

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836

## Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church Alton, Illinois

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



## June 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 June 2023

**June 4**

**Speaker: Cara Lane**

**Title:** “*Transcendentalism: Looking at Its Past to Understand Its Present*”

**Worship Associate:** Robyn Berkley

Cara Lane was born and raised in Anderson, Indiana. Upon graduating from Purdue University, she moved to southern Illinois in order to take a position teaching high school English at Edwardsville High School—a position she has held for twenty years. Cara teaches American Literature, Debate, and Public Speaking each year, and she holds two master's degrees from Washington University in St. Louis, one in Education and one in American Culture Studies. Active in both her school and local community, Cara loves reading, history, and travel. She is honored by this opportunity to share her lecture topic today.

**June 11**

**Speaker: Robyn Berkley**

**Title:** “*Radical Amazement*”

**June 18**

**Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall**

**Title:** “*Metaphors Matter*”

**Summary:** On this Father's Day we will look at how fathers are presented in media and conservative religion, and contrast that with what our faith teaches about "fatherhood and masculinity."

Rev. Claudia is our incoming minister as of July 1. We welcome her to this new role and look forward to her increased involvement with our congregation.

June 25

**UUA General Assembly Worship Service Live  
Streamed from Pittsburg PA.  
10 a.m. central time.**

**.Speaker: Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti**, Senior Minister of the First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor, MI will lead the 2023 Sunday Service at GA.

You are invited to come to church to watch the live stream of the General Assembly worship service together with others in our congregation, or watch it from home.

The link for information about accessing the worship service and other GA programs open to the general public is:

<https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2023>

Below is a link to the GA Program book:

[https://www.uua.org/files/2023-05/2023 General Assembly Program Book.pdf](https://www.uua.org/files/2023-05/2023%20General%20Assembly%20Program%20Book.pdf)

A potluck lunch at church will follow this online service. Please bring something to share.



*Rev. Claudia's  
Column*

Hello everyone!

As we turn from the beauty and growth of Spring to the heat and humidity of Summer, I am enjoying the idea of

the slower pace that summertime brings but haven't experienced a slowdown in real life yet! This is going to be a very busy year here at church, between the move and outreach into the community, so we should all enjoy the rest when we find some!

As the incoming minister I am just so thrilled to continue my work with you and cheering you all on as we engage in all the things that are preparing us to move. My goal is to be in regular contact with everyone, be it by email or text, phone calls or maybe old-fashioned letters even. No matter what the method, the intention is the same- to support and

build relationships with the people who are making this beloved community a reality.

For those of you who haven't had a chance to work with me yet, my name is Claudia Hall, my pronouns are she or they, and I have been working with this community since 2020 in a variety of roles. I started in ministry in 1998 as a youth minister, then I became a pulpit minister in 2001 when I moved to Kansas City and went to seminary. I got my M.Div. in 2005, and since then have served churches in various communities, eventually finding my way to the UU church. I finished my PhD in 2015, combining sociology, social psychology, and depth psychology to look at ways to promote group leadership.

Starting in 2020, I began consulting here on some of the awful things that had happened to this community, then helped last year to write the RE curriculum, and now I am honored to serve as your minister during this time of transition. I have two partners, Michael, and Robert, and an incredible almost 4-year-old, Cody. We live in South St. Louis County with our dog, 2 cats and a very bossy parakeet. When we aren't there, we are running our sheep farm in Salem, MO. We raise heritage breed sheep and are working to restore the land through best conservation practices. I am also a leader in Humanistic Judaism, and offer Humanist services for most major Jewish holidays.

I look forward to getting to know you all better as the year moves on, especially as it will be filled with a lot of ups and downs with this move. I know this whole process will unfold in its own time and we get to trust the great mystery of that unfolding, a trust that is made easier as we all share the burdens and look forward together to being able to rebuild and revitalize this community that we all love so very much.

I am grateful to be able to serve you all as your minister, and want to say please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any time by email at [dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com](mailto:dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com) or by text at 636.219.6580.

Blessed be,  
Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall  
First UU Church of Alton, IL



**Feel the Love  
Coffee House &  
Open Mic, June 2,  
7 p.m.  
First Unitarian  
Church of St. Louis**

**[5007 Waterman Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63108](#)**

Join this heart-warming event celebrating LGBTQ+ community, featuring music, poetry and more. Gabe Montesanti, local author, drag performer and STLPR Story Collider host, will emcee this open mic evening.

Sign-up to share a reading, song, or any other expression that celebrates the joy of human love in all its forms. First come, first served, sign up online or in person that day. You may also feel free to just bring yourself!

Coffee, tea, and desserts will be for sale in the Dodson Room and performances will be in the Sanctuary. Sales support the Metro STL UU booth at Tower Grove Pride.

This is an all-ages event. Performers are asked to keep content PG-13. Online performance sign up is here: <https://forms.gle/1pjUtGRzuTiogpV6>

Check out the FB event here:  
<https://fb.me/e/3wBQMVRpS>

Rev. Kim Mason  
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis  
(314) 361-0595 ext. 22  
*she/her/hers*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Greetings all,

By now you know we have launched our stewardship campaign for the 2024 fiscal year! As you heard from Rev. Krista, this is such an

June 2023

important year as we are poised to move our congregation. Please give what you can. Increase your pledge if you can, and offer your labor if and when you can!

As for the building, we have some great news. It looks like Illinois Water is responsible for some of the damaged pipe that caused the back up in the basement. They will be covering the repair. I thank Cardinal Catastrophe again for their outstanding work and support! I am grateful for the savviness and support as we navigated some unprecedented repairs on the building this year.

Lastly, if you were not able to attend the Transition Town Hall meeting, we have a recording of it. We reviewed all the options we have explored and shared our finalists. If you are interested in seeing the video, please email me directly and I will send you the link to the private YouTube video.

Lots ahead with our annual meeting in July and a final decision to be made about our new home in the coming days. Please stay engaged!

Love and Light...Robyn

## **Church Board Meeting – on Zoom**

**Monday, June 12 at 6:30 p.m.**

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

**Men's Lunch Group  
Thursday, June 8  
11:30 a.m.**

Location to be announced via email.

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





**Anna D Sparks  
Women's Alliance  
Lunch  
Thursday, June 1 @  
11:30 a.m.**

**El Maguey** in Edwardsville  
1534 Troy Road in Montclair Shopping Center  
<http://www.el-maguey-edwardsville.com/>

**(Church members, friends, visitors – all are invited to attend these monthly women's lunches held in various locations area-wide).**

RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) by May 30



**Children at Church on  
Sundays  
This Summer**

**Marcella Dominick** will be providing childcare in the nursery for children aged 3 and under, or supervision for

older children in the quiet activity room in the back of the sanctuary if there are no nursery aged children present. Volunteers will be needed to help when there are children in the nursery, as our church safety policy states that 2 adults must be present.

Religious Education (RE) class(es) will begin in the fall.

The last Sunday of each month a **Potluck Lunch** is held at church. Everyone is invited. Please bring something to share on June 25 and stay after the service to enjoy good food and conversation.



**Social  
Justice  
Team  
Report**

The Social Justice core team at First UU

Alton has been using the foundation of goals and actions that are put forth by the UUANI (Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois) as our current platform at church. The core team would like to present a quick summary to anyone who is unfamiliar or would like a refresher as to who is and what are the goals of the UUANI.

The UUANI was founded in 2013 and as the website states “organized to build power among UU congregations in Illinois, in order to put our UU values into meaningful, concrete far-reaching action toward social justice. We work collectively with each other and collaboratively with effective partner organizations to influence the creation of meaningful social change toward justice, beloved community, and a healthy planet. “

Further We covenant:

- to listen with respect, and to hold ourselves accountable, to each other, our deepest selves, our UU principles, the earth, and those on the margins of society;
- to continually work to develop our skills and our effectiveness;
- to focus our efforts where we can make a real difference, and to judge our efforts by our impact on people and the planet;
- to work to build energy, capacity, and power in our congregations;
- to work with other organizations who share our commitment to the common good.

The UUANI is supported by contributions from Unitarian Universalist individuals and congregations from across the state of Illinois. Other funding that supports the UUANI come from the Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility Fund, Side with Love and the Chicago Area UU Council.



Current 2023 Legislative priorities include; The Environment and Climate Justice, Immigration Rights, Restorative Justice, LGBTQIA+ rights , and many new initiatives in Reproductive Rights. We encourage all our members to visit the website UUANI.org, also on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/UUANI](http://www.facebook.com/UUANI).

You can sign up to receive a copy of the newsletter each month as well as sign up to receive action alerts that you can participate in from your home computer or other digital device.

We encourage all our members to take a look and consider how you might help and participate.

Please contact either [Dee Evans](#), or [John Herndon](#), if you have any questions or want to know more.

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## 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.

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## CHURCH CONTACTS

### 2022 - 2023 church year

#### Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley [robynberkley@yahoo.com](mailto:robynberkley@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Mary Johnson [mejohanson@mindspring.com](mailto:mejohanson@mindspring.com)

Treasurer: Nancee Magilson [nmagilson@hotmail.com](mailto:nmagilson@hotmail.com)

President Elect: Open

Member at Large: Aiden Crist [arexboi@gmail.com](mailto:arexboi@gmail.com)

Member at Large: Alex Hoeft [alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com](mailto:alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com)

Member at Large: Jennifer Lewis

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Member at Large: Carol McGrew

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**AV Tech Team:** Alex Hoeft & Ken Hoeft

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**Building and Grounds:** Michael Tarabulski

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**Custodial:** Hedda Kirk [hthrkirk@gmail.com](mailto:hthrkirk@gmail.com)

**Music:** Joy Hoeft [kjabhoeft@gmail.com](mailto:kjabhoeft@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Mary Johnson

**Office Support:** Nancee Magilson

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#### Ministerial

**Rev. Krista Taves** – [revtristataves@gmail.com](mailto:revtristataves@gmail.com)

**Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall** – [dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com](mailto:dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com)

#### First Unitarian Church of Alton

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<https://www.firstuualton.org>

**YouTube Channel:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ)

[6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSx-6KMgYdgy1zktuaPUTIQ)

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