

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

MARCH 2015



## SINGING FOR OUR LIVES

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

*Right was the tyrant king who once said,  
'Beware of a movement that sings.'  
For whenever and wherever the oppressed  
challenge the old order, songs are on their lips.*

~ from the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) *Little Red Songbook* (1923)

Since the beginning of known history, prophets, heretics, rebels and visionaries of every stripe have taken to the streets to sing truth to power. When fourth century anti-trinitarian theologian Arius stood up at the council of Nicea in 325 c.e. (in what is now Turkey) to oppose the Church's declaration of Jesus as God, he was pronounced a heretic, barred from the Council and ordered never to speak of his theology. Forbidden to preach, Arius then went into the streets and down to the docks and sang his sermons, which spread the fire of his faith faster than any spoken word could have – a little known chapter of Arius' life and what would centuries later develop as "Unitarianism," a belief in the oneness of God alone.

Come forward sixteen centuries to walk the road to Selma with Martin Luther King, Jr., Unitarian folk singer Pete Seeger in step, leading the marchers in the song we now know bone deep, "We Shall Overcome," proving the truth Dr. King declared that, "... songs bind us together, give us courage together, help us march together."

A decade later, the Reverend Eugene B. Navias gathered a selection of hymns written by Unitarians and Universalists in North America over the preceding two centuries in *Singing Our History*, in part to "trace the history of our evolving faith, and reflect the urgency of our social concerns."

Open the Unitarian Universalist hymnals now in use – *Singing the Living Tradition* and its supplement, *Singing the Journey* – and you will find topic headings for "Justice and Equity" and "Justice and Social Action" with songs like Holly Near's "We Are A Gentle Angry People," and Ysaye M. Barnwell's "We Are...."

Sunday, March 7, 1965, King and Seeger, clergy and allies of all denominations including Unitarian Universalists, marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama seeking justice. In the wake of that prophetic walk, two Unitarian Universalists paid with their lives -- the Rev. James Reeb beaten to death in an alleyway on a way to a voting rights organizing meeting, and ally Viola Gregg Liuzzo, ambushed as she drove black marchers back to their homes. They called it Bloody Sunday.

Fifty years later, on March 8, 2015, I will join with Unitarian Universalists and others who stand, march, walk and roll for justice to mark Selma's jubilee by once more crossing the Pettus bridge to honor those who made that first march, to remember those who gave their lives for justice then, before and since – and to renew, revive and recharge our commitment to the cause of justice clearly not yet fulfilled in our own time.

On that Selma Sunday, if you tilt your ear Northward, you may just hear us singing, "We shall overcome." We're still singing for our lives.



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(Click [here](#) for our Congregational Calendar or go to: [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) - click on Events – Calendar.)

## SUNDAY SERVICES – 10:30 AM

**Sunday, March 1:** *Sing Justice*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

**Sunday, March 8:** *Letters to Myself*, Pat Tinker & Bev Kaufman

**Sunday, March 15:** *Abundance vs. Scarcity*, Kip Barkley

**Sunday, March 22:** *What's That I Hear? Reclaiming Prophetic Witness in Unitarian Universalism*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb  
(Neshamah – Evening Meditative Service @ 6:00 pm)

**Sunday, March 29:** *BINGO!: We've Got Your Number*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb



## River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION  
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### Newsletter

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### Board of Trustees

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Secretary ..... Zena Tucker  
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Trustee ..... Lynn O'Brien  
Trustee ..... Natalie Hutton-Corp  
Trustee ..... Audrey Stang  
Trustee ..... Gary Gonzalez

### Committee Chairs

Auction ..... Sheryl Cattell, Toni Cattell & Esther Sampol  
Caring ..... Deb Giblin-Davis & Georgette Poland  
Community Awareness ..... Esther Sampol  
Concert ..... Aaron Stang  
Consulting Minister's ..... Diane Diaz, Committee on Ministry  
Esther Sampol, Leana Bresnahan, & Toni Cattell  
Facilities ..... Susan Juncosa & Ingrid Furlong  
Faith Development ..... Karen Gonzalez & Diane Lade  
Finance ..... Janet Schwartz  
Green Sanctuary ..... Steve Jens-Rochow  
Hospitality ..... Bennett Lorman  
Membership ..... Diane Diaz & Deb Kitner  
Nominating ..... Michael Richardson  
Pastoral Care ..... Riley Cothran, Pat Katz, & Marjorie Loring  
Personnel ..... Audrey Stang, Janet Schwartz, & Open  
Service & Social Justice ..... Rick Tucker  
Shared Ministry ..... Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz  
Stewardship ..... Ken Bresnahan  
Worship ..... Carolyn Sant Angelo

## 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 11:30 am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

**Faith Development Classes:** 11:00 am to 12:00 noon

## 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.

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Marjorie Loring



**H**aving been raised in New England, it was always clear when the seasons were changing.



There was no way you could miss the transitions: summer became fall when the leaves turned from shades of green to shades of bright oranges, yellows, and reds before letting go and drifting to the ground. Fall became winter with the white groundcover of snow and ice, hats and mittens, shoveling driveways and making snow people. Winter became spring with the thaw and the mud, when the snow would melt away and the rich brown earth became a sponge waiting for warmth to break the surface and new life to begin with fresh blooms

from trees and flowers. And spring became summer when swimming pool covers came off and the warm sunshine toasted our skin.

As we move out of the winter season and into spring here in Florida, I can see the more subtle seasonal changes that come with Florida living – my Starburst trees are in full bloom, beach areas are ramping up to get ready for a migration of college students from the north, and more duck eggs are showing up under my shrubs!

Springtime, wherever you may be is about renewal and growth. Looking at our River of Grass community, I believe that we are entering into a spiritual spring season of our own! A new energy is in the air. We are dancing in the aisles and singing new songs. New members opening up to what Unitarian Universalism has to offer them as they unfold their individual spiritual journey, existing members are blossoming and filling the places where others have stepped down, and there is new life in our nursery and classrooms.

We are in a season of growth and it is beautiful indeed! May we bloom like a starburst and take our place in making this world more beautiful by our presence!

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## CLIMATE JUSTICE MONTH:

### PEOPLE OF FAITH AND CONSCIENCE TAKING ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.

by Steve Jens-Rochow

**C**limate Justice Month is a spiritual journey for environmental justice from World Water Day on March 22 to Earth Day on April 22.

Climate Justice Month is being organized by Commit2Respond, the new climate justice initiative led by the UUA and the UU Service Committee. During Climate Justice Month Unitarian Universalists will embark on a spiritual journey for climate justice. Unitarian Universalists recognize the interdependence of all life and we are called as people of faith and conscience to heal and sustain the Earth.



If you believe that a better world is possible, join us at <http://www.commit2respond.org/join>. The daily inspirational emails will contain readings and activities for the whole family, and we will learn how to shift to a low carbon future, advance human rights, and grow the climate justice movement.

At River of Grass, Rev. Amy will bracket Climate Justice Month by presenting a special ceremony for World Water Day after her service on Sunday, March 22. And on her Sunday, April 19 service she will focus on Earth Day.

Climate Justice Month has parallels to last year's 30 Days of Love. The River of Grass Service and Social Justice Committee will again offer an opportunity to express yourself. Bring an artwork, photo, poem or story that expresses your thoughts on taking action for Climate Change or the environment. Guidelines and an area for the artwork will be posted later.

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## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Michael Henry-Richardson, Chair

The Nominating Committee has presented the following slate of candidates to fill the vacancies for the 2015 -2016 River of Grass Board of Trustees and the 2015-2016 Nominating Committee. This year's Nominating Committee consisted of Deb Giblin-Davis, Pixie Wright, Judi Oltmans, Tom Robinson, Ed Lewis, and Michael Henry-Richardson.

### The RoG Board of Trustees - 2015-2016 Slate

<p><b>President:</b> - Zena Tucker</p> 	<p><b>Vice President:</b> - Esther Sampol</p> 	<p><b>Secretary:</b> - Toni Cattell</p> 
<p><b>Trustee:</b> - Emilie Sayward Henry-Richardson</p> 	<p><b>Trustee:</b> - Brit Lundell</p> 	<p><b>Trustee:</b> - Bennett Lorman</p> 

Current Treasurer: Scott May (has one more year in current term)  
Current Trustee: Lynn O'Brien (has one more year in current term)

### The Nominating Committee for 2015-2016

Tom Robinson  
Ed Lewis  
Karen Gonzalez

In addition to these three Nominating Committee members, three additional members will be appointed by the new board.

Please plan to attend the annual meeting on **Sunday, May 3rd** to vote for the leaders who will keep The River flowing.

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## LIFENET4FAMILIES- FEBRUARY 13TH VOLUNTEER DAY

by Judi Oltmans

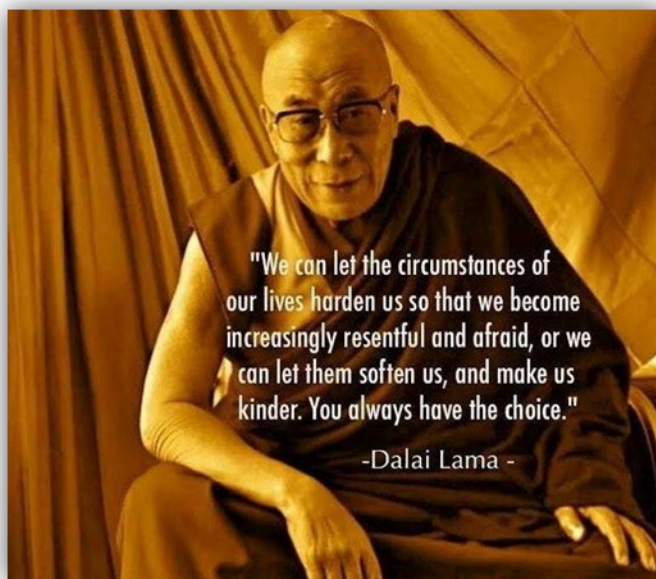
A big thank you goes out to the River of Grass volunteers who helped out at the LifeNet4Families pantry on Valentine's Day! They shared some love with LifeNet! Thank you to Drea, Stan, Cassidy, Nicolas, Tom, Kim, Linda, Rick, Zena and Judi for volunteering at the LifeNet4Families pantry. We worked alongside members of a Weston church and it was great to see so many people eager to help and work together as a team to get the boxes filled.



If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. It's an awesome way to spend a Saturday morning - great company and great work! And remember, this is a great place for teens to earn their service hours. Upcoming dates are March 14th, April 11th and May 9th. 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).

Can't make it to LifeNet? Every Sunday you can bring canned foods for LifeNet4Families to River of Grass and place them in the basket at the SSJC corner. They are always in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken or beef.

## CHOOSE KINDNESS .....





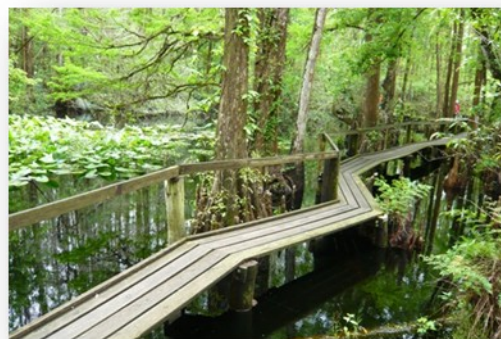
## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Director of Faith Development

*In the woods we return to reason and faith.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

What better way to cultivate a sense of wonder and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part than to spend a weekend out in nature, wandering amongst the trees and sleeping under the stars? If you are interested in deepening your connection both to Mother Nature *and* to your River of Grass family, we hope you will join us from March 6 through 8 for our Seventh Principle Congregational Camping Trip at **Highlands Hammock State Park**, just outside Sebring.



Although Faith Development is coordinating the trip, it's not just for the kids! Are you a guy who feels like the ladies have all the fun on their Full Moon Daughters' adventures? Then this trip is for you! Are you a fan of biking, hiking, and all things outdoorsy? Then this trip is for you! Do you enjoy s'mores and campfire songs, but prefer to sleep in a real bed at night? Well, with several hotels just a short drive away in Sebring, this trip is for you too!

Already on the agenda, we have yoga, crafts, a nature/tree walk, a tram ride, geocaching, a scavenger hunt, communal meals, and Sunday morning worship! Join us for one, two, or all of the activities. Bring a bike or rent one there to enjoy the many beautiful bike trails both within the park and in the nearby area. Most of all, bring yourself; we would be so glad to have you!



*Faith Development kids at the Tree Tops Field Trip on February 15, 2015*

## BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary

**T**he River of Grass Board of Trustees is excited about our upcoming events! Our annual Auction and the congregational camp out are this month, and we hope to see you there. More details elsewhere in the newsletter.

The board approved the Service and Social Justice Committee's request to sell donated T-shirts as a fund-raiser for the congregation. Additionally, the board approved the SSJC to have a River of Grass tent at the Davie Spring Egg Hunt in April. (More information on this event will be in our next newsletter.)

The board members are also working to write up nominations for the Florida District UU annual awards. The **Florida District Annual Assembly** meeting is a gathering of UUs from the state and a great way to fellowship. This year it is held at Orlando in April. If you are interested in attending, register at <http://www.uasouthernregion.org/aa2015.html>

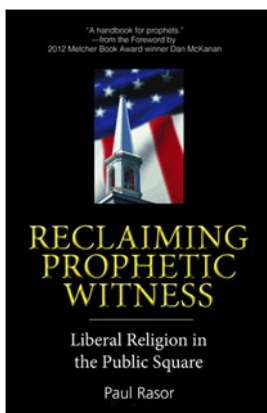


Speaking of assemblies, the totally awesome and spectacular Unitarian Universalist Association **General Assembly** (GA) is in a few short months. Thousands of Unitarian Universalists will gather June 24–28, 2015, in Portland, Oregon to focus on climate justice and conduct the business of the UUA. The provocative and influential [Cornel West will deliver the 2015 Ware Lecture](#), GA's keynote address. [Registration for GA 2015](#) begins on Monday, March 2 at 12:00 noon EST. Hotel registration also will open at that time. Everyone who plans to attend GA must register, and while there is on-site registration, registration fees increase after **April 30**. Volunteers who donate at least 24 hours of service (14 hours for youth) do not pay a registration fee. About 200 to 300 volunteers are needed. Opportunities to sign up as a volunteer also begin on March 2. Please visit <http://www.uua.org/ga/registration/index.shtml> for more information.

On a similar subject, your board is seeking volunteers to be delegates to the GA, either in person or as an off-site delegate. Delegates represent our congregation to the UUA in voting matters and help shape the future of our faith community. The cost for your registration is covered by the congregation. If you are interested, see [Zena Tucker](#) or email [secretary@riverofgrassuuu.org](mailto:secretary@riverofgrassuuu.org)

Our board meets next on March 12 at 7pm in the Multi-Purpose Room. All are welcome. Thank you all and I hope to see you soon around the River!

## COMING UP IN APRIL: THE UUA COMMON READ WITH REV. AMY CAROL WEBB



**R**eclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square by Paul Rasor (Skinner House Books, 2013) asserts that conservative Christianity is not the only valid religious voice in our national social policy. Showing that religious liberals are more numerous than many realize, he calls on them to embrace their prophetic heritage and bring their religious convictions to bear on the issues of our time.

*Reclaiming Prophetic Witness* will lift your spirit, while inspiring you to lift your voice and reclaim a place in the public square. The 2014-15 UUA Common Read invites Unitarian Universalists to explore and claim our contribution, as religious liberals, to the pressing moral and ethical debates of our contemporary world.

We have a few copies of the book in the office and it is available in eBook format through the Amazon Kindle Store and on Google Play.

*Stay tuned to Sunday Community Connections and our Weekly Email Updates for more information.*



## THE RIVER OF GRASS UU ANNUAL AUCTION

Esther Sampol, Co-Chair

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON SATURDAY, MARCH 28<sup>TH</sup>?

**A**tending the River's Annual Auction and Bingo night,  
of course!

But, first, you have to **buy your tickets!!!** You can do that –  
right now - online! Just click [here](#). Only \$50 pp for a night of  
bingo, dining, dancing, bidding, and FUN!

Do it NOW! You don't want to miss out!!!

But, wait, "What's for dinner?" you ask. Check it out ...



#### Appetizers

Fresh Italian Bruschetta and Olive Tapenade w/ Toast Rounds

Fruit and Cheese Display w/ Crackers

#### Dinner

Caesar Salad (vegetarian)

Chicken Alfredo

Meatballs Marinara

Vegetable Lasagna

Garlic Rolls and Bread Sticks with Butter



#### Dessert

Tiramisu Shooters

Fresh Baked Chocolate Chip Cookies

#### Beverage Station

Wine, Beer, Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Iced Tea, Coffee, Tea, and Water



## RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

by Esther Sampol

### GRANT PEEPLES

Saturday, March 21st, 2015 - 8:00 pm

**F**olk/Roots artist Grant Peeples is known for his axe-sharp socio-political tunes as well as Roger Miller type humor and heart-gigging ballads. Songwriting legend Bobby Braddock described him “like Prine, but with a Southern bent.” Music News Nashville called him “a guitar-slinging poet.”



Peeples’ tours have included performances at The Woody Guthrie Folk Festival in Okemah, OK, The Living Room in New York City, and The Triple Door in Seattle. His records, produced by Gurf Morlix (Lucinda Williams, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Robert Earl Keen) have topped Folk/Roots charts in the US and in Europe.

Peeples has been dubbed a “guitar-slinging poet” by *Music News Nashville*.

This finger-in-your-eye styled songwriter and 7th generation Floridian is a former expatriate. He spent 11 years on a tiny island off the coast of Nicaragua, where he installed the island’s first flushing toilet. He returned in 2006 to a very different homeland. Much of his songwriting is a response to what he found when he returned.

Grant’s latest release, *Punishing the Myth*, debuted at #1 on the [Freeform American Roots chart](#).

It is the third of a trilogy of records produced by legendary roots icon Gurf Morlix. John Conquest of 3rd Coast Music has named him songwriter of the year multiple times. Of his writing, Conquest says, “Unusually literate, unusually honest... Grant Peeples is the only songwriter I’ve ever called ruthless.”

**Purchase your advance ticket (s) for the Grant Peeples concert [here](#).**

**\$15 in Advance / \$20 At the Door**

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