

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois
www.firstuualton.org



March 2015

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

March Worship Services at 10:30 am and 1:15 pm
**** Note - the 2nd service now starts at 1:15 not 1:30 ****

March 1, 2015

Northwest by Canoe with Rev. Emmy Lou Belcher
Ministerial Settlement Representative.

The journey to finding a new minister is fortunately one without bears and hostile tribes! I will draw a map for this journey, see that you are well-supplied, translate the many languages along the way and rejoice with you when your new minister is called. So, let's begin!

Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

March 8, 2015

The Bridge from Selma with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe.
As people from around the world march across the bridge on Sunday, March 8th, to remember 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the Selma March, we will listen to the words and wisdom of the people of that year. We will remember those who were killed and bear witness to the legacy over the last 50 years. **(Remember to "spring forward" with the start of daylight savings time.)**

Worship Associate: Yomi Kinder

March 15, 2015

U.U. Joke Show with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe
and friends.

"How many UUs does it take to change a light bulb?
None. UUs think the light bulb should change by itself."

Join us for a worship service on the spiritual importance of humor and laughter. Have a joke, silly song, or story you want to share on this Sunday, let Pastor Sunshine know!

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

March 22, 2015

Abundance Sunday with Revs. Thomas Perchlik and
Sunshine Wolfe

How does the act of giving help you personally create meaning and purpose in your life? Rev. Thomas Perchlik will engage us with this question and the importance of abundance in our lives. Between the first and second services we will have a catered meal and celebrate the gifts we share and receive in this church.

Worship Associate: Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

March 29, 2015

A World with No More War
with Dr. Ronald Glossop,

A popular ideal is a world with no more war. We hear and see much about the horrors of war but almost no careful thinking about the basic causes of war and what should be done to get rid of it. We will explore those generally neglected issues.

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

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**

E-mail: swolfe@uuma.org

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

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

March 1, 22, 29 - Dee Evans, facilitator for *The Seekers*, the discussion group formerly called *Supporting and Developing each Individual's Spiritual Path*. This discussion group meets at 11:50 am in Emerson Place. Plan to attend Pastor Sunshine's "Inspire" programs on March 8 and 15.

March 8 at 9:30 am – Ron Glossop – Emerson Place. Our 7th class on *Global Problems of the 21st Century* will discuss the United Nations and existing international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ or World Court) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) and how they seek to deal with global problems? Does the world community need other organizations?

March 15 - Two sessions – 9:30 am and 10:30 am
Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Emerson Place –
Meditations from Around the World

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 Inspire Programs are available to members and friends 16 years and older.

Inspire Programs for March

March 8th – U.U. 101 - Our Racial Justice Legacy

Unitarian Universalism has a long history of serving justice in our world. Clara Barton, Theodore Parker, and Thomas Starr King laid the foundation for the American Red Cross. Through our efforts Eyes on the Prize was funded. Today, our youth work toward racial equality in a myriad of ways. Unitarian Universalists have died for racial equality. This class will explore the long history and struggle for racial justice in our denomination.

March 15th – Understanding Oppression: Introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed

One of Paulo Freire's closest friends was Augusto Boal. Sharing pedagogical models and a desire to bring a voice to those who were typically voiceless in Brazil, they helped lay the foundation for change in their communities. Through games this program will explore the use of play and performance art as a tool for change and healing.

Second Service Time Changing to 1:15 p.m.!

Beginning March 1st, the second worship service will start at 1:15 p.m. If you like a more intimate service, then this is the service for you! Hope to see you there.



Spring Forward on March 8th!

Don't show up late on Sunday - remember to spring forward that clock on Sunday March 8th!

Pastor Sunshine's Column

Living Into Who We Are

This congregation has had many incarnations. Imagine, if you will, that this congregation is a caterpillar/butterfly experiencing samsara- the Hindu notion of constant birth and rebirth. Most of the congregation's life is spent as a butterfly flying in the hearts and minds of the people who work and attend.

However, every so often, the congregation goes back to being a caterpillar and then into a cocoon. The interim time is the time in the cocoon. With each incarnation, the congregation remains a butterfly, but a different type of butterfly because of what it has learned in the last incarnation. The duty of the creature in the cocoon is to become the fullest most whole version of themselves possible.

In the Interim Process, we call this defining and redefining mission. In this defining, the congregation explores who they have become and how they have changed as a result of their shared ministry with the past minister. ***This month is ALL about mission.***

We have a number of programs and events occurring in March that will specifically help you as a congregation develop the answer to the question of what your purpose and direction is now. On Sunday, March 1st, Rev. Emmy Lou Belcher will preach and then hold a Question and Answer session with the congregation to begin the Search Process for your next called minister. The Search Process contains a number of tasks that will help you answer the question of who you are as a community today including a survey and conversations with the Search Committee.

On Saturday, March 14th, we will have our all congregation Covenant Workshop. During this program, you will discuss the values most important to you as a community and then develop a written covenant- a statement of how you promise to be in relationship with one another. A writing team will be formed at the end of the workshop to fine tune the Congregational Covenant and receive final suggestions from the congregation. The Covenant will then be voted on at the next All Church Meeting on May 17th.

On Sunday, March 22nd, we will have Abundance Sunday. During worship, you will be asked what you wish to shape through your participation and giving to this congregation to deepen meaning and purpose for yourself and all who attend. This upbeat service will be followed by a Celebration Luncheon in which do one of our favorite things- PARTY! We will celebrate all that makes this a wonderful congregation- all that is good in this congregation's mission.

This month I invite you to consider the mission of this church. What makes First Unitarian Church of Alton

unique and special? What are the defining features that you wish a called minister to recognize and join with? How do you help bring this mission to life for yourself and all who attend? Are the four words still relevant- Inspire, Love, Seek, Justice? Are there new words to add? What kind of butterfly is coming into being? Engage your wonderment for this congregation. We need you.

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe



RSVP to the Covenant Workshop by March 7th!

The Covenant Workshop will be Saturday, March 14th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm. A breakfast buffet and lunch will be included. However, we need to know how many people to plan food for and if you will need childcare. Youth 14 and older are encouraged to attend the workshop. To RSVP, please click

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1aBTt9xyW3kTPqt9L1XraOWY-XngsDmHLz1enx7aUpI/viewform?usp=send_form

or e-mail Pastor Sunshine at swolfe@uuma.org.

We do not have a creed, but we do understand the value of having shared standards for how wish to treat others and be treated. This will be a day of talking about values and what matters most to us. The core of the Congregational Covenant will be written on this day. Three people who have attended the entire workshop will be invited to form a writing team to fine tune the Congregational Covenant and gain additional feedback. The congregation will vote on the final Congregational Covenant at the Semi-Annual Meeting on May 17th.

Abundance Sunday Is Coming on March 22nd!

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a spiritual perspective do not view the money given to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with the world, the people around them, and themselves by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's Board has selected the Abundance Sunday Program (based on the New Consecration Sunday model) as a way to develop our personal and communal spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

Abundance Sunday is based on the need of the giver to give for their own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like spiritually grounded individuals who want to give unselfishly as an act of abundance and community. Abundance Sunday encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "How does my giving shape things of worth and value?" During worship on Abundance Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's service oriented, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an *Estimate of Giving Card* does so voluntarily by attending worship on Abundance Sunday. We urge people to attend even if they feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if they choose not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During worship our Guest Leader, Rev. Thomas Perchlik from First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship (going to the root of worship which means 'to shape things of worth').

We will encourage participation in Abundance Sunday events through the Abundance

Sunday Team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Abundance Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Abundance Sunday events.

Yours in the Spirit of Abundance,
The Abundance Sunday Team: Debby Lovell (Chair), Kathleen McKeever, Phil Embree, Lisa Strangeman, Mary Johnson, Kelly Crone-Willis, Michelle Bryant Barbeau, and Rev. Sunshine Wolfe



Proms Through the
Decades.
Put Your Dancin'
Shoes On!

Please join First Alton Youth Group on Friday
March 20 for an
INTERGENERATIONAL
Dance!

Come dressed in your favorite decade's finest
formal wear! Photos will be taken!

Everyone is welcome to this all-ages event.

The festivities will be from 7pm till 10 pm.

\$5 cover suggested - more if you can and less if
you can't. All proceeds will go to support
Campfest 5!

BYOB and a snack to share. Lemonade, water
and coffee will be provided.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Send Newsletter items by the 15th of each month to the newsletter editor,
Mary Johnson – mejohanson@mindspring.com
and also to Becky Green in the church office
church@firstuualton.org
Church phone: 618-462-2462
Mail: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002

SHOES FOR WATER



Mona Hebert (who works at St. Louis University) is collecting shoes for the “Battle of the Boot” Shoe Drive. Five universities in the St. Louis area are competing in this annual event. Formerly called the Shoeman Water

Project, with the retirement of George the Shoeman, the name has been changed to Solea Water. But the purpose remains the same - to provide both shoes and clean water systems for people in Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. SLU’s goal is to collection 10,000 pounds of shoes.

Any kind of shoes are acceptable. If the shoes have shoe strings, please tie them together, and for other shoes, please attach each pair together with a rubber band or string.

Mona will have a collection bin in the Wuerker Room for the next few weeks.



4th Saturday Lunch - March 28

Announcements about what is needed for March’s lunch menu and personal

care items for our neighbors in need will be made at church, on UU Friends, and in This Week at Church.

Our Religious Education program will be sponsoring this month’s lunch.

Please plan to help the RE classes, Kathleen, Robyn and Sabrina in continuing this long-standing social service effort.



Report from the Board

Sandy Shaner,
Board Secretary

As the Board met on February 12, the lengthiest part of our discussion centered on topics which will eventually require full congregational involvement. The most important item of that discussion was a conference call with Reverend Belcher, the UUA’s MSR (Ministerial Search Representative) who has been designated to guide us through the Ministerial Search process. She will be in the pulpit on March 1 to walk the congregation through the full “how it works” description, and we hope as many members as possible can attend that day.

We also discussed the upcoming Covenant Workshop on March 14 and the provision of breakfast and lunch by the Transition Team. This event is mentioned in each “church this week” e-mail, and we would like to know who/how many will be attending in order to plan the food accordingly.

We continue to work on Board policies, and we approved a minor change to our Building Use Policy to remove references to our former wedding coordinator, Nancy Magilson (who has our sincere thanks for her service), and to redistribute her duties to the minister and the Office Administrator.

As we continue through this process of change, our goal is to remain the “welcoming and inclusive faith community” described in our Mission Statement, and we need your involvement to make it so. See you in church!

Your Church Board

July 2014 – June 2015

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

**Community Lenten Services and Luncheons –
Services begins at 12:00 noon with lunch
immediately following.**

This is the 4th year our church has been invited to participate in the community Lenten Service and Luncheon program coordinated by the Church Women United organization. Pastors will be preaching in churches other than their own.

On **Wednesday, March 11**, our pastor, Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, will be the speaker for the service at the Godfrey First United Methodist Church at 1100 Airport Road (off Highway 67) in Godfrey. Please consider attending. [If this date changes announcements will be made online and at church.]

A free-will offering is taken at each service, and is split between Oasis and Crisis Food Center. The cost of the lunch at each church is \$5.00 and goes to the host church to help cover expenses.

On **Friday, April 3 (Good Friday)** our church will host the service and luncheon. The speaker will be Rev. John Buford of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Alton. Kathleen

Kathleen McKeever and Robyn Berkley will be coordinating the lunch portion of the event and will need assistance in meal preparation, setting up, and serving. We are also asking that our church members provide dessert. A signup list will be available in the Wuerker Room.

**Church Potluck Lunch
March 1 @ 11:45 am**



Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 1st 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.

**UU Events and Activities
Area and Region-Wide**

**THE ANNUAL CLARK LECTURE
First Unitarian Church – St. Louis
Sunday evening, March 15**

Dr. Stefan Bradley, Director of the African American Studies Program and Associate Professor of History at Saint Louis University, will deliver the 2015 Clark Lecture at First Unitarian Church on Sunday, March 15 at 7 pm.

Dr. Bradley's timely topic will be "*The Democracy Experiment: Black Youth in America.*" He has been a featured guest on local and national news programs following Michael Brown's death. Dr. Bradley's presentation will draw upon his knowledge and research on the role of young people in the civil rights movement. Dr. Bradley's work in this area led to the publication of his important study Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power and the Late 1960's, published by University of Illinois Press.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
Regional Assembly to Explore
the New Era of UUism**

The Regional Assembly, held in Naperville, IL, starts Friday evening April 17 and goes through Sunday morning April 19.

It will be a great chance to be together as one region to explore The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism with presentations by two major speakers: the Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar. You can benefit from workshops designed to strengthen your congregation, deepen your social justice work, and enrich you on a personal level.

Come and experience the Regional Business Meeting, good food, and time for meeting new friends and old from congregations across our great Region, culminating with the joy of shared worship and musical celebration on Sunday morning. See

<http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>

MidAmerica Region

Unitarian Universalist Association

Web: <http://midamericauua.org>

Phone: 312-636-9724

Email: midamerica@uua.org

All UU Women Invited!!

The **2015 Eliot Chapel Women's Weekend** will be held Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26 at the beautiful Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, Illinois. This year you have the option of staying over Friday night as well as Saturday! On Friday evening you can get energized with Roz Marx and Linda Smith doing an energy raising touch for health activity and/or you can gather and relax with friends new and old in Blackburn Hall.

The Saturday Morning workshops will be Healing Touch, Bread Baking with Kate Magrath, Zumba with Angie Bowland, and Migrating Birds with the Audubon Society. The Afternoon Workshops are Essential Oils, Container Gardening with Sugar Creek Gardens, Basic Wire Working and Earring Design with Linda Anderson, and—last but not least—Writing and Spirituality with Eliot Chapel's Rev. Barbara Gadon!

And your favorite activities will be returning – White Elephant sale, button-making table, wine tasting, singing around the bonfire, and Sunday morning service in the outdoor chapel.

Register online March 1 to March 28 at www.eliotwomensweekend.com.

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA) Camp

July 5 - 11 at the YMCA Trout Lodge near Potosi MO.

Featuring Rev. Dr. Tony Larson, minister at Olympia Brown UU Church in Racine WI, as themed daily speaker. The activities and recreational activities for adults are many and varied. During the day there is also a nursery for infants; activities for preschoolers; and programs for children in grades 1 – 6. Middle Schoolers (entering 7, 8 or 9th grades) live together in a large cabin with their counselors. Sr. High youth (entering 10,11 12th grades) also live in their own community setting. There's also a program and separate cabins for Young Adults (18-35). There are several options for general housing. Rooms in Sunnen Center (the Lodge); Lakeview cabin rooms; Forestview Cabins Rooms; Tent camping; or offsite at motels in Potosi.

Fees include registration, housing, meals, and all programming, and range from \$344 for a child; youth 7th through 12th grades \$490; Young Adult (housed with peers) \$500; Adults (\$438 - \$750) depending on housing choices.

For further information go to www.muusa.org

The Women's Alliance of First Unitarian Church of St. Louis Announces its Scholarship Competition for the Academic Year 2015- 2016.

The scholarship competition is open to any woman who is 25 years or older, responsible financially for continuing her education, a member of a greater St. Louis area Unitarian Universalist church or fellowship, and a registered student.

The award of \$3,000 will be made on the basis of scholarship, character, and need.

Applications may be requested by emailing the church office at office@firstuustlouis.org

The deadline for completed applications is April 24, 2015.

Lay Caring Ministry

Below is the list of members of the **Caring Ministries Team**. **Marcia Custer** is the Coordinator. You may always contact Pastor Wolfe swolfe@uuma.org or 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 mcuster@siue.edu

Claudia Harju dachsandcats@gmail.com

Kathleen McKeever mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Ethel Potts ethel.h.potts@gmail.com

Donna Young donnae47@gmail.com

Interest Groups

FIFTY-PLUS (50+) FORUM ...



The Fifty-Plus Forum will start meeting again regularly on the 1st Saturday of each month from 10:30 to noon.

Join us on **March 7** for an always interesting discussion followed by a noon-time meal at a local restaurant.



ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

The **Anna Ds** will meet at 11:30 am on **Thursday, March 5** at **Lucy 'n Ricardo's** – 3624 Edwardsville Rd., (<http://www.lucynricardos.com>) in Edwardsville. Sandy Shaner is the hostess so RSVP to her by Monday, March 2 – wrgma2@gmail.com. Also, please bring one or more non-perishable food item that we can contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Center.

Men's Monthly Lunch March 12 @ 11:30 am



The Men's lunch bunch – the Romeos - meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, March 12** 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.

The **Unity Circle**, facilitated by Sharon Johnson, will meet on **Sunday, March 15** from 12:15 to 1:30 pm. Everyone is welcome. The Unity Circle is intended for deep listening, and not feedback or advice.



RENEGADE WOMEN – SATURDAY, MARCH 21 1 TO 3 PM

Our theme for the coming year is "Unitarian and Universalist Women of the 19th century.

The theme comes from the book "*Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarians and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century*" by Polly Peterson. Each month part of our program will include learning something about the remarkable Unitarian and Universalist women who made an incredible impact on the direction of our nation.

These vignettes will not preclude having an additional program or discussion on a topic of interest. Due to the meeting being cancelled in February, the presentation on Olympia Brown will be given in March with the remaining presentations moved up one month. The presentations set thus far are: April, Lydia Maria Child; May, Margaret Fuller; June, Judith Sargent Murray.

At this meeting we will also be selecting a new coordinator for the group.

Donations to the Alton Crisis Food Center Always Needed

Please bring a few canned goods or non-perishable food to donate to the Crisis Food Center, down the street



Basic food staples are always in demand. Please put your donations in the collection container in the RE Foyer.

Any personal care items or laundry products you wish to donate should be put on the shelves in Emerson Place for distributing that the 4th Saturday Lunch.

CAMPFEST 5 in June

Campfest 5 will be at Camp Piasa in Pere Marquette State Park, Monday June 8 through Saturday morning June 13. This is an inter-generational, all inclusive camping experience. Many details to come. For more info please contact Juliette or Sayer.

March RE Program News & Notes

March Schedule

Date	Spirit Play (PreK-K)	Grades 1-5th	Youth: 6 th Grade and Up
1 March	Natural philosophy	CoExist--Michelle Bryant-Barbeau	Youth Group
8 March	Promises	Nature	Coming of Age (9 th Grade & up) Our Whole Lives (6 th -8 th Grade)
15 March	Promises	CoExist--InterFaith Game	Youth Group
22 March	Spring Equinox story	Social Service Sunday 4th Sat. Lunch	Coming of Age (9 th Grade & up) Our Whole Lives (6 th -8 th Grade)
29 March	Easter Story	Children's Chapel--Principles	Youth Group

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Date!

RE Program Sponsors Our Fourth Saturday Luncheon

An important part of our RE program is social service. About once a month we set aside our regular classroom learning to participate in social and community action activities. Our Social Service Sunday, March 22nd, will include activities that support the following 4th Saturday Luncheon served at the church to the hungry Alton community. The ***RE program is sponsoring the March 28rd luncheon.*** It's important for children to see their parents live out their Unitarian Universalist values in service to the underserved and disenfranchised. Children are invited to attend on the 28th with their parents and help out in age-appropriate ways. Save the date!

Youth Dance

Please join the Youth Group on Friday, March 20th at 7pm as they present a special night of dancing and fun! This is an all-ages, costumes-encouraged dance to benefit Campfest 5. Come dressed in your favorite prom outfit from any decade. A five dollar donation is suggested....more if you can, less if you can't. Bring a snack to share and your own alcohol. Lemonade, water and coffee will be provided.

Don't forget:

The RE committee welcomes anyone interested in Religious Education to our monthly meetings. They are held in the Youth Room at 11:50 on the first Sunday of each month. This month the meeting will be March 1st. Come join us to discuss the internal workings and future of RE.

RUMMAGE SALE COMING IN MAY



Once again, it is time to clean out the clutter and help raise a bit of extra cash for our church. The sale is tentatively scheduled for May 1st and 2nd. We will begin accepting donations soon once I get confirmation on a room for temporary storage. More details to come. Kathryn Chapman paintedgoatfarm@yahoo.com