



72425 Via Vail, Rancho Mirage, CA

January 28, 2018

Dear Beloved Members and Friends,

Have you sensed the buzz around UUCOD? We have, and a number of people have mentioned it. The chairs and parking lot are full and spilling over on Sunday mornings. There is a palpable energy and enthusiasm that can be felt in and around our sanctuary. Maybe you have felt it – that lively spirit that flows among us as we sing together, reflect together, share together, worship together; a spirit that nurtures our souls and inspires us to action. Perhaps you feel it during Food on the First when we collect food for the farm workers, or Socks on the Second to help the homeless, or during the holiday drive to support the foster care youth at Harrison House. Or maybe you've felt it while the children in RE fill backpacks with school supplies, or while the Social Justice Committee works to keep our Green Sanctuary and Welcoming Congregation status active and vibrant. You may be part of this exciting buzz by participating in the Adult RE program with "Coming of Sage" or "Building Your Own Theology." Do you feel it in Sunday morning worship during challenging and inspiring sermons enhanced by our lively and gifted music program. UUCOD is alive: There is a vibrant life force at work among us!

We are writing to you today to announce our Stewardship Campaign for 2018-19. This year's campaign is titled: Looking to the Future. We ask you to join us to keep focused on our vision **to make UUCOD a stronger, more compassionate, beloved community – a beacon of light and social justice in our Coachella Valley.**

We are living in a troubling and confusing time in our nation's history. Our seven UU principles are under constant attack and the impact on human lives is already too apparent. It is tempting for all of us to cut back our giving and guard our resources, but we believe our faith is calling us on. People are seeking us out as a caring community where they can find solace, safety and sanctuary. The warmth, love, compassion, and human connections we provide are difficult to find anywhere else. Our faith and our love calls us on to put our full support into this community.

We, the Board of Directors, have set aspirational goals to increase and support our ministry. Certainly the times call for more dynamic leadership as we navigate these troubled waters. To meet our aspirations will stretch us, but we can achieve them if we all search our hearts and give as generously as we are able to fully live into our mission. A successful pledge drive will allow us together to *plant seeds of inspiration, build compassionate community, and serve the wider Coachella Valley.*

The goals of our Financial Stewardship Campaign for fiscal year 2018-19 are simple:

- **\$159,000 pledge target** – Reaching this ambitious goal, but very attainable target, will allow us to sustain a 3/4 time developmental minister, support our music program, enhance our current children's and adult Religious Education, continue our social justice work, shape an outreach effort, build a reserve for maintaining our building and work towards a full time ministry.

- **100% participation** – We hope to receive a pledge commitment from every member and friend of our church. If your life is enriched and transformed through your association with our beloved community, we need you to pledge. If you want to grow a compassionate community, we need you to pledge. If you support transforming our world, we need you to pledge. Every pledge, no matter the amount, is a tangible symbol of your support and commitment to UUCOD. We accept each pledge in humble gratitude.
- **Stretch ourselves to increase the amount of our pledges from last year's amount** – We are asking all members and friends to increase their pledge by 15% or more from last year's pledge. Alternatively you can think about pledging 3% of your annual adjusted gross income, based on the Fair-share Contribution Guide (enclosed). Either way we would meet our goal. For some of us stretching is not possible this year. However, we challenge you to put yourself on a path to reach this 3% level sometime in the next three years.

*Our congregation is entirely self-governed by democratic process. One of the privileges of our free church tradition is to provide all of the financial support for our many ministries from among ourselves. Generosity, therefore, is one of the spiritual values we recognize as central to our personal and our institutional well-being. We now invite you to participate in our stewardship drive. Thank you.*

*(adapted from Rev. Dr. Victoria Weinstein, UU minister)*

We humbly thank you,

**The UUCOD Board of Directors and the Stewardship Committee**