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Unitarian Universalist
Society of Geneva



Pioneer Newsletter

February ~ March 2023



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Society of Geneva

Want to Know More?

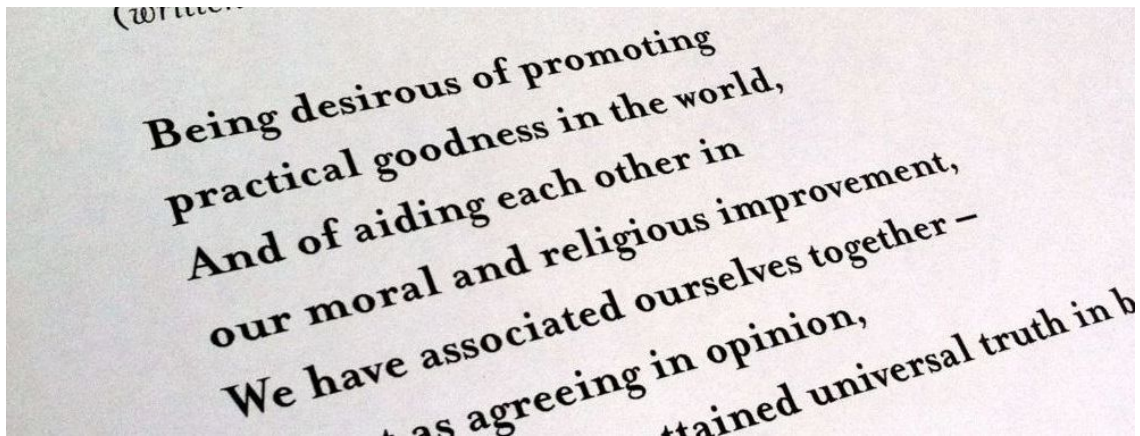
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From the Minister's Desk

Rev. Scot Hull

In 1842, the Founders of our church wrote [a covenant](#) into their church ledger, a covenant that has been part of our shared worship ever since. It closes by calling us “seekers after truth and goodness”. Seekers. Not necessarily *finders*, but seekers. Like we’re on a noble quest! That’s fun.

180 years is a *long* time to be on a quest. But even so, it is a remarkable course that we’ve charted – one church, many spiritual paths, united in a quest for truth and practical goodness. Our Founders would be delighted, I imagine, to know that our sanctuary was once their sanctuary, that our gatherings look like their gatherings, that our religious ideals were theirs, too. It’s inspiring.

Yes, things have changed a bit. I suspect our beautifully painted windows and our reclaimed pews and our one-of-a-kind chalice -- and our new Internet capacities – all of that would probably have raised the excessively bushy eyebrows of some in that early group. Just as the abolition of slavery, the rise of industry, the urban transformation of our region, two World Wars, and two vast pandemics, all of *that* would have raised eyebrows, too.

Our church has been through a lot. Seen a lot. Contraction. Expansion. Change.

But through it all, we have kept their faith just as we have kept their covenant. Our covenant. It lives on in us here, and in the children formed here, and it will continue to live on in those who will follow us, long after we are all gone.

Our church was once a big bet. One that, 180 years later, is still paying dividends. That initial investment of time, talent, and treasure in the 1840s has carried all of us forward. I can only wonder where our church will be 180 years from now. I will say, though, that whatever that future looks like, it is my hope that our church will remain that place where people of all histories, all backgrounds, all identities, will find home, and comfort, and community. Where “they”, whoever “they” are, can be seekers after truth and goodness, too. And maybe, in their seeking, in their pursuing, maybe they will find some of the happiness that comes with the questing and the questioning, the same happiness that people have always found here. The same happiness that we have always found, here, in our community.

That happiness is created every day through your gifts of love and support. And it is your generosity that makes our little church into a gift. A gift to yourselves, yes. To your families, sure. A gift to your friends and neighbors, most definitely.

And mostly, UUSG is your gift to those who have yet to walk through our real (and virtual!) doors, but might, sometime in the next 180 years and more.

UUSG is your gift to their future.

Thank you for giving so generously!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

New Spring Schedule for Religious Education

By Becky Hruby, Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth

Effective Sunday, April 2, 2023 a new Sunday morning schedule will go into effect. The teachers proposed the idea and the parents voiced agreement. Many thanks to all who answered my questionnaire.

Religious Education (RE) will no longer be held before church at 9:30. The new time for RE will be 10:30, to coincide with the church service.

Details

- Details of whether any of the K-12 youth will be in the sanctuary for any part of church are being worked on.
- What I know now is we will ALL be together in community every month on the second Sunday.
- Now taking place on the second (not fourth) Sunday, please join us for the social justice project prior to the intergenerational service.
- The intergenerational service will take the place of RE class once a month.
- Our youth will be encouraged, coerced, bribed...to participate as greeters, basket passers, worship associates, story presenters and musicians. If you have any other requests or ideas, please let me know!

As a reminder, social justice Sundays are designed for the entire congregation. Regardless of whether you have kids, you are welcome and encouraged to join us! Please mark your calendars for 9:30 am on these remaining dates in the 22-23 school year:

March 26 (final 4th Sunday)

April 9 (Easter)

May 14 (Mother's Day)

Parents, stay tuned for further details. I hope this shift makes your Sunday mornings easier. This will be a good pilot to determine class timing for the 23-24 school year.

SUMMARY

New Timing: as of Sunday, **April 2**, RE will be at 10:30.

Second Sundays: Social justice at 9:30/Intergenerational service at 10:30/All ages for both/No RE class

All other weeks: RE held during church

INVESTING IN A BRIGHTER FUTURE



UUSG PLEDGE DRIVE 2023-2034

The Pledge Drive Kicks Off This Sunday!

Please join us this Sunday, March 5, as we kick off the 2023-2024 Pledge Drive! We have a great worship service planned, the BAND will be playing, we will have special guests sharing inspiring messages, and yes, there will be cupcakes! Come celebrate with your UUSG friends after service with a Pledge Drive Potluck. [Sign up here to let us know you can attend](#). See you there!

And there is still time to Friend-raise with the Pledge Team!

Our upcoming pledge drive is about to begin and we are looking for a few additional members to join us this Stewardship Season. You'll be helping with calling on members and friends of UUSG, encouraging them to pledge for the upcoming year--each team member has a small list of contacts of their choosing, making these "warm calls" easy and a great opportunity to connect with friends or those who you might not have talked

with in awhile! Our last pledge training session is this **Saturday, March 4, at 4:30 PM**. Refreshments will be served! [Sign up at uusg.org/pledge-training](https://uusg.org/pledge-training).

A Note from Christine in the Office

Pledge Drive Brochures are in the mail and you can expect them in your mailbox this weekend or early next week! If you are newer to UUSG and are not sure if we have your mailing address, or if you did not receive a pledge packet, please call or send an email to our Congregational Administrator, Christine Imielski, and she will be happy to send one out! office@uusg.org or 630-232-2350.



UUSG MUSIC

As January closed, we were warmed by a song featuring the crystalline vocals of Kelly Herz, accompanied by Music Director Cynthia Spiegel at the piano. And woven throughout the service were the original electronic melodies of Geoff Pynn on synthesizer, including a piece in which he accompanied one of his synth compositions with gorgeous flourishes at the piano.

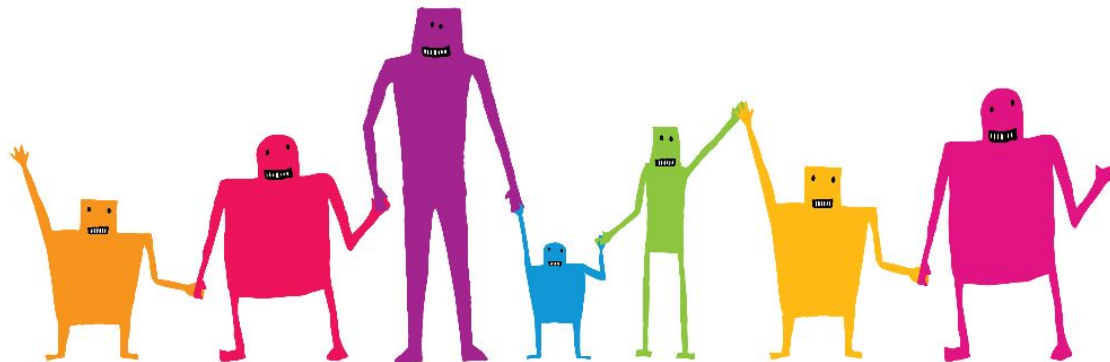
Tom Zimmerman dazzled at the piano with dynamic pieces by Spanish composers, and accompanied Cynthia leading us in hymns.

Cynthia treated us to a wonderful array of instrumentalists, featuring Lara Ward on French horn; Ruth Cavanaugh on flute; Linda O'Neill on violin; and Valerie Heinkel-Bollero at the piano.

Coming to a last-minute rescue when Cynthia couldn't be on hand to direct the UUSG Choir, pianist and arranger Valerie Heinkel-Bollero added her voice and directing skills to helm our terrific singers: Kelly Herz, Rhonda Robinson, Emily Clark, Jane Willard, Rachel Harbold, Teal Cyko,

Linda O'Neill, Andy Montgomery, Ashley Peterson, Roger Gallentine, Tom Haslett, Tom Zimmerman, John Rosenkrans and Mark Adams. And as an added performance gem, the Rev. Karen Mooney sang one of her original compositions, "I Can Only Be Like Me," accompanied by guitar.

Calvin Hruby opened our most recent service with the lovely Latin beat of a tango played on accordion. The great music continued with Tom Zimmerman on vocals and guitar, backed by John Rosenkrans on guitar and double bass. And sharing the piano keyboard were Tom and Cynthia.



Engaged?

If your answer is *yes*, then hooray! If your answer is *no*, then UUSG needs you . . . to be engaged in helping to make our church vibrant and welcoming. Our Engagement Fair a few weeks ago was a big step in familiarizing congregants with the teams that help make UUSG tick. If you missed the fair, and/or you'd like detailed information on what the teams are doing, click here for last month's [Team and Staff Reports](#). The reports will help you decide where you'd like to dedicate your time and talent. To contact a team leader with questions or a commitment, email office@uusg.org. UUSG needs YOU!

WORKING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE



ANNUAL WEEK OF SERVICE
MARCH 18 - MARCH 26, 2023

UUSG's Annual Week of Service will be held from Saturday, March 18 to Sunday March 26. Members and friends are invited to promote practical goodness by volunteering for opportunities like the Northern Illinois Food Bank, Fox River Clean Up, The Period Collective, and putting together birthday bags and school supply kits. We have many opportunities for all ages, and it's always a great time! [For more information and to sign up visit our website.](#)



Social Justice Sunday in February

Q: What do you get when you combine 40 UUs with more cut up t-shirts than you can count and an eclectic collection of items from the supply room?

A: An awesome donation to pets at Anderson Humane.

materials + 40 People
crafting 93 Dog & Cat Toys = Gratitude

- 30 catnip cat toys
- 27 feather on a string cat toys
- 21 t-shirt tug toys
- 15 dog tug of war toys

Heartfelt thanks to all who helped on Feb. 26, especially my project co-leads. I could not have done it without you!

--Becky Hruby

[More photos on our Facebook Page here!](#)





Time Traveling with the Heritage Team

Did you know that an Emergency Food Pantry was started in 1981 by the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates? It was open 4 days a week and served about 23 clients weekly in its first year. By the second year, 600 families were fed weekly.

The Pantry began as a single shelf of food that was available to people in need and was housed in Pioneer House. In the beginning it was run with help from St John Neumann Catholic Church and many, many volunteers. Later, the Geneva Methodist and Baker Memorial Methodist Churches would also become involved. By 1992, it was known as the Geneva Interfaith Food Pantry and it was available to the hungry from DuPage and Kane Counties.

The Pantry closed in the spring of 1993 with much of their work being carried on by the St. Charles Salvation Army.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

This Month's DEI Quote:

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

—Barack Obama

In the DEI Library (NEW!)

Three Girls from Bronzeville by Dawn Turner.

An “unmissable” (Vogue), “exceptional” (The Washington Post), and “evocative” (Chicago Tribune) memoir about three Black girls from the storied Bronzeville section of Chicago that offers a penetrating exploration of race, opportunity, friendship, sisterhood, and the powerful forces at work that allow some to flourish...and others to falter. It’s at once a celebration of sisterhood and friendship, a testimony to the unique struggles of Black women, and a tour-de-force about the complex interplay of race, class, and opportunity, and how those forces shape our lives and our capacity for resilience and redemption.

DEI Gem of the Month

[An inspirational TED talk that DEI has selected to share with you.](#)



"We Don't Have A Garage" Sale - April 27-29!

We are making lots of preparations behind the scenes and here are a few ways you can help make the event a HUGE success:

1. Start sorting and putting aside those items that you would like to donate (putting like items in one box would be helpful but not necessary)
2. Collect grocery bags (plastic and paper) for use during checkout
3. If you have big items and need help transporting your donations, please reach out to Molly and Jenny to coordinate pickups. We are scheduling dates now to avoid overlap in vehicle need. (Larger items may need to wait for pickup closer to the sale date given the limited storage at church)
4. Tell ALL your friends about the sale
5. Plan on dropping off items for the sale: Sunday, April 2, Sunday, April 16, Sunday, April 23 – last day to drop off items
6. Plan on attending the Sip and Shop on Thursday, April 27 from 6-9.
7. [Sign up for shifts to work!](#) There are multiple dates and times – organizing, sorting, pricing, during the actual event and cleanup.

We are here to answer any questions you may have!

Jenny Montgomery, jenny@andymontgomery.com, 630-881-8477

Molly MacKay Zacker, molly.zacker@mackayco.com, 630-204-6110

A Reminder on Items:

Here's what we are taking:

- Clothes/shoes
- Jewelry
- Kitchen items
- Small working (!) appliances, like waffle irons/blenders, etc.
- Sporting equipment
- Knick knacks
- Art
- Furniture
- Books
- Garden items
- Most anything, but (see below!)

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE NOT TAKING:

- Electronics, of any kind
- Non-working/broken items, like a broken piece of jewelry or a non-working waffle iron

And SAVE THE DATE for our Swedish Days Pizza Booth! This fun-filled UUSG fundraiser will take place during Geneva's Swedish Days Festival Wednesday, June 21st through Sunday, June 25th. We will need many hands to make light work. We look forward to seeing you there!



Candidate Forums for Municipal Elections

March 5, 12:15 pm: St. Charles Candidates - St. Charles Public Library, 1

S. 6th Ave., St. Charles.

[Recording of Batavia Candidate Forum](#)

[Recording of Geneva Candidate Forum](#)

Commit to Knit Has Resumed – Sundays at 9:30

Calling all fiber folk! Commit to Knit is collecting blanket sections through the end of March to donate to Warm Up America! Sections are 7"x9" rectangles knitted or crocheted out of medium-weight washable acrylic yarn, which WUA! will join into blankets and distribute to service organizations around the country. Emily Clark will help with selecting patterns and yarn with patterns and teaching knitting. Join her in the Heritage Room most Sundays by 9:30.

Help Get Out the Vote

[Write letters](#) encouraging historically under-represented voters in Wisconsin to make their voices heard in the upcoming Supreme Court election.

Beyond Our Walls for March: Fox Valley Hands of Hope

The March Beyond Our Walls collection will go toward Fox Valley Hands of Hope which provides compassionate guidance and support to those in the Fox Valley area who are grieving. At no cost to clients, FVHH provides individual grief counseling for children and adults, as well as family counseling, and support groups. In addition, they work with local school groups to bring grief support groups directly to schools. They also run day-long family programs.



Saturday, March 25, at 7 PM Attention musicians, poets, storytellers, magicians, astronomy buffs, drummers, and other talented people, come

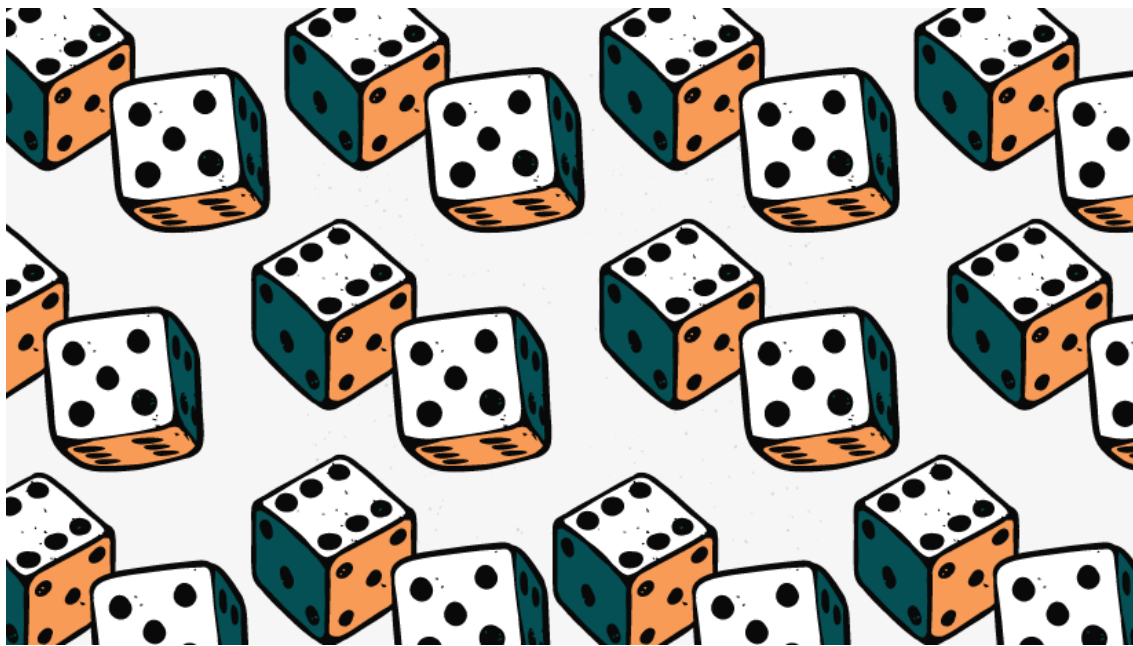
share your talent and help UUSG observe this year's Earth Hour. No electricity allowed. Please contact the Green Sanctuary Team at greensanctuary@uusg.org if you can help. We will be starting a bit early to accommodate families with kids. [Learn more about Earth Hour here.](#)

Green Sanctuary Presents this Month's Friday Flick
On Being Part of Nature - Interview with Dr. David Suzuki

The revered scientist, broadcaster and activist whose 52 books and decades of TV and radio service have made him the most respected and powerful figure in Canadian environmentalism.

A powerful discussion on philosophy, humanity and prospects for the survival of civilization.

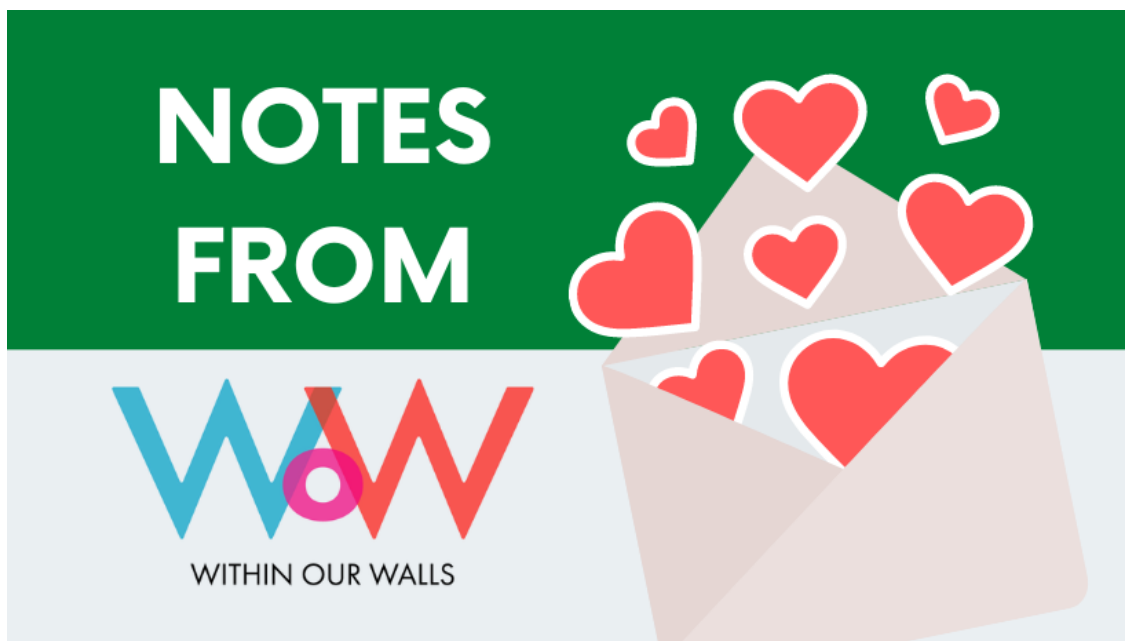
Join us on Friday, March 24 at 7pm in the Common Room.



Game Night Friday March 17, 6-9pm

February FARKLE Game Night was a great success with so much fun, we decided we should do it again in March with MORE PEOPLE! Come one, come all... have fun while building deeper friendships. The kids are welcome to play with the adults or have their own table playing other games.

The games each month will be interactive with random "switch-ups" throughout the evening. If you are ready to laugh and have fun then please BYOB/S-Bring your own beverages/snacks of choice and remember to wear some green for St. Patrick's Day!



With COVID and flu still around please be sure to let Glenda or Carol know if you need WOW's help in any way, or if you are aware of a friend or member of UUSG who could use a helping hand. We can be reached at wow@uusg.

Caring and healing thoughts go out to the following members who continue to face challenging health issues:

Trish Beckjord
700 Bower Hill Road
Apt. 6231
Pittsburgh, PA 15243
tbeckjord@gmail.com

Jennifer Liedberg
1601 N Farnsworth Ave Rm 303
Aurora, IL 60505-1509

Jeff Stanley
320 Whipple Ave
Batavia, IL 60510-2588
jstanley5100@gmail.com
360-296-1306

Gail Tattersfield
gtats2@gmail.com

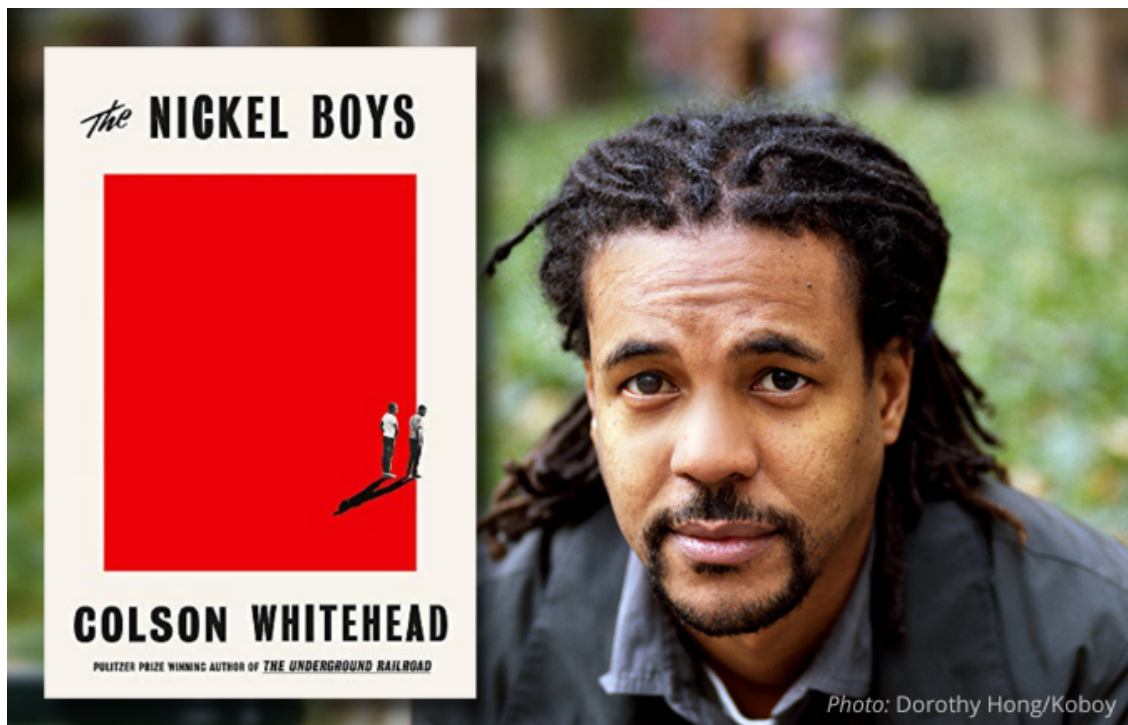
Joani Foster
200 N Island Ave Apt 112
Batavia, IL 60510
630 444-1588 (home)
joanidancer@aol.com

Please contact WOW if you would like to be included on this list.

UUSG Membership Class



New around here? Thinking about becoming a member of UUSG? Want to learn more about the privileges and responsibilities of becoming a voting member? You're in luck! Our next Membership Class is Sunday, March 12, 12:30-2:30pm in the Common Room and online via Zoom. Sign up at uusg.org/membership-class.



MANY
PATHS
ONE
CHURCH



ADULT GROUP OFFERING

ONE BOOK ONE UUSG

THURSDAY, MARCH 9 AT 7PM

UUSG COMMON ROOM

Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva

Our UUSG Book Club will be reading *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead at our next meeting on March 9th at 7 p.m. in the Common Room. This timely book was published in 2019 and won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize. *The Nickel Boys* continues our interest in reading about the Native American traditions and history in the United States. The book is historical fiction but based on a true story “of two boys unjustly sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.”

When Elwood Curtis, a black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a grotesque chamber of horrors. Elwood's only salvation is his friendship with fellow delinquent Turner... As life at the Academy becomes ever more perilous, the tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades.

Based on the *real story* of a reform school that operated for 111 years and warped the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers...” (*Entertainment Weekly*). Whitehead is also the author of the hit novel, *The Underground Railroad*.

All are welcome! Please come and participate in what we are sure will be a lively and stimulating discussion. Diane Gallentine and Jennifer Klein will be hosting and leading the discussion. Please RSVP to dgallen123@gmail.com.



**Next Date - Thursday, March 16 at 7pm
Sturdy Shelter Brewing in Batavia**

Join Rev. Scot and Pastor Stephanie Anthony of Fox Valley Presbyterian Church for a cross-denominational Pub Theology group!

Open and honest conversation about things that matter, at a table where all perspectives are welcome. We aim to dive deeply into topics involving faith, meaning, identity, culture, politics, and more! Bring your questions and your curiosity and respectfully engage with people of varying religious traditions, philosophical perspectives, and life experiences. A good time to be had by all! RSVP at uusg.org/pub-theology.

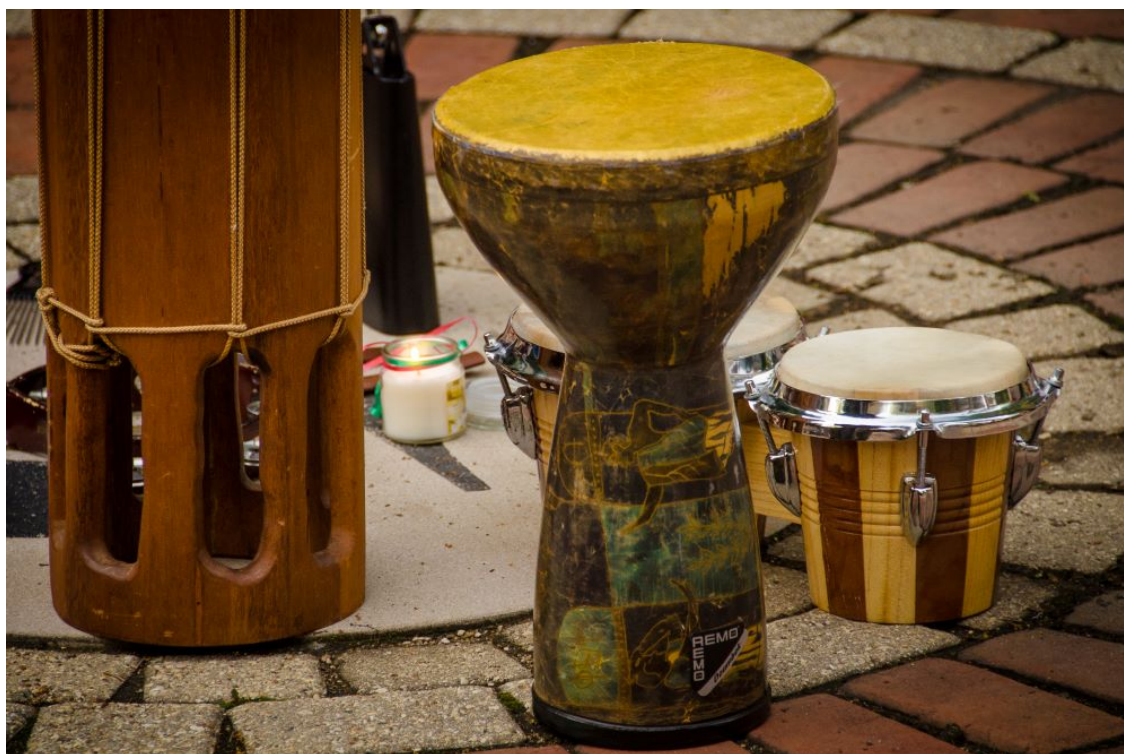


WORSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The newly formed “Worship Advisory Committee” needs your feedback regarding our Sunday Worship services. Do you have ideas for sermon topics, guest speakers, or themes? Is there something new you’d like us to consider adding to our worship service or something we should consider omitting?

Please email your comments, suggestions, and ideas to wac@uusg.org, or feel free to speak with anyone on the committee: Rhonda Robinson, Julia Friesen, Deb Brod, Linda Dorr, and Kathy McFadden. Your comments will be reviewed and respectfully considered by the committee members and discussed with Rev. Scot.

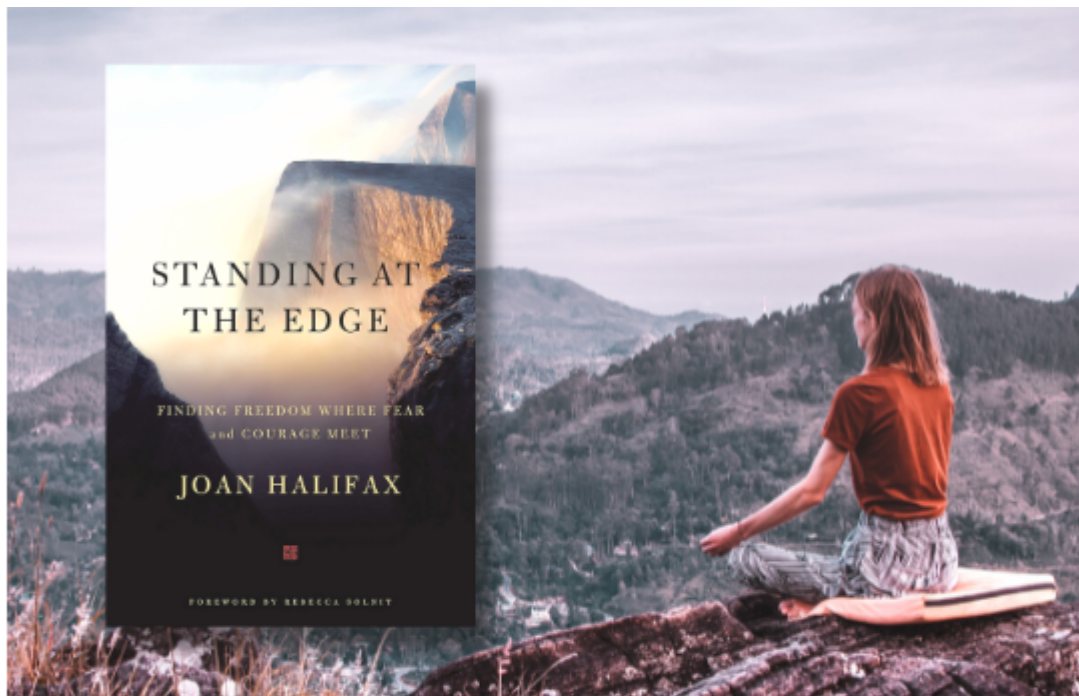
We would greatly appreciate your participation and commitment to our efforts. Thanks so much!



Oneness Drum Circle - 1st Sunday of the Month Beginning Sunday, March 5, 2-4pm in the Common Room

Drums are among the earth's oldest musical instruments and seem to have had a place in every ancient culture. This Drum Circle is uniquely designed for all ages to participate in creating rhythmic flows of music (vibrational energy) coming together as ONE. This experience is intended to lift our energetic vibrations as we learn to trust in the flow of consciousness connections and intentionally spread some high vibes of love & joy around the world. Music is the easiest way to lift vibrations.

Gina Grupe-Stibal will be leading this experience of a Oneness Drum Circle. Be prepared to have fun and move around (no music experience required). Don't have a drum? Make one. There are tons of DIY drum videos on youtube. It can be as simple as an empty soup can with a latex balloon over the top and a pencil for the drumstick. Also... other instruments that you feel called to bring in harmony are welcome such as shakers, maracas, flute, guitar, hand drum, wind chimes, rain sticks... you get the idea!



<p>MANY PATHS ONE CHURCH</p> 	<p>ONLINE ADULT GROUP OFFERING</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">BUDDHISM & MEDITATION STUDY GROUP</h2> <p>1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAYS AT 7PM</p> <p>Contact uubuddhism@uusg.org for Zoom Link</p> <p style="font-style: italic;">Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva</p>
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We'd love for you to join us for meditation and book discussion of [Standing at the Edge: Finding Freedom Where Fear and Courage Meet, by Roshi Joan Halifax](#). From her lifetime of work as a humanitarian and Buddhist teacher, Halifax shares her understanding of how our greatest challenges can become a valuable source of wisdom. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 7:00pm on Zoom. For information, please contact Lisa Gades (uubuddhism@uusg.org).

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