

Pledging

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When the conversation this week began to focus on the annual pledge drive, I'll admit my thought was *conversations about money make me feel icky*. Since reflecting, however, I think it was a necessary conversation, for me and for us all.

Since finally becoming an official Unity member this September, I avoided thinking about the pledge drive because it felt like an unfortunate but necessary obligation that inspired feelings of stress and inadequacy. It felt like a decision I had to make in isolation.

As I started brainstorming for this post, however, I began asking myself what my ideal pledging experience would look like. Could I imagine one that instead inspired feelings of communal gratitude? One that emerged from a place of clarity and eagerness for growth in my relationship with the church?

Let us enter into a little sacred imagination: I'm picturing a pledging experience in which I am familiar with the uses to which the pledge money is put and agree wholeheartedly with the purpose and effectiveness of those uses. No one feels like they are less of a member if they cannot pledge and every one who can, feels privileged to do so. I imagine Unity making space for each individual to share both joys and concerns about pledging with at least one other person. (And maybe including a little affirmation circle after voicing those vulnerable concerns, as we did following our discussion.)

I hesitate to frame some of these things as "imaginings" since I think Unity has taken steps to try to make sure donating money is not a requirement for membership and that pledges are made from the heart. But we do live in an imperfect world and based on our conversation on Thursday, I do not think I was alone in having some less-than-positive associations with pledging.

Much of the work at making my sacred imaginings a reality is my own. I can educate myself on the uses to which our pledges are put. I can give myself lots of time to consider my pledge so that I can remind myself that it is not something I have to

decide with a sense of urgency. I can enlist the help of my friends, mentors, and the leaders of this church to help me address my concerns. But what I am most interested in continuing to ponder is *How can we do this work together?*