

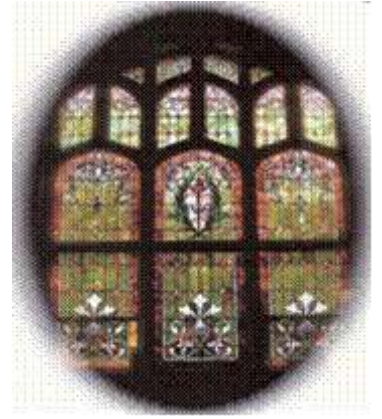
FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian Church*

Alton, Illinois
www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe, Pastor

February 2016

THEME: LOVE

*Sunday ~ Intergenerational Worship Services at 10:15 a.m.
Saturday ~ Soulful Sundown Vespers Service at 4 p.m.*

February Theme: LOVE

Worship Services are held at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and 10:15 a.m. on Sunday. Each service covers the same topic. Saturday is a Soulful Sundown service with meditation, silence, readings, and singing. Sunday is an intergenerational service with more ritual, movement, a sermon, readings, and music.

February 6 Vespers

February 7 Love- You Keep Using That Word...

- with Rev. Sunshine Wolfe

Worship Associate Mary Johnson

February 13 Vespers

February 14 Justice Is What Love Looks Like In

Public - with Rev. Wolfe

Worship Associate Joy Hoeft

February 20 Vespers

February 21 The Wisdom of Rumi: Beloved and

Allah - with Rev. Wolfe

Worship Associate Yomi Kinder

February 27 Vespers

February 28 Poems of the Heart

Worship Associate Dee Evans

February Monthly Theme: Love

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

Adult:

Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived by Rob Bell

Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud, A Memoir by Cornel West

Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle by A. W. Price

Youth:

High School Musical (movie)

Thirty Days of Love: Standing on the Side of Love Campaign

Children:

I Love You the Purplest by Barbara M. Joesse

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

The Adult RE class which usually meets at 9:15 in the Emerson Room on the second Sunday of the month will not meet in January or February 2016. Therefore the next class will be at 9:15 on March 13. Yomi Kinder will be leading the discussion of Jules Verne, *PARIS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*. This book, written in 1863 but not published until 1994, contains many predictions about technology and society that have proved to be remarkably accurate.

Ron Glossop

February 14- 11:30am

Inspire Program - U.U. 101: Universalism

Universalists believed in universal salvation for all Christians. Over the centuries this notion became ubiquitous in many Christian denominations. But even as this occurred, Universalists began to expand their notion of universal salvation to mean "all people." Their radical concept of God's love is deeply woven into the tapestry of our denomination. What is universalism today? How does it fit within our values and the way that we wish to spread those values into the world?

February 21&28 11:30 a.m.

"The Seekers" will meet in Emerson Place.

Our Church theme for February is Love. Unitarians in general are very into the intellectual. Is love intellectual or emotional or a combination of both? Do our principles say anything about love? What is Rumi writing about? What about Pastor Sunshine's sermons on love? These questions are a guide for our discussion and are not meant to be answered sequentially. This adult RE class will meet on the Sundays when Pastor Sunshine does not teach.

Pastor Wolfe Vacation Schedule

Pastor Wolfe will be in Wisconsin February 26th-28th. As always, Pastor Wolfe is available in the event of emergencies.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Newsletter Deadline is on the 15 of each month. Send info. to Dorothy Wilson djjccw@sbeglobal.net and to Becky Green at church church@firstuualton.org



Church Potluck Lunch February 7th @ 11:30 am

Gather 'round to share food and fellowship. Bring a dish to share and stay to help clean up, while enjoying your church community.



Intergenerational Sunday Activity for February

On the first Sunday of each month, we will have intergenerational community building activities along with our monthly potluck. This month, back by popular demand, we will have intergenerational team building games. This is a great opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to engage in fun, learn more about their neighbors, and celebrate the wonderful diversity of this loving congregation.

Race in Film: Do the Right Thing

Friday, February 12th 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 Spike Lee's movie Do the Right Thing. Due to weather, we were unable to watch this movie last month.



thank
you!

Last month, the editor neglected to thank Jim McKeever for important work he contributed to replacing the broken storm window.
Thank You Jim!

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE

In 2016 our congregation intends to become a Congregational supporter of the UU UN Office in New York. That requires a contribution of at least \$100.



Contributions to support this effort also can be made at any time by noting that purpose on the envelope or on the check.

It is also possible to be an individual supporter of the UU UN Office. Envelopes to send such individual contributions to the UU UN Office are available in the Wuerker Room on a table or in the rack for brochures on the south wall.

Also at any time you can send an individual contribution for the UU-UNO to: Stewardship and Development, UUA, 24 Farnsworth Street, Boston MA 02210-1409. When you do that, please indicate that you are a member of this congregation and provide your e-mail address and your postal address.

You can get more information about the UU UN Office at <http://www.uua.org/international/un>.

Ron Glossop, UU UNO Envoy for this congregation.

Social Action Meeting
February 7th 9:00 am



Are you interested and/or already supporting the social service and social justice work of the congregation? Please join us Sunday, February 7th, at 9:00 a.m. for a meeting to coordinate the various social service and justice initiatives of the congregation.

Children's RE

The Nursery continues to need volunteers to help during Worship Service and then afterwards for Religious Education. Please contact Kayci for more information.

The kids in Spirit Play continue to enjoy listening to stories and associated play.

Elementary age kids continue to learn about UU principles and life skills by listening to Dr. Seuss stories and activities. If you are interested in reading, contact Ed Navarre.

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

Transitions Committee

Marcia Custer

Sayer Johnson

Sarah Lazarz

Social Events - Sayer Johnson

Interfaith and U.U. - TBA

Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer

Sandra Shaner

Religious Education Council

Chair - Joy Hoeft

Nursery - Kayci Combs Lueker

Pre-K/Elementary - Ed Navarre

Youth - TBA

Adult - Pastor Sunshine Wolfe

Administrative - TBA

Search Committee 2015-16

Nancy Conniff (Chair)

Robyn Berkley

Kelly Crone-Willis

Phil Embree

Mary Johnson

Layne Simpson

Stewardship Committee

Building - Kelly Crone-Willis

Grounds - Robyn Stranquist

Canvass - TBA

Endowment Fund - Kelly Crone-Willis

Finance - Matt Koch

Membership - Mary Weber

Sunday Support Ministries - Claudia Harju

Worship Associates

Tom Cochran

Dee Evans

Joy Hoeft

Yomi Kinder

Mary Johnson

Sabrina Trupia

2016 MidAmerica UUA Regional Assembly

Friday, April 29 @ 4 p.m.
to Sunday, May 1 @ – 1:00 p.m.



*“The WHO in the New Era of
Unitarian Universalism”* –

Intercontinental CrownePlaza,
11 East Kellogg Blvd.,
St. Paul MN 55101

Regional Assembly Workshops

We are pleased to let you know that there are many great workshops coming your way at this year's Regional Assembly in St Paul! So many people applied to do workshops that we sadly had to turn some down. Here's a sample of what you can find this year:

- Spiritual Discipline of Followership: UUs and #BlackLivesMatter
- Circle of Belonging: information on how to bring people along from visitor to fully engaged member
- Escalating Inequality: a workshop on our current Congregational Study-Action Issue
- Heresy in the Heartland: Humanism in the Second Century
- End of Life Conversations: how to have these conversation in your congregations
- Navigating the Theist-Humanist Gap with Creativity and Grace
- Positioning Small Congregations for the New Era and Millennials
- Resilient Youth
- Reverence for Diversity: Group Spiritual Direction in Congregations
- Who is Your Congregation on the Web?

These are just a sampling-there are more on governance, funding social justice, planned giving, and faith development. All in all, there will be 23 offerings from which you get to choose. We wish there was more space, but these ones should give you insights and tools for living your UU faith more deeply. Check out our website pages-soon-about all the great things happening at Regional Assembly.

For more information go to

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

The UUA Presidential Search Committee today announced two nominees for the 2017 election of a new president of the Unitarian Universalist Association: the Rev. Alison Miller and the Rev. Sue Phillips. Other candidates may enter the race by petition between February 1, 2016, and February 1, 2017. Delegates to the 2017 General Assembly in New Orleans will elect a successor to President Peter Morales.

The Rev. Alison Miller has served as senior minister of the Morristown, New Jersey, Unitarian Fellowship since 2005. She chairs the board of the Church of the Larger Fellowship and serves on the boards of the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey and United Way of Northern New Jersey. Miller previously served as assistant minister at the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City; as intern minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and on the UUA Stewardship and Development staff. She graduated from Bryn Mawr College and from Harvard Divinity School. Miller lives with her husband, David Snedden, and their four-year-old son Asher. <https://www.AlisonforUUAPresident.org>

The Rev. Sue Phillips has served as a district executive and, now, as New England Regional Lead on the UUA field staff since 2007. After graduating from Colgate University and Episcopal Divinity School, Phillips worked at Partners for the Common Good, a socially responsible loan fund; the Catholic social justice lobby NETWORK; and the Housing Assistance Council, a community development loan fund serving the poorest rural communities in the United States. She served as minister of the Keene, New Hampshire, Unitarian Universalist Church before joining the UUA field staff. Phillips is married to the Rev. Tandi Rogers. Together they have five children. She lives in Boston and Tacoma, Washington. <http://www.PhillipsforPresident.org>

“I Can't Hear You When You're Angry”

Wednesday, February 3, 2016
1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Dr. Alison Reiheld, Assistant
Professor, Department of Philosophy
and Director, Women's Studies
Program.



Location: SIUE Campus, Morris University Center
(MUC), Oak-Redbud Room

Cost: \$2 (Lifelong Learning members) / \$5 (public)



Robin Crane signed the book on January 17, 2016, after attending services for a number of months, volunteering to teach children's RE, washing dishes, bringing chili, and taking a class or two. She was introduced to the church by her daughter Alison Reiheld and Alison's two boys, Robbie and Alex.

After living 23 years in the Richmond, Virginia area, Robin recently bought a home in Edwardsville with a lovely view of Dunlap Lake. She is retired and is just getting to know STL and MetroEast.

She was born in Chicago, went to Northwestern University (Bachelor of Music Ed), U of Chicago (Masters in Urban Studies), Northern Illinois University (M.A. in US. history, labor/business), UC/Berkeley (Education) and a whole bunch of other schools in order to maintain teaching certificates in several different states. She plays the piano, though is quite rusty, and speaks even rustier Spanish. She has served in the Peace Corps; taught middle school music and primary grades; done private sector technical writing (computer manuals, etc.); worked in state government in capacities from criminal justice planning to mental health/social services grants management; and has devoted years and years to state budgeting (health & human services) and legislative/policy/regulatory analysis.

Whether in California, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, or Virginia, she's been involved in community service, fair housing, school integration, and/or politics. She as taught English as a Second Language and housed and assisted immigrants. She has more contact than any sane person wants with writing by-laws; trying to make sense out of badly-written regulations and legislation; complying with the byzantine U.S. immigration system; and trying to find health care and health insurance for struggling immigrant families. After decades trying to make bureaucracies work for PEOPLE, Robin is more than happy to be retired and near family.

Robin has led children's church choirs and served on a variety of church committees and the governing boards at First UU Church of Richmond and her former Lutheran church.

She loves to attend ballet, music events, and movies; and enjoys playing board games and sports events with her grandchildren. She spends a month or so each summer at a vacation home on a lovely lake near Traverse City, Michigan.

In addition to Alison's family, Robin has a son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter in northern Indiana, and a "substitute grandson" in Richmond, whom she mothered for years. Robin has an elderly female pit bull mix who puts up with benign neglect and is good company, but desperately needs regular appointment with a dog-walker.

Robin offers sincere thanks to all the kind people of Alton Unitarian who have welcomed her into their midst. The transition has been seamless AND interesting.

Lenten Services and Lunch

Each year, our congregation participates in the Wednesday Lenten Lunch Services. A different congregation hosts each Wednesday (with one congregation hosting Good Friday, as well). Donations are given to Oasis Women's Shelter and The Crisis Food Pantry. Lunch costs \$5. If you are interested in volunteering to help with lunch on February 17th, please contact Pastor Sunshine ASAP. This is a great opportunity for interfaith engagement and welcoming our Alton and Godfrey religious neighbors. The schedule for all of the Lent services is as follows:



February 10 - Main Street Methodist Church,
Pastor Jim Pate

February 17 - First Unitarian Church of Alton,
Pastor Sunshine Wolfe

February 24 - Tabernacle M. B. Church,
Pastor Buford

March 2 - Unity Fellowship Church,
Pastor Burton

March 9 - First Presbyterian Church,
Pastor Crowley

March 16 - Godfrey First United Methodist Church

March 23 - Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church,
Pastor Goins

March 25 - Greater St. James M. B. Church,
Pastor Webb

News from your Board - December and January



Debby Lovell, Pres; Dee Evans, VP; Sabrina Trupia, Immediate Past Pres.; Pat Moore, Sec.; Lisa Strangeman, Treasurer; Paul Hebert and Paul Fischer, members at large.

We continue to work on a new Policy and Procedure Book with help from Sandy Shaner. She is also working on our by-law revisions. In January we approved policies regarding Service Animals and Building Use by members and others. These will be presented at the January 24 semi-annual meeting. We expect this to be a very interesting and informative meeting, so please plan to stay after church that day. Members and friends are invited, but only members can vote.

Our terrific church administrator Becky Green is back at work part-time while recovering from minor heart surgery. She would like to thank everyone for their cards, good thoughts, and well wishes.

Rev. Wolfe reported to us regarding the Search for a new minister. We had no responses of interest in us for the first round, but that's not unusual for a small church. Ghe expects that we won't have any problem finding a perfect minister for us, since ghe thinks we are a wonderful congregation. We hope members are excited about the prospect of working with someone new into the future.

Our treasurer Lisa Strangeman is working with Becky Green to learn the ins and outs of our financial system. She hopes to have a full financial report ready for the meeting.

Most of our task force heads are in place, but we need volunteers to help them. The new charts of task force groups will be represented at the meeting, so hopefully everyone can find some things they could help with. We all want to help our church follow its mission by volunteering our money and our talents, whether it be painting, plumbing, gardening, cleaning, organizing, planning parties, or whatever you could do.

The painting of our sanctuary is underway, so we will continue to worship in the Kate Wuerker room until it's finished, probably by the end of the month. We have 3 roof bids for the leaks in the roof of our twin towers, and

with a little more information we should be able to make a decision very soon. We'll also have to decide how the repairs will be funded. Keeping up our beautiful old building is always full of surprises.

The Board continues to find better ways to serve you by reading from good source books. We have just started a new book, Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times.

Remember, if you have any questions about things going on at the church, please ask a Board member or Rev. Wolfe. We are YOUR board, and we want to serve YOU. Anyone may attend Board meetings. Our next meeting will be Feb. 9 at 7:00 PM.

Basement Cleaning Task Day March 6th

Welcome to the First Basement Cleaning Task Day of 2016.

We all know that we are busy. We know that none of us really wants to clean the basement. But it has got to be done. So, we are doing two things to make it easier. First is that it will be done right after potluck on March 6th, so you won't have to make a special trip to the church. Secondly, we are keeping the cleaning time to 1 1/2 hours.

No, it won't get all get completed in that time. That's why it is the *first* task day. The more volunteers we have, the more we will get done on March 6th. **We welcome and need the help of our youth.** Please for the safety of the children, no one under 10 should be in the basement. Anyone ten and over must have the permission of their parents to help.



Alton Area Cluster Book Club YOU'RE INVITED!

The Alton Area Cluster Book Club will meet on Thursday February 18th from 3:00 to 5:00 pm 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 meetings.

INTEREST GROUPS:

Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance February 4th, 11:30

We're still on winter hiatus but those who can make it (on Thursday, February 4 at 11:30) will join us at Best Buffet in Wood River on the hill across from Wood River Wal-Mart; the formal address is 615 Wesley Drive and the phone number is 618-258-1888. We don't have a reservation or a need to cancel one, so anyone who wants to get out for a nice lunch and good company can just check the weather and come (or if the weather turns sour on us as February hits, stay safe and warm at home). In December and January the weather cooperated and a good number of us were able to gather, so we can see if third time is the charm for good weather.



Sandy



Men’s Monthly Lunch February 11th, 11:30 a.m.

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



The Kitchen Klub – The “Wash, Dry, Put Away” program for kitchen and Wuerker Room cleanup seems to working quite well. Rare is it to see dishes left in the sink or on the drain rack. Please

remember that “Wash, Dry, Put Away” is not only for coffee hour and potluck but for any meeting or gathering that is held at church. Everyone needs to help keep the kitchen and Wuerker Room neat.

February 27th Fourth Saturday Outreach Event



CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

During the Semi-annual congregational meeting on January 24th, a discussion was started regarding the difficulties and efficacy surrounding the operation of our monthly 4th Saturday luncheon and toiletries distribution. A suggestion was made to no longer serve a meal, but to perhaps increase the amount and frequency of the personal care products availability. No decision has been reached at time of publication, but before February 27th, a decision will be made. *Please contact Sabrina Trupia, strupia@gmail.com, to volunteer or add your ideas.* Contributions of cash or personal care items will still be very much appreciated and the congregation will be kept informed as to the status of the 4th Saturday meal.

We are very grateful for the many hours of hard work and the loving kindness shown to our guests by Kathleen McKeever, Robin Berkley, Lucy Bouton and Mary Johnson and all of the other volunteers who have contributed to this community service effort.

Planning Meeting for 4th Saturday Program Sunday, February 21st, at 9:00 a.m

All individuals who have been active in the 4th Saturday program are encouraged to join us for a conversation on how to operate the program in the future, how to manage our resources, and safety policies and procedures for the program. We will meet Sunday, February 21st at 9:00 a.m. in Emerson Place.

Free For All (formerly 50 Plus)

This group is on a winter hiatus for the months of December, January and February. On March 5th at 10:30 am, we'll again take up the DVD series on UU history “Long Strange Trip: A Journey Through Two Thousand Years of Unitarian History”

What's "in" a ministerial search interview?

Each pre-candidate that the MSC thinks may possibly be a good fit for our special place is invited for a weekend. (They aren't considered "the candidate" until the committee decides this person may be the best fit in their estimation, before this person meets the congregation and other church committees.) Advance preparation for each weekend includes review of the pre-candidate's information packet, checking of references, consultation with the Ministerial Transitions Director in Boston, and a coordination of the weekend's activities. Each pre-candidate arrives on a separate Friday for an informal evening. Saturday is reserved for formal interviewing all day and into the evening. On Sunday, the candidate presents a service at a neutral pulpit, and then meets briefly with the committee before heading home. The interview format includes the following elements:

- Introduction of the ministerial search committee to the pre-candidate
- Discussion of the minister's professional history
- Discussions pertaining to important areas of church life. Time is allowed in each area for questions from the committee as well as the pre-candidate. Areas covered include: religious philosophy and worship; pastoral care and working with people; church programming; leadership roles; adult, youth and child RE; and financial and contract matters. The Search Committee has prepared questions for each area.

Our church's ministerial search website (aka packet) is available for your perusal. If you'd like the website info and password, please contact me at ncdcjc@yahoo.com. You can also ask Phil Embree at embreephil@gmail.com.

Please remember that we will not be able to divulge names, locations, or personal information about the ministerial candidates 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 if you have questions! As a reminder, that includes Robyn Berkley, Kelly Crone-Willis, Phil Embree, Mary Johnson, Layne Simpson, and myself.

With warm regards,
Nance Conniff, MSC Chair

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, at 11:30 a.m. with the following date to be determined at each meeting.

Sandy Shaner's group is meeting the 2nd Wednesday of each month, at 5:30 p.m.