



Financial Dos and Don'ts

for the small Unitarian Universalist congregation

Don't fritter your endowment away on balancing the budget. Use the interest and dividends only. Save the principle for special projects out of the scope of the yearly budget.

Do have a yearly canvass.

Do vary your canvass from year to year on a three-year cycle. Don't lock yourself into one way only. Choose from face-to-face in people's homes or at a church event, a dinner or fun event, a well-written letter, a "Miracle Sunday" (takes place during worship), or something else. Be creative!

Do vote on your budget **after** you have done your canvass.

Do remember that people give to vision and mission, and not to pay the bills.

Do remember that you need at least 125 members to support a full-time minister.

Do create a balanced budget. Unbalanced budgets just tire people out.

Do give away a certain percent of your budget. Some congregations are choosing to give away all or part of their Sunday offering at least once a month. This brings in more money, not less, for the church as well as for the larger community.

Do encourage people to remember the congregation in their wills.

Do start an endowment if you don't already have one. Create a document that outlines its use for future projects and generations.

Do have a periodic professional audit, at the very least when you change treasurers or bookkeepers, but generally every year or every other year is sound financial practice.

Do consider hiring out your bookkeeping to insure that it is done in a financially sound manner. Make sure that the check signer is not the person writing the checks.

Do have a monthly financial statement for the governing board, and make sure you have two check signers in case of emergency.

Do make your fundraisers **fun**, and don't do the same thing every year unless people really love it and you make good money (over \$1000 per fundraiser). Fundraisers that raise less money are not fundraisers, but community church events that happen to bring in a few dollars (which could be donated to charity as part of your community outreach).

Do remember to thank people for giving with a personal note.

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