

Dear Beloved Congregants,

One year ago this week we kicked off our Annual Pledge Drive with a Community Day of Service followed the next day by a celebration of service in worship. These would turn out to be our last church events before the pandemic forced our worship services, religious education, and all our programs to go remote.

As we turn to March this year, we are gearing up to kick off our Annual Pledge Drive for the coming church year. We will be holding a Pledge-a-thon on Zoom on Saturday, March 20. We are asking people to pledge during the Pledge-a-thon or in the week following.

I would like to share a few reflections on the generosity of this congregation. In the early weeks of the pandemic we received an amazing number of unsolicited contributions to the Minister's Discretionary Fund from congregants who said they wanted the church to be able to help anyone in our church who needs it. Over the past year we've given away more money from this fund than ever before, but we've also been able to give the full amount requested to every single person who has asked!

Amazingly, over the past year giving to the church has increased.

As we approach the Annual Pledge Drive this year, I want to first address those in our community who have lost their jobs or seen their family's financial situation upended by the pandemic. If you are not able to pledge, we understand. In fact, we may be able to help.

Over the past year we've done our best to thrive as a community despite these challenging times. Marion and Kat have taken a terrific religious education program and converted it to must-see videos and Zoom. Glenn has launched a weekly vespers program, figured out how to do choir on-line, and has brought us excellent video production. Rachel leads a compelling coffee hour and hosts distanced meet-ups in the church parking lot. Dana has seamlessly helped us make the most of our on-line platforms. I like to joke that I never aspired to televangelism. Our programs of spiritual growth, education, social justice, community service, caring for each other, and just having fun together have adapted to these difficult circumstances.

Here's one thing I know to be true: our church will emerge from these challenging times even stronger than we were before. Beloved congregants, I know you will respond to this year's Annual Pledge Drive with generosity.

I love you and I'm with you,

Rev. Thom