

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the
**First
Unitarian Church
Alton, Illinois**



Rev. Amy Brooks, Pastor

Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.
February, 2019 Monthly Theme “Truth and Lies”

www.firstuulton.org

Sunday February 3rd
Monthly Potluck Luncheon

Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi

Sunday February 10th

Robyn Berkley
Worship Associate: Michael Tarabulski

Sunday February 17th

Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Sabrina Trupia

Sunday February 24th

Robert Kokenyesi
Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

A great big Welcome to **Nathan Brown**,
who “signed the book” on January 6th,
joining our congregation!



We welcome our new co-Presidents Elect (with future movement into the President and Past President’s position) - **Lee Suarez and Char McAllister!** See the Board report below for more information.

Potluck Luncheon

Sunday February 3rd Share the warmth of community, good conversation and plenty of good food. Bring a dish to share or maybe help with clean up. All are welcome!



Religious Education Updates

A new, rotating model of religious education has been implemented with youth meeting on 1st and 3rd Sundays and elementary aged children meeting on 2nd and 4th Sundays. On 5th Sundays, all young persons stay in worship with their families along with additional planned special services throughout the year (e.g., Ingathering).

The 2019 religious education curriculum will be matched with the monthly worship themes to promote

conversations between you all and our young persons. After some entertainment and use of the “Tapestry of Faith” curriculums provided by the UUA, leaders and I have discovered that the model provided in Tapestry does not fit the particular needs of our congregation. As always, the need for leaders for our religious education programming increases this coming year. I hope that you all will consider lending some of your time to share your wisdom with our young leaders and learners.

2019 R E Wish List:

- Schedule at least one intergenerational visit & worship experience with a gathering of persons from another religious tradition.
- With Main Street United Methodist, plan & attend a 3-day youth retreat experience with the “Urban Forum” at Kingdom House STL
- Update our nursery area with the help of our Sunday morning nursery staff.

Board of Directors Report, Jan. 10, 2019

It's been a busy time for the Board between its December and January meetings.

Here's a quick list with more information on several points:

- Preparing for the January 6 semi-annual congregational meeting,
- Continuing to canvass members about volunteer opportunities,
- Declining a request from Post Commons for expansion of its current liquor license,
- Enjoying the give and take of the semi-annual congregational meeting,
- Rejoicing as the congregation accepted the nomination of Lee Suarez and Char McAllister as co-Presidents Elect (with future movement into the President and Past President's position),
- Greeting both Char and Lee to their first Board meeting on January 10,
- Providing an opportunity for Hugh Halter of Post Commons to address the Board about its decision not to support the expansion of the Commons' liquor license.

Now for a few details:



If you didn't attend the congregational meeting (or even if you did) and you'd like to see Minutes of that meeting (including the Endowment and Treasurer's Reports), please let me know and I can send you a copy.

While the volunteering of Lee and Char provided the opportunity to take a deep breath knowing that the Presidency positions (Pres Elect, President, Past Pres) have been filled for the near term, there was still some concern that a President-Elect would be needed from the June annual congregational meeting. If you know Char and Lee from their previous service in the Church, you know that both are thoughtful, can-do members. At the January Board meeting they demonstrated their commitment with an offer that Lee to move into the President position for next fiscal year and Past President the next year while Char remains in the President-Elect position for FY19/20 then moves through President and Past President the next two years. The Board gratefully accepted their offer and the promise of leadership continuity for the next 2-3 years. We hope that the membership will also see this continuity as an opportunity to support the commitment of Lee and Char by engaging in one or more of the many levels of Church service still available.

The other major activity of the Board during this period was the request by Post Commons (in the old Post Office across Alby from our lower entrance). While the Commons already has a liquor license to sell/dispense liquor in that location, it was requesting the approval of the three neighboring churches to broaden its license to allow it to sell liquor to be taken from the building. We received the request at the Church office in mid-December but were unaware that an answer was needed by the end of 2018. Once we learned of the immediacy of the request, the Board engaged in a conversation and decided not to support the Commons' request. Subsequent to that action, Mr. Halter asked to address the Board at its January 10, 2019 meeting. Following that presentation, the Board determined that it would let its original decision stand and would not to support the Commons' request. Anyone with questions about this issue – or any other issue -- is urged to contact any Board member.

See you in Church!

Sandy Shaner, Secretary



Our newest Worship Associate is Robyn Berkley

Thank you, Robyn, for volunteering!

Congregational Covenant

Approved May 17, 2015

To strengthen and nurture with love, compassion and respect, we covenant to:



Honor and make space for our diversity, respect our volunteers, leaders and staff by supporting balance in their lives and in their personal and professional pursuits;

Encourage each member to develop a personal spiritual practice that cultivates honesty and acceptance;

Remembering our humanness we acknowledge our imperfection and extend forgiveness to ourselves and others;

Engage within our own and larger community with integrity, by taking responsibility for our actions, facilitating right relationships, and living into the Journey. (The acronym for our Covenant is [HERE](#))

Social Justice Committee Meeting February 17th 11:30 A.M.



This month's Social Justice meeting will have a guest speaker, Louis Goseland, who is a community organizer for Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans who is experienced working with UU churches.

His, and our, objective is building organizing capacity in the Metro East area. This is a real opportunity for us to learn from a real go-getter, professional.



Regional Assembly 2019
"Intersectionalities"

The **2019 MidAmerica Regional Assembly** is coming sooner than you think!

This year, our RA will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, at the Marriott St Louis, April 5-7, 2019, so *Save the Date!*

News About Our Extension Groups

This church has started the process of expanding into the Edwardsville and Glen Carbon areas and North County in Missouri, with one meeting a month at each location.

The Glen/Ed group will meet on Saturday, February 9th at 4 p.m. at A Holistic Approach, 88 South Main Street in Glen Carbon.

The North County gathering will be on Saturday, February 16th at 10:30 a.m. in the chapel of Village North Retirement Center. The Center is a little bit west of Christian Hospital at 11160 Village North Drive, off Dunn Road.

Watch your "Church This Week" email notifications and this newsletter for updates.



Saturday February 23rd at 10:00 a.m.

(Re-Posting Mary's Great Article from January, just in case you missed it)

4th Saturday Personal Care Distribution – The Way It Works

The average attendance at this community service project has grown from 40 to 60 in two years. In November 2018 we had a record 86 adults come by for personal care products. Folks start lining up outside the Alby St. door around 9 a.m., although unless the weather is bad (too cold or too hot) we don't open the doors until 10:30 a.m.

Distribution begins at 11 a.m. We have a helper named Roger who knows most of the people who come, and he has them sign in as they arrive and gives each person a line number.

Once people come in they are invited to go to the Hospitality Room down the hall where they can get coffee, lemonade, and cookies. Sometimes we have additional items like clothing or toys in the Youth Group room for people to select from. Seating is available in both rooms.

We provide two white boards listing the products available for the month. People are encouraged to take a note card and write down the items they want. Everyone always gets two rolls of toilet paper, and then they can choose 4 or 5 more items – 5 if they bring a reusable (non-plastic) bag. We have been handing out reusable bags since the program began. Over 80% bring their reusable bag each month. Water and condoms are available and do not count as one of the 4 or 5 items ... but are limited to 4 condoms and 2 bottles of water per person.

At 11 a.m. Roger starts calling people by number, three people at a time. Each person hands their note card and bag to one of the church workers in the distribution room (first room at the bottom of the stairs) who then calls out the items wanted and the other workers in the room go from shelf to shelf adding the requested items to the bag.

All the products distributed are provided by church members and friends – or are purchased using funds donated by church members or friends.

This 4th Saturday Program is wholly dependent on YOU donating needed products or money.

Items always needed: Toilet paper, Laundry detergent (some free and clear), Body wash, Shampoo, Baby wipes, Diapers, Liquid dish detergent, Deodorant, Lotion, Kotex pads. Other items are listed in “Church This Week” and on UU Friends.

February 23rd and helpers as well as products and financial support are needed.

Thank You for YOUR participation in our church’s community service efforts.



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

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.



Please send articles, news items or save-the-date reminders for the monthly newsletter to Dorothy Wilson djicw@sbcglobal.net and to the church administrator *Phillip Harris* at

church@firstuualton.org. All items are due no later than the 20th.

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!



Please Join the Discussion At the “Y”!

Watch the Movie – January 9, 2-4 p.m.

White Like Me: Race, Racism & White Privilege in America featuring Tim Wise.

Held in the lobby of the Alton YWCA

Round Table Discussion – Feb. 9, 2-4 p.m.

Share thoughts and experiences from the movie. Held in the lobby of the Alton YWCA.

Book Discussion – March 2, 2-4 p.m.

Read the book “White Like Me” and come together for further discussion.

Held in the lobby of the Alton YWCA.

RSVP YWCA of Alton

618-465-7774

info@altonywca.com

From Eliot Chapel

Hello! We would like to invite Alton members to join Eliot Chapel on a March 22-24 bus trip to **Montgomery, Alabama** to visit the National Memorial for **Peace and Justice, The Legacy Museum, Rosa Parks Museum, and the Freedom Rides Museum**. We will be taking a 55-passenger bus and staying downtown at the Double Tree by Hilton which is within easy walking distance of all the major museums and freedom and justice sites. Find all the details at: <http://www.eliotchapel.org/montgomerytrip>



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.



Anna Ds – Women's Alliance February 7th, 11:30 a.m.



We've moved to our winter schedule for the 2-3 months (Jan/Feb/March maybe) most likely to bring us weather that can keep us in our homes for our own safety. Every 1st Thursday of these three months, we have a "come as you are" gathering at 11:30 at Best Buffet in Wood River on the hill across from Wood River Wal-Mart; the formal address is 615 Wesley Drive and the phone number is 618-258-1888. They are always open, we don't need a reservation and won't disappoint anyone if 2 or 12 arrive. If the weather is good, please come and join us. If the weather turns sour or is predicted to do so, stay safe and warm at home.

Since January and February locations are decided, let's think a bit about where we want to go in 2019. Here's a list of 10 restaurants I believe we've enjoyed. Please add others by return email or during discussion on Thursday.

Taj Indian - Edwardsville
Queen's Cuisine - Edwardsville
Fazzi's Greek - Collinsville
Castelli's - Alton
Madison's Tea Room - Wood River
United Methodist Village - Alton
Meridien Village - Edwardsville
Maryville Winery - Maryville
Hofbrauhaus - Belleville
Bella Milano - Edwardsville

If you can bring a food donation to any meeting for the Food Crisis Center basket at church, please do.

If you have any other questions or information you'd like circulated to the group, just let me know.

See you Thursday at Best Buffet!
Sandy

Men's Monthly Lunch February 14th, 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

Co-Presidents-Elect- Lee Suarez and
Char McAllister

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 - Vacant

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 2019- TBD

Endowment Fund- Jerry Johnson,
Ron Glossop & Tracy Howe-Koch

Finance- Matt Koch

Membership- Mary Weber

Sunday Support Ministries- Vacant

Worship Associates

Mary Johnson

Robin Crane

Joy Hoeft

Robert Kokenyesi

Mike Tarabulski

Ruth Maskow

Sabrina Trupia

Dorothy Wilson

Peg Flach

John Herndon

Robyn Berkley