

Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation Focus



*Newsletter of the
Metro East UU
Congregation*



Masonic Lodge, Glen Carbon IL

Location: *Masonic Lodge 90 Kriege Farm Road, Glen Carbon IL 62034*

December 2023

Welcome! We hope to see you in person this month at our new home in Glen Carbon. Internet is being installed on December 11, so if all goes well, by the Dec. 17 service, we will once again be providing livestreaming at <https://www.firstuualton.org>.

Sunday, December 3rd

No Worship Service – The Worship, RE, and AV/Tech Teams will meet at the Lodge at 10:00 a.m. to work on setting up procedures in preparation for worship services in the upcoming weeks.

Sunday, December 10th @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

Title: *Being Nice versus Being Kind*

Summary: There is a stark difference between being nice and being kind. Kindness is assertive and has clear boundaries while treating people with empathy, while being nice is about keeping the peace even if we are harmed or have boundaries violated by others. Kindness is central to being a Unitarian as it relates to our First Principle of Respecting the Dignity of all People.

Sunday, December 17th @ 10:00 a.m. – First full service in the new building

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “*Keeping Your Light Alive.*”

Summary: Join us as we celebrate the winter holidays of Hanukkah and Yule (winter solstice) which both feature light and fire as a metaphor for spirituality in challenging times.



The children’s Religious Education class meets.



Sunday, December 24th @ 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Summary: Join us for a 10 a.m. Christmas Eve service at the Lodge, followed by a brunch style coffee hour. After brunch we will go caroling at nursing homes where some of our friends and members live.



Sunday, December 31st – New Year’s Eve, NO SERVICE.



**Rev.
Claudia’s
Column**

Hello everyone!

By now I hope you have had a chance to go by the old location and take anything that you or someone you know might find useful, everything taken away is one less item we have to store or pay to move.

While we are on the topic of moving, I cannot say a big enough THANK YOU to all the members and friends who have put in countless hours sorting, packing, organizing, and moving items. Without you all this would not be possible, and you all have my deepest gratitude and thanks.

I know the entire process of this move has been exhausting, physically, mentally, and spiritually, but there have also been some wonderful things such as the return of some long-time members who had moved away and now are back with us, and the chance to welcome new folks into our community.

Another wonderful thing was the open house, it was so very good to see so many of you there and hearing the children laughing and having leaf tossing contests in the backyard lifted my heart and I hope yours as well.

As we come into the holidays, I know it is often a time of many emotions and much stress, much less adding a new location and changes at church into it. Be gentle with yourself and with each other, know that everyone - including you- is doing the best they can, and know that the light of Hanukkah can happen in a demolished building, Christmas can happen with beds of straw in a stinky stable, and Yule reminds us that we can relight our fires with even the most slender twigs of hope and faith. Your holiday does not need to come from a store to be

happy, it doesn't need to have the same people it always did or be in the same place it always was to have meaning. The Sacred is found in the ordinary, the lowly, and the small as much or more than it ever is found in the lofty and majestic.

May our hearts be opened to find the sacred joy of the holidays in the ordinary, the unexpected, and even the unwanted things that seem to always come along at this time of year. Amen, and blessed be.

CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE

10 a.m. Christmas eve service at church, brunch style coffee hour to follow.

After Brunch: Caroling at nursing homes where some of our friends and members live. *No musical talent needed! They will appreciate the visit whether or not we can hold a tune.*

Pastor Claudia is available to meet with you by text, email, zoom or in person. Just reach out to her at 636.219.6580 or dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com

In Faith and Hope,
Claudia



Make Someone's Christmas a Little Happier

As the congregation has done for many Christmas seasons, we are providing gifts for a mother and child who receive services from Oasis Women's Center in Alton. For the last few years, we have been asked to donate gift cards. Nancee Magilson is coordinating this effort and will be purchasing gift cards based on the amount of money donated. Please contribute by sending a check made out to the church and marking the check for OASIS. Mail the check to First Unitarian Church, PO Box 494, Alton, IL 62002. THANK YOU!

President's Column

Happy Holidays my friends! It's been a rocky few months with selling, packing, moving, feeling, and experiencing all the things associated with our move. Here we are in December, ready for the next phase. It's exciting and daunting but it is all part of the journey.

I want to express gratitude for SO MANY people...all who came to help us pack, those who stepped up with support for creating a new space with fresh ideas, EVERYONE!!! I can't even take the chance of missing someone by listing names but there is ONE PERSON who truly has gone above and beyond...**Buddy Stricker!** Buddy is our Budget Analyst, and he also has supported us with stewardship activities. BUT WOW...he has stepped up in a big way with helping coordinate our move through project management software, and physically moving our stuff to storage. He has been invaluable, and I can't thank him enough! So, if you see him or want to send him an email, please do and tell him THANK YOU, because we could not have done this without him.

This is an opportunity for a fresh start. Change is hard...there is a lot of strangeness and a lot we have to adapt to in the next few months, but we have an amazing PR team in Suzanne O. and Peg F. who are working to get the word out we are here and ready to contribute to the community in a big way!

During this holiday season I express thanks and gratitude for all of you and everything you have done, big or small. I am grateful for an amazing board, a fantastic minister, support staff who keep us afloat, and most of all, each and every congregant!

Thank you!

Love and Light,

Robyn



**Religious Education (RE) News
from Jennifer Lewis**

Pre-K and Elementary/Youth RE will resume meeting on December 17, 2023 to close out the calendar year. We will continue to meet every first and third Sunday of the month thereafter.

As we transition into our new space, we are excited for the opportunity to work with our friends to learn more about world religions, UU history and traditions, famous Unitarians and Universalists, and the values outlined in the proposed changes to Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. Specifically, we will have lessons focused on interdependence, equity, transformation, pluralism, generosity, justice, and (of course) love. Understanding the important role our children play in the congregation, we are focused on allowing them to learn and grow in their spirituality as they support one another and enjoy the support of the congregation at large.

Our students will have the opportunity to learn through play, storytelling, games, movement, and crafts. We are also planning to incorporate service projects to allow our kids to put their faith into action. We can't wait to see how they grow!

**ROMEOS Lunch Group
(Retired Old Men Eating Out)
Thursday, December 14th
at 11:30.**



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



**December 7th
Anna D Sparks
Women's Alliance
(The Anna Ds – founded
in 1898 and named for
Anna Davenport Sparks)**

The December meeting will be on Thursday, December 7th at 11:30 a.m. at [Peel Wood Fired Pizza](#), 100 Quartz Knoll Court, Edwardsville IL 62025.

All women are invited to these monthly luncheons. RSVP to Sandy Shaner wrgma2@gmail.com / 618-254-9040.

By the way, most of you have seen the Bible that was given to the church in 1898 by Anna D's husband, David R. Sparks, a miller, who started Miller's Mutual Insurance Company in 1877. That historic Bible has been given to the Hayner Genealogical and Local History Library in downtown Alton.



SAVE THE DATE!

Eliot Chapel's Women's Weekend
May 17-19, 2024

Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, IL
Make Time for Yourself and Renew Your Energy!
Join us for a time of relaxation, rejuvenation, and illuminating workshops to feed the mind, body, and spirit.

Stay 1 or 2 nights or come for Saturday only. New this year! You can stay Friday night and all day Saturday including breakfast at Toddhall on Saturday morning, and lunch and dinner. We will be starting around 3:00 pm on Friday.

Women's Weekend is: - A retreat offered for the women of Eliot Chapel, friends, family, and women of UU churches in the surrounding area.

- A time for ourselves where we can enjoy the beauty of nature, a walk in the labyrinth, fun activities, a wide array of workshops, our Scholarship Silent Auction, BYOB wine tasting, massage, crafts, singing around the bonfire, great food and best yet, camaraderie.

- Private or double rooms available. Meals are included.

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

SOME OF THESE CONTACT LINKS WILL
BE CHANGED OVER THE UPCOMING
MONTHS

Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Location: *Masonic Lodge 90 Kriege Farm
Road, Glen Carbon IL 62034*

Mailing Address: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002

Phone: 618-462-2462

Email: church@firstuualton.org

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

YouTube Channel:

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

Facebook:

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

Instagram: firstuualton

[Return to Metro East UU Congregation - Newsletter Archive Page](#)