

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian Church
Alton, Illinois*

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

October 2013

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

October 6, 2013
“Emperor of All Maladies”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

One of the scariest words one can 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?

October 13, 2013
“The End of History”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

We remember yesterday as we look forward to tomorrow, celebrating the past as we hope for something better. But how free are we, really, to make choices today if we cling too closely to the good ol’ days?

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

October 20, 2013
“The Good Liberal”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

In the political world, *liberal* became a bad word a few decades ago. But for centuries, to be *liberally religious* didn’t only get you bullied: it might even get you killed.

October 27, 2013
“Espiritualidad Zombie”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

As we approach our annual celebration of El Dia de Los Muertos, you may be asking yourself, “¿Donde están los muertos? Where are the dead, exactly?” For many, the obvious answer is, “Ellos están aquí – they are with us still.”

November 3, 2013
“Why Study Moby Dick?”
Allen Schwab

Allen Schwab grew up in the shadow of America’s most beautiful ball park, Wrigley Field, where as a die-hard Cub fan, he learned special lessons in pain, suffering, and endurance

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

9:30 am

October 6 – Tracey Howe-Koch – The Bible

John The Baptist: Wildman from the forest, inconvenient prophet or Jesus' mentor? You decide! Join us for this lively discussion on Oct. 6th. Questions? Contact Tracey Howe-Koch

October 13 – Dr. Ronald Glossop – Philosophy

Our second class on "Issues in Philosophy" will focus on the part of metaphysics called ontology: What is the basic nature of what is real? Is everything basically physical? Are there two independent worlds, one physical and one mental? Is the only reality mental, the world of ideas? Are there other possibilities?

**October 20 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau –
Meditation**

Peg Flach – Dutiful Daughters and Sons (DDS)

Beginning October 20, there will be a new Adult RE offering, Dutiful Daughters and Sons.

This will be a support/sharing/venting group open to anyone who is struggling with the many issues involved in care-taking or advocating for an elderly parent. We will meet in Khleber's office at 9:30 am. If you have any questions, contact Peg Flach.

October 27 – Jerry Johnson – UU History

During this month's session, we will finish our discussion of Michael Servetus and then watch the story of the founding of the first Unitarian churches in Transylvania by David Ferenc.

11:00 am

**October – All Sundays
Cheryle Tucker, Coordinator**

Based on a reading by Linda Hoddy entitled "*Enter with me that still place within, the center,*" we will search for that place within which can guide and connect us as we confront our aspirations and our failings. See reading at www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/5869.shtml.

A First Glance



Usually a congregation has to wait for a minister to leave to learn how to act during and after a ministerial transition. But our recently and dearly departed long-time member Ruth Shaw has left us an excellent learning opportunity in this regard.

Ruth had been very active in our church and in the national and international liberal religious movement for decades. Then, in recent years, she began to have some trouble with mobility and balance. On my visits with her at her home in Collinsville, she always made sure to remind me that she had already arranged with a former minister of this congregation, Rev. Sylvia Falconer, to do her memorial when the time came. And I always made sure to respond, "Ruth, if that's what you want, Sylvia and I will work something out when the time comes."

Well, it's time. Back in July, Ruth died. And Rev. Sylvia was contacted by family and agreed to come do the memorial.

All well and good, and just the way it's supposed to happen, you might think. But you would be wrong to think it happens this way all the time.

Ruth was very lucky that, 30 years after Sylvia left, most ministerial issues have washed away down the river of time. Sometimes, like now, there are no big issues and it's okay for a former minister to be invited to participate in a rite of passage for a beloved member or friend of the congregation.

But here's the learning part: this is not always true!

Consider a case in which a new minister has been called and is still in the process of becoming known and accepted by the church. It could be very disruptive to that process if a particularly beloved former minister stepped in to officiate at a wedding or funeral. Or, consider a case where a longer-term minister has become uncertain in her current ministry or embattled with a group of members for whatever reason. To have a former minister return to do a memorial in that situation could prove the death knell for her time with that congregation.

Ruth Shaw was a dear, dear person who had made her requests long, long ago for the minister of her choice to come back and be with her family in their time of need. As it happens, the current situation at our church is suitable enough for a decades-gone, former minister to help with a memorial.

But should there be other ministerial transitions - as surely there will be, for ministers, like the rest of humanity, are all here on an 'interim' basis - you'll need to remember one of the hardest truths about ministry: members of our churches have to count on the minister called to the church *at the time* to take care of all the (as they say in the biz) "marrying and burying" that needs to happen.

See you in church,

Khleber



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

October 26 – 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.

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.

It is better to contribute 5 of 10 of the same item rather than one or two of each.

Social Justice Opportunity – Marriage Equality

The Church's Social Justice Committee will be hosting a PHONE BANK on Wednesday evenings through October 23 to garner support for Marriage Equality. We will be calling people who are in Rep. Jackson or Rep. Beiser's area. The people we will be contacting are either supportive or have been in the past. We are asking them to either call their representative or will transfer them to a representative's office to leave a message on how they support marriage equality.

Please join us on Wednesday nights through October 23 at 5 pm in the Kate Wuerker room. All you need is a cell phone and a desire to be involved. Laptops are also helpful bring one if you have one.

We also have a few extra cell phones for use. Food is provided! Questions? sayerjohnson@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



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

**Tuesday Evenings,
October 8, 15, 22
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.



A course in Esperanto

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.



Fall Church Picnic ALL INVITED

Date: Saturday, Oct. 5

Place: Char & Lee's - 19409 Jones road
Jerseyville, IL

Time: Any time after 3:30 pm. We'll eat at 5 p.m.

Menu: Chili / potluck -- bring a dish to share. Please bring a chair. We will supply tea and water. If you want something else, bring your own beverage.

Games / bonfire and s'mores.

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Lorli Nelson will be the hostess for the October lunch meeting of the Anna Ds.

It will be on **Thursday, October 3** at Methodist Village - 5201 Asbury Lane, Godfrey, IL. RSVP by an email to Brynda McCoy at bryndamccoy@yahoo.com or a phone call to Lorli by Monday, September 30.

The lunch is \$7.25, payable at the front desk.

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

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum
First SATURDAY
of every month
October 5, 2013
10:30 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.

The Men's lunch bunch meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, October 10** 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.



MEN'S GROUP

Moore patjimmoore@charter.net. All men in our church are invited.

RENEGADE WOMEN - TOPICAL DISCUSSIONS

Every 3rd Saturday.
Saturday, October 19
from noon to 2 pm at church.



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

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** Lenoresuarez12@yahoo.com

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

Church Potluck Lunch October 27 the 4th Sunday – 12:15 pm



Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 4th Sunday. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share. This is an all-church event so everyone should plan to participate in setting up and cleaning up, as well as in the sharing of food and conversation.



Worship Team Meeting Monday, October 14, 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” 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 of food items. Please do not put personal care items in the Food Center box located in the RE foyer. Personal care items should be put in the taken to Emerson Place room.

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.

Thank You.

Book Discussion Group

Members of the Alton Area Cluster, an interfaith social justice group, will meet at our church on Thursday, October 17 from 4 to 5:30 pm to discuss the first three chapters of book *"Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life"* by Karen Armstrong. If this sounds interesting to you, please plan to join us. Everyone is welcome. Questions – contact Mary Johnson.



Alton Area Cluster Meeting Monday, Oct. 28 – 7 pm at Our church

Missouri Interfaith Power and Light Presentation

Tracey Howe-Koch will make a presentation to the Alton Area Cluster about the newly formed Missouri affiliate of Interfaith Power and Light. <http://www.moipl.org/>

“IPL is a national organization whose mission is to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to global warming through the promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. IPL’s work is to help protect the earth’s ecosystems, safeguard the health of all Creation, and ensure sufficient, sustainable energy for all.”

Anyone interested in interfaith social justice efforts is invited to attend monthly Cluster meetings.

The Kentucky IPL was the recipient of the Sunday morning collection at the UUA General Assembly last June.

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 (cell) 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 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.



Are you interested in keeping more closely connected to the day-to-day activities of First UU? Along with our newsletter and website, First UU has a Facebook page that keeps you up-to-date on church events (<https://www.facebook.com/firstuualton>).

In addition to our Facebook page, we also have a private group called:

UU Friends

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/208329915867368/>) that allows for a free exchange of ideas, up to date information on church activities, and a place to socialize with your fellow First UU members. Many who have not been able to make church activities find this group to be a great comfort and a way to connect when your schedule does not allow you to regularly attend.

To access both the First UU Facebook page, and also *UU Friends*, you must have a Facebook account. This is free to open. (www.facebook.com). Once you have your page open, proceed to the First UU Alton page and click "LIKE" and you'll have access to the information on that page. You may also navigate to the *UU Friends* page and submit a request to join and a moderator will facilitate your access to the page. We keep this page private so no outsiders can access information within this group. If you are unclear how to navigate, please feel free to "FRIEND" Robyn Berkley on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/robynphd>) and I'm happy to add you directly to the group. Or you may send me an email at robynberkley@yahoo.com and I am happy to talk you through how to access our Facebook resources.



Mark and Cathy Tade and their children, Lily and Johnny have moved to Indiana and will be greatly missed. If you would like to keep in touch, their new address is:

**1252 Tamarack Dr.
Munster, IN 46321**



BOARD MEETING

Report on 9/9/13 Board Meeting

We completed a number of matters we've been considering, revising and reconsidering for a while. Here are the policy/procedural items we approved:

- Even though we've had several Youth members on the Board since 2007, the only justification for that action occurred in old Board Minutes. We decided that our determination to codify and publicize Church policies and procedures meant that we should have a direct policy statement authorizing such an appointment. Here's the policy we approved:

It is the policy of the Board to recruit and include a youth representative, selected by youth members in the RE program, as a member of the Board. The Youth Representative will be a non-voting member serving for six months.

- We also approved a policy to allow the Board to transact business electronically between meetings:

It is the policy of the Church Board to allow transaction of business between meetings via e-mail so long as the motion and vote are documented in either the prior or subsequent Board meeting minutes.

- And our last policy work for the month was to approve a revised Building Use Policy and related procedures. (The procedures related to this policy define how we handle events such as weddings and a list of authorized key holders by position.)

It is the policy of the Board to allow use of the sanctuary, Wuerker Room and other first-floor rooms by members and non-members under circumstances defined in these policies and procedures. If a request meets the stated uses in this document, approval may be granted by the Minister or Office Administrator, requiring only that the calendar ensure availability of the space.

If a request falls outside these guidelines, including appropriateness within the church mission, three members of the Board must be canvassed for approval with approval of two out of three required. During that discussion one of the three is designated to coordinate with the Office Administrator who will get back to the original requestor with the decision.

It is also the policy of the Board to provide keys to members and contractors who have church-related reasons to need access and to ensure return of keys no longer needed for those reasons.

- Finally we finished our discussion of follow-up items from last May's congregational meeting, and you will hear more about that from Board President Kelly Crone-Willis.

Anyone who has questions about the policies/procedures or who would like a full copy of the Building Use documents can contact me at wrgma2@gmail.com

Sandy Shaner
Board Secretary



OCTOBER 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.

10/04	Tori Chapman (9)
10/08	Nancee Magilson
10/09	Philip Bailey (3)
10/11	Becky Green
10/13	Ken Andrews
10/17	Noah Hudson (13)
10/22	Kelly Crone-Willis
10/22	Julian Myers (14)
10/24	Jacob Conniff (13)
10/24	Daniel Adams (6)
10/24	Ken Hoeft
10/26	Maxwell Oldt (16)
10/28	Pat Moore
10/29	Madeline Hershey (4)
10/30	Peg Flach



October RE Program News & Notes

Special Sundays in October

- October 6 Children's Chapel--Grades 1-6
- October 27 Social Service Sunday, Dia De Los Muertos

Thank You to This Year's Teachers

Mike Acharya
Spiral Blanton
Kathryn Chapman
Brigham Dimick
Paul Fischer
Joy Hoefl
Eric Johnson
Tara (Yoni) Kinder
Matt Koch
Jennifer Lewis
Amelia McCarthy
Paula Moore
Alison Reiheld

Robyn Berkley
Carol Brown
Kelly Crone-Willis
Peg Flach
Jennifer Herndon
Tracey Howe-Koch
Mary Johnson
Tom Kinder
Rachael Lapin
Debby Lovell
Kathleen McKeever
Ed Navarre
Erin Vigneau-Dimick

Neighbor Helping Neighbor—UNICEF

Join with other UU congregations across the country to support Trick or Treat for UNICEF. Children may come in costume on October 27 and after our regular RE program, Trick or Treat for UNICEF during Fellowship Hour. All proceeds will go to UNICEF. UNICEF Programs develop community-level services to promote the health and well-being of children and mothers in under-developed countries including such essential items as vaccines, antiretroviral medicines for children and mothers with HIV, nutritional supplements, emergency shelters, and educational supplies. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNICEF>

Juliette Crone-Willis
Interim RE Coordinator
jrcronewillis@gmail.com

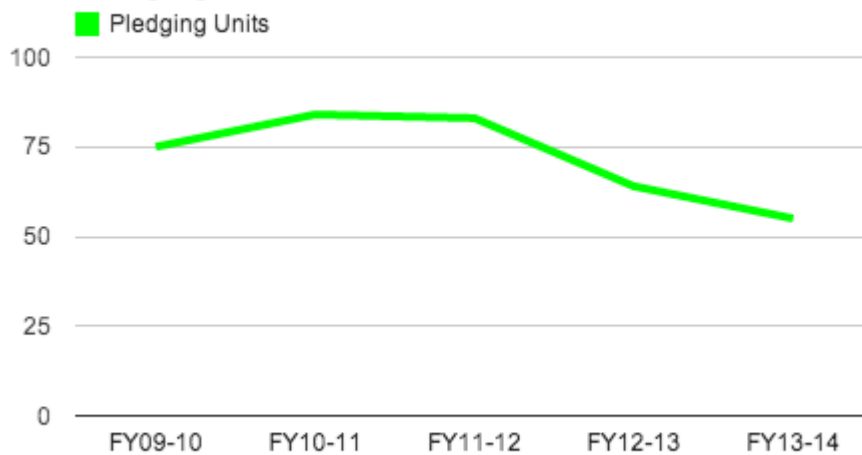
Information Requested at the May 2013 Congregational Meeting

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the board has been working this Summer on several action items from the May 2013 congregational meeting. During that meeting the new budget for Fiscal Year 2013-14 was presented, discussed and approved. However, due to the recent cash flow issues of the Spring, which necessitated the Over and Above Campaign and drastic cuts to our budget, the congregation tasked the board with researching a few items and following up on a motion made regarding endowment fund disbursements to the general operating fund.

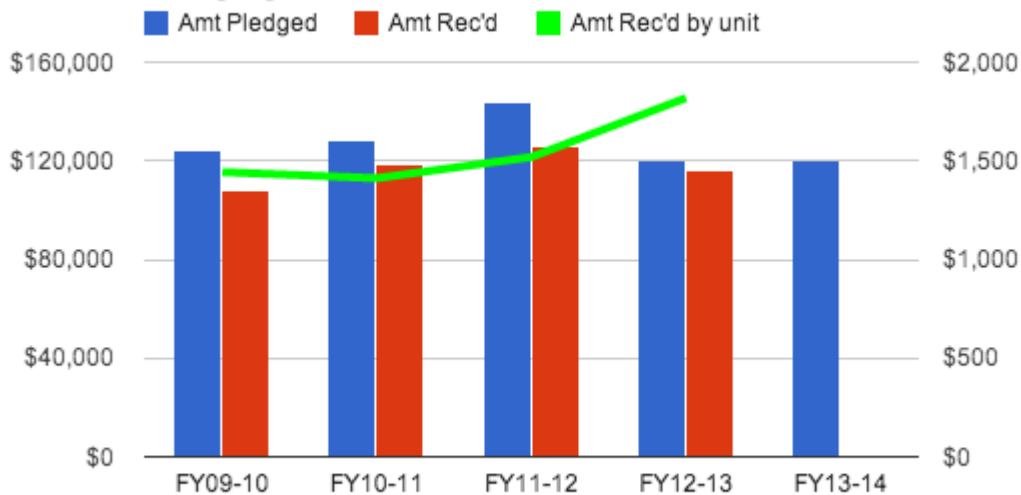
The congregation requested the results of our Spring pledge drive. The chart and graphs below show that information as well as our church's pledge history going back to FY09-10. Note that the calculations in the row for FY12-13 do not include the Over and Above Campaign money, only the normal pledges. The amount collected during Over and Above is listed as a note in the right column. It was a generous and significant donation necessary to balance this year's budget, but such a one-time campaign would skew the pledge history.

	Pledging Units	Amt Pledged	Amt Rec'd	+/-	% less rec'd	Amt Pledged by unit	Amt Rec'd by unit	Additional May, 2013 Over and Above Campaign
FY09-10	75	\$124,061	\$108,219	(\$15,842)	-12.77%	\$1,654	\$1,443	
FY10-11	84	\$128,107	\$118,622	(\$9,485)	-7.40%	\$1,525	\$1,412	
FY11-12	83	\$143,897	\$126,111	(\$17,787)	-12.36%	\$1,734	\$1,519	
FY12-13	64	\$120,428	\$116,409	(\$4,019)	-3.34%	\$1,882	\$1,819	\$13,500
FY13-14	55	\$120,367				\$2,188		
Capital Campaign 1/2012 to 7/2013	52	\$253,825	\$196,807	(\$57,018)	-22.46%	\$4,881	\$3,785	

Pledging Units 2009-2013



Pledging Income 2009-2013



There are several trends this data illustrates, but the congregation specifically asked for an analysis of how the Capital Campaign has affected normal pledging. As the Capital Campaign began in January 2012, the Capital Campaign and pledge years do not exactly line up by date. However, during the relative periods of overlap, our amount received per pledging unit actually went up during the time of the Capital Campaign. From our promised pledges for this year, we should also expect pledges per unit to again rise in FY13-14. The three-year capital Campaign will continue through December 2014. Bottom row of the above chart shows we have already received over 75% of our promised Capital Campaign funds without significant effect to our normal pledging.

The pledging history also points out that our number of pledge units has been decreasing in the last few years and accounts for our dip in total income this past fiscal year. This speaks directly to some of the congregational comments about working on growing our membership. If we could maintain our current per pledge amount, we could dramatically increase our budget through unit growth. Imagine what a \$180,000 budget could accomplish! (FY10-11 units * FY13-14 per unit pledge = 84 * \$2188 = \$183,792)

As we consider our future budgets, the congregation also asked the board about the process to utilize unanticipated income such as the Over and Above Campaign, the area UU churches' special collections or any future large undesignated donations. While some of the Over and Above and other UU church donations went directly to balancing our FY12-13 budget, any extra was not specifically added to the FY13-14 budget approved at the May congregational meeting. However, the FY13-14 budget was not a severely cut budget necessary to balance our last year end, but instead reflected a "living within our means" budget based on promised pledges. Still, there will be some portion of those extra donations to be worked into our operating funds. As the finance committee and board work on next year's budget, a process that actually begins this Fall, we will be looking for ways to make sure extra income is not merely saved for a rainy day but actually put to work in the mission of our faith. This year's budget did build in some items to guard against shortfalls, such as the 5% discount to pledges in the Income section and the shortfall reduction item in the Expenses sections. Hopefully, there is a creative way to build into next year's budget some items to account for windfalls as well. The budget should also assist with the growth mentioned above, by enhancing the specific areas that attract and retain members, such as building the music program or hiring a new DRE. Such enhancements could be paid for now, from current excess funds, with the intent of driving the growth that will keep us living within our means in the future.

Finally, in May the congregation passed a motion for the board to investigate moving more Endowment funds to operations than the current Endowment formula permits. As it stands now, the Endowment disbursement formula is built into the church bylaws and any deviation would first require amending the bylaws by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority during a congregational meeting. At this time the board feels we have received enough extra donations to sustain our budget. However, should an emergency arise, a better defined process for amending the Endowment disbursement would be helpful. Therefore, the board will propose a change to the Endowment portion of the bylaws at our December congregational meeting. Look for the meeting announcement along with advance dissemination of the new bylaws sometime in November.

Kelly Crone-Willis, Board President