

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

SUMMER 2015

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



“Remember who you are,” my mother would say as I scooted out the front door on the way to any one of my high school passions -- basketball, horseback riding, tennis, a walk in the woods with my dog and my guitar, an afternoon of Simon & Garfunkel records with my best friend, Diana -- “Remember who you are.”

To my mother’s credit, she never said exactly what it was I ought to remember. She didn’t tell me who I was, but rather let me build my identity from everything around and within me. I wasn’t just a basketball player, or just a musician, or just a daughter, or just a friend. Most of us can’t identify ourselves by any one tag, even as society tries to force us into its convenient pigeonholes, known as “demographics” in the popular parlance, and tells us we shouldn’t cross the lines. People in the “varsity athlete” demographic aren’t expected to also be in the “thespian” and “poet” demographics.



But my mother’s message was not about demographic classification. It was about self-respect, self-worth, authenticity in the face of the pressures each of us confronts everyday to be other than who and what we are. My mother’s “Remember who you are” meant “Follow your own inner compass. Behave only in ways consistent with your character - and if it doesn’t feel right, don’t do it.”

“Remember who you are,” I said as the car doors slammed behind my own sons each morning on their way into school. And I didn’t tell them what I meant, but sent them away with blessings over their heads to protect their lovely hearts and minds and bodies as perfect children of the Universe, created especially for this time and place and with a particular purpose in the world.

A Course In Miracles says one gift of human life is the opportunity to remember who we are and why we are here - and when we remember, to arise in love and courage and wisdom and faith.

“Remember who you are,” I say as we set off into Summer, down whatever winding roads, whatever adventures, whatever uncharted paths we each might dare follow – whether physical or spiritual or both. I can’t tell you what that means, only pray you and I and all of us will hold to our own inner compasses whatever our journeys till we meet again.

So, take a breath. Slap on the sunscreen. Know you are unique, beautiful and a divinely made child of the Universe created especially for this time and place and with a particular purpose in the world. Whatever your summer’s voyage this year, as you step out the door ... remember who you are.



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SUNDAY SERVICES – 10:30 AM

Sunday, May 31: *TBA*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Rhythm of Life Drumming Circle (with Rev. Amy Carol Webb), 6:00 pm

Sunday, June 7: *Flower Communion*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Sunday, June 14: *Summer Reverie*, Marjorie Loring

Sunday, June 21: *Summer Solstice*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Neshamah, Evening Meditative Service

Sunday, June 28: *Social Anthropology*, Kip Barkley



SUMMER MONTHS - JULY AND AUGUST

Our summer services are a bit more informal than the services you will experience during the regular congregational year. The children and youth will also have the summer off from structured Faith Development classes but will meet each week for varied, fun activities.

(Note: There will be no Neshamah Meditative services during the summer months. These will resume, every 3rd Sunday @ 6:00 pm, along with our regular programming, in September.)

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



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.

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Hospitality Bennett Lorman
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Personnel Audrey Stang, Janet Schwartz, & Open
Service & Social Justice Rick Tucker
Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
Stewardship Ken Bresnahan
Worship Carolyn Sant Angelo

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Marjorie Loring



As I complete my fourth (and final) year as your Board President, the words of wisdom that I leave you with (in my last newsletter article as president) are from Walt Whitman, a Unitarian transcendentalist.

Reflect on these wise words during the magical season of Summer. This community that we call the River of Grass which we have built together - and continue to nurture, grow, and cultivate is, indeed, a miracle.

MIRACLES

Walt Whitman, 1819 - 1892

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of
the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night
with any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer
forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so
quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.

To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with
the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the waves—
the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?



SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Judi Oltmans and Rick Tucker

POSTAL FOOD DRIVE AND LIFE**NET**4**FAMILIES** – MAY 9TH EXTREME VOLUNTEER DAY

On May 9th, our Extreme River of Grass volunteer day, we had volunteers in two locations from 9:00am until 8:00pm! Thank you to all our River of Grass volunteers at the Inverrary Post Office for the Annual National Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive: Tom, Zena, Rick, June, Lynn, Pixie, Kimberly, Kathy, Max, Sharon, Diane, Vernon, Judi, Marilisa, Shani, Nestor, Phyllis, Jacqueline, Jean, Scott, and Lynne! The Postal Food drive supplies the LifeNet4Families pantry with food until the end of summer. Our team sorted, packed, and stacked **7,160 lbs.** of food! Our RoG volunteers gave their time to put together boxes, wrestle with tape machines, mark all those Cs, Gs and Ds on boxes, and work together (in close quarters) to make a difference in our community! Go team!



Thank you to Steve, Elyse, Tom, Michael, Emilie, and Scott for giving their time to volunteer at the LifeNet4Families pantry in the morning on May 9th. A special thank you goes out to Tom and Scott who did **double-duty** volunteering at **both** LifeNet and the Postal Food Drive!

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. What a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning!

Remember, we volunteer at LifeNet throughout the summer. Upcoming dates are June 13, July 11 and August 8. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org.

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WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Carolyn Sant Angelo, chair



The summer sunlight often adds new hues and brilliance as it shines through the floral windows of River of Grass. Our summer services will be taking on some new hues as well. We will be experimenting and shifting some traditions. For example, the printed Order of Service will be just for our guests, the Worship Team, and a few congregants who still would like one. This will save trees, save energy for our worker bees, and give us an exercise in non-attachment. We appreciate any feedback!

Feeling daring?! Feeling creative? Feeling like you have something to say?! The gift of being a Lay Leader of a Sunday Service adds brilliance to the River's landscape with the high quality presentations and diverse perspectives of our wonderful members! If you (or a team) are interested in providing a Sunday Service, please send an email to Carolyn Sant Angelo at worship@riverofgrassuu.org. She will be happy to provide a range of support from having everything ready for you to simply read or helping you craft the creative message you have been dreaming of in the back of your mind! The need is real, so tackle her with a loving hug if you have an idea!

Feeling less daring? Feeling like you have something to give?! Feeling like you want to support the gifts of River of Grass but are not sure how? At the end of the summer we will be offering trainings to our new members and current congregants who want to try on a new hat with the Sunday Worship teams like Audio Visual, Power Point creations, Ushers and Lay Leaders. The work is fulfilling and the pay is... well priceless! Stay tuned for dates and ways you can join the Worship Troupe! Feel free to contact Carolyn Sant Angelo if you have any questions or ideas!

Whether you travel this summer – or enjoy some summer time at home, please remember to some water (real or symbolic) that you can share with the congregation on our Water Communion on September 20th when we have our In Gathering Sunday Service. The water that flows through our lives connects us all in so many ways and can represent our interconnectedness when we rejoin and rejoice in the fall!

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

(Continued from page 4)

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.

ACTS SCHOOL SUPPLY REQUEST FOR 2015



It's that time again where we start collecting school supplies for the ACTS program, the residential home for homeless teen girls. By offering our assistance, these students will have new backpacks and fresh supplies to start the new school year in August!

The backpacks and supplies are due no later than Sunday, August 9th, 2015.

So, please plan ahead and get your supplies in before your summer travels.

Middle and High School Supply List Needed for 2015/2016 School Year

book bags - the smaller ones	rulers
3x5 index cards ruled	graph paper
black pens	staplers with staples
red pens	book covers
calculators (able to do algebraic functions)	glue sticks
highlighters	page dividers
pocket folders in different colors	composition notebooks
post- it notes	flashdrives (with at least 2G capacity)

Thank you, RoGers, for making a difference in the lives of so many in our community!

BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Board Secretary

*How beautiful a day can be
When kindness touches it!*

~George Elliston

What a bounty of beautiful days we've seen this congregational year at River of Grass! It is with deep gratitude that I recall all the kindnesses done and said. From a Bingo Auction to finding Zebra Butterflies at Long Key Nature Center and all letters in between, volunteers have made our world a better place, one kindness at a time.

The Board of Trustees is extremely grateful to all who poured their hearts into River of Grass this congregational year. We would like to specifically recognize those who are stepping down from their leadership roles.



Auction: Esther Sampol, Sheryl Cattell, Toni Cattell
Café: Aaron Stang
Faith Development: Karen Gonzalez and Diane Lade
Faith Development Coordinator: Ginger Parrish
Hospitality: Bennett Lorman
Membership: Diane Diaz
Newsletter: Esther Sampol
Stewardship: Ken Bresnahan

Additionally, special gratitude is owed to Janet Schwartz and Kathy Jens-Rochow who stepped in to fulfill the office administrator functions for the last few months. Janet volunteered countless hours for our congregation in so many ways this congregational year. Kathy produced our Order of Service and weekly emails. Many, many thanks, Janet and Kathy!

Speaking of special, our congregation has been recognized by the Florida District of the UUA! Rev Amy's sermon "Getting a Faith Lift" won an Honorable Mention for the Clarence R. Skinner Award. Additionally, the Excellence in Music Award went to the Music Program of River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation! Congratulations to Rev Amy, Gayle Giese our Music Leader, Anne Smith, choir director, and our outstanding pianist, Brenda Parker!

Looking at board business, our congregation will be represented by Karen Gonzalez, Scott May and Carolyn Sant Angelo at the 2015 UUA General Assembly. GA is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. If you would like to learn more, see the UUA website: <http://www.uua.org/ga/>.

In case you missed our annual congregational meeting on May 3, here are the results of the congregational vote.

For the Board of Trustees, the following candidates were elected:

- ◆ President (two year term): Zena Tucker
- ◆ Vice President (two year term): Esther Sampol
- ◆ Secretary (one year term): Toni Catell
- ◆ Trustee (one year term): Brit Lundell
- ◆ Trustee (two year term): Emilie Sayward Henry-Richardson
- ◆ Trustee (two year term): David Katz



The congregation approved the following for Nominating Committee (one-year terms): Karen Gonzalez, Ed Lewis, Tom Robinson.

Regarding the annual budget, a motion to reduce the amount River of Grass sends to the UUA this year was proposed in order to reduce our planned deficit by \$5,000. After discussion, the vote was taken and the motion failed to pass. The vote was in favor to pass the budget as presented by Scott May at the meeting (and provided via email before the meeting). This budget anticipates a deficit of \$32,000 that will be offset by another fund.

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ROG STAFFING UPDATE!

Thanks to the Personnel Committee (Janet Schwartz, Audrey Stang, and Lynn O'Brien) for all their hard work in filling these positions!

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Wendell Abern

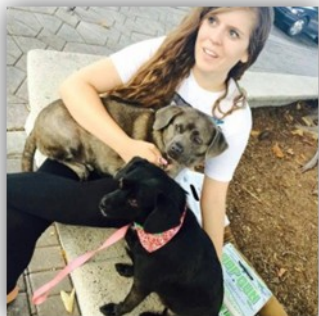


NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Yanieska (Yani) Hernandez began working as our new office administrator in May. And kudos to our search committee - they have discovered a star! Yani, who is bilingual (Spanish), seems to have mastered every office task imaginable: payroll, accounts receivable, invoices, check-cutting, filing, faxing, and even the more mundane task of answering phones. She is proficient in Windows, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, QuickBooks and Timberline. Yani comes to us after stints as a bookkeeper with Miller Construction and Leslie Delman, P.A.



Originally from Cuba, Yani has lived in Florida for 35 years, and currently resides in Pembroke Pines with her three-year old daughter, Kassandra, and their dog, Mojo, a Chihuahua. In her spare time, she enjoys decorating, dancing and exercising.



NEW SUNDAY ASSISTANT

Welcome to Daliana DeLeon the newest member of our staff! Daliana was recently hired to fill the position of Sunday Assistant. She will be responsible for assisting with hospitality set-up prior to services on Sunday, childcare for the nursery visitors during service, followed by facility clean-up. Her experience as a child-care worker was evident on her first day at work, as she cared for 4 little boys, ages 4, 3, and two 1 year olds! Welcome to our community Daliana. We're glad you're here.

BOARD MATTERS

(Continued from page 6)

In other news, **Scott May**, our treasurer, proposed we begin a program to collect used electronics for the benefit of ARC Broward. ARC Broward is a nationally accredited, private, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing services to children and adults with autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities, as well as those with various life challenges. **Scott** is willing to bring all the electronics to their recycling center as needed. The Board agreed to sponsor this recycling effort as a pilot program through the rest of the congregational year. Three cheers for **Scott**! The board is seeking other volunteers to assist **Scott** with delivering ARC items. If interested, email treasurer@riverofgrassuu.org.

Finally, the board approved two requests from the Service and Social Justice Committee. The board granted permission for conducting occasional blood drives after service and for petition signing regarding solar power and voting rights. Look for more news on these activities from SSJC very soon.

These are the highlights of board business as of May 13, 2015. Please see any member of the board or email secretary@riverofgrassuu.org if you have any questions. Our next board meeting will be on June 11 at 7pm. All members are welcome to join us.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT SUMMER NEWS THE ULTIMATE STAYCATION FOR THE YOUNG AND "YOUNG AT HEART" !

This summer we'll be offering a series of Sunday workshops for our kids during Sunday services. This is a great opportunity for our grownups to share a special skill, talent, or silliness and make some new young friends. Below are some of the possibilities, but we know there are some we didn't think of, so share your creative thoughts and sign up to wow their socks off! We can't wait to see what fun is in store. Pick a date!



FD Summer Workshops Link - <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b44a5ae2ba7fa7-summer>
If you create a Sign Up Genius account (requires an email address and a password), then you're all set each time we send out a signup option for one of our RoG events.

THE MOUNTAIN RETREAT AND LEARNING CENTER: SUMMER UU OPPORTUNITIES

You are invited to stand atop a 4200 ft. granite cliff in the Blue Ridge Mountains, overlooking majestic Blue Valley in the ecologically diverse Nantahala National Forest. Breathe in the pure mist of clouds swirling among an ancient and rare forest of elegant dwarf white oaks. Feel a heightened sense of wonder replacing time, The Mountain and the spectacular views alone invoke spirit. Come be a part of The Mountain and feel your spirit soar!



ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN:

Founded in 1979 by Unitarian Universalists, The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center is a nonprofit, year round retreat center and summer camp **open to all**. The Mountain is located in Highlands, NC and is approximately a two hour drive from Atlanta, GA, Greenville, SC and Asheville, NC. Visit our website(mountaincenters.org) to learn more.

Fun and Adventure Week: (June 29-July 5) Take a new rafting trip on the Chattooga River or do a “duckie” on the Nantahala River. Kids and Grandparents can enjoy a Great Smokey Mountain Train ride...or zip line...or hike...or all these choices and more. Campfire and s’mores, constellation lessons, other evening entertainment, too. Fun for all ages with extra help from YA Charles Sterner and from Barry White who’ll add to your hiking fun on new trails and a rock scramble. View [Flyer](#) and [Schedule](#). Get your \$25 Early Registration Discount.

Health and Wellness Retreat: (July 21-24) This weekday retreat is designed by long time yoga teacher and life skills retreat leader, Cathy Woods. She has created a program where you can spend quality time with yourself and like-minded individuals all coming together with intention of self-care and renewal. [View flyer here](#).

Family Camp: (July 26- August 2) A camp for families and friends of all ages to come together for traditional mountain camp activities. Parents, Children, Grandparents are all welcome for this inter-generational camp experience. [See the flyer here](#).

SUUF1 2015: (October 4-9) We have a great new program planned again for our 4th Fall Institute! Come enjoy SUUF1’s blend of personal growth and fun, inspiration and relaxation, community and space. Our 2015 program will test your mind and your experiential skills, yet we trust you’ll learn and leave with new options and commitment. Ahh, the color and coolness of fall in the WNC mountains, at our unique UU place, elevated 4200’ in early October. Please join others of diverse thinking who want a positive week of “being”, learning, and connecting. View the [Flyer](#), [Schedule](#), and [Program Details](#).

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Scott May, Board Treasurer

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Our beloved congregation is returning to full-time ministry, continuing on our journey to serve western Broward county and the world.



As we stretch financially, our generous members have stepped up with our largest Stewardship/Annual Giving drive ever. Your pledges exceed \$200,000 for the first time, demonstrating our collective commitment to the mission and ministry of River of Grass and Unitarian Universalist principles.

Together, we are poised to grow spiritually, to reach out beyond our sanctuary, to make an impact, to achieve our potential, and continue to live our values.

I’m grateful to serve with you.

MORE SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Rick Tucker, Chair

DAVIE EASTER EGG HUNT SSJC TENT

The SSJC had a booth at the Davie Spring Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4, 2015. **Judi Oltmans** made quality reproductions of “Endangered Florida Animals” masks and mobiles on card stock paper – and we brought our RoG banner and the UU Principles wall hangings. **Lynne Joshi** brought in League of Women Voters material, **Diane Diaz** and **Marilisa Lawless** joined and worked several hours at the tent,



helping the children pick a mask and helping them find seats and supplies. The kids had a great time and so did our volunteers. We talked to a lot of parents and other adults curious about what River of Grass was all about. We also handed out brochures to answer any questions we might not have addressed.



Although we had stiff competition with another church handing out free ice cream, hot air balloons and photo ops with a copyright infringing costumed character, still the kids came, and loved to decorate and wear the masks we provided. We gave them mobiles to take home and cut out to assemble. In fact, we were fairly engaged the entire time from 9am to 1pm when the event closed. **We estimate approximately 100-120 children did a craft at our booth.**

Big thanks to our volunteers, **Judi, Lynne, Diane, Marilisa, Zena** and **Rick** who gave up a good chunk of their Saturday to help make this happen. We already have new ideas and lessons learned to make next year even better.



THE GROWING INCOME INEQUALITY PRESENTATION BY TERRY LOWMAN

On May the 6th, the SSJC hosted an impromptu presentation covering an issue of concern by the UUA. Growing Income Inequality is a serious problem in the US and is of great concern in other countries as well. (This subject is also a study action issue that was addressed on May the 2nd at the Southeast Florida Cluster Social Justice Empowerment meeting in Boca Raton.)

Mr. Lowman’s presentation was comprised of several short videos and discussions as well as a Q&A. Because of the brief notice to invite others in the congregation, the turn-out was small. The hope is to arrange another opportunity for our congregation.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Scott May

Have old or broken **Computers** or **VCRs** taking up space? Bring them to River of Grass for **electronics recycling**! They will be transported to the **ARC Broward Electronics Recycling** center, and kept out of a landfill – helping to live our **7th UU Principle** for a sustainable planet.

ARC Broward Electronics Recycling Service is a nonprofit organization that provides training and employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities. It is part of ARC Broward, dedicated to providing services to more than 1,200 children and adults with disabilities and other life challenges. The revenue generated through recycling services goes directly to support additional job training opportunities for adults with disabilities as they begin to transform their lives and build new futures.

They accept all kinds of electronics, such as:

- ◆ Computers/ Laptops
- ◆ Cell Phones/ PDAs/ Game consoles
- ◆ Printers/ Scanners/ Fax machines
- ◆ VCRs/ DVDs/ Phones
- ◆ Cables

Electronic devices are the fastest growing segment of our nation's waste stream. ARC Broward Electronics Recycling processed approximately 1.5 million lbs. in 2013. They are committed to "**Reduce – Reuse – Recycle**" and are committed to their "**zero landfill**" policy.



Let's recycle, taking another small step to **help save our planet!**