

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org

Pastor Amy Brooks



Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M
The Theme for May, 2018 is “Freedom”

May 6th 10 A.M
Stewardship Sunday Celebration!

Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Robin Crane

May 13th 10 A.M
Mother's Day – Flower Communion

Sabrina Trupia
Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

May 20th 10 A.M
Pastor Amy's Graduation Celebration!

Sermon: “What Are the Two Most Important Questions of the 21st Century?”

David Gallop, President and General Counsel of the World Service Authority in DC.
Worship Associate: Pastor Amy Brooks

May 27th 10 A.M.
Memorial Day

TBA
Worship Associate: TBA

**Reverend Amy Brooks Graduation
Open House**
Sunday, May 20th, 2018 11 am – 3 pm

We are celebrating the graduation of our minister along with the UCC church in Brighton. This celebration will be at our church.



We need a set up crew, a clean-up crew, and people to bring finger foods and snacks for those with a vegan, meat eaters, and gluten free diet preferences. Please NO ONION or onion products which includes no onion powder, shallots, or leeks in your dishes. A cake will be provided, but we also need other desserts especially gluten free desserts. Please join and help us with this celebration.

See the flyer, designed by the Brighton UCC church, by clicking [here](#).



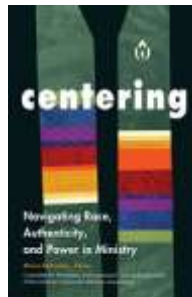
The Seekers

Most Sundays, 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 will meet each Sunday except when the "Common Read" group is meeting – which will be announced.

Common Read Group – “Centering-Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry” Some Sundays, TBA, 11:15

A "common read" is a book that a panel of members and clergy from our denomination, Unitarian Universalism, has chosen for congregations to read together and discuss. Our church has decided to read and discuss together this book on a topic very important to our faith and our country.



The group will meet once or twice a month, following service on Sunday. Watch for announcements in “Church This Week” and future newsletters.

MUUSA

Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly

MUUSA is an annual intergenerational Unitarian Universalist retreat for fun, fellowship, and personal growth.

It is held at Trout Lodge in the YMCA of the Ozarks near Potosi, Missouri.

Check-in is on Sunday July 1 and the camp runs until check-out on Saturday July 7, 2018.

All are welcome regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class or ability.

Go to <https://www.muusa.org/> to learn about costs, housing choices, and the various activities and programs available for adults, young adults, high schoolers (grades 10-12), middle schoolers (grades 7-9), elementary age, and younger children

Pastor Amy's Corner

The Free Church

“I tell my students, ‘When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.’” ~ Toni Morrison

I had the great pleasure this week of sitting in on a ‘ghost tour’ led by one of the members of the church. I particularly enjoyed the way the history of the congregation was weaved in throughout the stories of paranormal activities. During the question time the discussion turned to Unitarian Universalism in general, and one individual in particular pressed insistently to know what UUs believe.

In giving my answers I was reminded again that we enjoy a distinct and beautiful freedom that most other faith traditions do not: we are not bound by a doctrinal ‘statement of faith’ that dictate the answer to the question of what we believe. We are a community of people who have chosen to gather in support of that very freedom.

Very soon you will receive an invitation to participate in Stewardship Sunday, on May 6th. On this day we will celebrate together, we will challenge each other, and we will pledge to embrace our beloved community. I do hope that you will choose to join us. After all, it is not our ghosts who make us who we are, it is the flesh and blood people who love and support the astonishing, liberating, breath-taking reality of a truly free church.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



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

Nursery Care



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

Meet Arthur Crawford

He joined our congregation on March 18th. Following is an interesting bio he has offered. He has great knowledge of Unitarian history in the UK – we could learn a lot from him!



Originally born in Los Angeles, Arthur grew up in Palo Alto (CA), Laramie (WY), Hungary and Virginia. Arthur has also lived in Texas and England while in the Army. He works and lives St. Charles, Missouri, for the last 17 years. Arthur went to school at Virginia Tech getting a major in Geography and a minor in Art. Arthur came to Esri, a mapping computer software company, in 2000 after spending 10 years in the Army in Communications and Geospatial Intelligence. Some of Arthur's hobbies include illustrating (6 books so far), collecting antique maps/survey equipment, and travelling (40 countries so far and lived overseas several times in England and Hungary). Arthur's Mother, Helen, was a Unitarian and a Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech.

Arthur first learned of the Unitarian Church while travelling in England as a child visiting places his mother's family came from and hearing the stories of our ancestors. On his mother's family tree were Unitarians going back to the 1790's in Joseph Priestley's congregation in Birmingham, UK.

Arthur had attended a Unitarian Church in Little Rock with his mother a few times. One day, he was in an Alton antique shop, on Broadway, and saw a plate for the First Unitarian Church. He asked the owner where the church was and he said there were some churches up on the hill. He looked out the window and he saw the top of the First Unitarian Church which matched the drawing on the plate. He decided to check it out as he was looking to expand his spiritual side and to see find a community of likeminded people. He was drawn to the Unitarian Church because of the tolerance of people of different faiths/persuasions, well educated, and the church being supportive of similar views. It allowed a person to find a god of your understanding, instead of dictating one. The family connection was a bonus.

He has been dating Lori for the past 6 years, a woman who has lived in Alton all her life. Arthur is proud of being a Unitarian and glad he has found this church.



CALLING ALL SINGERS!!

Members and friends have asked, "When are you going to sing again?" Well, here is the answer:

Sunday, May 6, for Stewardship Sunday

&

Sunday, June 10, for Superhero Sunday.

Practice times will be announced in "Church This Week" Show up for practice(s) and let's make a joyful noise!

Ruth M.



Embracing Our Beloved Community Stewardship Sunday Celebration!

When: Sunday, May 6
Time: 10:00am with lunch provided at 11:00am

Join us as we celebrate all things First Unitarian Alton! We will enjoy a lively service followed by a meal and turning-in of pledge cards. Don't miss this opportunity for fun and fellowship!

Embracing Our Beloved Community Stewardship Campaign

Quick Stewardship Facts:

- It takes **everyone's** commitment – we can't do this without you!
- Your consistent support has made this past year a budget success – **THANK YOU**
- To increase Pastor Amy to ¾ time (which will increase in/outreach), stop deficit spending, and fund deferred building maintenance, we need to raise an *additional* \$50,000.
- This is reachable! We **CAN** do this.



Embracing Our Beloved Community Stewardship Campaign

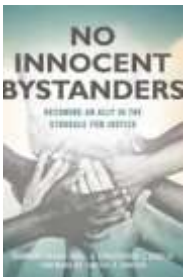
Special Stewardship Moment: Why I Give from Robin Crane

I was raised in a loving Methodist church in suburban Chicago. Later, I joined my husband's Lutheran Church where I held leadership positions. When I moved, I found a new church, but it was boring and routine. I tried another congregation and found its politics too right-wing and decision making too secretive. I was growing uncomfortable and my thoughts turned to "I want to believe, but I can't. This isn't right. I can accept this, but I can't believe this and that, and that, and all the rest of it."

When a friend hauled me to a UU church, I suddenly FOUND MY PEOPLE. There was more going on in the hallway after church that I had ever experienced before; people expressing ideas, talking about improvements to children's religious education and sharing their excitement about a new round of Our Whole Lives starting. Friends, I had finally found a home. I didn't feel that if I let others know my inner thoughts that I would be thrown out of the congregation. I found a place where questioning and "trying on" ideas was accepted and making connections encouraged. First Unitarian Church Alton carries on this tradition.

We are a small congregation. We need to enfold others in our loving community. We have a lot to offer and others have a lot to offer to our spiritual growth. We need more people so we can explore more ideas, more beauty, and more spirit-development. We need to support this very special place, not just sit back in our seats and enjoy it. We need to share it and enrich it. That is why I increased my pledge last year and will do so again this year. I will commit to decreasing my non-church spending so I can support the church in healing our broken and suffering world. Giving more is one way to be heroic in these troubled times.

Alton Area Cluster Book Group May 17, 3 to 5 P.M.



The interfaith Alton Area Cluster Book Group will meet at our church to continue reading and discussing "No Innocent Bystanders: Becoming an Ally in the Struggle for Justice" All are welcome to participate.

Social Justice Committee



Things are happening with Social Justice.

May 1st there will training for all those who want to learn to register people to vote. This was arranged by Sheila O'Brien. Places to set up booths to register people to vote are being investigated

On April 14, John Herndon, Mary Johnson, Ruth Maskow, Layne Simpson, and Dee Evans attended the UUANI conference, "Living Our UU Values Beyond our Doors." This conference, held in Springfield, Illinois, covered several social justice topics through break-out conferences in the morning: Environmental Justice, Reforming Criminal Justice, Immigrant Justice, and Integrated Voter Engagement/ Fair Tax which covered a successful voter's registration drive conducted by the Springfield Church. In the afternoon, we were introduced to the Poor People Campaign, a nationwide group calling for moral renewal and direct action through protest to call awareness to the need for reform in economic system in our country which includes racial justice.

The design of a T-shirt for church activities including Social Justice activities has been approved by the board. The board wants the same color for all the shirts and will approve the color next board meeting. However, individual members can get a different color shirt if they wish to pay more. However, board members believed that one color of shirt would help identify First UU church members at events more obviously.

The Congregations of the Metro East has a new leader, Reverend Mike Atty. He will be contacted to see how we can best work with them on voter's registration.

The Social Justice Committee invites all to join us in living our UU values outside our doors.

Building an RE Community

RE retreat scheduled for the afternoon of May 5th



Those who have been involved either through teaching, planning, or parenting this year will meet to go over the year and talk about our vision for religious education within this community. I am merely a facilitator and planner in this wonderful process as I draw my own focus forward to helping create expansive and deep experiences in religious education for all of you. What I do believe will be a focus of this retreat's work (and at a further one in August) is the beginning to building a community where each person is involved in the growth, learning, and teaching of religious education, especially that of our young persons. We are a mighty people with a vision where literally all are welcome, doubts are encouraged, and we are all always seeking that deeper vision.

Consider this: what does taking one Sunday to facilitate, plan, and encourage the growth and spirituality of our young persons look like to you? Does it mean taking a Sunday to be a helper in the elementary or youth classes? Does it look like helping with a fundraiser on a Sunday morning? Does it entail being one of the mentors for our young persons as they learn how to walk in faith? Does it mean using your creative skills to engage our young persons' spirituality by other methods? Does it mean telling stories, playing with Barbies or multicolored xylophones, or donating a few snacks for the bottomless pits of our young persons' stomachs?

I invite you over the next month or so to imagine what you think you're capable of passing on to our young persons and how best to demonstrate that ability. In doing that, I invite you to be in conversation with me as well, either in person, by phone, or by email. My contact information is in each "Church This Week" and can also be found here:

Zipporah Lee, (419) 961-3164 (cell),
rebeccamularski@gmail.com (email).

Thank you all for walking this journey of curiosity and awe with me.

Zippy

Ladies Luncheon

Anna Ds – Women's Alliance
May 3rd 11:30 a.m.

Last month we bounced around to different options for our next meeting and landed on the Hofbrauhaus in Belleville, (123 St. Eugene Dr., Belleville, IL 62223 -- phone 618-800-2337) a newly opened destination in the area. You will find a full explanation of the menu options on their website: <http://www.hofbrauhausstlouis.com/>

Directions: South on I-255 to IL-15 and straight there, taking only 30 minutes. Mary Weber, who suggested this location, says it's right across the road from Our Lady of the Snows shrine, so you can follow those directional signs if you want.

We can create car pools. I'm in Wood River with a car that easily seats 4-5 adults. If you'd like to ride with me, send me a note and we can coordinate meeting locations.

Now to RSVPs: Mary says they aren't doing formal reservations for lunch but she can call in advance asking them to set up a table for our expected number in attendance. Please let her know by Tuesday, 5/1 if you plan to attend.

Men's Monthly Lunch

May 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

The Women's Alliance of First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, Is offering a scholarship of \$3000



to a woman 21 years of age or older who is active in a Unitarian Universalist congregation and is pursuing post high school education. Please contact First Unitarian at 314 361-0595 for more information."

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

2017 - 2018

Board of Trustees

Board President- Michael Schmidt
President-Elect- Chris Strangeman
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
Mike Tarabulski
Ruth Maskow
Sabrina Trupia
John Herndon

4th Saturday, May 26th

Social Action: Fourth Saturday



Please remember your less fortunate neighbors and help us keep this important service going. Your purchased items or financial support helps struggling families make ends meet. We serve thirty to sixty people each month, plus their families. A list of specific items needed is published in the “Church This Week email notice and a list will be available at church and on UU Friends, but items always in demand: Toilet paper, laundry detergent, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, hand lotion, shaving cream. Other items needed are paper towels, counter wipes, dish detergent.

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

The Team thanks everyone for their ongoing support.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur, IL

...is seeking up to full-time ministerial leadership for the coming church year. UUFD is a 50-member “Welcoming Congregation” which is also a certified “Green Sanctuary.” Founded in 1953, we moved into our current facility in 1983 and maintain a well-managed endowment. We are looking for a great communicator to provide inspirational Sunday morning programs, lead in our efforts to increase our membership and become fully engaged in the life of our Fellowship. We seek an interim or contractual Unitarian Universalist minister for a term of at least two years with salary and benefits [total compensation package] of about \$65,000 per year starting as early as August 2018. For more information please contact Pat Rossiter, pmrsong@hotmail.com [217 433-5198] or Mark Sorensen, sorens1@comcast.net [217 330-6614]. www.uufd.org and Face Book [https://www.facebook.com/ UUFellowshipDecatur/](https://www.facebook.com/UUFellowshipDecatur/)