

# Connections You Can Count On

## The Stewardship Pledge Drive 2009

March 22 Through April 26th, 2009.

Stewardship Drive Co-Chairs: Ralph Brown & Maureen Butler

### Introductory thoughts from Co-chairs

(From 3/14/09 Sunday Worship Service)



19th Century Woodcut  
by Henry Stratton

Good morning. As we return to spring and also to the annual pledge drive - I am compelled to say- in the spirit of the famous line from the movie Poltergeist – “They’re Baaaack !!” .

As you know- Ralph and I are *Your Old Ship* annual pledge drive co – chairs. Now in year 2 of a 3 year commitment.

This morning my purpose is to provide you with a quick update on the pledge drive schedule, and, in short, we are going to get going next week.

We will begin next week with testimonials and brief presentations about the meaning of Old Ship, and the significance of our generously supporting it. In fundraising terms they call this “making the case for giving” . Ken may engage us all next week during church in some brief , lively conversation about our own connections to Old

Ship. So this week- be thinking if you would about what Old Ship means to you, how it inspires you , as a community you can count on , here locally, and perhaps to important things beyond...

The following week we are at the union service in Scituate, together but not here, and in early April , you can expect to receive written pledge drive materials at your homes. You will hear more about pledging and Old Ship in church each Sunday, and we will wrap up a terrific season of giving on April 26<sup>th</sup> with a celebration luncheon event.

I want to acknowledge , we are a little later in getting started this year. In a way, though, with how we have spent much of February and March together, maybe not. I am grateful and inspired by the meeting together, the many con-

versations, and planning that has come before now. Those conversations had to be on our proverbial “ front burner “ - the great community budget discussions regarding this year and next, & a wonderful weekend of work with Barry from the UUA last weekend. That weekend work provided a terrific congregational assessment and starts us in our own vision work for designing & creating the best possible Old Ship community future. There is still much to do on the above, , and the work will proceed, on both these fronts....

Yet, for a brief spell now, the pledge drive itself will take on one of these “ front burner spots” , through April.

We are happy to spend the time engaged in all of this with you – Please share your ideas, please share your enthusiasm and your passions, together with your very generous selves.

~ Maureen

Good morning!

You may remember me coming to you about this time last year, with Maureen, when we were brand-new co-chairs of the Old Ship Stewardship Pledge Campaign. I observed that Old Ship had again given me an opportunity to do something I had never done before – I had never been a pledge drive co-chair. This year, I can't say that any more.

Maureen and I spent this time with you last year sharing our vision of a different kind of a goal: helping our community see the generosity present within it. Our goal was to help our generosity grow.

You responded positively and powerfully. Several of you spoke to Maureen and me to let us know that this new goal was important to you. You said that hearing this idea, articulated this way, resonated within you.

This year is another year. Things are different (Boy, is that the truth!). But some things aren't different. Some things are the same as last year. Especially, the truth that this community is a generous community. And the truth of my desire to continue to stretch how I think about giving. I started last year to think differently about giving. This is one of the reasons that I decided to make a commitment to this job for three years, rather than three months. Maureen has done the same.

In the weeks that come, I want to share with you what I think about how we connect with each other here, and how we support each other. I also want to hear what you think about this.

I'm aware that some things are different this year. For each of us, what is

going on in the economy is really important. Our Old Ship community has already begun responding to the economy, by making next year's budget less than this year's. Larry Summers, the President's chief economic adviser, said this week that the problems our economy is facing “were not made in a day or a month or a year, and they will not be solved quickly.”

“But there is one enduring lesson of the history of financial crises,” he said. “They all end.”

~ Ralph

# Food For Thought.

There is a difference between thinking about giving in terms of being generous in funding a budget, and thinking about a life of generosity which is a means to enhance our spiritual development and the life of a people of faith bound together freely in religious covenant.

We don't so much give to an institution but how that institution enables us to live out our faith. Giving is more about us than our congregation, our need to find joy through participation, to live a life that makes a difference, to be engaged with a vision and a mission and a ministry.

There is a difference between talking about budget needs and talking about our spiritual needs.

There is a difference between looking at a balance sheet and looking at a vision.

There is a difference between raising money for a church and raising money for a shared vision and mission.

Our congregation is the conduit through which we are in relationship with things that matter the most. Giving is related to the extent that our congregation provides the opportunity for us to make the connection between faith and living.

Generosity is not about perpetuating an organization but about vision, mission, and ministry, about helping us grow in spiritual maturity, about being of service to others, and bringing hope and health to a world in need.

Giving is a way of saying Thank you.

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*An excerpt from a sermon by Burton Carley, minister of First Unitarian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, and a member of the UUA board of trustees.*

## Where *do* our Financial Resources Come From ?

Each year we turn our principles and our vision into meaningful action and programs & eventually, an annual budget. The Board of Trustees works together with our many committees and the congregation. They arrive in May (for the annual meeting) with objectives and plans, and, ideally, a balanced budget for consideration for our next year (July to June) .

Our work together in identifying and understanding the congregation members' upcoming financial commitments and gifts during April is critical .

Did you know that our own financial commitments make up at least 80 % of the financial resources we have year to year to support Old Ship, each other , Unitarian Universalism, & local and wider social action?

Let's absolutely honor ourselves, and Wow ourselves, into new territory this year with our pledging, giving and support !

Imagine the amazing things we could do .....



