

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA

APRIL 2017

THE PRICE OF SPRING

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



Beltane. Easter. Passover. Ostara. Different names, varied traditions, common purpose, these burgeoning Spring holidays. All are festivals of awakening, of renewal, of restoration, of resurrection. We dance and laugh and sing our way through this season, celebrating the new life bursting forth all around us – sometimes forgetting that all this emergence, all this birthing, all this liberation is actually quite costly.

Our Jewish ancestors paid dearly for their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, wandering the wastelands of the Sinai desert, suffering such thirst and hunger they cried out to Moses that at least as slaves they'd had enough food. By their faith, they found the promised land.

Our Christian family marks this season as the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who forfeited his own life that they might be free of sin, surrendering their own lives to follow in his steps. By their faith, they found salvation.

Our loved ones of Earth Traditions perform rituals of rebirthing for Ostara, goddess of fertility, symbolizing the power of the sun to burn away the cold dormancies of Winter and call up life from the hard soil, to recommit their own lives to wisdom and truth. By their faith, they find light.

This season, our habit is to say, "Spring has returned." But that has always sounded to me rather benign and altogether too passive for the riot of life emerging. Perhaps we just move too fast to see, amidst too much noise to hear, affording ourselves too few mindful moments necessary to perceive, the redemption already all around us – for Earth, and for ourselves. Or maybe we simply remain unwilling to make the sacrifices required for the revival we seek.

Pondering this thought, I came across a passage from Daniel Abraham's fantasy novel, "The Price of Spring."

We say that flowers return every spring, but that is a lie. It is true that the world is renewed. It is also true that that renewal comes at a price, for even if the flower grows from an ancient vine, the flowers of spring are themselves new to the world, untried and untested. The flower that wilted last year is gone. Petals once fallen are fallen forever. Flowers do not return in the spring, rather they are replaced. It is in this difference between returned and replaced that the price of renewal is paid. And as it is for spring flowers, so it is for us.

In this new era of emergence, may we know what in us must be released and replaced. However shaken we may be by the forces of reformation this season, may we be willing to pay the price of Spring.



Photography by Amy Carol Webb.

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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

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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!

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: 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)
- ◆ **Join our MeetUp group:** www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker



It's National Poetry Month! Did you know there are a number of famous Unitarian Universalist poets, including Mary Oliver and Ralph Waldo Emerson? And did you know that Skinner House and Beacon Press Books, run by the UUA, have published many books by famous poets, including James Baldwin?



We recently explored poetry at our "Poetry of Our Lives" worship service. We learned of our connections and what is meaningful to us. It was my deep pleasure to receive the poems from you, and to then share them, River friends. And I hope you enjoy this offering of mine.



MY RIVER ROCK FRIENDS

by Zena Tucker

*My River Rock friends
Stones and jewels
Most are unpolished, like me
Some sparkle with light
Others are deep obsidian in thought and deed
Some are bold, red and powerful
One is light, blue and translucent
Another is hard, purple and full of purpose
Small and yellow and new
Heavy and faceted and old
Round and green and shining
Flat and silver and quiet*

CARING COMMITTEE

Deb Kitner and Kristine Barkley, Co-Chairs

As co-chairs of the Caring Committee, Deb Kitner and Kristine Barkley want to review the role of the Caring Committee at River of Grass.

The Caring Committee is made up of volunteers from members of our River of Grass family and in some cases, friends and former members. The role of these volunteers include:



- ◆ Meal preparation and delivery
- ◆ Transportation assistance
- ◆ Housekeeping tasks
- ◆ Pet care
- ◆ Hospital or home visits to sick, injured, homebound, or bereaved members
- ◆ Cards, letters, phone calls and emails to stay in communications

We want to stress that we do not send any messages from the Caring Committee to anyone without the permission and desire of the member in need. We always ask what that member or member family would like to have communicated, and what their needs are.

Sometimes there is no need for meals, transportation or visits, but just a note to let our community know about an important event in a member's life.

Please let us know if the Caring Committee can be of assistance to you.

THE UU FLORIDA SOUTHEAST CLUSTER'S JUSTICE SATURDAY 2017

- ◆ How can we reclaim our democracy in a period of Republican and corporate control of virtually all levels of government?
- ◆ How can the *Indivisible* movement strengthen congregations supporting the Declaration of Conscience?
- ◆ How do we end racism? How do we democratize and transform oppressive systems?

SPEAKERS:

Timothy Canova, Chair, *Progress for All*
Kindra Muntz, President, *UU Justice Florida*
Betty Brantley, *Black Lives Matter Alliance*, Broward

Date: Saturday, May 6, 9:45 am to 3:45 pm
Location: Unitarian Universalist Church of Ft. Lauderdale
3970 NW 21 Avenue
Oakland Park, FL 33309

\$20 per person in advance by mail-in registration

Please mail check, **payable to SE UU Cluster**, to Kathy Jens-Rochow, 1420 SW 13 St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312-3322
PayPal registration also available: <http://uufloida.org/justice/>

Registration includes lunch and continental breakfast. Childcare through 12 years old available for \$20 each child, with mail-in registration only, until April 29 postmark.



MONEY MATTERS

Kip Barkley

As we read this newsletter, we have perhaps gotten around to filing our income taxes.

Some ask their financial person on April 1, "How much do I get back?" Some asked that question the previous November. Some asked a year ago, "How much can I get back?" Planning is so much easier before the year is over. Then you might think outside of the box, outside of the year. What expense can I move from one year to the next and get a bigger deduction? What does my business pay for that could have passed as a personal deduction?

Planning is good, especially when we still have choices. And giving more to the River means a larger deduction too.
<http://riverofgrassuu.org/planned-giving.html>



WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

- Apr. 16 **Easter**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Apr. 23 **Earth Day**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Apr 30 **The Artists Among Us**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb & the Arts Group
- May 7 **Root and Branch**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- May 14 **Mother's Day**
Kathy Jens-Rochow
- May 21 **Grab an Oar!**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- May 28 **Training Wheels**
Rev. Amy Carol Webb



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

By Wendell Abern

Four rookies (two this issue, two in the next), with four children, three cats, a dog and a puppy. We're growing!



Susan Malca loves being in nature, especially mountains and natural beaches, and joins us with a small brood: a son, Steven (22), a daughter, Julia (19), one dog, a new puppy and three cats. Both of her children are students at FAU.

A speech pathologist, who has been practicing for almost 30 years, Susan works in a private clinic in Davie.

And she came to us by way of listening to a folk singer! Another audience member told her about our beliefs and invited her to a service in Boca. Too far from home. When he mentioned Rev. Amy leading our congregation in Davie, she attended in January 2016, and has been with us ever since.

"I joined a covenant group," she says, "and made connections within the group, and as weeks passed I met more members and felt comfortable being a visitor to the congregation. I have been invited to two circle dinners, which I enjoyed and felt comfortable with everyone. As months went by, I joined Full Moon Daughters, and started volunteering in the pre-school class, both of which I enjoy."

Susan waited about a year to become a member, and continues, "I come from a Jewish background, more cultural than religious, and needed time to assimilate to becoming a member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation."

Her beliefs make her sound like most of us, who have been Unitarian Universalists all our lives, but didn't know it: "My philosophy has always been that I believe in equality for all people, feel very environmentally conscious, and feel spiritual about my journey in life. I feel grateful that I found River of Grass, and am glad to be a member."



Few of us have ever been as exuberant in our love toward River of Grass as new member Karen LeFever, who writes, "So much awesomeness with so many wonderful souls!"

Born on Staten Island "before the Verrazano Bridge was built," Karen was raised a Roman Catholic, attended Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia as a physics major, and graduated from Dowling College in Oakdale, New York, with a B.S. in Management Information Systems. She moved to Miami Beach in 1983 and has been a Systems Analyst and Business Analyst since 1985. She also attended the Educating Hands School of Massage in 1996 ("MBA sounded too boring"), and still maintains her license.

"And this year," Karen says, "I'm leaving 'computer stuff' behind, and going back to my loves: Body Talk, Infant Massage Instruction, Health Educator, Personal Healing Trainer and Concept-Therapy Instructor." (One suspects her middle name is "Multi-Tasker.")

Karen married Dennis in 1997 at Church by the Sea UCC in Bal Harbour. They became foster parents in 2007, met their children, Elizabeth (17) and Josh (14) in January of 2009, and moved to Coral Springs that year. The adoption was completed in 2010.

After attending a UCC and Disciples of Christ churches, Karen and her family realized they were more "universalist" in their beliefs and principles. They then tried Unity of FLL.

"Truth is," Karen writes, "we'd never heard of Unitarian Universalism. But I've known Rev. Amy for many years through her music and our mutual study of Body Talk. After she was called by River of Grass, I began to attend in the summer of 2015, and fell in love with you all!"

(Continued on page 6)



RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ PRESENTS KAT EGGLESTON APRIL 15

Kat Eggleston's incomparable music has dazzled audiences around the world, from intimate clubs to concert halls and festivals. Her original songs have won worldwide acclaim for their lyrical and emotional truth, while her powerful yet gently beautiful voice showcases material ranging from contemporary songs to the traditions of Great Britain and America with equal grace. Kat presents her music with humor and an honest, joyful presence that can't help but leave each listener touched. Spontaneity is the hallmark of Kat's performance, but listeners can always count on an evening to remember, one that will leave them deeply moved, smiling, perhaps even changed forever. This was recorded when she last performed at the concert series in my home. Listen to Kat Eggleston [here](#) or listen on youtube.

Concert at 8 PM
Doors open at 7 PM for food and drink
11850 W SR 84 (Suite 1)
Davie, FL 33325

Suggested donation is
\$17 in advance by April 13 (use link below), \$23 at the door
<http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/river-of-grass-cafe.html>



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

(Continued from page 5)

Karen hasn't missed much! She has volunteered at LifeNet, attended Full Moon Daughters Solstice Parties and camping trips, game nights, parties, marches in parades, rallies, meditation nights, concerts, auctions and sunrises at the beach.

In addition, other pursuits she enjoys: Ageless Grace (her most current), sailing, cooking, reading, glamping, any kind of dancing, and singing 70s songs relating to current conversations. Busy woman!

But her favorites seem to relate to River of Grass: "Worship service," she writes, "is the highlight of my week, and my covenant group is the highlight of my month!"



FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator

March was an exciting month for Faith Development, with the completion of our service project for the Humane Society of Broward County. The kids and their families raised money for the Humane Society as well as participated in the Walk for Animals. It was a huge success and fun time together. We have another service project in the works, and we will keep the congregation updated on our progress.



We in Faith Development are looking forward to our multigenerational service this month, the Easter and Passover service, which will take place on Sunday, April 16. Celebrate revitalization and rebirth with us, as we focus on renewal of the Earth as well as spiritual growth. We will have our Spring Fling after the service, with games and an egg hunt!

Mark your calendars! Our Faith Development Sunday Service has been moved to June 4. And as the year comes to a close, we are planning our final Faith Development meeting for Sunday April 30. It will take place after service, and childcare will be provided. Teachers, volunteers, parents and grandparents are welcome. We will discuss how this year went and what we would like to see in the coming year. Anyone interested in teaching next year is also encouraged to attend!

LIFENET4FAMILIES

MARCH 11TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair

Thank you to the awesome group of River of Grass volunteers that came to LifeNet4Families on Saturday, March 11th: Jessica, Eryn, Shane, Zena and Rick, Ed, Bev, Marilisa and Juan! River of Grass loves to volunteer! Volunteer Zena Tucker said, "We put away two pallets of food. Then we made up 75 boxes (about two pallets)." It was a busy day at LifeNet4Families. Thank you all for giving your time on a Saturday to lend a hand at LifeNet!



Making a difference and healing injustice in our community is part of our River of Grass mission, and volunteering at LifeNet4Families is one way to put that mission into action. At LifeNet4Families their mission is "to be a seamless system of care for those in need in Broward County..." LifeNet4Families serves approximately 5,000 individuals and families, and provides 1.4 million meals annually.

Join us at one of our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer days: May 13th and June 10th. We volunteer once a month from 9:00-11:00am. Sign up at the Service and Social Justice corner at the back of the River of Grass 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.

SAVE THE DATE FOR LIFENET: MAY 13TH

The Postal Food Drive brings in thousands of pounds of food for LifeNet4Families. Every year, River of Grass members support the National Association Letter Carriers Food Drive by volunteering at the Inverrary Postal Branch. Look for the sign-up sheet at the Service and Social Justice Corner or email us for more information at ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org.





DEAR RIVER OF GRASS UU CONGREGATION MEMBERS,

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend our congregational annual meeting on **May 7 from 12pm to 3pm**. This is important--in order to have a valid election, we need a minimum 40% attendance. Lunch and child-care will be provided.

NOTE: There are two documents for your consideration and vote at the meeting. The first is a **Black Lives Matter Movement Congregational Resolution**, reproduced on the following page. Send your suggested edits and comments to president@riverofgrassuu.org or contact Zena Tucker or Sheryl Cattell **no later than April 21, 2017**. The revised version (along with all the comments) will be published on April 23 and will be on the ballot for a vote. The second is the **UUA UUSC Declaration of Conscience**, printed below.



Declaration of Conscience

At this extraordinary time in our nation's history, we are called to affirm our profound commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion, to truth and core values of American society.

In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In opposition to any steps to undermine the right of every citizen to vote or to turn back advances in access to health care and reproductive rights, we affirm our commitment to justice and compassion in human relations.

And against actions to weaken or eliminate initiatives to address the threat of climate change – actions that would threaten not only our country but the entire planet – we affirm our unyielding commitment to protect the interdependent web of all existence.

We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil.

As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.

We welcome and invite all to join in this commitment for justice.

The time is now.

**2017 Black Lives Matter Movement Resolution
of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist (ROG UU) Congregation - Davie, FL**

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists have a goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, our Unitarian Universalist principles call us as individuals and as a congregation to challenge injustice;

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained powerful traction in conjunction with recent tragic events involving, in particular, police brutality and institutionalized racism that target the black community and other people of color communities;

WHEREAS, people of all ages and races are killed by law enforcement, yet black people ages 20-24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than any other group;

WHEREAS, mass incarceration fueled by for-profit prisons and racially biased police practices drive the disproportionate imprisonment of black and brown Americans;

WHEREAS, the school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of students expelled from U.S. public schools are black and one out of three black men is incarcerated during his lifetime;

WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Association's 2015 General Assembly passed a resolution in support of the Black Lives Matter movement; and

WHEREAS, the 'Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism' organization and other Unitarian Universalist People of Color organizations and leaders have asked Unitarian Universalist congregations to support the Black Lives Matter movement and black-led racial justice organizations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. ROG UU supports the Black Lives Matter movement and the purposes of Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective.
2. ROG UU will demonstrate our support of the Black Lives Matter movement by display of our Standing On the Side of Love, Black Lives Banner at our facility during service and in appropriate marches or demonstrations of support for this issue.
3. ROG UU will urge members to engage in intentional learning spaces to organize for racial justice with recognition of the interconnected nature of racism coupled with systems of oppression that impact people based on class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and language.



PROPOSED NEW POLICIES

Submitted by Janet Schwartz

At two previous board of trustees meetings, three policies were presented to the board for review. The policies pertain to the library, the benevolences fund and personnel, and they are attached for your review. In compliance with our Policy on Policies, the policies will be approved or rejected at the board meeting scheduled for May 11, 2017. If you have any questions or concerns in regard to the new policies, you are asked to direct your questions to Kathy Jens-Rochow or Janet Schwartz at policies@riverofgrassuu.org

Proposed Library Policy

20. Library

- A. A library has been established utilizing books donated by members and friends. Included in the collection are fiction and nonfiction. Books and audio books will be accepted. No magazines.
- B. The books are available for borrowing or keeping. An honor system will be used. People may borrow books and return after use. Or the books may be kept by the individual. If the person wants to keep the book, there will be a recommended donation of \$.50 for paperbacks and \$1.00 for hardcover. A small donation box will be available for people to leave their donations.
- C. A volunteer librarian shall be in charge of the organization of the books. It will be the librarian's sole discretion as to which books to keep. Rejected books will either be thrown away or donated to the Goodwill. The librarian will also be responsible for the collection of donations and giving to the Office Administrator following Policy 8, paragraph D and Finance Committee procedures.

Proposed Change to Title of Policy Section and Proposed Personnel Policy

11. ~~Minister/Employee Contracts~~ Personnel

- B. Staff positions are open to members, with the exception of the office administrator position, which cannot be held by a member. Other members of an employee's family may be considered for employment; however, relatives may not supervise one another. "Relative" means a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, or grandchild.

Proposed Benevolences Fund Policy

8. Finances

F. The River of Grass Benevolences Fund

1. Purpose of the fund: To provide emergency financial aid to individuals and families that cannot be met through other means.
2. Funding: Funds for the Benevolences Fund will come from:
 - a. Gifts from individuals. These gifts may not be designated for specific persons or uses.
 - b. Collections that are deemed appropriate by the minister or River of Grass board.
3. Eligibility for assistance:
 - c. Priority shall go to River of Grass members and active participants, with exceptions made at the discretion of the minister.
 - d. There is a one-time use of this fund by an individual or family unit per calendar year.
 - e. The Minister is not eligible for assistance from this fund, unless the River of Grass Board of Trustees President approves the expenditure to the Minister.
4. Distribution will be authorized by the minister, in consultation with the Caring Committee chairs(s), if the Minister chooses.
 - a. Distributions will be and shall remain confidential.
 - b. Distributions shall be for goods and services, such as rent, mortgage, utilities, food, and transportation.
 - c. The Minister may use fund money to buy food and gas gift cards.
 - d. With rare exceptions, payments shall be from the fund's checking account directly to the vendor or agency for the debt owed, not to the individual requesting assistance.
 - e. Assistance may be up to \$500.00.
 - f. Distributions shall not exceed the balance of the checking account.
5. Accounting of fund money:
 - a. Fund money will be held in a separate checking account with the minister and the

treasurer as signers on the account.

- b. The account will be reconciled monthly by a Finance Committee member who will respect the confidentiality of the fund distributions.
- c. The Minister will keep a confidential log indicating the name, date, address, amount and type of assistance provided for each distribution.
- d. At least annually, the treasurer will:
 - i. Review the log to insure expenditures are appropriately made.
 - ii. Report fund activity and account balance to the Board without including recipients' names or addresses.
- e. Contributions to the fund by individuals will be recorded in PowerChurchPlus.