

cultivating

The 2021 Annual Stewardship
Campaign and Year Two of the
Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign

HOPE



in an uncertain year



Community UCC

We're worth our words

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Dear members and friends,

Our church has seen many challenges during the pandemic. At first glance we might seem to be diminished with a closed church building and social distancing keeping us apart, but our ministry remains strong and has actually grown in new and surprising ways. Through creative methods of worship and new ways of connecting with each other and with those to whom we reach out in ministry, we continue to Cultivate Hope in this uncertain time.

Livestreamed services and Zoom small gatherings have brought us together with old and new friends—some local and some from around the world. Inspiring services with videos, live and recorded music, and creatively delivered messages from sometimes vastly distanced participants have allowed us to reach out to our own community as well as provide needed progressive worship in places that might not have that option. These new connections and our continuing ministries allow us to inspire and Cultivate Hope in each other as we struggle through this uncertain time, but also to connect to people we might not have reached otherwise. For example, we recently received a generous gift from someone inspired by Jubilee Café—someone who doesn't worship with us but still sees the hope in our work and wants to support it and the infrastructure of which Jubilee is a part. Our groups remain active, our connections to each other remain strong, and our ministries like Jubilee Café and Campus Ministry remain relevant, providing food and connection, even as they reinvent themselves weekly. CUCC's continued support of UCC Campus Ministry is an investment in the future. Look no further than our historic relationship to students to see transformation at work. In February, Rev. Nate Brantingham joined their team. We celebrate the close relationship CUCC has had with Campus Ministry and the ways our ministries are interwoven.

In addition to our annual stewardship campaign, we are also in the second year of our 3-year Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign. Please read Jen Robbennolt's letter for updates and upcoming plans. Like Jen, we are grateful for the many generous donors who have made the upgrades possible. If you didn't pledge to the Capital Campaign last year, you might consider doing so this year along with your annual pledge to the church.



As every year, we are also asking you to consider pledging service as well as money. The work we do has changed during the pandemic, but we still need contributions of time and talent, whether for Jubilee Café or building and grounds work days, helping with our worship services, or pitching in with outreach and hospitality. Thank you for all you contribute.

CUCC, like many of our individual households, is facing some financial uncertainty. Normally we can do more than expected for a church of our size not just because of the generosity of our members, but also because of income from other groups' use of our space. With the building closed and gatherings limited, rental income has been reduced, but some of our expenses have also been reduced since we're not currently meeting at the church. When we look at our donors, some in our congregation have been hit hard by loss of income, which affects their ability to give. Thankfully others have been financially unaffected or seen their expenses go down and have given extra because they know others in our community cannot.

Thank you to everyone for whatever you've been able to give this year! Please prayerfully consider how you might continue to support CUCC in 2021. CUCC creates its budget, finances its programs, and plans its future work based on the financial resources it expects to receive each year (not simply what we hope to receive). Financial pledges are a big part of that. Please respond with your pledge so we can continue to sustain our programs and Cultivate Hope.





Even in this strange year, CUCC has not just been maintaining. Instead, the people (clergy, staff, and congregants), ministries, and programs have been creating, agilely responding to our changing environment, and actively reaching out. With all our help, it will continue to do so no matter what the next year brings. All your gifts, so generously offered, help us shape our future, sustain our community, and Cultivate Hope.

Grace and Peace,

Marilou Hinrichs and Elizabeth Shack, Stewardship Co-Chairs



In spring 2018 I attended my first CUCC service as well as the campus ministry retreat in the same week. After years of emotional turmoil regarding the intersection of my queerness and religion, I immediately fell in love with the mission and community. Last May when I graduated and a month later moved to Finland, I thought I had lost what had become such an integral part of my life. Though my Fulbright program in Finland was abruptly suspended due to the pandemic, I found peace and gratitude in being able to reconnect with CUCC, even now that I have returned to the other side of the world.

— **Blake Banks**

My spiritual path has taken some twists and turns over the years. My extended family has members who haven't felt welcome in church because of their sexuality. My family slowly felt pushed away from church because of our views around social justice and support for the LGBTQ+ community.

2020 started out with my dad being stranded in a hospital in the Bahamas. Oh how I leaned on God during that time! I started thinking, "I know I am worthy. I feel Loved. There has to be somewhere I can take my family to show them this love that I feel".

Insert Covid and online church services! After a little google search, CUCC was the first service I found. Instantly, I knew we had found our church home. I have never felt so much love and acceptance. My family is finally going to church again – and feeling so happy to be there. I cannot begin to explain the relief I feel in being able to show my kids that loving our community is the work of God. Fighting for our community is what we are called to do.

Thank you CUCC for opening the (virtual) door, showing us love, and accepting us as we are. We are a family changed for the better.

— **Johnalene Radek**





When the pandemic hit, and our lives ground to a halt, David and I decided to plant a garden. We had a bag full of seeds sitting in the cabinet, the spoils from a bargain bin hunt where seeds were marked five packets for a dollar. David spent the first few weeks of the pandemic nestling seeds down in soil-filled egg carton cups so they could sprout.

Our back yard had been given over to daisies. Quite the wilderness, the girls would forge pathways through it each summer. David and I spent days clearing away brush, burning some of it, bagging the rest. He built raised beds. We started composting again, saving peels and ends of vegetables and fruits. We prepared soil. When a few neighbors offered ground they'd piled up from a project, off David went with the wheelbarrow. When it was time, we set out the tiny sprouts. We weeded. We watered. We watched green grow and grow. Critters got into the beds; David put chicken wire to prevent that from happening again. Disease beset our squash; we learned what the problem was, how to prevent it, and safeguarded new plants – some of them made it, some of them didn't. We can't grow parsley, no matter what we do, but I've put up enough tomatillos to last us all winter. We have worked and worked.

Cultivation – the process of preparation for the harvest – is a lot of work, no matter what you are growing.

These days, CUCC, we continue to grow lives of faith. We continue to grow as a church, and we are doing so amid a pandemic, ongoing civil rights struggles, an economic downturn, and a tumultuous election season. These factors have impacted our congregation's growth in ways we could've never imagined. And yet, we continually cultivate hope! Yes, it is a LOT of work – but, it is also just what we do as people of faith. We are a resurrection people and we can't help but cultivate hope. We cultivate hope each time...

- ...CUCCers and friends gather for worship, as imperfect as it is, online.
- ...our congregation's talents and creativity make worship moving, relevant, and uplifting.
- ...our kiddos impart their wisdom with us during children's moments.
- ...folks laugh and love on one another in the Zoom room following worship.
- ...those gathered on Facebook press the heart and thumbs up button throughout worship.

Those are examples from worship. Since we aren't together, physically, it may be hard to see the big picture of how we are cultivating hope as a church, continually, in big and small ways. More broadly, CUCC, we cultivate hope in these uncertain times when...

- ...a new person comes looking for a progressive, inclusive church – because they need a church like ours in these times – and finds us because we are clear about our values and made our online presence a priority years ago.
- ...CUCC makes faith statements regarding dismantling racism and homophobia, care for the poor and the marginalized.
- ...our church sponsored Pride fest, led Biblical Self-Defense for LGBTQ+ folx, and hosted the inaugural Interfaith Pride Worship service this September.
- ...CUCCers continue to support Campus Ministry by serving on their Board, partnering with, and supporting Pastor Nate in adapting this vital ministry to pandemic life.
- ...I work with social service providers and faith leaders through the Interfaith Alliance of Champaign County and the county commission's working group for LGBTQ+ homelessness for the common good.
- ...my youth group member shoos me out of the room so she can be in the youth group Zoom without her Mom/Pastor crashing the party.
- ...college students, friends, and CUCCers work together in our kitchen, on behalf of all of us, to feed hungry people every week.





...Jubilee Cafe guests say, "See you next week," when they leave because they know they can count on us being there for them.

...people who live far away, who've never been to Jubilee Café, are moved by our ministry through the weekly updates on social media, and donate because they count on us too.

...CUCCers care for one another with cards, calls, meals, online comments, encouragement, and prayer.

...we gather for fun and fellowship – even online, it builds our Community up!

...church leaders and staff gather information, learn new things, adapt, and adapt again, making responsible, faithful decisions on behalf of our Community.

...those same leaders continue to lead, tending to matters of the church that go largely unseen while we socially distance: negotiating contracts, setting policy, attending online UCC Conference and Association meetings, supervising capital improvements, learning new technology, reaching out to church members.....and the list goes on and on.

...small groups, like Retirees' lunch and Mens' Breakfast, figure out a way to meet amid a pandemic to continue fellowship.

...small groups, like our Unraveled small group and Pub Theology, continue meaningful conversation that grow their faith and increase their witness in the world.

This is not a cumulative list. Certainly you have things to add as you think of the work that goes into tending the vast garden that is Community UCC.

Beloveds, as you consider these things, what becomes increasingly clear in these uncertain times is this: we cultivate hope together. We have and will no matter what! That's the only way through. Know this, when your generosity of time, talent, and treasure is cultivated, along with the offerings of others, it becomes a harvest of hope upon which we all feast. Thank you, and, thanks be to God.

Blessings,

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser, Pastor

I have a favorite brick at church. It's on the 6th Street side of the building to the right of the stairs, just above the cornerstone. It became my favorite brick because I could completely remove it from the wall...! That brick, along with a few thousand others on our beloved building needed to be secured! If you wondered why we needed the Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign, see my favorite brick. When tuck pointing started on the church, I checked my brick every week. Has it been fixed? On an August Monday, between Jubilee guests, I walked over, intending to pull my favorite brick from the wall to show Pastor Nate. But, I couldn't. It had been restored! It's still my favorite brick, but for different reasons. Look at how much mortar is supporting it. That reminds me of you. You support our church, Community, in BIG ways.





Dear Community,

We are each blessed to be part of an engaged and supportive faith community, people who care about each other and about the broader world. We are a campus church, repeatedly affirming our collective desire to be a beacon of hope in this place. We are a “doing” church with branches that reach beyond our walls. We are an open and affirming church, formally committed to this covenant for more than 25 years. We are deeply rooted in community—in this community—and are continually engaged in cultivating hope in this community and beyond.

As a community we set ambitious goals for our 2019 Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign and came together to nourish our deep roots and to plant new seeds. We are beginning to see the fruits of our plantings. You may recall that our plans included overhauling the elevator, significant masonry and concrete work, roof repairs including full replacement of some sections, new paint and plaster in the sanctuary, resurfacing of the parking lot, installing a projector in the sanctuary, and updating the parlor flooring and furnishings. Each of these projects was targeted at supporting and nourishing the many activities that make up our collective mission.

Exciting work has been happening while we have been away from our building! Many projects cultivated by your contributions have progressed during recent months. The elevator project has been completed! And extensive roof and masonry work has been underway this summer. It is inspiring to know that our plans for our building are coming to fruition.

While most of us haven't had the joy of seeing the work unfold week by week, we also haven't had the headaches of working and worshipping in a building under construction. My thanks go to Carla for sharing glimpses of the progress through photos in her weekly updates. And even as we worship online, ministry from the building goes on. Jubilee Café, for example, continues to serve meals – even more meals than usual – offering home-cooked meals to go as well as groceries and snacks, fresh fruits and vegetables, canned and boxed pantry items, and treats to folk who would otherwise be hungry.

Thank you all for your faithful participation in the life of our church. Much of our interaction looks different during these pandemic times. But much remains the same – our caring for each other, our laughter, our support for Jubilee Café and Campus Ministry. Thank you, too, for your continued commitment to the campaign and for continuing to make your pledged contributions to the campaign throughout this year and next. Your faithfulness has allowed us to avoid the need to draw from our line of credit to pay for the work that has been done so far. Your gifts are acts of cultivation, ones that cultivates hope. If your circumstances have changed and you need to make an adjustment to your pledge, please contact our Financial Secretary, David Wilcox at financial-secretary@community-ucc.org. You can also update, or add a new pledge if you didn't contribute last year, on our website.



The work being done through the funds raised during our capital campaign will allow the ministry of CUCC to cultivate hope now and into the future as we shine the light of progressive Christianity, work for social justice, welcome everyone as an open and affirming church, serve as a home away from home for students, and feed both hungry bellies and the need for belonging and connection across lines of difference. I am continually grateful for your financial gifts to the campaign and all of the other gifts and talents that each of your brings to our community.

Grace and Peace,

Jen Robbennolt, *Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign Team Leader*





Church - church family

Here I was welcomed

*Here I became a member
with all of you*

*Here I was blessed and celebrated
as Chase just as I truly am*

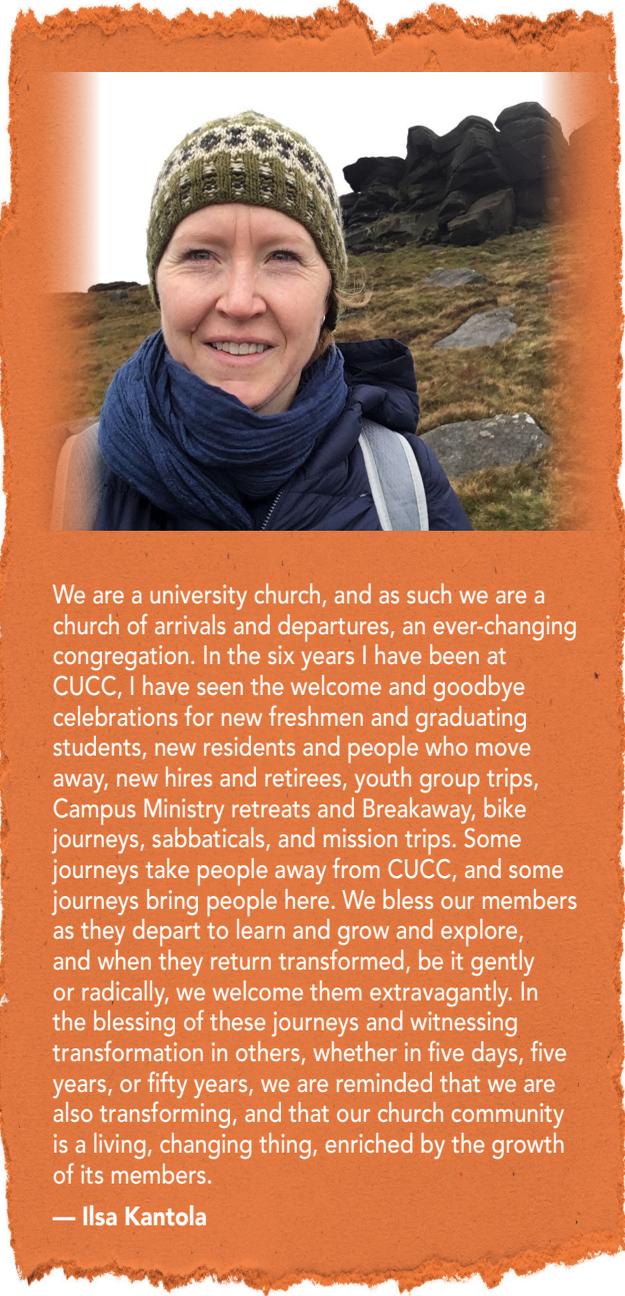
*Here I am able to serve
and you help my gifts to grow*

*Here I am able to belong
and be a part of*

Here I am

*so thankful and able to give
with my pledge*

— Chase Skye



We are a university church, and as such we are a church of arrivals and departures, an ever-changing congregation. In the six years I have been at CUCC, I have seen the welcome and goodbye celebrations for new freshmen and graduating students, new residents and people who move away, new hires and retirees, youth group trips, Campus Ministry retreats and Breakaway, bike journeys, sabbaticals, and mission trips. Some journeys take people away from CUCC, and some journeys bring people here. We bless our members as they depart to learn and grow and explore, and when they return transformed, be it gently or radically, we welcome them extravagantly. In the blessing of these journeys and witnessing transformation in others, whether in five days, five years, or fifty years, we are reminded that we are also transforming, and that our church community is a living, changing thing, enriched by the growth of its members.

— Ilsa Kantola





Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign Construction Updates

There has been a lot of activity at the church over the last nine months!

- The masons have spent a significant amount of time working on tuck pointing on all sides of the church. They used a 4-story lift to reach up to different sides of the tower and main building.
- The walls by the main entrance were dismantled and rebuilt.
- The concrete steps by the main entrance were demolished and replaced.
- The limestone steps by the parking lot entrance were pulled out and new limestone has been ordered.
- The water-filled glass bricks by the parking lot were replaced with "real" bricks.
- The steel lintels above many of the windows and entrances were pulled out and replaced.
- The crumbling back stoop, over at 510 Daniel, was demolished and replaced, and the front door and surrounding trim were painted.
- The tile has been partially removed from the roof over the sanctuary so a new high temperature ice and water shield can be installed along with new copper flashing.
- The cache of tile in the boiler room is being hauled out to be used as replacement tiles on the roof as needed.
- The new granite steps for the parking lot side entrance have arrived! They will be installed by our masonry contractor in the next two weeks.
- The collapsed window well at 510 Daniel has been replaced by the masons. This completes the work at 510 Daniel, which included repairs to the crumbling chimney, replacement of the back stoop, exterior paint touch-ups, and the new window well.
- The work on the tile roof over the sanctuary continues and beautiful copper flashing has been installed.
- The new roofing on the southwest corner and maintenance updates over the office on the north side should be happening in the next couple of weeks.





On Monday evenings, you can often find me at Pub Theology. This book club is full of folks that are intellectually engaging, who listen to each other, question assumptions, and are willing to be transformed in their thinking...a rare find at a church! But a natural part of our CUCC community. We recently read "How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi. A provocative and difficult call for change. As we wrestled with those ideas, I was continually encouraged by the openness to change and transformation of the great folks in our CUCC community.

— Randy Ewoldt

One morning on pre-church zoom this summer a thunderstorm was rolling through Champaign Urbana. Watching that storm come and go in the windows of people I haven't seen in person for a long time gave me hope. We are still connected, even as we weather all sorts of storms, in C-U and across the world.

— Alison Anders



"This past summer I began volunteering my time at Jubilee Cafe. I grew up in this church and coming back to so many familiar faces in a time of so much uncertainty and chaos in the world was comforting. Within these walls I found my own belongingness, a community that is also providing aid and food to my local community. With them, I have the chance to make a positive impact on the environment in which I live.

— Paul Kordik





On the first Monday of October, Jubilee Café turned 3! Over the course of the previous 52 weeks, Jubilee Café has served 3551 meals, averaging 67 guests per week. In March of this year, when Public Health issued restrictions on how many people could gather safely, we adapted quickly from in-person, sit-down meals, to carry-out meals PLUS groceries.

Since March, instead of being greeted in fellowship hall, seated, and served in order to eat off of real dishes, our guests line up (6 feet apart) or drive-up. Campus Minister Rev. Nate Brantingham is typically stationed outside handing printed menus to guests and waiting on drive up guests. Pastor Leah is inside the entry way, at the far end of a six foot table. She receives menus from walk up guests. Volunteers who are working distribution, typically University students, wait inside our 6th street lobby which has been transformed into a pantry. They fill and bag orders. Another volunteer, usually Ilsa, assists with drink orders and distributing meals in the entry way. Distribution of the meals itself is only a sliver of the work it take to make Jubilee Café happen – meals are planned, groceries are acquired, food is prepped, cooked, and boxed. Dishes still have to be done!

We saw the need in our community increase with the arrival of Covid.

- **Pre-covid, we served an average of 60 meals per week.**
- **Post-covid, that average jumped to 73 meals per week.**

However, due to the measures we put into place so that we could follow safe physical distancing, we saw our volunteer numbers decrease.

- **Pre-covid, Jubilee Café was made possible by an average of 32 volunteers per week.**
- **Post-covid, Jubilee Café has been made possible by an average of only 10 volunteers per week.**

That's a 21.67% increase in output, not including the groceries that we distribute, with a 68.75% decrease in volunteers.

Thanks to donations from friends of CUCC to Jubilee Café and our community partners, including Eastern Illinois Foodbank, Far East Grocery, Jubilee Farms, Sola Gratia Farm, Panera, and Ye Olde Donut Shop, we've been able to feed our regular guests, as well as Austin's Place guests, and DREAAM House students and their families. The continued success of Jubilee Café is due to YOU, CUCC! Jubilee Café is a ministry of our church – it exists within the infrastructure of our congregation. Your regular giving, and your gifts to the Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign, are the bedrock that make Jubilee Café possible. Thank you!

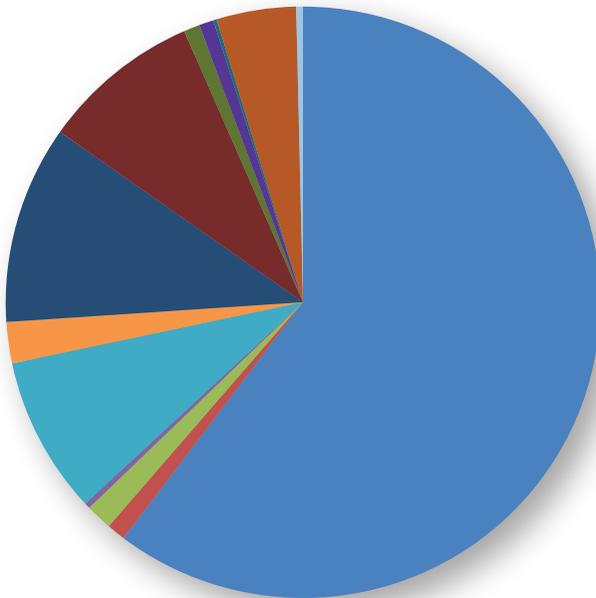
Thanks to your generosity towards Community UCC, which makes this ministry possible.





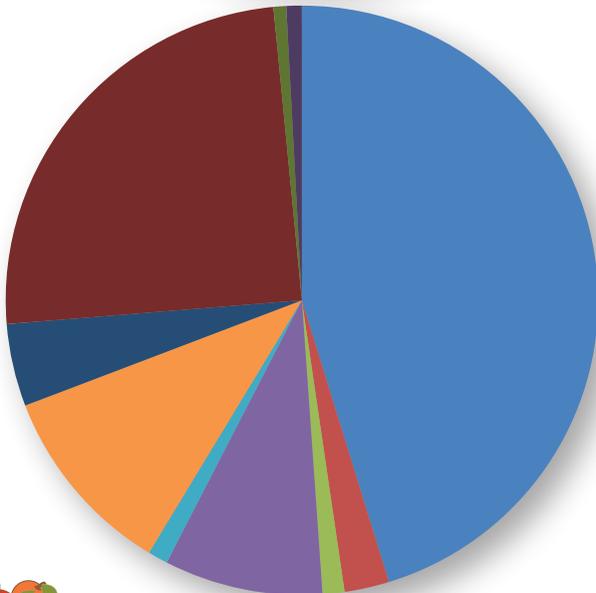
Nearly two-thirds of CUCC's income comes from pledges and donations from members and friends. In normal years we get additional income from renting our space to other groups, but with the building closed, that amount has been reduced.

2020 CUCC INCOME BUDGET*



- Pledges & Identified Giving – 60%
- Open Plate – 1%
- Investment Income General Fund – 2%
- Investment Income Endowment Fund – 0%
- Rent - Covenant Fellowship Church – 9%
- Rent - UCC Campus Ministry – 2%
- Rent - 510 E. Daniel St. Property – 11%
- Parking Income – 9%
- Fundraising – 1%
- Other Income – 1%
- In-Kind Contributions – 0%
- Sabbatical Reserve Transfer – 4%
- Jubilee Café Transfers – 0%

2020 CUCC EXPENSE BUDGET*



- Personnel Expenses – 45%
- Non-personnel Expenses – 2%
- Miscellaneous CLB Expenses – 1%
- UCC Mission Support – 9%
- CUCC Mission and Identity – 1%
- Worship – 11%
- Children and Family Ministry – 4%
- Facilities Management – 25%
- Financial Resources Management – 1%
- Community Building – 1%

* Read the legend information clockwise within the pie charts.





The spiritual practice of stewardship starts with prayerful consideration of what part of your household income you plan to give to support the mission and ministry of CUCC. By setting aside and giving back these “first fruits” from what God gives us, we realize God’s abundance more fully.

Please use the chart below in determining your pledge to the Annual Stewardship Campaign or a new pledge to the Deeply Rooted Capital Campaign. What percentage of your household income are you currently giving to the Annual Stewardship Campaign? Discern prayerfully how you might give more. Normally we’d suggest an increase of 1% or more of your household budget, but in this uncertain year, we know that will not be possible for some. We also know that for others, more will be possible. Together, as a Community, God blesses and multiplies our giving. Thank you to everyone who gives! Thanks to you who tithe (10%) for being foundational and sustaining members of our Community.

2021 GIVING SUGGESTIONS

| INCOME | | TITHE 10% | | 5% | | 2021 SUGGESTED INCREASE 1% | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Yearly Income | Weekly Income | Yrly Pledge | Wkly Pledge | Yrly Pledge | Wkly Pledge | Yrly Pledge | Wkly Pledge |
| 10,000 | 192 | 1,000 | 19 | 500 | 10 | 100 | 2 |
| 20,000 | 385 | 2,000 | 38 | 1,000 | 19 | 200 | 4 |
| 30,000 | 577 | 3,000 | 58 | 1,500 | 29 | 300 | 6 |
| 40,000 | 769 | 4,000 | 77 | 2,000 | 38 | 400 | 8 |
| 50,000 | 962 | 5,000 | 96 | 2,500 | 48 | 500 | 10 |
| 60,000 | 1,154 | 6,000 | 115 | 3,000 | 58 | 600 | 12 |
| 70,000 | 1,346 | 7,000 | 135 | 3,500 | 67 | 700 | 13 |
| 80,000 | 1,538 | 8,000 | 154 | 4,000 | 77 | 800 | 15 |
| 90,000 | 1,731 | 9,000 | 173 | 4,500 | 87 | 900 | 17 |
| 100,000 | 1,923 | 10,000 | 192 | 5,000 | 96 | 1,000 | 19 |
| 150,000 | 2,885 | 15,000 | 288 | 7,500 | 144 | 1,500 | 29 |
| 200,000 | 3,846 | 20,000 | 385 | 10,000 | 192 | 2,000 | 38 |

*This table is for you to use when calculating your pledge and donations.
A more detailed table with more percentage options is available elsewhere in your packet.*

You can make your pledge and donations on the website community-ucc.org by clicking **PLEDGE** and **DONATE** at the top of the homepage.

Or mail your pledge card and donations to:
Community United Church of Christ
Attn. Financial Secretary
805 S. 6th St., Champaign, IL 61820

