

Reflections

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

JANUARY 2020

LEARNING TO BEND

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



In his poem, "Late Fragment," the poet Raymond Carver asks:

*And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.*

As 2020 gets fully underway and heading into our February theme of "Resilience," I find myself reflecting on the ways we develop resilience – the ways we learn to bend, in a world that would seem someday determined to break us and all we hold dear. Cultivating kindness as strength? Yes. Speaking truth no matter what, though rocked on a vast sea of deceit? Yes. Learning to love the hell out of the world, no matter what? Yes. Learning to forgive one another, and, harder – ourselves? Yes. Getting knocked down, and getting back up again, and again, and again? Oh, yes.

"Yes, Yes, YES!" we chant, in our voices as disparate as they are determined. And then in the following quiet, we ask, "But how?" How do we find and grow and spread that strength, that kindness, the courage to speak truth, the heart for that fierce love, the humility to forgive, the resilience to get back up over and over again?

The answer for me is what Dr. King called, "Beloved Community." That is to say, our best hope to live the values we cherish and build the world we dream of is to do it *together*. Together. And I speak as one who's traveled this planet long enough to have learned Paul Simon did not mean to lie, but did, when he sang his ode to individualism, "I am a rock, I am an island." Which, by the way, he sang with Art Garfunkel *right beside him*.

I am not a rock, nor an island. And neither are you. For just by reading this, you invited in another's perspective, another's hope, another's yearning to connect. If, beyond simply reading this newsletter, you find yourself part of, or becoming part of, River of Grass, then you, too, know none of us can do this alone. None of us is kind enough, strong enough, truth-filled enough, loving enough alone. None of us can be resilient enough on our own.



In so many ways, we learn our values by living them in community, as we come to call ourselves beloved and gather in others that they, too, might feel beloved. Together we become more kind, more courageous, more truthful, more loving more forgiving, more determined to get back up, and get back up, and get back up. Together we teach each other how to love, how to live, how to thrive not just survive. Together we face the things that threaten to break us – and break us apart – till we learn how to bend.



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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 (7th – 12th grades): 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Faith Development Classes (K – 6th grades): 11:00 am to 12:00 noon

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave 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.

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 browse to: www.riverofgrassuu.org – click on Calendar/Events)



YourWorldExplorer

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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& Zena Tucker

Nominating TBD

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Dir. of Faith Development Karen Gonzalez

Office Administrator Sandy Blair Chibnick

Teams and Small Groups

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Adult Faith Development *Open*

Annual Giving Rita Cherubini
& Kathy Jens-Rochow

bUUKies Susan Juncosa

Café Robby Greenberg

Caring Deb Giblin-Davis
& Georgette Lewis

Communication Zena Tucker

Congregational Leadership *Open*

Facilities Riley Cothran

Facilities Rental Ken Bresnahan

Full Moon Daughters Diane Lade

Future Home Scott May

fUUndraising *Open*

Hospitality Kathy Jens-Rochow

Interfaith Outreach Linda Crain

Music Gayle Giese, Linda Lathroum, Brenda

Parker, Anne Smith, & Aaron Stang

Pastoral Care Riley Cothran & Pat Katz

Personnel Rev. Amy Carol Webb
& Janet Schwartz

Planned Giving Kip Barkley

Security Rick Tucker

Service, Social Justice & Green

Team (SSJGT) Steve Jens-Rochow

Shared Ministry Diane Lade
& Janet Schwartz

Web Design Esther Sampol

Welcoming Congregation ... Kathy Jens-Rochow

YUUnG Adult Group Linda Lathroum



FROM THE PRESIDENT

FUTURE HOME DECISION TIME – FEBRUARY 2ND

Scott May

Greetings to all, and welcome to 2020! This will be a pivotal year for River of Grass, as together we will decide our Future Home path. Straw polls taken in September, November, and December were unanimous that our current situation is not sustainable and must change. Our operating accounts are depleting, our rent increases every year, and our space feels tighter and tighter. We need to face the brutal facts. Something must change.

At the mid-year meeting on February 2nd, our congregation will discuss the go-forward options for our Future Home, and vote. This is an important meeting, so please make every effort to attend. River of Grass has had 6 homes, so we can navigate this together.

The Future Home Team has been working on this for a long time, and at this point, there are basically two options:

One option is to substantially reduce expenses. This means eliminating staff and/or relinquishing our 24x7 space -- as nearly 90% of our expenses are staff and building. Within this option, we would determine how we want to function. Possibly return to being lay-led, where Sunday morning services are delivered by members instead of our Minister. Possibly return to 'church in a box', where we rent space Sunday mornings and setup/take-down for service each Sunday. Possibly ask for volunteers to work in the office each day. Possibly ask for volunteers to plan and run our children's faith development. And many other possibilities exist, where each likely reduces the programs and activities we enjoy today.

Another option is to launch a Capital Campaign. This means asking members to pledge toward a permanent home, in addition to the annual pledge drive. Based on input from Barry Finkelstein, our UUA Stewardship Consultant, we would anticipate raising around \$750,000 – which is 3-4 times our annual pledges. Combined with the \$770,000 in our Capital Fund, the Future Home Team analysis shows we should be able to purchase a permanent home, larger than our current space, with little or no mortgage. Possibly even have a budget surplus. While there is no guarantee, more cash gives us more options.

I ask every member to contemplate and discern these options. I ask you to consider what River of Grass means to you, and your family. I ask you to consider what River of Grass brings to its members, the local community, and beyond. I ask you to consider your highest aspirations for this beloved community. I ask you to envision how you see River of Grass in 5, 10, 20, or 50 years from now. I ask you to consider what legacy we are leaving for the next generation.

And I ask you to bring your open mind and open heart to the mid-year meeting on February 2nd. Let's have vigorous discussion. Let's share, and listen. And together let's determine the next chapter for River of Grass.



WE ARE MARCHING IN THE MLK PARADE!

Steve Jens-Rochow

[SSJC@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org)

The 2020 Fort Lauderdale ML King Holiday Parade will be on Monday, January 20, It will start at Lincoln Park in Ft. Lauderdale, 600 NW 19 Ave and Sistrunk Blvd [NW 6 Street] in Ft. Lauderdale. The parade will depart at 9:30 am.

Show up early to decorate the Justice Truck.

Come march in unity and solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the African American community. The parade will end at Esplanade Park on the New River next to the Discovery Center and the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The Celebration of Unity and Multicultural Festival starts at 10:30 a.m.

Marchers are encouraged [but not required] to wear River or Side With Love yellow T-shirts.



FAITH FORMATION AS INTENTIONAL PRACTICE

Karen Gonzalez



On January 6th, my world expanded. My grandbaby, Wesley Oliver, came to show us just how much more we can love! There really is nothing more spiritual than the arrival of new life. We are intensely aware that the blessing of life comes with great responsibility – for his health and happiness, yes. But, also for his faith formation, for his faith begins to take shape the moment his first cries are answered. In his first years, his parents and everyone who holds him dear will incite wonder and awe in this *child of the universe*. He'll take walks and be shown all of the wonders around him. He'll be held close and connect with loving eyes. He'll see smiles and hear loving words. And, when flu season is over, he'll meet his faith community and begin a routine of regular connection to a loving, supportive extended family that nurtures his parents and supports his own search for what is true and right in life.



As a preschooler, he'll crave rituals and at his UU congregation he'll have the chance to light a chalice and sing a familiar song.

As a curious young child, he'll enjoy helping others, including his faith community and will begin to see a connection between his daily actions and our UU Principles.

As a young thinker, he'll be inspired by our UU ancestors and their inspiration will help to guide his budding value system.



When he begins to question the world around him, he'll learn that we are all seeking answers, too.

This is what Faith Formation looks like. This is what's happening in the back rooms once we sing our young'uns off to class on a Sunday morning. It is a great responsibility to guide one's growing faith, and indeed it is also a great blessing!



CHOIR CORNER

YOUR BRAIN AND SINGING:

WHY SINGING IN A CHOIR MAKES YOU HAPPIER

By Jaime Babbitt, adapt. by Gayle Giese



Any of us who have sung in choirs know that it brings JOY, not just to the audiences, but also to the choir members themselves. When we raise our voices, it feels like we're altering molecules. Well, according to various scientific reports, we *are* altering molecules...inside our brains, with different changes occurring whether listening to music, singing, or singing with others.

In Stacy Horn's wonderful book, *Imperfect Harmony: Finding Happiness While Singing with Others*, we see how music uplifts and empowers through first person stories as well as scientific evidence. Horn has been singing with The Choral Society of Grace Church (in New York City's Greenwich Village) since 1982; she evocatively describes her own experience while explaining how science is finally catching up with what vocalists have known since the dawn of time: singing heals.

Choirs are known for singing about somber topics, including death. Requiem masses by Mozart, Haydn, Verdi, and Berlioz are extremely popular selections for choirs worldwide. Yet, even though the content isn't necessarily joyful or soothing, endorphins—hormones produced by the central nervous system—release and interact with opiate receptors in the brain, diminishing pain and triggering an almost analgesic feeling in the body. Our brains get an endorphin “rush,” which apparently feels a lot like taking morphine. Singing, as well as listening to singing, can release dopamine, a chemical that works to help regulate the brain's pleasure and reward centers. Music has also been found to release serotonin, a neurotransmitter found mostly in the digestive tract that helps regulate our moods, social behaviors and appetite; other studies have shown that cortisol levels can be lower when listening to music and singing. In addition, Dr. David Huron, a music professor at OSU, postulates that singing may increase prolactin production; prolactin is found both in tears and in nursing mammals, and it helps regulate the immune system.

Other forms of happiness await us via singing as we age. Doctors are finding that singers have more circuit connections between the right and left sides of their brains than non-singers. Memorizing words (left brain function) and music (right brain function) could keep nerve cells and synapses in excellent working order. A study conducted by Dr. Gene D. Cohen of George Washington University specifically examined a senior singers' chorale in Arlington, Virginia where the singers' average age was 80 (65 the youngest, 96 the eldest). Findings showed that the singers suffered depression less frequently, made fewer doctor's visits each year, needed less medication, and increased their other activities. I can attest that some of my greatest memories are of forming and leading a choir at an assisted living facility and seeing with my own eyes how the songs from my elders' era affected them; they laughed, cried and told stories about first hearing that song performed.

The even better news is that while we always strive to be the best choristers we can be, our voices don't have to be “professional strength” to derive these myriad health benefits. Horn cites a 2005 study that showed that singing even at an amateur level was beneficial to people's emotional, physical, and cognitive well-being. But, as Horn will agree, the most remarkable phenomenon that a choir vocalist experiences are the many “take your breath away” moments that come as a result of being one of many voices coming together in harmony. I'm sure many of you reading this have had your own version of these types of experiences: goosebumps on your arms, hair standing up on the back of your neck, bursting into tears (that would be me), and more. Mine occurred when I joined Nashville in Harmony, a talented and love-filled group of largely non-professional singers in Nashville, Tennessee. Being one of 150 voices banding together for the common good has brought me exhilaration I'd not felt in all my years of singing...and that's a lot of years. The following link shows one of our 2016 rehearsals. The exhilaration is palpable: <https://bit.ly/2HdNbfS>. I hope one day River of Grass will have this many voices singing together!



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

River of Grass is facing an important decision regarding our future home path. Our current situation is not sustainable financially, and members will make a go-forward decision at the mid-year meeting on February 2, 2020. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. One of the options will be to launch a Capital Campaign to raise money for a permanent home. The Future Home team analysis shows several viable scenarios where we could purchase a larger permanent home and eliminate the budget deficit, based on a successful Capital Campaign combined with our savings in the Capital Fund. Here are some FAQs:

◆ What is a Capital Campaign?

- ✓ A Capital Campaign is a fundraising effort toward meeting a key need of a congregation, typically a building. It is a focused effort where members pledge and then donate over a specific timeframe, which is typically 3 years. Capital Campaign giving is in addition to the Annual Pledge drive.

◆ How is a Capital Campaign different than the Annual Pledge Drive?

- ✓ A Capital Campaign raises funds for a specific asset, such as a building, while the Annual Pledge drive sustains current operations. A Capital Campaign is seen by members as a key step toward fulfilling the congregation's mission and vision, and creating a future. It is a way for members to contribute to the congregation in a way that delivers something permanent. It is rooted in each member's desire to see their congregation meet its highest aspirations, and to change people's lives.

◆ Has River of Grass ever held a Capital Campaign before?

- ✓ Yes, we have. A Capital Campaign was held in 2003 to help fund land purchased in Southwest Ranches. Due to several obstacles, this land was sold in 2006. Most of the profit from the sale was set aside in our Capital Fund. The balance of this account is approximately \$770,000 and is designated for purchasing a permanent home.

◆ How much am I expected to contribute?

- ✓ Each member will determine the amount that feels comfortable to them, as each of us has a very unique financial situation. Each member and family is asked to reflect on River of Grass, and what it means in their lives. Consider your vision and aspirations for River of Grass, and identify how your family can contribute toward making that vision a reality. It is deeply personal, and requires deep reflection. It is a chance to invest in the future of River of Grass, and be part of changing people's lives. In aggregate, the hope is that members give 3-5 times their current pledge amount (over a 2-3 year period), while maintaining their current annual pledge.

◆ I already give to the Annual Pledge drive; how will I be able to give to a Capital Campaign too?

- ✓ Each of us has a unique financial situation, so there is no single answer. One way to view it is that the Annual Pledge drive is typically paid from our checking accounts giving a portion of our annual income. The Capital Campaign is sourced a bit differently. It may come from various sources such as savings, investments, retirement, and/or deferred

WORSHIP SERVICES



SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

INTEGRITY

January 19 *Bending the Arc: MLK Sunday*, Rev. Amy,
Service Host: London Lott

January 26 *Bending the Arc: All Souls Sacred and Worthy*, Rev. Amy & Marjorie Loring,
Service Host: Linda Lathroum

RESILIENCE

February 2 *Bending the Arc: Salvation Now!*, Rev. Amy,
Service Host: Ken Bresnahan

February 9 *Bending the Arc: Courageous Love*,
Beyssa Buil, Service Host: Rita Cherubini

February 16 *Bending the Arc: Rising for Our Lives*,
Rev. Amy, Service Host: Renato de Moraes

February 23 *Bending the Arc: When David Wins*,
Rev. Amy, Service Host: TBA

ABUNDANCE

March 1 *Annual Budget Drive Kick Off*, Rev. Amy,
Service Host: Kallie LeFever

March 8 *TBA*, Beyssa Buil,
Service Host: Mike Miller

March 15 *Justice Sunday*, Karen Gonzalez,
Service Host: Barbara Ratchford

March 22 *Poetry Spring Equinox*, Zena Tucker,
Service Host: Diane Diaz

March 29 *Women's History*, Rev. Amy,
Service Host: TBA

(Continued on page 7)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

(Continued from page 6)

expenses. It comes down to our personal connection to River of Grass, and our desire to see it flourish. It is a chance to be creative. Here are a few ideas:

- ✓ Possibly having a ‘staycation’ instead of traveling for vacation, and giving the cost of airfare and hotel to ROG.
 - ✓ Possibly pulling money from savings or investments, or selling some stock.
 - ✓ Possibly delaying the purchase of a new car for a couple of years, and instead giving those car payment amounts to ROG.
 - ✓ Possibly delaying a home renovation, such as remodeling the kitchen or bathroom.
 - ✓ Possibly pulling some funds from a home equity line of credit.
 - ✓ Possibly shifting other giving to ROG for a period of time.
 - ✓ There are numerous ideas to consider, to see how each of us can do our part to enable River of Grass’s future.
 - ✓ Barry has provided a document with “Stories of creative giving from UU Capital Campaigns” which is posted on the web site.
- ◆ **How can we reach the \$750,000 target?**
- ✓ Barry has shared that IT WILL TAKE COMMITMENT FROM EACH OF US to meet the \$750,000 Capital Campaign target. It will take a commitment from several high givers, such as one family giving a major gift of \$100,000+, one giving \$75,000+, one giving \$50,000+, one giving \$40,000+, etc. Plus many members will make important gifts in lower amounts, such as seven families giving \$7,500+, eight giving \$5,000+, etc. ALL GIFTS ARE NEEDED. The Feasibility Study will help estimate this. In the meantime, Barry has laid out an Essential Gift Chart for achieving the target goal of \$750,000:

Gift Range	No. Needed	\$\$ Needed
100,000+	1	\$100,000
75,000-99,999	1	\$75,000
50,000-74,999	1	\$50,000
40,000-49,999	1	\$45,000
30,000-39,999	1	\$30,000
20,000-29,999	4	\$90,000
15,000-19,999	5	\$95,000
10,000-14,999	7	\$80,000
TOTAL MAJOR GIFTS	21	\$565,000
7,500-9,999	7	\$60,000
5,000-7,499	8	\$55,000
3,000-4,999	8	\$35,000
1,000-2,999	10	\$25,000
<1,000	20	\$10,000
TOTAL GENERAL GIFTS	53	\$185,000
GRAND TOTAL	74	\$750,000
% of Households Contributing	93%	

- ◆ **Are we absolutely sure that a Capital Campaign will lead to a permanent home?**
- ✓ No. Nothing is certain. The future is unpredictable, and nobody can make any assurances about how this entire effort will play out. However, more funds does create more options, and we know that our current savings are not enough to purchase a home. Plus, we know that staying on our current path is not sustainable and has 0% chance of leading to a permanent home. We will discuss our options as a congregation during the mid-year meeting February 2, 2020, and together choose our path forward.

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

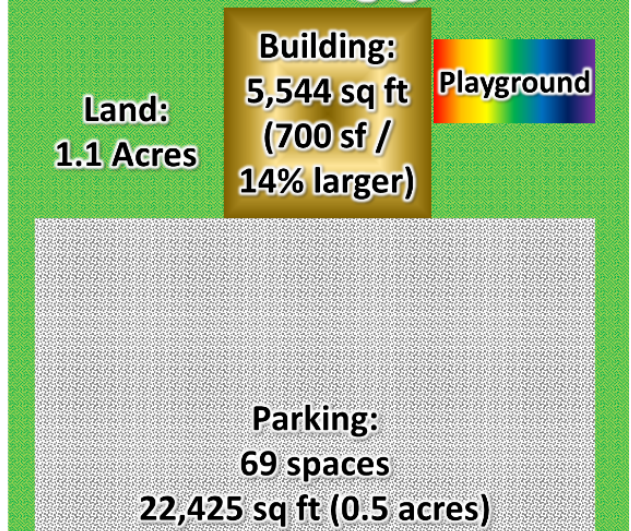
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VIABLE FUTURE HOME SCENARIOS

The Future Home Team analyzed Broward prices for houses-of-worship, and found viable scenarios where we could purchase a larger permanent home and eliminate the budget deficit:

Scenarios	Building Size	Acres	Annual Financials	Mortgage
Current Home	4,800 sq. feet	-	(\$43,000) <i>Deficit</i>	-
Scenario 1: Pay Cash*	5,500 sq. feet (14% / 700 sq ft larger)	1.1	\$29,000 <i>Surplus</i>	None
Scenario 2: Balanced Budget*	6,500 sq. feet (35% / 1,700 sq ft larger)	1.3	Break-even	Yes

Scenario 1: Pay Cash / \$29K Surplus No Mortgage



Scenario 2: Balanced Budget/No Deficit Small Mortgage



What are viable scenarios based on?

- ◆ Utilizing the \$770,000 in our Capital Fund.
- ◆ Completing a successful Capital Campaign, yielding \$750,000 (based on Barry Finkelstein’s initial estimate of what’s reasonable for ROG).
- ◆ Finding the right property at the right price with favorable zoning.

Are we absolutely sure that these “viable scenarios” can be realized?

- ◆ No. Nothing is certain. The future is unpredictable, and nobody can make any assurances about how this entire effort will play out. However, the Future Home team feels that the above scenarios are realistic, based on the research completed, conservative financial assumptions, and assuming a successful Capital Campaign. Plus, we know that staying on our current path is not sustainable, as rent increases every year and our financial reserves are pacing to be depleted in 2-3 years. At the February 2, 2020 mid-year meeting, we will discuss our options as a congregation, and together choose our path forward.

Getting to Know UU's

FAMOUS UNITARIAN

Kathy Jens-Rochow



JAMES REEB (JANUARY 1, 1927 – MARCH 11, 1965)
MINISTER, SCHOLAR, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, SELMA MARCH PARTICIPANT

“We are going to have to really take upon ourselves a continuing and disciplined effort with no real hope that in our lifetime we are going to be able to take a vacation from the struggle for justice.”

In 1947, Reeb was ordained a Presbyterian minister at the First Presbyterian Church of Casper. As a scholar of theology, Reeb gradually grew away from traditionalist Presbyterian teachings and was drawn to the Unitarian Universalist church. In March 1957, he resigned his Presbyterian Chaplaincy and contacted the American Unitarian Association about transferring his fellowship from Presbyterian to Unitarian. Reeb appreciated the church's emphasis on social action, and he became active in the civil rights movement during the 1960s.

During this time, he became a youth director for the West Branch Y.M.C.A. in Philadelphia. While at the Y.M.C.A. he abolished the racial quota system and began an integrated busing program to transport youth to and from the location. When he was granted preliminary fellowship by the Unitarians, he accepted an offer to be assistant minister of All Souls Church in Washington D.C.

Reeb went to Selma to join the Selma to Montgomery marches, a series of protests for African American voting rights, following the attack by state troopers and sheriff's deputies on nonviolent demonstrators on March 7, 1965. After eating dinner at an integrated restaurant on March 9, Reeb and two other Unitarian ministers, Rev. Clark Olsen and Rev. Orloff Miller, were beaten by white men with clubs for their support of African American rights. Reeb died two days later. His death resulted in a national outcry against the activities of white racists in the Deep South.

More than 30,000 people attended his memorial ceremony at Brown's Chapel in Selma. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. eulogized Reeb: “James Reeb symbolizes the forces of good will in our nation. He demonstrated the conscience of the nation. He was an attorney for the defense of the innocent in the court of world opinion. He was a witness to the truth that men of different races and classes might live, eat, and work together as brothers.”

Following his death, Congressional members gave speeches denouncing the brutality and called for government intervention. Deeply moved by the death of “that good man,” President Lyndon Johnson instructed his aides to draft a voting rights bill.

Source: Wikipedia

WHAT'S THIS?

(STORIES OF HOW THINGS AT RIVER OF GRASS UU MADE THEIR WAY TO BE WITH US)

Maureen Lundell

Our beautiful grand piano provides music at every River of Grass UU worship service. Have you ever wondered about its history? The brass plaque on the piano hints at an intriguing and tragic story of origin:



Dedicated in loving memory to
Ensign Robert B. Barnett, Jr., USNR
1956-1982
by his Mother, Irene Williams Barnett
March, 2000

This plaque commemorates the son of an early member of our congregation who lost his life on July 8, 1982. Ensign Barnett was assigned to the Reserve Naval Air Training Command in Corpus Christi, Texas as a Ranger – an advanced flight training unit that used Beechcraft twin turboprop planes to build a foundation to enable maritime fliers to move on to more sophisticated aircraft. He was aboard one of two Beechcraft-T44's as a 25-year-old student pilot along with 3 other students and 2 flight instructors who perished as they worked on touch and goes within a crowded pattern. Touch and goes – landing on a runway and taking off again without coming to a full stop alongside other planes doing the same – is a fundamental skill for naval aviators. His mother, Irene Barnett wanted to do something in memory of her son who died in the line of duty.

Irene approached another early member of our congregation, Dan McGrath, telling him about her beloved son and expressing her idea to memorialize Robert by “giving this church a grand piano, a \$13,000 grand piano,” as Gayle Giese recalls. Dan is now a well-known musician playing around South Florida but when River of Grass UU began, Dan was our director of music. Dan enjoyed using his considerable musical talent and experience incorporating wonderful songs into worship service – except that he was not particularly content playing hymns. His lack of enthusiasm occasionally caused mistakes to be made, accompanied by dirty looks from the minister; or maybe the mistakes and side eye-rolls were the cause rather than the result of his disenchantment with playing anything from our gray hymnal.

Gayle remembers observing this at the first service she attended, so she asked Dan if she could play the hymns for services. He told her to play “May Nothing Evil Cross This Door” – the first hymn on the first page of the hymnal. And with that successful audition began the many years of Gayle playing music, singing, choir directing and providing gorgeous musical inspiration and direction for River of Grass UU. But back during our early years of existence, our church met in a room at the Weston Community Center and Dan and Gayle played Dan's tiny two-octave electric piano at worship services. And when services ended and church was packed away into the tiny bathroom that served as storage closet during the week, that piano fit perfectly on the toilet tank – and so atop that toilet tank was where it was stored.

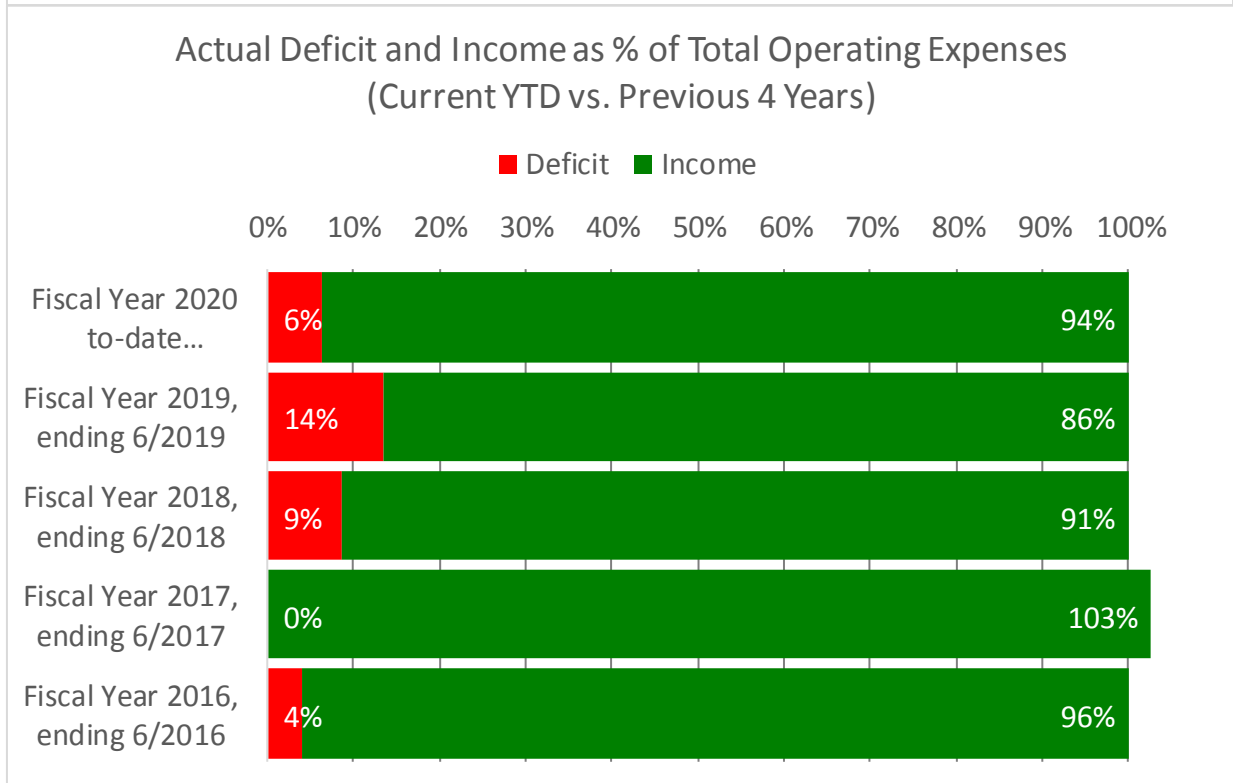
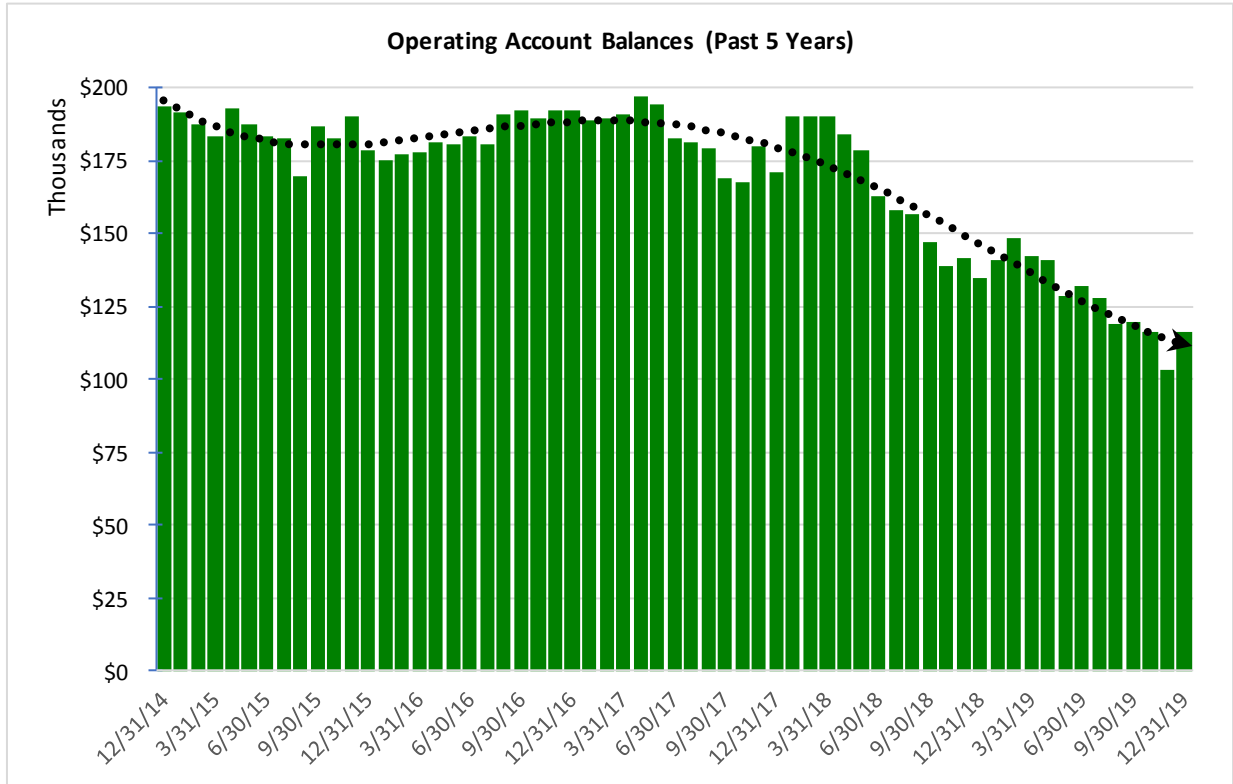
Irene Barnett was likely particularly fond of piano music because as Gayle points out “that's what she asked for, not an organ but a piano, a grand piano when we moved from the Community Center into our own space, at the old Shotgun Road location.” It was during that first year as a church meeting in a leased property on Shotgun Road that Irene asked Dan about getting a piano and Dan asked Gayle to find a piano. Gayle went to the cavernous showroom at Bobb's Pianos and Organs, explained her mission and played every grand piano there. She adored the “darker, woody sound” of a Steinway grand which ran about \$25,000. At Bobb's, Gayle learned that Samick copied that rich sound building fine and well-constructed pianos using less expensive materials. It came in right around \$13,000.

When the grand piano was delivered, a special concert was held at River of Grass UU. Gayle and Allen Giese started it off playing a duet of a Leroy Lovett arrangement of Simple Gifts with Gayle on the grand piano and Allen on violin. Aaron Stang performed a song as a soloist on guitar because, as Gayle recalls “Irene had mentioned that Robert loved guitar.” And the plaque commemorating Robert was on view for the first time. It's still there to see on the grand piano at River of Grass UU. Robert Bernard Barnett, Jr. is thought of by Gayle “really every time I play that beautiful piano.” Ensign Barnett's memory lives in song. So too lives the memory of great generosity to River of Grass UU. And the love of a mother.

MONTHLY MONEY SHOT

Brit Lundell, Treasurer

Two graphs depicting the Congregation’s monthly financial state. The first shows our monthly operating account balances over the past 5 years. The second shows our actual deficit and income as a percentage of our total operating expenses for the current fiscal year to-date (i.e., since July 1, 2019) as of the end of last month and compares that to the figures for the previous 4 years. Additional details are provided in the monthly financial reports and the Treasurer’s report to the board, which are posted on the wall directly facing the business office each month. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with the Treasurer or with members of the Finance Committee.



VOLUNTEERING AT LIFE^{NET}4FAMILIES: 4Cs COVENANT GROUP

Judi Oltmans

Our thanks to the 4Cs Covenant Group who signed up to volunteer at LifeNet on December 14th! 4Cs covenant members Karen, Kristine, Marjie and Esther, and Sheryl were joined by Eileen and son Steven, and together they packed up about 150 bags of food! Thank you all for making a difference for the families that count on LifeNet for support.



Volunteering as a group is a great way to serve the community while enjoying a fun morning together. If your River of Grass group is interested in volunteering at LifeNet4Families we have May, June and July available. We volunteer at Lifenet on the 2nd Saturday of every month from 9:00 to 11:00 in the morning. There's something for everyone to do!

Sign up at the Service and Social Justice spot at the back of the River of Grass sanctuary or email us at ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org. Save the Date: our upcoming Saturday volunteer days are February 8th and March 14th. Can't make it to LifeNet? Every Sunday you can bring canned foods for LifeNet4Families to River of Grass. They are always in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken or beef.



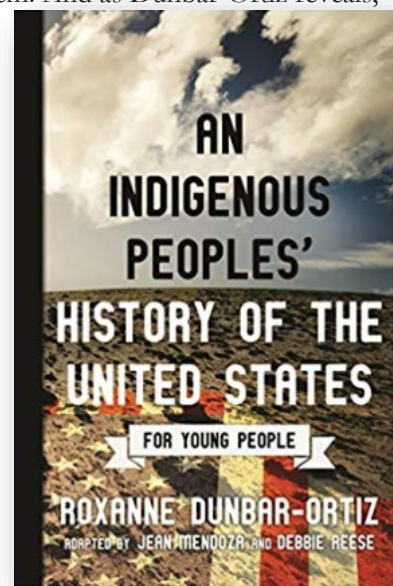
BUUKIES ANNOUNCE UUA COMMON READ DISCUSSION

Susan Juncosa

Every year the UUA selects a book to be shared by all UU congregations. A “Common Read” invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time. A Common Read can build community in our congregations and our movement by giving diverse people a shared experience, shared language, and a basis for deep, meaningful conversations. **The River of Grass conversation will be on Sunday, January 26 after the service. We will have a discussion group led by Rev. Amy.**

This year's Common Read is *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United State for Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. We are reading the Young People version because (1) we are young and (2) the original is a doorstep/textbook. The Beacon Press says:

With growing support for movements such as the campaign to abolish Columbus Day and replace it with Indigenous Peoples' Day and the Dakota Access Pipeline protest led by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* is an essential resource providing historical threads that are crucial for understanding the present. In *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, Dunbar-Ortiz adroitly challenges the founding myth of the United States and shows how policy against the Indigenous peoples was colonialist and designed to seize the territories of the original inhabitants, displacing or eliminating them. And as Dunbar-Ortiz reveals, this policy was praised in popular culture, through writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Walt Whitman, and in the highest offices of government and the military. Shockingly, as the genocidal policy reached its zenith under President Andrew Jackson, its ruthlessness was best articulated by US Army general Thomas S. Jesup, who, in 1836, wrote of the Seminoles: “The country can be rid of them only by exterminating them.”



Paperbacks and e-books can be ordered from Amazon or the UUA bookstore (\$18). A limited number of the paperbacks will be available for sale at River of Grass service. Please contact BUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Jan 19	10:30a	New Member Sunday	River of Grass
Sunday, Jan 19	12:00p	SSJGT climate demonstration	River of Grass
Monday, Jan 20	9:30a	Martin Luther King, Jr parade	Lincoln Park Fort Lauderdale
Tuesday, Jan 21	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Jan 22	3:30-4:30p	Mindful Meditation group	River of Grass
Thursday, Jan 23	7:00-7:45p	Welcome Table Communion Circle w/ Rev Amy	River of Grass
Friday, Jan 24	6:00-9:00p	River mixer and potluck	River of Grass
Sunday, Jan 26	12:30-1:30p	UUA Common Read discussion	River of Grass
Tuesday, Jan 28	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Jan 29	8:00-9:30p	Future Home team meeting	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 1	9:00a-12:00p	Congregational work day	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 1	11:30a-1:30p	SSJGT presents Citizens Climate Lobby	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 1	1:30-3:30p	SSJGT presents Broward Climate Alliance	River of Grass
Sunday, Feb 2	12:15-2:00p	Mid-Year Congregational meeting	River of Grass
Monday, Feb 3	7:00-9:00p	SSJGT meeting	River of Grass
Tuesday, Feb 4	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Feb 5	4:00-5:30p	Membership team meeting	River of Grass
Thursday, Feb 6	7:00-9:00p	Men's Group	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 8	9:00-11:00a	Lifenet4Families volunteer day	1 NW 33 rd Terr Fort Lauderdale
Monday, Feb 10	7:00-9:00p	Finance meeting	River of Grass
Tuesday, Feb 11	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Feb 12	7:15-9:15p	bUUKies book group	River of Grass
Friday, Feb 14	7:00-9:00p	Drum circle w/ Rev Amy	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 15	7:00p doors open 8:00p concert	River of Grass Café presents Don White	River of Grass
Sunday, Feb 16	12:00-1:30p	Faith Forward Inquirers Series #4	River of Grass
Sunday, Feb 16	12:00p	SSJGT climate demonstration	River of Grass
Sunday, Feb 16	12:30-2:30p	Focus Initiative Feeding the Soul series kick off	River of Grass
Monday, Feb 17	6:30-9:30p	SSJGT Citizens Climate Lobby	River of Grass
Tuesday, Feb 18	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Feb 19	6:30-8:45p	River of Grass Board meeting	River of Grass
Thursday, Feb 20	7:00-9:00p	Men's Group	River of Grass
Saturday, Feb 22	6:00-9:00p	River of Grass anniversary party	River of Grass
Sunday, Feb 23	12:30-2:30p	Focus Initiative Feeding the Soul series	River of Grass
Monday, Feb 24	6:00-9:00p	SSJGT JAM meeting/potluck	River of Grass
Tuesday, Feb 25	7:30-8:30p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
Wednesday, Feb 26	3:30-4:30p	Mindful Meditation group	River of Grass
Thursday, Feb 27	7:00-7:45p	Welcome Table Communion Circle w/ Rev Amy	River of Grass

RIVER OF GRASS COMPOSTERS

Judi Oltmans

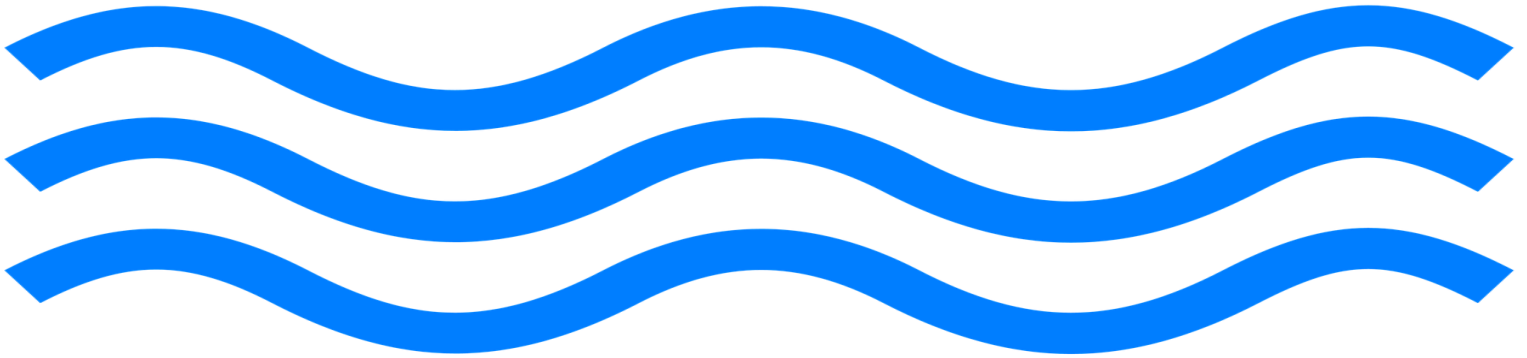
Thank you to all our composters: Steve, Scott, Deb, Karen, Judi, Geri and Rev. Amy for taking home the compost leftover from our Hospitality time. Thank you also to the Hospitality volunteers, we couldn't do it without you! Every Sunday morning they put the coffee grounds and fruit and vegetable scraps into our River of Grass compost container.

If you are interested in taking home our River of Grass compost one Sunday, please contact the Service and Social Justice Green Team at ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org. Composters can sign up for one Sunday a month or as often as they like. Our River of Grass compost takes on new life in the compost piles of our members' homes. Go green!

WHAT WE CHOOSE: ETHICS FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

Our mission at River of Grass is to nurture our spirits, love intentionally, and create a just and healthy planet. How does our mission statement inform our lives as members of our congregation and as Unitarian Universalists? Ed Lewis will walk us through this 10 session Adult Faith Development Program, described as "a useful tool for those of us who wish to live our values and our faith more fully". More information on this program can be found at <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/ethics>.








See the sign-up sheet during hospitality time or contact Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org to register.



DOES BIRTH ORDER AFFECT YOUR PERSONALITY?

POTLUCK
Friday January 24,
630pm

RIVEROFGRASSUU.ORG



Bring a dish to share and the whole family for relaxed evening of fun at the River. Our topic for discussion after our meal will be "Does Birth Order Affect Your Personality?" Sign up in the Hospitality area. See Kathy Jens Rochow or email membership@riverofgrassuu.org for more details.

RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

MINDFUL MEDITATION

2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAYS

330-430PM



River of Grass Mindful Meditation Group is open to all seeking support with their Mindful Meditation practice. Contact Zena Tucker for more information at membership@riverofgrassuu.org



We will meet:
Ma'at, Sekmet
Hathor, Bast
Isis



The Mountian
Retreat and
Learning
Center
Highlands, NC

***Journey to the Soul of
Ancient Egypt***

*The Ancient Egyptians utilized many
Goddesses to help them to understand
their world and to find spiritual guidance.*

*Join us to meet these amazing
Goddesses.*

UUWomenspirit Spring 2020
April 22nd-26th, 2020

*Note: This is a NEW and EARLIER tim
frame. UUWomenspirit.org*

