

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

DECEMBER 2015

## LIGHT ONE CANDLE

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Just seeing the title of this musing, many of you of a certain age have the Peter, Paul & Mary song of the same name jingling in your head (you can thank me later). Others may remember the hymn version of that same song in our grey UU hymnal – #221, *Singing the Living Tradition*.

The song recounts the Hanukkah story of the Maccabees, their victory over their oppressors to rededicate the Temple, and the miracle of the one-day supply of oil that burned for eight nights. The song then charges us:

*Don't let the light go out,  
It's lasted for so many years!  
Don't let the light go out,  
Let it shine through our love and our tears.*



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This is the call, the admonition, the heart of the holidays of light this season, and all the celebrations that mark the return of the sun after winter's long, dark nights. Each tradition, each culture, each continent, and each religion may frame their stories of Light's victory over darkness differently – from Germany's Yuletide to Iran's Yalda, from the Zuni and Hopi Soyal to the ancient Romans' Saturnalia, from Solstice welcoming the Sun to Christianity welcoming the Son – but their message to humanity remains the same: darkness cannot prevail if we will but carry Light to the world.

As I write this, our world is troubled indeed, too many days darkened with violence and fear. And yet, look. Look at the thousands who come to light candles in the face of that darkness. Look at the writings left on the walls, "We are not afraid." Look at humanity joining hands across continents and oceans to defy despair. Look at the man who came out of his apartment to sit with the wounded, that they should not be alone. Look at how the worst in us calls to the best in us. Look at the little boy scrawling in chalk on a Paris sidewalk, "*L'amour gagne toujours*" – "Love always wins."

This holiday season comes 'round again to remind us that the Light always returns, even in those times when we may wonder anew what our world is coming to. Many before us carried Light in the darkest of times, and many after us will carry it still. Let us be the carriers of Light in our time. For as Peter, Paul & Mary sang:

*We have come this far always believing  
That justice would somehow prevail.  
This is the burden, this is the promise,  
This is why we will not fail!*



## 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.



## River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Phone 954-723-7877

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## 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.

## STAY CONNECTED!

In between issues of *Reflections* you can stay connected to the River of Grass Congregation the following ways:

- ◆ Sign up for our **weekly email** with events and news that changes each week: send an email to [office@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:office@riverofgrassuu.org)
- ◆ Visit our **Facebook page**: [www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu](http://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu)
- ◆ Follow us on **Twitter**: @RiverOfGrassUU or [www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu](http://www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu)
- ◆ Try out the **ROG App** for your Android or iPhone: [my.yapp.us/RR94DQ](http://my.yapp.us/RR94DQ)
- ◆ Visit our **calendar**: [www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html) (or go to: [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) – click on Events – Calendar.)





## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker

Walking with both hands free, I have awareness of my steady gaze and my direction. With both hands free, my arms swing freely, my shoulders are relaxed and my breath energizing. My heart, breath and footsteps form a recognizable pattern and I am comforted by it. Walking with another, I have motivation to take more steps, adding interest and bringing attention to previously un-noticed things on our path... a beautiful bird, a fascinating lizard, a storm on the horizon. I cherish this walking together, and my steps adjust to keep time with the other; my direction changes a bit to accommodate. We have harmony and we travel far.

When my hands are full, my steps are shorter, my gait less free. The burden is my guilt. I am determined to carry on without comment on it. Walking with another, who also has hands full, our attentions are not on each other but on our internal turmoil. Our walk becomes labored, discordant. Our company is not as rewarding to the other, and our work together is unfruitful.

Then I recall my promise...our promise. I must listen and respond respectfully. I can be forgiven. And my companion does the same. Our discord is healed with this grounding. And our walk begins anew.

Our *Covenant of Right Relations* is the way we adjust our behaviors to walk together. I have my faults and shortcomings, my guilt and my thoughtless words. This covenant calls me to adjust my behaviors, and to be intentional in our walk together, because I truly *love* to walk with you in harmony, travelling far and moving mountains.

This is what our covenant means to me, dear River. What does it mean to you? Is there a careless word that may have hurt you? Is there need for forgiveness? Let us have the conversation about it, within the confidence of this beloved covenant we uphold and honor. I look forward to our walk.



### RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

We, the members and staff of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation agree to strive to be in relationship with each other and the larger community in ways that build a safe, healthy, nurturing environment and strengthen our common bonds. To that end, we are committed to putting forth our best efforts to live out the ideals expressed in this our covenant of right relations.

#### *Welcoming and Hospitality*

We practice hospitality and inclusion, welcoming all who enter and showing a genuine interest in each other. We honor and respect the differing cultural perspectives of others. We are all stewards of this sacred space.

#### *Listening and Speaking*

We listen with respect and attention, without assumptions. We speak and respond thoughtfully and honestly, respecting diversity of opinions.

#### *Conflict and Reconciliation*

We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and we are willing to forgive ourselves and others we make every effort to settle differences openly, directly and with compassion. We strive patiently to build trust in all our relationships, focusing on the issue, not the person.

#### *Celebration, Support and Service*

We support each other in times of joy and need. We serve with generosity and good humor. We recognize and acknowledge the service of others.



## BOARD MATTERS

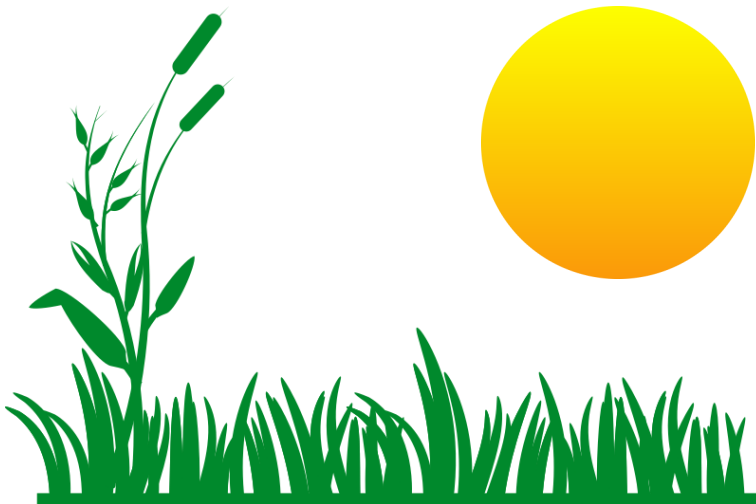
Zena Tucker, Board President



The River of grass Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that we have reached a rental agreement with The TAO Center (aka Temple Adath Or) to share our space on alternating Saturdays beginning soon. They will be holding a meditation service at our facility on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays from January through June 2016. We are especially pleased to be sharing our space with a congregation that shares many of our values when it comes to human rights, living in harmony with the planet, and focusing on love as the way.

We ask all members to be mindful of this schedule and consult with the River of Grass calendar when planning events in our facility. Let's make sure the sanctuary and kitchen are left clean and ready after each of our gatherings.

Many thanks to our facilities team, especially **Ingrid Furlong**, for negotiating this agreement for what we hope will be a continuing and mutually beneficial relationship.



## SERVICES – SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM (AND AS OTHERWISE NOTED)



Dec. 6, Amy Carol Webb, *There Was Lit in Me a Lamp*

Dec. 13, Amy Carol Webb, *Pageant*

Dec. 20, Amy Carol Webb, *Yuletide/Winter Solstice*  
(6:00pm, *Neshamah* evening meditative service)

Thu., Dec. 24, 6:00pm, Amy Carol Webb, *Christmas Eve*

Dec. 27, Susan Junosa, *TBD*

## REV. AMY CAROL WEBB'S INSTALLATION Pixie Wright, Installation Committee Member

Only a few more days! Rev. Amy Carol Webb will be installed as the third settled Minister at River of Grass on December 6, 2015. Prior ministerial installations included Rev. Ken Beldon's in 2002 and Rev. Naomi King's in 2008. We welcome all to join together in this special, joyous celebration for Rev. Amy and River of Grass.

The responses are in; If you have not RSVP'd, please call the congregational office at 954 723-7877 to do so. The champagne is on ice, the caterer is preparing light refreshments, the cake has been ordered, the sanctuary and offices are sparkling, music is being rehearsed, and flowers are being arranged! Please join us as we welcome and celebrate Rev. Amy as our special minister.



## ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

Submitted by Scott May

In 2015 the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly passed this Action of Immediate Witness (AIW), meant to convey the importance of an ambitious climate change agreement at the critical United Nations Convention on Climate Change being held in Paris in December 2015.

### SUPPORT A STRONG, COMPASSIONATE GLOBAL CLIMATE AGREEMENT IN 2015: ACT FOR A LIVABLE CLIMATE 2015 ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

**WHEREAS**, global climate change is fundamentally a moral and ethical crisis induced and exacerbated by human activity that can and must be modified to maintain a livable world for ourselves, our descendants, and other species;

**WHEREAS**, looming ecological catastrophes impacting food, water, and disease threaten the vulnerable and our descendants with mass suffering;

**WHEREAS**, Peter Morales (UUA President) and Bill Schulz (UUSC President and CEO) recently wrote that “*The crisis of climate change is the gravest threat facing our world today*”;

**WHEREAS**, we can act to limit the harmful consequences of climate change by effective risk management (adaptation and mitigation, including emission reductions, development of renewable energy, etc.), with sufficient motivation, persistence, optimism, and will;

**WHEREAS**, our Principles impel us to act on climate change: The web of life is threatened: climate catastrophes (in near and long term) disproportionately impact the poor, disadvantaged, elderly, women, and children; issues of equity, justice, democracy, speaking truth, and defending the right of conscience are associated; and our descendants are threatened, raising intergenerational equity issues;

**WHEREAS**, Unitarian Universalists overwhelmingly voted to adopt a Statement of Conscience on the Threat of Global Warming and Climate Change in 2006, calling Unitarian Universalists into action to mitigate climate change;

**WHEREAS**, there can be no long-term solution to many social justice issues with which Unitarian Universalists are concerned without a viable solution to the climate problem; and

**WHEREAS**, we are responsible as people of faith to mitigate, avert, and limit the potential catastrophes of climate change, standing with other faith traditions caring for our common home;

**WHEREAS**, Unitarian Universalists have made a commitment to climate justice and stand in solidarity with first nation peoples, who are disproportionately affected by climate disruption;

**WHEREAS**, an international climate agreement is critical for reducing risk of the myriad severe climate impacts and also increasing positive opportunities for all people; and

**WHEREAS**, an December 2015, many nations of the world will gather in Paris for their last opportunity to negotiate the most important climate agreement in history;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2015 UU General Assembly calls on Unitarian Universalists to unify and provide ethical and moral leadership for climate action and to do so within our congregations and within our multi-faith communities;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Unitarian Universalists will support local actions such as the Lummi Nations’ opposition to the Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal on sacred lands;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Unitarian Universalists will participate in and support mobilizations nationally such as the Moral March for Climate Justice in September 2015 during the Papal visit to Washington DC, pressing our government to act urgently and responsibly; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the 2015 UU General Assembly endorses a Unitarian Universalist delegation to the UN Climate Agreement Talks in December 2015 to support a strong, compassionate, fair, ambitious, binding, and enforceable international climate agreement. Without a global climate agreement, the climate crisis will not be sufficiently addressed, and many social justice issues will continue to magnify.







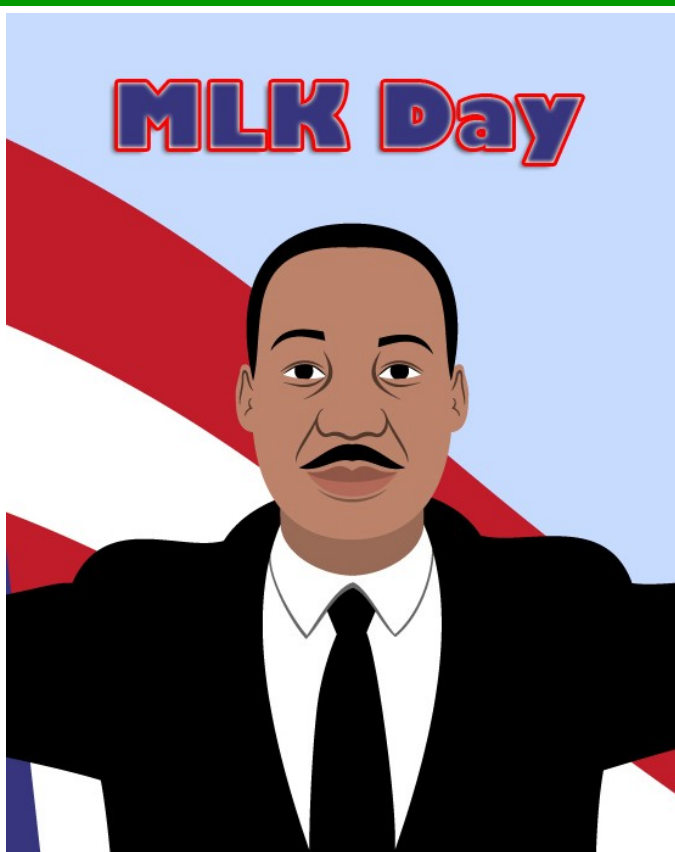
## FULL MOON DAUGHTERS SOLSTICE CELEBRATION!

Deb Giblin-Davis

**D**ecember 21st is Winter Solstice – the first day of winter, the time of the longest night and shortest day of the year. The dark triumphs but only briefly, and from now on the nights grow shorter and the days grow longer. Celebrated by cultures across the globe, it signifies the return of light and with it, life!

Women and girls, please join us as we make our own solstice celebration at the River of Grass Full Moon Daughters Solstice Party! Sunday, December 20th - 6pm at the Giblin-Davis home. Please bring a dish to share and join us for hot cocoa, hot toddies, singing around the campfire, and a small gift exchange!

RSVP to [fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org).



## MLK DAY EVENTS AT ROG

**M**ark your calendars for events planned in January to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. More details to follow in next month's newsletter.

- ◆ Jan. 16, Martin Luther King Day of Service Action at LifeNetforFamilies
- ◆ Jan. 17, Poster making and vehicle preparation for the MLK parade
- ◆ Jan. 18, River of Grass UU Congregation march in the Fort Lauderdale MLK Holiday Parade

## 2016 LUAU AUCTION

Submitted by the Auction Committee

**H**ave you bought your tickets yet for the auction? The date is Saturday, February 27, 2016, at 6:00. Tickets are \$55.00 each and include special food and drinks, bidding, and a live luau entertainment show. WOW! You may purchase tickets online at [www.riverofgrassuu.org/auction-2016.html](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/auction-2016.html) or from Kathy Jens-Rochow.

You know how we at River of Grass love our parties! If every member had a party, or a holiday dinner, or some other fun-filled entertainment, we could fill our social calendars for next year ... and beyond! Please consider hosting a party or contributing gift certificates or tickets for things such as concerts, plays, and sporting events. Or you could sponsor a member by donating a ticket or two for the auction itself. Thank you for your contributions, and until February 27 ... aloha.





## GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Steve Jens-Rochow, UUSC Chair

**B**eing the holiday season, it is the time for our Guest at Your Table celebration, the wonderful tradition that engages Unitarian Universalists of all ages in our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's human rights work around the world. Guest at Your Table — inviting real people who have been touched by UUSC's work to symbolically sit down and share a meal with us — is such a simple and powerful way to celebrate our common humanity. As you gather together during the holidays with your family and friends and take part in Guest at Your Table, we ask you to invite these leaders into your family by sharing their stories: <http://www.uusc.org/welcome-to-guest-at-your-table>.

Guest at Your Table is the annual fundraising and education program that supports the UUSC's human rights work. It also helps us put our UU values into action — not only in our own neighborhoods but in the farthest corners of the world.

The Guest at Your Table program runs through December. Membership in UUSC is \$40 per year. Contributions of \$125 or more are doubled by the Shelter Rock UU Congregation in Manhasset, NY. Please pick up your box or envelope, fill out your information, make out your check to UUSC, and turn it in to [Steve Jens-Rochow](#), [Scott May](#) or [Rick Tucker](#). Our office will tabulate our contributions, and at the end of the drive send in our contributions to the UUSC. This way we can acknowledge your Guest at Your Table gift to the UUSC. For more information contact [SSJC@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:SSJC@riverofgrassuu.org).

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## WELCOME TO SWIM 2015

Candy Gale, SWIM Director 2015

**S**WIM, the Southeast UU Winter Institute in Miami (sometimes), is delighted to invite you and yours to join us for a week of joy, adventure, and community from December 26 through January 1. Now in our 42nd year, SWIM brings many opportunities to share yourself with other Unitarian Universalists and friends. We invite you to play and learn and worship and just be — as we come together yet again.



SWIM is an intergenerational camp that will be gathering this year at Cloverleaf 4-H Camp in Lake Placid, Florida! (<http://florida4h.org/camps/cloverleaf/>) We have workshops, music, worship, trips, dancing, games, canoeing, and teen and children's programming, all ending in a wonderful New Year's Eve party. We will have some amazing activities. You will find it all on our website <http://www.swimuu.org/>.

We are happy to announce that there will be **NO INCREASE** in the cost of SWIM this year. Plus, there is a \$40 per person reduction for anyone who camps in a tent or RV all week. Special rates are also available for UU ministers and daytimers.

For those arriving early, and locals, there will be a Christmas Dinner at the historic Columbia Restaurant [www.columbiarestaurant.com](http://www.columbiarestaurant.com), 2117 E 7th Ave, Tampa, FL 33605 (813) 248-4961, in Ybor City at 6:00 PM on Christmas Day. No need to pay ahead of time, but if you are planning to come, let Candy know [director@swimuu.com](mailto:director@swimuu.com), so we can make sure to have reservations for everybody. If you would like to know more, please go to our website <http://www.swimuu.org/> or contact Candy Gale [director@swimuu.org](mailto:director@swimuu.org) or Jerry Elsenrath [registrar@swimuu.org](mailto:registrar@swimuu.org).

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## LIFENET4FAMILIES NOVEMBER 14TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair

Thank you so much to all of our River of Grass volunteers who gave their time at LifeNet4Families on Saturday, November 14th: **Rick, Steve, Riley, Marpessa, Renato, Marina, Gabriela** and **Lara!** They worked in the pantry, stocking the shelves and packing up boxes of food for the needy in Broward County. They accomplished a lot in those two hours by doubling the number of boxes on the packing line! Thank you for making service an important part of River of Grass.



If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month from 9:00-11:00am. What a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning - and for teens, a great way to earn service hours! Upcoming dates are December 12th, January 9th and February 13th. 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.

## LIFENET4FAMILIES IN NEED OF MEN'S CLOTHING

One more month to comb through your closets and see if you have anything to donate to LifeNet4Families! LifeNet not only provides meals and food boxes for the needy, they also supply men and women with clothing and shoes. **Right now they are in desperate need of men's clothing only.** Please check out the list below and see if there are any items you can provide. Donations can be brought to the Service and Social Justice corner. Thank you!

- ◆ Jeans, khakis, shorts
- ◆ T-shirts, polo shirts, short-sleeve shirts, tank-tops
- ◆ Socks, belts
- ◆ Baseball caps and visors
- ◆ Sneakers, casual shoes, sandals, flip-flops



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Mary Warner, Faith Development Coordinator

Bring on the Holiday Cheer! We may not be having our usual Sunday school classes, but we have some fun events coming up. Mark your calendars and join us!

- ◆ Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> is our annual Holiday Party and Movie Night from 6-10pm. Join us for kid's and adult's crafts, a holiday movie, and more!
  - Participants are asked to bring a finger-food dish to share. Pajamas, sleeping bags, and/or lawn chairs are also in order for getting comfy for the movie!
  - This event is open to the community, so please bring your friends and family and help us to spread the word about all the great things that River of Grass has to offer.
- ◆ "Following Yonder Star," our Annual Holiday Pageant, will take place during service on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. Join our youth in this wonderful reimagining of the story of the Three Kings' journey to Bethlehem, to include their wives and their take on what to bring to the new family.
- ◆ Having a Valentine Pal is a fun way to remind each other how special we are!
  - Participants will commit to three weeks of bringing in mystery mail for their Pal and be a part of the big reveal on Valentine's Day. Valentine Pals will be from January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - If you cannot attend a Sunday leading up to the reveal, you can still join in the fun. Just send your mystery mail to the church office, and it will be delivered to your pal that Sunday!
- ◆ Would you like to help guide our young spiritual minds? Volunteer to be a Sunday School Teacher. Each block is just 3 weeks and the children at River of Grass are a wonderful group. Please contact Faith Development at [fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org).
- ◆ Make sure to return your Guest at Your Table donations and boxes. This annual tradition supports the UUSC programs that help ensure people around the world have access to basic necessities such as clean water, food, and shelter.





## *'Twas the Night Before Installation*

'Twas the night before Installation, when all through the hall  
All task-team creatures were stirring, and having a ball;  
The banners were hung by the ceiling with care,  
In hopes that Rev. Amy soon would be there.  
These children not nestled all snug in their beds,  
Tho' visions of sugar-plums did dance in their heads;  
And thoughts of those visitors from near and from far,  
And all of those ministers! Who knows who they are?  
When out on the sidewalk there arose such a clatter,  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the crest and the 595 light glow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature Installation team, and they're all volunteer!  
And the tasks that they had were so many and so frightful,  
I knew in a moment they must have Team Leader Michael!  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:  
Now, Jody! Now, Rick! Now, Deb and Maureen!  
On, Carolyn! On Pixie! on Kristine, GO TEAM!  
To the top of the sanctuary! To the back of the hall!  
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!  
With an eye on the budget, and his thumb on his phone,  
Team Leader Michael's so busy! Let's leave him alone.  
The ministerial robing room is shiny and bright,  
With all of them in there, it just might be tight.  
There's a big full-length mirror and a portable clothes rack,  
There's water and coffee and a nice little snack.  
Maureen's in the kitchen banging pots and pans,  
Rick's in the sanctuary checking ac and fans,

He seems to be everywhere, moving furniture and chairs,  
Put the flowers on the floor, please, not on the stairs!  
Jody's in the office printing name tags and charts,  
She's creative, you see, she knows the fine arts.  
Deb's in the nursery counting little chairs and cribs,  
Pixie's in the office writing all the news there is.  
Carolyn's out decorating with ribbons and with bows,  
Kristine's counting RSVPs, hope that everybody shows!  
Rev. Amy is practicing in her splendid new robe,  
She's famous, you know, all over the globe.  
The band is a-playin', they could go on for hours,  
Let's buy them a drink, let's toss them some flowers.  
The chorus is singing, they really sound loud!  
They have to, you know, we're expecting a crowd!  
Installations are ritualistic and meaningful and fun,  
And as Rev. Amy says, "I'm only having one!"  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the highway the coursers they flew,  
With their team leader in charge, they knew they were through.  
He thanked the whole team,  
And gave a great smile,  
River of Grass and Rev. Amy,  
You'll be around for a while.  
He sprang to his Prius, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
HAPPY INSTALLATION TO ALL,  
AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!

~ Anonymous \*With apologies to Clement C. Moore