

Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation Focus October 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. Religious Education for PreK – Youth, and care for younger children is provided each Sunday.

October 6 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Sayer Johnson

Title: “Pink Pony Club”

Summary: Sayer reflects on queer joy and liberation through his own journey as a run of the mill, Midwest queer, transgender man. He will be reading from his upcoming memoir “Shades of Blue” **Bio:** Sayer is a longtime member of MEUUC and an out and proud queer transgender man.

RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth

October 13 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

October Sermons: A two-part series looking at Right Relationships Covenant, Who, What, Why, and How.

Oct 13: “Right Relationships - Who and What are they?”

RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth

October 20 @ 10 a.m.

Oct 20: “Living in Covenant- Why is this core to our faith? How do we do them?”

RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth

October 27 @ 10 a.m.

Speaker: John Herndon

Title: “Dear Chief Justice Roberts”

Summary: Dear Chief Justice Roberts, many people are now waking up to the fact that you an unelected governmental official and 5 of your unelected associate justices seem to be establishing a legal framework that is counter to the American version of democracy and seem to be promoting a white Christian nationalist replacement to the constitution. Maybe you slept through or skipped some of the more important classes in law school? I would like to take this opportunity to educate you on an alternative theology rooted in the faith of many of the founding fathers. A faith that evolved

and is now embraced and celebrates the Founding Mothers as well. It is a faith that is inclusive and rooted in love, it is called Unitarian Universalism.

RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth



Rev. Claudia's Letter

Welcome Fall!

I am so excited for Fall I can't even begin to tell you. Every day I look at my cool weather clothes and think about Fall

flavors, Fall activities, and I am just ready for it to be here already! Then I pull up the weather report and I am reminded that climate change is so very real and what should be crisp mornings and evenings with long warm afternoons is instead still hot, humid, and summer through and through. Yuck.

But it isn't all gloom and doom, by any means. For every scary thing we are facing, from giant things like climate change or the election to things unique to us, like finding land and moving, everything is made bearable by the people we surround ourselves with. This is the purpose of church, beyond building or events, beyond budgets and worship, beyond classes and meetings. The Church gives us a group of people. We are not alone, in belief or in practice. We are supported, cared for in hard times, celebrated in good times. Together we create our present, plan for our future, and work together to fix the failings of the past. This is the core of what it means to be a church. In a world where war is ramping up in so many places, in a country where neighbors are more divided by politics than in living memory, a place of togetherness and solidarity is crucial for sustaining us against the pressures of the world.

The Church matters. Each and every piece of it, each and every one of us, matters. Early Fall gives us a little pause between the rush of back to school and the zaniness of the holidays to think through what is truly important to us, to recenter ourselves around the purposes and values we want to support.

I hope that the weather will soon offer us all chances to pause, to reflect, and to reach out to others who need this place of togetherness, this place of fun, this place of peace. It is no coincidence that we call the main space of the church the sanctuary.

Where are your sanctuaries in this world? Who do you share them with? My hope for all of us is that one of our sanctuaries can continue to be this church, and that we can share it with all who share our values in this community. Welcome Fall. Welcome moment of reflection, of hope, of peace. Welcome community full of events and purpose. Welcome to our church.

Amen, and Blessed be,
Pastor Claudia.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS

OCTOBER 15 & 22



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.

October: 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.

Class will meet from 6:30-8 p.m. Central Time on Zoom, on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in Oct, Jan, Feb, March, April, and May. You can choose to attend only certain months if you prefer, as each topic is mostly independent, although they all do integrate with each other.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83999230532?pwd=uUuU2PgC5lYw2AYya6sZMOepDVsnbd.1>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Alex Hoeft

These past two months have been a busy time for the church, with lots of events happening currently and in the works. With everything going on, it can seem like we are too busy to think about the future. But that is exactly what the Board has been trying to do at this time. I know that big changes don't happen overnight, and if you aren't directly involved in them, they can sneak up on you. So, I'd like to discuss some changes the Board is working on and proposing. Broadly, we want to change three major things: where we are; how we agree to be together; and how we each contribute to the congregation.

Where we are should be pretty obvious. Our current home was always slated to be temporary, and we want to find a better suited and more permanent home. The Masons' hospitality has been an immense help and has given us the space to do this, but that doesn't mean we should take our time. This is a big decision, but not one we are unaccustomed to with our move from the Alton building. The Property Search Committee is working hard on our options, but it will be up to the congregation to consider the information they put forward in the near future and make a decision on what direction we want to go.

How we agree to be together is a little more vague. There are multiple people working on various efforts. Those include a Right Relationships Covenant for dealing with disagreements within the congregation, a modernization of our bylaws, and general efforts to be more inclusive in our communications. That can take the form of working on reducing gossip and anonymous opinions, to making sure that people feel comfortable giving feedback. Open discussion will help foster the best community and make sure that no one feels excluded, even by accident.

How we contribute to the congregation in this context I'm referring to volunteering. I'm sure you all know that we ask for money every year, and in every service, but the time, talent, and treasure

triangle does need balance. We would like to change some things about the opportunities we have to contribute time and talent. Making it easier for those who often coordinate those activities, as well as making it easier to say yes when asked. This includes building up the tools to manage people who want to help but also building up an expectation that, as you are able, each one contributes, but no one is expected to contribute too much. This may mean limiting some over achievers but easing the fears that once you start, you'll get put on three committees. Another aspect of this is caring about other people in the church. Many of you may already do this, but we want to make the shift into that being part of contributing to the congregation. By creating the avenue to do that, you can care for your fellow congregants or help others do so.

Change is hard, and some changes are bigger than others, but it helps to remember why we make these changes. To make things better for others, whether those others are members of the congregation, future members of the church, or future generations of the congregation. So let us make these changes, carefully considered yet promptly implemented.



CONGRATULATIONS

Ian Herndon, the son of Diane and John Herndon, married **Anna Whitaker**, the daughter of Martha Arnold, on Friday September 13th in the Boxwood Garden at the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Ian and Anna have been a couple since high school and spent many Sundays in RE together at First UU Alton.



Job Opening at First Unitarian Church in St. Louis

The First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

seeks an energetic staff member to work part-time coordinating onsite activities for our children's Religious Education program. The coordinator will work in partnership with an offsite Director of Religious Education who will plan programming. First Unitarian Church of St. Louis is an historic congregation in the urban St. Louis neighborhood of the Central West End. We are a small mid-size congregation with 210 members and approximately 40 children and youth.

See the full job posting at:

<https://www.firstuustlouis.org/sites/default/files/Sunday%20RE%20Coordinator%20.pdf>

Sanctuary and Common Room POSSIBLE Set Up and Break Down Schedule for October (based on the Masons' calendar)

(*** since put up/tear down in the Mason building seems to change quickly, we'll just have to deal with that week-to-week.)

On Sept. 29 after the UU service: break down both rooms for Masons Oct. 3 meeting.

On Oct. 6 UU service: set up both rooms. No breakdown needed afterwards.

On Oct. 13 after the UU service: break down both rooms for Masons private event to be held on the 19th.

On Oct. 20 UU service: set up both rooms and after the service break down both rooms for Masons event on the 25.

On Oct. 27 UU service: set up both rooms.

Additional 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](mailto:PegFlach) or sign up at church.



Church Finances as of the First Quarter of the Church Year (July – June)

As of our September board meeting (9/11/24), the totals are listed below. The numbers in each category reflect to-date actual dollars and budgeted dollars.

Total Income \$31,197.29 (Actual to date) \$105,579.59 (Budgeted. Includes pledge supplement from endowment of \$14,812.48)

Total Pledges \$21,533.00 to-date of \$70,229.50 budgeted (These are a subset of income, of course)

Total expenses \$15,554.73 of \$115,584.11 budgeted.

Nancee Magilson, Treasurer

Upcoming MEUUC outreach events Volunteers Needed

Saturday Oct 5 Metro East / Belleville Pride Contact [Jessie Dominick](mailto:JessieDominick) to help.

Sunday, October 6 MEUUC Halloween Brigade rehearsal - 11:30 in parking lot next to Masons.

We still could use a few more marchers for the Halloween parade. 2 humans to carry the banner. 2 humans to pass out treats to the masses. 1 human to provide percussion beat for the lawn chair routines. 2-4 more humans for the Lawn Chair Brigade Team.

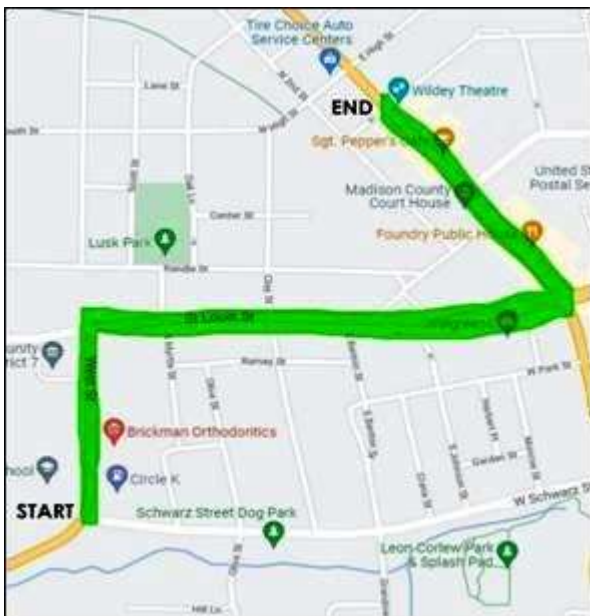
Saturday, Oct 12 Goshen Market booth 8 am - noon 2 Volunteers needed! Contact Peg Flach pegflach@gmail.com

Sunday, October 13 MEUUC Halloween Brigade rehearsal - 11:30 in parking lot next to Masons.

Tba Optional Sunday, October 20 MEUUC Halloween Brigade rehearsal - 11:30 in parking lot next to Masons.

Tba Sunday, October 27 MEUUC Halloween Brigade rehearsal - 11:30 (or 6:30 pm?) in parking lot next to Masons with lead truck and lights.

Thursday, October 31. Edwardsville Halloween Parade. 6:30 p.m. MEUUC & Friends Synchronized Lawn Chair Brigade Downtown Edwardsville. (See map).



Sunday Childcare

Childcare for the youngest in our congregation is provided every Sunday during the service. We are so pleased to have a dedicated nursery teacher with us! Haley Myers is our new childcare attendant, and while our nursery / pre-k class has been sparsely attended, Haley has led our kids with loving grace and even helped in our other classes when she could. Haley is very experienced with little children as she has a 2 ½ year old son and she

currently works in a daycare. Haley is the granddaughter of church member Mary Weber.

Religious Education: PreK – Elementary - Youth



Our Children and Youth Religious Education Classes are off to a great start! We have learned about how our differences make us stronger; how many world religions there are;

and how our UU values fit into our lives. Our nursery / pre-k, children, and youth classes meet every week to gather in community, light our own chalice, share our joys and sorrows, learn, and create!

In our youth class, we have chosen our own chalice lighting and extinguishing words, discussed our history and traditions as Unitarian Universalists, examined our own beliefs about some very big questions, and established a timeline of faith traditions. As we move through our curriculum, “Building Bridges,” we will continue to examine our own ideas in the larger context of world religions.

In our elementary class, we have created a covenant together to guide our class behaviors; have created our own chalice or other symbol of our faith, and met our first friend of another faith, a girl named Fiona who practiced Celtic Paganism.

Once a month, all our classes will join up to learn about our new Article 2 covenant values: Love, Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, and Generosity. To help the students remember the values, several UU churches are using the acronym JETPIG. In September, our classes created our mascots: Peppa JETPIG and Mike L. JETPIG.)



I would like to send a great big thank you out to all our current teacher-volunteers: Becky Alford, Nathan Brown, Mary Johnson, Beth McMahan, Patty Moore, and Aimee Villet. UU kids are amazing, and we need at least two adult volunteers every Sunday to help these awesome kids explore their faith. If you are interested in helping, please see me on Sunday or contact me.

[Jennifer Lewis](#)



**Anna D Sparks
Women's Alliance
Lunch
Thursday, 11:30 -
October 3
@ El Maguey Mexican
Restaurant
1534 Troy Road
Edwardsville, IL 62025**

The restaurant is at the end of Montclair Plaza with good parking, several large dining sections and an extensive menu. Please plan to be there by 11:30 so we can order. If you may be late, just let me know in your RSVP and we'll save a seat for you. And, if you're not sure if you will attend, I can list you initially as "maybe" until we're closer to the date.

RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#).



Men's Lunch Group

**Next Meeting is
on Thursday,
October 10
@ 11:30 a.m.**

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

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.



Steps to Becoming a Member of the MEUUC Congregation

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

**From Rev. Kim Mason, Minister of the
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis**

A Call to Connection

Thursdays, October 3, 24, November 7, 21
6:30-8 pm, Online and In Person

Combining scientific research, stories of impact, and recommended practices to help foster deeper connections in our lives, this groundbreaking primer on the state of connection in our nation seeks to ignite a national conversation about why we need each other. Download the primer for free and join Rev. Kim for a 4 session discussion series:
[:https://einhorncollaborative.org/call-to-connection/#a-call-to-connection](https://einhorncollaborative.org/call-to-connection/#a-call-to-connection)

Sign up: <https://forms.gle/yvbmkbGJHY5V546T7>

CHURCH CONTACTS
2024-2025 church year

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

Facebook:

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

Instagram: meuucglencarbon

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