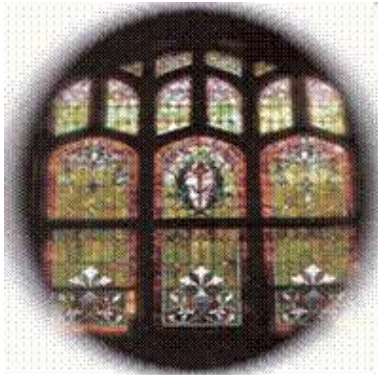


FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



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

Pastor Rev. Amy Brooks
www.firstuulton.org



Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M.

March, 2019 Monthly Theme: “Visibility & Invisibility”

Sunday March 3rd
Monthly Potluck Luncheon

Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Joy Hoeft

Sunday March 10th

Chris Sutton *“Hiding In Plain Sight”*

All of us have gifts that we are either not aware of or are reluctant to let shine. Together we will explore how to find these gifts and how we can help ourselves and others once we have.

Worship Associate: Robert Kokenyesi

Sunday March 17th

Pastor Amy Brooks
Worship Associate: Ruth Maskow

Sunday March 24th

Sayer Johnson
“Visibly Invisible Navigating Shifts in Being”



Sayer Johnson longtime member of First UU and local trans rights activist will explore visibility and invisibility reflecting on his own navigation in the world. Sayer will reflect on body image and dysphoria and how visibility has manifested into privilege. This service will also feature special music by Jay-Marie Hill, a sought after musician, educator and "creative mind asking the questions that will shape the future of culture" Jay-Marie (they/them/Holy) is a Black Boricua, Gender-Queer Bay Area-bred activist and consultant committed to the intersection of revolutionary music and queer political work to shape what freedom looks like for the next generation. You can find their music digitally under Jay-MarieisHoly and via the band they co-founded as the Holy Ghost: Rev. Sekou & the Holy Ghost.

Worship Associate: Peg Flack

Sunday March 31st

Ron Glossop
“How To Make the Invisible Visible”

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley



Save The Date!

Sunday May 5th

Theme: For Such A Time as This

**Potluck Luncheon
Sunday March 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, February 13, 2019**



While the Board discussed a variety of items, one may be of particular interest – when and how to cancel services if the weather forecast includes a warning about dangerous driving. This was a rarity in prior years, but it has already been an issue for us three times in January and February. (We cancelled Sunday service twice and had to think about it a third time. Weekend weather was also a consideration for our satellite services in Glen Carbon and North County.) Each time we “got it together”, but we all knew this increased frequency means we need a documented process.

At the meeting we talked about what worked and what didn’t as background for development of a clear process. Next month we’ll be reviewing a diagram of “if this, then that” decision points and follow-through actions.

Concurrently you’ll soon be approached with an informational survey. It has 3 short sections:

- what we know about you from the Church Directory so that we can update the Directory as needed,
- a list of various social media sites you access, and
- a third section in which you can tell us about your personal priority for checking those social media sites, email or phone.

Once we have your responses, we will convert them to a data base of preferences for social media sites (or email or phone) to use in communicating with you. We see this communications database as serving more than just weather warnings and believe we will find new ways to use it within the Congregation.

As with so many Board topics, both projects will undoubtedly be discussed for several months as we think through the processes. Stay tuned!

Sandy Shaner, Board Secretary

2019 MidAmerica Regional Assembly

This year's Regional Assembly will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, at the Marriott St. Louis Airport Hotel, April 5-7. Registration begins at 4 P.M. Friday April 5th; Saturday offers a full day of workshops, socializing, singing, and lessons. The Assembly will end with a worship service beginning at 9:30 A.M. Sunday, April 7th. Details can be found at <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra>. The theme is "Intersectionalities." UUA President, Rev. Susan Frederick Gray is our Keynote Presenter. Join us to explore, share, and worship with fellow Unitarian Universalists.



Is this newsletter important to you? Do you have roughly eight hours a month, and some skill in word processing? If so, please

Consider serving your church by editing our newsletter. Unfortunately, Dorothy will not be able to continue as editor. After April, she will no longer be able to put together the newsletter. If you're interested, please contact a Board member or Dorothy. Thank you.

Please send articles, news items or save-the-date reminders for the monthly newsletter to Dorothy Wilson at djjcw@sbcglobal.net and to the church administrator *Phillip Harris* at church@firstuualton.org. All items are due no later than the 20th of each month.



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.

Weather has caused cancellations lately, but hopefully we will be past all of that for several months.

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

The North County gathering will be on Saturday, March 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.



IN MEMORIAM

Michelle Bryant-Barbeau's mother, Geraldine Bryant, on January 26

Nathan Brown's grandmother, Monica Murphy, on January 29

Phillip Harris's father, Emmett Harris, on December 10, 2018



What you know about **Mary Johnson** probably depends on when you joined the Church. If you joined when her kids were small, you know about her efforts to ensure Religious Education for her kids and the other kids in the congregation. If you joined somewhere between then and the 2010s, you may have been to a service during which she summarized the general history of the UUA faith and the specific history of our church. If you joined at a time when the kitchen was declared an "off limits construction zone", you knew her during the Capital Campaign and the conversations about how to spend those monies for the

good of the church. Attending any time between then and now means you probably saw Mary working on many, many other church tasks.

As much as we owe Mary for her service all these years, her most recent accomplishment may prove to be her best. While the church and donations to it are tax-free, we didn't have the federal stamp of charitable approval, a 501(c)(3) designation...but now, thanks to Mary, we do.

Mary put her skills as a research librarian to work on our behalf, identified all the papers needed, gathered and filed them. Even though we had heard that filing was no assurance of receiving the status, Mary's filing was so well done that we heard fairly quickly that we had been approved.

That alone would have been praise-worthy, but Mary has a longer-range plan in mind: increasing the quantity of personal care items we distribute on every 4th Saturday. How is that connected? Now that the Church had been granted status as a 501(c)(3) organization, CORPORATE donors may deduct contributions they make to our church as formulated in the Internal Revenue Code. In addition, the Church can become a partner agency of the St. Louis Area Foodbank. Huh? Why would we want to do that? That partnership could provide additional products for 4th Saturday at little or no cost to us (in addition to the ongoing donations we already receive).

And so the Board wanted to express its heartfelt thanks for everything Mary has done – and continues to do -- for the Church.



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

4th Saturday Personal Care Distribution

Every month, an average of 60 individuals – plus their family members - depend on our church to help them stretch their budget and make their lives a little bit easier. All the products distributed are provided by church members and friends – or are purchased using funds donated by church members or friends. Leaders of this program are actively seeking partnerships with other organizations to increase the good we can do, but for the past many years, the 4th Saturday Program has been wholly dependent on our church members. Thank You for YOUR participation in this important community service efforts.

Items always needed: Reusable bags, toilet paper, laundry detergent (some free and clear), body wash, shampoo, baby wipes, diapers, dish detergent, deodorant, lotion, sanitary products. Other items are listed in “Church This Week” and on UU Friends.



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.

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”!

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 March 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.

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 March 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

Sandra Shaner

Mary Weber

Ruth Maskow

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

Peg Flach

John Herndon

Robyn Berkley