

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

Newsletter of the
First

Unitarian Church

Alton, Illinois

1110 East 3rd Street (location)

PO Box 494 62002 (mail)

Office phone: 618-462-2462

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



Photo by Michael Tarabulski
Congregation established 1836.



**July 2021
The Beginning
of the New Church Year**

IN-PERSON SERVICES BEGIN

Services held at the church will also be live streamed
to YouTube on the church's homepage

or <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ>

Note that July 11 will be at 1:30 p.m. on the SIUE campus.

July 4 at 10:00 a.m. at church

Speaker: Robyn Berkley



**July 11 at 1:30 p.m. at the
Buckminster Fuller Dome** on the SIUE campus –
81 Circle Drive.

Speaker: Ben Lowder, Director of the Center for
Spirituality and Sustainability, will speak about the
“*The spirituality of Buckminster Fuller.*”

Worship Associate: Peg Flach

July 18 at 10:00 a.m. at church

Speaker: Dee Evans

Sermon Title: “What the Humanists Got Right”

It will be about the influence of humanists on
Unitarian Universalists - what they had wrong and
what they did that we need to readopt more clearly.

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

July 25 at 10:00 a.m. at church

Speaker: John Herndon

Worship Associate: Jerry Johnson

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**July 25 at 11:15 a.m.
At church and on zoom.**

President's Column

I am so excited...REALLY!!! We survived 18 months of virtual services, and WE'RE STILL HERE! We open "Officially" on July 4th ... can't wait to see you all at church!

Soooo ... wowza. ... it's been an exciting year. Financially we are in a much better position than I thought we'd be. Stewardship pledges are still coming in, and we have exceeded last year's pledges already with more people to be contacted. As well, we really managed our budget over the last year in such a way that we are more than balanced and are in a healthy place!

Our ANNUAL MEETING is going to happen on July 25, and we will share how the year went and then share what our plans are for the upcoming year. Returning to the agenda is the discussion about whether or not we will stay in our building. This is not an easy decision. It is important that we all recognize that the choice to leave or stay is not simple AND that feelings will be high no matter what side you are on. The Board has been doing research on the issues and we'll have a better sense of our options to share at our meeting in a few weeks. The biggest concerns we have are volunteer time, having an ADA compliant building, and parking. There are pros and cons to both sides, and we will lay these out for you so we can take the pulse of the congregation and see where people are at with this decision. We need your voice in the process.

Difficult conversations are inevitable in congregational life. One important lesson to remember is that we can like each other AND disagree. Being respectful in the conversation is essential. Congregations aren't just a physical location ... it is also our culture, our values, and the people who walk in the door each week. Coming from a place of love and respect as we enter this discussion is going to help us navigate some difficult decisions. Please come prepared ... with an open heart, an open mind, and with love and respect for your fellow members!

Love and Light,
Robyn

Safety Guidelines for Worship Services

As we gather once again for worship services in our church after a hiatus of 68 weeks, we will be following the church's Pandemic Task Force guidelines.

As the weeks progress and the CDC guidelines are updated, our precautions will change. For now, as we start up again, masks will still be required. For social distancing purposes every other pew has been roped off. The joys and sorrows ritual using the water and rocks will not occur. The offering plate will not be passed, instead a basket will be available in which you can put your donation. No refreshments or beverages except water will be available at our "coffee and conversation" hour – so if you need that morning coffee you are welcome to bring your own.

Given all that ... it's good to be able to be together again.

Social Gatherings

Anna Ds Lunch Meeting – Thursday, July 1



The church women's group, the Anna D Sparks Alliance (aka the Anna Ds) will meet

for lunch at *Los Tres Amigos* on Thursday, July 1 at 11:30 a.m. We will be in a room directly across from the entrance and separate from the main seating area.

Los Tres Amigos is located at 1822 Vaughn Road, Wood River, IL 62095, next to Mallory Sports and just off the intersection with Aldi's and the entrance road to Wal-Mart. If you need to call the restaurant, the phone number is 618-259-9730.

Please let [Sandy Shaner](#) know if you plan to come to the to lunch on July 1.

Men's Group Lunch Meeting – Thursday, July 8



The men's group will be meeting for lunch at 11:30 a.m. at **The Old Bakery Beer Company** – 400 Landmarks Blvd., Alton, IL 62002. If you have questions, or want to get on the Men's Group notification email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#) or [Nick Pendergrass](#).

Church Board News

The Board will have its regular monthly meeting via Zoom on Monday, July 12 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 June meeting the Board discussed Finances. As reported on June 7, our total income was \$82,533.72 and total expenses \$44,26.88. Total pledges received to date totaled \$51,370. The church year (pledge year) ends on June 30.

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 on Sunday, July 25. Much of the budget is predicated on the results of the Pledge Drive.

Worship Associates



Planning for summer and fall Sunday services is ongoing with church members and guest speakers being asked to fill the pulpit.

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 July 24 we'll need 3 volunteers who have completed their vaccination regimen, to assist with this monthly community outreach program. Volunteers need

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

We had 23 people come by in June. 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. Thanks to Pat Moore, Jen and Wayne Politsch, and Jerry Johnson for helping in June.

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 July 24, email [Mary Johnson](#).

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.

Your Stewardship Pledge

If you haven't yet sent back your pledge information indicating how you will support the church, both financially and with your volunteer efforts, please do so now. **THANK YOU!**

Congratulations to Robert Kokenyesi

Robert Kokenyesi has recently had two articles published in *The Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* (Spring 2021 issue). These articles are his translations of two sermons by **György Enyedi**, (1555 – Nov. 28, 1597). Enyedi was an Hungarian Unitarian bishop, moderator of the [John Sigismund Unitarian Academy](#) in [Kolozsvár](#) and writer known as the "Unitarian Plato." Enyedi's major work was the [anti-Trinitarian Explicationes](#) (1598) which circulated widely in Europe.

Robert's translations represent a world-first, never before published in English, sermons of Enyedi.

Photographs by Joe Russo

MaryLu McManus has donated two framed photographs to the church taken by one of our beloved long-time members, Joe Russo. Joe was an avid photographer and offered some of his works for a church service auction, where MaryLu bought these two. Joe and his wife Virginia joined the church in 1955 and were active members throughout their lives. Joe died in 2005 and Virginia in 2009.



Makeup table



Viewing the canyon

CHURCH LEADERSHIP as of July 2021 2021 – 2022 church year

Board Members

President: [Robyn Berkley](#)

Secretary: [Mary Johnson](#)

Treasurer: [Nathan Brown](#)

Member at Large: [Aiden Crist](#)

Member at Large: [Alex Hoeft](#)

Member at Large: [Carol McGrew](#)

Member at Large: [Pat Moore](#)

President Elect: To be Determined.

The next Church Newsletter deadline is July 26.
Send news items to [Mary Johnson](#)