

# Metro East Unitarian Universalist Congregation Focus April 2025



*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.

**April 6 @ 10 a.m.**

**Speaker:** Eden Johnson

**Title:** “Eco-Diversity”

**Summary:** This month we are focusing on the theme of Diversity and how our faith is rooted in actively supporting, demanding, and calling for each person to be treated with dignity and respect. My portion to kick us off will focus on eco-diversity and the ways the universe prefers to evolve by constantly creating unique and beautiful beings, and what they might teach us in light of our own challenges, systems, and disillusion with how diversity is honored (or not) in our present time.

**RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth.  
Childcare for children younger than PreK.**

**Set up Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall**

**April 13 @ 10 a.m.**

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

**Title:** “All UU Service”

**Summary:** We join together with Eliot and Emerson to share parts of our Palm Sunday and Passover service with each other through videos. Sermon co-created by Rev. Claudia, Rev. Krista Taves, and Eden Johnson.

**RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth.  
Childcare for children younger than PreK.**

**April 20 @ 10 a.m. – EASTER SUNDAY**

**Speaker:** Eden Johnson

**Title:** “Easter: Welcoming New Life”

**Summary:** Easter, a term coming from the pre-Christian cultures or as some prefer to call it Resurrection Sunday, is a tradition of entering into the celebration of new life, springtime, and renewal. This pattern of life, death, and rebirth is a pattern found everywhere, including the Christ story. What

meaning can we glean from the story of the Resurrected Christ? How might we examine this story as a way to reveal or uncover the link of death with life?

**RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth.  
Childcare for children younger than PreK.**

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**April 27 @ 10 a.m.**

**Speaker: Joy Hoeft**

**Title: “Sharing Our Stories Through Music”**

**Summary:** Music and Unitarian Universalism have always been a big part of my life. This service will be filled with songs written by UUs sharing stories of our faith through music. Come, learn about some UU songwriters, and bring your voices, as we will be singing a lot.

**RE classes – PreK, elementary, and youth.  
Childcare is available for children younger than PreK.**

**POTLUCK lunch follows the service.  
Please bring something to share.**

**Take down Sanctuary / Fellowship Hall.**

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### **Rev. Claudia’s Letter**

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Things are a bit of a whirlwind right now at MEUUC for sure! I will leave it to the Board to keep you updated on all things building, but I want to take a moment and give my most sincere and deepest thanks to all who have helped with this process and who continue to give so much of their time and energy to this cause. You are all my super rock stars!

Change is hard. Life is change. These two truths are in full force right now across our whole country, and our church. Finding hope and joy in the midst of the change seems so elusive and hard, and yet

there are also constants that can ground us when we need them. Trees bloom and grow, birds make nests, flowers bloom. Children outgrow clothes before they even wear them, eat more food than seems humanly possible, and make more noise than anything that small should. Another constant is that our church is here, and we love one another. It can be easy to forget that, sometimes, in the business of running around, but it is a constant. We all have a place of hope and joy, of love and comfort, of nourishment both physical and spiritual to bring us together week after week.

Wherever we go, whatever our space looks like, we are a people who love. May this be our only creed, and may our arms be ever wider to embrace all who need to hear our message of welcome and inclusion in these difficult times. Amen, and Blessed Be.

Amen, and Blessed Be.  
Pastor Claudia

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### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

We've been learning and having fun this month in RE class! Our youth and elementary classes have both learned a bit about Buddhism's Eightfold path, and the ways it mirrors our own UU values. We have spent time learning about our uniqueness and the value we find in our diversity! We have learned how to approach new friends with kindness and how to practice patience in our existing relationships. Our youth are writing "elevator speeches" about their own UU faith. And our kids are weaving a chalice tapestry to display in our new home when we get there! We are excited that three of our youth members are attending the regional Youth Convention in Iowa this April, and we have lots of fun and learning planned for our classes here as well!

## A Note from Church President Alex Hoeft

We have had a lot going on in recent times. More work but also more progress. Since I have already talked about our property vote via email, I would like to talk a bit more about the committees, what they will be doing and why we need them.

I'll start with the Financing Committee. Their job will be to look at loans and other financial mechanisms to borrow money for a build or purchase. Building and purchasing are very different kinds of loans, so they both need to be explored. The challenge here is that lending to non-profit organizations is generally considered a higher risk. This will mean working on what a UUA loan or a UUA loan guarantee looks like, talking to financial institutions, and bringing that information to the congregation. There will be support from financial staff and the board.

Next is the Pledge and Capital Campaign Committee. I know that this is typically the part a lot of people dislike – asking for money. We know it needs to be done, but don't feel comfortable doing it. Though, it isn't what it may seem. Most people who are part of the church want to give, they want to make contributions to the community and have an impact, but that giving needs to be a coordinated effort. People need to feel like their gift does something, and they need to feel like it was appreciated. The reasons people give are complicated and nuanced, but these are prerequisites of sorts. The job of this Committee is to make sure this giving is coordinated. Now, the Pledge Campaign and the Capital Campaign are different asks. The Pledge Campaign obviously happens every year and funds our general budget. The Capital Campaign is a larger fundraising effort for a specific large project. These don't happen all the time, and this one is for creating our new home. Members of this Committee will have the support of the Board members, the financial staff, and resources from the UUA on how to run these types of efforts.

So, if you are looking for how to get involved, this is it. These are the things we need right now to move our dreams forward and get us where we want to be. So, if you are thinking about it but aren't sure,

come talk to me. Let's work together to figure out one of these is a good fit for you. We are working hard to make this the church we all want it to be.

## Welcome to our New Members

In March, MEUUC gained four new members.

**Courtney Kuhl** and **Christian Koebel** from Breese, IL (along with their 7 year old daughter Trudy) signed the membership book on March 2.

**Denise Maxwell** from Edwardsville, IL also signed the book on March 2.

**Pete Eaton** from Maryville, IL signed the book on March 16.

Please spend some time talking with our new members, making them feel welcome and helping them get involved in our church.

### IN MEMORIAM



**Jamie "Nikki" Nicole Short**, 39, passed away on Monday, March 24, 2025.

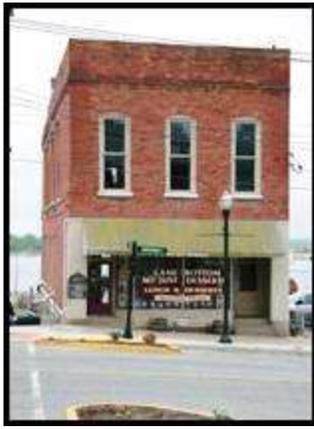


Nikki was a very active Friend of MEUUC and contributed in many ways.

Visitation will be on Saturday, March 29, 2025, from 11 am until time of service at 1 pm, at Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home (727 E Bethalto Blvd, Bethalto IL 62010). Longtime family friend, Danny Michel, will officiate.

<https://www.eliaskallalandschaaf.com/obituaries/Jamie-Nikki-Nicole-Short?obId=40081117>

In lieu of flowers, check donations are appreciated to the Caseyville Food Pantry (mail to 119 W. Lincoln, Caseyville, IL 62232).  
<https://ampleharvest.org/food-pantries/caseyville-food-pantry-5356/>



**ANNA Ds WOMEN'S ALLIANCE Luncheon**  
**Thursday, April 3**  
**11:30 a.m.**  
 @  
**My Just Desserts**  
 31 E Broadway, Alton,  
 IL 62002  
 RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#)

*www.eliotwomensweekend.com*

**AN INVITATION TO ALL WOMEN**

*Eliot Chapel's Annual Women's Weekend*  
**Friday, May 16 (5 p.m.) to Sunday May 18 (10:30 a.m.)**  
**Toddhall Retreat Center.**  
 320 Todd Center Dr, Columbia, IL 62236

The theme for 2025 is Resilience.

Please go to this link to get the full details about the weekend, including info about Scholarships.

[www.eliotwomensweekend.com](http://www.eliotwomensweekend.com)

This retreat is open to all UU women and friends. Last year six women from MEUUC attended the Weekend. Several of us carpoled.

The Women's Weekend features a wonderful variety of workshops, Opening and Closing Circle, a Scholarship Silent Auction, a BYOB Wine Tasting, massage, icebreaker and board games, great food, bonfire and songs, and time for relaxation and socializing.

**Registration is now open and continues through the deadline of Sunday April 13, 2025. Go to the link [www.eliotwomensweekend.com](http://www.eliotwomensweekend.com) to get more information and to register.**

**Options to stay:** 2 nights in a single room (no single available for Friday night only) --1 or 2 nights in a double room – Saturday during the day only.

Description	Fee
Fri,Sat & Sun(single, 4 meals)	\$260
Fri,Sat & Sun(double, 4 meals)	\$200
Fri & Sat (double, 3 meals)	\$125
Sat only (2 meals)	\$45

Toddhall sleeping rooms are like a motel room. There are 2 twin beds, a desk, and a full bathroom with shower.

**A Collaborative Event:**

**Sunday, April 6**



**A Gathering of Women: "Walk and Talk"** – 12:30 p.m. at the Watershed Nature Center, 1591 Tower Ave. Edwardsville.

**Peg Flach** writes - "We'll be gathering at Watershed to enjoy the lush abundance of spring and to walk & talk ... sit & talk ... nosh ... with sister spirits. If convenient, bring a muchie to share. We'll fall back to the MEUUC/Masons Lodge if Mother Nature isn't on board with our plans."

**MEN'S LUNCH GROUP**  
**Thursday, April 10**  
**11:30 a.m.**

**Info about the location will be sent out by email.**



If you're not on the men's lunch email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#) or call him at 314-702-3453 (c).

## Chants and Cheers

Tuesday April 29th from 7:30-8:30 join **Eden Johnson** (our Pastoral Associate) at Urban Chestnut Brewery (4465 Manchester Ave., St. Louis, 63110) for some singing and fellowship. Put on in collaboration with Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Saint Louis and Carondelet United Church of Christ. A spin on the 'beers and hymns' tradition, using contemporary songs to aid the spirit for communal strength.

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### Sharon ShareAlike *DRAG Comedy Bingo Show*

**Sunday, April 27@ 3:p.m.**

#### A NOTE FROM PEG

"We have supported the Moose with their fundraiser chicken dinners in the past and we are helping to promote this April event for them. Please come for a fun Sunday afternoon at the Moose Lodge 7371 Marine Rd."

The **Sharon ShareAlike DRAG Comedy Bingo Show** from Diamond Entertainment will return to Edwardsville on Sunday, April 27 at 3 :00 p.m. This show is sponsored by the Women of the Edwardsville Moose Lodge. Tickets are \$20 if purchased prior to the show, and \$25 at the door. Call 618-656-5051.

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## Masons' April Calendar as of March 26, 2025

More things might be added to their calendar as April progresses. The current calendar only indicates that the Masons will be meeting on Thursday, April 3 and a private event is scheduled at the Lodge on April 5. But things usually are added as the month progresses. So, we need to check their calendar weekly.

At this point we will need to –

March 30 - Take down

April 6 - Set up

April 27 -Take down

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## CHURCH CONTACTS 2024-2025 church year

### Minister

Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

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Pastoral Assistant Eden Johnson

[fromedenjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:fromedenjohnson@gmail.com)

### Board Members

President: Alex Hoeft

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Secretary: Jennifer Lewis

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Member at Large: Aiden Crist

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**Building and Grounds:** To be determined

**Custodial:** Hedda Kirk [hthrkirk@gmail.com](mailto:hthrkirk@gmail.com)

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

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

Instagram: meuucglencarbon

[Click here to see this month's calendar](#)

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