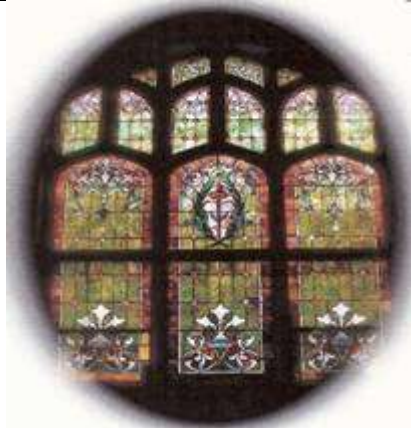


FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



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
<https://www.firstuualton.org/>



**Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. (Christmas Eve Vespers will be at 7:00 p.m.)
December 2020 Theme: "Silence"**

Some Worship Services will be live on Zoom at 10:00 a.m.
<https://siue.zoom.us/j/726948775> (that's a j not an i)

Others are pre-recorded and will premiere on Our YouTube site at 10:00 a.m.
Click on the YouTube icon in the upper right corner of the church's website.

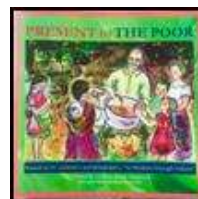
Our live Zoom "Coffee and Conversation" time follows at 11:00 a.m. at the Zoom link listed above.

December 6th at 10:00 a.m. – On YouTube
***Faces Not Forgotten: Art as a Power to Shift Our
Social Consciousness***

Presented by Christine Ilewski-Huelsmann
Worship Associate: Peg Flach



Alton artist Christine Ilewski-Huelsmann will be sharing insights from her Faces Not Forgotten project.



In addition, excerpts from her newly published book, *Present to the Poor* will be featured: Christine created the artwork to illustrate the life story of Larry Rosebaugh / Father Lorenzo.



December 13th –
10:00 a.m. – On
YouTube
Songs of the Season –
A Virtual Sing-Along
Dec. 13th Service

(cont. next page)

Presented by Joy Hoeft and a group of musical guests who will sing the carols along WITH YOU. Joy will give a brief history of each Christmas carol. Join Joy and guests for a service of songs of the season.

December 20th – 10:00 a.m. – Live Zoom

A Solstice Celebration
Presented by Michelle Bryant-Barbeau
Worship Associate:
Robyn Berkley



December 24th – 7 p.m. – Live Zoom

Christmas Eve Vespers
Presented by Robyn Berkley and

Tracey Howe-Koch

December 27th – 10:00 a.m. –

Live Zoom
Burning Bowl Ceremony
Presented by:
Worship Associates



Weather and Covid issues permitting, we will possibly have an in person outdoor gathering (socially distanced and masked) with the Burning Bowl firepit on the sidewalk in the church side yard. Fixings for S'more's will be available.

Check the Facebook UU Friends group page for status. Backup plan will be an informal live Zoom gathering with optional burning bowl ritual participation in your home.

Looking Ahead to January 2021 Services

1/3/2021 - The Rev. Khleber Van Zandt's sojourn in Italy
1/10/2021 - John Herndon
1/17/2021 - Troubadours of Divine Bliss
1/24/2021 - Dennis Fisher
1/31/2021 - TBA

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.

With Sadness in Our Hearts

Megan Hebert, the daughter of Paul and Mona Hebert, died last Wednesday, November 25, at the age of 35.



Our thoughts and prayers for comfort, strength, and peace go out to her parents, her children Ramona and James, her sister Karen, and to all those who knew Megan.

A 1:00 p.m. funeral service is being planned for this coming Saturday, December 5, at Shepard Funeral Home 9255 Natural Bridge Rd, St. Louis, MO 63134 (intersection of I-170 and Natural Bridge) with a visitation from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Care and Concern

Both Neil Adams and Jim Moore are recuperating at their homes. Cards would be welcomed.

If you have a joy, sorrow, or concern you would like included in the "Church This Week" flyer, or in the monthly newsletter, please email that information to Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com or call her.

To have it included in "Church This Week" please get your information in by Tuesday of each week. The deadline for the next newsletter is Monday, December 29.

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

Dearest friends and congregants! As we close out 2020, I want to share how grateful I am for all of you. We have continued to stay connected, have worked to stay healthy, and continue to provide comfort and support to each other as needed through our services and other programs. In January, it will be 10 years since I joined "this special place" and it has been to this day the best decision of my life to join and be a part of the First UU Alton. Even in this pandemic, we continue to attract people who see the possibilities that we have to offer.

Each one of you are what make this church special. Thank you for being a part of this congregation and for having faith in us. December is full of wonderful ways to connect and have fun – Christmas Eve vespers, a Solstice celebration, a Christmas sing along – please tune in and participate!

Merry Christmas, Happy Yule, Happy Hannukah ... joyous love to all of you!

Love and Light
Robyn



***Memorial to Honor
Gerry Gilman***

We will be purchasing a paver at the Watershed Nature Center to commemorate beloved member Gerry Gilman who passed away in

November. If you are interested in contributing to this memorial, please donate via the Givelify app (indicating it is for Gerry Gilman), or send a check to the church PO Box office.

Pavers will be used to revitalize the Watershed’s Nature Center front patio entrance.

Proceeds will directly benefit the ACCESS NATURE project which is designed to create improved access and better nature education facilities for our children.



**Church Fundraiser -
“Alton Hauntings” Tours**

Although this year’s ghost tour season was shortened, the church made \$1,422 from seven nights of tours.

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

The Board will have its regular monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, December 8th 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



**Donations to Buy Gift
Cards for a Family
connected with Oasis
Women’s Center**

Thanks to all those who made financial donations to the Oasis Family Christmas.

We now have enough money to buy \$200 worth of gift cards for the mother and her teenage daughter. This will allow them enough to purchase the items they requested, plus a little extra.

Any additional money that comes in will be used to purchase Dollar Tree gift cards which we will then give out at the Saturday Curbside lunches provided at the First Presbyterian Church down the street. These cards are in lieu of our being able to distribute personal care products due to covid restrictions.



Ben Hoeft will celebrate his 18th Birthday on
December 5.

Historical Note – 184 Years Ago

It was on December 7, 1836 that the Rev. Charles Andrew Farley, the first minister called by the Unitarians in Alton, preached his first sermon to his new congregation in a rented hall. This date is the one that we commemorate as the founding of our church.

In that sermon Farley said, "Do you now ask, 'Which is the true church?' I answer, not the Episcopal church, not the Presbyterian church, not the Baptist church, not the Methodist church, not the Unitarian church, but the good in all these churches.

All who live under the light of nature or under the more blessed light of revelation: the child of the Ganges who worships the river, and finds healing in its waters; he who adores the Sun in its Majesty; he who cries out for the help of the great father and whose dying eyes are lit up with the hope of hunting again in the Spirit land; all, all are the children of God. All are members of the church universal, of that vast temple which the broad skies cover and the broad earth sustains and whose doors are open to the illimitable heaven."

The Men's Group will be gathering on Zoom at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10th. If you are not already on the Men's Group email list contact Nick Pendergrass for the Zoom meeting ID npendergrass@me.com.



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.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of December 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

VIRTUAL UUA General Assembly

June 23-27, 2021



Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime.

W.E.B. Du Bois 1868-1963