

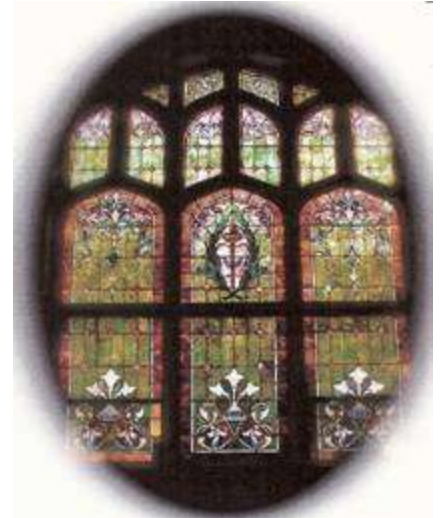
FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

Newsletter of the
First
Unitarian
Church
Alton, Illinois
110 East 3rd Street. (location)
PO Box 494 62002 (mail)

Office phone: 618-462-2462
<https://www.firstuualton.org/>



June 2021

Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. on June 27
June 2021 Theme: “EMBODIMENT”

EXCEPT FOR JUNE 27, all the services will premiere at 10:00 a.m. on our church’s YouTube site.
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 the UU Friends Facebook page 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

June 6 at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Joy Hoeft

Sermon Title: “*Universalism, and the people who were influential in bringing the faith to what it is today.*”

June 13 at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Joy Hoeft

Sermon Title: “*The merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America*”

June 20 at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Chris Sutton

Sermon Title : “*In the Name of the Father*”

Chris will offer a look at the different ways a father is seen across time by various cultures, and how we can use this awareness in our spiritual journey.

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

June 27 – See next page.

June 27 at 11:00 a.m.

Today's service will be the Worship Service from the UUA General Assembly. The Service will be live streamed at this link <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2021/sunday-worship> at 11:00 a.m. central time.

Or you are invited to come to church to gather as a congregation at 11:00 a.m. to watch the service in our sanctuary. All safety precautions will be in place.

For more information about this service go to <https://www.uua.org/ga/program/highlights/sunday-morning-worship>. The worship leaders will be the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis.

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.

President's Column

I am going to use this space this month to say thank you. Thank you to each and every one of you who committed to staying engaged with the church even when I know it was tough watching services and attending coffee hour virtually. If you didn't watch services on Sunday, I know many of you clicked the link to watch them during the week...to stay engaged...to stay connected! I see you, and I thank you!

Thank you to those who were generous by donating what they could, when they could, of their time, talent, and treasure. The grounds are looking good, and the building is clean and ready for us to return soon! We have been reaching out to home bound church members when we can. We will also very likely meet our budget goals and then some and we look forward to sharing the specifics of that good news with you at our annual meeting.

Thank you to the creativity and resilience of the Worship Associates who put themselves out there and came up with creative services that helped them stretch themselves as well as the congregation, both personally and spiritually. Peg Flach, Tracey Howe-Koch (and Matt Koch!), Jerry Johnson, Mary Johnson, Joy Hoeft who did double duty with sermons AND music, John Herndon, Eric Johnson, Paula Moore...the "field trips," the guest speakers who gave generously of their time...our services, albeit virtual, have garnered interest from the community and we are excited to be returning to live services in time for the General Assembly service

at the end of June and starting in July at the church. A HUGE HUGE thank you to Alex and Ken Hoeft who used their technological savviness to enable us to deliver high quality services on all different platforms. It is with their help we will continue to have hybrid services going forward so even those who are homebound can continue to be a part of our church community!

Thank you to the pandemic task force – Marci Bennett, Ed Navarre, Wayne Politsch, and Mary Weber – who helped with coming up with a plan to enable us to return to live services, with the primary focus of ensuring the most vulnerable members of our congregation can attend services if they want to. Their collective knowledge and consideration were astounding and helped us develop a solid plan.

Thank you one more time to our previous board who truly gave of their heart and soul. It was a difficult time for them, but they have left us with a positive legacy of better fiscal management, with good checks and balances. With a knowledgeable CPA team, we have a clear and uncluttered understanding of our finances and a solid system in place to keep it that way.

Lastly, and not least, I want to thank our current board for their hard work – Mary Johnson, Nathan Brown, Alex Hoeft, Aiden Crist, Pat Moore, and Carol McGrew. It takes my breath away at the amount of work this team has done over the last year! From a security system in place (some details to be completed), to church maintenance, to hosting haunted ghost tours, to returning to 4th Saturday distributions, to showing up for each meeting and for each cause 100%...I have lost count of the number of things this group has done to keep the church afloat and moving forward! We all jumped in after the July 2020 annual meeting, many of us with no experience in church leadership, but with a desire to do the heavy lifting, and a commitment to the church and its mission! They embody what it means to be Unitarian Universalists! I am proud of them and our work together!

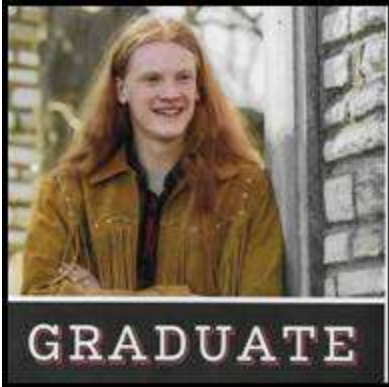
Thank you again...it has been an honor and a privilege to serve you as congregation President. I will continue in this role as long as I need to until we get our feet underneath us and make some tough decisions about the direction of our congregation. We will begin this more challenging discussion in July and continue into the next church year.

I love each and every one of you and look forward to working with you all over the next year and into the future!

Love and Light, Robyn



Congratulations to Our 2021 High School Graduates



Kelvin Thomas Crone-Willis has graduated from the Crone-Willis Homeschool and will be continuing his swimming and pursuing Environmental Studies at Albion College in Michigan this coming fall.



Benjamin Isaac Hoeft will be graduating from Hazelwood West High School on June 5. He will continue working at Dierbergs over the summer and will start classes at Florissant Valley Community College in the fall.

Congratulations to Our 2021 Seminary Graduate



Dee Evans graduated on May 14 from Eden Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. She received the Grauer Award for “promise toward congregational ministry, particularly in preaching and pastoral care.” Dee will continue her progress towards UUA credentialing including an internship at Abraham Lincoln UU congregation in Springfield IL.

CHURCH GROUP GATHERINGS

Anna Ds Meet Again!

After over a year of no meetings, the Anna D Sparks Alliance (a.k.a. the Women’s Group) will meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 3 at Sugo’s in Edwardsville.



<http://sugospaghetteria.com/> (masks are required). We will be eating outside. Sugos is located at the Dierbergs Edwardsville Crossing Center, 243 Harvard Dr. RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) by Tuesday, June 1.



The Men's Group will be meeting for lunch on Thursday, June 10 at 11:30 a.m. at a location still to be determined. *If you have questions, or want to get on the Men's Group notification email list, contact [Nick Pendergrass](#) or contact [Paul Hebert](#).*

Church Board News

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

The position of President-Elect for this coming church year is open. If you are interested in learning more about this position, please contact Robyn.

At its May meeting the Board discussed Finances. To date our total income is \$74,478 and total expenses \$43,437. Total pledges received to date total \$44,220. The church year (pledge year) ends on June 30.

The Pandemic Task Force report was reviewed. Plans are to reopen in 3 phases culminating with Ingathering at the end of August with all safety protocols in place.

The Annual Pledge drive will begin in June and will focus on the giving of time, talent, and treasure.

The Board held a budget meeting on May 25 to review the projected 2021-2022 budget, which will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting (date to be determined). Much of the budget is predicated on the results of the Pledge Drive.

UUA General Assembly

The Annual Meeting (i.e., General Assembly) of Unitarian Universalists will be June 23 – June 27, 2021. As last year, this General Assembly will be virtual. Registration is \$200 per person and that will give you access to all the workshops, worship services, and presentations offered. To register go to <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>. **It's not too late to register.**

Stewardship Report

The time has come. Our **stewardship campaign** will begin this week. Look in your mailbox for the envelope from the Stewardship Committee that contains an informative letter, two forms: the pledge card, a volunteer card, plus a return envelope. We have weathered a difficult few years and are in a solid place financially, all things considered. While the pandemic has been a challenge for many reasons, it has helped us retrench and rebuild in a way that we are stronger and looking towards growth! I know you all love this church as much as I do and want to see it thrive and grow so we can reach a place of sustainability. That will enable us to have all the things we want and need, such as a minister and an RE director in some form or another. We need two things to make this happen. We need money to support the church AND we need volunteer hours. We must take responsibility for the growth of this church by being an active part of the community and participating in activities that gets the word out about who we are and what we value. We need building and grounds maintenance, and we need folks to help with the day-to-day activities of managing a church. We have to pay the bills, but it is more than the bills, it is the need for us to show our values and faith in action to support our mission. We are asking for you to commit to SOMETHING – NOT EVERYTHING (Edward Everett Hale had it right!), Please consider adopting a project or an event, or committing to a certain number of hours per month that you can give to the church. Every minute, every hour helps, just as every nickel, dime, and dollar helps as well. Our campaign will run through most of June, followed by a virtual Annual Meeting in July once we know what our budget will be. Thank you in advance for your donation of your time, talent, and treasure!

Robyn Berkley and Eric Johnson

Stewardship Committee

Worship Associates

Planning for summer and fall Sunday services is ongoing with church members and guest speakers being asked to fill the pulpit. In the works is an afternoon service at The Center for Spirituality and Sustainability (the Buckminster Fuller Dome) at SIUE; an Ingathering picnic (bring your own food – not potluck) at the end of August; and an in-person concert by the Troubadours of Divine Bliss in mid-September.

At least two more Worship Associates are needed to fill out the Worship Associates' Team. Worship Associates support the person who is doing the sermon and on occasion deliver sermons themselves. For those who do not wish to create their own sermons, there are over 100 complete services from Faith Rocket that are easy to use.

Please contact Robyn Berkley to learn more about joining the Worship Associates' Team.

4th Saturday Personal Care Distribution



On June 26 we'll need 4 volunteers who have completed their vaccination regimen, to assist with this monthly community outreach program. You would need

to arrive at 10:30 a.m. and can leave when we close at 12:30 p.m.

We had 16 people come by in May. It may be several months until the word gets out that we're open again, and the attendance builds up to the 50-70 we were having prior to Covid.

Financial donations are especially welcome and as we get back to coming to church, product donations (e.g., toilet paper, free and clear laundry detergent, body wash, dish detergent) are really appreciated.

If you can volunteer on June 26 email [Mary Johnson](mailto:Mary.Johnson@firstunitarian.org).

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 June 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.

The next Church Newsletter deadline is June 26.
Send news items to [Mary Johnson](mailto:Mary.Johnson@firstunitarian.org).