

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/>

March 2022



“In-Person” worship services have started again, and you are invited to attend services at the church. Masks will be required, and social distancing practices put into place. Services will also stream at 10 a.m. on YouTube (or Click “Virtual Services”) on the church’s homepage <https://www.firstuualton.org>

**The Zoom Coffee Hour follows at 11 a.m. at
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88505584363?fbclid=IwAR0hRmxfn2ZSIo-U98VW0vq9-uXvxlkhIPC7nTK7YqfGa_u6v6ilbcknr5g
Passcode: 641343**

10 a.m. WORSHIP SERVICES FOR MARCH

March 6

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: *“Difficult Conversations.”* – In every relationship there are times where you have to have a difficult conversation with someone you care about. As Alton faces several large decisions, come explore in the service and a conversation afterward how we can have difficult conversations without ruining our relationships.

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley

A training workshop led by Claudia about “Difficult Conversations” will follow the service.

Please plan to attend.

March 13 - Day Light Savings Time Begins

Speaker: Annie Girresch

Title: *“Queering the Bible: Joseph”*—

Did he wear a technicolor coat? Or a princess dress? It depends on how you translate the Hebrew! We will explore how Joseph is a gender expansive character in the Bible and what that means for us today.

Worship Associate: TBA

March 20 - First Day of Spring

Speaker: TBA

Worship Associate: TBA

March 27

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi folks...this month's message will be a quick report on a number of items, so you know the progress we are making on a few things!

1) So grateful we are back in the sanctuary for services. As such, we need help with ushering and someone who is willing to take the lead on coordinating ushers. This is not difficult or time consuming, but we need someone who is willing to just ensure the schedule is set on a regular basis.

2) We need volunteers for the nursery to help care for the littles when they attend church. I have called the local babysitting services and sadly they are all booked up. If someone knows a responsible older teen or college aged kid, this would be helpful. Otherwise, we are asking church members to occasionally volunteer to help with some nursery care on an ad hoc basis.

3) The State's Attorney is in the process of proposing a plea deal to Philip Harris. While specific details cannot be shared at this time, the hope is the plea will be accepted in court on March 14th. I plan to attend if the hearing goes as scheduled. I will be composing a statement on behalf of the church with the help of other Board members. If given a chance to make a statement, I will read the statement to the judge and to Mr. Harris.

4) Mary and Jerry Johnson and I visited a church site in Glen Carbon that is for sale. While we are not in a position to make a move on purchasing anything at this time, it gave us a good sense of what is available IF we decide it is time to leave our building behind.

5) Tom Cochran is working on plans to address our accessibility issues on the Alby side of the building. Again, it's all about possibilities and information gathering at this time. Information is power and this would enable us to make good well-informed decisions.

6) The grant writer, Anna Bilyeu, is in the midst of doing research and will have a report for us to review in mid-March. This will give us a sense of what resources are available so we can make the needed upgrades to the building if we choose to stay.

7) We are looking to secure a commercial Real Estate Agent who works in the metro east who can help us fairly value our building if we decide to sell and give us guidance on properties that may be available in the area. If you know of someone and are willing to make a recommendation, let me know!

8) The search committee is getting ready to assess ministerial applicants. We'll keep you posted on their progress.

9) Sam Berkley will be helping us with updating the church website. Please take a few minutes to provide us with your feedback on what we could do different or better, or what we could add that would enhance our web page. You can email me directly at robynberkley@yahoo.com with your ideas and feedback.

10) We need volunteers to do services and deliver sermons...do you know anyone you think would be interested? Let us know!

11) DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TRAINING after the church service on March 6. Please plan to be there either virtually or in person! If you want to have a voice in this challenging decision ahead of us, this training is essential! We hope you will take the time to attend.

That's all for now. I'm getting ready for a week in Mexico to just give myself a solid break from March 7 through March 12. Mary Johnson will be gone as well but if you have any concerns, contact Nancee Magilson who can take messages and pass along concerns to me and the Board.

Love and Light...Robyn



**Anna Ds
Thursday,
March 3, 2022
11:30 a.m.**

The *Anna D. Sparks Women's Alliance* will meet at Fazzi's in Collinsville!! It's been a long time since we've

been there because (pre-pandemic) their separate room was reserved by a different group, but Mary Weber got it nailed down for us for March. The web site with menu is here. www.Fazzis.com

And here's the address & phone info.
1813 Vandalia St., Collinsville, IL 62234
Phone: 618-344-5440

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.

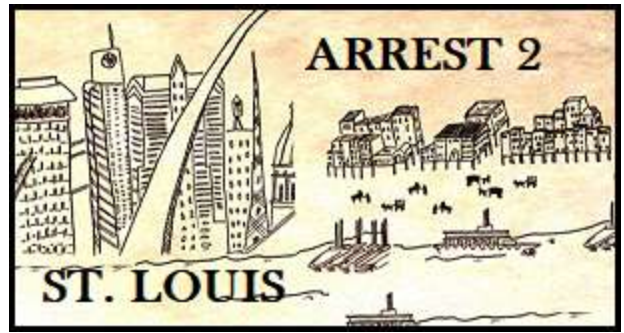
RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) (by email or phone) by Tuesday, February 1.

**Men's Group Lunch
Gathering
Thursday, March 10,
2022
11:30 a.m.**



The men's group will be meeting somewhere for lunch. Information as to where will be sent out to the group's email list.

If you're not already on the group's email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#).



**Anti-Racist Religious Education
and Solidarity Training
Session 3: Thursday, March 10, 2022
"Second Half of 20th Century"**

Contact [Sabrina Trupia](#) if you are interested in attending this Zoom session.

**Board Meeting Notes
February 9, 2022**

The value of our investments was down a bit due to the flux in the stock market.

Pledges are on track. To date we've received \$41,737 in pledges with the amount budgeted for the year at \$54,230.

Total income from all sources is \$63,975 and expenses \$34,141 giving us a net income of \$29,834.

We have a contract with grant writer Anna Bilyeu to help us find infrastructure improvement grants.

After some discussion, the Board decided not to have a student intern this coming church year as we did not believe that our church at this time could provide the kind of training they would need and expect. We will be continuing our search through the UUA's ministerial search system for a contract minister.

The embezzlement case is still under review by the courts.

The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, March 15 at 6:15 p.m. on Zoom. If you have something you want the Board to discuss, please contact Robyn Berkley.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MULTIPLATFORM / PORTLAND • 2022

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

Join us June 22 - 26, 2022 online or in-person in Portland, Oregon. General Assembly 2022 will be a multiplatform event, with registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation. In-person registration for GA 2022 in Portland, Oregon is open. Registration for Virtual participation will open March 1. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available.

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](#).



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 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

Office Support: Nancee Magilson

nmagilson@hotmail.com

Building and Grounds: Michael Tarabulski

madtparty@uwalumni.com

Custodial: Hedda Kirk hthrkirk@gmail.com

AV Tech Team: Alex Hoeft & Ken Hoeft

alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com / kfhoeft@gmail.com

Music: Joy Hoeft kjabhoeft@gmail.com



**4th
Saturday
Distribution
– March 26,
2022**

Paula Moore has taken on the Co-Coordinator role for the 4th Saturday Distribution. Please plan to help with this monthly community outreach program by volunteering your time in the distribution room or by donating money or products. **Pat Moore** does the inventory of what is needed each month, so if you have questions about what to donate, contact Pat. **Mary Johnson** picks up free products at the STL Foodbank and shops, mostly at Dollar Tree stores, for whatever else is needed.

Lunch With Lorna and Roger

Former church member, Lorna McElhone, and her husband, Roger Thorogood, will be visiting our area from March 14 to March 21. They'll be coming to the church service on March 20 and would enjoy seeing friends. A lunch is being planned to be held at the Old Bakery Beer Company in Alton after the service. RSVP between March 14 – 17 to [Mary Johnson](#).

[Return to First Unitarian Church of Alton - Newsletter Archive Page](#)