

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2016



OVER SPILT MILK

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

It was over spilled coffee actually. In dawn twilight, I knocked over my old ceramic Melitta coffee dripper and covered half my kitchen with a royal mess of hot, wet coffee grounds. My Melitta didn't break, tough old thing that it is, but for a moment I thought I might. "I. DO. NOT. HAVE. TIME. FOR. THIS!" my brain screeched (though I did not, given I was the only one awake, nor did I want to frighten the dog).



But, generally speaking, messes don't clean themselves up. And while there are some that can be left for later, like the newspapers in the corner waiting for the recycling bin, soupy coffee grounds splattered over what seemed, at the time, a full square mile isn't something one can walk away from till one feels like dealing with it. So I set about mopping it all up, which is to be expected. While paying attention to the urge to cry over it, which is not.

It's called "displacement" – the inner self's way of letting us know, through a too-strong reaction to something that isn't really all that important, that we may not have sufficiently dealt with something that is important. Our selves and our society are rife with it. More often than not, it shows up as anger, because anger feels powerful while tears do not – though underneath that anger there is usually some other feeling of grief, pain, fear, or vulnerability.

Which brings us to this month of hearts and flowers. This month of love – and, for many, loss. Actually, for just about everybody, loss. Because, for all the love that is in our lives, there is also love that isn't – at least if we've been on the planet any length of time. Most of us tend to tuck our losses away, intentionally or not, in the interest of tending to the day-to-day, doing what must be done, because the world does just keep on turning and us with it, and we're taught the only socially acceptable answer to the question "How are you?" is "I'm fine, thanks," and one day becomes the next and then the next. Until you knock over your coffee dripper one morning.

It would appear the old saying isn't all that true: "It's no use crying over spilt milk." Yes, there are times we simply clean up the mess and move on. There are also times we can give ourselves permission to stop, feel our feelings, consider their origins, and ask for help if we need it.

Sometimes crying over spilt milk is not only useful, but helpful. And sometimes in the month of hearts and flowers the one we need most to love is ourselves.



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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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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
- ◆ Visit our **Facebook page**: www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Follow us on **Twitter**: @RiverOfGrassUU or www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Visit our **calendar**: www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html (or go to: www.riverofgrassuu.org – click on Events – Calendar.)





FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker

It all started with one of those forwarded emails that one usually ignores. Marjie Loring forwarded it, however; she's our past President. I read it. It ended up with dozens of people working hundreds of hours and a refurbished dining room for the local community kitchen for the homeless.

Marjie knows how much we cherish Martin Luther King and learned of grants administered by Broward College for MLK Service Projects. "Go forth and do good," was the call in honor of Dr. King. This was a perfect fit for River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation and our newly installed minister, Reverend Amy Carol Webb. She spoke boldly at a recent service about "Black Lives Matter" and about how important it is to ask, "How can we help?" versus assuming we know best. She spoke also about how it's important to show up for others' causes and needs.

Rev Amy practiced what she preached and showed up to the organizing meeting for the MLK Service Grant. "What shall we do?" was bounced far and wide through the email verse, committee and board meetings. Turns out the proposal that arrived to us first came from LifeNet4Families, a community kitchen and support center supporting Broward County's most in need. And what a natural fit again, as River of Grass volunteers at the food pantry and donates regularly there.

The project: Refurbish the dining room. Who: River of Grass and anyone else willing to join us. The cost: \$3500. Simple, right? Oh my, no.

Bountiful paperwork, organizing times for the work without disrupting daily food service, meetings, getting volunteers, designing the refurbish work, tracking hours spent, purchasing supplies, returning mistakes or unused items, and hours and hours of dirty, hard work taxed our bodies and brains. Thankfully, our lead organizer, Ken Bresnahan, stayed steady throughout. One has to wonder how he hauled all that stuff in his Scion.

Then, when the congregation volunteers grew weary, in stepped three pals from US Southern Command where I work. John Uharriet, Max Desosa and Ray Fleury jumped at the opportunity to help. Among the long list of help they provided, they replaced all the baseboards, in one day!

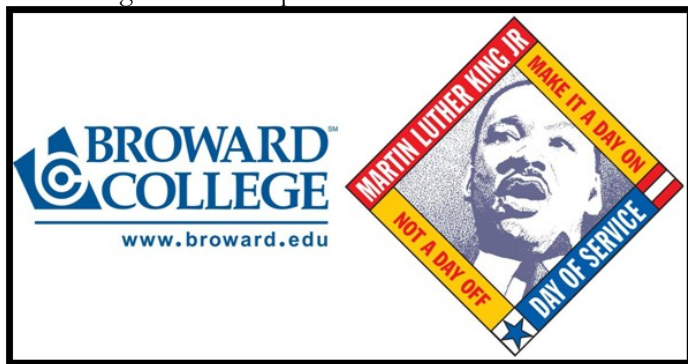
Two improvements worthy of special note are the custom-made storage units and installation of a television set with wiring to the office. Congregation member GL Franklin and assisted by congregational friend Steve Alloco created sturdy cabinetry to store clients' belongings while they dine, saving dining table space for food and people. Meanwhile, Dave Henkel wired and installed a television, enabling office staff to provide entertainment, music and training to the diners. In addition, Dave rewired two existing, required bug zappers, bringing everything up to code.

Scrubbed and painted from ceiling to floor, from backdoor to front and all in between, the room was transformed. Each day, Ken led a chalice lighting, set long tables up with all the gear and put on smooth music to work by. Each day, people who perhaps might not get along were they talking politics or sports, worked in harmony and with satisfaction. And each evening, well past the expected stop work time, the team would pack it all in the little Scion and go home, tired but proud.

At the ribbon cutting, Rev Amy's dedication captured the spirit: "May we continue the work of justice and the way of love in the memory of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. He taught us that we would remember the silence of our friends more than the words of our enemies and that our actions speak louder than words. May the good work continue."

Here's to LifeNet4Families. Here's to all those who show up for the good work of River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation. (Photos to be published in next month's newsletter.) And here's to the perfect fit of message and deed.

Volunteers: Steve Jens Rochow, Lynn O'Brien, Steve Alloco, Jessica Hill, GL Franklin, Ken Bresnahan, Zena Tucker, Rick Tucker, Rev Amy Carol Webb, Scott May, James May, Shawn May, Dave Henkel, Emerode Baryttelemy, Kristine Stewart, Max Desosa, Ray Fleury, John Uharriet, Riley Cothran, Ed Lewis, and Wendell Abern.



COVENANT GROUPS AT RIVER OF GRASS

Submitted by Janet Schwartz and Ingrid Furlong

Starting in February, River of Grass will launch five new Covenant Groups. We hope these groups will shorten the time it takes for our newest members to feel they are “one of us,” and help all of us form deeper bonds with another. Our goal is to develop a sustainable program that serves both the faith development as well as the social fabric our congregation. One essential aspect of a covenant group is the practice of “deep-listening,” i.e. putting your full attention toward hearing and understanding what each person is trying to communicate. This practice is a key part of the covenant group experience and one that not only enables a more meaningful discussion but also leads participants toward love and acceptance for one another.



Covenant groups will meet monthly at a variety of locations. Groups will meet in the north and east side of the county at a member's home, and others will meet in the daytime or evening at our River of Grass facility. The meetings will span approximately 1½ to 2 hours and observe the following format:

- ◆ Opening words and candle lighting
- ◆ “Check-in,” in which each member of the group shares 2-3 minutes of what is happening in his or her life
- ◆ Reading of quotes and texts on a topic that is chosen and shared with the group in advance of the meeting
- ◆ Member thoughts – each member of the group takes 5-7 minutes to share thoughts and experiences related to the topic and pose questions for discussion
- ◆ A facilitated discussion of the members' thoughts and experiences
- ◆ Closing words and extinguishing the candle

Each group will be led by a trained facilitator, who will enlist a group member process observer, so that the process remains true to the vision. If you are interested in becoming a member of a covenant group, please contact Janet Schwartz at smallgroups@riverofgrassuu.org.



WORSHIP SERVICES

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

Feb. 7, Amy Carol Webb, *Somebody Loves You: Faith Development & New Member Sunday!*

Feb. 14, Scott May, *R U a UU?*

Feb. 21, Amy Carol Webb, *After the Ecstasy* (Nirvana Day)
(6:00pm, *Neshamah* evening meditative service)

Feb. 28, Amy Carol Webb, TBD

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Mary Warner, Faith Development Coordinator

February is the month of love and friendship, a time to remember all those who are nearest and dearest to us. At River of Grass, we brought back an old tradition; Valentine's Pals & February 14th reveal.

We also look forward to another intergenerational service with the focus on love and friendship.

Each of our classes will be working on social justice projects. The projects will put to use our children and youth's creative sides to share the love with the community. Our Primary class will focus on our furry friends in need, while our Secondary class will learn to knit and share their skills with those in need.

If you have any questions or interest in volunteering with our youth please contact Mary Warner fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org



LIFENET4FAMILIES JANUARY 9TH 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, January 9th! Kristine, Anne, Pat, Marilisa, Shani, Alex and Ken worked in the pantry stocking the shelves and packing up boxes of food for the needy in Broward County. Rita and Ann, along with Judi, worked in the dining room serving meals. Over 50 boxes of food were packed up for needy families! Shani filled up bags with rice too. Thank you all for putting "...and service is our law" into action! Start the new year by joining us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day. We volunteer once a month from 9:00-11:00am. What a great way to spend a Saturday morning, and for teens it is a fun way to earn service hours! Upcoming dates are February 13th, March 12th and April 9th. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at 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.



LUAU/AUCTION 2016

Pixie Wright, Auction Committee

ODE TO AN AUCTION

*Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of donations and gifts galore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my church front door.
'Tis some visitor, I muttered, tapping at my church front door.*

Only this, and nothing more.

*It was in the bleakest month, dreams of luaus, Hawaiian punch,
Lovely ladies leaning lightly, palm trees swinging, swaying slightly.*

*Orchid leis and tiki huts, real grass skirts and co-co-nuts,
Balmy breezes, sandy shore, pineapple passion, mai-tais galore,
Lagoons and atolls, island reefs, mynah birds and parakeets.*

Only this, and so much more.

Suddenly there came a chatter, laughter, music, what's the matter?

What is this? oh, that's my query, What IS this? Oh, Holy Mary!

What is this oh, I implore? What's behind that sanctuary door?

*Deep into the brightness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before.*

*Thoughts of travel, trips and touring, mountains rising, rivers roaring,
Cabins, cottages, concerts, cruises, everybody bids and no one loses.*

Only this, and so much more!

Certificates and candy by the door, boxes and baskets on the floor,

Paintings, photography, fine arts in the back,

Hand-knit shawls and sweaters on the rack.

Jewelry, pottery, stained glass art,

Athletic gear for that sport at heart.

Wine and coffee, chocolate, cheese,

Member-made cookies, and honey from bees.

Books 'N Books and so much more.

Books for babies, books for teens, books for those called in-between,

Books for parents, books for mummies, books for teachers, Books for Dummies.

Books on birds, on cats and dogs, books on nematodes, books on frogs,

Books on marriage, myth and money; some are novel, some are funny.

Only this, and so much more!

Yes, the River of Grass Annual Auction is this month, only a few weeks away! Please continue to solicit donations and certificates, buy your tickets and maybe an extra, volunteer to assist at the auction, and sponsor your own party or event. Check out our website at riverofgrassuu.org/auction-2016 to buy tickets, review the menu and enjoy a preview of our entertainment with Polynesian dancers. Here are some important schedules to remember for our very own Auction:

- ◆ **Feb. 14** – donations with catalogue description due in to River of Grass
- ◆ **Feb. 20** – last day to purchase auction tickets (\$55.00)
- ◆ **Feb. 21** – auction catalog available on-line
- ◆ **Feb. 27** – **River of Grass Luau and Auction**
 - ✓ **6:00** Doors open for welcoming photo and drink, browse and buy; photo (\$5.00 charge) will be available that evening
 - ✓ **7:00** Dinner
 - ✓ **7:30** Entertainment
 - ✓ **8:30** Live auction

See you at the Luau.



RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

DOUG MACLEOD

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 8:00 P.M.



River of Grass Café is thrilled to present a special appearance by **Acoustic Blues Master Doug MacLeod**. In addition to showcasing our best local and regional artists, the Café occasionally has the opportunity to present national artists that that we typically don't get to see live in South Florida—especially in such a welcoming and intimate setting. Doug MacLeod is an LA-based, acoustic blues maestro whose music is a direct link back to the blues-roots music of the '30s and '40s.



Doug's current album, *Exactly Like This*, has been nominated in three categories of the **37th Blues Music Awards – Best Artist, Best Album and Best Song**. And **DOWNBEAT** magazine has voted *Exactly Like This* “One of the Year's Best Albums.”

Don't miss this amazing show. We hope to sell out the Café and show Doug we care about great music. Get tickets now at the River of Grass website or click here: [Café Tickets](#).



- ◆ **One of the Year's Best Albums**
– DOWNBEAT Magazine
- ◆ **NOMINATED FOR THREE 2016 BLUES MUSIC AWARDS!**
- ◆ **Probably the greatest living representative of the acoustic blues.**
– Heaven Magazine

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Kip and Kristine Barkley, Stewardship Committee Co-Chairs

Yes, Virginia, there will be a canvass.

We call it our Annual Budget Drive. (Doesn't that sound nicer?) Kristine and Kip Barkley will lead this event. Following our Visioning workshop, Saturday January 30, you will be hearing testimonials from fellow members. Then, Sunday February 21 we will kick off with a Sunday Service followed by a Commitment Luncheon.

For those who do not attend, there will be Gift Facilitators to connect and deliver pledge cards. You too can be a Gift Facilitator once you complete your own pledge card. The dream is to have all pledges turned in by March 5th. With your help, we can do this.

More information to follow.



RIVER OF GRASS AT THE MLK DAY PARADE

