

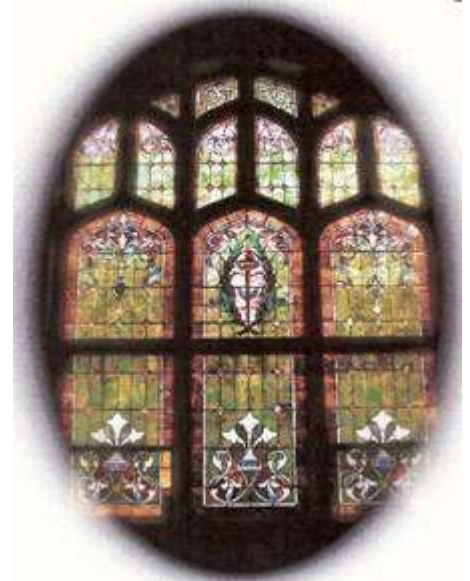
FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



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/>



January 2022

You are invited to attend services ‘in person’ at the church at 10 a.m. The live services will also be available on our YouTube channel. We request that anyone coming to a service at church be vaccinated or have a negative covid test within the last 3 days prior to the service. Masks will be required to be worn at all times while you are in the building, pew spacing will be in place, hand sanitizer will be provided, and you will be asked to sign-in for contact tracing. A HEPA filter is on the platform to further capture airborne contaminants. The Zoom Coffee Hour follows at 11 a.m. at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88505584363?fbclid=IwAR0hRmxfn2ZSIo-U98VW0vq9-uXvxlkhIPC7nTK7YqfGa_u6v6ilbcknr5g
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10 a.m. WORSHIP SERVICES FOR JANUARY

January 2

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

Title: “*The Burning Bowl*” – This is a spiritual ceremony when people are invited to write down words, or a phrase to sum up what they wish to release before entering the new year. This ritual allows people to burn away all that they wish to let go.

January 9

Speaker: Tracey Howe-Koch

Title: “*Guest at Your Table*”



The *Guest at Your Table* program has been an important part of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and congregational culture for 40 years. *Guest*

at Your Table has evolved from a charitable drive to a multigenerational human rights awareness and action program. UU congregations and individuals in the United States and around the world participate in this important annual tradition. We come together, learn about people directly connected to human rights work, reflect on our own lives, and raise funds to advance justice in communities near and far.

January 16

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “*The New Year of the Trees & MLK Jr Day*”: Environmental justice and social justice go hand in hand. In the middle of the coldest and bleakest part of the year, come join with us in looking to ancient wisdom and modern struggles to find inspiration for positive change in ourselves, our land, and our community.

January 23

Speaker: Phillip Lund

Title: To Be Announced

Phillip Lund is a Congregational Life Consultant with the MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

This is also the day of our Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting, starting at 11 a.m. It is important that you attend, either in person or on zoom.

January 30

Speaker: Annie Girresch

Title: To be Announced

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Happy New Year my friends! I am excited we are embarking on a new year with exciting decisions ahead of us. We have pulled together as a congregation to handle virtual service, financial challenges, the loss of dear members, and the joys and happiness of those who made a commitment to marry and share their love and joy with us. I am grateful we can gather together safely and am grateful we are providing safe options for those who cannot attend live services.

Annnnnnd...here we are on the cusp of 2022. At our semi-annual meeting on 1/23/22 we have some issues we need to discuss and address and potentially vote on. Do we want a minister for next year...what will it cost us to stay in this building...do we want to stay here? What options are ahead of us if we choose to find a new spiritual home? While we will not make a final stay-or-go decision in the January meeting, we will begin to share with you important information the task force members have gathered. As well, we will schedule some congregational sessions with Kohenet Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall to help us navigate difficult conversations and come up with a covenant of right relationships regarding how we will interact with each other. We will have the meetings face to face if safely possible with an option to attend those sessions virtually.

Please plan on attending the annual meeting as well as attend the upcoming sessions with Rev Claudia so we can move forward as a congregation, honoring the worth and dignity of all voices.

May this new year bring you love, peace, joy, and happiness, and may you navigate the waves of your life as an expert sailor with compassion for yourself and others.

Love and Light, Robyn

**CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING –
January 23 at 11:00 a.m.**

This meeting will be “in-person” at church. Child care will be provided. You can also join the meeting on Zoom. The login for Zoom is given below.

Topic: First Unitarian Church Alton's Annual Meeting
Meeting Time: Jan 23, 2022 11:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81986356919?pwd=VjFDbXBBSQitac1pVT3dPMHVtZlJGZz09>

Meeting ID: 819 8635 6919

Passcode: 201766

Social Gatherings



**Anna Ds
Thursday, January 6, 2022
11:30 a.m.**

The *Anna D. Sparks Women’s Alliance* will meet at The Old Bakery and Beer Company, 400 Landmarks Blvd. in Alton.

We are asking that anyone attending our group luncheons be fully vaccinated or have had a negative COVID test no more than 3 days prior to the meeting. Masks of course are required to enter the restaurant and while moving around inside.

RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) (email or phone) by Monday, January 3, 2022.



Men's Group Lunch Gathering
Thursday, January 13, 2022
11:30 a.m.

The men's group will be meeting for lunch at 11:30

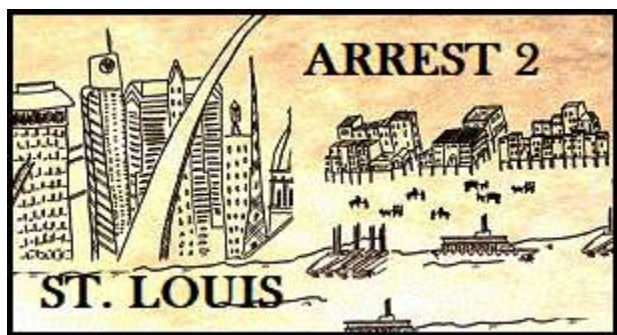
a.m. somewhere.

As the date draws closer a decision will be made as to where, and the usual participants notified. If you have questions, or want to get on the Men's Group notification email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#) (or [Nick Pendergrass.](#))

OASIS Christmas Gifts



In December we sponsored a mother her two children from the Oasis Women's Center. \$375 was donated, and gift cards were purchased to help make Christmas a happy time for this family. Thank you to all who contributed and to Nancee Magilson who coordinated the Christmas Gifts program with Oasis.



Sabrina Trupia is the co-coordinator of this program and invites you to participate.

<https://mailchi.mp/c04e52b8b66f/arrest-2-st-louis-area?e=612b778a17>

SIGN-UP for ARREST 2 HERE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9v6tLz1O7Z9eCvUbwi2Kfs_RmFidGEOmKmIqQrTQu85U-Fg/viewform

ARREST 2 - St. Louis Region

The UU Outreach and Social Action cluster invites you to join the St. Louis Edition of the **Anti-Racist Religious Education and Solidarity Training (ARREST)**. All members and friends are encouraged to participate. You do not need to have participated in last year's ARREST, and you do not have to commit to come to every session (though we hope you will want to!). This program will be offered on Zoom. We have an exciting program planned (see below) and hope you can attend!

Anti-Racist Religious Education and Solidarity Training (ARREST) St. Louis Edition.

This new series continues the mission of Toward Justice's anti-racist education by focusing on the racial history of the St. Louis region. In the program, which will occur monthly and will be hosted by a variety of experts, we will learn about and discuss some of the historical and cultural events that have occurred in the region. We will also have an opportunity to connect to the history of First Unitarian Church of St. Louis through those times, as we believe that anti-racism can also be thought of as a spiritual practice. We will conclude the program with a field trip to visit some of the places we have discussed during the program.

Discussion Sessions

- Session 1** (January 13th, 2022 - 7:30 - 9:15pm): Pre-History to the Civil War
- Session 2** (February 10th, 2022 - 7:30 - 9:15pm): Early to mid-20th Century
- Session 3** (March 10th, 2022 - 7:30 - 9:15pm): Second half of 20th Century
- Session 4** (April 14th, 2022 - 7:30 - 9:15pm): The present
- Session 5** (April 16th, 2022 - time tbd): Field Trip!

[READ THE COMPLETE COURSE OUTLINE HERE](#)

Please view videos before the class sessions (approximately 2 hours a week). Videos serve as background information for the discussion sessions.

There is no class fee, but donations to help defray costs are welcome. To make a donation send a check to the church with ARREST 2 in the memo or use the [online payment system](#).

Board Meeting Notes December 13, 2021

Board meetings are being moved to the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:15 p.m. They are still being held on Zoom. The next meeting will be January 12, 2022.

Our pledge income is now projected to be around \$52,000. Pledge reminder letters will be sent out before the end of December. To date, our total income is \$43,122 and expenses are \$23,315.

We are investigating the cost of a portable outdoor sign to replace the deteriorating kiosk.

Mary would like to recruit a team of 4 – 5 members who could rotate, doing the various tasks (taking inventory, shopping, reshelving, etc.) and working at the distribution itself.

Robyn, Pat, and Michael will do a “walk through” of the building to make a list of the work that needs to be done on the interior and exterior of the building as well as the grounds.

The ministerial search form is nearly completed and will be submitted to the UUA early in 2022.

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.



Have you ever wanted to visit Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2022** is for you! Four Alaska UU congregations invite you to experience our unique environmental and spiritual tour program next summer. 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. Proof of Covid-19 vaccinations required. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience you won’t want to miss!

David Frey WhaleCoast Alaska
675 Gold Vein Rd., Fairbanks, AK 99712
www.WhaleCoastAK.org 907-322-4966

(A note from Mary Johnson: Jerry and I took this UU WhaleCoast tour in 2001 and it was a lot of fun. Great scenery, friendly people.)

CHURCH CONTACTS 2022

Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com
Secretary: Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com
Treasurer: Open
President Elect: Open
Member at Large: Aiden Crist arexboi@gmail.com
Member at Large: Alex Hoeft alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com
Member at Large: Jennifer Lewis

jenniferkaylewis@gmail.com

Member at Large: Carol McGrew

carol_mcgrew@yahoo.com

Member at Large: Pat Moore patjimmoore@charter.net

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Custodial: Hedda Kirk hthrkirk@gmail.com

AV Tech Team: Alex Hoeft & Ken Hoeft

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Music: Joy Hoeft kjabhoeft@gmail.com

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