

BROOKLYN

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Dear friends,

As we begin our stewardship campaign at the one-year mark of the pandemic's arrival in New York City, I've been reflecting on the past year and all we've shared, all we've lost, and all we've built together. We have had the opportunity to do what religious communities do best: to care for one another in times of isolation and fear; to bring spiritual and ethical vision in times of social crisis. We've done it all without the benefit of being together in person. But we have been very much together in spirit. I've been thinking of all the ways this congregation has hit it out of the park. And the realization hit me: *First U was made for times like this.*

I would never wish, of course, for such upheaval and suffering to afflict our world, and I pray that it never will again. But it is at times like this that a congregation gets to look itself in the mirror and see what it's made of. I feel extraordinarily proud of what we've seen as we've looked in the mirror. We have shined. We've seen that our members are made of compassion, reaching out to support one another in a thousand ways, over and over. We've seen that our board and lay leadership are made of values, guided by UU Principles through each brand new, never-seen-before challenge. We've seen that our staff is made of ingenuity, developing new forms of worship and music-making and new ways of embracing our members in real time. We've seen that we're *all* made of commitment and hope.

It is in the spirit of this commitment and hope that we enter this stewardship season. Our community will only grow in importance as the fallout from the pandemic continues to roll out in waves – increased poverty and homelessness, physical and mental illness, profound loneliness, and the spiritual crises of a fractured society. First U will be needed more than ever, both within and beyond our congregation. We will be needed as a

place of hope and solace, of justice-seeking and spiritual seeking – and most importantly as a place where people still believe in the future.

Your generous pledge is one powerful way to show that you believe in that future – so much so that you want to help build it. I am asking you to dig deep to expand our loving and resilient ministries next year. We don't know what the future holds for us. But I have no doubt that together we will rise to meet the challenges that await – because we were made for this moment. Together in spirit, and with your commitment to giving next year, we can be a powerful source of love in this world that needs all the love it can get.

With gratitude for your generosity,

Rev. Ann

