

**UU Deland
First Unitarian Universalist Church of West Volusia
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2025**

Call to Order: President Mel Browning called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m.

Chalice Lighting: Offered by Mel Browning, featuring a reading from Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Opening Remarks:

President Browning reminded attendees that all meeting materials were emailed two weeks prior and that printed copies were available for those who requested them.

Quorum:

A quorum was established. There were 62 eligible voting members as of the meeting date; 30% (18 members) was required for quorum.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Andy Bowen moved to approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting as presented.

Seconded by Martha Jess.

Motion carried by voice vote.

President's Report – Highlights by Mel Browning

- **2025 expenditures** were under budget.
- **2026 pledge campaign** exceeded its goal.
- The church will continue **without wind insurance** due to high cost, but a contingency fund is in place.
- The **air conditioning system** may need replacement soon, as it is approximately 40 years old.
- The **back lot** recently required removal of a fallen tree and other debris.
- The **UUA renewed our certification as a Welcoming Congregation**; thanks were extended to Marguerite Johnson for her leadership.
- A **new website** is being designed by John Cupak; updated photographs will be needed.
- Paul Garfinkel will explore **additional digital communication outlets** for public engagement.

2026 Proposed Slate of Candidates

Board of Directors:

- President: *Jade Hoke Smith*
- Vice President: *Nancy Jacobsen*
- Treasurer: *Les Figueroa*
- Secretary: *Ella Shepherd*
- Members-at-Large:
 - *Paul Garfinkel*
 - *Patti Rausch*
 - *Jim Dries*

Nominating Committee:

- 1-year term: *George Stevenson*
- 3-year term: *Colleen Cunningham*

Election:

Mel invited nominations from the floor; none were offered.

Andy Bowen moved to close nominations; seconded by John Cupak. Motion passed.

Mel called for the slate to be accepted by acclamation.

Deb McShane moved to accept the slate as presented; seconded by Donna Pepin.

The slate was approved by unanimous voice vote.

2026 Budget Presentation

Charles Bose, treasurer, presented the proposed 2026 budget. He explained that past budgets had combined building maintenance, insurance, and mortgage payments under General Administration, which is not an accepted accounting practice. He recommended that future budgets move these expenses to the Building category for more accurate reporting. The congregation responded positively to this recommendation.

Mel asked for approval of the 2026 budget.

Jade moved to approve the budget as presented; motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Bylaws Review and Vote

Proposed bylaws changes were reviewed.

Ella Shepherd moved to accept the bylaws as presented, including the revision to Section 3.1. The amended sentence would read:

“The congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of all individuals in carrying out its mission **inclusive of** race, color, gender, ...”

Seconded, and approved unanimously.

Presentation of UU Core Shared Values

Andy Bowen presented a framed set of UU Core Shared Values and Statements. The congregation expressed appreciation, and the pieces will be displayed appropriately in the church.

Other Business

- George Stevenson requested that future budgets include clearer detail on income and expenditures.
- Marguerite Johnson acknowledged that UU DeLand has been recertified as a **Welcoming Congregation**, and noted that a framed certificate is displayed in the lobby.

Adjournment

Mara Whitridge moved to adjourn; seconded and approved.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl D. Kellogg