

First Unitarian Focus

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church of Alton, Illinois



Congregation established 1836

110 East 3rd St. (location)

PO Box 494 62002 (mail)

Email: church@firstuualton.org

Office phone: 618-462-2462

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

August 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 elsewhere in the church building.

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

August 2023

August 6

Speaker: Dee Evans

Title: *Life Lessons Learned at the Deli.*

Summary: Who knew that going to the deli could teach important lessons about life, humility, and kindness.

August 13

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

Title: *The Importance of the Women’s Music Movement through the Music of Holly Near.*

August 20

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: *Ethics vs. law.*

Summary: We all know things that are legal but not ethical, and ethical but not legal. How do we navigate the difference between rules and values in our own lives and as a community?

August 27

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: *Evangelism isn't a dirty word!*

For many of us evangelism brings up images of banging on doors or arguing with people. As UUs we don't do that, but people need to know who we are and what we care about. This service will focus on low-key ways for all of us to share our faith with others in ways that work for introverts and extroverts alike. No knocking on doors required!



Rev. Claudia's Column

Hello everyone, I hope you are staying cool in the midst of our summer heat!

Speaking of heat, things are on fire here at church as we are all searching for our next new home. I'm sure our fabulous board president Robyn will keep us updated on all that, but I wanted to remind everyone that it's always a good time to try to grow our church. We have the new metro wide UU cards that list our Principles and have all four UU churches websites on it. This is a low key way to let folks know who we are, what we stand for, and gives them the chance to check us out.

Later in August I'll be preaching on "evangelism isn't a dirty word". Most of us grew up thinking about really aggressive sales tactics being called evangelism and we rightly don't want to be like that, and that's not what we are about. For UUs we want people to know about us, but we don't want to be pushy or rude, so be sure to join us the 4th Sunday in August to get some ideas for how to share your faith in ways that don't involve banging on doors or being a nuisance to people!

Also in August, we're starting a preaching series on hot topics, this month it's about ethics vs law. We all know that just because something is legal (or not) doesn't mean it's ethical. Social justice work is all about advocating for the ethical to become the legal, and for ethics to be applied equally to all. How can we advocate for justice when we are oppressed, and how can we advocate and be a good ally when we aren't facing injustice? Both of these will be explored in that service.

August might seem less busy at church but really there's a lot of foundations being laid for community work this fall.

There's lots going on here at church and in our communities in September, we will be at several Pride events and at Unity Fest to try and bring the good news of our faith into the wider communities we live and work in. We have good news to share with the world, a religion and a way of life that is about love given hands and feet through service and justice, that welcomes all who share our values and that proclaims love is what makes a family. I'm so glad to be with you in this work, and I look forward to getting to know you and work with you as summer ends and we dive into fall.

Peace, Claudia

To help our new minister, Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall get to know you better, please fill out and return to Rev. Claudia this **Pastoral Care survey 2023**
<https://forms.gle/s1urB2kUA3sKqpQU8>



Mark Your Calendars for Dee Evans' Ordination

Ordination into the UU ministry is the sacred religious ritual in which a solemn covenantal vow is publicly made by the ordinand and a call to ministry is affirmed by a UU congregation.

Dee's ordination will take place on **Saturday, October 28, 2023 starting at 2 p.m.** the Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Springfield Il. The address is: 745 Woodside Road, Springfield, IL 62711. This is where Dee did her ministerial internship. It is hoped that many members from the Alton Unitarian church will be able to attend.

There will be a potluck meal following the ordination ceremony and **we from Alton are asked to contribute the desserts.** More details, and a dessert signup sheet, will be available later. Jennifer Lewis and Mary Johnson are on the Ordination Planning Committee along with several people from Abraham Lincoln. If you have questions please ask Dee or Jennifer or Mary.

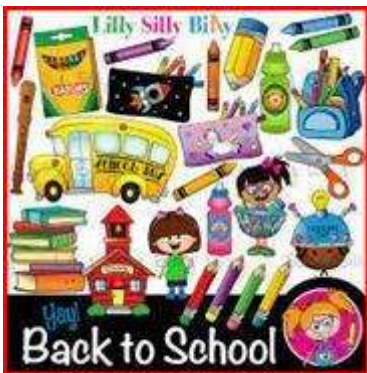
President's Column

Greetings all...I want to thank all of you who planned, attended, and participated in the annual meeting in July. Our new Board is already up and running and working hard to move our agenda forward. The Moving Committee continues to seek out potential locations, and the Selling Committee is taking the steps to get the building sold. None of this works without you and your support, so we appreciate your continued trust in us as a board.

As I timidly peak outside, and read the thermometer, I am reminded about our 7th principle, the Interdependent Web of All Existence. YUP... humankind did this. While climates fluctuate, it is obvious we have created highs and lows that are unprecedented with respect to temperature. What more can we do as a congregation to ensure we are not contributing to this in an unhealthy way? What more can we do in the community to bring awareness to climate issues? I am open to ideas so please don't hesitate to let me know.

We are beginning a dialogue on the Facebook website UU Friends about what we can do and how to best prepare for the upcoming Pride and Unity events in September. If you care to join the dialogue let me know.

Love and Light, Robyn



Carol McGrew for Financial Donations for Back to School Supplies

I'm hoping you will help me pay for School Supplies for a 5th grade girl who just moved to O'Fallon, Illinois. Alex and her mother Samantha had to move in with family members because Samantha could no longer work and take care of Alex.

Samantha is in my Therapy Group, she has a rare cancer and needs chemo and a bone marrow transplant. She was just released from BJH after a August 2023

lengthy stay to stabilize her so she could start Chemo at the Siteman Cancer Center in St Louis. Samantha has filed for SSDI, but is waiting for her case to be reviewed.

They now live with family, and don't pay rent, so she "made too much" money in June to qualify for Cash from social services at this time. She mentioned in Group she was worried about having enough money for new school clothes, shoes, winter coat, and a lengthy School Supplies List.

Right now she needs to stay as strong as possible until they find a Donor. I would like to help lower her stress level with your help by taking care of the School Supplies.

Carol will be at Anna Ds on August 3 if you would like to give her cash, or **mail a check made out to Sandy Shaner to Sandy at 110 Hickory Street, Wood River IL 62095-1350.**



We are delighted to begin our new children's religious education year soon! We have some wonderful plans for the kids that we believe will help them connect to their own personal spiritual journey while also incorporating their learning into the greater church community.

Beginning on August 6, school-aged children will meet on the first and third Sundays of the month. They will begin in the sanctuary and be sung out to their class with their teachers. Our curriculum this year will focus on the proposed changes to Article II, the purposes and covenant section of the by-laws and rules of the Unitarian Universalist Association. We will begin by examining our freedom of belief, including the history of the chalice, the difference between covenant and creed, and how UUs go about exploring their own faith journey. We will go on to explore the covenants of interdependence, pluralism, generosity, transformation, justice, and equity. We will also explore inclusion and our UU inspirations. Finally, we will plan student-chosen action projects in November and May to allow our kids to put their faith into action. Contact **Jennifer Lewis** to register your child(ren).



BOOK FAIR

Mona Hebert has been collecting donated books for some months now as part of a charity project with the DAR. Several people have asked her what she does with the books, so hopefully the info below will answer people's questions and will encourage people to continue to bring books to church for Mona.

“Right here in St. Louis, you can find the largest charity book fair in the Midwest! [The Greater St. Louis Book Fair](#) gives families the chance to dive into books, records, comics, cookbooks, and more. Proceeds from the Fair benefit local education and literacy programs for underserved individuals in the St. Louis community. Since its inception in 1950, more than \$1 million has been donated to local nonprofits.”



Anna Ds Lunch Gathering Thursday, August 3 @ 11 a.m.

The Anna Ds – known formally as the Anna Davenport Sparks Women's Alliance – has been an integral part of the First Unitarian Church of Alton since the Alliance was founded in 1898.

The Anna Ds meet for lunch on the first Thursday of each month at various restaurants and cafes in communities on both sides of the Mississippi.

August's gathering will be at **Chicken Salad Chick** – 2323 Plum St., Edwardsville, IL 62025
<https://www.chickensaladchick.com/edwardsville/>

RSVP by August 1st to [Sandy Shaner](#).

Don't forget ... books for Mona, financial support for Carol's "back to school" supplies for Alex, a 5th grade girl.



ROMEOS Lunch Group (Retired Old Men Eating out) – Thursday, August 10 at 11:30.

Location to be announced via email (but it probably won't be on a beam high above a city).

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

Starting Point

An Introduction to the
Unitarian Universalist Journey
*All sessions are Monday evenings at
6:30 pm Central time on Zoom.*

Oct 16: Your Journey - Sharing Our Stories and Spiritual Roadmaps

Oct 23: The Unitarian Universalist Journey & The Journey of Our Church

Nov 6: Our Journey Together - The Three Paths of UUism, Part One

Nov 13: The Three Paths, Part Two & Finding Your Journey Group

For Zoom Link contact Pastor Claudia at dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com



This class is for people new to Unitarian Universalism and also for anyone who wants to learn more about UUism.

CHURCH CONTACTS

2023-2024 church year

Minister

Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com

Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley

robynberkley@yahoo.com

Secretary: Mary Johnson

mejohanson@mindspring.com

Treasurer: Nancee Magilson

nmagilson@hotmail.com

President Elect: Alex Hoeft

alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com

Member at Large: Aiden Crist

arexboi@gmail.com

Member at Large: Jennifer Lewis

jenniferkaylewis@gmail.com

Member at Large: Jessie Dominick

jadominick@gmail.com

AV Tech Team:

Alex Hoeft & Ken Hoeft

alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com / kfhoeft@gmail.com

Building and Grounds: Michael Tarabulski

madtparty@uwalumni.com

Custodial: Hedda Kirk hthrkirk@gmail.com

Music: Joy Hoeft kjabhoeft@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Mary Johnson

mejohanson@mindspring.com

Office Support: Nancee Magilson

nmagilson@hotmail.com

First Unitarian Church of Alton

Mailing Address: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002

Location: 110 East Third St., Alton IL (corner of 3rd and Alby Sts., across from City Hall)

Phone: 618-462-2462

Email: church@firstuualton.org

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

YouTube Channel:

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

Facebook:

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

Instagram: firstuualton

New President of the Unitarian Universalist Association



Dr. Rev. Sophia Betancourt was elected at the UUA General Assembly in June to become the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. She will serve a six-year term.

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