

Reflections

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

AUGUST 2011

THE BIG PICTURE

By Marjorie Loring, Board President



We live in Florida. Our home is here, our work is here, and our congregation is here. It is the place where we have chosen to spend the day-to-day of our lives. What we need to remember is how easy it is to get comfortable – and, if we are not careful, how our comfort can easily become a silo, cutting us off from the rest of the world.

Every summer, Esther and I find the time to travel. It reconnects us to places outside of our Florida borders. It opens doors to the diverse landscapes of our world, taking us beyond the palm trees and tropical weather, into the snow-capped mountains, the deserts, and the wide-open plains, painting for us the bigger picture of this thing we call life on earth. It reframes who we have been and who we have become, and reminds us that we are a part of a multi-faceted and complex world.

This summer, our first stop was at General Assembly (GA) in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was during the experience of attending GA in Charlotte that the parallel struck me. GA is the “summer” of our congregational life. It connects River of Grass to the Unitarian Universalist world outside of our district borders and reminds us that there is a bigger picture, a diverse and complex world of the human spirit, and as Unitarian Universalists we are responsible to move through it with awareness and intention.

Both a joyous gathering and a healthy dose of sobering real world issues, General Assembly calls upon us to be our best selves. It calls us to come out of our congregational silos and join with the larger association’s movements in ways that require our commitment, hard work, and sacrifice. It calls us to walk our talk.

Member congregations are part of an important voice in this world – a voice that will only be effective when it resonates beyond the walls of our individual spiritual homes. As a member congregation, we, the members of River of Grass, are part of that voice. We should strive to be voices that speak not only through donation, but also through actions carried out by the physical movement of human presence and focused attention.

Please take the time to thank Karen Gonzalez for being our General Assembly delegate in Charlotte this year. Talk with her about what she learned and how we can get involved. There is important work to be done between now and next year’s historic “Justice GA” in Phoenix, Arizona. Let’s plan on stepping out of our spiritual oasis together and committing ourselves to being active participants. Let’s plan, starting now, on making history together in traditional Unitarian Universalist fashion.

As Gandhi said, “Let us **be the change** we wish to see in this world.”

May it be so.



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AUCTION COMMITTEE REPORT

By Elly Keane



Our next auction, scheduled for Saturday, December 3rd, 2011, will be co-chaired by Audrey Stang and Esther Sampol. They will be concentrating on the upcoming auction and Elly Keane will continue to oversee the member parties from the 2010 Auction.

The fall season for 2010 Auction Member Parties is just around the corner. September starts with two events held at our new home: a **Bingo Party** on September 9th, followed by the **Sunset Piano Concert** on September 11th. On September 17th, the Bresnahans will host a **Latin Festival** party at their home. Spaces are still available at all three events. Please contact Elly Keane if you would like to attend one or all of these events.

The “**Beer & Brats**” party and “**Where in the World Wine Tasting**” party are scheduled for October.

The 2010 Auction Committee is still arranging dates for the **Domino Duel** party and the **Mother/Daughter Sleep-over**. More information on these events will be provided in the weekly announcements.



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.

Faith Development Classes: begin Aug. 28, 10:45 to 11:45

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

- Aug. 7** “Seasons of Our Lives” – Johnnie Peck; baby dedication – Matthew Martinez
- Aug. 14** “I’ve got the Music in Me” (youth music service) – River of Grass youth (guided by Kathy Jens-Rochow)
- Aug. 21** “Your Computer as Spiritual Teacher” – Kip Barkley
- Aug. 28** “Welcome” (Welcome Sunday) – Marjie Loring & Esther Sampol

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Service & Social Justice Alan Meerow & Judi Oltmans
Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

FAITH DEVELOPMENT KICKS OFF THE NEW YEAR

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

Ready, set... have fun! This year's Faith Development program for children and youth, which begins in August, will channel everyone from Dr. Seuss to Bart Simpson. Students will find it's easy to be green through the **Story of Stuff** curriculum. But yes, there is religious education going on here, as these non-traditional sources are great ways for kids to explore our Unitarian Universalist values and help them develop their own.

We also will be offering two of our most popular and formative programs for teens in early 2012. The "**Our Whole Lives**" classes for middle school students builds a foundation for responsible sexual behavior and ethical decision. And in

Affirmation, high school teens work through our faith's fundamental questions – Why am I here? Where am I going? – as they write their own personal belief statements.

Classes begin Sunday, Aug. 28, with a kick-off brunch and registration starting at 9:30 am. There will be programs for children and youth in these categories: Preschool, elementary school, middle school and high school.

Classes this year are scheduled for during service, from 10:45 am to 11:45 am

Students will begin the morning in service, then be dismissed following the Story for All Ages. Classes will end 15 minutes into the coffee hour fellowship following the service. This schedule was picked because the majority of parents consulted preferred class during service time. The times could change if our efforts to sound proof the multipurpose room aren't successful.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

We are rebooting our teen program (also known as YRUU, or Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) with new advisors and monthly gatherings. Youth will meet on the first Sunday of every month during regular class time. Our UU teen programming is youth empowered, with the youth making the decisions about what they want to do, service projects and the direction of the group. There is no curriculum or lessons.

River of Grass teens also can attend weekend gatherings, or CONS, and meet other UU kids at other congregations through the statewide Beacon program, which works with the Florida UU District. Watch for more details about a new year YRUU party.

High school students will be in service the fourth Sunday of every month. This gives them the opportunity to experience worship. So given that they have youth group on the first Sunday, this leaves this age group with two class sessions monthly: the second and third Sunday. Parents and students will be given a schedule at registration to help them keep track.

We still are in need of teachers, as well as people who want to support our young UUs by hosting or volunteering for social gatherings and special programs. Our Faith Development program is managed and staffed completely by volunteers. If you feel religious education is an important part of who we are at River of Grass, we need your help.

If you are interested, email: faithdevelopment@riverofgrass.org. Or talk to Diane Lade or Karen Gonzalez. Teacher training will be from 9:00am-12:00pm Saturday August 27th.

We are looking forward to an exciting year!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Leana Bresnahan, Membership Chair

In these slower months of summer, our collective thoughts begin to turn to the new congregational year that will begin in earnest around the time the school year begins again. As we savor all of these firsts in our beautiful new home, the desire comes to my heart that I would love to share this beauty and this peace with many more people...with fellow travelers on this beautiful yet fragile planet, who like you and I, are searching for meaning, for community, for a way to contribute to the greater good.

As a congregation, we have always embraced the vision of being a large congregation, one that has a profound impact for good on the lives of our members and friends, on the community we live in, and on the larger world. Nurture your spirit. Help heal the world. That's my favorite Unitarian Universalist Association slogan ever, because it states in so few words what for me is the essence of why I am a Unitarian Universalist.

Our goals as the Membership Committee are to make the guests who walk through our doors on Sunday mornings feel welcome, encourage guests who find our brand of spirituality appealing to become members, and help our members deepen their connections to each other. These are actually things that we need all River of Grass members to take on as their own goals as well.

As we move into the new and exciting congregational year, we hope that you will share your feelings and beliefs about being a Unitarian Universalist and about being a member of River of Grass with us. Share your vision of how we can best grow our congregation to be that major force for good that we have always dreamed of being. And remember to look out for those new faces on Sunday mornings, to welcome them with love and openness to our midst.

The Membership Committee is currently planning the potluck Welcome Back Picnic, to be held on Saturday, August 27th, from 1:00 to 4:00pm. Liz and John Perez have graciously volunteered to host the picnic at their home (thank you, Liz and John!).

Please plan to attend as we all gather back from our vacations and travels to celebrate being together again. There will be a sign-up sheet at worship service to let us know what you plan to bring, and if you can help with set-up and clean-up. Or you can e-mail Membership@riverofgrass.org. (The Membership Committee will provide all the beverages, ice, and serving items.)

Looking a little further ahead, our next New Member Sunday will be held on October 9th. Prior to that, in September, we will hold a "Pathways to Membership" Class. We will let you know as soon as the date is set. If you are considering membership in River of Grass, please be on the look-out for the sign-up sheet at worship service. We can't wait to welcome you into membership in this very special loving community!



Jan Taddeo, a former member of this congregation, has been ordained and has been called to serve the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett, GA.

Congratulations and best wishes!

OUR GENEROUS CONGREGATION

By Janet Schwartz, Treasurer

As the newsletter deadline looms, the members involved with the congregation's finances are still finalizing our year-end financial statement. It's become a designated project this year because we've relied on River of Grass volunteers to do all of our accounting for the last five months. A special thank you is extended to Maddi Gutfreind and Roy Schwartz for the valuable gifts they brought to this project.

I'm unable to give you the final year-end results at this time, but I can say the preliminary reports indicate we are a very generous congregation. In the 12 months ending June 30, 2011, our special collections allowed us to donate:

- \$1,135 to the Unitarian Universalist Association for Japan Relief
- \$872 to the Trevor Project for preventing suicide among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth
- \$772 to the Mid-South UU District for Storm (Tornado) Relief
- \$870 to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee for Guest At Your Table.

In addition, funds from the annual Empty Bowls Project, 10% of our auction proceeds and 50% of our Sunday plate each week allowed us to donate \$9,700 to Life Net 4 Families during the same 12 months! Our generosity is truly a reflection of who we are as a congregation.

As I move into this new role of leadership at River of Grass, it is my sincere hope to serve our congregation in the best possible way. I thank Kathy Jens-Rochow for the outstanding job she performed as Treasurer over the last year and for the guidance she has shown during my transition.

... AND SERVICE IS OUR LAW

By Judi Oltmans and Alan Meerow,
Service and Social Justice Co-Chairs

Thank you to Steve Jens-Rochow, Zena and Nicole Tucker, Monica Guerra and her friend Patricia, and Andy Susman and his friend Mary, for participating at our River of Grass Saturday Volunteer Day at Life Net 4 Families on July 16th.

We unloaded two pallets of boxes from the Postal Food Drive and stocked the shelves with all the canned goods. It was great to see those pantry shelves full of food when we finished!

Our next volunteer day at Life Net 4 Families is Saturday, August 20th. If your committee or group is looking for a special way to spend a Saturday together, consider signing up for a Saturday Volunteer day and help us make a difference in our community! There is ample parking next to the facility and someone from the Service and Social Justice committee will be there to help.

Service is a core value of Unitarian Universalism and volunteering at Life Net 4 Families is a way to share a part of yourself and give back to our community.

As a reminder, each Sunday we are accepting donations of canned foods and nonperishable items. Look for the donation basket in the back of the sanctuary. At this time, Life Net 4 Families is in need of **peanut butter**, **canned vegetables** and **baby food**.

GREEN TIP:

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE: A GREENER ALTERNATIVE TO CHLORINE BLEACH

By Steve Jens-Rochow

Most of us use chlorine bleach, but a greener alternative is **hydrogen peroxide**, also called H₂O₂. Hydrogen peroxide is just water with an extra molecule of oxygen, which is a lot safer than bleach when it reacts with the environment because it just forms water and oxygen.

Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite) forms toxic byproducts like dioxin when it reacts with the environment. So just add a cup of 3% hydrogen peroxide solution instead of chlorine bleach to your whites in your wash.

In fact hydrogen peroxide is the active ingredient in "oxygen" bleaches. Fill a spray bottle with 1/2 H₂O₂ 3% and 1/2 water and use it to treat areas affected with mold, use it as a toilet disinfectant and use it to remove blood stains from clothing, rinsing promptly to avoid bleaching.

For more information, check out <http://www.green-livingtips.com/articles/64/1/Hydrogen-peroxide-tips.html>.



RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ = PURE MAGIC

By Gayle Giese

I couldn't stop smiling as I watched Mark Hanson work his finger-picking guitar magic at the new River of Grass Café's inaugural event, Saturday, May 14th; or the wonderful June 17th event when local artists Mitch Kopp, Dr. Bob, Mike Carignan, and River of Grass musicians Aaron Stang, Gary Gonzalez and Steve Teppeper all performed to a full and very appreciative audience.

For each monthly event, the Concerts Committee transforms the sanctuary into a dreamy, café/club with an ambience sweeter than wine. The glow of pretty candles on the earthy tablecloths signals a relaxing night with friends. Delicious food and drink keep folks almost as happy as the awesome music.



Aaron Stang has been busy booking more great acts to delight us. In fact, his connections with musically-diverse touring artists will make the Café stand out among other folk music venues. See the Café Calendar below and mark your own calendars. And remember, all concerts / coffeehouses at the River of Grass Café are fundraising events for our growing River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Come and ENJOY!

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ CALENDAR

- Sept. 16: Ellen and Gary Bukstel, award-winning singer/songwriter local folk artists
- Oct. 21: TBA; stay tuned!
- Nov. 18: Maria Rivas, world-class Latin jazz singer (currently performing in Tokyo)
- Dec. 16: River of Grass Café Christmas Coffeehouse
- Jan. 20: Al Petteway and Amy White, Grammy and Indie award-winning masters of Celtic and traditional music
- Feb. 17: Ronny Cox, 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.
- Mar. 16: Tim Farrell, called "One of the new trailblazers ..." by John Schroeter, Founder of *Fingerstyle Guitar Magazine*
- April 20: TBA
- May 18: TBA

AUGUST 2011



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|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sat. 6 th | 8:00am-12:00pm | Congregational Work Day |
| | 10:00-11:30am | Wildpine Covenant Group |
| Sun. 7 th | 10:30-11:30am | Sunday Service/Child Dedication |
| | 11:30am-12:30pm | Hospitality Hour |
| | 11:30am-1:00pm | Membership Committee |
| Mon. 8 th | 7:00-9:00pm | Finance Committee |
| Wed. 10 th | 7:15-10:00pm | Board Meeting |
| Thu. 11 th | 7:00-9:00pm | Men's Group |
| Sat. 13 th | 6:00-10:00pm | Contra Dance Rental |
| Sun. 14 th | 10:30-11:30am | Sunday Service |
| | 11:30am-12:30pm | Hospitality Hour |
| Mon. 15 th | | Newsletter Deadline |
| Sat. 20 th | 8:45-11:30am | Volunteer Day at Life Net 4 Families |
| Sun. 21 st | 10:30-11:30am | Sunday Service |
| | 11:30am-12:30pm | Hospitality Hour |
| | 12:30-3:00pm | Swamp Rose Covenant Group |
| Mon. 22 nd | | First Day of School in Broward County |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Thu. 25 th | 7:00-9:00pm | Men's Group |
| Fri. 26 th | 6:30-9:30pm | Spiritual Arts Group |
| Sat. 27 th | 1:00-4:00pm. | Welcome Picnic |
| | 9:00am-12:00pm | Faith Development Teacher Training |
| Sun. 28 th | | Water Communion/ Welcome Sunday |
| | 10:30-11:30am | Sunday Service |
| | 10:45-11:45am | Faith Development Classes |
| | 11:30am-12:30pm | Hospitality Hour |

SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Fri. 9 th | Bingo Party |
| Sun. 11 th | Sunset Piano Concert |
| Fri. 16 th | River of Grass Café with Ellen and Gary Bukstel |
| Sat. 17 th | Annual Leadership Roundtable (District Meeting for UU Presidents) Latin Fiesta |
| Sat. 24 th | Full Moon Daughters Planning Brunch |

WE JUST CAN'T KEEP FROM PARTYING

By Kathy Jens-Rochow,
Women's Group Facilitator

The River of Grass Women's Group 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 a snack and/or wine or other drink to share. We 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 WomensGroup@riverofgrass.org.

DRIVER NEEDED FOR LIFENET4FAMILIES

Chris Polzer of Life Net 4 Families is looking for one to three volunteers to pick up bagels from the Einstein Bros. Bagels restaurant (North Federal Highway and East Broward Blvd.) on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays at 5:00pm. Because Life Net closes at the same time, you'd have to deliver them to the food co-op the following morning.

If interested in any or all of these days, please contact Chris at chris.polzer@lifenet4families.org or call 954-792-2328.