

# 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**

**July, 2018 - "UnrUly Summer Sundays!"**

**July 1<sup>st</sup> 10 A.M – Potluck Dinner!**

**Sing!**

This will be an hour long hymn sing where YOU pick the songs!

**Facilitator: Zipporah Lee**

**July 8<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M**

**Web of Life**

Featuring Marcia Berry and Her Dogs

**Facilitators: Zipporah Lee and Robin Crane**

**July 15<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M**

**Mourning Earth**

Will Include a Ritual of Mourning for Our Slain Trees In the Easton Lot

**Facilitators: Pastor Amy Brooks and Michelle Bryant Barbeau**

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> 10 A.M.**

**Blue Boat Home**

**Fun With Water**

**Facilitators: TBD**

**July 30<sup>th</sup> 10 A.M.**

**Borderlands**

**Facilitators: Pastor Amy Brooks and Zipporah Lee**

**NEWSLETTER  
DEADLINE**

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



**Welcome to UnrUly – a church experience that’s a little song, a little talk, a little play, a little silent, and of course, there’s food.**

Friends,

We’ve entered the summer season – where vacations are plenty and church takes a bit of time to relax. This summer season, as you’ve heard many times already, we’re taking a little exploratory journey at how to do church without the rules (or at least a bulletin). **UnrUly will run from June 17<sup>th</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup>, starting at 10am each Sunday.** For those of you with children, UnrUly is for all ages – our nursery and religious education staff is on-site and available so that you can experience worship without your children if you wish! Perhaps if you’re a person like me – who needs to know a little bit about structure so I feel a little less anxious about something “new” – read the cheat sheet below on what to expect! UnrUly is truly church without rules – if you could learn and explore your spirituality/faith/church any way you wished, what would you focus on?

Pastor Amy & Zippy

UnrUly Cheat Sheet (What to Expect)

- **UnrUly is based on weekly themes.**
  - The theme will be announced at the beginning of our time together and is also included in the church newsletter for the month.
- **UnrUly is a free-form experience.**
  - There are multiple stations to explore. Spend time at one or some or all (whatever you prefer). Move to another station whenever you wish, whether in the middle of conversation or when you’re just ready to move on. You create how you are in conversation with your faith during this time.
- **UnrUly is all-age friendly.**
  - Children and youth are welcomed and highly encouraged to use all of these experiences to inform and create their spirituality in the moment. This is a touch, taste, sniff, watch, and listening in space that’s participatory and celebratory. Be noisy. Be nosy. Be you.

- **UnrUly starts in the sanctuary and ends with announcements.**
  - In the sanctuary, we light our chalice, sing a few songs, pass the offering plate, and are then released to explore as we see fit.
  - At the end of our time together, we extinguish the chalice and share any announcements, either written and given to a worship associate, or spoken aloud.
- **UnrUly offers five stations of exploration.**
  - Song & Dance – where we start together singing as one body and sharing our donations to the church before being released into the weird ether of UnrUly.
  - Nourishment – something of substance to keep us going. It’s found on the coffee area table along with the chalice.
  - The Daily Diversion – offers a longer, immersive activity for one or more centered round the daily theme. It’s usually the ‘main event’.
  - Prayer & Meditation – a space for silence and contemplation. Set in the sanctuary, it offers the bowl of stones and other options for silent worship.
  - Conversation Corner – a discussion space for lively, deep dialogue around some themed questions for the day to spark our spirituality. It’s found near the fireplace with questions on the mantle.
- **UnrUly is open for suggestions.**
  - One of the best things about this whole setup is that you, the congregation, are part of how it gets created! Amy and I are here to hear your suggestions, plan or include them, and experiment with you. Talk to us before, during, after your experience of UnrUly and we’ll see what we can do to make it happen!



**Nursery Care**

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

## Board

### Meeting



If you missed the Congregational Meeting on June 10, you missed the Board elections, so let's review what occurred. Several months ago, the Board appointed Chris Strangeman as President-Elect after the resignation of Paula LaFond from that position. At the Congregational Meeting the movement of Chris from President-Elect to President was ratified. That also meant that Michael Schmidt moves from President to Past President and Dee Evans leaves the Board having completed her 3-year term.

With the end of Pat Moore's term as Secretary, Sandy Shaner was approved for a three-year term in that position. Robin Crane continues in the second year of her three-year term as Treasurer. Tracy Howe-Koch and Phil Embree will continue as Board members at large.

Do you see who's missing? Despite Dee's best efforts to identify and recruit a member to serve as President-Elect (who would then move into the President's position and finally to Past President) no one has yet accepted the call. While Board participation and leadership does require time and effort, there are many tasks that have been completed by the Boards led by Dee and Michael.

- We have a minister who, while currently part-time (and increased from 20 hours/week to 25 hours/week in the budget year beginning in July) would like to grow with us and become our full-time minister.
- Pastor Amy, in concert with the Board, is using her additional time to investigate the possibility of one or more satellites in areas where members live, and which could perhaps support one or more outreach efforts.
- We have a detailed budget development and reporting process thanks to many hours of work by Robin Crane and soon-to-rotate Office Administrator Becky Green. As a result of all that work, the budget can be supported by current resources.
- We have an RE Coordinator in Zippy, and we're all getting to know her better during UnrUly summer services.
- Pastor Amy has also selected an Office Administrator to follow in Becky's footsteps,

someone who will work (quickly) with Amy and Becky to understand as much as possible where those footsteps have been and where they lead.

- Over a longer period of time Board members have developed a manual of Policies and Procedures to provide guidance for future Boards. While such a manual is never complete, much has already been defined and approved in addition to the process of development itself.

My point? Many of the most difficult tasks that a Board can confront are well in hand, the hands of experienced members supported by an enthusiastic Minister and staff. All we need is for you to search your heart and let Chris know that you are willing to join the Board in this form of Church service.

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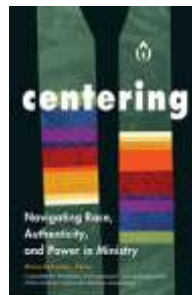
### The Seekers



**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.

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### 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.

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## A Careful Investment in Growth: Our FY 2018-19 Budget



A heartfelt thanks to the entire congregation for participating in the Annual Meeting on June 10 and approving the Board's budget proposal. And thanks also to the Board members and Pastor Amy who struggled to balance the need to seriously restrain spending with the strategic need to invest in growing the congregation. We think we succeeded with a conservative, yet forward-looking, proposal that restrains costs but potentially allows a bit more community outreach.

At June's Annual Meeting, we voted to adopt a budget that retains all current staff positions for the full year, reduces Office Administrator time from 30 to 20 hours per week (saving about \$10,000), and slightly increases ministerial services from 20 to 25 hours per week.

Roughly, that turns out cost us:

Continuation at current staffing, but reducing Office Administrator hours		\$133,000
Fund for part-time wage increases		840
Raise minister's time to 25 hrs/week		<u>9,100</u>
Total		\$143,000

Budgeted income is \$117,500, leaving an anticipated deficit of \$25,500.

To meet that deficit, we authorized supplementing our normal sources of income with \$25,500 from the Endowment, and approved the use of an additional \$11,500 from the Endowment, but only in case of unbudgeted emergency.

Don't forget that we do this following a deficit year in which we did not use ANY of the authorized Endowment supplement for the year ending June 30. Though we did not use that authority, it surely made the process of managing the budget much less stressful..

How did we avoid using last year's \$37,000 Endowment supplement to meet our deficit? Well, pledge and other income was higher than we originally budgeted; and expenses were lower due to delayed hiring. The resulting deficit was much smaller than budgeted, and we were able to fill that deficit by spending down our bank balances. As a result of that smaller deficit and our effort to avoid using that Endowment supplement, we enter the new budget year with a lower bank balance. The lower

bank balance makes the Endowment supplement more necessary for next year

Reauthorizing the use of Endowment Funds is not an action that will cut into the Fund any more than we planned last year. However, we probably can't avoid using the Endowment supplement this time. We are relatively "staffed up" now, and our monthly deficit, at about \$2,000, is chronic. (We are running expenditures at about \$12,000 a month with under \$10,000 a month coming in.) We hope to use the extra ministerial time this affords to conduct more outreach into one or two communities away from Alton where our members live and work; this would provide better, more convenient service to current members and perhaps attract new members, as well.

The least predictable budget item is the payroll for the Office Administrator. We hope to have a replacement for Becky within the next few weeks, and will be working to change office and financial procedures a bit to adapt to a half-time office staff. Have patience with us as we attempt to transfer the skills and knowledge that Becky has accumulated over so many years to others so as to keep our operations running smoothly.

Thanks to all again for voting for a budget that risks short-term deficits in order to invest in the future. The Board is being careful with spending and will report back to you regularly.

Robin M. Crane, Treasurer  
On behalf of the Board of Trustees

### Fireworks Over the River

#### Watch the Fireworks from the Church Lawn July 3<sup>rd</sup>!



Peg Flach will be coordinating our traditional hot dog / lemonade booth this year. Volunteers needed ... info will be forthcoming via Facebook and weekly church emails. All donations of soda, hot dogs and cookies welcome! See Peg Flach for more details. Please consider bringing a chair or blanket and joining us for Alton's Firework display. Fireworks usually begin around 9 pm, but come early and enjoy the summer evening with friends.



## Social Justice Committee



The Social Justice Committee is committed to helping us live our UU values outside our doors. Watch for upcoming information and actions.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday, July 22nd 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 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Distribution noted on the memo line.

The Team thanks everyone for their ongoing support.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Potluck



Enjoy sharing a meal with friends, old and new, at our monthly luncheon. Bring a dish or help clean up – All are welcome!

## Wash, Dry and Put Away!

We count on each other to be thoughtful and fair in all our interactions – that also includes seeing to it that our church home is kept clean and dishes washed up and put away. If you enjoy a cup of coffee, a plate of snacks, or a full meal, please take your turn to help with cleaning-up.



## Note from Your Church Office



Don't forget to 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 2017 - 2018 pledges and some are paying towards their 2018- 2019 pledges.

*I would like to thank you for providing me with a wonderful place to work for almost eighteen years. I have enjoyed working with and learning from leaders and members of the church and I appreciate the support provided me during my time here. I am ready to move on to the next phase in my life and enjoy time with my husband and family.*

Thank you, Becky Green,  
Retired Administrator & Bookkeeper

**Please welcome your new administrator,  
Phillip Harris.**

## INTEREST GROUPS:

### *Ladies Luncheon*

**Anna Ds – Women's Alliance**  
**July 5<sup>th</sup> 11 a.m.**

When we left our June lunch, we agreed we'd like to return to Castelli's in July.....BUT I called and they're going to be closed both the 4th and 5th for the holiday and to refinish the kitchen floor.

I have an alternate proposal: a new Greek restaurant has opened near Bethalto (in the old Frank's location on Hwy 140). I stopped there today with two friends and we loved the folks, the food, the much cleaner restaurant itself. One friend and I had a lovely gyro salad while the third friend had the gyro, and we all thoroughly enjoyed our meals.

It's called the Opa Grill, and here is the detailed info.  
132 W. MacArthur Dr.  
Cottage Hills, IL 62018  
phone 618-251-8206

They will be open 7/5 and they still have the large room at the back for groups which we can use.

Let me know if are willing to try this new option or if you have any questions. (I told Castelli's that we would undoubtedly be back to them in the next few months.)

*(Response has been very positive, so we will see you at Opa Grill!) Sandy*

**Men's Monthly Lunch**  
**July 12<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)

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

2018 - 2019

### Board of Trustees

**Board President-** Chris Strangeman

**President-Elect-** TBD

**Past President-** Michael Schmidt

**Treasurer-** Robin Crane

**Secretary-** Sandy Shaner

**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