

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 February Is Grace

February 5th

“Everyday Grace” – Sabrina Trupia

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

Monthly Pot-luck luncheon at 11:00



First Sunday

Pot Luck Luncheon

Sunday, February 5th, 11:15

Come, enjoy good food and
fellowship with your UU
church community!

All are welcome!

February 12th

Jay Worthey

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

February 19th

Rev. Dawn Fortune

Worship Associate: Robin Crane

February 26th

Kayci Combs-Lueker

Worship Associate:

**Nursery services are
available for children
under 5 years of age.**



The Seekers

Every Sunday, 11:15 am in the Emerson Room, We'll engage in a more in-depth discussion that day's sermon and the monthly topic. Everyone is welcome to put in “your 2 cents worth!” It's a great way to get to know your fellow congregants and to get a deeper understanding of the lessons we are learning.



If you are interested in joining our congregation,
please contact Reverend Dawn Fortune through their
e-mail: revdawnfortune@gmail.com
or by cell phone (314) 399-1023.

Summary of Board Meetings December 16 and January 17

Bi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be January 29 after Church

This is a summary of what the Board has been doing. It does not include what happens at the bi-annual meeting. It's important that members attend that important meeting to hear what is going on and to ask any questions they may have.

Accessibility: Mike Schmidt and Ron Glossop have been working on the idea of getting an elevator for the Alby side of the church. They met with an accessibility expert, and Mike has met with one elevator company. The cost of an elevator on the outside is in excess of \$100,000. Dee will talk to the UUA to see if any type of grant money is available.

Incorporation and 5013C Status: Robin Crane has been checking on our Incorporation paperwork to be sure it's up to date. We must have that before we can apply for 5013C status, which we would need to seek corporate donations for our Saturday giveaway program. It may also be required to seek grants for accessibility projects. Robin will continue to work on this project.

Web Site: Thanks to Jerry Johnson and Paul Hebert for working to get the site free of viruses. They and Debby Lovell will continue to work on improving the site. They may consider changing to a different server. They would welcome any suggestions you may have about the site.

Ministerial Search: The new search team is in place and have started meeting. The Board has discussed our current financial status and has voted to go ahead with the search for a half-time minister who will not be serving two churches and will preach twice each month. They feel that this is essential for our church to keep going and to grow, even if it depletes our reserve funds. Hopefully we will get all our pledged funds and continue to add new pledging units to help pay the minister, with the idea of growing back to full time ministry again. The team welcomes your input regarding what you want to see in a minister.

G-Drive: The church has been keeping all its documents on Google Drive. Mike Schmidt is working on getting those documents more organized, so things are easier to find.

Religious Education: Joy Hoeft and her committee have planned an interesting group of lessons for the elementary and youth groups, and a professional nursery worker is in place. However, they need more volunteers to do the teaching and assisting. We need two people with each

group at all times. Joy and Jennifer Lewis have been doing most of the teaching. The lessons have already been prepared, so all you need to do is show up. If you think the religious education is important, please see Joy to find out how you could help. If you miss the worship service to teach, you can always listen later online.

The Seekers discussion group meets every week after church if there is no other meeting. This adult RE group discusses the topic of the month and/or the day's sermon.

Stewardship: In order to finish our church year in the black, all members new to catch up on paying their pledges ASAP, since those pledges were counted on when this year's budget was developed. We also need to start now working on a stewardship program for 2017-18. If you are willing to work on that team, see Mike Schmidt. Rev. Dawn has promised to give some training to the group.

Building Repairs: The roof repairs to the two towers have been finished, but the ceiling still needs to be repaired, so we still are not using that foyer. A squirrel was able to chew through the Wuerker Room ceiling and cause some havoc, just as a raccoon had previously done. The ceiling is repaired, but we still need to be sure no garbage or food is left out to attract them. Be sure all food is either in the frig or in a sealed contain and that all garbage cans are emptied if you are helping with clean-up after church or other events. One of the pocket doors between the Wuerker Room and sanctuary is off the track. Tell Kelly Crone-Willis if you could help fix it, as it's too heavy for one person to handle.

Building Use Policy: Sandy Shaner and Rev. Dawn have worked out a policy for use of the building for weddings and other events. The Board is reviewing the policy before accepting it. Building use is free to active members, so they needed a way to define that. The definition they used is that the person has signed the membership book, pledged during the current year, and has made a documented financial contribution during the prior and current year.

Regional Assembly: Ask Dee or Rev. Dawn if you are interested in more information about attending the Midwest District Assembly in Oakbrook, IL in April or the UU General Assembly in New Orleans this summer.

The next Board Meeting is February 16 at 7:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend. Contact President Dee Evans ahead of time if you have business you would like added to the agenda.

Submitted by Pat Moore, Board Secretary

Religious Education for Children and Youth

From the Children & Youth RE

We are beginning the Spring Semester for Children & Youth RE. We are continuing with the UU SuperHeroes Bible People as well as adding some sessions from the UU Famous People for Elementary.

The Youth Group will be continuing with the Popcorn Theology curriculum where we will be watching excerpts from movies such as Fields of Dreams, Oh God!, Little Buddha, Spiderman, Life of PI, Jesus Christ Superstar, Evan Almighty, Jurassic Park, and Gandhi. Each movie is associated with a life theme where afterwards lively discussion questions as well as associated activities promote thinking and expressing their values, views, and how our UU faith fits in to our life. There is also lots of laughter, popcorn and soda.

We are still very much in need of volunteers to be teachers and just second person in the room. Please see Jennifer Lewis or Joy Hoeft.

Due to the lack of getting enough volunteers, the committee has decided not to have RE every Sunday. We encourage the children and Youth Group to attend church these Sundays when there are no classes.

Here are the dates of when there and will not be RE.

Feb 5 NO RE

Feb 12 RE Feb 19 RE Feb 26 RE

Mar 5 NO RE

Mar 12 RE Mar 19 RE Mar 26 RE

Apr 2 NO RE

Apr 9 RE

Apr 16 - Easter **NO RE** - should attend service -
Easter Egg Hunt after church

Apr 23 RE

Apr 30 **NO RE** - Church Picnic with Emerson

May 7 RE May 14 Last RE class

Joy

Nursery services are available for children under 5 years of age.



General Assembly 2017 New Orleans, LA June 21-25, 2017

A new UUA President will be chosen at this summer's GA. There are three candidates, all women:

Alison Miller, Susan Frederick-Gray, and Jeanne Pupke.

Visit www.uuworld.org/uuavote2017 to learn more.



A long-time member of this church, **Grace Madison**, died on December 29, 2016 at the age of 92. She and her husband Eldon joined the church in 1963 and were dedicated volunteers from that time forward, serving in

many ways. She did not want a formal memorial service held, however a remembrance of Grace was included in the church's regular worship service on January 8. Some of those who wrote about Grace after learning of her death commented that she was a "gentle, powerful woman" and a "grounded and forthright person" and a "gracious and wonderful hostess." Special memories were shared with the congregation by her friend Ginger McCall.

Former member of the church, **Sue Sutton**, died on January 1, 2017. She and her husband Joe were active members for a number of years. Our sympathy is extended to her son Chris and daughter-in-law Julia, and her grandchildren Emily and Max.



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**)



**From UU-UN Office:
Join Us in New York City,
April 6-8, 2017**

This April, join us in New York City for the Unitarian Universalist

United Nations Office's 2017 Intergenerational Spring Seminar:

Arm in Arm: Interfaith Action to Disarm Our Planet.

This year's seminar will equip participants with tools and skills to bring back to their communities to be active in building a more peaceful and compassionate world, free from armed violence. Hear from world class speakers, explore spirituality and activism, and attend a panel discussion within United Nations Headquarters building in New York!

The Spring Seminar is intergenerational and is open to people age 14+. Youth (high-schoolers age 14-18) must attend with an adult sponsor (max. 5 youth per sponsor) and arrive on Wednesday April 5th for orientation.

Some scholarships are available to offset the cost of registration. Please submit scholarship applications by January 16th – *people of color and young adults are strongly encouraged to apply!*

Please visit our UU-UN website to learn more and register! The final day to register will be February 27th.

**4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution
Saturday, Feb. 25th, 11 A.M**

Thanks to all who helped with our January 28th personal care item distribution. We provided sand-wiches to each of our guests, as well as your donations of personal care items. Laundry detergent, dish detergent, toilet paper seem to be always in demand; other items needed will be announced prior to the February event. These necessities can't be purchased using SNAP. This time of year cold weather clothing is really appreciated, as are basics like towels and washcloths. Cash or a checks are welcome, just be sure to indicate that the funds are for "personal care items". We have a donation collection bin at the bottom of the steps in the RE wing, next to the personal care inventory room. Please be sure items are placed there.



Items Needed for the February 25th event will be announced at a later date

**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
- Interfaith 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

- Mary Johnson
- Robin Crane
- Kayci Combs-Lueker
- Joy Hoeft

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



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

Ministerial Search Team

The Ministerial Search Committee wants to hear from you! We will be hosting Fireside Chats immediately after Sunday services from Jan. 29-Feb. 19th. This is your opportunity to let us know what you are hoping for in a new Minister. Your voice is important to finding the right match for our congregation. Questions? Please contact Tracey Koch at thowekoch@gmail.com



Crisis Food Center

Please help the Crisis Food Center in Alton assist those in need. Your contributions of canned meats, beans, stews, fruits, and vegetables will go a long way in providing meals for the hungry. When you do your regular grocery shopping please pick up a couple extra cans of food and bring them to church. There is a basket in the RE entrance hall to leave your donations.

INTEREST GROUPS:

Fellow Book Lovers!
Wednesday, Feb 1st,
6:30 to 7:30 pm
In the Wuerker Room



- Join us for a lively discussion of "The Tribe" by Sebastian Junger:
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/books/review/sebastian-jungers-tribe.html>
- If you are interested, please contact Nancy Conniff or Phil Embree.

Alton Area Cluster Book Group

The Alton Area Cluster Book Group continues its reading of "Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" by Debby Irving. The Group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month from 3 to 5 p.m. at the church. You do not need to have read the book or have your own copy of the book as we read the book aloud, passing copies around, and stopping often to discuss a point or topic. The next gathering will be on February 16th. If you are interested in attending, or getting on the group email list, contact Mary Johnson. mejohanson@mindspring.com



Anna Ds – Women's Alliance Thursday, February 2nd 11:30 am



Our winter schedule is in effect, meaning we have a "come as you are", gathering at 11:30 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. They are always open, we don't need a reservation and won't disappoint anyone if 2 or 12 arrive. If the weather is good, please come and join us. If the weather turns sour or is predicted to do so, stay safe and warm at home. If you can make, please remember to bring canned food for the food pantry!

If you have questions or information you'd like circulated to the group, just let Sandy know.

Men's Monthly Lunch Thursday, February 9th 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 Mondays February 13 & 27th



6:30 P.M. by the Fireplace

Our group is growing and attracting new people and new people are always very welcome. If you enjoy meditation, and/or need a special time to talk deeply with others and hopefully, find a measure of peace, this group may be just what you're looking for.

50+ Group / Free For All

Due to low attendance, and potential bad winter weather, this group is suspended for the months of February and March, possibly to return in April. Sandy Shaner is working to find a consensus of where we go from here. If you have an idea of an interesting topic or format for this group, please let her know.