

Dear Unitarian Universalist,

For years, our congregations have used giving guides as a helpful tool for members to reflect on their financial contributions. Over time, however, we learned that many of the existing giving guides weren't meeting everyone's needs—it could feel a bit inflexible, sometimes complicated, and didn't fully reflect the realities of people's financial situations. That's why we wanted to hear from you. Through open forums, personal conversations, and dedicated working group meetings, we gathered your insights to better understand how we can support our beloved community in faithful and meaningful giving.

The result is this new guide—a simpler, more flexible tool that combines narrative reflection with clear, visual guidance. It invites you to consider your financial circumstances honestly and thoughtfully, then explore giving options that align with your capacity and commitment to our shared mission. A customizable graph helps visualize possibilities, while written reflections ground the process in our values of equity and generosity.

Recognizing that every congregation is different, we've included links to editable templates, allowing you—and your congregations' leaders—to adapt this resource as needed. Whether a member is new to the community or has been part of it for decades, this guide meets members where they are.

Most importantly, this approach calls us into an equitable way of funding our faith community—one that honors each person's circumstances while collectively ensuring we have the resources to live out our mission. We hope it fosters deeper conversation, thoughtful discernment, and a renewed sense of shared purpose.

Thank you for engaging in this process with openness and care. Together, we sustain not only a budget, but the vibrant lives of our congregation.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you reflect on your financial situation and explore giving in a way that feels both meaningful and sustainable.

Start with the first page, which offers a series of thoughtful questions to assess your financial capacity—considering your income, expenses, savings, investments and priorities. These prompts are not meant to prescribe a single “right” answer but to help you clarify what generous giving looks like in your current circumstances. Each category has a series of descriptors; please know that you do not need to have all or none of the descriptors to fit in a particular category. If you seem to fall between, make your best call about the category that best describes you now.

Then, turn to the graph on the second page, which suggests a range of giving percentages based on income (net income—after taxes) and your level of activity and engagement in your congregation. Someone who is a core member might be a formal leader or someone who's developed an informal leadership role over time. Someone who is resting may attend church once a month or less. Someone who is casual might attend on Sundays and send their kids to RE programming. This visual aid is a starting point, not a rule—adjust as needed to fit your life. Whether you're able to give at the suggested level, more, or less, what matters most is your intentional engagement in supporting our shared mission.

WHAT'S IN YOUR CUP?

My Financial Cup Runneth Over

I am employed or retired with income and wealth that more than meets all my basic needs (food, housing, transportation, health)

I may have some debt but it doesn't impact my financial choices in any way.

I may own more than one property and/or I have other investments.

My household can afford several vehicles. And I often fly business or first class.

I never have to avoid medical care due to finances.

I often eat meals out at good restaurants and subscribe to theater, the symphony, the ballet and/or the opera.

I can buy clothes whenever I choose.

I can afford vacations to exotic places and take time off when I need it (if I'm employed).

Your Financial Cup Full

I am employed or retired with enough income to always meet all my basic needs (food, housing, transportation, health)

I may have some debt but it doesn't impact my financial choices.

I own my own home OR I rent a higher end property by choice. I may own more than one property.

My household owns or leases at least one car.

I have adequate access to health care, and do not avoid medical care due to finances.

I have enough extra income to afford meals out, the movies or a concert, new clothes, etc. when I choose.

I can afford vacations and take time off when I want it (if I'm employed).

Your Financial Cup is Adequate

I am employed or retired with enough income to usually meet all my basic needs (food, housing, transportation, health)

I may have some debt but it doesn't impact obtaining my basic needs.

I own or lease a car.

I have adequate access to health care, and do not avoid routine medical care due to finances.

I have some financial savings (am not living paycheck to paycheck).

I have enough extra income to occasionally afford meals out, a concert or a movie, new clothes, etc. without going further into debt.

I can take a vacation annually or every few years without going further into debt.

Your Financial Cup is Low

I struggle to meet my basic needs (food, housing, transportation)

I have enough debt that it impacts my capacity to meet my basic needs.

I pay below median rent, live in subsidized housing or have unstable housing.

I can not afford a car.

I am unemployed or under-employed.

I qualify for government assistance for my basic needs.

I have no savings.

I am unable to afford meals out, a concert or a movie, new clothes, etc.

I can not afford vacations or to take time off from work without a financial burden.

What's in your cup?

Level of Engagement and Participation

	Core	Active	Casual	Resting
Low	1-2%	1-2%	1-2%	1-2%
Adequate	8-10%	5-8%	3-5%	1-3%
Full	13-15%	10-13%	7-10%	5-7%
Runneth Over	15% or more	13% or more	10% or more	7% or more

Level of Engagement and Participation

What's in your cup?

	Core	Active	Casual	Resting
Low				
Adequate				
Full				
Runneth Over				