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Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

February - March 2017



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From the Pulpit

the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

Naming & Dedication Celebrations

It's time to plan ahead if you'd like your child(ren) included in our annual Naming & Dedication Services on Sunday, March 26. We need to know how many families would like to take part, and we need that information no later than Sunday, March 12.

Each year, we dedicate at least one full service to a Celebration of Naming & Dedication. This year,

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we've scheduled the services for Sunday, March 26 – having found that a Spring Break weekend tends to work well for most families.

This is our UU equivalent of a Christian Baptism or a Jewish Naming ceremony or a Muslim Akikah. The entire service is devoted to welcoming and naming the children, with several families participating together. If we have more than three families in any given year, we divide them up between the services (three or four children being about the maximum for each service). Each family presents their child or children to the congregation with a reading (poetry or prose or a prayer or prepared statement) or special music, and the members of each family make their individual promises of love and support to one another and to their children. The ceremony includes older siblings, grandparents, godparents or sponsors, and other special friends and relations. As a religious community, we all covenant to help in caring for all of our children, and if older children are being included, we also invite their classmates to return to the sanctuary for the actual ceremony of Naming and Dedication. The children being Named can be any age, and parents need not be Voting Members of UUSG – they need only want the support of our UU church family as they raise each child.

Let us know as soon as possible, but absolutely no later than March 12, please, if you'd like your child(ren) included and which service time you'd prefer (first come

first served on that – we can't easily do more than 4 children at a service, so if you have a strong preference, tell us soon). We'll send you the "N & D Info Form" we need filled out for each child.

If you have questions, give Lindsay a call (630-232-2350 at church) or e-mail her at minister@uusg.org.

Peace!

Rev. Lindsay



Scott's REgards
the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis

Dear Members and Friends of the UUSG Congregation:

It is with real disappointment that I must tell you that I have resigned my position as Assistant Minister of the congregation. It has been a true pleasure to serve you over the last one and a half years.

One of my greatest joys has been teaching, nurturing and genuinely loving the children and youth of this congregation. They do you proud!

However, in recent months it has become clear to those of us in church leadership that my ministerial skills are not a good fit with the demands and expectations of the Lifespan Religious Education program. This has been a difficult realization for me and for many others. All sides have done their best to make things work.

In the coming years you have some challenges ahead of you, but I know that you have the wisdom, grace and love to give them proper attention. You also have cause for celebration: the 175th anniversary of the founding of the church

and the conclusion of the venerable and storied ministry of the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates. My only regret is that I will not be able to celebrate those milestones with you.

With Joy, Love and Gratitude,

Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis



boardblog - Jean Pierce

We are defined not by the challenges we face but by our responses to those challenges. Over the past 175 years UUSG has confronted and overcome extremely serious challenges. I can only imagine the angry words spoken in the 1st ten years, when leaders of the congregation rebelled against Rev. Conant's abolitionist sermons. More recently, tensions rose to the surface when the congregation was split along the issue of whether UUSG would be declared a "Nuclear Free Zone."

And over the years we have remained in community as we gained a deeper understanding of our principles – agreeing to show compassion in human relations while we promote acceptance of one another. This is a strength of UUSG – our commitment to examine and define problems and then to address them as compassionately as possible.

Problem solving which is consistent with our principles depends on trusting relationships, on having a clear process in place, on respecting the process, and on being committed to respectful communication.

During the past few months, we have confronted a variety of different problems. For instance, we discovered there were Religious Education issues which needed to be addressed, and we took steps to clarify roles

and responsibilities of church staff. More needs to be done, and we are fortunate to have extremely dedicated and capable LRE leaders who have come forward to work with parents and teachers to help the program grow.

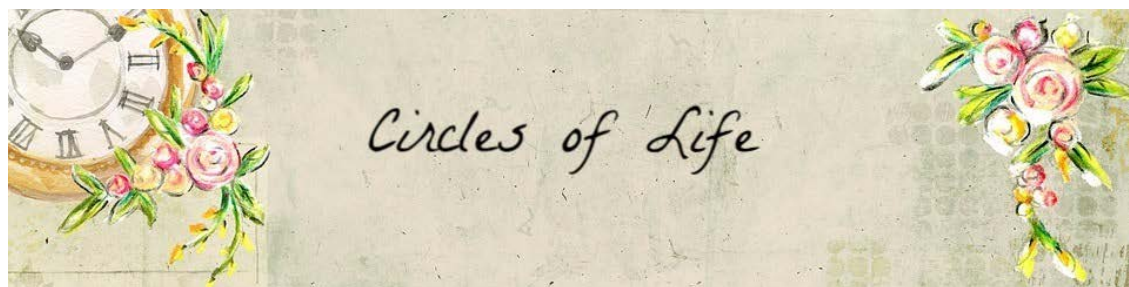
Other groups are benefiting from re-examining roles and responsibilities, as well. For instance, the facilities team has developed a flow chart which describes how decisions are made. Our musicians have clarified expectations for the music director and paid musicians.

At times, dealing with the problems has been extremely frustrating for a community which cares so deeply about education, about music, and about our historically-significant building, and we have been reminded of the need for respectful communication. Recently, some members of our congregation have created a matrix capturing the essentials. [Click HERE](#) to view recommendations about Don'ts and Do's of respectful communication.

Our most important assets are our concerned and caring members. Together, we have made and will continue to make positive changes as we define and redefine ourselves. This process will continue next year when we begin to receive guidance in the search for an interim minister. Beginning in January, 2018, we will be clarifying our vision of the congregation we want to become when we call a new minister.

We have an exciting future ahead of us. We can look confidently towards it because we have such an extraordinary history. We have much to celebrate in this 175th anniversary year.

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



Circles of Life

Congratulations to Samantha and Omar Mejia on the arrival of their daughter, Abigail Rose Mejia on February 14th! Everyone is happy and healthy, says Grandpa Brad and Grandma Doris Lipman. Welcome to the world, Abigail Rose!

We send our loving sympathies to Jason Sapet and his family; Jason's dad passed away in January.

Longtime UUSG-member, George Hickman, died on Monday, January 23. The following is a note from his daughter, Sally: "I'm sorry to have to tell all of our UUSG friends that dad died Monday, January 23. He died peacefully at age 97 after several months of illness and two hospitalizations. He is relieved of any further struggle, and I choose to think he's with mother now. He loved UUSG and his friends there and I am sorry that I didn't keep in better touch with all of you. Please know we are grateful for the many friends and rich memories from our time with you. Dad had a really rich life here in California with lots of family and activities, but it was hard for him to leave UUSG and I'm sorry we weren't close enough to come and visit. We are hoping to do a memorial here in Oakland, CA, at the end of May. With love and gratitude to all of you, Sally Matthews"

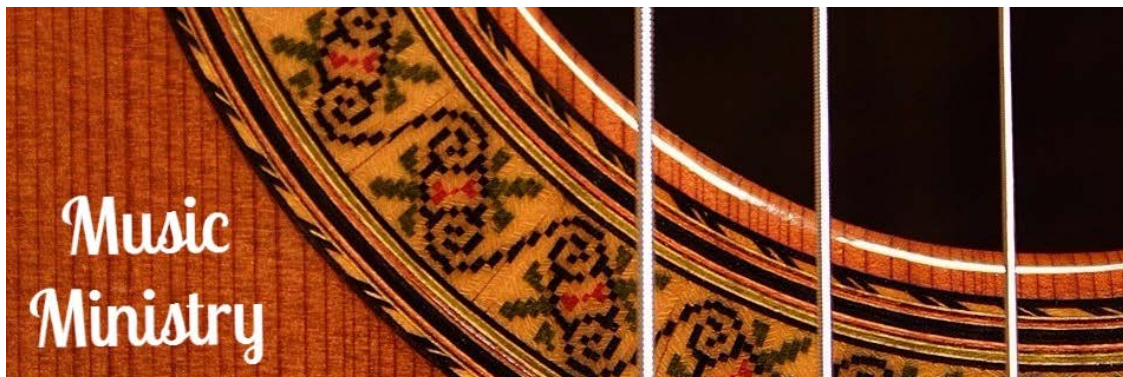
Several UUSG members have also expressed interest in a local memorial. Sally will be in Michigan in July and would be happy to be a part of any celebration of George's life we plan. If you are interested in contributing/being a part of either a few moments of a Sunday service or a separate event, please contact [Tracy Rosenkrans](#).



Heritage Room Display Case

The 175th Anniversary Committee and the Heritage Team call your attention to the changing displays in the glass display case in the Heritage Room also known as the entrance foyer at 110 S. Second. As we move through events commemorating UUSG's 175th Anniversary during 2017,

we are exhibiting historical church documents, photos and artifacts. If the current display gives you ideas about other things you'd like to see, contact Kathy Cornell, Pat Ward or Karen Moore.



February Music at UUSG

Musical valentines touched the heart through February, featuring wonderful pieces by the UUSG Choir, led by Cynthia Spiegel; a tribute to the Rev. Augustus Conant by the multi-instrumentalist Love Bandits Band comprised of Tracey McFadden, Andy Montgomery, Linda O'Neill, Ellie Montgomery, Tracy Rosenkrans, John Rosenkrans and Liam Johnson; and the inspiring voices and instruments of members of YRUU in its special service.

We also enjoyed the keyboard artistry of Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, Dean Malambri, Tom Zimmerman, and Alexander Cordogan.

Looking ahead, we'll be treated to music by Jessica Littlefield; Geoff Pynn; the Jazz Combo with Michael Townley, Tracy Rosenkrans, Liam Johnson, Andy Montgomery and Parvaneh Shidnia-Smith; RE music students, led by Sandra Anderson-Cordogan; and the UUSG Choir, led by Cynthia Spiegel.

Come be a part of our eclectic presentation of music, musicians, talents and collaboration at UUSG! To share your own special gift, offer suggestions, or express your appreciation of our work, please reach out to Music Director Tracy Rosenkrans at music@uusg.org.



RE Music

RE Music students (Kindergarten through Fifth Grade) are singing with passion these days, as they prepare to share their musical message during services on March 12, 2017. Their illustrations, which are fabulous in their thoughtful interpretation and energy, will be projected prior to the start of services. Do put this date on your calendar to come look, listen, and sing along, as our young people serve their congregation with their gifts!



6-8 Grade Service Projects

Sixth through Eighth graders, their instructors, and their parents, are busy serving their congregation! On February 19 during services, their dramatizing of a story about how one child finds healthy ways to manage the strong emotion of anger was both engaging and appreciated! Instructors Kate Johnson and Griffin Johnson facilitated this project. On March 12, these students will serve their congregation once again as they host the Social Hour. The gifts and generosity of these thoughtful young men and women are much appreciated!



Good Work in Our Community

UUSG's Annual Day of Service is scheduled for Saturday, March 18. [Please visit our website to sign up](#) for volunteer events, a worship service, and/or dinner. Childcare will be provided at some events, as listed, for those who sign up in advance. We even have opportunities for those who are out of town on the 18th!



Calling all Green Beings!

Our Mother Earth is ill and she needs some serious 'Lovin' up.' She's given you the air you breathe, the food you eat, the water you drink, and the outdoors and animals you and your family love. Help her recover.

Help **Green Sanctuary Team** AS and WHEN you can. We are **thinking**

global but starting local. We need your help!

Meet with us at 11am. Sunday March 5, in the Wright room or sign up on the sheet (see the Common Room bulletin board) for project options that could suit your interest and skill.

Whether you can offer a little time or a lot, please join us at 11am. Sunday 3/5 and 3/19 — as we organize a diverse range of actions, all focused on environmental & climate issues starting with:

A special Green Service in April and 'Green Your Home & Life' actions for the wider congregation.

UUSG's Green Sanctuary team, our Earth, and **our children** need more GREEN BEINGS. Help bring our Mother Earth back to health.



175th Anniversary Celebration Kick-Off Event Thank You

Congratulations and sincerest thanks to Don Brod for his wonderful presentation on the story of UUSG, the Congregation and the Building, that kicked off the year-long recognition of our 175th Anniversary! Many congregation members and friends, including some familiar faces we don't see very often, participated in the event, as well as community members who joined us as a result of PR through local news outlets. Don's presentation was, as we knew it would be, interesting, informative and from the heart. A lively Q&A session followed, with help from members of the audience including Rev. Lindsay. A big thank-you to Jill and Don

Brown, who generously provided the refreshments for the reception. And more thanks to Jill and Don, who also set up the reception along with our coffee gurus David and Renee Tomell and a few kind friends (Ellie Fusaro and others) who helped ad-hoc with setting up, and to Jill, Renee and David for cleaning up. Tremendous thanks to Don for his splendid presentation and to the wonderful volunteers and participants who made our first anniversary event such a big success!



175th Anniversary Committee Planning Meeting

The 175th Anniversary Committee will be having a planning meeting on Monday, March 6, at 7pm in the Common Room to brainstorm about the ongoing celebration that will continue throughout 2017. We have plans that carry us through June and we would like ideas to help flesh out these plans, including the big event in June. We are also looking for ideas/concepts for the rest of the year. Our goal is to promote constant awareness, and enjoyment of this landmark anniversary and our remarkable congregation/history/building/place in the community. All are invited to come and help with this planning session! Please feel free to contact co-chairs Kathy Cornell or Jill Brown with questions at 175@uusg.org.



Commit to Knit - Join Us!

Be the love and peace you wish to see in the world. One stitch at a time, craft much-needed articles of clothing and comfort for women and children across our country and the world. Join with Commit to Knit and knitting4peace.org: our next gathering is between services on Sunday, March 5, in the Common Room. For more information, please contact Katherine Lyons at knitting@uusg.org



Beyond Our Walls - Youth Outlook

UUSG BOW offering for March 2017 will go to Youth Outlook which is the only agency in the DuPage, Kane, and DeKalb counties of Illinois dedicated solely to serving LGBTQ youth. In order to accomplish its mission, it provides wellness education on a variety of topics, leadership development, and social space. It also conducts community education programs in order to change the social atmosphere that imperils LGBTQ youth in the first place.

Youth Outlook has four drop-in centers, one each in Naperville, DeKalb, Aurora, and here at UUSG for the tri-cities. Groups meet every week, and provide a safe social setting for youth to meet other LGBTQ teens and talk about a variety of topics.



Mental Health Ministry's Life Span Series

Join us on March 5 at 12:30pm in the Common Room for our Mental Health Ministry's Life Span Series: Moral Development, lead by Tom Schevers, PhD.

Ever notice how little children, adolescents, and adults often choose and behave differently when it comes to right and wrong? Or how people choose the same behavior but for really different reasons? Or how people, who seem to be asserting the same values as you, advocate very different behaviors than you would?

This presentation will look at how cognitive, emotional and social development affect moral choices and behaviors. We will discuss how this topic relates to parenting and relationships, and why discussions about values, politics, and religion can be so confounding and difficult -- and more.



Got Cabin Fever?

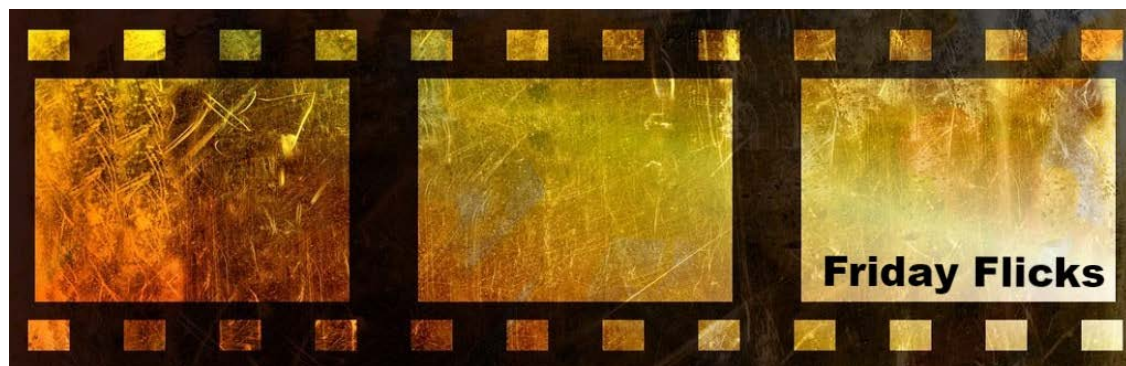
Perk up your rec room and get the blood flowing with some great items from New2U: A tabletop pool table, a slot machine, a portable ping-pong set. And, if you just can't wait to get back in the saddle, we've got a Thule bike rack. Get great stuff and put dollars in UUSG's coffers. Shop at <http://www.uusg.org/new2u-shop>.



Ministry Team Spotlight: MOM Team

We hope everyone knows that MOM – our Ministry on Ministries team – exists to help connect individuals or groups having problems (including but not restricted to failed communications, lack of clarity around roles or expectations, concerns about policies or events or behaviors witnessed, conflicts of any kind) with the individuals or groups who can help get those problems solved. MOM is a neutral, unbiased group, part of whose job is to make sure that the clergy hear clearly what people are saying to us! Sometimes MOM will facilitate meetings, sometimes MOM just passes along important information and follows up to see that it's handled appropriately. This can take time, and it does require patience. But it works.

MOM members are Bev Coe, Sean Hruby, Patrick McGleam, Ellie Radvanovsky, Pat Ward, Molly MacKay Zacker, Board Liaison Gail Tattersfield, and Rev. Lindsay. You can approach any one of them, or ask to talk with the whole group. You can ask a member to hold your name in confidence while taking a concern to the group on your behalf. That person will get back to you to let you know what is happening with your concern. MOM generally meets on the first Sunday of the month after the second service.



Friday Flicks - Gore Vidal: The United States of Amnesia

Friday, March 24, 2017 at 7:00pm
UUSG Common Room

No twentieth-century figure has had a more profound effect on the worlds of literature, film, politics, historical debate, and the culture wars than Gore Vidal. Anchored by intimate one-on-one interviews with the man himself, Nicholas Wrathall's new documentary is a fascinating and wholly entertaining portrait of the last lion of the age of American liberalism.

Commentary by those who knew him best – including filmmaker/nephew Burr Steers and the late Christopher Hitchens – blends with footage from Vidal's legendary on-air career to remind us why he will forever stand as one of the most brilliant and fearless critics of our time.

Gore Vidal's professional life spans more than 50 years of American

politics and letters. His return to America in 2005 marked the last great stage in his creative career and this film represents an extraordinary opportunity to share his view on America in the 21st century (this film was released in 2013). Featuring candid vérité footage of Vidal in his final years, the film explores his enduring global impact on art, politics, and everything in between. His overview of the current state of the Republic and the health of US democracy is unique and incisive.

This is Gore Vidal's last word and testimony.



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, March 19 to plan our spring activities and discuss current events. For information please contact Lynn Steele at interweave.leader@uusg.org.



Adopt-a-Plot

Interested in joining Adopt-a-Plot Weeding Ministry 2017? It's a once a month commitment that involves keeping a small plot of our church grounds weeded (April through October). If interested contact Karen Laukaitis at weeding@uusg.org.



equal exchange fair trade

Equal Exchange Fair Trade

EQUAL EXCHANGE/fair trade: UUSG supports Equal Exchange fair trade by purchasing coffee, tea and sugar for church use. In addition EE/ft products are for sale to the Congregation and friends at no or very low mark-up. These products are displayed in the Common Room north armoire.



Membership Prep Class

Membership Prep Class

What better time to become a full-fledged member of our church than during the 175th anniversary year? The Spring 2017 Membership Preparation Class will take place on Sunday, March 12. Whether you're a recent New UUs graduate or a longtime Friend, here's an opportunity to find out what it means to sign "The Book." If you've been coming to UUSG long enough to know what we're all about and find yourself in agreement with our Covenant, please join the Welcoming Team in the Common Room, 12:30-3pm. After a light lunch, we'll hear from congregational representatives about the Five Points of Commitment. Attendance at the

MPC does not obligate participants to join. Those who feel ready to add their names to the UUSG Membership Book may do so at the end of the session. [Sign up here!](#)



Atheism/Humanism Study Group Meeting

The atheism/humanism study group will at 12:45pm on March 12. Peter Coe will lead a discussion of [J. D. Vance's book Hillbilly Elegy](#). The book covers many of the family, cultural, educational and health issues which contribute to upward and downward social mobility. Hopefully, you will get a chance to read the book, but, if not, take a look at the internet reviews of Vance and his book.



The Office Report

February was a busy month of prep-work in the office: completing our application for the [Swedish Days](#) Pizza Booth (located on the 3rd Street Property this year!); getting the [Day of Service Sign-Up](#) ready and

postcards out to UUSG Members and Friends (designed by the talented Andy Montgomery, and a special thanks to Jan Miller and Rhonda Robinson who addressed and stamped them!); collecting Team and Group budget requests for the 17-18 Fiscal Year; finalizing the lawn-care contracts for summer (thank you, Lisa!); and ordering candles and bulletin covers for the Christmas Eve Services (if I could only be so prepared when it came to my own Christmas shopping...). I am excited to see all the upcoming events and activities of Spring at UUSG and to continue to provide administrative support for the UUSG community. As always, please feel free to stop by the office, [email](#), or call (630-232-2350) with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Christine

Christine Imielski
Congregational Administrator



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Podcast



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