

TRI-UU NEWSLETTER

This Month:

Birthdays

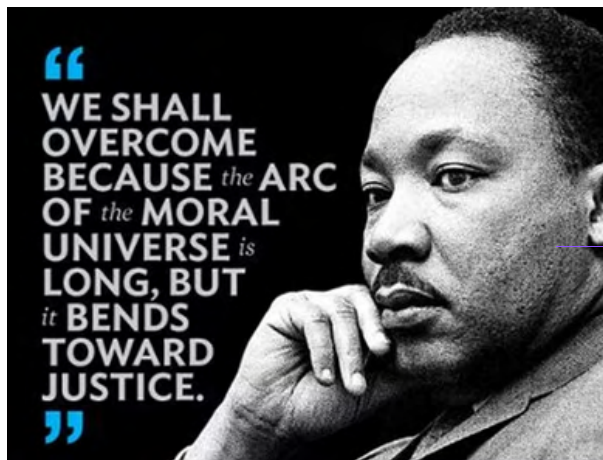
Diane Trice	01/08
Larry Cooper	01/09
Dani Hunter	01/09
Joyce Mills	01/11
Sally Bethart	01/12
Judy Kemp	01/22
Kathy Anne Greco	01/27
Mary Ann Hume	01/27
Lynne Westmoreland	01/28
Eddie Boufford	01/30

Calendar

• Building & Grounds	01/06	10 am
• Finance	01/12	2 pm
• Worship	01/08	10 am
• Forum: "Florida Farmworkers"	01/08	4 pm
• Meditation	01/08	10:30 am
• Board Meeting	01/19	1 pm
• Meditation	01/22	10:30 am
• Tri-UU Book Club	01/26	1 pm

Continue inside for more information!

Deadline for submissions to January's TriUU Newsletter will be January 24.



Commemorative

Committee

Scholarship

Thank you SO MUCH, my Tri-UU Family and Friends, for November's Fifth Sunday Donation that was collected for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Commemorative Committee, to provide college scholarships to area high school students. Tri-UU donated \$2,263, which really helped MLKCC to be able to award scholarships of \$4,000 each to fifteen deserving seniors! Those of you who bought tickets to the Awards Breakfast on January 10th will have the opportunity to learn about some of these student leaders and their plans for the future.

With great appreciation,
Helene Kirschbaum

The Giving Trees

IMAGINE the faces of the children, and their parents, who received the gifts from the Giving Trees ornaments. Some families, who have been displaced to motels this month will use the gift cards in a different way. You truly have made a difference for local families this year.

Children in the Dallas community will have an opportunity to use their gift cards to get a unique item.

Thank you for caring and shopping for a special request for the children whose only gifts may be from you."

Joyce Mills



TRANSFORMATION

January's spiritual theme is "Transformation."

Jan 4:

Rev. Kathy Schmitz

"The World is Changing... So Must We."

One of our shared values is Transformation. As we look to the new year, we'll reflect on what transformation means for our hearts and minds in a rapidly changing world.

Jan 11:

Rev. Kristina Spaude

"Dreams and Dares."

Today our annual Stewardship campaign kicks off. Rev. Kristina will challenge us to consider our hopes and dreams as we turn our minds toward the future.

Jan 18:

Rev. Kristina Spaude

"A Better World."

At the 2025 national UU gathering, General Assembly delegates voted to study "Abolition, Transformation, and Faith Formation," raised by the Church of the Larger Fellowship, which serves about 2000 incarcerated members. On this MLK Jr. Sunday, we'll explore a more just vision of the future.

Jan 25:

Rev. Dr. Steve Burt

"Pious Profanity."

Do you ever find yourself watching the news and reeling off a string of Mom's wash-your-mouth-out-with-soap words? Are the words of politicians any less profane? Rev. Dr. Steve Burt will explore this lively topic.

GREAT DECISIONS

Great Decisions will begin on January 20, 2026, with Dr. Mark Welton moderating our class.

The Foreign Affairs Association offered a 20% reduction on the price of books purchased during the week of October 20, 2025. The board authorized the purchase of 15 of the books. Gretchen has ordered them, and they will arrive in early January. A sign-up sheet will be in the back of the Chalice Room. Those first 15 books purchased will be \$30 each. If you purchase your book later, you will be responsible for ordering your own book.

Classes will be held on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm until around 2:15pm. We will skip the week of February 3, due to the Rummage Sale. The last class is March 13.

Topics are timely and include such discussions as Trump Tariffs and the future of the World Economy, U.S. - China Relations, Ukraine and the Future of European Security, for example. Questions?

Contact Gretchen Lewis



JOIN US



**Tri-County
Unitarian Universalists**

**7280 SE 135th St.
Summerfield, FL 34491**

Please Join us for our January Forum

Farmworkers and Immigrants

Thursday, January 8th, 4 p.m.

Jeannie Economos, Environmental Health Project Coordinator at the Farmworker Association of Florida in Apopka will address current conditions for Farmworkers and Immigrants.

The Farmworkers Association in Apopka supports families and community members. Families are asked for all kinds of documents and requirements that have not been needed in the past. Waiting times to receive food stamps are longer, plus, the dollar amount is less. This is already having an impact on many families,

Learn how interested UU members can help farmworkers and immigrants in their communities.

Please donate money or bring food donations such as beans, rice and masa harina (corn flour). Supplies for diapering and hygiene are also welcome.

A potluck dinner will follow the Forum. Please join us.

Note from Jeannie:

Also, in the meantime, if UU members are interested in things they can do to help farmworkers and immigrants in our communities right now, we do have a big need for food (beans and rice and masa), and things like diapers and hygiene supplies.

At our office in Apopka, we help community members with Food Stamp applications. Recently, families are being asked for all kinds of documents and requirements that they had not needed in the past, and the waiting time to receive the food stamps is much longer, plus, the dollar amount is less. This is already having an impact on many families. So, just a thought, but we often have people ask what they can do to help, and right now, donations of food, etc., and/or support for us to purchase food, would be very welcome.

"The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people." Cesar Chavez

"Nu to UU" Class - January 24, 2026, 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Are you curious about Unitarian Universalism or interested in learning more about Tri-County Unitarian Universalists? Join Rev. Kristina and me for our "Nu to UU" class, where we'll explore the values and beliefs of Unitarian Universalism and introduce you to our local Congregation. This is a great opportunity for newcomers or for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding.

Location: Tri-County Unitarian Universalists

We hope to see you there! For more information or to RSVP, please sign up in our sanctuary or contact:

Helene Kirschbaum at helenekirschbaum@gmail.com

Message from Reverend Kristina:



In January we celebrate the beginning of a new year... although for congregational life, it's more like smack dab in the middle. We will be seeing more of our snowbird friends return - and how lucky are we that some have already come back? Their presence may help ease the sadness of letting go of some of our longtime

and beloved members, who are moving for various reasons.

The spiritual theme we'll be engaging in January is "Practicing Resistance." It's a theme we've explored some in the past, and one that we'll surely continue to explore in the future. It seems to be a factor of the times we find ourselves living in, but also one I believe UUs as a whole are beginning to take more seriously as a matter of faith. It surfaces questions like, "What do we want the future to look like?" and "How do we act in a way that helps make that vision real?" and "What do our Shared Values tell us about how to be in the world?"

This month TriUU will also be launching its annual stewardship campaign, headed by the enthusiastic and gifted Pat Felton. Be prepared to hear messages about how great a place TriUU is (as if you didn't already know) as we wonder together as a congregation where we want to go in the future.

One of my favorite acts of resistance is cross stitching. It probably sounds very little like resistance, but I maintain that the creation of beauty in the world is a powerful act of resistance.

(Cont'd on p. 5)

President's Message from Cindy Crossman

Reframing Resolutions Into Intentions



Several years ago, our interim minister, Reverend Cynthia Snaveley, asked us to think differently about New Year's resolutions. She encouraged us to reframe them as intentions. I have been thinking about that a lot lately.

The problem with resolutions is that we start off with the premise that we are doing something wrong and so we need to work hard to achieve a specific outcome. On the other hand, intentions are more flexible. They allow us to focus on growth instead of a predetermined result. We can ask ourselves what are our growing edges? Where do we want to realize more fulfillment in our lives? We can define how we want to be, not just what we want to achieve.

This is not just about making corrections; it's about considering how precious each of our lives are and taking the time to reflect on honoring our unique being.

The writer, Oliver Burkeman, takes it even further by saying that instead of focusing on what will make us happier or what will improve us, we can think about what will stretch us, deepen our experience, or make our lives more significant — even if it's uncomfortable at first. He calls this process "choosing enlargement" which prioritizes deep, meaningful growth over surface-level improvement.

(Cont'd on p. 5)

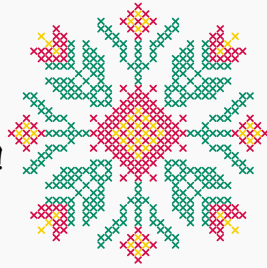


MESSAGES

Message from Reverend Kristina: (cont'd from p.4)

Speaking of cross stitching, I'll be on vacation through January 10 (with luck... there's a lot that needs to get done for that to happen). I won't be traveling, so I'll be available for pastoral emergencies. While I'm away, please remember that I will not be contacting you by email or text with weird, "urgent" requests for gift cards or anything else.

I look forward to connecting with you again when I return!



WHAT COULD YOU DESIGN WITH CANVA?

Have you admired how well-designed our monthly newsletter is? Jeff Tatarka, our newsletter creator, uses Canva. Would you like to learn to design and create stand out, imaginative social media content? That is what Canva can do with you at the helm. Check it out at canva.com. We, the Communication Team, would like to have someone else learn the program too. Is that you? Would you like this challenge?



If so, contact Lenore at lenoretriuugmail.com.

President's Message... (cont'd from p.4)

At TriUU there are many opportunities for finding meaningful growth. Our multiple small group gatherings like our community coffee hours, our women's group, our men's breakfast, our chalice circles, or even our Sunday lunches allow us to deepen our relationships with one another. There we can show our sometimes vulnerable, authentic selves and practice acceptance when others are feeling vulnerable too. There we can manifest "unconditional positive regard", to borrow a phrase from the humanist psychologist, Carl Rogers.

Our monthly forums, our book club, our online news group and our Great Decisions course allow opportunities for intellectual and civic enlargement. Our worship services and our meditation group encourage us to develop a deeper sense of our own spirituality. If you look carefully, I am sure that you will find many opportunities to stretch within our beloved community.

How will you grow in 2026? In the words of the poet, Mary Oliver, "what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

The Tri-UU Mission

"We unite in religious community to seek spiritual growth, live with integrity, and serve with compassion."



MEDITATIONS

"The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it." – Thich Nhat Hanh

Meditation -- Joyce Axelson

Blessings for welcoming the New Year with ease, gratitude and joy. As one year closes on the Calender and another one opens, I am reminded of the joy I have found inside of myself through the practice of Meditation..I am also grateful to share this practice with thosewho are interested in learning, and practicing mediation in a group, Some topics we covered over the past year are:

Mindfulness

The Four Noble Truths

The Eightfold Path

The 8 Pillars to Joy

Hindrances

Practicing regularly with a group enhances my personal practice and opens my mind and heart center to an internal spaciousness that allows me to mitigate whatever is happening externally.

Developing a personal practice of meditation allows one to explore their internal landscape creating a more expansive knowledge of ones self.

Most of us in the West have been fortunate enough to benefit from the work of Jon Kabat Zinn, Joseph Goldstein, Susan Salzberg, Jack Kornfield and more.

Most of Western Buddhist Teachers have had the opportunity to actually study in the East with Buddhist Teachers, or Zen Masters. You may or may not be familiar with their work, perhaps even to have studied with one or more of them.

There is a common thread that creates a beautiful tapestry of Meditation Practices, Studies and a way of living is taught by these Instructors. The primary thread is 'JUST SIT'....'JUST BREATHE' 'LET GO'..

Sounds too simple and it is, however, there are 'hindrances' in Meditation Practice to overcome, and we learn about those in our studies and practice.

On behalf of the Meditation Group, I am inviting you to join us..The schedule is published in the Timetable.

"Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it." – Buddha



Welcome to Unitarian Universalism!

Reverend Kristina

Our faith is not like others in many ways, and it can be confusing for people who are new to our pews. I've written broad strokes about our faith, what it takes to become a UU minister, and the role of covenant in our faith life in previous months. This month I thought I'd write about worship.

Our history as a faith comes from two Christian denominations – Unitarianism and Universalism. Although there had been movement from the centrality of Christianity in either denomination for some time, this became more solidified during the consolidation of the two into Unitarian Universalism, and even more since. I have described us before as “coming from Christian traditions but no longer bound by them,” one way to frame our pluralism.

There are various aspects of our congregational life/lives that draw from those Christian roots, and one of them is worship. The structure of our worship services – our liturgy – still is rather Christian in its form. The content of the services is only occasionally Christian in flavor, but the outline very much is.

There are probably a variety of reasons for this, but two that are important are that it works and is adaptable. Most elements change between one service and another, but the familiarity of the structure lets people know what to expect when in the order and flow.

I can go on about this for a while, but I'll try to stick to some of the main points. Good services have an emotional arc. There's welcoming in; opening and settling; pastoral and community care (this is both the time for Joys and Sorrows as well as the offering); deepening, challenging, affirming, and other things, hopefully in the right balance; and closing, preparing us to re-enter the wider world.

Music is meant to complement the message, to affirm what is being said, to set the tone for different elements, to provide familiarity as we think our thoughts.

Good services also have a core message that is carried throughout. All the elements of the service, from the Opening Words through the Closing Words/Benediction, and the prelude to the postlude, should all reflect that message. Each element offers its own lens or frame or viewpoint on the central message while also fulfilling their role. Not everyone hears all the parts of the service, or experiences them in the same way. The variety of kinds of ways to engage with the theme allows everyone to get something they can take with them.

I would also add that good services reflect many voices. While I very much believe that worship is a conversation between minister and congregation (or in my case currently, two congregations, which is sometimes quite an adventure!), and it is clearly my work to lead in this area, I am also quite sure I am not the only one with wisdom to offer. In my home congregation, just like Tri-UU, many people participated in worship services, from the chalice lightings and extinguishings, worship associates, musicians, and others. Participation by many is a beautiful expression of our values and community-making.

Every congregation's liturgy is a little (or sometimes, more than a little) different from others, unless they have taken theirs from another. This reflects our congregations' individuality as well as being an expression of what has been important to them.

I have been thinking about some new ideas to explore in worship. In the meantime, if you have questions or ideas, please feel free to reach out! And if there's something else you'd like to hear about, let me know!



KNOW TRI-UU

The Work of Membership: Growing a Connected Church

The Membership Team plays a quiet but essential role in the life of Tri-UU. At its heart, our work is about connection—helping newcomers find their place, supporting long-time members, and making sure our community stays strong, organized, and welcoming. One of the ways we do this is through our Nu 2 UU classes, where we introduce new friends to Unitarian Universalism, share the story of our congregation, and answer the many thoughtful questions that arise when someone is exploring a spiritual home.



Another important part of our work is the Care Team, a ministry of members helping members. Whether someone needs a meal, a ride, a phone call, or simply a listening ear, the Care Team steps in with compassion and practical support. This is community at its best—people showing up for one another in ways that are simple, human, and deeply meaningful.

Behind the scenes, the Membership Team also maintains three major databases: the whole-church directory, the email list, and the UUA membership records. These tools help us stay organized, communicate effectively, and ensure that our official membership count is accurate. We assist with by-laws updates, track membership numbers for congregational meetings, and help count votes when decisions are made. It's detailed work, but it keeps our congregation running smoothly and transparently.

Most of all, we encourage a culture of warmth and welcome. Being friendly, offering help, and reaching out to newcomers isn't just the work of one team—it's the work of the whole church. Every smile, every greeting, every small act of kindness helps someone feel at home. Welcoming others is something we all share, and it's how we continue to build a vibrant, connected church.



TriUU News Group

Are you feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by the flood of news and opinions coming at you from TV, newspapers and social media? Have you been tempted to turn off TV news? The TriUU News Group has a special place for you! It meets on Zoom every Tuesday afternoon, 4:00-5:00 P.M. It is an open forum for discussing news items of international, national and local interest in a respectful atmosphere. It is a place to hear and be heard in a congenial atmosphere.

The Zoom link to the News Group is on the TriUU website (triiu.org). Scroll down below the Sunday Service bar to a section called TriUU Weekly and Monthly programs. There you will find the Zoom Link. Any Questions? Call Roger Cooper at 352-259- 8545 or Jan Droegkamp 262-510-8760



Some of our members meet after
Sunday Service for Food and
fellowship.

Tri-UU Tortoise Team

We've got some "turtley" good news! Actually, they're tortoises, not turtles, but they are even more turtley awesome!

Anne and Liz, of our TriUU Memorial Garden Team, aided by Aaron, Calvin, Tim and Sally, were working in Melody Meadows and discovered more Gopher Tortoise burrows! We respectively avoided her burrows and now are working on protecting her habitat. Her real name is *Gophermus polynemus*, but Aaron named her Uni, since she is a Beloved UU!

Most of you know that Gopher tortoises are a "Keystone" species, i.e. very important and desirable. Their burrow supports up to 350 other species, from insects to snakes! Their presence is so important that they are a protected species in Florida, at least for now. As you can imagine, developers are their biggest risk. Unfortunately, they have been removed from the Federal Endangered Species list, since they interfere with development.

The Meadow's "Longleaf Pine Sandhill" is their preferred habitat, and the same habitat needed for the cacti, which is an important food source for gopher tortoises. Please don't dig up their cacti!

Please visit us at Melody Meadows, behind the driveway hedge, to see Uni's home and watch our progress! Like the Gopher Tortoise, we will move slowly and with intention!

If you would like to "adopt" a tortoise by donating plants or trees for their habitat, please see Ann or Liz.



COMING SOON

Join Us for Richer Music and Singing!

The Choir and our Music Director, Tom Zitkovic, would like to invite YOU to join us in the choir. We practice on Wednesdays from 4:00PM-5:30PM in the TRIUU Sanctuary. Your presence and voice are needed for a richer sound.

Also, if YOU have directed a choir or singing group before and want to help with the singing, volunteer to lead the hymn singing with a microphone during the Sunday Service and/or attend choir practice and lead the choir, volunteer to help us. Tom finds it challenging to play the accompaniment and lead the choir to perform its music at the same time.

If you play an instrument, sing with a group and want to perform with the choir, or perform a solo with accompaniment or without, we need YOU to enrich our music program.

Hymnbooks. If you read music and want to see the notes so you can sing the hymns better, hymnals are on a metal rack on the left side of the sanctuary as you enter. The Order of Service you are given at the door lists the hymn numbers we will sing. We have two hymnbooks. The older dark gray book: "Singing the Living Tradition" Numbers 1 to 415.

The newer teal book: "Singing the Journey" Numbers 1000 to 1074.

Contact Nancy Solberg or Tom Zitkovic to volunteer or if you have any questions.



Grief Support Group

Grief hits us in many ways. It could be from losing a loved one, a pet, or a change in your living situation. It could be from losing who you used to be. It can even be grief over what could or should have been, but wasn't.

TriUU will be starting a peer Grief Support Group in January. This is not intended to replace any form of therapy, but as an opportunity for mutual sharing and encouragement. It will be coordinated by Lenore Mickelson and Sally Primc, and facilitated by the Rev. Trish Schwartzberg, with assistance from the Rev. Kristina, if needed.

If you are interested in this group or have questions, please contact Lenore or Sally. There will be sign-up sheets in the sanctuary, with a place to indicate days of the week, times you would be able to attend, and frequency of getting together. The group will meet at the TriUU Building (this will be in person only, no Zoom).



COMING SOON



Tri-UU Annual Rummage Sale February 5, 6, 7.

Mark your calendars for the return of this annual event.

Start putting aside sellable items such as:

- Household items
- Decorative items
- Small appliances
- Games
- Jewelry
- Accessories
- Purses and bags
- Sport items
- Books
- Children's toys
- Dishware and tableware
- Small furniture
- Garden items

Donations may be brought to the building Feb. 2, 3, 4.
Look for more details and ways to help in the coming weeks.

Joyce Mills and Andrea Coburn

