

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

*Newsletter of the*

## *First Unitarian Church*

*Alton, Illinois*

[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)



Rev. Sunshine J. Wolfe, Pastor

## May 2016

### THEME: TRANSCENDENCE

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

*Soulful Sundown Vespers Service on the 3rd Saturday at 4 p.m.*

#### May Theme: TRANSCENDENCE

Worship Services are held at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday. Sunday is an intergenerational service with more ritual, movement, a sermon, readings, and music. Soulful Sundown service is at 4:00 p.m. on the 3rd Saturday with meditation, silence, readings, and singing.

Please note that worship may change to accommodate a ministerial candidate. If this occurs, the candidate will set their sermon titles and we will announce them to you ASAP

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#### **May 1 Hold to Things Not Eternal**

With Rev. Sunshine Wolfe and Rebecca Walters

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#### **May 8 Margaret Fuller and Transcendentalism: A Mother's Day Service – (intergenerational service)** With Rev. Wolfe and Dee Evans

Members are encouraged to bring flowers for our annual Flower Communion. Families with children or infants that they would like to be a part of the Child Dedication ritual should contact Rev. Wolfe by May 5<sup>th</sup>.

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#### **May 15 The Wisdom of the Arts**

With Guest Speaker and Yomi Kinder

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#### **May 21 Vespers**

#### **May 22 The Transcendent Brahma**

With Rev. Sunshine Wolfe and Joy Hoeft

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#### **May 29 TBD**

With Guest Speaker and Robin Crane

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#### May Monthly Theme: Transcendence

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

#### **Adult:**

[American Transcendentalism: A History](#) by Philip Gura

[The Poets of Transcendentalism](#) by G. W. Cooke  
[Avatar \(R\)](#) (movie)

#### **Youth:**

[Little Women](#) by Louisa May Alcott

#### **Children:**

[Ralph Waldo Emerson for Kids](#) by Joseph Madden

[The Little Prince](#) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

## ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

### Inspire Programs:

#### Intergenerational Games for Fun and Community May 1, 11:30 am

Join us for some intergenerational cooperative and community building games. Fun ways to get to know your UU neighbors within this community. We will have our monthly potluck first and then join together for some fun!

#### U.U. 101 – Unitarianism and the Transcendentalists May 8, 11:30 am

This program will explore the history of Transcendentalism and how it influenced Unitarianism and eventually Unitarian Universalism. Looking at the wisdom and words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Louisa May Alcott, Walt Whitman, and others, we'll explore the basic tenants of Transcendentalism and how they may still hold relevance today.

#### Beads and Spiritual Practice May 22, 11:30 am

This program will explore the role that beads have played in various religious traditions. Whether the rosary, mala, misbaha, or other forms of prayer beads, the significance of beads to help people center and transcend is long and rich. Participants are encouraged to bring beads to use and/or share. Beads will be provided as well. Participants will have the opportunity to make a "7 Principles" set of beads or create one of personal significance for themselves. Participants must be 14 or older to attend.

#### Adult RE Class

May 8, 9:15 a.m. Emerson Place

Our discussion of *The Meaning of the 20th Century* (1964) by Kenneth Boulding will continue. Having already discussed chapters 1, 2 & 5 about the two great transitions and the population problem, Ron Glossop will lead discussion on the other chapters on the importance of the social sciences for the current transition from civilized society to post-civilized society and the challenges of avoiding war and running out of resources.

May 15 & 29, 11:30 am "The Seekers" Emerson Place  
Seekers will meet when Sunshine does not teach. May's theme is transcendence. Unitarian Universalists have a long history of relying on our own direct experience due to the Transcendentalists movement that influenced us. Questions for discussion are: How do you experience the wonder and mystery of the universe? Is the transcendent experience only related to joy? What does transcendence mean to you? How does our having no creed relate to the transcendent experience? "



### Child Dedication on May 8<sup>th</sup>

Unitarian Universalists do not believe in baptism. We leave that decision to those who have come of age. In our tradition, we dedicate the resources and support of our families and community to raising a child with love and care. If you would like your infant or child to be dedicated within this church community during worship on May 8<sup>th</sup>, please contact Pastor Wolfe by May 5<sup>th</sup> at [swolfe@uuma.org](mailto:swolfe@uuma.org).

### Church Potluck Lunch May 1st @ 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.



We will have an intergenerational game activity to enjoy as well. Great fun for all!



From the Editor

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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

## Out of the Ordinary

*“There is a Light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens, beyond the highest, the very highest heavens. This is the Light that shines in our heart.”*

~Chandogya Upanishad

Our Transcendentalist ancestors went in search of a spirituality that went beyond the cold calculating reason that made up much Unitarian thought in the 1820s. For these individuals, personal experience spoke to a piece of reality beyond what could be understood in the physical realm – a spirituality beyond all things. Many religious traditions embrace this question of transcendence – of experience beyond the physical be it through story, meditation, yoga, dance, singing, or ritual.

Listen to a favorite piece of music or read a favorite book and you may find yourself transported into a different way of being than you are normally accustomed. This is the core of transcendence – to go beyond the normal or physical. There are places in our experience that move us out of the mundane and into majestic wonder and grace. These experiences provide unique insight into the wisdom of the universe and of ourselves.

For our Transcendentalist ancestors, one could not completely separate the transcendent and the immanent (that which is found within the physical realm). They had no desire to give up reason or science. What they wanted was something with more richness and depth of spirit. It is perhaps no surprise that many of them took to writing, such as Louisa May Alcott or Walt Whitman, to explore the transcendent places in their lives. It moved them into new ways of thinking.

It is for this reason that they looked to the wisdom of Hinduism – a religion that celebrated both the immanent and transcendent. In Hinduism, Brahma is both immanent and transcendent in nature. One of the first stories of The Upanishads describes Brahma as filling the gods with wonder. When we are filled with wonder we are moved out of the ordinary spaces of our lives – we experience transcendence.

I invite you to consider this month where you experience moments of transcendence. Do you experience wonder and mystery in your life? What has happened recently that has helped you see wisdom in the unordinary? How do you step out of the routines of life into new and unexpected spaces? What do you find there? What is that light that shines in your heart?

Pastor Sunshine J. Wolfe

## Religious Education for Children and Youth



Children and youth will start in worship and then go to their R.E. classes. Parents and guardians, please note that classes will run until 11:30 am. We will have intergenerational worship on May 8th. **Our last Religious Education classes for this year will be May 15<sup>th</sup>. We will have no religious education during the summer. Look for classes to return in September.**

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### Race in Film: Rabbit Proof Fence (PG)

Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.



The last movie in this year’s series, this film follows three aboriginal girls as they make are removed from their native home and struggle across the Australian outback to return. The film is powerful in artistry and narrative and provides a unique look into the impact that eugenics had in the early 1900s.

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**Please remember to bring non-perishable foods to contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Pantry – It’s the right thing to do.**



**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.



## 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](#))

### MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBER!



**Matt Hagan**

I'm a 23 year old guy from Edwardsville, although I grew up over in Staunton. I went to Ranken Technical College to study server infrastructure, and I currently work there as our Client Services Technician, which is a fancy way of saying I fix the computers and keep the tech on campus running. If that sounds fun, trust me in saying that it isn't. My hobbies include reading (comics, philosophy, and good fiction novels), music, gaming, and collecting / building models.

I happened upon Unitarianism when I left Christianity a few years ago. Like many who do that, I was looking for something else. Unitarianism seemed interesting, a place for community and individual soul searching. Unfortunately, I lived too far away to really consider going to church here at the time. Now that I live in Edwardsville, the option is much more viable, and now that I've been to a couple of services, I'm happy to say that I want to be a part of your community!

## Thank You!



The Abundance Sunday coordinators, Michael Schmidt and Robin Crane, thank all members of the team who helped make our spring celebration so fruitful. We also thank the congregation as a whole for your loving responsiveness. It was indeed a pleasure working with you all, especially:

- Dee Evans, advisor and Board liaison, and Jack-of-all trades
- Announcer Kayci Combs-Lueker
- Announcer Ed Navarre
- Announcer Paul Fischer
- Claudia Harju and Phil Embree, hosts
- Those who spontaneously helped with the serving and clean-up of the Abundance Sunday luncheon
- Lucy Bouton, post-luncheon thank-yous
- Rev. Bill Sasso, our guest speaker
- Sandy Shaner, for data and advice on tracking commitments
- Board Members, for food, telephoning, and planning
- Ken Hoeft, slides
- Joy Hoeft and Mary Johnson, phoning
- Becky Green, for ushering every letter and form through edits and printings and provided data
- Isabella Navarre and Ben Hoeft, who distributed giving cards and writing implements with smiles and enthusiasm
- Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, advisor

(If we've left anyone out, we apologize. Everyone who helped was greatly appreciated)

Those who didn't participate in Abundance Sunday have received a final letter with opportunity to pledge their financial contribution to the church. Any contribution, of any amount, is appreciated. We'd really like to hear from you!

Thank you, Congregation, for your responsiveness. We are hopeful that our Abundance Sunday luncheon has strengthened our community and that our giving of both financial resources and time-and-talent, will increase our ability to live out our principles and further enrich our creative worship.

## 4th Saturday Lunches: We Need Help for May, June, and July!



On Saturday, April 23, we had another successful 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch for homeless and other persons in the community needing help with food and personal care items. Organized by Robyn Stranquist, about ten volunteers participated in making, serving, and cleaning up after of luncheon of chicken-rice soup, turkey sandwiches, endless salad, fruit and cookies. On Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, the congregation was able to share in a similar menu.

The congregation and the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday guests who count on us really need some people to step forward to organize the next lunch on May 28. PLEASE help. It's hard work for only a short period of time, and it's rewarding. We have clear directions to help you, and starting early enables you to get volunteers just by talking to people at coffee hour after church service. Most of the preparation can be done a day or so ahead of time in the church kitchen, and volunteers help set up, serve, and clean up.

Your commitment is for food preparation ahead of the scheduled Saturday, plus 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the Saturday of the luncheon. Soup and sandwiches and easy dessert; maybe salad and fruit. Simple, right?

We have Lunch Leaders for August, September, October, November, and January. WE need someone(s) for the following dates:

- (1) May 28
- (2) June 25
- (3) July 23
- (4) December, 2016
- (5) February, 2017
- (6) March, 2017

Please sign up AS SOON AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN on the clipboard in the Wuerker Room or e-mail Robin Crane at [patriot4511@gmail.com](mailto:patriot4511@gmail.com). The "Regulars" can't keep up with major responsibility every month and it will be so much easier and more fruitful if we share in the commitment.



### **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Congregational Meeting on  
June 5<sup>th</sup>, following service.  
More information to follow**

## Personal care items needed for next month.

This is what we need, we have a lot of the other items, please only donate what we need.

Toilet paper (we are OUT)  
Baby wipes  
Pull ups (diapers) 1-t or 2-t  
2-in-1 shampoo (VO5 is both popular and available at the dollar store)  
Bleach  
Dishwashing liquid  
Laundry detergent  
Body lotion  
Shower gel  
Deodorant  
Depends for women

If you cannot supply the items, but can spare some money, please specify this is for 4th Saturday personal care items.



## "History Extravaganza" Trivia Night May 20th, 7 pm



From UU history to local Alton history to fabulous "historical" 1980s music – join us for this all-ages fun filled night.

- 20 a person tables of 8 purchase an entire table for \$150.00!!
- 8 rounds of 10 questions, including photo challenge round and name that 80's tune!!
- BYOB We will have popcorn and soda.
- Costumes and theme tables are encouraged!! Represent your favorite era!
- Silent Auction. We are looking for items. Please see Paul Fisher or Sayer Johnson for details.

## Alton Area Cluster Book Club YOU'RE INVITED!

The Alton Area Cluster Book Club will meet on Thursday May 19th. They will continue reading "*Ferguson & Faith: SparLasking Leadership & Awakening Community.*" One need not have read the book to attend as we will be reading it together at the meetings.



## Summary of Board Meeting April 12, 2016

Revisions to our Youth/Child Protection Policy were approved.

Due to an error made in transferring the Quickbooks account to our church administrator, the Minister's Discretionary Fund was overspent, so we will need to fund that account to make up the difference. We will probably have a special Sunday plate collection in May for that fund, as has been our past practice.

The Endowment Fund has made its annual transfer of funds to the church. This year was better than expected, with a transfer of \$5154.65.

Pledge collection has been improving, thanks to those who paid up and to donations of new members. Remember to make your pledge for 2016-1017 if you have not already done so, so a budget for next year can be made. Thanks to Robin Crane and Mike Schmidt for planning a successful Abundant Sunday pledge drive.

Sandy Shaner is planning to work on any needed by-law changes this month, to have them ready for Board approval in May. Any changes needed will be voted on by the congregation at the annual meeting in June.

The tower roofing bids are still in progress. We're hoping that will be ready for work very soon.

The Board will be starting a search for another interim minister, just in case we don't get a full time minister in the search process. We know there will be at least one applicant for full time, but it will be up to the Search Committee to decide if an applicant meets our needs.

The Board is supporting the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Lunch program by doing the lunch in November. Other families or groups are urged to sign up for one of the other available months.

The Board discussed the possibility of having a "treasurer in training" position to help solve the problem of needing to have a second person available to step in when a treasurer's term ends or when the treasurer is unavailable. Sandy and Rev. Wolfe will meet to plan a proposal for the Board.

We will again participate in the St. Louis Pride Parade in June. Contact Debby Lovell if you are interested in helping plan with other area congregations. All people

can march with our group to support our LGBT community. The parade is really a lot of fun for kids and adults.

Board nominations are in progress, led by Sabrina Trupia. She will take names for a member-at-large and a President-Elect.

Four members will be going to the General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. The Board voted for them to be our official delegates and to vote their conscience, keeping in mind what is in the best interest of the church. The Ware Lecture at Assembly will be delivered by Krista Tippit of NPR. We're planning to have a watch party here at the church for that lecture.

The Youth group is going to plant a garden here at church for Earth Day. Robin Stranquist will be helping, and will keep the garden watered. She has been doing a beautiful jobs with the church grounds, and can always use help in planting, weeding, etc.

Several new fundraiser events are coming up this spring/summer:

Peg Flach has submitted a plan for a mini-retreat and evening concert fundraiser for Nov.12 – 13.

The Trivia fundraiser is scheduled for May 20. Be getting together your tables of eight. You can reserve a table by contacting Sayer Johnson or Paul Fischer. Also be thinking of items you can donate for the silent auction.

Rev. Wolfe will be having a curry dinner and Bollywood movie night fundraiser in June.

The time for Religious Education has been returned to 10:30 – 11:30. The children will start out in the sanctuary with parents and leave for RE from there.

Pat Moore, Secretary



### *Is It Your Turn?*

If you've ever had a cup of coffee or tea, or a glass of water or lemonade, or had a snack during coffee hour, or enjoyed a potluck lunch at church, please take **YOUR** turn at doing coffee hour cleanup. It should not take more than 30 minutes to take care of the dishes following our policy of "wash, dry, and put away." There is a signup sheet for April through May on the desk in the Wuerker Room. Thanks!

# 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** – Robin Crane & Michael Schmidt

**Endowment Fund** – Kelly Crone-Willis

**Finance** – Matt Koch

**Membership** – Mary Weber

**Sunday Support Ministries** – Claudia Harju

### Worship Associates

Tom Cochran

Robin Crane

Dee Evans

Joy Hoeft

Yomi Kinder

Rebecca Walters



## **General Assembly 2016 Is in Columbus, OH!**

Unitarian Universalist General Assembly will be from June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>. This is a great opportunity to meet UUs from all over the world and to get jazzed about the many ways our religion lives in the world. This year's Ware Lecture will be given by Krista Tippett, the host of the Public Radio show "On Being." There are many ways to participate in General Assembly including online and in-person. If you wish to be a delegate (online or in-person), please contact Debby Lovell or Pastor Sunshine ASAP. For those attending 1 day or all of the days, please know that housing reservations begin March 1<sup>st</sup> from the UUA website at [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga).

## **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 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, at 5:30 p.m.



We need to let you know that we do not have a ministerial candidate at this time. Our Ministerial Settlement Representative, Reverend Emmy Lou Belcher, has repeatedly stressed the importance of not choosing someone just so we can fill the pulpit. Also, it must be a good fit for the minister as well as our church.

We've heard from several important sources that there are more churches searching than there are ministers available. We will be in contact with the UUA Transitions Office this week to find out if they have any other options available for us. If not, the Board will look into having an Interim Minister Search Committee find another interim minister for the next year.

We will pass along information as we learn things. Thank you for your patience during this process. We have faith that the right person WILL come along!

With warm regards,  
Nance Conniff  
MSC Chair

### What is The Point?

**The Point is a customizable Unitarian Universalist retreat for all ages.**

The staff at **The Point UU Retreat** has been reaching out to churches all over the Midwest letting them know about the centrally located UU retreat known as The Point. We have participants that travel as many as 12 hours by car to spend a week with fellow UU's in a beautiful retreat environment for all ages.

Our website is...

[www.thepointuu.org](http://www.thepointuu.org)

We also have videos explaining what The Point is and what to expect when you get there.

<https://youtu.be/eeT3ovUGBZA>

This video explains all the different programming and workshops that we have for our participants.

<https://youtu.be/FzUeY-3SNMc>

This video is a quick look at what a day at The Point looks like and all the special events that happen during the week.

[https://youtu.be/da\\_0HgeDHs](https://youtu.be/da_0HgeDHs)

Registration is up and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sean Briscoe, The Point Committee Member

## INTEREST GROUPS:

### Anna Ds – Women's Alliance May 5th, 11:30 am



This month's get together will be at Peg Flach's lakeside house in Edwardsville. She volunteered at last Thursday's meeting, and we all agreed to make it a potluck to complement the meat she'll prepare. A follow-up e-mail from Peg has been sent, with address, driving instructions and a request to let her know what you'll bring when you RSVP. Contact me for directions or other questions.



### Men's Monthly Lunch May 12th, 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](mailto:pphebert@mail.com)

### Free For All (formerly 50 Plus)

May 7th @ 10:30 am



We *were* making great progress through the UU history DVD series, but last month's lesson was cancelled due to a conflicting event. So, for all of us who were bummed that we had missed out, you have a second chance – lesson V is rescheduled for this Saturday! I think Paul Hebert will again set up the system (or Jerry Johnson will) so we can learn more about UUA history. Part V follows both Unitarianism and Universalism through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they evolve, from Christian bible-oriented religions to our present day non-creedal movement. It discusses influences as diverse as the Civil War, Feminism and Suffrage, Darwin's "On The Origin of Species," and the Social Gospel.