

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian
Church*

Alton, Illinois
www.firstuualton.org



June 2015

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

SUMMER SCHEDULE - One Service only at 10:00 am

In this newsletter there's lots of important information YOU NEED to know. PLEASE read it all!

June 7, 2015
After Brokenness
with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

A loving heart is one that is vulnerable to brokenness in the world. What do we do with the experiences of brokenness in our lives? The art of Kintsugi takes broken ceramic bowls and makes them whole again by filling the cracks with gold. What gold connective tissue holds you together after being broken open?

Worship Associate: Yomi Kinder

June 14, 2015
Being Micro-ambitious?
with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

How do we limit our plans for the future in order to open ourselves to fullest life we can live?

Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

June 21, 2015
Building a New Way
with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

This service will explore the work of Brené Brown and Buddhism as we consider what it means to let go of attachment and open our hearts to what is right in front of us.

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

June 28, 2015
Do Unitarians Pray?
with Dee Evans

When the rug is pulled out from under you and suddenly the floor disappears, you are free falling into disaster. Do Unitarians cry out in prayer at those times? Is it true that there are no atheists in foxholes? These questions will be explored in the sermon.

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

Worship Associate Position Open

We continue to have an opening on the Worship Associates Team. If you have wanted an opportunity to learn about and bring your gifts and ideas to worship, then this is the team for you. Worship Associates serve for one year with the option of serving for two years. Worship Associates participate in 8-9 worship services a year. They preach one time during the summer. This team meets once monthly to discuss, evaluate, plan, and learn. This is a fun team and we hope you will join us. Please contact Rev. Sunshine at swolfe@uuma.org to apply.

Rev. Sunshine Wolfe's Office Hours

Pastor Sunshine's Summer Schedule

The dates below show times I am away. If not listed, then I am available. As always, I do not work on Mondays. I will return for any emergency regardless of time-off schedule.

June 3-5: Office of Church Finance
Conference in St. Louis

June 9-10: Campfest

June 21-29: General Assembly in Portland,
Oregon

July 5- August 3: Vacation/Study Leave
(except July 25 for a wedding)

Except for the Dates Listed Above

**Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 5 pm
at Church.**

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

E-mail: swolfe@uuma.org

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

Emerson Place 11:15 a.m.

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe – "Inspire Programs"

Two Sundays 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.

June 7th: Covenant Group Facilitator

Training with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe and
Jennifer Tempe

This training will prepare those interested in the facilitation of Covenant Groups. Covenant Groups gather once a month for the period of a year to discuss particular themes and deepen relationships with people in the congregation. This program will review the style of such programs, the skills needed in facilitation, and practice in the form of Covenant Groups. This program will also be offered at Campfest on June 9th.

June 14th: U.U. 101: Origin Stories

Where does Unitarian Universalism come from? Is it really 2000 years old or only just 50 years old? We will listen to stories of Unitarians and Universalists who brought us into being and helped shape what we believe today.

June 21 and June 28—"The Seekers" with Dee Evans will meet in Emerson Place at 11:15.

The 9:30 class for Adult RE on "Global Problems of the 21st Century" held its final meeting for the 2014-2015 "academic year" on May 10.

Discussion indicated that we should at try to continue the class next fall. Ron Glossop will lead the first session on *Understanding the Problem of Free-Will in Terms of Modern Psychology* with special attention to Susan Wolf's book "Freedom within Reason" (Oxford Univ. Press, 1990).

Pastor Sunshine's Column

Flying Through the Air

June 2015

Some of you may remember this reading by Danaan Parry from one of our services in August:

"Sometimes, I feel that my life is a series of trapeze swings. I'm either hanging on to a trapeze bar swinging along or, for a few moments, I'm hurdling across space between the trapeze bars."

Change can feel like we are hurtling through the air. And each of us handles change as differently as a person swinging between trapezes might. Some scream the whole way until the next trapeze is reached- particularly if it is their first time. Some feel anxiety, but quietly plug on from one trapeze to the next. Others find it exhilarating and laugh the whole way. Others still approach it with the professionalism of a trained trapeze artist. For every person who might fly through change there is a unique way of being with and responding to it.

So, we end the first year of the interim having faced numerous changes. Many of you have been actively involved in facilitating change and felt the force of rushing from known to unknown to known again. It is not an easy path, this in-between time. What has hopefully come from this time of change is a clearer sense of what you as a congregation want for your future and the kind of minister you would like to see settle here.

Yet, for all of the changes that were brought about through intentional good work, many were brought about simply by different people being in new roles. As minister, I cannot know how Rev. Khleber did things. Being such different people, we approach ministry in our own unique ways and have our own preferences for worship, pastoral care, and administration. So, I changed things simply by being that different person. Hopefully, by seeing the

differences, each of you can articulate more clearly what you want for the future to the new Search Committee.

In addition, we saw six active families move away last summer. That brought significant change in energy, responsibility, and presence. Each person who comes in or leaves brings change to the congregation.

So, now we enter into another important time- summer. This is a time to relax a bit. Take a break from the hullabaloo of the year and reflect on how we wish to be with the changes and what we hope for ourselves and for our congregation. In the fall, your Search Committee will begin to ask you what you would like in a new minister and what you hope for the future. What will be particularly hard is that there will not be full agreement on what you want. As the conversations go on you will begin to find a common ground.

Judith Walker-Riggs writes, "If there is not something happening in your U.U. church that you do not approve of, how welcoming is your U.U. church?" In other words, our diversity means that we will not always like what others have to say or prefer, but that is part of "accepting one another and encouraging one another in our spiritual growth."

So, may you have some time of reflection, rejuvenation, and relaxation before you return in the fall to begin the next phase of change. May we be present in kindness and love to one another's struggles. May we know that we are not alone.

Blessed be.

Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

**Send Newsletter items by the 15th of each month to the newsletter editor, [Mary Johnson](mailto:Mary.Johnson@firstuualton.org) 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 Structure for the 2015-2016 Church Year
Responsibilities and Accountabilities

- CONGREGATION
 - Board of Trustees
 - Ad Hoc/Other Teams/Committees
 - Interfaith and UU Outreach
 - Nominating
 - Shared Committee on Ministry/Transitions Team
 - Social Events
 - Stewardship Committee
 - Building and Grounds
 - Canvass
 - Endowment Fund
 - Finance
 - Membership
 - Sunday Support Ministry
 - Minister
 - Administration
 - Pastoral Care/Pastoral Associates
 - Religious Education (R.E.) Council
 - Social Action
 - Worship/Worship Associates

New Worship Accompanist Needed

The First Unitarian Church of Alton is currently searching for a new Accompanist for worship on Sundays. We are specifically looking for someone who is not a member of the congregation who can work most Sundays throughout the year. If you are aware of person who would be a good match for our congregation or locations where we should advertise, please contact Rev. Wolfe at swolfe@uuma.org. *We offer our congratulations to Rachel Pashea as she begins her new job at Lockheed Martin!*



Report on Elections at the Annual Meeting held on May 17.

The following were elected for Board positions:

President-elect: Dee Evans
Treasurer: Lisa Strangeman
Secretary: Pat Moore
At-Large: Paul Hebert

The following were elected to the Ministerial Search Team:

Robyn Berkley
Nancy Conniff
Kelly Crone-Willis
Phil Embree
Mary Johnson
Ruth Maskow
Layne Simpson



Congregational Covenant
Approved at the Annual Meeting on May 17, 2015

To strengthen and nurture with love, compassion and respect, we covenant together to:

Honor and make space for our diversity; respect our volunteers, leaders and staff by supporting balance in their lives and in their personal professional pursuits;

Encourage each member to develop a personal spiritual practice that cultivates honesty and acceptance;

Remembering our humanness, we acknowledge our imperfection and extend forgiveness to ourselves and others;

Engage within our own and the larger community with integrity, by taking responsibility for our actions, facilitating right relationships, and living into the journey.

[The acronym for our Covenant is HERE.]



Report from the Board

**Sandy Shaner,
Board Secretary**

If you attended the May 17 congregational meeting, you got to see most of what we discussed at the Board meeting the Thursday before. We finished the nominating slates, finished the budget for the Ministerial Search Committee efforts and ensured that the year-to-date financials and the FY15-16 budget were ready for discussion by the congregation. And all that occurred after we spent the first hour completing Reverend Sunshine's evaluation for the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Calendar coordination among us proved difficult for the next meeting, so we decided our "June" Board meeting would be held on July 1 and that we would invite all the new Board members to join us for overlap and sharing.

Remember: Board meetings are always open to all which means YOU are always invited! Join us sometime, especially if you might in the future be interested in a Board position or just curious about Church governance.

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

Church Potluck Lunch June 7 @ 11:15 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.



4th Saturday Lunch – June 27

Announcements about what is needed for June'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 that has been in operation since October 2008.



Donations to the Alton Crisis Food Center Still Needed During the Summer

Please bring canned goods or non-perishable food to donate to the Crisis Food Center, located down the street from the church

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

In Sympathy

In sadness we share the news of the death of Kelsey Fourdyce, daughter of Diane and Anthony Fourdyce of Edwardsville. Diane and her young daughters Kelsey and Lana were active in our church programs in in the 1990s.



Pastoral Associates Program

On May 3rd, many members met to discuss the best way to organize pastoral care in this congregation. All who were gathered expressed their appreciation for all who have worked on Pastoral Care in the past year. While the minister is ultimately responsible, pastoral care requires the collaboration between staff and lay leaders to care for all people in the community. After much discussion, those gathered agreed that the best way forward is to create a Pastoral Associates Program.

A team of between four and six people will be selected to support congregants who need pastoral care and presence. This team will meet once a quarter (in person or by conference call) to discuss the ongoing needs in our community and to participate in continuing education around providing care and support. Team members will need to pass a background check due to the sensitive nature of the position. Once the Pastoral Associate Team has been determined, they will work with the minister to determine the best way of organizing the work.

If you are interested in being a Pastoral Associate, please contact Rev. Sunshine at swolfe@uuma.org. You can also contact Marcia Custer for more information. Look for more information in July. The deadline for applications to the program will be August 15th, 2015.

One Time Volunteer Opportunity!

As many of you are aware, we had a homeless gentleman sleeping on the bench in front of the building. With the help of Lucy Bouton, we have been able to offer some assistance to him. He no longer resides on the porch. We need a volunteer who can handle bleach that would be willing to wash the bench and any other portions of the porch that need cleaning. Please contact Pastor Sunshine at swolfe@uuma.org.

Joys and Milestones

Mona and Paul Hebert are the happy grandparents of Zelda Marie, born on May 15 to their daughter Karen and son-in-law Tim.

Jerry and Mary Johnson celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 5.

Margaret Berkley will be attending UMSL, studying music education and music performance this fall. She will be a student in the Pierre Laclède Honors College.



General Assembly: Alton

Every year the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations gathers for an annual meeting. Anyone can virtually attend and communicate with Unitarian Universalists all over the world through Live Stream. You can watch the many worship services, the Service of the Living Tradition, and the Ware Lecture given by Cornell West all from the comfort of your own home. To attend this year's General Assembly virtually go to <http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/2015>.

Interest Groups

ANNA DS – WOMEN'S ALLIANCE



The **Anna Ds** will meet at 11:30 am on **Thursday, June 4 at Bella Milano — 1063 South State Route 157, Edwardsville, IL 62025**

RSVP by Monday June 1 to [Joan Hashimi](#).

FIFTY-PLUS (50+) FORUM ...



Saturday, June 6 – 10:30 to noon at church – followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant. Questions: Contact Sandy Shaner.



Men's Monthly Lunch June 11 @ 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, June 11** 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](#).

RENEGADE WOMEN – SATURDAY, JUNE 20 1 TO 3 PM

Along with our sharing and discussion time we will continue with our learning about "Unitarian and Universalist Women of the 19th century" with finishing watching the video of Lydia Maria Child that we started in May.

Leadership Training Rescheduled

We will have Leadership Training on August 8th and 15th. If there is interest, we can explore offering the program again at an alternate time.

Sierra Club, June 8, Speaker Series

"What's Up with the Upper Mississippi River System?"

Dr. John Chick, an aquatic ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey – University of Illinois, and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, will present an overview of ongoing long-term monitoring and research activities that focus on this nationally significant ecosystem.

The June Speaker Series will be on June 8th at 7:30 pm at the First Unitarian Church of Alton, 110 E. 3rd Street. Everyone is welcome to join the speaker for a pre-meeting dinner at 5:45pm at Mac's Time Out, 315 Belle St. in Downtown Alton.

Changes to the Religious Education Program

With the need to create a balanced budget, the Board presented and the congregation voted in a budget for 2015-16 that eliminates funding for the Religious Education Coordinator and the professionally staffed nursery. As soon as we learned of these coming changes, Juliette Crone-Willis and I met to discuss how to adjust the program to a volunteer program. Thanks to the work of the Religious Education Committee and Juliette's work, we have a strong core to our religious education program that is already supported by great volunteers. We quickly determined two key changes that would help us in the coming year.

Religious Education Council

The program next year will be coordinated by a Religious Education (RE) Council with representatives coordinating one aspect of the Religious Education Program. It will look include the following portfolios:

- RE Council Chair (Joy Hoeft)
- Nursery Portfolio (TBD)
- Spirit Play/Elementary Classes
- Youth Programs (including youth group, coming of age, and OWL) (Juliette C-W)
- Adult Programs (including covenant groups)
- Administrative

Each of these portfolios will be responsible for coordination of volunteers for their area. The goal is to split up responsibilities into manageable and easy to understand areas. Each portfolio will be implemented by numerous volunteers. We will create clear job descriptions for each portfolio in the coming weeks. Juliette and I will be contacting those already active in RE to help fulfill these roles. We thank everyone who continues to be involved RE for your support and hard work!

Worship and Religious Education Time

Juliette reports that one of the struggles in finding volunteers is that people do not want to miss worship. Looking to the ways in which many congregations comparable to ours have handled

budgetary constraints, we plan to explore having intergenerational worship for the main service every Sunday followed by religious education for all ages. We would offer a volunteer run nursery for both the worship and religious education times.

All of this is a work in progress Juliette, Joy, and I welcome feedback as we move forward. This will not be an easy change and we do hope it will lead to continued spiritual growth and deepening for all of us. Thank you in advance for your patience and kindness as we move forward building a new way.

June RE Program News & Notes

To everyone who contributed to Religious Education this year, ***thank you*** from the Minister, Religious Education Coordinator, and Congregation. Teaching our children, youth and adults is one of our most important tasks!

Many thanks to all of our teachers and everyone who contributed to the Religious Education program:

Robyn Berkley	Alex Hoeft	Kathleen McKeever
Spiral Blanton	Joy Hoeft	Ed Navarre
Michelle Bryant-Barbeau	Tracey Howe-Koch	Michael Ray
Kayci Combs-Lueker	Eric Johnson	Alison Reiheld
Nancy Conniff	Jerry Johnson	Layne Simpson
Emily Davis	Mary Johnson	Chris Strangeman
Brigham Dimmick	Sayer Johnson	Jennifer Timpe
Dee Evans	Becky Kern-Ryan	Sabrina Trupia
Paul Fischer	Mandan Kirk	Lauren Waters
Daisy Gartner	Rachel Lappin	Pastor Sunshine Wolfe
Ron Glossop	Jennifer Lewis	

Summer RE Program Activities

We began our summer schedule on May 24 with one service at 10 am. There are no planned religious education activities over the summer—children and youth are invited stay in the sanctuary during summer services. Our regular program will resume with an intergenerational worship service at In-gathering, the first Sunday after Labor Day.

Juliette Crone-Willis
Religious Education Coordinator