

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



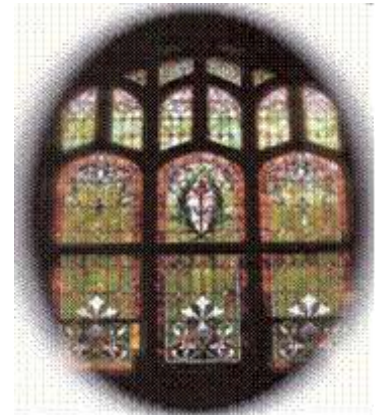
Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Rev. Dawn Fortune

Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M. The Theme for October is Integrity

October 2

Special 10:30 A.M. Service in the Park!

Joint event with Emerson UU Chapel October 2

On October 2, Emerson UU Chapel will host the annual Fall Fest cookout and picnic, which this year will be a shared event with the members of the First Unitarian Church of Alton, IL. The event will take place at the Cochran Pavilion at Babler State Park in Wildwood, MO and will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a short worship service followed by a cookout and fellowship. Hot dogs and buns will be provided by Emerson Chapel members. Please bring meat, charcoal, dishes to share and lawn chairs if you'd like. The members at the Emerson congregation voiced enthusiasm about this and it should be a great event.

(There will be NO service at the Alton church this day.)

October 9, 10:00 A.M.

Rev. Dawn Fortune

Worship Associate: Robin Crane

October 16, 10:00 A.M.

Sayer Johnson

Worship Associate: Robin Crane

October 23, 10:00 A.M.

Andy Grissell

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

October 30, 10:00 A.M.

Rev. Dawn Fortune

Worship Associate: Yomi Kinder

ADULT RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT (ARE)

“The Seekers”

The theme of the month for October is Integrity. How do we go about making a life with integrity, in this challenging world? Join us after service each week to share and discuss what we've learned that day and how it applies to our lives.

Thoughts of Bells and Water

From Interim Minister
Rev. Dawn Fortune
September 15, 2016

This past week has brought us many memories. It was the 15th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. For many congregations, last week and this week will mark the annual ingathering ritual of Water Communion, which blends our memories and experiences into a common spiritual pool to be shared.



When I arrived at First Unitarian in Alton, Rev. Wolfe and I sat down to share the things that ministers share: where the keys are, how to log onto the internet, which files hold which information. And the secret location of The Bell.

The Bell, I learned, was a gift from a long-ago minister who brought it to First Unitarian from a trip to Maine. Now, some of you know that I am from New England, and some even know that I spent most of my life in Maine. I recognized The Bell immediately as one of a series of bells created by NorthCountry Wind Bells in Round Pond, Maine. When they were originally introduced, there were three sizes of bells, and each was tuned to accurately ring in the same tones as the buoy bells in the harbor for which it was named. The bell I have at home (pictured here) is tuned to one of the harbor bells in Penobscot Bay. The Bell that belongs to the church seems to be either the Bar Harbor bell or the Bass Harbor bell.

Fishermen on the coast know the sound made by each bell in the same way a parent knows the voice of each of their children. There are differences in tone and pitch, and differences in the pattern of sound. The rougher the seas, the closer the notes were to each other. There is a haunting loneliness to the sound of these bells that evokes the image of fishermen in boats wrapped thick in fog, trying to find the safe shelter of the harbor along the many miles of Maine's rock-bound coast. Those rocks regularly crush and destroy boats, so the sound of the bells is a true lifeline to fishermen who work the coastal waters.

Rev. Wolfe shared with me that The Bell had been rung in a vigorous and enthusiastic way to gather people for worship. The energetic ringing was more reminiscent of the chuck wagon cook calling the cowhands to chow than anything worshipful, she said, so The Bell was removed

in the hopes that a more ... contemplative method could be employed to gather Sunday morning worshippers. Growing up hearing those bells, the very thought of those tones being rung in that manner strikes terror in my subconscious. There is no weather condition in the world that could cause those bells to ring in the fashion Rev. Wolfe described, and I wholeheartedly endorsed the sequestering of The Bell.

And when I got here, one of the things I heard from many people was about how much they missed The Bell. I understand that. I miss hearing those notes myself, and am grateful when a breeze causes the bell on my back porch to chime. But in the same way a drummer experiences horror when an amateur picks up drumsticks and flails in an undisciplined frenzy on a drum kit, I experience that same horror when someone grabs the windcatcher portion of the bell and swirls it around to make an unholy racket. It feels disrespectful to the tradition of the craftspeople who created the bell and to the life-preserving nature of the actual harbor buoy bells after which each model is crafted. Those chimes represent safe harbor and homecoming, a return to warmth and shelter, hopefully with a profitable haul from the ocean's depths. They are blessed and they are holy.

The Bell presently resides in the minister's study. I have taken it from its hiding place and have yet to decide where it should go. Ideally, it should be hung outdoors where the wind can move the windcatcher and cause the bell to chime in its natural fashion. I welcome your thoughts and recommendations for where it might best serve the peaceful purpose for which it was created.

In the meantime, I have purchased for worship a singing bowl of Tibetan design that can either be struck as a chime or made to sing a single, long, vibrational tone. Bells are a part of the worship experience in traditions from all over the globe and down through the ages. It is right that we continue that holy ritual. And we are called to do so in a way that honors the bell, its purpose, and its makers.

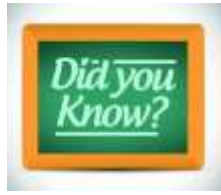
I look forward to seeing everyone in worship this week for our annual water communion. Like the bells that are held aloft by the waters of Maine's harbors, the memories and experiences of the people who share in this ritual are cradled and comforted by the water that will be joined in the common pool.

Blessings,
Rev. Dawn



Non-perishable foods items are always needed to contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Pantry. It's important to help our neighbors get the food they need.

From the Prez



When the board met with the members by the fireplace to inform you that we did not have enough money for a full time minister, you set three goals:

One was to hire a minister even if it was half time.

The second goal was to get our finances straight.

The third goal was to grow church membership.

When I shared these with Rev. Dawn, Dawn reminded me that all this will come if we keep our eyes on our mission. We as a church wrote this mission well over a year ago.

Outward Reaching, Inward Seeking. We are creating and nurturing an intentional community that values social justice, acceptance and the embodiment of UU principles. Let us question together.

We have many things working toward accomplishing this mission. We have our weekly Sunday service, religious education on Sunday, a Spiritual UU Exercises group, and a Meditation Group that meets every other Monday, a 50+ group, and we are working on giving out personal care products to the needy. We have teams that are working hard to make our experiences pleasant. Kelly and Robyn take care of the building and the grounds. Mike sees that we have coffee every week. Over 14 people came to clean our church. Our board works hard. These are just some of the things we do to accomplish our mission. But working toward our mission does not mean the board has forgotten what you asked.

We did hire Rev. Dawn who has already worked out a wonderful schedule with our congregation and we have meshed well with Emerson in this process due to Dawn's leadership.

We are working on our finances. We are getting our accounts straight and found some money that we did not know we had — not a lot — but some. We will be providing exact information on our finances as soon as we decide what we need to do about the number of accounts we have.

Please be patient with us in this process. We will have some facts and figures for you by the next newsletter. We found that we do have money to fix the roof of each turret to prevent any further damage to our church.

Growing members is something that will come as we continue to work on our mission. However, Michael Schmidt, our president elect is making growing the church a priority for this church year. He is working in conjunction with Mary Weber. Two people alone cannot do this. So, if you would like to help on this goal, please step forward and contact Michael or Mary or both. We are a great congregation and we have a lot to share.

Respectfully, Dee Evans

From the Interim Minister

Rev. Dawn Fortune

September 22, 2016

Greetings to all!

The church year is underway and seems to be rolling along in good shape.

The work of a congregation in its third year of interim is not clearly defined and tends to be considered on a congregation-by-congregation basis. What strikes me as some of the work that First Unitarian might engage in is consideration of what it means to have a half-time minister, and how the responsibilities of lay leaders will shift and change to make that adjustment. Many of the decisions that have historically been made by the minister will now be within the purview of the board of trustees and the leaders of various teams and committees. It will take some adjusting, and there will undoubtedly be times when things get missed or done twice, but it will all sift out in the end.

Rev. Dawn's Schedule:

Wed – Sunday church office	Sunday preaching
Sept 21-23 Emerson	9/23 off
Sept. 28-Oct. 2 Emerson	10/2 Emerson (Babler Park)
Oct. 5-9 Alton	10/9 Alton
Oct. 12-16 Emerson	10/12 Emerson
Oct. 19-23 Alton	10/23 off
Oct. 26-30 Alton	10/30 Alton
Nov. 2-6 Emerson	11/6 Emerson
Nov. 9-13 Alton	11/13 Alton

If you'd like to meet with me, the best days are Wednesdays and Thursdays when I have regular office hours, although I recommend making an appointment so things don't overlap. I can also sometimes meet on Fridays or Saturdays, depending on my schedule, so if midweek doesn't work for you, let me know and I'll flex to make things fit.

As always, you can get in touch with me at my cell phone (314) 399-1023 or at my church email revdawnfortune@gmail.com

Peace,
Rev. Dawn



Summary of August and September Board Meetings

The Board has been having monthly meetings with the Emerson Board, just to become acquainted and share ideas. If you

would like to get to know Rev. Dawn better or have another need, please call them to make an appointment. Office hours are Wed. and Thur. and possibly Sat. They would love to get to know us better. The minister's discretionary fund has been funded, so Rev. Dawn can now help members or non-members with small needs or maybe direct you to sources of greater help. All fifth Sunday non-designated offerings will go to that fund, or you may make a donation by designating "Minister's Fund" on your check or envelope. The Pastoral Care Team has been meeting with Rev. Dawn and are always available to talk with members. Rev. Dawn is available to us during the weeks before she preaches here, so check the newsletter for weeks of availability. The Worship Associates have been meeting with Rev. Dawn to plan our services. They have resumed having printed order-of-services and are trying to keep liturgy in the same format. Rev. Dawn has been meeting with various teams as time permits. Rev. Dawn is planning to offer a vesper service on the night following the election to have a safe and comfortable place to be together. Look for more news to follow.

Our church bank accounts have many out-of-date signatories on them. In an effort to bring them up-to-date to be in accord with our new Bank Accounts Policy, we have found it extremely difficult to work with U.S. Bank. The Bank continues to insist that all signatories (old and new) be present at one time to make the changes, which is impossible, since some of those folks now live out of town, and others are no longer church members. A committee has been interviewing other banks, and will close our U.S. accounts and move funds to a different bank when that survey is finished.

Our treasurer Lisa Strangeman reports that there have been some difficulties getting correct reports from Quickbooks. She will be working with our office administrator Becky Green to solve the problems.

The roofing contract for our two towers has been awarded to Beale. They will do a tear off and complete replacement of those two roofs on September 26 for a total cost of \$45,099. It will be mostly paid for from what remains of our Capital Campaign fund, and the remainder will be taken from the money market. This should put an end to leaks which were ruining the walls.

Our church continues to be a hot spot for ghost tours. Currently we have three tour companies bringing folks through. We are working on updating their contracts, raising prices, and assuring that they provide proper insurance. It will be necessary to have a member present

during tours to make us compliant with our insurance, so we will be asking for volunteers to serve in that capacity. Contact a Board member if you want to volunteer.

Debby Lovell is in the process of getting together a new Ministerial Search Committee for Board approval. If you would like to serve, contact Debby.

Debby is also working on improving our web site, updating, and removing viruses. The Board has given their approval of improvements as long as no cost is involved.

If you are planning a committee meeting, wedding, birthday party, group session, workday, or any other use of the building except for on Sunday mornings, please check with Becky to get it on the calendar. This is VERY IMPORTANT to make sure uses don't overlap.

We have decided not to provide meals for fourth Saturday any longer, but we will still collect canned goods or money offerings for the food pantry. Put your donations in the basket in the front hallway. We will make our focus on the giving of personal care items. The team will publish a monthly list of needs, so check that list before you shop. If you have time to help, contact Sabrina Trupia.

Becky is working on an updated Church Directory and will email it to members when it's ready. Paper copies will be available only on request. It's VERY IMPORTANT that the directory is kept private, since none of us wants our personal family information to fall into the wrong hands. Shred your old directories when you get new ones.

The Board is working on a new policy for the position of Wedding Coordinator. Some weddings are asking to use the sound system, so we may need to increase the cost to cover that use.

We need some new members to step up to plan social events and/or fundraisers. Do you have some ideas? Let Mike Schmidt know, and let's get going with something fun!

We will try to do a better job of communicating news to members who don't have computers. Also, we are hoping to get our church Facebook page more active. If you want to be included in our UU Members and Friends Facebook group, contact a Board member. You may friend Rev. Dawn on Facebook, and they will accept your request. Sandy Shaner plans to write a bio of Rev. Dawn to submit to our local newspapers.

Ron Glossop has made a proposal to the Board that he is willing to contribute a significant amount of money to help make our church more accessible. He feels, as do we, that this is important for our growth and for attracting a new minister. Ideas were already studied somewhat by the Capital Campaign Committee, but were not pursued when it was evident that we only had enough money for the windows, roof, HVAC, and kitchen upgrades. Mike Schmidt is going to be looking into the options of either a parking area in the current park or an elevator near the

Alby entrance. We would need the approval of using the park grounds (which is city property) for a parking lot or for any exterior changes to the building (since our building is in a historic area). Talk to Board members about your thoughts on these projects. Are you willing to make a donation to help get it done?

In our "spare" time, the Board is reading and discussing Growing a Beloved Community, which is available from Beacon Press.

The Board is planning its annual "retreat" for Oct. 29, with a topic of "How are we Carrying Out our Mission?" The next regular Board meeting will be Oct. 20. All are welcome.

Pat Moore, Board Secretary



Memorial Service for Richard Evans,

Dee Evans' husband, will be October 8th at 12 noon.

A dinner will follow in the Wuerker Room. No

donations are necessary. If anyone wishes to donate, please do so to Senior Services Plus Meals on Wheels, one of Richard's favorite Charities.

All are welcome to this memorial

If you want goodies for our Sunday coffee hours, please bring some to share. We have no more goodies, like fruit, cookies, cheese, left. Any donations of coffee, tea, creamer, lemonade, and so on are welcome. Mike Tarbulski is doing a great job of keeping coffee and goodies out on Sunday. So, if you like goodies, please help us out by bringing some every so often.



From the Editor
church@firstualton.org

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Newsletter Deadline is on the 15 of each month. Send info. to Dorothy Wilson djjccw@sbcglobal.net and to Becky Green at church

Religious Education for Children and Youth

RE classes started 9/25/16. We will have a week off from Children's RE due to the Joint Picnic with Emerson Congregation. Classes will resume on 10/9/16.

The Youth Group (6th- 12th grade) is also in need of a few more facilitators, who would like to lead and be a partner. The Youth Group is participating in a curriculum called Popcorn Theology, where they watch a portion of a movie that demonstrates a particular theme. There is discussion, and a few activities. Popcorn and soda included.

If you have any questions or comments about RE, please contact Joy Hoeft, kjabhoeft@gmail.com. Please support programs for all ages to keep them interested in coming to church – they're our future!



Nursery services are available for children under 4 years of age.

Special Vespers Service November 9



I want to alert you to a special worship service that I am planning in November. As you are aware, the national presidential election takes place on November 8. This year has seen the most brutally divisive and charged national election season our country has seen in living memory. Families and friends are deeply divided, relationships are being damaged and people are hurting. No matter who wins the election, people will need a place to be safe and process the election and what it means for the future of our nation and our community.

To that end, I am planning a special vespers service on November 9, the day after the election, at 7 pm. It will be a service of readings and hymns, with a short reflection by me, and space for people to talk and share, both before the service and afterwards in the Wuerker Room. We will be publicizing this event to the larger Alton community and inviting the people at Emerson Chapel to join us for this time of quiet healing and reflection. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

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](#))

4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, October 22, 11 A.M.

The 4th Saturday personal care item distribution started up again on Saturday, September 24th. We will continue to need your contributions. We are no longer doing lunches because Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church, two blocks away, is providing lunches on the 4th Saturday. But we can double down on our niche - giving out much needed items that cannot be purchased through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The personal care storage room downstairs has been reorganized and rearranged to allow us better access to the various items. An inventory each month will help us decide what donated items are needed. Items we run low on will vary each month and, with limited storage space, the team will announce during service and post on "Church This Week" what will be needed for the October 22nd distribution. If possible, please purchase items that are fragrance free.

As always, cash or check donations are also gladly accepted. Please be sure to indicate that the funds are for "personal care items".



"Beyond Boundaries: Controversies, Frontiers, and Growth in Unitarian Universalism"

Thursday, Oct. 27 – Sunday, Oct. 30, 2016

At the Airport Hilton, Bloomington MN

Put on by the UU Collegium for Liberal Religious Studies and the Unitarian Universalist History & Heritage Society.

Papers, panels, posters, and workshops related to the study of Unitarian Universalism past, present, and future.

Registration: \$285

This fee includes meals from Thursday dinner through Sunday lunch (no breakfasts) (Some financial aid up to \$150 is available for students or those with limited means.).

Housing: Airport Hilton: \$99 per night.

For further information go to uuconvo.org

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."

Please look over your new Church Directory and check it for errors or missing information. Please contact me and I will correct it.

church@firstuualton.org.



Thank you,

Becky Green, Administrator & Bookkeeper

INTEREST GROUPS:

50+ Group / Free For All **October 1, 10:30 am** **UPDATE! We're Meeting** **Again**



We talked about the book *Landscapes of Aging & Spirituality*, edited by Kathleen Montgomery. It's a small book with short reflections that we can read aloud (after check-in) and then discuss. Hope all of you can come — 10:30 am, Wuerker Room, followed by lunch for those who want to continue the conversation in a different location. Remember, there really is not an age requirement to join us.

Anna Ds – Women's Alliance **October 6, 11:30 am**

Castelli's Restaurant
3400 Fosterburg Rd, Alton,
IL 618-462-4620

Please contact Sandy no later than Monday, Oct 3rd so she can complete our reservations. We'll have a great visit with many friends, old and new.



Men's Monthly Lunch **October 13, 11:30 am**



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

Healing Energy Meditation **October 10th and October 24th** **6:30 pm by fireplace at church**

Powerful guided mediations, words of wisdom, beautiful music, laughter, chanting, sharing, exploring many paths to connect with the Light and to experience and Bless the Interdependent Web of Life. We bring no answers, only open minds and questing hearts. Please join us.



We had a good group for our September 4th meeting! Thanks to all who came and stayed! Your presence was appreciated and necessary!



The October meeting was actually held on September 25, since there is the picnic with Emerson on October 2.

There will not be a meeting in October. Our next meeting will be Sunday, November 2 in the Sanctuary.

For those of you who couldn't attend, I have a handout, a notebook and pen for you. (I will make a point of carrying them with me when I come to church). But you can still keep the thoughts in a journal (another journal) until you have the one from me.

Suggestions regarding the meditation / contemplation / prayer (this is for everyone): Pick the same time of day. Do the breath meditation first. When you meditate on the breath, other (non-breath) thoughts will come to your mind. It's completely normal and expected. Just lightly shoo them away. When your mind is quieted after a while of breathing, you can start contemplation on your faith history or your life history (how did I get here?). I would suggest contemplating just one section of it. But you can look at the whole thing too as long as you focus on the object of contemplation. Again, during contemplation, you will get distracted by other thoughts. When that happens, gently shoo them away. But do observe what kind of other thoughts come up. Maybe write them down. How long for meditation/contemplation? However long you can do it. The longer the time, the easier it gets to quiet the mind.

For the prayer, you may want to write it down after the contemplation has given you the 'material', or just say it at the end of your practice. This can be done separately from meditation contemplation. See what works for you.

What to keep in the journal? Your own book of 'experiments' or (as Ignatius would call them) rules for what works for you, what deepens your self-awareness (the goal for this month).

I will set up a private Facebook group for comments and questions. For that to work, I have to be your Facebook friend, so let me know if you aren't on Facebook or if you are and we aren't friends, so I can send out a digest by email instead.

Thanks again for your participation. Many blessings,

Sabrina



WHAT: Time for Something Better,

WHERE: First UU of Alton

WHEN: Saturday Nov 12 and Sunday Nov 13, 2016: Veteran's Day weekend

This is an all-gender church and community event

Saturday afternoon mini-retreat

Saturday evening catered dinner

Saturday night concert featuring The Troubadours of Divine Bliss

Sunday Spoken Word service featuring local writers and the Troubadours.

WHY: Because we all need a Weekend of WOW

Wellness,
Oh-My-Goodness Opportunities for Over-the-Top Fun,
Workshops, Words & Wonderful Music!



Here is a link to the Troubadours performing their song, as well as the lyrics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCZdTbxwSxs>

CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2016 - 2017

Board of Trustees

Board President- Dee Evans
President-Elect- Michael Schmidt
Past President- Debby Lovell
Treasurer- Lisa Strangeman
Secretary- Pat Moore
At-Large- Robin Crane
At-Large- Paul Hebert

Committee/Team Leads

Transitions Committee - TBA
Social Events- Vacant
Inte rfaith and U.U.- Vacant

Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer
Sandra Shaner

Religious Education Council

Chair-Joy Hoeft

Stewardship Committee

Building- Kelly Crone-Willis
Grounds- Robyn Stranquist
Canvass 2017- TBA
Endowment Fund- Kelly Crone-Willis
Finance- Matt Koch
Membership- Mary Weber
Sunday Support Ministries- TBA

Worship Associates

Tom Cochran
Robin Crane
Sayer Johnson
Joy Hoeft
Yomi Kinder
Rebecca Walters