

# FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN

Nurturing Spirituality | Building Community | Pursuing Justice



## Stewardship Q&A from the Generous Giving Team

April is Stewardship month at First Parish in Lincoln. The campaign begins on Stewardship Sunday and completes on May 10. Please look out from an email on April 7 about the campaign. Here are some common stewardship questions and answers.

**What is Stewardship?** *Stewardship is a spiritual practice through which we care for our spiritual home.*

“Stewardship” is a spiritual practice that asks us to care for something unconditionally. It reminds us that our time, talent, and treasure are not ours to keep, but gifts to be shared. Our annual “stewardship campaign” asks us all to commit to helping to fund FPL’s operating costs. Through stewardship, we co-create our next year together.

We are a self-sustaining church: no money from the diocese, no pennies from heaven. Stewardship funds staff, programs, buildings, music, lights, heat. The projected FY 2024-25 budget of \$813,500 requires **\$550,000 in stewardship** contributions with the remainder funded by rental and Endowment income. This budget continues current staffing and programming, with inflation and cost of living increases.

**What does participating in stewardship involve?** *Just pledge/communicate your giving intentions by May 10, and make your contribution before June 2025.*

During the Stewardship Campaign, we only need your pledge (or the amount you will recommend to your Donor Advised Fund). We run the campaign in the spring so we can plan our next fiscal year (which begins on July 1) with these resources in mind. **Please send in your pledge/DAF intentions by May 10 so that our plans for next year reflect your support.**

**Is stewardship meant for me?**

Stewardship contributions come from members and non-members; in-person and virtual participants; people who join most Sundays, just holidays, or in non-Sunday programming. If you appreciate what is happening at FPL – nurturing spirituality, growing community, seeking justice – please make a generous stewardship contribution.

## How much do I pledge?

**No pledge is too large or too small.** There are several faith traditions that require tithing (giving the church 10% of your net income). Our affiliated denominations (UUA and UCC) provide [giving guidelines](#). These encourage you to pledge a percentage of your income, based on your level of engagement. For many, the level of giving suggested by these frameworks is both challenging and inspiring.

Here at FPL, we let you figure out the right pledge amount. The right pledge will match your level of commitment and your resources. Some of us are blessed with more financial resources, others less. Some are deeply engaged with the community; some are testing the waters. Last year, the average stewardship contribution was \$3,000 and the median was \$1,500. No amount is too large or too small. As you think about how much to give, ask yourself:

- How often am I inspired, surprised, or moved by something I heard in an FPL worship service or other gathering?
- Where would I turn in moments of personal hardship, crisis, or celebration?
- How do my household income and expenses compare to the median in this area?

## When do I fulfill my pledge/stewardship obligations?

During the Stewardship Campaign, we only need your pledge (or the amount you will recommend to your Donor Advised Fund). Actual payment can come any time before the end of next fiscal year (now - June 30, 2026). All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Here's how to make your payment:

1. **Lump Sum:** Some parishioners like to pay all at once. Popular times are right away, in December as part of year end charitable giving, or in May of the following year, when FPL requests that all pledges be paid (our fiscal year ends on 6/30).
2. **Monthly Payments by Bank BillPay or Credit Card:** A pledge that feels very big in total can be more manageable in monthly installments. You can set up monthly credit card transactions through FPL's website (though this does incur significant transaction fees). You can also set up monthly bill-pay through your bank without transaction fees.
3. **Sunday Plate:** Checks or cash (in envelope with your name) in the Sunday plate, count towards your stewardship pledge.
4. **Gift of stock or securities.** Please contact Silvia in the church office for details on executing these transactions.
5. **Recommendation to a Donor Advised Fund (DAF).** If you plan to give to Stewardship through a DAF, please note this on your stewardship form. We will record your intention to recommend FPL to your DAF, and not record a pledge.

**Stewardship is about commitment and generosity. It is community work. Regardless of how much you contribute to stewardship, you are welcome and valued in this spiritual home.**

If you have further questions, please email [generousgiving@fplincoln.org](mailto:generousgiving@fplincoln.org).