

Treasurer: Rebecca Crawford

Overview

Our pledge drive was very successful, many thanks to the efforts of Denise Helton and Gretchen Goetz, as co-chairs, and the welcome assistance of Barbara Kernochan, Eileen McCormack, Rev. Jeremiah, and Vilma Ortiz. Our big-hearted members continue to recognize how important UUSM is in their lives, and the lives of our community. The other side is that we will lose one of our funding sources (SLF) and will need to make up for it. The proposed budget has a deficit of just under \$40K, mainly because of this loss.

We have included funds for our permanent minister search committee, and to support both Religious Education and Music.

Changes to the current, '24-'25, budget

In June 2024, we passed a balanced budget, but our best estimates are not always accurate. It was impossible to predict that we would lose to retirement our long term devoted church administrator: Nurit Gordon. Training her very capable successor has meant several months of two administrators on the payroll.

In addition, as described below, we have increased the DRE's hours.

Pledge receipts will be about \$14K below budgeted.

Increases in the proposed budget ('25-'26), vs. the current budget ('24-'25)

Increase in Multigenerational Director of Religious Education (MDRE) hours and loss of Spirit Level Fund

The board listened to the congregation's enthusiasm over our beloved DRE, Jessica TenHave-Place, and our desire to build a strong Children and Youth Religious Education program. Jessica was originally hired for 20 hours per week. In order to give her more time to grow the program, with input from the congregation, Jessica's hours were increased, in December, to 30 hr/wk. This adds about \$10,000 to the budget for '24-'25. Jessica's hours will continue at the current level for all of '25-'26, for an increase in RE expenses of \$24,000 – to a total of \$74, 000 in the proposed budget.

For the past two years UUSM has been receiving Spirit Level Matching Funds to support our RE program. This has meant \$28,000 from SLF and over \$37,000 in donations from our generous members. This income has offset expenses, but is not part of the proposed budget.

Almost all of the proposed, deficit, budget is related to RE – AND this past year our generous members have sponsored RE to the tune of nearly the amount of the proposed deficit: \$37K vs. \$40K. We care about our youth program and are willing to

pay for it. Already, we have more kids on Sunday mornings and Jessica has big plans for the coming year.

Church membership is being maintained, and RE growing, largely because of Norm Richey's unstinting efforts, along with his able cohort, Anne Bridgins. He has developed and maintained Meet and Greets, and other events, to help visitors become a part of our community.

COLA allowance

Even if UUSM doesn't have the budget in a given year to give raises to individual employees, it is important that we keep up with the increases in cost of living. This year, Social Security gave a 2.5% COLA, to respond to inflation. Thus salaries for our ongoing personnel contain a 2.5% COLA adjustment – with the exception of our new administrator.

Change in UUA GEO index

We all understand how expensive it is, relative to the rest of the state, and the nation, to live in or near Santa Monica. And it seems to be increasing in relative terms as the years go by. The UUA is recognizing this fact by updating the GEO index they put UUSM in, from index 5 to index 6. This essentially means a suggested increase in salaries for our personnel by 5%. It is not expected that we make this change all at once, but we need to start. With that in mind a 1% additional salary adjustment has been added above the COLA for '25-'26.

More rentals

The presence of the Santa Monica Synagogue this year has been very symbiotic. The relationship offers opportunities for interfaith events that we have not previously had. Here's hoping for a long and fruitful association.

Now that the Arizona entrance is complete and open, we have an opportunity to increase rental income. We have increased recurring rentals already, and the ability to arrange more one-time rentals, such as weddings, will aid our total rental income.

Music grant

Thanks to the continuing generosity of the Fletcher/San Diego Foundation we are able to have a music program that is one of the best in the area. Saunder Choi, our section leaders, and a dedicated group of member-singers regale us regularly with their tuneful proficiency.

Total of funds various places: balance sheet

UUSM, as of the end of May 2025, has \$785, 000 in assets, including over \$410,000 in endowment with the UU Common Endowment Fund.

We spent a total of \$303,000 on the Arizona project. The monies came from an SLF grant (\$50K), matching funds from generous members (\$54K), and transfers from Catastrophe and Emergency Funds (\$199K).

Permanent minister search funds

The budget includes up to \$15,000 from the Minister's Equity Fund to go toward Search Committee expenses as we survey our members and bring potential candidates to our shores. Any of that money unspent will stay in the Equity Fund.