



In Awe of Grace

by Rev. Dr. Jennifer Yocum

When I joined the UCC back in 2003, I had every reason not to pledge. I was in deep debt from graduate school. I was primarily self-employed and had dramatically uneven income. Some months, I couldn't even make my part of the mortgage payment. Even deeper though, I'd been deeply hurt by churches in the past, thrown out by one and blown out by another. (Both stories best shared over a beer.) For ten years, I'd been spiritually homeless and I wasn't too sure of the ragtag little church I'd joined, made up of misfits and refugees just like me.

But I was downright ensorcelled by this promise, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." If there was even a chance that this might turn out to be true, I knew I

had "put down roots" to make it happen. Even if it was a measly \$5 a month/5 hours a month, I knew I needed to make a bet on my faithfulness to the dream of a church that would take me in.

In the 18 years since then, I've challenged myself to increase my pledge every year. Not because of the terrific programming my church does, or because of mission giving, or because of a sense of duty, I give because I'm still in awe of the grace extended by that "No matter who you are..." promise. I hope you'll join me in growing that promise in your churches.

CONSIDER YOUR PLEDGE AS A PERCENT OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME.

Annual Income	Monthly Income	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%
16,000	1,333	27	40	53	67	133
20,000	1,667	33	50	67	83	167
25,000	2,083	42	62	83	104	208
30,000	2,500	50	75	100	125	250
35,000	2,917	58	88	117	146	292
40,000	3,333	67	100	133	167	333
45,000	3,750	75	113	150	188	375
50,000	4,167	83	125	167	208	417
60,000	5,000	100	150	200	250	500
75,000	6,250	125	188	250	313	625
100,000	8,333	167	250	333	417	833
125,000	10,417	208	313	417	521	1042

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity. Giving even 1% more of annual income to charity would be transformative for our congregation and other organizations doing good in our community.