

# The Journey of Your Money at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces

When I was a kid, I'd go to church with my mother and sister most Sundays. We'd attend Sunday school and worship. There was a collection at both. When the collection basket came around, I usually put in some change...a quarter or so.

As I got older, I slowly increased my contribution to dollars. I thought that I was doing good by contributing \$10 per week; \$20, if I was a great mood about life. That lasted through my 20's.

Once I hit my 30's, I began writing larger checks to the churches that I attended. Usually, I was contributing in the \$100's and it was still based on my subjective feelings from week-to-week. In my mind, I was well-above average based on looking around at others.

I've come to realize that my congregations and ministers didn't do a great job of explaining church finances to me. They may have ranted about money from time-to-time, relying on pressure selling and repetition, but it never clicked that day-to-day operations required a steady flow of income for the churches to be sustainable. I usually thought the financial pleas were for the minister's salary.

Now, I understand better how churches use contributions. I want you to understand basic church finances, too. In other words, what is the journey of your money once you donate to the UUCLC.

The bottom line upfront is that the UUCLC needs members to donate on a regular basis, or if possible, make and fulfill a pledge early in the church year. That enables us to pay out our ongoing and recurring expenses as they occur.

We operate similar to a household. Every month, or maybe, every two weeks, a paycheck rolls in. If you have a two-person income household, two paychecks come in. Then, you have to pay your bills from those paychecks every month. The more you have in your checking and savings accounts, the better able you are to meet your monthly obligations.

## **Well, what is the journey of your money? I'm glad that you asked!**

The UUCLC pledge drive enables us to build up funds in our checking and savings accounts to meet our expenses. These include the minister and staff salaries, utilities, repairs and maintenance, supplies for our music and religious education programs, funding for all of the various committees, social justice efforts, and of course the biggie, the worship experience.

Your upfront pledge initiates this journey for your money and makes this dynamic ministry possible.

One more thing. The Sunday morning collections are mostly given away to selected charities in our community. Those "Change for Change" collections do not fund the expenses and programs of the church. So keep that in mind.

For these reasons, we need you to pledge "fast and big." We need you to do it now. If you are unable to pledge fast and big, please pledge as much as you can and often as you can.

Your pledge helps us operate a sustainable ministry. It is a ministry of love and transformation that changes lives and creates beloved community. We are counting on you.

We want you to continue coming to the UUCLC on Sunday mornings just as I went to church in my early years. We want you to have a great time being enriched spiritually, meeting new and old friends, and building community. Just know that money does matter and we are excellent stewards of your contributions.

I hope this provides a solid understanding of the journey of your money. If you have any questions about any of this, don't hesitate to contact us. We'll get you an answer. We aim for transparency here and we're happy to discuss church finances with you and your family. Peace and namaste, Rev. Xolani Kacela