

# Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation Focus February 2024



*Newsletter of the  
Metro East Unitarian  
Universalist Congregation*



Masonic Lodge, Glen Carbon IL

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

**Welcome!** We hope to see you in person this month at our new home in Glen Carbon. For those at home, the worship service will be live streamed each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube (or click Virtual Services) on the church's homepage at <https://www.firstuualton.org>.

**February 4 @ 10 a.m.**

**Speaker: Dr. Aminata Cairo**

**Title:** *“Holding Space: A storytelling approach to trampling diversity and inclusion.”*

Childcare is available for children under the age of 5, and a Religious Education (RE) class for school-aged children will be offered during the service.

**11:30 luncheon**

**12:00 Dr. Cairo** “. . .will share her passion and commitment to making this world a little bit better, one story at a time.” [Please pre-register for this 12:00 p.m. presentation. See flyer on next column]



Internationally acclaimed speaker/storyteller Aminata Cairo will share her passion and commitment to making this world a little bit better, one story at a time.

<https://aminatacairo.com/>

**\*\*\* 12:00 p.m. Sunday, Febr 4, 2024 \*\*\***

Sponsored by **Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

at Masonic Lodge #99

90 Kriege Farm Road, Glen Carbon, IL

Handicapped accessible

Limited seating available, please preregister at

<https://www.facebook.com/events/687763243527295?ref=newsfeed>

All are invited and encouraged to attend our 10:00 worship service with keynote Aminata Cairo and to enjoy our tasty 11:30 luncheon. Masks requested from 10:00 - 11:30 for our immunocompromised friends. 11:30 - 1:30 masks optional.



**Metro East  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation**

Formerly First Unitarian Universalist Church of Alton

**February 11 @ 10 a.m.**

**Speaker: John Herndon**

**Title:** “Remembering Roe and the Development of a Theology of Resistance and Healing.”

**Childcare is available for children under the age of 5.**

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**February 18 @ 10 a.m.**

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

**Title:** “UU Principles”

**Summary:** Justice & Democracy

**Childcare is available for children under the age of 5, and a Religious Education (RE) class for school-aged children will be offered during the service.**

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**February 25 @ 10 a.m.**

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

**Title:** “Giving Up to Get More”

**Summary:** What Lent means for Unitarian Universalists.

**Childcare is available for children under the age of 5.**

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### Rev. Claudia's Column

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Happy secular new year everyone! Looks like climate change means we went from summer straight to the heart of Winter, so I hope that you are all staying safe in the ice and snow and bitter cold that keeps coming in waves. For those who celebrate Tu B'shevat, a happy new year of the trees to you as well!

With a new year comes many things, including our mid-year meeting. I hope you will join us this Sunday, Jan 28 in person or on zoom to get caught up with all the latest news of where we are as a

church (it's good and exciting stuff!) and help us decide on the next steps as we get settled here in our new home.

Speaking of our new home, we have lots of opportunities coming our way to get involved in our community, engage in social justice work, and live out our ethic of love and justice as we put down roots in Edwardsville/Glen Carbon. Stay tuned to the newsletter and Sunday announcements for those opportunities.

Many of you are new to the community or are returning to us after a long time away, and it's good to see the sanctuary so full on Sunday! If you are ready to take the next step or if you just want to learn more about what membership means in this congregation I'm offering a **new member class on Monday, Feb 26 from 6-7:30 pm**. This class will go over the rights and responsibilities of membership, including a look at the ways we have for you to get involved with the community both inside and outside our four walls. Email Pastor Claudia for the Zoom link.

Long time members, you can come too! You can see what we are asking of members, and you can meet new folks in our congregation in ways you might not be able to on a busy Sunday morning.

Lastly, **save the date for March 18 and 25, 6-7:30 pm when I'm leading an adult RE class on creating your own theology**. This is open to folks beyond our church so invite a friend, it will be a great way for them to learn about who we are and what we stand for as Unitarian Universalists.

In faith, Pastor Claudia

#### Minister's Calendar for February

**Feb. 8 -16 Out of town.** In an emergency you can email her at [dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com](mailto:dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com) but there will likely be a delay in responding.

Feb. 18 **In pulpit**

Feb. 22 **Minister Hang-Out** Noon to 2 p.m. Place still to be determined but in the Edwardsville area.

Feb. 25 **In pulpit**

Feb. 26 **New Member class** 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. Email Pastor Claudia for Zoom link.

## President's Column

Hello all and welcome to 2024. We have hit the ground running with more news coverage, advertising, open houses, event planning! The energy is high as we are getting creative new ideas for how we can engage with our community and begin our work for social justice in the area.

We had a successful closing of our Alton building and it is now in the hands of the buyer. Thank you to all who showed up to help pack, sell, move, sort, store all the things. It was a difficult process after being in that building for over 100 years, but I am grateful we were able to find a buyer as quickly as we did, and I believe it will be well stewarded under AltonWorks. We obviously need to begin the discussion of a new location, but I plan to take a breather for a month or so before I begin that process.

If you have ideas for social justice, or social events, or anything we should do to be more connected to the Metro East communities, let me know! The slate is clean, and we are beginning anew in the area!

Cheers...Robyn

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## Supporting the Edwardsville Food Panty

As part of MEUUC's growing commitment to working in our new community, Alan Oberholtzer, church member and Food Pantry volunteer, is requesting donations of the following for the Edwardsville Food Pantry. Please bring your donations to church by February 10.

Dish soap  
Laundry detergent  
Hair conditioner  
Hand soap (bottle)  
Deodorant  
Pancake mix  
Syrup  
Coffee  
Tea

## A VIDEO AND DISCUSSION Saturday, February 10 @ 1 p.m Hosted by MEUUC



Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America with Heather Cox Richardson

Did you miss the fabulous talk with The Notorious Heather Cox Richardson when she spoke at Wash U in December? Here's your opportunity to view a video of that talk ... as well as a stimulating discussion forum immediately after!



Moderated by Dr. Robyn Berkley

1:00 pm Saturday, Febr 10 2024



Masonic Lodge #99 90 Kriege Farm Rd, Glen Carbon, IL  
(Conveniently located directly behind Walmart across from the Goodwill drop-off)

Refreshments and beverages will be served.

JOIN US for a Saturday afternoon of stimulating, insightful conversation right here in your community.

## UU Friends Facebook Group

If you would like to join the MEUUC Friends Facebook page, please contact Robyn Berkley, the Group Administrator, [robynberkley@yahoo.com](mailto:robynberkley@yahoo.com)

*An Invitation to the Ordination Ceremony  
for Sabrina Trupia on April 7, 2024*



**The link is just to RSVP. The people who do so will get sent the link to the livestream.  
(Note that the time listed is in Eastern time)**

**New Name Tags**



If you would like to have a magnetic name tag made, please fill out the blue Name Tag Request card found on

the Information Table in the fellowship hall at the Lodge and put the card in the marked basket. This is for people just starting to attend, and for people who already have other forms of name tags.



Hello everyone! Our little RE program is growing all the time! We are focused this month on justice as a theme. We will be defining justice, talking about the difference between justice and fairness, and exploring the ways justice relates to democracy and the democratic process. We will also be beginning to plan our Spring social justice activity.

School-aged children will continue to 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. Masks are required for RE class while our infection rates are high, as we will be meeting on clean Sundays. Kids are encouraged to keep their mask week to week by decorating a paper bag and leaving their mask at the church. We care for the Earth!

Make sure to see Jennifer Lewis to get your child registered for this fun and educational class!

We are also interested in expanding our RE offerings next church year, so if you are interested in being on the RE committee, teaching a class (even just once in a while), or working with our young people, please see Jennifer Lewis to volunteer. All our participants must get a background check from the church and be trained on our two-adult safety measures.

Thank you,  
The Children's RE Committee

Anna D Sparks  
Women's Alliance  
Thursday, February 1, 2024  
11:00 a.m.

Note earlier than usual meeting time!

<https://weepingwillowtearoom.com/>

123 Glen Crossing Road, Glen Carbon, Illinois  
62034 618.205.8557

Sandy Shaner writes: "The Weeping Willow Tea Room offers seating on a first come first serve basis. They do not accept reservations .... Since they open at 10 a.m., I'll do my best to be there by then and it would be great if those coming could get there at that early time too. If so, we should be able to lay claim to several tables. . . . If the weather is bad, feel free not to come if driving or walking on that day is risky for you." RSVP to [Sandy](#).



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

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



On January 16, 2024, the final papers were signed and the sale of Alton Unitarian Church building to AltonWorks <https://altonworks.us/> was completed.

The sale price was \$205,120.00 After a negotiated reduction of approximately \$20K for the shared cost of remediation of lead and asbestos, and after all fees, the final proceeds came to \$192,567.33. which will be invested.

## UPCOMING UU GATHERINGS



Love @  
the Center  
– Spring  
Session

This four-session program engages you in the Purposes, Values and Covenant, Inspiration, Inclusion and Freedom of belief of the proposed Article II (currently our 7 principles and 6 sources) which will be voted on at General Assembly 2024. Sessions are 90-minutes, 6:30-8 p.m. every other Wednesday, February 7 & 21, March 6 & 20, online AND in-person. This is a covenant-based program that requires participants to attend all four sessions. The Zoom link for the sessions will be emailed the week before Session 1.

Register: <https://forms.gle/aZ8eH8S6RW6PTs9h8>  
Hosted by **First UU St Louis**, led by Rev. Kim Mason

Annual MidAmerica Regional Assembly  
April 19 – April 20, 2024  
**First Unitarian Society – Madison Wisconsin**  
In person or virtual. Check the link below for more details.



MidAmerica Region UUA  
<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/events/threads-connect-stories-inspire>

## Eliot Chapel's Women's Weekend

May 17-19, 2024

Toddhall Retreat Center in  
Columbia, Illinois

*new  
Eliot  
women's  
weekend*

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.

For further information contact:

[registrar@eliotwomensweekend.com](mailto:registrar@eliotwomensweekend.com)



<https://www.uua.org/ga> This is the link to everything you need to know about this year's virtual UUA General Assembly, June 20 – June 23. Early bird registration is \$280 if done by March 15.



## MEUUC Hospitality Team Volunteers Needed.

We are recruiting volunteers to help with various Sunday morning tasks on a rotating basis. These tasks include:

- 1) setting out and taking up signs, and maybe directing traffic on big event days.
- 2) staffing the front desk and asking people to sign in, helping with name tags, visitor packets, and masks.
- 3) greeting new people, showing them around, and making them feel at home both before worship and during coffee hour.
- 4) making coffee and setting up /putting away snacks.
- 5) cleaning up in the kitchen as needed.

"How to" directions will be printed for these various tasks and a signup sheet for each category will be available.

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**The Interfaith Partnership of St. Louis** is co-sponsoring a lecture by the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III based on his book *"Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times."* Rev. Moss is pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. The lecture honors the life of Rabbi F.M. Isserman (1898 – 1972), a St. Louis activist in social justice and interfaith work locally, nationally, and internationally.

The lecture will be on **Thursday, February 8 at 7 p.m. at Graham Memorial Chapel on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis.**

More information is in the link below:

<https://students.wustl.edu/isserman-lecture/>

## Update on the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting held on 1-28-2024

19 members (1 on zoom) attended along with 2 visitors.

Church president **Robyn Berkley** gave an overview of the last few months, thanking everyone involved for their efforts during the move and the resettling at the Lodge. In her minister's report, **Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall**, now registered as an Associate Minister with the UUA, encouraged people to contact her with pastoral care concerns. She mentioned upcoming collaborative events with the other three UU congregations in St. Louis/St. Charles, and her efforts through "Ministerial Hangouts" and other events to get to know more members of the congregation. She encouraged members to invite friends/family to services and to get more involved in community building. **Buddy Stricker** gave the financial overview. The pledges are projected to come in at \$63K but that is \$4.3K underbudget. We have lower costs now due to renting month by month, but we must plan for the future. Congregational retention and growth are critical through outreach efforts, virtual services, and enhanced web presence. **Rev. Dee Evans** spoke about UUANI's efforts in Climate Justice, and she would like others in the congregation to join her in climate justice efforts.

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### CHURCH CONTACTS

2023-2024 church year

#### Minister

Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

[dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com](mailto:dr.claudia.hall@gmail.com)

#### Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley

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Secretary: Mary Johnson

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Treasurer: Nancee Magilson

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President Elect: Alex Hoeft

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Member at Large: Jessie Dominick

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**Building and Grounds:** Michael Tarabulski

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**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*

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**Phone:** 618-462-2462

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

**YouTube Channel:**

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

**Facebook:**

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

**Instagram:** firstuualton

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