

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org

Pastor Amy Brooks



Congregation established 1836



Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M
The Theme for December, 2017 is “Giving and Receiving”

December 3rd 10 A.M
Church Anniversary - Founded Dec. 7, 1836
Celebrating with a Performance by Our Choir!
Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Dorothy Wilson

Decorating for the holidays!
1st -Sunday Potluck!

December 10th 10 A.M
“A Hanukkah Sermon on Justice” A Faith Rocket
Sermon Written by Rev. Susan Moran
Joy Hoeft
Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi

December 17th 10 A.M
Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

December 24th 7 P.M Special Evening Service
Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Ruth Maskow

December 31st 10 A.M.
New Year’s Eve Fire Service
All Worship Associates



December 3rd!



Fellowship Meal

December 3rd, following service
Celebrate our church’s 181 year anniversary, share a meal with your church family and stay to decorate the church for the holidays!



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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETING IN JANUARY

Suggested Date: January 18, 2018
Suggested Place: Some restaurant in Edwardsville
Suggested Time: 11 AM

Social Justice has many aspects. The Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI) has projects that we can choose to work on with them. We would be joining other UU churches in Southern Illinois that are working with UUANI. Or we can design our own short term project.

Why Edwardsville? Why not? We can pick any town when we need to have future meetings. We have members from many places.

Please contact *Dee Evans* via e-mail or Facebook to give your feedback on the date, a suggested restaurant in Edwardsville, and the time.

SOCIAL JUSTICE HAPPENINGS WITH FIRST UNITARIAN OF ALTON AND UUANI

The Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI) is working on the Fair Tax Project with the Responsible Budget Coalition.

This project has goals of providing tax relief and tax fairness, investing in building healthy and thriving communities, and having everyone pay their fair share. This is a time limited project that they intend to complete in the first six months of next year. I attended a meeting on The Fair Tax Project as a representative of UUANI last month. This project will make it possible to reinstate the horrendous social service and education cuts that took place in Illinois during the last couple of years. If you have a child at a public school or university in Illinois, if you work at a university, if you know anyone that relies on meals on wheels, on early childhood programs, on senior services, on in-home care of the disabled--I could go on-- you want to be at this meeting. I invite you to join me to learn more about this project. The meeting is at the Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall in Caseyville (very near the expressway) at 6 PM on December 4th.

Submitted by Dee Evans for the Social Justice Committee

CHALICE LIGHTERS Can We "Pay It Forward"?



Remember, the larger UU churches of the STL area contributed considerable funds to our Alton church, a generosity which has been helping us for quite a few years. It's our turn to "pay it forward" now, and here's an easy way to do it: we EACH make at least a \$20 Chalice Lighters contribution.

The regional Chalice Lighters program is totally dependent on contributions from individual UU members. Churches do not contribute as organizations, but they CAN apply for grants from the Chalice Lighters program IF a significant number of their members contribute to the funding of the program. Of course, Chalice Lighters would like regular monthly contributions; more money does more good. But, members are counted as contributors for any (7/1 through 6/30) fiscal year in which they give \$20 or more at least once. As of early November, we still have too few contributions to be eligible, as a church, for a Chalice Lighters grant. Can a few more people contribute at least \$20? Every little bit helps.

Chalice Lighter grants are flexible. Funds, to the degree available, can be provided to churches for program growth, including staffing, and for maintaining or expanding the church physical plant, or even for starting a new congregation. Our church, however, cannot apply until we have a higher rate of contributions.

Here's how to contribute your \$20 or more:

- On-line through:
<https://midamericauua.org/programs/chalice-lighters>

OR

- Via snail-mail to:
Chalice Lighter Program
MidAmerica Region Unitarian Universalist Association
2355 Fairview Ave N., #312
Roseville, MN 55113

Sharing reflects caring. Let's Pay It Forward!





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

From the Editor

Summary of Board Meeting November 8, 2017

The church board met at 7:00 pm on Wed., Nov. 8.

5013C Status: The Board members are studying the report made by Mary Johnson. We hope to qualify for 5013C status before long. We will need to make a couple of changes to our by-laws in to qualify. Those changes must be voted in by a vote of the congregation, so we will have that ready by our semi-annual meeting on January 14.

Endowment Fund: The Endowment Fund committee will have Ron Glossop and Tracy Howe-Koch joining Jerry Johnson to complete the committee. They will be meeting soon.

RE Coordinator: Our newly hired coordinator will begin work on Dec. 1. Her contract will run for one year – to Dec. 1, 2018. We are happy to have her, and are eager to have our children meet her.

Easton Park Lot: Our lease with the city has been officially terminated, and our insurance will be adjusted to eliminate that lot. We will be looking at options for changing our lawn care to exclude that lot. You still have full access across the lot for accessibility to the side entrance.

Roof Repairs: A contract for roof repairs has been signed with Lakeside Roofing, and work should be commencing soon. Phil Embree has agreed to look into bids for some masonry work that is also needed on the edge of the roof near the foyer entrance.

Church Boundaries: Some Board members are planning on borrowing some survey tools to find our exact land boundary on the park side, so that we know exactly where our jurisdiction ends. A professional surveyor's bid was beyond our budget.

Treasurer's Report: Robin Crane gave us a written report showing that our pledge receipts are on target. Since we had not yet hired an RE Director, our spending has been below budget. Spending for the personal item give-away is exceeding the amount donated due to an increase in folks coming. Please remember to keep making your monthly donations of items or cash. At the end of October our combined checking and reserve fund balance was \$45,234. Please remember to give to the Chalice Lighters program so that we will be in a good

position to ask for a grant. Look for information in the Nov. Newsletter, or look it up online.

Minister's Report: Pastor Amy has had a conversation with the man who is redoing the old post office across Alby from us. The Board agreed to sign a paper giving him permission to get a liquor license for special events. Since she cannot hear the doorbell from her office, the Board agreed to the purchase of a doorbell for her. Matt Howe-Koch will look into repairing the blinds in her office. There are many demands on the Minister's Discretionary Fund, about 1/3 of which are from our own members. Please make donations to the fund at any time by putting your check into the offering plate with "Minister's Fund" on the note line. Also, the 5th Sunday service loose offerings go to the fund, so be generous on Dec. 31.

Stewardship: Paula LaFond will head up the Stewardship Fund Drive. Be thinking of increasing your giving of funds next church year, also think about giving of your time and talents by joining in on the work of the church.

UUANI: Dee Evans has been looking at how we can get involved with this social action branch of the UUA, which works on projects in Illinois.

Special Music: We have signed a contract for a special musical program fundraiser for March. Be watching for more information.

Minister's Travels: Amy will be taking classes in Chicago in June toward her UU certification, and will take part in a racial justice conference in TN in February. In June she will travel to Kansas City for the annual UUA General Assembly. Hopefully many of you will want to join her there.

Holiday Decorating: Join Mary Weber to deck out our church for the holidays following the after-service potluck on Sunday, December 3.

Board Retreat: The Board met on Saturday, Nov. 11 to make some plans for how we can further meet our mission. Look for some improvements in information about ways you can help.

Next Meeting: The next Board meeting will be Dec. 14 at 7:00 pm. Any member may attend. If you have something you think needs the attention of the Board, submit it to President Michael Schmidt.

Submitted by,
Pat Moore, Board Secretary

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

The elementary RE class is learning about world religions, beginning with some ancient religions. We hear their stories, songs, and customs. The kids have enjoyed this and are making great connections between these religions and some modern ones we see today, including our own. They are looking forward to learning about lots of other religions as the year progresses, as are the teachers!!

The Youth Group is digging deep into a Social Justice curriculum. They explored *Maslow's Hierarchy of Basic Needs* and how meeting basic needs is a justice issue. There was much discussion on this topic. The *Call for Understanding* encouraged the youth to increase their understanding of justice issues, the meaning of "abilities", and the importance of nonviolent communication. Moving forward, the Youth Group will concentrate on *Empathy* and how it connects to our Principle of affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We'll explore how the values of *Courage* and *Cooperation* are needed to bring about a more just world.



4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, December 23rd

Please support our church's community outreach by donating to our personal care inventory.

Each month we need laundry detergent, toilet paper, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, hand lotion, shaving cream, baby wipes ("free and clear"), dish detergent (for hand washing dishes).

Donations of reusable tote bags (like what you can buy at grocery stores) would be appreciated.

Stay tuned for more specific information on what will be needed.

Wash, Dry and Put Away!

When you enjoy some coffee and a cookie with your conversation after church, we count on YOU to keep our church home clean and tidy.



AUDREY WISEMAN



ALTON — Audrey May Wiseman, 83, died in her home on Nov. 2, 2017 in Alton, Illinois surrounded by her family and her wonderful hospice nurse. Audrey was born at home in 1934 to Eva and Fred Paris of Alton. She married David Wiseman in 1954. Their love lasted more than sixty-three years. She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings, Mary Alice List, Lora Jean Dalton and Fred Jr. She is survived by her husband, her daughters Sarah Wiseman of Alton and Laura St. Gemme and son in law Bob St. Gemme of Charleston, Illinois, and son, Eric Wiseman and daughter in law Lori Baer of Lakewood, Colorado. She has one grandson, Nick Freund of Wausau, Wisconsin, and numerous nieces and nephews. Audrey was a lifetime Altonian, graduating from Alton High School and attending Shurtleff College. She went on to receive her Bachelor of Arts Degree from SIUE in 1980.

Audrey had many diverse talents and interests. She was not only a gardener, homemaker and seamstress; she was also an artist, showing much of her work in local art shows. Profound influences in her life were her older sister, Mary Alice List who helped raise her and was always a boon companion and artistic mentor and Ruth Means of Fosterburg, her cousin and fellow member of the weekly painting "class" that met in private homes for several decades and included quite a few of Audrey's relatives and other area artists. Ruth and Mary Alice were also dedicated genealogists and infected Audrey and her brother with that bug, as well.

Audrey was a longtime member of Friends of the Hayner Public Library; she volunteered at Treehouse and worked monthly at Caravan for thirty years. She belonged to the First Unitarian Church of Alton (serving in all capacities but board president), Sierra Club, Nature Institute, and Audubon Society. She was a guest columnist for the (Alton) Telegraph and performed in many plays at Alton Little Theater. An excellent writer with a quirky sense of humor, a homemaker who put rocks, turkey feathers, and driftwood into beautiful arrangements all around the house, Audrey loved animals and had many pets over the years. She enjoyed canoeing and camping with family in national parks from coast to coast. She was never without her binoculars or drawing pad. She had a curious zest for life and was gracious and loving. Most important of all, she never forgot the words to any song and would help you out if you got the melody a bit askew.

Visitation was Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017 at 10 a.m. followed by a service at 11 a.m. at Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home in Alton. Audrey is buried at Fosterburg Cemetery after the service. Online condolences and guestbook may be found at eliaskallalandschaaf.com

INTEREST GROUPS:

Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance December 7th, 11:30 a.m.

Our winter schedule begins in December, so for the next three months, we’ll meet for Chinese at the Best Buffet, 615 Wesley, Wood River, IL 618-258-1888

There’s plenty of room for everyone and no reservations are required, so just come enjoy good food and good company.



Men’s Monthly Lunch December 14th 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

Women & Religion



I AM WILLING

February 2nd - 4th, 2018

Unitarian Church of Evanston

Once upon a time in every district in the UUA, there was a Women & Religion Committee charged with creating a woman's space for the exploration of women's spirituality. Our committee (for the MidAmerica region) is one of three left of the original 21. We gather one weekend a year to explore, learn, and celebrate our Woman Spirit. Through music, worship, workshops, and a spectacular keynote speaker we rejoice in a woman-only conference.

This year singer and activist Holly Near will speak, inspire and serenade us. If you have not attended before this is your year to be renewed and energized by experiencing **WomanSpirit!!!**



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

Religious Education Council

Chair-Joy Hoeft

Stewardship Committee

Building- TBD

Grounds- Robyn Stranquist

Canvass 2018- Paula LaFond

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

Halloween Costume winners:

