

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION  
DAVIE, FLORIDA NOVEMBER 2013

## MINISTER'S CORNER

### GIZZARDS

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb, Consulting Minister

**M**y mother swore she really did like the gizzard. And the neck. Of her specialty southern fried chicken piled not quite high enough on the dinner platter. Not quite high enough because there could be no such thing as enough of Mom's fried chicken for the three athletic teens, a growing pre-schooler, and the odd guest or two that always seemed to find the Webb house round about dinner time.

And so my mother cheerfully insisted the gizzard was the piece she sincerely wanted most as she politely plopped it next to the mashed potatoes, gravy and fresh-snapped green beans on her plate. She'd also be the one with the burned biscuit "because it was so crispy" and the smallest slice of pecan pie, given she "was watching her weight, don't forget."

Actually, she was watching out for us, of course. Four boisterous kids burning calories by the truckload (oh, would that were still so!), my father who adored my mother's fried chicken only slightly less than my mother herself – and the rotating chairs of friends who got more than their bellies filled at our dinner table. Naturally, my completely self-absorbed kid-self thought my mom a bit nutty for liking the gizzard. She just smiled and picked up her fork.



November may be the month of the "American meal" – Thanksgiving – but that's not what I most remember of family dinner tables. Myths abound around this holiday. It's not likely many of the traditions we inherit for the last Thursday in November have more than the slenderest of roots in actual events of the early 17th century colonies of our forbears – especially where those of us of Native ancestry are concerned. We are bequeathed more a practice of romantic folklore than an act of historic remembrance. Mind you, the veracity of the Thanksgiving holiday was not addressed in my growing up, as far as I can remember. It was for us, as for every other Oklahoma working class family we knew, a big deal only by virtue of the size of the turkey, the multiplying need for chairs with the addition of "marrieds" and grand- and great-grand children – and the volume of gluttonous groans emanating from folks sprawled in lawn chairs on the yard after the feast it took a week to mount was devoured in under an hour.

Honestly, Thanksgiving was never my favorite meal. Nope, my favorites were the regular dinners Mom managed to put on the table day in and day out, come what may – especially the particularly inventive ones she cooked up when there was more month than money in our house.

Of course, I must confess none of this ever really occurred to me until I was grown. Until I became a mother. Until decades of Thanksgivings passed and years of family dinners grew into my own family legacy. Until I found myself reaching for the gizzard.



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## NOVEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

November 3, 2013	10:30am	"If Music Be the Food of Faith"	Rev. Amy Carol Webb
November 10, 2013	10:30am	"Waste Not, Want Not"	Pam Schrimsher
November 17, 2013	10:30am	"Hunger Communion" (Guest at Your Table Service)	Rev. Amy Carol Webb
<i>Evening Service</i> 7:00pm		Neshamah: Gather in Spirit	Rev. Amy Carol Webb
November 24, 2013	10:30am	One Wild and Precious Life Service	



## NOVEMBER CALENDAR (Click [here](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html) or go to [www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html))



### 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:** 10:45 to 11:45am

### 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.

## River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Phone 954-723-7877

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### Newsletter

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Finance ..... Janet Schwartz  
Membership ..... Diane Diaz & Bridget Morris  
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Personnel ..... Audrey Stang, Esther Sampol & Janet Schwartz  
Service & Social Justice ... Steve Jens-Rochow & Judi Oltmans  
Shared Ministry ..... Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz  
Stewardship ..... Ken Bresnahan  
Worship ..... Kathy Jens-Rochow

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marjorie Loring, President  
Board of Trustees



## MARATHON HIGH

**M**y daughter is a marathon runner. She runs while Esther (my spouse), Matthew (her son/our grandchild), and I cheer her on – an arrangement that suits us just fine. We are hikers, not runners, meandering through nature hugging trees along the way. But Donna runs, taking in the miles and challenging her resolve, disciplined and focused on her timing, her stride, and the finish line.



During the course of her runs, she experiences both a “runner’s high” and a point where she “hits the wall”. According to a report in the journal *Cerebral Cortex*, the runner’s high is caused by a flood of endorphins in her brain. Hitting the wall is also common for runners and is caused by having exhausted the supply of carbohydrate glycogen needed to provide a quick energy supply to the body. Runners typically store enough carbohydrates to support about 18–20 miles of running, so at that point in the race they often experience dramatic fatigue. A marathon is 26.4 miles, and like all marathon runners, she perseveres and her body finds new sources of energy to get her through those remaining miles.

I see River of Grass in a marathon of sorts. It’s been a great run so far as we move at a steady pace toward our five-year vision. We are a community of people whose commitment keeps this congregation moving forward and we have been on that River of Grass high, giving it our all, focused on the vision, with plenty of energy to support the movement.

As we head into year four and our resources run low and our energy takes a dip, we too may “hit the wall”. But, we too can find new sources of energy, new ways to overcome challenges. We have what it takes to challenge our resolve, be disciplined and focused on our stride, and reach the finish line still standing. Then, in true marathoner style, we will then start training for the next 5 year vision run! And the bonus – look at us: we are healthy because we are on a journey that continues to make us stronger!

So **Run, River, Run!**





## BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary  
Board of Trustees



**F**renzy in the kitchen: “Where are the table cloths?” Coffee brewing, cookies tumbling onto trays, buzzing in the hall, children’s laughter, tables going up, signup sheets galore and “Pooh’s Corner” filled with conversations among young and old.

What wonderful managed chaos Sunday at River of Grass is now! Where can one go for a quiet talk? Not the teen room, occupied by our older teens. How about the nursery? Better get there early, as the choir may be warming up. What about the sanctuary? After service, the Board Report-Back occurs once per month there after service. What about the multi-purpose room? Our young ones have their social time there with adult supervision. Starting to get the idea that we have some happy growing pains?

Your board is working to relieve these growing pains, happy as we are to have them. And we ask your help, ideas and above all patience as we journey ever widening and deepening River of Grass. We’ll navigate these rapids with a few bumps, but with care for each other, we’ll get there!

As you read last month, we have several board objectives for this year and we have made good progress:

- ◆ One item sure to help with our growing pains is a “Space Evaluation Task Force.” We decided to change the name from “New Space Task Force” since we also have immediate concerns in our current location to be addressed. **Marjie**, our board president, has drafted a charter and provided it to the board for review. We’re off to a great start here. Please contact Marjie if you would like to help with this task force.
- ◆ As for finances, our treasurer, **Gary**, reports a net gain for the month, largely due to the outstanding turnout for **Rev. Amy’s** Café Concert and her generous donation of her artist’s fee. This, combined with a nearing normal receipt of monthly pledges, gave us some surplus. Notable expenses were extra hours for personnel. Thankfully, we anticipate more volunteers to alleviate some of this extra expense soon.
- ◆ Towards our objective on Child Safety, Marjie presented the course curriculum we will use. The course will be required for all who supervise youth and will consist of a three-hour program of videos and instruction. I’m proud of the care we provide our children here at River of Grass.
- ◆ Our other objectives remain in formative stages now. **Leana** is working with the Membership Committee toward a better process for our guest database.
- ◆ Gary continues to research how we achieve a “Green Sanctuary.”
- ◆ **Zena** has found resources to improve our young adult programming and provided the information to the relevant groups.
- ◆ **Tom** has been working with our Small Group ministry committee, too.

Please see any member of our board if you have ideas or help for any of these topics. These are the highlights from the board this month. I leave you with an excerpt from one of our hymns:

*Peace shall walk softly through these rooms,  
touching our lips with holy wine,  
till every casual corner blooms  
into a shrine.*

(You may also enjoy the musical version at: <http://youtu.be/C4rSAIts3MA>)



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Ginger Parrish, Coordinator

*“We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.”*

- Thornton Wilder

**W**hat fun we had in **October**! Not only did we have a productive month in Faith Development classes, but we also had the chance to eat, play, visit, and relax at the Fall Frolic Picnic.

- ◆ We welcomed new students into our classes, including some new members!
- ◆ Our annual Spooktacular and Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF events were a great success and a fun way to kick off the fall festivities.

**I**n **November**, we pause to remember how fortunate we are to be part of a beloved community. We give thanks for our health, for our families and friends, and for each new day that brings with it the opportunity for us to make a positive difference in the world.

This month, we are looking forward to lots of opportunities for children and youth to participate and make a difference at River of Grass.



- ◆ First up is a **Special Music Summit** on **Saturday, November 2**.
- ◆ Later in the month, children and youth will be invited to participate in two special **Intergenerational Services**: our annual **Guest at Your Table/Hunger Communion** service on **November 17** and our **Wild and Precious Life** service on **November 24**.
- ◆ Don't forget that children of all ages are always welcome and encouraged to help out at our **LifeNet for Families** volunteer days. The next one is coming up on **Saturday, November 9**, so we hope to see you there!



**O**n a personal note, I would like to say that I am giving thanks this month (and every month) for the hard-working teachers, youth advisors, and Faith Development chairpersons who dedicate their time, energy, and talent toward making our River of Grass Faith Development program a success. And I am particularly thankful for the parents and children who join us each week for learning, exploring, and growing together. I am so glad that you are all a part of our Faith Development family.

## UPCOMING REV. AMY CAROL WEBB WORKSHOPS



**Saturday, November 2: *The Minor Fall: Music Summit 1*** – What does our music in worship say about us? What could it say? What would you like it to say, and would you like to contribute your own musical gifts and interests? In our Fall River of Grass Music Summit, we'll build on ROG's rich musical foundation to move our music even higher!

**Sunday, November 3: *Raising the Roof: Congregational Singing 101*** – Back by popular request, we'll gather after Sunday service to find our voices together gently, rooted in living breath and loving fellowship. Love to sing? This is for you. Think you can't sing? This is definitely for you. Not sure? This is especially for you.

**Sunday, November 17 & Sunday, December 15: *The UUA Caring Congregation Program*** as part of a two workshop series. Deepening our understanding and practice of our first UU principle respecting the inherent worth and dignity of every person, the workshop sessions focus on welcoming and supporting people with mental disorders and their families into our congregations.

## RIVER OF GRASS AUCTION AND CASINO/GAME NIGHT 2014

Esther Sampol and Sheryl Cattell, Auction Committee



### **CASINO & GAME NIGHT AUCTION**

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Saturday, March 1st, 2014**

**T**he Auction Committee continues to meet monthly and we have made great progress in planning our next auction. We are thrilled to announce that our food caterer this year is ARC Broward Culinary Institute. While the planning is moving along nicely, we do need help from YOU in getting donations for our Silent Auction.

The Auction Committee has set up a table in the hospitality area and we have lots of goodies for you: donation letters, thank you letters – and more! Stop by and see us after service on any Sunday and pick up your supply. How do you go about getting donations? It's easy! Follow our three easy steps ....

### **Three Easy Steps to Make this Our Best Auction Ever! WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

1. Go about your normal business of eating out, going to the hair stylist, visiting your favorite store or getting a massage.
2. Ask to speak to the manager/owner about donating a gift certificate to a very worthy cause. Show them a copy of our pitch letter or cover the highlights of the great charities that we give to and ask them for a gift certificate or item for our silent auction.
3. Once they agree to a donation, turn the form over and fill in the thank you letter with the name of their establishment and the value of their gift so they can claim it on their taxes.



Smile and enjoy knowing you did a great thing for River of Grass, our charities, and for the place of business that is donating since now we know about great places that you love to frequent.

You can pick up copies of the pitch letter and the donation/thank you letters on Sundays. And if you would like to donate a service of your own, just complete a service donation form also available on Sundays in the hospitality area. What could be easier than that???





## SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Judi Oltmans, Co-Chair

### LIFENET4FAMILIES OCTOBER VOLUNTEER DAY

**T**hank you to Jennifer, Natalie, Xavier, Bennett, Daniel, Tico, Rick, Zena, Andrea, Stan, Cassidy, Nicolas, Ken, and Jacque for giving their time to help out at the LifeNet4Families pantry on October 12th!



The volunteers spent a fun Saturday morning together preparing boxes of food for the needy and stocking the shelves in the pantry. Thank you for your service to the community!



If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. Upcoming dates are November 9 and December 14. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at [ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org).

## HOLIDAY GIFT TREE 2013

Zena Tucker, Service and Social Justice Committee

**Z**oom! The year has whizzed by and the holidays are here!

The Service and Social Justice Committee will be collecting gifts for abused and neglected children in our local community from Sunday, November 17th to Wednesday, December 4th.

Just stop by our Holiday Gift Tree (also known as the Angel Tree) in the hospitality area, select a child's name tag, and sign our roster. Once you make your purchases, bring in your unwrapped gift(s) – with the name tag attached – no later than December 4th.

ChildNet, the non-profit organization that manages child welfare services for Broward county, will distribute your gift directly to children in need. Every year ChildNet

provides holiday gifts to approximately 300 needy children in our area.

Do you think River of Grass can help make the holiday a little brighter for 55 of them? See you at the Holiday Gift Tree soon! Together we can make a difference in the life of a child this holiday season!



## GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

**O**nce again River of Grass will be having its annual Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) membership drive and the Guest at Your Table donations. Rev. Amy Carol Webb will kick-off our UUSC annual campaign on Sunday, November 17. By celebrating Guest at Your Table, we are helping nurture a spirit of gratitude and “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.” Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition in which congregation members learn about several people with whom the UUSC is working. This year, we are featuring people who have empowered others to realize their human rights.



## FLORIDA'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY AMENDMENT

**D**eep state funding cuts are seriously jeopardizing the great work Floridians have been doing for decades to acquire and protect our land and water natural resources. This Constitutional Amendment would permanently dedicate the revenue from 1/3 of the document stamp tax to protect what is best about Florida: “miles of beaches, beautiful parks, crystal clear springs, endless opportunities to swim, bike and fish, and an amazing diversity of plants and animals.”

So far more than 450,000 Florida voters have signed, and 683,149 signatures are needed by November 30 to get the Amendment on the 2014 Ballot.

If you would like to add your signature to the petition, it will be available at the Service and Social Justice corner at the back of the sanctuary.

## FULL MOON DAUGHTERS

Diane Lade, Coordinator

**T**hanks to all of you who brought your ideas, delicious food, and free-loving spirits to our Brand New Year brunch last month.

Besides enjoying the delicious food, we did some planning!

So you can mark your calendars, here is our schedule for the 2013-14 congregational year – and the sponsors for each outing.



- ◆ **Oct. 18-19:** Delray Labyrinth Adventure. (Sponsors: Gayle Giese)
- ◆ **Nov. 9-11:** Bahia Honda camping trip. (Sponsor: Diane Lade)
- ◆ **Dec. 22:** Solstice Party. (Sponsors: Deb Giblin-Davis/Judi Oltmans)
- ◆ **January:** Swamp Walk. (Sponsor: Christy Schultz. Date TBD)
- ◆ **Feb. 15-17:** Jonathan Dickinson camping trip. (Sponsor: Diane Lade)
- ◆ **March:** Boynton Beach adventure? Congregational campout? (Sponsors: Christy Schultz, Laura Secord)
- ◆ **April 12:** Chillin' at the Picnic Pavilion. (Sponsors: Zena Tucker, Ingrid Furlong, Lynn O'Brien)
- ◆ **May 17:** Sunrise at the Beach. (Sponsors: Marilisa Lawless, Natalie Corp)
- ◆ **June:** Snorkeling? Night Paddle boarding? (Sponsors: Susan Juncosa, Linda Meerow)

*(Two of the events have dates yet to be determined. If you are part of the Full Moon Daughters email list, you will receive reminders in advance of each event, with details on how to sign up. If you are not on our email distribution list and wish to be, send me an email at: [fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org).)*

## DAUGHTERS FOR OTTERS

**T**he Full Moon Daughters agreed that we would like to continue our fundraising efforts for the Otter Habitat at Flamingo Gardens. Here is a link to information about the habitat effort: [http://flamingogardens.org/Bear\\_Otter\\_Habitats.html](http://flamingogardens.org/Bear_Otter_Habitats.html)



Flamingo Gardens has raised about half of its \$120,000 goal for the exhibit. If we would like a River of Grass plaque, we would need to contribute at least \$25,000 to get a separate dedication plaque. But other donations places names, along with others at your giving level, on a permanent marker. The higher the level, the less names – and the more ours would stand out! We are at the first level, the Exhibit Donor, now. But we can become Bronze Donors by raising \$500 to \$999. Only two others are at that level now. So let's go for it! We already have \$120.

Our fundraiser for this event is our **Garage Sale in a Box** which will be held on **Sunday, Nov. 17 after service**. All are welcome to help! Please start setting aside a few extra nice items that you can contribute to the sale. They need to be fairly small items (no furniture, or at least nothing of any size), with good resale value. Also, try to limit clothing unless it is something extra fancy, as we have no place to display it easily. Whatever is not sold will go home with you after the sale is over. I know that, together, we will be able to raise the funds needed to take us to the Bronze Level so we can advertise our name proudly at Flamingo Gardens!

That's it for now. See you on the water, along the trail, and under the stars.



## RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

Esther Sampol, Concert Committee

**T**he Bluegrass to Beatles Concert on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> was a HUGE success! Our River of Grass musicians have never sounded better. What an amazing and talented group of musicians! We are so lucky to have them as part of our beloved community!

We enjoyed Gayle Giese on piano, flute, clarinet, and vocals, Allen Giese on violin, Steve Tepper on vocals and guitar, Gary Gonzalez on vocals, guitar, drums and harmonica, Aaron Stang on guitar and banjo, Renato deMoraes on flute, and special guest star, Al Nigro, on bass.

Thank you to all the musicians – the amazing gourmet chefs – the café setup/take down volunteers – servers – door volunteers – and to all who supported the concert by purchasing tickets and BEING THERE! It was truly a night to remember.



## NEXT UP: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2013 – EMMA'S REVOLUTION



**emma's revolution** is the duo of award-winning activist musicians, Pat Humphries & Sandy O. Called “Inspiring, gutsy and rockin’,” the duo is celebrating the release of their third CD, *Revolutions Per Minute*, an electrifying soundscape of “rousing and soulful” songs of social conscience, in settings from intimate acoustic to full-on funk.

Grand Prize winners in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, the duo's songs create new standards in the art of social justice. Their songs “Peace, Salaam, Shalom” and “Keep on Moving Forward” are sung around the world, and their music has been featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* and Pacifica's *Democracy Now!* Hear one of **emma's revolution**'s latest songs “[Feel the Wind](#),” a jazzy, a cappella call for offshore wind energy.

Pat and Sandy are partners in life, love & justice. In the spirit of Emma Goldman's famous attribution, “If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution,” **emma's revolution** brings their uprising of truth, hope and a dash of healthy irreverence to concerts and peace & justice, environmental, LGBT & women's rights, immigration & human rights, and labor events around the world. Based in the Washington DC area, **emma's revolution** has performed at more than a thousand events throughout the US and abroad. Join the revolution!

**Tickets: \$15 Advance Purchase / \$20 at the door**

Click [here](http://riverofgrassuu.org/river-of-grass-cafe.html) for tickets (or go to: <http://riverofgrassuu.org/river-of-grass-cafe.html>)

**Doors Open at 7:30 pm / Show starts at 8:00 pm**

## UPCOMING CONCERTS

- ◆ February 1, 2014, **Richard Smith**, “The most amazing guy I know on Guitar. He can play anything I know, only better.” ~Chet Atkins
- ◆ March 22, 2014, **Still on the Hill**, “The creativity and originality of these two blows through the stale air of singer-songwriters like a gale of genius.” ~Rich Warren, *Sing Out!* Magazine
- ◆ April 19, 2014, **Josh Rowand**, “The Pitbull of Blues” – 2012 *Blues Alliance of the Treasure Coast* SOLO Blues Challenge Winner

Check out our River of Grass Café [Facebook](#) fan page for all the latest news!



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Diane Diaz and Bridget Morris

What an exciting month October was – River of Grass welcomed the following new members at the New Member Sunday ceremony on October 13th:

- ◆ Kip Barkley
- ◆ Linda Gabriele
- ◆ Drea & Stan Kelley and their children Cassidy and Nicolas
- ◆ Mac McNicol
- ◆ Anne Smith
- ◆ Jacqueline Velazquez

Our resident biographer, [Wendell Abern](#), will be collecting their stories. Look for them in the December issue.



This year the Fall Frolic Picnic fell on the same day and more than 85 of our new and old members, their families, friends and some recent visitors made merry at the home of [John](#) and [Liz Perez](#) for the entire afternoon – lots of kids splashing and laughing in the pool and adults enjoying the great food and each other's company (see the pictures on the following pages). Once again our thanks go to the Perez's for graciously hosting this annual event. Also, thanks to all the participants who brought refreshments and to the membership committee – [Janet](#), [Leana](#), [Elly](#), [Jody](#), [Ken](#), [Bennet](#) and others who handled the preparations and then became clean up elves as well.



Not to rest on our laurels, the membership committee participated in the Committee Fair and is planning another *Pathway to Membership* class for Sunday, November 17th from 12-4pm.

Sign-up sheets are available in the hospitality area after service or contact: [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information.

The class is a great opportunity to find out about Unitarian Universalism, our congregation and meet many of the volunteers who coordinate the "dance we do". All visitors are welcome, and we can even provide child care with advance notice. Come check us out – we want to get to know you too!

## NESHAMAH: GATHER IN SPIRIT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> AT 7:00PM

Join [Rev. Amy](#) as she leads a reflective, guided service. Peaceful and tranquil, this service will renew your spirit and you will leave refreshed, relaxed, and ready to face a new week of challenges and joy.









