



Path to Membership

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN
Littleton, MA

WELCOME!

The Path to Membership is a Journey to Deeper Commitment

Church membership represents a deeper connection with your religious community. To help you discern whether or not First Church Unitarian membership is right for you, we encourage you to attend the 2 part *Path to Membership Orientation* (offered throughout the year).

Membership is both easy and difficult. It is easy to sign the *Membership Book*. It is difficult because of what this means. It means that a person has made a decision to join a community that is searching for truth, struggling for justice, and whose members would live in loving relationship with one another. It also means making a commitment to support the church financially and with volunteer time. Persons considering membership are invited to sign the Membership Book on the first Sunday of each month, Membership Sunday. Before you join, please read this booklet carefully. Then, complete the form at the back and bring it to Membership Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you as a member.

SEEKING HIGH COMMITMENT MEMBERS

Since our beginnings in 1714, generations of highly committed members have worked diligently to create what you experience today: a dynamic and open-minded community devoted to personal spiritual growth and to social justice in our world.

Carefully consider the responsibilities of membership before you make the commitment. Members and friends of First Church Unitarian make promises to each other: we covenant together to keep Love the spirit of our church and to treat each other with respect and honesty (*see covenants, last page*). Members readily and generously give our time, talents and financial resources to support the church mission (*see box*) – because we want to and because this is our chosen church home.

The **mission of First Church Unitarian** is to be a welcoming, compassionate, and diverse community, seeking spiritual growth and fellowship while working for a just, peaceable, and sustainable world.

This spirit of generosity and commitment develops over time and is the result of active participation in our worship services and our programs. This is what is meant by *high commitment members*. Are you prepared to make this kind of commitment?



FOLLOW THESE STEPS ON YOUR PATH TO MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Attend at least four (4) worship services.**
Every Unitarian Universalist congregation has its own distinct characteristics and personality. Attending several Sunday worship services will help you get to know us.
- 2. Attend the 2 Part Path to Membership Orientation classes** (offered throughout the church year). At these gatherings we will share personal journeys, view a video about Unitarian Universalism, and provide an overview of First Church Unitarian. It is strongly recommended for anyone wishing to become a member.
- 3. Read the Church Bylaws.** To become a member, a person shall express an understanding and acceptance of the [Church Bylaws](#). You may obtain a copy from the church office or website.
- 4. Complete the New Member form in this booklet.** Each individual age 16 years or older is eligible for membership. Completed forms will be collected at the time you sign the Membership Book.
- 5. Express your intent to join.** Register on the schedule at the Membership table in the front church entry way or by emailing membership@fculittle.org, or by calling the church office at 978/486-3044.
- 6. Sign the Membership Book.** Persons ready for membership are invited to sign the Book on the first Sunday of each month, Membership Sunday.

SOME BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

We welcome your decision to join us and hope that your relationship with First Church Unitarian will be spiritually, intellectually and emotionally rewarding. Together, we have the power and strength to impact positive change in our communities and in the world.

As a member, you'll become part of a vital and dynamic community of faith and action. Your voice will join that of thousands of other Unitarian Universalists who speak for social justice, freedom of thought, the worth and dignity of every human being, and environmental action.

Voting Members* are eligible to make decisions about the budget and other important issues at the Annual Meeting each spring, and at other member meetings as outlined in the church bylaws.

You'll receive all regular church mailings – including our informative monthly newsletter, *The Bulletin*, as well as *UUWorld*, the journal of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

** Voting Member: A member who has made an identifiable financial contribution during the current or previous church fiscal year at least 30 days prior to the date of a warranted meeting.*

YOUR PLEDGE IS YOUR FINANCIAL PROMISE TO THE CHURCH

Members annually pledge to support this church with their financial resources. Unitarian Universalist congregations are self-sustaining institutions; their primary source of financial support comes from church members and other congregants who faithfully participate in the life of the church.

Stewardship: Give, Receive, Share

We recognize one of the truths of all the world's great religions: that *generosity* is central to a healthy spiritual life. We believe in the ancient practice of *giving* as a spiritual practice that deepens and strengthens the soul. Members of our congregation who give generously – to this church and elsewhere – tell of the joy and empowerment they feel when they live out of a sense of abundance.

Our faith calls us to welcome the stranger at the door, to share our resources with others in need, and to care for our planet. This is the meaning of Stewardship.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe it is the right and responsibility of each local congregation to govern itself. There is no centralized authority that supports us financially, nor tells us what to do or what to believe.

Each UU congregation is self-sustaining: our primary source of financial support comes from our members and friends who make financial gifts to the church. As a group of people covenanted together into a church, we believe that a financially healthy church is the responsibility of all members. We also know that if this church and this faith are to live into the future for our children and grandchildren, we must care for this institution and keep it strong.

Things to Consider When Pledging

When you join the congregation as a new member, you will be asked to make your financial commitment to the church by making a *pledge*. The pledge you make upon joining is for the remainder of the *current* fiscal year, which runs July through June.

Then each spring during our annual pledge drive you will be asked, along with all other congregants, to make a new financial pledge for the *next* fiscal year.

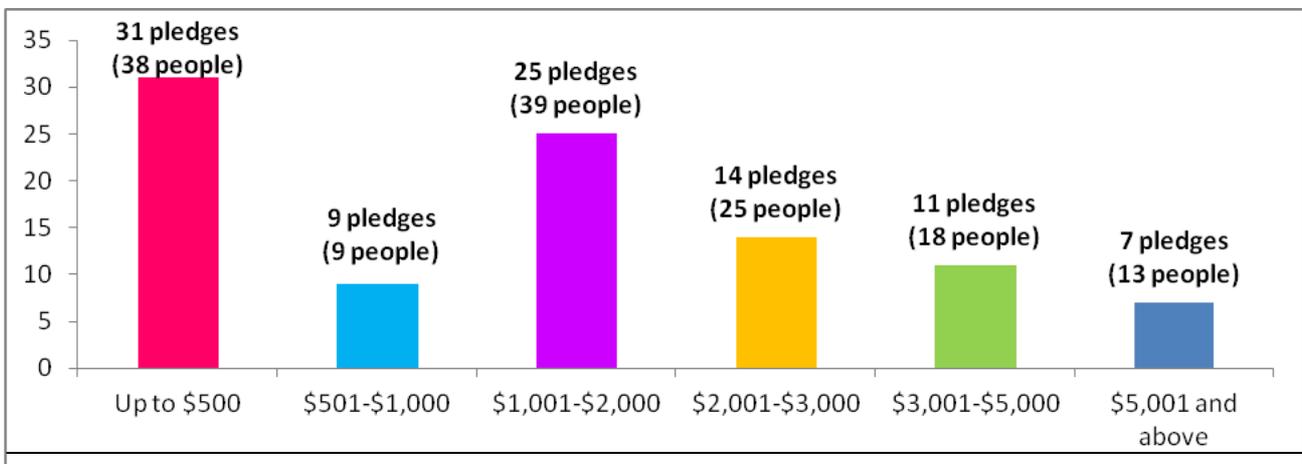
Approximately 67% of our budget of \$277 thousand is funded through the generosity of all who participate in our community.

Based on historical participation, we anticipate about 100 households to pledge, accounting for approximately 140 people. This year, it will take about \$1,300 per person to sustain the church. In an economically just world, we each would be able to contribute equally.

However, recognizing the economic diversity within our community, we invite you to consider your individual circumstances. What value do you place on being part of our FCU community? How will your financial commitment to FCU compare with other valued items in your budget?

Of special note is that about 6% of our budget pays membership contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), and Clara Barton District, costing the church \$79 per voting member.

Giving at FCU: How others at FCU have chosen to give



GETTING INVOLVED: THE KEY TO MEMBERSHIP WITH MEANING

Attending the worship service on Sunday is a very special experience, but most members find that, over time, it is not enough to sustain their commitment to the church. We know of no better way to deepen your connection as well as increase your reward than by active engagement in a church program that can give expression to your talents and your calling. Don't wait! Find a group, program, or activity in which to involve yourself as soon as possible. This is how you will start "feeling a part of" the church, and in return, the people of First Church Unitarian will become a community for you.

We offer many ways to get involved. Here's a brief sampling of the opportunities for personal and spiritual growth:

- Adult Enrichment programs
- Covenant Groups
- Lay Worship
- Men's Group
- Music - Mixed Choir (adults)
 - Artemis Singers (women's chorus)
- Religious Education
- Social Justice Task Forces
- Sunday Hospitality (ushering, coffee hour, etc.)
- Women's Alliance

FIRST CHURCH UNITARIAN COVENANTS

Our Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law.
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,
To seek the truth in love, and to help one another.

Covenant of Right Relations

As love is the spirit of our congregation,
as best as I am able, acknowledging our human frailties with compassion,

I covenant:

- To be open, honest, attentive, and compassionate to all;
- To honor our diverse viewpoints;
- To listen with an open heart;
- To speak respectfully and compassionately of those present and not present;
- To deal directly with others to resolve conflict;
- To explore and accept my responsibility in conflict;
- To look for the good intentions of others;
- To be patient and gracious;
- To seek common ground;
- To forgive and accept forgiveness;
- To ask for help when I need it and to give help as I am able;
- To show appreciation.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SEVEN PRINCIPLES

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

NEW MEMBER FORM

Membership indicates your commitment to this community, sympathy with our covenant and Unitarian Universalism and willingness to support the church as you are able financially and as a volunteer.

To be completed by EACH prospective member. (Minimum age for membership: 16) Please print clearly.

Name: _____
(last) (first)

Address: _____
(PO Box) (street, apt.#)

_____ (town / city, state) (zip code)

Phone: _____
(primary) (work)

Email: _____

Birthday: _____ Occupation: _____
(month / day / year - optional)

Children (please include birth date for children High School age or younger):

_____ (name) (date of birth) _____ (name) (date of birth)

_____ (name) (date of birth) _____ (name) (date of birth)

Have you read, understood and accepted the Church Bylaws? Yes No

How did you learn about this church? _____

What brings you here? _____

About how long have you been attending First Church Unitarian? _____

What was your previous church connection, if any? _____

How can we help you find what you need here? _____

Is there anything in particular you want us to know about you? _____

May we publish your contact information in the FCU Phone Directory? Yes No

Are you receiving notices on the Listserve? Yes No

Which is your preferred Bulletin format? e-mail Postal mail

Date signed the Membership Book: _____

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For Office Use Only:

DB (bulletin, directory, email)
cc: Sunday Hospitality Tiles

cc: Assistant Treasurer
cc: Membership