



THE PIONEER

December 2008/January 2009

Holiday Greetings from Your UUSG Staff!

Lindsay

Yurika

Adam

*May your holidays be filled
with joy, hope, contentment,
and thanksgiving.*

Jojo

Clarice

*And may your Christmas wishes
be grand and worthy
of the New Year's rededications.*

Allendy

Katie

Jan

Sandi

Amy

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Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Services

5 PM – our “Family Friendly” service especially for young children

8 PM – Candlelight Choir Service

10 PM – Candlelight Meditative Service

Saturday, December 27, & Sunday, December 28

Special Intergenerational Services led by Rev. Adam

Staff Hours

Our LRE Administrator, Sandi Sumner, will be on Winter Break through January 3 and will not be checking email or phone messages.

In addition to her regular days off (Fridays & Saturdays), Katie Phillips, our Congregational Administrator, will not be working on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and January 4th. Katie's hours between Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be irregular. Please call first if you need to stop by.

Religious Education Announcements and Upcoming Events

Supporting the Next Generations of UUs! Time to Explore Teaching or to Sign Up as a Teacher...

Believe it or not, we're starting to fill our teaching teams for the spring term—and we hope that you'll join us in teaching this spring. As part of a three- or four-person teaching team, you'll be able to teach regularly and attend services regularly as well. Just like this past fall, without three or four teachers per class, we will have to cancel or combine classes.

If you have a degree of patience, a love of learning and fun, and an ability to treat children and youth with respect for their experience and intelligence while understanding that they still need guidance, then you've got the foundation of being a good church school teacher. We can help you learn the rest.

A Chance to Learn a New Skill...

Are you thinking about teaching UU church school, but have questions? Want to learn the skills needed for a successful teaching experience? Or, have you taught before but it's been a while? Then please join us for a discussion/learning session about teaching UU church school on **Wednesday, January 7, 7-9pm.**

Sign up on the LRE board in the Common Room or by contacting Rev. Adam or Sandi Sumner. There will be a classroom demonstration presented by a small group of teachers, Rev. Adam will talk about the Ministry of LRE, and Sandi Sumner will cover the administrative piece of the program. Talk to Rev. Adam or Sandi for more details. (Attending this session does not commit you to teaching, but we hope you'll want to after learning what it's all about!)

Great! You've Signed Up to Teach This Spring...Now What?

Please plan to join us for the LRE Teacher Planning Workshop on **Sunday, January 25, 1-3pm.** This is a great opportunity for teaching teams to meet each other, complete the team teaching planning calendar, and visit/organize your classroom. Rev. Adam will be available to answer questions, and Sandi Sumner, LRE Administrator, will briefly review the administrative piece of the program. Refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing you!

The Teacher Sign-Up Sheet is on the Volunteer Opportunities Bulletin Board in the Common Room. Please sign up as soon as you're able!

Get Involved in the New Year: Small Group Ministry

It's a new year, and our Small Group Ministry has room for you to join in once a month on either a Thursday or Saturday.

Small Group Ministry (SGM) is a way for growing church communities to make sure that people can be connected in close circles as well as be part of a vibrant and large congregation. In a small group meeting, 6 to 10 participants discuss issues and topics of their choice in a structured format that provides time to get to know each other and have in-depth conversations about things that matter.

At the heart of healthy congregations, we find people who are part of close relationships with others in the congregation. SGM is an especially good way to get to know other members and friends of UUSG if you are new to the community or to discover people anew if you've been here a while. Questions? Want to get involved? Contact Rev. Adam!

Upcoming Adult & Youth LRE Events

Dec 28, 12:15pm	YRUU Joys & Concerns
Dec 30, 7:00pm	In the Name of Peace: Book Club & Shawl Ministry
Jan 4, 1:00pm	UU Atheism/Humanism Study Group
Jan 7, 7:00pm	"Intro to Teaching UU Church School" (Snow date: Friday, January 9)
Jan 7, 7:30pm	UU Paganism Study Group
Jan 10, 6:30pm	Junior High Youth Group
Jan 16, 7:00pm	Friday Flicks: "Afghan Stories"
Jan 17, 6:30pm	Games Night!
Jan 25, 1:00pm	LRE Teacher Planning Workshop
Jan 27, 7:00pm	In the Name of Peace: Book Club & Shawl Ministry
Jan 28, 7:00pm	LRE Committee Meeting

Weekly Adult RE Opportunities

Every Monday at 7:00pm in the Common Room:
Adult RE: "Still Living in the Present Moment"

Every Wednesday at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary:
Buddhist Meditation & Study Group

Guest At Your Table

Who is the Guest at Your Table? During this holiday season, many of our UUSG members are remembering the needs of people throughout the world who are helped by the UU Service Committee (UUSC). To honor these unseen guests, at each meal we are placing donations in special boxes.

The money collected will go to the UUSC, which partners

- with programs helping those who have lost jobs and homes in the violence in Kenya,
- with organizations who have built tents of hope for survivors in Darfur,
- with farmers throughout the world seeking fair trade for their products,
- with groups in South America who are working to ensure fair access to water, and
- with people in our country who are working to raise the minimum wage and to rebuild New Orleans.

On January 11, please tally your household's donations, write a check payable to "UUSC" and bring it to church. Guest at Your Table participants can become members of UUSC with membership-level contributions. Basic UUSC annual membership rates are:

\$40 — Regular (1 adult)

\$75 — Dual regular (2 adults)

\$20 — Senior (65 and over)

\$10 — Student (high school and up) and youth

All individual and family unrestricted contributions of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

Questions? Please contact Sandi Sumner, LRE Administrator, at 630-232-2350 x224 or lre@uusg.org.

Unitarian Universalist Christianity Study Group

We are a group of people drawn together to explore and reflect on our various Christian backgrounds in the context of Unitarian Universalism. Many of us identify with the words of Thomas Moore: "...each spiritual achievement, developed over centuries of intellectual and moral struggle, has its validity and value."

Books of interest have helped focus our discussions. Last year we read and discussed Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time by Marcus Borg and Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels.

Another of our resources has been the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, an affiliate of the UUA. Because we are diverse, our discussions become the most interesting part of our get-togethers! We encourage others to join us.

We meet the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00pm. For more info, contact Joanne Erickson at uuchristianity@uusg.org.

Guest Speaker

The UU Buddhist Meditation & Study Group would like to invite the congregation to join us for what promises to be an inspiring and interesting evening.

On Wednesday, February 18 at 7:00pm, we will welcome David Pyle to UUSG. David, a Zen Buddhist practitioner, is currently training to become a UU minister and military chaplain and will lead a workshop on living our UU faith using the Precepts of Zen Buddhism as a model.

We hope that you will join us!

Coming in January – Self-Hypnosis Workshop

Are you looking for some help changing habits, improving motivation and performance, handling stress, improving your sleep? Would you like to learn the basics for teaching your conscious and subconscious mind to work cooperatively to help you achieve your personal goals? Dr. Bates (a Board-certified Consulting Hypnotist who's been using hypnotism as part of her pastoral ministry here at UUSG since 1995) is offering a 2 ½ hour Introduction to Self-Hypnosis Workshop on Saturday, January 31, 10am-12:30pm.

Child-care will **not** be provided; we ask that small children be left at home, to avoid distractions while we're working. Older children and youth (8 years or older), however, with written permission of a parent or guardian, are welcome to participate.

You do not need to have prior experience with hypnosis, nor do you have to be a member or active friend of UUSG – but you **do** have to preregister! There is an absolute maximum of 25 participants. We'll have a sign-up list in the Common Room after the 1st of the year, or call the office to be put on the list.

Paper Pulpit**the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates****Come, Let Us Dream Together . . .**

Do you remember the invitation from last month's PIONEER? Our Committee on Ministries is inviting you all into conversations leading into both our Canvass for the 2009-10 church year and our next Long Range Plan, exploring where we believe we should be in the next 5, 10, 20 years. These facilitated conversations will include your stories of your involvement – in particular, those things that have given you encouragement, inspiration, comfort and joy – as well as your thoughts about what we do well as a community that could guide us in new directions and your hopes for where we might make our ministries together even stronger.

There are 3 "Dreaming Conversations" on the calendar: Tuesday, January 27, from 1 until 3 in the afternoon; again on the 27th from 7 until 9 PM; and Sunday, February 8, from 1 until 3 PM. Sign-up sheets will be available in early January, and for those who need childcare, if you'll let us know, we'll do our best to provide it.

These conversations are especially important as I prepare for my sabbatical. Part of my work is already planned – beginning to learn conversational Spanish and studying the Native American flute. But part of it also is deep reflection about the next chapter in my ministry and our ministry together. These conversations will help us all be thinking about what comes next in our UUSG story. We're facing a lot of limitations – resources, volunteer time, space, cultural expectations & pressures to name only a few. We need to be exploring and intentionally planning for our future. Shall we hunker down, protect what we've got (and stagnate)? Or shall we do the challenging and exciting work of finding other ways to grow in community, in service, in spirit, and in faith?

I suspect you know what my answer would be – but yours is the more important response.

As you think about your dreams for our religious community, I offer you these words from Margaret Wheatley, in *Turning to One Another*:

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters to you.

Talk to people you know.

Talk to people you don't know.

Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity.

Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.

Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.

Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.

Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.

Rely on human goodness.

Stay together.

Peace ~ **LB**

Social Justice News

How Can You Top This (Potato)?

Save the Date and Time:

Saturday, January 31, 2009, 6:30pm

Coming soon to a Common Room near you:

THIS SPUD'S FOR YOU!

Similar to our successful Super Summer Salad Supper in August, This Spud's For You will be a participation potato potluck that is sure to warm hearts in the middle of winter. Guests will bring the baked potatoes, potato toppings, a salad, dessert, or beverages to share with the group. The evening will highlight programs at Lazarus House Homeless Shelter, and we will have an opportunity to meet with Darlene Marcusson, founder and director of the shelter. Spud toppers will also be asked to bring an item from the Needs List on the Lazarus House website at <http://www.lazarushouse.org/Donations/NeedsList.asp>.

Watch for more details after the New Year!

If you wish to help us out, please contact Gail Tattersfield through the office at 630-232-2350 or office@uusg.org.

How to Recycle Lotions & Shampoos

On "Boxing Day" – December 26 – you may find yourself confronting the annual question – what to do with well-meaning gifts of lotions, creams, and fruitcake? While we can't help with the fruitcake, the Social Justice Committee is collecting unopened lotions and shampoos for the temporary residents of Mutual Ground Shelter for abused women in Aurora. Look for the basket in the "northern" armoire in the Common Room.

"Afghan Stories"

Friday Flick on January 16 at 7pm

As fighting and casualties increase in Afghanistan, we focus on events since 2001 in that country. The film gives a face to the struggle by introducing us to a member of the Afghan royal family who was tortured by the Taliban, a refugee couple, a father who is dedicated to peace and his soldier son, an aid worker, U.S. soldiers, and Afghan warlords. Join us as we examine "the other" U.S. war.

Recognizing the Dignity and Worth of Inmates at the Illinois Youth Center

On Saturday, December 20, 16 members and friends of UUSG celebrated the holidays with boys at the Illinois Youth Center. During December, our congregation raised more than \$2700, which was used to purchase 300 hats and gloves – enough for all of the boys in the Center. Gifts from our congregation in past years have proven to be so popular with the boys that they reappeared on this year's wish list from the Center. So in addition to the hats and gloves, we provided another popcorn maker and 18 softball mitts. This year, Zylstra Harley-Davidson in St. Charles contributed to our effort and helped purchase some more softball mitts as well as basketballs.

Boys at the Youth Center who do not receive visits from friends or family were invited to the party. They each selected from books donated by Literacy Volunteers, and they were given gift bags containing games, puzzles, candy, notepaper, decks of cards, and socks.

This successful social justice ministry was made possible thanks to the congregation's generous "Beyond Our Walls" collection and to "Ornaments, Etc." sales. Special thanks are due to a number of people who contributed their time and talents to the project this year: Melissa Auer, Bill & Katie Baar, Laura Bartoszek, Kevin Beyer, Joe Eddy Brown, Sherri Casterline, Kathy Cornell, William Elbert, Ruth Fitzpatrick, Kate and Jim Frazier, Lisa Gades, Diane Kenney Handler, Tiny Leidolf, Doris Lipman, Eleanor Lukazewski, Maureen McKeough, Joan McInnes, Jeanne Neltner, Jerry Nordengren, Julie Riffle, Lisa Rittenberry, Donna and Will Roman, Jan Pritchard Voogd, and Diana Wesley.

Picture This: Universal Human Rights

In recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UU Service Committee is sponsoring a photo contest for young people ages 12 to 18. To see a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which shares some of its wording with our UU principles, see

http://www.uusc.org/universal_declaration_of_human_rights_preamble.

For rules and information about the contest, see

http://www.uusc.org/content/uusc_udhr_60th_anniversary_youth_photo_contest.

More Social Justice News

Poll About Statements of Conscience in January

Should the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) develop and vote on “Statements of Conscience” that are used to inform reactions to political policies? Mechanisms for creating Statements of Conscience have been part of the UUA bylaws for the past 10 years, and this congregation has been working to clarify its own ideas regarding the proposed Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking. Now the UUA has asked us to vote on whether the Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking should be placed on the agenda for the 2009 General Assembly. They are NOT asking whether we endorse the statement of conscience. They are simply asking whether time should be created to discuss and vote on it at the annual meeting.

This raises a larger issue. Some members of UUSG are strongly opposed to the UUA’s Statements of Conscience which attempt to represent a collective UU conscience.

Some of the arguments AGAINST Statements of Conscience include:

- If we are gathered “not as agreeing in opinion,” it is not possible to develop a statement which both represents our wide diversity of opinions and is specific enough to inform statements reacting to U.S. policies and events as they arise.
- Elected officials of the UUA are welcome to express their own opinions or to advise us about how our UU heritage and traditions might inform our advice to the government, but they should not act as if they are speaking on our behalf.
- We want to hear what UUA is going to say before handing them a “blank check” to speak based on a vague statement of conscience.

Arguments SUPPORTING Statements of Conscience include:

- Statements of Conscience clarify our shared values and can inform statements made by elected officials on our behalf.
- Our elected officials don't always have the time or resources to get our approval each time they are asked to represent UUs on a specific issue. When they do, they ask for responses to an “Action of Immediate Witness.”
- We trust our elected leaders to give a voice to UU values as expressed in Statements of Conscience.

The draft of the current UUA Statement of Conscience can be found at

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/peacemaking/121606.shtml>

You can search through previous Statements of Conscience, Actions of Immediate Witness, and Resolutions at <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/index.php>

You can view recent statements made by the UUA through <http://feeds.feedburner.com/uua/Lxnn>.

On the Social Justice bulletin board in January, you will have an opportunity to express your opinion.

Social Justice Action Alert: Minimum Wage \$10 by 2010

Let Justice Roll, an interfaith coalition working to raise the minimum wage, is asking faith leaders, business leaders, and all members of the general public to endorse an effort to raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour by 2010. In 2004, Congress voted to raise the minimum wage in three stages, to reach **\$7.25** in **July 2009**. But at that time, after adjusting for inflation, the minimum wage will be at the same level it was in 1997 – far too low for a decent standard of living. Please endorse a minimum wage of **\$10 in 2010** by going to www.ucc.org/justice/worker-justice/minimum-wage.html.

Tracey McFadden, for the Social Justice Committee

A Bit More Social Justice News

Just in Time for New Year's Resolutions: Social Justice Volunteer Opportunities

The RSVP program will continue to provide opportunities for UUSG-ers to volunteer for local organizations in the spring. Please sign up on the Social Justice bulletin board, through the UUSG website (<http://content.uusg.org/rsvp-program/>) or by contacting Lisa Gades (maikoda@gmail.com). See photos on the website to get an idea of what volunteers do at the Food Bank.

Date	Location	Ages	Requirements	Activities
Jan. 17 8:45am-12pm	Northern Illinois Food Bank 600 Industrial Dr. St. Charles, IL	14 & older	Must wear closed-toed shoes	Sort and package food for distribution to food pantries
Feb. 21 2-4pm	Common Room at UUSG	All ages – children will help decorate cards and gifts.	Please bring enough wrapping paper and ribbon for 5 gifts. (Gifts will be provided by the Humanitarian Service Project)	Carefully wrap 60-80 birthday presents for indigent children served by the Humanitarian Service Project
March 21 8:45am-12pm	Northern Illinois Food Bank 600 Industrial Dr. St. Charles, IL	14 & older	Must wear closed-toed shoes	Sort and package food for distribution to food pantries

Pottawatomie Habitat for Humanity Update

The walls are going up and volunteers are needed for the house that is now underway in St. Charles. The site is located on Dean Street, just west of 15th Street. Work begins about 8am each Saturday, weather permitting, and lasts until mid-afternoon.

Lunch is provided. If you are available, please show up at the site on any Saturday, introduce yourself, and someone will put you to work. Bring a hammer and dress for working outdoors in whatever weather.



Questions?
Contact Joan McInnes through the office at 630-232-2350 or office@uusg.org.

Literacy Volunteers Needed!

Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley needs volunteers to help adults read, write, and speak English more effectively. They will supply training, materials, a meeting location, and an adult who wants to learn. You will contribute about one hour of your time each week for tutoring in addition to any preparation time you may need. Several of our church members have become tutors and have found it to be quite satisfying. For more information from a church member, contact Joan McInnes through the office at 630-232-2350 or office@uusg.org.

Upcoming training workshops are scheduled for January 19, 22, 26, & 29 from 6:30pm to 9pm at the St. Charles Library. If you would like to register, send your name, home address, email address, and phone number to COKER46@aol.com or call Peg Coker at Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley at 630-584-4428

For more information and to see a 3-minute video about the tutor experience, go to <http://www.lfvf.org> and click on "Learn More."

Cookie Walk Summary

Despite the bitter cold, this year's Cookie Walk was a great success, netting almost \$2500! We had a record number of cookies promised (576 dozen) and more than 600 dozen were delivered. This year's cookies were "the most beautiful assortment I've ever seen," said Sherri Casterline, who co-chaired the Cookie Walk with Elba Karim.

We couldn't have done it without our Cookie Walk co-chairs, Elba Karim and Sherri Casterline, who organized the event and made sure that it ran smoothly! Special thanks also go to Rhonda Robinson & David deCoriolis, who asked Mayor Kevin Burns to mention us while he was onstage during the tree-lighting. Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this fundraiser a success:



Bakers: Renae Anastasia, Pam Anderson, Melissa Auer, Katie & Emma Baar, Kathy Basil, Melinda Beck, Pauline Berberian, Colleen Besic, Betty Bristol, Jill Brown, Jim Burke, Barbara Campbell, Sherri Casterline, Ann Drover, William Elbert, Joanne Erickson, Wendy Evans-Glazier, Kate Frazier, Marcia Friedman, Nancy Gher, Jinny Gilgan, Nancy Goodfellow, Amy Hong, Monica Jenkins, Jen Johnson, Jordan Karim, Laura Laughlin, Gloria Mansfield, Kathy Meier, Kristy Michael, Jan Miller, Jenny Montgomery, Karen Moore, Wendy Mosier, Jeanne Neltor, Jerry Nordengren, Linda O'Neill, Susan O'Neill, Julie Overcash, Glenda Peck, Diane Peters, Jean Pierce, Jen Reiner, Rhonda Robinson, Donna Román, Tom Russo, Janet Shanahan, Cynthia Spiegel, Gail Tattersfield, Pam Tilbrook, David Tomell, Cara Whiting, Anne Wilson-Dooley, Marty Zack, and Molly MacKay Zacker

Thursday's Volunteers: Emma Baar, Katie Baar, Betty Bristol, Kate Frazier, Nancy Goodfellow, Jen Johnson, Vohny Moehling, Glenda Peck, Tracy Rosenkrans, and David Tomell

Friday's Volunteers: Emma Baar, Katie Baar, Colleen Besic, David deCoriolis, , Ann Drover, Nancy Goodfellow, Sharon Hansen, Amy Hong, Beth Johnson, Sally Jones, Jordan Karim, Joan McCullough, Kathleen McFadden, Joan McInnes, Kathy Meier, Vohny Moehling, Karen Moore, Jeanne Neltor, Betty Nordengren, Pat O'Malley, Tom & Diane Peters, Lisa Rittenberry, Rhonda Robinson, Lauren Schrock, and Pat Ward

Circles of Life

We were saddened to learn of the death of Connie McFadden just a few days before Thanksgiving. For many years Connie had helped Roger Robbins live with the aftereffects of his stroke, was an occasional visitor to UUSG, and was a friend to many in Roger's circle of friends. A memorial service for Connie will be held at our church at 2pm on Saturday, December 27.

A service celebrating the life of Ellen MacGregor was led by Dr. Bates on December 15. Ellen, who died on December 1, had been a member of UUSG for nearly 25 years. Before poor health stopped her active participation, Ellen had been part of our Choir, our Women's Guild, Circle Suppers, Social Justice projects, and much more. She was a dear friend to many of us, and she is already greatly missed.

Ed Kendall is recovering from his hip surgery at Rest Haven West in Downers Grove. Contact information is available in our office – give Katie a call if you need the phone or the address. Cards, calls, and visits from friends are all welcome! We'll need to activate the Errand-Runners and the Casserole Brigade for Ed once he's able to return home to St. Charles. If you'd like to be included in the group helping Ed, please let Katie know.

Bev Coe will have surgery at the end of December for a cochlear implant. Notes & cards & emails are welcome as she and Peter continue to deal with her sudden loss of hearing.

Who In the World Are We? ...in the larger world/in our UUSG world?

Beginning on **Sunday, February 8th** we attempt to answer some questions and help you know more about us! Both of our ministers and various members of UUSG will be with us to give synopses of Unitarian Universalism history and the history of our own church over 4 consecutive sessions, February 8, 15, 22, & March 1. (Can't do them all? That's ok—we repeat them in the fall.)

We will also hear about our Religious Education classes for children, youth, and adults, and about our involvement with social justice and environmental programs.

These sessions provide a quick & condensed look at who we are.

We will meet on Sundays, February 8, 15, 22, & March 1.

Join us for a light lunch at 12:30pm, followed by the program from 1pm to 3pm.
Childcare will be provided.

Session 1: February 8

Sharing Spiritual Journeys

Tradition Sources and Lindsay's Personal Journey—the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

Session 2: February 15

A Brief History of Unitarian/Universalism—Rev. Adam Robersmith
Continuum of Beliefs

Session 3: February 22

History of UUSG ministers with Al Drover and his famous puppets!
History of our building with Harry Shumaker and his famous walking tour!

Session 4: October 26

Potluck!

The Church Institutional (or “How does anything get done around here?”)
Ways to Get Involved

You may stop at the Membership Table in the middle of the Common Room to talk with someone about our meetings or to ask questions you have about us. We'll show you to the sign-up sheet at “Clipboard Central” in the Common Room if you are thinking about joining us!

A Update on the “New” Property

There have been a lot of questions lately about what we're going to do with the new 18'x100' piece of property to the west of our building. We're hoping eventually to build there!

In the meantime, although it would be wonderful to use that land as a “casual” parking lot, unfortunately, we aren't able to do that due to restrictions from the City of Geneva.

WINTER WEATHER CLOSING POLICY

Because we're a regional congregation, with many of our folks traveling a considerable distance to get to Geneva, we do have a policy for winter weather. If the wind chill in the greater Chicago area is colder than 40 degrees below zero, or if travel advisories have been issued because of snow or wind, we cancel all church events, including any committee meetings, office hours, Saturday evening or Sunday morning religious education, and Saturday or Sunday worship. During the week, if you're not sure about the severity of the weather, please check with your group's convener before heading for a winter meeting

If Saturday or Sunday activities are canceled, we'll try to get that information onto our homepage (www.uusg.org) and the Congregational Administrator's voicemail message (call the church office at 630-232-2350 and then press 1-0-0 to hear the message). But when in doubt, please stay home!

Volunteer Headquarters

Volunteer Appreciation

A great big THANK YOU to some of this month's volunteers!

George Hickman, who spread mulch under the shrubs to keep our garden protected over the winter

Elba Karim & Sherri Casterline, who organized and ran the Cookie Walk this year—you're amazing!

Hillary Johnston, for coming up with so many terrific ideas to publicize the Cookie Walk and other upcoming events

Karen Moore & Karin Kemp, who spent a Saturday creating the beautiful displays in the urns outside the Sanctuary

All of this year's Cookie Walk bakers and volunteers— see page 8 for a full list of those who helped make this our most successful year ever!

Julie Riffle & Sherri Casterline, for helping to host the intermission during the Bittersweet Christmas Band Benefit Concert for Mutual Ground on Friday, December 19th.

All our Greeters and Social Hour Hosts, for making UUSG a welcoming place

All our Teachers, for helping raise the next generation of Unitarian Universalists!

Do You Enjoy Writing?

Then consider joining our Press Release Crew! We're working hard to get UUSG more publicity through the local papers and we need volunteers to write press releases for special events, activities, and fundraisers.

If you can help by writing 1-4 releases/year, talk to Katie in the office.

Just a Touch-Up

Some of our Common Room chairs could use some touching up on the wooden arms—if you can help by volunteering a few hours, let Katie know (instructions and materials provided).

Helping Out In the Office

Our Congregational Administrator, Katie Phillips, is seeking a regular volunteer to help her with the Mini-Pioneer once a month. If you are available on the 3rd Thursday of each month to fold the Mini, please contact Katie at 630-232-2350 or office@uusg.org.

Joining the Communications Committee

If you're interested in brainstorming ideas about how we can best let the world know about UUSG, talk to Hillary Johnston (ComCom chair) or Katie Phillips about joining the Communications Committee.

Happy Hosting!

In order to provide hospitality after our services, we need your continuing help! All we really must have is the coffee and tea, set-up, and, after the noon social hour, clean-up. Food treats are entirely optional. Here are the current upcoming openings:

- 2 hosts on Saturday, 12/27, after the 5pm service
- 2 hosts on Sunday, 12/28, after the 9am service
- 2 hosts on Sunday, 12/28, after the 11am service
- 1 host on Saturday, 1/3, after the 5pm service
- 2 hosts on Sunday, 1/4, after the 9am service
- 2 hosts on Saturday, 1/10, after the 5pm service
- 2 hosts on Sunday, 1/11, after the 9am service
- 2 hosts on Sunday, 1/11, after the 11am service

Getting to Know YoUU...

As the congregation grows, it becomes more challenging for your staff to put faces to names—there are so many new people and we want to know each and every one of you! It always helps if you wear your nametag, but we'd also like to add photos to our database so we can easily see who's who. The pictures will not be made public and will just be used to jog memories.

If you can email us a picture of yourself and/or your family to office@uusg.org, we'd appreciate it!

The next Pioneer deadline is Friday, January 18 at 9:00 am.
Please send all articles to BOTH office@uusg.org AND minister@uusg.org.
This deadline is **FIRM** unless you make other arrangements with Katie!

Green Corner

How Green Are Your Electronics?

From Greenpeace International – Find more info at

www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/electronics/how-the-companies-line-up

If you're planning on buying electronics this new year and sustainability is one of the factors you'd like to consider, then check out the latest version of Greenpeace's [Guide to Greener Electronics](#).

[Greenpeace](#) has been ranking major manufacturers of personal computers, cell phones, televisions, and game consoles since 2006. The environmental activist group updates its results four times a year. Follow the links for details on [criteria used to rank companies](#) and for a PDF of the [full report](#). Ratings are based on each company's policy on the following three issues:

Elimination of toxic chemicals from products.

(Hazardous substances make it difficult to safely recycle products.)

Highest rated: [Sony Ericsson](#), [Nokia](#), and [Toshiba](#).

Lowest rated: [Nintendo](#), [HP](#), [Dell](#), and [Lenovo](#).

Ability to take back products and responsibly recycle them once they become obsolete.

Highest rated: [Samsung](#), [LGE](#), [Sony](#), Dell, and Nokia.

Lowest rated: Nintendo, [Philips](#), and [Microsoft](#).

Efforts to reduce the climate impacts of products and operations.

Highest marks: Philips, Nokia, Toshiba, and [Panasonic](#).

Lowest marks: Nintendo, Microsoft, and Lenovo.

Greenpeace says that most consumer electronics manufacturers have gradually improved their performance on toxic chemicals and recycling, but there is room for improvement when it comes to addressing climate change. Only a minority of companies are adequately responding to the issue despite green marketing claims. Greenpeace International campaigner Casey Harrell is disappointed that "such innovative companies are moving so slowly on climate and energy issues."

Here's the breakdown for overall scores:

Highest ranked: Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Toshiba, and Samsung.

Lowest ranked: Nintendo, Microsoft, Lenovo, Philips, and [Apple](#).

Most improved: [Motorola](#), [Toshiba](#), and [Sharp](#).

Some caveats:

- Nintendo scores so low because Greenpeace uses publicly available data and Nintendo discloses much less information than the other 17 companies Greenpeace ranks.
- Philips is a leader when it comes to energy and chemicals. Greenpeace reports that even a modest score on waste would put it in the top 3, but the company scores "abysmally low" in that category.



Green Corner (continued)

Make a New Year's Resolution to Save Energy and Money the Green Way! Here Are Some Ideas:

Saving energy in small and large ways can add up to less expensive utility bills and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Flipping out the lights when you leave a room, turning off your computer when you're not using it, and other habit changes are definitely part of the solution. But there are also plenty of devices on the market that can do the work for you.

Here's a round-up of easy-to-find gadgets. They may seem a bit mundane, but some have new twists and others are old standbys that can help you save energy without much effort.

Light dimmer. Dimming your lights saves energy, although how much depends on how much you dim them and what kind of dimmer you have. Older dimmers don't save energy, but newer models do, says Christina Kielich of the [U.S. Department of Energy](#).

Motion-sensor light. People can use them in places where there's infrequent traffic (like the laundry room) and then they don't have to remember to turn the lights out, says Kielich. They're also great for [outside](#) use too because they activate only when motion is detected and don't operate during the daytime. (Another outside lighting idea is solar powered LEDs. Solar power is converted into electrical energy and stored in the rechargeable battery.)

Power Strip. They range from basic to high-tech. Some have the ability to know when your computer goes into sleep mode or is turned off and can then shut down power to peripherals that are plugged into the same strip. You can find one with an [occupancy sensor](#) that turns off after a designated time period or even a system with a [remote control](#).

Programmable thermostat. If you [program it properly](#), you can save as much as 5% a year on your heating bill.

Solar-powered charger. You can power your handheld electronics with power from the sun rather than (or in addition to) the grid. An added benefit: It comes in handy when you're on the go and you run out of juice.

Habitat Restoration

Dick Young Forest Preserve and Nelson Lake Marsh

Each Tuesday at 1:00pm, the Kane County Forest Preserve hosts an outdoor workday for volunteers, under the direction of a site steward. They clear invasive plant species and restore the preserve to its natural state. Children must be accompanied by adults. Volunteers should wear closed-toe shoes & long pants, and bring a pair of work gloves. For more information, contact the Kane County Forest Preserve Volunteer Coordinator, Julia Bourque, at 630-762-2741.

Fermilab Habitat Restoration

http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/habitat_restoration.html

Help to revive natural areas at Fermilab by clearing away non-native brush to encourage native woodland flowers and trees to grow.

Meet at the Lederman Science Center on the 3rd Saturday of every month, 9am-12pm.

Doughnuts and coffee will be served. You will then work until noon on different areas around the site that need our attention. Wear field clothing and gloves. For more information, call Barb Kristen at 630-840-3199. In case of bad weather on the scheduled dates, call the Fermilab switchboard at (630) 840-3000 regarding cancellation.

Our calendar is provided on the next page, and is current as of December 22, 2008. For the most up-to-date calendar information, please visit our Website Calendar – go to www.uusg.org and follow the links to the Interactive Online Calendar. You can download a printable version if you like; the Calendar site has the instructions.

NEXT PIONEER DEADLINE

The deadline for submission to this monthly newsletter, the PIONEER, is generally 9:00 a.m. on the third Friday of the month.

The next deadline for articles is **Friday, January 16th, at 9:00 a.m.**

JANUARY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> 9:00 AM & 11 AM Intergenerational Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:15 PM YRUU Joys & Concerns	29 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> <i>Ministers' Sabbath</i> 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment"	30 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> 3:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM In the Name of Peace: Book Club & Shawl Ministry	31 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> <i>Office Closed</i> <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:30 PM GAS AA	1 <i>Associate Minister's Day Off</i> <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> New Year's Day <i>Office Closed</i>	2 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	3 <i>LRE Administrator on Winter Break</i> 1:00 PM Committee on Ministries Meeting 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM
4 <i>Office Closed</i> 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:30 PM Peacemaking Discussion Group 1:00 PM UU Atheism/Humanism Study Group	5 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:30 PM Technology Committee Meeting	6 3:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Sacred Harp Singing 7:30 PM Program & Administrative Councils	7 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM Buddhist Meditation and Study Group 7:00 PM Intro to Teaching UU Church School 7:30 PM GAS AA 7:30 PM UU Paganism Study Group	8 <i>Associate Minister's Day Off</i> 9:30 AM Private Meeting 7:00 PM Reiki Share 7:00 PM Small Group Ministry	9 8:00 PM Cooper, Nelson, & Early Concert	10 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM 6:30 PM Junior High Youth Group
11 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 10:30 AM Finance Committee Meeting 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:15 PM Facilities Committee Meeting 12:30 PM Membership Committee Meeting 12:30 PM Social Justice Committee Meeting 2:00 PM Lay Ministers' Meeting 7:00 PM 2nd Sunday (Story Tellers) Covenant Group	12 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 1:30 PM Women's Guild 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:00 PM Reiki Discussion Group	13 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 3:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:30 PM Board of Directors	14 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM Buddhist Meditation and Study Group 7:30 PM GAS AA	15 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> <i>Associate Minister's Day Off</i> 7:15 PM WomenSpirit Rising	16 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 9:00 AM PIONEER deadline 7:00 PM Friday Flicks	17 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 8:45 AM RSVP: Northern Illinois Food Bank 3:30 PM Small Group Ministry 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM 6:30 PM Games Night!
18 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:30 PM Communications Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Reiki Share	19 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> Martin L. King, Jr. Day 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:00 PM UU Christianity Study Group	20 <i>Associate Minister on Vacation</i> 3:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Sacred Harp Singing	21 <i>Associate Minister at MSR Training</i> <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 6:00 PM Pioneer Mailing Prep 7:00 PM Buddhist Meditation and Study Group 7:00 PM Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting 7:30 PM GAS AA	22 <i>Associate Minister at MSR Training</i> 9:15 AM Simple Living Circle	23 <i>Associate Minister at MSR Training</i> <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i>	24 <i>Associate Minister at MSR Training</i> <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM
25 <i>Associate Minister at MSR Training</i> <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 1:00 PM LRE Teacher Planning Workshop	26 <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment"	27 <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 1:00 PM "Dreaming" Conversations 3:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM "Dreaming" Conversations 7:00 PM In the Name of Peace: Book Club & Shawl Ministry	28 <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM Buddhist Meditation and Study Group 7:00 PM LRE Committee Meeting 7:30 PM GAS AA	29 <i>Associate Minister's Day Off</i> <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 7:30 PM Last Thursday Group Hypnosis	30 <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i>	31 <i>Congregational Administrator on Vacation</i> 10:00 AM Self-Hypnosis Workshop 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM 6:30 PM This Spud's For You: Baked Potato Supper Benefiting Lazarus House

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Our Covenant (written in 1842)

Being desirous of promoting practical goodness in the world, and of aiding each other in our moral and religious improvement, we have associated ourselves together — not as agreeing in opinion, not as having attained universal truth in belief or perfection in

Our Mission Statement

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva is a diverse, welcoming community which endeavors to make its Covenant a living reality. We provide religious education and opportunities for spiritual growth. We encourage individual and mutual responsibility as together we work to be a liberal religious voice in the community and a force for compassionate social justice.

— adopted by the congregation May 19, 1996

The next Pioneer deadline is Friday, January 16th at 9am. Please send all articles to BOTH office@uusg.org AND minister@uusg.org.

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