

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA

JULY 2011

LET YOUR SPIRIT FLY

By Marjorie Loring, Board President



As we enter into a new year of lay-led ministry, I am both energized and inspired by the many gifts our community has received during this past year of transition. I am not referring to tangible gifts, though there were many, but rather gifts of spirit.

Standing beside the unfaltering leadership of Steve Tepper, I watched as members' perspectives of our future shifted from one of a looming end to one of a new beginning. You see, an amazing thing happened while we were busy focusing on the physical necessities (space, time, work, money) of "being" River of Grass – the collective spirit of River of Grass lifted and began to fly. (Luckily, we now have high ceilings.)

This is the spirit that welcomes and embraces our guests each Sunday when they walk through the doors of our new home. This is the spirit that fosters a sense of belonging. This is the spirit of love, the spirit of this congregation.

Another wonderful gift shows in how we have discovered new ways of being together. As a lay-led congregation, members are sharing themselves in ways that stretch each one of us in directions that foster personal and spiritual growth – we share

more openly, we act more kindly, and we feel more deeply.

We have invested ourselves in this community, heart and soul, and the rewards are endless. I have no doubt that we will have a minister again one day, but until that day comes, I will continue to look forward to the inspiration, wisdom, and insight that is shared by each member who steps up to the pulpit on Sunday morning. A sample collection of the wonderful reflections offered by volunteer lay leaders this past year is posted on our River of Grass [website](#).

As we look ahead, we look to open skies and a wide horizon. We now have the space to become a truly active spiritual home. We will soon take the important steps of a new envisioning process that will guide us into our future. Think about that future, see yourself in it, feel yourself in it, let your spirit fly and share what you see.



Grant and Erin Enwright proudly present one-year-old daughter Emma Kate at her Child Dedication Ceremony on June 19th, the first such service held in our new home. The entire congregation came forward to welcome our youngest member.

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REPORT FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By Karen Gonzalez

It was with great pleasure that I represented River of Grass at this year's General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in Charlotte, North Carolina.

This yearly gathering of delegates is the driving force behind the work that the association does on our behalf. It is here that decisions are made regarding how we will work together to live out our principles as an association, as congregations and as individuals. It's an inspiring, thought provoking and enlightening experience I hope to share with many of you in Phoenix next year. Here are some of the highlights of this year's general assembly:

- The 50th anniversary of the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America was celebrated with historical footage, personal reflections and cupcakes.
- The Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating was approved. This document brings attention to the ethical concerns regarding food practices in this country and the wider world, and calls us to action on several issues.
- Justice GA 2012 in Phoenix was approved, based on an amendment to the bylaws allowing for a minimal amount of business to take place at that GA for the first time. GA in Phoenix will offer opportunities for deepened understanding of our religious call to justice and human rights with a focus on the immigration concerns in Arizona, and including community engagement events.
- Dr. Karen Armstrong was the Ware lecturer. Dr. Armstrong spoke about her experiences of speaking to and about the world's religions and her new book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, and the companion project, Charter for Compassion.

Beyond these highlights, I attended many workshops, worship services and plenary sessions on other items of business. And, of course, there was lots of shopping and information gathering opportunities at the exhibit hall! For more in depth information on any of the proceedings or to watch highlights of the weekend, please visit www.uua.org. And, please consider making Justice GA 2012 in Phoenix a part of your summer plans next year.

OUR PRINCIPLES

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

OUR SUNDAY LOCATION

11850 W. State Road 84, Suite 1,
Davie, FL 33325

EVERY SUNDAY

Worship Service: 10:30 to 11:30am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30am to 12:30pm.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave the closer parking spaces for our guests and physically challenged worshippers.

All meetings are held at 11850 W State Road 84, Suite 1 in Davie unless otherwise noted.

SERVICES

- July 3** "Interdependence Day" – Pam Schrimsher & Grant Basham
July 10 TBA
July 17 Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going? – Spiritual Arts
July 24 TBA
July 31 TBA

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Newsletter

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 Concert Aaron Stang
 Community Awareness Esther Sampol
 Facilities Susan Juncosa
 Faith Development Karen Gonzalez & Diane Lade
 Finance Scott May Green TBA
 Membership Leana Bresnahan
 Pastoral Care Riley Cothran, Pat Katz & Marjorie Loring
 Service & Social Justice Alan Meerow & Judi Oltmans
 Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
 Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

FAITH DEVELOPMENT: PLANNING THE NEW YEAR

By Karen Gonzalez and Diane Lade, Faith Development Co-Chairs

“For us, holy living is wholly living and religious education is the door through which we pass to sort out our feeling and our understanding... From this sorting out comes our values. From our values come our actions and our inner resources. This is our religion.” – Reverend Margaret K. Gooding

As we look forward to a new year of religious education at River of Grass, we are planning to provide for our children, youth and adults a place and a means to “sort out” feelings about ourselves, each other and our world. With greater understanding, we are able to grow our spirits and thus help to change our world.

If you are interested in being a part of this rewarding experience, please see Diane Lade or Karen Gonzalez (co-chairs of the Faith Development Committee). We are looking for sponsors of short-term projects and longer-term classroom curriculum guides. Watch out for our new brochures with course offerings soon!

A taste of what to look forward to in 2011-2012:

Lessons from Dr. Seuss and the Simpsons, as well as some “holier” characters.

Our Whole Lives, a great youth sexuality and ethical decision-making class for junior high.

Affirmation, which is our rites of passage program for teens, and a trip to Boston for senior high (and yes, that means delicious food fundraisers!)

Lessons from “The Story of Stuff.”

The congregational school year will begin Sunday, Aug. 28, with a Registration Fun Day that will include brunch, information for parents and games for all. We hope you will join us!

FACILITIES RENTAL NEWS

River of Grass is happy to be renting some space in our wonderful new home on Tuesday mornings through July 26th for Mommy & Me Music classes.



Facilitated by our very own Gayle Giese, these classes will bring music play and the joyful voices of children into our multipurpose room on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 10:45am through July 26th.

Her classes are open to children 0 to 4 years, attended by a caregiver.

FOCUS ON WORSHIP: PLANNING OUR CONGREGATIONAL YEAR

By Kathy Jens-Rochow (incoming Chair)
and Brit Lundell (outgoing Chair)

Thank you for the past congregational year of inspirational lay-led services! Now it is time to plan for our second year of lay-led ministry and we need your help.

We have 52 worship services to deliver through the services of our volunteers. This is a wonderful opportunity for an individual, committee, or small group to step up and lead us in a worship service! For your convenience in checking for available dates, a schedule has been uploaded as a Google doc; the read-only file is available by clicking [here](#) – the first column, Service Leader, is the column we are interested in filling (the unfilled dates are highlighted).

In addition to the suggested message or theme, be sure to check out the various observances and events that may be happening around any particular service and which may inspire you as to a message or topic.

Please e-mail Worship@riverofgrass.org if you are interested in a particular date (first received, first to serve). And thank you for sharing in the lay-led ministry of our congregation!

VOLUNTEERING

Our worship services rely on the services of many volunteers. In addition to the opportunities to plan and deliver a worship service, there are many teams of volunteers who are needed to deliver our worship services, including:

Usher Team: Prepare the sanctuary for worship; invite congregants in; take up the offering; and tidy the sanctuary following service.

Presentation Team: Work with the Service Leader to create and project our visual presentation in aid of the worship service.

Lighting & Sound Team: Set up and control our lighting and sound systems each Sunday, working with the Service Leader, the Accompanist, and the Music Team/Choir to ensure that the spoken, played, and sung elements of the worship service are seen and heard.

If you are interested in helping with any of the above, let us know and we'll train you!

BOARD MATTERS

By Johnnie Peck, Board Secretary

The June 6 Board meeting focused on our 2011-2012 calendar year, which starts July 1. In attendance were members newly elected to the Board as well as existing members. Newly elected members are: Ken Bresnahan, Vice President; Diane Diaz, Trustee; Grant Basham, Trustee; Deb Giblin-Davis, Trustee; and Paige Giese, Youth Representative. The composition of the Board will also change as members leave and roles change. Marjorie Loring will serve as President, Janet Schwartz will serve as Treasurer, and Susan Juncosa will serve as Secretary. Tom Robinson is remaining on the Board as a Trustee.

Members of the incoming Board selected the second Wednesday of each month as the Board meeting night. That schedule will start August 10th. The date for the July meeting will be announced later.

The Board approved the President's list of committee chair appointments for the coming year. Vice President and incoming President Marjie Loring joined Steve in developing the appointments list. Members of the incoming Board concurred in approving the list of appointees. Chairpersons will be:

Annual Giving: Roy Schwartz
Auction: Audrey Stang and Esther Sampol
Caring: Kristine Barkley
Community Awareness: Esther Sampol
Faith Development: Karen Gonzalez and Diane Lade
Finance: Scott May
Membership: Leana Bresnahan
Service and Social Justice: Alan Meerow and Judy Oltmans
Concert: Aaron Stang
Shared Ministry: Janet Schwartz and Diane Lade
Worship: Kathy Jens-Rochow
Facilities: Susan Juncosa
Pam Schrimsher is being asked to continue as chairperson of the Celebrations Committee.

Other items before the Board included the following.

- The "Hub" Task Force reported that it has at least one remaining task. At this point the items listed as "needs" will cost more than the amounts collected for some build out and furnishing items. The Task Force will be meeting to prioritize those remaining items.
- Brit Lundell, current Worship Committee chair, notified the Board that service leaders are needed for Sundays from July 10 through August 31.

WOMEN'S GROUP SUMMER BREAK

By Kathy Jens-Rochow, Facilitator

The Women's Group will be taking a summer break and will resume meeting in August.

We will start our new congregational year with a party. What else could we do? We will have a snack and wine potluck to celebrate being together again on August 22 at 7:30pm. Everyone is asked to bring either a snack or wine or other drink to share. We will talk about our summer and what we want to do for the next year.

The Women's Group is open to all women of River of Grass and their women friends. We meet the fourth Monday of the month to discuss issues important to women. For more information contact Kathy Jean-Rochow at Womens-Group@riverofgrass.org.

TREASURER'S TIDBITS

By Kathy Jens-Rochow, Outgoing Treasurer

1. The balance in the Operating Account as of 5/31/11 was \$45,660.03.
2. The balance in the Benevolences Account as of 5/31/11 was \$3,264.95.
3. The TD Ameritrade balance as of 5/31/11 was \$125,133.72.
4. Plate collections continue to be above budget.

We are a generous congregation. Year to date, we have donated almost \$9,500 to Life Net 4 Families, in addition to our special collections. We contributed \$772 to the Mid-South Storm Relief fund last month to help the recovery due to the severe storm damage in that district.

At this point we show a deficit of \$1,222 year to date. We had budgeted a deficit of \$7,422. So, we are doing much better than we had budgeted.

This is my last Treasurer's Tidbits, as I retire from the Treasurer position. This year has been a learning year for me. I feel I understand River of Grass so much better. This year the congregation really pulled together to get to our new home and make it happen. The next years are going to be difficult financially, but I have great faith that our membership can make it happen.

Thank you for the honor of serving this wonderful group as Treasurer.

GREEN TIP:

BEST BET, AVOID PLASTIC CONTAINERS

By Steve Jens-Rochow

According to Jaymi Heimbuch in Treehugger.com, "The energy it takes to recycle plastic bottles is mind-boggling. It's no simple task to melt down all those bottles, for the amount of steps – not to mention electricity, water and manpower – that need to be taken to go from a bale of plastic bottles into safe, useable material is pretty staggering. And the plastic is usually degraded in the process and often can't be used for food-grade products again."

So, it is cheaper to make new plastic bottles from oil than to recycle. At best a small amount of plastics that are "recycled" are downcycled into plastic lumber. Where does the rest of "recycled" plastics go? Probably the landfill.

"Recycling should be a last line of defense in slowing down our consumption of natural resources," Heimbuch said. "Plastic bottles – indeed anything disposable – is simply a bad idea from the start. Reduce, reuse and recycle are the three Rs in this triangle, and reduce and reuse are the two most important Rs in the loop. Recycling gets the most attention. It might be because it doesn't require us to change habits, like shifting what items we buy in the first place so we avoid excessive packaging and disposable items."

The solution is easy: just drink filtered tap water in reusable containers. On the other hand, recycling aluminum is a very good idea. It only takes 10% of the energy that is used to mine and refine Bauxite ore into aluminum to melt recycled aluminum and make new containers.





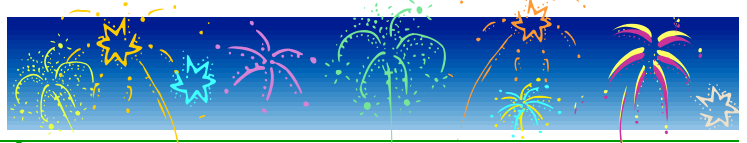
RIVER OF GRASS PLANS EXCITING CONCERT SERIES

On September 16, award winning local artists **Ellen and Gary Bukstel** (bottom right) will be our featured performers. In October or Nov (still TBD), we have the honor of presenting legendary Venezuelan jazz singer **Maria Rivas** (top left). Other performers scheduled for the concern series are **Al Petteway and Amy White** (top right), **Tim Farrell** (center), a virtuoso solo acoustic guitarist, and actor/musician **Ronnie Cox**, (bottom left), a life-long folk musician whose “side job” happened to be starring in *Deliverance*, *Total Recall*, *Robo Cop*, *Star Trek* and countless other movies and TV shows.



Full Moon Daughters, the River of Grass outdoors and spirituality group for women and girls, had their last outing of the congregational year in June at Oleta River State Park in North Miami. Halimah Polk and Laura Tepper relax in a mangrove tunnel after a two-hour kayak cruise to Intracoastal Waterway islands – and a close encounter with a friendly manatee. The Daughters take a break in July and August. But watch for details about our Brand New Year brunch on Sept. 24, and come help us plan our activities for the coming congregational year. If you have questions or want to get on our mailing list, contact us at FullMoonDaughters@riverofgrass.org.

JULY 2011



Sat.	2 nd	8:00am-12:00pm	Congregational Work-day
Sun.	3 rd	10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm 11:30am-1:00pm	Sunday Service Hospitality Hour Membership Committee
Tue.	5 th	9:00-11:15am	Mommy and Me Music Class
Sat.	9 th	6:00-10:00pm	Contra Dance Rental (dance at 7:30pm)
Sun.	10 th	10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm	Sunday Service Hospitality Hour
Mon.	11 th	7:00-9:00pm	Finance Committee
Tue.	12 th	9:00-11:15am	Mommy and Me Music Class
Thu.	14 th	7:00-9:00pm	Men's Group
Fri.	15 th		Newsletter Deadline
Sun.	17 th		Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI) begins, thru Sat. 23 rd
		10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm 12:30-3:00pm	Sunday Service Hospitality Hour Swamp Rose Covenant Group
Tue.	19 th	9:00-11:15am	Mommy and Me Music Class
Fri.	22 nd	6:30-9:00pm	Spiritual Arts Group
Sat.	23 rd		SUUSI ends
Sun.	24 th	10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm	Sunday Service Hospitality Hour
Tue.	26 th	9:00-11:15am	Mommy and Me Music Class
Thu.	28 th	7:00-9:00pm	Men's Group
Sun.	31 st	10:30-11:30am 11:30am-12:30pm	Sunday Service Hospitality Hour

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

Sun.	7 th	Child Dedication Sunday
Mon.	22 nd	School Starts in Broward County
Sat.	27 th	Welcome Picnic
Sun.	28 th	Welcome Sunday, New Member Recognition, and Faith Development Registration Fun Day

BROWARD CONTRA DANCE:

ALWAYS FRIENDLY AND FUN!

By Anita Mason of Broward Contra Dance and Susan Juncosa, Facilities Chair

River of Grass has its first renters! The Broward Contra Dance is meeting 7:30 to 11:00pm on the second Saturday of each month in our hall. Their first dance took place on June 11 with about 40 dancers ranging from elementary school age on up. They would love for any of us from the congregation to join them. Here's what they would like you to know:

Contra dance is an American folk community dance (sometimes called barn dancing) that is energetic, social, and lots of fun. In a contra dance, parallel lines of dancers stand opposite – or “contra to” – their partners. A dancer and his/her partner form a couple.

In response to the Caller's instructions, each couple dances with the couple next to them. Over the course of a dance each couple moves up and down the hall, dancing with the other couples in their line. There is no fancy footwork involved. Each dance is taught with a walk-through before the music begins, and the Caller gives instructions throughout the dance. If you are new, please join us for the beginner's session at 7:30pm.

Group dancing in South Florida has never been more fun. It's a great activity in an alcohol-free and smoke-free family environment. Bring the kids! Their live band, Happy Feet, will get you and your friends moving to upbeat reels, jigs and marches. Beginners, singles, couples, families – everyone is always welcome!

Bring a snack to share. We usually have a table full of goodies! Wear comfortable, non-marking shoes and be fragrance free (no colognes or perfumes please).

Upcoming Dance dates & Themes:

July 9	USA, wear your red, white & blue!
August 13	Family Night
September 10	Key West theme - Singles mixer
October 8	50's Night

Suggested donation: Adults \$10, Students with ID \$5, under 12 free! (\$25/family max.)

For more information, call Patrick or Anita at 954-431-0690.