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Unitarian Universalist  
Society of Geneva



## Pioneer Newsletter January - February 2016

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### **From the Pulpit**

the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

We're all familiar with the concept of a Covenant, I hope - we do, after all, speak our UUSG Covenant together every Sunday morning and at the start of most of our formal meetings. It's a statement not of what we believe (in fact, we explicitly agree to disagree), but rather of how we intend to act together, promoting practical goodness, aiding each other in our moral and religious improvement, being seekers after truth and goodness. It's pretty general, and it doesn't spell out in any detail just how we will do these things. Still, it's a good guide. Members of this congregation will take action to help the world and to help each other as we strive for greater understanding and greater goodness than we have yet achieved.

When our UUA MidAmerica Region staff person Lisa Presley was with us in October, she stressed the value of covenants for smaller groups that work together regularly. It's helpful to develop together a clear statement of what we need and expect from one another, what we will promise one

another, how we will develop our relationships with one another as we do the institutional and relational work of UUSG. It's been an interesting process. The groups that have completed their covenantal agreements will, I hope, share them with others so we all have a better understanding of how we expect to treat others and to be treated ourselves within our UUSG community.

Your core staff – professional and support – spent several weeks working on a Covenant that we will honor in our work with one another. It all seems like common sense ~ but if things get difficult, it's good to have our specific promises to one another to hold us together. With Staff Appreciation Sunday coming up on the 31st, we thought you might like to see what our Covenant looks like. It's how we agree to treat one another – and how all our UUSG community, I'm sure, would also like to be treated.

*UUSG Staff Covenant  
December 15, 2015*

*As the core staff of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva, this is our covenant:*

*We will honor confidences expressed in staff interactions, respecting both the privacy of each other and of church members/friends.*

*We will respect each other's competence, do our jobs to the best of our ability, and recognize that others are doing their best as well. We will address issues as they arise instead of waiting for them to build to unacceptable levels.*

*We will be generous with forgiveness when errors or missteps are made. We will be patient with one another, especially in times of stress.*

*We will support each other by asking for help when needed, offering help when appropriate, and maintaining a sense of humor.*

*We will attempt to communicate clearly, and to keep lines of communication between and among staff members open and clear. New ideas will be treated with appreciation and respect.*

*We will present a united front, even when that means respecting decisions that we may not agree with.*

*We will remember that we serve a diverse congregation and may not be able to meet everyone's needs at all times. To the best of our ability, we commit to serving the values and vision of this congregation and of Unitarian Universalism as we go about our work.*

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**Scott's REgards**  
the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis

When I was a freshman in high school, a girl who'd been in the school play invited me to a party at her house. This girl was not one of those popular young ladies, but more someone who tended to fade into the woodwork, but I wasn't exactly the class president either, so I accepted.

When I got to the party, there was a girl there who I didn't care for, to put it diplomatically. She was the type who always belittled others, me included. With her were two of her cronies who were her back-up. (Did you see 'Mean Girls'?)

Well, the party was dragging, we were low on chips, and 3 Dog Night was playing when this odd-looking woman came lumbering up the hallway and into the kitchen. With slurred speech, she began talking with our hostess and it became obvious she was the girl's mother. I'll never forget what the girl said: "Mama, did you take pills again?" She began crying hysterically, but I was concerned for the mother. If we were going to avoid catastrophe, somebody had to do something.

Not typically the "take charge" type, I found the phone and phone book and called for an ambulance, pronto. Simultaneously, I could see the

“mean girl” out of the corner of my eye, she was calming the daughter down and helping them to find coats and purses and handkerchiefs. The guests, though there weren’t many, were rallying to help. When the ambulance arrived, the girl and her mother were taken away to the hospital. I don’t know what else happened, but the mean girl and I jumped into my car and drove to the hospital. Her two sidekicks jumped into the back seat and we were gone!

All that evening, the four of us worked together, helping and providing moral support for our friend. As I sat in that cold and ugly waiting room, I was baffled by the whole situation. Were the mean girls and I cooperating and working together? Crisis makes for surprising resourcefulness and collaborations.

None of us really qualify as mean girls, and our troubles are rarely so dramatic! With Michelle Gibson’s resignation, we’ve lost a talented and important staff member. But we’ll pull together and make it work! So many people have stepped forward to pitch in and take up the work, I’m really grateful. Our wonderful LRE teachers and facilitators are so very appreciated. Jodi Brown, Jenny Montgomery, and other members of our LRE Team have provided help, advice, and support. Thanks to all of you.

Wow! It’s great to be part of the UUSG community.

With joy, love, and gratitude,  
Rev. Scott



## **Testing, Testing...**

You'll notice that this month's Pioneer has a different format – we've

included full articles instead of just links to our website. Please let us know what you think with a reply to this email.

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### **"New UUs" Reunion**

If you attended "New UUs" in 2014 or 2015, you're invited to a potluck on January 30 at 6pm. Bring your spouse, your partner, your significant other, or a friend! Sign up [here](#).

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### **Staff Appreciation Day**

Take a moment to share kind words of support and appreciation to our staff on Sunday, January 31 during the Social Hour.

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## **"Guest at Your Table"**

"Guest at Your Table" boxes will be collected January 31. Bring yours on Sunday!

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## **Lost? Found!**

Check the "Lost & Found" table in the Common Room for your wayward items. Anything not claimed by February 1 will go to Goodwill.

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## **Introducing "boardblog"**

"boardblog" will be a monthly blog on the UUSG web site written by a member of the UUSG Board of Directors. The author of the articles will

change each month. Each Board member will decide their topic. Topics may be anything relevant to UUSG community -- discussion of a UUSG Board issue, announcement of an upcoming event, an appeal for help, recognition of someone, anything of common interest. Reader comments will be welcome; send comments and suggestions on "boardblog" articles to all of the Board with an email to [board@uusg.org](mailto:board@uusg.org).

The mission of "boardblog" is to improve communication within UUSG. We continue to hear that we need to communicate more. Over the last year, we held more open meetings, attended more council meetings, posted Board meeting minutes on the web site, and put short Board meeting minute summaries in the Pioneer but heard that it is still not enough. Now that we have the new electronic format for the Pioneer, we no longer have the space limitation of the old paper Pioneer, and adding a monthly blog to our communications is fairly easy and cheap. We want "boardblog" to open up new discussions and issues.

You can check out the blog at any time at [www.uusg.org/boardblog](http://www.uusg.org/boardblog). Let the blogging begin!



### **Junior High Youth Group**

Our Junior High Youth Group meets next on Saturday, February 6 at 7pm. Hope you can join us!

[Learn more...](#)



## **New2U Marketplace**

We have a new fundraising vehicle at UUSG – New2U – an online marketplace where sellers can list gently used (or new) items and buyers can get great deals. And the monies support UUSG.

When participating in N2U, everyone wins! Sellers get rid of superfluous items and get a tax receipt for monies donated; buyers get great deals on great stuff and know they are supporting an amazing organization; and UUSG gets the funds. Win. Win. Win.

So if you are downsizing or just cleaning out – or if you want to get great deals on great stuff – click [here](#).

The success of this program depends on enthusiastic sellers and buyers – so check it out!



## **Facilities Reminder**

In recent weeks, we've had a few facilities "adventures." Please remember



that the care of our building is everyone's responsibility – if something is amiss, please contact a staff member or member of the [Facilities Team](#) as soon as possible so the issue can be addressed quickly. If we don't know about a problem, we can't fix it. Thank you for your attention to our historic home!

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### **Food Bank Group**

Our Food Bank Group's next volunteer event is Saturday, February 13, 9am-12pm. New volunteers welcome!

[Learn more...](#)

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### **A Joyous January**

A rich array of music has graced services, including gifted flutist Meredith Vandre; and shining at the keyboard were pianists Erin Rosenkrans, Dean Malambri, and Geoff Pynn. Providing the Christmas Eve special

accompaniments were pianist Patricia Arzaga, flutist Ruth Cavanaugh, and string players Mary Phillips, Wendy Evans-Glazier, and Larry Glazier.

There is a special pride and excitement surrounding our rejuvenated UUSG Choir, singing under the leadership of our own Ruth Cavanaugh for Christmas Eve and Cynthia Spiegel after the New Year. Choir members included Melanie Abercrombie, Julia Adams, Mark Adams, Mark Alleman, Al Arzaga, Melissa Auer, Trish Beckjord, Bob Brubaker, Alan Drover, Ann Drover, Giana Felish, Eleanor Hamilton, Dave Hanchette, Tom Haslett, Kelly Herz, Becky Hruby, Cathy Kern, Ali Lanthrum, Susan O'Neill, Lou Pierce, Julie Riffle, Rhonda Robinson, Anna Rosenkrans, Parvaneh Smith, Meredith Vandre, Pat Vary, and Jane Willard. Thank you for the lovely vocal solos, Toni Golab and Kelly Herz!

Looking ahead, we'll be treated to the UUSG Money Band, with Tracey McFadden, Andy Montgomery, Chris Stibal, Tracy Rosenkrans, and John Rosenkrans. Don't miss the golden voice of Cynthia Spiegel, and the keyboard talents of Patricia Arzaga and Tom Zimmerman.

Every weekend is a one-of-a-kind creation. Each of our musicians and groups carefully prepares music to fit the particular service, presenting a worship experience that we believe is unique to the area. To share your own special gift, offer suggestions, or express your appreciation of our work, please reach out to our Music Director, [Tracy Rosenkrans](#).



## **"New UUs" Orientation Program**

The Membership Team welcomes you to join our three-session "New UUs" Orientation Program. The next sessions will be February 14, 21, & 28, 12:30pm-3pm.

"New UUs" is mainly designed to introduce newcomers to UUSG and to Unitarian Universalism in general. Even if you have been here awhile, if you're interested in a session, please attend. You are welcome to attend as many sessions as you wish, as each covers a different topic.

You'll have an opportunity to discuss personal journeys, ways to get involved, history of the church and what it means to be a member of UUSG.

The sessions are facilitated by members of the Membership Team and will include presentations by our minister and other church members.

[Learn more...](#)

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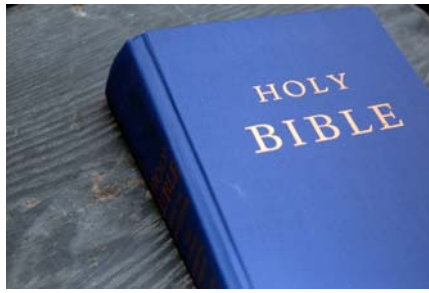


### **February Staffing**

Our Congregational Administrator, Katie Phillips, will be off work on Sunday, February 14.

Our Senior Minister, the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates, will be on Study Leave February 22-28.

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## **"Bible Study for UUs"**

For UUs who simply want to learn more about the Bible as literature, "Bible Study for UUs" meets on the third Monday of each month from 7pm to 8:30pm. Their next meeting will be on February 15. Please read through Chapter 4 in "[Lost Christianities](#)" by Bart D. Ehrman. For more info, please contact [Jim Frazier](#).

If you haven't had a chance to read the book, please feel free to come anyway. The conversation frequently wanders beyond the book!

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## **Nursery Caregiver Needed**

Make a few extra bucks while helping out the littlest UUs! We're looking for someone to join our staff as a Nursery Caregiver. If you would like to join our group of rotating providers or know someone who might be a good fit in our nursery, please contact [LRE@uusg.org](mailto:LRE@uusg.org). Although we're particularly looking for regular help, please also let us know if you can be called for events or on short notice.

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## **Adult Religious Enrichment: "Articulating Your UU Faith"**

This 4-session course is designed for new Unitarian Universalists as well as those interested in exploring our traditions and values more deeply.

Written by the wife and husband team of Rev. Barbara Wells and Rev. Jaco Ten Hove, the course is designed to increase our comfort and ability in speaking about a faith based on community, rather than belief.

Join Rev. Scott on 4 successive Wednesday evenings (February 17, February 24, March 2, & March 9) for this fun and interactive adult program.

Attending all sessions is preferred but not a requirement. Doing the readings and follow-ups, which amount to less than 5 pages per session, is strongly encouraged!

Childcare will not be provided.

Maximum of 12 people, so [sign up](#) today!

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## **Combined Day of Service & Food Bank Group Event**

On January 16, the Social Justice Team and the Food Bank Group packaged 1,850 pounds of bulk cereal at the Northern Illinois Food Bank. We could have done more, but they ran out of food!

Thank you to Mark Adams, Kevin Beyer, Teresa Bradley, Betty Bristol, James Carroll, Jamie Carroll, Angela Dausman, Abby Fredrickson, Lisa Gades, Joni Garcia, Brad Lipman, Doris Lipman, Samantha Mejia, Jeanne Neltner, Nate Ng, Gary Noll, Lou Pierce, Page Poris, Anna Rosenkrans, Erin Rosenkrans, John Rosenkrans, Hamid Rusef, Ramsey Rusef, Jason Sapet, Kerry Sapet, Bob Swanson, Mary Swanson, Calvin Thi, Pat Vary, Chris Weithers, and Josh White.

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### **"Our Whole Lives" Program (OWL)**

The second OWL overnight is scheduled for February 19-20.

[Learn more...](#)

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## Get Involved With Interweave

Interweave is a local group of LGBTQ members, friends, and allies who meet once a month to have time together for discussions and special events. We will meet at 12:30pm on Sunday, February 21 to plan for our annual LGBTQ Friday Flicks and church service. For more information, please contact [Lynn Steele](#).

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### Holiday Lights Collection

Thank you to everyone who contributed to December's collections and on Christmas Eve to support various social justice causes.

We raised \$5,319, which went to provide a happy new year to "Elba's Kids," the Pottawatomie Habitat for Humanity family, the Habitat family whose house was built by our YRUU youth last summer, the Humanitarian Service Project Seniors Project, and the UUSG MAD ("Make a Difference") Fund.

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### Friday Flick: "Intersexion"

Join us for an LGBTQ-focused film on Friday, February 26 at 7pm.

*Intersex* is the term for a condition whereby a person has ambiguous sexual anatomy. The film “Intersexion” sets out to de-mystify intersex, looking beyond the shame and secrecy that defines many intersex births.

Interviewing intersex people around the world, the film explores how they navigate their way through childhood, adolescence, relationships, and adulthood when they don’t fit the binary model of a solely male and female world.

It also sheds light on our culture and how it dictates gender roles without allowing for ambiguity. This film is sponsored by the UUSG [Interweave Group](#).

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### **April Earth Month with Greening Activities**

Greetings, everyone! The Green Sanctuary Team is off to a sizzling start for 2016. We have a new Team co-Leader, Kurt Heinz, who is stepping in to replace Nancy Goodfellow, who has served as a fantastic and valuable co-Leader for 5 years.

Our wind energy support has now been renewed for another year. (UUSG’s Green Sanctuary Team buys wind energy matching 100% of our monthly Com Ed use, through [Community Energy](#), from various wind farms. That energy goes to the grid, replacing energy from coal-fired plants, and considerably reduces pollution and water waste!)

But each of our households can add to this eco-impact by additionally buying inexpensive energy blocks ourselves from Community Energy, representing a percent of our household’s bill (up to 100%). Find out how



on the GS bulletin board about this valuable participation. Watch for the wind energy 'thermostat' on our board showing UUSG's members' "Wind on the Rise."

We're already planning a very green UUSG Earth Month. April will feature Lindsay's environmental sermon, a green Social Hour, an ecologically-minded movie, green sales (including our signature reusable gift bags plus rain barrels), a green music performance with Tom Neilson, and much more. Please enjoy with us our celebration of Earth Month in April.

Isn't it great to be part of a church membership that by and large considers the environment really important? Thank you for helping.

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### **Adult Religious Enrichment: "Questions at the End of Life"**

On Sunday, March 6 at 12:30pm, a panel of experts from both within and beyond our church walls will provide insights and advise for those who are concerned about questions of aging and the end of life.

Whether for yourself or with a view to caring for an elderly family member, you may find the considerations of later life less onerous when viewed with the support of others.

Sign up [here](#).



## **Sunday Buddhist Meditation**

UUSG's Buddhist Meditation and Study Group is now offering meditation on the fourth Sunday of each month at 11:15am in the Servetus Room of Pioneer House. Upcoming dates include February 28 and March 27. Please contact [Lisa Gades and Eric Bodwell](#) for more information.

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## **Love Is Love**

The annual Interweave LGBTQ worship service will be held on March 6. We would like to show pictures of our church family and friends that Sunday to help us celebrate our theme, "Love Is Love." If you have pictures of your household members or extended family or friends to share, please send them to [Tony Gibbons](#) by March 1. If you have any questions, please contact [Lynn Steele](#).

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## Get Bee-Witched

Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley has chosen March 19 has chosen for their 2016 fund-raising Trivia Bee, with the theme "Bee-Witched." They can truthfully call it a "spellbinding" competition. Chosen by the Social Justice Team as one of the area non-profits we support, LVFV provides tutors for Fox Valley residents who want to improve their English skills. At any one time, native speakers of more than 90 different languages live among us and receive help from volunteer tutors, many of them friends and members of UUSG. The Social Justice Team pays the registration fee for a UUSG Trivia Team (which won the 2013 and 2014 Bees!).

Right now, we are looking for two things: people who want to be on our team and a clever team name that highlights the year's theme and UUSG.

An example (not a very good one) might be "The Spell-ConjUUurers." We have always attempted to find names that include a "u" that we double and highlight as shown in this example. You probably can do better than that. If you are interested in being on the team and/or have a suggestion for a team name, contact [Jean or Lou Pierce](#).

In addition to the Trivia Bee, the event will have a silent auction, prizes for costumed teams (not required), 50-50 raffles, etc. It's a witch's brew of fun and entertainment. You don't have to be on a team to enjoy the event. It'll be held from 9am until noon on Saturday, March 19 at a new location this year: Pipers Banquets, 1295 Butterfield Road (near Kirk and Butterfield).

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## Commit to Knit

Our hearts (and our yarn stash) are full, but our shelves are not. After sending off so many items last month, we could use your help in filling them up with knitted, crocheted, and quilted items to be sent to women and children in global areas of conflict, including parts of our own country. Our parent organization, [Women4Women Knitting4Peace](#), has specially requested mittens, socks, winter scarves, quilted sleeping mats, baby bibs, and baby blankets (patterns are available on their website).

Our monthly gatherings are on the first Sunday between services in the Common Room. Stop by, sit down, chat, knit, whatever -- we are always delighted to see you.

For assistance, instruction, and/or encouragement, please contact [Katherine Lyons](#).

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## RE Music

It's time for a new song! RE Music students are learning "I Have a Dream," composed by Eugene B. Navias. Passionate discussions are

taking place regarding Martin Luther King, Jr., his message, and its connection to our song. Students will share their song and visual interpretations in March.

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## **Religious Education Class Topics**

The RE classes will study the following topics in February:

### Grades K-2nd

- From Wishing to Doing
- Unconditional Love
- Be Fair
- Finding Balance

### Grades 3rd-5th

- Peace
- One Person Makes A Difference
- The Power of Peace
- Kindness Is the Key
- Peace Inside

### Grades 6th-8th

- The Healing Power of Touch
- We Are All Healers
- Human Rights & Peace
- Human Rights & Injustice

### YRUU: Grades 9th-12th

- Planning projects for the coming year (social justice as well as social)
  - Welcoming new youth into our community
  - Identifying processes to making our group a success
  - Team-building
- 



### **Giving "Beyond Our Walls"**

This month's "Beyond Our Walls" contributions will go towards our partnership with the DuPage UU Church, sponsoring and mentoring a new Bridge Communities family.

Kirsten is a single mother in her early 30's with a daughter Zylah, nearly 2. Kirsten has had good jobs in payroll/accounting in the past but was laid off in 2009 from a job that was very stressful and contributed to illnesses which have continued to plague her.

Thanks to the \$1,000/month sponsor commitment, they have moved into a Bridge apartment, and Kirsten is taking full advantage of employment resources including job readiness classes, skills assessment, and wardrobe acquisition to boost her confidence in presenting herself well at job interviews.

Please give generously by the end of the month! Write checks to "UUSG" with "BOW" in the memo line. You can also give through [Paypal](#).

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## **Volunteer Appreciation**

We give our heartfelt thanks to the following people:

Pageant Chair Kathy McFadden, Music Director Tracy Rosenkrans, and Assistant Minister Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis for their hard work coordinating the “Holiday Joy” pageant on December 20. Special thanks to the Hospitality & Fellowship Team for providing lunch at the pageant rehearsal and 2 social hours the day of! See a complete list of participants [here](#).

Wendi Barlow, who folded the Christmas Eve bulletins and put together the candles for the Christmas Eve services.

Michelle Gibson, who has been our Church School Administrator for the last 3 years and has now moved on to other opportunities. Thank you for your years of hard work and dedication!

George Tattersfield, Kurt Heinz, Jamie Carroll, Donna Amburgey, and Lou Pierce for their 6 months of faithful transportation for two church members.

Lazarus House Volunteers: Giana Felish prepared lunches; Aaron Fogleman, Lisa Gades, Kevin Beyer, and Judy Majewski made dinner; and Shawn Thornton stayed overnight.

Greeters: Dan & Sandy Bottoms, Diane & Roger Gallentine, Louise & Tom Haslett, Neill Shanahan

Social Hour Hosts: the Board of Directors, the Councils (Team Leaders), the Finance Team, the Green Sanctuary Team, the Meditation for Connection Group

Counters: Brad Lipman, Patrick McGleam, Dave Moore, Kevin O'Neill,  
George Tattersfield, Pat Ward, the Finance Team

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### **Friendly Faces Needed**

If you can greet on an upcoming Sunday, your help would be much appreciated!

See openings and sign up [here](#).

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### **Upcoming Fox River Valley Initiative Meetings**

- Leaders Meeting (all are welcome): January 28, 6:30pm, Christ the Lord Lutheran Church, Elgin
- Housing Research Action: February 9, 7pm, Bethlehem Lutheran, St. Charles
- Mental Health Research Team: February 16, 6:30pm, Christ the Lord Lutheran, Elgin





## Food Bank Group 2015

In 2015, our Food Bank Group made a huge difference in our community!

- Individual volunteers: 128
- Hours volunteered: 846
- Pounds of food packaged: 79,679
- Pounds of personal care items packaged: 1,250
- Total number of pounds: 80,929 (over 40 tons!)



## Celebrations of Naming & Dedication

This year's services will be on April 3

Contact [Rev. Lindsay](#) if you'd like your little one to be included.



## Winter Weather Closing Policy

Use common sense! See details of our policy [here](#).



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