

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian Church
Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

September 2013

Worship Services

September 1 & 8 – One Service at 10 am

September 15 through May 25 – Two Services – 9:30 am & 11:00 am

September 1, 2013 – 10 am

“Tasting the Wine of Astonishment”

Excerpts on streaming video from the Sunday morning worship service at the 2013 Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly. Sermon by the **Rev. Dr. William F. Schultz**, President and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. **Coordinator: Mary Johnson**

September 8, 2013 -- Ingathering Sunday --

-- One service at 10:00 am --

“Livin’ the Dream”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

The summer is over and it’s time to buckle back in for a wild ride into cooler weather and beyond.

September 15, 2013 (Fall RE Begins at 11:00 am)

-- two services: 9:30 and 11:00 am --

“Remembering the Covenant”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Back in 1648, to combat the growing threat of rampant Presbyterianism, ministers in New England met and adopted a congregational form of church governance. We still try to live out those values, though we’ve forgotten a few over time.

September 22, 2013

“Left Wanting”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

I have faith. I lose faith. Sometimes I gain it again. I want consistency in my life and competency from my God. And more often than not, I am left wanting. What gives?

September 29, 2013

“Emperor of All Maladies”

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

One of the scariest words one will ever hear their doctor say to them is “cancer.” How did it become thus? And where are we in the fight against this awful and awesome array of diseases?

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

September 1 – 11:15 am – RARES – Rogue Adult Religious Education for Summer – Lay led, “rag-tag” group of random conversationalists discussing whatever peaks the group’s interest for the day.

September 8 – 11:15 am -- RARES - Rogue Adult Religious Education for Summer – 11:15 am

9:30 am

September 15 – Dr. Ronald Glossop – Philosophy

Our first class on "Issues in Philosophy" will focus on the overall nature of philosophy and its main divisions: speculative philosophy (metaphysics and ethical or evaluative inquiries), reflecting on speculative philosophy (logic, epistemology or theory of knowledge, and metaethics) and reflecting on other activities (philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, etc.)

September 22 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Meditation

September 29 – Jerry Johnson – UU History

UU story-teller, Ron Cordes, proposes to tell the fascinating story of Unitarianism and Universalism through the past 2,000 years by means of the set of six DVDs which he has produced. I intend to show about 40 minutes of the progressing story each month with some time at the end for discussion and questions.

Our first session starts "At the beginning" – after the first gospel had been written – and ends with the introduction of Michael Servetus in the 1500s.

11:00 am

September 15, 22, 29 – 11:00 am

"Free Mind, Infinite Spirit" – Cheryle Tucker

William Ellery Channing wrote, "I call that mind free which discovers everywhere the radiant signatures of the infinite spirit, and in them finds help to its own spiritual enlargement." We will use the ideas found in this quote and others to explore our own spirit and the connections between mind and spirit.



A First Glance

As the summer months wind down, I realize I’ve been a lot of different places this year: Italy in February, New Orleans in March, San Antonio in April, Austin and Louisville in June, and Austin again in July. Traveling so much can make my head spin and leave me feeling a little lost and out of sorts, so it feels like high time to settle in for another exciting year at church.

On one of my jaunts closer to home this year, I came across a story that spoke to me that I want to share with you here. It was typed haphazardly and tacked on the wall of a small-town eating establishment:

As a guitarist, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director friend to play at a graveside service for a recently departed homeless man. He had no family or friends so the service was to be at a pauper’s cemetery out in the back country. Being unfamiliar with the backwoods, I got lost.

After wandering around trying to negotiate my way on tiny dirt roads, I finally arrived about an hour late to find the funeral director already gone and the hearse nowhere in sight, either. Only the gravediggers were still there, sitting near the newly dug grave eating their lunch.

I felt very badly and apologized to the men for being so late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down to see that they already had lowered the vault lid into place. Since I didn’t know what else to do, I pulled out my guitar and started to play.

As I warmed to my mournful task, the workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played my heart and soul out for this man who had no family or friends. I played like I’ve never played before for a homeless man I’d never met.

When I came to ‘Amazing Grace,’ the workers began to weep. They wept, then I wept, then we all wept together. When I finished, I silently packed up my guitar and headed for my car. Though my head hung low, my heart was full to breaking.

As I opened the door to my car, over my shoulder I heard one of the workers break the silence, “I ain’t never seen nothing like that before, and I’ve been putting in septic tanks for twenty years!” Apparently I’m still lost.

One of the keys to living well must surely be the ability to find humor in dire situations. Not everything is funny, of course – life is full of death and loss and heaviness. But if we can’t find a way to take ourselves a little less seriously and a little more lightly, life will be destined to remain crushing and exhausting rather than – as I believe it is meant to be – the source of wonder and excitement and celebration.

See you in church,

Khleber



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

September 28 – 11:30 am

In August and September we are trying something different with our 4th Saturday Lunch program. Due to the increased numbers of people attending our lunches we don't have enough tables / chairs / or floor space to seat everyone comfortably.

While the weather is still good we're going to provide sack lunches (sandwiches, fruit, dessert) along with beverages and give our guests the choice of eating their lunch in the Wuerker Room or taking their sack lunch and eating it elsewhere.

There will be details about how you can help with this month's lunch on UU Friends, in announcements at church, and through "This Week at Church" sent from the church office. Linda Van Zandt is coordinating August and September's lunches.

Our distribution of personal care items has become very popular – as many of these very needed items cannot be purchased through the government's "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program" (formerly known as food stamps). Char McAllister visited several social service agencies to get a better sense of the sorts of items that are needed. 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.

Requests from the Church Office

Please be very clear on the memo line of your donation checks. Examples:

- 2012-2013 pledge (to complete your pledge)
- 2013-2014 pledge
- Capital Campaign
- Restricted Donation and what it is for
- For a split donation, please show the amounts for each.



Thank you, Becky

Your Church Board July 2013 – June 2014

President
President Elect
Past President
Secretary
Treasurer

Kelly Crone-Willis
Sabrina Trupia
Cheryle Tucker
Sandy Shaner
Michelle Bryant-
Barbeau
Lee Suarez
Paul Fischer
Vacant

Trustee
Trustee
Youth Rep.



A course in Esperanto to be available starting in October.

Ron Glossop, President of the American Association of Instructors of Esperanto and a member of our congregation, has decided to offer a course for beginners on Esperanto, the easier-to-learn language designed to facilitate international communication.

The class will meet at 12:30 pm in the Emerson Room on the second Sunday of each month beginning October 13. Participants should bring a pencil or pen to take notes. Paper will be provided. Anyone who wishes to do so can bring a sack lunch to eat before or during the class.

If you want to get a head start on Esperanto, you can visit the trilingual website <<http://www.icxlm.org>> and you can start learning the language at the website <<http://en.lernu.net>>.

Whether you think learning a new language would be easy or difficult, you are encouraged to at least give it a try. Evidence shows that a good way to maintain your mental abilities is to put them to use. For students, Esperanto is the perfect first foreign language to learn.

Questions? Contact Ron at rglossop@mindspring.com.

Interest Groups



ANNA DS – WOMEN’S ALLIANCE

Lorna McElhone will be the hostess for September’s lunch meeting of the Anna Ds.

It will be on **Thursday, September 5** at Fazzi’s Restaurant in Collinsville, IL at 11:30 am. The address is 1813 Vandalia St. The menu can be viewed at www.fazzis.com. It is a very popular restaurant and Lorna suggests carpooling. RSVP to Lorna by September 3 – lornance@aol.com

The Anna Ds invite all women in the church to come to their monthly luncheons.

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum
First SATURDAY
of every month
September 7, 2013
10:30 – 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 GROUP

The Men’s lunch bunch will meet on Thursday, **September 12** 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.

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RENEGADE WOMEN - TOPICAL DISCUSSIONS

Every 3rd Saturday.
Saturday, SEPTEMBER 21
from noon to 2 pm at church.



See the write up about recent Renegade programs elsewhere in this newsletter. Contact the facilitator Dee Evans zorn227@fastmail.fm for further information.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

As of 8/17/13 we have received \$212,592 in capital campaign contributions. This is 84% of our goal.

Everyone’s generous donations are sincerely appreciated.

The Architectural Committee is now getting bids for the replacement of the windows on the Alby side of the RE Wing, and it is hoped that these insulated, energy efficient windows will be in place “before the snow flies.”

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@vahoo.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

Church Potluck Lunch September 22 – the 4th Sunday – 12:15 pm



Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 4th Sunday – which is not always the last Sunday of the month. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share. This is an all-church event so we should all plan to participate in setting up and cleaning up, as well as in our sharing of food and conversation.



**UU and You!
An Introduction to
Unitarian Universalism**

**Monday evenings
September 16, 23 & 30
7:00 to 8:30 pm**

In this three-session adult education course you will be introduced to the ideas, history, and people that make up the First Unitarian Church of Alton, and the Free Church Tradition of which Unitarianism and Universalism are a part. Learning about the church and its traditions is a first step towards involvement in a community of faith dedicated to the preservation of religious freedom and the uplifting of the human spirit.

We will explore together the difference between the orthodox and the liberal ways in religion, as well as a brief history of the Western church. You will learn about our approach to religion and the core ideas of Unitarianism and Universalism. You will also learn something of the rich and enduring history of the First Unitarian Church of Alton.

Hopefully you will also learn something about yourself and the things you value and the things you believe, as well as meet and learn about other newcomers who are on the same pilgrimage of self-discovery.

There will be a signup sheet at church or let the church administrator know by calling (618) 462-2462 or emailing church@firstuualton.org. Free childcare will be provided if arranged when you indicate your intention to attend the UU & You! classes.



**Worship Associates Meeting
Tuesday, September 10
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 Associates” Team meeting. For more information contact: **Khleber Van Zandt** kvanzandt@uuma.org.

**Donations to the Alton Crisis
Food Center**



The Crisis Food Center, down the street from the church, is always in need of donations.

There is a donation container in the RE entrance foyer. But PLEASE don't contribute food items that are past their expiration date. We had to eliminate almost 30 items from the bags that were taken down to the Center in August because the expiration dates were from one to three years in the past.

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. But remember to check the expiration dates, especially if you're donating items from your own pantry.

Thank You.

Did you know?



That you can earn money for the Church when you spend money with local merchants or an increasing number of on-line merchants? Most of us started with the EScrip program by signing up at Schnucks and showing our key-tag while buying at Schnucks. Since that small beginning, the EScrip program has upgraded the merchants who participate (including Amazon and other major retailers). Here's a link to the EScrip web site to see all the various merchants now participating <http://shopping.escrip.com/> Here's how it works:

- You register any one or all of your existing grocery loyalty, debit and credit cards with the program;
- Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on your purchases, as long as you use a registered card;
- Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on behalf of your charities.

You can still visit Schnucks to set up your account and get a key-tag to scan at check-out at brick-and-mortar stores, or you can start with the web site directly. If you sign up at Schnucks, you can then go to the web site to list up to 3 charities to receive your contributions. If you're shopping locally, just let them scan your EScrip key tag. If you're shopping online, go to the EScrip shopping site and access your web site through its portal. Please give it a try.

Sandy Shaner

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.

Amy Andrews ajrn07@gmail.com

Kathryn Chapman paintedgeatfarm@yahoo.com

Marcia Custer mcuster@siue.edu

Char McAllister Charlenemcallister613@hotmail.com

Kathleen McKeever mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles cnofles@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.



SEPTEMBER 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.

Sept 01	Dee Evans
Sept 03	Jim Moore
Sept 04	Riana Herndon, (9)
Sept 06	Chris Strangeman
Sept 09	Isabella Navarre, (8)
Sept 10	Gina Adams, (5)
Sept 10	Mary Lu McManus
Sept 10	Roger Thorogood
Sept 11	Alex Reiheld, (6)
Sept 13	Phil Finley
Sept 14	Mona Hebert
Sept 15	Tony Grippi,
Sept 16	Paul Fischer
Sept 16	Meredith Johnson, (13)
Sept 16	Janice Joiner
Sept 19	Kelvin Crone-Willis, (11)
Sept 19	Jen Politsch
Sept 22	Sid Eichen, (6)

Book Discussion Group

Members of the Alton Area Cluster, an interfaith social justice group, will meet at our church on Thursday, September 12 from 4 to 5:30 pm to discuss the book "*Faith, Hope, and a Bird Called George: A Spiritual Fable*," written by Michael Morwood. If this sounds interesting to you, please plan to join us. Everyone is welcome. Questions – contact Mary Johnson.



From the Board – Sandy Shaner

Since the August Board meeting is scheduled for August 19, after the newsletter deadline, a report on that meeting will be in the next newsletter. In the meantime the Board held an all-day session on August 11 to work on issues that need more time than we can devote at the monthly meetings. In general terms we discussed:

- Confirming authorization for the Ad Hoc Architectural Committee to move forward with replacement of the RE Wing windows by soliciting bids with future expenditure limited to funds set aside in the Capital Campaign Account;
- Next steps to rebuild our committee structure and process;
- Answers to questions raised at the May congregational meeting;
- Discussion of how best to invest in the future of the church using the special donations received from local UU churches;
- Several policies and related procedures.

All but the RE Wing window replacement item require conclusion at the August Board meeting, and you'll be hearing more about our progress in September.

Do You Have an IDEA for a Community Social Service or Social Action Project that could get off the ground with a little funding?

If so, get in touch with Khleber immediately.

Grant Proposals Sought

In 1985 *First Unitarian Church of St. Louis'* Community Action Endowment Fund is used to support agencies doing direct service and social action projects in the community.

The fund Committee will make its 25th annual awards this year. These will be moderate grants; the total amount available is approximately \$3,500.

Applications should state the organization's name, address, telephone number, and contact person as well as a brief description of what the group does and who it serves. Applicants should include the size of the staff (paid and volunteer), how long the organization has been in existence, the amount requested, and the purpose for which the money is desired.

Applications are due 18 September, 2013. Send them to: Community Action Endowment Fund, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63108.

Renegade Women's Discussion Group

The Renegade Women are having some interesting meetings. Earlier this year we heard from Gayle Borman discussing the book "*Tools*" – ways to live a psychologically successful life. In August, Melody Hardman presented from "*My Mother's Rules*" by Lynn Toler. Ms. Toler outlines over forty "rules" for living an emotionally stable life. Melody presented 10 of these intriguing rules and we will continue looking at more of these at our September meeting. Some of the rules are:

1. "*Smith and Wesson Test.*" To pithily summarize it: "If someone put a gun to your head, could you stop your ...?" And the "..." is whatever dysfunctional emotional thing you are doing as yelling, screaming, throwing a temper tantrum, etc. etc.

2. *Work your emotions like a job.* Make your emotions follow your actions. I am going to do what's right even though I don't feel like doing it now. A brief example: I may feel like screaming, but I am going to act effectively rather than engage in an ineffective emotional display.

3. *Bathroom Mirror.* Look at yourself in the mirror in the bathroom. Search your major mistakes and examine them. The purpose is to make sure you are conveying what you intend to convey rather than engaging in something other than you intend. Know your faults and weakness so that you do not allow them to harm you.

4. *Rule of Inclusion.* Don't ask "why me?" Everyone has pain and suffering. Everyone is included in this basic human condition. Accept this and handle it.

5. *No matter what, keep coming.* Neither you nor your situation determine you. Your absence assures your failure. The way to change something is to be there to change it. This is not to say, don't walk away from a bad or dangerous situation. But if you do, know why you are walking away.

7. *Identify the barking dog.* You can not be in control of something if you don't know what it is. Whatever emotion you experience, take the time to identify what it is and why you are experiencing. In other words, identify the barking dog.

8. *Meet Fido at the door.* Listen to yourself. Notice shifts in mood. Why is the dog going from one place to another? Why are your moods and emotions rapidly shifting?

9. *Get your mind right.* Once you notice that you are supporting an emotion that is not doing you any good, change it. You can choose what to feel.

We invite all women of the church to join us on September 21 from noon to 2 pm to continue this discussion.

Dee Evans



September RE Program News & Notes

REgistration for 2013-2014

Unless you registered very recently, please update your family's information this year. Thanks for your help. See Juliette Crone-Willis, this year's acting coordinator of the RE program.

Fall Semester Begins

September 15, 11:00 AM

Our RE Program church year begins, Sunday, September 15. This year we will continue to offer a comprehensive religious education experience, including active and reflective learning, worship and social service opportunities, and intergenerational church fellowship.

What will our children and youth learn this year?

Pre-K and Kindergarten: Spirit Play.

Joyful discovery and learning for children ages 3 or 4 through 5. The primary goal for this age group is to introduce the children to RE Program classes, increase their comfort with the church environment, and provide a nurturing environment for children to discover their growing capabilities.

Grades 1-2: Love Will Guide Us

In *Love Will Guide Us*, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as, "Where did we come from?" "What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?" "How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?" "What happens when you die?" Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions. Participants will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

Grades 3-4: Sing to the Power

Sing to the Power affirms our Unitarian Universalist heritage of confronting "powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love." Participants experience their own power, and understand how it can help them to be leaders.

Grades 5-6: Riddle and Mystery

The purpose of *Riddle and Mystery* is to assist sixth graders in their own search for understanding. Each of the 16 sessions introduces and processes a Big Question. The first three echo Paul Gauguin's famous triptych: Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? The next ten, including Does God exist? and What happens when you die?, could be found on almost anyone's list of basic life inquiries. The final three are increasingly Unitarian Universalist: Can we ever solve life's mystery? How can I know what to believe? What does Unitarian Universalism mean to me?

Youth Group. Grades 7-12.

Junior High and High School youth meet about three times a month on Sunday at 11:00 a.m. or as the Group decides. The group is self-directed and with the help of adult advisors and available curricula, plans programs that may include worship, education, social events, social action projects, and development of leadership skills. Discussion topics cover current events, situations in school, and various religious concerns.

Juliette Crone-Willis, RE coordinator

RE_Coordinator@firstuualton.org

Memorial Service for Ruth Shaw



The Memorial Service for long-time church member Ruth Shaw will be held on Saturday, September 28 at 1 pm at The Center for Spirituality and Sustainability (the Religious Center) at SIUE in Edwardsville.

The academic community and our church community have lost a dear woman whose enthusiasm for life was almost boundless.