



Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

June - July 2016

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From the Pulpit

the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

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The fourth Sunday in June has always felt a bit odd to me. It's Swedish Days Sunday, the one Sunday each year that I have off, even though I'm in town, not on vacation, and perfectly healthy. We long ago decided there was no point to attempting a church service during Swedish Days, and besides, I know that the Pizza folks need my parking space. I help out for Swedish Days by staying out of Geneva, while blessing those who make the trip in to sell pizza, be a human book, carry

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on the work of the church office, or just enjoy the happy chaos of the week.

On this Swedish Days Sunday, I slept in, read the electronic paper, had mimosas and brioche for brunch, sat in my garden. I've done some chores, worked on some projects, medicated cats. Not my typical Sunday, and I'm aware that, pleasant as it's been, something has been missing.

It's the community. When it's Sunday morning and we aren't together, I've realized that I miss you. Yes, I'm working when I'm in church on Sunday, and yes, our direct encounters are often very brief - a fast hello at the pulpit as the line moves toward the coffee, a wave and a smile across the Common Room, or maybe, when I'm at the front door before the service, a hug of greeting. But I know that our Sunday mornings together energize me for the rest of the week. It matters to me that you've chosen to come to church, to hear the music and consider the sermon and drink the coffee or lemonade, rather than stay home and drink mimosas and read the paper. I always know you have other options. And I know that it matters to everyone who chooses church on Sunday that you've made that choice, too.

It's how we sustain our

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community. We come together.

Many of us go out of town on summer weekends. Some of us are scheduled by our children's activities and the family opportunities the summer provides. Roughly half the congregation simply can't be in church during the summer, which is why we go to just one service in June, July and August. I rely upon your Facebook postings, summer meetings, email, special events to stay connected while we're scattered and away from each other. It's good to see the pictures, hear the news, know that all is well (or sometimes that it isn't, so I know to check in more directly). But the basic reality for me is that I miss you. Sunday feels strange without you.

Do enjoy your summer, wherever you are! We all need the chance to change the routine, do something different, be more active or take a break. Summer's invitation to difference should certainly be accepted. It's healthy, it's nurturing, it's fun. Take your opportunities, choose the garden or the lake or the amusement park, create memories that will make you smile when the temperature is down below freezing.

But please also remember that others are looking forward to

seeing you again. Your presence is missed. And it will be good to be together when your path brings you back to the corner of South Second and James, whether that's this Sunday, or next month, or in September when Homecoming calls us all back into the Beloved Community that is ever-present, holding us all together in love, in peace, in joy, in the quest for the better world.

Have a terrific summer!

Peace ~

Lindsay

An Open Letter to the UUSG Congregation:

May 25, eleven young adults age 18-25—referred to from here on out as kids—who grew up in UUSG, went on the First Annual UUSG Young Adult Habitat trip to Boone County, Iowa. It was a terrific success by all measures, but I'll let the kids* tell you about that at a later date.

This letter is to the UUSG congregation as a whole. Larry and Brandon Pickeral, who have been part of the YRUU Habitat trips to Minnesota for many years (several of us feel as though they are honorary members of our church), were on this trip too. They met our kids in Iowa and contributed their expertise in construction and community building. I spoke with them as they drove back home to Minnesota from the Habitat Chapter in Iowa. Larry said, "They were great teenagers, they are even better young adults. I forgot how awesome they are." It was Brandon who said, "I'm not exactly sure how to say this, but your church community raises great kids. Do you think you could tell them?" I said I'd try.

A lot of you are now thinking, "This letter isn't about me at all, I avoid those teenagers like the plague." And I'm going to correct you in that impression. Maybe you're the furry guy at the back of the church who invited them to ring the bell when they were tots. Maybe you're one of the people who decorated the sanctuary seasonally, or who made the outside of our beautiful old building look so trim and charming. Maybe you didn't throttle them, or even throw dirty looks in their direction, when they were young and struggled to sit still next to you during the first part of our Sunday services. Maybe you were a friend to their folks. Maybe you made beautiful music during our church services. Maybe you were a mentor to their awkward middle school selves. Maybe after the YRUU service you hung around to tell them how insightful and thought-provoking their contributions were. Maybe you never spoke a word to them, but you supported their church lives with your time, talent and treasure. You helped create a community that

encouraged them to think their own thoughts, to act on their beliefs and to share the bounty they were born into.

So, I want each of you to take a little credit for these brilliant, shiny and strong young men and women who think that service to others is a worthwhile way to spend some of their summer vacation.

Now, a special note to those of you who are currently parenting. Despite the marketing, parenting can be challenging, heart-breaking, thankless, and even terrifying—not every day, maybe not even most days, but sometimes. During those parenting years, our church community is a safe and loving place, where adults and kids can see your child or children clearly, without the anxious lens that parents sometimes see their children through. This is a good thing. Our community mirrors your child's uniqueness back to them, and says, "We think you are great, just the way you are." This is valuable.

As a mom whose two sons grew up at UUSG, having strong-willed, independent, free thinking and non-approval seeking teenagers didn't seem nearly as cool to me when they were teen-agers as it had seemed to me as the mother of toddlers. But as I see light beginning to dawn at the end of a long and sometimes harrowing trek, I know that my sons are the terrific young men they are, in good part, because they are UUs. UUSG's UUs.

We all have a great deal to be proud of in our children, our teens and our young adults. They don't seem great just because they are ours and we love them. They seem great to strangers and those with no vested interest. I want to thank you and congratulate you. Our congregation does indeed raise great kids.

Laura Laughlin

*Trip participants: Aron Bartoszek, Emma Baar, Aaron Clevenger, Nathan Clevenger, Audrey Jonke, Paul Justis, David Montgomery, Jake Montgomery, Lily Philips (trip leader), Jeremy Swanson and Kat Zimmerman.



boardblog: The Thrill of Serving!

Did I use "thrill" and "serving" in one phrase? YES I DID, because the feeling is

very alive, and I have much gratitude and many rewards because of it.

I get to share this month's Board Blog with you just as my term as Board Vice President is ending. While holding this position is neither the first, nor the last, opportunity for me to serve UUSG, it is the first time I have had the privilege to be on the Board of Directors in recent times.

What I found is an uplifting experience – one that has made both a positive difference in my life, as well as, from what I have been told, the same for UUSG. It has been a year of personal and organizational growth, a year of learning, problem solving, and getting to know so many more Congregants. The latter has truly offered validation of the rich talent we are blessed with, how vibrant our programs are, and the high degree of impact UUSG makes in our local Community. I feel prouder and closer to be a member than ever before.

Now, some of you might be saying, "wait a minute, Hal's just sharing a one-sided view as there are only days-of-wine-and-roses type comments." Well, let me be clear, of course there were challenges, yes there were some frustrations, and naturally there were times of feeling in overload. BUT, overall, the gains far outweighed all of these combined! WHY? Because of the support and learning I got from throughout the Congregation, because of real changes that have been evolving that bring us closer to our mission/vision, because of the fulfillment from making a difference for others, and because of the personal skills I have honed and/or obtained. Overall, I'd say this has been a thrilling opportunity to serve others, to live my purpose and to do my best.

The Board of Directors this year launched a Leadership Development Program (LDP) which the UUA suggests has huge opportunity for us to accelerate achievement of our vision/mission in a more powerful and collaborative fashion. I am also thrilled about this initiative. As I see it, LDP will support each friend/member to share all your skills and passions. Leadership comes in many forms. Each of us has value to offer, and UUSG can benefit from the diverse contributions. I invite you to allow yourself to embrace your own personal thrill of serving.

In closing, I share this quote for inspiration: "Offer your best to the world, and you'll find the world to be a place filled with great opportunity. Focus on how you can be of service, and your own pains and disappointments will wither away out of neglect. It is generosity that gives birth to prosperity, not the other way around. It is the willingness to make a difference, not what you get out of it, that makes life good." – Ralph Marston

-Hal Schulman

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



June Music: An Eclectic Mix

An eclectic mix of music recently graced our sanctuary, beginning with a Latin beat underscoring powerful songs by EnsAmble Ad-Hoc, featuring flutist Ruth Cavanaugh, vocalist Francy Acosta and Jose Luis Posada on strings and percussion. Youth showed their talents during the RE student-led "Celebration of Moving Up," with a piano offertory by Calvin Hruby; songs sung by Anna Masini and Grace Christiani, each self-accompanied on strings; and pianist Lynn Fisher McCanne leading the Kazoo Band with the students joining in, assisted by Pat Vary and Tracy Rosenkrans. Pianist Sandra Anderson-Cordogan was joined by son Alexander Cordogan on violin in four exquisite pieces. Alexander plays his grandfather's vintage violin. Two touching selections for Father's Day featured Audrey Jonke singing "Fathers and Daughters," accompanied by guitarist David Montgomery, who soloed in the song "My Dad." Dean Malambri shone at the keyboard.

Coming up, we'll be treated to Thom Thomas, Julie Riffle, Kelly Herz and Seth Prisco; vocal soloist Cynthia Spiegel; bassist Tracy Rosenkrans, violinist Honna Austin and flutist Meredith Vandre; and soloist Amanda Bollero, plus our gifted pianists, Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, Lynn Fisher McCanne, Patricia Arzaga and Dean Malambri.

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 at music@uusg.org.



Green Corner: Happy & Interesting Summer Everyone!

Green Sanctuary finished April's EARTH MONTH in May, with an Annual Native Plant Sale, held on two Sundays in front of Pioneer House. It was a success in spite of a little worrisome rain one of the days. Very few plants remained after the second Sunday. An especially huge thanks to Midwest Groundcovers for their wonderful generosity and to Trish Beckjord for her time and skilled attention to selection, organization, and transporting the native plants to church. Hugs to you, Trish! She always came up with perfect answers to our many searching questions. And thanks to our super helpers! We're hoping to see all our great 'buyers' again next year at UUSG's Native Plant Sale!

Applause to our Swedish Days Pizza Booth planners for again selling soft drinks in aluminum cans and free Geneva water in compostable cups! They are avoiding plastic bottles, which can harm both the user and the environment by leaching PCBs into the water. Besides, 80% of plastic bottles end up in landfills and are not biodegradable.

Keep watching soon for a new & interesting challenge regarding our 'water usage' that everyone may participate in.

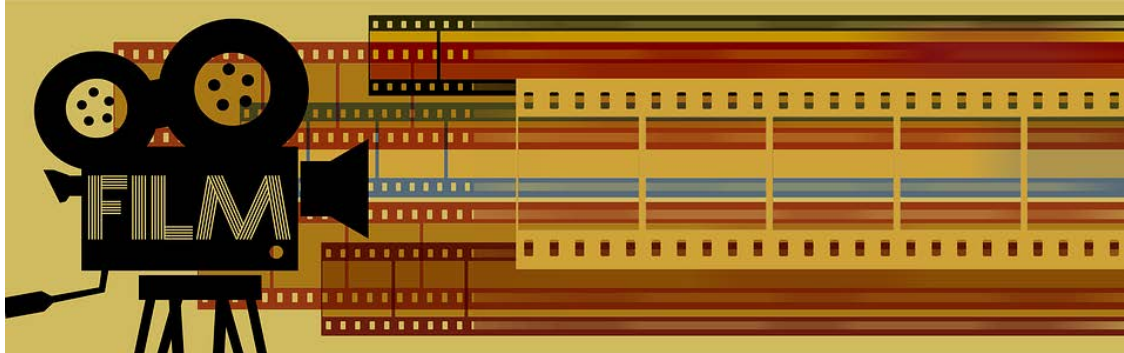
Lastly, it won't be long before the GST herbs, expertly planted by Llona Steele, are once again ready to be harvested. Watch for a treat: small bunches of free herbs during Social Hours. Then those left will head for the Food Pantry on Monday. Above all, be sure to continue with an enjoyable - and 'GREEN' Summer.



2016 Volunteer Organization of the Year!

The UUSG Food Bank Team was honored on June 16th by the Northern

Illinois Food Bank as the 2016 Volunteer Organization of the Year! Congratulations to Kevin Beyer, Ellie Radvanovsky and all of our UUSG volunteers who help out each month at the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Want to join in on the fun? Our next volunteer event is Saturday, July 16th. [Sign up here!](#)



Friday Flick: "Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA"

Making a Killing, which will be shown July 22 at 7pm, is a timely look at the costs of gun ownership to our society. The NRA spent more than \$27 million on congressional races in 2014, according to opensecrets.org, which monitors political lobbying. In recent years the guns and ammunition industry had estimated revenues of more than \$11 billion annually. The documentary notes that one person in the U.S. is killed with a gun every 16 minutes and that 92% of Americans favor background checks on all gun buyers.



YRUU Service Project

Our YRUUs went to Feed My Starving Children on June 16th and helped pack 144 boxes of food which is 31,104 meals for the kids! Great job YRUUs!



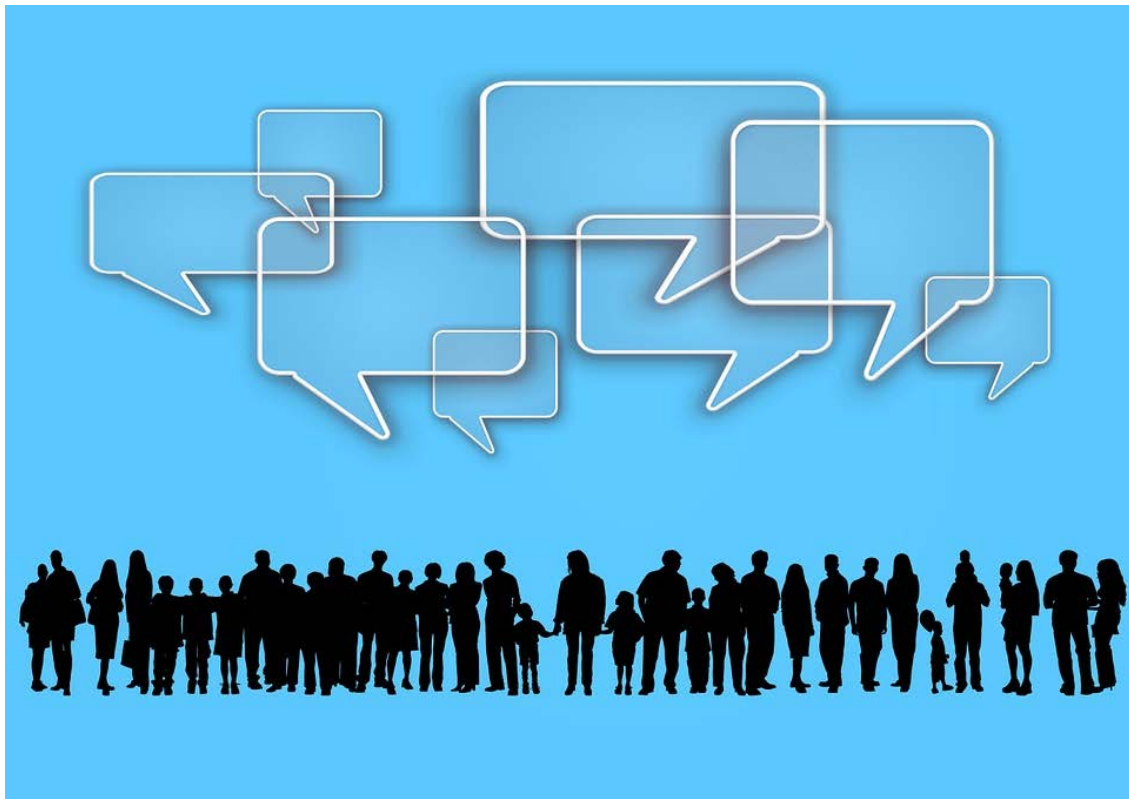
The Follies Returns - Friday, July 29 at 8pm

The Follies, a comedy made loosely about UUSG will make its only appearance on Friday, July 29 at 8 pm. The reception - which will include beer, wine and food begins at 7pm.. Please mark your calendars. The Follies all-cast this year includes Lindsay Bates, Scott Talbot Lewis, Diane Handler, Chung Liang, Lou Pierce, Tracy Rosenkrans, Melissa Auer, Llona Steele, Tony Gibbons, Joani Foster and Steve Zrebiec. The actresses and actors have been preparing hard to make sure you have a great time. Admission is free, and you'll have more fun than you ever had or your money back!



Joseph's Deli Meatballs for Lazarus House dinners for Sept. 3!

It's time to sign up to help prepare lunches for 15 or dinners for 60 for the first Saturday, September 3. Remember the incredible meatballs served at our Swedish Days Booth? We have a 10-pound bag of them plus buns available for use by folks who prepare an upcoming dinner. Just defrost them, add sauce, and you will have an unforgettable meal for the residents of Lazarus House. Sign up either on the Social Justice Bulletin Board in the Common Room or [online](#).



Sit Down and Be Counted!

The Fox River Valley Initiative team at UUSG needs your presence at an Assembly July 30, 3-4:30 pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in St. Charles. Last October more than 35 members attended an assembly, giving our church the distinction of having the highest attendance of any organization in the Collaborative. Let's keep our title! Contact socialjusticeleader@uusg.org to tell us you will be present at the Assembly. The purpose of this Assembly will be to explore how the broad-based organization can continue to make a difference in our region.



UUSG Social Justice Volunteers

Social Justice is proud to announce that the final tally of volunteers in UUSG Social Justice opportunities for the 2015/16 church year reached **311** separate individuals!! See the list of names on the Social Justice Bulletin Board. Now it's time to begin a new year. Start planning how you will get your name on the list.



Young Adult Habitat Trip

UUs in the news- Our Young Adult Habitat for Humanity group traveled to Iowa and spent three days building a home for a family of 8. Many thanks to the UUSG congregation for their generosity. [Read about their trip here!](#)



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](#).



Circles of Life

Congratulations and all best wishes to Carol Dooley and Lt. Andrew Corwell, married on June 25 at Pottawatomie Park by Rev. Lindsay!



New2U is Going Strong!

We've just passed the \$1,300 mark--thanks to those of you who have listed your items and those of you who have made purchases. Some new listings are: Snap-On toolboxes, a Hammond organ, and a photo scanner that will allow you to digitize those mounds of photos you have lying around. More information on listing and shopping [can be found here!](#)



UUSG Food Bank News

The UUSG Food Bank Team combined with members from Team AT&T and the Fusion Soccer Team to package 16,170 lbs of raw potatoes. Many thanks to Kevin Beyer, James Carroll, Jamie Carroll, Elke Chateau, Keith Gesiakowski, Gary Noll, Kathie Noll, Hamid Rusef, Ramsey Rusef, and Martha Tabis for their tireless work!



Commit to Knit

Many thanks for the items pictured above, which have been sent to knitting4peace.org for distribution to women and children in global areas of conflict. You guys are awesome! I look forward to seeing you and your projects when our regular gatherings resume in September.

--Katherine

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



CARNIVALE UUSG!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, November 5, from 5pm-8pm for the 2016 UUSG Auction Extraordinaire: CARNIVALE UUSG! Remember, this is an All-Church Auction, with special food and events planned for children.

People have volunteered to chair most of the committees, so now we are looking for volunteers to assist them with: Catalog, Merchant Donations, Children's rooms, Ambiance, Entertainment, Technology, Power Point Slide Show, Silent Auction displays, and Live Auction Bid Recording. Please contact Jan Miller and Jean Pierce at auctionleader@uusg.org.

Thank You



for your Kindness

Volunteer Appreciation

We give our heartfelt thanks to the following people:

The Social Justice team offers sincere appreciation to the following people who helped with our Lazarus House ministry in June: Meredith Vandre who prepared lunches, Doreen Christiani and William Elbert who fixed dinner, and Shawn Thornton who stayed overnight.

Greeters: Sandy Bottoms, Dan Bottoms

Social Hour Hosts: the Buddhist Meditation & Study Group

Counters: David de Coriolis, Kevin Beyer, Dave Moore, James Carroll, Kevin O'Neill, George Tattersfield, 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](#).



"Taste of New UUs"

The Welcoming Ministry Team invites you to join our one-session "Taste of New UUs" Orientation Program. This program will take place on Sunday, July 17, 11:30am-2pm.

[Learn more and Register Here...](#)



Membership Preparation Class

Have you been here for at least 3 months? Have you attended at least some of our

“New UUs” Orientation Program? Are thinking about becoming a member? If so, please attend this class on Sunday, July 31 from 11:30am-2pm to learn about important features of membership at UUSG.

This class is a requirement for church membership, and you’ll have the opportunity to sign our membership book at the end of the class. [Learn more and Register here...](#)



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.

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



Save the Date!

The 4th Annual UUSG Women's Retreat will be held February 3-5, 2017.



Stay Connected!

The Social Media Team asks everyone to “like” [UUSG on Facebook](#) to stay connected with us throughout the week! Questions, comments, photos to share or content ideas? Please [email us](#), we would love to hear from you!



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.



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](#).



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.



Friendly Faces

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



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