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Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

March - April 2017



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From the Pulpit

the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

I've begun the process of clearing out nearly 4 decades of files, and I came across this "Paper Pulpit" from 2006. It seems to be relevant still...

We're now well over half-way through Lent, a time of reflection and sacrifice in the Christian tradition. Too many of us distrust that Lenten discipline, thinking that "sacrifice" means "to give something up" – but it doesn't. "Sacrifice" is from the Latin – *sacer* (holy) and *facere* (to make) – and so it really

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means “to make holy,” to transform something mundane into something of transcendent value, to take that which is ordinary or taken for granted and turn it into something that gets God’s attention, that says to the Mystery of our lives, “Take this – take this thing of mine – my possession, my action, my life – and use it to change me, to change and to heal and to save the world.”

Sacrifice, then, is not about giving up something one wants for oneself – it is about being generous with what one has for the sake of a larger vision of a greater good.

We’re also more than half-way through our Annual Canvass, another time of reflection and, yes, frankly, of sacrifice. Do we really want to make a difference in the world? Then we need to be willing also to give enough to make a difference. Church consultant Michael Durall, who is a UU and understands full well our tendencies as religious liberals to be, to put it charitably, fiscal conservatives (if not regressives), has written:

...If giving to your congregation is similar to writing a check at the end of the month to pay the phone bill or the electric bill, and then forgetting about it until the end of the next month, you are not giving enough. Similarly, if you take spare change or a dollar or two from your pocket or purse for the weekly collection and never notice the difference, your giving has too little meaning either for you or for your church.

We should notice that we’re doing something, if what we are doing is in

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fact worth while. We should be giving enough to challenge us to look at our own deepest values, and to feel that we are being true to what we say we hold most dear. Our Pledge Drive challenges us to look at what we think about generosity. It challenges us to think about what transcendent goods are worth a sacrifice – a making holy – of our limited resources. And the money we promise to give should be going out from us not out of guilt or dreary obligation, but out of gratitude, joy, even love.

Money itself is a neutral reality – it takes on meaning as it becomes one of the means through which we send our selves out into the world. What does your money mean? Do you regard it as a means to a life of ease, affluence, indulgence? Or is it a means to the ends of deepening your life, strengthening your faith, changing the world?

The existence of the free church – not the church that runs without money (there's no such thing), but the church that is truly free, where you are encouraged and supported in your own quest for your own true self and where you join with others who share your greater vision of the kind of community, the kind of world you want for yourself and for those you love and for those you don't even know – the existence of the free church is not guaranteed.

But if we want such a church, for ourselves and for our children and for generations still to come, we can have it. It is ours to dream and create; it is our responsibility and our

privilege to dream it and create it
and sustain it together, with
gratitude and with joy.

To those who have pledged as
generously as they can, blessings
and thanks. To those who have not
pledged, or who could in fact pledge
more, please consider what sort of
church – what sort of world – you
really want.

And to all – as always – Peace!

LB



boardblog - Kathy Cornell

We are really looking forward to April, with a variety of important and enjoyable happenings in the works – for example, wonderful Earth Day activities, another 175th Anniversary event, a Tom Neilson concert, a great Friday Flick, another productive Saturday morning at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and excellent Sunday experiences. Following up on our successful and enjoyable Annual Day of Service, which engaged over 175 UUSG members and friends in a variety of community service projects and culminated in a delicious and fun dinner celebrating the day's accomplishments, we are now kicking off our 2017 Pledge Drive.

Our terrific Pledge Drive Team is in the process of contacting everyone (UUSG members and friends) to extend an invitation to get together for a brief in-person conversation. We'd like to talk about the ways UUSG is meaningful in your life, share related joys and concerns, answer questions about the Pledge Drive and the budgeting process, and encourage you to consider the importance of UUSG in your life as you decide on your pledge for the coming fiscal year. These opportunities to get together (over coffee, by phone, via email...) are another part of the ongoing 2017 celebration of the UUSG 175th Anniversary.

Lots of other things are happening in April, of course, reflecting the wide variety of ways that UUSG offers us to be engaged in the life of the church, to support all of our ongoing programs and special projects, to enjoy our Sunday services and LRE experiences, and to broaden and deepen the relationships we are developing with one another.

As we are saying – 175 years – what a great beginning!

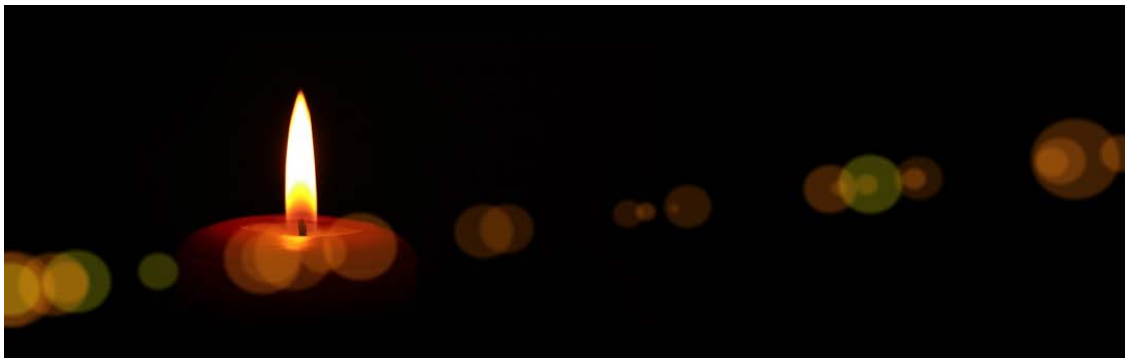
Questions or comments? Contact the [Board of Directors](#).



Circles of Life

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Iain R. Tilbrook, our Roger's son. A physicist at Argonne and a UU, it was Iain who introduced Roger to our faith community. To all of Iain's family, we send our loving condolences. He was greatly loved and will be greatly missed.

Please join us for a Memorial Service celebrating the life of Nancy Ahner, daughter of Rev. Don and Betty King, on Saturday, April 1 at 1pm in the UUSG Sanctuary. We send our sympathy to Gene and all their family.



Tenebrae Service

On Good Friday, April 14, we will hold our traditional Tenebrae (“Shadows”) Service. This dark service acknowledges the suffering, the evil, and the loss of hope that are realities in the world. For many of us, this service is a necessary prelude to Easter’s celebrations. Rev. Lindsay will lead the service, with music provided by Geoff Pynn.

The Sanctuary doors will open at 7:30pm, with recorded meditational music and time for quiet reflection. The service begins promptly at 8pm and will last about an hour.

Please note that Tenebrae is not suitable for young children and we’re not able to provide childcare.



Upcoming Staff Time Off

Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates will be on retreat April 24 - May 1.



New Members!

We welcome our newest members who signed "The Book" on March 12, 2017: Linda Kay Marquis, Marilyn Hebda, Mary "Manya" J. Prah, Robert "Bob" Prah, Jericha Hawkins, and Rosemary Maziarz. Welcome Home!



March Music at UUSG

The melodies of March have brought us wonderful pieces by vocalist Jessica Littlefield, the Jazz Combo with Michael Townley, Tracy Rosenkrans, Liam Johnson and Andy Montgomery joined by powerful vocalist Parvaneh Shidnia-Smith, the joyful UUSG Choir led by Cynthia Spiegel, a shining ensemble of RE music students directed by Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, and the keyboard artistry of Geoff Pynn and Dean Malambri.

Looking ahead, we'll be treated to a special Musicians Appreciation Service featuring most of our regular musicians playing their personal favorites. Tom! Andy! Sandra! Dean! Cynthia! Geoff! Tracey & Tracy! John! Lynn! The Easter will bring the Bunny Band with Andy Montgomery, Liam Johnson, Tracey McFadden, and Tracy and John Rosenkrans, followed the next week by the high-energy songs of FUUSion.

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 5th grade) surely outdid themselves singing “I’ve Got a Light” on March 12 – it was unforgettable! In addition, Jeff Stibal projected their colorful art interpretations of the song prior to services. The RE Music season concluded with instrument sharing: Preston Malana played piano, Jack Pokorny played his keyboard, and Liam Doyle played cello, joined by his father Brian.



6-8 Grade Service Projects

Sixth through Eighth graders, their instructors, and their parents, have been busy serving their congregation! On March 12, these students served their congregation once again as they hosted the Social Hour. Their refreshments were delicious and their work preparing and cleaning up afterward was commendable. The gifts and generosity of these thoughtful young men and women are much appreciated!



Annual Day of Service Thank You

Thank you to everyone who participated in the March 18 Annual Day of Service! We had our largest participation yet, with 180 church members and friends helping to make the event a success performing more than 450 hours of public service and strengthening our UUSG community! Some key accomplishments:

- 72 volunteers visited the Northern Illinois Food Bank and packaged 33,834 lbs of potatoes and senior food boxes.
- 21 efficient packers assembled 134 Senior Gift Boxes for Humanitarian Service Project. The congregation donated nearly \$2000 for this effort, and area businesses contributed about \$400 more.
- 17 lively party-goers played BINGO with area senior citizens at Bria Health Services of Geneva.
- 9 dedicated painters spruced up a hallway and rooms at Mutual Ground to welcome clients to the women's shelter. Some were so dedicated that they returned on Monday for a second coat!
- 20 shoppers donated paper products for low-income seniors.
- 23 creative souls provided lovely Birthday Party in a Box kits for disadvantaged children.
- 17 concerned citizens wrote 133 postcards and letters to their

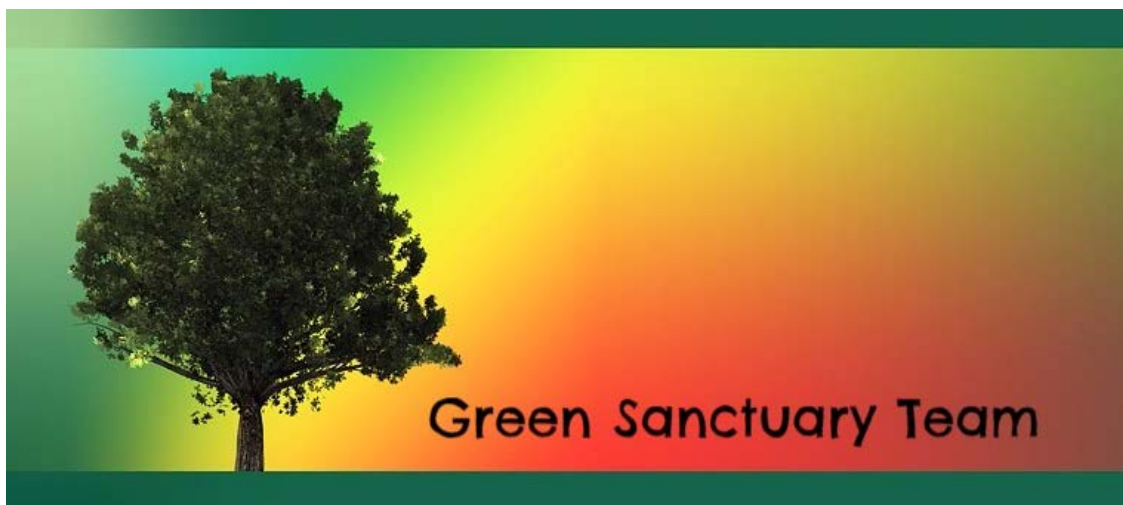
representatives in government on behalf of the "interconnected web of which we are a part."

- 3 inspired leaders put on a lovely, uplifting worship service which several dozen attended.
- 20 gracious volunteers put on a lovely dinner for 65 hungry volunteers!



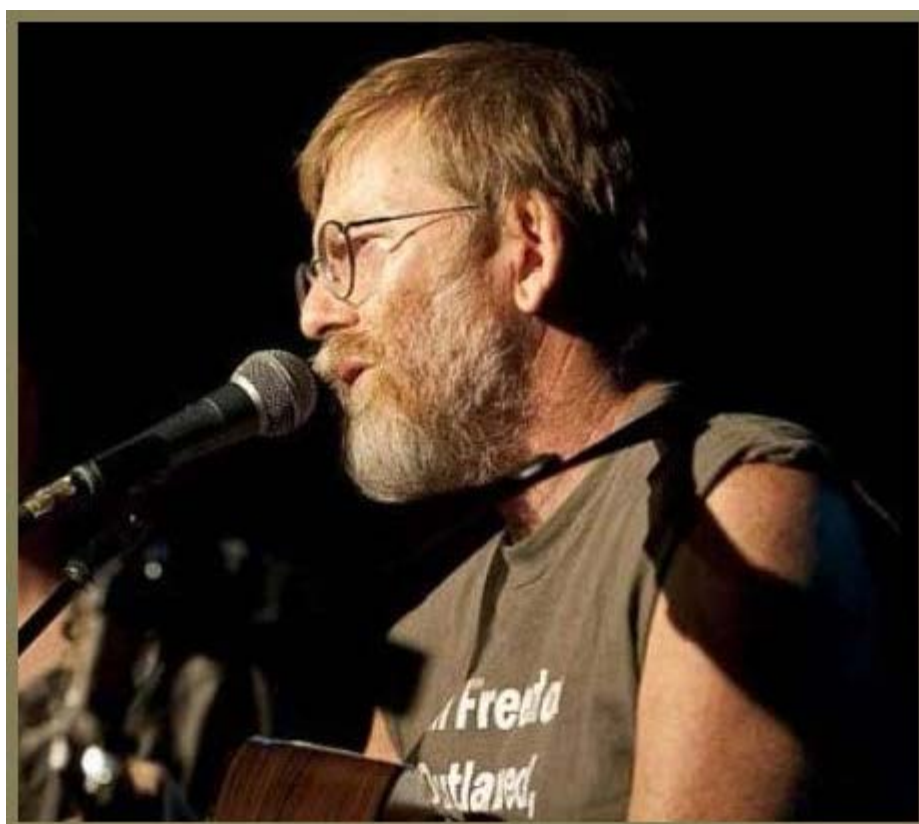
WOW: Is It The Team For You?

WOW is a ministry designed to reach out to members/friends of the church and help with any practical concerns or problems. This team was formed five years ago to formalize and improve on much of the assistance we extend to each other as a caring church community. We deliver meals to overwhelmed or ill friends, provide transportation, assist with household jobs, etc. If you choose to join our ministry, your responsibility as part of our crew is to simply read the WOW requests that come through your email, and "reply to all" if you can help out with a concern or need. It is our hope that all members of the WOW Team will be able to participate in one or two requests throughout the year. This is a very informal group. Our mission is to keep it simple but effective. We will be hosting the Social Hour on Sunday, April 30th. This would be a wonderful time to talk to a WOW member and sign up. You may also contact George Tattersfield or Glenda Peck at wow@uusg.org. There is great satisfaction and reward in the giving of your time and talents.



UUSG April Green Activity

The Green Sanctuary Team has picked one of the "Fabyan Work Days" to promote for our congregation's April Green Activity. We will be removing buckthorn from the Fabyan Forest Preserve. Tools, water and snacks will be provided, but volunteers should bring gloves and wear appropriate clothing and boots. This event is organized by the Geneva Natural Resources Committee. April 8, 9:00am to 12:00pm. Location: on the east side of the river by the Windmill. RSVP to Bill Koehl, 222koehl@gmail.com.



Tom Neilson Concert

On April 15 at 7:30pm, UUSG again welcomes Tom Neilson, popular folk musician who performs political satire, parody, and general social commentary. Tickets may be purchased at the door, and will cost \$20. Doors will open at 7pm.

Using humor, compassion, and outrage, Tom performs songs about a variety of themes concerning the world and the environment. No worthy cause goes unnoticed by Tom. The sophistication of his writing brings together some of the finest components of song and comedy, and has resulted in his winning several music awards. You can hear a sample of Tom's music at his website at tomneilsonmusic.com.

Proceeds of the concert will be donated to the Conservation Foundation in support of their work restoring and preserving natural lands, rivers and watersheds in Kane County.



Memorial Stones

If you would like to remember a loved one with a carved stone in our Memorial Garden, please give a [completed order form](#) to Christine Imielski by April 16.



Foxfire Pan Pagan Earth Circle

Foxfire Pan Pagan Earth Circle is a group for those be they Pagan, Pantheist or anyone who finds their spiritual connection through nature and who wishes to honor that connection through sharing beliefs through ritual, through discussion, and through living what we profess we believe by actions that honor the earth through environmentally conscious practices. There are many pagan and pantheist paths, therefore we are not traditionally Wiccan, Astaru, Feri, Heathen, Reclaiming etc., but we may examine some of their beliefs and include them in our rituals. Please join us for sharing or just to find out what we are about. We will meet the first Thursday of the month, 7-9pm in the Common Room. Some activities may occur off site e.g. rituals, but you will be notified of any such changes.

Some suggested books:

The Earth Path, by Starhawk;

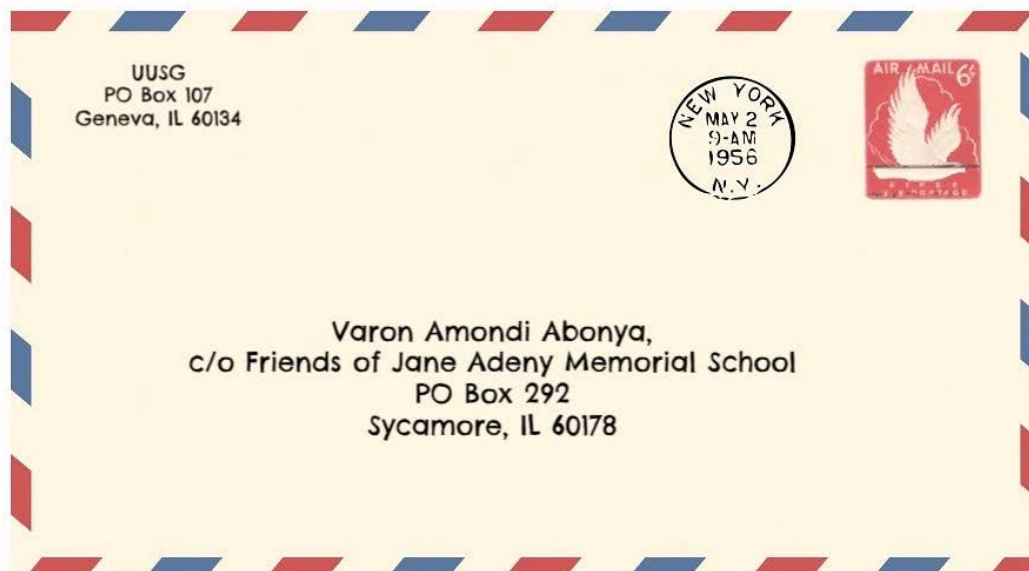
Earth, Water, Fire, Air, by Cait Johnson;

Journey Into Nature, by Michael J Roads;

Drawing Down The Moon, by Margot Adler;

Standing In The Light, My Life as a Pantheist, by Sharman Apt Russell;

Pantheism Across The World's Traditions, by Lorilialai.



Cards and Letters for Our Student at JAMS

Twice a year our notes and pictures are hand-delivered to Varon, the student we are sponsoring at JAMS school in Kenya. She loves to draw, so pictures are welcome in addition to cards and letters. Before April 20, Please send them to:

Varon Amondi Abonya,
c/o Friends of Jane Adeny Memorial School
PO Box 292
Sycamore, IL 60178



Commit to Knit

Spring may have sprung, but there's still lots of knitting/crocheting to do! Please join us in making items for donation to knitting4peace.org, either from home or on the first Sunday of the month. in the Common Room, between services. Our next gathering is April 2. For more information,

contact Katherine Lyons at knitting@uusg.org.



Beyond Our Walls - The Conservation Foundation

The Conservation Foundation is celebrating its 45th anniversary of conservation work in 2017. Its 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.



Exploring the Belief Continuum and Where We Find Ourselves

The 175th Anniversary Committee invites UUSG members and friends to an enjoyable, enlightening and thought-provoking activity - Exploring the Belief Continuum and Where We Find Ourselves - Sunday April 23, 1:30-3:00pm.

We will be borrowing one of the favorite New UUs activities, one which many attendees of classes have enjoyed but most members and friends of the congregation haven't had the opportunity (or maybe not for quite a while). We will be talking about the variety of spiritual beliefs, everything from atheist to pantheist to deist and points between, that fall along a continuum of personal and world views that reflect where we might see ourselves today. Personal beliefs grow and change as we make our way through life's experiences. Where do you see yourself now? How did you find your way to this point in your own belief journey?

We will begin with a brief introduction and then break up into smaller groups to physically place our own marker on a representation of the variety of (generalized) beliefs where we might find ourselves. The process, the exploration and the conversations are engaging and can be surprisingly challenging - and great fun!--- and there will be refreshments, of course... it is our 175th Anniversary, after all! We hope you will join us! [RSVP at uusg.org/175th.](http://uusg.org/175th)



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 12:30pm for fellowship and interesting discussions. For information please contact Lynn Steele at interweave.leader@uusg.org.



Spring Cleaning?

Spring is here, time to open the windows and clean out the clutter! And consider donating your items valued over \$25 to New2U. UUSG will get the monies, and you'll get the tax deduction. It's easy. For more info, please see uusg.org/new2u. Questions? Contact the New2U Crew at new2u@uusg.org.



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."



Western Crescent UU Choir Festival

Music lovers! Come support our UUSG Choir at the Western Crescent UU Choir Festival! Walk the labyrinth while you are there, too! Sunday, April 2, 4pm at [Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin](#). Hear individual performances by Geneva, DeKalb, Rockford, McHenry, & Elgin UU Choirs, followed by a Mass Choir event of 5 short inspirational works.



UUSG: NonTrivial Leaders in Support of Literacy

On Saturday, March 25, the UUSG Team claimed the 3rd Place Prize in the Literacy Volunteers' Trivia Bee. For 6 of the past 9 years, our team: Julia Adams, Michele Hoecker, and Brian Joose, has been one of the top 3 winners of the event. This year the theme was "Birds and BEEs", and

our team's name was "Let's DUU it: Let's Fall in Love."



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. New inventory will be available in mid-April. In the meantime, you may want to try the Rooibos tea and Ethiopian coffee.



Save the Date!

The Annual UUSG Thanksgiving Dinner is scheduled for 11-23-2017. A special 175 Anniversary cake will be included in the menu. More info in September.



UUSG Book Exchange

Located in the north entry. Please take and keep as many books as desired. Enjoy!



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.



BINGO!

On our recent "Day of Service" there was a group of us who played Bingo with the seniors at Geneva Care Center (which is now called Bria Health Services of Geneva). The residents there seemed to like it that we came! I'd like to start going to play Bingo with them once a month or once every 6 weeks. The Activities Director at the home said Saturdays at 2:30pm would work best. If you are interested in joining this outreach, please contact Jill Brown at jill.monga@comcast.net.



The Office Report

The Mini-Pioneer, Pioneer, UUSG Calendar, Sunday Email, Facebook, Bulletin Boards, Sign-Ups, Press Releases, Worship Announcements, the UUSG Website....there are a lot of way to promote and publicize your UUSG activity or event! Be sure to check out [this helpful guide](#) that goes over our deadlines and tips for submissions. With enough lead time I am able to make sure that the UUSG Community learns about your event or activity and can participate. And if you need help or have questions, send me an email at office@uusg.org, call 630-232-2350, or stop by the office (Sundays - Thursdays, generally 9-5) and I would be happy to help!

~Christine

Christine Imielski
Congregational Administrator



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