



What is Stewardship?

First Parish in Lincoln (FPL) is a self-sustaining church. We must come up with the money to pay for everything (staff, facilities, insurance, music, heat, lights). We do this through the annual Stewardship Campaign, conducted in spring. Parishioners pledge financial support for operating the church for the following fiscal year (which runs from July 1 – June 30). Based on stewardship results, the Parish Committee and Treasurer refine the budget, which is approved at the Annual Meeting in June.

Stewardship only asks for a pledge. You don't need to pay it right away. Many contributors set up automatic weekly or monthly payments through our online system. Some pay in a lump sum when they pledge, or at some point during the year.

While pledges are measured in dollars, it's our commitment and generosity that matter. A pledge signals the commitment to share in the responsibility for creating and maintaining our spiritual home. When we all pledge generously, we raise the money we need to fund our operating budget.

What is the 2023-24 Stewardship Target?

The projected FY 2023-24 budget of \$750,000 requires **\$515,000 in stewardship contributions**. (We also receive rental income and draw 4% from our Endowment). Raising \$515,000 would cover the growing expenses in this inflationary environment, provide staff with cost-of-living salary increases, and allow us to increase staff compensation commensurate with their contributions to our thriving community.

How much am I supposed to give?

Every household is unique. Some are blessed with more financial resources, others with less. Some are "all in," and some are testing the waters. Some have several FPL participants; others have just one. The right pledge will match your level of commitment and your household resources.

Some faith traditions require tithing (meaning give the church 10% of your net income). This is nice and clear, but many chafe at the prescriptive one-size-fits all, and some feel that this doesn't apply in the world today, when there are many charitable causes to which we contribute.

The UUA and the UCC provide [giving guidelines](#). These encourage you to pledge a percentage of your income, based on your level of engagement. That may work for you.

Here at FPL, we let each parishioner figure out the right pledge amount. But this low-pressure approach leaves many unclear about how to proceed. This document is meant to offer some tools and perspective to help you discern how much to pledge.

What is your level of commitment to FPL?

- What role does FPL play in your life? Are there substitutes?
- How does FPL shape your values, social networks, and worldview?
- How often do you find yourself inspired, surprised, or moved by something you heard in an FPL worship service or other gathering?
- Are you committed to our core values of 1) lifelong spiritual growth; 2) a welcoming community; and 3) working with others to care for the living earth and address injustice?
- Where would you turn in moments of personal hardship, crisis, or celebration?

What level of resources are you blessed with?

- How does your household **income** compare to median income in our area (you might consider salary, Social Security, pension, IRA distributions, investment income)
 - Median income in Lincoln (2021): \$145,833
 - Median income in Middlesex County: \$111,790
- How do your **expenses** compare to others in the community (do you have extraordinary costs for mortgage, healthcare, elder care, childcare)?

How do your commitment and resources translate into a pledge?

- Compared to other pledgers, would you expect to be in the top quartile or bottom or somewhere in between?
- Would you expect to be above or below the average? *An average pledge of \$2,860 (\$55 per week) will fund the budget for next year.*

The chart below shows FPL’s FY 2022-23 Pledges. *Where do you see yourself? Where are you currently? Could you take greater financial responsibility?*

	Range of pledges, FY 2022-23	% of FY 2022-23 Stewardship Total
1 st Quintile*	\$4,800-\$30,000	61.5%
2 nd Quintile	\$2,000-\$4,600	20.8%
3 rd Quintile	\$1,100-\$2,000	9.5%
4 th Quintile	\$600-\$1,000	5.2%
5 th Quintile	\$100-\$500	3.0%

*Each quintile represents 20% of the pledges, ranked from largest to smallest.

Stewardship is about commitment and generosity. It is community work. Regardless of how much you pledge, you are welcome in this spiritual home.

If you have further questions, please email generousgiving@fplincolin.org.