

Reflections

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

SEPTEMBER 2017



FROM WHERE YOU ARE

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

At the close of the Summer of the Unending Relocation, this very morning, we finally woke up in our own new home. We'd aimed to be here long before now. And the timing for each phase of this process was ... well ... lousy. Finally, we just had to wonder what lesson we were missing that the flow of the Universe kept having to make us stop and start over. Again.

But on this morning, I will not complain about any of it. We are safe, and dry, slept under a sound roof, and wake up to the privileged problem of having too much stuff for our down-sized house to hold. While people we love are awash in the waters of Hurricane Harvey across the gulf coast, displaced indefinitely, having lost everything that ever was home for them, not knowing when and to what they may ever return, after a storm that that has changed the very shape of the landscape in that region forever.

Others we love struggle to stay above the tides of all manner of change in their own lives as well this season, not sure what comes next, or what needs be done – or undone. Beginning again. Perhaps, you, too, find yourself in a place of starting over.

River of Grass opens this season with new ideas, new challenges, and all kinds of new possibilities with September's launch of the new congregational year.

Whatever the circumstance – whether the change upon us is sudden or sought after, desired or devastating – the old wisdom holds true: we can only ever start again from where we are. Not from where we wish we were. Where we are. The only step we can take is the next one. The only day, this day. The only moment, the one we're living right now.

Just know this: you are not alone. None of us ever is. And that is the truth of Beloved Community. We are here with and for one another. Whatever may come. Wherever we are in our life journeys.

Earth, too, bears this truth. This first morning here in our new home, we found the little bulnesia sapling, set in on the day we got the keys, greets us with sweet new blossoms. The waters of change will recede in time. Yours. Mine. Our loved ones' in the storm's path.

And we will start again. Together. From where we are.

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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

Marjie Loring

River of Grass – Re-imagined.

This was the theme that surfaced at this year’s board retreat, which was held on Saturday, August 26th.

Fed by imagination and a healthy dose of reality, it was and is what propelled us forward and what kept us mindful of who we are and who we strive to be as a UU congregation.

At SUUSI, the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute, the theme this year was “Blessed is the Path.” That got me thinking about the blessed path forward for our River of Grass community. Taking the long view, I can look back and see the many paths that have converged to bring us together into this time and place, the struggles we have risen above and the amazing accomplishments we have celebrated along the way. Looking ahead, I see a world of increasing social and spiritual complexities that keep calling us to stand, guided by our seven principles, on the side of love, and I see a community that has shown, time and time again, that we are strong enough to take that stand.

So, how do we make the beautiful, living light of this community shine on into a hurting and anxious world that is looking so desperately for the kind of loving community that we have created and sustained as Unitarian Universalists both at SUUSI and right here at River of Grass?

We start by knowing ourselves and by growing ourselves.

At the board retreat, we spent time looking through all the notes that were taken during the conversations with members at the last visioning day, notes from both long term members and new members who shared their thoughts about what they hope to see when they imagine River of Grass in 2022. We talked about our own hopes for what we might accomplish over the next five years, and we began the work of drafting a strategic plan to guide us toward a shared vision.

In the coming months, the RoG Board will share the 2017-2022 strategic plan draft with you, the members of this beloved community. But it will be you who turn this completed draft into a reality – a roadmap – a blessed path that we will walk together into our future.

I am grateful to this 2017-2018 Board for their passion and enthusiasm, and look forward to all we can accomplish together.

WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

*Theme for September: **Welcome/Hospitality***

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| September 3 | Rev. Amy
<i>DIC: Love, Work, Community – Labor Day 2017</i> |
| September 10 | Zena Tucker, Debbie Kitner, Leana Bresnahan
<i>Hospitality at the River</i> |
| September 17 | Rev. Amy
<i>Grab An Oar!: Water In-Gathering</i> |
| September 24 | Rev. Amy
<i>No Strangers: Radical Hospitality in Troubled Times</i> |
| October 1 | Rev. Amy
<i>TBA</i> |



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Zena Tucker

Mark your calendars! Our Fall Membership Picnic is scheduled for Sunday October 15 after service. The Perez Family is again graciously offering their home as the venue. Burgers, hot dogs and beverages provided – vegan options too. Bring a side dish or dessert to share and your swimsuit if you like. Join us for great family fun, food and fellowship!



PLANNED GIVING

SECOND HELPING DISCUSSION: COMFORT ZONES, LARGE AND SMALL Kip Barkley, Planned Giving Group

For me, speaking in front of 1000 people would be “getting outside of my comfort zone.” Also, ordering something different than my usual at my favorite diner.

Sunday Sept 24 after coffee, our Second Helping Discussion will explore our comfort zones and what they might keep us from doing. Join Kip and the Planned Giving Group, if you are comfy.

Our next New Member Sunday will be October 15, where we will recognize and celebrate all who are joining this free and open River of Grass.

Care to be a part of Team Membership? Our next committee meeting will be after service on Sunday, September 17 in the Multi-purpose room. We would love to hear your thoughts on growing our beloved community.

RIVER OF GRASS ANNUAL AUCTION SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2017 6:00 PM Pixie Wright, Auction Committee Co-Chair



Line Dancing

The rodeo is coming to River of Grass!! Not really, but we are having a Country and Western themed auction event this year. And we do hope to have a western barbeque, line dancing – perhaps with a live caller, regular dancing, live auction, silent auction, new raffles and Dolly, our pig mascot – Miss Dolly, if you please.

The auction team is working out the details; price to be determined in a separate announcement. This will be a family event so round up all those lil’ young’uns and herd ‘em all in.

Back by popular demand is the Column O’Coins. Please bring in your spare change during September and October to contribute to the pot and watch that column grow to jackpot heights. Somebody’s gotta have the winning number. Two new raffle items include a Wine Pull and an Artisan Gift Basket. The wine bottles will be wrapped up and unidentified. Winners get to pick two bottles – could be Chateau Margaux – could be something else. The Artisan Gift Basket will include selected originals from our River of Grass artisans. Another popular item from prior years is a Chocolate Basket, which we hope to have again.

Our favorite auctioneer, Ken Bresnahan will be back to encourage you to bid in our live auction. And we need your help for donations of parties, services, workshops, and/or gift items.

If you would like to assist with the planning and implementation of the many auction details, please contact Kathy Jens-Rochow at auction@riverofgrassuu.org. This is our major fundraiser of the year, and we need your support and assistance. Thank you to all our members for your gracious contributions.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator



Welcome back! Was your summer filled with fun, family and friends? Did you also get to take part in our Summer Fellowship at River of Grass? We had a wonderful, relaxed time together, and the children and adult volunteers built special relationships during these fun classes.

We are so excited that we are now heading into the new year! We have three classes planned for this year: Early Childhood (ages 4-6), Primary (ages 7-10) and Secondary (ages 11-15). Our theme will be Unitarian Universalist History! The curricula for the Early Childhood class will be *Creating Home* and *A Discovering Year*. The Primary class will follow curricula titled *Faithful Journeys* and *Up, Up and Away*. And our Secondary class will be using *Building Bridges: A World Religion Program* as well as *Listening Between the Lines: A Musical Response to Pop Culture*. What a fantastic year we have planned for our little 'uns! Please join us on our first day of Faith Development classes on September 10. We can't wait to see all of our young UUs!

FINANCE MATTERS:

PLEDGES PAID AT PHENOMENAL RATE!

Pam Schrimsher, Finance Committee Chair

Our congregation paid 99% of the amount we pledged for the 2016-17 fiscal year. Most congregations expect a 90% rate and are thrilled if 95% of pledges are paid. **We are a committed, excited congregation.** Thank you for your extraordinary support."



RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ:

JOIN US SEPTEMBER 16TH

FOR OUR OWN AMY CAROL WEBB

Our summer break will be over before you know it, and River of Grass will proudly present Amy Carol Webb as our Cafe opening act on September 16th. Amy Carol Webb is Florida's most beloved treasure. Named one of South Florida's "Ten Best Folk Singers of All Time" in 2013, an "Act to Watch" by Billboard magazine and "One to watch in the next millennium" by the Miami Herald – the sole songwriter among noted philanthropists, activists, and cultural visionaries – Amy Carol Webb is passionate and poignant, the girl next door and no ordinary woman. From her first CD, *Songweaver*, to her most current *Scattered Seeds*, her music is creative, passionate, raucous, contemplative and life-changing!

Doors open at 7pm for food and drink purchases; concert begins at 8pm. Advance tickets available on the ROG website for \$18, or at the door for \$23.00.



Getting to Know UU's

"Getting to Know UU's" is a new monthly feature of the newsletter suggested and written by Kathy Jens-Rochow.

MARY WHITE OVINGTON (1865–1951): Children's Activist, Civil Rights Activist, Women's Rights Activist, Journalist, Co-Founder of the NAACP.

Mary White Ovington was born April 11, 1865, in Brooklyn, New York. Her parents, members of the Unitarian Church were supporters of women's rights and had been involved in the anti-slavery movement. Ovington became involved in the campaign for civil rights in 1890 after hearing Frederick Douglass speak in a Brooklyn church.



On September 3, 1908, she read an article in *The Independent* written by William English Walling, entitled "Race War in the North." Walling described a massive race riot directed at black residents in Springfield, Illinois, that led to seven deaths, the destruction of 40 homes and 24 businesses, and 107 indictments against rioters. Walling ended the article by calling for a powerful body of citizens to come to the aid of blacks. Ovington contacted Walling, and she and Dr. Henry Moskowitz met with Walling at his New York home and decided to launch a campaign by issuing a call for a national conference on the civil and political rights of African-Americans on the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12, 1909.

Many people responded to the call that eventually led to the formation of the *National Negro Committee* that held its first meeting in New York on May 31 and June 1, 1909. At its second conference in May 1910, the National Negro Committee and attendants organized a permanent body known as the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP).

In the mid-1890s, Ovington helped the poor at the Greenpoint Settlement which provided shelter and services to those in need. In addition to her social work at Greenpoint, Ovington soon took on another challenge. She began studying the lives of African Americans living in New York at the time. Her research would result in the 1911 book *Half a Man: The Status of the Negro in New York*. Ovington has been quoted as saying, "If we deny full expression to a race, if we restrict its education, stifle its intellectual and aesthetic impulses, we make it impossible to fairly gauge its ability."

Sources: *Biography.com* & *Wikipedia*

LIFE4FAMILIES SUMMER VOLUNTEERING

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair

Thank you to the awesome group of River of Grass volunteers that volunteered at LifeNet4Families this summer! June 10th: Tennille, Jon, Ella and Saybel, Juan and Marilisa, Zena and Rick, Riley, Bev, and Linda and Gary! July 8th: Linda and Gary, Zena and Rick, Linda, Renato and Gabriela. August 12th: Bev, Scott and Carolyn, Riley and Logan. Thank you all for giving your time on a summer Saturday to help out at LifeNet!



“I’m grateful for the abundance of food and clothing in my life, and am honored to help at LifeNet4Families. It makes a meaningful difference in people’s lives, including your own,” said Scott May of his volunteering experience at LifeNet4Families. 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.

(Continued on page 8)



LIFENET4FAMILIES

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Join us at one of our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer days: September 9th, October 14th and November 11th. We volunteer there 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.

