

## TO SING OR NOT TO SING? OH, NEVER NOT TO SING!



At a four-hour rehearsal on Saturday afternoon, Deborah Berioli works with Choir Festival singers on "Trust the Seeds" by UU composer Elizabeth Alexander – "When the planting's over, you must trust the seeds."

### **Sounds of success - "Wish we could have this every Sunday"**

- From overwhelming response by both singers and those attending the Sunday worship service at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach, the Fourth Annual Florida District Choral Festival on February 27-28 ranked as an unqualified success. Of the 55 official registrants, some had to return home Saturday night, and others decided to be part of the audience. Combined with the singers in the Vero Beach Fellowship, a chorus of 74 singers joined their voices to honor the music of UU composers.

They traveled from all over the state – singers, musicians and choral directors from Gainesville, Lakeland, Nature Coast, Orlando, Ormond Beach, Palm Beach, Rockledge, Tallahassee, Tampa, Venice, Vero Beach and West Melbourne.



All dressed up for an early Sunday morning rehearsal with Sara Blackwelder conducting "We Live in Possibility" with music by David Zabriskie, words by Ann Hossler – "We then must come to know what is, to learn to love what's here."

Ann E. Hossler, director of music at UUFVB, hosted several fellow musicians who conducted or accompanied during the service - Deborah Berioli (Venice), Sara Blackwelder (Orlando), Ruth Lewis (Gainesville), Amy Menard (Tallahassee) and Jamie Sterrett (Orlando). Sterritt also served as drummer, with Rich Mermer (Vero Beach) on the steel guitar.

### **After-dinner entertainment**

Saturday night's talent show was fun with varied, impressive performances by Deborah Berioli (singing flat routine for soprano), Sara Blackwelder ("As If We Never Said Goodbye," song from *Sunset Boulevard* with piano accompaniment), Dan Eisaman (shuttle bagpipe), Dave Hoffman (guitar and "UU Blues"), Pete Kersey (Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwock"), Pauline Masterson ("Naked Lyrics"), Amy Menard (Irish fiddlin'), Rosie and Bill Murphy (Sonny and Cher routine), Bill Murphy ("The Parting Glass"), John Seebe and Cathy Stanton (a song from *Hymns for the Cerebration of Strife*), Joan Walsh and Steve LaPointe ("Almost Like Being in Love"). (See photos on page 14.)

The organization of music, home stays/lodging, food, entertainment, and rehearsal break presented many challenges but every volunteer rose to the occasion, each giving many hours to its success. Northeast Cluster president Allie Gore and her husband, Bob, drove the three hours from Ocala to enjoy a Cluster/District event.



With music, all things are possible, including holding your sweet baby while rehearsing for a concert.



*Lining up in the hallway leading to the lobby and thence into the sanctuary, processing in, two by two, to beautiful harmony and words - "Gathered here in the mystery of the hour"*

*A view from the balcony, with Ruth Lewis at the piano and Jamie Sterritt conducting "A Moment Comes, a Moment Goes" – "Century by century, the only thing that stood between the dark of disrespect and the grace of Good was Humility and Love." Sterritt wrote both words and music. His rousing "Mansion of Faith" was the postlude and brought the congregation to its feet with applause.*

The idea for a statewide UU choral festival originated in Gainesville in 2007 as the brainchild of Gainesville music minister Ruth Lewis, who tested the waters with an area festival. It was successful, and a District-wide Festival was held in Orlando in 2008 and in Clearwater in 2009.

The coming together of UUs from all over Florida to make music together fostered a spiritual connection for those involved, and a strong commitment to look to next year's festival. Watch your *Breeze* for updates and information.

*- Rosie Murphy*



***Some glimpses below of the Choir Festival Talent Show - John, Cathy, Dan, Amy, Joan, Rosie and Bill***

