

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.

August, 2018 - "UnrUly Summer Sundays!"

August 5th 10 A.M. – Potluck Dinner!

Journeys

Facilitator: Pastor Amy Brooks and Zipporah Lee

August 12th 10 A.M.

Hued

Facilitator: Zipporah Lee and John Herndon

August 19th 10 A.M.

Chiaroscuro

Facilitator: Pastor Amy Brooks and Zipporah Lee

August 26th 10 A.M.

Protest

Facilitator: Zipporah Lee and Robert Kokenyesi

Pastor Amy's Corner

The Children

"Give justice to the lowly and the orphan;

maintain the right of the poor and the destitute!"

~ Psalm 82:3, CEB

In recent weeks there have been a lot of stories about children.

We have been horrified by the news from the southern border, of infants torn from the arms of their mothers. We waited, on edge, while a soccer team of young players were rescued from a flooded cave system in Thailand. We learned of four young African American boys being hand-cuffed by the police at gunpoint.

In order to honour the newsletter deadline I write this in mid-July, two weeks before you will read it. Who knows what the latest affront against children might be by then?

There is something about protecting the children that is inherent to our understanding of who we are as human creatures. The continuation of our species requires it, our ability to sleep soundly at night demands it. We must think of the children.

And, I wonder if there is something more that we are missing. Because it is right and good to protect the vulnerable **and also** our inherent worth and dignity does not somehow dissolve the day we reach our eighteenth birthday. Vulnerability does not stop when childhood

stops. The value of a person does not diminish as we age into adulthood.

Asylum seekers of all ages were in crisis at the southern border before the current administration began their policy of separation, and they continue to be in crisis at borders all around the world. Miners of all ages continue to work grueling, underpaid, underground hours in artificial ‘cave’ systems for corporate greed. Black bodies of all ages continue to suffer violence at the hands of the police.

In many ways it is easier to care about the children. They fit our aesthetic ideal of cuteness and tend to be non-threatening. I invite you to extend your idea of what is outrageous. Care about the fate of the elderly refugee, of the coal miner with black-lung disease, of the black drivers disproportionately represented in traffic court.

Care about all of the children, including the ones who are all grown up.

MEET OUR NEW ADMINISTRATOR!



Hello everyone!

My name is Phillip Harris, and I’m excited to be your new church administrator at First Unitarian Church. I have had an opportunity to meet some of you through e-mail, some have sent welcome notes and have left snacks on my desk and some I have actually had the opportunity to meet in person which has been wonderful as well. A bit of an introduction about myself, I’m currently a full-time student at Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri where I reside with my beautiful wife Jennifer and our two elementary school-aged daughters. If everything goes as planned, I will be graduating from Eden in May of 2020 with my Master of Divinity. In my spare time, I enjoy watching college football, reading, taking long naps, watching Netflix and dismantling systems of injustice.

Before coming to First Unitarian Church, I was on staff at two United Methodist churches in the Saint Louis area as a youth director. Prior to that, I spent thirteen years as an educator in the public school system. I also spent three years as a pastor in Ferguson, Missouri during civil unrest and protest of the murder of Michael Brown Jr.

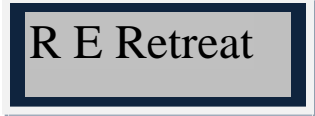
I enjoy keeping the door open in the church office, so come by and say hi!

I’m looking forward to working alongside all of you in the weeks ahead.



IN-GATHERING
SERVICE
Sunday, Sept. 9th
Pastor Amy Brooks

RE Volunteer Retreat
Sat., Aug. 18th, 1-4pm
Childcare provision TBA



We’ll be reviewing the year, talking about dreams, aspirations, and challenges for the upcoming year. Come ready to do some planning and preparation!

“Religious Education in the ‘New Year’”

Friends,

As the summer is getting closer to an end (I know, I know, we still want the sunshine!), I’m deep in planning for this coming year with religious education. As you heard at the annual meeting, there are numerous ideas and visions that have yet to come to life and fruition. Here’s a bullet point list of the highlights again:

- An elementary and youth curriculum for Sunday mornings from the UU “Tapestry of Faith”
 - Youth will use the “Place of Wholeness” curriculum
 - Elementary will use the “Signs of our Faith” curriculum
- A series of interfaith, interactive youth outings as community enrichment experiences
 - The Interfaith Partnership of St. Louis will be assisting in the planning of these events
- The finishing out of UnrUly, our experimental summer worship
- A volunteer retreat & training (August) for adults interested in supporting the youth & children’s educational growth

As everyone knows, even the best-planned programs for religious education do not run themselves. I also firmly believe in the community’s responsibility as a whole for the education of their youth, children, and visitors. Over this next month, I am asking you to consider attending the volunteer retreat (date TBA in a “Church This Week”) and give some of your precious time, your faith

experiences, and your wisdom to our youth and children in their spiritual growth. Some of the volunteer tasks I'll be searching for are:

- Help organizing and sorting the resource space for religious education
- Sunday morning volunteers to lead and assist with classroom curriculum
- Drivers/chaperones for our youth interfaith outings (schedule TBA)
- Sunday morning nursery fill-in volunteers (in case of sickness or other emergencies)
- Others during the course of the religious education year!

Of course, anyone who wishes to start early with helping out, contact Zippy at rebeccamularski@gmail.com. You can also catch them on a Sunday morning before or after worship! Thank you so much for supporting our religious education programming – I'm proud to have such congregational support and joy for what we're doing together!

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

From the Church Administrator

The church now has regular office hours!
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from
8:00am-1:00pm

Pastor Amy's hours will be on Wednesday from
9:00am-1:00pm

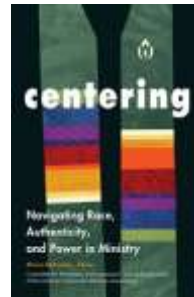
Please assist me in making sure the bookkeeping can be done more quickly and efficiently. If you are giving cash for your contributions, and you want credit for your giving make sure that you use an envelope and clearly write your name and where you wish your contribution to be designated to. Otherwise, all cash placed in the offering plates will be marked as undesignated or unrestricted. The same with checks, please make sure in the memo line its written where the funds are to be designated to.

As some of you have already experienced, e-mail is a great way to communicate with me, I tend to respond rather quickly depending on the urgency of the e-mail. For all church related communications I would prefer that you use church@firstuualton.org or the Istuuchurch@gmail.com e-mail addresses. My eden.edu e-mail inbox tends to get full rather quickly and I need to restrict it for school purposes especially for when I go back to classes at the end of this month.

Shalom,
Phillip Harris
Church Administrator

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.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



Newsletter Deadline is on the 15th of each month. Send submissions to Dorothy Wilson at dijccw@sbcglobal.net and to Phillip Harris at church@firstuualton.org



Nursery Care

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

1st Sunday Potluck Sunday August 5th

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

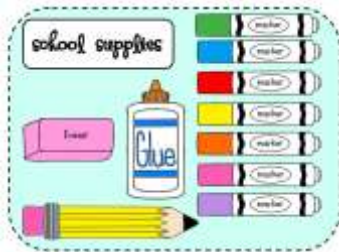


Social Justice Committee



Several members will be attending a training, July 28th (as this newsletter goes to print), conducted by United Congregations of Metro-East: "Integrated Voter Engagement Training & Deep Canvassing Training (IVE)"
Contact Dee Evans for more information and updates.

4th Saturday, August 25th



Social Action: Fourth Saturday

SCHOOL IS STARTING... and our clients need school supplies & backpacks as well as the usual toiletries. 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.

"Reaching Sideways" UU Women's Connection Summer Retreat August 3-5, 2018

*Ronora Lodge & Retreat Center, Watervliet
Michigan*

We will gather in Trilogy Lodge, a dorm-style lodge that sleeps up to 25. Catered gourmet Vegan meals, nourishing workshops, wildflower walks and worship circles make up this weekend "back to the land" on the 400+ acres of woodland and lake within the spirit-filled place called Ronora. A few workshops, plus time to explore, relax, drum, sing and commune with nature and each other.

Workshops will feature hands-on ice-dyeing, solar cooking, chanting/singing, and a wildflower/plant walk. Our theme comes from the title of a UU women's journal. UU foremother Rosemary Matson says, "Saraa Best, a lay woman in the Joseph Priestly District Women and Religion Committee, with the help of her friends, created a journal REACHING SIDEWAYS - A Continental Exchange of Views and Ideas chronicling the successes and failures of those trying to implement the Women and Religion Resolution. It was a voice when there were very few other voices in the denomination speaking for women and it proved to be the writing of our Women and Religion story as it was being lived. Sara Best produced her first issue in October 1981 and sent out her last issue on June 15, 1991. REACHING SIDEWAYS is sorely missed."

Remember to bring drums (and musical instruments if you like), perhaps an item to place on one of the 5 altars, and a small item of personal significance to pass along via the Giveaway Blanket **See you at Ronora!**

Contact ronora@uuwomensconnection.org if you have questions.

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.



INTEREST GROUPS:

Ladies Luncheon

Anna Ds – Women’s Alliance
August 2nd 11 a.m.

At the last meeting we agreed we still wanted to visit Castelli’s Moonlight Restaurant at 255, so that’s where we’re going for the August lunch meeting. Here’s their address and phone #: 618-462-4620

3400 Fosterburg Road
Alton, IL 62002

And here’s the link to their web site which includes their menu offerings.

<https://www.castellis255.com/>

As always, we aim to meet at 11:30. And how about we set next Sunday, 7/29 as the (soft) deadline to RSVP to me. This email address is the best way to do that.

If you want to bring a food pantry donation, we’ll get it to church for you.

Any questions? Use this email address and I’ll answer you.

Hope to see many of you there,

Sandy

Men’s Monthly Lunch
August 9th 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 Hebert

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