

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church Alton, Illinois

110 East 3rd St. (location)

PO Box 494 62002 (mail)

Email: church@firstuualton.org

Office phone: 618-462-2462

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



February, 2023

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 February 2023

February 5

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

Title: *Everyday Ethics for Unitarian Universalists*

Summary: As a religion of reason that strives to lift all up, it is often difficult to make peace with different ethical points of view. Even though I am not an ethicist, I teach business ethics and I find I have gained so much more clarity about how to approach ethical ambiguities...we'll talk about this and more as we dip our toes into the realm of ethics and ethical decision making.

Children's RE Class

February 12

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves

Title: *"Love and Revelation"*

Summary: Love is our center and grounds everything we do. Revelation is not sealed. Truth and wisdom are constantly evolving and being revealed. What has this looked like in our history? What does it look like now?

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting at 11:15 a.m.

February 19

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: *"Are we there yet?"*

Summary: Travel is wonderful, and also exhausting. We use journey as a metaphor for the spiritual life, but are we relaxing by the pool or stuck in endless traffic? Join us as we reflect on the state of our souls and look for ways to enjoy the trip even as we get asked, a lot, "are we there yet?"

Children's RE Class.

February 26

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves

Title: *"The Vulnerability of Needing Each Other"*

Summary: As UU's we know intellectually that we need each other. Emotionally, that can be harder. It's often easier to offer help than to ask for it. And yet, we need to need each other.

This will be our Potluck Sunday. Please bring something to share. Discussion about the proposed Article II revision will follow.



Message from Our Minister - The Rev. Krista Taves

UUA Article II - Revelation in Process

Until last spring, I was the very part time Office Administrator for my partner's acupuncture practice. I did all the insurance billing and took care of some of the financial matters. Last year, it was time to renew our lease. We had reviewed our current lease and knew there were things we wanted to address. Our landlord had similar thoughts. We have a good landlord, so it was productive. It felt like we were working together and we got to a good place with it all. Five years from now, we'll probably do it again.

We are in a similar discernment process at the national level with the Unitarian Universalist Association. Our bylaws state that every 10 years we are to assess Article II, which includes the Principles and Sources that many of us know and love, to see if we need to change them given the world we live in, how we have evolved in the last decade, and where we want to go as a people.

Our current Principles and Sources were approved in 1985 by the delegates of our Annual General Assembly. Before that, we had Principles and Objectives, approved in 1961 when the Unitarians and Universalists merged to become Unitarian Universalists. The current principles have been evaluated several times with the decision to make no changes. In 2009, some revisions were suggested, but they did not pass.

A lot has changed since 2009. Our faith tradition has been deeply impacted by significant challenges in the last decade. The climate crisis is here. The Trump years showed us how vulnerable our democracy can be, with crisis after crisis threatening so much that we value. Abortion is no longer a national right. People of color and Indigenous people in our denomination have said

that our current Principles have elements within them that are rooted in white supremacy. For instance, the primacy given the individual, with the interdependent web being the last principle is a predominantly white middle class way of seeing the world and ourselves.

At General Assembly 2020 the delegates approved the creation of the Article II Commission to engage in a two year process and bring recommendations for a revision. After two years of work, with many opportunities for input, they have released a proposed revision of the Principles and Sources, recommending instead Values and Inspirations. It is a dramatic change. There will be time for additional feedback in the next 4 months. In June, the final version will be brought to General Assembly 2023 where delegates will vote on whether to place the revision on the agenda for General Assembly 2024, when a final vote will be held.

Here is a link to the Article II Study Report:
https://www.uua.org/files/2023-01/a2sc_rpt_01172023.pdf

I will be holding a discussion session on the proposed Article II revision after service February 26th, beginning at 12:20 p.m. so that everyone has a chance to enjoy coffee hour. I look forward to seeing you there!

Yours in faith and service,
Rev. Krista.

P.S. I will be on vacation January 27 - February 4th, hopefully camping on the Pacific Coast at Pismo Beach with the overwintering monarchs. See you when I get back.

Note from Robyn: Please read and fill out the survey found on page 5 regarding a variety of issues around moving to a new location

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS



Friday, February 24th, 6:30 pm
FIRST UU ALTON's GOT TALENT

Get ready for a talent night filled with fun and laughter! Sign up to offer an act by emailing revkristataves@gmail.com. No talent is too mediocre! Very little is too kooky. Jokes, songs, stories, poetry, dance, gymnastics, cheer leading, riddles, even math problems. Perfection is not the goal. Fun is. All acts receive a resounding ovation! Bring canned chili, canned stews, and canned soups for the Alton Crisis Food Center.



Friday, March 17th,
6:30 pm
ST. PATRICK'S DAY
PARTY AND
POTLUCK

Wear green clothing. Bring green food and green drinks. Green games and music (really?). Bring cans of vegetables for the Alton Crisis Food Center.



Friday, April 21st,
6:30 pm

EARTH DAY
SCAVENGER
HUNT AND
POTLUCK

We'll start off with a scavenger hunt inside and outside the church followed by a potluck. Bring peanut butter and canned fruit for the Alton Crisis Food Center.

President's Column

Happy February my friends. We are on the cusp of our midyear meeting and will have lots to tell so please plan on attending on Sunday February 12th, in person and virtual. As you all know it's been a busy month since we had our Christmas Eve pipe breakdown causing a flood in our basement. We spent a lot of time cleaning it all up, and then working with Cardinal Catastrophe to navigate the estimates and repairs that need to be made. The last weekend in January was grueling but also pretty dang epic. We put a call out to you for help, and wowza did you respond! We had a great crew of folks who dove in downstairs and sorted stuff, tossed things, saved things, and packed up things of value and necessity. It was long, and frustrating in moments, but we sang songs, and laughed, and supported each other. No casualties to report other than an annoying splinter in my finger, and Dee Evans kept us well fed Saturday. I look forward to the construction being completed over the next few weeks!

I would be lying if I said I haven't felt some struggles as we have pulled ourselves up and out of the rubble of the challenges we've had with the embezzlement, changes in leadership both in and out of the pulpit, and of course, dealing with a worldwide pandemic. Sigh... Moments I worried, would we make the bills, will we have meaningful services to keep people interested in attending, will we exist in the next 10 years or fade away as is happening to so many churches...? And then don't get me started with building repairs and challenges. But that beautiful weekend in January, no matter how tired we were, and how frustrating the process was, I felt lifted up...I believe wholeheartedly that our church is not the building, but the beautiful people who are committed to our spiritual mission and message, who love and support each other, and who pushed up their sleeves and dove in, no questions asked! The love and connection I feel with all of you is profound and I know without a doubt, we are here, we are strong, and we are not going anywhere!

Sending you all love and light!

Robyn



February Coffee Hangouts with Rev. Krista

Rev. Krista hosts regular Hangouts to meet with people over coffee. Everyone is welcome. There is no need to RSVP. Both locations are accessible.

Thursday February 9th, 4 p.m. Post Commons, Alton

Monday, February 20th, 4 p.m. Sacred Grounds, Edwardsville

**Anna D Sparks Women's Alliance
Monthly Lunch
Thursday, February 2
@ 11:30 a.m.**

**Old Bakery Beer Company
400 Landmarks Blvd,
Alton, IL 62002**



Please let [Sandy](#) know by **Tuesday, January 31, 2023** if you plan to attend. As always, we'll be watching weather forecasts and only keep our lunch plan if we can travel safely.



**Men's Lunch Group
Thursday, February 9 @ 11:30 p.m.**

Location to be announced via email.

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

UU CRASH COURSE SERIES Winter/Spring 2023 Classes - On Zoom

The UU Crash Course Series: Just enough information to make you dangerous! Offered by Rev. Krista Taves. On zoom. Register at revkristataves@gmail.com.

Wednesday, February 15. 7:00 - 8:15 pm - A Crash Course in Unitarian Universalist Theology

Wednesday, March 15. 7:00 - 8:15 pm - A Crash Course on Unitarian Universalism since 1945

Wednesday, April 12. 7:00 - 8:15 pm - A Crash Course on Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist Statements of Identity and Principles through the years



Religious Education Class

Carol McGrew is the grade-school RE teacher. The curriculum chosen is "*Holidays and Holydays*" which

focuses on those holidays that lift up values that we as UU affirm and seeks to honor the diversity and particularity of cultural traditions while connecting with our UU identity.

Classes will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. The children (kindergarten age and older) will start in the sanctuary and after the "*Story for All Ages*" will be dismissed to attend their RE class.

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays the children will remain in the sanctuary and quiet activity packets will be provided for them.

A nursery is available for younger children. Our new nursery attendant is **Anna Hosier**. She will also help Carol with RE if there are no nursery-aged children present.

Clean Out After the Christmas Eve Flood (Photos on next page)

Due to the excessive damage done to the lower level of the RE wing we had to move everything out of the rooms downstairs so that Cardinal Catastrophe could start the repairs.

A team of volunteers worked on Friday evening 1/27 and Saturday morning and afternoon 1/28 sorting through 6 rooms and making decisions regarding keeping, storing, or disposing of items in each room.

Those hardy volunteers were: Nance Magilson and Mark Antieau, Suzanne and Alan Oberholtzer, Mary and Jerry Johnson, Wayne and Jen Politsch, Joy, Alex, and Ben Hoefl, Robyn Berkley, Pat Moore, Michael Tarabulski, Nathan Brown, Mary Weber, and Peg Flach. Dee provided lunch on Saturday and earlier in the week Carol McGrew had sorted through the RE materials in the downstairs office.

Susie Delano at First Presbyterian Church, down the street from our church, graciously agreed to take all the household and personal care items remaining from our monthly distribution program and give the products out to those in need who come by for the weekly lunch held at First Presbyterian. On Friday, a van and car had been loaded with these products, so on Sunday, 1/29, the vehicles were driven to First Presbyterian and our church volunteers went down to unload the boxes and crates and carry them into one of the rooms at First Presbyterian.

A Survey Regarding the Possibilities for our Congregation's New Home – Please fill it out.

Greetings all. Members of the moving team have put together a survey to assess your comfort and interest in a wide variety of issues involving moving to a new location. Please review the questions and answer them **by Sunday February 5, 2023**. If you prefer a paper and pencil survey, one can be provided for you at church on the 5th or via mail. If you have any questions, please contact [Robyn Berkley](mailto:Robyn.Berkley@eliotchapel.org).

https://siue.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_38hmc2ke0P79xJ4

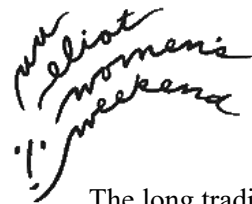
Becoming a Member of this Church



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.



Eliot Chapel Women's Weekend

The long tradition of a Women's Weekend hosted by Eliot Unitarian Chapel continues. It will be **May 19-21** at Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia IL. The sleeping rooms are like a motel room.

The weekend will feature a variety of workshops, Sunday service, BYOB wine tasting, massage, games, good, bonfire and songs, and a time for relaxation and socializing.

Several of our church members and friends have attended these weekends previously and have found them to be a lot of fun.

The retreat is open to all UU Women and friends from local area UU Churches and UU Churches as far away as Columbia MO, Springfield and Carbondale IL.

Go to this link for further information.
womensweekend@eliotchapel.org

Fri., Sat., Sun. (single, 4 meals) \$185

Fri, Sat., Sun. (double, 4 meals) \$135 per person

Sat. & Sun. (double, 4 meals) \$95 per person

Sat. only (3 meals)

Photos from the Flood Clean Out
Photos by Robyn Berkley



CHURCH CONTACTS

2022-2023

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

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