

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church Alton, Illinois

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



Spring Celebration Tree

April 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 during the worship service 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/>.

10 a.m. WORSHIP SERVICES For April 2023

April 2

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “Passover - A Call for Collective Liberation”

Summary: Join us to explore the history of the Passover story, and why its ethical calls still remain relevant over 2,000 years later.

- Children’s RE Class

April 9

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves

Title: “Easter According to Mary Magdalene”

April 16

Speaker: Robyn Berkley (Reading a sermon by Dr. Ronald Glossop)

Title: “How To Make the Invisible Visible”

- Children’s RE Class.

April 23

Speaker: Rev. Krista Taves

Title: “The Shadow Side of Resistance”

Summary: Resistance can come from a deep commitment to social change. This form of resistance is anchored in conviction, courage, and commitment. But sometimes resistance is anchored in fear and becomes a roadblock to wholeness, healing, and a nourished life. We will be exploring this kind of resistance.

April 30

Speaker: TBA

- Potluck follows the service. Please bring something to share.



Message from Our Minister - The Rev. Krista Taves

This past weekend we finally threw ourselves into preparing the gardens. We're clearing weeds and last year's old growth from the perennial native gardens and preparing the vegetable beds for seeding. As a northerner, it still surprises me how early things green up and how quickly the weeds take over. Last year I was slow getting to my gardens and I called some of the garden beds "terrors" because of the thick wall of weeds I knew I was going to need to deal with. But slowly, I did, with mounds of weeds piling up and the wanted plants finally getting full sunlight and explode.

I think about what it means to clean out, to clear, to free. This past week, the Moving Team and I visited some potential sites for our future home. Some had potential. Some didn't. What I've noticed amongst us is that with every visit, we become clearer in our priorities for what our future home needs. These priorities were lifted in the congregational gatherings we had this fall and in the congregational survey from earlier this winter. It's like gardening. with every visit the weeds are clearing and we are together looking for the nibs of potential waiting for the sun.

And what is the sun? It's you. Together, you are the living breathing heart of this church. We evaluate each potential location by how it will help you to shine. There is a lot of clearing to be done, not just in terms of the contents in our current church, but also in the spirit of this church, which is you.

I want to be sure you know that the clearing is already happening, even though we haven't moved yet. Just the preparation, the thought, and the care that you are taking has begun to clear the weeds, and you're shining already. I am seeing you having fun together, laughing and playing, eating and socializing, worshipping, having love filled serious conversations. It is a palpable feeling that I sense whenever I join you. The question is not can you shine, but where will you shine?

There are many gardens yet waiting for our attention. I'm already thinking about what is going to get my attention next weekend (when the weeds are already thicker than they are now), hoping that it's a bright

sunny weekend. In this congregation, the sun has already come back. In fact, it never went away.

Yours in faith and service,
Rev. Krista.



Starting Point An Introduction to the Unitarian Universalist Journey

This 4-part series offers those considering Unitarian Universalism as a spiritual path the opportunity to experience UUism through a small group experience. 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. Longtime members and friends seeking a small group experience are also welcome. To register please email revkristataves@gmail.com.

Sunday, April 16, 2-3:45 pm on Zoom

Session 1: *Your Journey – Sharing Our Stories and Spiritual Roadmaps*

Monday, April 24, 6- 7:45 pm on Zoom

Session 2: *The Unitarian Universalist Journey and the Journey of our Congregation*

Monday, May 1, 6-7:45 pm on Zoom

Session 3: *Our Journey Together – The Three Paths of Unitarian Universalism Part 1*

Sunday, May 14, 11:30 - 1 pm in person at Eliot

Session 4: *The Three Paths Part 2 and Continuing your Journey*

Church Board Meeting – on Zoom

Monday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m.

If you have an item you wish the Board to discuss please contact [Robyn Berkley](mailto:Robyn.Berkley).

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, April 12, 7 p.m. on Zoom.

This is the 4th and final session of our series. We will be looking at different UU Statements of Convictions and Values through our history, ending with the new version of the Principles and Sources (renamed Our Values and Covenants) that will come before General Assembly this summer. Here is the link to the revised Article II to review them: [Article II Study Report \(PDF 26 pages\)](#). To register email revkristataves@gmail.com.

Report from the Moving Team

Over the last few months, the Moving Team has explored locations in Alton, Wood River, and Edwardsville. We have looked at First Presbyterian in Alton, St. John's UCC in Wood River, a church for sale on Vaughn Road in Wood River, the Dome on the SIUE campus, and Immanuel Methodist, Newsong, and St. Paul's UCC, all in Edwardsville. We still have more to explore at St. Paul's as we have not yet toured that location. All have pros and cons that we are considering now given the survey results. We hope to have a report for the congregation soon, with the hopes of presenting an option to the congregation in the near future.

If you have any questions about the locations, don't hesitate to chat with a member of the Moving Team: Alex H, Nathan B, Peg F, Robyn B, and Rev. Krista. If you have any further recommendations for us to explore, please let us know as soon as possible.

Cheers...the Moving Team

Congratulations to Dee Evans and Sabrina Trupia



March 17, Dee Evans at St. Patrick's Day party at First Unitarian Alton



March 5, Sabrina in the pulpit at UU Congregation Montclair, NJ

After months of preparation, including extensive study and internships, both Dee and Sabrina recently appeared (via Zoom) before the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee, the denominational body that has jurisdiction over all phases of ministerial credentialing. Candidates for ministerial fellowship are interviewed by the Committee before fellowship is granted. As Dee had already finished her internship she was granted preliminary fellowship. When Sabrina finishes her internship later this spring she too will be granted preliminary fellowship. Both have been cleared to be "in search" for ministerial positions.

Photos from the St. Pat's Party at Church March 17



And the Fun continues ...

ANOTHER FELLOWSHIP EVENT



Friday, April 21st,
6:30 pm

**EARTH DAY
SCAVENGER
HUNT AND
POTLUCK**

Friday, April 21st, 6:30 p.m. Earth Day Scavenger Hunt and Potluck. Dress in green and brown and come ready to explore nature during our Earth Day Scavenger Hunt. Please bring non-perishable items for the food bank.

April Coffee Hangouts

Come for good conversation and no agenda except to connect! Everyone is welcome. Both locations are accessible.



Alton: Thursday, April 6, 4 p.m. Post Commons.

Edwardsville: Thursday, April 20, 4 p.m.
Sacred Grounds Café.

April 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends...SPRING...FINALLY! I love the renewal of Spring and the warm beginnings! I get to plant my garden, open the pool, and smell the warming dirt and flowering plants. There are days when Winter feels like it will last forever, but like the cycle of life, the ups and downs, we know that Winter WILL END, followed by the warmth of Spring and Summer.

Someone shared their thoughts about happiness with me...and I see a sermon brewing on this topic...but I love what they shared about happiness that it is not a permanent state of being. It ebbs and flows situationally...we have to recognize that riding the waves of our life means some days things are tough, and other days, things are beautiful and glorious. I strive for happiness, but I know there are days it is a struggle. The same holds for congregational life...a few steps forwards, a couple of steps backwards...a slide to the left, then a slide to the right...but ultimately the cha-cha of our daily life brings us to a place of comfort and acceptance of those ebbs and flows. For example, we had a broken pipe Christmas Eve, but that led to us getting the basement repaired and mold and asbestos remediated at no cost to us. What a glorious gift to arise out of a tragedy!!

I know things feel very uncertain...will we sell the building...where will we move...but I encourage you to trust the process and all of its ebbs and flows. The moving team has been very, very busy exploring new locations for our church in Alton, Wood River, and Edwardsville. The selling team has begun a conversation with potential buyers. One day at a time my friends...we will get there TOGETHER! As we have things to report we will share with you but know for now, we are working hard on all of the options and hope to have a plan in place soon to share with you all!

I also want to reiterate our new masking policy. Our sanctuary will remain a masking zone so we create a safe space for anyone who is immuno-compromised to come to worship in the sanctuary if they so desire. The rest of the building will be mask optional. Those who wish to stay masked may do so with others in fellowship in the rest of the building, or if not, they can exit out of the front of the building to minimize their exposure safely. Covid is still with us...my daughter just caught it for the first time after going away on vacation and masking through most of it. Of course the best line of defense is to mask AND to vaccinate, but to be consistent with our UU values to honor the interdependence of all living things, we know that creating a safe space for all...a

welcoming space that allows people of varying abilities and health conditions to be in community with us, is most important to our congregation. Thank you for honoring our policy.

In the meantime, please get outside, enjoy the sunshine, plant some vegetables and flowers...take a deep breath and enjoy the moments that give us happiness as they come!

Love and Light...Robyn

the Church Ladies unsupervised

Anna D
Sparks
Women's
Alliance

Monthly Lunch
Thursday, April 6 @ 11:15 a.m.
(Note earlier time than usual)

Location: Meridian Village Retirement
Community, 27 Auerbach Place,
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Ginger McCall has made arrangements with Meridian Village for us to have lunch there. Depending on the number of attendees we will either be in the private dining room or the regular dining room. RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) by March 31 so the Meridian staff can plan ahead. We will be in the big building with the big parking lot in front.

You must pay for your lunch in cash, and tipping is not allowed.



Men's Lunch Group

Thursday, April 13
11:30 a.m.

Location to be
announced via email.

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



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 most 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 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

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN.

<http://www.eliotwomensweekend.com/>

Registration CLOSES April 16

Theme: "Women of Vision"

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.

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)

The History of the First Unitarian Church of Alton

If you are interested in learning more about the history of the Alton Unitarian Church, including events from 2022, below is the link from the church's webpage.

<http://firstuualton.org/A%20History%20of%20the%20Congregation%201836-2022.pdf>

This article and other church history information, can be found on the church's homepage by working down from the tab ...

About UU & Our Church

UU and Our Congregation

Our Congregation's History

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

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 / kfhoft@gmail.com

Music: Joy Hoeft kjabhoeft@gmail.com

Rev. Krista Taves – revtristataves@gmail.com

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

First Unitarian Church of Alton

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstuualton>

Instagram: firstuualton