

2025-2026 Pledge Drive

Igniting Hope

Together We Soar

GMUUC is a special place - dear to long-time members and a breath of fresh air to new members and friends. It is your enduring generosity that enables us to flourish as we:

Radically welcome all into our loving and diverse community;

Enthusiastically provide a safe haven for religious liberals in uncertain times;

Vigorously engage in our community through service and action.



Does my pledge make a difference?

Yes! Your pledge will:

- Support our full-time minister and staff with fair compensation to ensure continued strong leadership, programs and pastoral care;
- Enrich our worship experience with our new Music Director, John Whitworth;
- Lead by living our values through faith in action, underscoring our commitment to justice, equity and compassion;
- Move us closer to a balanced budget. (See enclosed Proposed Budget.)

Igniting Hope takes all of us! Support GMUUC by making your pledge today at www.gmuuc.org/pledge.



PLEDGE DRIVE GOAL:

\$225,000

**14% increase
(\$27,500)
over last year's
budget**

**Pledges provide
88% of our
Annual Total
Income**



**EVERY PLEDGE
COUNTS!**



EVERY pledge, no matter the size, has impact. Your generosity enables GMUUC to grow and thrive - and even more important - helps kindle changes in the world that will resonate for years to come.

What does GMUUC mean to you?

Where can your whole self be welcomed, informed in your spiritual journey, and empowered to make a difference in fighting against local and national injustices?

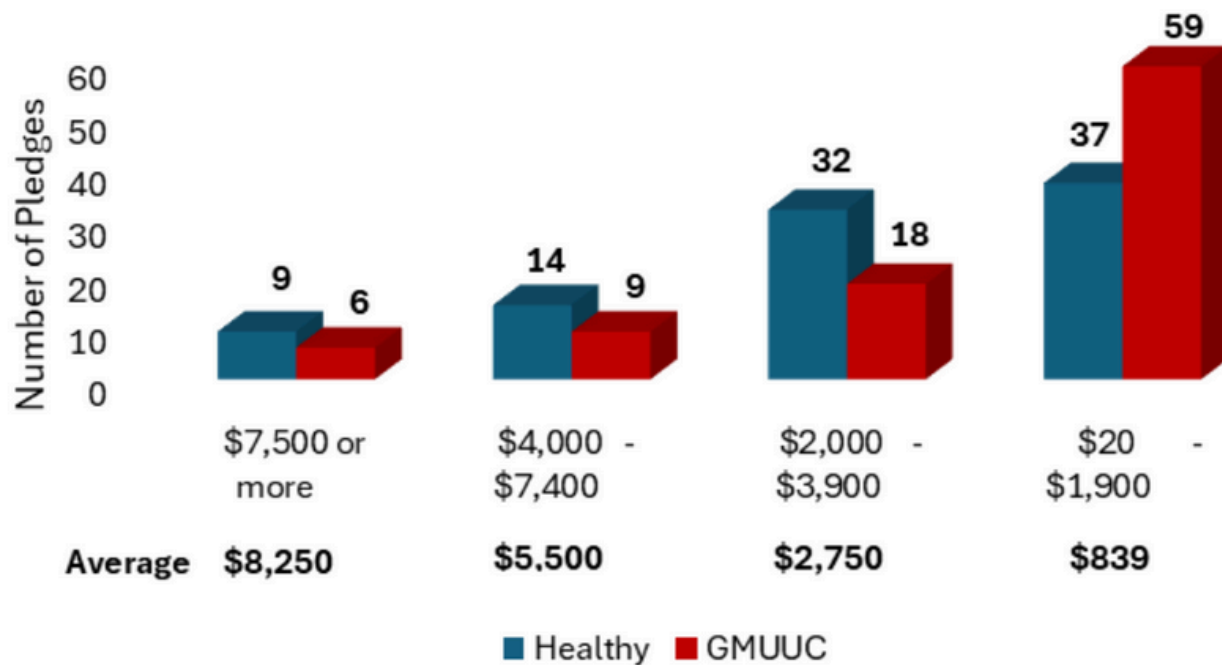
Where else can you go to 'Ignite Hope' for ourselves and others?

How much should I pledge?

Every pledge - no matter the size - is gratefully received.

The chart below shows the number of current GMUUC pledges by dollar amount range (the red bars) and the average pledge for each.

Healthy* vs. GMUUC Pledge Distribution



The blue bars represent a healthier and more sustainable pledge distribution as recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association. In comparison, GMUUC has fewer pledges in the higher \$ ranges.

If you are able, please consider increasing your pledge to a higher \$ range.

We are grateful for your continued generosity!

Georgia Mountains Unitarian Universalist Church



Inspire Connection * Advocate Love * Nurture Wonder * Serve the World

Dear Friends and Members,

GMUUC's role as **a safe haven, a loud voice for social justice, and a defender of liberal religious ideals and democracy** has never been more important!

As Rev. Charlotte challenged us on Pledge Drive Sunday, *"If not us – who? If not now – when?"* In these turbulent times, we are called to **'Ignite Hope'**! To do this requires a loving and radically welcoming community, outstanding staff, dedicated volunteers and a strong financial foundation.

We've made significant investments over the past 3 years:

- Moving Rev. Charlotte from $\frac{3}{4}$ to full-time ministry in early 2023
- Providing sizeable salary increases to meet UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines
- Bearing increased costs for our beautiful new building

Thanks to membership growth and your continued generosity, we're getting closer to a balanced budget in fiscal year 2028.

Shining our chalice light as a beacon of hope in these dim times requires each of us to dig as deeply as we can. Maintaining our current operations and meeting the Board's proposed Aspirational budget requires a Total Pledge increase of \$27,500 (+14% - see enclosed Aspirational Budget Summary). To reach this goal, increases are needed from 2/3's of those renewing as well as generous gifts from first-time pledgers.

See "How much should I pledge?" in the enclosed brochure or at <https://www.gmuuc.org/pledge>.

As GMUUC is 100% self-funded, every pledge counts!

Complete your confidential pledge in one of three ways:

- 1) Online at: <https://www.gmuuc.org/pledge>
- 2) Complete your form and mail to: 3155 Morrison Moore Pkwy East, Dahlonega, GA 30533.
- 3) Drop your form in the Pledge Drive box on Sunday.

Questions about pledging? Talk with a Pledge Team member on Sundays before the deadline on **April 13th**.

Thank you for supporting our beloved Congregation,

Rev. Charlotte Arsenault

Robin Kottman, Board President



Pledge Drive FAQs

How do I Pledge?

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- 1) Online at: <https://www.gmuuc.org/pledge>
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- 3) Drop your form in the Pledge Drive box on Sunday.

What are my payment options?

- Use easy online payment options at www.gmuuc.org. Click on the “Give” tab to fulfill your pledge, set the frequency and payment method via credit card or bank account withdrawal.
- Write a check & insert “Pledge” in the memo line.
- Make a Qualified Charitable distribution or Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA. Contact your IRA plan administrator for further information.

What is the Deadline for pledging?

Sunday, April 13. This allows time to finalize the budget before our Annual Congregational Meeting on May 18.

Can I change my pledge?

Personal & financial circumstances can change in unexpected ways. If they do, please talk with our Minister or Treasurer to review your pledge.

What is the proposed Budget for 2025-2026?

See the 2025-2026 Aspirational Budget Summary on the back page. Questions? Join our Budget Q & A on Sunday, March 16 & 30 in the conference room.

How is my pledge used?

All the money collected is used to support the Congregation in meeting the annual budget that funds our worship and music, faith development classes for children and adults, many social justice projects, pastoral care, community events and much more. It pays the salaries of our Minister, Children’s Faith Development Coordinator, Music Director, and for the operation and maintenance of our building.

Will I receive pledge updates and statements?

Pledge reminders are sent out periodically throughout the fiscal year. For tax purposes, we provide a statement in early January showing your contributions for the previous calendar year.

I contribute to special collections and various fundraising efforts throughout the year. Do those contributions count toward my pledge?

No. Special collections earmarked for community organizations or special purposes do not support our operating budget. Fundraisers such as the annual service auction are intended to supplement our pledge funds. Your purchases and donations are greatly appreciated but do not count as part of your pledge.

Aspirational Budget for July 2025 - June 2026 Fiscal Year (FY26)

| | Final FY25 Budget | Proposed FY26 Budget | year/year \$ change | year/year % change |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Pledges | 196,734 | 224,278 | 27,544 | 14% |
| Uncollectible Pledges | (4,918) | (5,607) | (689) | 14% |
| Sunday Morning Plate - GMUUC's share | 8,651 | 10,929 | 2,278 | 26% |
| Fundraisers - Auction, Plant Sale, Bingo | 20,500 | 16,000 | (4,500) | -22% |
| Ocala Fund Grant to BG&T Reserve in FY25 | 2,600 | | (2,600) | |
| Other - Montessori, Building Rentals, Misc. | 8,521 | 9,580 | 1,059 | 12% |
| Total Income | 232,088 | 255,180 | 23,092 | 10% |
| Expense | | | | |
| Ministry Teams | | | | |
| Worship - Guest speakers, etc. | 5,600 | 5,644 | 44 | 1% |
| Faith in Action (Social Justice) | 2,000 | 2,000 | - | |
| Community Events | 800 | 1,875 | 1,075 | 134% |
| Life Span Faith Development | 2,000 | 2,000 | - | |
| Spreading the Word | 1,500 | 1,000 | (500) | -33% |
| Care Ring | 500 | 500 | - | 0% |
| Membership | 1,000 | 500 | (500) | -50% |
| Fellowship | 2,500 | 2,500 | - | |
| Safety Team | 500 | 500 | - | |
| Staff Gifts | 1,000 | 1,000 | - | |
| Leadership Development | 1,650 | 2,350 | 700 | 42% |
| Total Ministry Team Budgets | 19,050 | 19,869 | 819 | 4% |
| Facilities | | | | |
| Building/EPD Well/Grounds/AV/Tech | 14,247 | 14,648 | 401 | 3% |
| Utilities, Internet, Security Monitoring | 8,288 | 11,949 | 3,661 | 44% |
| Liability & Property Ins./PCI check | 4,739 | 6,425 | 1,686 | 36% |
| Total Cost of Facilities | 27,274 | 33,022 | 5,748 | 21% |
| Administration | 4,883 | 6,677 | 1,794 | 37% |
| Denominational Support | 9,709 | 10,680 | 971 | 10% |
| Fundraising - pledge drive, credit card fees | 950 | 1,378 | 428 | 45% |
| Personnel | | | | |
| Salary - Parish Minister - 1.0 FTE | 76,714 | 79,399 | 2,685 | 3.5% |
| Salary - Admin/RE/Com - 0.875 FTE | 37,433 | 38,743 | 1,310 | 3.5% |
| Salary - Music Ministry | 14,400 | 17,280 | 2,880 | 20% |
| Salary - RE Asst + Child Care | 3,529 | 4,264 | 735 | 21% |
| Employee Benefits | 46,118 | 49,390 | 3,272 | 7% |
| Professional Development | 9,671 | 10,440 | 769 | 8% |
| Workers Comp Insurance | 692 | 732 | 40 | 6% |
| Payroll Taxes Non-Minister | 4,235 | 4,612 | 377 | 9% |
| Minister FICA Offset | 5,868 | 6,074 | 206 | 3.5% |
| Total Personnel Costs | 198,660 | 210,934 | 12,274 | 6% |
| Building, Grounds & Tech Reserve* | 2,600 | 2,800 | 200 | 8% |
| Total Expense | 263,126 | 285,360 | 22,234 | 8% |
| Planned Deficit = Transfer from SMF** | (31,038) | (30,180) | | |
| Updated Projected Deficit as of Feb. 10 | (14,000) | | | |

* Funded at 1% of Expense Total per the Bylaws.

**In Dec. 2022, the congregation voted to bring Rev. Charlotte from 3/4 to full-time in early 2023. At the same time a fundraiser for the Sustainable Ministry Fund (SMF) raised \$62,000 to cover 'planned deficits' resulting from the increased expense as we grow into a balanced budget in FY28.