

Group Email and Web Services

The most basic function of Albany UU's Groups.io service is delivery of messages sent to a group's email address to all members of the group. Whether you reply to a group message with the **Reply** or the **Reply All** buttons in your email program, your message goes to the whole group. But you also have an easy way to reply just to the sender: use the **Reply to Sender** link that appears at the bottom of each message. Unless you believe your reply will be of interest to the whole group, it's better to reply just to the sender to help cut down on mailbox clutter.

Groups.io not only provides the basic group email functions but also associates a private website with each group (separate from Albany UU's public website, <https://albanyuu.org>).

- Albany UU's Groups.io account is organized with a *main* group, containing all registered members and friends, and many subgroups, each consisting of a subset of those in *main*. The main group has address main@albanyuu.groups.io and private website <https://albanyuu.groups.io/g/main>. An example of a subgroup is the Green Sanctuary Team, with address GST@albanyuu.groups.io and private website <https://albanyuu.groups.io/g/GST>.
- Groups.io allows only one subgroup level; put another way, the parent group of every subgroup is *main*.
- Each subgroup's website provides a **message archive**, **membership directory**, **files area**, **photos area**, and a **calendar** for posting subgroup event notices. It also has a **New Poll** feature, which allows subgroup members to vote on an issue on the website instead of sending votes by email.
- To access these features, you must be logged into Albany UU's Groups.io service. Members and friends of Albany UU who already have an email address registered with albanyuu.groups.io can *log in temporarily without a password* using the **Email me a link to log in** option that appears on the **Please Log In** page.
- Everyone should log in at least once to look around at the subgroup websites, at least at their message archives. Click on the **Messages** item in the website's Menu, which is displayed on the left side of each page. (If viewed in a small window or phone screen, the Menu isn't initially displayed but can be opened by clicking at the right end of a strip at the bottom.) Even if you intend to use Groups.io only for sending and receiving group email, you should be aware that the message archive of most subgroups is *open*, i.e., visible to parent group (*main*) members. More about privacy issues with group message archives, and how, if desired, greater privacy might be achieved, is discussed in a separate document, [Albany UU Group Privacy Policies](#).
- For more extensive use of the subgroup websites, you should create a password: once you are logged in temporarily, click on your name (or, on a small screen, the person icon) at the top of the screen, and select **Account**, where you can enter a password. If you allow your browser to save your email/password combination for Groups.io, you'll rarely need to enter the password again.

Here is more detail about these website features:

1. The home page of a subgroup's private website is <https://albanyuu.groups.io/g/subgroup-name>. For example, the home page of the CircleDinners subgroup is <https://albanyuu.groups.io/g/CircleDinners>. The subgroup home page includes basic information about its email address and related addresses for subscribing or reporting problems to the subgroup owner(s). The home page of each subgroup website is public, but all its other pages, such as its message archive or file area, are inaccessible to the general public. *Hint*: an easy way to get to a subgroup's website, without having to remember its URL, is to click on the **View/Reply Online** link at the bottom of any subgroup message. This puts you in the website's **Messages** archive, and you can use the website's Menu to get to the **Home** page, **Files**, or other pages.
2. Each subgroup's website holds its message archive, organized by topic. There, you can read messages, download their attachments, or reply to them. No need to keep subgroup messages you receive in your Inbox or save them to other folders, since you can always refer back to them in the subgroup's message archive.
3. While all members of a subgroup are typically able to send messages to the subgroup, the *main* group is "announcement-only," meaning only albanyuu.groups.io administrators can send to it.
4. To check which subgroups you already belong to, and which others are available to join, use the **Subgroups** item in the Menu of any subgroup website.
5. Joining a subgroup is easy. Just send an email to subgroup-name+subscribe@albanyuu.groups.io. For example, to join the CircleDinners subgroup, send an email to CircleDinners+subscribe@albanyuu.groups.io. (No need to include anything in the Subject line or body of the message.) Some subgroup subscriptions are moderated, i.e., they require approval of a group *Owner* or *Moderator* (see below).
6. Each subgroup website is also capable of hosting and organizing related files, photos, polls, and a calendar for posting subgroup event notices. Access to these, as well as to the Message archive, is available to subgroup members and in some cases to all parent group (*main*) members using the subgroup's Menu.
7. An important Menu item on most subgroup websites is **Subgroups/Members**, which displays a list of all members of the subgroup. With a few subgroups, you must be a member to have access to the membership list.
8. These Groups.io websites are distinct from the church's public website, <https://albanyuu.org>. Their limitation of access just to registered members provides a

place to post documents that should be available only to church members and friends (e.g., meeting minutes, budget proposals, or reports that include staff salary and benefit data).

9. Some subgroup members are designated as Owners or Moderators. An Owner has an **Admin** item in the subgroup's website menu, which opens up additional capabilities. For example, **Admin/Preferences/Settings** gives you a page on which you can configure many features, such as the photo that appears at the top of the subgroup's home page (instead of the default elephant herd). For Owners, the membership list is one of the **Admin** items instead of under the **Subgroups** menu item. The creator of a subgroup is an Owner, and they may designate other subgroup members to be Owners. They may also change their role to be an ordinary Member of the subgroup, or even remove themselves. Current members should decide among themselves who should be Owner(s) going forward and request that whoever are the current Owner(s) change to new one(s).

10. If you want to change the email address with which you are registered with Groups.io, click on your name (or, on a small screen, the person icon) at the top of the screen, and select **Settings**, where you can enter the new address. The change will propagate to all subgroups you are a member of, so that all email sent to those subgroups will come to the new address.

If you have any questions, send an email to main+owner@AlbanyUU.groups.io. It will go to the *main* group Owners (currently Amy, Xanthe, Annika, and David), not to everybody.

Happy connecting with your groups!

AlbanyUU.groups.io administrators (Amy Lent, Xanthe Plymale, Annika Pfluger, David Musser)