



Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

November - December 2017



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From the Pulpit

the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

Dear friends,

When December ends, we'll have celebrated our last Christmas holiday season together. In 40 years, I've missed exactly 2 Christmas Eves, one back in 1983 when the weather forced us to cancel our Christmas Eve services and the second in 2009, after my dad died, when Thom Thomas and Julie Riffle stepped in to present the services. I find myself feeling a bit abashed at the less-than-perfect record – part of my inner nagging voice keeps suggesting that I must

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“owe” you 2 additional Christmas Eves. That, however, is not within the limits of the possible. Silver star on this one for Valid Excuses, but no gold star for Perfect Attendance. Oh well.

Actually, this is a good time of year to allow the silver stars to shine – for being not perfect, but the best we can manage. Demanding the perfect from ourselves and others only sets us all up for disappointment. Going for the best we can manage at any given time – well, that’s going to be by definition manageable.

Let’s reach for the silver this season. Don’t let the perfect become the enemy of the good – especially in a season when we so often discover that the less-than-perfect turns out to be perfect in its own way. We need only to let ourselves flow along with it, spread the joy around, share the wonder, experience and invite others in to experience the holy in all the ways it breaks through to us. There will be moments of gold – there always are, if we look with our hearts as well as our eyes, expecting to find them. We’ve already achieved the silver, simply by allowing ourselves to celebrate in the face of winter’s darkness, rejoicing in the moon and the stars until it is once again time for the sun to return.



Our UUSG community celebrates the season with our “do it ourselves/No- Rehearsal” Pageants on Dec. 17 (if you’ve never experienced one of these, please do plan to attend! it’s always The Best Pageant Ever!), then with 3 services on Dec. 24.

Since Dec. 24 is a Sunday, we’ll have one morning service at 10 AM, a special collection of stories and carols for all ages and the music of classical guitarist Paul Moeller, followed by a potluck brunch. If you aren’t going to be able to attend either of the later Christmas Eve services, do come to this one!

Then in the evening, our Family Service begins at 4 o’clock. This is the service for those who are too young and/or too excited to sit quietly through the later traditional service – but it is a reverent, joyful celebration of the ancient holy story of the birth of Love into the world.

And at 8, our traditional Candlelight & Choir Service begins – the most beautiful service of our UUSG church year. Cynthia Spiegel will be directing our UUSG Christmas Eve Choir, with Sandra Anderson Cordogan at the piano. I’ve chosen (perhaps a bit self-indulgently) some of my favorite readings for Christmas to share with you one last time.

We always fill the Sanctuary for this special service, with overflow seating in the Common Room. Sanctuary seating is limited to 150 people, including our Choir. So if you want to be sure of a place in a

pew, come early!

We'll say goodbye to 2017 on New Years Eve, Dec. 31, with one morning service at 10 AM, again followed by a potluck brunch. Our service will include some favorite readings, carols, and the Fire Ritual, burning away the dross of the old year and lighting a new flame for welcoming the open possibilities of the new. All ages are welcome at this final service of 2017.

Our normal Sunday schedule of 9:30 and 11:15 services and church school will start up again on January 7, 2018.

I hope to see you all during the holiday season!

Blessings and joy to all!

Lindsay



Board Blog by Jean Pierce

I don't ask for personal help.

Oh, it's different if I'm coordinating a project. Then I'm constantly asking for people to help in any number of ways. But when it comes to personal support, I usually revert to my "stiff upper lip" Welsh upbringing.

But during the past 3 months, I have been overwhelmed by the help and support I have received from this amazing community.

- Lou received hours of Reiki which helped relieve pain and promote healing – until the game of whack-a-mole instigated by sepsis would give rise to another medical crisis.
- Using techniques of hypnosis I had learned from Lindsay, I was able to feel as if I could make a difference in helping him to relax or occasionally to “wake up” from a hospital–induced delirium.
- People would ask if they could visit, and they weren’t put off when I told them that Lou was scheduled for some procedure or other. They came to sit with me and to assure me that we weren’t alone on the journey.
- When we discovered that music helped him tap into memories, one member of the church brought her guitar, and we sang peace songs from the 60’s and 70’s.
- People sent cards which I put in an album and shared often with him.
- Members of WOW delivered meals once a week which seemed to “magically” appear in a cooler on my front porch. Like the time when I felt that I needed to stay late at the hospital, arriving home after 14 hours on the roller coaster.
- People surprised me with a meal at the hospital or with cookies or bread or with care packages of candy and magazines.
- UUSG members telephoned and invited me to share the joys and stresses of the day.
- Visitors shared my excitement when, after days of uncertainty, Lou would suddenly show us how cognitively aware he still was.

And of course I’ll never forget the tremendous outpouring of love at his Celebration of Life. Thank you to all of you who have shared your memories, your compassion, and your hugs. Thank you for showing me the true meaning of living in a caring community.

~ Jean Pierce

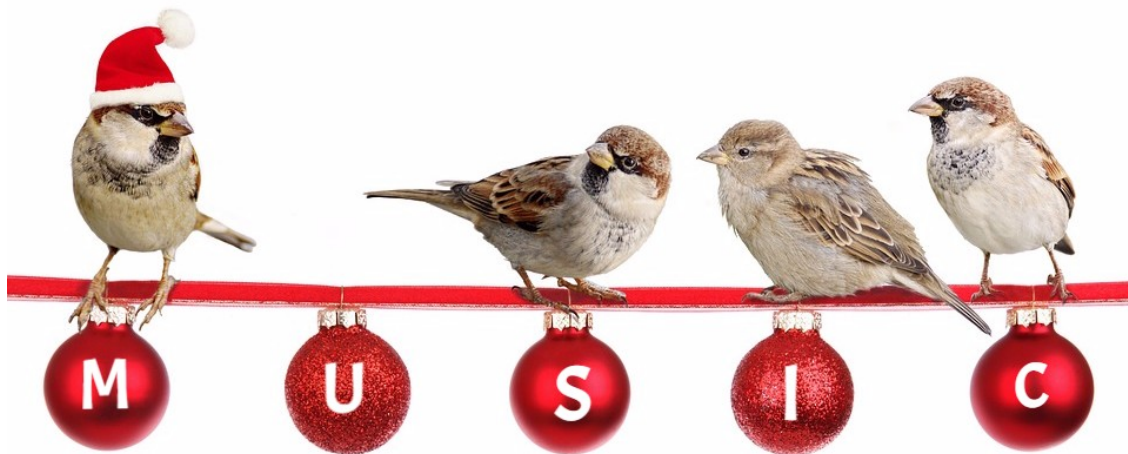


Circles of Life

It’s been a hard month for our UUSG family. Anne Brink passed gently in her home, with her son Dave at her side, on October 26. She had been dealing with a cancer that took her far too quickly. We celebrated her life with a memorial service on November 13, and we send our loving sympathy to her family.

We also lost Lou Pierce, who had been trying to fight off continuous infections since he went into Delnor in early September. His medical team tried everything they had, but Lou died gently, too, with his family beside him, on November 12. We held his Celebration of Life on November 17, with a full church and overflow seating in the Common Room. We hold his family - Jean, Jordan & Evan and their wives (Danielle and Carrie), and their children (Donovan & Remington, Brindle & Balsam), his sisters, and all of the extended family - in our hearts. The number of people who came to one of the visiting hours and/or the service says much about how deeply involved Lou had been in life. We will all miss him.

In much happier news is the official engagement of UUSG members Jeff Stibal and Gina Grupe. We send them our best wishes and congratulations!



Music at UUSG

Special music helped celebrate the 39th anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates' ordination, featuring the high-energy UUSG House Band powered by Tracey McFadden, Andy Montgomery, Liam Johnson, and Tracy & John Rosenkrans. The musical highlights continued this month with an inspiring anthem by the RE music students – the congregation even got to sing along! The UUSG Choir shone in a beautiful array of songs for the always moving Veterans Day service, ending with taps played by Dawn Pokorny. Showing their piano artistry and love of performing for you this month were Lynn Fisher McCanne and Dean Malambri.

The Thanksgiving celebration turned jazzy with superb playing by the UUSG Jazz Combo featuring trombonist Michael Townley, guest guitarist Paul Sargent, double bassist Tracy Rosenkrans, and Geoff Pynn on keyboards.

In December, we look forward to a Hannukah Service with music from Tom Zimmerman and Andy Montgomery. The following weekend, be ready

for a host of Holiday Pageant musicians: Calvin Hruby, The Ellie, David, & Jake Montgomery Trio, Tracey McFadden, Andy Montgomery, Geoff Pynn and Tracy Rosenkrans. For a totally different musical treat, come relax with guest classical guitarist Paul Moeller on the morning of Christmas Eve. The candlelit final service on Christmas Eve will feature the UUSG Christmas Eve Choir (kids 11 & up, come join us!) and lush string arrangements by John Rosenkrans. Violinists Wendy Evans-Glazier and Mary Phillips, Larry Glazier on cello, John on bass, and pianist Sandra Anderson-Cordogan will all be led by our amazing Cynthia Spiegel.

Be a part of the joy of music – there is a place for you in our Music Ministry! Please contact Music Director Tracy Rosenkrans at music@uusg.org today!



Holiday Services Schedule

Sunday, December 17

- 9:30am No-Rehearsal Holiday Pageant
- 11:15am No-Rehearsal Holiday Pageant

Sunday, December 24

- 10am Service of Readings & Carols for All Ages, followed by a potluck brunch
- 4pm Family Service for Christmas Eve
- 8pm Candlelight & Choir Service for Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 31

- 10am Stories & Fire Ritual for the New Year for All Ages, followed by a potluck brunch
-



Cookie Walk - 35 Years and Counting!

Cookie Walk is tomorrow, December 1, 4:30-6:30pm. at UUSG. Held in conjunction with the city's popular Christmas Walk celebration, the Cookie Walk offers a wide array of festive holiday cookies for sale, home-baked by UUSG Members and Friends. For \$14.00, customers can purchase a box to be filled with cookies they select. Due to health department rules, "cookie elves" will place choices into customers' boxes as they walk through the cookie room. With hundreds of dozens of cookies to choose from, people often fill more than one box.



UUSG Christmas Eve Choir

Consider joining the UUSG Christmas Eve choir! There are three weekly rehearsals starting Wednesday, Dec. 6. A special invitation goes out to our youth, 11 years or older, who must be joined by at least one parent. [Sign up here](#). For more information, contact our choir director, Cynthia Spiegel, at choir@uusg.org.



Christmas Eve at UUSG

10am Morning Service followed by Potluck Brunch

Enjoy the beauty of our sanctuary and the season with a special service of stories and carols led by Rev. Lindsay and music presented by classical guitarist, Paul Moeller. Paul Moeller received a Graduate Performance Diploma from Peabody, where he spent four years under the tutelage of world-renowned guitarist, Manuel Barrueco. Mr. Moeller holds a Bachelor's degree from NIU and a Master's from the Eastman School of Music. He is currently a Visiting Associate Professor of Guitar at NIU and on faculty at ECC.

4pm - Family Christmas Eve Service

A sweet time for the whole family, especially the little ones. Pianist Dean Malambri.

8pm - Candlelight Choir Christmas Eve Service

Don't miss this UUSG tradition that includes our Choir led by Cynthia Spiegel, accompanied by strings and piano. Come sing along to your favorite hymns and listen to the stories of many talented people coming together to bring you this evening's service led by Rev. Lindsay. This is the day we come together to celebrate the Christian heritage of our church and the traditions with which many of us grew up.

Musicians:

Wendy Evans-Glazier & Mary Phillips, violin

Larry Glazier, cello

John Rosenkrans, bass

Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, piano



Circle Suppers 2018 - Register by December 4!

Circle Suppers involve revolving groupings of participants who take turns hosting or providing a part of the meal for each of four monthly suppers. Participating pairs or singles will be grouped with different participants for each of the four suppers, held in January, February, March, and April.

The designated guests at each supper will be pre-assigned the tasks of bringing salad, entrée, or dessert. Designated hosts may provide hors d'oeuvres, bread or vegetable, etc., as well as china, glassware, flatware, and a place to dine. If you wish to have wine or other adult drinks, BYO.

If you would like to participate in the 2018 Circle Supper Program, as either a "single" or a "pair," and as either a regular or an alternate participant, [please register here.](#)

Each Circle Supper grouping will include 8 participants. When regular participants are unable to make scheduled suppers, the hosts should contact persons or pairs on the alternate list to complete the grouping for their supper. If additional guests are invited, the persons providing meal portions should be advised so that appropriate amounts of food can be prepared.

After the groupings and pairings are made, a complete schedule and instructions will be emailed to each participant. (If you don't have email, please contact Mary Swanson for the schedule and instructions). It's up to each of you to make it work.

If you have questions about your schedule or instructions, please contact [Mary Swanson.](#)



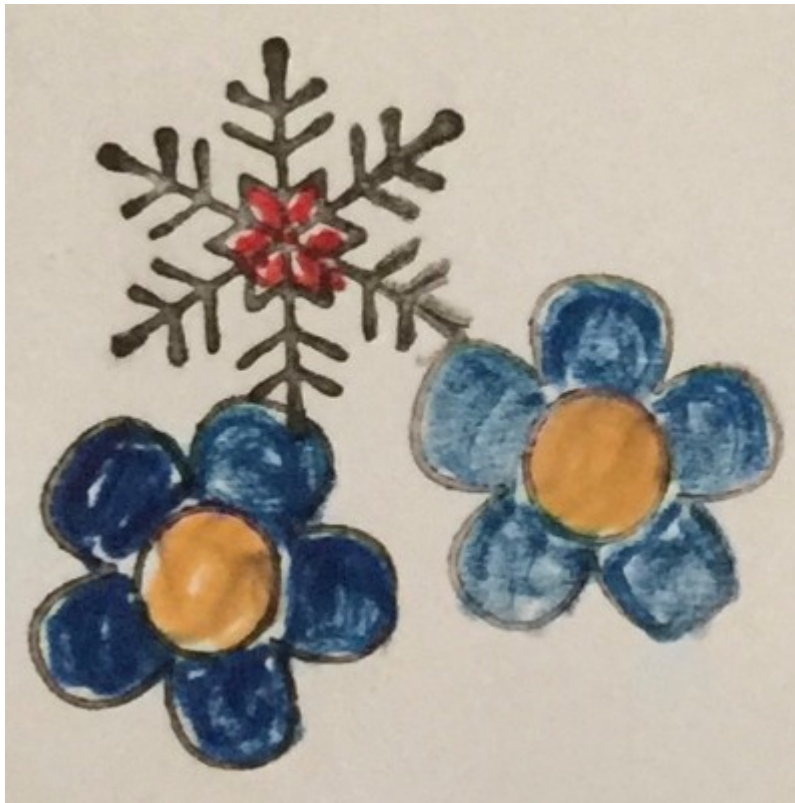
Our House

Tom Lichtenheld and Ron Craig installed an innovative astragal on the sanctuary doors. And what's an astragal? It's a strip of wood, metal, or material that covers the gap between a pair of doors. When the exterior sanctuary doors were closed, there was a ½" gap between them. This gap allowed cold air to flow from the outside, creating an uncomfortable draft in the sanctuary. Since the sanctuary doors were custom made, a custom solution was necessary. Tom and Ron devised one that is both elegant and functional. Check it out the next time you walk into the sanctuary.

We had an unexpected repair. A window on the west side of the common room was struck by a rock, leaving two large cracks that ran the width of the window. Kevin O'Neill worked with a window repair company to have the glass replaced.

The Geneva Fire Department completed a fire and safety inspection and we passed.

The Facilities Team is looking for more members, so if you're interested in preserving our historic site and beautiful sanctuary, then please contact the team.



The Snowfall Project

The Green Sanctuary's postcard campaign, The Snowfall Project, will continue its soft roll out during December. Our next event is Saturday, December 9. Join us any time between 9-10 and 12-1, just before and after the IYC party planning session.

The events have evolved into introductory sessions about the nature of the campaign itself. An ongoing campaign will involve several levels of activity. Let's start at the beginning. The basics:

- It is a postcard campaign where we send individualized cards to our Representatives to share our concern for the environment.
- We will send one to two post cards per month.
- Our GST will supply cards, postage and written samples to use or edit as desired.
- They can be written at home and brought to church.
- Or at a hosted event for those who would care to attend.
- And the church will mail out the cards, just a few, everyday.

The project is designed to be very easy and flexible. We want no one to feel they cannot participate because it is too hard or they do not have the time. Even if you cannot come to church, you can write one small card a month.

As an on-going campaign, it can take on another primary focus, that is developing our own congregational outreach. Sharing an invitation to participate in this campaign may be it's most important aspect. We would

all like something simple, but valuable or important to do.

Planning to launch in January. Hopefully to be shared with Celebration and Worship. There are already several other area churches interested in joining us in this endeavour.



Planning for the Future

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Many of us know that we should plan for our future. However, we always seem to think that the future is far away. The Stewardship Team will host a discussion on Planned Giving and Estate Planning open to all. Ted Kuczek, J.D., will talk about:

- 1) Will planning
- 2) Joint tenancy planning
- 3) Beneficiary designations
- 4) Disability planning
- 5) Living trust planning
- 6) Charitable giving strategies
- 7) Current charitable gifts
- 8) Planned charitable gifts (charitable remainder trust/charitable lead trust)
- 9) Tax efficient charitable planning (from IRAs etc.)
- 10) Health care powers of attorney/living wills

This discussion will surely be a benefit for all who participate. Please plan to attend and invite a friend!



Women's Retreat 2018

Don't forget that the last day to register for the 5th Annual Women's Retreat is **tomorrow, December 1!** There is now a wait-list for overnight spots, but there is still room for non-overnight attendees. You don't want to miss this opportunity to "Discover Your Flow...Pause and Bond with the women of UUSG," January 19-21. Please contact Rachel Harbold at womensretreat@uusg.org if you would like more information. [Register here.](#)

Testimonials:

"The UUSG Women's Retreat has been the highlight of my year. It is a way for me to connect more deeply with other participants, and develop stronger and more "real" friendships. Beyond this, it is a place where I can escape from my busy life, and relax my mind, body and spirit. With the help of our facilitator, Debbie Leoni, I am able to reconnect with my higher self/higher power and feel a true sense of peace and contentment that lasts well beyond the retreat."

- Kathy

"I always receive exactly what I need when I attend. Each year what I need is different, and it varies, but it has been amazing support, quiet time, and deep connection are just a few things I gain by attending."

- Samantha

"2017 was my first UUSG Women's Retreat, and I had no idea what to expect. I found connection with myself, and also with Women at UUSG. These connections are some of the strongest ones I've had in years."

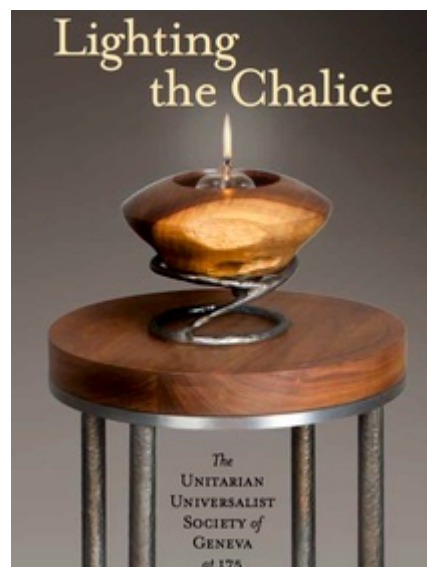
- Rachel



UUSG Holiday Party for Incarcerated Youth

For over 20 years, UUSG has provided support for the young men at the Illinois Youth Center by holding a holiday party for some of the youth who do not receive visitation. Traditionally, we have purchased an item for their Rec Center or needed items for the young men, such as socks or body wash. Without these things life for the kids would be pretty bleak, especially at the holidays. Please help us continue to reach out to these boys, by signing up to help out at the Holiday party on Dec. 16– or by making a donation to help fund our efforts. **In order to participate at the party, you must submit your date of birth and social security number to Melissa Auer before December 1**, as the Center will do a background check.

We strive to let them know that someone cares about them and believes their lives have value. For more information contact Melissa Auer at auermel@yahoo.com, 630-338-2519.



One-Stop Holiday Shopping!

When you're making your holiday shopping list, remember that "Lighting the Chalice" will make a wonderful gift for your UU family and friends.

To purchase, one, two, three or more copies, see Christine in the office. Copies are \$10.



Steeple Walk 2017

Once again UUSG is hosting a musical performance during the Steeple Walk program. This year the Batavia High School Madrigal Singers will entertain us. Three other local churches will host Scott Stevenson (organ), the Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale, and Ruth Cavanaugh and EnsAmble Ad Hoc. Sunday, December 3, \$12 per ticket. For information and tickets contact Gail Tattersfield 630.587.8567.



Interested in UUSG Leadership Roles?

The Nominating Committee is looking for a few good people. We're building a list of members who are "warm" to the idea of serving on the Board, not necessarily next year, but perhaps sometime in the future.

If you're interested in being on that list, please let anyone on the nominating committee know, or you can email the chair, Jim Frazier at jim@jimfrazier.com or call him at 630-452-5595.



Chicago Restaurant Bargain!

Going downtown with your family or a group of friends over the holidays? Want to eat at a great restaurant? New2U has a \$250 gift card at [BLVD](#) for only \$150! BLVD, in the West Loop, draws its inspiration from Hollywood's Sunset Blvd circa 1950, with contemporary cuisine, cocktails, music. Location: 817 West Lake Street. Check it out at [New2U](#).



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 Sunday December 17, after second service about 12:30pm, to walk to a nearby restaurant for lunch. This will be our social gathering for the holidays. We can take the time to enjoy our connections and great conversations during this busy season. For information please contact Lynn Steele at interweave.leader@uusg.org.



Bible Study for UUs: Movie Night!

For UUs who simply want to learn more about the Bible as literature, "Bible Study for UUs" is on the third Monday of each month from 7 to 8:30pm.

Our next meeting will be on December 18. As opposed to our usual reading, we'll be watching "Monty Python's Life of Brian."

For more info, please contact Jim Frazier biblestudy@uusg.org.



UUSG Art Wall

Deann Alleman's oil pastel paintings are currently on display on the Art Wall in the Common Room through January. Anyone that is interested in displaying their artwork, textiles, poetry, or other medium, can sign up with an email to Christine at office@uusg.org.



Equal Exchange Fair Trade

Equal Exchange fair trade SALE: Starts this week. Check out the sale shelves in the Common Room. When purchasing items, please make your check to "UUSG" with "EE/ft" in the memo. Place checks in the coffee can in the armoire. Requests and suggestions are always welcome - please add them to the coffee can.



We Give Thanks

The 5th Annual UUSG Thanksgiving Dinner: Almost 20 UUSG members and friends enjoyed our famous fellowship and fabulous food. We had a rockin' good time until almost 9pm. See you at the 6th annual Thanksgiving Dinner on 11-22-18!



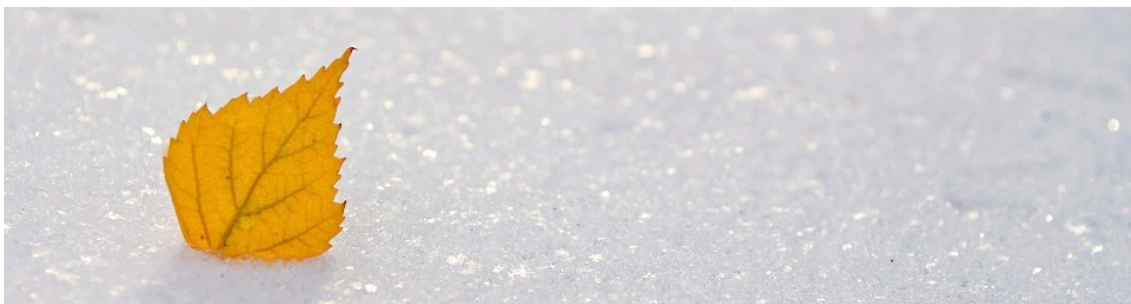
Recycle Styrofoam at UUSG

Styrofoam Recycling is here! See the blue container on the back porch. If the bin is full, please do not leave loose styrofoam or open bags on the porch.



Peace Vigil at First Congregational Church

UUSG has been invited to participate in a peace vigil that The First Congregational Church of Geneva is hosting on Sunday, December 3, at 5pm. The purpose of the vigil is to remember those who have been impacted by violence in the last year, especially the victims of the recent mass shootings.



The Office Report with Christine Imielski

We are excited to invite you to UUSG's own private social network: **Realm**.

What is Realm?

Realm is our new church management system. It allows easy communication with others in our church community, access to a church directory with your contact information and other personal details you decide to show, and the

ability to easily stay on top of what's going on at UUSG. Realm allows you to manage your personal information and who is allowed to see it, communicate with Ministry Teams and UUSG Community Groups, and RSVP to UUSG Events and Team Meetings.

Why use Realm?

We know that signing up for yet another online platform can be a hassle—but [we have created a tutorial to help you get started](#). Improved communication within UUSG is one major improvement that Realm will provide. As you may know, the e-forwarders that UUSG utilizes (facilities@uusg.org, finance@uusg.org, etc.) are often unreliable and can be hacked by spammers. The transition to **Realm will provide a more secure communication** method and allow Team Leaders and members to view a list of who they are emailing.

What about privacy?

Your privacy is one of our greatest concerns. Realm is only made up of the people in UUSG; it's not like a social network that's open to everyone. Realm keeps your data and information safe and gives you control over what information you share and who can see it.

How do I start?

If you haven't received an invitation to join Realm yet:

1. Email Christine Imielski at office@uusg.org to request an invitation.
2. You will receive an invitation e-mail with a subject line saying "Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva: Join our Online Community!" The message will include a link to create your account.
3. On your computer: follow the link to create your account and enter the information you wish.
4. On your devices: visit <http://onelink.to/connectapp> to download the mobile app called Realm Connect.
5. Review your profile to make sure that UUSG has your correct address and other personal information entered correctly. If anything is incorrect, you can change it there.
6. If you have any questions, contact Christine Imielski at office@uusg.org or Dave Davis, Communications Team Leader, at davdav630@aol.com.

UUSG Member Bill Pokorny created this very helpful tutorial on setting up your account. https://docs.google.com/document/d/16xyuPt7_-QPNvljnFUZLuY_6J7ORtdw1HJ0Ob2CfCVk/edit#



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The MailChimp logo is centered within a light gray rectangular box. The logo itself is the word "MailChimp" in a white, cursive script font.