



# The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist

Jan 31, 2024

Dear Congregants,

I've been involved in numerous annual pledge drives since I joined the Community Church UU in 1997, and most recently, when my husband and I spearheaded the Community Day of Service in 2019 and 2020 which helped encourage congregational participation and enthusiasm for the pledge drive, but never in the role that I'm in now as president of the Board of Trustees.

This church community means the world to me. I don't know what I would have done without it during the last 27 years as I navigated some really difficult times in my life including going through a divorce and becoming a single parent to a 4-year-old as I continued to work full-time. Fortunately, my daughter was guided as a young child and through high school by our fabulous Children's Religious Education programs. When I found love again in my 50's my husband, Bill Rote and I celebrated our wedding on a glorious spring day at Memorial Rock and had a fabulous celebration afterward in the Jones building.

During those 27 years, I've seen several ministers and interim ministers lead this church, including our beloved late minister Charlie Kast. Under the leadership of Reverend Thom, however, for the last 11 years, I think we're in the best place we have ever been. Our congregation is vibrant, thriving, and growing, when many other places of worship are experiencing a loss of membership and connection.

Whatever circumstances brought you to this place, it will always be a special place in your heart. As you think about your involvement in the Community Church and what it means to you, I hope that it will lead you to be generous in helping us continue to support our church for years to come.

I think we can all agree that the staff of this church are *amazing*. Glenn with his musical prowess, Rachel with her welcoming nature and ability to remember everyone's names, faces, and connections, Marion and Kat leading a fantastic Children's Religious program including the connection at the college level with students on the UNC campus looking for a religious home. Franklin helps keep all of us straight financially and operationally, Abigail Castaneda makes sure our weekly coffee hours run smoothly, and finally, Rev Thom has a challenging role as not only our spiritual leader but also our chief of staff. We have a cadre of "heavy lifters", but they can't do their job without your involvement and financial support.

Thankfully, we have an incredibly active church community of volunteers, but it takes money to keep the bills paid and the lights on. I hope you will dig deep and contribute to this year's annual pledge drive in a way that is meaningful to you and consistent with your budget, means, and beliefs. Thank you for your involvement in our church community and your participation in any way you can contribute whether that is time, talent, or treasure.

With respect and love,  
Mary Beth Powell  
President, Board of Trustees