

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the

*First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

February 2014

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

February 2, 2014

“Women of Distinction: Olympia Brown”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Among our most powerful forebears is the first woman ordained by a major denomination, Olympia Brown, a Universalist minister and early suffragette who blazed a path that many sisters have since followed.

(Church Potluck Lunch – 12:15 pm)

February 9, 2014

“Control-Alt-Believe”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

If ‘option-command-escape’ on a Mac allows you to force-quit unresponsive apps, and ‘control-alt-delete’ on a Windows machine reboots the system, when is it time to hit the ‘control-alt-believe’ buttons on our lives?

February 16, 2014 – Presidents’ Day

“Malice Toward None”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Lincoln set a standard for oratory in American politics that has rarely if ever been matched, and his Second Inaugural Address a succinct statement of belief in the American experiment.

February 23, 2014

“Leading with Spirit”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

In A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix, the late Edwin Friedman worried that the U.S. has developed into a state of cultural regression and is destined now to suffer a long decline. How can we keep from replicating this situation in our personal lives or as a congregation?

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

9:30 am

February 2 – 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! [This was originally scheduled for January but was cancelled due to the snowstorm.]

February 9 – Dr. Ronald Glossop – Philosophy

Our 6th class is the first to deal with social philosophy. The question is "How much authority should the government exercise over individuals in the society?" "Individualism" says that the society should exercise as little control as possible as in laissez-faire capitalism. "Collectivism" says that the government should make and carry out all plans for the general welfare as in socialism. A 3rd view is that "individualism" is good for some kinds of problems while "collectivism" is good for others. A 4th view says that individual activity should be limited or regulated by the government as in state-regulated capitalism.

February 16 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Meditation

February 23 – Jerry Johnson – UU History

We will finish the overview of Universalism and begin to examine the separate strands of Unitarianism and Universalism from 1860 onward.

http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/290764.shtml?utm_source=n

11:00 am

February – All Sundays

Cheryle Tucker, Coordinator - "We Are Whole"

The 11:00 ARE for February is entitled, "We Are Whole" and is by Beth Lefever. We will explore how we are whole even when we feel broken and afraid.

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

A First Glance



Sometimes we talk past each other.

At the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting in January, a question came before the group about changing the process for using Endowment Fund monies in an emergency. During the discussion, I thought the comments from all sides were properly respectful and that the outcome was probably the right one given the debate: the suggested change didn't quite muster a two-thirds majority and so it didn't pass.

The deliberation itself, though, laid bare some important warning signs for our congregation. More than one speaker alluded to there being a question of trust among congregants. On reflection, this seems abundantly clear, and I for one was left to wonder if a better understanding of ourselves and each other wouldn't help alleviate some of those trust issues.

For the last several years the members of this church seem to have been working from widely differing assumptions about the meaning of the Endowment Fund. In the past, some said that the fund was sacrosanct and should remain untouchable in perpetuity. Today, some would no doubt say that some of the fund could properly be used as a rainy day fund, for instance, to repair a damaged roof or otherwise carry us through a disaster. Others, I've heard, imagine it as a nest egg that could help us take advantage of large ministry opportunities that might present themselves somewhere down the road.

One problem with this is that our underlying assumptions come out of deep emotional processes we sometimes have little awareness of. And then comes another problem: adherents of each point of view begin caricaturing the other points of view so that they don't have to take them seriously.

Perhaps we have an opportunity here to learn how to deal with difficult questions.

I wonder if we could gather some afternoon or evening, sit together in a series of small groups and larger ones, and give each other a chance to explain how we view the fund. Perhaps that would give us the opportunity to truly listen to one another: not that we will ever all agree with each other, but that we might understand each other better, cease the caricatures, and thereby develop deeper trust among ourselves.

Such a process will never be a panacea. But I do fear that if the only forum for discussing our deeper issues remains annual congregational meetings, it will never give us the basis for reaching across the divides and developing deeper relationships.

If an opportunity to better understand one's fellow church members presented itself, how many people do you think would show up?

Would you?

See you in church,

Khleber



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

**February 22, 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

At 12:30 p.m. Sunday, February 9, 2014 the fifth meeting of the Esperanto class will take place in the Emerson Room.

Questions - Contact Ron rglossop@mindspring.com.



**Church Potluck Lunch
1st Sunday of each Month
February 2, 2014**

We hold our potluck lunches on the 1st Sunday of each month. Bring a dish to share on February 2nd 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, February 3
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 February is Gratitude.

Contact: Khelber Van Zandt kvanzandt@uuma.org

Donations to the Alton Crisis Food Center

Please continue to bring your donations of non-perishable food for The Crisis Food Center. 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. The food collection box is in the RE foyer.



Personal care items should be put on the shelves in Emerson Place.

Book Discussion Group - March

The Alton Area Cluster book discussion group will not meet in February, but has chosen a book for our next session which will begin on Thursday, March 20 from from 4 to 5:30 pm in the Kate Wuerker Room.

The book is "*Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth*" edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee. It is a collection of essays by such people as Thomas Berry, Thich Nhat Hanh, Joanna Macy, Vandana Shiva, and others. Everyone is welcome. Questions – contact Mary Johnson.



RUMMAGE SALE @ Church May 9 & 10

Char and Lee are once again "hosting" a rummage sale at church! Start your spring-cleaning soon and set aside those treasures that you thought you could never part with ... but have now decided they are just collecting dust ... and you really don't like to dust.

A great variety of items will be needed – almost anything sells if the price is right. Last years' sale was very successful, and we'd like to top that this year. So start searching closets, basements, attics, spare rooms, cabinets for what you'd like to donate to the sale.

More info. will be coming closer to May.

UU&You! 3: A House for Hope

7 to 9 pm 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.

Thrift Store Prom



We are having a "***Gender Bending Thrift Store Prom***" on

Saturday February 15 from 6 - 10 pm. Please join us for this all-ages dance. Lots of music variety. Everyone welcome! Tickets \$5 at the door and will benefit Campfest 4! BYOB and a snack to share.

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN’S ALLIANCE

The Anna Ds will meet on **Thursday, February 6** at the **Best Buffet**, 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River, IL. Due to bad weather we’ve missed getting together, so think “no snow” and plan to come to February’s meeting. Let Brynda know if you’ll be joining us bryndameccoy@yahoo.com. All women in the church are invited.

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum
First SATURDAY of every month
February 1, 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
February 13, 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.

FEBRUARY 15, 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 mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles cnofles@gmail.com

Ethel Potts ethel.h.potts@gmail.com

Donna Young donnae47@gmail.com

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

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.



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 and give her that information.

- Feb. 2 Mary Johnson
- Feb. 3 Tom Kinder
- Feb. 8 Leah Bailey
- Feb. 8 Nancy Conniff
- Feb. 11 Debbie Miller
- Feb. 14 Megan Bryden-Wasoba
- Feb. 14 Amal Kambal
- Feb. 14 Yvonne McCall
- Feb. 15 Jeff Lovell
- Feb. 16 Dennis Bailey (2007)
- Feb. 17 Chrissie Chapman
- Feb. 17 Ron Glossop
- Feb. 17 Ryan Wasoba
- Feb. 19 Blue Brice
- Feb. 23 Beth Bourland
- Feb. 26 Donna Young



Condolences to Pat Moore and Her Family

Pat Moore's mother, Gladys Crump, passed away on December 29 at the age of 94. Mrs. Crump was a loving

homemaker who enjoyed cooking, crocheting, gardening, and her family. Our sympathy goes out to Pat and Jim and the rest of the family.

Report from the Board Sandy Shaner, Secretary



The Board met on Monday, January 13 and here's a summary of what we did.

– We had a great discussion of the Facebook Blizzard Sunday service and how well it went. Of particular note was the fact that it had about 250 hits that Sunday, but that the traffic kept building until it finally topped 1,000 hits a week later. As a result, we believe that the Church would benefit dramatically if the Outreach Group could focus some attention on improvement of the web site and electronic outreach. In order to help them along, we voted to authorize the Outreach Group to spend up to \$2,000 if needed on that effort.

– Michele and Becky have agreed to on-line bank statements in order to complete monthly reconciliations earlier in the month (in time for the following month's Board meeting), and they're working on custom Quicken reports to improve understanding of the financial flow.

– We're planning to use our all-day review session in August for the Ministry (and Minister) review effort.

– We discussed the fact that the suggested Bylaws Endowment Fund change was rejected at the Semi-Annual Meeting and whether there were other special fund areas that need policy clarification. Sandy will work some more in that area with Kelly helping.

– The Stewardship Campaign (pledge drive) will begin in early March, and we'll hold our Spring Summit in April to plan for the May Congregational meeting and review the status of the Stewardship Campaign.

– As promised at the January semi-annual congregational meeting, Michele checked on the UUA Annuity and confirmed that the Church gets a check twice a year that represents our portion of the annuity income. It is budgeted at \$3,000 which is the amount generally received.



February Religious Education Program News & Notes

February Schedule

Date	Spirit Play (PreK-K)	Grades 1-5th	Youth Group
Feb. 2	Begin in classroom	Begin in classroom	Meets
Feb. 9	Begin in classroom	Begin in classroom	Meets
Feb. 16	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets
Feb. 23	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets

Join us in the Labyrinth!

This year, our winter R.E. intercession (Jan. 5 - Feb. 9) has been exploring Labyrinths. This multi-age, multi-disciplinary project will culminate in a temporary labyrinth for the congregation on Feb. 9th. Join us to walk the Labyrinth and celebrate the work of our 1st-5th graders!

Classroom Reorganization

We are going to reconfigure some of our RE classes beginning **February 16th** 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 6-8th grade. 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. 28th – March 1st.

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

jrcronewillis@gmail.com 314-482-5239 (cell)