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Turning Up: Informing Your 2023 Pledge

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Winnipeg

Sunday, April 2, 2022



Preface

“Turning up” has a double meaning - collective and individual.

- Collectively, we have had a painful and demanding few years, but have also laid foundations for **an upturn in our fortunes**. Let’s appreciate what we have achieved and seize these opportunities.
- Individually, we are challenged to **turn up to contribute** to the First UU church renaissance. The church is us, together as a community, with shared principles, mission and vision.

A further supposition is that knowledge of circumstances and possibilities will be a key ingredient for both a church upturn in fortune and congregants turning up to contribute.

- This presentation aims to promote a thoughtful and realistic assessment of where we are and where we might go to inform your 2023 pledge.

Outline

- Challenges, achievements and foundations
 - Recent losses are offset by significant achievements in visioning and planning, savings and capital, mastering the digital world and organization, congregational health, social justice and green action, and staffing renewal.
 - These are foundations for growing programs, outreach, membership, & donations.
- Budgeting 101: Thinking about our 2023-2024 budget
 - Budgeting for stability and upturn.
 - Donations support our staff, who support our community and its mission.
- Choices
 - Volunteers, collective, individual.
 - Guidance for pledging choices.
 - Give until it feels good.

Challenges, Achievements, and Foundations

We are a community with a Mission and a history –
Let's take a clear-eyed look at where we have been and might go.

Our Mission

We are a
community
with a
mission and
a history

We are a diverse and caring community that is loving, inclusive, responsible, and encouraging.

We are a learning community open to evidence and varied insights that encourages reflection and exploration. We use what we learn to strengthen our relationships and our capacity.

We are a socially engaged community that works collaboratively, compassionately, and urgently for a just society and for our life-sustaining planet.

As clear-eyed idealists – first the bad news:

Covid, conflict, loss of pledges and staff.

Recent History – the Downside

- From 2018-19 to 2022-23
 - Pledges dropped from \$283,458 peak to \$198,071.
 - Pledgers dropped from 159 to 108.
- With the onset of Covid, Spring 2020, we
 - Paused hiring church administrator to replace Pam
 - Laid off rentals coordinator and DLFD assistant & reduced caretaker hours
- Resignations
 - Summer of 2021 - PJ Buchan and Andrea James.
 - Summer of 2022 - Rev. Meghann.

BUT – Look at what we have done!

We know what we aspire to be and do.

Recent Achievements Visioning and Planning

- 2020-2021 – created new church [Mission](#) with extensive member participation.
- 2021-2022 – created [Mission into Action](#) from [Living into our Mission](#) inputs.
- Summer 2022 – [Dialogue on Our Future](#) created direction for this year.
- December 2022 – [Planning with Stefan](#) launched Stefan's ministry.

BUT – Look at what we have done!

Rentals, savings, and assets – all up.

Recent Achievements Financial and Capital

- Building rentals are increasing
 - Feb. 28, 2023 - \$63,124 vs. \$36,528 last year – a 75% increase.
- Operating savings have grown to over \$165,000 due to rental income and reduced payroll.
- Restricted savings for refugees, elevator, endowment over \$337,000, but unavailable to pay bills and payroll.
- Capital Projects
 - 2018/2019 - Heating system and knob and tube wiring replaced, asbestos removed, and basement and stairway rebuilt – led by Peter Hill-Carroll with the support of many volunteers.
 - Spring/Summer 2020 – Storm sewer and parking lot constructed.
 - Winter 2021-22 - \$31,500 in grants for our new A/V equipment installed by volunteers.

BUT – Look at what we have done!

Mastering the digital world & keeping us organized.

Recent Achievements Online and Admin

- Growing Zoom and Hybrid Capacity
 - Spring 2020 – In days, cancelled in-person Sunday services by phone and pivoted to Zoom with high quality production.
 - Rev. Meghann created Zoom workshops to train congregants to produce and deliver online services. Foundation for volunteer and paid delivery ever since.
 - Winter 2021-22 – Obtained \$31,500 A/V tech, wire upgrades, and training with volunteer installation.
 - 2022-23 – Two paid tech positions for A/V and Zoom.
- Administration services entirely by volunteers since Summer 2020 saving over \$100,000.
- System improvements – 2022-23
 - New Breeze member system continues to roll out.
 - Google workspace training - [Using committee email together.](#)

BUT – Look at what we have done!

Creative caring, volunteering, welcoming, and constructive dialogue.

Recent Achievements Congregational Health

- Continuous delivery of creative core activities – pastoral care & Sunday services.
- Renewed Volunteer Resources and Membership Committees.
- New Congregational Relations Working Group and Vitality and Well-Being cluster.
 - 2022 – [Spring](#) & Fall workshops [Reflecting on our Past to Build a Better Future](#).
- A-Team – [Making washrooms friendly to all](#).
- [Mutual learning/consensus decision model](#).

BUT – Look at what we have done!

Reconciliation, compassion, justice, and love for Mother Earth.

Recent and Planned Achievements Social Justice and Green Action

- Harvest and Share the Plate.
- Winnipeg Indigenous Accord
- Climate, Black Lives Matter, Pride rallies.
- Numerous justice and green action services.
- Co-sponsor of Mayoral environmental forum.
- UU Indigenous Canada workshop.
- Assisting refugees from Syria and Ukraine.
- Upcoming workshops on Poverty and Homelessness.
- Upcoming forum on Climate Resilience.

BUT – Look at what we have done!

9 new staff & countless volunteers in 2022 & 2023

Recent Achievements Staffing Renewal

- August [Dialogue on Our Future](#) identified staff and ministerial needs.
- Continuing – Webmaster and Caretaker
- New – Rentals coordinator
- New – Tech support for Zoom and A/V
- New – Pastoral Care support
- New – Covenant group support
- New – RE support
- New – Sunday Services and program support
- New – Pianists and Music Director
- Continuing – Volunteers everywhere

BUT – Look at what we have done!

Ready for an upturn.

Conclusion: We have a solid foundation to build on

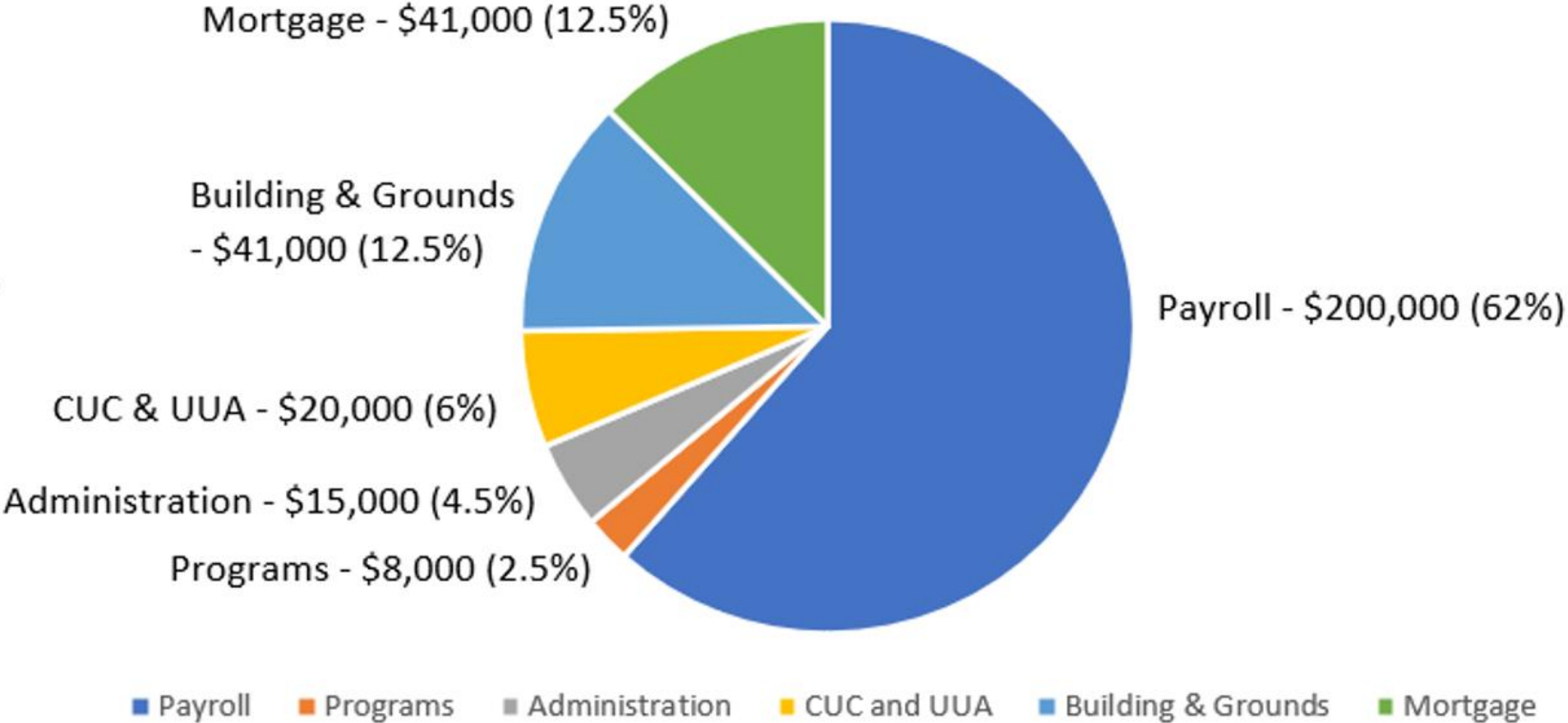
- The bad news is real and can't be ignored
 - It has left bruises and a depleted donor base.
- But so are our many achievements
 - Visioning and planning – Mission and Mission into action.
 - Education, training, organizing for congregational health.
 - Investments in 603, growing rentals and savings to back up donations.
 - Volunteer power – thanks to all who have stepped up.
 - Continuing enhancement of digital and online capacity and skills, including hybrid delivery of Sunday services.
 - Multiple social justice and green action initiatives.
 - Extensive staff renewal – 9 new positions since Spring 2022.

Be proud of what we have achieved and get ready to grow programs, outreach, membership, pledging and donations.

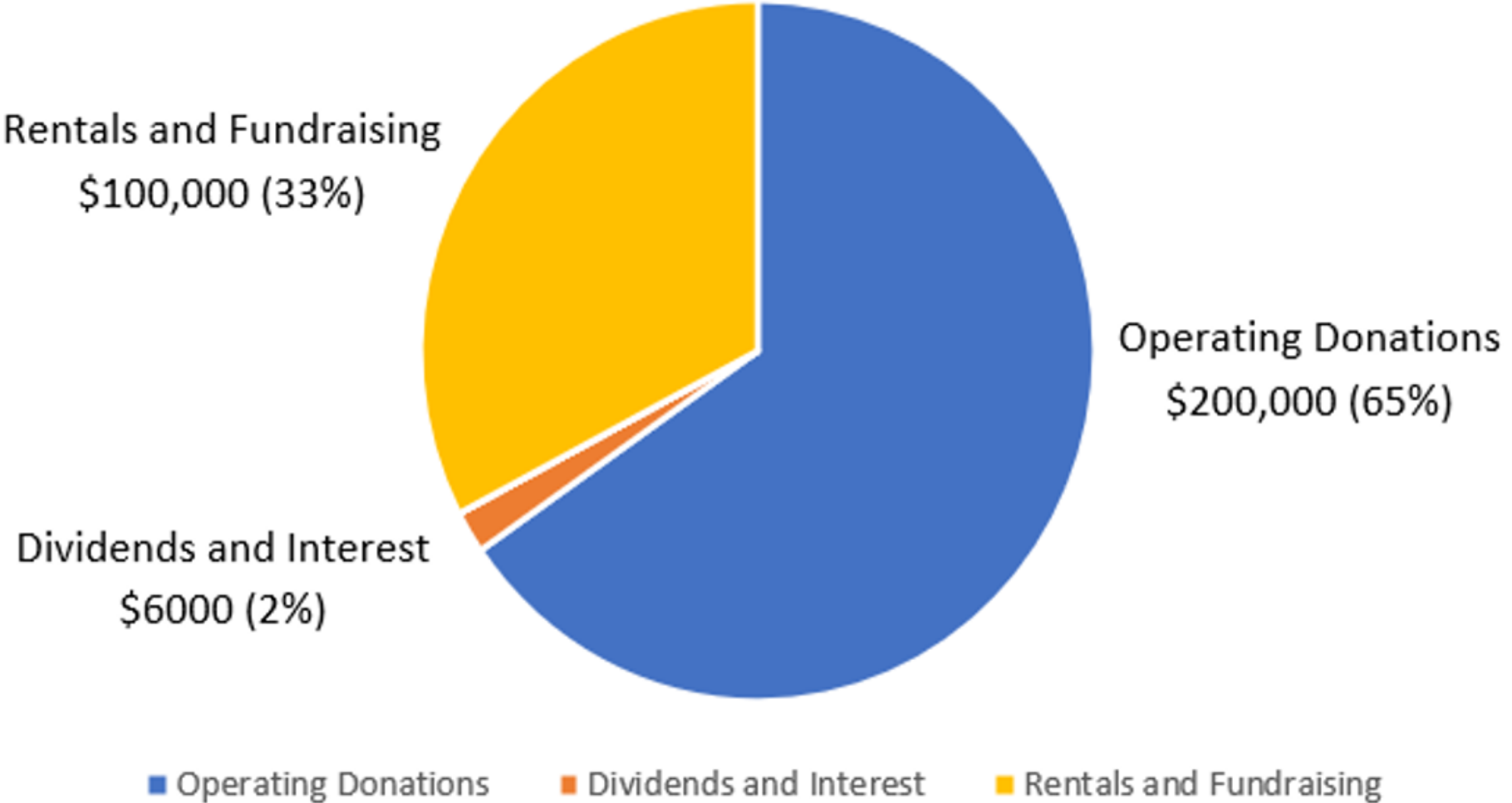
Budgeting 101: Projections and Choices for 2023-2024

Projected income falls short of projected expenses.
We need a strategy and choices to turn this around.

Projected 2023-2024 Expenses - \$325,000



Projected 2023-2024 Operating Income - \$306,000



Our lives and our church develop from the choices we make.

Choices

- **Volunteer choices**. The choice to serve by many saves us 10s of thousands of dollars every year.
- Projected expenses are \$19,000 higher than income – a deficit. How shall we deal with it?
- **Many individual pledge choices** will determine if our income is higher or lower than the projection.
- **Our collective choice at the AGM**. Should we budget a deficit next year if pledges don't close the gap? Let's invest in the future we want!
- As truth-seekers, our choices should be informed.

Making up my
mind what to
pledge.

General
guidance.

Pledging Guidance

- [Bylaws, Article 1](#): a member is expected to make a sincere effort to support the congregation functionally (volunteering) and financially.
- A Biblical tithe is 10% of income. A [“UU tithe”](#) is 5% to the church and 5% to other charities.
- You have a world of worthy causes to give to. We hope investing in our future is high on the list and that you will turn up for the upturn.
- The [Fair Share Contribution Guide](#) reckons income and level of commitment together.

Making up my mind what to pledge.

What are others pledging?

Pledging Guidance

- Average pledge = \$1834 or \$150/month
- Median pledge = ~\$1200 or \$100/month
- Top pledgers up to 5 X average pledge.
- With 10% increase:
 - Average pledge = \$2,000 or \$167/month
 - Top pledge = \$10,000 or \$833/month
- Compare with [Fair Share Contribution Guide](#).
- Compare with your own past giving & and circumstances. Am I able to give more, or less?

Making up my
mind what to
pledge.

Give until it
feels good!

Putting it all together

**“Make your pledge in an amount
you feel good about in your
current circumstances....
Give until it feels good.”**