

# Growing in Spirit Together

## FOLLEN COMMUNITY CHURCH

January 1, 2015

Dear Fellow Follenites,

Since becoming our minister in 2013, the Rev. Claire Feingold Thoryn has brought great energy, spirit, insight and caring to our community. Her wisdom from the pulpit and vision for the future of Follen has engendered a new wave of growth.

Now, more people attend Sunday morning services. Our choirs, Religious Education classes, youth and covenant groups have all experienced robust growth. There are more and varied adult support groups. We enjoy the increased vitality new congregants bring, and we wish to continue Growing in Spirit Together.

### Supporting Staff for Growth

Our church staff supports our growth, and, as we grow, we have a responsibility to meet the increasing demands for our staff to respond to all members of our congregation, and to maintain and enhance the excellence of our programs and our spiritual growth.

Our part-time Membership Coordinator welcomes newcomers and works diligently to help them gracefully integrate into life at Follen. By increasing paid work hours, we could deepen our outreach to new and current members. We can also begin to provide support for the increasing number of volunteers whose energy powers so much of our community's programming. The activities of Action Teams and others have grown to the point that they would benefit from greater staff support.

### Investing in Our Youth

The youth of Follen are the future of a more humane world - one increasingly in sync with our Unitarian Universalist principles. Investing in our youth programs is a *great* way to make the world a better place.

Ministerial Intern Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick, happily accepted a call to increase her time with us to help manage the enormous growth in Follen Unitarian Universalist Youth (FUUY), Coming of Age, Our Whole Lives and other youth programs. We anticipate her continuing to do this next year, even as we anticipate a longer term need to hire a dedicated Religious Education and Youth Program Coordinator.

As we ask more of our staff to support our rich and varied shared experiences at Follen, we must pay them fairly for their added workload and continue our efforts to right size their benefits.

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### Generosity for the Greater Good

Follen is well known within the Unitarian Universalist universe as a church committed to social justice. We have been expanding our efforts to reach more people and support more efforts to make the world a better place. We now have 10 active social justice subgroups working to aid our partner church, rebuild in New Orleans, and to assist with urban ministry, the interfaith garden, gun violence prevention, immigration issues, environmental justice, Kiva micro loans, Sunday's Bread, and the homeless shelter in Lexington. We need you now to support our growing generosity for the greater good.

### Your Pledge Matters!

While Follen has a few other sources of income (rents and annual fundraising events), almost 80% of our church budget needs to come from our pledges! Annual pledging enables Follen's very existence. It's what makes possible what we do together.

Your pledging support is absolutely vital to enable us to continue to do all the things that make Follen the special place it is.

### What's Next?

In January, a Follen congregant who has volunteered as a steward in this year's pledge drive will contact you. Please welcome this call and please contribute as generously as you can to help fund Follen's 2015-2016 church year.

We have already asked leaders from Follen's governing bodies and from our Stewardship and financial committees to pledge. Each has responded generously. As a result, we have already raised about 50% of our \$500,000 pledging goal. But to reach that goal, we need you now to do your fair share to help support our staff, our programs, our building and our vision for a vibrant, fulfilling future together. *Thank you* for helping make this happen!

*Marlene Stone*

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