



Unitarian Universalists of DeLand

DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Board Officers: Pres. Mel Browning, VP Jade Hoke-Smith, Sec. Cheryl Kellogg, Tres. Charles Bose
At-Large Board Members: Colleen Cunningham, Martha Jess, Donna Pepin

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 AM

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98531898667>
Refreshments are served in the Social Hall after service.

Zoom ID is the same each week: 985 3189 8667

12/7/25 Transcending Mystery!

Carol Dries will present "Transcending Mystery" by UU **Rev. Sarah C. Richards**, who observes, "'A covenant with mystery,' says the cell biologist. That seeming contradiction really resonates with me, because it demonstrates the interconnection between our human drive to understand and the experience of mystery. We need to be scientists and mystics to live in this world fully." **Carol** starred on Broadway in 4 musicals, on TV's *The Jeffersons* and *Dolly Parton's Christmas on the Square* and will be in *The Good Daughter*, which streams in 2026. **Jim Dries** will be the Service Leader. *Note: Please remember to bring non-perishable food items for the Neighborhood Center on the 1st Sundays.*

12/14/25 Are you the Curmudgeon in the Pew?

Are you skeptical of new things? Easily annoyed? Have a preference for old traditions and tend to question popular trends? You might be a Grinch, or perhaps you're just a victim of temporary circumstances. Come laugh and learn with **Jade Hoke-Smith** to see if *YOU* are a curmudgeon. **Jade** is President-elect of the UU DeLand Board of Directors. She's a former biology teacher and fierce advocate of reading banned books! **Jade** lives with her husband, 3 dogs and 1 cat. She enjoys sewing, gardening and playing the piano.

12/21/25 Gaianism: Interconnectedness of All Life

The **Green Team** will have a Winter Solstice service focused on Gaianism, a religious philosophy that views the Earth (Gaia) as a living being and emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life. Practitioners, known as Gaians, believe it is their duty to protect and restore Gaia, recognizing that humans are just one part of a larger ecological system. The **Green Team** offers its congregation and friends activities, such as bonfires, movies nights, hiking, kayaking, and maintaining local trails. **Mara Whitridge** will be the service leader.



Paul Garfinkel will explore the psychology of New Year's resolutions. Why do we make them? Why do we—or don't we—keep them? How do we set meaningful expectations that don't disappoint so often. Inward versus outward resolutions. Congregational participation is required! **Paul** is a UU DeLand Board Member-elect, our Music Coordinator and active on many of our church committees. He has a Bachelor's in Government and Economics, and a Master's in Health Science. Paul is a retired clinical research ethicist, focused on pediatrics. An avid reader and performing songwriter, he is also a Francophile. *Bonnes résolutions pour la nouvelle année!* **Ella Shepherd** and **Mitzi Dykes** will be co-service leaders.

CONGREGATION INFORMATION

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 maryschoperow@earthlink.net. What is needed:

FOOD: rice; beans (pinto and black); masa (dough made from Maize at a Mexican grocers); cooking oil; fruit; cornmeal; non-perishables foods. **ITEMS:** feminine hygiene products; children's vitamins; toothbrushes (adult's and children's); toothpaste; clothes (especially children's); warm clothes; toilet paper; paper towels; bath soap; dish soap; diapers.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS: new unwrapped presents for children of all ages.

Listening Room at Northwest Square Benefit Concert, Sunday, December 14

The Social Justice team invites you to their "field trip" to help support the West Volusia Neighborhood Center. The Listening Room at Northwest Square (238 North Clara) is hosting this worthy holiday cause. Music will be provided by the **Paul Garfinkel Trio**, "The Two of Us," Bob Levings and Friends, and The Holtons. The entry cost is \$20, with *all profits* going to the Neighborhood Center. They will also be accepting donations of non-perishable foods. Doors open at 1:30 and music starts at 2:00. You can also grab a drink at the Chapel Tap and food from onsite vendors.



The Neighborhood Center Food Donations, 1st 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, 5th 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.

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

Newsletter Submissions Deadline is the 15th of the month. Please email submissions to 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

Adult Discussion Group

2nd and 4th 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.

Board of Directors Meeting

3rd 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 or Jade Hoke-Smith at sewdamnhappy@gmail.com.

Book Discussion Group – *Change of date for December only: 12/19, same time and place. Bring a book to exchange.*

Otherwise, **4th Friday** of the month at **10:30 AM** in the Social Hall. Contact **Karen Wolfe** at 763/213-2403 or

karenwolf64@gmail.com.

Connecting Women

1st Saturday of the month at **10:00 AM** and **3rd 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.

Green Team

2nd Tuesday of the month at **A NEW TIME - 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 Joyce Palmer, Facilitator, at joycepalmer68@yahoo.com or call/text 1.907.727.7655.

- **Dec. 21, 5 PM, Bonfire** in the UUDeLand parking lot. Please bring canned food for the Neighborhood Center. Bring a chair as well. BYOB is acceptable.



- **Dec. 29 Dinner and Documentary.** Before the movie, a vegan dinner will be served of soup and bread, served at 600pm. Come at 5:30 to socialize. An RSVP is appreciated to help up plan for the food. See **Martha Jess, Jim Durocher, or Colleen Cunningham**.
- **Tip of the Month:** Reduce food waste by planning meals, using what you buy, and composting scraps. This prevents food from producing methane (greenhouse gas) in landfills and saves energy to produce food.
- **Recipe of the Month:** [One Pot Creamy Vegan Tuscan Kale Pasta](#)
- **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 jorjcrofts@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.

Program Committee

1st Thursday of the month at **1 PM** in the Social Hall. Planning of future church services. Contact **Jade Hoke-Smith** at sewdamnhappy@gmail.com.

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 Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America. The West Volusia alliance meets on the 1st 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](#).

Song Circle – NO MEETING IN DECEMBER!

Otherwise, **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.

Welcoming Congregation Team, Next meeting TBA

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

OTHER GROUP MEETINGS

PFLAG DeLand/Volusia, 4th 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

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Winter Solstice Worship Service, Sunday, Dec. 21, 7 PM

The UU Ministry for the Earth provides another opportunity to welcome seasonal change from your armchair. Contact comms@uumfe.org or your Denominational Affairs Team, Joyce Palmer and Dawn Taggbloom for more details.

