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Our mission charges us: "Give generously of our time, talents and resources at Follen and beyond, energized by our contributions and grateful for those of others."



Can giving really be energizing? Out there in the world, people ask for money by saying, "Give 'til it hurts!" But here at Follen, I hope we can turn that around. Let's give until it feels good!

When I give, I get a "giving buzz." Exercise gets our blood flowing; and giving gets the spirit moving. Our energy is heightened, shared, harnessed—and as we move our congregation forward, the end of our vision is nothing more than the horizon of our sight. Let's be grateful, energized, and generous together. Let's get our spirits moving.

In faith, Rev. Claire Feingold Thoryn

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### How to Give

Let's all pledge as generously as possible to support our staff and our community. As in the past, our lay leaders on Program Council and Parish Board have pledged early, answering the challenge by strongly increasing pledges. It's a great start, and now we can all join them. Over the next few weeks, a steward will contact you. Please welcome your steward and communicate your pledge promptly to your steward, and advise the church administrator at [sarah.garner@follen.org](mailto:sarah.garner@follen.org) by January 31, 2015.

**Janet Lane and David Armstrong:** Someone said, "Belonging is not a thing you feel, it is a thing you do." When we began participating, we realized we were building a community one relationship at a time. The more we committed both time and money, the more Follen began to feel like our extended family. Looking back, Follen has given rich experiences to each member of our family, whether it was singing, playing on a softball team, teaching a class, or belonging to FUUY. It's like participating in a barn raising, to join other people freely giving their time and money, working to be their best selves and in the process becoming a spiritual home.

### Another Way to Give

Follen's Legacy Society includes members and friends of our community who have chosen to include Follen in their estate planning. If you are considering this, please talk to your steward or send an email to [legacy\\_society@follen.org](mailto:legacy_society@follen.org).

**Questions about Stewardship? Contact [stewardship@follen.org](mailto:stewardship@follen.org).**

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Photo by Joe Turner

## GROWING IN SPIRIT TOGETHER

### 2015 Stewardship Outreach

### Follen Community Church

#### How have you grown with Follen?

This year has been a time of significant growth and change for all of us in the Follen community. We have welcomed new members, experienced increased demand for our youth activities, covenant groups, support groups, and pastoral care, and we have supported more social justice causes than ever before.

We are committed to fulfilling Follen's mission of ministry to our members and the surrounding community through our programs and volunteer efforts. As our numbers grow, so does our potential to make an even bigger impact in the world. But to do so, we need everyone's help in pledging to Follen.

To put Follen on stronger financial footing, we need to raise 80% of our annual budget from pledges. This year's fundraising goal is \$500,000, and raising this amount will enable an increase in staff hours to maintain the excellence of our youth and adult programs and work for the greater good.

**Maggie Pax:** Follen is where my husband and I come for community, for thought-provoking sermons, for soul-filling music, and for the chance to make a difference in the world. We are so happy to see the Follen "family" continue to grow and welcome new members.

## Growing in Spirit Together!

As Unitarian Universalists, we support each other in our spiritual growth. Your pledge to Follen is a tangible expression of that commitment.

**Isaiah Johnson, youth member:** Since I started coming here in second grade, I have tried to participate in much of what Follen has to offer. FUUY, our wonderful youth group, has truly always been a place where I have felt safe to grow and really have fun. In addition, the music program and our fearless leader, Thomas...wow! Choir has been a constant in my life, and the operettas are truly spectacular. Getting to play a lead has been such a joy and a privilege! Follen has really supported me as an individual, and been a wonderful place to grow up in.

## Investing in Our Youth

Many families are drawn to Follen for our vibrant youth programs. Over 150 students are enrolled in our Religious Education classes – a **25% increase** from last year! Opportunities for youth involvement include the middle school and high school youth groups (FUUY), the youth and junior choirs, the unique Coming of Age program, and the innovative Our Whole Lives curriculum. Our families also look forward to cherished annual events such as the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta and the FUUY service trip to New Orleans.



Photo by Howie Bernstein

**Beth Bernstein:** The NOLA service trips have provided important opportunities for Follen's youth to see different perspectives, work together and challenge themselves in many ways (social, emotional, physical and vocational). It is an amazing way to build community and develop important life skills. Most importantly, it teaches our children that they can make a difference in the world with their hands, their minds and their compassion. It is an empowering, life changing experience for many and I will personally be forever grateful to those who have worked so hard to sustain this program!

## Staff Support for Growth

As our Follen community grows, we rely more on our staff of dedicated professionals. Existing roles need to expand to meet the needs of our congregation. We also plan to continue efforts to “right size” staff salaries and benefits.

- Additional staff support is required to manage the remarkable growth in our youth and adult programs.
- We recognize the need for staff to help coordinate action teams and assist volunteers with events, such as the East Village Fair.
- We anticipate that the cost of staff salaries and benefits will increase this year.

**Sophie Morgan, youth member:** Follen has supported and celebrated my identity and my growth. The community here has encouraged me to grow as an activist and leader and has given me a safe space to explore my faith and myself.

## Generosity for the Greater Good

The Follen community is extraordinarily generous with the time and energy we devote to social justice causes. This year, our goal is to increase our financial support to our Social Justice programs, including:

- **Sunday's Bread**, a program that serves free, hot meals to people in need in Boston every Sunday.
- **Lift Up Lexington**, a volunteer coalition supporting families living in transition at the Quality Inn in Lexington. Lift Up Lexington connects these families with food, supplies, monthly community meals and recreational activities.
- **The Dennis and Sally Brown Scholarship**, a fund to provide Follen youth with training in social justice.

**Chris and Rebecca Farnham:** Like many families, we came to Follen when our children were very young. At the beginning, it was difficult to find time and energy to devote to church activities. Now that our children are a tad older, we're finding new ways to get involved. We appreciate so much that no matter how much of ourselves we had to give to Follen, we have always felt welcomed and at home in the Follen community. Even on days when all we could do was chase toddlers around at coffee hour, we still felt cared for at church. The church is an extension of our family, and that is why we give.

**Alice Dunn and Gordon Hardy:** We came to Follen because we wanted a community – a place within Lexington to really call home, for ourselves and our children. We found that and also a place where children, youth, and adults of all ages work and play and learn together, listen to each other, believe in each other, and treat each other with respect. Most of all, we found friendship, purpose and love – a place to live our lives in a way we hope is valuable, useful, and right for the world.