

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

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Congregation established 1836



Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. – July 2020 Theme: “Spiritual Practice”

**ALL IN-PERSON CHURCH SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES
ARE CANCELLED FOR THE SUMMER.**

**Worship Services will be available on YouTube premiering at 10:00 a.m.
each Sunday. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ>**

Live Zoom “Coffee Hour” follows at 10:45 a.m. (See below about how to access Zoom.)

July 5th

Presented by: Eric Johnson

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley

July 12th

Presented by: Tracey Howe-Koch

July 19th

Presented by: Jerry Johnson

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

July 26th

Presented by: Robyn Berkley

Worship Associate: Eric Johnson

If people need help with doing their worship service videos for YouTube please get in touch with Alex J. Hoeft alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com. He would like to have the videos at least by the Friday before your service.



ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

Every Sunday at 10:45 a.m., following the 10:00 a.m. videoed worship service on the church’s YouTube app, YOU are invited to a **live coffee hour** through Zoom. Please contact **Robyn Berkley** robynberkley@yahoo.com for information as to how to join the zoom coffee hour where you can see and talk with others (and often see favored pets).

Board President and President-Elect Resign

On June 25, 2020 Lee Suarez submitted her resignation as Board President, effective immediately.

In addition, Char McAllister also submitted her resignation as President-Elect, and from the committees she chaired.

These two dedicated women have worked tirelessly for the betterment of the church and its programs. Their outstanding leadership over the last eighteen rather tumultuous months demonstrated their strength and wholehearted desire to see our church find its way through tough times. Their voices will be missed.



In Memoriam

Phillip L. Finley, Sr.

September 13, 1951 - June 02, 2020

Phil joined our congregation on May 29, 2005 after learning about the church from his sister. He hardly ever missed a Sunday service. He shared his poetry with those meeting in chalice circles or other small group settings and enjoyed playing chess with the young people. He always enjoyed a cup of coffee during fellowship time and appreciated the potluck lunches.

4th Saturday Distribution

Due to the “shelter in place” and “social distancing” guidelines, the last care product distribution from the church was in February.



However, since there were no expenditures for four months (March – June), about \$1000 in donations accumulated in the 4th Saturday account. In mid-June we were told that in keeping with some new church financial decisions, we needed to spend that money before the end of the fiscal year (i.e., June 30). This is a very typical approach to finances in business and academic settings.

The Distribution Team decided that the easiest way to spend \$1000 quickly was to buy gift cards and distribute them on the 4th Saturday in July. We ordered 100 gift cards (\$10.00 each) from Dollar Tree and will be distributing them from outside the church building and setting up safety guidelines. We hope to be able to have a process set up in August to once again distribute products.

If you want to help on July 25th please contact Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com



The **ROMEOS (Men’s Lunch group)** will meet at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 9th via **Zoom**. If you’re not already on the

Men’s Lunch email list contact Nick Pendergrass for the Zoom meeting ID. npendergrass@me.com.

A Bit of History & Our Church

The seventh debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas was held in Alton on October 15, 1858, a few blocks down the hill from our church.

In that debate, Lincoln commented that the disturbances raised in regard to slavery went far beyond politics and that the divisive effects of the controversy enters into churches and “render them asunder.” He mentions the division of the Methodist churches, the troubles in the Presbyterian churches, and then he says “**What disturbed the Unitarian Church in this very city two years ago?**”

That was always a cryptic statement until I found that in July 1856, Rev. William D’Arcy Haley, the minister of the Unitarian Church, submitted his resignation because members of the congregation complained about his preaching politics when he took a stance from the pulpit on the “Kansas question.” [Each new territory was to decide, by a vote of those living there, whether the territory would come into the Union as a free or slave state. Kansas became a battle ground between anti-slavery northerners who moved to Kansas to settle, and pro-slavery “border ruffians” from Missouri who attacked the settlers.] Haley said in his sermon “The Kansas question is a question of right and wrong, it involves a struggle for civil and religious liberty, against heathenish tyranny, and that man is a moral coward ... who dare not condemn the wrong.” He went on to say, “I denounce such enormous wrongs from root to branch ... and that if I cannot be an honest man and be your pastor, I will at least remain honest. If I cannot preach the whole truth I will not preach at all.”

Following the first vote to accept his resignation, a second motion was made asking that he remain and stated that “... as a Society we will never condemn a person for upholding the cause of Truth, Justice, and Morality...” That motion was approved and Haley stayed a few more months, leaving in October 1856, three years after he began his ministry in Alton.

That second motion became the basis of our church policy of “freedom of the pulpit.”

A VOTER FORUM at the YWCA

YOUR VOICE - YOUR VOTE - YOUR FUTURE

John Herndon and Ruth Maskow are on the Planning Committee for this Social Justice event.

Thursday July 23rd the YWCA is sponsoring a voter forum, a chance for voters to hear from the Candidates. Invited guests include County Board Chair-Kurt Prenzler (R) and Bob Daiber (D); State’s Attorney- Crystal Uhe (D) and Tom Haine (R); and Circuit Clerk- Tom McRae (R) and Amy Gabriel (D). This a chance for voters to engage with local candidates who will a direct impact on all the citizens of Madison County. This election is a major focus of the UUA and our own local church social justice efforts. Face masks and social distancing will be required and observed, but please consider joining in this important event.

See the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information.



Rooted, Inspired, & Ready!

Several of the programs from this year’s Virtual General Assembly are available on the UUA’s Youtube site, including the Sunday morning worship service.



A major focus at this year’s gathering was UUtheVote. Googling that term will give you links to several informative pages about this Social Justice ongoing activity.

**CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of July 2020
2020 - 2021**

Board Members

Resigned 6/25/20: Lee Suarez - President
Resigned 6/25/20: Char McAllister - President-Elect
Vacant - 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 – Resigned 6/25/2020

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

Resigned: 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 Hoeft

Sunday Support Services

Paula Moore
Carol McGrew

Worship Associates

Chair – Amy Brooks
Robyn Berkley
Peg Flach
John Herndon
Joy Hoeft
Tracey Howe-Koch
Jerry Johnson

YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE. YOUR FUTURE.



Get Out To Vote Candidate Forum

sponsored by YWCA of Alton GOTV Project

Thursday July 23

6:00pm—7:30pm

Haskell Park

1211 Henry St.

Alton, IL.

Event w'l. be held assuming we are in phase 4 or 5 of Restore Illinois.

We will follow COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the event with social distancing enforced.*

Forum can be heard from Henry St. and 12th St.

Bring your own chair or blanket!

The Forum will be video recorded by Riverbender.com and available for later viewing.

Candidates Invited:

County Board Chair: Kurt Prenzler (R)
Bob Daiber (D)

State's Attorney: Crystal Uhe (D)
Tom Haine (R)

Circuit Clerk: Tom McRae (R)
Amy Gabriel (D)

A moderator will ask questions of each candidate pair and a few questions will also be taken from the audience.

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

Alton