

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

MARCH 2016

## EACH DAY A MIRACLE

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



**T**his morning I sat on my front porch as I love to do at daybreak, watching the earth awaken. The greens and yellows and purples and oranges and pinks of the flowers reaching into the new day as the brilliant birdsong chorus heralded the possibilities of another day. A day like other days. And not. For as the author Paulo Coelho reminds us, “You can become blind by seeing each day as a similar one. Each day is a different one, each day brings a miracle of its own.”



The month of March this year hosts the holy days of rebirth and resilience we celebrate each Spring equinox. Our Christian family knows it as Easter. Our Pagan family as the Feast of Ostara, the Germanic goddess of Spring – herself known by different names in different cultures – Eostre, Astarte, Ishtar, Esther – from whence we inherited Easter eggs, symbol of fertility and new life, decorated and exchanged in ancient festivals as wishes for prosperity and abundance during the coming year – especially with the tilling of the soil and planting of crops. In China people have given each other painted eggs during the Ching Ming or Pure Brightness festival from as far back as 3,000 years ago. The Hindu New Year festival known as Varsha Pratipada also heralds the coming of Spring, and among my own ancestors, the Cherokee celebrate the First New Moon of Spring to bless the beginning of the planting season. It is no accident Judaism’s Pesach, or Passover, also comes with the Spring, commemorating the Israelite’s new life as a free people.

So what does it mean, all these different cultures claiming this season with their own rites and rituals, their own deities and doctrines, their own practices and prayers? Does it render none of it true? Or all of it true? Adoration of divinity? Of nature? Of humanity?

Unitarian Universalists are free to mark this time of year as we will, or not, and still recognize that all these holy days of Spring, at the root, are festivals to the power of hope. And what have we, absent hope?

This is the meaning of Easter for me: that we have it within ourselves and our beloved community to rise again, to renew the truth of who we really are, to revive our faith and redeem the world in love without condition or hesitation. And that makes of each day a miracle.



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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

Phone 954-723-7877

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[www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org)

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& Georgette Poland  
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& Drea Kelly  
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& Deb Kitner  
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& Open  
Service & Social Justice ..... Rick Tucker  
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& Janet Schwartz  
Stewardship ..... Kip Barkley  
& Kristine Barkley  
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& Pat Katz  
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& Esther Sampol

## 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;

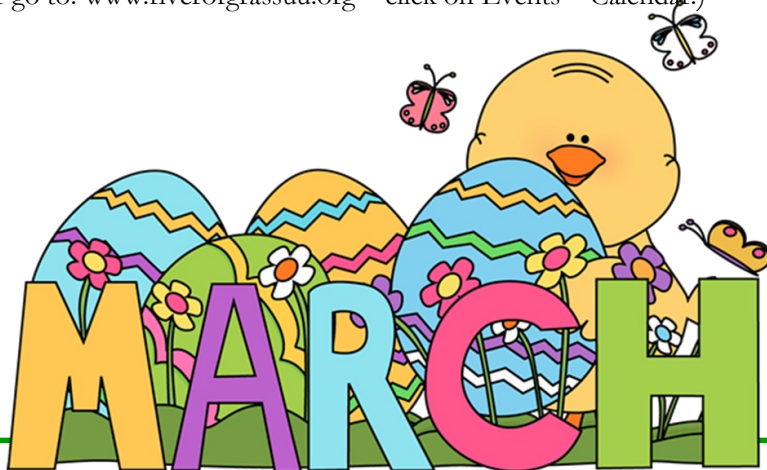
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

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)
- ◆ 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.)







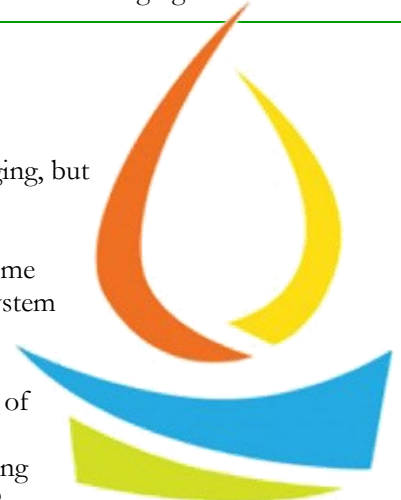
## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker

**C**hanging one's perspective is mighty challenging, but it is a worthy endeavor nonetheless!

Scientists and mathematicians have noticed that some discoveries of truth must be made from outside the system of study. For instance, math used to explain the warping of time and space contains no direct observation, but was taken from imaginings about the nature of the universe. Einstein's lofty theories were recently confirmed with the observation of a faint chirp of gravitational waves, by scientists who worked years to create the technology to prove his perspective was correct. What will we do with this fascinating perspective? Shall we harness the energy of these waves to travel in space and time?

Check out this article: <http://www.openculture.com/2016/02/this-is-what-gravitational-waves-sound-like.html>



Similarly, I've examined my personal perspectives. Chores of washing dishes, cleaning, paying bills, and commuting are necessary to my day-to-day life. Taking a step back from them in my mind is not required, but what a fresh view life takes when I do. Dishes still get clean, but my experience of the warm, soapy water is enjoyed when my mind isn't wandering to my next task. And my commute, still tiresome at times, gets somehow shorter when I breathe intentionally through that annoying traffic.



Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me...

Anything can happen, child.  
Anything can be.

~Shel Silverstein

*Mandala postcard art by Emilie Sayward Henry*

My exercise in perspectives continually surprises me. What's up with the beautiful lights in the bushes outside River of Grass? What thoughtful person put them there? Why does Brenda Visvanathan's piano music make me feel like soaring? Did you see that heron on the canal bank, hunting for fish? What new expressions will the artists at the River bring, changing our perspectives anew?

And in the season of our annual budget drive, I look afresh at my perspective on money. Money was a mystery to me as a child, and still is somewhat today. Will I have the courage to step outside my normal financial picture to see the possibilities of tomorrow? What would my perspective be, were I less fortunate? What fascinating things can come from small changes in money-saving, taken in small increments over a long time?

These questions come flooding to me, as never before because of the perspectives gained in my time with this congregation. Because of the comfort, trust and challenges gained with this faith, my spiritual practices of stepping a bit past my comfort zone have grown in your company, Dear River. This journey is a gift I treasure; new vistas and insights are still to come, and I look forward with hope and wonder. What new perspectives have you noticed while among this beloved community called River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation?

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

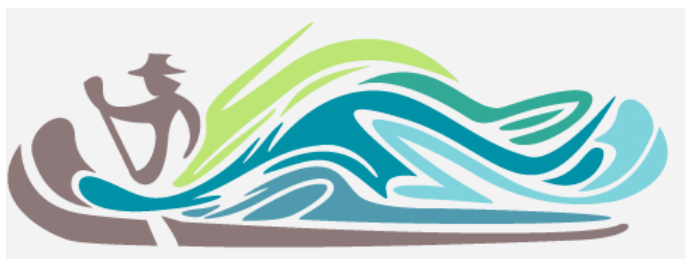
Debbie Kitner, Membership Co-Chair



*Please take the time to introduce yourself, if you haven't already.*

**P**lease join me in welcoming our wonderful new members! We are so blessed to have so many talented, enthusiastic and thoughtful new members join our beloved community. They are: Rita Cherubini, Valerie Pellegrini, Alex Pobiner, Linda Lathroum, Pat Fier, Marla Hannah, Vernon Allen, Kelisa and Chris Ball and their children Corbin and Quentin Ball, Melissa Buehler and Debbie Ely and their children Emme and Everett Buehler-Ely.

## RIVER NAVIGATORS



**T**his is a new program that was developed as a way of helping new members become active, happy and involved members of River of Grass. Navigators are mentors to new members and their families, introducing them to all that River of Grass has to offer, including affinity groups, covenant groups, committees and other fun activities. We are asking for volunteers to become River Navigators. For more information, please see Rev. Amy, Leana Bresnahan, or Debbie Kitner, or email [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org).

## CIRCLE DINNERS

**C**ircle dinners are a wonderful way to get to know other River of Grass members on a deeper level. These dinners are held in members' home and are usually groups of 6-10. The host provides the main course and the guests provide the side dishes. These dinners are always filled with fun, laughter, great conversation and delicious food. We are looking for hosts and attendees. Please see Debbie Kitner or email [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information.



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Mary Warner, Faith Development Coordinator

**F**aith Development is eager to celebrate Easter at the end of the month. March 27<sup>th</sup> will be our intergenerational service and our Easter egg hunt.



Please check the weekly emails and special announcements for more information!



Primary Class: ARK Art (Teachers: Diane Lade and Marilisa Lawless)  
Sundays 11:00-12:00 (March 6th, 13th, 20th)

Secondary Class: Pysanky (Teachers: Emilie and Michael Henry-Richardson)  
Sundays 11:00-12:00 (March 6th, 13th, 20th)



## LIFENET4FAMILIES FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> VOLUNTEER DAY

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair



**T**hank you so much to all of our River of Grass volunteers who dedicated their time to our community partnership with LifeNet4Families on Saturday, February 13th! Marilisa and Shani, Steve, Patricia, Linda, Pat, Sheryl, Rick, Judy and Ed worked in the pantry bagging up rice, beans, and sweet potatoes, and stocking the shelves with food for the needy families in Broward County. Rita and Ann, along with Ken, worked in the dining room serving meals. Everyone worked in groups and had a chance to chat while filling, folding and stacking! Thank you all for putting our Congregational Covenant "...and service is our law" section into action.

Join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day. We volunteer there once a month from 9:00-11:00am. What a great way to spend a Saturday morning and for teens, a fun way to earn service hours! Upcoming dates are 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](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.







## COME CAMP WITH US!

By Diane Lade, Full Moon Daughters Coordinator

The second annual River of Grass congregational camping trip is coming up on March 4 (Friday) through March 6 (Sunday) at Highlands Hammock State Park, just outside of Sebring. We would love to have you join us for this fabulous three-day weekend featuring nature walks and crafts, campfires and cooking out, and great bike riding through one of the state's best preserved forests.

Highlands Hammock, once considered for national park status, is best known for its biodiversity and 1,000-year-old oak trees. For more information about the park:

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/Highlands-Hammock>

This family-friendly trip is co-sponsored by the Full Moon Daughters outdoors spirituality group for women and girls, and the Faith Development program. Our theme this year is "Our Florida Home," as we will look at our state's unique ecosystem and how we can be custodians of its future.

Are you passionate about our Seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle (respecting the interdependent web of life), introducing your children to the real Florida or just being outdoors? We are looking for volunteers to lead nature walks or other activities, coordinate our shared meals and lead or participate in worship on Sunday morning.

Birding, hiking and biking are some of the most popular activities at Highlands Hammock. Bicycles are available for rent and there is canoeing/kayaking nearby outside the park.

Sebring is about two and a half hours from Broward County. You can come for one or two nights.

We have eight camp sites reserved, which will be given out on a first come, first served basis. Two tents are allowed per site. The campground is full. So please save yourself a place in one of our camping spots by emailing: [fullmoon-daughters@riverofgrassuu.com](mailto:fullmoon-daughters@riverofgrassuu.com). There will be an \$18 fee if you cancel your reservation with us after Feb. 26, in order to cover the "turn back" costs charged by the park.

If you want to join the fun but prefer to sleep in a real bed, we encourage you to book a hotel nearby. However, we urge you do it quickly, as there is an auto race in Sebring that weekend and many hotels are already sold out. Check for lodging vacancies in nearby Lake Wales and Avon Park. If you want the hotel option, send an email to the above address and we will connect you with other hotel campers.

See you on the water, along the trail and under the stars.



## JUMP INTO THE FUN

### AT THE DAVIE SPRING EGG HUNT!

Submitted by Zena Tucker



On Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> River of Grass will have a tent at this popular annual event in Davie. We'll be ambassadors to the community, sharing literature and stories about our Unitarian Universalist principles and our beloved River of Grass, while offering crafts for the children free of charge. Volunteers are needed! See Marilisa Lawless or Pat Fier or email [ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org) for more info. Sign up for a shift in the hospitality area or at <http://tinyurl.com/nu2tuv5>.

## TAKE A HIKE!

Submitted by Diane Lade



**E**xperienced outdoorsman and Florida master naturalist Dave Griswold will be leading some great nature hikes for Unitarian Universalists, and their families and friends in March. Come along and experience the real South Florida. The scheduled hikes are:

- ◆ 8 am-noon, Saturday, March 5 at Big Cypress National Preserve, rest stop at mile marker 63, Alligator Alley/ Interstate 75. Six-mile hike for adults and older children, with much wildlife viewing.
- ◆ 8 am-2 pm, Saturday, March 26 at Big Cypress National Preserve, location same as above. Hike is a little over eight miles and similar to the March 5 trip.

Hikes are free and open to all. Dave, who is the president of the UU Church of Fort Lauderdale, is a trained Fern Forest guide and volunteers with the Florida Trail Association. Please contact Dave if you want to attend; he will send you a gear list and directions exactly where to meet the group. He can be contacted at: [dgriswold2001@hotmail.com](mailto:dgriswold2001@hotmail.com).

Spring is the perfect time to visit the Everglades, as the tropical birds are building their nests and hatching their young. For more information about Big Cypress: <http://www.nps.gov/bicy/index.htm>

Thanks to Dave for extending this opportunity to River of Grass!

## BOARD MATTERS

Toni Cattell, Board Secretary

**A**t the February 11th meeting, The Board of Trustees reviewed results of the recent Service and Social Justice Committee's River of Grass UU Congregational Survey. The survey included questions on congregant support of a River of Grass "Black Lives Matter" banner. Based on the responses, the Board unanimously agreed to design and purchase a "Black Lives Matter" banner for walking and for display inside. Keep a look out for our own River of Grass "Black Lives Matter" banner in the near future! Thanks to all who took the survey!!



## POTLUCK DINNER AND GAME NIGHT

Submitted by Linda M. Lathroum



**A**potluck dinner and game night will be held on Friday night, March 11th at River of Grass. Dinner will start at 6:30 pm and games for kids and adults start at 7:30 pm. Meet fellow congregants for a relaxing evening of board and card games, including Scrabble, Dominos, Chess, Poker, and Darts. Bring your favorite game to share with friends, and come ready for lots of fun.

Sign up for the potluck at the hospitality table after Sunday service. For questions please contact Linda Lathroum at [gamenight@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:gamenight@riverofgrassuu.org).



## BEYOND THE WALLS OF OUR CONGREGATION

Submitted by the Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camp and Conference Centers

As Unitarian Universalists, we often find ourselves wishing we could live in a world that more closely reflects our values. We want more of what we share within the walls of our congregation to exist outside the walls. Many of us dedicate our lives to creating small pockets of community that reflect our values.

It can come as a surprise to many Unitarian Universalists that there is already an established network of such communities throughout the United States and Canada. It's our Unitarian Universalist Camp and Conference Centers. And they have formed an alliance to help spread the word, the [Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camp and Conference Centers \(UUACCC\)](#).

Each center is a unique place, often located in a spectacular natural setting. Most operate year-round or close to it, offering retreats, conferences, and summer camp experiences that reflect our UU values. They offer similar experiences to the summer institutes and assemblies but because they are center based they are able to do so on a continuous basis throughout the year with a great many opportunities for learning and growing in community.

Adults and families are often surprised to learn what a wide range of opportunities for fellowship, self-discovery, and learning Camp and Conference Centers provide throughout the year. And all take place in natural settings of unparalleled beauty.

For those of us with children, the centers that offer summer camp experiences for youth are especially important. It can be challenging for our children to find peers who share their values, and a place to belong where they can live those values. Unitarian Universalist Camp and Conference Centers are often a home away from home for young people.

In the words of a camper from [Unirondack](#), a UU summer camp in the Western Adirondacks of New York State:

“You taught me to seek out the innate goodness in every human being. You taught me that there is no fully good person, and no consummation of evil...that everybody is a rainbow. You just have to pick which colors to see,...You taught me how to love. You taught me that love doesn't have to be between man and woman...that any two people can love each other. Love is holding hands, love is sitting together, reading together, singing together, holding each other up, holding each other back, and letting each other go. Goodbye [Unirondack](#). I love you. And now I'm ready to go love some more.”

Transformative UUnique experiences like this young person describes are an everyday occurrence at our Unitarian Universalist Camp and Conference Centers. There is something for everyone: youth, families of all kinds, and adults. Visit the [UUACCC](#) website to find links to UU experiences beyond the walls of our congregation.



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### WORSHIP SERVICES

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

Mar. 6, Rev. Amy Carol Webb, *Where the Wild Things Are*

Mar. 13, Deb Giblin-Davis, *Fierce Grace*

Mar. 20, Rev. Amy Carol Webb, *Busting Out All Over*  
(6:00pm, *Neshamah* evening meditative service)

Mar. 27, Rev. Amy Carol Webb, *Rolling Back the Stone:  
An Easter Service*

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