



# Pioneer Newsletter April - May 2017



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From the Pulpit the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

As you read this, I'll be on the porch or the deck of my favorite hermitage at the Christ in the Wilderness Retreat Center. It's a plain cabin, smaller than a typical Motel 6 room, with a bed and a dresser, a desk and chair, a reading chair, a tiny kitchen and a tiny bathroom, no TV or internet or phone access, no neighbors except deer and chipmunks and many, many birds. Last year there were wild turkeys, at least one raccoon who tried to claw open the porch door, a rabbit, and a hunting calico from one of the nearby farms. I go

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twice a year – have been since 2006 – for a week of silence, reading, reflection, and prayer. I take this time instead of the sabbatical I was scheduled for but didn't take in 2007 and instead of the one I would have been eligible for in 2012. I have no regrets!

I don't usually go on retreat with any particular agenda. I load up my iPad with books I've not had a chance to read, carry my laptop so I can maybe work on plans for the worship services in the upcoming year, and sometimes my spiritual director makes suggestions for reflections. None of those, however, are mandatory. The only essential items on the Retreat To Do List are simple: Rest. Listen. Be.

This time, I have a more structured assignment. The UUA, in particular the members of BLUU (Black Lives UU) and the UUA Board, have asked all congregations to sign on for a "UU White Supremacy TeachIn" on either April 30 or May 7. This is a follow-up to the hiring debacle in our Southern Region, which led to the resignations of our UUA President, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Director of Congregational Life, as well as the withdrawal of the candidate who had been offered the job in the Southern Region. There have been many hurt and angry exchanges, expressions of both hope and dismay, many expressions of irritation and many more efforts to listen deeply and try to understand. The undeniable reality is that UUs of color (Black, Latinx, Asian, East Indian, indigenous, and others)

have been holding in a lot of disappointment and anger for a very long time. The rejection of a highly-qualified local candidate of color for the leadership position (the job was offered to a white ordained male from another part of the country) in the Southern Region was the final straw.

So far, 543 TeachIns have been scheduled - that's well over half the congregations in the UUA, plus groups in Great Britain, New Zealand, Canada, and India. I did not sign UUSG up for the TeachIn for the simple reason that I saw no way we had time or volunteers enough to prepare adequately for it. To do it right, we need to involve the entire congregation, in forum presentations, in worship, in all levels of our church school and youth programming, in small group discussions, and in planning for the conversations and the deep changes to continue.

But it needs to happen. I intensely dislike the use of the words "white supremacy," and those words were almost enough for me to dig in my heels and ignore the whole controversy. But after much reflection, conversations with colleagues, blog articles and other postings from UUs of color, I think I do understand why those words are being used. That the dominant Northern European white cis male culture is still normative for institutional Unitarian Universalism is undeniable. We say we want to change that. But those of us raised within that culture haven't done a very good job of changing anything.

UUs of color have, understandably, had it with the status quo.

I've downloaded reams of material from the UUA, BLUU, DRUUMM (Diverse Radical UU Multicultural Ministers), UU bloggers, and others, and it's all going up to my cabin with me. I hope I'll have some coherent if only preliminary way of addressing the issue(s) when I'm back in the pulpit on May 7.

In the meantime, I invite all of you to go to the UUA's website – www.uua.org – and follow the links to the various stories, letters, and reports that describe the background and the plans for these upcoming weekends. If you'd like to participate in the services on May 7, with questions or reflections or stories or suggestions, please let me hear from you.

This is a massive UU effort to come together as a religious community and face the uncomfortable truths about racism within our own ranks. We need to be part of the conversation, part of the healing, and part of the change.

Peace ~

Lindsay



#### boardblog - Nancy Christensen

I came to Unitarian Universalism much the same way many of us did – circuitously. I came, I left, I came, I stayed. In 2004, my family and I moved from Batavia to Corpus Christi. We had no idea what we were getting into. One thing that I did before we moved was to read a book about what to do to make a move easier on the family. That book recommended a few useful things. One thing it did recommend that if all the people in the neighborhood are going to church, your family should also. If your family did not go to church, you should dress them up and leave for breakfast or something to make it look like you were going to church. Since we were moving to Texas, I figured we should plan for bagels and coffee every Sunday morning for a while.

But...imagine my surprise when I looked in the phone book (it was 2004!) and saw there was a UU church in Corpus Christi. (South Texas!! Can you believe it?!?! I still cannot really believe it even though I was a member of that church for 5 years!) I drove my kids to Corpus Christi late in September on a Saturday night. As they slept on Sunday morning, I went to that UU church, in a Jewish Community Center. About 25 people greeted me and offered their support and friendship. I never looked back. I was a member of that church as they moved to a new building they had built with a loan from one of their members, since they could not qualify for a bank loan. I was a member of that church as they grew in numbers and voice in the community. They made me and my family feel so loved and welcome. I still get a little weepy when I think about how happy we were in that church.

But, that is not really what I want to write about. The real point is, when I needed a church, the UU Church of Corpus Christi was there for me. When my kids needed YRUU, there was a church that was here for them. Churches, ready and waiting for us, which were supported by people who came before us.

That is what I think about our church. It is a church for those of us who have already found it, for sure. However, it is also a church waiting for the people who need it to find it. Some of us have found it, but many have not. I want our church to be there for them, when they need it. This is why I commit my time, treasure and talent to our community. I want our church to be here for the people who need us. I do not always like what goes on in our church. Sometimes I really do not like what is going on. However, for me, that is not really the point. I love the community of our church. I love our motto, "Come as you are." I think this is a special thing about UU churches. They offer shelter in the storm to so many people. The principles of the UU faith resonate with so many people. Now, more than ever, our church community needs to be here.

I was SO miserable when I moved to Texas, so lonely and homesick, and so far away from my people. That church saved my kids and me, in a way, by offering love and friendship when we needed it and then by accepting us as a part of their beautiful community. I know that our church does the same for others. I am now part of 'the people who came before' – the

people that support the church so that it will be there in the future, ready to do bigger, better things. I encourage you to be a proud member of that group.

Thank you.

Nancy

Questions or comments? Contact the Board of Directors.



# Friday Flicks - Before the Flood

Friday, April 28, 2017 at 7pm UUSG Common Room

Before the Flood, presented by National Geographic, features Leonardo DiCaprio on a journey as a United Nations Messenger of Peace, traveling to five continents and the Arctic to witness climate change firsthand. He goes on expeditions with scientists uncovering the reality of climate change and meets with political leaders fighting against inaction. He also discovers a calculated disinformation campaign orchestrated by powerful special interests working to confuse the public about the urgency of the growing climate crisis. With unprecedented access to thought leaders around the world, DiCaprio searches for hope in a rising tide of catastrophic news.

From Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Fisher Stevens and Academy Award®-winning actor, environmental activist and U.N. Messenger of Peace Leonardo DiCaprio, *Before the Flood* presents a riveting account of the dramatic changes now occurring around the world due to climate

change, as well as the actions we as individuals and as a society can take to prevent the disruption of life on our planet. Beyond the steps we can take as individuals, the film urges viewers to push their elected officials in supporting the use of alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power. "We need everyone to demand bold action from their political leaders and to elect representatives who have their best interests at heart, not the interests of corporations to perpetuate a cycle of greed and destruction," says DiCaprio. "This documentary shows how interconnected the fate of all humanity is — but also the power we all possess as individuals to build a better future for our planet."



#### **UUSG Annual Meeting - May 21, 2017**

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that this year's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 21, 2017 at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary.

All friends and Members of our Society are encouraged to attend. We particularly request all Voting Members to be present such that we have a quorum. (<u>Voting members, please RSVP here.</u>)

<u>Please click here</u> to see the proposed slate of candidates for the 2017-2018 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee.

The Board looks forward to sharing details with you with the intention that you join us in understanding our status today, our direction for tomorrow, and how together we can continue to achieve great things. See you all on May 21!



#### Mother's Day & Intergenerational Flower Service

Our services on Mother's Day, May 14, will be Intergenerational Flower Services. Everyone of every age is invited to bring a flower, a small leafing or flowering branch, any "greenly growing" beautiful thing, if possible from one's own garden or yard, to add to the Treasury of Grace that is at the center of this pre-WWII Unitarian ritual. Our Unitarian church in Prague has asked all UU congregations to celebrate the Flower Communion; that date doesn't work for us, but Mothers Day is a good second choice!



**Upcoming Staff Time Off** 

Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates will be on retreat through May 1.



### **April Music at UUSG**

April has brought us beautiful musical bouquets including a special Musicians' Appreciation Service featuring personal stories and musical favorites by most of our regular performers. Andy and Ellie Montgomery started the amazing service with ingathering music, followed by contributions from Cynthia Spiegel, Kelly Herz, Pat Vary, Tracey McFadden, Tom Zimmerman, Geoff Pynn, Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, Lynn Fisher McCanne, John & Tracy Rosenkrans, and youth soloist Bryce Jonke. Special thanks to Tom Lichtenheld for the inspiration behind our

For All Ages, "Sing a Song."

The Easter landscape was more than unique with The Bunny Band, hopping with tunes by Tracey McFadden (aka E.B.), Andy Montgomery, Liam Johnson, and Tracy & John Rosenkrans. The band had the congregation grooving to songs inspired by the Wood Brothers and singing along to "Sweet Caroline" & "Put Your Hand in the Hand."

Intricate harmonies were provided by the members of FUUsion, whose joyful pieces were sung by Trish Beckjord, Pam Birch, Lynn Fisher McCanne, Susan O'Neill, Dawn Pokorny, Rhonda Robinson, Shawna Tiffin and Pat Vary, with percussion accompaniment by Jennifer Covert.

Looking ahead, we'll be treated to selections by our wonderful pianists, Quinn Welsh, EnsAmble Ad-Hoc, and our own UUSG Choir, led by Cynthia Spiegel.

There is a place for you in our Music Ministry. Be brave and talk to Music Director Tracy Rosenkrans at <a href="mailto:music@uusg.org">music@uusg.org</a>!



### Spring ReUUnion and Potluck for New(er) UUs

If you've participated in any New UUs session since 2015, we invite you to join the Welcoming Team for a ReUUnion and potluck dinner in the Common Room on Saturday, April 29. Please come at 6PM with a dish to share. Feel free to BYOB. This is a chance to reconnect with the folks with whom you shared Spiritual Journeys, explored different beliefs, and exchanged insights. You might meet some new friends too! Please RSVP online at <a href="mailto:uusg.org/new-uus-reunion">uusg.org/new-uus-reunion</a>

Questions? Please contact Kate or Jim Frazier.



#### **LRE Update**

**April 30** - will be the end of the K-5 "Read-a-thon" and Bernie's Book Drive.

Parents: For the Read-a-thon, please bring the total count of books your kid(s) read over the last 2 weeks to report to Jean Pierce during the For All Ages portion of the service. If you have gently used books that your kids have outgrown, please send them to the classrooms for collection. All Congregants: Adults will be asked to donate change for all the books the kids read this month...Don't forget to bring your spare change on April 30th!

- **May 12** is the LRE Volunteer Recognition party hosted by the Zackers at 7:00pm. If you volunteered for LRE, we want to celebrate you! RSVP to LRE@uusg.org.
- **May 21** Don't miss the OWL recognition service. Middle School OWL (Our Whole Lives) was a big success and has just wrapped up with our last overnight earlier this month.
- **June 4** is the Moving Up Service. We will be recognizing students who will be moving up from their current class group to the next group. Names will be read and small tokens distributed. Some adults who are hitting milestones will also be honored.
- **June 11** Coming of Age was reinstated this year with 7 participants working with mentors to develop their own belief statements. Youth will give those statements during the service that day.

We still need Teacher volunteers for next school year. We especially need teachers for the 3-5th grade classes at both services. Please contact Jodi Brown or Jenny Montgomery if you are interested in teaching!



**April Green Activity** 

The Green Sanctuary Team invites you to take part in the People's Climate March, this Saturday, April 29 at 12:00pm. Meet at the Federal Plaza, 230 South Dearborn Street, Chicago. See all you "Green Beings" there!



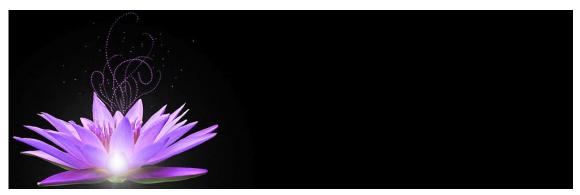
#### **Get Involved with Interweave**

Interweave is a local group of LGBTQ members, friends and allies who meet once a month after second service. Due to Easter, we will meet at a new time in April. Join us on Sunday April 30, at 1pm for fellowship and interesting discussions. For information please contact Lynn Steele at <a href="mailto:interweave.leader@uusg.org">interweave.leader@uusg.org</a>.



#### **Social Justice Special Congregational Meeting**

The Social Justice Team invites you to a short congregational meeting to be held in the UUSG Sanctuary at 12:30pm on April 30 right after 2nd service. We will be voting to decide if UUSG will, as a congregation sign on to the joint <u>UUA and UUSC declaration of conscience</u> affirming our commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity, compassion, truth and core values of American Society, and the <u>Food and Water Watch pledge</u> to resist extreme attacks on our environment. Your participation is needed to ensure that we have the required quorum. Childcare will be provided. RSVP at <u>uusq.org/special-meeting</u>.



**Taoism Discussion Group** 

"The Way that can be spoken of is not the eternal Way," and yet we wish to speak of it. Would you like to find out more about the mystery of mysteries? The Taoism Discussion Group is meeting in the Alcott Room after the Special Congregational Meeting, April 30, 2-3pm. Our topic is the first chapter of "Tao: the Watercourse Way" by Alan Watts.



#### **Commit to Knit**

Spring has sprung, summer is coming, and Commit to Knit is winding up for another church year. Our last gathering will be between services on May 7 in the Common Room. Also, we'll be collecting items on May 14 for donation to <a href="mailto:knitting4peace.org">knitting4peace.org</a>. Questions or suggestions? Please email Katherine Lyons at <a href="mailto:knitting@uusg.org">knitting@uusg.org</a>.



**Gearing up for Gardening?** 

New2U has some great stuff for your yard and garden, including a bird bath, planters, a rain barrel, and garden boots. Check it out at <a href="http://www.uusg.org/new2u-shop">http://www.uusg.org/new2u-shop</a>.



#### **Beyond Our Walls - The Conservation Foundation**

The Conservation Foundation is celebrating it's 45th anniversary of conservation work in 2017. It's mission is to preserve and restore open space and natural lands, protect rivers and watersheds and promote stewardship of the environment in Chicago's collar counties. April's BOW collection will go toward TCF's work in Kane County to increase individual and group conservation actions with emphasis in the Fox River corridor. Programs it can be applied to include building stewardship through youth education programs such as Mighty Acorns, homeowner conservation through educational presentations and TCF's Conservation @ Home certification program, rain barrel sales events, storm drain stenciling, river clean up actions, etc. TCF also supports the land preservation needs of Kane County park districts and the Forest Preserve as needed. See theconservationfoundation.org.

# **Bread & Roses**

**2017 Spring Concert** 

# **Songs of Caring and Compassion**

**Directed by Peggy Safford** 



Sunday, May 7, 3 p.m., at the
Westminster Presbyterian Church
830 N. Annie Glidden Rd
DeKalb, Illinois

Freewill donations will benefit the Welcome Essentials Pantry, a social justice ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of DeKalb

http://breadandroseschorus.org

#### **Bread & Roses Spring Concert**

If you enjoyed the harmonies of FUUsion OR even if you missed them, do join our FUUsion members along with their sisters in Bread & Roses at our spring concert, Songs of Caring and Compassion on Sunday, May 7, 2017 at 3pm. Located at:

The Westminster Presbyterian Church, 830 N. Annie Glidden Rd., DeKalb, IL

Your free will donations will benefit the Welcome Essentials Pantry at the DeKalb UUF. Great music for a great cause.

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# 175th Anniversary Congregational Gift

What's an Anniversary Celebration without a Gift?

Throughout our history, UUSG members and friends have marked important anniversaries by making a special Congregational Gift to our

beloved church — most notably, donating the funds to build a parsonage (today's Pioneer House) on our 50th anniversary in 1892.

This year as we celebrate the 175th anniversary of UUSG, we are continuing our long tradition of generosity to each other in the form of a Congregational Gift — not to build something new, but to preserve the priceless record of our past.

Preserving the treasures of our history in digital format.

Our church archives are filled with historic photographs, records, correspondence, publications and ephemera. The vast majority of these items are paper, and all are vulnerable to loss by fire, storm or decay over time. For the past six years, the UUSG Heritage Team has been painstakingly sorting and storing these precious documents. But unless something is done to permanently preserve them, they are in danger of being lost forever.

The solution is digital archiving — scanning and converting the paper originals into a digital format that will endure for centuries. Having a digital archives of our most important historical photos and documents will put UUSG technologically far ahead of mid-size UU churches and churches of other denominations in our preservation efforts. Members and friends of all ages can participate in creating the digital archives. The digitization project is also a perfect complement to the history book to be published by the Heritage Team during this anniversary year.

We are seeking a total of \$3,000 in donations to purchase the archiving software, train people to use it, and provide ongoing service and tech support.

If you treasure our church's proud history and want to ensure that it is preserved for future generations, please support acquisition of the software with a generous donation to the 175th Anniversary Congregational Gift campaign. The campaign will be formally announced to the congregation in the near future. Should you wish to make an immediate donation, please place a check in the offering basket, payable to UUSG, and write "Congregational Gift" on the memo line.



# Mental Health Ministry's Life Span Series: Stages of Faith - Part 2

Join us May 28 at 12:30pm in the Common Room as we continue this discussion led by Tom Schevers, PhD.

Children from all cultures learn religion first from stories not from theological or philosophical tracts. But the stories that excited and satisfied the young child can seem silly to the adolescent and irrelevant to the adult and maybe profound again as the adult gains wisdom. The point is that as a person goes through stages of physical, cognitive, emotional and social development, his or her faith changes. People often leave a church not because they have lost faith but because they have outgrown that church's vision of faith.

James Fowler says faith is the underlying process that helps us form beliefs, find meaning, connect with others and face the mysteries of life. He describes 6 stages of faith starting from infancy to old age. Understanding these stages can help clarify intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, confusion, breakthroughs, and enlightenments. Come join the discussion.



### **Celebration of the Life of George Hickman**

The date has been confirmed by George's family for Aug 6, 2017 during our 10am service. Both his daughters and some of their children plan to attend. If you are interested in contributing/being a part of this service, along with several other members who have already stepped forward, please contact Tracy at <a href="mailto:tracyrosenkrans@sbcglobal.net">tracyrosenkrans@sbcglobal.net</a>.



#### **Annual Day of Service - Thank You to Our Volunteers!**

Thank you to everyone who came together to make our Annual Day of Service such a special event! UUSG is "175 years and going strong" in promoting practical goodness! Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers!

Our Annual Day of Service Coordinators: Kevin Beyer, Jodi Brown, Jamie Carroll, Lisa Gades, Kerry Sapet, Bill Scown

**Event Leaders:** Kevin Beyer, Mylane Bryant, Jamie Carroll, Lisa Gades, Cathy Kern, Bill Koehl, Jeanne Neltnor, Jason Sapet, Kerry Sapet, Jeannie Scown, Bill Scown, Pat Vary

**Transportation:** Cari Gesiakowski, Keith Gesiakowski, David Zacker, Molly MacKay-Zacker

**HSP Senior Gift Bags:** Katie Baar, Lisa Bauer, Gary Bauer, Anne Brink, Deb Brod, Don Brod, Lisa Gades, Karen Laukaitis, Aidan Malana, Anthony Malana, Martha Malana, Preston Malana, Rosemary Maziarz, Kerry Sapet, Jason Sapet, Will Sapet, Gail Tattersfield, George Tattersfield

HSP Birthday Kits: Melanie Abercrombie, Ivy Benshoof, Tim Benshoof, Don Brown, Jill Brown, Jamie Carroll, James Carroll, Samantha Gesiakowski, Christy Hickey, Karen Moore, Kevin O'Neill, Linda O'Neill, Diane Peters, Tom Peters, Lydia Pynn, Family Rupperts, Kerry Sapet, Parvaneh Shindia-Smith, Nancy Smith, Ian Vetter, Sarah Vetter, Roxanne Willis, Katie Yurkewicz

HSP Paper Products: Jennifer Benjamin, Kevin Beyer, Sherri Casterline, Colleen Cushing, Teal Cyko, Lisa Gades, Anne Heavey, Jan Miller, Tom Peters, Diane Peters, Page Poris, Christine Schulman, Hal Schulman, Don Smith, Linda Valentine, Sarah Vetter, Ian Vetter, Pat Ward, Katie Yurkewicz

**BINGO:** Jill Brown, Kate Rodgers, Colleen Cushing, Cari Gesiakowski, Keith Gesiakowski, Samantha Gesiakowski, Anne Heavey, Terri Stanley, Jeff Stanley, Ian Stanley, Ivan Pynn, Cameron Klein, Teal Cyko, Jeanne Neltnor, Carol Myers, Katie Yurkewicz, Eric Yurkewicz

**Northern Illinois Food Bank:** Mark Adams, Melissa Auer, Kevin Beyer, Betty Bristol, Declan Brown, Jodi Brown, Nolan Brown, James Carroll,

Jamie Carroll, Elke Chateau, Kathy Cornell, Teal Cyko, Mary Davis, Brian Doyle, Kathy Doyle, Liam Doyle, Aaron Fogleman, Lucas Fogleman, Noah Fogleman, Salome Fogleman, Jenny Gresco, Eleanor Hamilton, Jett Herrera, Kathleen Herrera, Jan Hershberger, Bobby Houseman, Becky Hruby, Sean Hruby, Grace Johnson, Griffen Johnson, Kate Johnson, Liam Johnson, Bryce Jonke, Eric Jonke, Ethan Jonke, Mary Margaret Jonke, Vera Lind, Brad Lipman, Doris Lipman, Gary Littlefield, Maissy Littlefield, Doreen Mace, Molly MacKay Zacker, Andy Montgomery, David Montogomery, Ellie Montgomery, Jenny Montgomery, Max Montgomery, Craig Moore, Dave Moore, Rose Moore, Robin Pietrucha, Sophie Pietrucha, Alyssa Palumbo, Amanda Riley, Irulan Riley, Isabel Riley, Diane Rodi, Alba Rusef, Hamid Rusef, Ramsery Rusef, Tom Schevers, Bob Swanson, Mary Swanson, Martha Tabis, Pat Vary, Susan Weimer, Joyce Whitehead, Jane Willard, Abby Zacker, David Zacker, Julie Zacker

**Green Advocacy Postcards:** Trish Beckjord, Alistair Betts, Sandy Bottoms, Sherri Casterline, Kathy Cornell, Gail Eckl, Sharon Hansen, Anne Heavey, Kerri Hildebeaud, Cathy Kern, Bill Koehl, Jean Pierce, Lou Pierce, Claire Ryan, George Tattersfield, Susan Weimer, Joyce Whitehead

**Mutual Ground:** Winelle Glaser, Jett Herrera, Kathleen Herrera, Glenda Peck, Bill Peck, Bill Scown, Jeannie Scown, Meredith Vandre, Matthew Vetter

**Dinner:** Jamie Carroll, James Carroll, Brian Doyle, Kathy Doyle, Liam Doyle, Sharon Hansen, Dave Hansen, Christy Hickey, Rosemary Maziarz, Kerry Sapet, Jason Sapet, Bill Scown, Jeannie Scown, Nancy Smith, Don Smith, Joyce Whitehead

If you helped out and we somehow missed you, please let us know!



# The Office Report

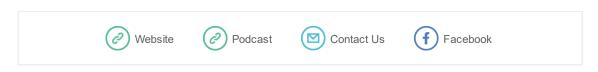
In a little over a week (May 8) I'll be celebrating my one-year-anniversary

of working at UUSG. So that means I've been through the full UUSG calendar year, everything from the Swedish Day's Pizza Booth to Homecoming Sunday, to Christmas Eve Services, to Pledge Drive Season and wrapping up again with the Annual Meeting next month. Which probably means that there is nothing left to surprise me and now I know everything, right? Well...I guess I will have to wait and see what the next year brings!

On the office-side of things, our summer schedule of one worship service is fast approaching so I'll be reaching out in the coming week to Teams and Groups to ask how often you'll be meeting in the summer. And don't forget to RSVP for the Annual Meeting on May 21. See you there!

~Christine

Christine Imielski Congregational Administrator



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