New Horizons Pledge Campaign Update
from the Old Ship Finance and Religious Education Committees

Our church, Old Ship Church and Unitarian Universalism, has a history of interesting and strong religious education programming, of meaningful Religious Education Ministry. Religious Education is a lifelong process, one of our shared values. Offered well for Children and Youth, and Families more generally, we start this life long process with a strong foundation and lasting power and we support and strengthen individuals, and by extension each other, and our communities, near and far.

We are grateful to be clear about what we have always known: Religious Education and Family Ministry is not the same as Sunday School. Sometimes age specific, developmentally competent, Sunday morning gatherings and classes are part of this critical ministry. They are one piece of a dynamic, flexible whole.

Our budgets are a reflection of our values, aspirations and goals. We hope we will move ahead year by year, as a committed congregation, evolving and developing this ministry, and its related programs.

Specifically next year, and for a bit beyond, we are planning ahead and proposing budgets for review.

On the Horizon:
(This list could be longer, here is a sample)

- Revitalized religious education and family ministry for the current and future Old Ship children, youth and families (it’s been a rough 2-3 pandemic related years, here and at most churches)
• Adding to the Sunday Morning classes & activity, some short term, multi week, learning opportunities for children, youth and families (i.e. OWL for the younger elementary children, parenting spiritually classes)
• On-going social justice initiatives, increased collaboration & integration with our social justice council
• An intentional, regional community outreach strategy to prominently feature and share the opportunities here at Old Ship (social media, improved website, community media: journalism, newsletters)
• Collaboration with Interim Minister, and Life Long Learning committee, on classes focused on adult learners (though open to all). This will be highly dependent on hours available after primary responsibilities (see half time, below)
• Collaboration with the interim & settled ministers and the music director, on multi age, dynamic worship services several times per year
• Re-designed religious education ministry volunteer system: recruitment, support, opportunity matching
• Intentional, goal focused collaboration with our neighboring Unitarian Universalist Congregations and their ministers, DRE’s, volunteers. This could include: shared staffing models (possibly essential to attracting excellent staff), shared significant events, social justice projects, short term courses
• Hire a Half Time Director of Religious Education (start date August 2022)

There are plenty of Old Ship religious education strengths, habits, traditions, and events to bring with us from the last decades into our collective future. Where we can and need to improve and evolve, we really do need to commit together to do so, for our ongoing Religious Education Ministry to succeed.

Recommendations:
The recommendations coming out of our Interim Year(s) of reflection, research and professional consultation include: Hire a Half Time (20 hrs./week) Director of Religious Education; Hire a part time (could be 10/hour per week or higher) Membership Coordinator, Hire a part-time Youth Advisor.

Note: at this writing, the membership coordinator, and youth advisor positions will be considered in the future. Our priority at the moment is our DRE.

The Numbers:
The Religious Education Ministry Budget Area in the 2022/23 Proposed Budget

Staff Member:
Salary plus taxes and benefits: $42,500

Salary: $26,300 ($25,000 plus 5.0 % increase)
Taxes (payroll) and Benefits: $16,200

Other Costs:
General expenses amounts for 2022/23 are: $1,750
Historical comparison: this budget line item has been approximately the same for several years. It is lower in this budget than in past.

Note: The cost for nursery care/ staff is approximately $2300 per year. This is
technically not an RE area expense, and rather stands apart, as a welcoming & nurturing cost. Seen more as a “cost of doing business” as a church, in order to have worship services, large meetings, and proper access to same for all. I have not included it in any RE financial figures in any of this information.

Note: Many of the youth group activities over the years are self-funded through their own innovative fund raising efforts and thoughtful management of those funds. Many thanks to those who have supported, in particular, much social justice work as delivered to the community through our youth “ambassadors”.

In summary, **numbers wise**, the 2022/2023 Old Ship Proposed Budget reflects a decrease in Religious Education Expenditures, when we review and compare to the historical data, across a decade of budgets. For example, sample year 2018 total was $70,198 (personnel costs and general expenditures).

The 2022/23 budget is very closely aligned with the proposed 2020/2021 budget (which was $36,175, total personnel plus general expenses, where we may have underestimated benefits costs), in our first interim RE year, with half time staff.

The 2021/2022 Budget (current church year) has been unique, financially and otherwise. It is our second Interim RE year. We have no staff hired yet (no applicants), an RE Interim Consultant only, limited “post” pandemic participants, and general expenditures. We budgeted for approximately $36,000, but we are spending much less than that amount this year.

In summary, **vision wise**, Unitarian Universalism and Old Ship Church offer tremendous opportunity across many important life areas, in the “being human” life areas, for individuals, families, small and large groups of community members and our world. There is no shortage of ideas for how to support and engage the youngest through the eldest among us.

We have a set of “the next right steps” lined up under the Religious Education Ministry umbrella. Let’s please be sure that we fund them fairly so that we can move ahead and develop our shared ministry together.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your Religious Education Committee members, volunteer teachers and/ or Board of Trustees to ask questions, offer ideas, and to discuss our shared ministry.

How do I make a pledge?
The Old Ship website provides useful pledge information. After you have decided what you would like to give to support the work of Old Ship during FY 2022/23 (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023), either

- Pledge Online: Go to [https://oldshipchurch.breezechms.com/form/21-22pledge19](https://oldshipchurch.breezechms.com/form/21-22pledge19)
- Call Lisa Beck at the office (781-749-1679) to pledge in person or request a pledge card