

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola

The Light

Vol. 69 Issue 3 March 2026



Celebrate Diversity *Strive for Justice* *Inspire Love*

From the President – March Reflections

From Your Board: President's Letter

Dear Beloved Community,



As we step into March, we find ourselves in that gentle turning of the seasons—when cooler mornings give way to warmer afternoons, and the first signs of spring begin to emerge all around us. Here along the Gulf Coast, March often brings a bit of everything: sunshine, rain, and the occasional surprise chill. Yet in all its variability, this month reminds us that change is constant, and with it comes the promise of renewal.

Here at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola, March invites us to reflect on that spirit of transformation in our own lives and in our shared community. This month, our Sunday services will center on the theme of renewal and new beginnings. Together, we will explore what it means to begin again—with intention, with courage, and with hope.

Spring is not only a change in the weather; it is a call to awaken. It asks us to notice what is stirring within us, what we are ready to release, and what new growth we wish to nurture. Whether it's rekindling a spiritual practice, deepening connections within our congregation, or stepping forward into new opportunities for service and justice, this is a season rich with possibility.

You may notice the world around you coming alive—trees budding, flowers blooming, longer days inviting us outdoors. I encourage each of you to take a moment to pause and appreciate these small miracles, and to consider how they mirror the quiet transformations happening within your own heart.

March also offers us meaningful opportunities to gather, reflect, and celebrate together. I hope you will join us on Sundays and participate in the life of our church, whether through worship, fellowship, or acts of compassion in our wider community.

As always, I am grateful for each of you and for the ways you help make this congregation a place of warmth, inclusion, and spiritual growth. May this month bring you a sense of renewal, a spark of inspiration, and the courage to embrace new beginnings.

With gratitude and hope,

Crys Brockway

President

Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola

DIRECTORY

See our website, uupensacola.org, for updates and a complete list of teams

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(850) 475-9077, uupensacola@gmail.com

Community Minister

Rev. Maggie Lovins

Governing Board

President: Crys Brockway
President Elect: Brett Ramsey
Past President: Joe Vinson
Secretary: Marybeth Ramsey
Treasurer: Bradley Vinson
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Members at Large:

Ian Briggs
Herman "Pappy" Campbell
Penny Fendt
Claire Helton
Mark Swaney

Key People & Contacts

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Buildings & Grounds: Wayne Chardon Jr.
Caring: Crys Brockway
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Children's Religious Education Coordinator:
Honor M. Bell, III (cre@uupensacola.org)
Communications: Joe Vinson
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Denominational Affairs: Joe Vinson
Finance: Laurie Winterberg
Fun and Fellowship: Marybeth Ramsey
Leadership Development: Scott Satterwhite
Membership: Lauren Anzaldo
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Outreach: Laura Keith King
Safer Congregation: Brett Ramsey
(safer@uupensacola.org)
Social Justice: Paula Montgomery & Scott Satterwhite
Sunday Services: Nancy Hagman



Our annual Pledge Drive has ended!

Check Page 9 for more information on how to get in your pledge!

Newcomer Orientation, Sunday, March 29, after Sunday Service



Recent UUCP Members and Friends as well as prospective Members/Friends are invited to join us for Newcomer Orientation at UUCP. This interactive orientation will take place in the Sanctuary following Sunday Service that day.

Childcare is available during this orientation.

The orientation will provide useful information about our church while allowing you to meet and interact with other newcomers to UUCP. Topics covered include how to get involved in the activities of UUCP, the rights and responsibilities of membership, Fun & Fellowship activities, our budget and pledging, our Children's Religious Education program, our communication systems, and more! Orientation is presented by the Membership Team with support from other Ministry Teams and the UUCP Board.



March 21 | April 11

FemFest Song Circle participants will be helping lead music for our Women's History Month service on Mar. 22 if you'd like to participate please join us for our song circle the day prior on Mar. 21!

Sunday Services in March



The first Sunday of the month is always Manna Sunday! The collection basket will be in the lobby to drop off items. Most requested items from Manna Food Pantries include canned fruit in 100% juice, fruit cups (20 oz. or less), soups (low sodium), canned dinners (20 oz. or less), and canned tomatoes (16 oz. or less).

March 1, 2026

Service for All Ages (SFAA)

"The Individualist Fallacy"

Presenter: Joe Vinson, UUCP member

Join us in exploring how a key part of American identity was weaponized to weaken society and exploit the vulnerable.

Plus: Ministry Team Minute, Fuun and Fellowship

Children stay in the Sanctuary/Main Hall this Sunday.

Second Hour: Earthstars; JUST Pensacola Team Mtg; Long Term Planning Committee Listening Session

March 8, 2026

"Reimagining the Sacred: Metta Valley Gospel and the "Good News" We Need"

Presenter: Zachary Helton is a spiritual care counselor and author. His work centers on creating imaginative spaces for reflection and connection, especially in times of transition. You can find more about his work on zhelton.com.

In this talk, Zach will share the story behind his new novel, *Metta Valley Gospel*—what it is, where it came from, and why it feels urgently needed in this cultural moment. What happens when we retell the stories that formed us?

What new possibilities emerge when compassion becomes the center of the narrative? Join us for a reflection on creativity as spiritual practice, storytelling as cultural healing, and the enduring human need for meaning in uncertain times.

Second Hour: Sunday Sweets; Inner Harmonies: Using the Senses for Healing and Renewal

March 15, 2026

"Thinking Backwards, Thriving Forward: Enhance UUCP Community, Internal Intimacy, Caring, Adult Education, Retention!"

Presenter: Dr Dolly Haik-Adams Berthelot, long time member of UUCP

Let's all put our minds and hearts together to help our Beloved Community flourish in the future. Personal and professional perspective from a 40+ year PUUF/UUCP member, author, former journalist, teacher, professor, communication and organizational development consultant/workshop leader.

Second Hour: Long Term Planning Committee Listening Session; An Invitation, Creating a Safe and Loving Community at UUCP

Second Hour: Earthstars

March 22, 2026

"Tending the Spark: A Women's History Month Service"

Presenters: Various UUCP Women and Guests organized by Claire Helton, member of UUCP

"And we will care for each other / as the world around us unravels / And we will tend to the spark / of hope that lives within our grieving hearts." These are the words that started our first FemFest Song Circle gathering one year ago and the group has met monthly ever since at UUCP, tending that spark in ourselves and one another. For this Women's History Month service we'll be joined by members of the Song Circle and other members of our community to hear how they are tending that spark in uncertain times - and, of course, to sing!

Second Hour: Long Term Planning Committee Listening Session

March 29, 2026

"What is Safety While In a Diverse Community?"

Presenter: Honor Bell, III, BSW (they/them), CRE and Admin

How do we embody our values as UUs in an intentional community with people from diverse backgrounds? From culture to

civic alignment, to even simple etiquette of expression, how are we stewarding the next generation while fully exploring what it means to be human?

Fifth Sunday: Pass the Plate
"Mom Hugs" non-profit



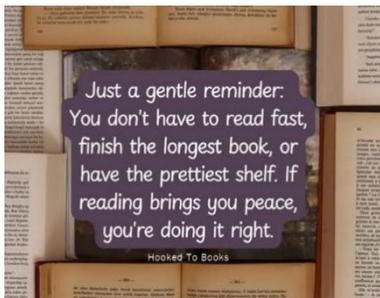
Sunday Sweets

Sunday Sweets for the month of March will be held on Sunday

March 15th. This is a change from the original date of March 8th. The reason for the change is that we will recognize Pi day (Saturday March 14th- 3.14....). There will only be pies available and no cakes for this event

Thank you. Michael Newcomb

Readers' Group



New Season of Readers' Group - Beginning Monday, March 9

Overwhelmed with so many choices at the Library or Bookstore....Your answer just might be as easy as joining the monthly ZOOM gatherings of some avid readers among us UUCP folks. Curated recommendations from UUCP folks - yes - please.

As always, there's no particular book to read in advance, the purpose of each meeting is to recommend books that

participants have read, currently reading, or plan to read. It's just that simple.

A link to the ZOOM meeting will be emailed to all UUCP Members and Friends the day before containing the link to join. Meetings start at 10am and last an hour.

The upcoming dates -
 Monday, March 9 - 10 am
 Monday, April 13 - 10 am
 Monday, May 11 - 10 am
 Monday, June 8 - 10 am
 And yes, we do love our public libraries.

Faerin's 80th birthday

Saturday, March 21, 5 - 8pm

In the church sanctuary

Dance To The Oldies Party plus potluck - bring a dish to share

Children welcome.

~Please no gifts besides your presence!~

We have begun the process of crafting our church's next long term plan.

This plan is meant to set out the goals and priorities of our church. We will be hosting two listening sessions per month directly following our Sunday service in the library.

We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate and weigh in on what you would like to see from our church over the next several years. Here are the scheduled dates for the sessions.

Please mark your calendar, and plan to attend at least one.

3/1, 3/22, 4/12, and 4/19.

Contact Brett Ramsey for questions & details.

Thank you.



JUST Pensacola
 Justice United Seeking Transformation

*It is time to look forward to our **Nehemiah Action** on the topic of Mental Health. That is when we ask our elected officials to commit to make the changes in policy and program to bend toward Justice. Last year's Action was attended by more than 700 Escambia County citizens.*

The Action will be held Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at First Baptist Church of Warrington.

All of us in our congregation are urged to attend and bring friends, family, neighbors, anyone else who would like to see more Justice in Pensacola and Escambia County.

It is not too early to mark the date and place on your calendar and begin thinking about whom you will invite.

If you attended a House Meeting and signed up to be a Network Member, you are counted on to attend. However, if you have not signed up, it is not too late to make the commitment to attend the Network Meeting as well as the Rally and the Nehemiah Action.

For questions ask Paula Montgomery, Penny Featherstone, Lauren Anzaldo or Barbara Wright.

March LUNCH BUNCH

Dear LB'ers.

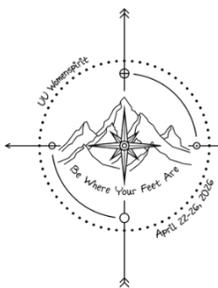
Well, Georgio's on Cervantez East was mentioned at our 11 February meeting, and it piqued my interest, having initially lived (4/84) nearby - but likely before they began operations; and also for the pizza attraction. So I was an early Saturday visitor for a small vegetarian meal, and found



it good but "expensive" (perhaps my '84 frugality), and maybe a little undercooked in the dough area; but in spite of this underwhelming flavor, let's try them at 3000 Cervantez, (850 432 5996). Being in business this long (40+ years) must mean they're doing something right ... and the menu is a lot more than pizza, which you can apparently find via Facebook (but not Google). As usual, 1 PM on this 2nd Wed. 11/3, and let me know for your seat reservation.

As for Jordan Valley in February: 1st, I did get the large Tabouleh Salad ... I had over-scheduled my 11 Wed. time from 11:30 to 1, spending it at Baptist's seminar on Health Longevity by Dr. Videau (originally of Louisiana, where-for he listed the 5 happiest cities in the country, all in LA.) But to the tabouleh, with the parsley taste strong, but not much else (lemon, oil, mint, ? etc.), and very much nearly invisible was the bulghur; a grain of good (protein) purpose. The contrast between our Jordan Valley repast (of 11/2) and our earlier Middle Eastern fare restaurant (Taste of Jerusalem) is the overpolished aspects: wait staff "upscale", heavy outside polished iron tables (steady in the winds for sure), fancy curtains between outside seating and the street ... but beware the Barrancas road noise. I did ask inside re our table of 8 and was advised that inside they can move the heavy looking booths/tables for parties of 30-40. - Hugh Ed T.

Register for U UWomenspirit April 22-26!



Registration is open for the Spring U UWomenspirit gathering at The Mountain in Highlands, NC, and this event will have several familiar faces for UUCP members: Nancy Hagman as Event Coordinator, Penny Featherstone on the Worship Committee, and Rev. Maggie Lovins on the Coordinating Council.

There are also two familiar faces on the program this time: Claire Helton (UUCP member) will lead an Institute Track and Catherine Quiring (former speaker at UUCP) will lead two Saturday workshops.

We would love to have you with us! Registration closes April 1 (early bird pricing through March 11).

Learn more at uuwomenspirit.org.



PFLAG Pensacola is official and nationally recognized!

We are working on a date to "open the doors," and if you'd like to stay updated on

the events and support group meetings for PFLAG, please reach out to Brian Lee Poteat.

What is PFLAG: (originally Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is the first and largest organization for LGBTQ+ people, their parents, families, and allies, focused on creating supportive, inclusive communities and advocating for equality through peer support, education, and advocacy. They provide resources, host meetings (in-person & virtual), and work to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals are safe, celebrated, and empowered by supporting families through the coming-out process and educating the public.

New Member Profile

Mike Gaines

If you are new to our UUCP community and would like to be featured, reach out to Dolly Berthelot!

What are your pronouns?

He/Him

Where were you born and raised? Education – High school, college, major, graduation?

Born in Elizabeth, NJ.

Got a B.S.M.S from Seton Hall University, NJ

Masters plus 32 credits at Seton Hall University, and also New Jersey Institute of Technology

Current or former work? Your chosen profession? What did you like about your career?

Chemistry and Physics Teacher, Linden High School, Linden, NJ (for 33 years)

Adventures or valued experiences the work has provided for you – and/or is still providing.

Teaching was the most exhilarating and rewarding work I could imagine.

Children: names, ages. Grandchildren.

Parents are deceased, as is my wife of 30 years, Trudi.

Children: Michael and Jennifer

Grandchildren: Alicia 27; Andrea 23; Sean 22; and Kevin 20

Are you from the Pensacola area, or recently moved here? What made you decide to choose the Pensacola area and where did you move from?

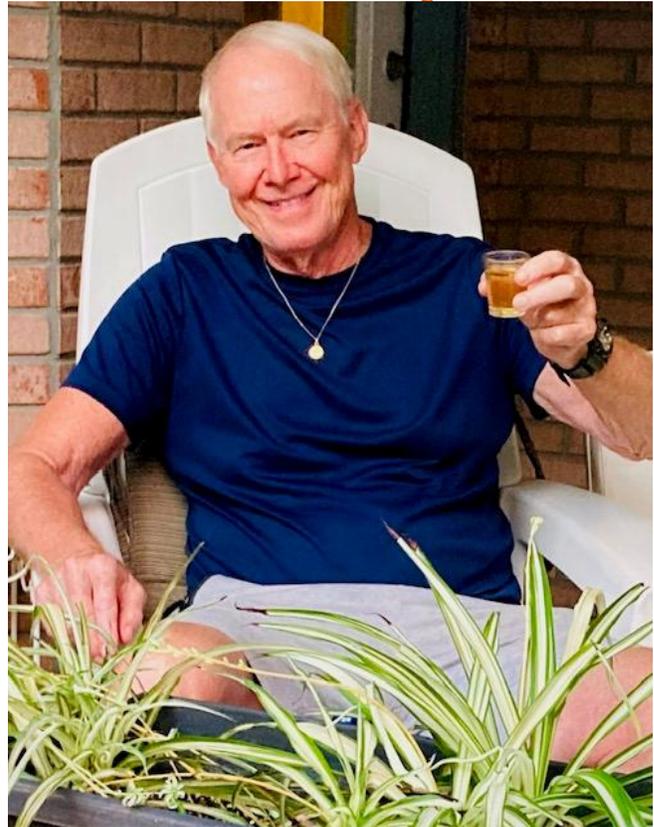
Moved from NJ in 1996. Had visited here and chose this area for retirement

What do you like about the area?

Warm, friendly people and a climate that suits me

Special interests or hobbies – now or in the past? - Sports, music, reading, art, community volunteering, lobbying for a cause, other?

Played baseball into college and have played tennis until recently. I also enjoy boating and fishing along with exercising.



Life’s adventures you’d like to share. Travels, raising a family, helping in the community, getting involved with organizations, starting and running a business, etc.

Watching my family grow and succeed has been my greatest joy.

What is your religious background? When did you become interested in Unitarianism, and what is there about it that appeals to you? Were other family members associated with a Unitarian Church, specifically UUCP?

I was raised Catholic and in some ways still consider myself one, however I did not agree with many of Catholicism’s teachings whereas Unitarianism always intrigued me. After some research, I found that the UU’s echoed many of my feelings.

Were you a member previously?

No

What do you like about our church? Changes you would like to see made? Programs you’d like to see added?

We have intelligent and caring people with a strong bent for social justice. I see that programs are always evolving and nothing is stagnant.

UU Reflections: Viola Liuzzo



On Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, a 39 year old UU in Detroit was watching the TV coverage of the cruelty of the law enforcement men in Selma Alabama on horseback beating a peaceful crowd with clubs. The crowd of peaceful citizens who were being brutalized had gathered to start a march from Selma to the state capital at Montgomery. That march was to protest the death at the hands of local law enforcement of a young black man in Selma. His name was Jimmie Lee Jackson. The Detroit UU who watched TV in horror along with thousands of others nationwide was Viola Liuzzo wife and mother of 5. She was a white woman and an activist with the NAACP in Detroit. She immediately felt urgently the strong desire to be in Selma and help with the reorganization of the protest and march which had been stopped by the violence at the foot of the Edmund Pettis Bridge.

She drove herself from Detroit to Selma and volunteered in any way that she could help. In addition to her willing spirit and enthusiasm, she had another asset. She had a car. As the march was being reorganized the car was useful in picking up volunteers from all over the country at airport, bus or train stations and transporting them to Selma or to the route of the march.

On March 9th UU minister Roger Reeb from Boston was beaten and killed by a group of white men outside a black restaurant in Selma. We heard about that killing at our Sunday Service on February 8th, 2026 with guest speaker Nancy Ziccardi.

On the day that the march reached Montgomery, March 24th, Viola was in the front lines for the last four miles. It is reported that she marched barefoot, singing loudly. After the culmination of the march with a rally and speeches and music at the capitol, Viola and Leroy Moton the black man who had been using her car to ferry supporters from the airport drove several of the marchers back to Selma. Viola

then volunteered to drive Leroy back to Montgomery. They were spotted by a car full of Klansmen in Selma at a traffic light. That car began to follow them. Viola was at the wheel of her car. The Klansman waited till they were out of town and began to ram the back of Viola's car. Leroy stated that Viola speeded up and sang "We Shall Overcome" at the top of her voice. The Klan car pulled up beside her and shot Viola. She died instantly, the car ran into a ditch. Leroy escaped by lying still while covered with Viola's blood. He was relatively unharmed. The Klan car sped away. The details were confirmed by an FBI informant who was riding undercover in the Klan car and as a consequence spent the rest of his life in witness protection.

The UUA has dedicated a plaque to the memories of Jimmy Lee Jackson, Rev Roger Reeb and Viola Liuzzo. They are also commemorated several places in Selma including with paintings on the wall of the museum dedicated to the march. Viola is honored in Detroit in several ways and places. A song about her named "Color Blind Angel" was written by blues singer Robin Rogers. Her story has been featured in several documentaries.

Paula Montgomery



*A Special Excerpt from the
UUA General Assembly
Newsletter!*

([Click Here](#) to Read More)

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUNE 14 – 21, 2026

MEET THE MOMENT: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE

In Uncertain Times, Choosing Connection Matters More
What is unfolding around us is deeply troubling for some and devastating for others. In a moment when many are experiencing harm, fear, and uncertainty, our Unitarian Universalist tradition asks us to turn toward one another. General Assembly 2026 is one of the places we practice that covenant together, in real time and in relationship. One way we are approaching GA this year is by naming a few simple strategies that help us stay grounded, connected, and accountable to one another in difficult times.

(continued on page 8)

Do not obey in advance. Resist.

When things feel uncertain, it can be tempting to pull back, wait it out, or assume we already know how things will unfold. Resistance does not always look loud or dramatic. Sometimes it looks like staying present, choosing not to disengage, and continuing to show up for community rather than withdrawing from it.

Build bridges, coalitions & trust.

Isolation makes everything feel heavier. Gathering with others, whether in a large space or a small one, helps rebuild trust and reminds us that we are not carrying this alone. GA 2026 creates multiple ways to gather so people can connect in shared space, have real conversations, and strengthen relationships that carry beyond one week.

Do the one thing you can do.

You do not have to do everything. Choose one thing that feels manageable. Pick how you want to gather. Invite one other person to join you. Show up for a conversation. Small, intentional actions are often the most sustainable way forward.

Strengthen institutions.

Institutions are not abstract. They are made of people choosing to participate, care, and invest in shared values.

General Assembly is one of the ways Unitarian Universalists come together to listen, learn, and practice being in community, especially when it is not easy. GA 2026 offers several ways to participate, including the Studio Site in Louisville, Satellite Sites hosted by congregations, Community Gatherings, and joining from home. Each option is a way to meet this moment together, in a way that fits your life.

If you are feeling unsure about what comes next, consider this an invitation to take explore your next move. Choose how you will gather. Stay connected. We will meet the moment together, everywhere.

March 15, 2026**Second Hour****An Invitation To Safety & Community:****Creating a Safe and Loving Community at UUCP**

In this Second Hour you are invited to learn about trauma-informed sensitivity and safety in an intentional community. In a diverse community we all come with individual and varied histories that inform our identity, faith, culture, humor, and so many other things. We can hurt each other or cause discomfort without meaning to or being aware of it.

According to our covenant, our goal is to love each other respectfully despite these differences. This will be the first discussion of several based around this concept of diverse expression, respect, and understanding the sensitivities of others.

For questions, contact Honor Bell or Laura Keith King

March 8, 2026**Second Hour****Inner Harmonies: Using the Senses for Healing and Renewal***Led By Felipe Muñoz*

Looking for ways to slow down, feel more centered, and reconnect with yourself?

Inner Harmonies is a gentle, experiential series exploring how our senses can support calm, clarity, and inner balance. Through guided meditative exercises, mindful awareness, breathing techniques, and intention-setting, participants will explore simple practices that help soothe the nervous system, restore energy, and cultivate inner peace.

Each session will focus on one of the senses, offering practical tools and reflective experiences that can be used in everyday life. No prior experience is needed, and participants are welcome to join at any point of the series.

This six-session series meets every second Sunday at 11:30am, providing a welcoming space for exploration, relaxation, and personal connection.

Come as you are. Leave feeling a little more grounded, a little more whole.

For Questions Contact Denise Gunn

~In Loving Memory~

Honorary Lifetime Member, **Joyce Smandra**, passed away October 2025. She was 81 years old. At present, there is no information available regarding condolences. Her name will be added to the Memorial Garden plaque later in the year. She is remembered fondly by many.



Welcome Home

Give Together, Grow together

Our annual Pledge Drive has ended!

Making your pledge of financial support - AND your annual re-affirmation of membership status - is easy

On-line from the church website [CLICK HERE](#)

OR

Stop by "Pledge Central" located in the church lobby

Whether you pledge on-line or on paper - check out the new "What's in Your Cup" It will help you in making your decision in how much to pledge. Remember - Our church is 100% Member and Friend funded. and about 93% percent of our operating budget comes from your most generous giving.

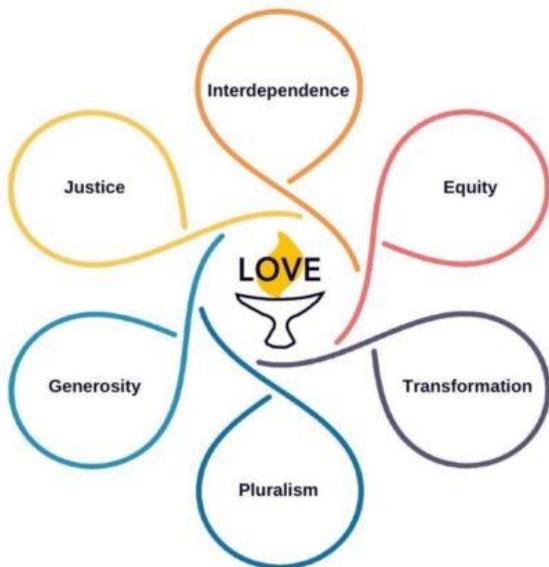
THANK YOU Your Finance Team.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola
9888 Pensacola Boulevard
Pensacola, FL 32534

TO:



Deadline for the April *Light*:
Saturday March 21



LGBTQ

Welcoming Congregation