

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church

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

September 2022



Welcome to church!! We hope to see you in person this month.

For the time being we ask that you still wear a mask and continue to practice social distancing while at church. For those at home, the worship service will be streamed at 10 a.m. on YouTube (or Click “Virtual Services”) on the church’s homepage [https://www.firstuualton.org.](https://www.firstuualton.org/)

10 a.m. WORSHIP SERVICES For September

September 4

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall
Title: *"Bees and Salvation."*

How do bees make honey? Why are bees important for humans, and humans for bees? How can lawn care express our faith? (This sermon was originally scheduled in August but had to be postponed.)

September 11 - Homecoming Sunday

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves
Title: *"Water Communion"*

The water represents the coming together of all our individual life journeys. The bowl represents the vessel of the beloved community which holds us.

September 18

September 18: Paula Moore
Title: *"The Continuum Concept"*

September 25

Speaker: Dee Evans
Title: *"Are we a church or are we a congregation?"*

Why does the answer matter and how does this relate to our UU identity?

Message from Our Minister - The Rev. Krista Taves

We are in the waning days of summer. The nights are cooler, the humidity is not quite so high, and you can see signs of fall everywhere. I'm a consummate gardener and my passion is native plants, a passion I share with my partner. Every year I promise myself that I won't add a new garden! Every year, I work around that promise by enlarging the gardens we already have!

We had a lot of trial and error getting started with natives. We bought native seedlings and seeds. Initially, it felt like almost everything we did failed. Seven years ago I brought home two common milkweed rootballs and planted them. Nothing happened for 3 years. But in the spring of year 4, milkweed shoots appeared all around the original two plantings. Now, the garden is filling with more milkweed every year.

What was happening for those three years when we saw nothing? Those roots may have been in hibernation, holding onto their strength, slowly reaching out for nutrients and down for moisture, and waiting for the moment when it was right to push through the soil's crust.

This is what life can be like for us, too. We plant seeds of hope and possibility. Many of them go nowhere. Sometimes it feels like nothing is happening, or it's not happening like we wanted it to. We wonder if we will ever get where we thought we wanted to go. But all along, things were churning underground and at some moment, we were ready, and were blessed with new life of some kind.

Part of being in a beloved community like ours is that you're always planting seeds with hope for what might come into bloom. You never know which seeds are going to catch. You never know where those seedlings might root and grow towards the sun.

This church is in such a place. You've made a big decision about searching for a new home. This was not a unanimous decision. There are differences of opinion. There is heartbrokenness and hope, both in

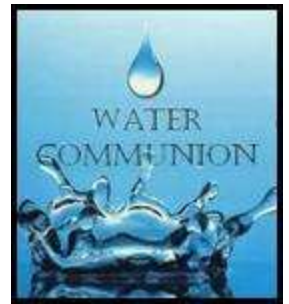
those who voted to leave and those who voted to stay. Many of you are walking around each other tenderly, not knowing what to say or do. Things are happening deep inside each person, and our hope and prayer is that the yearnings of your hearts will come together and move forward as one, in the spirit of trust, compassion, and courage.

As your minister, I am here to support you as you find your way together, as one community, held in covenant, grounded in understanding and acceptance of one another and our differences. We all have different ways of growing towards the sun. I look forward to this journey with you, wherever it takes us.

Yours in faith and service,
Rev. Krista

We will be celebrating **Water Communion**

on Sunday, September 11th. Water Communion is a uniquely Unitarian Universalist ritual established by UU women in the 1980s. It is now observed in virtually every UU congregation. You are invited to bring water from a place that is sacred to you. During the ceremony, you will be invited to come forward and pour your water into a common bowl. The water represents the coming together of all our individual life journeys. The bowl represents the vessel of the beloved community which holds us.



If you have not brought water, there will be a pitcher from which you can pour water to represent the place you would have wanted to bring water from. All are welcome to participate, regardless of membership. You are also welcome to observe if that is what your spirit needs. The bowl will be circulated through the sanctuary for those who would have difficulty coming forward.

If you are joining us from home, you may wish to have your water and a bowl with you. If you would like us to pour water into the bowl for you, please email revkristataves@gmail.com by Thursday September 8th with 1-2 sentences about why the place from which it comes is sacred for you.

After the service, the water will be saved. We use it for child dedications and other services of blessing.



Becoming a Member of this Church

If you've been attending services at First Unitarian of Alton for a while and have gotten to know some of the people here and believe that this church offers the kind of religious home and support for the spiritual journey that you are seeking, we invite you to consider membership in the church.

Signing the membership book in the presence of two Board members, is the first step, and then adding your spirit and presence by participating in the life of the church follows.

On page 3 of this newsletter is information about a series of informational classes, starting on September 11 that we hope all who are interested in membership in this church will take.



Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Besides preaching once a month,

Rev. Claudia is helping to revitalize our children's RE program. On the next column is a link to the registration form, plus a printed copy. The forms will also be available at church.

We would like to know how many children/youth to expect when the program begins. You may contact Rev. Claudia with your questions/concerns by emailing her at dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com or texting her at 636-219-6580.

The curriculum chosen is "Holidays and Holydays" which focuses on those holidays that lift up values that we as UU affirm, and also seeks to honor the diversity and particularity of cultural traditions while connecting with our UU identity.

First Unitarian Church of Alton Religious Education Student Registration 2022-2023

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u80RzJOqBzjICxPdYL1PKcz5IJWpDJx_y6ldqHdn2LI/edit

Student Name: _____

Age: _____ DOB: _____

Grade: _____ Gender: _____

Pronouns: _____

Youth Cell#: _____

Youth Email: _____

Please indicate how often child plans to attend:

____ Weekly ____ Every other week

____ Monthly

____ Other

Any Special Needs/ Conditions/ Allergies or other concerns:

Parent/ Guardian/ Other Information:

Relation to student:

Mother ____ Father ____

Grandparent ____ Guardian ____ Other ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone #: _____ Cell or Home

Email address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Next Newsletter Deadline -

Wednesday, October 26



REPORT FROM ROBYN, Church President

Greetings all...I'm so excited we are getting ready to begin our new church year.

First, our Ingathering celebration is coming on 9/11. Look for information from Rev. Krista about bringing water to contribute to our service. We plan, weather permitting, for the service to be outdoors and then following by a potluck picnic! The church will provide Hot Dogs and Burgers (veggie options as well), and we are asking everyone to bring a side dish to share.

Second, after Ingathering, we want to bring back our monthly potluck. We have traditionally held Potluck on the first Sunday of the month. Given Rev. Krista is sharing her schedule between here and Eliot, we want to have Potluck when she can be with us. Therefore, starting in October, Potluck will depend on the week she is with us. Expect Potluck to be Sunday October 23, Sunday November 13th, and December 11th, January 15th, February 12th, March 12th, April 9th, and May 4th!

Third, we are ready to launch our RE program, so if you are interested in having your kids as a part of this program, please contact Rev. Claudia who'll be developing our RE Curriculum. If you are interested in helping teach, please let me know as well!

Fourth, we need volunteers to help us at our community outreach events...9/10 at Alton Pride, 9/24-25 at Tower Grove Pride, and 10/1 at Unity Festival in Edwardsville. Peg Flach is coordinating Unity Fest and I will be coordinating the two pride events. I'll be posting a volunteer schedule soon to get schedules covered!

Fifth, and final, we are looking for people to volunteer for one of the committees for our move. We need a committee to help with selling the building, a committee to help with the move, and one that will help with overall care of congregants as we navigate this journey. We plan to present our draft transition plan to the congregation on 9/18 after the service and conduct a listening session in

October, on the 23rd, to hear from you all what you are looking for in a new location. Your voice matters in this move...even if you voted to stay, we need your voice in the process so we can find a location that meets as many of our priorities as desired.

I am continually proud of this congregation and our work to be there for each other and our community. This place is special, and I am grateful to each and every one of you for doing your part!

See you at Church!

Love and Light,

Robyn

Would You Like to Learn More About Unitarian Universalism?



**ADULT EDUCATION
OFFERING**

**Starting Point
with Rev. Krista Taves
and Jennifer Lewis**

This 4-part series offers those considering Unitarian Universalism and the First Unitarian Church of Alton the opportunity to experience UUism in action. You will learn about our faith tradition, explore your own spiritual journey, and connect with others who are also seeking a spiritual home or faith. We will meet on Zoom for the first three sessions; the fourth session will be in person at the church. Longtime members and friends seeking a small group experience are also welcome. We will have winter and spring sessions as well.

Session 1, Sunday, September 11, 2-3:45 pm on Zoom: Your Journey – Sharing Our Stories and Spiritual Roadmaps

Session 2, Monday, September 19, 6- 7:45 pm on Zoom: The Unitarian Universalist Journey and the Journey of Our Congregation

Session dates continued on next page.

Session 3, Monday, October 17, 6 - 7:45 pm on Zoom: Our Journey Together – The Three Paths of Unitarian Universalism Part 1

Session 4, Sunday, October 23, noon - 1:45 in person: The Three Paths Part 2 and Finding Your Journey Group

Please register by emailing revkristataves@gmail.com with "Starting Point Registration" in the subject line.

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**Rev. Krista Taves (she/her)
First Unitarian Church of Alton IL**



Anna Ds Lunch

**Thursday,
September 1
11:30 a.m.**

The *Anna D. Sparks Women's Alliance* meets on the first Thursday of each month generally in the Alton-Edwardsville-Florissant area. All women in the church are invited.

On August 1, the group will meet at Bakers & Hale - 7120 Montclair Ave, Godfrey, IL 62035. For the menu go to <https://bakershale.com/menu>.

RSVP asap to [Sandy Shaner](#)

Finally, a gentle reminder – we expect all those attending to be vaccinated and, best case, boosted.

Men's Group

**Lunch
Thursday,
September 8
11:30 a.m.**



The men's group will be meeting at the Best Buffet Grill (Asian cuisine). 615 Wesley Drive, Wood River, IL 62095.

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



**4th Saturday
Distribution
September 24
10:45 – 12:15**

Yesterday, August 27, we had 31 individuals who received personal care items, and they reported a total of 59 people in their households.

The Fourth Saturday personal care distribution continues to be going well, with a special thank you for Mary Johnson and Carol McGrew's efforts. They also moved all the items to a room at the other end of the hall that does not flood. Although I am "Coordinator" of Fourth Saturday, I could not do this without their committed help to this important program for our community.

I am still finding my stride with being coordinator, and would like to have a meeting after church in September (date TBD) to discuss what we can do to streamline this process, and clarify my duties for the program, as well as how others can be involved. I would also like to extend a welcome to anyone who would like to be involved, and at the meeting we can discuss all things "Fourth Saturday." I will check with the board on a date so as not to interfere with other planned activities.

Thank you to all the people who have volunteered to assist with Fourth Saturday, as well. Yesterday, it was just Carol and me distributing and packing bags (ideally there should be at least 3 people, maximum 4). We managed, but it definitely made it clear we need at least one other person.

Next month's Fourth Saturday will be on September 24th, from 10:45 am to 12:15 pm. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 10:15 am. Lists of needed products will be printed in the "This Week at Church." Financial donations also welcomed.

Thank you all for your continued support for Fourth Saturday. [Paula Moore](#)

THREE UPCOMING FESTIVALS WHERE THE CHURCH WILL HAVE A PRESENCE

Alton Pride Festival
September 10,
12 noon to 10 p.m.
Belle Street, Alton



Tower Grove Pride Fest
September 24 – 25,
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tower Grove Park, St. Louis MO

Volunteers will also be needed to staff our Table at both the Alton Pride and the Tower Grove Pride festivals. Contact [Robyn Berkley](mailto:Robyn.Berkley@edwardsvilleunity.org) to volunteer for either of these locales.



EDWARDSVILLE UNITY FEST

First UU of Alton will be reaching out into the community this fall to participate in UnityFest. Specifically, this free event will take place from noon until 4 p.m. on Saturday,

October 1st at LeClaire Park in Edwardsville.

Our church will be hosting a conversation booth with free beverages to facilitate both UU and the UnityFest common goals to "... bring together as

many of the different faces and voices of our community as possible."

Volunteers are needed for our booth at Unity Fest 2022 at LeClaire Park in Edwardsville on October 1. Two- hour shifts from noon to 2 and 2 to 4 are needed. We'll be giving out beverages and some other goodies. Please invite your friends and family. It is a totally free event with no vendors, no politics, inclusivity that aligns with our UU principles.

Contact Peg Flach to volunteer.
pegflach@gmail.com.

The newly formed nonprofit *EdwardsvilleUnity* group strives to "... encourage togetherness and solidarity through education, collaboration and community building activities." ... a perfect fit for UU thinking with our own little lighthearted twist.



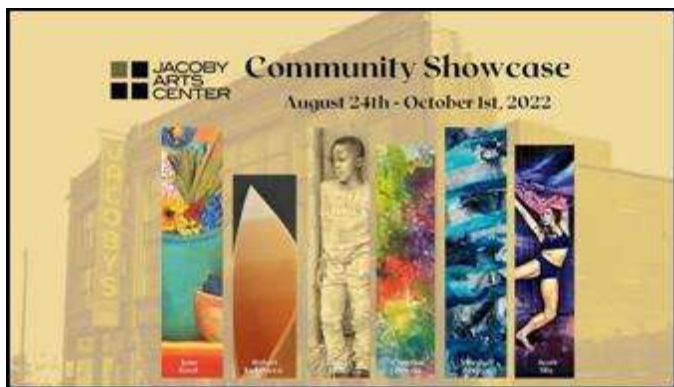
Welcome to
[Jessie Dominick](#)
From Glen Carbon, IL
(she/her he/him)

Jessie signed the
membership book on
August 21, 2022



Book Donations Wanted

[Mona Hebert](#) is collecting books for a DAR project in which she is involved. She is looking for gently used books, both adult and children's' (including cookbooks). Almost anything is acceptable except subscription magazines and Reader Digest condensed books. She can pick up the books at church or at the Anna D luncheon or at your house. Just let me know what works best. This is an ongoing project so I will be looking to collect books for the next couple of months.



Ceramic Art Pieces on Display

Robert Kokenyesi has 3 ceramic art pieces on display in the Jacoby Arts Center *Community Showcase* exhibit. The exhibit will be available from August 25 through Oct. 1 at the Jacoby, 627 E. Broadway in Alton. The hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.



In Sympathy

Thoughts of comfort, strength, and peace are sent out Micha Carey on the recent death of their mother.

A SUMMARY OF THE ROUGH DRAFT OF THE TRANSITION PLAN which was prepared by Rev. Krista

As you know, the congregation voted at the annual meeting in July to find a new home. In preparation for this transition, Rev. Krista has made some suggestions regarding how we go about working towards this goal. We are recruiting volunteers to serve on three teams – a Selling Team, a Moving Team, and a Congregational Care Team.

Please read the summarized descriptions of the teams given below and decide which one you would like to be part of. If you have questions, or when you make your decision about which Team you want to serve on, you may either email the Board Representative for that Team, or the Church President [Robyn Berkley](#).

Some of the duties of the Selling Team include: * recruiting a real estate agent who would help determine value of the property, selling price, and find potential buyers. * The Team would keep the Board informed of ongoing actions and update the congregation regularly with the status of the process. * The Board would decide when to go public with the sale listing. * When a buyer is found, the Team would bring the potential sale to the Board who would negotiate the contract and then bring the contract to the congregation for approval. * The Team would communicate regularly with The Moving Team. * Nancee Magilson (nmagilson@hotmail.com) is the Board representative to the Selling Team.

Some of the duties of the Moving Team include: * building a new home profile by holding sessions (zoom or in person) with the congregation to determine what the congregation would like, or must have in a future home (e.g., number of seats, square footage of the sanctuary, accessible parking, nursery, meeting rooms, classrooms, offices, outdoor space, etc.). * From this gathered information, a new home profile can be built including whether to own/rent, share/sole occupancy and determine the difference between what is wanted and what can be lived with. * The Team would recruit a real estate agent and also investigate other churches (or nonprofits) that might be interested in sharing. * The Moving Team would communicate regularly with the Selling team. * If necessary, identifying a temporary home and storage facility if the Selling Team secures a buyer before a permanent new home is found. * The congregation will be kept in the loop about what's happening in the process. * The Team will communicate with the Board monthly, or more often if necessary. * [Alex Hoeft](#) is the Board representative to the Moving Team.

The Congregational Care Team will be led by Rev. Krista and built by the Board. * The purpose is to care for the congregation and hold the congregation in covenant through the transition. * The Team will hold regular listening sessions providing a safe place to share what is happening to them through this transition. * The Team will be available to provide spiritual support to the Board, the Selling, and the Moving teams. * [Carol McGrew](#) is the Board representative to the Care Team.

**CHURCH CONTACTS
2022**

Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com

Secretary: Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com

Treasurer: Nancee Magilson nmagilson@hotmail.com

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

Rev. Krista Taves – revtristataves@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall – dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com

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