

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

*Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian Church
Alton, Illinois*

*110 East 3rd St. (location)
PO Box 494 62002 (mail)*

Office phone: 618-462-2462
www.firstuualton.org



**Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. (except Nov. 1st – see below)
November 2020 Theme: “Possibilities”**

**ALL IN-PERSON CHURCH SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES
ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

**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 11:00* a.m.
(Contact Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com for zoom login information.**

November 1st at 10:45 a.m.

Coordinator: Peg Flach

Join us on this special Sunday as we travel on our first virtual “*UU Field Trip.*” We will be joining the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin for this special service. Rev. Meg Barnhouse will be in the pulpit leading this service honoring ancestors ... with a bit of a pagan tinge. The service drops at 10:45 on **their church Facebook page.**

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/watch/fuuca/>.

* This Sunday our “Coffee and Conversation Hour” will begin at 11:45 a.m. after the service from Austin is over.

Contact robynberkley@yahoo.com for zoom login information.

Tuesday, November 3rd – TBA - on Zoom

Presented by: UU Seminarrians

Election Day Vesper Service

November 8th at 10:00 a.m.

Presented by: Tracey Howe-Koch

“What Could Possibly Be Next?”

Remember to **set your clocks back** as daylight savings time ends.

November 15th at 10:00 a.m. – on Zoom

Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley

"To re-enchant the world: a meaning and purpose for our faith in a troubled world"

Based on the book by the same name, this sermon looks at the particular faith claims made by Unitarian Universalists and how they enliven the world.

Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall is the PRN Minister of Emerson UU Chapel in St Charles, MO.

November 22nd at 10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker: Roddy Biggs

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

"Gratitude in Pandemic Times: Looking Towards the Future of our Faith and Nation"

Join us as we explore the idea of gratitude as we live our lives in 2020, With so much pain and uncertainty in the air what can we be grateful for? How can we even think of Gratitude at a time like this? We will look back on the past year and envision the future of our Faith and nation.

Roddy is a Middle Tennessee State University student finishing their bachelor's degree in Religious Studies before pursuing seminary in the Fall of 2021, They study and work towards ordination in UU ministry, Roddy is currently a member of the First UU Church of Nashville, They are a worship associate, a lay minister on the pastoral care team, and serves as co-chair for the Social Justice Ministries at the church, In addition to the work in their local congregation, Roddy is serving in an Academic Internship for the Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Revival Network, is on The Board of Directors for Unitarian Universalist Mental Health Network, and works as a lay-speaker on Sunday mornings whenever they have the opportunity to do so, Roddy has a passion for speaking on topics that have historically been left out of religious spaces, including topics of mental health challenges, queerness, and multiracial identities, and is planning to continue such vocation and advocacy as they continue their education and enter into life-long service in Unitarian Universalist faith communities.

November 29th at 10:00 a.m.

Presented by: Robyn Berkley

"The Possibilities That Await Us When We Can Have Difficult Conversation"

Today we'll also have our BREAD SERVICE.

Looking Ahead to December's Services

12/06/2020 – Christine Ilewski-Huelsmann

12/13/2020 – Joy Hoeft

12/20/2020 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau
(Solstice celebration)

12/24/2020 – Robyn Berkley & Tracey Howe-Koch
(Christmas Eve service on Zoom)

12/27/2020 – Worship Associates (Burning Bowl)

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.

Who Watches Our Worship Services?

If you haven't watched the worship services on our YouTube channel you've missed out on some interesting, inspiring, and enlightening services, They're available anytime, although each service "premiers" at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday morning.

A review of the 15 videos available for viewing (from July through October) shows an overall average of 37 households logging to the services, The lowest number of households was 23 and the highest was 63. However, these numbers simply indicate how many computers logged in, there is no way to count how many people were watching in each household. We know that often people in each home were watching the service together.



**“Robyn’s Remarks” –
From the Church Board President**

Edward Everett Hale, a UU minister, has a few things to say that I believe are relevant to my comments in this column this month, These quotes include the following:

"To look forward and not back, To look out and not in, and To lend a hand."

"I am only one, but I am one, I cannot do everything, but I can do something, And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

To the first quote, it is important that we not dwell on what has happened regarding the pandemic, the embezzlement, and other past hurts and concerns we have EXCEPT from the perspective that we must learn from the past to move forward, Examining our past to understand mistakes is imperative for growth; continuing to sit in pain is not productive as it keeps us looking backwards, nursing wounds, rather than allowing us an opportunity for learning and growth, As Pema Chodron has said, *"If we run a hundred miles an hour to the other end of the continent in order to get away from the obstacle, we find the very same problem waiting for us when we arrive. It just keeps returning with new names, forms, manifestations until we learn whatever it has to teach us about where we are separating ourselves from reality, how we are pulling back instead of opening up, closing down instead of allowing ourselves to experience fully whatever we encounter, without hesitating or retreating into ourselves."*

If we continue to dwell in our past hurts, we will never be able to move forward as a congregation to achieve our mission, As such, as a Board, we are trying to help the congregation heal and move forward in a way that is productive and useful, One way we have already done this is to make sure we have a financial reporting system that is not vulnerable to embezzlement, Kudos to our previous Board for the hard work they did to set this up, which we want to ensure continues as Board policy, There are other things we need to address, We need to hear from congregants on where healing needs to take place, Are there specific behaviors, or larger issues that have to be addressed so we can learn from past issues and concerns in a way that can enable us to be healthy and grow? If we were to schedule "Healing Circles" would people be open to attending? We are asking YOU...what do you need from us to feel energized and connected to the mission of this church so we can learn from past mistakes and continue our journey together, We will be sending out an inquiry to members on these issues sometime in the beginning of November with the

hope we can schedule events where needed to address these larger issues.

One thing I am keenly aware of, given my work in business, is that our congregation has struggled as most do with having difficult conversations, While one of our 7 principles acknowledges we should engage in a democratic process, this does not mean we have to all be in agreement on what must be done and how it should be done, The democratic process means that we hear everyone's voices, and we vote on things as a congregation or you provide feedback but empower the Board to make the best decision with the congregation's needs in mind, Understanding how to have difficult conversations, and how to be in relationship with others even if we are in disagreement is key, Treating differences with respect and assuming positive intent helps us achieve this, As well, this also compels us to find a way to have a "Right Relationships Covenant." So, a few things come to mind, First, I'll be doing an upcoming sermon on the possibilities that are open to us when we are able to engage in difficult conversations, Second, I would like to do a small session for the congregation on how to think about and navigate stressful or difficult conversations, These events are planned to set the foundation for Spring 2021 work in building a "Right Relationships Covenant" to guide how we handle some of the difficult conversations we have ahead of us as we continue to navigate remote services, and a building that is both a financial burden and inaccessible for many of the valued members of our congregation, I would like to schedule the "Difficult Conversations" workshop soon so we can be prepared for building our RR Covenant, As such, an early December time frame may work best so please look for inquiries and announcements to this effect.

To our second quote, volunteer burnout is a real thing, As many have remarked to me both privately and publicly, it is easy to see how Board burnout can happen as we try to do all we can to support the church, But this also leads to feelings by the Board of not being supported by the congregation if all the volunteer work rests on the shoulders of the Board, We get MANY of you have limited time and ability to make major time commitments, But I am asking you to find THE ONE THING YOU CAN DO!! We need volunteers to help on our Caring Committee, We need to know that our members who are currently in isolation because of the pandemic are getting their needs met, We have several needs for building maintenance, for the congregants that need support, and for our local community that we have previously served through our 4th Saturday work, I am not asking you to do EVERYTHING, but I am asking you to do the ONE THING that you can do, Please look for an inquiry from us on the list of items for which we

need volunteers to help, You don't have to do it all, You simply need to choose one thing that you can do to help support our congregation, The church isn't the building...it is its members, and we need our members to step up on occasion and ensure that the responsibility doesn't fall completely on the Board to do all of the heavy lifting, We need you...PLEASE help!

Lastly, the Worship Associates are working hard to come up with services and offerings that meet the needs of our congregants, We have plans for virtual field trips, more Zoom services, and a wide variety of voices to be heard from people all over the world, We are working to be creative in what we can offer, We would also like to hear from you about what is or isn't working...please share...let us know, even if you simply email one of the Board members to share your issues and concerns!

At present, we will have to depend on virtual services until the pandemic is under better control and we can safely gather, We have no idea when that will be but know we want to do this as soon as possible and will continue to ensure we have the safety of all congregants in mind!

Peace, Love, and Light...Robyn



Church Fundraiser - "Alton Hauntings" Tours

Once again, we're allowing tour groups from Alton Hauntings to come into the church on Friday and Saturday evenings through November 13th. Each attendee is required to follow the standard Covid-19 safety guidelines. Each Sunday Nathan Brown dutifully comes in and recleans and sanitizes the sanctuary and Wuerker Room. There are often three separate tours each evening and a church member is always on site to see that everything goes smoothly.

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

The Board will have its regular monthly meeting via zoom on Tuesday, November 10th from 6 to 8 p.m. If there is an item you would like the Board to address, please contact Robyn Berkley – robynberkley@yahoo.com

November 2020

The Men's Lunch group will meet at **12:30 p.m.** on Thursday, October 8th 10th 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.
Note new meeting time.



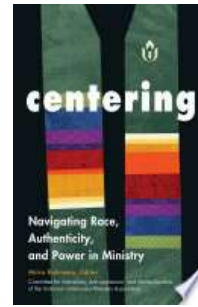
Financial Donations

You can now make a financial donation to the church through PayPal, The blue logo icon is in the upper right hand corner of the church's homepage <http://www.firstuualton.org/>.



You may also donate using Givelify. Click on the large green square on the church's homepage.

Or mail your check to the church at PO 494 Alton, IL 62002.



Call It a Book Club – Call It Adult Religious Education – Call It a Discussion Group

For her CAPSTONE project in her final year at Eden Seminary, Dee Evans is spearheading a Zoom discussion on the book "*Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry.*" UU seminarians Sabrina Trupia and Matthew Villarreal are also involved in this project.

There will be three sessions using the discussion guide that accompanies the book. The book is available on the UUA website and well as Amazon Kindle and hard cover. It would be helpful if participants had the book.

The Book discussions will take place on three consecutive Saturdays:

November 7 – November 14 – November 21
5 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Members and friends from all the area UU congregations are invited to join in these discussions. The book centers on the voices and stories of Unitarian Universalist ministers of color in mainly white congregations. The book opens our minds into what is needed to make us the beloved communities that we wish it to be.

Below is the information for the Zoom meetings.

Topic: Centering

Time: Nov 7, 2020 05:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada).

Every week on Saturday, through Nov 21, 2020,

3 occurrence(s)

Nov 7, 2020 05:00 PM

Nov 14, 2020 05:00 PM

Nov 21, 2020 05:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86753914248?pwd=RjF6TUhPY2ZaYVZ4YXBLdUZTNU1Tdz09>

Meeting ID: 867 5391 4248

Passcode: 549425

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system. Weekly:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZlqcuqhrz8oHtwu5bqUZf9v9Ld0s85nhM4E/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGuqT4pE9WRsh2PRpwAB4_4b_PzmCIBgrdKiUrnEhVpRFrgb85GYqEnRdbY

CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of November 2020 2020 - 2021

Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com

Secretary: Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com

Treasurer: Nathan Brown
nathan.brown0621@outlook.com

Member at Large: Aiden Crist arexboi@gmail.com

Member at Large: Alex Hoeft alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com

Member at Large: Carol McGrew
carol_mcgrew@yahoo.com

Member at Large: Pat Moore patjimmoore@charter.net

President Elect: To be Determined

COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds

Co-Chair - Tom Cochran

Co-Chair - Michael Tarabulski

Grounds - TBD

Endowment Fund

Jerry Johnson

Tracey Howe-Koch

Fund Raising

Co-Chair - Peg Flach

Co-Chair - TBD

Membership

Co-Chair - Mary Weber

Co-Chair - TBD

November 2020

Newsletter

Mary Johnson

Pastoral Care Associates

Carol McGrew

Ruth Maskow

Pat Murrell

Sandy Shaner

Mary Weber

Pledge Drive

TBD

RE Council

Joy Hoeft

Jennifer Lewis

Kayci Combs-Lueker

Social Events Coordinator

Co-Chair - Pat Moore

Co-Chair - TBD

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

Robyn Berkley

Peg Flach

John Herndon

Joy Hoeft

Tracey Howe-Koch

Eric Johnson

Jerry Johnson

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next things that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1884-1962