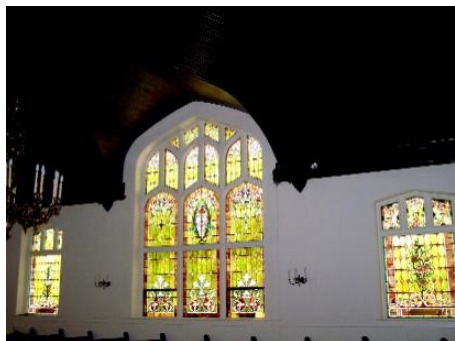


FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Windows on west side of sanctuary.

*Newsletter of the
First Unitarian Church,
Alton, Illinois*

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

January 2012

TWO WORSHIP SERVICES EACH SUNDAY 9:30 AND 11:00 AM

January 1, 2012 - one service only - 10:00 am
Intergenerational worship service – no Religious Ed classes

“We Begin Again”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

This New Years’ morning, bring all the family to let go of past hurts and sing in the New Year.

January 8, 2012
9:30 and 11:00 am
“A Passionate Core”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Our church’s mission statement says we are ‘welcoming and inclusive,’ which is wonderful when we achieve it. But if we go no deeper with one another, if we cannot share the stories that drive us, then we have nothing to fall back on when times get tough.

January 15, 2012 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
9:30 and 11:00 am
To Be Announced

January 22, 2012

9:30 and 11:00 am

*“It’s YOUR Church:
A Congregational Polity Primer”*
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

In our faith tradition, we govern ourselves through the democratic processes of congregational polity. The power in our church resides in the Free Pew rather than in the Free Pulpit, but both sides of that equation need to understand the relationship between freedom and responsibility

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting
12:15 pm

January 29, 2012

9:30 and 11:00 am

“Thinking Our Way Through”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

It’s easy to delude ourselves into believing that our human intellect is far superior to our animal nature and that we can think our way out of pain, grief, and periods of vulnerability. Maybe it’s time to ask: “How’s that workin’ fer ya?”

Adult Religious Enrichment (ARE)

Offerings at 9:30 & 11:00 am

Nursery Care for infants and toddlers as well as Activities for older children is provided at 9:30. Nursery Care and Religious Education classes for children 3 and older are offered at 11:00.

Jan 1 – NO ARE

Jan. 8 – 9:30 am – Dr. Ron Glossop. Our topic will be the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711 – 1776), the third of the British Empiricists. Hume argued that is we are consistent empiricists; we also have no “reason” to believe in mental substances (souls) or God. Our ideas about an independently existing material world and uniform causality and ongoing personhood are the causal result of natural “instinctive” beliefs, habits, and memory rather than “reasoning,” as is evidenced by the fact that even non-rational animals have such beliefs.

Jan. 8 – 11:00 am – Spirit of Life – Cheryle Tucker-Loewe. Spirit of Life classes seek to bring meaning, beauty, inclusivity, and growth to Unitarian Universalist adults as they deepen their spiritual awareness and connections.

Jan. 15 – 9:30 am – Bible Study – Tracey Howe-Koch. This is a time of discovery, discussion, and individual interpretation. The class will be loosely based on the John Buehrens book *Understanding the Bible, an Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*.

Jan. 15 – 11:00 am – Spirit in Life – Cheryle Tucker-Loewe.

Jan. 22 – 9:30 am – Introduction to Paganism – Michelle Bryant-Barbeau

Jan. 22 – 11:00 am – Spirit in Practice – Cheryle Tucker-Loewe.

Jan. 29 – 9:30 am – To be announced

Jan. 29 – 11:00 am – Spirit in Life – Linda Van Zandt

A First Glance



Back in December, our congregation put on a luncheon for the family and friends of Mike Fischer, a beloved church member who died after many years of struggling with many medical issues, not least of all a heart transplant. Mike’s wife, Pat, worked with her church to have a funeral mass said for Mike down the street and around the corner from us at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Afterwards, family and friends and other funeral participants were invited to our place for a meal and fellowship in honor of Mike.

Lots of people came, many who'd never been in our building before, and it was great to see the warm hospitality offered to these visitors courtesy of our many volunteers who brought food, set up and decorated, served and then cleaned up. Everyone I spoke to was appreciative and knew from our treatment of them and the stories we told that Mike had been well and truly loved by this congregation.

The next day, I received an anonymous phone call from someone who'd been at the luncheon. This person had not approached me at the time for various reasons, but said they decided they had to call to let me - and us - know how important that luncheon had been for them personally.

The caller explained that they had transferred to another state many years ago and had developed a relationship there that turned into a loving partnership. However, illness intervened; the partner died. When the person contacted their family and shared with their parents what had happened, the parents disowned them and told them that bad things had happened to the couple because of their 'choice of lifestyle.'

Some years after the death of the partner, the person had moved back here and had worked in a couple of professional positions in the community, though because of the relatively public nature of those jobs, was never able to express fully and outright who they were. When they walked into our fellowship hall, looked at our literature, gazed at the photos on our new member board, and spoke to a few of our members, they said they felt welcome in the world for the first time in a long, long time.

It matters who we are.

It matters what we do.

It matters in ways we may never know and to people we may never hear from when we act out our aspirations to be welcoming and inclusive.

May you begin the New Year with a blessing on your lips and love in your heart.

See you in church,

Khleber

Join the Party!

UN-Decorate the Church
on Sunday, January 8
right after church.



Stay and share the joy and
excitement in seeing the
church transformed.

We will order Subway sandwiches
chips, fruit and drinks for all the
Holiday Helpers.



Winter WomanSpirit 2012

Presented by the Womanspirit Committee and the
Women and Religion committee of the Central
Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist
Association

**Friday evening, Feb. 3 thru Sunday morning,
Feb. 5 at UU Church in Rockford, IL**

“Sacred Journey Into Sound” with keynote
presenter Ragani – a world renowned healer and
practitioner of Kirtan, a melodic meditation for
centering of the heart and spirit. Numerous
Saturday morning and afternoon workshops to
choose from.

For further information about the weekend see
flyers at church or go to
www.womenandreligion.org and/or talk to Mary
Johnson about riding with her to Rockford.

Deadline for early bird registration fee of \$120
is Dec. 31. Home hospitality is available as well
a group rate for hotel accommodations.

Your Church Board 2011-2012

President –	Sayer Johnson
President Elect –	Marty Moore Johnson
Past President –	Cheryle Tucker-Loewe
Secretary –	Sarah Lazarz
Treasurer –	Jerry Johnson
Trustee –	Jim Moore
Trustee –	Don Allen
Youth Rep. –	Lily Tade

**Board meetings are the 2nd Wednesday each
month at 7 pm and are open to the church
members.**

**Speaker to Share his
Insights about the Rev.
Dr. Martin Luther King
Wednesday
January 25th – 7 to 9 pm**



Sponsored by The Seekers
Book Group

On Wednesday, January 25th at 7 pm, The Rev. Bill
Veith, a Dr. King scholar, will share his insights and
findings about the life and work of Dr. King

Rev. Veith is the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church
(ELCA) in Alton and has given a series of lectures at
our church before about Dr. King.

The Seekers decided to ask Rev. Veith to speak about
Dr. King after reading Dr. King’s very compelling
book “*Strength to Love*.” There will be plenty of time
for questions and discussion.

You are all invited to attend Wednesday evening’s
presentation. Childcare will be provided.

CHALICE CIRCLES



PARENTS SEEKING PEACE CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Sunday.

Sunday, January 15 from 12:15 to 1:30 pm in Emerson Place at Church. Contact: Diane Thompson dianeelizabeththompson@gmail.com or Sayer Johnson sayerjohnson@gmail.com

BELLEVILLE CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Thursday.

Thursday, January 19 at 7 pm. Contact Don or Jan Allen for the location janallen703@aol.com.

RENEGADE WOMEN'S CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Saturday.

Saturday, January 21 from 10 am to 2 pm
The UUA "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" workshop will resume this Saturday. Bring a lunch. Contact Beth Bourland bethbou1@att.net or Peg Flach pegflach@juno.com

MEN'S CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 4th Tuesday.

Tuesday, January 24 at 7 pm at church.
Contact: Khleber Van Zandt kvanzandt@uuma.org

THE GLBT CHALICE CIRCLE

The last Sunday of each month.

Sunday, January 29 at 12:15
Look for them on facebook under "GLBT UU Chalice Circle - Alton, IL." Contact Layne A. Simpson layne3030@hotmail.com for more information.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Send Newsletter items by the 15th of each month to the newsletter editor,

Mary Johnson – mejohanson@mindspring.com
and also to Becky Green in the church office
church@firstuualton.org

Church phone: 618-462-2462
Mail: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002

Meet our newest members and add their names to your church Directory

Joining 11/27/11

Rachel Lappin
(daughter Makala)
ramielap@gmail.com



Staci Bratten
bpbrat10@gmail.com

Joining 12/4/11

Wendy Moore Hershen and Raymond Neil Hershen
(children: Catherine, Bennett, Madeline)
moorekisses2004@yahoo.com



Most people enjoy getting a card or email or phone call on their birthday. Below is the list we have of church members and friends celebrating birthdays this month. If you don't think the church office has your birthday on file, please contact Becky Green at church@firstuualton.org and give her that information.

11 January – Glenn Brunner
11 January – Juliette Crone-Willis
16 January – Alex Lewis (2010)
16 January – Jane Russo (1998)
19 January – Javion Herndon (2007)
21 January – Rowan Elizabeth Dothager (2002)
25 January – Caleb Tucker-Loewe (2000)
25 January – Erin Herndon (1992)
25 January – Tom Kinsella
25 January – Jennifer Timpe
26 January – Rachel Lappin
30 January – Deb McNaughton
30 January – Lily Dothager (2007)
30 January – Vivienne Dothager (2007)
31 January – Pat Blanton



FOOD MINISTRIES

Coffee Hour:

Signup sheets are in the Kate Wuerker Room for you to sign up to bring refreshments, or to set-up for Coffee Hour, or to clean-up after Coffee Hour.

Throughout the year please volunteer at least once in each of these areas. Taking part in helping to make Coffee Hour enjoyable for everyone is a great way to build community.

Pot Luck Lunches:

Our monthly lunches are held on the 4th Sunday following the second worship service. In January that will be on **January 22**. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share. This is an all-church event so **we all participate in setting up and cleaning up**, but Food Ministries members are the people who help others find serving spoons, use the microwave, and give general kitchen guidance.

4th Saturday Lunch – JANUARY 28

Please consider coming to church to share a meal with our guests who may be in less fortunate situations. Helping at our 4th Saturday lunches are a way you can contribute your time and talent and also share a meal with people you might not otherwise ever meet.

We will have a sign up sheet as usual and appreciate everyone's contributions to this activity.

Mark Your Calendars

Campfest 2012 and the "Community through Camping Committee" will be having our first meeting of 2012 on Sunday February 5 at 12:30 pm.

Come join us as we discuss camping opportunities for our second annual Campfest Congregation-Wide Campout!!

Crisis Food Center Donations Needed

The Alton Crisis Food Center has fed record numbers since June. They are not able to provide extra holiday meal items this season but will continue to be able to provide the 5 day supply of nutritionally balanced food to their clients. This year, on average, 75 new families come for help each month.

Please remember to buy "extra" when you do your grocery shopping this month and put those "extras" in the food donation boxes in the RE entrance foyer at church.

The following items are those that are needed the most by the Crisis food Center.

canned corn	canned green beans
canned pork and beans	macaroni and cheese
chicken noodle soup	canned fruit
vegetable beef soup	instant mashed potatoes
peanut butter	boxed breakfast cereal
tuna	grape jelly

The center purchases perishable items with cash donations.

New Times for Choir Rehearsals

To accommodate more people's schedules and provide the opportunity for more people to sing with the choir, we will NORMALLY be rehearsing from 12:15 to 1:30 pm on the **1st and 2nd Sundays** and from **7:00 to 8:30 pm on the Thursday evening following the 2nd Sunday and on the following Thursday**. This will allow people who can only rehearse on Sunday to have two practices each month.

However, JANUARY'S schedule is different as there will be no rehearsal on the 1st Sunday as that is New Years Day.

Sun., January 8 – 12:15 pm
Thurs., January 12 – 7 pm
Thurs., Jan. 19 – 7 pm



For further information contact Willis McCoy:
mccoy.willis@yahoo.com

Making Communal Worship a Part of Your Spiritual Regimen – from the UUA’s Tapestry of Faith “Spirit in Practice”

1. Try to get to worship services with the least amount of stress as possible.
2. Use the prelude to center yourself and let go of whatever you don’t need for the next hour.
3. Don’t overanalyze – open yourself to simply experiencing the service
4. Appreciate your fellow congregants. Look around and remember that each person in the sanctuary with you comes with their own joys/sorrows/concerns.
5. Make an offering out of the largeness of your heart.
6. When something “turns you off” say a silent “thank you.” Wouldn’t it be boring to simply hear your own views and see your own preferences week after week?
7. Use the coffee hour to engage with other people ... not for congregational business.
8. Come back to the service during the week. Reflect back on what was said or what you thought or felt.
9. Attend services as regularly as your circumstances allow to increase your sense of connection to other individuals and to the congregation as a whole.

To Contact Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
Email: kvanzandt@uuma.org
Cell Phone:
Missouri – 314-223-0551
Illinois – 618-520-0567

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven
<http://cakesforthequeenofheaven.org/>

Plan to join us on Saturday, January 21 at 10 am in the Kate Wuerker Room for *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven*, sponsored by the Renegade Women's Chalice Circle. Bring a sack lunch and perhaps an item to share!

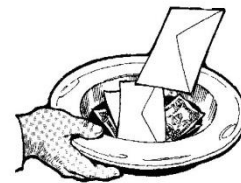
Session 3: Womanpower
Please join us!

Questions? More information? Contact: Peg Flach at pegflach@juno.com.

Community Outreach Offering

General Information:

One-half of the cash collection and **one-half** of any undesignated checks put in the collection on the 2nd and 4th



Sundays are given away to charitable causes. The **entire amount** of a check designated for a specific cause is donated to that cause. The money donated **does not** include pledge checks or money otherwise earmarked by the giver.

The COO on January 8th and 22nd will go to **Transhaven**. TransHaven serves as an active organization representing the Trans Community in advocacy, as well as supporting the issues of the broader LGBTIQA Community. TransHaven's Board and Staff, includes individuals representing Southern Illinois, Eastern and Central Missouri. TransHaven works as an educational resource, advocate for Trans Equality and provides opportunities for Trans individuals to become more active as a community. TransHaven is committed to the equality issues of all people, and remains active in the global community reaching out to individuals in more than 20 countries.

<http://www.transhaven.org/>

DESSERT AUCTION 2012



What: Enjoy dessert and a silent auction.

When: 7:30 pm, Saturday, January 28, 2012

Where: First Unitarian Church, Wuerker Room

Rules: Each entrant should bring a dessert for auctioning off **AND** a copy of that dessert for tasting. A silent auction will be held.

Coffee (both caffeinated and decaf) & Hot Tea will be provided. Nursery care will be available.

Semi-Annual Meeting and Vote on Proposed Changes to Church Bylaws

The Board of Trustees would like to cordially invite all members of the congregation to our Semi-annual meeting to be held at 12 30 pm on Sunday January 22. We will review accomplishments and vote on the proposed updated and amended bylaws.

By late December the proposed changes will be made available to the congregation in print as well as electronic format.

On January 15, the Sunday before our Semi-annual meeting the Board of Trustees invites the congregation for a fireside chat to talk about the proposed changes to the Bylaws. Please use this opportunity to discuss and clarify the proposed updated Bylaws and bring questions to the Board of Trustees.

The congregation is saddened by the death of two of its members in December and our sympathy goes out to their families.



William C. Fischer (Bill) died on December 1st. Until the last year he was a regular attendee at the Men's Lunch Group. He was a member of the Thomas Jefferson Fellowship in Florissant, and when they closed he joined our congregation here in Alton. He served as Board President and in several other capacities over the years. He was a husband to Lois, father, grand-father, and great-grandfather. Rev. Van Zandt conducted a service for Bill on December 5.

R. Michael Fischer (Mike) died on December 8th. Mike was a member of our church for just a few years, but he made a lasting impression and impact on many. His desire to get to services every Sunday was evident in his determination to make, for him, the arduous trek up the walkway into the sanctuary. Mike left behind his wife, Pat, three sons and a daughter. Rev. Van Zandt led a memorial prayer service at Staten-Fine funeral home on Dec. 12th and the church hosted a luncheon for his family and friends on Dec. 13th.

Below is the **NEWLY UPDATED** list of members of the **Caring Ministries Committee**. You may always contact one of them in time of illness, loss, crisis, or other need. Keep this list of contact people available in case you or your family is in need of pastoral support.



Nance Conniff
ncdcjc@yahoo.com

Nancy Copley
copley213@charter.net

Marcia Custer
mcuster@siue.edu

Melody Hardman nberg1240@yahoo.com

Sharon Johnson (Chair) sharonjohnsonmsw@gmail.com

Pat Moore patjimmoore@charter.net

Sabrina Trupia strupia@gmail.com

Megan Wasoba mrwasoba@gmail.com

Khleber Van Zandt
314-223-0551 (MO cell)
618-520-0567 (IL cell);
kvanzandt@uuma.org

**Have you recently started attending the
First Unitarian Church in Alton (or are you
someone who wants to brush up on UU history and
theology?)**

Then this introductory class is for you.

UU&You! 1.0

7 – 9 pm

Tuesdays, January 17, 24, 31

Here you will be introduced to the ideas, history and people that make up the First Unitarian Church of Alton and the Free Church tradition of which Unitarianism and Universalism are a part.

Please sign up in the Kate Wuerker Room if you are interested in attending or email the church office church@firstuualton.org

Interest Groups

The ANNA Ds Women's Alliance Group

All women are invited to attend, whether or not they're "official" members of the Anna Ds.

The Anna Ds will meet at 11:30 am on Thursday, January 5th at Bully's Smokehouse in Edwardsville – 1035 Century Drive (intersection of Rt. 157 and Commerce Drive). Please let Pat Colclasure know if you'll be attending this first meeting of 2012 – mcolcla@hotmail.com.

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum

The "Fifty Plusers" will meet on Saturday, January 7th from 10:30 am to noon in the Kate Wuerker Room. Our guest will be a woman specializing in physical fitness activities for seniors.

Afterwards, as always those who can will continue the discussion over lunch. The Fifty-Plus Forum is coordinated by Sandy Shaner, Pat Murrell, and Mona Hebert.



Spiral Scouts

Sunday, January 8th from 1-3 pm.

The SpiralScouts youth program includes interpersonal skills, traditional woodland lore, camping, and outdoor living skills. To check on meeting times or for additional information you may contact Amy Eichen Primary Contact for RiverDragon Circle 254 at skullmonkey9637@yahoo.com

Men's Lunch Group

**All Men in our Church
Family are invited!**



The Men's Lunch Group will meet at 11:30 am on **Thursday, January 12th** at the St. Louis Buffet, 672 Wesley Dr., Wood River, IL. Contact **Dick Blanton** dickb65@sbcglobal.net for further details.

**Want to give your congregation a
voice at the United Nations?**



By becoming an envoy for the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) you can make this possible! Since the UU-UNO was founded in 1962, UU envoys have been working to ensure that their congregation's voices are represented at the United Nations.

Through their work with the UU-UNO, UU envoys have been tremendously successful at influencing UN policy to promote global justice. UU-UNO envoy Elaine Harvey led the faith-based coalition to support establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), an important institution for holding individuals accountable for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Today the UU-UNO continues to make a difference by addressing gender-based violence, stopping violence and discrimination based on real or perceived Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, supporting school fees for 160 AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Ghana, and MORE.

It is important to our UU-UN office that we represent all the diverse voices of our faith. We do not want our congregation to be left out. Both youth and adults can be envoys and hold equal authority. For more information about our programs and what being an envoy entails, please visit our website at www.uu-uno.org and/or e-mail our Envoy Outreach Coordinator, Holly Sarkissian, at envoycoordinator@uu-uno.org.

The First Unitarian Church of Alton now has two UU-UNO envoys, Ron Glossop and Edward Oldt, but we could use more, including a Youth Envoy. If you would like to become another UU-UNA Envoy for our congregation, contact Ron at rglossop@mindspring.com.

Demon Java

"Waiter, waiter, percolator!"

I love coffee, I love tea

I love the java jive and it loves me

Coffee and tea and the jiving and me

A cup, a cup, a cup, a cup, a cup"

— Oakland & Drake

Remember, twice a month, the Youth Group is selling fair trade coffees and teas in the Kate Wuerker Room after both services on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. All proceeds go the Youth Group fund.



January 2012 RE Program News & Notes

January Schedule

Date	Pre K-Kindergarten	Grades Pre-K-6 th	Youth Group
1-Jan-12	Dreidel in the Emerson Room	Dreidel in the Emerson Room with Steven and others	Does not meet
8-Jan-12	Spirit Play!	Good King Wenceslas play Rehearsal in the Emerson Place Room	Meets
15-Jan-12	Spirit Play!	Good King Wenceslas play Rehearsal in the Emerson Place Room	Meets
22-Jan-12	Spirit Play!	Good King Wenceslas play Rehearsal in the Emerson Place Room	Meets
29-Jan-12	Spirit Play!	Good King Wenceslas play Rehearsal in the Emerson Place Room	Does not meet

Let's Put On A Play! Good King Wenceslas

This year's Winter Intercession will be devoted to rehearsing and presenting the play Good King Wenceslas! Each Sunday in January the RE program will be devoted entirely to casting and rehearsing this short play (15-20 min) for a performance before the whole congregation on Sunday February 12th. There will be some role for every child — acting, chorus, singers, kazoo orchestra. If your child wishes to participate, it is important that they attend *every* week until performance — unlike our regular classes, rehearsals build upon the previous week's activity. We have only five rehearsals, then performance. Our music last year drew on classical composers, this year on traditional composers:

- Good King Kong Looked Out — P.D.Q. Bach
- In the Bleak Midwinter — Trad. Lyrics Shawn Colvin
- Good King Wenceslas — Trad. With the whole congregation

Adult volunteers are both welcome and needed for technical, costume, props, moral, and crowd control support. Please see Steven Mead, Director Deluxe.

We return to our regular religious education programming February 19th, 2012.

The Wisdom Well — Messages to Our Youth

When we dedicate our children, often these words resound: “. . . Let us bring up our children. It is not the place of some official to hand to them their heritage. If others impart to our children our knowledge and ideals, they will lose all of us that is wordless and full of wonder. Let us build memories in our children, lest they drag out joyless lives, lest they allow treasures to be lost because they have not been given the keys. We live, not by things, but by the meanings of things. It is needful to transmit the passwords from generation to generation.” — *Antoine de St.-Exupery*. Further, we pledge to nurture each child. Time now to make manifest that pledge.

During the month of January, we would like to collect from each adult in the congregation a message to our Youth (grades 7-12). If you could say just *one* meaningful thing to our youth, what would it be?

- A favorite quote?
- A favorite short poem?
- Something you wish someone would have said to you when you were 16?
- Something your adult self, looking back, would wish to say to your 16 year old self?
- A wisdom imparted to you or that you have come to know?

Put your message in a sealed envelope, and please sign your name. Throughout the spring, the Youth Group will open and read several of these each time they meet for Youth Group. Thanks for your participation.

Steven Mead, DRE

314.239.5694 (cell) dre@firstuualton.org