

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 2016



LISTENING FOR CHANGE

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

What this essay means to you depends entirely upon when you read it. Before or after November 8th.

It's a uniquely human thing to set our lives by benchmarks, goals, thresholds, deadlines, turning points – consciously and not consciously. We watch for shifts, check for mile-markers. We generate “before and after” on virtually any subject, any challenge. But this one – this 2016 Presidential election – seems more momentous than others we may have experienced. This one seems to have put

our very humanity on trial. Our sense of ourselves as citizens, as neighbors, as people. Our identities writ large and broadcast in the coarsest of terms. “Is this who we are?” we wonder. “Is this what we’ve become?” “Has the world ever been so bitter?”

Well ... yes. But we forget. Which is also a human thing, a way our biological, emotional and spiritual bodies learn to protect themselves. Which works. Until it doesn't. So what's happened in this election cycle is more about the shields we habitually carry being shattered, than our humanity worsening. No, this shadow side of ourselves is always there, just not always so visible in our neighbors . . . or ourselves. And how you feel about that will likely differ mightily if you read this on November 7th or November 9th.

But know this. The volatility churned up with this election will not end on November 9th, no matter who wins. It's part of us. And what we have before us is a fresh opportunity to look ourselves, and each other, in the eye and decide once more how we will proceed – to work toward real and lasting healing, or suppress it all again until the next event that pulls back the veil of our willful forgetting.

And how will we get through? One thing is sure, arguing will get us nowhere. Never has, and never will. But listening might.

Consider the ancient wisdom of the East, and the Mandarin symbol for the verb “to listen.”



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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
www.riverofgrassuu.org
office@riverofgrassuu.org

Minister **Rev. Amy Carol Webb**
minister@riverofgrassuu.org

Newsletter

Editor Monica Dyer
 Layout Brit Lundell
 Copy Editor Diane Diaz

Board of Trustees

board@riverofgrassuu.org

President Zena Tucker
 Vice President Scott May
 Secretary Toni Cattell
 Treasurer Brit Lundell
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committee contact info at

www.riverofgrassuu.org

Caring Deb Kitner
 & Kristine Barkley
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 Facilities Management Jon Kitner
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 Service & Social Justice Rick Tucker
 Shared Ministry Diane Lade
 & Janet Schwartz
 Stewardship Kristine & Kip Barkley
 Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

Other Resources

contact info at www.riverofgrassuu.org

Office Administrator Sandy Blair Chibnick
 Faith Development Coordinator Deb Ely
 Choir Director Gayle Giese
 Pastoral Care Riley Cothran
 & Pat Katz
 Web Designer Marjorie Loring
 & 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
- ◆ Visit our **Facebook page**: www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Follow us on **Twitter**: [@RiverOfGrassUU](https://twitter.com/RiverOfGrassUU) or www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Visit our **calendar**: www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html (or go to: www.riverofgrassuu.org – click on Events – Calendar)
- ◆ Join our new MeetUp group: www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu





RECOVERING FROM MATTHEW

Zena Tucker, Board President

I've been "under the weather" lately. Matthew slammed into Haiti, threatened South Florida and put me to the test. As a meteorologist at US Southern Command, I did my part to enable our readiness and response to the hurricane. As I write, I am happy to report that the military delivered nearly 600,000 pounds of supplies to the western Tiburon Peninsula of Haiti to areas unreachable by road. The helicopters used soccer fields as landing pads. Everyone... just everyone... jumped to do their part. Including me, sitting at a desk in Miami, making briefings, helping to get the weather support right and turning my hand to whatever I could to make things better for the folks in the field and my fellow desk jockeys in the rear.

Thankfully, the roads now are passable in Haiti, and ports are opening. There is no need to fly aid in on Marine and Army helicopters. It is time for US military personnel to return home and time for me to finally have a day or two off. My time to recover won't take too long. I am grateful for the support through these long days; Grateful to Scott May, who's been brilliantly covering for me these past few weeks; Grateful for the encouragement from Rev. Amy and others; Grateful most especially to my husband Rick for being my rock through it all.

Haiti will need much more time to recover. Who will be their support through the long days?



A Haitian man helps unload rice from the World Food Programme off of a CH-53 Super Stallion in Plaisance-du-Sud, Haiti, Oct 18, 2016. (U.S Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Autumn S. Bobby)

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Deb Kitner, Membership Co-Chair

Membership

The Membership Committee held a Pathways to Membership class on October 9, 2016. We had five very enthusiastic and interesting potential new members join us in this session. These classes are so interesting, hearing the stories of religious and spiritual journeys that lead us to Unitarian Universalism, and to River of Grass. Please join us on Sunday, November 6, as we welcome new members to our beloved River of Grass family.

Sadly, the Fall Fling picnic was cancelled due to forecasted rain and lightning. The Membership Committee felt it would be safer for everyone if the picnic was rescheduled. The committee will meet and decide on a new date, probably after the first of the year. Watch for a new date to be posted soon. Some members brought drinks and paper goods to River of Grass on the Sunday before the picnic. Items can be saved for the rescheduled picnic or if you prefer to have the items returned to you, just email Deb Kitner at debkit2@yahoo.com.



LISTENING FOR CHANGE

(Continued from page 1)

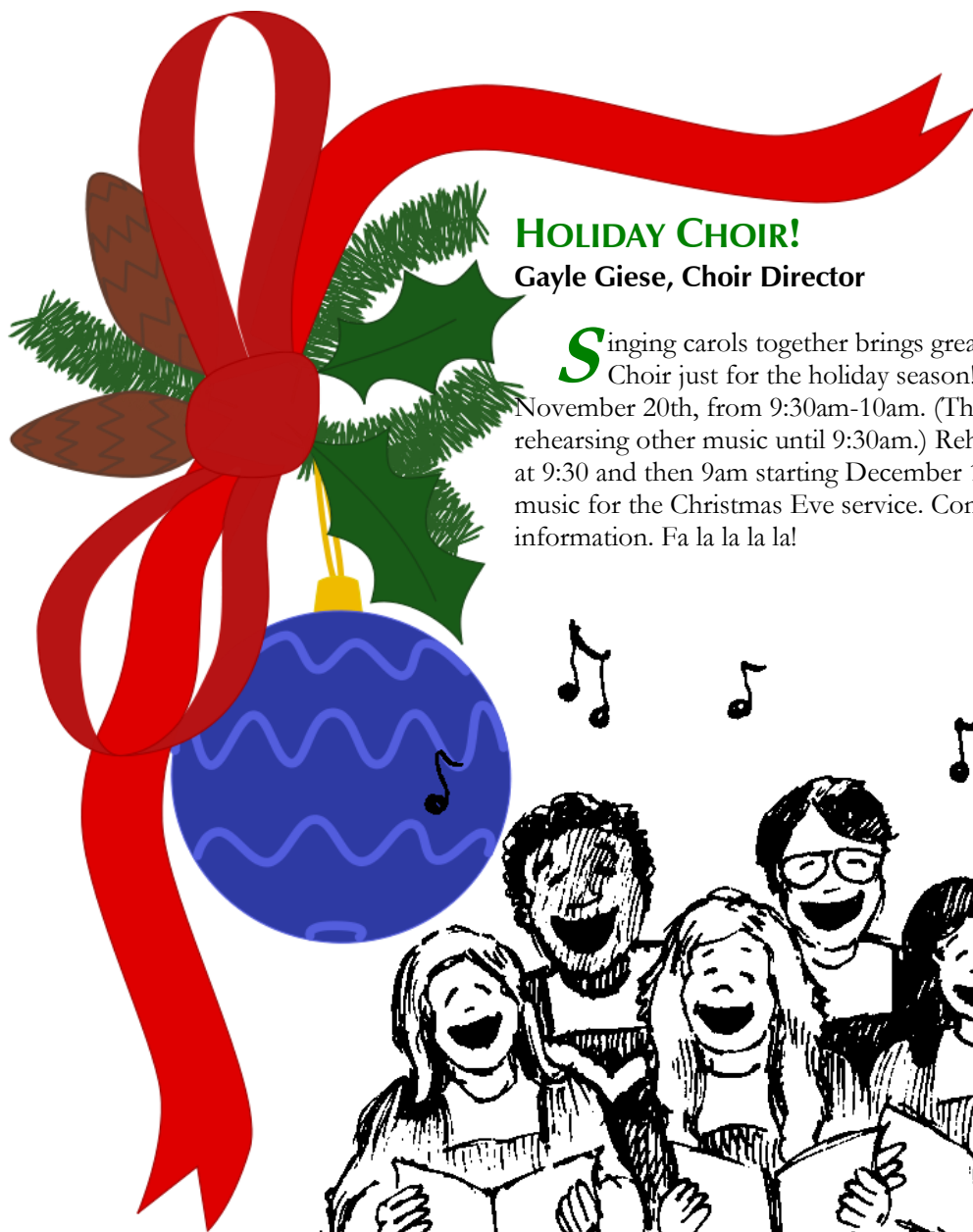
I give you my ears, my eyes, my undivided attention and my heart. What if we really worked to listen this way? What might happen if we gave our hearts to it? What if we had the courage to risk it? What if this is how we decide to conduct ourselves from this moment forward, in this passage of history that has strained our very civility to the breaking point?

I can't say how I'll feel on November 9th. No matter what happens, our work for love and justice must carry on. As I write this, out my window I can see the hateful, crude, uncivil political signs in my neighbor's yard. Will I work to stop the hate? With everything I've got. But if I can't listen for where that hate is coming from – with my ears and eyes and heart – it can only be interrupted for a time, never healed. Not until I learn to listen for change.

WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

- November 6: **Ancestor Sunday**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- November 13: **One Wild and Precious Life**
Zena Tucker
- Nov. 17 (Thu.): **Welcome Table Communion**, 7pm
Nov. 18 (Fri.): **Rhythm of Life Drum Circle**, 7pm
- November 20: **Hunger Communion**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- November 27: **Leftovers**
Kathy Jens-Rochow
- December 4: **TBD**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb



HOLIDAY CHOIR!

Gayle Giese, Choir Director

Singing carols together brings great joy! Consider joining our River of Grass Choir just for the holiday season! Holiday rehearsals begin Sunday, November 20th, from 9:30am-10am. (The choir will meet at 9am, but we will be rehearsing other music until 9:30am.) Rehearsals will be Sunday mornings beginning at 9:30 and then 9am starting December 12th. The Holiday Choir will sing beautiful music for the Christmas Eve service. Contact Gayle Giese to sign up or for more information. Fa la la la!

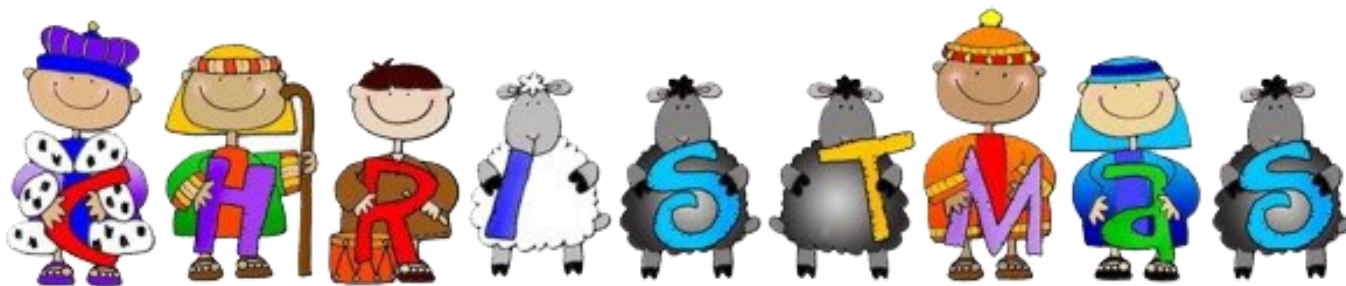


FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

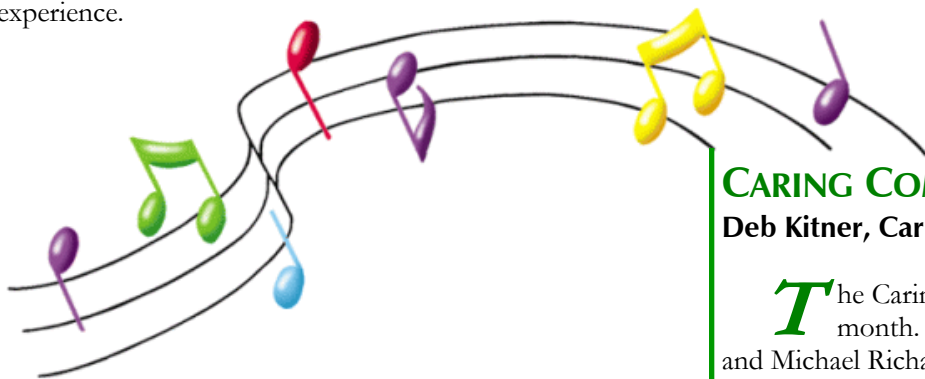
Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator

October was a full month for Faith Development. The Early Childhood class learned about chalices and made some of their own. Our Primary class explored the complexities of interpersonal relationships and the importance of valuing others, and the Secondary class built and promoted a utopian society. The month came to an end with the Animal Blessing Intergenerational Service, which is always fun for all ages and species.

We are also approaching the busy and exciting holiday season. In the month of November, we will focus on gratitude and giving. With our classes and services, we will discuss how we are blessed and ways we can help others. Through **Guest at Your Table** and the *Hunger Communion* service, our children and their families will have many opportunities to give: in the congregation, at home, and in the community.



Our Holiday Pageant is in December, and we need volunteers for this delightful production! Please let Debbie Ely or Tanya Gustafson know if you are interested in being involved behind the scenes or on stage. We would greatly appreciate help from people of all ages. Additionally, we would love to have children involved in the music for our Christmas Eve service. Please let us know if your children would like to take part in this, as it is sure to be a beautiful and enchanting experience.



CARING COMMITTEE

Deb Kitner, Caring Committee Co-Chair

The Caring Committee has had a pretty quiet month. We do want to note that Melissa Buehler and Michael Richardson have recovered nicely from surgery and are again active in our River of Grass family. Thanks to everyone for their cards, calls, and meals. We also send best wishes to Robby Greenberg for a speedy recovery from her spinal injury and subsequent surgery.

BOARD MATTERS

Toni Cattell, Board Secretary

The Board voted to establish a Minister's Discretionary expense budget of \$750 to further the ministry and mission of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation. The monies are to be spent at the minister's discretion.



If you know of anyone who is in need of support and comfort please contact Deb Kitner and Kristine Barkley, co-chairs of the Caring Committee. We are here to help.

FACILITIES MATTERS

Jon Kitner, Facilities Co-Chair

This is an exciting time for the River as we grow in our church home. There are two projects in development that will improve the use of our facilities. First, our co-chair, G L Franklin and committee member, Rick Tucker are building, from scratch, a new folding partition for the multi-purpose room. As many at the River know, GL is a master carpenter whose work already graces our facility. The partition will be a very useful and enhancing addition to the Faith Development program, the Choir, and other groups that have need of our limited space. We are very fortunate to have such a competent team as GL and Rick. Co-chair Jon Kitner is working with members of the Board to replace our sanctuary chairs with new ones. Won't that be nice to have upgraded, new seating! Our present chairs are wearing out. Please treat them carefully as we move towards their replacement.



Lastly, Congregational Workdays fall on the first Saturday of the month. This is a time of light work and fellowship as we repair, clean and renew our church home. We have had a dedicated, small group of volunteers who have served over the years, but it would be great if a few more members attended our workdays. This is a chance to work alongside fellow members to get to know them in ways that are rewarding and to build church community. We encourage you to come and join us at our next workday on Saturday, November 5th from 9:00 AM until noon.

BLACK LIVES MATTER AT THE RIVER

Submitted by Rev. Amy

You are cordially invited to express your views about River of Grass's support of Black Lives Matter and our planned flag display. Rev. Amy and the Board of Trustees will host three Listening Circles. The first will be held on Saturday, Nov. 5th at 11am, another on Sunday, Dec. 4th at 12pm (right after service). The third session is TBA. Bring your concerns, ideas and plans to this open forum. For more information or to send your thoughts electronically, email president@riverofgrassuu.org.

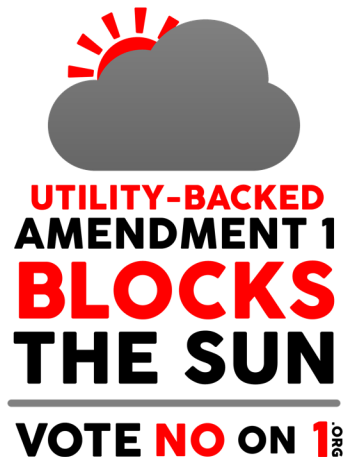


VOTE NO IN NOVEMBER ON AMENDMENT 1

By Steve Jens-Rochow

It is a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.” Backed by Florida’s monopoly electric utilities, Amendment 1 is an effort to choke-off rooftop solar and keep a stranglehold on customers by preventing them from generating their own power. Big power companies do not want to lose their exclusive hold on Florida’s electric customers so they launched a competing ballot campaign to Floridians for Solar Choice in the hopes of confusing voters. Amendment One is the result of the monopoly utilities’ successful campaign to manipulate and mislead Floridians about solar.

Steve Jens-Rochow greensanctuary@riverofgrassuu.org



RIVER OF GRASS "ADOPT A WISH" GIFT DRIVE

By Judi Oltmans

How wonderful it would be to bring a smile to the face of an abused, neglected or abandoned child, especially during the holidays. We all have this opportunity if we act now. River of Grass has partnered with ChildNet, a non-profit organization that manages child welfare, to provide holiday gift cards for children right here in Broward County. ChildNet provides holiday gifts to approximately 300 children in distress.

How can you help? Just stop by our display in the hospitality area, take an envelope with the name and gift card wish, and sign our roster. Then return your envelope with the gift card in it to River of Grass, no later than December 11th. ChildNet will then distribute your gift card directly to children in need.

See Linda Lathroum or Judi Oltmans or email ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.



CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY

Submitted by Rani Govindasamy

We are giving some tender loving care to our growing library in the hall bookcase outside of the nursery. To help you participate in our developing project, here are some guidelines to help you. First, books will now be displayed by subject or areas of interest. Please help us keep them in the right section. We will take books that are not appropriate for our areas of interest, place them in boxes, and donate them to local charities.



If you wish to donate books, please leave them on the floor, next to the bookcase in the hall. Books can be borrowed (honor system) or purchased to keep for \$1.00, by putting a dollar in the glass jar provided. Every Sunday look for free, give-away books and books for \$1.00 on a small table beside the coffee counter. Lastly, since space is limited, please do not store non-library items on the library bookcase. Thanks for everyone's help in growing the library and sharing and finding hidden gems!



7th Annual Florida Unitarian Universalist Women's Retreat April 7 -9, 2017

DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center Ellenton Florida

The retreat begins Friday at 5:00pm and ends Sunday at Noon.

DaySpring Conference Center is conveniently located off I-75 just north of Sarasota on Florida's West Coast. The beautiful campus nestled under ancient oaks and located on a cove of the Manatee River offers a serene setting for our annual retreat. Take a look.

<http://Dayspring.dioswfl.org>.

\$220 per person covers expenses for a semi-private room and six meals. 8 women share a cozy cottage with 4 bedrooms and 4 baths, a screened porch and common area. A limited number of single rooms are available at \$292 each.

\$5 Discounts available for registration before September 30.

A non-refundable deposit of \$15 for semi-private room or \$25 for a private room will reserve your place. Final payment is due January 15, 2017. Come join us for an enriching and memorable weekend.

To register contact Helen Leddy helen.leddy@gmail.com