

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois
www.firstuualton.org



April 2015

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

April Worship Services at 10:30 am and 1:15 pm

April 5, 2015

“Rabbits and Chickens” with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe and friends.

This is an intergenerational service. Once there was a rabbit who thought he was a chicken...

Worship Associate: Dee Evans

April 12, 2015

“Walking With” with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe.

Where do we find courage and vulnerability in our lives? What do we most need in times of trouble? We will explore the work of Brene Brown, Martin Buber, and Oriah Mountain Dreamer, among others as we consider what practices helps us walk together fully present on our beautiful blue marble.

Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

April 19, 2015

“Reproductive Justice” with Becky Turner

Worship Associate: Yomi Kinder

April 26, 2015

“Earthly Treasure” with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe.

In this week when we celebrate Earth Day, we talk about the true treasure of this planet. In a consumerist society, what does it mean to be counter-cultural and grounded in an ethic of care for our world?

Worship Associate: Dee Evans

Rev. Sunshine Wolfe’s Office Hours

**Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 5 p.m.
at Church.**

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

Phone: 317-448-3818

E-mail: swolfe@uuma.org



The Congregation extends its condolences to Pastor Sunshine following the death of her mother, Sandra Snider, on Tuesday, March 17.

Words of sympathy are also extended to Phil Finley. His father died on Friday, March 20.

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

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

April 5 at 11:50 am. - Dee Evans, facilitator for *The Seekers*. This discussion group meets in Emerson Place.

April 12 at 9:30 am. – Ron Glossop – Emerson Place. The 8th class on "*Global Problems of the 21st Century*" will discuss the possibility of creating a governance structure for the global community better than the United Nations, for example, a democratic world federation. What are the difficulties for and arguments against such a development?

April 19 - Two sessions – 9:30 am and 10:30 am. Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Emerson Place – *Meditations from Around the World*.

April 19 at 11:50 am. – The Seekers discussion group.

April 23 at 11:50 am. – Pastor Sunshine's "Inspire" program.

April 26 at 11:50 am – Pastor Sunshine's "Inspire" program.

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

April 12th – Pastoral Care at First Unitarian Church of Alton

Pastoral Care and Pastoral Support are two ways that churches support those in times of celebration and struggle. This program will discuss the difference between the two. We will look at the many ways that congregations provide for the pastoral needs of members and review how we do them here at First Unitarian Church of Alton. If you are interested in Pastoral Care, Pastoral Support, or wish to be involved in the decisions about how these take shape in the coming years, you are highly encouraged to attend.

April 26th – UU 101- Environmental Justice

Unitarian Universalists have been active in environmental justice since the 1960s. What theology led us to this and how have we lived out our values over time? What active initiatives are congregations engaged in today? From water justice to global warming to food justice and beyond, we will explore the work facing us today and what's next.

Jesus Christ Superstar Sing-a-long!!!

Join us **Friday, April 3rd, at 7:00 pm** as we celebrate Good Friday with a "Jesus Christ Superstar" Sing-a-long! Dress up or come as you are and celebrate this wonderful musical for the season. Fun will be had!

Pastor Sunshine's Column

Resurrecting Planet Earth

The river region is beautiful this time of year. Birds flying all over the place. The tulips are budding. Green seems to be returning. As with all change, we are hardly done with winter. Change is a slow and choppy process. Of course, the process is made more slow and choppy by the global impact of human living on our climate.

Unitarians and Universalists long ago took very seriously the notion that human beings were to be stewards of the land. They saw this as a prime commandment from God. From those beginnings, we have added multiple voices into the conversation including pagans and earth based spiritualists and environmental activists. We have long recognized that we must be intentional in our relationship with planet earth and all of the residents of this big blue marble.

For many people on our planet this is considered radical and dangerous. They believe that the earth must be destroyed for the end of days to come. The struggles we face further evidence of a fatalistic eschatology (theology/ideology of end times). We stand against this notion and lift up the importance of love and care for our earth. We do not presume to know what will come of the world.

Rev. Dr. Miguel de la Torre, a liberation theologian and ethicist, shares that the resurrection of Jesus on the cross is a resurrection of the oppressed. It is the resurrection of that which is defiled and downtrodden. In a real way, this describes how our earth has too often been treated. This resurrection of the earth needed does not come from a crucifixion and murder long ago. It is not even a resurrection brought about by each one of us.

For the earth to be truly resurrected from this damaging oppressed state billions of people will need to act together. We need to fundamentally reframe the consumerist culture that sees the earth as a resource to be used. We need to offer a culture of collaborative connection between ourselves and the planet. We need to transform the world through our care. We practice this care between one another as people and then let it ripple outward to plants and animals and oceans and forests.

By our own hands may we resurrect the world bringing hope to future generations. May it be so!

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

A Fragrance Free Zone



To create a safe place for all our congregants, we are creating a "fragrance free" zone in the sanctuary. More and more people are reporting sensitivities to fragrances, and

may having life-threatening or debilitating reactions to "smell good" scents.

We will be marking the first few pews near the piano as "fragrance free" zones. If you are wearing cologne, perfume, after-shave, or use soaps, shampoos, deodorants, or lotions with fragrances, please refrain from sitting in or near those pews.

Here is just one of many links to more information about fragrance and multiple chemical sensitivities.

<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/features/fragrance-allergies-a-sensory-assault?page=2>

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

Church Potluck Lunch April 5 @ 11:45 am

Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 1st Sunday. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share – and help with setting up and cleaning up.





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

Immediately preceding our March 12 meeting we spent an hour developing responses to the Interim Ministry Appraisal form, a process which occurs three times during the two years of interim ministry. Prior to our meeting, the Transition Team had reviewed the same document, and Sarah Lazarz joined us so that we could incorporate the Team's thoughts with our own in the document.

After completion of that responsibility, we moved to regular Board business. We continued our discussion of plans for Abundance Sunday and discussed Reverend Sunshine's monthly report including plans for the Covenant Workshop. Then we moved to an extended conversation of positions to be filled, whether Committee/Team groups or recommendations from the Nominating Committee (chaired by Kelly Crone-Willis) for a slate of officers to present at the May annual congregational meeting. If you're seeing a pattern here, think about where YOU would like to volunteer in service to the congregation. As of now, there are many diverse opportunities available, and Sabrina or Kelly would love to talk about matching your interests with the vacancies.

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	Paul Fischer
Trustee	Vacant
Youth Rep.	Vacant

**4th Saturday Lunch –
April 25**



Announcements about what is needed for April'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.

**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. To keep the Emerson Place fragrance free, any personal care items or laundry products you wish to donate should be taken downstairs and put in the first room on the right at the bottom of the stairs. Please ask someone to help you if you have difficulty with the stairs.

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.

**DESSERTS NEEDED
for the Community Lenten Service –
Friday, April 3 – Service at 12:00 noon –
Lunch at 12:30 pm.**

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.

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 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.

Ministerial Search Committee

"Do you think you know someone who has what it takes to be on the Ministerial Search Committee?" Have you asked to nominate them? Are you someone who would like to be in the committee? If so, fill out the form on the next page and give it to a Board member. Nominations are open until April 25th.

The search committee is a team of 7 people who have the following characteristics (from the UUA Settlement Handbook):

- **Known and respected by others in the congregation.**
- **More strongly committed to the congregation as a whole than to any subgroup.**
- **Well informed about the demands and time requirements of search committee membership.** - Members should promise to attend every meeting, and to give about 250-400 hours over the coming year.
- **Balanced by sex, age, interests, and tenure of membership to reflect the diversity of the congregation.** Major areas of church life such as religious education, social action, property management, finance, and music should be represented by participants, not partisans.
- **Balanced by attributes:** organizational ability, broad theological awareness, computer skills
- **Not paid members of the church staff, except in the case of a senior minister who will be supervising the minister to be called.**
- **Pledged to conduct a search that is fair and nondiscriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, and national origin.**
- **Committed to maintain confidentiality and to seek consensus.**
- **Capable of both self-assertion and compromise.**
- **Not prone to extreme reactions to ministers.** The previous ministers' strongest supporters or opponents are rarely the best choice.
- **Well suited to teamwork:** a search committee is no place for Lone Rangers!

If you have any questions contact Sabrina
(strupia@gmail.com)

MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Who are you nominating? (Give their full name):

Please describe why this nominee would be good on the Search Committee (you can attach a page if you need more space):

I have confirmed the willingness of this nominee to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee
Check here: _____

Your Name: _____

Place in the Search Committee Nomination box in the Wuerker Room at Church.

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

Donna Young <mailto:mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net>



CHURCH MEMBERS TO BE HONORED

Congratulations to

Neil and Nan Adams. They will be receiving the “*Sustainability Leadership Award*” at the Center for Spirituality and Sustainability 2015 Awards Dinner on Saturday, April 11 from 7 to 9 pm. The dinner will be held at N.O. Nelson Campus, LeClaire Room, 600 Troy Road, in Edwardsville.

They are being awarded for their leadership role in the promotion and preservation of Illinois’ prairie heritage.

A reservation for the dinner may be obtained by calling 618-650-3246. Tickets are \$50 per person, with \$20 of that being tax-deductible.

DRAFT COVENANT –FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH, Alton IL

On Saturday, March 14, about 30 church members met with Pastor Sunshine for a day-long workshop to discuss the whys and wherefores of developing a church covenant – something that would help us describe what kind of relationship we wanted to have with each other and the wider community. After a morning of talking about where we wanted to be as a congregation, and what our most important values were, we divided into groups, each with a different focus – member to member; member to minister and staff; member to self; member to board; member to the larger community. After each group presented its covenant statement, a writing team was chosen to take each group’s statement and reformat those words into an overall covenant. Below is a draft Covenant. This draft will be discussed and voted on at the Annual Meeting later in the spring.

In order to strengthen and nurture our lives and this Welcoming Community with love, compassion and respect for all, we covenant together to:

Encourage and help others and ourselves to develop a personal spiritual practice that cultivates an inner dialogue of honesty, acceptance, and love;

Engage with one another by honoring and making space for our diversity, by taking responsibility for our actions, and facilitating right relations among us;

Honor with compassion the service of our volunteers by staying informed, engaging in direct communication, and trusting the process;

Encourage and support balance in our leaders’ and staff’s personal and professional pursuits;

Engage the larger community with integrity, compassion, and respect.

Together, we acknowledge our humanness and extend forgiveness to ourselves and others.

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN’S ALLIANCE



The **Anna Ds** will meet at 11:30 am on **Thursday, April 2** at CHURCH.

This will be a “bring your own brown bag” lunch. Individuals may consider making a donation to the Anna Ds treasury in lieu of paying for a restaurant meal. This will add to our treasury allowing us to support additional church activities. We recently donated \$50 towards the purchase of new trays that will be helpful at the various lunches and dinners held at the church. Also, please bring one or more non-perishable food item that we can contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Center.

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 **April 4** for an always interesting discussion followed by a noon-time meal at a local restaurant.

RENEGADE WOMEN – SATURDAY, APRIL 18 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.

In April Pat Murrell will tell us something about Lydia Maria Child, who ranks among the most influential of nineteenth-century American women writers. She was renowned in her day as a tireless crusader for truth and justice and a champion of excluded groups in American society — especially Indians, slaves, and women.

These vignettes will not preclude having an additional program or discussion on a topic of interest.

Men’s Monthly Lunch April 9 @ 11:30 am



The Men’s lunch bunch – the Romeos (Retired Old Men Eating Out ☺) - meets the second Thursday of each month. Join us on **Thursday, April 9** 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.



New Member Orientation on April 5 at 11:50 am

Recently joined or considering joining First Unitarian Church of Alton? Join Rev. Wolfe and other church leaders for an introduction to our church. Get your questions answered, learn how we do our good work, and find out what you need to do to become a full member of our congregation. We hope to see you there!

The Three Rivers Environmental Program



Come and hear Christine Favilla and Virginia Woulfe-Beile, the Sierra Club’s Three Rivers Project Managers, illustrate and describe how this critical program works to protect and preserve the integrity of the rivers, wetlands, forests, open spaces, and floodplains in the Piasa Palisades’ region, while helping to build vibrant, sustainable communities. To accomplish their mission the focus is on education, community participation, administrative advocacy, and partnership building. Please join us to find out the good work that is happening in our region and learn how you can play important roles in this very unique and special Sierra Club activity. The program will be held on April 13 at 7:30 p.m., in the Wuerker Room at the First Unitarian Church, 110 E. Third Street in Alton. Everyone is invited to join the speakers for dinner at 5:45 p.m. at Mac’s Time Out at 315 Belle St. in Alton. Contact Chris Krusa at 410-490-5024 for questions.



Rummage Sale

Once again, it is time to clean out the clutter and help raise a bit of extra cash for our church. The sale is scheduled for May 1st and 2nd. We will begin accepting donations the final Sunday of March (29th). As we have done this for a few years now, we have learned a few things so please follow these guidelines when consolidating donations:

1. **NO** electronics please (tv's, VCR's etc.) they do not sell well and would do better at a Goodwill or recycling center for this sort of item.
2. **NO** large exercise equipment it does not sell and then volunteers are left to move heavy things.
3. **NO** books. I know that UU's love their books, but the truth is they are heavy and sell very poorly. Please donate any books to your local library.
4. Clothing is welcome; however, please make sure it is CLEAN and WEARABLE. This was stressed to me by a few people so I'm just passing on what I really feel should be obvious.

Donations should be packaged in bags/boxes/containers that will be manageable up and down our stairwell as the storage will be in the basement and the sale in the Wuerker room. It is all a volunteer effort and I don't wish to break anyone. Your assistance in this matter is appreciated.

One last note, I plan to stop accepting donations the Sunday before the sale April 26th. This will give us the best possible plan for organizing what we have in the space the week leading up to the sale. On the 26th as in previous years, anyone physically able and willing to help tote items up the stairs (I believe a passing chain has been employed in previous years) would be greatly appreciated. The week before the sale, I will not be able to work on set up every day. I live too far away and there is always the

possibility that I will be called into work. I need to know who would be available the week of April 27th – 30th and what days you are most likely to be able to work. I do not need to be present every day as I feel we can get a format established and then volunteers will know what to do; however, I do want to maximize our efforts as much as possible. If I do not get enough volunteers, this event will be canceled as it would be way too big to do all by myself.

I thank you all for your donations, help, and support. All proceeds go to the church.

Kathryn Chapman paintedgoatfarm@yahoo.com

April 2015 RE Program News & Notes

RE Thank You!

To all the folks who helped the RE program host the March 28nd Fourth Saturday Luncheon!

Time for Teachers.

The Religious Education Committee is beginning the search for folks to teach in our R.E. classes next year. We will need more than a dozen people willing to dedicate themselves a couple times a month to help our U.U. kids explore their spiritual past and paths. Consider joining us! No experience required. Teacher orientation is in late August, you will be supported by staff, experienced teacher-teammates, and engaging, top-quality curricula.

Juliette Crone-Willis

Acting Religious Education Coordinator

(314) 482-5239

jrcronewillis@gmail.com

April RE Program Calendar

Date	Spirit Play (PreK-K)	Elementary (1 st -6 th Grade)	Youth
5-Apr-15	Intergenerational	Easter	Service
12-Apr-15	Passover	Nature Sunday	Jr. High: Our Whole Lives Sr. High: Coming of Age
19-Apr-15	Promises choice	CoExist -- Unitarians	Youth Group
26-Apr-15	Flower Communion	Social Service -- Principles Bench	Jr. High: Our Whole Lives Sr. High: Coming of Age