



A Newsletter of

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva

THE PIONEER

December 2009 - January 2010

Paper Pulpit

The Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates, Senior Minister

Joy of the Seasons to all! We've got great news – a confirmation of the rumor/hope many of you already know about – that we will indeed be a Teaching Congregation in 2010-11! Our Finance Committee and Board looked at the numbers and the needs, and authorized me to go ahead and offer a 10-month Ministerial Internship to Pamela Rumancik. Pam has accepted the offer, with details to be worked out soon.

Pam is a Meadville/Lombard student who'll be in her final year next year. She's doing her Internship then so that she can keep going on her Spiritual Direction Certificate program at Loyola's Institute for Pastoral Studies. She'll be bringing some of that skill to UUSG, along with a strong background in pastoral care, worship arts, and adult religious education. We'll be helping her explore and make the transition from active lay leader to professional minister, with opportunities to work in all areas of congregational life.

I'm tremendously pleased and excited for us to again be helping a seminarian prepare for the ministry. This is work we've done many times before (UUSG has been a Teaching Congregation off and on since 1926, when Dr. Lyttle first started bringing Meadville students out on the train to lead worship and help organize and teach in the Sunday School). It is work that we do very well – all five of our most recent Ministerial Interns have gone on to successful ministries, both Parish and Community, in accordance with their interests and gifts. And it is work that I think I'm safe in saying we all enjoy and find rewarding. I'll gladly own that I'm not particularly skilled in group teaching – but I will claim my skills as a mentor and individual teacher!

Pam will be in the pulpit once a month as well as helping with Intergenerational and special seasonal services. She'll offer a program of some sort (details to be determined) in Spiritual Direction. She'll be working closely with me and our Lay Ministers, our Worship Associates, and our Acting DRE, Sandi Sumner, to learn as much as we can cram into 10 months about how ministry is developed and carried out in a mid-size congregation like UUSG.

As an added bonus, Pam will bring us the practical ministerial assistance we need. She's still a student, and her time will be limited – but we'll again have a second minister leading worship, offering pastoral care, participating in lifespan religious education, and working with the committees & Councils & Board. She'll also, as part of her learning, be asking the kinds of "outsider" questions we need to hear as we make our decisions about where we go next. It's much too soon to be looking for another Associate Minister; we're still catching our breath after Adam's sudden departure. Sharing our work with a Ministerial Intern gives us more breathing room, so that we can all take the time we need to explore and decide together what we want and need to do in preparation for our UUSG's next chapter.

We'll have more details in January, when I'm hoping Pam might come back to Geneva to participate in a weekend's services. Working with a Ministerial Intern is exciting, important, creative, and fun. It's a great blessing to have this opportunity to be looking forward to as part of our planning for UUSG's 169th year of active liberal faith in the Fox Valley!

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Peace – and again, Joy! **LB**

Religious Education Announcements and Upcoming Events

A Message from Sandi Sumner, Our Acting Director of Religious Education

Hello UUSG Members and Friends!

We are well into the fall session of church school and things are going very well. I'm so pleased to see so many families attending regularly. I sincerely appreciate all the time and dedication our teachers and advisors have given to help make our LRE Program a huge success. With their guidance, our young people are exploring other religions, cultures, and ideas to better understand themselves and their relationships with the world around them.

If you are curious about the curricula we are using this year, please let me know. I would be happy to share the material with you! Do you have comments, concerns, or ideas? Please let me know those, as well. Just see me on Sunday, send me an email to lre@uusg.org, or call me at 630-232-2350 X224. Also, you may speak to a member of the LRE Committee:

Tracy Rosenkrans (Preschool-Grade 4 Representative)

Jenny Montgomery (Grades 5-8 Representative)

Elba Karim (YRUU)

Sandy Anderson-Cordogan (RE Music & Chime Ensemble)

Diane Thornton (Library Liaison)

NEW Munch & Learn Monthly Lecture Series! On December 6, we began our program of factual talks with "The Principle of Relativity for Non-physicists," presented by Barry Knerr. These one-hour sessions allow folks to share their knowledge and experience with others! Planning has begun for future sessions. More information, including dates, topics, and sign-up sheets, will be available in early January. Just check the LRE Board or please talk to me. Hope to see you there! **Lecturers are needed, too!** Would you like to present an informal factual talk about something you know, share the experience of your visit to somewhere wonderful, or teach others your talent? Then consider signing up as a lecturer! The only restriction of the topics' scope is that the content of the talk must be factual and not opinion (no ideology, religion, politics, or anything that provokes rancorous debate!) Please let us know your interest in facilitating a future talk by signing up in the Common Room in January or talking to me.

Teacher Sign-up for the Spring session has begun! Our Ministry of Religious Education is one of our core responsibilities as a congregation. Church school is an important way in which we pass on our faith to our children and youth. **We need young adults and elders, parents and those without children, people of all kinds, to become teachers in our classrooms!** This is a terrific opportunity to meet new people and have fun. Each one of us has something wonderful to share. As teachers, you'll share the values of our covenant with children and youth and show them that their religious education program is important to you. With your guidance, our young people will develop their own beliefs and a better understanding of the world around them. Sign-up sheets for teachers and substitute teachers are on the LRE Board in the Common Room. If you have questions, please let me know.

Time to collect your Guest at Your Table! On Sunday, January 10, we will close our Guest at Your Table program. Please look for a display in the Common Room where you can drop off your boxes or envelopes. In recent weeks, our Guest at Your Table boxes and "Stories of Hope" have taught us about real people engaged in the struggle for justice in the United States and around the world. It has also taught us about our power to change the world when we support our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the many amazing people with whom they partner. Before bringing back your Guest at Your Table box, be sure to complete the form on the box. And, if possible, please convert your cash and coins to a check made out to "UUSC." We'll announce the results of our Guest at Your Table program as soon as we are able. On behalf of UUSC, we thank and commend every person who has chosen to share their blessings through Guest at Your Table. (If you miss bringing back your Guest at Your Table box on January 10, you can pass it along to me at any time.)

More LRE News & Events

We will once again be offering the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Program to 7th, 8th, and 9th grade youth. This is an excellent relationship and sexuality education program which integrates the values of our Unitarian Universalist community. The program consists of four lock-in overnights, one each month from January through April. There will be a parent orientation meeting in early January. Planning has begun for this program. An email invitation will soon be sent to all families with youth in grades 7 through 9. Please see me if you have any questions.

Happy Holidays! Sandi

Walking Meditation

Back by popular demand, the UUSG Buddhist Meditation and Study Group invites members and friends to join us for walking meditation on Wednesday, January 27, at 7pm in the UUSG Sanctuary.

Upcoming LRE Events

Dec 19, 11:00am	YRUU Mini Con Planning Meeting and Potluck
Dec 19, 6:30pm	Games Night!
Dec 26, 6:30pm	Small Group Ministry
Jan 3, 1:00pm	UU Atheism/Humanism Study Group
Jan 6, 7:30pm	UU Paganism Study Group
Jan 9, 6:30pm	Junior High Youth Group
Jan 13, 7:00pm	Compassionate Communication Study Group
Jan 15, 7:00pm	Friday Flick: "Fresh"
Jan 16, 3:30pm	Small Group Ministry
Jan 16, 6:30pm	Games Night!
Jan 20, 7:30pm	LRE Committee Meeting
Jan 24, 12:30pm	Taste of New UUs (Snow date: 1/31/10)
Jan 27, 7:00pm	Compassionate Communication Study Group
Jan 30, 6:30pm	Small Group Ministry

Weekly Adult RE Opportunities

Mondays, 7pm, "Still Living in the Present Moment"
Weds, 7pm, UU Buddhism Meditation & Study Group

Help Needed for the No-Rehearsal Pageant!

You don't have to be Joseph or memorize any lines to help out—just offer to help bring up or put away the Pageant costumes and props, or lend your hand as a "rober" to get our actors ready for their parts. We need as much help as possible this year, since our Acting DRE Sandi Sumner is still recovering from surgery on her shoulder and can't do ANY lifting. If you can help, please talk to Sandi about which service you'd like to help at. She can be reached at lre@uusg.org or 630-232-2350, ext. 224.

A Note from Lindsay

Dear friends,

Thank you all for your prayers, your warm thoughts, your caring and your offers of help as I head East to be with my family. My dad was diagnosed with lung cancer the day after Thanksgiving, and it has spread far more widely and aggressively than anyone had expected. I'm grateful beyond words to Sandi and Katie, Thom and Julie, our Lay Ministers and our Worship Associates and everyone else who has offered to help with all our UUSG holiday activities. To those who've asked what you might do for me during this time, the thing that would be the greatest help and comfort would simply be for all of you to keep things going smoothly and well here at UUSG. Be there together for one another, please, to share the special services and holiday events ~ knowing you'll do that lets me be fully with my family for what will be for us a bittersweet holiday.

Gratitude and blessings to you all.

Peace ~ Lindsay

Holiday Happenings

Plan to Join Us for Our Winter Holiday Services & Celebrations

Saturday, 12/19 & Sunday, 12/20

Our annual Holiday Pageant at all services

Thursday, 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 26 (5pm) & Sunday, December 27 (9am-12pm)

Boxing Day Potluck & Potluck Holiday Brunch
No childcare provided.

Our Special Christmas Eve collection

will be divided between the Northern Illinois Food Bank and our UUSG “Make a Difference” emergency assistance fund.

If you'll be out of town or otherwise unable to attend Christmas Eve services but would like to make a donation to the Christmas Eve offering, please mark it "For Christmas Eve" and send it in or drop it into the collection baskets. And those who need our help thank you!

Hello, Mr. Fire Marshall!

Using all available seating, our Sanctuary holds an absolute maximum of 160 people, including the Choir. Understandably, the 8pm Choir Service is the most popular - for our own folks and also for visitors looking for a place to go on Christmas Eve.

Once there are 160 people in the room, our Greeters will have to turn people away. Now that the sound system is working again, we'll broadcast it into the Common Room for those who choose to stay and listen, but it's not ideal.

We strongly recommend that families with young children plan to attend at 5 o'clock. That service contains all the central Christmas Eve elements, but is paced for shorter attention spans and lasts no more than an hour.

The 10 o'clock service has most of the same readings and carols as the earlier Choir Service, but is far more meditative/prayerful in tone - and has far more room to stretch out and enjoy the beauty of our sanctuary by candlelight.

If the 8 o'clock service is your only option, please do plan to arrive well before 8 PM. Latecomers are almost guaranteed seating in the Common Room.

Boxing Day & Beyond

In addition to the special Christmas Eve services at 5 (for families), 8 (with the Choir) and 10 (the quieter, more meditative Candlelight Service, with more music from Michael McElvain), we've got the weekend right after Christmas to plan for.

Experience has taught us that the closer the weekend is to Christmas, the lower the attendance at the services. A respectable total of folks of all ages will show up, but spread across the three services, it tends to look more than a little bit sparse! Sparse attendance, alas, tends to dampen the spirit of the services.

So this December, we're going to experiment with a different kind of celebration. Our Decorating Party Informal Celebration & Stone Soup Potluck went so well (thank you again to all who helped make it happen!) that we're expanding the idea for all three worship hours on December 26 & 27.

So come to church with children and visiting family – bring whatever you'd like to bring for the common tables (there are bound to be leftovers you'd rather not face for the whole week, we're sure!), and join us for a **Stone Soup Celebration & Supper** at 5 o'clock on Boxing Day, Saturday, December 26, and/or any time from 9 o'clock to noon on Sunday, December 27, for a **Potluck Holiday Sunday Brunch**.

Social Justice News

Action Alert: Be a Proud Member of the Global Family on Global Family Day, January 1, 2010

This holiday season, Citizens for Global Solutions is partnering with an inspiring woman, Linda Grover, to celebrate Global Family Day on January 1st. What binds us together as true citizens for global solutions is our strong belief that we are all, everywhere in the world, connected as members of the Global Family. Holidays are society's most powerful tool to inspire and unify individual groups.

Global Family Day (One Day in Peace) was conceived by children and co-founded by author Linda Grover and Congressman John Conyers Jr., as a day to share food with friends (especially the needy), make personal pledges of non-violence, ring bells, and spread the message of peace and sharing. The Global Family Day initiative has been endorsed unanimously twice by the U.S. Congress, by the U.N. General Assembly and by more than thirty heads of state and ambassadors representing more than two-thirds of the world's population.

Right now we are building momentum for worldwide celebration and are encouraging President Obama to spread the word about the importance of celebrating as global citizens. This Holiday Season, join us in celebrating Global Family Day on January 1st. To sign a petition asking President Obama to celebrate Global Family Day, please go to:

http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5550/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=1335

Tracey McFadden, for the Social Justice Committee

UUSG Peace Commitment

The most current version of the UUSG Peace Commitment can be found at <http://content.uusg.org/peacemaking-pledge/>. Please take a few minutes to look over the Commitment and to suggest revisions to any of the sections.

Special note to people who contributed ideas in November: Apparently Jean's computer fought off a virus by feeding it most of the written suggestions that were received last month regarding Congregational and International Peacemaking (at least that's her story, and she's sticking to it!), so PLEASE resubmit your recommendations. We do value your input.

In January, two events are planned for further consideration of the Peace Commitment.

- On the weekend of January 16 and 17, the sermon will address interpersonal peace and nonviolent communication.
- The following day, January 18, is the commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. At 7pm in the Alcott Room, the Social Justice Committee will sponsor a forum. At that time, members of the Social Justice Committee and Lindsay will confront a disagreement using the framework which Marshall Rosenberg has provided for conflict resolution. The difference in opinion regards perceptions of Lindsay's "Annie Oakley" sermon when her discussion of societal peace included a defense of gun ownership.

CROP Walk Update

UUSG raised \$450 for Church World Service and local food pantries in this year's Tri-Cities CROP Hunger Walk. On October 18, the following walkers participated: Diane Peters; George Tattersfield; Diane Thornton; and Dave, Amy, Samantha, & Andrea Brink. Both the walkers and the donors who contributed this year are appreciated.

Giving "Beyond Our Walls"

We collected \$1778 for the Illinois Youth Center project. On December 20, members of UUSG will be visiting boys at the Center to spend time with them and show them that they are not forgotten during the holiday season.

Many thanks to everyone who donated money or purchased items to support this important ministry!

A Little More Social Justice News

Friday Flick January 15: "Fresh"

The Friday Flicks series will resume on January 15 at 7pm with the film documentary "Fresh." Selected for presentation at five national and international film festivals in 2009, the film takes an uplifting look at how people are making a difference in food production and choices. More inspiring than older flicks which focused on crowded feedlots and dismal slaughterhouses, "Fresh" challenges our eating habits while providing examples of ways in which we can make a difference.

The Friday Flicks series shows great films about matters vital to social and economic justice on third Fridays monthly. There is no charge to view a film and then share views from different vantages with citizens attending and invited resource persons. Each night is a stimulating, informal, stand-alone program.

Register at <http://content.uusg.org/friday-flicks/> to receive email notices of future programs. Mark your calendars ahead now for the third Friday of every month in 2010 (except December), pass along this notice, and bring friends!

December and January RSVPs

Thank you to everyone who packed gift bags for Humanitarian Service Project on November 28: Melissa Auer, Kevin Beyer, Judith Calleja, Doreen & Grace Christiani, Lisa Gades, Nancy Goodfellow, Hillary & Elizabeth Johnston, Vohny Moehling, Jeanne Neltner, Jean Pierce, Gail Tattersfield, and Linda Valentine.

We have several fun events planned for all ages in December and January.

On December 20, will be assembling gift bags between worship services (10:15-11:00am) to take to the Christmas party at the Illinois Youth Center. The 5th & 6th grade LRE classes did a wonderful job of decorating bags for us, and we are looking for volunteers of all ages to fill the bags with items that will be useful for the boys.

On January 16, we will return to Feed My Starving Children to pack nutritious meals for children around the world. Children in grades 3 and up are welcome with a parent. For more information, visit the organization's website: <http://www.fmssc.org>

On January 23, we are scheduled for a youth shift at the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Children ages 8 and up are invited to volunteer with a parent.

Feed My Starving Children and Northern Illinois Food Bank are popular organizations for volunteers. Both are booked for several months after January, so we hope you'll join us for one or both activities!

Date	Location	Ages	Requirements	Activities
December 20 10:15-10:45am	UUSG Common Room	All ages		Pack gift bags for the Illinois Youth Center
January 16 2-4pm	Feed My Starving Children	Grades 3 & up	1 adult for every 3 kids	Pack meals for children
January 23 9-11am	Northern Illinois Food Bank	Ages 8 & up	Closed-toe shoes; 1 adult for every 5 kids	Sort and package food for distribution to food pantries

Sign up for these RSVP opportunities on the Social Justice bulletin board in the Common Room, register online at <http://content.uusg.org/rsvp-program/>, or contact Lisa Gades through the church office at 630-232-2350 of office@uusg.org. Thank you for your continued support!

Volunteer Headquarters

No More Coffee at Social Hour?!

Many thanks to all who have given their time to make the social hour so agreeable with fresh coffee week after week. Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more difficult to fill those hosting spots.

As a result, the Hospitality Committee has reluctantly decided that coffee won't be available beginning in January, **unless ALL of the January hosting slots are filled by the end of December.**

The remaining slots are:

January 2, 6pm
 January 3, 10am
 January 3, 12pm
 January 9, 6pm
 January 10, 12pm
 January 17, 12pm
 January 23, 6pm
 January 24, 10am
 January 24, 12pm
 January 30, 6pm
 January 31, 12pm

Sign up in the Common Room or online at <http://content.uusg.org/greeters-and-social-hour-hosts/>.

Regardless of whether we have coffee or not, social hour still continues, and we hope you'll stick around to visit with old and new friends.



December Volunteer Openings

Greeting in December

December 19, 5pm

Hosting Social Hour in December

December 19, 6pm

If you're interested in greeting or hosting, you can sign up in the Common Room or by going to <http://content.uusg.org/greeters-and-social-hour-hosts/>.

Volunteer Appreciation

We send our heartfelt appreciation to:

Everyone who helped make Cookie Walk a success! Elba Karim and Sherri Casterline coordinated the event and were helped by more than 85 members of the congregation.

Our November Social Hour Hosts: Ann Drover, Pat Ward, Monica & Jim Jenkins, Karen & John Laukaitis, Kate & Jim Frazier, and Doreen Christiani.

Jeff Stibal, for saving our sanctuary sound system from the junk yard. Some tender loving care - and rewiring - turned out to be all it needed.

Help Needed for the No-Rehearsal Pageant!

You don't have to be Joseph or memorize any lines to help out—just offer to help bring up or put away the Pageant costumes and props, or lend your hand as a “rober” to get our actors ready for their parts.

We need as much help as possible this year, since our Acting DRE Sandi Sumner is still recovering from surgery on her shoulder and can't do ANY lifting. If you can help, please talk to Sandi about which service you'd like to help at. She can be reached at lre@uusg.org or 630-232-2350, ext. 224.

November New UUs

The Membership Committee's November UU sessions were successful—we had a very nice group of new people and visitors. We would like to thank those people who helped make that happen.

Thank you to David deCoriolis, Peter Coe, Howard Katz, and a special thanks to Lindsay (who hadn't been feeling well.) We'd also like to thank Jim Frazier and Mick Jaggard—they both did a great job at their first presentations of UU history and UUSG history.

Green Corner

Green Sanctuary Committee's New Meeting Information

Beginning with our January meeting, the Green Sanctuary Committee will meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 7pm to 9pm. This is a change to make things a little easier for folks who have wanted to join us, but whose schedules conflicted with our meetings. So, we're eagerly anticipating meeting with all of you who've wanted to get involved in our perpetual greening of UUSG. We'll see you on Thursday, January 21 at 7pm as we gear up for Earth Month 2010!

Top Gift-Giving Tips from www.greenplant.com

Be sure your material gift will get used It may be the thought that counts, but a gift that the receiver does not use is simply wasted: not a very nice thought. Give material possessions only if you know the recipient well enough to pick out something they were on the cusp of getting for themselves, or which they really need and will certainly enjoy using.

Give a consumable gift Your friend will love your consumable gift twice: once while enjoying the organic teas, fair trade coffee, fresh flowers, fresh or dried fruits and nuts, or other consumable gift; and again when they appreciate that your gift leaves them with no guilty conscience about a gift left unused in the corner of their closet.

Share a piece of yourself Avoid material consumption altogether. Instead, offer your services to baby-sit while your friend enjoys a cozy date with their partner, give a gift certificate for a relaxing massage, or a winter's-worth of driveway shoveling (in which case you just save that massage for yourself).

Make a gift of a green service If your time is prioritized elsewhere, you can buy a green service. Consider a gift of carbon offsets for a commuting colleague or a bike to peddle around town doing errands.

Make a gift of any service You will still reduce material consumption by giving a service of any kind. Especially heartwarming are humanitarian services, such as making a gift of a micro-loan.

Give a gift where it is needed on behalf of someone better off Make a child smile when they get a card describing the child in another part of the world whose life will be improved by the gift of a llama or a sheep on their behalf (see <http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/> or www.heifer.org for ideas).

Creative gifts show you care The baby sweater you knit yourself is more likely to become a family heirloom, extending the life cycle of the materials in your gift.

Buy a local gift A gift made or grown locally can tell a story or share a unique product you have discovered on your own stomping grounds. Your locally-sourced gift will save the environment from the emissions involved in shipping.

Buy high-quality goods Sometimes a little extra care or money invested will result in finding a high-quality gift that will do justice to the materials consumed in the manufacturing by a long lifespan. Try flea markets or vintage and second-hand shops for quality goods you can afford: then make the gift "new" with a personal touch like a special paint job, or some ribbon around the edges. Your friend will enjoy your perfect high-quality gift much longer!

Think about your packaging Use packaging that will not go to waste. Your packaging may be part of the gift itself, such as wrapping the gift in a scarf or enclosing it in a box that can be reused for collecting life's odds and ends. Reusable wrapping, such as a gift bag, will pass on the fun. For family and close friends, consider the Sunday funnies instead of commercial gift wrap.

Getting Green in the New Year

A Few Ideas for Green New Year's Resolutions

Use reusable shopping bags You can purchase reusable bags at most stores. Some stores will reward customers who use reusable bags. Countries like Africa, Australia and China have already banned plastic bags in many areas. Make a conscious effort to bring your bags with you and into the stores.

Recycle Take your plastic bottles or aluminum soda cans to a recycling center or have a recycle bin that the city picks up. You can also shop at resale stores, give items to charitable organizations, use both sides of paper, and remember to recycle, reuse, reduce.

Use less water There are many ways that you can reduce your water consumption, from turning off the water when you're brushing your teeth and taking shorter showers to putting a brick in the tank on the toilet and getting a water barrel.

Maintain your home to be more energy-efficient Clean or replace your air filters once a month so your air conditioning system and furnace run more efficiently, check for drafts, winterize your home, fix leaky faucets, and replace old appliances with Energy Star appliances.

Grow a garden this New Year Fresh produce is best. If you can't grow a garden, go to local farm markets for your produce and more.

Have you changed your light bulbs lately? Replace your old standard light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. You can average savings of \$30-\$50 in electricity during the life of each new bulb.

Unplug Unplug electronics you are not using. Electronics suck electricity even when they are turned off.

Circles of Life

Our thoughts and prayers are with our Senior Minister, who is in Massachusetts to be with her family during her father's illness.

Gabi Karim is home after a surprise visit to the hospital—we're so glad the family's back together for the holidays!

On Sunday, December 13, we celebrated George Hickman's 90th birthday with cake and singing. We were very pleased that his family could be here to join us. Happy Birthday, George!

Available: Binder of Documents Regarding Adam's Departure from UUSG

We recently received the exit interviews of Lindsay, Adam, and the Board. These documents and others regarding Adam's departure are available at UUSG in the Common Room during social hours and during the week by appointment with Katie.

Holiday Staffing

Please note that Lindsay is out of town on an unexpected trip and will not be in the office until after Christmas.

In addition to their regular days off (Fridays & Saturdays), Sandi & Katie will be off on these days:

Christmas Eve	Thursday, 12/24
Christmas Day	Friday, 12/25
New Years' Eve	Thursday, 12/31
New Years' Day	Friday, 1/1

Staff hours between Christmas Day and New Years' Day will be irregular. Please call first if you need to stop by during that time.

In the event of any emergency, please contact the church office at 630-232-2350 for information on whom to call for assistance.

**Holiday Greetings
from Your UUSG Staff!**

Getting stressed out during the holidays?

Then spend a night de-stressing at the UUSG Games Night on Saturday, December 19! Open to all ages and to the public (bring your friends), we welcome new games—or try ours. We have games for everyone, adult through pre-reader.

Walk in and try us out, or attend the service beforehand and have Sunday for yourselves. If you desire that we supply pizza and salad, call ahead of time so we can pick them up. (Games Night is unfunded, so “pray defray.”) See you Saturday night!

Coming Soon: Emailing Pledge Statements

Be on the lookout this spring for an option to have your pledge statements emailed to you instead of snail-mailed. We'll save money & trees, and you'll save yourself another piece of paper piled up on your desk!

A Chair to Spare?

We're looking for a small chair to place behind the piano for use by the pianist when he or she is not playing. It will need to be in a style that fits with the other two chancel chairs, but can be smaller (like a dining room chair). All three chairs will be recovered with matching fabric.

If you have a chair to spare, please contact Katie in the office. Thanks from the Sanctuary Aesthetics Committee.

End-of-year Donations

This is the perfect time of year to make a donation to UUSG, just in time to include it as a deduction on your 2009 taxes!

Donations must be received by Thursday, December 31. If you'd like to know your donation total for 2009 thus far, please contact Katie in the office.

Taste of New UUs

Are you new to UUSG? Want to learn more about us and Unitarian Universalism? Then join us for a “Taste of New UUs,” offered Sunday, January 24 from 12:30pm to 3:00pm.

Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates will lead the session with support from the Membership Committee. A light lunch will be served. Please RSVP to office@uusg.org or by signing up on the “Taste of New UUs” clipboard in the Common Room.

If you need childcare, please let us know and we'll make every effort to have nursery caregivers available. Questions? Contact Jill Brown or any membership committee person during social hours.

Cookie Walk Summary

This year's Cookie Walk was a great success, netting almost \$2300! More than 600 dozen cookies were baked—demand was so high this year that we sold out of cookies and had to turn people away! Are 700 dozen cookies in our future?

We couldn't have done it without our Cookie Walk co-chairs, Elba Karim and Sherri Casterline, who did an incredible job organizing the event and making sure that it ran smoothly!

More than 55 people baked beautiful cookies, and no fewer than 30 people helped out with setting up, selling, & cleaning up. Thank you so much for your time and effort—this event has been a success for 28 years because of YOU!

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!

Our calendar is provided on the next page, and is current as of December 16, 2009. 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 15, at 9:00 a.m.**

JANUARY 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i> 9:00 AM -12:00 PM Potluck Holiday Brunch	28 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i> 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment"	29 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i> 7:30 PM Last Tuesday Group Hypnosis-- CANCELLED	30 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i> <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM UU Buddhism Meditation and Study Group 7:30 PM GAS AA	31 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i>	1 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i>	2 <i>Office Closed & Staff Schedules Irregular</i> 1:00 PM Committee on Ministries Meeting 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM
3 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 1:00 PM UU Atheism/Humanism Study Group	4 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:30 PM Technology Committee Meeting	5 7:00 PM Private Meeting 7:00 PM Sacred Harp Singing 7:30 PM Program & Administrative Councils	6 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 12:00 PM "Healthy Habits" Group 7:30 PM GAS AA 7:30 PM UU Paganism Study Group	7 <i>Senior Minister's Sabbath</i> 7:00 PM Youth Outlook (youth can begin arriving at 6:30pm) 7:15 PM WomenSpirit Rising	8 7:00 PM Blue Papaya Meeting 8:00 PM Cooper, Nelson, & Early Concert	9 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM 6:30 PM Junior High Youth Group
10 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 10:00 AM Commit to Knit 10:15 AM Social Activites & Hospitality Committee Meeting 10:30 AM Finance Committee Meeting 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 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	11 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 1:30 PM Women's Guild Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:00 PM Reiki Discussion Group	12 7:30 PM Board of Directors	13 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM Compassionate Communication Study Group 7:30 PM GAS AA	14 <i>Senior Minister's Sabbath</i> 7:00 PM Youth Outlook (youth can begin arriving at 6:30pm)	15 9:00 AM PIONEER deadline 7:00 PM Friday Flicks: "Fresh"	16 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!
17 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Communications Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Reiki Share	18 Social Js 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:00 PM Social Justice Forum	19 7:00 PM Reiki Share 7:00 PM Sacred Harp Singing	20 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 6:00 PM Pioneer Mailing Prep 7:30 PM GAS AA 7:30 PM LRE Committee Meeting	21 <i>Senior Minister's Sabbath</i> 7:00 PM Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Youth Outlook (youth can begin arriving at 6:30pm) 7:15 PM WomenSpirit Rising	22 7:00 PM Blue Papaya Meeting	23 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM
24 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 12:30 PM Taste of New UUs	25 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment"	26 7:30 PM Last Tuesday Group Hypnosis	27 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 7:00 PM Compassionate Communication Study Group 7:30 PM GAS AA	28 <i>Senior Minister's Sabbath</i> 9:15 AM Simple Living Circle 7:00 PM Youth Outlook (youth can begin arriving at 6:30pm)	29	30 10:00 AM Teacher Planning Workshop 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM 6:30 PM Small Group Ministry
31 8:15 AM Teen/Adult Choir Warm-Up 9:00 AM & 11 AM Worship & Church School; Social Hours at 10 AM & NOON 11:00 AM Big Ideas Covenant Group 12:30 PM Taste of New UUs (snow date)	1 1:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM AA Group Meeting 7:00 PM Adult RE - "Still Living in the Present Moment" 7:30 PM Technology Committee Meeting	2 7:00 PM Sacred Harp Singing 7:30 PM Program & Administrative Councils	3 <i>Senior Minister's Day Off</i> 12:00 PM "Healthy Habits" Group 7:30 PM GAS AA 7:30 PM UU Paganism Study Group	4 <i>Senior Minister's Sabbath</i> 7:00 PM Youth Outlook (youth can begin arriving at 6:30pm) 7:15 PM WomenSpirit Rising	5	6 9:00 AM Blood Drive 1:00 PM Committee on Ministries Meeting 5:00 PM Worship (childcare available for young children); Social Hour at 6 PM

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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 character, but as seekers after truth and goodness.

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 January 15, 2009 at 9am. Please send all articles to BOTH office@uusg.org AND minister@uusg.org.

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