

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



The crocus announce the coming of spring in spite of the ongoing evidence of winter.

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/>



March, 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 March 2023**

March 5

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “To thrive is to resist!”

Summary: This week is the Jewish holiday of Purim, where a festival air transforms a story of intense hatred and oppression. Join us to see how celebrations in the midst of persecution can be a defiant act of resistance.

Children’s RE Class

March 12

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves

Title: “Creatively Maladjusted”

Summary Have you ever felt like a square peg in a round hole? You may have exactly what you need to be a servant of peace, equity and mutual respect.

During Coffee Hour: Celebrating Dr. Ron Glossop’s birthday via Zoom.

After Coffee Hour: “Rev. Krista Sermon Discussion.”
A chance to reflect on the morning’s sermon.

March 19

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “Purpose in the chaos”

Summary: At the best of times we call it busy, at the worst we say we’re frantic and overwhelmed. Let’s find ways we can discern purpose and meaning when just existing and getting through the day seems like so much.

Children’s RE Class.

March 26

Speaker: John Herndon

Title: TBA



Message from Our Minister - The Rev. Krista Taves

*“The truth will set you free. But
not until it is finished with you.”*
David Foster Wallace

I spent 5 years in graduate school before entering seminary. I studied history, largely because I was good at it and didn't know what else to do with my life. The truth I lived at that time was that this was something I could do, and since nothing else had presented itself, this was what I would do. That truth was good enough for quite some time.

My area of specialization was historiography. Historiography is the history of history. The main question we ask is what is motivating the histories that we create? What unquestioned assumptions are guiding the way we tell the stories of the past? What questions are driving what we are searching for and how we interpret our primary sources? The basic premise of historiography is that we must understand the pressing issues of the present moment that are energizing how we are searching for and generating the stories we tell about the past. The present informs the past, more than the other way around.

I delighted in revisionist history, where the standard stories were teased apart by doubts nurtured from the margins – when working class historians tore apart the histories written by elites, when women historians asked questions against the grain to raise doubt about the canons written by men, and when people of color demanded that their stories not simply be added to dominant narratives, but rather fully inform and possibly subvert them. All of this rocked my world. Even when I decided that academia was not my true path, it continued to inform my work as a Unitarian Universalist minister committed to the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

It really makes you wonder how you know what is true and what is not. There are basic truths, like “I didn't get that job.” But a question like, “Why didn't I get that job?” involves a different path to truth. Generations of people of color often wonder why they didn't get the job. Were they passed over based on merit, or did implicit racism lead the decision makers towards a different applicant? Women, who have broken those glass ceilings and are still trying to break them, know that they have to fight against certain truths that still try to define who they are and what they can be.

We are in a truth crisis in our country. We are struggling against those who would cement truth into place and those who understand that truth is always being revealed and must always be leaned into. Immigrants are struggling against assertions of truth that have the power to offer hope or strangle it. January 6 is either a patriotic act or an act of treason. Either voter fraud is rampant or voter suppression is suppressing democracy itself. Being woke is either opening your eyes to the truth of the world around us or a dangerous left wing big brother.

As Unitarian Universalists we are committed to the free and responsible search for truth meaning. The truth does set us free, and my deepest hope is that the truth will prevail in our country so that the damage to the most vulnerable comes to an end.

Yours in faith

Rev. Krista.

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

Following the very successful February event, **First UU Alton's Got Talent**, we move into March with plans for another fun evening.



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

Wear green, bring green food, green drinks, green games and green music (use your imagination!).

Also bring cans of vegetables for the Alton Crisis Food Center.

And the Fun continues ...



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.



March Coffee Hangouts

Come for good conversation and no agenda except to connect! Everyone is welcome.

Both locations are accessible.

Alton. Thursday, March 9, 4 p.m. Post Commons.

Edwardsville. Thursday, March 23, 4 p.m.
Sacred Grounds Café.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dearest Congregants,

Thank you all who came out for our mid-year meeting! It was great to see all in attendance and the feedback from all of you on what is going on is so very valuable. The next few months will be rather busy...exploring more locations and finding a good match. Your response on the survey will help guide our decision where to go. The underlying message was, "We can do anything we want as long as we do it together!!" I couldn't agree more.

We are growing, with new members joining in the last few weeks! That always makes my heart sing!

If you did not hear in church announcements last week, the repairs to the basement will not cost us anything out of pocket! Repairs will begin this month and should be finished by the end of March.

We had a blast at the "Alton's Got Talent" Night on 2/24! Krista is planning social events for us each month for the next few months and our next event is March 17th...A St. Patty's Day party...hope to see you then. Bring games, food, and love and fun conversation! Yes, even green beer if you so choose.

Love and light, Robyn

the
Church Ladies
unsupervised

**Anna D
Sparks
Women's
Alliance**

**Monthly Lunch
Thursday, March 2 @ 11:30 a.m.**

FAZZI'S RESTAURANT
1813 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, IL
RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#).



Men's Lunch Group
Thursday, March 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](mailto: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, March 15 - 7:00 - 8:15 p.m.
Session 3 - Unitarian Universalism since 1945:
Register by emailing revkristataves@gmail.com

Wednesday, April 12. 7:00 - 8:15 pm – 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.

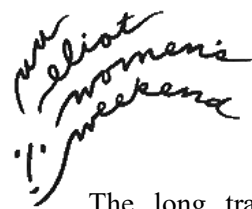
A nursery is available for younger children. Our new nursery attendant is **Anna Hosier**. She will also help Carol with RE if there are no nursery-aged children present.

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)



***Faces Not
Forgotten,
Local Non-
Profit, Honored
by the 2nd
Annual Anthem
Awards***

Congratulations to **Christine Ilewski**, Founder and Executive Director of Faces Not Forgotten
www.facesnotforgotten.org
<https://www.facebook.com/thefacesprojectstlmo/>

Christine has been a member of our church since 1998.

Faces Not Forgotten, an Alton-based non-profit, has been named a Gold winner for Special Projects showing Innovative Products and Services as well as a Silver winner for Community Outreach in the Education, Art, & Culture category of the prestigious 2nd Annual Anthem Awards, <https://www.anthemawards.com/winners/list/entry/#!education-art-culture/special-projects/faces-not-forgotten/1980/-1/387040>. The Anthem Awards honors the purpose & mission-driven work of people, companies, and organizations worldwide. Fellow winners include Gloria Steinem, Billy Porter, Amanda Gorman, and Abigail Disney.

Faces Not Forgotten is a social justice visual art project that honors the children in America, eight per day, disproportionately black, who are killed by gun violence.

Since 2010, *Faces Not Forgotten* and its network of artists have painted more than 300 portraits of gun violence victims aged 20 and under. Their 35 quilts travel nationwide and were recently displayed at March 2023

the 10th Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence at St. Mark's Cathedral in Washington D.C. attended by President Biden. A portrait of a child lost to gun violence can be requested at www.facesnotforgotten.org.

Memorial and Wedding Coordinator Sought

Are you someone who can provide caring support to families in times of bereavement and joy? Are you looking for a way to make extra money? Eliot Unitarian Chapel in Kirkwood, MO needs someone(s) to volunteer to handle memorials and weddings by coordinating the event at Eliot with the family or bridal party. This would be a paid-per-event non-employee opportunity. Please contact the frontoffice@eliotchapel.org if you are interested.

Updates to the October '22 Church Directory

Alford, Rebecca (new member 02/05 23)
nuthouse1979@gmail.com

Awalt, Tricia (new address)

Brown, Nathan (new address)

Custer, Marcia (new address)

Dominick, Jessie and Marcella
(Marcella new member 02//05/23) (new address)

Hosier, Anna (new member 02/05/23)
anna.hosier92@gmail.com



UUA Office at the United Nations

Congregation members are invited to attend this year's [UU@UN Intergenerational Spring Seminar](#), with the theme of "*Demilitarization & Abolition: Resist Policing and Empire.*" This Seminar will take place April 1-3, both online and in Minneapolis. To find out more information about the seminar including registration options and rates go to the Seminar website listed above.

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

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