ALUUC is a Welcoming Congregation

The Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation is a religious community of individuals coming together for spiritual growth and fellowship. We respect the diverse faiths and ethical traditions of every person and honor their cultural traditions, ages, abilities, economic status, race, sexual orientation, and gender identity, as well as their theologies, philosophies and political persuasions. We are formally recognized as a “Welcoming Congregation” by our national UU Association affirming and promoting the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender persons, and those individuals who self-identify their gender, in the life of the congregation and the community.

Special points of interest:
- Fantasy Auction: Welcome to America!
- Pathways to Membership
- Circle Suppers in April

Inside this issue:
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- Upcoming Events, News, & Updates
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March 2017

From Your ALUUC Minister:

While skimming through past FOCUS articles, I came upon this memory from eleven years ago, written in the aftermath of the tornadoes of March, 2006. It still resonates with me today. All of us have experienced loss, and many of us are left with questions that go unanswered.

On Saturday, March 11, Celeste found an egg on our front lawn. She gleefully picked it up and showed it first to Angela and then to me. It was very small and slightly blue – a robin’s egg, I suppose. Celeste gushed about how her teacher had set up an incubator, with chicken eggs, in her classroom. We let her bring her discovery into the house; she placed it in a doll crib, tucked under a tiny blanket.

The next evening, the sirens sang. I studied the sky from the front porch, listening for hail and gauging the force of the wind. By the time the electricity was knocked out, I had located flashlights, batteries, candles, etc., and began to explain to Celeste why we were going to move to the basement, Celeste insisted on bringing the egg along. In truth, I would not have remembered it myself.

The storm came, and then passed over us. We cautiously left the basement and sat around the kitchen table, the three of us and one egg. The room itself was illuminated by a mixture of flashlight and candlelight. At one point she positioned one flashlight so that it bathed the egg in light & warmth. But then, while I fiddled with the radio, disaster struck. Celeste had removed the egg from its crib and was cradling it in her hand. But something went wrong. She noticed that the egg now had a fatal crack, slightly seeping. In rapid succession, dread rushed over her, then grief, and finally guilt. All other fears that night were forgotten.

What to tell her? Compared to what Springfield had just suffered, this was a minute loss. Yet to a six year old girl, that egg possessed enormous significance. As you might suppose, we assured her that the crack had probably started when the egg first fell out of the tree. It may well have. At any rate, our adult explanation proved satisfactory, and she was eventually able to fall asleep, safe, sound – and exhausted.

I, on the other hand, stayed awake for quite some time. One wishes that the world was completely tidy, utterly safe, and that one’s own assurances brought complete peace. But it is not to be, evidently. And so it must be that we will look for, and hopefully find, comfort from one another.

Martin

Rev. Woulfe’s Office Hours: Monday - off; Tuesday 10:30am–3pm; Wednesday 10:30am–2pm; Thursday & Friday 10:30am–3pm; Saturday is Sermon Preparation Day; Sunday available after coffee hour. Please call to schedule an appointment during evening hours.
Greetings from your DRE. I’m not sure what the groundhog saw, but this February weather has been a wild ride, hasn’t it? Things are much more predictable in RE, as we’ve been having a great month with the students. In our Children’s Worship on February 19, we focused on Principle 6, the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. Under this umbrella, we drew then talked about our various visions of “home”, subsequently discussing how homeless people might have a very different definition of “home.” After that, we learned about how we could help build our community by helping the homeless. One way to do this would be donating supplies to Mercy Communities in Springfield (mercycommunities.org), but we needed to know what they needed. So, we had a scavenger hunt for items Mercy Community has on its wish list. The students then brainstormed what they might bring in to donate, and RE will be taking donations for Mercy until the next Children’s Worship on March 12th. Please send in what you can for your children (or you) to donate. Two interesting notes from the project so far: Amy, the cashier at Dollar General where I purchased the scavenger hunt items, was so moved by what we were doing that she reached into her pocket and donated money because, as she said, “This sounds great! I want to help.”; and in our own membership, Paula Brayden has jump-started our donated items campaign with several bags of gently used clothing.

In the regular RE classes, Pre K/K have been learning about rituals & special services. They had a lesson on wedding/union ceremonies where they dressed up and “celebrated” a wedding between Bear and Bear, followed by a lesson on babies, in which the children tried baby food and made nests using baby food jars. Just last week, they learned about the Flower Ceremony and had a Sharing of Bread for their snack. Seventh and Eighth grade are looking into a service project involving the Mini O’Bearne Crisis Nursery, which offers primary prevention of child abuse and neglect by caring for children birth through six years of ages whose parents are experiencing crisis situations. Senior Youth are in the midst of planning both a service project and a political action project. We’ll have more specifics on that in the next newsletter.

Thanks,
Pat Marshall, Director of Religious Education, dre@aluuc.org

Mercy Community’s “Wish List”
- Adult and child-sized hangers
- Large kitchen trash cans
- Bathroom towels/wash cloths & Kitchen towel sets
- Wall clocks
- Silverware
- Mops, buckets, brooms & dust pans
- Floor & table lamps
- Laundry detergent & dish washing soap
- Household paper products: Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels
- Cleaning supplies
- Shelving (bookshelves, laundry shelving, etc.)
- Toddler beds
- Crib sheets / twin sheets / full sheets
- Blankets / New bed pillows
- Mattress Covers

We accept these items in almost new or gently used condition.
- Kitchen Tables and Full Chair Sets
- Coffee Tables
- End Tables
- Metal Bed Frames
- Kitchen Carts/Microwave carts
- Clothing Dressers—large and small
- Pots, Pans, Utensils, Dishes
- Adult women’s clothing
- Kid’s clothing-Boys and Girls
Sunday Morning Services
10:30 am

Would you like to be a Sunday Greeter? See Tracy Zieber Minks

March 5, 2017
What Comes After Innocence?
Larry Golden and Charles Palmer
Charles Palmer was exonerated the day before Thanksgiving after serving 18 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. He went home to his family in Decatur and is now struggling to put his life together — as he and Larry Golden will relate, re-entry into society has been filled with many challenges.

There will be a “Change for Change” Sunday collection for the Innocence Project.

March 12, 2017
Affirming the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
Rev. Martin Woulfe
Our third UU principle focuses on addressing the challenges — and benefits — of spiritual pluralism, and reconciling the needs of the individual and the community.

Please remember to change your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night!

March 19, 2017
Affirming a free and responsible search for truth and meaning
Rev. Martin Woulfe
Our fourth UU principle speaks to the deep yearning that we have as human beings to discover truth and meaning in our lives, and how to pursue them responsibly.

There will be a Potluck following the service — bring a dish to share!

March 26, 2017
Affirming the rights of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
Rev. Martin Woulfe
Our fifth UU principle weaves together the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the collective: how we do things is as important as what we do and why.

April 2, 2017
Raising Awareness of Bias and Rising Up
Kelly Wickham Hurst
Kelly Wickham Hurst, the Executive Director of “Being Black at School”, will explore her experiences of Racism in our schools and in society, with the additional layer of recognizing the difficulty in the conversations that we need to have in our nation right now. Despite that, there is hope, especially as it relates to how that work can be accomplished.

There will be a “Change for Change” Sunday collection for “Being Black at School”.

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From Your ALUUC Board President:

I propose changing the upcoming Pledge Drive to the Member Affirmation Drive and here is why.

For the past several years, I have been in a leadership position at ALUUC. This is my second time as Board President and I have served on various committees and volunteer positions in the eleven years since I found this interesting and fulfilling religious home. I humbly submit myself to many years of future service, glad for the opportunity to serve the greater good while building a loving community of friends. As many of you know, we have an annual Pledge Drive that is right around the corner. Many of you have also participated in what is called The Member Review (or its previous, less gentle moniker, “The Purge”). Others reading this have served on various Committees where you had to acquire volunteers by going from person to person with a clipboard asking over and over painfully, “Do you want to be on my committee?”

The Member Affirmation Drive is a new way of doing things that will greatly decrease the work load on our volunteers, but I need your help. We started this project last year with an expanded pledge card. The committees and volunteer opportunities were listed as an and/or option in conjunction with the pledging. Members were given the opportunity to pledge and/or volunteer their time. It allowed each member to indicate which committees or other volunteer positions they would like to perform. With that data in hand, we compiled lists of emails and sent them to the respective Committee Chairs. Suddenly, instead of scrambling around each Sunday begging people to join or spending hours on the phone leaving messages, each committee chair had a list of people ready and willing to serve on their committees.

There were kitchen helpers and greeters galore.

The Member Affirmation Drive serves several functions: receive pledge; recruit Sunday volunteers (kitchen helpers, ushers, greeters); acquire committee volunteers; update member information such as email address and photo; verify members are still active; and get feedback from members about their experience at ALUUC. Each of these tasks are a significant drain on ALUUC’s volunteer resources. By putting them all on one form that is filled out once a year, we will be able to decrease the number of volunteer hours necessary for each of these tasks thereby freeing up those volunteer hours for more enjoyable activities such as fellowship and community building.

The only way I know that these are onerous tasks is that I have performed them all. The Member Review is the worst. After sorting out members who are recorded as having donated, the group in charge of The Review has to decide who we have seen in church or other activities. Then we have to call, email, Facebook, or write a letter in multiple attempts to contact those who we have not seen and who have not contributed financially or through volunteering. Once contacted, you can imagine the ensuing conversation. “Hey, you don’t give money or come around...Do you still want to be a member?” I’ve heard horror stories of members being deeply offended from this type of interaction. So...Who wants to volunteer for this job this year? Who wants to spend hours sorting through members and calling the lucky few who haven’t given money or be seen at church? Because I did it a few times and it is the most excruciatingly awkward experience I have ever submitted myself to. I’m done with it. I have reached volunteer burnout in regards to that particular task and intend to never do it again.

This article may not seem as inspirational as some I have written, but its value for the health of our community is significant. By working smarter and not harder, we can maximize our effectiveness as a force of good in the local community and beyond. Please join me in my efforts to efficiently manage our community so that we may better achieve our goals of social justice, ecological stewardship, and a community of trust and commitment. If you would like to volunteer to help me in this endeavor, please email me at president@aluuc.org. I look forward to a year of resounding success at ALUUC!

Sincerely, Phillip Anderson
The 2017 Fantasy Auction invites you to celebrate our diversity...

Welcome to America!
Saturday, March 11th from 6-10:30pm
$25.00 per person

ALUUC at 745 Woodside Road

Your ticket price includes:
- Live entertainment!
- Delicious international appetizers & desserts!
- Soft drinks and coffee
- Cash bar for wine or beer

This really fun event is a fundraiser that supports our congregation.

Please donate interesting, quality items and services — download the donation form here...

Ask how you can help make this evening a success! Contact Phillip Anderson, Gwen Childs or Debby Hagan for more information at fantasyauction@aluuc.org.

Tickets are on sale NOW
- at Sunday Service,
- ONLINE at www.aluuc.org/tickets,
- or at the door on the night of the event.

Choir
If “you got to sing when the spirit says sing”...join our choir!

Rehearsals are on Sunday mornings at 9:20am in the Fuller room. “We Sing Now Together” in harmony, reading two-part and four-part music. Whether a soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, you are welcome to attend as we “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. Come visit a rehearsal. “Come Sing a Song”.

For more information, contact Kathy Schultz at choir@aluuc.org.

Eco Camp Planning has begun!
The next Eco Camp meeting date will be Thursday, March 21, in the Fuller Room, at 6 pm.

All are welcome—we love new ideas and innovations!
**Membership Committee Update**

Spring is always an exciting time of year. We think of new life as we watch the Earth grow and turn green once again.

It’s exciting to realize ALUUC is growing with the new season as well. Since October 2016, we have had twenty-one new members! On Feb. 19th we proudly held a New Member Ceremony, welcoming in our newest family. What’s even more amazing is realizing that we come from a long and proud heritage — after all, ALUUC celebrated its 64th anniversary in February as well.

ALUUC and the membership committee continually strive to improve the experience for everyone who is here, and who may hopefully be here in the future. We are engaging in small group ministry for new members, while also technologically advancing our website with ad tracking — we are tracking our Illinois Times print ads using links to our website! We’re updating and streamlining our Pathways to Membership process, while engaging our staff, volunteers, and members on a more personal basis.

Tending the garden truly is a rewarding process; watching it bloom is beautiful.

If you would like more information about the Membership Committee, please contact Co-Chairs Dianne Roberts and Carol Kneedler at membership@aluuc.org or the Membership Coordinator Tracy Zieber Minks at welcome@aluuc.org. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 16, at 6 pm, in the Fuller room. All are welcome to attend.

*Membership Committee Co-Chairs, Carol Kneedler and Dianne Roberts membership@aluuc.org
ALUUC Membership Coordinator, Tracy Zieber-Minks welcome@aluuc.org*

**PATHWAYS TO MEMBERSHIP**

Pathway Sessions is a special series for people interested in membership at ALUUC. The next series will be held on **Sunday, March 19, after the service** (session #1) and **Monday, March 20 at 7 pm** (sessions #2 & #3). Please contact Rev. Martin Woulfe (minister@aluuc.org) or Tracy Zieber Minks (welcome@aluuc.org) if you would like to attend. Child care is available upon request.

**March 19**

Session #1 *Seeds: Sharing Our Stories*. This session focuses on sharing important themes and stories from our own life stories, with a special emphasis on our faith journeys.

**March 20**

Session #2 *Roots: An inside scoop on UUism and ALUUC*. This session is intended to present and discuss various themes and developments within UUism as a whole and ALUUC in particular. We will explore the Principles & Purposes, the Sources, and some important milestones.

Session #3 *Branches: Fostering Growth & Creating Connections*. This session is an opportunity for newer people to meet some of the leaders and mentors within the congregation, to discuss how one might become more active and engaged!

New and seasoned members are encouraged to attend.

**Please Welcome Our New Members!**

On January 29, ALUUC welcomed two new members:

Matthew Schultz   Catharine O’Connell

*Catharine O’Connell and Matthew Schultz*
From Your Intern Minister:

The path to ministry has a lot of firsts. A first class, first sermon, first wedding, first baby dedication, first funeral. My first set of classes were online as I was part of a pilot program at Starr King School for the ministry for low resident students. Four other students and I took online courses to see if being a student at a distance was a feasible model for Starr King to incorporate into its educational model. The five of us realized pretty quickly that not feeling connected was one of our biggest complaints. I choose to take on-campus intersession courses in Berkeley so that, at least for a short time, I was near the campus where I could meet some of my classmates and teachers. This allowed me to put faces with names I had become so familiar with during my courses.

I remember vividly my first wedding. My best friend Alison found her love and they decided to get married. She said that I was the only person she would even think about asking to officiate her wedding. Alison and I had met at church at Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Chandler, AZ, which is still my home congregation. This is the congregation that officially sponsored me into seminary and no one there had seen me since I went off to seminary. Going back to Arizona to marry Alison and Shayne was a homecoming for me and for members of our church as they got to see me in my first official act as an aspiring minister. Since that beautiful day, I have performed a few more weddings. I was blessed to marry a lovely gay couple this past fall here in Springfield, which was my first wedding at ALUUC.

Five years after marrying Alison and Shayne, they called to ask if I would perform a baby dedication for their firstborn child. It was an honor to perform such a beautiful and profound ritual with people that I love.

In all my preparations, the one rite I had not performed was a funeral or memorial service. Many students do not get to do these and I figured I would get experience once I was a called minister. Sadly, an opportunity to perform a funeral recently presented itself. You may have heard of an apartment fire on February 13th. A young family’s apartment caught fire and though the mother worked hard to get all three of her little ones out of danger ultimately, she was unsuccessful. They lost their 3-year-old daughter, Hailey. This family is not associated with a congregation so my services were offered and the family accepted.

One of my gifts as a minister is that death does not scare me and I have had the honor of journeying with many people on their way to the other side. Being with someone as they pass is a meaningful experience. Those experiences, however, are vastly different than holding space for a grieving family who has just lost a child. As I shared in a previous sermon, I have survived a house fire. That in itself is traumatic. Losing all of your worldly goods AND your child, well, the enormity of that loss is hard to even grasp.

With Martin’s assistance a service was crafted and on February 18th I performed my first funeral. It was heartbreaking. Quite honestly, I hope that in my future as a minister I will not have to perform a service for someone so young. After the service was over I went home and held my own children tightly for a long time. No one ever said that becoming a minister was going to be easy.

I came to church the next day and within just a few minutes of walking into the building one of our congregants came up to me, placed their hand on my arm, leaned in and asked me “how are you” in a deep and sincere way. This person was not asking how I was in the casual “hey how are you” way, I was being asked in a caring and deeply meaningful manner. I nearly burst into tears. I was not ok, my heart hurt for this family and the little girl who was never going to grow up. But in that moment, in the hallway of our church I felt so loved and supported by this congregation. This congregation takes my formation as a minister seriously and people genuinely care about what is happening with me and to me. It is my hope that when I go out into the wide world to find my very own church, that I get the pleasure of serving a congregation like this. One that is warm and loving and are deeply connected with one another. —Paula

Paula Brayden’s Office Hours:
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 10am – 1pm.
Notes from the ALUUC Prairie

The Green Sanctuary Committee burned the ALUUC prairie the first Sunday in February. What a blaze! Flames over 5 feet tall—for maybe 10 minutes. These burns have to be conducted with care using equipment and training that have been developed over years of experience with prairie burning.

So why burn? Before Europeans arrived in the U.S., native people routinely burned the prairies to stimulate growth of new plants for game and to make hunting easier. Lightning also set prairies ablaze. Over thousands of years, prairie plants adapted to these fires—sending roots deep into the earth to protect against both drought and fires. Fires can kill less adapted plants such as cool season grasses and some shrubby plants that can take over the prairie. So we burn for the same reason—to rid the area of last year’s growth, stimulate new growth and rid the prairie of undesirable plants such as cool season grasses.

A common concern is that burning releases carbon into the air adding to global warming. True, burning does release carbon into the air—but this carbon is “new” carbon that has been circulating in the air in the last few years—not “old” carbon sequestered millions of years ago in the coal and oil we now burn. Because of their deep roots, prairie plants sequester more carbon in their roots than released in a burn, even in prairies burned every year. So in balance, prairie plants are a carbon sink. (Chris Helzer, Nature Conservancy’s Director of Science in Nebraska).


An additional note: Committee members also spread seed ALUUC members collected last summer and fall at the Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary with the help of Vern LaGesse of the Friends of the Sangamon Valley. These seeds will increase the plant diversity of our prairie—making it even more beautiful as the years pass. So look forward to spring and new growth in the prairie.

Pictures courtesy of Jim Curran and Bob Croteau. For more photos (and video!), go to https://www.flickr.com/photos/78820709@N04/sets/72157678856763780

Milestones

Dave Braddock, who has been a member of ALUUC since 1988, has entered home hospice, under the care of Zoe and his sons.

Please consider sending a card or letter to Dave.
Being an Usher or a Greeter is a fun, easy way to get to know the members, friends, and guests at ALUUC.

Connections and friendships can form by simply saying “Good morning” or by handing someone a hymnal. The Membership Committee would like to extend the opportunity for welcoming by offering these volunteer positions.

Being an Usher is an easy way to become involved at ALUUC:
- Please be sure to arrive no later than 10 am to help adjust the chairs in the sanctuary to make sure there is plenty of room to accommodate everyone;
- Stuff programs (and any additional papers) into the hymnals;
- Make sure everyone who walks through the sanctuary doors has a program and a hymnal;
- Be available by the sanctuary doors for 10 minutes after services have started to help latecomers find seats, programs, and hymnals;
- Be available to help take up the offertory if needed;
- Be available to help put away hymnals after service is completed.

Greeters are some of the first friendly faces we see when walking into ALUUC:
- Please be sure to arrive no later than 10 am to begin greeting guests, and returning members and friends;
- Stand inside the hallway near the front doors;
- Greet members, friends, and guests with a warm smile and “Good morning”, or a greeting of your choice;
- Help direct guests with children towards the DRE, Pat Marshall, as needed; and other guests towards the Membership Coordinator, Tracy Zieber Minks, near the guest book in the foyer.

If you would like more information about being an Usher or a Greeter, please speak with Membership Coordinator Tracy Zieber Minks at welcome@aluuc.org, or the chairs of the Membership Committee at membership@aluuc.org

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**Flowers**

March 5—available 
March 12—Posy Robertson 
March 19—available 
March 26—Kim Villanueva

New floral sign-up sheets are available! Your tax-deductible $20.00 donation is payable the week before the Sunday requested. Flowers will remain in the sanctuary after the service for the beautification of church as we continue to have guests and friends throughout the week.

The Flower Committee is financially self sustaining and always accepts additional donations.

Thank you for your continued support,

*Vi Lanum, Flower Committee Chairwoman, flower@aluuc.org*
**ALUUC Fellowship Corner**

The **Founders Day Mexican Train Tournament** was held **February 10**. Over twenty players competed, with several spectators cheering/backseat coaching from the sidelines. After four preliminary games with some amazing matches (Jodi Perko with a perfect score!), it was down to the final four in the Finals: Phoenix (Royce Hill); Perky (Jodi Perko); Dr. Watson (Ken Watson); and Pat (Pat Goller). Four very strong players went in, but in an upset, previous champion Phoenix smoked ‘em all! Thanks to all who attended, competed and helped out! Until next year!

*Pictured clockwise from top: 2016 Champion Elizabeth Jones hands over the coveted Mexican Train Tournament to the new champion, Royce Hill; Celeste, Kurt, Marla and Randy having a friendly bout; Anne, Pat, Zion, and Ken, surprised by the cameraman (Martin); all smiles from David, Carol, Royce, and René.*

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**Game Night** will resume in **April.**
See you then ;)

**Movie Night — March 26, 5pm — Queen of Katwe**

“Phiona Mutesi (Madina Nalwanga), a Ugandan girl living in a slum in Katwe, learns to play chess and becomes a Woman Candidate Master after her performances at World Chess Olympiads.” 124 minutes, rated PG. All are welcome! There will be subtitles for those who have a hearing impairment. Popcorn will be provided.

**Potluck March 19 — after the service**

Bring a dish to share or a small donation to cover the cost.

**Coffee Hour — Sundays after Service!**

Join us every Sunday morning after service for coffee (or tea...or lemonade) and conversation. We need a hand or two in our Kitchen for Coffee Hour (making the coffee, setting out a few tables and food donations, cleaning the cups). If you are interested in helping out on a Sunday, [click here](#) to sign up or contact Marissa DeWeese ([email@aluuc.org](mailto:email@aluuc.org)).
Join Phil Anderson and others every **third Saturday** of the month for **Open House Kids Club at ALUUC**. We’ll feature games, movies, snacks, and a whole lot of fun for kids age equivalent from Kindergarten through the Eighth Grade. This is a great opportunity for parents to have a little bit of “me time”, while kids get the chance to play and form life long friendships. Parents just need to be sure to check the sign in sheet when dropping children off and picking them up again.

For more information about Open House Kids Club, please contact Phil Anderson at phil@74@aol.com or by phone.

We hope to see you on **Saturday March 18, between 5 and 9 pm** for open house **Kids Club**!

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**Sign up for our Circle Suppers on April 7th or 8th**

To sign up, go to [www.aluuc.org/circle-dinner](http://www.aluuc.org/circle-dinner), or sign up on the clipboard at church.

We are looking for both guests and hosts.

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**FABULOUS FUNDRAISING**

Scrip is a cooperative that allows congregation members to buy gift cards to national retailers at face value. A percentage of each card sold comes back to ALUUC. Gas stations, grocery and clothing stores, drugstores and restaurants are well-represented on the list of 400+ vendors.

Go to [www.aluuc.org/about-aluuc/members/scrip-program](http://www.aluuc.org/about-aluuc/members/scrip-program) for step-by-step instructions on how to register for this program. Use the code provided by Kerri to join the ALUUC’s program. Scrip gift cards are sent to ALUUC; members then can pick them up and use them. Many scrip cards are reloadable, and you can also buy scrip as a **ScripNow eCard**, which can be **printed** from your computer and used **immediately**.

Our next order deadline is **March 12**.

*** PLEASE NOTE: The deadline is a little earlier this month, as the coordinator will be going on vacation.***

Please contact Kerri Skrudland at scrip@aluuc.org or by phone for more information about this exciting program.

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ALUUC hosts our local **PFLAG chapter** (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) on the Third Monday of every month. The next meeting will be held at ALUUC on **Monday, March 20 at 7 pm**. This is a safe and confidential gathering of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer) people, their families, friends and allies to meet and share. This PFLAG group is open to all and welcomes your energy!

Visit our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/PFLAGSpringfieldIL](http://www.facebook.com/PFLAGSpringfieldIL).

To contact the group by email: pflag-springfieldil_1@juno.com.
ALUUC Social Action Committee Updates

Immigrant Support Actions

Since January 2017 there has been a swell of raids on immigrants throughout the United States. Because of this our faith is asking each and every one of us to help in any way we can. What can you do?

- Sign the Petition to Resist Deportation: action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/we-pledge-to-resist-deportation-and-discrimination-through-sanctuary

- As a congregation, discuss whether becoming a sanctuary for people being deported is something you feel called to do. Don’t know if this is right for us? Join a webinar on February 27 at 4pm to discuss the steps towards becoming a sanctuary. uurise.org/event/path-toward-sanctuary-practical-guide-webinar/

- Educate yourself! Here are some resources:
  - UURISE is Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education uurise.org
  - www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org
  - forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/

- Listen to President Morales as he speaks on this topic: http://www.uua.org/immigration/witness/partners/newsanctuary

Thanks to Paula Brayden for this write-up.

UU Advocacy Network of Illinois

The UU Advocacy Network of Illinois works “to build our collective power to act effectively for justice by building relationships within our congregations and with other congregations.” Their major issue areas for this year are Environmental Justice, Economic Justice, and Racial Justice.

The UUANI newsletter is on ALUUC web page at www.aluuc.org/category/unitarian-universalist-advocacy-network-of-illinois. It lists many opportunities for social and environmental action in Illinois. Paula Brayden, intern minister, is our connection to this group if you have any questions or would like to get involved — you can contact her at intern@aluuc.org.

Upcoming SAC Programs

Sunday March 5th — The Illinois Innocence Project (IIP) by the founding director (our own) Larry Golden. IIP is dedicated to releasing innocent men and women imprisoned in Illinois for crimes they did not commit. UIS undergraduates and Illinois law students work together directed by IIP lawyers reviewing, evaluating and legally pursuing claims of innocence. They receive over 300 requests for review each year. To date, they have been involved in the release of nine innocent inmates in Illinois.

Sunday April 2nd — Being Black at School (BBS) by Kelly Wickham Hurst. This national non-profit agency believes “in order to achieve an equitable and inclusive education system we must identify, address, and eliminate the biases and barriers that cripple our student’s cognitive and social development.” Their mission is to utilize data and policy analysis to foster a movement for schools that are safer and more equitable for Black students.
SAC Volunteer Survey Still Available Online and at Church

SAC is concentrating on the problems of homelessness and racial justice this year. We know ALUUC members and friends are doing volunteer work in these and other social justice areas in their communities. SAC is collecting this information and will share it in written form with all ALUUC members and friends so they can see what others are doing and perhaps be motivated to join them. Please fill yours out today.


Action for a Better Tomorrow, when you are done just complaining

Looking for a way to keep track of and react to political changes you don’t support? Many UUs are supporting and using this local group. This is what they are about: “We are determined to make a difference, not just through action, but through better action. Alreadys tens of thousands strong, we take a different approach to civic engagement: through our vetted, meticulously-researched actions, and our trainings and seminars we empower our members to be more informed, prepared and ready to create a better world for future generations.” More information at actionforabettertomorrow.org.

Opportunities for Helping those without homes this winter

- **Winter Warming Center Update**
  ALUUC volunteers continue to serve dinner to homeless men and women at the Winter Warming Center on Madison St. If you would like to join them contact Delinda Chapman. Together we make a positive difference in the world.

- **St. John’s Breadline**
  430 N. 5th St., Springfield, IL 62702, (217) 528-6098
  http://cc.dio.org/programs/st-johns-breadline
  You can volunteer here to serve meals Mondays-Fridays from 7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., and 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. Groups are welcome.

- **Helping Hands**
  1023 E. Washington Springfield, IL 62703, (217) 522-0048 ext 5
  It’s easy to provide a meal at Helping Hands. Simply click on the mealtrain picture to view the meal calendar. http://www.helpinghandsofspringfield.org/ Select a date and book your commitment, or call 522-0048 ext 5 and Brandy will help you.

Change for Change – thank you for your most appreciated and needed generosity

**Change for Change March (March 5) will go to The Illinois Innocence Project.** IIP is dedicated to releasing innocent men and women imprisoned in Illinois for crimes they did not commit. UIS undergraduates and Illinois law students work together directed by IIP lawyers reviewing, evaluating and legally pursuing claims of innocence. **Donations are also most welcome by check made out to ALUUC with IIP noted.**

**Change for Change April (April 2) will go to Being Black at School.** This national nonprofit advocacy organization’s mission is “to utilize data and policy analysis to foster a movement for schools that are safer and more equitable for Black students.” **Donations are also most welcome by check made out to ALUUC with BBS noted.**
Change for Change February collected $203.55 for Faith Coalition for the Common Good, a local association of over 25 churches (including ALUUC), faith-based organizations and labor unions. It provides opportunities for us to work on the SAC focuses of Racial Justice & Homelessness with people of different faith traditions. **Donations are still most welcome by check made out to ALUUC with FCCG noted.**

**Faith Coalition for the Common Good**

FCCG is a local association of over 25 churches (including ALUUC), faith-based organizations and labor unions. It provides opportunities for us to work on SAC focuses of Racial Justice & Homelessness with people of different faith traditions.

The vision of the Faith Coalition is Racial and Economic Equity for All across Central Illinois. Much of their work is done through the 4 task forces described below.

1. **Education for All Task Force** – “a very dynamic and positive group” according to Stu
   Goal: Create ed. focused campaign aimed at closing academic opportunity gap in District 186
   ALUUC Reps: Stu Jacobson; District 186 parents or prospective parents needed

2. **Jobs and Economic Equity**
   Goal: Promote opportunity for meaningful employment with a living wage for all.
   ALUUC Reps: no one at present; new members would be most welcome

3. **Civic Engagement and Policy Involvement**
   Goal: Create systemic, economic & social change in our communities (and lives) thru Policy & Legislation.
   ALUUC reps: Jan Droegkamp & Virginia Forrer; other ALUUC members most welcome.

4. **CUJO: Restorative Justice (Citizens United for Justice and Order)**
   Goal: Work with local, state & federal agencies to ensure equity & justice for those in danger of becoming incarcerated, those incarcerated and those who have been released from prison.
   ALUUC reps: no one; would be great to tie this into our new Illinois UU prison initiative

If you are interested in the task forces, contact the Faith Coalition office at faithcoalition-il.org or at 544-2297. For more information, including upcoming meetings of the task forces, go to faithcoalition-il.org/what-we-do/ or call Shelley Heideman at 544-2297. The website does not have contact information for task force leaders, but has a calendar of the meetings under the heading News and Events. There is strength in numbers and diversity folks.

**SAC Meetings**

SAC meets after services on the third Sunday each month. The next SAC meeting will be **March 19**. Everyone is welcome. **In a year of social tumult help steady the ship.**

— Nancy Derrig, SAC@aluuc.org

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**Greater Springfield Interfaith Association**

GSIA will meet on **Tuesday, March 7, from 11:45am-1:30pm at the Catholic Pastoral Center** (1615 West Washington). Fr. Kevin Laughery & Rev. Martin Woulfe will share insights into St. Patrick, Saint Brigid & Celtic Spirituality. Please bring your own lunch.
Update regarding UUA elections

This year, UUs will go to the polls during General Assembly in June to elect our new President. At present, there are three candidates: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Rev. Alison Miller, and Rev. Jeanne Pupke. The winner will serve as the UUA’s first woman President. You can go to www.uua.org and read up on these candidates.

(Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.)

2017 GA News: New Orleans, June 21-25

Please note that GA Registration opens on March 1, 2017. The early registration fee is $360 per adult. After May 1, it goes up to $415.

This date is important especially if you want to reserve a hotel room – Hotel reservations will be available via the GA Housing Reservation System also beginning March 1.

I recommend that you reserve your room first – sometimes all UUA reserved rooms are claimed within 24 hours; rates will vary according to the location.

There will also be a limited number of opportunities for home hospitality.

ALUUC member Vinod Gupta donated a bird bath to Washington Park in memory of Martin Luther King Jr and Mahatma Gandhi.

It was installed on December 6, 2016.
A COURSE in MIRACLES

The weekly ACIM discussion group continues to have from 5 to 10 people each week reading and discussing the text. Like everyone else, we are concerned for the future with the political changes that are taking place. However, through the Course, we are reminded that this is all an illusion. As we strive to understand the teachings and to hear the Voice for God, we are taught that, regardless of what is happening around us, we are in the protective custody of a loving and merciful God.

We always welcome new participants and experience and knowledge levels are not important as we are all working together for a better understanding of the Course.

Join us at 6 pm on any Tuesday in the Barton classroom. We are usually out by 7:30. A few of us have taken to going to a restaurant afterwards for further fellowship. If you have any questions, please email acim@aluuc.org.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Interested in reading? Want to read a variety of books from classics to best-sellers? Want to meet with members and friends in a casual group? Then join the ALUUC Book Group. A reorganizational meeting will be on Tuesday, March 28 at 7 pm in the Fuller Room at ALUUC. Hope to see you there.

Questions? Call or text Penny Wollan-Kriel for more information.

DREAM GROUP

This is an opportunity for folks to discuss their dreams in a relaxed, friendly, informal setting. The Dream Group is using an online format for our conversations about participant’s dreams. Occasionally we’ll have informal gatherings. For more information, call or email Phil Gregg by phone or at uudreamgroup@aluuc.org.

DRUM CIRCLE

The ALUUC Drum Circle meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm at Diana DeWeese’s studio. Everybody is welcome, including first-time drummers. For the location of the studio, parking information, or any other questions, please contact by phone or at drumming@aluuc.org.

HUMANIST GROUP

Our ALUUC Humanist Group emphasizes humanitarianism as a way of life with core values of dignity, equality, and social justice for all individuals. We routinely discuss matters of morality/ethical values, separation of church and state, science/evolution/neuroscience, behavioral economics and occasionally non-partisan politics as it relates to the human spirit. Programs focus on humanity book reviews and/or media presentations followed by lively group discussion. Other formats can and will be considered by Co-Chairs Vi Lanum & Sarah Iaienaro.

On Monday, March 27, 2017 from 7:00-8:30PM, George Oravis will be review the book The Secret History of Wonder Woman by Jill Lepore. The creators of the Wonder Woman fictional hero used the comic book media to inspire and empower young women to succeed and to work for equal rights. In Jill Lepore’s riveting work of historical detection, Wonder Woman’s story provides the missing link in the history of the struggle for women’s rights—a chain of events that begins with the women’s suffrage campaigns of the early 1900s and ends with the troubled place of feminism a century later. Contact: Vi Lanum or Sarah Iaienaro at humanistgroup@aluuc.org for more information.

MEN’S GROUP

The Mens Group meets on the first & third Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. We vary our meeting locations between church and nearby
GROUPS at ALUUC (cont’d)

restaurants. Join us for insightful discussion, dinner, drinks and merriment. Feel free to bring thought provoking books, articles or poems for examination and reflection. Contact Jim Curran to get on the mailing list for meeting locations and details (mensgroup@aluuc.org or by phone)

**NEWS GROUP**

The News Group meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm. Join us on **Thursday, March 2nd** at the ALUUC in the Channing Room. If you have any questions call Kurt DeWeese, Frank Kopecky, or email newsgroup@aluuc.org.

**PAGAN GROUP**

The Pagan Group is on hiatus until spring and will not meet in March. Please join us again in April for Beltane. For more information, please contact Tracy Zieber Minks by phone or at aluucpagans@gmail.com.

**UNDERSTANDING the BIBLE**

Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers and Religious Liberals by John A. Buehrens. This course is based on the above referenced book and will meet twice a month on the second & third Sundays after church. This course covers the Hebrew bible (aka the Old Testament) as well as the Christian scriptures (aka the New Testament). The book by Buehrens and a bible are required for this course. If you are interested in the course, contact intern@aluuc.org.

**WOMEN in the RED TENT**

The Red Tent is on hiatus. Interested in learning more about our Red Tent? For more information, or to join our Facebook group, email redtent@aluuc.org.

All groups must reserve their meeting space in advance for meetings and/or events through Office Manager Cheryl Wycoff at office@aluuc.org. If you aren’t on the reservation calendar, you could find yourself bumped by another group who followed procedures.

**Senior Youth Group meets Sundays, after Service**

The Senior Youth Group meets every Sunday starting 5-10 minutes after each service. All high-school aged youth are welcome!

For more information, contact Jordan and Brie by phone or at senioryouth@aluuc.org.

**Labyrinth Walk**

Our monthly meditative walks meets on the third Friday, March 17.

This is a unique, ancient pathway to greater spirituality that incorporates body and consciousness. Each walk starts at 7 pm. There will also be an opportunity to receive a Oneness Blessing before and after you walk; those who wish to stay after the walk may join in a UU Communion held in Rev. Woulfe’s office.
# March 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>5:00 pm Casimir Pulaski Day</td>
<td>*6:30 pm Mens Group UUA GA Registration opens</td>
<td>7:00 pm News Group</td>
<td>2:00 pm Mens Group</td>
<td>3:00 pm 9:30 am Zen Meditation</td>
<td>4:00 pm 6 pm “Welcome to America” Fantasy Auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>*11:45 am GSIA Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 pm A Course In Miracles Group</td>
<td>7:15 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>8:00 pm Drum Circle</td>
<td>9:00 pm 6 pm Membership Committee Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 pm St. Patrick’s Day 7 pm Labyrinth Walk 5 pm Kids Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Daylight Savings</em></td>
<td><em>Spring Forward 1 hour</em></td>
<td>6 pm A Course In Miracles</td>
<td>7:00 pm Board Meeting</td>
<td>13:00 pm 6 pm Mens Group</td>
<td>14:00 pm 6 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>15:00 pm 6 pm Membership Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>*11:45 am GSIA Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 pm A Course In Miracles</td>
<td>7:15 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td><em>6:30 pm Mens Group</em></td>
<td>12:00 pm RE Committee Meeting</td>
<td>17:00 pm 9:30 am Zen Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>6 pm A Course In Miracles</td>
<td>7:00 pm Board Meeting</td>
<td>14:00 pm 6 pm Mens Group</td>
<td>15:00 pm 6 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>16:00 pm 6 pm Membership Committee Meeting</td>
<td>17:00 pm 5 pm Movie Night: <em>Queen of Katwe</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 pm PFLAG Meeting</td>
<td>6 pm A Course In Miracles</td>
<td>7:15 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td><em>6:30 pm Drum Circle</em></td>
<td>19:00 pm A House for Hope &amp; Understanding the Bible classes</td>
<td>24:00 pm 9:30 am Zen Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 pm Pathways to Membership (#1)</td>
<td>6 pm A Course In Miracles</td>
<td>7:15 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>12:00 pm Social Action Committee Meeting</td>
<td>20:00 pm A House for Hope &amp; Understanding the Bible classes</td>
<td>25:00 pm 9:30 am Zen Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 pm Pathways to Membership (#2 &amp; #3)</td>
<td>6 pm Eco Camp meeting</td>
<td>7:15 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>9:00 pm <em>6:30 pm Drum Circle</em></td>
<td>21:00 pm 6 pm Meditation Group</td>
<td>31:00 pm Spring Youth CON in Peoria, IL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates event takes place off-site.  **Bold** text indicates an ALUUC-sponsored event.

Check online at [www.aluuc.org/events](http://www.aluuc.org/events) for the most up-to-date calendar.
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The Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Springfield, IL is a religious community of individuals coming together for spiritual growth and fellowship. Whether you’re looking for a church to call home or just curious about Unitarian Universalism, we invite you to get to know our congregation and the people who make it so special.