

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established Dec. 7th, 1836

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org

Pastor Amy Brooks



**Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.
December, 2018 - "Humility"**

December 2nd 10 A.M – Potluck Dinner!

**Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi**

December 9th 10 A.M.
*Celebrating 182nd Years History
Our Church was Founded on Dec 7th, 1836*
**Sabrina Trupia
Worship Associate: Mary Johnson**

December 16th 10 A.M.

**Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Robin Crane**

December 23rd 10 A.M.

**Hymn Sing and Bread Communion
Lead by Joy Hoeft**

Monday, December 24th 7:00 P.M.



*Christmas Eve
Service
With Pastor Amy
Brooks*

December 30th 10 A.M.

*Annual Burning
Bowl Ceremony*



**Sabrina Trupia
and the Worship
Associates**



**Sunday, December 23rd
Bread Communion**

In this morning's worship service, we will honor our diverse backgrounds and family heritages by breaking and sharing bread. Please bring bread that is representative of your family's ethnic roots or traditions. You will

also have the opportunity to tell the story of your bread if you wish.

Pastor Amy's Corner

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
~ Psalm 139:13, NRSV*

Abomination

Who has unraveled you?
Who has snipped and ripped at your intricate strands
until the very fibres of your being hang, like so many
cobwebs,
across the chasm that falls, depthless,
between the lies you have been told and the truth of
who you are?
Who slipped loose the yarn, who has dropped all
these stitches,
who undid all My good work?

Who has bleached you?
Who hung you out to dry beneath the merciless heat
of an oppressive sun,
until the vibrant brightness and the rich depths of the
spectacular spectrum I gave you
have faded and greyed into the muted pallor
of an over-washed sock?
Who stripped out the colours, who has denied you
the promise,
of My rainbow?

Who has soiled you?
Who dragged you through the dust beneath the tread
of a ruthless heel,
grinding into your soul the fallacy that I made you
wrong,
until even you have begun to settle limply into this
matted, besmirched
state of existing?
Who slung the mud, who wrote your name in dirt,
who infringed upon My trademark?

Who has discarded you?
Who has removed you from the honoured place of
public display,
slipping you farther and further back into the
shadowed corners of the closet,
until finally sliding you from the hanger into the
trash bag that brought you here
to this thrift store bargain bin?
Who discounted your worth, miscalculated your
value,

who diminished My treasure?

Who has done this abominable thing
to My good and perfect creation?

Show Mamma who did this to you,
I will sort them out.

Sunday December 2nd

You'll want to stay after the service this
day! We'll we have
shared a meal together, then put up the Holiday
decorations in the Sanctuary.
Come, enjoy the good food
and the good company.



The Old...

Celebrating 182 Years

Unitarianism came to Alton by the early 1830s with the arrival of Dr. William Samuel Emerson and his wife Olive from Kennebunk Maine. Dr. Emerson was from a long line of Emersons who were either physicians or ministers. He was the second cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Dr. Emerson was listed as the community's first physician in records from 1832.

Dr. Emerson wished to bring his Unitarian religion to Alton and so brought together those interested and held Unitarian meetings in his office. By 1835 and afterwards, the Rev. William Greenleaf Eliot, founder of the Unitarian church in St. Louis, would on occasion take a steamboat upriver to Alton and preach to those gathered.

Emerson's wife Olive, in a letter to her brother in 1832 wrote "Thank you for telling me about the hymns and tunes that you sing [at the Unitarian church in Kennebunk]. There is nothing that reminds me so forcibly of home as that. Oh how I long every Sunday morning to be in Kennebunk and go to my own meeting. It is so different here."

By 1836 the Unitarians in Alton were great enough in numbers to call a minister through their contacts back east. Rev. Charles Andrew Farley, a 1832 graduate of Harvard Divinity School, arrived in Alton in late fall and preached his first sermon, entitled "What is Unitarianism?" on December 7, 1836 in the Methodist church, rented by the Unitarians for the event.

His words were unlike the usual words spoken by Christian ministers in Alton. He said:

“Do you now ask, ‘Which is the true church?’ I answer, not the Episcopal church, not the Presbyterian church, not the Baptist church, not the Methodist church, not the Unitarian Church, but the good in all these churches. All who live under the light of nature or under the more blessed light of revelation; the child of the Ganges who worships the river, and finds healing in its waters; he who adores the Sun in its Majesty; he who cries out for help of the great father and whose dying eyes are lit up with the hope of hunting again in the Spirit land; all, all are the children of God. All are members of the church universal of that vast temple which the broad skies cover and the broad earth sustains and whose doors are open to the illimitable heaven.”

So, December 7, 1836 is the date we mark as the founding of the Unitarian congregation in Alton.

[And the New](#)

News About Our Extension Groups

This church has started the process of expanding into the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon area and STL North County, with one meeting a month at each location. We are still fine-tuning times and venues for these meetings, so at this time, we can say for sure that the NoCo meeting will be on Sat. Dec. 15th at 10:30 am in the chapel of Village North Retirement Center. The GlenEd location may move to the Edwardsville library, time to be determined, but it will be on Dec. 8th. Watch your “Church This Week” email notifications and this newsletter for updates.



The Seekers

Seekers discussion group meets each Sunday, in Emerson place, about 15 minutes after that day’s service is concluded. On the second and third Sunday of each month (Dec 9th and 16th), we will have a facilitator; the remaining Sundays will be self-led by those attending. All adults are encouraged to use this forum to discuss the sermon and related ideas. Please be thoughtful of time, so that everyone can participate. This is a great way to get to know your fellow members. We always have a lively and interesting exchange of ideas. Hope to see you there!



What is Guest at Your Table?

Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC’s annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues. Since UUSC works in over 25 countries, with over 75 grassroots partners, there are thousands of individuals involved in and who benefit from the work that our members make possible. The program is an opportunity to celebrate grassroots partnership, support human rights, and learn about just four of these individuals – the “guests” in Guest at Your Table.

2018-2019 Theme: Justice Across Borders

From the Northern Triangle of Central America, to deserts of Mexico and Arizona, to detention centers in the United States, the road away from danger is paved with injustices. Partnering with grassroots allies along the Central American migration trail, UUSC addresses root causes, supports migrants in transit, and protects the right to seek asylum. Join with UUSC for Guest at Your Table to learn more about UUSC’s and our nation’s involvement in Central America – historically and presently – and our courageous Migrant Justice partners.

Look for the donation information in the Wuerker Room to support this critical mission.

Don’t forget the church now offers online giving! -You can now make a contribution to our church through a mobile app! To get started download

GivePlusChurch for **FREE** from the App Store or Google Play. Simply search for “**GivePlusChurch**” to quickly find and download the app today. Then, you can easily make donations directly from your smartphone using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account. You can also choose to donate as a guest or set up an account that allows you to securely and conveniently schedule recurring donations and manage and review your giving history. We hope you enjoy this new way to contribute to our church and thank you for your support!



Religious Education Updates

Friends,

We're adapting curriculum yet again for our youth & children - thanks for being so flexible!

We'll now follow the monthly theme so that parents/guardians & our young persons are able to share their learning.



Monthly themes are below:

Dec: Humility

Jan: Hope & Despair

Feb: Truth & Lies

Mar: Visibility & Invisibility

Apr: Restoration

May: Hunger

June: Identity

Quick shout-out to all of the leaders who've shared their wisdom with our children & youth by teaching RE.

As the New Year comes around, I'm in need of some creative, practical persons who are interested in sharing their wisdom with our young persons.

Our current teachers are still able to worship regularly & participate in the rest of the life of the congregation while teaching.

This is an important task & as UU's, we've all got different things to share!

Contact Zippy at rebeccamularski@gmail.com if you're interested in teaching once or twice in the new year.



Hello everyone!

There has been a high number of receipts that have been turned into the church office for reimbursements over the past few weeks. I'm in the process of creating a new reimbursement request form that will better help me with the organization of reimbursements. Once that form is available I will let everyone know via Church This Week. I will work to make sure everyone getting their reimbursement checks quickly.

Just as a reminder, to please have bulletins e-mailed to the church office by Friday at 1:00pm. That gives enough

time to print and fold bulletins before the church office closes at 2:00pm. There has been a couple recent Sunday's where there has been no bulletin printed.

The Church Office will be closed Monday, December 24th through Thursday, December 2th for the Christmas holiday. Also, the office will be closed on Monday, December 31st and Tuesday, January 1st for the New Year's holiday.

Starting this month, Pastor Amy's office hours will be 10:00am to 2:00pm on Wednesday's.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas season!

Shalom,

Phillip Harris

Church Administrator

From the Board



Deck the halls with ... sox? And gloves, mittens, and scarves? We're planning to bring out the Christmas decorations and deck our halls on Sunday, December 2 before, during and after our monthly pot luck lunch. We're

also planning to decorate a really large box to collect the previously mentioned sox, gloves, mittens and scarves so that we have an extra gift for the guests at our 4th Saturday distribution on December 22. (Our guests tell us repeatedly that they want crew-length socks, not the longer or insulated kind, so please bring what they requested.)

And soon the sanctuary will have a new and permanent "decoration"...a grand piano to support our music. Our pianist, Nicole, is giving us a lovely piano and we're hoping to get it moved by mid-December. (The Board approved funds for the professional piano movers to ensure that it will remain in its splendid condition after the traveling.)

The Board also approved the funds to remove the floor tiles in the downstairs boys' bathroom. Once that is completed, we will replace that flooring.

Next Board meeting is Dec. 5th at 7:00 P.M. and everyone is welcome!



**Special Holiday 4th Saturday
Cold Weather Clothing Drive
Dec. 22nd, 10:00 A.M.**

Here is your chance to find the joy of playing Santa, while you provide a helping hand to your neighbors! We will have a donation box, in the sanctuary, to fill with warm socks (crew length, not too thick), hats, gloves & some toys. These will be distributed to our guests, along with the usual cleaning and personal care items. This will be instead of a donation to Oasis Crisis Center or the Alton Community Christmas.

We had 86 guests at the November event – considerably more than we usually see. Open your heart and your wallet, “as spirit and body allow” – you know the need is there.

If perhaps you haven’t been taking part in our 4th Saturday program because you don’t have time to shop and bring items to the church, the team has devised a way to make participating easier. Just put your check (indicate 4th Saturday program on your check) or cash (be sure to include who it is from for your tax record) in the offering plate, or give it to the church secretary or a member of the 4th Saturday team. And of course, you’re always welcome to bring in your own purchases as well. Our clients – roughly 70 people per month (or more!) – count on this help. Watch “Church This Week” for items needed if you decide to shop.

Also, remember, in addition to product, we need additional volunteers to be trained in the processes involved in this community outreach. It will do your heart good!

Newsletter Deadline is on the 20th of each month. The editor for the January 2019 newsletter will be **Mary Johnson**. Please be sure to send all information to her

at mejohanson@mindspring.com and to the church administrator, Phillip Harris at church@firstuualton.org



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 keep 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
Dec. 6th 11:30 a.m.**

At our last meeting we agreed that it would be fun to go to Taj Indian Cuisine restaurant in

Edwardsville (at the old Neruda location behind the MotoMart on IL 157). Here's a link to their web site:

<http://www.tajindiancuisineil.com/>

4 Club Center Court
Edwardsville, IL 62025
618-692-8110

They have a nice range of foods on their lunch buffet, some of which are suitable for vegetarians. I've already talked to the manager and will call again to reserve their separate meeting room.

I'd appreciate your RSVPs or regrets by Monday, December 3 so that I can call with an estimated count so they can plan on the number coming. If the weather or road conditions are bad, we can cancel without seriously inconveniencing them.

If you'd like to bring some personal care items for our Fourth Saturday distribution, please do so. We'll make sure they get to church.

Hope to see all of you there.

Sandy

**Men’s Monthly Lunch
Dec. 13th 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

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

2018 - 2019

Board of Trustees

Board President- Chris Strangeman

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Past President- Michael Schmidt

Treasurer- Robin Crane

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Member-At-Large- Phil Embree

Member-At-Large- Tracy Howe-Koch

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Transitions Committee - Vacant

Social Events- Vacant

Interfaith and U.U. – Vacant

Social Justice – Dee Evans

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Endowment Fund- Jerry Johnson,
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Finance- Matt Koch

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Sunday Support Ministries- Vacant

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Robin Crane

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