,213,340.19
<b>Total Non- Current Assets</b>	<b>\$5,213,340.19</b>

### **Total Assets**

**\$8,841,469.20**

### **Liabilities and Fund Balance**

#### **Liabilities**

##### **Current Liabilities**

Accounts Payable	\$56,477.30
Benefits Payable	\$36,631.70
Other Current Liabilities	\$21,998.31
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$115,107.31</b>

##### **Long Term Liabilities**

Loan Payable	\$1,398,337.45
Interfund Transfer	\$0.00
<b>Total Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,398,337.45</b>

### **Total Liabilities**

**\$1,513,444.76**

### **Fund Balance**

<b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,908,859.81</b>
<b>Donor Restricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,419,164.63</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$7,328,024.44</b>

### **Total Liabilities and Fund Balance**

**\$8,841,469.20**

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**  
**Income Statement**  
**Operating Budget**

	Actual 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2025 to 06/30/2026
<b>Revenues</b>				
<b>Support</b>				
Annual Giving	\$656,931.56	\$612,264.00	\$44,667.56	\$1,275,550.00
Donations & Fundraising	\$66,649.03	\$74,647.00	(\$7,997.97)	\$236,500.00
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$723,580.59</b>	<b>\$686,911.00</b>	<b>\$36,669.59</b>	<b>\$1,512,050.00</b>
<b>Earned Revenue</b>				
Services & Rentals	\$46,239.61	\$42,813.31	\$3,426.30	\$109,000.00
Investment	\$104.69	\$0.00	\$104.69	\$0.00
Other Income	\$583.27	\$0.00	\$583.27	\$2,000.00
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>\$46,927.57</b>	<b>\$42,813.31</b>	<b>\$4,114.26</b>	<b>\$111,000.00</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$770,508.16</b>	<b>\$729,724.31</b>	<b>\$40,783.85</b>	<b>\$1,623,050.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Personnel & Professional	\$515,107.92	\$515,374.44	\$266.52	\$1,243,000.00
Administrative	\$45,038.77	\$68,092.79	\$23,054.02	\$148,001.00
Fundraising	\$5,761.96	\$7,290.00	\$1,528.04	\$19,500.00
Program	\$35,360.44	\$37,701.93	\$2,341.49	\$67,500.00
Building & Grounds	\$52,744.75	\$50,551.62	(\$2,193.13)	\$140,300.00
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$654,013.84</b>	<b>\$679,010.78</b>	<b>\$24,996.94</b>	<b>\$1,622,801.00</b>
<b>Investment Activity</b>	<b>\$1,288.78</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$1,288.78</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$117,783.10</b>	<b>\$50,713.53</b>	<b>\$67,069.57</b>	<b>\$249.00</b>

# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Income Statement

### Building & Capital Reserve Budget

	Actual 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2025 to 06/30/2026
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#### Revenues

##### Support

Donations & Fundraising

Capital Campaign	\$26,620.00	\$64,791.65	(\$38,171.65)	\$155,500.00
Total Donations/Fundraising	\$26,620.00	\$64,791.65	(\$38,171.65)	\$155,500.00
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$26,620.00</b>	<b>\$64,791.65</b>	<b>(\$38,171.65)</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$26,620.00</b>	<b>\$64,791.65</b>	<b>(\$38,171.65)</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>

#### Expenses

Administrative

Professional Fees	\$734.81	\$0.00	(\$734.81)	\$0.00
Total Administrative Expenses	\$734.81	\$0.00	(\$734.81)	\$0.00

Building & Grounds

Equipment (Non-Capitalized)	\$0.00	\$208.31	\$208.31	\$500.00
Equipment Repair & Maintenance	\$366.08	\$208.31	(\$157.77)	\$500.00
Repairs & Maintenance	\$311.00	\$3,333.31	\$3,022.31	\$8,000.00
HVAC	\$3,907.00	\$2,500.00	(\$1,407.00)	\$6,000.00
Elevator	\$1,421.81	\$1,458.31	\$36.50	\$3,500.00
Grounds Maintenance	\$2,750.00	\$1,666.65	(\$1,083.35)	\$4,000.00
Capital Campaign Expenditure	\$0.00	\$55,416.65	\$55,416.65	\$133,000.00
Interest Expense	\$22,179.43	\$0.00	(\$22,179.43)	\$0.00
<b>Total Building &amp; Grounds</b>	<b>\$30,935.32</b>	<b>\$64,791.54</b>	<b>\$33,856.22</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$31,670.13</b>	<b>\$64,791.54</b>	<b>\$33,121.41</b>	<b>\$155,500.00</b>

#### Investment Activity

\$8,660.67 \$0.00 \$8,660.67 \$0.00

# First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

## Income Statement

### Building & Capital Reserve Budget

	Actual 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Budget 07/01/2025 to 11/30/2025	Variance	Annual Budget 07/01/2025 to 06/30/2026
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$3,610.54	\$0.11	\$3,610.43	\$0.00

# MINUTES

## First Universalist Stewardship Committee

Thursday, 11 December 2025, 4:00 | Zoom

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### Attendees

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Lynn Broaddus (chair), Ginny McAninch, Velma Wagner, Emily Wallace

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### Notes

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The purpose of this short meeting was to select the 2026-2027 Pledge Campaign theme. After thinking further about the suggestions raised during our past two meetings, we selected "Investing in Hope". Before finalizing the theme, we posed the following question to Google's AI tool:

*What is a pledge campaign theme that is an alternative to "investing in hope"*

It answered with the following:

*A pledge campaign theme works best when it's short, memorable, and emotionally resonant. Since "Investing in Hope" emphasizes optimism and future-building, here are some strong alternatives that carry similar weight but with fresh angles:*

#### ❖ Alternative Campaign Themes

- *Building Tomorrow Together* – highlights collective action and shared responsibility.
- *Seeds of Change* – evokes growth, transformation, and long-term impact.
- *Empowering Futures* – focuses on giving people tools and opportunities to thrive.
- *Strength in Giving* – underscores the power of generosity and community.
- *Lighting the Path* – conveys guidance, clarity, and hope through support.
- *Promise in Action* – turns the idea of hope into tangible steps and results.
- *Together We Rise* – emphasizes unity and collective uplift.

Some of these alternatives could fit well into the material and messages we develop as part of the campaign.

Lynn will get copies of recent pledge letters (asking Rachel, then Ashley), and construct a draft to share with the Committee for editing and input.

We will meet again next week to discuss the timeline and specific tasks needed to launch and manage the campaign.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm**

# MINUTES

## First Universalist Stewardship Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025, 1:00 | Zoom

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### Attendees

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Lynn Broaddus (chair), Ashley Harness, Velma Wagner, Emily Wallace

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### Notes

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The focus of this meeting was to review the pledge campaign timeline, and the specific tasks and responsibilities associated with it. Decisions and actions are noted below:

- Pledge campaign will last seven weeks, launching on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> and concluding on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Emily will reach out to Martha Moriarty from the Visual Arts Team to discuss creating a "Hope"-themed chalice thermometer display for the pledge campaign.
- Lynn and Emily will jointly create a letter from the Stewardship Team, with Lynn writing the first draft, possibly including the giving guide ("as an optional tool that some people find helpful") from the UUA. We need to be sensitive to members' diverse financial circumstances yet also be direct about the church's financial needs.
- Envelope stuffing tentatively set for week of January 25<sup>th</sup>, with in-person distribution on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Emily will ask youth board members Ada and Zoe to give a testimonial. If they agree to it, Emily will provide support to them as they develop their statement.
- Office staff will prepare labels and envelopes for pledge packets.
- Ashley will compile a draft list of relationship managers.
- Ashley will ask Brad to get the updated list of donors, to help with assignments to relationship managers.
- Emily (and Ginny, as available): Prepare to deliver the stewardship team's introduction/testimonial (live or video) for the February 1st launch.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm**

Next meeting – January 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm

# MINUTES

## First Universalist Stewardship Committee

Thursday, 8 January 2026, 6:00 pm | Zoom

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### Attendees

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Lynn Broaddus (chair), Unique Jacobo, Velma Wagner, Emily Wallace.

Note – Ginny was attending the Finance Committee meeting, which was scheduled for the same time, and Ashley was recovering from tear gas and other stresses related to recent ICE actions.

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### Notes

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After a quick check-in, particularly regarding the impacts of this week's ICE actions, chalice lighting, and reading of our covenant, the meeting focused on the action items identified during the December 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The key takeaways from the meeting were:

- Emily will follow up with Martha Moriarty of the Visual Arts Team to continue the discussion of the pledge collection box and to also ask them if they could create something that will visually track our progress on pledges (like a thermometer, but not a thermometer, perhaps filling the word "HOPE").
- Lynn will schedule a time to meet with Jen next week to fine tune our message and communications regarding the pledge (i.e. for the packet, for the web portal, for the Weekly Liberal, etc.) We anticipate that Jen will take the lead on creating the spiritual framework for the messaging while Stewardship will create the specific "ask", create giving lines (e.g. UUA guidelines), share information about our pledge statistics, and ensure people know the mechanics of pledging.
- Ashley will continue to line up people to give pledge testimonials during the seven weeks of the pledge drive. Ada and Zoe, the youth appointees to the Board, will provide a testimonial (per Emily's request), and Unique offered to add her name to the list of possible testimonial providers, though not on the first one or two weekends. .
- Ashley will continue to take the lead on what we've been calling "relationship managers, focusing on the mid-level donors who give \$2,000 - \$5,000 annually, as well as the 8-9 households who expressed interest in multi-year commitments during last year's pledge drive. We discussed alternatives to the terms "relationship manager" or "canvasser" and landed on the title "Hope Ambassador". Lynn will share the decision with Ashley.
- Ashley will schedule training for the Hope Ambassadors, preferably a week or two before the pledge campaign launches (i.e. as early as January 18).

- Emily will coordinate volunteers and snack contributions for an envelope stuffing event, likely on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> or Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup>. Once the date is set, each of us will share the invitation to our social groups.
- Unrelated to the pledge campaign, Lynn will meet with Paolo next week to discuss music events / fundraisers at the church.

### **Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm**

Next meeting – January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm

*After the meeting we received the following update from the Finance Committee's meeting:*

Give to the Max 2025 – total raised was \$14,175.00

The preliminary budget will include:

- Pledge base increase of \$185k from the 2025-2026 budget which allows:
  - An additional \$50k for salaries to cover increasing Rev. Laura's time to 30 hrs, hiring a half time admin/membership/volunteer coordinator, extra hours for youth ministry, music director at half time and an accompanist;
  - \$86k for mortgage (this year we start weaning off funds accumulated from the last capital campaign);
  - \$40k for inflation and increased health insurance increase costs.

The total target pledge income is about \$1.5M (vs. ~ \$1.3 M in current year).