

Greetings from the Executive Operations Director

As Staff Lead of ISC and member of the Budget Working Group, I ask that you make a pledge for our 2023-24 fiscal year if you have not done so. As President Carla Williams explained on Sunday morning, our pledge drive fell significantly short of goal and we are facing difficult choices as we move toward finalizing our budget. We hope that everyone feels that their pledge matters and is appreciated, no matter how small or large. Let's keep working together to do all that we can toward accomplishing our mission and goals. Thank you.

Read further about Rummage Sale 2023 – then continue for information about the upcoming Peter Mayer Concert, Lower Level Bathroom Construction, Something Smelly in the Building and other topics of interest.

Please see the Rummage Sale article in this week's newsletter and the UCE homepage at ucevanston.org for full details on this year's sale on May 12 and 13. (set up May 7) We need you to Donate, Volunteer and Shop the Sale.

Here is the line-up of Department and Team Leads for this year.

Sale Coordinator: Sandra Robinson

Children's: Gillian Lawrence and Alice Swan

Furniture: Pat Ulmer and Ginny Niemann

Housewares: Alice Chrostowski

Clothing: Tory Bassani (support team: Shelly George and Lisa Solomon)

Boutique: Elizabeth Kennedy

Durable Goods: Robb Geiger (support team: Tom Beck)

Treasures: Margaret Schatz and Carol Nielsen

Jewelry: Lynn Kendall

Art: John and Will VanDyke (support team: Craig Spidel)

Cafe: Kathy Talmage and Meredith Haydon

Clean Up: Meredith Haydon (Meredith already has the truck arriving for pick up after the sale)

If you see a department or particular people you would love to work with, let us know at rummage@ucevanston.org

We are all busy getting ready for another great event. Remember to bring your items starting on set-up day May 7 after worship. Donate, Volunteer and Shop the Sale. I am looking for a volunteer to assist me. Last year we had three coordinators and this year it is just me. If you are a detailed oriented person who enjoys being with people, join me.

srobinson@ucevanston.org

Peter Mayer returns to the UCE Stage

Join us on Friday, May 19 for a wonderful evening of music with Peter Mayer, singer song writer familiar with UU's.

Peter wrote Blue Boat Home, a beloved song in our UU teal hymnal. You can purchase tickets by going to our website

Ucevanston.org and following the Eventbrite link. Info on Peter if you are not familiar with this talented guy:

“Minnesota's Peter Mayer has been singing and songwriting full-time for over 20 years, performing in venues across the United States and beyond. He writes songs for a small planet-- songs that celebrate life on earth and the mysterious and wondrous fact of our existence--songs about the vast cosmos that surrounds us and how we are a part of it all.”

Something smells funny around here: Critters have died beneath the church again. Every spring for many years we encounter this pesky problem. Kathy Talmage, Meredith Haydon, and I did a thorough spraying of the church and put out vanilla candles and odor trappers on Sunday. It was much better on Monday when Liz and I were at the church. We are sorry for this inconvenience. The solution to the problem would be installation of a metal fence several feet in the ground along the entire building at an astronomical cost. This solution has been quoted in the past. We have filled spaces only for them to find new places to crawl beneath the church and die. This time we were able to neutralize the odor without the expensive laying of neutralizing chemicals under the building.

Update on Lower-Level Bathrooms – Almost there!

We are in the last lap of bathroom construction in the lower level. I have been told by our contractor that the bathroom will be done early May depending on partitions delivery. Initially there were challenges getting materials for the additional electric work required for the west bathroom and later adding an accessibility door opener/closer. Eric also encountered a serious issue with no hot water and last week cut a hole in the east bathroom wall to run new copper piping.

The addition of the new longer partitions added three weeks to the completion of the bathrooms but is well worth the money and time as it is an investment in the congregation's comfort and inclusionary goals. Floor tiles go in on Thursday and toilets will be set. Painting is complete and lighting installed.

Apparently, no work had been done on the bathrooms in the many years since the church was built from what the contractor found to be true about plumbing and electric. Thank you for the Capital Campaign which could fund the reconstruction of these important facilities.

Lobby Bathrooms – If you visit the lobby bathrooms you will notice a big difference in the lighting. I had the grid replaced and the area above the grid repainted. It looked yellow and old and now looks fresh and bright.

Energy Use:

I am receiving a monthly report from Ecobee, the service that we are signed up with for the sanctuary thermostats.

Total savings in March over February is 61% with HVAC system running 127 hours for the month. Our savings are in the top 18% of neighbor usage. I take energy and cost conversation very seriously and control the thermostats carefully when in the building and when not in use. When one person is in the balcony we do not run balcony heat, but rather use a personal space heater.

Michael Drennan, David Bates-Jeffreys, Robb Geiger and newer member Jeannie McCullough serve on a new Emission Control Committee. Rev. Susan Frances is staff lead for Green Team and I for Buildings and Grounds. Michael Drennan was very helpful in finding a resource for lowest energy supplier costs. We continue to monitor building usage of electric, gas and water.

Spring Clean-up:

Our landscaper Ernesto Arreguin completed spring clean-up of our gardens on April 12th. I consulted with Barbara Butz regarding the pollinator garden and Carol Nielsen regarding the new plantings along the west wall of the wing. Britta Franke of Nature's Perspective advised on what should be cut back in the west garden along the lobby window area, and the playscape area in the south lawn area. This summer promises to grace us with beautiful flowers, trees, bushes and pollinators.

Gardens - A fountain for the south Playscape garden has been ordered and we are working with Kathy Underwood and Faith Formation families on the selection of climbers for the small play area between the ramp and wing. Given that our trees have been trimmed, gardens pruned, new fountain and play area, the south garden should be just beautiful and fun to use this summer.

Landor Memorial Bench - A new bench was installed in the northwest lawn in memory of Raissa Landor and her mother. You might recall that an older worn bench was there previously. Raissa's daughters brought the new bench last week. It is a lovely addition to our garden.