

Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation Focus August 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 meeting place 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>. A “coffee hour” follows every service.

August 4 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Jesse Allen

Title: *“The Importance of Non-Violence in our Daily Lives and Society at Large.”*

Summary: Yoga is a philosophy and practice that has over 3,000 years of history. It is not just a bunch of balance and flexibility exercises but more importantly is a way of life. The most comprehensive text on yoga is the “Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.” In it, Patanjali clearly spells out the guiding principles and practices of the yogic lifestyle. This way of life is informed by the Yamas and Niyamas, which translate to abstinences and observances. The first of these abstinences is called Ahimsa and means non-violence. We will look at some of the ways that we are violent in our words, thoughts or deeds (most of the time without being aware of it). In addition, we will talk about how we can be less violent and avoid the negative karma that comes from the small acts of violence that almost all of us commit regularly.

Mr. Allen is a Master’s Level special educator. He owns his own business in Edwardsville where he teaches social-emotional learning to children and adults. He

currently is president of a local non-profit called Edwardsville Unity which works to promote racial, religious, and cultural harmony.

Worship Associate: Robyn Berkley.

August 11 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: John Herndon

Title: *“To Be Announced”*

August 18 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: *“Back to School”*

Summary: As the children return to school, we too can cultivate a beginner’s mind and look at our lives in new ways.

On August 18 We will also be doing a special blessing of all students’ and teachers’ backpacks so please bring them with you to church!

August 25 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “Climate Change & Little Things”

Summary: We will look at some little things each of us can do to make the world a little better where we are.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER THE SERVICE to vote on the '24-'25 church budget and to vote on whether or not to purchase the proposed property.

POTLUCK SUNDAY – bring something to share.



Rev. Claudia's Letter

Hello everyone and wow the summer has flown by! I remember when I was younger that people told me the years went by faster every year and I never understood, well I sure do now as each year seems to zip by faster than the one before it.

In part that is because we are hopping here at church, lots of things going on as we try to wrap up the summer without baking in the heat, so hang out with us as we are on the move and always need volunteers to get the word out about us.

This year at church my goal is to work on our behind-the-scenes systems, making sure that all of the policies, procedures, software, and routines that we have are documented and that everything we need is written down and up to date. It isn't glamorous work, but it is laying a solid foundation and making sure we are sturdy and steady as we build our future together. In addition to that, leading services, pastoral care, and events, I am also teaching two classes this year, one on Social Justice for the rest of us and one on the Bible for Liberal religious people. Check out

the descriptions below for all the details on those classes. Both of those are open to the entire community, so invite a friend to join in for one or both, they are great low key ways to introduce people to who we are and what we are about.

Finally, a lot of folks have expressed that this political season has brought with it a larger than usual helping of anxiety, so I am putting together some guided meditations that will help you to relax and be restored even in the midst of an anxious world. I hope that these will help all of us to find our center in love, not stress, this Fall.

Amen and Blessed Be – Pastor Claudia



Report to the Congregation from Church President Alex Hoeft

This month has been my first month as the new president of the congregation. We started the month with some technical and health issues which required us to extend the pledge campaign until July 25th. We have gotten those resolved. Furthermore, we will also be having a discussion about a potential property this week at our special congregational meeting, as well as voting on a budget. We will hopefully answer all of your questions about the property, and I look forward to a discussion about what our future looks like. The budget we present will depend on the level of pledges received.

Coming up in the next month, progress on our new website is happening. Once that is deployed, I plan on making a dedicated effort to make sure our name change happens in all the places as well as to start putting our name out there more. There are still some remnants in systems we use which reference the old name. Another aspect of looking at our technological footprint will be learning to better utilize our existing tools. I would like to have better

ways for the Board to communicate with each other, as well as better ways for the congregation to communicate with the Board.

Overall, my goal for the congregation is to make things easier. I want it to be easier to participate and communicate, easier to attend, easier to find us, easier to give, and overall just easier to get what you want out of the experience. That being said, I don't know what the best way is to do all of those things, and something may go wrong somewhere, but with a little trial and error we can hopefully end up in a better place.



Religious Education at MEUUC

Your religious education committee is very excited about changes coming to our programming this fall! Our kids will be meeting every Sunday to learn about our sources and values. We will have a **pre-k class, an elementary class, and a youth class.** This means that we will need some teachers! This means we will need three volunteers every Sunday to teach RE. We need to make sure that these volunteers are not just our parents! Our congregants have so much wisdom and experiences to share, and our kids' lives are more enriched when the village works together to teach them! (Plus, we want our parents to be able to experience their own enrichment by participating in our services!) Thank you to those of you who have already approached me to help with our youth program! We are still looking for help with the elementary and pre-k classes. Easy to follow lessons are provided, but if there is something you would like to teach, please let me know. UUs are nothing if not flexible! I've been working with our UU kids for ten years now, and I can tell you that there are no more thoughtful, caring, unique kids than ours. UU kids are raised to think for themselves, tackle difficult questions, think outside the box, and present unique solutions. They are an absolute joy to teach, and I want everyone to know how

awesome they are! Please let me know if you are interested in teaching just once or once a month! You can find me at church most Sundays or shoot [me](#) an email.

Thank you! Jennifer Lewis

Schedule for Setting up / Breaking down at the Masonic Lodge for August Services

(This is as of July 25 – any change to this schedule will be announced.)

The Masons use the Lodge on August 1 & August 17

7/28 – Need Greeter, Coffee Hr. hosts. Breakdown Sanctuary and Common Room after service – 2+ people needed.

8/4 – Set up Sanctuary and Common Room – 2 people needed by 8:45 a.m. No breakdown needed after service. Need Greeter, Coffee Hr. hosts.

*** Saturday 8/10; Goshen Market
1 volunteer for 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
2 volunteers for 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Contact [Peg Flach](#) if you can help.

8/11 – No Sanctuary setup needed – After service only Breakdown the Common Room.

8/18 – No Sanctuary setup needed. No Breakdown of the Common Room needed.

8/25 – No Sanctuary setup needed. No Breakdown of the Common Room needed.

Help is always needed on Sunday mornings to put signs outside, to be at the welcome table to greet people, and to assist with coffee hour.

To volunteer for any of these activities email [Peg Flach](#) or sign up at church.

Religious Education is Not Just for Kids!

***Upcoming classes on Zoom
led by Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall***



***Social Justice for
the Rest of Us:
When You Want to
Change the World,
But Aren't a
Protester.***

Based in part (and going beyond) the book *Social Justice for the*

Sensitive Soul: How to Change the World in Quiet Ways by [Dorcas Cheng-Tozun](#), this 3 part class will examine a wide variety of ways to engage in social justice work that integrates your specific physical, mental, and emotional capacity; your personality; and your skills. The first two sessions will discuss what social justice can look like beyond protests and direct advocacy, and the final session will include recommendations for ways to volunteer in the local community based on your specific traits.

Tuesdays Sept. 17 & 24 on Zoom, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Third session TBA.

***The Bible for
Liberal Religious
People***



For too long UUs and other liberal religious people have ignored or downplayed the Bible, leaving it for the extreme right to use and abuse. With the rise of Christian Nationalism, this has become dangerous ignorance for us. Whether or not you use the Bible as sacred for your spiritual path, knowing what it really says, and how it has changed and evolved over time, can give you tools to combat rising Christian extremism.

In this class students will learn the following:

The history and development of the Bible Canon itself, including the variety of texts that comprise

what is considered Scripture by various Jewish and Christian sects, and the texts that were left out.

1. The various ways these texts have been interpreted by Jewish and Christian leaders over the centuries, within various historical contexts.
2. The rise of Historical-Critical method and how that changed the way the Bible was interpreted and understood.
3. The impact of various sciences on biblical interpretation and the ongoing adaptations for progressive Judaism and Christianity based on these impacts.
4. How to exegete and interpret Biblical texts in context, with specific attention given to the 'hot topics' of women in ministry, abortion, LGBTQIA equality, and salvation.
5. How to use the Bible (with its flaws and problems) as part of our spiritual heritage as progressive religious people.

This is a year-long series (1-2 classes each month) BUT each of the above topics is a mini-module, so if you can't make them all you can pick the topics you prefer and just attend those 1-2 sessions. *Will start in October on Zoom.*



Do you have a fun idea for our community outreach booth at the Edwardsville Goshen Market?

I know that a few ideas have been floating around out there and if you'd be willing to take leadership on ... a children's activity ... a game ... some-thing that will draw people to our booth ... we encourage you make plans, prepare your activity and to join us on

...

- Saturday, August 10 or
- Saturday, September 14 or
- Saturday, October 12

Contact [Peg Flach](#) to volunteer.

**Anna D Sparks
Women's
Alliance Lunch
Thursday,
August 1**



11:30 a.m.

1933 House of Bourbon in Edwardsville
<https://1933houseofbourbon.com>
1001 Enclave Blvd suite D, Edwardsville, IL 62025

“House of Bourbon offers a delicious lunch menu in an upscale atmosphere, ideal for a business meeting or lunch with friends. Our menu features a variety of handheld sandwiches with perfect side dish pairings. Or, you can choose from our crisp & fresh salad options, warm and delectable soups, or even create your own pasta dish.”

RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#).

Men's Lunch Group



Men's Lunch Group (taken on 7-11-24)

**Next Meeting is on Thursday, August 8
@ 11:30 a.m.**

Location to be determined. Info will be sent out by email. If you're not already on the group's email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#).

**\$\$\$\$\$ Proceeds from the Moose Lodge
Chicken Dinner**

On Sunday, July 21, two 5 person teams of church volunteers, working in shifts, helped the Moose Lodge members with their regular twice a month Chicken dinner. Several tables of our members came to enjoy the meal and conversations. Peg Flach coordinated the volunteers and ran the bake sale (goodies provided by the church members). The church gets \$4.00 for every \$12.00 dinner sold, and we made \$450 from the dinner proceeds and \$120 from the bake sale.

Peg thanks everyone who volunteered and a special thanks to Joanne Berry who filled in at the last minute and stayed until the last dish was washed.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

If you haven't met these new members yet, please make it a point to introduce yourself to them and get acquainted.

Ned Giberson signed the membership book on May 5, 2024.

Jamie Riedesel signed the membership book on June 9, 2024.

Amy Riedesel signed the membership book on August 21, 2024

UU Friends Facebook Group

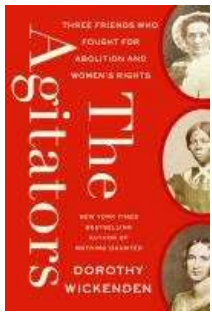
If you would like to join the MEUUC Friends Facebook page, please contact [Robyn Berkley](#), the Group Administrator,

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 both people just starting to attend, and for people who already have other forms of name tags.



MEUUC Summer Book Club

The last session will be on Tuesday, August 20 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Zoom link is below.

The book is *The Agitators: Three Friends Who Fought for Abolition*

and *Women's Rights* by Dorothy Wickenden.

Sherry Rondi will facilitate the book discussion.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82085701655?pwd=9nic8pIwTv0U8boAOwWm1YLFYnwi8Q.1#success>

Becoming A Member of the MEUUC Congregation

If you are interested in becoming a member of this congregation, please talk to Rev. Claudia about the path to membership.

Upcoming MEUUC outreach events

Aug 10 Goshen Market booth

This month we'll be using our snazzy new spinner thingy to be our "draw" with accompanying treats facilitated by Jennifer Lewis.

We'll also have lemonade and brochures/UU promo cards.

Check out the sign up sheet on Sunday for 2 shifts: 7:30 - 10 and 10 - 12:15.

Aug 17 Masons Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

congregational support & bake sale.

We now know to check with them for the menu ... but it is supposed to go back to pancakes / sausage / eggs.

Sign up on Sunday to volunteer to provide a few baked goods to support the Masons and to splash over for coffee hour on the next day. If you can make it, come, and join us for breakfast!

Aug 21 SIUE Fall Fest: TBA

Aug 24 Rainbow House event 3 pm -7 pm

Leadership TBA

Seeking a volunteer to coordinate our support for this activity. It could be as simple as one or two volunteers wearing our UU aprons and helping to cook ... or they could duplicate Goshen Market and crack open the canopy tent.

Aug/Sept tba: prep for Halloween parade:

Lawn Chair Brigade

To volunteer or express interest in any of these events, please contact [Peg Flach](#).

CHURCH CONTACTS

2024-2025 church year

Minister

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

Board Members

President: Alex Hoeft
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Member at Large: Aimee Villet
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**SOME OF THESE CONTACT LINKS WILL
BE CHANGED OVER THE UPCOMING
MONTHS**

Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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Facebook:

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

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