

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



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



Windows on the west side of sanctuary

[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

February 2013

## Worship Services at 9:30 am and 11:00 am

**February 3, 2013**  
***"Hello, My Name Is ..."***  
**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt**

Perhaps you've written your name on one of those nametags that say, "Hello, my name is ..." How did you decide what name to use? Our congregation must be a place where people can name themselves and be welcomed and included regardless of the names they've been called out on the street. **Liturgist: Spiral Blanton.**

**February 10, 2013**  
**– 9:30 service –**  
***"These Things We Pray"***  
**Rev. Khleber Van Zandt**

Progressives have for a long time allowed the voices of the religious right to define religious language in our culture. And letting them do so has kept us from things that can be helpful. So when we pray, what are we doing? And what does it all mean? **Liturgist: Mona Hebert**

**– 11:00 service –**  
– an intergenerational worship service –  
**A play starring our children**  
***"There Be Dragons"***

Come be a part of what many of our kids have been working on throughout January: a timeless, all-ages story told with song and youthful energy.

**Liturgist: Mona Hebert**

**February 17, 2013**  
***"What the hell happened?"***  
**Chaplain Eric Johnson**

What happened? To me, it feels like something big has changed in the past few years. Maybe, it's a lot of little changes adding up? I drive a lot in my hospice job. Over many drives out to Nashville and Carlyle Illinois, I came up with a few theoretical, modern spiritual maladies which I think are presenting symptoms - Quants virus, Cotton Candyitis, Googleitis, to name a few. I'll also throw out some ways which we liberal religious can address the symptoms and work towards cures or recovery. **Liturgist: Peg Flach**

**February 24, 2013**  
***"Unconditional"***  
**Sayer Johnson**

Sayer explores the role of love in his transition from female to male. Familial love, community love and self love. He examines how vital all three were to his process to live his authentic life and the spiritual significance it has held for him. **Liturgist: Jaimie Hileman**

Please join us after second service for an afternoon of education and advocacy. Transgender members of the congregation will share their personal narratives and be available for questions and answers. We will provide information and exercises on the transexperience as well as cis gender privileged. We will also provide opportunities on how to support Trans persons. Everyone is welcome. Snacks provided.

## Religious Education (ARE)

Sessions at 9:30 am and 11 am  
Childcare Available

### At 9:30 am

#### February 3 – Tracey Howe-Koch

##### The Bible.

This month we will be reading *Song of Songs* (Solomon). Please join us as we discuss this unique collection of songs and its presentation of Love. All are welcome! Questions, please contact Tracey Howe-Koch.

#### February 10 – Dr. Ron Glossop

##### American Philosophy.

Our 6th session on "American Philosophy" will again be on John Dewey (1859-1952). We will focus on his ideas about education, ethics (how individuals should live), social philosophy (how the society should be structured), and the roles religion and art should play in society.

#### February 17 – Eric Johnson

##### Theology Funshop.

#### February 24 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau

##### Earth-based Spirituality.

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### At 11:00 am

#### February – Each Sunday

##### Cheryle Tucker – Spirit in Practice.

*Spirit in Practice* was created to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines, or practices, of the spirit—practices that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it.

Contact Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Email: [kvanzandt@uuma.org](mailto:kvanzandt@uuma.org)

Cell Phone:

Missouri – 314-223-0551

Illinois – 618-520-0567

## A First Glance



A few weeks ago, I fielded a question from a member of another UU church who called and asked, “What do you do when the people you’re talking to don’t want to hear religious-sounding words like *prayer* or *blessing* or *God*?” I remember answering the same way I have for many years: that I think people often come to our churches seeking – if they’ve never been a part of a religious institution before – to learn what religious language means. Or, if they have leftover baggage from previous connections to church, temple, or ashram, to explore the possibility of redefining, renaming, and reclaiming words and concepts they’d previously found painful or empty.

As full and complete as that answer has seemed to me for all these years, today I’m feeling the inadequacy of it.

Here’s why: because I find that I don’t actually care about words like *prayer* or *blessing* or even (gods, help me) *God*. I don’t really care what language you speak or which words you use. What I really care about is the humanity behind any words you do use and the human feelings and experience that are the object and end of those expressions.

I think we do pretty well in our congregation at living out some of our mission. From the reports that reach me, it sounds as if people feel that we’re welcoming to guests and visitors, and as you scan across the pews on a Sunday morning, it looks as if we’re relatively inclusive.

Lots of us participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch program, sharing meals and some of what we have with our neighbors who live near the church and our friends from the shelters in Alton.

We seem to care for one another pretty well: checking in on people we haven’t seen in awhile, delivering food to families in need or in distress, and our church Facebook community is certainly thriving.

And when it comes time to remember and memorialize those who’ve gone on before us, all indications are that we do a decent job of that, too – not that it’s anybody’s favorite thing to do, but it is vitally important in showing that we care about each other and in helping each other live through loss.

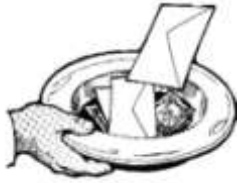
I think all these activities require that we – to use another religious-sounding word – *bear witness* to pain and loss and suffering as well as to beauty and truth and goodness. Do we get it right all the time? Certainly not. Could we do better? Absolutely. But are we blessed by bearing witness to, for, and with both the joy and brokenness of one another’s lives?

I am, very deeply so. And I hope you feel you are, too.

Many blessings to you and yours,  
From wherever they may flow,

Khleber

## Community Outreach Offering



### General Information:

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

Several years ago our church made a commitment to support three Unitarian students in the Khasi Hills of India through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council. One young woman has finished her college work, but we are still supporting two secondary school students. The bill for their support for 2013 is \$352. The COO collected in August for the students only brought in \$194. To make our commitment to these students we need another \$157 so we are asking that February's COO go toward that commitment.

If you have a suggestion for an organization we should support with our Community Outreach Offering, please contact **Cheryle Tucker** [cheryle726@gmail.com](mailto:cheryle726@gmail.com)



*Our young friend, Sallie Oldt, a light to her family and her many friends, passed away on December 26, 2012, at her home in Edwardsville. Our profound sympathies to her parents, Edward Oldt and Mickey Gould-Oldt, and her siblings, Sam, Catherine, and Max Oldt. A memorial service, conducted by Rev. Van Zandt, was held at the church on Friday, January 4 at 7 pm.*

## Chalice Circles



### RENEGADE WOMEN'S CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday.

Saturday, February 16 at from noon to 2 p.m. at church.

Contact the facilitator Dee Evans [zorn227@fastmail.fm](mailto:zorn227@fastmail.fm) for further information.

### PARENTS SEEKING PEACE CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday.

Sunday, February 17 from 12:15 to 1:30 pm in Emerson Place at Church. Contact: Diane Thompson [dianeelizabeththompson@gmail.com](mailto:dianeelizabeththompson@gmail.com) or Sayer Johnson [sayerjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:sayerjohnson@gmail.com).

### THE GLBT CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

Sunday, February 17 at 12:15 pm in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade classroom downstairs at Church.

Contact Staci Bratten [sabrat10@gmail.com](mailto:sabrat10@gmail.com).

### Your Church Board

Jan – June 2013

President	Sayer Johnson
President Elect	Jennifer Timpe
Past President	Cheryl Tucker
Secretary	Sarah Lazarz
Treasurer	Michelle Bryant-Barbeau
Trustee	Kelly Crone-Willis
Trustee	Sandy Shaner
Youth Rep.	Lily Tade

Board meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday each month at 7 pm and are open to the church members.

## Interest Groups

**Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum -  
First Saturday of every month  
February 2, 2013**



Place and time will be announced.

**Sandy Shaner**

**Spiral Scouts – Every SUNDAY from 1 to 3 pm.**



This program for children and youth includes interpersonal skills, traditional woodland lore, camping, and outdoor living skills. Please use this email ([amy9637@gmail.com](mailto:amy9637@gmail.com)) and our facebook ([facebook.com/riverdragonspiralscouts](https://www.facebook.com/riverdragonspiralscouts)), as

it will give updated information about what we are, upcoming events and what is going on in our meetings.

**Amy Eichen**

**The Anna Ds –  
1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month.**



Anna Ds will meet at 11:30 am on February 7 at **Ge-Gee's** in Bethalto. The address is 333 W. Bethalto Dr.

It's on the east side of the street in the Liberty Bank Building. There is a traffic light right there at the parking lot. You can enter the main entrance of the building and Ge-Gee's is on the left. You can google the restaurant and find a menu. They specialize in soups, salads, sandwiches, coffees and baked goods. Brynda McCoy is hosting and can attest to the quality of the service and food. This is not a buffet, and orders will be taken at the table. The prices are very reasonable.

Please email Brynda at [bryndamccoy@yahoo.com](mailto:bryndamccoy@yahoo.com) by Monday Feb. 4 if you are planning to attend. In case of icy roads we will cancel.

All women in the church are invited to attend Anna Ds luncheons.



**ROMEOS meet the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each  
month**

The ROMEOS – *Retired Old Men Eating Out* – will meet on Thursday, February 14 at 11:30 am at the Best Buffet at 615 Wesley, Drive in Wood River IL. Contact **Dick Blanton** [dickb65@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dickb65@sbcglobal.net) for further details. All men in our church are invited!

**4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch  
February 23**



**Trish Botsko** is the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch Coordinator and **Sabrina Trupia** coordinates the Personal Care Item distribution.

If you are interested in organizing one of our Saturday lunches, please let Trish know.

Details about the lunch will be available at church, on UU Friends, and through “*This Week at Church*” so watch for more information.

**Worship Associates  
TUESDAY, February 5  
7:00 to 8:30 pm**



The proposed discussion topic for this month's meeting is the role of the “*message*” in the worship service.

For more information contact

**Khleber Van Zandt**  
[kvanzandt@uuma.org](mailto:kvanzandt@uuma.org).

**Your ATTENTION is Needed to  
Maintain the Church Building**

If you notice something in the church building that needs attention or repair, please contact our Building Co-Chair

**Lee Suarez at**  
[Lenoresuarez12@yahoo.com](mailto:Lenoresuarez12@yahoo.com)





**Notes from Board Trustee &  
Newsletter Liaison -  
Sandy Shaner**

Since my last report, we've had two Board meetings: December 10 and January 7 (the latter a week early due to scheduling needs). At both meetings we discussed plans for the semi-annual congregational meeting on January 13, as well as a special Board meeting on February 9 at the Edwardsville Library to discuss income/expenses, both to date and projected to fiscal year end.

We also talked extensively about fundraising because the current fiscal year budget includes \$10,000 in to-be-determined fundraising. So far we have achieved total net proceeds of \$3,613 with \$2,560 from the Day of the Dead and \$1,053 from the holiday jazz event at Jacoby. We had hoped that the Jacoby event would exceed the Day of the Dead, but there were venue costs for the latter, a lesson learned. As a result, we're going to try to focus for the next 6 months on events we can hold in our own building. These may not be blockbusters but should have a good income/expense return. Since we're halfway through the year and only 1/3 of the way toward that \$10,000 goal, fundraising is really important and we're hoping for congregation support (and ideas and volunteers for more events). If you have suggestions and a willingness to help, please let us know.

And thanks for all your support of this special place and all the ways you already contribute.

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

Send Newsletter items by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to the newsletter editor,  
Mary Johnson – [mejohanson@mindspring.com](mailto:mejohanson@mindspring.com)  
and also to Becky Green in the church office  
[church@firstuualton.org](mailto:church@firstuualton.org)  
Church phone: 618-462-2462  
Mail: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002

**- Meet One of our New Members -  
Ethel Potts**

Ethel is new to our church, but definitely not new to the UU faith. She was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie New York for twenty years. However, a couple of years ago, Ethel decided it was time to move a little closer to one of her children. The decision wasn't easy since her three boys were scattered across the country. Son David lives in Kansas City with his partner, Roy Smith. Son Steve, who lived the closest in Massachusetts, has a daughter in college and a teen-age son. Brad and his wife Julie live in Belleville and have a four year old, Timmy. When it came time to make up her mind, Timmy made the decision much easier. Since moving here, Ethel has really enjoyed watching him grow and helping out the family.

Ethel is originally from Iowa but has done quite a bit of traveling. She graduated with a degree in Spanish and, right after college, spent a year in Bogota Columbia as part of a government fellowship program. After she married husband Ronald, who worked for IBM, they spent time at the University of Illinois where she got her master's in Spanish. Later, IBM paid Ronald to attend Stanford where he studied for his doctorate in electrical engineering. When Ronald was assigned to a year and half in Germany, they used their free time to see much of Europe.

Now Ethel spends a great deal of time with her art. She enjoys painting, drawing and working with pastels. She is a member of the art guild in Belleville. And she's quickly become an active member in our church. She's part of our Welcome Team and is an active member of Anna Ds.

We are very happy to welcome Ethel Potts to our church family.



**Unitarian Universalist Service Committee:** Did you know that one of the exciting programs offered through the UUSC's College of Social Justice are trips for both adults and youth? They lead service-learning trips to Haiti, New Orleans, India, Guatemala and to our borderlands. Additionally, they sponsor a Civil Rights Journey for youth every summer. These opportunities are an amazing way to put your social justice values to work. Please visit their website at <http://uucsj.org/> or [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) for more information or contact Tracey Howe-Koch [thk3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thk3@sbcglobal.net).



## Capital Campaign Update

As of the semi-annual meeting on January 13, 2013 **\$156,666** had been contributed to the capital campaign fund.

Of that, **\$47,912** has been spent on capital campaign projects – new kitchen appliances, new roof over the Wuerker Room and RE wing, enhanced sound system in the sanctuary, and architect fees.

The fund currently stands at **\$108,754**. However, the kitchen renovation is nearing completion and soon the payment for that work will have to be made. We estimate that will come to **\$59,000**. This includes the new coffee center in the Wuerker Room. Added to that is the cost of a new furnace (part of the HVAC project) and additional architect fees, which together come to around **\$13,000**.

Added together, we will soon pay out around **\$72,000**. Thus, we'll begin the 2013 capital campaign year with around **\$37,000**.

The next project is making the RE wing more energy efficient. We will not be able to start really planning the extent of this work until capital campaign funds pledged for 2013 start coming and we have a better idea of how much money we will have to work with.

**If you promised to make an annual pledge in 2013, and are able to pay it in full now, please do so.**

*Thank you.*



## Food Drive

More than 11% of the people living in Madison County are impoverished. That's over 30,000 people. The Crisis Food Center in Alton provides families and individuals in need with a week's supply of food on an ongoing basis.

Please bring your donations of canned or long-shelf-life food (veggies, fruit, meat, cake mixes, pasta, etc.) to church and put the items in the marked container in the RE entrance foyer.

# Lay Caring Ministry

Below is the current 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.

Amy Andrews ~ [ajrn07@gmail.com](mailto:ajrn07@gmail.com)

Brian Bennett ~ [bben990703@hotmail.com](mailto:bben990703@hotmail.com)

Chrissie Blount ~ [cchapman@lc.edu](mailto:cchapman@lc.edu)

Marcia Custer ~ [mcuster@siue.edu](mailto:mcuster@siue.edu)

Melody Hardman ~ [nberg1240@yahoo.com](mailto:nberg1240@yahoo.com)

Sharon Johnson ~ [sharonjohnsonmsw@gmail.com](mailto:sharonjohnsonmsw@gmail.com)

Kathleen McKeever ~ [mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net)

Catherine Nofles ~ [cnofles@gmail.com](mailto:cnofles@gmail.com)

Sabrina Trupia ~ [strupia@gmail.com](mailto:strupia@gmail.com)

Khleber Van Zandt ~ [kvanzandt@uuma.org](mailto: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 Sabrina Trupia at [strupia@gmail.com](mailto:strupia@gmail.com).

## In Sympathy

**The congregation extends its sympathy to Mary Lu McManus whose mother, Martha McManus, died on January 8.**





## February 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](mailto:church@firstuualton.org) and give her that information.

- Feb. 02 Mary Johnson
- Feb. 03 Tom Kinder
- Feb. 08 Leah Bailey
- Feb. 08 Nancy Conniff
- Feb. 11 Debbie Miller
- Feb. 14 Megan Bryden-Wasoba
- Feb. 14 Yvonne Mccall
- Feb. 15 Amanda Grippi
- Feb. 16 Dennis Bailey (2007)
- Feb. 17 Chrissie Blount
- Feb. 17 Ron Glossop
- Feb. 17 Ryan Wasoba
- Feb. 19 Blue Brice
- Feb. 23 Beth Bourland
- Feb. 26 Donna Young

## Unitarian Universalist Meetings

**Central Midwest District (CMWD) Assembly**  
**April 26-28**  
Waukesha, WI (near Milwaukee)  
<http://www.cmwd-uua.org>

**General Assembly (GA)**  
**The annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist**  
**Association of Congregations**

GA will be in Louisville Kentucky June 19 – 23. This will be a great opportunity for many of us to attend as Louisville is an easy 4 hour drive from St. Louis. Go to the website below for additional information. Registration, housing, volunteer and scholarship applications will be available March 1.  
<http://www.uua.org/ga/>



**February RE**  
**Program News &**  
**Notes**

### Let's Put On a Show!—The RE Winter Intercession Play

The RE Winter Intercession Play is *There Be Dragons*, an original adaptation of Robert N. Munsch's, *The Paper Bag Princess*. Written and directed by Steven Mead, DRE; music by Nat King Cole; music maestro: Neil Hershey. Don't miss it!

### Sort-of-Dress Rehearsal February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12:10-12:30

You know, with a dragon in a play, there is a lot of mayhem, so to have something that *looks* like mayhem, without actually *being* mayhem, we feel the need for one dress rehearsal in the sanctuary, Sunday February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12:10 to 12:30. If you can keep your kids on campus for this, great; if not, no worries—well maybe a few. . . .

### Performance February 10<sup>th</sup>, Second Service Only

*"We've gotta have a great show, with a million laughs... and color... and a lot of lights to make it sparkle. And songs - wonderful songs. And after we get the people in that hall, we've gotta start em in laughing right away. Oh, can't you just see it...?"* — Judy Garland, *"Babes In Arms"*, 1939.

### Youth Conferences! Mark Your Calendars!

- **Senior High Mini-Con, March 1-3** hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign (3-hr drive)—our Youth want to go!—chaperone needed; grades 9-12
- **Middle School Mini-Con, March 8-9** hosted by the Unitarian Church of Columbia, MO (2-hr drive)—Chaperone(s) needed; grades 6-8
- **2013 Spring Senior High District CON, April 19-20** (*district means a big five-state conference*) hosted by First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri (45 min drive); chaperone needed; grades 9-12

**Steven Mead, DRE**  
[dre@firstuualton.org](mailto:dre@firstuualton.org)