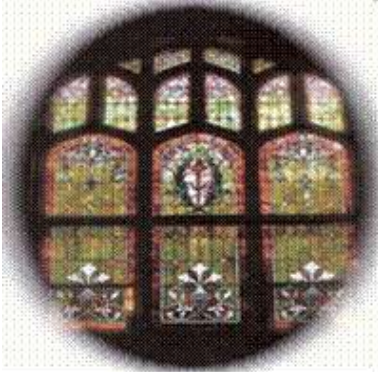


FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of
First Unitarian Church
Alton, Illinois

Rev. Amy Brooks, Pastor
www.firstuulton.org



Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:00 am
June 2019 Theme: "Identity"

Worship Schedule

Sunday, May 5th

Sunday, June 2nd -Monthly Potluck Luncheon

Sermon: Joy Hoeft

Worship Associate: Ruth Maskow

Sunday, June 9th -Congregational Meeting

Sermon: Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: John Herndon

Sunday, June 16th - Father's Day

Sermon: Paula Moore

Worship Associate: John Herndon

Sunday, June 23rd

Sermon: Laura Perkins

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

Sunday, June 30th

Sermon: Phillip Harris

Worship Associate: John Herndon

|



Sunday, June 9th

Make plans to attend the congregational meeting on Sunday, June 9th after the morning worship service.

There will be an election for open board positions, in addition to voting and approving the church budget for the 2019-200 fiscal year. Don't this opportunity to have your voice heard!



State of the Association

Dear Congregation Members,

The UUA's annual congregational certification is in! Every year, congregations report their membership, religious education (RE) enrollment, budgetary figures, and much more. It's a helpful snapshot of what's happening in our congregations. And here's this year's headline: membership is steady, while religious education

enrollment and average Sunday attendance continue to fall.

Adult membership is steady overall, coming in at 154,704, almost identical to last year. We have stabilized a downward trend in membership that had run 2010-2017, but beneath the headline we see substantial movement in membership figures in congregations. Last year 43% of congregations grew their adult membership, and 30% grew their RE enrollment. Growth is coming largely from our smallest congregations – of the almost 400 members we added to brick and mortar UUA congregations last year, 70% were from congregations of under 150 members. Regionally there is also some variation. The Central East, New England and Southern Regions grew this past year, and the Southern Region in particular has been a source of growth over the past five years.

So, what do these numbers mean; what's going on here? First, it's important to note that Unitarian Universalists, like many faith communities, continue to be impacted by the tide moving away from religious involvement in the United States. We see this in the generational shifts in RE enrollment. And the fact that we are not losing members at the rate of some of our mainline Christian cousins attests to the relevance of Unitarian Universalism in our time, as we tread water against the current trends.

It's also important to acknowledge that the transition to the new formula for the Annual Program Fund, asking congregations to contribute to the UUA based on their ability to pay rather than their members, means we are not penalizing congregations for membership. The regions that grew this past year are the ones who have fully implemented the formula, and the remaining two regions – Pacific Western and MidAmerica – will complete their transition to the new formula next year.

Most importantly, what I see is that there is still a hunger for the values of justice, equity, compassion and liberation to which our faith aspires. Advancing these values matters far more than any simple statistics can capture. As we have engaged at a deeper level in the past two years in examining how systems of oppression have shaped our own UU institutions, we have not seen big changes in our membership, implying most folk are staying in the conversation. There is much more work to do to build “the power of we” in Unitarian Universalism, and I am glad to be on the journey.

In faith,

Carey McDonald

UUA Executive Vice President



Would you like a “free” way to support the Church?

From Sandy Shaner

Following Mary Johnson's successful efforts to obtain a federal 501(c)(3) designation for the Church, Phillip Harris (our Office Administrator) successfully registered the Church as an Amazon Smile charity. This means that anyone who designates the Church as their preferred charity will generate 0.5% of the purchase price from their eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Here are some excerpts from the Amazon Smile web site about this program.

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

Which products on AmazonSmile are eligible for charitable donations?

Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. Recurring Subscribe-and-Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.

Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?

On your first visit to AmazonSmile smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

Here's how to find and select the Church. If you walk through the last paragraph of information, you can search for the Church as First Unitarian Church of Alton. When it pops up, just select it. (For now, under the Church portion of their database, we had to pick a type so we're shown as "Christian". Knowing that many of us as well as others who might be interested in us find that adjective too restrictive, Phillip will be checking to see if there's an "other" category available.)

I may be unusual in my use of Amazon (dating back to the time when shopping was extremely difficult before both knees were replaced), but Amazon says that as of May 22, 2019 they've contributed \$66.40 to my charity (primarily a different one before I switched to the Church option).



The church office will be closed Wednesday June 5th through Friday June 7th

Just a reminder to everyone that the fiscal year ends Sunday, June 30th so please make sure that you have your 2018-2019 pledges in by that date. The

2019-2020 fiscal year will begin Monday, July 1st. Some of you have already started giving toward your 2019-2020 pledges. If you do not specify on the memo line of your check or giving envelop where you want your giving to go towards, it will be automatically marked as a loose cash or undesignated donation. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Phillip Harris
Church Administrator



The church board voted unanimously at the last board meeting to discontinue using Vanco for the online giving needs of the congregation. Sunday, June 30th will be the last Sunday that you will be able to give through Vanco. Starting July 1st, we will be switching the church online giving to Givelify. Watch your "Church This Week" e-mails in the upcoming weeks for more information.

**July Newsletter
Submissions due
Monday, June 24th**



Spokane, Washington

Go to www.uua.org/ga for more information about the upcoming General Assembly including agendas and livestreaming information.



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.



Extension Groups

The Glen Carbon/Edwardsville Extension Group will meet on Saturday, June 8th at A Holistic Approach located at 88 South Main Street in Glen Carbon.

The North County Extension Group will meet on Saturday, June 15th 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 the "Church This Week" e-mail for any notifications or updates.



4th Saturday Personal Care Distribution

Saturday June 22nd at 10:00 am

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.



As many of you know, we're deep into Pledge and Budget season. As a result, while Char keeps us posted on projected Pledge income, Budget development work has been our primary focus. All of those activities, as well as developing a slate of nominations for Board positions, effective July 1, will be visible to everyone who attends the June 9, 2019 Congregational Meeting. We see and are planning for a future of focused change, and we're eager to share our vision of our Church with you. We hope to see you all.

Sandy Shaner, Board Secretary



**Church Board Meeting
will be Wednesday,
June 12th at 7 pm.**



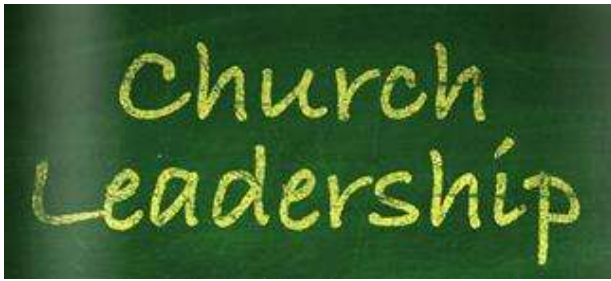
WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Anna Ds
First Thursday of each Month
@ 11:00am



Thursday, June 13th
@11:30am

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 at pphebert@mail.com.



Board of Trustees

President

Chris Strangeman

Co-Presidents Elect

Lee Suarez and Char McAllister

Past President

Michael Schmidt

Treasurer

Vacant

Secretary

Sandy Shaner

Members at Large

Phil Embree and Tracy Howe-Koch

Committee/Team Leads

Transitions Committee

Vacant

Social Events

Vacant

Interfaith and UU

Vacant

Social Justice

Dee Evans

Fundraising

Dee Evans and Peg Flach

Pastoral Associates

Sandy Shaner

Mary Weber

Ruth Maskow

Religious Education Council Chairperson

Joy Hoeft

RE Coordinator

Zipporah Lee

Stewardship Committee

Building and Grounds

Phil Embree

Canvass 2019

Vacant

Endowment Fund

Jerry Johnson, Ron Glossop,
and Tracy Howe-Koch

Finance

Matt Koch

Membership

Mary Weber

Sunday Support Ministries

Vacant

Worship Associates

Mary Johnson

Robin Crane

Joy Hoeft

Robert Kokenyesi

Michael Tarabulski

Ruth Maskow

Sabrina Trupia

Peg Flach

John Herndon

Robyn Berkley