

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

*Newsletter of the*

## *First Unitarian Church*

*Alton, Illinois*

[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)

*Pastor Amy Brooks*



**Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M**

**The Theme for January, 2018 is "Resistance"**

**January 7<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M**

**Pastor Amy Brooks**

**Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Potluck!**

**January 14<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M**

**Mary Johnson: Faith Rocket Sermon**

**"Resistance as Disobedience - Disobeying Herod"**

**Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi**

**January 21<sup>st</sup> 10 A.M**

**Pastor Amy Brooks**

**Worship Associate: Mary Johnson**

**Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting**

**January 28<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M**

**"Unitarian Postcards from Transylvania: The Joy of Religious Freedom" Robert Kokenyesi**

Robert translated a "postcard" from 1993, which was a sermon given on the occasion of Religious Freedom Day. Yes, it was a very big postcard. Pretty interesting too. Like, how Transylvanian Unitarians connect the dots that makes religious freedom an inevitable conclusion."

**Worship Associate: Michael Tarabulski**



Our Semi-annual congregational meeting has been scheduled for January 21st. We will be asking our church members to vote on amending our bylaws during this meeting in order to meet the necessary requirements for a 501(c)3 status. A [copy of the bylaws](#), with the recommended revisions, will be sent out as an attachment by email and copies will be available in the Wuerker Room at church.



### **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.



### **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

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

## Pastor Amy's Corner

### Begin

*"I made no resolutions for the New Year. The habit of making plans, of criticizing, sanctioning and molding my life, is too much of a daily event for me."*  
~ Anais Nin

Friends, welcome to 2018.

Now that we are all here I invite you to take a look around and familiarize yourself with the place. Much will appear to be as it seemed in 2017, perhaps there will be some small changes. Maybe there are still constants that bring comfort, maybe there are entrenched evils that require our efforts to change.

In many ways these are thoughts that could be shared in January of any year. There is truth to the thought that the first day of the year is no more special or magical than any other day when the clock strikes midnight. Times and dates are, after all, human constructs. Anais Nin, above, reminds us that self-evaluation is a constant task.

That said, there is something special about the idea of starting anew. It is the promise of hope for the future. It is the comfort of knowing ourselves to be a people of agency, who are equipped to navigate through the upheaval and the wonder of this universe.

And so, however you celebrate the marking of a new way, my wish for you and for us all is that we enter into the January of *this* new year with open hearts and minds.

You are a miracle. May we continue to astonish one another.

Amy

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### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Pot Luck Dinner, Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>



Start the 2018 out right! Spend a little time catching up with your friends after the service. We'll have good conversation, share good food and enjoy our church community



## 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!

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## 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.

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### The Madison County Partnership to End Homelessness

Needs Volunteers for Two Activities

#### (1) Point-n-Time Count

Volunteers will be assigned to a team to help count and administer a survey to persons living on the streets.

When: Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from 6 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Where: Throughout Madison County

Orientation: Will be announced

#### (2) Project Homeless Connect

Volunteers will help with a variety of activities (e.g., set-up, registration, guides, administering surveys, handout supplies and food, clean-up, etc.

When: Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Where: River of Life Church, 3401 B Fosterburg Rd., Alton IL

For more information or to volunteer, contact Mary Castillo, Madison County Homeless Programs

Phone: 618-296-4442 or [mlcastillo@co.madison.il.us](mailto:mlcastillo@co.madison.il.us)

In 2016 the point-n-time count showed 419 persons homeless in Madison County, with 49% of those being children. In 2017 the count showed 191, with 40% being children.

By Mary Johnson

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## Religious Education for Children and Youth

### Welcome to Zipporah Lee, our new RE Coordinator

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.

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### Nursery Care

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



### Our Whole Lives (OWL) Classes

Our Whole Lives is a program of lifespan sexuality education with curricula for all ages up to young adults. Our Whole Lives takes a holistic view of sexuality. It provides accurate, age appropriate information while helping people clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Our Whole Lives is based on the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education produced by the National Guidelines Task Force, a group of leading health, education, and sexuality professionals assembled by the Sexuality Information and Education Council.

Juliette Crone-Willis and Robyn Berkley will be teaching OWL classes to the youth group beginning in January. They will be meeting in Emerson Place from 10 am to 12:30 about every other Sunday beginning January 14th. More information will be posted in "Church This Week."

**4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution**  
**Saturday, January 27th**  
**Personal Care Distribution in January**



During November and December we did not put out a list of needed items as the Distribution Team decided to “spend down” some of the funds that members and friends have so generously donated over the last months in support of our church’s social justice effort. However, in this New Year we are once again going to ask for donations of either needed items or financial support. A list will be available at church and on UU Friends, but items always in demand

include:

Toilet paper, laundry detergent, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, hand lotion, shaving cream. Other items needed are paper towels, counter wipes, dish detergent.

Our inventory room is at the bottom of the stairs in the RE wing. You may take your donated items downstairs or leave them upstairs marked as personal care items and we’ll see that they get downstairs.

Checks may be made out to the First Unitarian Church with 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Distribution noted on the memo line.

The Team thanks everyone for their ongoing support.

***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.**

*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!!!**

**INTEREST GROUPS:**

**Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance**  
**January 4<sup>th</sup>, 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**  
**January 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)

## WhaleCoast Alaska 2018

Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2018** is for you! Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose,



bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our program is the best way to visit Alaska! Tours led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime. For complete information go to:

[www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org),

[email: dfrey@whalecoastak.org](mailto:dfrey@whalecoastak.org) or call 907-322-4966.

Discount for groups of 8 or more. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

David Frey

Whale Coast Alaska Tour Director

[www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org)

[dfrey@whalecoastak.org](mailto:dfrey@whalecoastak.org)

907-322-4966

## UU WORLD

*UU World*, the magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Association, celebrates liberal religion and the people it inspires. Meet extraordinary individuals, see how Unitarian Universalist communities put their values into action, and explore the ideas and traditions that ground them.



The quarterly print and digital magazine is published in March, June, September, and November, but the website publishes news and original online-only content every week. We also publish a weekly email newsletter and audio recordings of selected stories.

Members of Unitarian Universalist congregations in the United States receive a print subscription as a benefit of membership, thanks to the generosity of congregations to the Annual Program Fund.

**To sign up for UU World's free email newsletter go to:**

[www.uuworld.org/subscriptions/emailnewsletter](http://www.uuworld.org/subscriptions/emailnewsletter)

## 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 –** Dee Evans

**Fundraising –** Dee Evans & Peg Flach

### Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer

Sandra Shaner

### Religious Education Council

**Chair-**Joy Hoeft

**RE Coordinator -** Zipporah Lee

### Stewardship Committee

**Building & Grounds -** Phil Embree

**Canvass 2018-** Paula LaFond

**Endowment Fund-** Jerry Johnson,

Ron Glossop & Tracy Howe-Koch

**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