

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the

*First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

January 2014

Worship Services Two Services - 9:30 am & 11:00 am

January 5, 2014
“What They Saw”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Our base of human knowledge expands each day, but it often seems the more we know, the less we understand. Instead of fearing the mystery, perhaps we can celebrate it.

(Church Potluck Lunch – 12:15 pm)

January 12, 2014
“Swerving Into the Future”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

The prominent humanist Poggio Bracciolini spent much of his life in the Vatican hierarchy. He was also an avid book hunter who, in 1417, made an astounding find that mapped our path toward becoming modern.

(Semi-Annual Meeting 12:15 p.m.)

January 19, 2014
To be Announced

January 26, 2014
“A Martyr With Zeal”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

In Zealot: the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth, author Reza Aslan takes up the quest for the historical Jesus and finds a character very different from the one preached in many UU churches today.

To ccontact Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
Email: kvanzandt@uuma.org
Cell Phone: 314-223-0551

**Adult Religious Education (ARE)
Sessions at 9:30 & 11 am
Nursery childcare available**

9:30 am

January 5 – Tracey Howe-Koch – The Bible

This month we will be discussing Jesus' parables. Was there one that particularly rocked your worldview? Please share! Not sure what a parable is? Then come and find out!

January 12 – Dr. Ronald Glossop – Philosophy

Our 5th class is the second to deal with ethics. The question is "To what extent should individuals be concerned about the welfare of others?" Egoism advocates taking care of oneself alone. A common-sense view is that individuals should be more concerned about themselves than others but should have some concern for others. A 3rd view is that one should be equally concerned about oneself and others. Altruism is the view that one should be a selfless servant and focus on the welfare of others.

Peg Flach – Dutiful Daughters and Sons (DDS)

Dutiful Daughters and Sons is a support/sharing/venting group open to anyone who is struggling with the many issues involved in care-taking or advocating for an elderly parent. We will meet in Khleber's office at 9:30 am. If you have any questions, contact Peg Flach.

**January 19 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau –
Meditation**

January 26 – Jerry Johnson – UU History

The UU history DVD that we will view this month is devoted to the history of Universalism. We will witness the amazing story of John Murray, and learn about Elhanan Winchester and Hosea Ballou. We will also learn about some early interactions between Unitarians and Universalists and find out what they had in common. For more information, go to:
http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/290764.shtml?utm_source=n.

11:00 am

January – All Sundays

Cheryle Tucker, Coordinator - "Expect Life!"

Based on a reading by Elizabeth Tarbox, we will explore living in the present, miracles, and the interconnectedness of joy and sorrow.

A First Glance



Early last Tuesday morning, my daughter came down the stairs of her new apartment. "Did you see it?" she asked. "See what?" I responded.

Linda and I had gone out to California to help Cathy get settled in new digs as she begins a new job in the desert two hours northeast of Los Angeles. Linda had ridden in the car with Cathy all the way from San Antonio, Texas - about fifteen hundred miles, all told. I had the much easier duty of flying from St. Louis to LAX on Sunday evening and then driving a rental car the final hundred and sixty miles to help out.

"The sunrise," Cathy said, "it's all happening right over there," as she twisted open the vertical blinds at the sliding back door. But I was no longer listening. I was pulling on my shoes, grabbing my camera phone, and running out the front door.

It was still chilly, about 30 degrees in the dry, high desert air. Across the sky, out in the east, over the dark mountains on the distant horizon, was a great splash of oranges and yellows and reds spreading out against a deep blue background.

I walked out into the lot across the road from Cathy's apartment, dodging the tumbleweeds and the scrub brush and making sure not to step on any wildlife (i.e., rattlesnakes). But my eye mostly remained on the panorama unfolding above and beyond.

I stepped up onto a small rise in the sand, held the phone up in front of me, and started shooting. As I snapped away, the kaleidoscope above my head shifted and changed. The once-bright colors slowly washed out until the sun peeked up over the mountains and flashed a bright hello to the scene below.

I stood for a long moment, wondering at the immensity of what I'd just been invited to witness, and why I was the one who got to attend such a grand and glorious party.

Back inside the house, when I was showing off the photos, I noticed something I hadn't seen. There in the sand, running off to the east across the lot and through the brush, was a clear pathway. It wasn't that it had been invisible before, it was simply that I had been intent on something else and hadn't noticed the trail leading diagonally away into the distance. Back and forth through the sand were footprints large and small, and tire tracks, probably made by bicycles rather than Range Rovers.

Though I had felt small and alone out in the desert as the dawn broke overhead, it was pretty obvious that plenty of folks had passed that way before, coming and going who knows where, paying attention to who knows what on their way.

And the words of Rob Doss' benediction rang in my head: "For all who seek a right path, may a way be found, and the courage to take it, step by step."

See you in church,

Khleber



4th Saturday Lunch & Personal Care Items for those in need

January 25, 2014 - 11:30 am

Information about what will be needed for this month's 4th Saturday Lunch will be available at church, via email from the Church Office, on UU Friends, and on the First Unitarian Church of Alton's Facebook page. Questions – contact Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com

Our distribution of personal care items has become very popular – as many of these needed items cannot be purchased through the government's "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program" (SNAP - formerly known as food stamps).

If you can contribute any of the following items, your donation would be very welcome. Toilet paper – feminine hygiene products – shampoo – laundry detergent – bleach – baby wipes – diapers/pull-ups – AfroAmerican hair products – cleaning supplies – toothpaste - soap. Questions – contact Sabrina Trupia strupia@gmail.com

Your Church Board July 2013 – June 2014

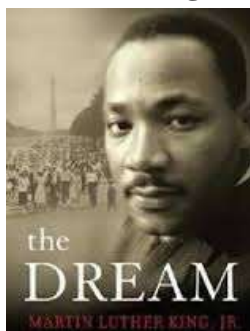
President	Kelly Crone-Willis
President Elect	Sabrina Trupia
Past President	Cheryle Tucker
Secretary	Sandy Shaner
Treasurer	Michelle Bryant-Barbeau
Trustee	Lee Suarez
Trustee	Paul Fischer
Youth Rep.	Vacant

A course in Esperanto



The 4th meeting of the Esperanto class will take place following the semi-annual church meeting on Sunday, January 12, 2014. This Esperanto class is led by Dr. Ronald Glossop. Questions - Contact Ron at rglossop@mindspring.com.

Marching – Living – Keeping the ‘DREAM’



**Sunday, January 26, 2014
2 to 4 pm
Evangelical United Church of
Christ in Godfrey IL
1212 W. Homer Adams Pkwy**

This program is in celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and is sponsored the Alton Area

Cluster of the United Congregations of Metro-East (UCM).

Choirs from area churches will perform, a narrative will be given of Dr. King's life, and journalist **Ande Yakstis** will share his personal experiences about walking with Dr. King on the Voter's Rights March from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. In addition, newspaper editor **Daniel Brannan** will tell the stories of people who are keeping Dr. King's dream alive today. They have recently published a book entitled "You Can't Kill the Dream: People Living the Dream" and will be autographing copies following the program.



**Church Potluck Lunch
1st Sunday of each
Month
January 5, 2014**

We hold our potluck lunches on the 1st Sunday of each month. Bring a dish to share on January 5th and stay after the 2nd service to join with friends and newcomers in an enjoyable tradition.

Volunteers are needed to help set the tables and help clean up, so please enjoy both the food and the sharing of the tasks.



Worship Team Associates
Monday, January 6
7 to 8:30 pm

Have you wanted to share in bringing new perspectives to Sunday morning worship? Would you would enjoy a deeper study of what happens (emotionally, spiritually, intellectually) during worship, and how to make those experiences more meaningful to yourself and the congregation? If so, please plan to attend the Worship Team Associates meeting.

The topic for January is Gratitude.

Contact: Khelber Van Zandt kvanzandt@uuma.org

Donations to the Alton Crisis Food Center

The Crisis Food Center, down the street from the church, is always in need of donations of food items. The Center is in need of canned green beans, corn and other vegetables; tuna; canned meat; peanut butter; boxes of mac 'n cheese; and basic food staples.



Please bring non-perishable food items and put them in the collection container in the RE Foyer.

Please support the Food Center.
 Thank You.

Book Discussion Group

Members of the Alton Area Cluster, an interfaith social justice group, will meet at our church on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 16** from 4 to 5:30 pm to finish our study of "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life," by discussing Steps 8 through 12. If this sounds interesting to you, please plan to join us. Everyone is welcome. Questions – contact Mary Johnson.

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN’S ALLIANCE

Change in Date for January’s Anna D’s Meeting.

The Anna Ds will meet on **Thursday, January 9, 2014** at the **Best Buffet**, 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River, IL. The Men’s Group will be meeting at the same place/same time – but we’ll have our own seating area. Let Brynda know if you’ll be coming to lunch - bryndamccoy@yahoo.com.

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum
First SATURDAY of every month
January 4, 2014
10:30 am to noon at church



We invite anyone who is over 50 or even getting near that milestone to join us. We have a lot in common: long work lives, preparation for or entry into retirement, a vast array of interests ... and we love sharing all of it.



Men’s Monthly Lunch
January 9, 2014
11:30 am

The Men’s lunch bunch meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, January 9** at 11:30 am at the **Best**

Buffet at 615 Wesley, Drive in Wood River, IL. Coordinator: Jim Moore, patjimmoore@charter.net. All men in our church are invited.

RENEGADE WOMEN - TOPICAL DISCUSSIONS

1 pm to 3 pm every 3rd Saturday.

JANUARY 18, 2014

For information for the topic of this month’s discussion, contact Dee Evans, zorn227@fastmail.fm

Lay Caring Ministry

Below is the list of members of the **Caring Ministries Team**.

Marcia Custer is the Coordinator. You may always contact a Team member 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.

Kathryn Chapman paintedgoatfarm@yahoo.com

Marcia Custer mcuster@siue.edu

Claudia Harju dachsandcats@gmail.com

Char McAllister
charlenemcallister613@hotmail.com

Kathleen McKeever mckeeperjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles cnofles@gmail.com

Ethel Potts ethel.h.potts@gmail.com

Donna Young donnae47@gmail.com

Khleber Van Zandt 314-223-0551
kvanzandt@uuma.org

The Caring Ministries Committee is ready to welcome several more members! If you are interested in engaging in conversations with other church friends and getting to know them on a deeper level, please consider joining our group! Please contact Marcia Custer at mcuster@siue.edu for more information.

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Sunday, January 12

following the 2nd service

Due to icy road conditions on the day in December scheduled for the Semi-Annual meeting, that meeting was postponed to January 12, 2014. The agenda will include a proposal as requested at the May annual meeting to amend the Endowment Fund section of the Bylaws. The following is the proposed language:

In the event that the Board deems it necessary to withdraw funds from the Endowment Fund over and above the spendable income formula, it will provide the congregation with an explanation of the need for such a withdrawal thirty days prior to the meeting as part of the notice of a regular or special congregational meeting. Such a special fund withdrawal, as proposed by the Board and/or revised at the congregational meeting, requires a motion to that effect approved by a 2/3 majority of those members present and voting.

A PDF copy of the complete Bylaws with this proposal incorporated was sent by email. Copies will also be available at church.



Capital Campaign Update

As of December 8, 2013, nearing the end of the 2nd year of at three year Capital Campaign, we have reached 93% of the Campaign pledge goal. The total pledged was \$252,355 and we have received \$233,654 – leaving only \$18,701 needed to make our goal.

Of the 56 individual or family units who supported the Campaign, 40 have already paid off their pledge, and most of the others have been contributing on a regular basis.

Hopefully, those few pledgers who did not, or were unable to, make a payment on their pledge in 2013 will be able to fulfill their pledge in 2014.

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone!



January Birthdays

Most people enjoy getting a card, email, or phone call on their birthday. Below is

the list we have of church members and friends celebrating birthdays this month. If you do not think the church office has your birthday on file, please contact Becky Green at church@firstuualton.org and give her that information.

- 11 January – Juliette Crone-Willis
- 16 January – Alex Lewis (4)
- 16 January – Jane Russo (16)
- 18 January – Audrey Glossop
- 19 January – Javion Herndon (7)
- 25 January – Caleb Tucker-Loewe (14)
- 25 January – Tom Kinsella
- 25 January – Jennifer Timpe
- 26 January – Rachel Lappin
- 30 January – Deb McNaughton
- 31 January – Lee Suarez

WhaleCoast Alaska 2014

Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2014** is for you!



Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program next summer! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and sea otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our tour is the best way to visit Alaska! Programs led by Dave Frey, a member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and an expert in Alaska travel. To find out more about your Alaskan trip of a lifetime, visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!



JANUARY Religious Education Program News & Notes

The RE Winter Intercession

This year, during our winter intercession (Jan. 5-Feb. 9) we will be exploring a Labyrinth Project. This multi-age, multi-disciplinary project will include stories, art, a field trip and culminate in a temporary labyrinth for the congregation. Kids in grades 1 through 5 are encouraged to join us.

Classroom Reorganization

We are going to reconfigure some of our RE classes beginning February 16 after the intercession. Senior High will meet on a casual, conversational basis. The sixth graders will move up into the Jr. High class, making it grades 6 through 8. Fourth and fifth graders will meet together using the current 3/4th curriculum – *Sing to the Power*. First through Third grade will meet together using the current 1/2nd grade curriculum – *Love will Guide Us*. Spirit Play will remain the same. We hope that this will provide a better distribution of kids in the classrooms.

Youth Cons:

Both the two-day Jr. High Mini-Cons and full-weekend Sr. High Cons are a cherished part of UU Youth Group culture. This year, there will be both cons right here in the St. Louis area! Registration information will be available in the coming months, but if you are the parent of a Youth Group member, you might want to get these on your calendar now.

Jr. High Mini-Con:

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis is hosting the STL Cluster Area Jr. High Mini-Con this year (6th, 7th & 8th graders). This event consists of a Friday overnight and Saturday Social Justice Project and fun activity. Everyone heads home on Saturday afternoon. The dates are Friday, Feb. 28 – March 1.

Sr. High:

Spring Con for our area will be at Eliot Chapel in St. Louis April 11-13.

Juliette Crone-Willis
Acting Religious Education Coordinator
jcronewillis@gmail.com
314-482-5239 (cell)



First Unitarian Church of Alton

P.O.Box 494 Alton, Illinois 62002 (618) 462-2462

UU&You! 3: A House for Hope

7 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays
February 4th, 11th, (skip the 18th) and 25th, and March 4th, 11th, and 18th

In this continuation of the UU&You! series of orientation classes,
we'll read John Buehrens and Rebecca Ann Parker's new book,

A House for Hope:
The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-First Century.

Using the metaphor of a theological house, this book aims to recover
the hope-filled frameworks that inspired generations of activists
to work for women's rights, racial equality,
economic justice, and peace.

During this three-session program,
you'll deepen your understanding of Unitarian Universalism
and be invited to meaningfully engage with liberal theology
in both group and individual settings.

You'll need to order your own copy of
A House for Hope from a website like Amazon

OR

you may borrow a copy from the church.

You may either sign up on the clipboard in the Kate Wuerker Room
or contact the church office to let us know you want to attend.

For further information, contact Khleber Van Zandt at kvanzandt@uuma.org
or by phone at (314) 223-0551.
