

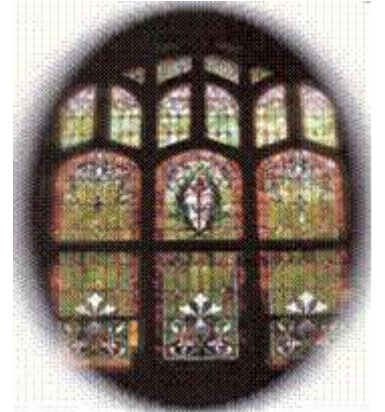
# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

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

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



Rev. Dawn Fortune

**Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.**  
**The Theme for MAY is Witness**

**May 7<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

*“Unitarian Postcards from Transylvania: Do Not Be Indifferent”*

“Since the 1980's the UUA Partner Church movement promoted the partnering of American and Transylvanian Unitarian congregations. The language barrier have largely prevented the flow of information about Transylvanian Unitarian practices, such as sermons. In this service I will present a full translation of a Transylvanian Unitarian sermon. My hope is that this service will begin a series of such presentations, and help us to learn about our Transylvanian partners in faith.”

Service: Robert Kokenyesi  
Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

**11:15 A.M. First Sunday Potluck!**

**May 14<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**  
**Mother's Day**

Service: Mark Fish (Emerson Chapel)  
Worship Associate: Robin Crane

**May 21<sup>st</sup> 10:00 A.M.**  
*“Evolving Religion: Past, Present, and Future.”*

Service: Ron Glossop  
Worship Associate: Dorothy Wilson

**May 28<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

Service: Dee Evans  
Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

**The Seekers**

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



**Ministerial Search Committee Update**

The Ministerial Search Committee has been hard at work behind the scenes! As with every important venture, things tend to move slower than one would like, but it is all part of the process. We hope to have an announcement in the very near future. Stay Tuned!

~Tracey Howe-Koch, MSC Chair



From the Editor

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



## FROM THE PREZ

It's a wonderful time of the year. Time for walking, hiking, having picnics, swimming, and generally having summer fun. I would like to bring that sense of fun to our church. I hear rumors that we may have a church picnic. I hope everyone joins us.

We are in the process of finding a part time minister-harder done than said. So, I hope by next newsletter we will have some information about this.

Well, looks like we have some plumbing problems -- an exploding utility tub in the utility closet. The plumbing literally fell off and water shot all over the place. Our custodian was kind enough to stay over to clean up the huge mess. We also have a toilet in the handicapped bathroom that runs despite attempts to fix it. These items were installed in the 70s and are not eco-friendly. The toilets use more water than needed. Donations are welcome.

I am so glad to be back with my church family. Health issues are resolving and my new knee is working better and better every day.

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### First Sunday Pot Luck Luncheon

Sunday, May 7th, 11:15  
Come, enjoy good food and fellowship with your UU church community!



**All are welcome!**



**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.**

## Religious Education for Children and Youth News

Last day of RE classes is May 21<sup>st</sup>. There will be a combined party for all children that day.

Until then, children's RE is continuing with the UU SuperHeroes Bible People as well as adding some lessons 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.

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



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### 4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup> 11 A.M



Please remember our neighbors who struggle in today's economy – your donations of toilet paper, detergent, baby wipes, shaving cream, African American hair products, liquid dish soap, laundry detergent, deodorant, shampoo, diapers, etc. – some of the necessities of life which are not covered by SNAP – make a real difference in their lives. We always provide some food and drinks for everyone as well. A big “thank you” to all who donated and to those who did the work.

There is a bin at the bottom of the stairs for you to put your donations or find someone to carry them down for you. The Dollar Tree stores are a great place to purchase items needed for this community service activity of the church.

**Items Needed for May event will be announced at a later date**

## HOPING FOR A GREAT SEA CHANGE

*Believe that further shore*

*Is reachable from here.*

*Believe in miracle*

*And cures and healing wells.*

—Seamus Heaney, “The Cure at Troy”

### **With a name like mine, it’s easy to guess I’m Irish.**

My forebears were among the millions who struggled to escape Ireland’s disastrous Potato Famine (1845-1852). With his six siblings, my great-grandfather Patrick boarded one of the infamous “coffin ships” out of Liverpool. When the ship dropped anchor in Canada’s St. Lawrence River, of the Killoran family, only Patrick survived. What could it have been like for that ten-year-old kid? First losing his family to typhus aboard ship, then being locked into quarantine upon arriving in what had been billed as the promised-land? The boy must have been strong, for Patrick somehow traveled to northern Quebec, where he grew up to become what family lore describes as a hard-drinking, hard-loving miner.

In the 19th century, most Irish were poverty-ridden peasants, dependent on a diet of potatoes with maybe a wee bit of milk or butter if you were lucky enough to share a cow. When a fast-moving blight devastated their only crop, people had nowhere to turn. Famine took over a million men, women, and children while those who could have offered relief ignored or even rejoiced in their plight. In all, two million people became refugees, with only one in five surviving to reach the largely hostile New World. Calamity is like that: the bottom falls out, not once but again and again. Everything keeps changing, and you either take desperate action — or you die.

You hear it in Irish music: the lament for having been beaten down, and for dreams both lost and denied. It’s there too, the stubborn persistence for which my people are famous, the refusal to abandon the necessity of dreams.

With another St. Patrick’s Day having come and gone, I ponder the calamities and the strengths of my heritage. To do other than persist would be to dishonor those who have gone before. Too many things matter for me to give up. Life is too precious for me to say die. If desperate action is likely to be required, then I must gird myself with stories of strength. Although I can barely see the further shore, I must hold fast to the conviction that we will get there; that love will not only survive, but thrive. Others have done it. So can I.

## **Prayer**

God of stubborn persistence, be with me, for the days are dark, and I am often afraid. *Help me feel surrounded by a cloud of witnesses lending support to my days and giving comfort in my nights.* Inspire me to draw strength from all that has gone before, that I may have courage to engage the struggles yet to come. In the name of all that is Holy, this I pray. Amen.

## **About the Author: Maureen Killoran**

Born in Canada, Rev. Maureen Killoran has, over the past 30 years, served UU congregations in Ohio, British Columbia, Oregon, North Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Maryland, Texas, and Florida.

Source: UUA.org, Braver-Wiser

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## **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)

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## **Baby and Child Dedication - June 4<sup>th</sup>**



As part of the Sunday service on June 4, Rev. Dawn will be dedicating babies and children. If you have a child you would like to have dedicated on that day, please contact Rev. Dawn – [revdawnfortune@gmail.com](mailto:revdawnfortune@gmail.com) or 314-399-1023.

## INTEREST GROUPS:

### **Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance, May 4<sup>th</sup> 11:30 a.m.**



On May 4 we'll meet at United Methodist Village, hosted by **Eleonore Nelson**. Please call her (or email me) by Friday, April 28 so she can give the Village a count. You can arrive as early as 11 and go in the main entrance, pay cash \$8.75 for a lunch ticket (all lunches the same price, no tipping, and exact change is appreciated).

Go down 1 floor and we will be seated in a private room with lunch orders taken at 11:30

At this meeting we'll make decisions on the locations to visit in the coming months, so bring your suggestions to add to the ideas mentioned the last few months.

See you soon.  
Sandy Shaner  
[wrgma2@gmail.com](mailto:wrgma2@gmail.com)

### **Men’s Monthly Lunch May 11<sup>th</sup>, 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)

### **Alton Area Cluster Book Group**

The Alton Area Cluster Book Group continues it’s reading of “*Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*” by Debby Irving. The Group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 May 18<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in attending, or getting on the group email list, contact Mary Johnson. [mejohanson@mindspring.com](mailto:mejohanson@mindspring.com)

## Healing Energy Meditation

May 8<sup>th</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
6:30 p.m. by the Fireplace



Fellowship and a couple hours of peaceful presence – sound good? Join us in our journey to the center of ourselves.

Would you like to learn how to meditate? Or just curious? We are still hoping to have a meditation class, but it’s not finalized just yet, more to come! “Church This Week” will have all the details once the event has been finalized.

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