



# Unitarian Universalists of Deland

## JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

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Website: [www.uudeland.org](http://www.uudeland.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/1UUCoWV/>

Board Officers: Pres. Jade Hoke-Smith; VP Nancy Jacobsen; Secretary Ella Shepherd; and Treasurer Les Figueroa

At-Large Members: Jim Dries, Paul Garfinkel and Patti Rausch

### SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 AM

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Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98531898667>

Zoom ID is the same each week: 985 3189 8667

Refreshments are served in the Social Hall after service.

#### **1/4/26 More Love: Yes, Even YOU!**

"More Love," a UU sermon by **Rev. Darcy Laine** will be presented by member **Andrea Kramer**, retired teacher and storyteller. People are drawn to UU because they have experienced unconditional love—a love that says "yes, even you"! This love is deeper than affection, steady beneath change, and available even when we are wounded, angry, or grumpy. Love is the bedrock of the tradition, the core of church, and our central calling. **Rev. Laine** has a BA in Music Performance (Indiana Univ.), attended Star King School and was ordained in 1998. She has served UU congregations in CA and NY. **Cheryl Kellogg** will be the Service Leader.

#### **1/11/26 F.A.I.T.H. (Fighting Against Injustice Towards Harmony)**

**Joshua LeClair** will speak about the successes and challenges of **F.A.I.T.H.**, a 501c3 organization comprised of 30 religious congregations in Volusia County. Though F.A.I.T.H. congregations differ in their racial makeup, socio-economic status, and theology, they stand united in their commitment to fulfill God's call to "do Justice." **Joshua** joined FAITH as a dedicated advocate with over 20 years of experience in community and labor union organizing. A Volusia native, Joshua has devoted his career to championing the rights and well-being of working families. **Patti Rausch** will be the service leader.

#### **1/18/26 Peace in a Time of Chaos?**

Imagine finding peace in this crazy world. It's so easy to slip into pessimism when everything around us seems to be falling apart . . . our hopes, dreams, peace, and balance with nature. Find out how we can overcome these fears by reconnecting to nature and the sanctuary of our inner selves. Our speaker is **Linda Crider**, former UF professor and Exec. Dir. of Bike Florida. As a performer, singer and songwriter, she has written and recorded 100+ songs and 5 CDs over the past 20 years. Linda wrote the 6-act play *Bartram Nights*. **Paul Garfinkel** will be our service leader.



## 1/25/26      **The Influence of Islam in America: Hidden Threads, Living Light**

Long before falafel shops and Muhammad Ali, Islam was woven into the very fabric of America's story. From enslaved Africans whispering Qur'anic prayers, to Islamic recitations in blues music, to modern leaders shaping justice and unity—Islam has been here. **Imam Abdurrahman Y. Sykes** will uncover forgotten roots, celebrate resilience, and reveal Islam's timeless gifts of Oneness, Mercy, and Justice. With a BS in Psychology and a Masters in Religious Practice, he was host of "The Islamic Message," a TV series; Chaplain in the NC Dept. of Corrections; and Pres. of The Islamic Society Leading American Muslims Peace Center. **Ella Shepherd** will be our service leader.

## CONGREGATION INFORMATION

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**The Neighborhood Center Food Donations, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Month.** Please bring nonperishable foods and place them in the basket in the vestibule of the Sanctuary. Contact **Mara Whitridge** at 386/846-9016 for more information.

**The Bridge Dinner Prep, 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday of Month.** UUDeLand provides dinner for our homeless community at The Bridge, 421 S. Palmetto Ave., DeLand. We need more volunteers please! Contact **Karen Wolf** at 763/213-2403.

### **DeLand Quakers "Care Coordination Alliance," Ongoing**

Our Social Justice team is working with the DeLand Quakers to provide food and essential items to our greater DeLand community. Please contact **Mary Schaperow** at 407/314-6746 or [maryschaperow@earthlink.net](mailto:maryschaperow@earthlink.net).

**UU DeLand's By-Laws and Policies and Procedures:** [UU DeLand Member Resources](#)

**Newsletter Submissions Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.** Please email submissions to [mdykes@stetson.edu](mailto:mdykes@stetson.edu).

**Unsubscribe.** To be removed from this email list, reply to this email with "Remove from newsletter mailing list."

## UU DELAND GROUP MEETINGS

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### **Adult Discussion Group**

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays** of the month at **9:15 AM** in the Social Hall or out on the deck – weather permitting. There is a different pre-determined topic for each meeting. Contact **George Crofts** at [jorjcrofts@gmail.com](mailto:jorjcrofts@gmail.com).

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday** of the month at **9 AM** in the Social Hall. UU DeLand members may attend.

Contact President **Mel Browning** at [melbrowning@cfl.rr.com](mailto:melbrowning@cfl.rr.com) or Jade Hoke-Smith at [sewdamnhappy@gmail.com](mailto:sewdamnhappy@gmail.com).

### **Book Discussion Group**

**4<sup>th</sup> Friday** of the month at **10:30 AM** in the Social Hall. Contact **Karen Wolfe** at 763/213-2403 or [karenwolf64@gmail.com](mailto:karenwolf64@gmail.com).



### **Connecting Women**

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday** of the month at **10:00 AM** and **3<sup>rd</sup> Friday** at **2:00 PM** in the Social Hall. Enjoy an informal gathering of female members and friends. Contact Linda Newman at 386/734-1117 or [newmanlinda247@gmail.com](mailto:newmanlinda247@gmail.com).

## Green Team

**2nd Tuesday** of the month at **2 PM** in the Social Hall. Our mission is environmental stewardship through education, outreach and fun. If this appeals to you, come check us out! All are welcome. For additional information, contact **Mary Schaperow** at 407/314-6746 or [schaperow@gmail.com](mailto:schaperow@gmail.com).

- **Activities:** Continuing cleaning vegetation, debris, and invasive plants from the west parking area fenceline. A workday will be set up in January, date TBD.
- **Tip of the Month:** The third Friday in January is Florida's official Arbor Day. Plant a native tree or other native plant. Or, check out Mead Botanical Garden's , Breath With the Trees Relaxation Exercise on Thursdays <https://share.google/7IH4qDx4GrIV4esih>
- **Recipe of the Month:** January is Veganuary! The 2026 31-Day Vegan Challenge kicks off this month. Go to <https://share.google/vl1Af9P9PI9hjknf> for numerous recipes and tips.



- **Right to Clean Water Amendment**, ongoing. Let's help improve our drinking water and waterways by signing the 2026 primary election petition at this link: <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>.

## Men's Discussion Group

**Every Tuesday at 7 PM** in the Social Hall. Contact **George Crofts** at [joricrofts@gmail.com](mailto:joricrofts@gmail.com) .

## Poetry Group

**2nd Sunday of the month at 12:30 PM** at a member's home. Share a potluck lunch followed by poems read by each participant. Any poem. Contact **Karen Wolfe** at 763/213-2403 or [karenwolf64@gmail.com](mailto:karenwolf64@gmail.com).

## Program Committee

**2nd Thursday** of the month at **2 PM** in the Social Hall. Planning of future church services. Contact **Mitzi Dykes** at 386/801-2615 or [mdykes@stetson.edu](mailto:mdykes@stetson.edu).

## Social Justice Team

**2nd Thursday** of the month at **3 PM** in the Social Hall. Join us to get updates on local, state, and federal bills and proposals and find out how your voice can be heard!

- **Braver Angels** is a citizens' organization uniting red and blue in a working alliance to depolarize America. The West Volusia alliance meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 4 – 5:30 at Marchetti's Destination Coffee Bar and Gift Shop, 110 N. Woodland Blvd.
- **No Kings Protests** usually occur on Saturday from 10-12 at Woodland Blvd./New York Ave. (occasionally at Woodland Ave./International Speedway Blvd.) Protest signs are provided. Bring your voice, water, hat, and chair (if needed). See you there! Join us in saving democracy! **50501 (50 protests in all 50 states in 1 day)** is a national grassroots movement supporting democracy and opposing executive overreach. We're not watching history happen—***We're making it!*** Check out their link for future events: [50501 Protests](https://www.50501protests.com/).

### **Song Circle**

**3rd Thursday** from **7-9 PM**. Members and friends are welcome to bring their voices and instruments or just come and listen. Contact Paul Garfinkel at 904/323-5655 or [paulgarf53@gmail.com](mailto:paulgarf53@gmail.com).

### **Welcoming Congregation Team, Next meeting TBA**

UU DeLand is a Welcoming Congregation and has actively promoted LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Contact Margaritte Johnson at 516/547-5231 (text) if you want to join this rainbow coalition!



## **OTHER GROUP MEETINGS**

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### **PFLAG DeLand/Volusia, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month, 6 – 7:30 PM (location undisclosed)**

PFLAG's mission is to create a caring, just, and affirming world for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them. The meetings are confidential and largely for support purposes. Contact **Carol Dries** at 818/522-5469.

### **Volusia Buddhist Fellowship, Wednesdays, 7 PM, Social Hall**