

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the

*First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

March 2014

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

March 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.

March 9, 2014

“Which Will We Be?”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

As we kick off *El Mes de la Vida* (the Month of Life), we'll hang our hopes and thanks on *El Árbol de la Gracitud* (the Tree of Gratitude) as we ask the question of one another, “Which church will we be?”

March 16, 2014

“A Twenty, and Change”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

A Buddhist monk, visiting New York City, walked up to a hot dog vendor, handed him a twenty-dollar bill, and said, “Make me one with everything.” Oh, if enlightenment were that easy.

March 23, 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?

March 30, 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?

To contact 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

March 2 – Tracey Howe-Koch – The Bible

Evidently, the Parables are larger than a one-Sunday study. Please join us for Round Two! Last month's discussion was very lively and we would love you to join us. No previous Bible experience needed. Questions? Contact Tracey Howe-Koch.

March 9 – Dr. Ronald Glossop – Philosophy

Our 7th class is the second to deal with social philosophy. The question is "What arrangement should be used for arriving at decisions about what to do to promote the general welfare of the society or community?" One view is that the best system is one-person rule. A second view is that the ideal is rule by an elite group. A third view is that the ideal is representative democracy as exists in most Western countries. A fourth view is that the ideal is pure democracy as exists in New England town meetings. What do you think?

**March 16 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau –
Meditation**

March 23 – Jerry Johnson – UU History

During March's session, our study of UU history will begin the final leg of our "Long Strange Trip". We will learn about Thomas Starr King, who served both Universalists and Unitarians in the mid 1800s, and about Curtis W. Reese, who served as our minister in Alton from 1913 to 1915 and who went on to become the president of the American Humanist Association. The DVD video includes the founding of the UUA and presents some of its turbulent, early history. For more information about the video presentation, visit http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/290764.shtml?utm_source=n.

March 30 – "We Are Whole" – Cheryle Tucker

11:00 am

March – 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.

A First Glance



I think I've always known it to be true, but now comes proof that maintaining a practice of gratitude can make you happier.

Robert Emmons, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Positive Psychology*, has studied what it means to think and feel grateful. In his book, *Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, Emmons explains that keeping a "Gratitude Journal" and regularly practicing gratitude in one's everyday life can increase happiness by as much as twenty-five percent. And this change in behavior doesn't have to be long-term to begin to show results: keeping a gratitude journal for as little as three weeks, Emmons says, results in better sleep and more energy.

The benefits of practicing gratitude are apparently numerous:

-- psychologically, a grateful person is apt to be more alert, energetic, enthused, and attentive;

-- physically, those of us who are thankful get more exercise and exhibit fewer medical symptoms than our 'ungrateful' fellows;

-- socially, when we're more appreciative of what we have, we develop better relationships, we are more altruistic, we garner stronger support from other people, and we become more sensitive to situations where we can be helpful to others and thereby become far less likely to be lonely and isolated.

All in all, Emmons finds, a practice of gratitude enhances healthy behaviors, contributes to healthier sleep, reduces blood pressure, nurtures better caring for one's own personal health, promotes more positive social interactions, and discourages destructive social behaviors.

And if that's not enough of a carrot: Emmons trained groups of 7-8th graders to keep Gratitude Journals, and for those students who kept the journals, their grade-point averages improved. Improved only slightly, it's true, but improvement nonetheless.

And then there's this: Sam Berns, a young man whose life with the illness Progeria was the subject of an Academy-Award-nominated documentary, died in January at the age of 17. Sam's philosophy for a happy life was #1) focus on the things you *can* do instead of worrying over the things you can't; #2) surround yourself with people you want to be with; and #3) keep moving forward – don't look backwards for very long, open new doors, do new things. As Sam said, "That's the way you're going to change the world."

Sounds like practicing gratitude might be a way to change our lives. And following Sam's advice to focus on what we can do, be with people we want to be with, and keep moving forward might be a way to change the rest of the world.

Food for thought. See you in church,

Khleber



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

**March 22, 2014
11:30 am**

(Lunch sponsored this month by the Religious Education Department)

In an essay entitled “Annadana: the Gift of Food,” Vandana Shiva writes “Because food is the very basis of Creation, food is creation, and it is the Creator ... There are all kinds of duties that we should be performing with respect to it ... If people have food it is because society has not forgotten those duties. If people are going hungry, society has moved away from the ethical duties related to food.”

Our church has been hosting “4th Saturday Lunches” for about seven years. Information about what is needed for March’s 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

A Course in Esperanto

At 12:30 p.m. Sunday, March 9, 2014 the sixth meeting of the Esperanto class will take place in the Emerson Room, but all are welcome even if you never attended before.



**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

**It’s time to share your talent by sharing stories, poetry or music at the COFFEE HOUSE NIGHT
Coordinated by Spiral Blanton**

**Friday, March 21
6:30 to ???**

This will be a no-alcohol event. Coffee and other hot/cold beverages will be available. Please bring a snack to share.

All ages are welcome. There will be games and activities for children.

The church will not be providing childcare, but if parents are bringing younger children it is suggested they organize some kind of childcare arrangement among themselves. Several of our youth have childcare experience and might be available.

If you wish to perform at the Coffee House please get in touch with Spiral.



Church Potluck Lunch

March 2, 2014
1st Sunday of each
Month



We hold our potluck lunches on the 1st Sunday of each month. Bring a dish to share on March 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.

Book Discussion Group - March

The Alton Area Cluster book discussion group has chosen *Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth* for our next session which will be on Thursday, March 20 from from 4 to 5:30 pm in the Kate Wuerker Room.

The book is 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.

Join us! Questions – contact Mary Johnson.



Worship Team Associates Monday, March 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.

Contact: Khelber Van Zandt kvanzandt@uuma.org



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.

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.



Travel to the Holy Land with UUs

Jerusalem, Petra, Dead Sea, October 24 to November 6, 2014: join Rev. Wayne Walder, as we take a *Mindful Journey* to the Holy Land -- "a cauldron of ancient myths and real historical events that have indelibly marked the fate of humankind." From the ancient sites of Amman, Jordan, to a magical candlelight walk through the Siq of Petra, to the therapeutic waters of the Dead Sea, and on to explore Jerusalem in depth - a city that captivates the imagination of billions of people and is home to a mosaic of cultures and beliefs, this will be a journey filled with memorable moments and awesome experiences. Email beverlz@me.com for details.

Thank you! Beverly Carr
Neighbourhood UU Congregation, Toronto
www.nuuc.ca

UU&You! 3: A House for Hope

7 to 9 pm Tuesdays
March 11th, 18th, and 25th and April 1st
(Last four weeks of a six week class.)

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 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.



Welcome to Tom Cochran who joined the church on February 2, 2014. Please add this information to your church directory.

Cochran, Tom* and Sheila
St. Louis, MO 63104
huckfinn@mindspring.com

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE



The Anna Ds will meet on **Thursday, March 6** at Castelli's - 3400 Fosterburg Road • Alton, IL. Let Dee Evans know if you'll be joining us - zorn227@fastmail.fm.

All women in the church are invited.

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum
First **SATURDAY** of every month
March 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
March 13, 2014
11:30 am

The Men's lunch bunch meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, March 13** 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.

MARCH 15, 2014

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



Report from the meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

At the end of January, church member Ron Glossop attended the week-long biennial conference of the International Council of UUs held at the Shelter Rock UU Church in Manhasset, Long Island, New York.

The all-day sessions included memorable worship services, plenary sessions on intercultural competency led by Beth Zemsky, presentations by special guests such as UUA President Peter Morales, Chalice Circles composed of very small groups designed to facilitate getting acquainted with individuals from other countries, informative workshops, tasty collective meals, coffee breaks with plenty of conversations plus displays of art objects and books, and daily bus trips from and to the hotels that greatly helped getting to know one another.

Friday featured a special program about human rights and freedom of worship at the UU-UN Office organized by its administrator Bruce Knotts, a tour of the United Nations building, and a closing program at New York City's Community Church featuring UU singer and composer Peter Mayer.

The 125 participants came from 26 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Romania [Transylvania], South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the U.S.A. Over half were UU ministers and lay leaders who participated in their own conference the following weekend.

The event left no doubt that Unitarian-Universalism has become truly international. The 2016 ICUU conference will be held in the Netherlands. Check the ICUU website at www.icuu.net for more details.

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 815-561-5635
paintedgeatfarm@yahoo.com

Marcia Custer 618-656-8179 (home) 618-660-6607
(cell) mcuster@siue.edu

Claudia Harju 618-433-1907
dachsandcats@gmail.com

Char McAllister 618-535-6552 (cell)
charlenemcallister613@hotmail.com

Kathleen McKeever 618-463-7687 (home)
mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles 314-972-9883 (home)
cnofles@gmail.com

Ethel Potts 618-589-3935
ethel.h.potts@gmail.com

Donna Young 314-358-7688 (cell)
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.



March 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.

- 03/02 Ty'ria Payne (2003)
- 03/03 Jerry Johnson
- 03/04 Lauren Johnson (2002)
- 03/06 Kathryn Chapman
- 03/08 Margaret Berkley (1997)
- 03/09 Michelle Hudson
- 03/13 Louis Bailey
- 03/16 Robyn Berkley
- 03/18 William Lewis
- 03/23 Kira Lovell (1998)
- 03/24 Audrey White (2007)
- 03/25 Gerry Gilman

Future Events for Your Calendar

Saturday April 26 @ 6 pm

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Free. All ages. Movie sing along event. Join us as we do the time warp again! Costumes encouraged. BYOB and a snack to share!

Sunday May 11 @ 12 noon

Mother's Day Plant sale and Bingo party! Join us after the 11:00 am service for our annual plant sale, followed by a Bingo game for all ages! \$1 cards. All proceeds will benefit Campfest. Great prizes and snacks! Plant donations gladly accepted. Please see Sayer or Juliette.



The Annual Meeting of the UUA will be in Providence Rhode Island – June 25-29.
Theme: Love Reaches Out
Registration opens March 3.

Early registration (3/3 – 4/30) \$335;

Late registration – (5/1 – 6/29) \$385.

Financial aid is available.

Housing is an additional cost.

For information regarding registration, the program and schedule, and other GA information go to

<http://www.uua.org/ga/>

Campfest

We will have our first official planning meeting for 2014 on Sunday March 9 after second service. If you would like more info about campfest or be involved in the planning process please join us. Campfest dates open to the congregation are Monday June 30 - Friday July 4 core planning members will be on site from Sunday June 29 till Saturday July 5.

New Logo for the Unitarian Universalist Association



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

The UUA hired Proverb, a brand development company, last year. “We asked them not simply to design a new logo for us, but to help us look at ourselves differently.”

See more at:

<http://www.uua.org/news/pressroom/pressreleases/293249.shtml>



Report from the Board
Sandy Shaner, Secretary

We were grateful for the break in bad weather so we could gather without worry for our regular monthly meeting. By the time you read this we believe that the RE wing windows should be in place and protecting us from the outside inclement weather.

As spring approaches in March, we will be focusing on our annual pledge drive and completion of a recommended FY14-15 budget by the Finance Committee. At this meeting we reviewed the financials as of January and were somewhat concerned that there is a shortfall of about \$4,400 between pledges and expenses. Michele has sent notices to members with their pledge status which we hope will generate additional pledge receipts in February for those who need to catch up on their contributions. We anticipate a report to the congregation at the March 30 service on the results of the pledge drive as well as a general summary of our financials for this year.

The Outreach Group continues its work on modernizing the web site and increasing use of social media to carry our message. We had several examples of outreach by other UU churches that will be forwarded to the web group.

We also approved a request from friends in the Alton Area Cluster that we offer our members the opportunity to purchase fair trade items at some time. The plan is for them to bring the items to church, set up one or two sale tables and tell us about the artisans and how selling their goods at fair trade prices affects their lives.



March Religious Education

Program News & Notes

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Date!
RE Program Sponsors Our Fourth Saturday Luncheon

An important part of our RE program is social service. From time-to-time we set aside our regular classroom learning to participate in social and community action activities. Our Social Service Sunday, March 16th, will include activities that support the following 4th Saturday Luncheon served at the church to the hungry Alton community. The *RE program is sponsoring the March 22rd luncheon.* It's important for children to see their parents live out their Unitarian Universalist values in service to the underserved and disenfranchised. Children are invited to attend on the 22rd with their parents and help out in age-appropriate ways. More information will become available through worship service announcements, the weekly Church bulletin e-mail, and our Facebook group page, *UU Friends*. Save the date! Let's throw a party!

Juliette Crone-Willis
 Acting Religious Education Coordinator

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

March RE Schedule			
Date	Spirit Play (PreK-K)	Grades 1-5th	Youth Group
March 2	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets
March 9	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets
March 16	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Social Service Sunday	Meets
March 23	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets
March 30	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Begin in sanctuary; finish in classroom	Meets