

## We are a Liberal Religious Community

We are an inclusive and welcoming community. We welcome all people of good will regardless of race, color, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc.

We believe that a mature religiosity can flourish in a community that celebrates diversity, respects differences and welcomes a variety of beliefs and opinions. It may surprise you at first to learn that ALUUC is home to Agnostics, Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Humanists, Jews, Naturalists, Pagans, Theists and Transcendentalists. As a result of our rich heritage, we regard tolerance, both within our community and in the world at large, as a virtue.

We are committed to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Conscience and Intuition are integral aspects of this search.

We are seekers after truth, beauty and justice – within our own personal relationships and within society.

We strive for a religion which will help us cultivate a sense of reverence, humility, self-respect and integrity. These are the essential foundations of a religious life. That essence sustains us, supports us in times of joy or grief, and guides us in our daily lives.

## Sunday Services

Our Sunday worship service is a time of music, sharing of community joys & concerns, silent reflection, a children's story, readings, and the spoken word – either shared by the minister or other worship leader. The service is apt to vary from week to week, but is always appropriate to the spirit of Unitarian Universalism. The children join the congregation for the first part of the service and then leave for their own program of religious education. A coffee hour follows the service, providing an informal opportunity for all to share refreshments and conversation.

## Religious Education

Our Religious Education Program provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for our young people to learn and to participate in their own religious growth. We strive to offer a varied curriculum, as well as individual and group activities, which encourage young persons to recognize and appreciate the religious and ethical aspects of daily living. We introduce our young people to a variety of faith traditions from around the world as well as to Unitarian Universalist principles and history. Above all else, we strive to help our young people understand what it means to be a religious person as they make decisions which affect their lives and those of others.

## Membership

Any person who is at least 17 years of age and is in sympathy with the mission and religious ideals of this congregation may become a member by completing *the Pathway to Membership* and signing the Membership Book, in the presence of the minister or a member of the Board of Directors.

Members are expected to be active in the life of the congregation. They are encouraged to attend worship services, social events, potlucks, small group activities, classes, committee functions and fund-raising events. They are further encouraged to support this congregation through volunteering their time and/or by offering a financial pledge.

Members have voting privileges at both annual meetings and special congregational meetings. Members may serve on the Board, Committee on Ministry, and as Officiants.

Members & Friends alike receive the ALUUC newsletter, congregational mailings and emails. In times of distress, they may receive financial assistance from the congregation's Benevolence Fund. The minister will offer appropriate counseling at no cost to them. Also, he and/or members of the Pastoral Care Committee will offer appropriate assistance to the sick or those who are restricted in terms of attending ALUUC.

Members & Friends are entitled to the minister's service and the use of the building, free of charge. They may rent space within the building for social events at 50% of the rate paid by nonmembers.

## Rites of Passage

A rite of passage marks a significant threshold in the life of the individual. These are some of the major rites of passage which Unitarian Universalists observe:

### Child Dedication

This ceremony welcomes infants & children into the life of the congregation.

### Coming of Age

This ceremony recognizes teen aged youth who are becoming adult members within life and the congregation.

### Memorial Service

This service celebrates the life of one who has died. Typically, this service is held 1-2 weeks after death when cremation is chosen. Ashes may be scattered in our Memorial Garden.

### Funeral

When a traditional burial is preferred, a funeral service is generally held, either here or at a funeral home. A grave-site service typically follows.

### Wedding / Civil Union

A religious service that recognizes the love and commitment of a couple and confers legal status. Particulars of each service vary according to the couple's preferences.

### Hand-fasting / Commitment Ceremony

A service that recognizes the love and commitment of couple. At present, these are considered essentially religious ceremonies that do not confer legal status.

## Our Minister

Rev. Martin Woulfe was raised in the Chicago area in the Roman Catholic tradition. Martin joined the First Unitarian Society of Chicago in 1987 and several years thereafter enrolled in the Meadville/Lombard Theological School, which is associated with the UUA and the University of Chicago.

While completing his M.Div. coursework, which included a chaplaincy at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and an internship at the Countryside UU Congregation, Martin was granted preliminary fellowship as a UU Minister by the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship in 1998.

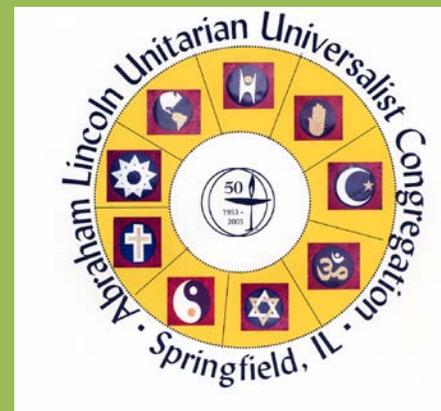
Martin served for two years as the Interim Minister at UUCC in Park Forest, IL; the members there ordained him in March, 2003. Prior to that settlement, Martin worked as an on-site house parent of a group home for teenagers connected with Maryville Academy. Martin also worked at Maryville's Emergency Service Shelter for abused & neglected youth both during & after his seminary training.

Martin was called by a congregational vote to serve ALUUC as our first full time settled minister. He and his family – Angela & daughter Celeste – moved to Springfield in the summer of 2003. He assumed his duties here in August of that year. He was granted Final Fellowship as a UU minister in December, 2005.

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# Welcome to ALUUC

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