

Mindful Stewardship

From our small beginnings in 1953, UUFM has grown slowly but steadily. Partly this has been due to careful stewardship of our resources. It is not that we have not spent money when we needed to—the decisions to buy the house on Pohl Road, then to expand it, then to buy the church on Charles Avenue and expand it were all acts of faith in ourselves and in what we bring to our community.

In recent times—since our 2005 move to Charles Avenue, say—we have made a number of mindful decisions to “do the right thing” for ourselves and our community. One of the first decisions we made in our new home was to purchase a baby grand piano so we could celebrate together with a more joyful sound. We put out a call, and the members contributed dedicated gifts for the piano fund, and we paid it off within the year. When we moved to Charles Avenue, we liked the sanctuary, but we realized that the Fellowship Hall in the basement was not accessible to people with mobility challenges. We promised ourselves that we would fix that as soon as possible. It took a few years, but in 2015 we launched a 3-year capital campaign and financed a new entry, a new office, and a lift! Last year, we had the opportunity to install solar collectors on our roof in a project that should pay for itself in 10 years and continue to produce electricity for at least 15 years after that, all the while contributing to lessening greenhouse gas emission in our region. And we took the opportunity to replace our fluorescent lighting fixtures with energy-efficient LEDs. Again, our members stepped up and with a dedicated contribution defrayed much of the cost of the installation, which is lessening both our expenses and our energy footprint.

We did all this even while trying to save up for one of our biggest promises to ourselves—the promise to call a full-time minister. This, too, was a major expense and one that was also beyond our current budget. But it was the right thing to do, and we promised ourselves that we would care for our new minister and, in time, bring the resources to bear to keep her.