

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois
www.firstuualton.org



May 2015

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

**May 3, 10 & 17 - Worship Services at 10:30 am and 1:15 pm
May 24 through the summer - One Service only at 10:00 am**

May 3, 2015

Walking With with Rev. Sunshine 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: Yomi Kinder

May 10, 2015

We Come a Marchin'! with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

This Mother's Day we remember the legacy of mothers and grandmothers to justice and hope in the world. The first Mother's Day for Peace celebrations were brought about by the work of Unitarian Julia Ward Howe. In light of this legacy, we will consider all of the relationships with mothers be the loving or strained or broken. As we enter into the month of May, we will celebrate our Flower Communion. So, please bring a flower to share! This is an intergenerational service.

Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

May 17, 2015

The Times They Are a Changin'

with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

Religion is seemingly on the decline. Though Unitarian Universalism is on the rise that is expected to change in the coming years. The religions that are growing have changed in many ways to meet our ever transforming world. What are some of the exciting new ways that religions and communities are facing this change and bringing energy and a zest for living to those they serve? This is an intergenerational service.

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

May 24, 2015

(Summer Service schedule begins today at 10 am.

Let's Talk About Sex with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

While sex is more freely presented in entertainment, there is a lack of conversation happening in the public square. The results can be disastrous. With the memeification of [Fifty Shades of Grey](#) has come damage to real lives and a false notion of what it means to be in life-giving relationships founded on trust and knowledge. What does a sexuality that lives into celebrating the body while doing no harm look like? **Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft**

Worship Service: May 31, 2015
10 am
Speaker/Topic To Be Determined
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

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.

May 3 at 11:50 am – Pastor Sunshine's "Inspire" program.

May 10 at 9:30 am. – **Ron Glossop** – Emerson Place. Our 9th and final class on "Global Problems of the 21st Century" will discuss the insightful ideas advanced by Professor Joseph Schwartzberg of the Univ. of Minnesota in the recently published book, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*. What needs to be done to deal with our many global problems?

May 10 at 11:50 am – **Dee Evans**, facilitator for *The Seekers*. This discussion group meets in Emerson Place.

May 17 - Two sessions – 9:30 am and 10:30 am.
Michelle Bryant Barbeau – Emerson Place – *Meditations from Around the World*.

May 24 at 11:20 am. – Pastor Sunshine's "Inspire" program. (Note time change due to change in Worship service to 10 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. All *Inspire Programs* are available to members and friends 16 years and older.

May 3rd – **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.

May 24th – **Unitarian Universalist Adult Sex Ed Workshop**

This workshop has three goals:

- to build skills for talking about sexually healthy living;
- to understand the developmental needs of sexual individuals from young adulthood to end-of-life;
- to have a basic understanding ethics and sexuality for daily living

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.

Pastor Sunshine's Column

Dreams Writ Large

Often healthy energizing experiences are accompanied by both excitement and trepidation. To embrace the life affirming changes in our lives we must risk being vulnerable. It requires practice and bravery to risk living fully. One of the greatest scholars in understanding these emotional struggles is Brené Brown. In her book, Daring Greatly, she writes:

“As children we found ways to protect ourselves from vulnerability, from being hurt, diminished, and disappointed. We put on armor; we used our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors as weapons; and we learned how to make ourselves scarce, even to disappear. Now as adults we realize that to live with courage, purpose, and connection—to be the person whom we long to be—we must again be vulnerable. We must take off the armor, put down the weapons, show up, and let ourselves be seen.”

Our visions for what is possible can be dampened by our own fear. This is true for individuals and communities, for children and adults, for leaders and followers. The question becomes how we take off the armor. Certainly, church is a place to practice just this thing.

Numerous religious traditions have spiritual practices specifically designed to help us dare greatly in our own lives by putting down the armor. For that “courage, purpose, and connection” to live large in our lives, we must be prepared to practice over and again taking off the armor that comes up. Each of us puts that armor on for different reasons. Maybe we are afraid to trust our feelings with others. Perhaps we are afraid that if we do not complete that one task perfectly then we will not be worthy of love. Maybe if we change how we do things we will lose that most important part of ourselves?

When we are in this mindset of fear, we get lost and fail to see the land of possibility before us. Trusting our feelings to others means deeper connection and increased emotional resilience. Recognizing that our worth is not tied up in what we do in the world we begin to enjoy the task for what it is. Admitting that we will lose some of what we had we begin to embrace new aspects of ourselves and our world that are just as valuable.

As it is for individuals, so it is for groups of individuals. This congregation is going through a time of transition- of inherent change- because of your changes in ministry and membership. In addition, there are the

normal changes that you as a community face from year to year. This year, you are given the opportunity to be vulnerable as a community and consider new ways of doing things.

The Finance Committee has recommended to the Board that we eliminate the Religious Education Coordinator and Child Care positions in order to present a balanced budget to the community (not including the cost of the search process). Sometimes we are forced in to change by practical matters. If we think about Brené Brown's work in relation to this significant change, we recognize a few things:

1. It (the change) is a practical decision with emotional ramifications.

For some there will be feelings of disappointment after putting so much work into creating this position. For others there will be anger, hurt, and sadness. All of these emotions tell us one thing- this decision matters to us. What they do not tell us is what to do next. The practice is to simply be with these emotions without them running our decision making. This takes time and patience.

2. It leaves space for creative problem solving and energizing the community.

Once we have embraced and been with the difficult emotions then we can begin to look at the gifts that come from the change. In considering what we might do instead of having a Religious Education Coordinator, staff and lay leaders have begun to consider creative solutions. It has invited us to consider ways of offering programming for all ages that is in some ways more energizing.

3. It asks us to consider what our values are and then live into those values within the resources available to us.

As we began to consider the gifts and the ways we might change how we do things, one thing was abundantly clear. *We value our children, youth, and adults and want programming- both in worship and religious education- that is meaningful and spiritually valuable to all of us.* Keeping this value at the core of all decisions means that we can keep the most important part of our past work while living into the necessary changes of our future.

So, we enter into the future holding on to our core values while being good stewards of our community. This is not the first change that is a challenge in this congregation's long history and it will certainly not be the last. So, let us take this opportunity to practice being with this process of discernment. What emotions are true for you now? What gives you energy and hope in the face of that change? What values are core and how will they live in your life moving forward? Important questions for this change and for all of the changes we face in the course of our lives. May you journey with thoughtfulness and presence. May it be so.

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

Classes in May Offered by Pastor Sunshine

Enneagram as Spiritual Practice

Wednesday, May 13th, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Registration required.

This class will cover the Enneagram as a way to deepen spiritual and personal awareness. The class will focus on students attending and utilizing the Enneagram in a more practical way. *Prerequisite: Must have attended one of the Enneagram workshops offered this year or with special permission from Rev. Wolfe.* To register, sign-up at the Membership Desk or send Rev. Wolfe an e-mail at swolfe@uuma.org.

Skills for Leading

2 Saturdays, June 6th and 13th, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Registration required.

This two day class will cover practical skills and theory for religious leadership in a Unitarian Universalist congregation. While this program will focus on congregational leadership, the skills will be useful in a variety of contexts. Topics to be covered include: communication, creating learning institutions, systems theory, volunteer recruitment and retention, social media basics, safety, and more. If you are wondering if you have the skills to lead at church, wish to develop your skills in leadership, or have been in leadership for years and would like to hone your skills, this program will be useful to you. Open to all. Board Members, Committee Chairs, and active volunteers highly encouraged to attend. To register, sign-up at the Membership Desk or send Rev. Wolfe an e-mail at swolfe@uuma.org.



Please mark your calendars and plan on attending the **Annual Congregational Meeting** May 17, 2015 at 11:50 am (after the

first service, in the Sanctuary). The meeting is open to everyone, but only church members will be able to vote.

We will be voting on:

1. The nominees for new Board Officers &
2. Ministerial Search Team
3. The proposed budget for 2015-2016
4. 3. A Bylaws change, which was announced in January and will help with the Committees' restructuring
5. Our new church covenant
6. And last but not least, the minutes from the last meeting from 1/12/14.

Thank you, Sabrina Trupia, Board President



Rummage Sale

(Deadline to bring in donations 4/26/15)

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 Friday May 1 and Saturday May 2 from 10 am to 2 pm both days.

I thank you all for your donations, help, and support. All proceeds go to the church. To volunteer to help setting up the week before the sale and work at the sale, contact Kathryn Chapman paintedgoatfarm@yahoo.com.

**Volunteering at East Side Heart and Home
Wednesday, May 27 and Thursday May 28.**

For several years now members of our congregation have volunteered to work a day or two in East St. Louis helping with a house build for East Side Heart and Home. Last year we provided a lunch. In previous years we did build work (painting, siding, drywall, debris pickup, etc.) This year we're planning to do both. This way people can help in any way they want—with food or building (or both). We'll be doing the lunch on May 28. Please contact Robyn Berkley (robynberkley@yahoo.com) for further information or to let her know when you can work and what you want to do.

“East Side Heart & Home Family Center, an Illinois 502 (c) (3) not-for-profit, was founded in 1995 as a collaborative effort of four local groups who had as their goal improving housing stock for low-income families in the Metro East. In 1997, ESH&H Family Center seized an opportunity to do just that, and, with the help of donors and volunteers, the organization completed four new homes. Since then, 19 houses have been built for families who would not normally be able to afford a home. Today, East Side Heart & Home continues in this same mission—that of improving the quality of life for low-income families through its home ownership program. Besides constructing quality, affordable homes, participants are instructed in skills necessary for owning a home and building community.” <http://www.familycenterestl.org>

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 have 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.

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
May 3 @ 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.

SHOES Into WATER

Mona Hebert will continue to collect shoes for the SLU Solea Water project through May 24. This collection project will help provide shoes and clean water systems for people in Central and South America. <http://www.soleawater.org/> Any kind of shoes are acceptable. Please tie pairs of shoes together with their shoestrings or rubber band pairs together.

**4th Saturday Lunch –
May 23**



Announcements about what is needed for May'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. Thanks to Kathleen, Robyn, and Sabrina for their ongoing efforts in coordinating this very important program.



Report from the Board
Sandy Shaner,
Board Secretary

NOTES FROM THE April 9, 2015 BOARD MEETING

As is frequently the case, our meeting focused on work and materials for an upcoming deadline, in this case the Congregational Annual Meeting on May 17. We worked on the operating budget, nominations for various offices and the Ministerial Search Committee, and a proposed revision to the Bylaws to reflect our recent changes in organizational/committee structure. I'm sure we'll meet that deadline and be prepared for an informative church-wide meeting.

AND we approved the second year of Pastor Sunshine's interim contract (hooray!), laying the foundation for a second year during which we can focus on preparing for and selecting a settled minister. We also noted a need to work on Pastor Sunshine's Preliminary Fellowship Evaluation with more work on it planned for next month prior to the regular meeting (on 5/14/15).

We knew these two years would be years of change – some comfortable, some not so much. We'll soon be launching ourselves into the second year based on the first year experiences and with a determination to work together for the good of all. 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	Paul Fischer
Trustee	Vacant
Youth Rep.	Vacant

Community Notice



Great Rivers Choral Society Concert –
May 9 @ 7 pm
May 10 @ 3 pm

The Great Rivers Choral Society invites everyone to enjoy the next program, *River Music*, at the National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way, Alton IL. A free will offering will be taken during the concert.

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 donnae47@gmail.com



CAMPFEST FIVE

Campfest FIVE — our intergenerational, all inclusive, church campout — will be held from Monday, June 8 through Saturday morning, June 13 at Camp Piasa at Pere Marquette State Park. Please join us for this fantastic outdoor community building experience. Camp Piasa is a private camp ground with rustic cabins, fully functioning kitchen and mess hall, a half-Olympic size pool (private for our entire stay!) We will have, Bingo, Games, Crafts, Talent Show, Dance, Unity Circles, service under the sun, group co-op meals and much more! UU memories for a lifetime!

Registration is now live on UU Friends and there will be a paper registration form in the Wuerker Room. The cost is \$14 per person per day for individuals 4 years old and older. Please see Juliette or Sayer for more information.

Award Given at the Mid America Regional Assembly Naperville, Illinois

Award given to each of the four St. Louis metro congregations for their work around the events in Ferguson. Accepting the award for Alton were Pastor Sunshine Wolfe and Mary and Jerry Johnson.



The Mid America Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association includes nearly 200 UU congregations in parts or all of these states: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

The Regional Assembly, held in Naperville IL April 17 through April 19, included worship services, workshops, exhibitors, and Friday evening and Saturday morning keynote conversations between the Rev. Rosemary Bray NcNatt, new president of Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA and the Rev. Dr. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK.

The topic of their conversation was “How can we make our congregations ready to welcome, embrace and engage all who seek us out? What do we need to pay attention to, to prepare for it?”

Next year’s Assembly will be held in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

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

FIFTY-PLUS (50+) FORUM ...

WILL NOT MEET IN MAY (May 2nd) DUE TO OTHER CHURCH ACTIVITIES HAPPENING THAT DAY.



ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE



The Anna Ds will meet at 11:30 am on
**Thursday, May 7 at
Lucy 'n Ricardo's.**
<http://www.lucynricardos.com>
3624 Edwardsville Road
Edwardsville, IL 62025

RSVP by Monday May 4 to Marcia Custer
mcuster@siue.edu.

Men's Monthly Lunch May 14 @ 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, May 14** at 11:30 am at the **Best Buffet** at 615 Wesley, Drive in Wood River, IL. All men in our church are invited (retired, or old, or not ☺). For further information contact **Paul Hebert** pphebert@mail.com.

RENEGADE WOMEN – SATURDAY, MAY 16 1 TO 3 PM

We continue with the theme of "Unitarian and Universalist Women of the 19th century." Pat Murrell did an excellent presentation on Lydia Maria Child, an abolitionist, feminist, and civil rights activist. There is a video about her life that we are attempting to obtain. If we are able to get this video, it will be shown at the May meeting.

The "Women's History" stories will not preclude having an additional program or discussion on a topic of interest.

In Memoriam

Gayle Borman died on Thursday, April 23rd. She was a loved member of this congregation. The Nature Institute has graciously agreed to let the friends and family meet at the Mississippi Sanctuary at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 2, 2015 for a celebration of Gayle's life. Gayle's sons, Braun and Brock, request that in lieu of any flowers that there be a financial contribution to the local Sierra Club Group, the Piasa Palisades.



John "Jack" McCall died on April 9, 2015 at home after a short illness. He was born August 7, 1924 with twin brother Thomas. He served in World War II as a Weather Observer in the U.S. Army Air Force. He obtained his PhD in Psychology from the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis. The last 25 years of his academic career were at SIUE, from which he retired in 1989 as Emeritus Professor.

He served leadership roles in our church for many years. He was an active bird watcher, logging more than 1000 different species. He was a long-time member of the Great Rivers Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society and Piasa Palisades Group of the Sierra Club. He volunteered at the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge and the Watershed Nature Center.

The sympathy of our congregation is extended to his wife of 60 years, Virginia (Ginger) McCall, children Carolyn, Todd, and Libby, and their families.

Erwin A. Thompson, grandfather of Diane Thompson, died on March 28, 2015 at the age of 99. He served in the military during WWII. He earned the Purple Heart and a Silver Star. He worked for Union Electric for 33 years, retiring in 1980. We remember his fiddle playing and calling square dances at church.



Our condolences go to Diane, Kevin McCarthy, and their children Amelia and Margaret, and to all of Erwin's family and friends.

RE Program News & Notes

3-May	Children's Chapel -- May Day	Children's Chapel -- May Day	Children's Chapel -- May Day
10-May	Intergenerational Flower Service	Intergenerational Flower Service	Intergenerational Flower Service
17-May	Appreciation Sunday	Appreciation Sunday	Appreciation Sunday
24-May	Summer	Service	Schedule
31-May	Summer	Service	Schedule

May is a month of special services!

May 3 – May Day

We start the month off with our annual Children’s May Day celebration. The children gather out on the lawn to hear the Beltane/May Day stories, learn about some rituals and, finally, decorate the churchyard with a beautiful May Pole.

May 10 – Flower Communion

Bring flowers to share! “The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. For some time he had felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people more closely together. The format had to be one that would not alienate any who had forsaken other religious traditions. . . So he turned to the native beauty of their countryside for elements of a communion which would be genuine to them. This simple service was the result. It was such a success that it was held yearly just before the summer recess of the church. . .The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community, it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community.” —Reginald Zottoli; <http://www.uua.org/documents/zottolireginald/flowercommunion.pdf>.

May 17 – Appreciation Sunday

This will be an intergenerational service to celebrate all our achievements this year! If you have volunteered for anything in RE, had a child in class or who participated in OWL, Coming of Age or Youth Group, we hope you can join us at this service. We will take the time to express our gratitude for everyone’s generosity of time and talent as well as the special projects and accomplishments of our children and youth.

Juliette Crone-Willis

Acting Religious Education Coordinator

314-482-5239

jrcronewillis@gmail.com