

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the

First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

www.firstuualton.org



Congregation established 1836



Amy Brooks, Pastor

Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.
September 2019 Theme: "Work and Play"

Sept. 1st 10:00 a.m.

"Looking Upstream"

Presented by Dennis Fisher. Dennis is a retired educational technologist who is fascinated by art, music, and theater. He was a longtime member of the Joliet Illinois Universalist Unitarian Church and now lives in the St Louis area.

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

Sept. 8th 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley

* In-Gathering

* Water Communion

* Back-to-Church Roundup and Barbeque (see elsewhere in the newsletter for details)



Sept. 15th 10:00 a.m.

"What is Esperanto and Why Do We Need It?"

Presented by Dr. Ronald Glossop, Professor Emeritus (Philosophy and Peace Studies) Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (SIUE)

Worship Associate: Jerry Johnson

Esperanto is a deliberately constructed non-national language designed 140 years ago by Ludovic Lazarus Zamenhof to facilitate international communication. He was motivated by his desire to help prevent violent conflicts among four different language groups in his home town in Poland. The

world community needs a single readily-learned neutral non-national language so that every person can communicate with every other person.

Sept. 22nd 10:00 a.m.

Pastor Amy Brooks

Worship Associate: Michael Tarabulski

Sept. 29th 10:00 a.m.

"Labor and Immigrants" from the view of Mother Jones (1837-1930 American labor and community organizer).

Presented by Loretta Williams

Loretta is a historical re-enactor portraying the Irish immigrant and labor activist, Mother Jones. Loretta has performed at the Mother Jones Festival in Cork, Ireland, Vintage Voices in Alton and regularly at the Mother Jones Museum and Union Miners Cemetery in Mt. Olive, Illinois.

Worship Associate: Joy Hoefft

Contacts:

Pastor Amy Brooks thisisamybrooks@gmail.com

Office Administrator Phillip Harris

Office phone: 618-462-2462 church@firstuualton.org

Next Newsletter: September 20, 2019

Send articles to: Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com

Pastor Amy's Corner

By the Deadline

"I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." — Douglas Adams, The Salmon of Doubt

So, first of all, I am in no position to lecture anyone on the perils of procrastination. This very article is being banged out hastily, a full day past the deadline for newsletter submissions (sorry Mary!). Perhaps there are some of you reading this who share with me a deep appreciation for the Douglas Adams quote, written above.

We are accustomed to facing deadlines in the workplace. Our lives are built around alarm clocks, and schedules, and calendars. We incline our attention to time limits and tasks. Everything must be done by the deadline.

It is interesting to note that we almost never attach the same sense of urgency to play as we do to work. When is the last time you heard someone proclaim, "I'm running so late I will never find time to finish this board game" in harassed tones? Our modern society tells us that work is crucial, and play is what is done in the spare minutes at the sundown of our days. When we attempt to set aside time to play, capitalism tells us to feel guilty about it.

We have a finite number of days to travel in this 'blue boat home.' Let's not allow the pressures of work to steal the treasure of play from us.



To Ranchers and Wranglers (and to anyone else reading this column ☺)

On Sunday, September 8th we will have our **Back to Church Roundup and Barbecue** following the worship service. Burgers, hot dogs, veggie options, and drinks will be provided. You bring the side dishes and desserts.

Wear your western wear (jeans, hats, bandannas, etc. if you like. NO sidearms allowed!

Games for the kids.

If you haven't been coming to church for a while, why not take this opportunity to reunite with old friends and meet newcomers?

Pat Moore, Social Events Coordinator



News about Our Extension Groups

As the new church year gets underway, our Extension Groups will start up again.

The Glen Carbon / Edwardsville Group (Glen/Ed) will meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month (September 14) at 4 p.m. at "A Holistic Approach," 88 South Main St. in Glen Carbon.

The North County gathering will be on the 3rd Saturday of each month (September 21) at 10:30 a.m. in the chapel of Village North Retirement Center. The Center is at 11160 Village North Drive, little bit west of Christian Hospital off Dunn Road.

You are invited to choose to attend either of these two gatherings, no matter where you live. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussions, sharing, and a time to get to know each other better.

YOUR BOARD IN ACTION

The Power of WE. Our Community is valued by your Governing Board.



From the time we said yes to be a part of the Board, we knew that our community has had challenges in the past, but are excited about the possibilities. I am excited about the challenges and the meaningful work that the Board will do. As a Congregation we have potential for growth and the ability to move forward.

Besides our Goals (Implementing Transparency, Congregational Involvement, Outward Reaching, and Reconfiguring the Religious Education program), the Board will understand its Partnership with the Congregation and find its voice to be aligned with the Mission and Vision of First UU of Alton.

Our Mission: "*Outward Reaching, Inward Seeking. We are creating and nurturing an intentional community which values social justice, acceptance and the embodiment of Unitarian Universalist principles. Let us question together.*"

As WE move forward into our new fiscal year 2019-2020, we have a lot to share. The First Unitarian Church of Alton is very fortunate to have volunteers who give generously of their time and talent. The names of the current members of the Governing Board are listed on the next page:

President: Lee Suarez
President elect: Char McAllister
Past President: Chris Strangeman
Treasurer: Phil Embree
Secretary: Sandy Shaner
Members at Large: Aiden Crist, Jennifer Lewis
Youth Representatives: Ben Hoeft,
Isabella Navarre

In the last couple of months Char McAllister and I have been busy recruiting volunteers to fill the Board and committee vacancies. We are working toward all committees having co-chairs. This will ease the responsibilities into sharing the tasks together. We will update all Leadership positions in upcoming newsletters and please watch the Bulletin Board in the Wuerker Room for updates.

As President, I encourage you to be open and honest in sharing your questions and ideas in building our Beloved Community. Come join Us in the journey.

Lee Suarez, President

Children's Religious Education

Plans have not yet been finalized for the RE Program. But this is what we know as of now ... The focus will be on the 7 UU Principles.



We do not have a start date yet for RE, it may be the end of September or the beginning of October. Timing all depends on how many people are willing to support the RE mission by becoming teachers or helpers. We will need to do individual background checks (as per our church policies) and there will be an orientation/teaching session.

When the program begins the children will all meet as one group in Emerson Place at 11 a.m. then will go into the Sanctuary near the end of the service for the "Time for All" segment. The Exploration Room will be available at the back of the Sanctuary during services.

Teachers and helpers are needed. One idea would be for a teacher and co-teacher or helper to schedule themselves for the same Sunday once a month for 4-5 months. That would mean they would only need to teach 4 or 5 times during the church year and it would provide consistency for the children. So that's a win-win for all.

Please get in touch with **Joy, Jennifer, or Kayci** if you are willing to support the mission of the church through teaching our young people.

Pastoral Care Committee Announces Free Training on Recognizing Signs of Suicide and How to Help.

This is not a form of counseling or treatment. Rather, it is intended to offer hope through positive action. Much like CPR or the Heimlich maneuver, the fundamentals of this program, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) are easily learned. As with CPR and the Heimlich maneuver, the use of QPR may save a life. This one-hour training was created by Paul Quinnett, Ph.D. and is recommended by many, including the St. Clair County (IL) Suicide Prevention Alliance. The Presentation is one hour long and includes written copies of slides.

The training will be held at the church on Saturday, September 14, 2019, at 11:30 a.m. and lunch will be provided. (The Pastoral Care Committee will meet following this.) Contact **Ruth Maskow** if you are interested in attending. Hope to see you there!



Summary of the Church Board Meeting of August 8th, 2019

In case you missed it, the Church Board is changing:

Jennifer Lewis has been added (serving the final year of Phil Embree's original term),

Phil Embree has moved over to the Treasurer's post for a new 3-year term,

Aidan Crist has been added (in a new 3-year term after Tracey Howe-Koch's term expired at the end of June), and the September 11th Board meeting will be the first with our new Youth Representatives Isabella Navarre and Ben Hoeft.

Prior to the August 8th meeting we expedited several items via email so that we could take time for deep dives into two issues requiring focused attention. We began with a discussion led by Marquette Assistant Principal Bob Baird about building security and Marquette's approach to it. While our needs and strengths are different from theirs, we appreciated Mr. Baird's knowledge and plan to build on his experience.

Then we did another deep dive with Jerry Johnson, Chair of the Endowment Fund Committee. Jerry reviewed the Fund's current investments and history of returns as well as the procedures he follows in monitoring the investment funds and withdrawing the annual contribution to the operating budget.

In other business we approved a one-year contract with a new cleaning contractor at a lower weekly cost as well as savings since future cleaning supplies will be supplied by the contractor. And who is that contractor – our own Heather Kirk whose bid was the lowest of the four responses we received. While Aidan Crist solicited the bids, he removed himself from this part of the Board meeting in keeping with our Conflict of Interest policy.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Sept., 12th at 7 p.m. All are welcome!

Sandy Shaner, Board Secretary

A Social Justice Journey By Char McAllister



On July 31st and August 1st, I traveled with over 100 people to Ft. Sill Army Base in Lawton, Oklahoma with activists from the Heartland for Human Justice, the Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis (JCRC) and other social activists, to Protest the Detention Centers being developed on U.S. Army bases. The Protest was to make a visible presence in areas where upcoming detention centers are to house immigrant children.

The collective group consisted of several faith-based organizations from the St. Louis area. The Heartland for Human Justice coalition was formed by Rabbi Susan Talve who was instrumental in organizing and implementing this Protest. We arrived at our hotel the evening of the 31st. That evening we had opportunities to share our evening meal with other participants and to make protest posters if

you had not brought your own. I was so honored to have Carol McGrew, from church make incredible protest posters for me.

On August 1st, I shared breakfast with more new participants. During this social interaction I meet several women who were from the Sisters of Notre Dame, a Missouri State Legislator, Oklahoma State Legislators, St. Louis Rabbis and a parent who brought her teenage daughter and friend. We All were UNITED in the message of Denouncing our Administration on Separation of Immigrant Families and on the inhumane conditions these children have been exposed to in the last year.

After breakfast we traveled to the local United Methodist Church grounds in Lawton, Oklahoma, where the pastor greeted us and joined us for a protest rally in 100 degree heat. At this community rally, members of the group shared stories about the 34 humans who have died under the custody of the US Administration. Twenty-eight of the thirty-four have been children. As we remembered their names and lives, we held up a large poster of each person who had lost their life under these atrocities. We sang and chanted protest messages to say "Never Again". The Never Again is to remind us that this Army Base was used to house Apache Prisoners of War during 1894-1910 and Japanese Americans after WWII.

After our presence in the Lawton Oklahoma community, we traveled to the entrance to Ft. Sill Army Base. This Action was to make our voices heard against the Child Detention Centers located on Army bases across our country. During this Stand of Action we began with a Native Indigenous Sage Ceremony conducted by Rabbi Susan Talve and Native Peoples. This Action included singing, chanting and being visible to the highway and entrance to the base. We boarded our buses and continued our 12 hour trek back to St. Louis. During the ride we sang, discussed continued action in contacting our legislators, upcoming trainings to assist immigrant families in going to Custom ICE appointments. Along with supporting the Interfaith Committee in Latin Affairs and more direct Action on the ground throughout the country.

This Direct Action on Speaking out Against Family Separation was another Community Building experience for me. Standing Strong with others who say each human being is worthy of dignity, love and justice. This is another action Against the Hate being committed towards our Southern Border families, and the one that speaks loud in my consciousness because of my spouse's heritage.

Let us Do What We Can in Speaking out Against the Injustices.

4th Saturday Distribution Program Update

We are in the process of investigating several sources to obtain more of the personal and household care products needed by the people who come to the church on the 4th Saturday of each month.



We have received a generous donation (which will be ongoing as needed) of feminine hygiene supplies from “I support the Girls” in Edwardsville, and recently became a partner agency with the St. Louis Area Foodbank which often has in its inventory personal care and household products (although to date none that are on our list of needs).

In July we gave out school supplies, generously contributed by you, our church members and friends. Twenty-six children got many of the supplies needed to help them get a good start in school this year. In September a lunch is being planned, coordinated by **Robyn Berkley**, for those who stop by for personal care products.

Between January and July the average monthly attendance at 4th Saturday was 58 adults. The high was 70 and the low 45. It costs on average between \$200 and \$300 each month to keep our inventory stocked. All this money comes from church members and friends, in addition to the products each of you donate. We're always happy to have new people come to help on the 4th Saturday, or just stop by to see how the program operates.

Mary Johnson & Sabrina Trupia & Carol McGrew



A BIG Shout Out to **Phil Embree** who managed the Augean task of removing the water from the basement hallways when due to heavy rain and a clogged drain the water came in under the door at the

bottom of the back steps.

A Thank You also to **Alex and Ben Hoefft** who spent several hours over two days adding an HDMI video cable to the back of the church. This effort required getting into, and working in, the crawlspace area of the basement under the sanctuary. The addition of the cable will allow us to connect the computer in the back of the sanctuary to the projector in the front for seamless video transmissions.



INTEREST GROUPS:



The Anna D. Sparks Alliance (aka Anna Ds) will meet on September 5th at 11:30 a.m.

(This women's group was formed in 1898 'to do good works in support of the church and community' and named for Anna Davenport Sparks, the church's first woman treasurer.)

We will be having lunch at Sugo's Spaghetteria.
243 Harvard Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025

Phone: [+1-618-659-4640](tel:+1-618-659-4640)

It's in the Dierberg's shopping center, next to Buffalo Wild Wings.

There are several locations for this restaurant so you may want to work your way through their web site.

<http://www.sugoscucina.com/> then click on Locations, then the Edwardsville address for the map. After that you can go back to menu to find what's offered at the Edwardsville location ... looks like some lovely options.

I'd appreciate it if you would RSVP to me by 9/3 so I can let them know how much seating to arrange.

See you soon!

Sandy Shaner wrgma2@gmail.com

Men's Monthly Lunch Sept. 12th 11:30 a.m.



The men's Lunch Bunch meets on the second Thursday of each month. Join us at the Best Buffet, 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River.

All men in our church are invited. For further information contact **Paul Hebert** pphebert@mail.com.

Among Our Members

Gerry Gilman was released from the hospital and is now at Meridian Village Rehabilitation Center in Glen Carbon. Visitors are welcome to stop by.



SAVE THE DATES!

**Winner, Winner,
Chicken Dinner:
Sunday, October 27
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.**



Volunteers needed 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tentative onsite 10:00 a.m. Edwardsville church service to be announced (still working on the details of this, will have firm info. in October newsletter).

As a fundraiser for our church, First UU will be helping the folks at the Edwardsville Moose Lodge with their chicken dinner on Sunday, October 27. A hearty meal is \$9 for adults: fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, fresh salad. Enhanced salad bar options for vegetarians available on request. Eat onsite or eco-friendly, compostable takeout containers are available. Scrumptious desserts available for purchase.

In early October we will be recruiting volunteers to help prep, serve, do dishes, cleanup, donate desserts.

Contact **Peg Flach** (pegflach@gmail.com) to volunteer to help or donate desserts.



Saturday, November 9 - at Noon: A Unitarian Version of "High Tea"

Joan Hashimi's family generously donated 25 of her lovely teapots to First UU ... as well as some other items special to Joan. We plan to keep a few teapots for church use and, utilizing a Silent Auction format, allow Joan's friends to attain wonderful keepsake items as a special remembrance of Joan. Plan to "tart up" in your best finery: hats, gloves, a tad of rouge and lipstick (or not)! A lovely lunch, tea, and more. All genders welcome.

NEEDED:

- 3 stacking servers. (You know you have one hidden away somewhere: we'd like to borrow it!)
- Volunteers will be needed to help prep, cook, clean up (yes, we will be using our lovely china!).

Contact **Peg Flach** pegflach@gmail.com to volunteer or loan 3 stack servers.

PITCH IN ... 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.



Are you using AmazonSmile Yet?

If you shop on Amazon, consider going to smile.amazon.com when you order and Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the charity of your choice (hopefully you'll choose our church.) Go to smile.amazon.com to get complete instructions, or look at the detailed information provided in August's church newsletter.



New Online Giving Option. The First Unitarian Church of Alton has entered a new era: the age of anytime, anywhere giving. We are now signed up with Givelify, the mobile giving app for places of

worship and charities.

To make your first mobile donation the best experience possible, we recommend you download the Givelify app for Android or iPhone before you get to service. Givelify gives you a beautiful, easy giving experience using your smartphone. There are no frustrating web forms or text-to-give codes to memorize. Even better, it's free to download and use. It's totally safe and secure, and for tax time you have one-tap access to your complete donation records.

Make your offerings, pledge giving, 4th Saturday program donations, and other gifts that support First Unitarian Church of Alton to special envelopes right from the palm of your hand. You can give to First Unitarian Church of Alton wherever you are.

Make us your home place of worship for quick one-tap access. Want to see how it works? Watch the demonstration video that shows you all about how to make and track donations. Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/FmK5Fy9Yd4U>

Working Hard to Beautify the Church Grounds

Thanks for the work done over the last two months by Char McAllister, Donna Young, Mary Weber, Phil Embree, Lee Suarez, Pat Moore, Wayne & Jen Politsch, Tracey Howe-Koch and son.



Bags full of trimmings



A work team



Beginning to clear brush off the hill



Dumping the brush for City pickup

Cleaning Up in the “Dungeon” (aka the furnace room)

Thanks to Char McAllister, Peg Flach, Mary Johnson and Alex Hoeft



Up for grabs ... otherwise it all goes after 9/1/19



More piles of “stuff” to go



Christmas decorations organized, boxed, and labeled - ready for the holidays.

Please don't use the “dungeon” to dump stuff you don't know what else to do with. Talk with Peg or Mary about an appropriate place for such “stuff.”

The work of keeping the church building and grounds up is an ongoing task, and one in which everyone is encouraged to participate ... whether it be doing yard work, washing dishes, straightening cabinets, picking up trash, or keeping the sanctuary and Kate Wuerker Room looking neat. Every little bit helps to maintain this building which has been our church home for over 100 years.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of August 10

2019 - 2020

Board Members

Lee Suarez - President
Char McAllister - President-Elect
Chris Strangeman - Past President
Sandy Shaner - Secretary
Phil Embree - Treasurer
Aiden Crist - Member at Large
Jennifer Lewis - Member at Large
Isabella Navarre & Ben Hoelt - Youth Representatives

Building & Grounds

Co-Chair Tom Cochran
Co-Chair Michael Tarabulski
Char McAllister - Grounds

Endowment Fund

Jerry Johnson
Tracey Howe-Koch

Fund Raising

Co-Chair Peg Flach
Co-Chair vacant

Membership

Co-Chair Mary Weber
Co-Chair vacant

Newsletter

Mary Johnson

Pastoral Care Associates

Rev. Amy Brooks
Dee Evans
Ruth Maskow
Pat Murrell
Sandy Shaner
Mary Weber

Pledge Drive

Char McAllister

RE Council

Joy Hoelt
Jennifer Lewis
Kayci Combs-Lueker

Social Events Coordinator

Co-Chair Pat Moore
Co-Chair vacant

Social Justice

Co-Chair John Herndon
Co-Chair Ed Navarre

Sunday Support Services

Paula Moore
Carol McGrew

Worship Associates

Chair – Amy Brooks
Robyn Berkley
Peg Flach
John Herndon
Joy Hoelt
Tracey Howe-Koch
Jerry Johnson
Robert Kokenyesi
Michael Tarabulski

4th Saturday Distribution Program

Mary Johnson
Sabrina Trupia
Robyn Berkley
Carol McGrew

If you have questions, concerns, or helpful ideas regarding any of the church activity areas given above, please get in touch with one of the people listed in your area of interest.

In Memoriam

Willis McCoy, a former member of our church, known for his musical contributions to our congregation and to the community, died on Saturday, August 24, 2019 in Northfield, Minnesota. He and his wife Brynda joined our church in October 2005 and moved to Minnesota a few years ago to be closer to their daughter. Willis and Brynda became active in the UU Fellowship in Northfield and in their new community. A memorial service will be held later in the fall. Willis will be sorely missed by his family and all who knew him.

Willis' daughter, Daphne, quoted lyrics from Dan Fogelberg on Facebook when announcing her father's passing. *"The leader of the band is tired and his eyes are growing old, but his blood runs thru my instrument and his heart is in my soul."* From "Leader of the Band" by Dan Fogelberg,

