

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY
the abundance of our lives together



2026–2027
Annual Giving Campaign



In Chile, there are cypress trees that are over 5,000 years old.

In Utah, there is a massive grove of aspen trees that are all one organism, regenerating for more than 10,000 years, with older, more seasoned “mother” trees symbiotically sharing resources with younger trees through a network of interconnected roots.

FRSUU is a lot like a tree.

In 300 years, we’ve seen enormous change.
We’ve weathered many storms—even been struck by lightning.
And now we are entering another season of change.
A beloved minister is moving on. We face some uncertainty.

The Buddhist Monk Thich Nhat Hanh taught the art of looking deeply at all things. When Thich Nhat Hanh looked deeply at a tree, he saw the sun, he saw the rain, and he saw the earth, because a tree contains all these things. He also talked of how in a storm the top of a tree can appear unstable and vulnerable in the wind. But when you look down at the base of the tree, you see something very different: you see that the tree is solid and still, and you know that it will weather the storm.

Look deeply at FRSUU, and you see a beautiful web of people connecting and sharing and creating. You see deep, interconnected roots. You see a towering steeple. And at its base, you see strength, solidity, and stillness.

40 years ago, FRSUU members Anne and Forrest Speck planted a blooming tree in the side yard of the church. Each year since, we’ve been greeted by the beautiful blossoms that heralded the arrival of spring. They planted a tree, but what grew were joy, hope, and beauty.

We are the roots, the branches, and the leaves of this mighty tree. There is a song that comes out of Thich Nhat Hanh’s community, Plum Village. Its words seem perfect for this moment:

*We are all the leaves of one tree
The time has come for all to live as one*

We all have an opportunity right now to plant something that will grow into our future. What would you love to plant right now?

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY

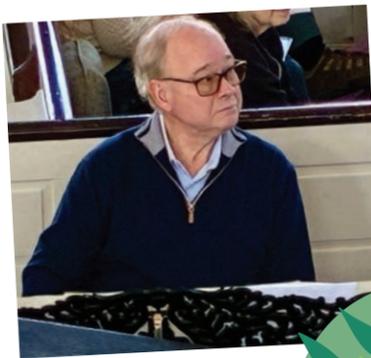
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BRANCHES

Branches extend the reach of leaves.

Stretching toward the sky, they transport water and move gracefully to soften and endure strong winds. We have the capacity to look to the world with love, listen with a heart of understanding, and act with determination to bring peace and joy to all we meet. Week after week we have shown up. We've marched out into our community, we've gathered closely to be there for each other, and we've expanded our minds and hearts with love and kindness.



Dear Members and Friends,

This is a time in history when we must remember what matters:

Liberal religious leaders, strong congregations, and spiritual communities that provide radical welcome and a safe harbor matter.

Churches with engaged people who act with courage and love matter.

You may look at what is happening in our country and the world and ask, "What can I do?" or "What difference do my efforts make?"

You may be afraid, overwhelmed, or both. You are not alone.

What we can do together is more than any of us can accomplish alone.

The historical roots of this church as a beacon for liberal religion and our Unitarian Universalist values run deep in our denomination, this city, and our country.

The branches of our tree include programming, ministry, music, social justice teams, spiritual care, public leadership, community engagement, and more.

You are the leaves that emerge and grow from this history and programming.

Please join me in supporting this year's annual campaign. Our gifts help sustain and strengthen our presence and value in this community, the larger religious landscape, and in our individual lives.

With faith, love, and gratitude,

Reverend Rebecca Bryan
Senior Minister



LEAVES

Leaves are a miracle of transformation.

They turn toward the sun, absorb the light, and share life-giving oxygen with the planet. What great fortune to have been born at this time, in this place, and to have found this community. Rising from the darkness of threat to all humanity, oppression of civil rights, and assault to democracy, we reap the light. This past year, we at FRSUU have been the light. From the candles of Christmas, to solstice services, to the brightness of our actions, we have shared our light.



ROOTS

Roots create an anchor.

Reaching deep underground, they intertwine with others to share precious intelligence and absorb the Earth's nutrients.

We are the continuation of what our ancestors began 300 years ago. We are also the inspiration of our future. This coming year we will continue to nourish the seeds of goodness, wisdom, and happiness which we have inherited. Our involvement in time, talent, and treasure makes this possible.

Support our annual campaign.

In the coming year, we face significant financial uncertainty and we need your help. Our expenses have gone up significantly since our last budget, and our income has suffered due to the recent loss of antenna rental in our steeple.

The "storm" of this financial dilemma is real, and we are being challenged. This year's campaign goal is \$660,000, a 12% increase from last year's campaign. But by pulling together as we have in the past, we can remain strong and stable. We can meet this challenge. We know that every pledge is a generous pledge, and not everyone can help in the same way.

We are asking everyone to do the best they can.

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Now is the time for making our church secure for the coming year. Our future depends on the kinds of seeds we plant each day. Our pledge is one of the seeds we plant to maintain our strength and solidity. Imagine the beauty, the joy, and the hope that will come from what we plant today.



“When the winds of the world are blowing, our ability to root down into our deepest values together is of profound importance. In nourishing this community, we create an environment that fosters all of our mutual flourishing. And just as the trees around us support a wide ecosystem of life, liberal religious communities like ours infuse a complicated world with greater love and justice.”

– Reverend Laurel Gray
Assistant Minister of
Congregational Life

We Need Everyone's Participation

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PLEDGE



Online at www.frsuu.org/pledge



Email your pledge to diane.carroll@frsuu.org



Mail your completed pledge form to FRSUU at
26 Pleasant Street in Newburyport, MA 01950



Call Diane Carroll at 978.465.0602 x1



*Scan this QR
code to make
your pledge.*



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