

Affirming that this church has been sustained for over 360 years and that those who came before us had a vision that we continue their legacy, today is Commitment Sunday — a day of worship where we recognize and celebrate our collective responsibility and dedication to financially sustaining First Parish. The pledges we collect today are for Fiscal Year 2017. Though annual pledging is an imperfect system, we do our best to honor everyone, we do our best to make our collective generosity and mission something to celebrate, appreciate, and to sing about.

Friends, members, folks who just resonate with this holy gathered folk — all are welcome to exercise your sense of belonging by making a financial pledge to sustain this place. If you are here for the first time or are still figuring out where First Parish fits in your life, no worries — we are so glad you are here and hope you keep coming back.

If you have not already, I hope you will complete your pledge card now, proudly and without apology, no matter what the amount because We Are Doing Good together. Every pledge matters, every single one is needed and received with gratitude and joy.

We will gather up our financial commitments in a simple way this morning. While the youth choir starts us off with singing Curtis Mayfield's song "People Get Ready" — which is about getting on train where there is room for all of the loved and the lost — you can bring your pledge envelope forward and drop it here. [point to the glass bowl with shells at the bottom] It is a glass bowl where we gather what becomes our holy water and today, at its bottom, are shells that are the symbol of our pilgrimage this sabbatical year.

If now is too soon for you to make your pledge, you can check the box that says you know you want to pledge but you don't know how much right now and tell us the amount when you do know. Or maybe you will know by the end of today's worship — if so, we will leave the big bowl up front and you can add your envelope when silent candles are lit at the end of the service. As for now, children are invited and encouraged to bring a card forward for their family — so they get to practice giving too. Singing along is strongly encouraged — the words are printed in the insert in your program.

Dancing in the aisles is optional.