

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

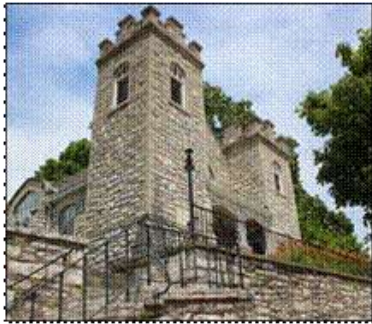


Photo by Nancy Crace Coniff, 2015

*Newsletter of the*  
*First*  
*Unitarian Church*

*Alton, Illinois*  
[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)



Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe, Pastor

## November 2015

*Sunday Worship Services at 10:15 a.m.*

*Saturday Vesper Service at 4 p.m.*

*Each weeks' Vesper service will be related to the worship topic of the week.  
It will include chanting, meditation, silence, and will have its own unique style.*

**October 31**                      **Vespers**

**November 1- The Costumes of Our Souls: A Halloween Service** with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe  
Worship associate: Mary Johnson

As we open our conversation on forgiveness, we look at how our guilt, shame, and regrets can take hold of our lives. How do we end up in inauthentic places? When are the costumes we wear for fun and when do they take over? How do we open our hearts to compassion and forgiveness to that deepest within us?

**November 7**                      **Vespers**

**November 8- In Memoriam: A Ritual of Blessing**  
With Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe  
Worship associate: Dee Evans

The holiday season is a time of joy and a time of sorrow. It can be a difficult time for those who grieve loved ones who have died. It is also a difficult time for those who are estranged from loved ones. This service will honor the places that forgiveness and hope have in our grieving those no longer in our lives- both living and dead.

**November 14**                      **Vespers**

**November 15 - Forgiveness and Action: The Words of Cornell West** with Sabrina Trupia  
Worship associate: Sabrina Trupia

Dr. Cornell West is a prominent and provocative intellectual. This summer he spoke at our Unitarian Universalist General Assembly Ware lecture. Sharing the wisdom of W.E.B. DuBois in a conversation with Paul Robeson, he talks about the challenge of action-particularly inspiring and strengthening the next generation.

**November 21**                      **Vespers**  
**November 22 – Breaking the Chains: A Service of Thanksgiving/grieving** with Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe and friends  
Worship associate: Yomi Kinder

Through story, song, and ritual, we will consider the power of forgiveness in the face of great global tragedies. How do we keep the power and gifts of thanksgiving while holding the difficult history behind the United States holiday? Follow a group of animals as they come to terms with how help the turkeys of the world. This will include our annual bread communion service. Members and friends are encouraged to bake bread for our gathering.

**November 28**

**Vespers**

**November 29- Let It Go...or Not** with Joy Hoeft and friends

Worship associate: Joy Hoeft

Forgiveness leads us into a complex world of emotions, struggles, and uncertainty. It is not an end game, but a process. Sometimes that process never resolves. Can we always forgive? What is the place for forgiveness which is not possible in our lives?

**ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT  
(ARE)**

**Inspire Programs:**

**November 1, 11:30 am: Compassion and Forgiveness** with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

We will explore two key case studies on compassion and forgiveness. This program will focus on sharing from personal experience. We will also look at the place of forgiveness in justice work.

**November 22, 11:30 am: Intergenerational Service Project - To Be Determined**

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**November 8, 9:15 am** in the Emerson Room - Ron Glossop will lead the 3rd session of the Adult Religious Education class continuing on the topic "*Understanding the Problem of Free-Will in Terms of Modern Psychology.*" The focus will be on what relation if any should exist with regard to punishment for crimes committed. Should punishment for crimes consider anything else but how punishment or lack of punishment will influence the future of that person and of society?

If you have an issue about which you would like to lead the class in the future, please come and suggest it.

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**Nov 8, 15 & 29, 11:30 am "The Seekers"** will meet in Emerson Place.

**The Heart of Letting Go**

*"When you look deeply you begin to understand. The moment when you understand, compassion is born in your heart. And then it is possible for you to forgive."*

Thich Nhat Hanh

There is generally an understanding that forgiveness is a good thing to do. It also can be a difficult thing to do. There is a paradox with forgiveness- in order to let go of that which needs forgiven, you must first be able to hold it in your heart. Scientists and theologians alike agree that in order for forgiveness to occur, one must start at a place of compassion.

At the heart of forgiveness is the ability to own what has been done, see the humanity in the person(s) who need forgiving, and in seeing that humanity hold compassion for their imperfections. The truth is that the person who is liberated by forgiving is as much the forgiver as the forgiven. It is not uncommon for the forgiver to forgive and the person who is forgiven to be unable to forgive themselves. As long as we cannot forgive ourselves for our mistakes then we are unable to receive the forgiveness of others.

The regrets of our lives- those things that we need to offer ourselves forgiveness for- hold onto us. They can fester leaving us in spiritual and emotional pain. This can cause health problems, burden relationships, and cause us to tune out. The heart of letting go of regrets is compassion- accepting one's fallibility. We must first accept that we will err. We will say and do things that are hurtful despite our good intentions.

Understanding this, we can offer compassion to ourselves. That self-love that is the opposite of narcissism invites us into a place of humility and hope. Learning from our mistakes, we love deeper, we accept forgiveness, and we grow. The heart of letting go of regret and the injuries received from others is to know the great capacity for learning. No longer are we bogged down by failure. Rather, we are buoyed into growth through the healing power of compassion.

May you find understanding in yourself. May you have compassion for yourself and others. May you embrace the world in humility and find a path to healing and wholeness in forgiveness. May it be so.

Blessings on the journey,  
Pastor Sunshine

## Monthly Theme: Forgiveness

This month our theme is *Forgiveness*. Here are some resources to help ground our exploration.

### **Adult:**

Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind by Kristin Neff, Ph.D.

The Power of Forgiveness (documentary)

### **Youth:**

Paper Clips 2004 (documentary)

“The Power of Forgiveness” website including a quiz on forgiveness:

<http://www.thepowerofforgiveness.com/>

### **Children:**

Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes  
What if Nobody Forgave and Other Stories of Principle by Colleen M. McDonald

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### **Race in Film: Crash**

**Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**

Each month, we will have a movie or documentary that involves race and racial experience with a discussion to follow. This month we view the award winning movie Crash. Challenging and thought-provoking, Crash takes a provocative, unflinching look at the complexities of racial tolerance in contemporary America. This compelling urban drama tracks the volatile intersections of a multi-ethnic cast of characters’ struggles to overcome their fears as they careen in and out of one another’s lives. In the gray area between black and white, victim and aggressor, there are no easy answers.



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### **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**



Newsletter Deadline is on the 15 of each month. Send info. to Dorothy Wilson [dijccw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dijccw@sbcglobal.net) and to Becky Green at church [church@firstuualton.org](mailto:church@firstuualton.org)

## **News from Your Ministerial Search Committee (MSC)**



Ministerial Search Committee  
**Latest News**

Robyn Berkley and other MSC members are finalizing the interesting and informational ministerial search website, as well as the Congregational Record (CR). Both of these will help interested ministerial candidates learn about our church community. The CR draft will need to be approved by our UUA liaison, a.k.a. Ministerial Settlement Representative, Rev. Emmy Lou Belcher. It will then need to be approved by Rev. Keith Kron and Margaret Montore from the UUA Transitions Office. The website and packet will be unveiled mid-December, and you can access them along with prospective ministerial candidates by getting the password to view these documents from any of the Ministerial Search Committee. Such exciting times!!!

Please remember that we will not be able to divulge names, locations, or personal information about the ministerial candidates when we have them and we are obliged to maintain this confidentiality. However, we are more than happy to discuss all procedural matters with members of our congregation. Please contact any of us on the search committee with your questions!

Warm regards,  
Nance Conniff  
MSC Chair

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### **Religious Education Council**

We are looking forward to the new RE church year and our schedule change. The Dr. Seuss curriculum should be fun and interesting to learn about Unitarian Universalism and our world.

We need more volunteers to read Dr. Seuss for the grade school children and also people to help out in the nursery.

Please contact Ed Navarre if you are interested in teaching our children this year.

Joy Hoeft

## Chili-Fest!

Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 6-9pm in the  
Wuerker Room

Bring your favorite chili  
and fall dessert!



MAGIC game for kids/adults, and movies and  
activities for kids of all ages!

Come for fun and fellowship!

Thanks, Robyn

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## Board Meeting Summary

Due to the postponement of the Oct. Board meeting, it was too late to get a summary in this month's Newsletter, so the news from the Oct. and Nov. meetings will be combined in next month's newsletter.

Pat Moore, Board Secretary



## Church Building Improvements

Thanks to Nancy Conniff for refreshing the RE porch doors and the Kate Wuerker Room entrance doors with bright "Salsa Red" paint.



**Our New Member!** My name is **Rebecca Walters**. I have three daughters. Miranda is 20, Erin is 15, and Emily is 11. I am a checker at Bethalto Schnucks, and I also manage a vintage clothing store at eBay called The Lurve Connection. I was born and raised in Alton, and graduated from Alton High School in 1991. In my spare time, I enjoy listening to music, gardening and nature photography. I first heard of the Unitarian Universalists when I was in my late 20s. I had heard great things about the church from my father, Glenn Walters Jr., who had attended the services and encouraged me to check it out. He passed away suddenly in May at the young age of 64. Paul Fischer and I started dating shortly after, and I was pleased to discover that he was a member of First Unitarian Church of Alton. This is my first attempt as an adult to explore the concept of spirituality, and I am happy to be able to do this in a non-judgmental and loving environment. I am very grateful to be a member of a community that will help me nurture my spiritual growth and inspire me to continue living a life filled with love, compassion, and justice for humanity.

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## YOU'RE INVITED!



The Alton Area Cluster Book Club will be meeting at our church on Thursday, Nov. 19th and to continue the study of *"Ferguson & Faith: Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community."* One need not have read the book to attend as we will be reading it together at the October meetings.

## Congregational Covenant

Approved May 17, 2015



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

**Honor** and make space for our diversity, respect our volunteers, leaders and staff by supporting balance in their lives and in their personal and 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 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](#))

## Small Group Ministries

Goals of Small Group Ministry are to develop a growing network of small groups that:

1. Draw us into mutual ministry
2. Strengthen our congregation
3. Deepen our understanding of Unitarian-Universalist principles and values
4. Continuously develop lay leadership
5. Challenge us to action and spiritual growth
6. Express our principles and values in the community
7. Help members identify their own calling and expression of lay ministry

The members of the small groups have decided to continue through the winter, but only once per month, rather than every other week. Both groups would welcome new members.

Jennifer Timpe's group will now meet one Sunday per month, 11:30 a.m. with the following date to be determined at each meeting.

Sandy Shaner's group will now meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, at 5:30 p.m.

**Happy Halloween!**



**Halloween November 1<sup>st</sup>-  
Wear Your Costumes!**

We will have our Halloween service on November 1<sup>st</sup>. You are encouraged to wear your costumes and to bring change to help UNICEF!

*A member of our church, Patricia Ann Blanton, 82, passed away Friday, October 16, 2015. Patricia "signed the book" on October 5, 2008. Pat enjoyed painting, drawing and traveling. Private services will be held by the family.*



**Church Potluck Lunch  
November 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:30 am**



Our monthly fellowship potluck lunches are held on the 1st Sunday. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share & stay to help clean up.

## INTEREST GROUPS:

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### **Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance** **Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.**

We had a great time at Fazzi's last month including deciding that Ginger McCall would host us at the November 5 meeting at the main building dining hall at:



**Meridian Village, 27 Auerbach Place, Glen Carbon, IL 62034.**

As usual, we will meet there at 11:30, and Ginger will have a large table set aside for us. Please call or e-mail Ginger to let you know if you'll be attending. After this meeting, we'll go on winter hiatus during December, January and February so we don't have to worry about driving in bad weather.

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**Renegade Women** will not meet at this time, but we hope to welcome former members to **Free For All** meetings and lunch get-togethers. After the DVD series on UU history has been completed, this group will move on to learn about some of the women in our church history, beginning with Lucy Stone.



**The Kitchen Klub** – a group of people who want to change the kitchen cleanup culture – are inviting everyone to participate in our new program called “**Wash,**

**Dry, Put Away.**” If you have a meeting or gathering at church that involves food or drink, we encourage you to make sure that the dishes used are washed, dried, and put away – not left in the meeting room, or in the sink to be washed later by someone else, or left drying on the drain rack to be put away by someone else. This effort on the part of everyone using the church facilities will keep the kitchen neater, and provide an equitable way to get cleanup tasks done.

### **Free For All (formerly 50 Plus)** **Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 a.m.**

Open to All! Join us in the Emerson Room for the 3rd of 6 DVDs to help us learn as much as possible about our denomination before the arrival of our new minister. We are lucky to have available, thru Jerry Johnson, a DVD series on UU history. “**Long Strange Trip: A Journey Through Two Thousand Years of Unitarian Universalist History**” Each DVD is about an hour long. We will have a brief check-in, watch the DVD and lunch afterward for those who would like to go.

A brief outline of what we'll learn:

#### **Part III – American Unitarianism**

Part III talks about the development of Unitarianism in America from 1620 through 1860.

#### **Part IV - Universalism**

Part IV - Documents the development of Universalism churches across America during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Part V – Evolution**

Part V Follows both Unitarianism and Universalism through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as they evolve.

#### **Part VI – The hundred Year Waltz**

Part VI Documents the century-long courtship between Unitarianism and Universalism that culminated in their merger in 1961.

**Please note that we will not meet during the months of Dec, Jan. and Feb. We begin again in March with Part IV.**

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### **Men’s Monthly Lunch** **November 12 11:30 a.m.**



The men’s lunch bunch – the Romeos (Retired Old Men Eating Out) – meets on the second Thursday of each month. Join us in November at 11:30 at the Best Buffet at 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River. All men in our church are invited (retired or old, or not). For further information contact Paul Herbert [pphebert@mail.com](mailto:pphebert@mail.com)

**November's 4<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday Lunch  
November 28<sup>th</sup>  
11:00 am**



Hands-On and Financial Help are both needed!

Meals are provided to 60 – 80 people in need each month and \$80 to \$90 is spent in this community service endeavor. Your financial support would be welcomed to help us continue this program which has been going on month after month for seven years.

While money is essential, so is your hands-on support. We need people to help prepare food, help serve food, and help clean up.

In November we will be serving chili as our main dish and probably need 8 crockpots full. There will be a signup sheet on the desk in the Kate Wuerker Room as well as on UU Friends for what is needed. Please take this opportunity to help those who may need a little more support to get by day by day.

If you care to make a financial contribution, make your check out to the First Unitarian Church, and mark in **bold** “4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch” on the memo line. Personal care items are also needed – a package of toilet paper, laundry detergent, hand soap, tooth paste, deodorant, etc.



Following a memorial service for Cynthia Gayle Borman on 9/26/15, attendees went outside so that Reverend Sunshine could bless the new bench placed in her memory. As she wanted, there's a spectacular view of the river from the bench for all to enjoy.

## **CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2015 - 2016**

### **Board of Trustees**

**Board President-** Debby Lovell

**President-Elect-** Dee Evans

**Past President-** Sabrina Trupia

**Treasurer-** Lisa Strangeman

**Secretary-** Pat Moore

**At-Large-** Paul Fischer

**At-Large-** Paul Hebert

### **Committee/Team Leads**

**Pastoral Care-** Marcia Custer

**Transitions Committee**

Marcia Custer

Sayer Johnson

Sarah Lazarz

**Social Events-** Sayer Johnson

**Interfaith and U.U.-** TBA

### **Religious Education Council**

**Chair-**Joy Hoeft

**Nursery-** Kayci Combs Lueker

**Pre-K/Elementary-** Ed Navarre

**Youth-** Juliette Crone-Willis

**Adult-** TBA

**Administrative-** TBA

### **Search Committee 2015-16**

Nancy Conniff (co-chair)

Ruth Maskow (co-chair)

Robyn Berkley

Kelly Crone-Willis

Phil Embree

Mary Johnson

Layne Simpson

### **Stewardship Committee**

**Building and Grounds-** Robyn Stranquist

**Canvass-** TBA

**Endowment Fund-** Kelly Crone- Willis

**Finance-** Matt Koch

**Membership-** Mary Weber

**Sunday Support Ministries-** TBA

### **Worship Associates**

Dee Evans

Joy Hoeft

Yomi Kinder

Mary Johnson

Sabrina Trupia

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## Mission and Vision Statement

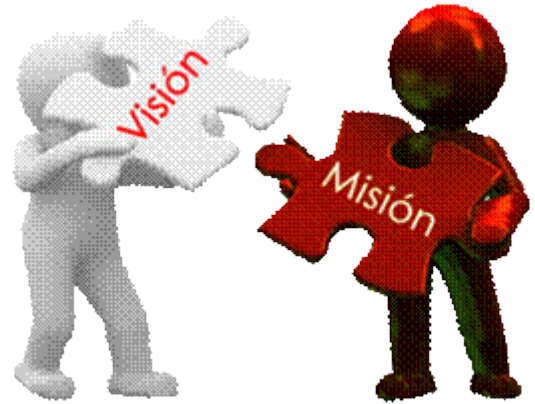
A big THANK YOU to the Members of 1st UU Alton who met on Oct 10th to work together on the mission and vision statements.

You may have noticed some hanging papers around the Kate Wuerker room. These are our working documents that will give you an idea of what we talked about and where we are heading.

There will be fireside chats coming up in November, exact dates will be announced in service and online.

This will offer congregants a chance to speak with the committee about their visions and ideas for our mission statement as well as our vision for our future.

For those of you who were unable to attend, here are the definitions from our workshops and some questions to ponder during the time of creation.



**Mission Statement:** Concise statement of what the congregation wants to be known for or known as within the wider world. What the congregation means to the community. Easily recalled and easily communicated.

**Vision Statement:** A carefully defined picture of where the congregation wants to be in five or more years. It is a dream of what the congregation can become. The vision statement contains both judgment and promise by articulating the different future it wishes to create.

- What is the mission of our religious community? What is it really?
- Does the mission statement address what difference your congregation makes for the broader community or does it describe what your congregation is doing?
- Is your vision statement a shared image of the desired future, growing out of the stated wishes and desires of the membership?
- Does the vision statement remain faithful to the congregation's best understanding of its religious heritage?
- How do our statements set us apart from other congregations?

Mission and Vision statements will be voted on in January. Don't wait until then to participate, let us know your thoughts now.

I've heard many people say our church is very special (TRUTH!)...help us put into words why. Let's further our agenda of love and justice by creating easily shared statements of our truth.

We appreciate any input you have.

If you have any questions, suggestions or general comments please talk with Kayci Lueker or email at [kcintheam@gmail.com](mailto:kcintheam@gmail.com)

Thanks to the transitions team for a wonderful breakfast and lunch.

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