

## Message from the Treasurer

Preparation of JRUUC's annual budget begins early late January with the establishment of an Operating Budget Committee. This Committees use the previous year's budget as a template to allow year-to-year comparisons. With revenue, we start by looking at how much actual revenue the Congregation received from each of various sources in the first six months of our fiscal year--that is, July 1 through December 31--and use that to estimate how much revenue we are likely to receive from each of those sources by June 30 of the current. We can then compare that with the current fiscal year's budget for those sources of revenue, so we can adjust the coming year's budget to more provide more accurate estimates.

With expenses, we started by filling in fixed expenses we know are not going to change, like our building mortgage and some subscription and membership fees we expect to be the same. As we did with revenue, we looked at the actual expenditures during the first half of the year and use these to estimate what our total year expenditures was likely to total, and compared this to how much was budgeted for each item, so we could make adjustments up or down in the 2025-26 Budget. With regard to the salaries of Minister and Staff, we always started with the recommendations of the national UUA on appropriate salaries based on role, experience, anticipation of inflation, etc., hoping we could avoid any reductions from these guidelines. Committees also provided requests for the coming year based on their expected needs. At this point, we could make a preliminary draft of a budget for the coming year.

Our preliminary budget for 2025-26 showed a projected deficit about \$23,000. At this point, the Operating Budget Committee and the Board of Trustees began whittling away, making judgments about which expenditures might be reduced and whether it would be reasonable to expect any of our sources of revenue to increase. It was in this context that our Stewardship Committee asked members of the Congregation to consider whether it would be possible for you to increase your annual pledges. When we later reviewed the overall increases in pledges, we were able to reduce our projected deficit for 2025-26 by several thousand dollars.

Even when we had the deficit down to about \$16,000, however, the Board of Trustees still felt we needed to make painful cuts to a number of expenditures in effort to minimize the deficit in the 2025-26 Budget we would present to the Congregation. While we were in the process of doing that, however, we were overjoyed to receive from a member of our Congregation an extremely generous offer to match pledge increases and one-time donations for the coming year up to a total of \$11,500. When we combined all the pledges and donations already received by May 15 with the appropriate matching funds and the reduction in expenditures, we were actually able to produce, for the first time in many years, a 2025-26 Annual Budget that did not forecast a deficit.

Michael Nunley