



Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

April - May 2016

[UUSG Calendar](#)



From the Pulpit the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

Want to Know More?

[Board Minutes](#)

[Team Reports](#)

[Financial Reports](#)

Table of Contents

- [From the Pulpit](#)
- [Scott's REgards](#)
- [boardblog: Your Voice Matters](#)
- [Annual Day of Service](#)
- [Welcome Home!](#)
- [Giving to Save Our Rivers](#)

I am amazed and impressed and, on behalf of the Church Institutional, deeply grateful for the remarkable generosity shown in this spring's Pledge Drive numbers.

I'll leave it to Kevin Beyer, Pledge Drive Leader Extraordinaire, to share numbers of new pledges, percentages of increases, and all those other entertainingly wonky yet essential details. Suffice to say, those details made me smile. You have all,

- [Share Your Voice](#)
- [Rev. Scott on Study Leave](#)
- [Commit to Knit](#)
- [Celebrating Spring with Music](#)
- [Do You Like Social Hour?](#)
- [Senior Minister on Vacation](#)
- [Introducing Our JAMS Student](#)
- [Making a Difference in Our Community](#)
- [Food Bank Group](#)
- [Keep It Together, People!](#)
- [Farewell to Katie](#)
- [Voting Members!](#)
- [Annual Meeting Materials](#)
- [Studying the Bible as Literature](#)
- [Spring Is In the Air](#)
- [Friday Flick: "Where to Invade Next"](#)
- [UUSG Turns 175!](#)
- [UUSG's NPR Sponsorship](#)
- [Volunteer Appreciation](#)
- [Ongoing Teacher Recruitment](#)
- [Attention All Weeders](#)
- [Spring Decluttering?](#)
- [Get Involved With Interweave](#)
- [Book Exchange](#)
- [Fair Trade Products: Think BOB!](#)
- [Circles of Life](#)
- [Green Corner](#)
- [Giving "Beyond Our Walls"](#)

together, done a truly amazing job of building a strong financial foundation for UUSG as we move into the church's 175th year.

Because everyone did what they could (and every pledge counts, and every dollar matters), we went from looking at a deficit of over \$100,000 in what we all knew was our fantasy budget to the far more manageable \$23,000 deficit arrived at Tuesday evening.

Kudos to the Board's ad hoc budget committee, Kevin O'Neill, Dave Moore, Bob Swanson, Bill Scown. Applause for Kevin Beyer and Lisa Gades for their leadership of the Pledge Drive. Appreciation to Board and congregation members who spent two hours working hard to create a budget that will support all our ministries – Worship, Social Justice, Lifespan Religious Education and other programs – and the care of our beloved old house.

But most of all, gratitude to all of you, who share a vision of what this UU Society can do for the world, starting with ourselves and one another, and moving outward to welcome others in an ever-growing circle of acceptance, commitment, compassion, and peace.

[Friendly Faces](#)

- [Board Meeting Summary](#)

Brightest blessings upon you
all!

Peace ~

Lindsay

Peace ~ Lindsay



Scott's REgards

the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis

Your Best Shot at Immortality!

There are so many profound thoughts expressed with beauty and artistry between the covers of our gray hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, but this among my favorites: "If others impart to our children our knowledge and ideals; they will lose all of us that is wordless and full of wonder. Let us build memories in our children, lest they drag out joyless lives, lest they allow treasures to be lost because they have not been given the keys. We live not by things, but by the meanings of things. It is needful to transmit the passwords from generation to generation." (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

That's what teaching is. Teaching is transmitting our values to the next generation. There are many things we do as a community of faith, but sharing our values with our children is perhaps the most important.

For me, coming to the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva was particularly enticing because of the strength of the Lifespan Religious Education program. We have an outstanding program and we want it to thrive and grow. LRE teachers are essential to that process.

First, I want to say a hearty THANK YOU to those individuals who have taught this year or in previous years. Your contribution to the next generation of Unitarian Universalists and by extension a more just and compassionate world is priceless. Your love, intelligence, and valued work are what keeps me from despairing over the future of our fragile planet.

Words can't express the depth of my gratitude.

And to those of you who haven't taught religious education or haven't taught in a long time, may I remind you of the old African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child." Perhaps your children are grown and you feel you've "done your time" in religious education; that's unfortunate. These children – the children and youth who come to Church School – need you. And truth be told, you need them. They are unique and face different challenges than those who came through our LRE program before. By grappling with their concerns, you remain engaged in the world and the future in a way you can't otherwise. In turn, your efforts carry your insights and beliefs forward. From my point of view, that's the best shot at immortality any of us have.

With joy, love, and gratitude,
Rev. Scott



boardblog: Your Voice Matters

Annual Meeting, May 15, 12:30pm
Come As You Are – Because Your Voice Matters!

Greetings!

I don't know if you've experienced this, but I've attended Annual Meetings at various church congregations where all it felt like was an obligation. I knew I was "supposed" to attend, but I really did not want to spend extra time in another meeting, particularly when Sundays are my time for ME!

I would leave feeling informed as to the state of the church, yet I didn't feel as though my presence mattered. I wonder if my sentiments are one of the

reasons why Annual Meetings are not always fully attended.

Being a part of the UUSG community feels like more than a community. It feels like a family and because of this, I want to know the state of the church AND I want to be heard. I want to have the opportunity to share my joys and concerns and offer my treasures to the best of my ability.

This is exactly what the UUSG Board of Directors wants for you as well: to be informed and to be heard because your voice matters, just as it does within your family.

Here's what you can expect as our "family" comes together at the Annual Meeting on May 15:

- A financial report on fiscal year 2015-2016
- The fiscal year 2016-2017 budget and how we intend to meet the budget
- The presentation of the candidates for fiscal year 2016-2017 Board of Directors
- Election results, presentation of the fiscal year 2016-2017 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee
- The presentation of the proposed bylaw changes
- Opportunity for Q & A
- Opportunity to contribute solutions to our challenges ahead
- Opportunity to share concerns with church leadership
- Exercise your right as a voting member
- Socializing with friends and church family
- Share what UUSG means to you!

What if the Annual Meeting was the most powerful kickoff to the best year ever at UUSG?! We are ready and we look forward to hearing your voice!

Questions or comments? Contact the [Board of Directors](#).



Annual Day of Service

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Day of Service on April 2 – over 135 UUs were out “promoting practical goodness” in our community! Click [here](#) to see pictures and a full list of volunteers.



Welcome Home!

Our newest members – Teal Cyko and Yvonne Riley – signed “The Book” on April 17.



Giving to Save Our Rivers

The "Beyond Our Walls" recipient for April is The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership. FREP was formed by Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) with the goal of preserving and protecting the natural, economic, and recreational resources of the Fox River Watershed. The vision is to balance needs, users, and resources while preserving and enhancing the health of the river. One of FREP's goals is to designate the Fox River as part of the National Water Trails System, a single, cohesive network of recreational waterways.

Please give generously by the end of the month! To make sure your donation is received by April 30, you can give through [Paypal](#).



Share Your Voice

Our choir will perform at both services on May 15. Rehearsals are May 1 and 8, 9:15am-10:45am. Sign up [here](#).



Rev. Scott on Study Leave

Our Assistant Minister, the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis, is on Study Leave through May 1.



Commit to Knit

For UUSG needle artists, May is send-off month! After our monthly gathering between services on Sunday, May 1, we'll send our knitters, crocheters, and quilters off to work on their own over the summer.

And at the end of May, we'll collect all the completed projects we can for sending off to the organization [Women4Women Knitting4Peace](#), whose incredible folks will hand-deliver the much-needed, comforting items to women and children in global areas of conflict (including locations in the U.S.).

Please join us in making scarves, shawls, baby blankets and bibs, toys, sleeping mats, and other items. Yarn, patterns, needles, and assistance are available on request.

Questions, suggestions, donations? Contact [Katherine Lyons](#).



Celebrating Spring with Music

Piano virtuosity shone in April, with an eclectic selection of pieces performed by Quinn Welsh, Tom Zimmerman, Lynn Fisher McCanne, and

Sandra Anderson-Cordogan.

The music in May will dazzle with the UUSG Jazz Combo featuring Geoff Pynn, Tracy Rosenkrans, Michael Townley, Meredith Vandre, and Ian Vetter; the UUSG Choir led by Cynthia Spiegel; the vocal group FUUsion led by Lynn Fisher McCanne; professional harpist Lillian Lau serenading us on Mother's Day; and our regular keyboard stars Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, Patricia Arzaga, Dean Malambri, and Geoff Pynn.

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 Music Director [Tracy Rosenkrans](#).



Do You Like Social Hour?

Can you help keep a good thing going by hosting with your group, family, or friends on Sunday, May 8? Sign up [here](#). Help is available!



Senior Minister on Vacation

Our Senior Minister, the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates, will be on vacation May 11-21 (although she will be here for the Annual Meeting on May 15).



Introducing Our JAMS Student

Thanks to all UUSG members and friends, our church is paying tuition at Jane Adeny Memorial Secondary School for Varon Amondi Abonyo, a 14-year-old orphan who was living with her impoverished grandmother. This is a huge opportunity for her and for us.

We hope that people of all ages at UUSG will exchange letters with her. Since the mail is not particularly dependable in rural Kenya, there are two times when you can be sure your letters will get there: they will be hand-delivered in May and in December. Please give a card or letter for Varon to Jean Pierce no later than Sunday, May 8.



Making a Difference in Our Community

UUSG members and friends are invited to participate in any or all of the following upcoming Fox River Valley Initiative Events:

- May 10, 7pm: Judge Hull is speaking about Treatment Alternative Court at Gail Borden Library in Elgin
- May 11, 7pm: Mental Health Team at UUSG
- May 23, 6:30pm: Affordable Housing Team at St. Charles Episcopal Church

Do you have a different concern about a problem that needs to be addressed in the county? Please contact [Jean Pierce](#) to express questions and concerns.



Food Bank Group

Our Food Bank Group's next volunteer event is Saturday, March 12, 9am-12pm. Please join us in our effort to provide food for our neighbors in need. Sign up [here](#).



Keep It Together, People!

It takes teamwork to keep our buildings in good repair, and the team that does it has openings for new members. Your Facilities Team manages contractors and volunteers who maintain and repair every aspect of the UUSG buildings, and their historic nature makes it a creative, educational endeavor.

If you're interested in home repair, project management, or any aspect of construction, make your interest more meaningful by joining the UUSG

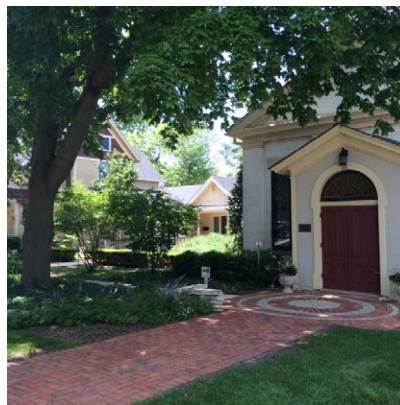
Facilities Team. [Contact us](#) for more information.



Farewell to Katie

Join us between services on May 15 to say goodbye to our Congregational Administrator, Katie Phillips, as she leaves UUSG after 10 years. (Sasha the Malamute will also attend.)

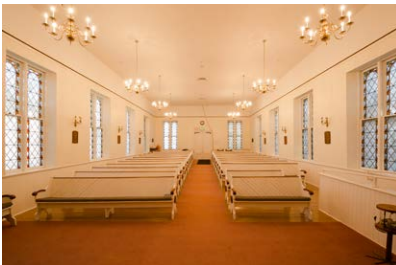
If you would like to help plan the farewell party, please contact Cindy [Vacek](#).



Voting Members!

Our annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 15, immediately after the 2nd service.

To ensure that we have enough voting members in attendance to form a quorum, please [sign up](#) to let us know if you plan to attend. Please respond no later than May 1. If you need childcare for your children ages 6 and under, please let us know as we are working to coordinate it.



Annual Meeting Materials

[Letter from Bill Scown, UUSG Board President](#)

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Proposed Budget](#)

[Slate of Candidates](#)

Proposed Changes to UUSG Bylaws:

- [a “marked” version of the current Bylaws that shows the proposed revisions](#)
- [a “clean” version of how the Bylaws would look assuming all the changes are approved](#)



Studying the Bible as Literature

For UUs who simply want to learn more about the Bible as literature, our

"Bible Study for UUs" group meets on the third Monday of each month from 7pm to 8:30pm. Their next meeting will be on May 16.

Please read through Chapter 8 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.



Spring Is In the Air

Our annual Spring Spruce-Up will be held on Saturday, May 21. We have lots of different jobs that need to be done including weeding, mulching, trimming, and general tidying-up. Even if you don't have a green thumb, please join us as we spruce up our UUSG grounds!

This is also our monthly Day of Service when we practice practical goodness in our own back (and front) yard. The Hospitality & Fellowship Team will provide food and drinks for all workers. Please arrive between 9am and 11am to help out.

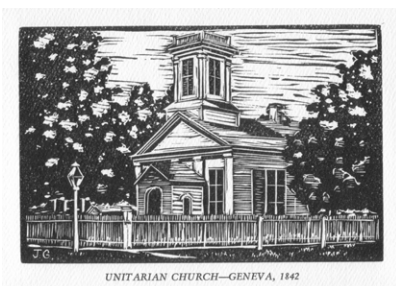
Sign up [here](#).



Friday Flick: "Where to Invade Next"

Join us on May 27 at 7pm to watch "Where to Invade Next" by Michael Moore. This is a provocative and hilarious comedy in which Moore will stop at nothing to figure out how to actually make America great again.

Sophia McLennon of Salon says, "Instead of pointing out our flaws, he imagines our possibilities. And instead of wallowing in fear and panic, he offers practical ideas for productive change. Gary Noll of UUSG says, "I thought it was his best work. Thought-provoking and inspiring."



UUSG Turns 175!

Seems like only yesterday it was 1842 and we were a religiously diverse group of Geneva settlers, no more than a couple dozen folk, signing our assent to the original Covenant of the First Christian Congregation of Geneva. Now we're looking at our 175th Anniversary in June 2017.

Clearly, there must be a party!

Planning is beginning for special activities in the spring and early summer of 2017, and we need some more idea-folks and organizers and volunteers to help make things happen.

We've already got the Augustus Conant Pageant that Diane Handler created a few years ago lined up for the first weekend in June 2017. We're thinking it will happen on that Sunday morning, followed by our 175th Birthday Party.

Other ideas that have come up include a tea room during Swedish Days, docents in period costumes talking to visitors about our church's story during Swedish Days, a float in the Swedish Days Parade (since we're an important part of Geneva's story, maybe we could even arrange for Augustus Conant to be the Grand Marshall!).

Would you enjoy being part of the planning? Let Rev. Lindsay know that you'd like to be part of the team that makes it all happen. (And if there is no team, there will be no party. No one is going to be cornered into doing it all by him or herself!)

Sign up with an email to [Rev. Lindsay](mailto:Rev.Lindsay).



UUSG's NPR Sponsorship

Thank you to those who gave! With \$310 given and \$250 from the Communications Team, we purchased airtime to advertise UUSG.



Volunteer Appreciation

We give our heartfelt thanks to the following people:

Karin Kemp and Karen Moore for providing a fresh spring look to the urns by the Sanctuary door; to Sherri Casterline and Tom Lichtenheld for changing the sanctuary curtain to a cheery spring decor; and to Sherri for providing lovely seasonal arrangements for the Common Room tables. Our thanks!

Jamie Carroll for coordinating the wonderful Day of Service dinner!

Plot Captains for our newly organized Weeding Plan ("Adopt-A-Plot") – Laura Bartoszek, Elke Chateau, Sally Jones, Karin Kemp, Karen Laukaitis, Kathy Meier, Jan Miller, Llona Steele, and Shawn Thornton – who will take charge of specific areas of our grounds this season. Special thanks to Karen Laukaitis for recruiting and organizing this team! And to all who volunteer to assist!

Jan Miller for being the genius behind the New2U fundraiser for UUSG. [Check it out](#) – there may be things you'd like to buy. Or are there things you'd like to offer to sell? To date, this entrepreneurial endeavor has brought in \$725!

Greeters: Cari Gesiakowski; Louise & Tom Haslett; Neill Shanahan; Kerri, Michael, Alyssa, and Kaylynn Trejo

Social Hour Hosts: the Board of Directors, the Facilities Team, the Green Sanctuary Team, the Heritage Team, the Stewardship Team

Counters: David de Coriolis, Al Drover, Brad Lipman, Patrick McGleam, Kevin O'Neill, Lynn Steele, the Finance Team



Ongoing Teacher Recruitment

We are forming teacher teams for next year's LRE classes. Thank you to all who have signed up already!

We plan to offer 8 classes, most of which operate best with 4-teacher teams. The 4-teacher teams allow teachers to rotate weekends, exchange lead and assistant roles, and frees up schedules so teachers can rejuvenate by attending services or having an occasional Sunday off.

We provide curriculum, supplies, guidance, teacher meetings, a yearly recognition ceremony, and even an annual party!

You get to learn about who UUs are, what we believe in, and provide valuable lessons to our future UUs.

Interested? Need more information? Let us know by contacting [Rev. Scott](#) or [Cathi Plass](#).



Attention All Weeders

Spring has sprung at UUSG and so have the weeds! Our Groundskeeping Group is looking for teams of people to tend a section of church property Spring through Fall 2016 in our new "Adopt-A-Plot" program.

If you're interested in helping, click [here](#) and select the section you'd like to adopt. Your "Plot Captain" will contact you with further details.

If you have any questions, contact [Karen Laukaitis](#).



Spring Decluttering?

If you have "treasures" that others might enjoy, [list them](#) on New2U. Spring decorating? [Shop](#) for great things at great prices on New2U. So far, we've raised over \$700 for UUSG! Thanks for your support.



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.

Interweave will not meet in May but will have their annual Pride Month Picnic on June 12 after the church service.

For more information, please contact [Lynn Steele](#).



Book Exchange

Take a peek at the UUSG Book Exchange across from the James St. entrance. Borrow or keep any of the books in the barrister shelves. No sign in/out – just enjoy! Latest additions include: *Juggling*, *How Good Do We Have to Be?*, and *Meditations on Design*.



Fair Trade Products: Think BOB!

Sale with benefits: Equal Exchange will offer a complimentary BOB ("bag of [coffee] beans") with every Equal Exchange/fair trade purchase. Complimentary BOBs are possible due to the generosity of Equal Exchange. Look for the brown bags marked "BOB." Take one home with you when you purchase 1 or more items from the fair trade armoire in the Common Room.

We'd like to find homes for current inventory before the start of the coming fiscal year. Remember that Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day are coming up, along with graduations, showers, weddings, etc. Fair trade gifts are always welcome and appreciated!



Circles of Life

Congratulations to Jean & Lou Pierce, who are now proud grandparents to Balsam Rye Pierce, born on April 16!

It's with great sadness that we report the death of church member Ray van Overberghe on April 27. We send our heartfelt condolences to Ray's wife, Susan Justice, and his daughters, Michelle and Courtney.



Green Corner

April's Earth Month at UUSG with the Green Sanctuary Team at the helm of eco-activities sped quickly by – a whirlwind of green-oriented weeks that hopefully made us all think more about the world around us – our world – and some of its vulnerabilities.

From **Tom Neilson's** songs about the world's eco-justice problems to a GST-hosted Social Hour, the Environmental Story grew more specific with real life examples during "For All Ages" at the 11:15am worship service. It was about scarce, life-essential clean water and girls in undeveloped countries.

In the last half of Earth Month, the green Friday Flick titled, "**DamNation**" showed concerns about now-useless dams, built previously all over the country, being removed for the health of the rivers. It included information about removals with spectacular coverage of huge dams and their destruction. The Fox River Ecosystems Partnership (FREP) was a sponsor of the film, and Jeff Mingler of FREP led a lively discussion afterward. Funds received during Earth Month were directed to FREP.

Next there was a Green Sanctuary Team "**All Discount Sale**," featuring bird books, reusable gift bags to replace gift paper, Equal Exchange products, and Kleen Kanteen products. Our prize sale was the purchase of one of our 2 rain barrels, kindly provided by The Conservation Foundation for our eco-sales.

You've been asking, so please stay tuned for the date when our **Native Plant Sale** will take place. We are expecting the plants to be ready to sell by about May 22, but we'll be sure everyone is informed as soon as we find out.

Earth Month proved rewarding for our Green Sanctuary Team, and we hope for all UUSG members!



Giving "Beyond Our Walls"

In March 2016, we collected \$876 for Youth Outlook, the only agency in the DuPage, Kane, and DeKalb counties of Illinois that is dedicated solely to serving LGBTQ youth. They provide wellness education, leadership development, and social space at four area drop-in centers. They are also working to change the social atmosphere that imperils LGBTQ youth in the first place.



Friendly Faces

Individuals, couples, and families are all invited to act as greeters on Sunday mornings. Sign up [here](#).



Board Meeting Summary

April 12, 2016

1. The retirement of Katie Phillips will be recognized with a sad send-off on May 15.
2. Our church will sponsor a “Human Library” during Swedish Days, a growing movement featuring Human “Books”: gay, African-American, Muslim, etc. who may be chosen to carry on a conversation with someone to foster more understanding.
3. The tree-damaged stucco in the courtyard, plus other minor cracks will be repaired by a stucco artisan, Jacob Arndt, May 5-7. He will also train 3 UUSG members so that minor repairs can be made “in house.”
4. The Pledge Drive is in full swing and many have increased their pledges. A Board subcommittee will meet to draft a budget on April 24 and then present it at the April 26 budget meeting at 7pm at the church. All interested parties are invited to attend on the 26.
5. Mary Swanson and Tom Russo will be co-managers of the Pizza Booth during Swedish Days.



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