

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the

## First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

**Pastor Amy Brooks**

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Congregation established 1836



### Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. January 2020 Theme: "Thresholds"

**January 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Pastor Amy Brooks**

**Worship Associate: Tracey Howe-Koch**

Potluck Lunch & Social Justice action of letter writing to local politicians.

RE class meets at 10 a.m.

Take down holiday decor

**January 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Pastor Amy Brooks**

**Worship Associate: Peg Flach**

**January 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Presented by: Robyn Berkley**

**Worship Associate: Char McAllister**

**January 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Presented by: John Herndon**

**Sermon: "Songs and Stories of Faith and Action"**

This will be a mixture of readings and songs that explore many faith expressions. A chance to sing, meditate, pray and be mindful in the present moment.

**Worship Associate: Tracey Howe-Koch**

RE class meets at 10 a.m.

**In case of Church cancellation due to weather watch for an email from Lee or Char and / or watch for an announcement that will scroll across Channel 5 - KSDK.**



**Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>  
Social Justice Action.**

During PotLuck the congregation will have the opportunity to write letters to their local political representatives. Paper and envelopes will be provided, along with addresses. Research something you are passionate about and let your representatives know how you feel. Hosted by Pat Moore and John Herndon.

**MARK CALENDARS NOW FOR AN IMPORTANT  
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 16, 2020**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the Semi-Annual Congregational meeting after church on February 16<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting a Congregational Vote on "Stay or Go" will be held.



**Anna Ds Lunch Gathering**

**Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> - 11:30 a.m.**

We'll be at the Best (Chinese) 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. 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. RSVP to Sandy Shaner [wrgma2@gmail.com](mailto:wrgma2@gmail.com). (Photo is of Anna Davenport Sparks after whom the Anna D Alliance was named in 1898.)



**Men's Monthly Lunch**

**Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> - 11:30**

**a.m.**

The men's Lunch Bunch meets on the second Thursday of each month. Join us at the Best (Chinese) Buffet, 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River. All men in our church are invited. For further information contact **Paul Hebert** [pphebert@mail.com](mailto:pphebert@mail.com). (Chinese New Year Jan. 25)



**Game Night**

**Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup> - 6 p.m.**

Join us for a night of fun and laughs playing games with your friends from First UU Alton on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be games for all ages, and feel free to invite friends or family to join you. Bring a snack to share and BYOB, but tea, coffee, hot chocolate and lemonade will be provided. If you got a new game for Christmas that you are dying to try out, bring it along. We will open at about 6:00 p.m. and start the games after you have a chance to get some snacks. Coming later? No problem. **Pat Moore**



**IN MEMORIAM**

**Death of Long-Time Member**

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Eleanor (Lorli) Nelson on October 9, 2019 – 2 days before her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. She joined the church on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1957 and until just this past year annually hosted an Anna Ds luncheon at Methodist Village in Godfrey.

**Photo Gallery of Church Happenings**



**Tree Trimming December 1<sup>st</sup> 2019**

Decorators: Pat, Char, MaryW. (not in photos are Aiden and Hedda)



**RE class members present "Thanksgiving Soup Communion" at the Bread Service on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (Photos by Lee Suarez)**

**All Gone!** The accumulated "stuff" cleaned out of the



furnace room and hallway has been hauled away or put to good use elsewhere.

## Our ACTIVE Church – please read Communiqués from Committees

### Community Outreach 2019 - Submitted by Mary Johnson 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Distribution Program

Between January and November of 2019 an average of 60 adults came each month to the church's 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Personal and Household Care Product distribution. A tally of the number of people in each household (as provided by the individuals coming for the products) indicates that our distribution service helps many more than the single individual who picks up the products.

In May the church became a Partner Agency of the St. Louis Area Foodbank, paying a one-time membership fee of \$100 which we have been using to "pay down" for our products. Once that is used up we will be charged 10 cents per pound of products. We started the product pickup in September. Once a month we order and pick up 4 boxes of products and to date have picked up 632 pounds of products, averaging 126.4 lbs. per month (or \$12.64). We still have probably three months of "free" product pickup before starting to be billed a small monthly fee for the products. The products we get are high-quality, name brands, and we have literally saved hundreds of dollars if we were to buy these products in stores. The only downside is that we have no choice in what products we get – it's literally a "mixed box" of a variety of personal care and household care products – and not always in the quantity we need.

Thus, we continue to depend on our church members and friends to donate specifically requested products (and provide ongoing funding) to complete our basic needs inventory.

### Oasis Christmas Gifts

This December we were asked by the Oasis Women's Center to be "Santa's Helpers" and sponsor a family – a mother and three children ages 6, 7, and 10. Christmas gift requests made by the family for toys, clothing, and household goods were filled by members of our generous congregation. Forty-four presents were donated and taken to the Oasis Santa House in Godfrey for distribution to the family.

### Fundraising Committee 2019 - Submitted by Peg Flach

Goal: To plan and coordinate 2 fundraisers for the First Unitarian Church of Alton. This goal was met. A total of \$1130.00 was raised via two combo social/fundraisers.

On 10/27/19 we helped the Edwardsville Moose folks with their bi-monthly chicken dinner. Our regular 10:00 a.m. service happened right there under the iconic moose head. A tidy profit of \$320 was raised via the chicken dinner and bake sale.

On 11/9/19 we welcomed 30+ congregants and friends to the Kate Wuerker Room for Tea. Both harp and piano music were enjoyed, as well as a lovely lunch, and information shared about tea traditions, Joan Hashimi's teapots, and

January 2020

information about the history of the Anna D's. A profit of \$810 was raised via the luncheon and the teapot silent auction.

### FUTURE PLANS

Another fundraiser at the Edwardsville Moose Lodge is being considered for Spring, 2020.

### RE Committee 2019 – Submitted by Joy Hoeft

Chair: Joy Hoeft; RE Committee members: Jennifer Lewis, Kayci Lueker.

#### GOALS:

- To have a structured Religious Education program that teaches our children about the Principles and Values of Unitarian Universalism.
- To provide information about Unitarian Universalism and other faiths, so that our children and youth can choose their own spiritual journey.
- To be able to enlist and support enough teachers / facilitators throughout the year, so those individuals who do volunteer do not suffer burnout, and are able to attend church services more than occasionally.

#### BACKGROUND INFO:

- There was a restructuring of the Children's Religious Education Program in May 2019, after the Board released their budget for fiscal year 2019-2020.
- Congregants stated that providing a structured religious education for our children was important to them, despite not having funding for a paid RE Coordinator.
- The RE Committee met and came up with a plan to have one RE session a month for the months of July and August, as well as discussing on what we wanted the children to learn in our church's religious education program.
- The RE Committee met with the children and youth and asked them what they wanted out of their religious education program. Here are a few key things that were important to them:
  - They all agreed that meeting all together, with all ages in one group was better than splitting up.
  - They wanted less time in church service.
  - They didn't want to meet every week.
  - They wanted to have more "technology" in classes, such as videos.
  - They wanted to learn more about what Unitarian Universalism was, and how to live by it.

#### ACTIONS: How we got RE going.

- Planned two RE classes during the summer, one in July and the other in August.
- With the first class in the fall, the children and youth would go directly to Emerson Place for the class rather than going into the Worship Service.
- The RE Committee decided that RE classes would take place about every other week. This would alleviate trying to get teachers for every week, and thus allowing them to attend church services more often.

- Enlisted 8 teachers / facilitators. With meeting about every other month this would allow each of them to only teach about 4-6 times during the year. Our teachers for this year are: Jennifer Lewis, Kayci Leuker, Mary Johnson, Patty Moore, Robyn Berkeley, Sandy Shaner, Dorothy Wilson, and Patricia Murrell.
- Despite the lack of paid Nursery Attendants, the RE Committee also believed that it would benefit the church to continue having volunteers in the Nursery, since we have about 2-3 kids within that age range. Carol McGrew volunteered to provide Nursery services, as well as teaching the little ones about the UU Principles through using Dr. Seuss books / videos. The nursery would be covered the same weeks as the RE schedule.
- Parents wanted the focus of RE to teach the kids about the UU Principles and how to translate these principles into life choices and everyday actions.
- Curriculum found - *Faithful Journeys*. In each session, historic or contemporary examples of Unitarian Universalist faith in action are presented. Stories about real people model how participants can activate their own personal agency – their capacity to act faithfully as Unitarian Universalists – in their own lives, and children have regular opportunities to share and affirm their own stories of faithful action.
- As of the first day of structure RE classes, on October 6, 2019, there were 15 children and youth registered in the First Unitarian Church of Alton Religious Education program. Thirteen of those attend regularly, and 2 of the children are Nursery age.
- In November, the children/youth led the Thanksgiving / Bread Service, by performing a skit called “Thanksgiving Soup,” where they proceeded to make a soup during the service, which afterwards, they served to the congregants. A great shout out to these kids, as they were able to memorize their lines, and did a great job!

PLANS:

- The plans of the RE Committee for the rest of the fiscal year 2019-2020 is to support the teachers leading the *Faithful Journeys* curriculum.
- They will meet approximately 11 more times until May 17, 2020. Then hopefully the kids will be able to have some time to share with the congregation what they have learned.
- The RE Committee will continue to meet throughout this year to check on how things are going with the curriculum, and in May / June, we will begin to plan for the Fall 2020.

**Social Events Committee 2019 -**

**Submitted by Pat Moore**

Chair: Pat Moore - Members: Peg Flach, Carol McGrew, Robyn Berkley, Sabrina Trupia, Kayci Lucker, Mary Lu McManus, Jennifer Lewis.

Goals for 2019-2020: Try to have at least one social event per month. Goals for 2020-2021: Continue having social events and include one fundraiser auction.

We have not been meeting as a total committee, but have been communicating by email, and at church or at Anna Ds meetings. We will probably have meetings before some of the bigger events planned for 2020.

**Sept. 8:** We held a western roundup barbeque in association with the official start of the new church year. People were encouraged to wear western wear, and there was a potluck of side dishes, with Char and Lee grilling burgers and hotdogs.

**Oct. 19:** Everyone was invited to come to the Hofbrauhouse in Belleville to enjoy music, food, and drinks to celebrate Oktoberfest. There was a small attendance, but the evening was enjoyable.

**Oct. 27:** There was a worship service and chicken dinner at the Moose in Edwardsville, organized by Peg Flach. It was a successful event and a fundraiser for the church.

**Nov. 9:** The Anna D’s Alliance sponsored a High Tea and Teapot Auction to sell the teapot collection of Joan Hashimi, donated by her family. The event was organized by Peg Flach, with most members helping and/or attending. We served tea and lunch to approximately 40 guests, and funds were raised for the church. The last two events raised a total of \$1130.00

**Dec. 1:** Following the monthly potluck, we decorated the sanctuary and Wuerker Room for the winter holidays.

**Dec 21:** Lee and Char will host an open house at their home. All members are invited.

**Jan. 18, 2020:** We will have Board games at the church, with potluck snacks. We hope to have a movie night in Jan. or Feb.

**Feb. 15:** There will be a 20’s Jazz Themed night, with snacks and possibly a band.

**Mar. 14:** Our second (not annual) P.J. Party. Relax and wear your nightwear or comfy clothes for an evening of snacks, conversation, and “music of the night.”

**Apr. 18:** An Open Mic Coffee House. Anyone is welcome to sing, play an instrument, read a poem, dance, rant or whatever you want to share. Coffee, tea, and desserts will be served.

**May 16:** A 60’s Night in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woodstock. Wear your 60’s outfit and enjoy music and 60’s trivia. Bring snacks to share.

**Summer:** Possibly an additional outing, like to a winery?



**Social Justice Committee 2019 -  
Submitted by John Herndon**

Co-Chairs: John Herndon and Ed Navarre;  
Members: Congregation at Large.

“Seven days a week, Unitarian Universalists (UUs) live their faith by doing. Whether in community with others or as an individual, we know that active, tangible expressions of love, justice, and peace are what make a difference. Embracing peace, love, and understanding that goes beyond individual belief systems, we are creators of positive change in people and in the world.” <http://uua.org/beliefs/what-we-do>.

The history of social justice work at First UU Alton has centered on members of the congregation stepping up and doing work in the community either individually or in groups. Individuals generally gravitate to becoming a member of this church because of their desire to do “justice” in the community. Here they find other individuals who want to live these values each and every day. Together we form a community that serves the community and represent values that generate progressive change throughout the Riverbend area and beyond.

The church is a strong participating member of the UUANI (Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois) and co-chairs are active participants in advocacy training and networking.

Individual members have initiated many projects ranging from strengthening and continuing the mission of the Fourth Saturday Personal Products Distribution, actively engaging persons in the area who find themselves without home and shelter, registering citizens in the area to vote, lobbying local political representatives in the area concerning important pending legislation, and providing at risk families at the Oasis Women’s shelter with Christmas presents. This is a short list and incomplete list of what members are doing to serve our neighbors and local friends.

The coming year of 2020 is a pivotal year in the future our community not only in terms of our future direction but it is an election year that has enormous implications for our church and our fellow citizens. We hope and expect that individual members are ready, able and willing to engage in efforts to ensure that every individual is able to express the right to vote, no matter the outcome. The UUA has begun a program called UU THE VOTE: #VOTELOVE, #DEFEATHATE, AND #UUTHEVOTE IN 2020.

The coming year is also pivotal for members of the church who are residents of Illinois. Pending legislation referred to as the clean energy jobs act will be a generational shift concerning efforts to halt the devastating effects of climate change. Individuals and groups of individuals in the congregation will continue to serve their fellow humans and initiate, innovate and above all serve.



**Summary of the Church  
Board Meeting of 12/11/19  
Sandy Shaner, Secretary**

At its last meeting the Board handled a number of “housekeeping” matters, e.g.

- Setting the date and time of the next Board meeting (Thursday, January 9 at 6 p.m.) with the intent to switch to Thursdays for the remainder of the fiscal year;
- Setting the date for the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting (Sunday, February 16 after the service);
- Noted a major addition to the Governance Calendar (4/1/20 = Start work on renewal of the Church’s Illinois tax letter which expires 11/1/20);
- Reviewed the “Bad Weather” procedure which now includes the process for adding the Church to the KSDK “crawl” of school and church closures;
- Discussed administrative matters being handled by Board members instead of an Office Administrator.

So, let’s shift gears for the rest of this article. I don’t know how many of you receive emails from the UUA’s Church of the Larger Fellowship, but the most recent one from Rev. Meg Riley, Senior Minister, has stuck with me. An earlier email from Rev. Riley announced her coming retirement, noting that she didn’t have a firm plan for retirement and was happy letting the world speak to her when it’s time. In her most recent email she connected December’s theme for CLF worship (The Unexpected) and an unexpected opportunity to run for the position of UUA Moderator, sharing the position with a comrade who had served with her on the CLF Board.

Let me let Rev. Meg continue the story (with the understanding that I’m editing out a great deal here).

“How does something unexpected happen like this, you might wonder? I’ll tell you because I suspect this is the pattern of how lots of unexpected yeses come into being. I have a lot of immediate whispers of yes about all kinds of things that I shush. Many of them go away, never to utter a peep again. But this one didn’t.

“I started asking a lot of people if they were thinking of running and, to a person they all said no. The whisper persisted. I talked to some other friends who concurred with me that it was a ridiculous idea, and I felt relieved. NOT DOING IT. But the whisper kept coming back. “And then I asked Charles DuMond to be my teammate, and he said “yes”. So...uh oh. I was beginning to be committed to this! “Saying yes is like that. Testing, trying on, imagining, questioning, seeking other perspectives, figuring out if it’s really right for the world and for you, finding your people ...

“What’s whispering yes to you today?”

**A SUMMARY of the December 8, 2019  
Congregational Town Hall Meeting**

A Report from Lee Suarez, Board President

Dear Congregation,

This is a summary of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Congregational Town Hall meeting held on December 8<sup>th</sup>. There were 26 individuals who attended, a reduction from the 34 who attended the first two Town Hall meetings. Many of you attended all three.

I want to thank all who have participated in our three-month journey. We have spent a lot of time and energy as we intentionally focused on the issue of where we will house our future activities. In short, do we Stay or do we Go?

A decision was NOT made at this meeting, and I want to emphasize again that this decision will be made by the Congregation, **not** by the Board.

We are planning for a **Congregational vote at our Semi-Annual Meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>** when we will follow the process prescribed in our ByLaws which governs congregational voting. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend this important meeting. We know that this issue and the surrounding conversations are difficult, and that we all want what is best for the entire Congregation even as we differ in our opinions of what is “best.”

This discussion and eventual decision are emotional for all of us (whether we display those emotions or hold them tight within ourselves). And yet we must struggle through this process of expressing our thoughts and feelings while listening respectfully to those of others. It may be difficult to listen carefully to opinions we do not share, but it is essential that we do so in order to make the best decision for the entire Church.

Our Mission states that we are:

*Outward reaching, Inward seeking. We are creating and nurturing an intentional community that values social justice, acceptance and the embodiment of UU principles. Let us question together.*

And yet the second Town Hall focused on the many financial aspects of Church management, seemingly losing sight of the Mission itself. The Board stressed that we have been operating at a deficit for most of the last five years, covering that deficit only through extra withdrawals from the Endowment Fund. While it may not have been obvious, that meeting laid the base for a paradigm shift: instead of just repeating our past spending history and drawing extra amounts from the Endowment Fund for our annual budgets, how can we use our annual income (and the regular interest-based Endowment Fund withdrawals) as a tool to support enhanced social justice activities?

We are not the only UU church struggling with these issues, and we can learn from others further along this road. That is why I will be meeting with the leadership from Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel to hear what pitfalls they encountered as they sold their property and moved to another location. Knowing what they know now, would they make the same decision again, or a different one? I believe their experience can provide some guidance for us and I look forward to sharing what I learn with you.

It may be tempting to give up and back away from this process, particularly when any decision on the “stay-go” spectrum is just the first of many hard decisions that will be made in our immediate future, no matter which path we

choose. As you read the following summaries of the charge given to the two research groups who reported at the Third Meeting, you will see that either path requires concerted actions by all of us to make either path a success. And, as you read, please consider how YOU can contribute to the future of our Church.

Both groups who reported on their work at the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were asked to focus on six aspects irrespective of their charge, whether to STAY or GO. The Groups met after each Sunday service and did some research between their meetings. Each Church Group was asked to answer 6 questions, explaining what they considered important, and supporting their preferred solution (action) to their challenge (topic) of Stay or Go. The six questions covered

1. The challenge,
2. The undesired outcome,
3. The desired outcome,
4. Proposed solution,
5. Risk remover (why the proposed solution) - and
6. The call to action (the decision you want made that will put the solution into motion).

**The report from the Stay/Remain group**

Our group concluded that it is very important, and should be a priority, to establish an accessible entrance to the church. We also explored funding opportunities for capital expenses and found not a lot. In terms of things the church still needs done, we came up with \$120,000 of capital funds necessary for repairs within the next couple of years (maintenance, things breaking down, etc.). This figure is only an estimate. We mentioned “chalice lighter” grants to support more of Rev. Amy’s time or an intern to get more people to come to our church (as well as outreach) and we mentioned making the church available to other groups, keeping in mind that this increases overhead.

**Our Challenge:** staying, given how expensive it is to stay;

**Undesired outcome:** to have to move;

**Desired outcome:** we stay in current location;

**Proposed solution:** increase membership, rent out church (sanctuary and classrooms), talk to City about parking;

**Risk remover:** we don’t really have one (Sara? More outreach?)

**Call to action:** Congregation must actively participate if we want to stay.

**The report from the New Horizons/Go group**

**The Challenge:**

First Unitarian Church of Alton is a small congregation with an old, inaccessible, beloved building. We like what we have and cope with the limitations and quirks of the building. In the past several years the congregation faced budget shortfalls in annual operating funds and faces future capital expenses (\$100k - \$400k, beyond our reach) for addressing accessibility and building repair. Current membership is small and national trends indicate that rapid growth is unlikely. It is challenging

to attract new members without a full-time minister and a stable RE program, both of which have had reductions (versus 6 years ago) due to budget allotment through vote of the Congregation. This challenge occurs at a time in which the Alton City/Simmons partnership makes the property landscape of Alton difficult to understand.

**The Undesired Outcome:**

1. Disbanding or major loss of congregants due to a move/stay decision;
2. Greater expenses than current budget;
3. Renting a single large room for Sundays only (carry in and out all materials for service);
4. Execute a move but remain owner of an unsold, vacant building;
5. Loss of control of the current building, e.g. Simmons buys the building and rents it back to the church;
6. Losing services that Church provides - 4th Saturday distribution;
7. Losing the Church history - the building symbolizes a lot to many congregants, how can that meaning be retained?

**The Desired Outcome:**

1. Retain our community - a community of support and inspiration, a sense of connection;
2. *Item one is first by a large margin;*
3. Retain congregants - local examples teach us that some members will leave due to the move, but the goal is to keep most members by agreeing together on these steps forward;
4. Retain the services provided to the Alton community;
5. Keeping a minister - is a divided issue. Some feel that an entirely lay-led congregation can successfully move forward, sustain itself, and attract new members. Some feel that it is very important to have a minister to maintain and attract new members;

**The Proposed Solution:**

1. Purchase a new, accessible, preferably church-shaped building without incurring new debt. This is the least likely option because buildings are expensive.
2. Rent a “complete” church space including a large sanctuary space, office, RE space, and kitchen.
3. Co-location with another religious or affinity organization with shared space and expenses in a new location (could be new-to-us or new-to-both). Successful local examples exist.

**The Risk Remover:**

Foremost, a move will succeed because the congregation wants First Unitarian Church of Alton to continue to exist as a beacon of liberal religion. This congregation is distinct from other nearby UU congregations.

A carefully executed purchase, rental, or co-location will decrease operating expenses and relieve the future capital expense burden. This change in finances will allow the congregation to more easily apply the budget in ways that express the values of the congregation.

**The Call to Action:**

This Group asks for the formation of an exploratory group(s) to:

1. Meet with realtors to assess a) cost of purchase/rental; b) value of the current building and its viability as a property for sale in current condition.
2. Meet with nearby religious organizations regarding the feasibility of co-location (particularly Wood River UCC and the remaining members of the Godfrey synagogue, other options welcome). St. John’s UCC in Wood River volunteer minister Jim Stille has responded positively to the suggestion and will discuss it with his Board on Dec 19, 2019. We are awaiting that outcome. Our congregation has not discussed this option.

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**CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of December 2019**

**2019 - 2020**

**Board Members**

Lee Suarez - President  
Char McAllister - President-Elect  
- Past President

Sandy Shaner - Secretary  
Phil Embree - Treasurer  
Aiden Crist - Member at Large  
Jennifer Lewis - Member at Large  
Isabella Navarre & Ben Hoeft - Youth Representatives

**Building & Grounds**

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

**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 Hoeft  
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

## Social Media

Nathan Brown

Alex Hoefl

## Sunday Support Services

Paula Moore

Carol McGrew

## Worship Associates

Chair – Amy Brooks

Robyn Berkley

Peg Flach

John Herndon

Joy Hoefl

Tracey Howe-Koch

Jerry Johnson

Robert Kokenyesi

Michael Tarabulski

## 4th Saturday Distribution Program

Mary Johnson

Sabrina Trupia

Carol McGrew

Robyn Berkley

**Social activities committee:** Pat Moore, Robyn Berkley, Peg Flach, Jennifer Lewis, Kayci Combs-Lueker, Mary Lu McManus, Sabrina Trupia, 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.

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## News from the MidAmerica Region and the UUA

### SAVE THE DATE FOR REGIONAL ASSEMBLY 2020

**Regional Assembly 2020** will be held at **The Unitarian Universalist Church, Rockford, Illinois on Saturday, April 18, 2020**. Our keynote speaker will be Taquienna Boston, Special Advisor to the UUA President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Change. The day will feature worship, the annual business meeting, lunch, keynote presentation, and select workshops. The annual business meeting and keynote speaker will be live streamed for those who cannot attend. On Friday evening, April 17, The UU Church in Rockford will graciously host an evening gathering for those in town. **Registration opens January 2020.**

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## General Assembly 2020 - Register Now



General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. Please join us Wednesday, June 24 through Sunday, June 28, 2020 in Providence, Rhode Island for this 5-day immersive experience where we participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, reconvene with friends and colleagues, and explore our bustling exhibit hall. GA is an unforgettable experience for the thousands of UUs who attend. Meet us in Providence and you'll leave with renewed energy and innovative ideas to share with your congregation and community-at-large!

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## FROM UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI)

With the 2020 elections less than a year away, UUANI is launching **VoteLove IL** in partnership with the UUA's [#UUtheVote](#) campaign. VoteLove IL is about putting our UU values into action by encouraging our neighbors to engage in the democratic process from a basis of compassion. There will be a range of ways to participate, from voter registration to issue education to community conversations to trips to other states. Congregations are invited to join the campaign launch by hosting watch parties for the **national [#UUtheVote webinar](#) at 3pm CST on Sunday, Jan 12**. (You could also have your party at a later date and play the recording.) These watch parties are a great way to gather those who want to do something, identify a team of folks to lead this effort in your congregation, begin brainstorming who you might want to reach out to and why, and identify who you might partner with. Please [register your watch party here](#).

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## *The New Common Read Discussion Guide Is Now Available*

The 2019-2020 UUA Common Read discussion guide is now available! In 2020, the United States will approach the 400th anniversary of the much-mythologized encounter at Plymouth between colonists and those native to the land.

Available at [www.uua.org/books/read](http://www.uua.org/books/read)

