

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.

The Theme for July is "The Ways of Knowing"

July 2nd 10:00 A.M.

Robyn Berkley

Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi

First Sunday Potluck following service.

July 9th 10:00 A.M.

"The Soul of the Whole" Presented by Dorothy Wilson

A Faith Rocket Sermon, written by Rev. Victoria Safford, Senior Minister at White Bear UU Church, Mahtomedi, MN

Worship Associate: Dee Evans

(See more about Faith Rocket on page 2.)

July 16th 10:00 A.M.

"21st Century Schizoid Man" John Herndon

A song title from 1969 that presented images of the previous year 1968, pessimism seemed to be the status quo, and distrust for government and authority reigned supreme. Sound Familiar? Have we really progressed since 1968 and is there any reason to optimistic for the future? I believe that progressive religious voices have something to say that is prophetic and relevant, and I will discuss how a Universalist outlook may just be reason for hope.

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

July 23rd 10:00 A.M.

"Singing Our Visions of Action, Transcendence, and Hope" Joy Hoeft

Takes us on a trip through various social reform movements in our country's history using music and song. It was written and performed at 2003 General Assembly in Boston, MA by the late David Navias.

Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

July 30th 10:00 A.M.

"The Spirit of a Humanist" Presented by Mary Johnson

A Faith Rocket sermon, written by the Rev. Paul Daniel, minister at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown, PA.

Worship Associate: Ruth Maskow



Nursery Care

All children, 5 years of age and under, are welcome to our staffed nursery during Sunday Services

A New Addition to Worship Services Faith Rocket

The church has subscribed to a monthly program called **Faith Rocket**. It comes from the Church of the Larger Fellowship (a “UU congregation without walls”) and will provide us with themed Worship Services prepared by Unitarian Universalist Ministers, as well as related essays, reflections, videos, and podcasts. The Worship Associates will be using these resources when we do not have a minister or guest speaker in the pulpit. These resources may also be used by those who are coordinating small group discussions or other church-related activities.

Two services in July will come from the Faith Rocket program. The theme is “Spirit and Soul.” On July 9 Dorothy Wilson will present the sermon entitled “The Soul of the Whole,” and on July 30 Mary Johnson will present “The Spirit of a Humanist.”



Religious Education for Children and Youth News

While the official Religious Education year has ended, plans are in the works for the youth group to get together occasionally - watch for notices in the "church this week", e-mail bulletin, the July and August newsletters and Facebook Friends page for more information. Happy Summer!

The Seekers

Every Sunday, 11:15 in the Emerson Room, we'll engage in a more in-depth discussion of that day's sermon and the monthly topic. Everyone is welcome to join in. It's a great way to get to know your fellow congregants and to get a deeper understanding of the lessons we are learning.



From the Editor

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Newsletter Deadline is on the **15** of each month. ***Dorothy will be unable to read emails for a few weeks due to eye surgery so for the month of August, please only send info. to Becky Green at church church@firstuualton.org***

Save The Date!

meet & greet

There will be a “meet and greet” with our new minister Pastor Amy Brooks following the service on Sept. 10.

AND

Church Picnic



We will have a church picnic at Gordon Moore Park on Oct. 8. There will be a brief service, a potluck picnic, fellowship, and more. Watch for more details.

Congregational Covenant

Approved May 17, 2015

To strengthen and nurture with love, compassion and respect, we covenant to:

Honor and make space for our diversity, respect our volunteers, leaders and staff by Supporting balance in their lives and in their personal and professional pursuits;



Encourage each member to develop a personal spiritual practice that cultivates honesty and acceptance;

Remembering our humanness we acknowledge our imperfection and extend forgiveness to ourselves and others;

Engage within our own and larger community with integrity, by taking responsibility for our actions, facilitating right relationships, and living into the Journey.

(The acronym for our Covenant is HERE)

HAPPY SUNDAY

Your Board of Trustees thanks the congregation for a happy Sunday on June 4. It was a busy day, bitter-sweet because it was Dawn's last sermon at our church, but happy because Dawn is happy to be heading east for a new full-time post with a congregation in New Jersey. Happy also because the potluck was varied, delicious, and sufficient and because we had the opportunity to chat with a lot of our friends between trips to the buffet.

The congregational meeting was well-attended (perhaps because we waited on the beautiful chocolate cake until after adjournment?), and the congregation was attentive and involved, asking good questions and deliberating carefully. We accomplished two important bits of business that many of us are excited about:

First, we elected new Board members:

- Paula LaFond, as President-Elect
- Phil Embree, Member-at-Large
- Tracey Howe-Koch, Member-at-Large
- Robin Crane, as Treasurer, to fill out the term of Lisa Strangeman, who has had to resign because of her extremely heavy job-related travel schedule

One of our new Board members is replacing Paul Hebert, who has just completed an At-large term.

Second, the congregation considered both a \$125,000 budget and a \$140,000 budget for the next fiscal year beginning on July 1. We voted by almost a 3 to 1 margin to adopt the higher budget. AND, because current pledges cannot fully support such a budget, the congregation also authorized the Board to use up to \$37,000 from the Endowment Fund, as needed, to:

- Enable the church to hire a ¼-time Religious Education Director
- Increase nursery child-care to meet the two-adult standard most Sundays, and for several non-worship events
- Pay the full assessment owed to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) as we used to do

The Board pointed out, and most members seemed to agree, that these are not unusual expenses, but rather are basic functions of a church of almost any size. We have simply been unable to meet those needs with the level of pledges that we have been able to commit.

The Board of Trustees was proud to be able to bring to the congregation a well-crafted budget based on a lot of hard work and what we think is a much-improved understanding of the church's finances. We are grateful that the congregation has enabled a fuller level of funding by allowing limited use of the Endowment. Many in the congregation saw the limited use of some Endowment funds as a risk worth taking at a crucial time in our congregational life, a risk that will enable us to continue the hard work of building a more robust and stable future.

With appreciation, the Board pledges to be good stewards of these resources and to report to the congregation on the extent and the use of the funds. We hope that, with the call of a new half-time minister who is open to staying for the long term, we may strengthen our R.E. program and attract new families to share in the faith we love and the congregation that we cherish, and achieve financial stability. And we thank Rev. Dawn for steering us through this last year as we worked on three main tasks:

- Strengthening our financial management and budgeting
- Reaching out to engage new members (seven this year) and
- Finding a new half-time minister who was open to the possibility of staying and building a congregation that could support full-time staff.

Again, a genuine thank you to all for the companionship, the trust, and the enthusiasm, and the hope in the future that we share. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, feel free to talk to any member of the Board. We really want to be responsive and provide whatever information you need.

We thank Paul, Lisa and Dawn for their service and wish them the best as they move on with other aspects of their lives.

Your 2016-17 Board of Trustees

Board Minutes

Summary of Board Meeting June 15, 2017

This was a joint meeting of the outgoing and incoming board members.

The new Board consists of:

President: Michael Schmidt
Immediate Past President: Dee Evans
Vice President: Paula LaFond
Secretary: Pat Moore
Treasurer: Robin Crane
Member-at-large: Phil Embree
Member-at-large: Tracy Howe-Koch

The Board thanks Debby Lovell, Paul Hebert, and Lisa Strangeman for their service.

5013C Status: We have found that we cannot get incorporation status under the umbrella of the UUA. We have had an offer of a \$400 donation toward the cost of a lawyer to help us obtain incorporation. Dee will be trying to find a suitable lawyer. The purpose of the 5013C status would to make us eligible to accept corporate donations for our Fourth Saturday Give-away program.

Minister: Rev. Dawn will be moving on to New Jersey to serve their new congregation, their first regular ministry since graduating from seminary. We offer them our best wishes for continued success and our thanks for their year of ministry to us. Our new minister will join us in August.

Treasurer's Report: Robin Crane prepared an abbreviated form of the monthly report, which members found very useful. The full report will still be available any time there is a need for further details. She projects a \$9208 deficit for this fiscal year, which can be balanced by using from the reserve fund. Pledges are down for next year, but more are anticipated to come in.

Thanks to the congregation for their faith in our future by voting for the \$140,000 budget for the coming year, which allows us to hire a part time RE director and a second nursery worker, and to pay our fair share to the UUA. We can make up any deficit by using from our reserve and/or endowment funds.

Policy & Procedure: Sandy Shaner presented a detailed written report of where we are in terms of policy development.

- A. The board agreed to shorten job descriptions in our by-laws and place a full description in Policy.
- B. We agreed that we need to update our Strategic Plan.
- C. We may review our policy of not hiring members. We need to hire an RE director and a second nursery worker.
- D. New names will added to our bank accounts due to our change of leadership.
- E. The list of church key holders needs to be updated.
- F. Our Welcoming Congregation status has expired, so we will need new training to be official with the UUA.
- G. Job descriptions need to be updated to meet our current practice. We may decide to return to a committee structure.

Other Items:

Carol McGrew will take on leadership of Social Justice.
Peg Flach has agreed to work with Dee Evans on Fundraising.
Vice President Paula LaFond will be seeking leaders for other committees.

Thanks to all who have helped in any way with the work of furthering our mission in any way this past year.

The next Board Meeting is July 12 at 7:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend. Contact new president Michael Schmidt ahead of time if you have business you would like added to the agenda.

Submitted by Pat Moore, Board Secretary

Worship Associates for 2017-2018

The role of a Worship Associate is to work collaboratively with the minister, guest speakers, and other Worship Associates to plan and implement worship services.

The Worship Associates for the 2017-2018 church year are: Robin Crane, Joy Hoef, Mary Johnson, Ruth Maskow, Robert Kokenyesi, Michael Tarabulski, Sabrina Trupia, and Dorothy Wilson.

Please give them feedback regarding the worship services to allow them to provide services that are meaningful, life-affirming, and inclusive.

First Sunday Pot Luck Luncheon

Sunday, July 2nd 11:15
Come, enjoy good food and fellowship with your UU church community!



All are welcome!



Non-perishable food items are always needed to contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Pantry. It's important to help our neighbors get the food they need.

4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, July 22



Please support our church's community outreach by donating to our personal care inventory.

Each month we need laundry detergent, toilet paper, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, hand lotion, shaving cream, baby wipes ("free and clear"), dish detergent (for hand washing dishes).

Donations of reusable tote bags (like what you can buy at grocery stores) would be appreciated.

This month we are also collecting school supplies such as: crayons (24/box); #2 pencils, pink eraser, washable markers 8/package, glue sticks, wide ruled spiral notebooks, pocket folders, pencil case, package of lined paper, lined notebooks, pens, rulers, pencil sharpeners.

Sabrina Trupia will be coordinating this month's distribution.

Wash, Dry and Put Away!

Enjoy some coffee and cookies with your conversation after church? Thank you for being sure our dishes are taken care of and trash removed.



Keeping our church home clean and comfortable is everyone's job.

INTEREST GROUPS:

Anna Ds – Women's Alliance, July 6th, 11:30 a.m.

Just a reminder that we're taking our individual brown bags to Joan Hashimi's house where we'll enjoy drinks provided by Joan and a surprise dessert -- or two or three.



Please look up Joan's address in your church directory.
jhashimi@sbcglobal.net

What do we need from you?

- a call or e-mail to Joan by Friday, 6/30 so she knows how many are coming;
- a few volunteers to join me at Joan's around 11 so we can rearrange her dining area to allow for a crowd;
- a few volunteers to bring a dessert;
- a few volunteers to stay behind and help us put Joan's house back to its normal, lovely appearance.

And, as always, feel free to bring some donations for the Food Bank or the Church's personal care distribution process; \$\$ also gratefully accepted if that's your preference.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at Joan's.

Sandy
wrgma2@gmail.com

Men's Monthly Lunch July 13th, 11:30 a.m.



The men's lunch bunch (Retired old Men Eating Out) meets on the second Thursday of each month.

Join us at the Best Buffet at 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River. All men in our church are invited (retired or working, old, or not). For further information contact Paul Herbert pphebert@mail.com

Healing Energy Group



No meeting in July.

Since many of our members are unavailable this month, the group decided to take a brief pause. Our next meeting, therefore, will be **August 9th** - We would love to have you join us when we meet again!

Note from Your Church Office



Please use the envelopes available in the pews for cash donations that are designated as pledges or for specific funds like for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, 4th Saturday Lunches, Sacred Grounds, etc. Write this information along with your name on the envelope. All other undesignated or unrestricted cash donations can be placed in the collection plates.

Also, please make sure that all checks and envelopes have the pledge year in the memo line. That is especially needed this time of year when some are paying the balance on their 2016 - 2017 pledges and some are paying towards their 2017 - 2018 pledges.

We are converting to a new database program so this is a great time to update your information. Please let me know if you have moved, changed your phone number or email address. I will be sending out a new directory so please look it over for outdated information.

Thank you, Becky Green, Administrator & Bookkeeper

CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2017 - 2018

Board of Trustees

Board President - Michael Schmidt

President-Elect - Paula LaFond

Past President - Dee Evans

Treasurer - Robin Crane

Secretary - Pat Moore

Member-At-Large - Phil Embree

Member-at-Large - Tracy Howe-Koch

Committee/Team Leads

Transitions Committee - TBA

Social Events - Vacant

Interfaith and U.U. - Vacant

Social Justice - Carol McGrew

Fundraising - Dee Evans & Peg Flach

Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer

Sandra Shaner

Religious Education Council

Chair - Joy Hoeft

Stewardship Committee

Building - TBD

Grounds - Robyn Stranquist

Canvass 2017 - TBA

Endowment Fund - Jerry Johnson

Finance - Matt Koch

Membership - Mary Weber

Sunday Support Ministries - TBA

Worship Associates

Mary Johnson

Robin Crane

Joy Hoeft

Robert Kokenyesi

Dorothy Wilson

Mike Tarabulski

Ruth Maskow

Sabrina Trupia