

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation founded 1836;  
Current sanctuary built 1904

## *Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church*

*Alton, Illinois*  
[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)



Interior window and chandelier;  
Photo by Nancy Conniff

**August 2014**

## Summer Worship Services are at 10 am

**August 3, 2014**  
***“Storytelling”***  
**Sayer Johnson**

Storytelling can be both healing and revolutionary. Sayer Johnson on the Metro Trans Umbrella Group will explore the role of storytelling and in his own transition and reflect on the power of storytelling within the greater Transgender rights movement. Informal Transgender Q and A panel discussion to follow.

**Liturgist: Jennifer Lewis**

**August 10, 2014**  
***“From World Citizenship to World Republic”***  
**Ronald Glossop**

Gradually more individuals are recognizing that being citizens of the world community as a whole is more important than being citizens of this or that country. But how many realize that every community, including the world community, needs a recognized constitutional government in order to manage and control conflict so that it does not degenerate into violence and war? In order to have peace and justice at the global level, we need a World Republic over the nation-states just as we have our National Republic over our state governments.

**Liturgist: Kaci Combs-Lueker**

**August 17, 2014**  
***“Relationships Trump Theology”***  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**

At Unitarian Universalist General Assembly this year, military chaplain Rev. Rebekah Montgomery said, “relationships trump theology.” Too often people think the other way around. However, prophets, religious leaders, and evangelists for compassion all share that being at the table and enjoying company is in fact a sincerely religious act. In the euchre game of life, what trump cards do you play?

**Liturgist: Paul Fischer**

**August 24, 2014**  
***“Running From Safety”***  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**

Change is inevitable and often unwelcome. However, from birth to death we are continually facing change as one of the few constants of our lives. Richard Bach calls this “Running from safety.” In a world that resists change, what do we as a religious community bring to the world and to ourselves to run from safety into the great unknown?

**Liturgist: Sarah Lazarz**

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**August 31, 2013**  
**“Beyond What We Can Know”**  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**

Science is a part of a Unitarian Universalist spiritual life. What religion ultimately calls us to is to recognize that as small specks on a small planet in a small solar system there is more that we do not know than what we know. So easy to fall back on what we feel is certain we lose track of the mystery. Let us traverse the mystery of that unknown together.

**Liturgist: TBA**

**11:15 am ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
(ARE)**

**Nursery childcare available**

There will be no 9:30 ARE during the summer.

The 11:15 ARE program will be coordinated by Dee Evans. The discussion topics for the summer sessions are chosen each week by the participants.

**Interim Minister**

The Church Board welcomes The Rev. Sunshine Wolfe as our interim minister. Rev. Wolfe is just finishing an interim ministry in Montgomery, AL, and will be in the pulpit August 17, 24 and 31. If you would like to learn more about our new minister, Rev. Wolfe's website is <http://www.sunshinejeremiahwolfe.com/>.

Members of the Transition Team working with Rev. Wolfe are Sayer Johnson, Marcia Custer, and Sarah Lazarz.

**Your Church Board  
July 2014 – June 2015**

|                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>       | <b>Sabrina Trupia</b>               |
| <b>President Elect</b> | <b>Debby Lovell</b>                 |
| <b>Past President</b>  | <b>Kelly Crone-Willis</b>           |
| <b>Secretary</b>       | <b>Sandy Shaner</b>                 |
| <b>Treasurer</b>       | <b>Michelle Bryant-<br/>Barbeau</b> |
| <b>Trustee</b>         | <b>Bob Larson</b>                   |
| <b>Trustee</b>         | <b>Paul Fischer</b>                 |
| <b>Youth Rep.</b>      | <b>Vacant</b>                       |

**Summer Contacts**

**Board President, Sabrina Trupia**  
[strupia@gmail.com](mailto:strupia@gmail.com)

**Board Secretary, Sandy Shaner**  
[wrgma2@gmail.com](mailto:wrgma2@gmail.com)

**Church Office: 618-462-2462**  
[church@firstuualton.org](mailto:church@firstuualton.org)  
**Church Administrator, Becky Green**



**Report from the  
Board**  
**Sandy Shaner, Secretary**

We began the meeting with palpable excitement because it was the last Board meeting before our new interim minister, Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe arrives in August. Part of that excitement included setting two potential dates for an all-day meeting with Sunshine and a representative from the UUA to focus on the interim ministry period.

You may have heard by now that Bob Larson is leading a “primarily outside” work day on August 9 and we hope that he has lots of volunteers to join him. And the new web site may be live by the time you read this.

The meeting included a review of the draft year-end financial report which is basically balanced, with Michele explaining that she needed to check several line items and share it with the Finance Committee before it is finalized. She will also be sending year-end pledge reminders to everyone to compare pledge to actual contributions along with a reminder of any change in pledge level from last to this fiscal year.

See you in Church!  
Sandy Shaner

**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**

## In the Interim August 2014

It is with great excitement and joy that I come to serve as Interim Minister at the First Unitarian Church of Alton. I have enjoyed learning about this congregation and the creative ways in which you celebrate your values and the mysteries of life. I look forward to learning more about you in the coming years as you face a transition time from one settled ministry into the next. Here at the beginning I want to name a few things that are important to know about this process.

First, *it is a process*. The interim time is about working through a process that has been well established and repeats itself in community after community. Relying on the wisdom of other communities who have gone through transitions we move into this time with intentionality and yet are open to possibility and uncertainty. Like a butterfly going through metamorphosis you have the time and space to ask yourselves who you want to become. What kind of butterfly do you want this congregation to be?

Second, *we don't want to rush it*. Not many people like change and transition. It is anxiety producing and often asks us to leave our comfort zone. Yet, what we know is that great transformation is possible in the interim. Like a caterpillar who takes the time in the cocoon to transform, so too do communities need cocoon time- at once comfortable and yet at the end coming out a butterfly. What do you as a congregation want to make of the time in your cocoon?

Third, *grief is natural*. Grief is the natural and healthy response to change. Often we think of grief as related to death, but grief is more than that. We may grieve our old house after a move, the change in relationship with the birth of a child, or the change in abilities that come from living. In all instances, grief tells us one important thing- that what happened before matters. Rev. Khleber Van Zandt mattered to this community and always will. You will never again be the community you were during his time, but that time will forever become a part of your congregation's DNA. What has mattered to you in the last ten years in this congregation?

Finally, *the interim will end*. We all have to come out of the cocoon someday. This is a set time period of two years in which the congregation will look more inward than outward. We will continue the work that you do in the community, but the most important job I can do in the next two years is help you as a community decide who you are, how you have been changed by Rev. Khleber's ministry, and who you want to become.

To that end, there are five areas of focus in the interim time. These are designed to make sure that we look at each aspect of the community. It is not a checklist. There is no right or wrong way to look at them. Instead, we ask ourselves, where is the congregation in each area. The five areas are:

**Heritage:** reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed.

**Leadership:** reviewing the membership needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership.

**Mission:** defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction.

**Connections:** discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself.

**Future:** developing congregational and pastoral profiles that reflect its' vision.

In the coming months, we will focus on these areas not just as they relate to the life of this congregation, but also to a world in turmoil and within our own personal lives. Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams once wrote, "Church is a place where you get to practice what it means to be human." So, as we move forward together practicing, may we light the world with our wisdom, vision, and love.

Transform on!

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

## Interest Groups

**Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum**  
First SATURDAY of every month  
**August 2, 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.

### ANNA DS – WOMEN’S ALLIANCE

Our next Anna D’s meeting will be held on **Thursday, August 7** at 11:30 am at **Gang Wang Asian Eats** at 1035 Century Drive, Edwardsville. The restaurant is in the University Point strip mall on Rt. 157. (Same as Bella Milano where we met last month.) RSVP to our hostess **Marcia Custer** [mcuster@siue.edu](mailto:mcuster@siue.edu) by Monday, August 4.



### Men’s Monthly Lunch August 14 @ 11:30 am

The Men’s lunch bunch meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, August 14** at

11:30 am at the **Best Buffet** at 615 Wesley, Drive in Wood River, IL. All men in our church are invited. For further information contact **Paul Hebert** [pphebert@mail.com](mailto:pphebert@mail.com)

### RENEGADE WOMEN - TOPICAL DISCUSSIONS

1 pm to 3 pm every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday.

**AUGUST 16, 2014**

The Renegade Women will continue meeting throughout the summer. For information, contact **Dee Evans**. The theme for this church year is “*Women in Organizations.*”



### Worship Associates Team Monday, August 18 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 Associate Team meeting.

### LIVING SIMPLY UNITY CIRCLE



The Unity Circle, facilitated by Sharon Johnson, will meet on **Sunday, August 17** from 11:15 to 1:00 pm.

Everyone is welcome. Participants should join if they are able to commit to joining us monthly for 6-12 months, as this Unity Circle is intended for relationship building.

This Unity Circle is intended for deep listening, and not feedback or advice.



### Church Potluck Lunch August 3, 2014 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each Month

We hold our potluck lunches on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month. Bring a dish to share on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and stay after the 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.**



**Fourth Saturday Lunch &  
Personal Care Items  
for those in need  
August 23  
11:30 am**

Information about what is needed for May'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](mailto: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 – Afro-American hair products – cleaning supplies – toothpaste - soap. Questions – contact Sabrina Trupia [strupia@gmail.com](mailto:strupia@gmail.com)



**STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS.** The Garden Ministry will be hosting a **100 Mile Dinner Party** sometime this fall to support the UUSC 100 Garden Project. This project sponsors gardens in Haiti to help in their reconstruction efforts after the devastating earthquake in 2010. This fun, family friendly get together will highlight the best food within 100 miles of our congregation. More information will be forthcoming, so stay tuned! Questions? Contact Tracey Howe-Koch.



## August 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.

- Aug 03 Nan Adams
- Aug 03 Akilah Hudson, (12)
- Aug 04 Jim Elliott
- Aug 05 Erin Vigneau Dimick
- Aug 06 Lisa Strangeman
- Aug 07 Jack McCall
- Aug 10 Lorna McElhone
- Aug 11 Robbie Reiheld, (10)
- Aug 13 Edward Navarre
- Aug 15 Eunice Lueker, (1)
- Aug 15 Isis Payne, (10)
- Aug 18 Madison Adams, (10)
- Aug 18 Peyton Adams, (8)
- Aug 18 Matt Koch
- Aug 23 Paul Hebert
- Aug 23 Kingston Sellitto-Brehm, (6)
- Aug 24 Amelia McCarthy, (18)
- Aug 24 Ethel Potts
- Aug 24 Jonathan Strangeman, (5)
- Aug 25 John Barbeau
- Aug 28 Tara Kinder
- Aug 29 Eliot Bailey, (10)



# 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](mailto:paintedgoatfarm@yahoo.com)

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

**Claudia Harju** [dachsandcats@gmail.com](mailto:dachsandcats@gmail.com)

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

**Ethel Potts** [ethel.h.potts@gmail.com](mailto:ethel.h.potts@gmail.com)

**Donna Young** [donnae47@gmail.com](mailto:donnae47@gmail.com)

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](mailto:mcuster@siue.edu) for more information.

New mailing address for Lee Suarez and Char McAllister:

P.O.Box 352  
Englewood, Florida 34295.



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

**August 9  
Work Day**



There's always outdoor work to be done around the church. Join us on Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to noon to lend a hand.



Bring your lawn tools and a pair of gloves. We will be sprucing up the outside grounds around the church.

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



**Food Pantry  
Donations Needed**

## **Donations to the Alton Crisis Food Center**

People need food year round. 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.