

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



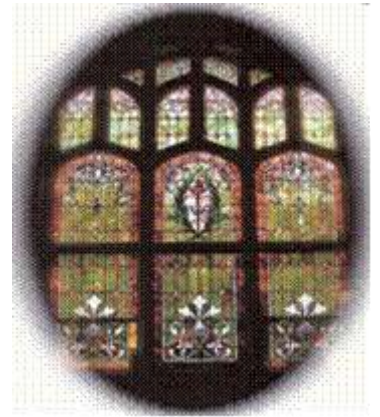
Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M. **The Theme for August is “The Ways of Knowing”**

August 6th 10:00 A.M.

Sabrina Trupia

Worship Associate: Michael Tarabulski

First Sunday Potluck following service.

August 13th 10:00 A.M.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

August 20th 10:00 A.M.

Dee Evans and Ruth Maskow

Worship Associate: Ruth Maskow

August 27th 10:00 A.M.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft



Nursery Care

All children, 5 years of age and under, are welcome to our staffed nursery during Sunday Services

Religious Education for Children and Youth News

Elementary Religious Education classes will be held on Sunday, August 6th and 20th. Plans are in the works for the youth group to get together occasionally - watch for notices in the "church this week", e-mail bulletin, the newsletters and Facebook Friends page for more information.

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.





We are delighted to welcome **Rev. Amy Brooks** as our new minister. Originally from Australia, she holds citizenship there and Great Britain and is applying for US citizenship. Amy is in her third year at Eden Seminary and will graduate in 2018 with a master's degree. She has been a United Methodist minister for 7 years. She has two teenagers and enjoys working with teens and children and has recently married a UCC minister and lives in Brighton, IL.

As an advocate of social justice, a special interest in the homeless, and experience with children and teens, she fits in well with our church's goals. We are excited that Amy will be our pastor and we are looking forward to this year of growth together. Please welcome Amy to our church family and join us in this spiritual adventure.

Save The Date!

meet & greet

There will be a "meet and greet" with our new minister Pastor Amy Brooks following the service on Sept. 10.

AND

Church Picnic



We will have a church picnic at Gordon Moore Park on Oct. 8. There will be a brief service, a potluck picnic, fellowship, and more. Watch for more details.



The Risk

'You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.'

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

They say you never get a first chance at a second impression.

Wait.

Rewind that.

Now reverse it.

They say you never get a second chance at a first impression!

I confess that I have sat at my computer for an hour*, gazing blankly at the screen, unable to move past the idea of this being my first communication with my new church. I mean, no one wants to make a mistake during the very first meeting, right?

It is not so unusual for fear to kick in when we are about to take a risk on something. This is not necessarily a bad thing - fear can be an invitation to wisdom, a mechanism helpful for our safety. At the same time fear can be an obstacle to action.

We humans do best when we attend to the task of discerning the difference between healthy fear and obstructive fear, but this is not the difficult part. The action is what is hard. We each take a risk when we act based on what we have discerned. That is, indeed, the 'thing we think we cannot do' that Eleanor Roosevelt referred to.

And so I invite you to take a risk with me.

I invite you to the risk of relationship. Let us each take the small, tentative steps towards knowing each other well. Yes, there is fear. It's probable there will even be some mistakes. But let us disregard the fear and the mistakes and get to know each other anyway. I have much to learn from you. And there may be something that you can learn from me.

The hardest part is to begin. Things just pretty much flow from there. Much like newsletter articles, as it turns out. And maybe, just maybe, we will all discover it was worth the risk.

(*This is a small fib. It actually took me the better part of three days to finish writing this.)

Rev. Amy Brooks

Board Minutes

Summary of Board Meeting

The Board held its first meeting of the new church year on July 12, with your new president Michael Schmidt presiding.

In old business, Dee Evans reported that she has found an accountant that will help us pro bono with obtaining 501C status. Two new members are needed for the Endowment Fund to work with Jerry Johnson. Preferably she/he would have some experience with investments, but anyone interested in helping should speak to Jerry or to Vice-President Paula LaFond.

We are seeking a new RE director to work 10 hours per month for a salary of \$10,000 per year. This would be a one-year contract, to be extended only if budget permits. According to the new hiring policy to be adopted by the Board, we will first seek a qualified candidate who is not a member of our church. If no qualified candidate applies, then we will take applications from interested members.

We are also seeking applications for a second nursery attendant for Sunday mornings. The salary is \$60 per Sunday. The candidate must be 18 years or older and preferably have some experience caring for infants up to 5 year olds. Apply to any Board member.

We are getting bids on electrical repairs for the outlets on the window side of the Wuerker Room, and we are also supposed to get a bid by next week on roof repairs for one of the towers. We are still seeking a volunteer to lead on building related work. You would not actually DO all the work, just keep track and seek volunteers to help. I did it for many years, and all I knew how to do was clean and paint.

The treasurer's report showed a checking account balance at the end of June of \$22,641.60 That was after deficit spending of (\$11,094.77) for the year. We also used part of our reserve fund last year, leaving a reserve fund balance of \$21,342.64.

The congregation voted for a \$140,000 budget for next year, and pledges so far are down to \$92,000. We will need to use all our reserve and also dip into our Endowment Fund if we do not gain more in donations/pledges in the coming year. Only 53% of our member households have pledged so far, so hopefully more of them will decide to give their fair share to support the mission of this church.

We are trying to revise our list of people holding a church key. If you currently hold a key that you no longer need, please return it to Becky or a Board member. Some of you may be receiving a call if you are currently listed as a keyholder.

We're having a congregational picnic at Gordon Moore Park in Alton on Oct. 8. There will be a brief pagan style service, followed by a potluck lunch, fellowship and fun. We have a reserved pavilion with tables, grills, and nearby restrooms and playground. Bring a dish to share, drinks (no alcohol), and any game equipment you want to share. (Anyone have croquet or badminton?) It's still to be determined if there will be any service at the church building that morning. If so, you could join the picnic after attending church.

We will soon be starting a training program about LGBTQ issues needed to regain our UUA status as a Welcoming Congregation. Sharona Johnson and Ed Navarre have agreed to lead this program update.

Dee Evans will be working on fundraising ideas this year. Watch for events to come. If you have suggestions, give them to Dee or another Board member. What is a "meat auction," and will we have one? Also, will we be sponsoring a fun UU music concert this year? Watch for developments.

Look for a new bowl for the stone placement during the "Joys and Sorrows" ceremony time. Our bowl was accidentally broken during a ghost tour, and they have graciously replaced it. (Did the ghost break it?)

We will be joining other UU's across the nation in a common book read this year. Kayci Combs-Lueker is donating space for the UU Book Club meetings at her place of business in Glen Carbon. Watch for more information about the book and the time.

Mary Lu McManus has offered to teach a four-session class on meditation beginning on Saturday, October 28. It will be open to the public, so be talking to interested friends. There will be a small fee, which will be donated back to the church. Email or talk to Mary Lu or Paula LaFond if you would like to sign up or want more information. First come, first served.

Many folks who come to our potlucks, after church coffee time, picnics, and other food events have food allergies or diet restrictions: vegan, vegetarian, celiac, nuts, onions, peanuts, seafood, flour, sugar, etc. The best way to help these people decide what they can eat, or allow their children to eat, would be for everyone to list the contents of your dish on a small card or paper to place next to your dish. Please be thoughtful and supportive of others by

doing this. We will try to have cards and pens available in case you forget.

Our next Board meeting will be Wednesday, August 9 at 7:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend. If you have an issue for discussion, send it to President Michael Schmidt for possible inclusion on the agenda.

Board Secretary, Pat Moore

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](#))

Worship Associates for 2017-2018

The role of a Worship Associate is to work collaboratively with the minister, guest speakers, and other Worship Associates to plan and implement worship services.

The Worship Associates for the 2017-2018 church year are: Robin Crane, Joy Hoelt, Mary Johnson, Ruth Maskow, Robert Kokenyesi, Michael Tarabulski, Sabrina Trupia, and Dorothy Wilson.

Please give them feedback regarding the worship services to allow them to provide services that are meaningful, life-affirming, and inclusive.

A New Addition to Worship Services Faith Rocket

The church has subscribed to a monthly program called **Faith Rocket**. It comes from the Church of the Larger Fellowship (a “UU congregation without walls”) and will provide us with themed Worship Services prepared by Unitarian Universalist Ministers, as well as related essays, reflections, videos, and podcasts. The Worship Associates will be using these resources when we do not have a minister or guest speaker in the pulpit. These resources may also be used by those who are coordinating small group discussions or other church-related activities.



4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, August 26



Our church’s personal care item distribution on the 4th Saturday of every month is an important part of our outreach to the community. Your help, as a member or friend of this church, is needed to keep this outreach effort going by keeping our shelves stocked with needed items.

In July we gave out most everything we had. Our next distribution will be on August 26 and donations of the following basic care items would be greatly appreciated: Toilet paper, shampoo, deodorant, body wash, tooth paste, shaving cream, razors, baby wipes, dish detergent, laundry detergent.

Bringing in your donations early in August would be very helpful so we can better plan for distribution.
Thank you.

Mary

First Sunday Pot Luck Luncheon

Sunday, August 6th at 11:15
Come, enjoy good food and fellowship with your UU church community!



All are welcome!

INTEREST GROUPS:

Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance, August 3rd, 11:30 a.m.

Peg Flach has generously offered to host our meeting at her lakeside Edwardsville home (439 E. Lake Dr.) as a potluck. Peg is going to provide a meat entree, dessert and beverages, and we can let her know what we'll bring when we RSVP, preferably by Friday, 7/28. Peg's e-mail is pegflach@gmail.com and her cell phone is 618-972-6256.



Looking forward to seeing many of you at Peg's.
Sandy
wrgma2@gmail.com



First UU of Alton Pagans

Our next event is for Lughanasa, on Saturday, August 5th, at 4 pm. We will have a ritual and a potluck, so please bring a dish to share if you can. Any questions, please contact Paula LaFond at paulafond721@gmail.com, or through messenger on Facebook.

Our events consist of a ritual relating to the specific sabbat, food and drink (potluck) and fun! More details in the next couple of weeks.



Men’s Monthly Lunch August 10th, 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



Healing Energy Meditation

Wednesday, August 9th and August 23rd 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.



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.

Wash, Dry and Put Away!

Enjoy some coffee and cookies with your conversation after church? Thank you for being sure our dishes are taken care of and trash removed.



Keeping our church home clean and comfortable is everyone’s job.

Note from Your Church Office



Please use the envelopes available in the pews for cash donations that are designated as pledges or for specific funds like for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, 4th Saturday Lunches, Sacred Grounds, etc. Write this information along with your name on the envelope. All other undesignated or unrestricted cash donations can be placed in the collection plates.

Also, please make sure that all checks and envelopes have the pledge year in the memo line. That is especially needed this time of year when some are paying the balance on their 2016 - 2017 pledges and some are paying towards their 2017 - 2018 pledges.

We are converting to a new database program and this is a great time to update your information. Please let me know if you have moved, changed your phone number or email address. I will be sending out a new directory so please look it over for outdated information.

Thank you, Becky Green,
Administrator & Bookkeeper



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

CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2017 - 2018

Board of Trustees

Board President - Michael Schmidt
President-Elect - Paula LaFond
Past President - Dee Evans
Treasurer - Robin Crane
Secretary - Pat Moore
Member-At-Large - Phil Embree
Member-at-Large - Tracy Howe-Koch

Committee/Team Leads

Transitions Committee - TBA
Social Events - Vacant
Interfaith and U.U. - Vacant
Social Justice - Carol McGrew
Fundraising - Dee Evans & Peg Flach

Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer
Sandra Shaner
Nan Adams

Religious Education Council

Chair - Joy Hoeft

Stewardship Committee

Building - TBD
Grounds - Robyn Stranquist
Canvass 2017 - TBA
Endowment Fund - Jerry Johnson
Finance - Matt Koch
Membership - Mary Weber
Sunday Support Ministries - TBA

Worship Associates

Mary Johnson
Robin Crane
Joy Hoeft
Robert Kokenyesi
Dorothy Wilson
Mike Tarabulski
Ruth Maskow
Sabrina Trupia