

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

110 East 3rd St. (location)

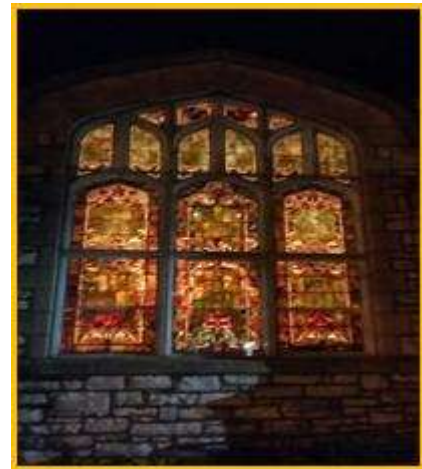
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<https://www.firstuualton.org/>



Photo 1-27-2021 by Nathan Brown
Congregation established 1836



February 2021

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: The Giving Statements, recognizing 2020 donations to the church, were sent out on 1/31/2021. Four statements were sent via USPS and 49 statements were emailed. IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE THE EMAIL AND LINK TO ACCESS YOUR STATEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT [BUDDY STRICKER](#)

Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.
February 2021 Theme: "RISK"

This month's services are pre-recorded videos 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.

Due to technical issues, sometimes the services do not upload exactly at 10 a.m.
Check for a message on UU Friends regarding the start of any service.

Our live Zoom "Coffee and Conversation" time follows at 11:00 a.m. at the Zoom link below.
<https://siue.zoom.us/j/726948775> (that's a j not an i) - PASSWORD: 551868

February 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Tracey Howe-Koch
Worship Associate: Matt Koch

February 14, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

"Side with Love" - a full video worship service from the Unitarian Universalist Association. The service is coordinated by Rev. Erika Hewitt, UUA Minister of Worship Arts, along with and a range of UU religious leaders and lay leaders.
Worship Associate: Jerry Johnson

February 21, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Speakers: UU Seminarians from Eden Seminary (Cory, Dee, Matthew, Sabrina). The title of their joint sermon is "In common" from the Latin "communitas." They will each give a glimpse of their ideas around Beloved Community.

February 28, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

If people need help with doing their worship service videos, please get in touch with [Alex J. Hoeft](#). He would like to have the videos at least by the Friday before your service.

“Robyn’s Remarks” President's Column

Dearest friends...we are one month into 2021 and what a month it has been! A new President...a bit of craziness attacking our democracy...but we are strong as a nation. Many Unitarians had a role in the founding values of our country, and it is important for us to stand strong and continue to be the light that expresses those values. As for our congregation, we are moving forward with Healing Circles and a session on how to have Difficult Conversations. Please look for messages about the dates and times in the next week or two.

According to the UUA, we are unlikely to be able to open for business until well after the summer for regular services. The Worship Associates, however, are looking into the possibility of some outdoor services on our lawn as the weather warms. We'll keep you posted as we know more.

Overall, our congregation is in a relatively solid financial position all things considered. Of course, we are unable to afford a minister at this time, but our budget is stable, and our building is being maintained. Kudos to Church leadership – Mary and Nathan – and our Board – Aiden, Carol, Alex, and Pat – for all their hard work and stewardship. This is a great team, and we work very well together, for which I am eternally grateful!

Keep safe, wear a mask, wash your hands...and get a vaccine when you are able! Love and light to all of you!

Robyn

Sorrows and Concerns



Nancee Magilson writes:
Our granddaughter, Avery, was born 6 weeks premature in December. There appeared to be a problem with her eyes, and today it was confirmed that she is blind. One eye is hopelessly malformed, so cannot be saved. There is the possibility that the other may be corrected with a cornea transplant, but at her fragile age & size, it's uncertain how long it might be before that is attempted. At any rate, she has a tough road ahead. I'm not one who prays, but would appreciate all positive thoughts that she not suffer a lifetime of total darkness.

Miscellaneous News and Notes



Carol McGraw invites you to attend her LEGO themed 50th birthday party via Zoom, as the limit to in-person attendees is 12. The party will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 20th. Please get in touch with [Carol](#) for that Zoom link by email or by phone.

Church Board Meeting

The Board will have its regular monthly meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, February 9th from 6 to 8 p.m. If there is an item you would like the Board to address, please contact [Robyn Berkley](#).



TheMen's Group will be gathering on Zoom at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 11th. If you are not already on the Men's Group email list, contact [Nick Pendergrass](#) for the zoom meeting ID.

Notes from the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting January 24, 2021

The meeting was held on Zoom with 25 members, and 3 non-members, attending.

Buddy Stricker, our Budget Analyst, reported that we are on target for reaching (and possibly going beyond) our pledge campaign goal of \$48K. Although we had only 25 pledging units, others who normally pledge, but did not this year, have continued to make regular donations.

The discussion that began in 2019 regarding “to stay or go” will be postponed until the congregation can once again meet in person and have serious discussions and prep work. We will be following UUA guidelines and local authorities regarding when the church will re-open for services.

Talks have begun with officials from City Hall regarding our needs regarding parking. It is hoped we can also initiate talks with Simmons Law Firm which is planning to build an amphitheater on the park site.

Five security cameras have been purchased for all entrances to the building, with the backyard camera having a wider angle. The three Wuerker Room windows facing the park have been repainted.

For a few weeks we have had an issue with “squatters” filling the Alby St. porch with their belongings and trash. That hopefully has been rectified and the porch will be cleaned up.

Although only 10-13 households (i.e., computers – could be more than one person watching at a single computer) are usually logged in to the Worship services when premiered at 10 a.m. on Sundays, other households watch at other times. Since we started video services in March, an average of 44 households log in sometime during the week.

Healing Circles, led by our contract minister, the Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall, will start in the near future. Information about these will be sent out when dates have been determined.

Volunteers will be needed in the spring to get the church grounds and building “back in shape” after a year of non-use.

Robyn will serve another year (July 2021-June 2022) as president, but a President Elect will need to be in place for this upcoming church year.



THE UU SIX SOURCES STUDY from Sabrina Trupia

As Unitarian Universalists, we commonly cite the Seven Principles

of our living tradition in our conversations with one another and as motivations for our spiritual searching. Not as commonly referenced or examined are the Six Sources of our living tradition and the wisdom that can be gleaned from them. In this seven-week program, the Eden Bi-State Congregational Intern Collective will lead a cross-congregational workshop that seeks to engage with some of our most sacred sources, think critically about their contemporary relevance, address embedded bias we may have accumulated towards some, and work towards a dynamic and responsible interplay of these sources to strengthen our faith and theological grounding.

The four Eden Seminary UU Interns will take turns teaming up to host each session, which, after an introductory session, will focus on a different set of sources each week. The cross-congregational nature of the workshop means we'll be in beloved community with UU's and UU adjacent folks across state lines and can help us widen our spiritual circle of belonging.

Material and the Zoom meeting link will be sent to participating congregants via email, so if you wish to take this course Registration is required to receive study materials and weekly zoom link. PLEASE REGISTER AT THE LINK BELOW.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pBBTu3SvmiNZVWz_a3Q6kysK_-Jh0FQXS_z256fMVQ_8/edit

Sources Study Topics (Fridays in Mid-February to Mid-May), 7:30-9:00pm CT

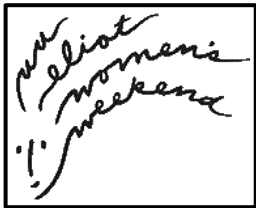
- February 5th - Exegesis (Cory, Dee, Matthew, & Sabrina)
- February 19th - Hebrew Bible and New Testament (Dee & Matthew)
- March 5th - Wisdom of World Religions (Cory & Matthew)
- March 19th - Spiritual Teaching of Earth Centered Traditions (Dee & Sabrina)
- April 2nd - Humanism (Cory & Dee)
- April 16th - Words and Deeds of Prophetic People (Cory & Sabrina)
- May 7th - Direct Experience (Sabrina & Matthew)

Whale Coast Alaska 2021

From: Dave Frey, member of the UU Fellowship of Fairbanks, Alaska. I am the lead organizer of a unique Alaska UU fundraising tour program called "WhaleCoast Alaska" involving Alaska's 4 UU congregations: Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and Sitka.

Have you ever wanted to visit Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2021** is for you! 4 Alaska UU congregations invite you to experience our unique environmental and spiritual tour program this summer, when it will be safe to travel again. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and awe-inspiring tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, sea lions, etc. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. WhaleCoast Alaska is an inspirational way to visit our beautiful state. Complete info at: www.WhaleCoastAK.org. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience you won't want to miss!

David Frey
WhaleCoast Alaska Tour Director
www.WhaleCoastAK.org
dfrey@whalecoastak.org
907-322-4966



The Eliot UU Chapel's Women's Weekend

May 14-16 at the Toddhall
Retreat Center in Columbia, IL

VIRTUAL UUA General Assembly June 23-27, 2021

2021 Registration Information

Registration for virtual GA 2021 is **\$200 per person**. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app.

For further information go to:

<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>



Financial Donations to the Church

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 February 2021 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 Hoelt

alex.j.hoelt@gmail.com

Member at Large: Carol McGrew

carol_mcgrew@yahoo.com

Member at Large: Pat Moore

patjimmoore@charter.net

President Elect: To be Determined

*We have tomorrow
Bright before us
Like a flame.
Yesterday
A night-gone thing
A sun-down name.
And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came.
We March!*

Langston Hughes, Adapted