

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Flower garden in front of the church

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



Church pictured in 1909 postcard

www.firstuualton.org

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

June 2013

SUMMER Worship Services at 10:00 am

We will be on a 10 am “single service” schedule during the summer. Our services from June 9 through August 4 will be led by members of our congregation. Khleber will be back in the pulpit August 11 through August 25. September 1 will be another lay-led service, with our ingathering service starting on September 8 with Khleber in the pulpit.

Summer Worship Speakers

June 2 – Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
“When I Get Where I’m Going”

It’s been a tough twelve months for a lot of us and we’re feeling the need to let it all go. This Sunday, a musical review of the ups and downs of the past year aimed at helping us move on.

June 9 – Ron Glossop
“UUism as a Different Kind of Religion”

June 16 – Robyn Berkley

June 23 – Sayer Johnson

June 30 – Dee Evans
“What’s Love Got to Do With It?”

July 7 – Michelle Bryant-Barbeau

July 14 – Tracey Howe-Koch
“Jesus, What is He Good For?”

July 21 – Sabrina Trupia

July 28 – Cheryle Tucker

August 4 – Group presentation

August 11 – Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
“Hello my name is ...”

August 18 – Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
“Laborers in the Vineyard”

August 25 – Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
“Beyond iChurch”

September 4 – TBA

Nursery Care from 9 am to 1 pm

A First Glance

On a Saturday in early May, Mary Johnson and I hosted a workshop in our sanctuary and fellowship hall that had been organized by a group called the Returning Citizens Coalition of Alton. The gathering was open to the public and attended by about fifty folks from the broader community, including social service agency directors from around the Metro-East, a U.S. District Judge, the Alton police chief, and Alton's new mayor-elect, as well as a number of "returning citizens" – people who have recently been released from prison.

We learned lots that day, especially about how difficult it is for people returning to their communities after doing time in the criminal justice system: no, you can't get a job if you don't have an address, and no, you can't get a house without a job, and no, you can't get a job if you admit you've been convicted of a felony or served time, and, and, and.

It's a circular system of "no, you can't...", and it's been set up that way mostly as a way to further punish offenders. The trouble is that these people have already paid their debt and served their time, and now they need and deserve more than a cold shoulder and a wall of no's.

As a result of this fine workshop, I was moved to write a letter to the editor of the Telegraph that they have yet to print. Perhaps it will strike a chord with you here:

"Recidivism rate" - that's what we hear most often about people returning home from prison. We don't hear so often about reasons behind high recidivism rates: the near impossibility of finding jobs or housing because of labels like "prisoner," "convict," or "criminal."

I recall that Matthew says Jesus spoke of prisoners with compassion, telling a story that included these words: "Then the king will say, 'I was in prison and you visited me.' And they will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you in prison and visited you?' The king will answer, 'Truly, just as you did it to one of my sisters and brothers, you did it unto me.'"

Jesus himself didn't spend a long time in prison, just enough to be tried and tortured and crucified as a convicted criminal. Stories then say that three days after that encounter with the prison system, he arose and rejoined his friends. So as a convicted criminal who came back to his community, Jesus himself was a Returning Citizen!

There's no denying, of course, that some people's wiring is so messed up that they need to stay in prison, but the vast majority of our returning citizens want to rebuild productive lives. It's time to stop thinking of them in terms of "ex-convicts" and "criminals" and start seeing them as Jesus the Returning Citizen did: as our sisters and brothers who deserve our compassion and need only a chance.

See you in church,

Khleber



Notes from the Board - Newsletter Liaison

Sandy Shaner

Board Meeting 5/6/13

Once again, our main topics – completion of an FY13-14 budget and report of the nominating committee – will be old news by the time you read this. And that's fitting since we spent so much time this year working on funding and planning how to use the available funds. As part of this year's work we also worked through some questions about "designated contributions" and at the last meeting approved a policy which we believe will clarify that topic going forward:

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to solicit and accept pledges and unrestricted donations to fund the Church budget which is presented to and approved by the Congregation. Other donations may be solicited and accepted for designated purposes not included in the normal budget, e.g., special building amenities, new software, etc. At the same time the Board rejects designated contributions for support of budget line items since to do so would encourage preferential funding of some line items and potential defunding of other line items, both actions which would damage the Church's ability to plan and implement an overall budget.

Any request for an exception to this policy requires approval by a majority of the Board.

This policy isn't intended to stop financial gifts for special uses not included in the budget, such as the new drinking fountain or gas fireplace. It IS intended to ensure that the bulk of our funding supports the budget and that special preferences don't detract from that budget.



THE CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE MADE \$1469.90 !!

On May 10 & 11 we had a rummage sale at church, held in the Kate Wuerker Room. We advertised in the Alton Telegraph, WBGZ radio, the Riverbender events calendar, Liberty Bank signage in Alton, Godfrey, Bethalto, the Jerseyville Shopper (a free paper), and the social networks of many of you. Fliers and posters were placed around town in business. We are grateful for the support of everyone who donated stuff for the rummage sale. Everything was priced to sell. We had lots to sell that went to other good homes. Hopefully, it was good to de-clutter and get some needed space back into your homes. We are grateful for the 23 individuals that assisted us in the rummage sale and all the good thoughts that went into the success of the sale. We made \$1469.90 which went to the church's general budget. The items leftover went to Beverley Farms resale shop in Godfrey and the library in Jerseyville. It was hard work but good rewards.

We are sincerely grateful,
Lee & Char

In Our Church Family



A long-time friend of the church, Betty Yakubian, passed away on Sunday, April 21 in Houston Texas.

Betty was very active in the Riverbend area for many years. She was an accountant, a business woman, an artist, and a musician.

She actively participated in church activities, especially enjoying the Anna Ds.

A Celebration of Betty's Life is scheduled in the afternoon of June 22 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton, with a visitation at 12:30 pm until the Memorial Service at 2:00 pm. Contributions in her honor may be made to IMPACT in Alton or to the charity of ones choice.



4th Saturday Lunch June 22 – 11:30 a.m.

THANK YOU to Robyn Berkley and Kathleen McKeever who have stepped up to be the 4th Saturday Lunch coordinators. Our former Lunch coordinator, Trish Botsko, has moved to California.

There will be details about this month's lunch on UU Friends, in announcements at church, and through "This Week at Church" sent from the church office.

Potluck Lunch June 23



Our monthly lunches are held on the 4th Sunday. 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.

Mona Hebert's Medical Mission to Guatemala



Mona will be traveling to eastern Guatemala in early August with the St Joseph Mission Outreach volunteers. They will be providing free medical and dental care to the very poor in remote rural villages. Mona is seeking donations of bars of soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, as they would like to give each person cared for a gift of personal hygiene items. These can usually be picked up at Dollar Tree stores. You can purchase 3-5 toothbrushes in a package for \$1 and 2-4 bars of soap for \$1. Please buy the toothbrushes and bars of soap that are individually wrapped or packaged.

This year they will also be spending a day providing free medical and dental care at CASA GUATEMALA, which is an orphanage. They would like to be able to collect about 300 pairs of children's new underwear and about 600 new or gently used (clean) children's t-shirts. The children at the orphanage range in age from about 4 – 12.

If you are able to donate these personal hygiene items, or children's clothing please bring them to church by Sunday July 14. Cash donations or check made out to St Joseph Catholic Church will also be accepted.

Thank you!

**Your Church Board
Jan – June 2013**

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

Board meeting this month is the 2nd Monday
June 10th at 7 pm and is open to the church
members.

Election of Board Members

2013-2014 church year

**At the church's Annual Meeting on May 19 the
following individuals were elected to the Board**

President: Kelley Crone-Willis

President-Elect: Sabrina Trupia

Past-President: Cheryle Tucker

Secretary: Sandy Shaner

Member at Large: Lee Suarez

Member at Large: Paul Fischer

Contact Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Email: kvanzandt@uuma.org

Cell Phone: 314-223-0551

Chalice Circles



**RENEGADE WOMEN'S CHALICE
CIRCLE**

Every 3rd Saturday.

Saturday, JUNE 15 from noon to 2 p.m. at church.

Contact the facilitator Dee Evans zorn227@fastmail.fm
for further information.

OTHER ACTIVITIES



**UU Family Campfest
at Pere Marquette**

Please join us for an all-inclusive
inter-generational camping event from
July 5 to 11. The cost is \$12 per
person per day (children 3 and under
free) this includes a rustic cabin to
sleep in, hot showers, 3 meals and drinks per day.

Activities include private pool and fellowship. Come for
the day or the whole time. We will hold a special outdoor
service on Sunday July 7 at 11 am.

Online registration will be available or see Juliette Crone
Willis or Sayer Johnson

**Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum -
First SATURDAY of every month
June 1, 2013
10:30 – noon at church**



We want to 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.

At the June meeting Pat Moore will lead a discussion
topic about knowledge to share with your grandchildren.
Even if you don't have grandkids yet (or if they're to the
age when they already know everything), we think the
discussion will stir memories and lead to sharing about
our own lives. We're still thinking about how we might
alter our meetings to attract more members and
reinvigorate meetings, so please come if you can.

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) 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



**ANNA Ds
Thursday, June 6
(last meeting until September)**

Anna Ds will meet at 11:30 am on June 6 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. Marcia Custer is hosting.

Please call Brynda McCoy or email her at bryndamccoy@yahoo.com by Monday June 3 if you are planning to attend.

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

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**

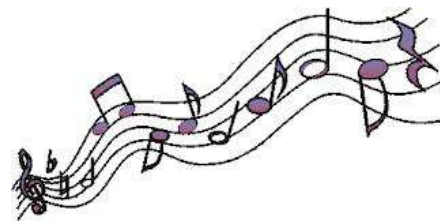
**Church phone: 618-462-2462
Mail: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002**



The ROMEOS – *Retired Old Men Eating Out* – will meet on Thursday, June 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 – you needn't be “old” or retired!

**Worship Associates
TUESDAY, June 4
7:00 to 8:30 pm**

For more information contact
Khleber Van Zandt
kvanzandt@uuma.org



**UCM Worship
Concert**

The United Congregations of Metro-East (UCM) is holding an “Interfaith Fire of Faith Worship Concert” at 5 pm on Sunday, June 2 at the Evangelical United Church of Christ – 1212 W. Homer Adams Parkway in Godfrey. There will be a wide variety of music including Gospel Mime, Praise Choirs, and traditional church music. An ice cream social will follow the concert. Tickets are \$5.00. This concert is a fundraiser for UCM. RSVP to ucmetroeast@gmail.com or 618-451-1458.

Lay Caring Ministry

Below is the list (as of 5-20-13) 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

Chrissie Blount cchapman@lc.edu

Kathryn Chapman paintedgeotfarm@yahoo.com

Marcia Custer mcuster@siue.edu

Char McAllister Charlenemcallister613@hotmail.com

Kathleen McKeever mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles cnofles@gmail.com

Sabrina Trupia strupia@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 Sabrina Trupia at strupia@gmail.com until June 30.



JUNE 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.

6/1 Sayer Johnson
6/3 Kris Loewe
6/4 Marcia Custer
6/4 Jennifer Herndon
6/4 Mark Wolff
6/6 Ella Chapman Baker, (13)
6/7 Jan Allen
6/7 Ruth Shaw
6/9 Wayne Politsch
6/12 Will Adams, (8)
6/12 Trish Botsko
6/12 Honor Dimick, (13)
6/13 Samuel Berkley, (11)
6/17 Ryan Wucher, (13)
6/20 James Hull, (8)
6/20 Victor Hull, (8)
6/20 Meridith Koch, (13)
6/20 Abigail White, (4)
6/20 Andrew Strangeman, (2)
6/21 Justin Herndon, (5)
6/21 Joy Hoeft
6/22 Cole Chapman, (11)
6/24 Devin Johnson, (13)
6/25 Lela Eichen, (7)
6/25 Mandan Kirk
6/25 Char McAllister
6/27 Amy Andrews
6/29 Charlie Chapman Utgaard, (9)
6/30 Brianna Bennett, (2)
6/30 Ruth Maskow

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



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

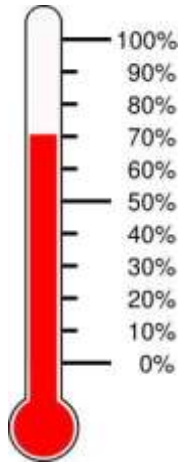
If you notice something around the church grounds that needs attention or repair, please contact our Grounds Co-Chair, **Bob Larson** at larsonlaw@gmail.com



Raccoon "Cookie" – the masked invader who wrecked havoc in our building in late May, was drawn by the scent of sardines to go into a no-kill trap that had put on the church roof near where Cookie was getting into the building. Rev. Van Zandt brought Cookie (in the trap) off the roof and took the raccoon across the Mississippi River and released it somewhere in St. Charles County. We hope Cookie can't swim back.

Capital Campaign Report

Almost half-way into our three year Capital Campaign we have already received 70% of our promised pledges. As of May 19, 2013 we've received \$178,369. This leaves a little over \$75,000 more to come in to meet the campaign goal. From our Capital Campaign contributions, we've spent \$134,399 on congregation approved projects, leaving \$43,970 in the bank account. This will be the starting point for the next project - new energy efficient windows in the RE Wing. Any of you who would like to pay off your Capital Campaign pledge early are welcome to do so. Since we are only doing projects when we have the cash on hand to complete them, the sooner we get funding, the sooner we can move forward.



Mike Bechtol and Trish Botsko and their son, Chris have moved to California and will be greatly missed. If you would like to keep in touch, their new address is:

**22328 Shadycroft Ave.
Torrance, California 90505**



June 2013 RE Program News & Notes

Summer Program

We are taking the summer off this year. There will be no Religious Education programming from June 2 through In-Gathering, September 8. Children and Youth are welcome to worship in the sanctuary during Sunday services. Our fall program resumes September 15, 2013.

Steven Mead, DRE
314.239.5694 (cell)
dre@firstuualton.org