

# 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

**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe, Pastor**

**November 2014**

## Worship Services 10:30 am and 1:30 pm

**November 2, 2014**  
***"We Remember Them"***  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**

As we lead into the holiday season, it is important to remember those who have died. This service will include an altar to those who we wish to remember. You are invited to bring pictures or mementoes in honor of beloved friends, family, and pets who have died. The service will include a ritual of remembrance.

**Liturgist: Jaimie Hileman**

**November 9, 2014**  
***"I Became a Unitarian Because of a Unitarian Dog Named Casey"***  
**Patrick Murphy, member of the congregation**  
**Liturgist: Sabrina Trupia**

**November 16, 2014**  
***"Spinning Plates - What Do Ministers Do Exactly?"***  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**  
**Liturgist: Wayne Politsch**

**November 23, 2014**  
***"Rabbits!!!"***  
**Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe**

This Thanksgiving/grieving intergenerational service will include a bread communion. Members and friends are invited to bring/bake bread for this service. Please note if your offering is gluten free.

**Liturgists: Brigham Dimick/Mary Johnson**

**November 30, 2014**  
***"Meaning, Purpose and Intent"***  
**Dee Evans, member of the congregation**

Life is filled with routine tasks, mundane tasks, responsibilities, things we like, things we don't like. We are always busy. What is the meaning of it all?

**Liturgist: TBA**

**Rev. Sunshine Wolfe's Office Hours**

**Tuesdays** from 4-6 at the BreadCo in Florissant

**Fridays** from 1-5 at First Unitarian Church of Alton

**Available by phone, e-mail, and appointment  
Tuesday to Saturday**

Phone: 317-448-3818

E-mail: [swolfe@uuma.org](mailto:swolfe@uuma.org)

**ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)**

**ARE classes are still being organized. Contact Tracey Howe-Koch if you would like to lead, coordinate or facilitate an ARE class.**

**November 9 at 9:30 am** –Ron Glossop – Emerson Place.

Our 3rd class on "**Global Problems of the 21st Century**" will focus on the problem of the sustainability of planet Earth and what should be done to deal with pollution and climate change and possible depletion of resources. "Is human nature such that we don't act until it is too late?" "What can and should be done save planet Earth?"

**November 16 - Two sessions: 9:30 am and 10:30 am**

Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Emerson Place  
**"Meditations from Around the World"**

**November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30** - Dee Evans, facilitator for "**Supporting and Developing each Individual's Spiritual Path.**" This group will meet either in Emerson Place or in the Pastor's study.

**November 2 and November 16 – 11:50 am**  
Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe– "**Inspire Programs**"–  
Emerson Place

At 11:50 on Sunday twice a month, Rev. Wolfe will offer *Inspire Programs* on a wide array of topics. Inspire Programs will provide opportunities for religious education in spiritual development, justice, countering oppression, spiritual practice, Unitarian Universalist identities, and more. Some programs will require registration and others will be open to all. Each program description will state clearly whether registration is needed. All programs are open to high school age student 14 and over with permission of parents, unless otherwise noted.

**November 2:**

**Race - the Power of an Illusion: Part 1**

A powerful three part documentary from PBS, Race - the Power of an Illusion covers the ways in which race was formed as a concept in the United States. Part 1 covers the science (or lack thereof) around race including genetics vs. environment. Part 2 covers the creation of race in the early history of the United States through to the end of the 1800s. Part 3 covers the creation of race legally and socially from the early 1900s to the present day. You can learn more about this series and take a short quiz on race at [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_General/000\\_00-Home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm).

**November 16:**

**Unitarian Universalist Foundations: The Creation of the Principles**

The Unitarian Universalist Principles that we covenant as denomination have been hundreds of years of the making. We will explore the values and sources that informed the creation of these values from the 1800s to today. How do the Principles live in your life? What do they mean to you?

**“Worth and Worship”**  
**from**  
**Pastor Sunshine J. Wolfe**

The Worship Team voted last month to change the format from a Worship Committee to a Worship Associates program. The Worship Committee will dissolve itself and the liturgist position. Through an application and interview process, six members of the congregation will be selected to serve for one year as Worship Associates who help plan, create, and lead worship eight or nine Sundays a year and preach once. The Worship Associates will receive training in preaching, safety, liturgy, and much more (see the article later in this Newsletter for application details). This is an exciting time of change and creativity and we hope that you appreciate the program as it rolls out. That said, I understand that change in worship can be uncomfortable.

Perhaps the most difficult change for any congregation with the start of any new minister is the change in worship. Accustomed to certain rituals, traditions, and preferences, the congregation can be surprised by the change that a new minister brings. Settled ministers often face difficult decisions between their preferences for worship and what the congregation is accustomed to. Interim ministry started recognizing that the congregation needs time to adjust to the change that naturally comes when a long time minister leaves.

The root of the word worship means “to shape things of worth.” We want worship to be meaningful to all kinds of people. We want the minister to be able to bring their authentic presence to worship. We want the congregation’s highest ideals to be present in the worship. How does what we say and do in worship share a moment of transcendence and transformation for the people who walk through our doors? What about Unitarian Universalism is “of worth” to ourselves and the world?

As many of you have noticed there are already some changes in worship. There will be more to come. In addition, when the newly called minister arrives in the future, they will change things again. It is how things are and it causes anxiety for ministers and congregations alike. Yet, the same worship styles and liturgical elements repeated overtime become stale and often do not meet the needs of new visitors or even those in the pews.

I want you to know that there is a reason for every change. I will mention those changes in worship and in the Newsletter. I encourage you to offer feedback to me or to the Worship Team directly. In fact, you should know that I do not accept anonymous feedback. Direct address is important to healthy communication. I have spoken with lay leaders about this and if you have questions you can speak with me or them to get more information. We want to make sure you are heard even in the face of changes. Also, keep in mind that you may feel an initial reaction that transforms over time. I encourage you to sit with the change for a couple of months before making final opinions over what they mean.

For some changes, I will include in the monthly newsletter a section called “*What’s Up With That?*” It will provide the basic reasoning for changes for your consideration. Look for an example of that in this newsletter on later pages. The interim process is naturally anxiety producing. I invite you to notice when anxiety arises as a sign that something matters. That does not mean that it shouldn’t be changed, just that it is important to you in some way. It creates an opportunity for spiritual and personal examination. What do you value? Where is the worth in what is being changed? Is the basic essence being maintained even if the way it is done has changed?

We gather as a community to shape things of worth including relationships, values, visions, justice, spirituality, philosophy, children, youth, and so much more. As we look at who this congregation is and who it would like to become I invite you to seriously consider this question- what do you want to take shape for the good of all?

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### **Congregational Interviews**

Rev. Wolfe is conducting interviews to learn more about the congregation. Ghe is interested in interviewing everyone and would like to interview those who have been a member since before 1999. These interviews are open-ended, confidential, and valuable to help determine the course of the interim time. Rev. Wolfe is willing to meet you where it is convenient for you. Please contact gher at 317-448-3818 or [swolfe@uuma.org](mailto:swolfe@uuma.org). Thank you for your time and participation.

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**Church Safety Training**  
**on November 23**  
**11:50 am**

Adult and Children Religious Education Teachers, Ushers/Greeters, Liturgists, Speakers/Preachers, Group Leaders, Board Members,

Building and Grounds, 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday volunteers, and all members are *highly* encouraged to attend this Church Safety Training with Pastor Sunshine. Topics include:

- what to do in the event of a medical emergency, active shooter situation, or disaster;
- basic skills for deescalating agitated individuals;
- how to prevent risk for all members, friends, children, and youth;
- how to prevent identity theft in church communications;
- how to respond in the event that our congregation is picketed;
- and much more.

Pastor Sunshine brings experience in risk management from managing group homes, chaplaincy, trauma response training, writing safety policies in multiple congregations, and nine years of experience working with homeless men and at-risk youth.

**Church Potluck Lunch**  
**November 2**  
**11:45am**



Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Associate Program**  
**Seeks Applicants!!!**



Want to deepen your understanding of Unitarian Universalism while supporting the work of the congregation? Would you like to learn more about worship, liturgy, and preaching? Would you like to actively help create worship with the Minister and guest speakers? Then Worship Associates is for you!

The Worship Committee is now accepting applications for six Worship Associates. We will interview potential applicants in December and January and announce them at the end of January. Worship Associates will be expected to attend a two hour Orientation in February. Then on *March 1<sup>st</sup>* they will begin their service in the pulpit. We ask for a one year commitment from March 1, 2015 to February 29, 2016 with the option of two years of service. Responsibilities include:

- one monthly meeting which includes training
- serving as Worship Associate for 8-9 Sundays per year
- preaching once during the summer
- assisting in locating potential guest speakers

Please send an e-mail to Pastor Sunshine at [swolfe@uuma.org](mailto:swolfe@uuma.org) to receive an application. This is an exciting, meaningful, and fun way to serve the congregation! We hope you will join us!

**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**



## Report from the Board

**Sandy Shaner,  
Board Secretary**

We hope you've noticed some changes since the arrival of our Interim Minister, Sunshine J. Wolfe, and that you've begun to consider which changes you like and whether there are some you may not prefer. That is a normal process for interim ministry, and we believe that Reverend Sunshine is both experienced and skilled at helping us work through these changes.

As a result, we've begun to change our Board meeting agendas, processes and conversations, choosing to focus more of our time on Discernment and Strategy and less on reviewing reports and discussing items which could be forwarded to Committees.

The terms "discernment" and "strategy" come from Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss which we are reading as a group. Hotchkiss lists four leadership roles in the work of governance and ministry – oversight, strategy, discernment and management. In his system, oversight is a Board function while management belongs in the staff sphere. The last two roles – discernment ("articulating mission and vision") & strategy ("making the big choices about capital investments, staffing, program philosophy and outreach goals" p. 79) are shared by the Congregation, the Board and the Minister.

Given this model, anyone who has served on the Board or attended the meetings should see a change in the

items upon which we focus and the quality of the discussions. As we make that shift, we are also working on having the Board agenda available a week before the meeting so that it can be included in the "Church This

Week" e-mail at the end of the prior week. In this way you can see our areas of emphasis and decide whether you would like to attend a meeting.

And, about those Committees...in gher interviews with members Reverend Sunshine has received a great deal of feedback about the collapse of our committee structure during the last year as well as member burnout. As a result, at our October 9 Board meeting we focused on organizational structure, i.e. the Committees which exist on paper but not in reality and the committees or teams that aren't reflected but need to be included and active. We had a great discussion, and the result is still in process with the expectation that Reverend Sunshine will review our work to date and continue to lead the discussion at the November 13 Board meeting (which we moved, along with future meetings, to the second Thursday of each month).

The Board continues to be excited about the potential for change in our congregational life, and we look forward to hearing your reflections along the way.

**The Board now meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
of each month @ 7 pm.**

### **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- Barbeau</b>
<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Bob Larson</b>
<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Paul Fischer</b>
<b>Youth Rep.</b>	<b>Vacant</b>



### **What's Up With That?**

In October, I asked that we move from individuals providing announcements directly in worship to written announcements. We now ask that you provide a written announcement in the Announcement Basket and/or send an e-mail directly to me at [swolfe@uuma.org](mailto:swolfe@uuma.org) with the announcement you wish to include. There are *many* reasons for this change.

1. Announcements are now shared at both the 10:30 and 1:30 services. Before, they were only shared at 10:30.
2. It is easier to plan the length of the worship service.
3. Introverts and extroverts are able to give announcements in written form. Also, those who are wordy when speaking find it easier to find brevity in writing.

There are other reasons, but these top the list. If you would like to know more about this change, please feel free to speak with me or the Worship Team members. We encourage you to experience this for a couple of months and then provide feedback as to how the experience has been for you over time.

*Pastor Sunshine*

# 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.

## Sierra Club

Join us on November 10<sup>th</sup> as Scott Moss, Coordinator/Instructor Restoration Ecology/ Storm Water Management Programs at Lewis and Clark Community College, presents "Rethinking our Landscapes."

The program will be held at 7:30 pm, in the Wuerker Room at church. Everyone is invited to join the speaker for dinner at 5:45 pm at Bossanova's, 112 W 3rd St. in Alton.

Contact Chris Krusa at [410-490-5024](tel:410-490-5024) for questions.

## Winter WomanSpirit 2015 February 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

**Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church**  
W299N5595 Grace Drive  
Hartland, WI 53029

### HEALING WORDS: Called to Consciousness

Mary Pierce Brosmer uses the written and spoken word to heal women's deepest hurts and from the new wholeness formed, a renewed passion for life is born. Hear the story of this healing process and learn how to bring this home to your friends, family and congregation.

Join us for a weekend filled with opportunities for continuing growth in a safe woman-only community. Take part in workshops to explore your spiritual self. Workshop and Presenter information is available at <http://tinyurl.com/jwhjhnr>. Questions? Send us an email – [uuwandr@gmail.com](mailto:uuwandr@gmail.com) or visit our website at: [www.womenandreligion.org](http://www.womenandreligion.org)

**4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Thanksgiving  
Lunch  
At the KC Hall in Alton  
November 22**



As last year, we are supporting **Andy's Auto Body Thanksgiving Luncheon** to be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Alton (405 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St.). More details will be forthcoming when we find out what exactly the organizers want us to do. Last year we distributed personal care items.

Robyn Berkley [robynberkley@yahoo.com](mailto:robynberkley@yahoo.com)

**We are very low on personal care items to be distributed at the 4th Saturday Lunch. Please look at the list below and see if you would be able to donate any items for this month. Many of these needed items cannot be purchased through the government's "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program" (SNAP - formerly known as food stamps).**

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).

## Interest Groups

**Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum**  
First **SATURDAY** of every month  
**November 1, 2014**  
10:30 am to noon at church



**November:** Mary and Jerry Johnson will present their travels to UU sites in New England. They visited the new UUA headquarters, churches, and locales that play a part in our UU history.

The 50+ Forum invites both retirees and those who are still active in their careers. Some of us have gray hair, some of us do not. Some of us love science, some of us love the arts, some of us love both. Some of us have grandchildren, others of us do not. Some of us love to be physically active, others of us do not. Some of us love nature, and others think nature is a plant in their house. You get the point. We can't be stereotyped just because we are over 50. The only thing we have in common is facing the fun and facts of being 50 and over. If you are over 50, join us.

Ah – besides being over 50, the other thing we share is our love to eat. So, we go out to lunch after our 10:30-12:00 first Saturday of the month meeting. For further information, contact Sandy Shaner.

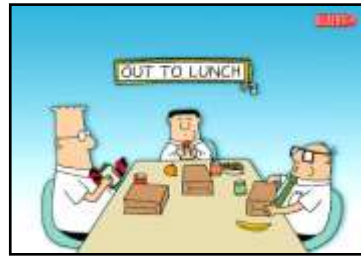
### **ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE**

Our November meeting on Thursday, November 6 will be hosted by Eleonore Nelson at United Methodist Village in Alton. She needs your RSVP by Monday, November 3. You may call her, or you may email your response to Sandy Shaner [wrgma2@gmail.com](mailto:wrgma2@gmail.com). Please be at Methodist Village by 11:30 and pay your \$7.50 lunch fee at the reception desk before coming downstairs to the private room.

### **RENEGADE WOMEN - TOPICAL DISCUSSIONS every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday**

**Saturday, November 15** from 1 to 3 pm.

### **Men's Monthly Lunch** November 13 @ 11:30 am



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

### **LIVING SIMPLY UNITY CIRCLE**



The Unity Circle, facilitated by Sharon Johnson, will meet on **Sunday, November 16** from **12:15 to 1:30 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.

### **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 special need of "Thanksgiving dinner" type foods. The food collection box is in the RE foyer.

Personal care items should be put on the shelves in Emerson Place.

## November Religious Education (RE) Program News & Notes

### November Schedule

	Spirit Play	Elementary (1 <sup>st</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	Youth (6 <sup>th</sup> Grade and up)
2-Nov-14	Yellow (to learn about ourselves, others, and the Mystery)	Social Service -- Guest at your Table	Coming of Age/Our Whole Lives
9-Nov-14	Indigo (to Insist on a peaceful, fair and free world for all)	Nature	Youth Group
16-Nov-14	Bread Service Lesson	CoExist (Visitor TBA)	COA/OWL
23-Nov-14	Intergenerational Bread Service	Intergenerational Bread Service	Intergenerational Bread Service
30-Nov-14	Violet (to Value our home Earth that we share)	Social Service -- Oasis Christmas Project	COA/OWL

### Guest at Your Table 2014

The RE Program will join with other UU congregations from around the country in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's *Guest at Your Table* program.

For more than thirty years, the Guest at Your Table tradition has helped UUs build lasting connections for UU principles and support the movement for universal human rights. It is a simple and meaningful way to incorporate "faith in action" into your life.

Beginning in November, participants make daily contributions to Guest at Your Table, as if sharing a meal with special guests. We will collect the boxes in December; all contributions go to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in their vital work. UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing resources to challenge oppressive policies.

### Oasis Women's Center—Adopt a Family

The RE Program leads the church in sponsoring the Oasis Women's Center. The Center provides housing for women and children that are victims of domestic violence. We will sponsor one large or two smaller families this year. Gifts should have a value of less than \$30 for each item. When we get specific information about our families and their Christmas requests we will post a sign-up board in the Kate Wuerker fellowship hall. Gifts will be due back at church Sunday Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>.

Juliette Crone-Willis  
 Acting Religious Education Coordinator  
[jrcronewillis@gmail.com](mailto:jrcronewillis@gmail.com)  
 314-482-5239 (cell)