

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 2014

## LEADING TO FOLLOW

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb

“Walk ahead and let me put my steps in your steps,” she said as we grouped to go up the mountain. “You seem so sure footed and I so surely am not.”

It’s from my ancestors, this sense I discovered as a child, this way my feet can grasp the Earth, can know footholds on unfamiliar ground, unafraid. One moonless night I was 11 or 12, my mother and I were stranded by a broken car deep on a dark wooded country road. “Don’t worry, Mom,” I said as we headed out through pitch black, “I can see with my feet.” She wasn’t sure what to make of me (often the case), but she let me lead and we made it out to a neighboring farmhouse without trouble.

But on this day on this mountain, I dearly yearned to *follow*. I wanted to make my way a small distance behind our group, in silence. I wanted to be at least a little alone with the wind and sun and sky. With just the sound of leaves and birds and this morning’s rainwater trickling along the way. With the low hum of wise old trees, and the whip of sinewy saplings extending strong arms along the rocks. My blood sings in the woods. A song I know in the farthest corners of my soul. A song I hadn’t heard in far too long, and ached to hear – if only, on this trek, I could follow.

“Let me put my steps in your steps,” she said. My new friend with a new knee and a new hiking pole and a newfound courage anxious to put all three to use on a mountain trail this beautiful autumn afternoon. And so, we set off, with her right behind me step for step, others taking the rear behind her, all of us proceeding as quietly as possible.



I’m not exactly sure on what part of the trail it occurred to me I wasn’t leading. At that particularly steep rock outcropping by the reddening maple tree? That bend where the cottonwoods leaned in to help? The overlook where we all stood breathless, partly because of the view, partly because of the climb? I’m not sure which moment, as I chose my steps with my friend’s in mind.

But the thought rose as powerful as my blood rising to muscles that had forgotten all about mountains: “I *am* following.”

Following the fundamental calling of human kinship. Following the vow to answer that calling. Following the need of another on this path. I might have walked before her, but also *for* her.

Any who are drawn to lead do well to be deeply determined, devoted followers. Followers of tears and smiles and stories to their sources. Followers of the mystery that ebbs and flows with our very breath. Followers of questions we hope against hope will turn up answers – even when our hearts know better. Followers of the cries of people, of communities, of a world hungry for just a bit more kindness.

“Let me put my steps in your steps,” she said.

And I followed her lead.



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# November Calendar

(Click [here](#) for our Congregational Calendar or go to: [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) – click on Events – Calendar.)

## SUNDAY SERVICES – 10:30AM

Sunday, November 2: *Celebrating Ancestor Sunday*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Sunday, November 9: *Armistice Day*, Johanne Peck and Kip Barkley

Sunday, November 16: Rev. Amy Carol Webb

*(Neshamah – Evening Meditative Service – every 3rd Sunday @ 6:00 pm)*

Sunday, November 23: *One Wild and Precious Life Intergenerational Service*, Various Speakers

Sunday, November 30: Rev. Amy Carol Webb



## CELEBRATING ANCESTOR SUNDAY

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

On Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, please bring photos or other mementos of beloved ancestors you wish to remember – family, friend, Unitarian and Universalist foremothers and forefathers, someone whose life has helped make you who you are.

We'll have a place of honor for them in our sanctuary and a special ceremony to celebrate them.

## 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.

## 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

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### Newsletter

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Community Awareness ..... Esther Sampol  
Concert ..... Aaron Stang  
Consulting Minister's ..... Diane Diaz, Committee on Ministry Esther Sampol, Leana Bresnahan, & Toni Cattell  
Facilities ..... Susan Juncosa & Ingrid Furlong  
Faith Development ..... Karen Gonzalez & Diane Lade  
Finance ..... Janet Schwartz  
Green Sanctuary ..... Steve Jens-Rochow  
Hospitality ..... Bennett Lorman  
Membership ..... Diane Diaz & Deb Kitner  
Nominating ..... TBA  
Pastoral Care ..... Riley Cothran, Pat Katz, & Marjorie Loring  
Personnel ..... Audrey Stang, Janet Schwartz, & Open  
Service & Social Justice ..... Rick Tucker  
Shared Ministry ..... Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz  
Stewardship ..... Ken Bresnahan  
Worship ..... Carolyn Sant Angelo

## TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Marjorie Loring, Board President



**O**K – here’s the short of it: Your River of Grass community needs you to show up on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>!

One of the most valuable resources we have in our lives is time. In the busy-ness of our day, we struggle to fit our lives into the 24 hour, 12 month boundaries of the clock and calendar. And many of us have become good at squeezing a lot of things within those boundaries. Work, play, sleep, and nourishment are at the core. Then we add the kids’ baseball games, dance competitions, and music practices. Some of us visit with kids and grandkids, squeeze in time for entertainment – maybe a movie, playing cards with friends, or taking some reading time for ourselves. Others take a slice of time to walk, run, ride a bike, meditate or do yoga. How we choose to spend our time is as diverse as the spiritual paths we walk and share with one another.

And ultimately, how we spend our time is completely up to us.

What we sometimes forget is how our choices affect others. If we get lost in our busy-ness and forget to show up at our child’s baseball game or school play, it sends a message, one maybe that we may not intend to send. When others rely on a slice of our time, that time is important to them – not for the actual minutes and hours, but for all that the time holds of value.



At River of Grass, we are a community that relies on each member sharing what they can in time, talent, and treasure. It is what sustains us. How much time you give to this community is up to you, but I like to think that we all come together with intention when we need it most, and this is why I am asking you, as members and friends, to make the decision to give your time to the special congregational meeting on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> after service. It has been many, many years since we have had the opportunity as a community to come together to vote to call a minister to be among us. The **ONLY** way we can call a vote for a settled minister is if we have a strong turnout of 60% of voting members.

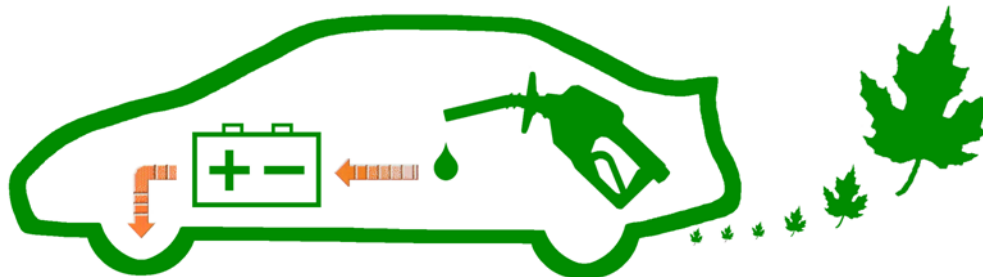
**This is not a decision of the few, it is a decision of the many – so I urge you to make your attendance at this meeting a priority so that we can continue moving forward toward the vision we have been working so hard together to achieve.**

This community needs your time commitment on December 7<sup>th</sup>. As President, I am counting on seeing you there when I go up to bat to start the next inning of our spiritual life together where I hope to hit a home run for the team!

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## GREEN TIP

Steve Jens-Rochow, Green Sanctuary Committee Chair



**R**educing greenhouse gas emissions does not have to decrease economic growth. The recent U.S. economy shows that this can happen. Between 2005 and 2013 greenhouse gas emissions declined 10% in the U.S. while the real G.D.P. grew 11% according to Bruce Usher of the Columbia Business School in the *New York Times* (September 29, 2014). A large part of the decreased CO<sub>2</sub> is increased automobile fuel efficiency. And the best way to do that is to drive a hybrid!

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## BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary

**H**ello River of Grass!

Your Board of Trustees met for our Annual Board Retreat with **Rev. Amy** on October 4, where we reviewed our mission statement, covenant, and by-laws. Additionally, we came up with ideas for improvements and conducted a short business session that allowed us to forgo our normal meeting later that week. More importantly, we got to know each other, shared home-cooked dishes and were inspired by moving activities, music, and lessons by **Rev. Amy**. Who says Board work is all work and no play?

During our business session, we approved the Full Moon Daughter request for a fundraiser to benefit the Otter Exhibit at Flamingo Gardens. Additionally, the board approved the Abilities Venti concert, sponsored by the SSJC, on January 25. And, finally, speaking of fun, the board decided on its own fundraising event for our Annual Auction. (The board event is scheduled for May 16. More details to follow in future newsletters.)

The board is beginning work toward creating continuity files for each committee. We will be working with each committee to create information files to make it easier for new chairpersons in the future. We envision these files to be available via electronic means so that all who need the files can access them.

**Mark your calendars for December 7!** Please plan to attend the Minister's Call meeting following services the first Sunday in December. In order to call a minister, our by-laws state we must have 60 percent of eligible members in attendance. (This means that we need YOU there to make this happen!) Moreover, 90 percent of the attendees must approve for the call for the minister to be valid. Therefore, it is vitally important for members to attend this meeting. Child care will be available and we will try to keep the meeting to no more than 2 hours. Absentee voting is not allowed. So please plan to attend this critical meeting that will impact the future of our congregation.

That wraps up this "Board Matters" report. See you around the coffee pot!



## GIRL CHOIR OF SOUTH FLORIDA SINGS FOR WATER COMMUNION

Gayle Giese



**T**he Girl Choir of South Florida sang for the Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> Water Communion, Welcome-back worship service. The 16 girls, ages 13-18 (a small subset of the 150-girl organization) sang 3 "water" songs, all by Moira Smiley, who was one of the girls' main

workshop clinicians this summer. The emotionally-moving postlude was "Famine Song," about Sudanese women who wove baskets to provide for their children amidst intense famine in the 1980s.

The Girl Choir of South Florida sang as a favor to River of Grass. They are a nonprofit arts organization under the artistic direction of Wallis Peterson. Their mission is to enrich girls' lives through musical excellence. The choir is a diverse group of young women with different backgrounds and beliefs who sing together and support each other.

The Girl Choir brought back some symbolic water for the worship service from the snow-covered Mount Hood they visited while on tour in Oregon in July. The choir enjoyed the wonderful service presented by **Rev. Amy Carol Webb**, and the congregation loved hearing the girls sing! It was a beautiful worship experience!

## TREE/HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

Zena Tucker, Service and Social Justice

**H**ow 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!



Each year, River of Grass partners with Childnet, a non-profit organization that manages child welfare to provide holiday gifts 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 Giving Tree (also known as Angel Tree), take a tag with the name and gift wish, and sign our roster. Each tag has three wishes; you can bring one, two or all three of these wishes if you desire. Then return your unwrapped gift(s) to River of Grass - with the tag attached no later than **December 8**. Then ChildNet will distribute your gift directly to children in need.

Want to help more? The SSJC also needs assistance with tree decorating, sign-ups, and gift collecting after services from November 8 to December 8. See **Zena** or **Rick Tucker** or email [ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information.



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Director

*We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race.*

- Cicero

With the first whisper of autumn weather, Faith Development got outside for our first field trip of the year! On Sunday, October 5, 15 children and 9 adults participated in the North American Butterfly Count at Long Key Nature Center. Our naturalist, Ingrid, took us on a nature walk and showed us native Florida plants along with the caterpillars and butterflies that depend on them for survival.



Later in the month, we continued the fun with our annual Spooktacular celebration! Kids and adults dressed in costume, trick-or-treated for UNICEF, and had fun with some spooky (and slightly silly) games and crafts. Thanks so much to Diane Lade, who set up both of these events, and to all the volunteers who helped with them!

In November, we mix it up a bit with two special intergenerational services: our Guest at Your Table service on November 16 and our Wild and Precious Life service on the 23rd. Although children are not in classes on those days, families should remember that intergenerational services are an important part of the Faith Development experience, as they allow our children to view and participate in full services that are designed specifically for all ages. They are an opportunity for adults and children alike to learn more about our UU values and experiences, and to become closer in community across generational lines.

Other special events this month are the Girls Rock Jam on Saturday, November 1, facilitated by our very own Rev. Amy, and our first Holiday Pageant rehearsal on November 30th. Spread the word: there's something for everyone at River of Grass!

## ANNUAL AUCTION AND BINGO NIGHT 2015

Sheryl Cattell, Toni Cattell, and Esther Sampol (Tri-Chairs)



Our Auction website is up! Check it out by clicking [here](#) or going to [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) – click on Events – Congregational Events.

Our Auction Donation Letters are up on the website already. That's because

NOW is the time to start getting donations for our biggest fundraiser of the year! Please be sure to download the letter, make a few copies, and request donations from your favorite businesses and restaurants. If you have an auction party idea (these are some of our best fundraisers), send those to us at [auction@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:auction@riverofgrassuu.org).



**And, remember, SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

## A VERY GOOD MONTH

Rick Tucker, Service and Social Justice Chair

We had a very good month for Service and Social Justice activities!

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

– Saturday, October 25



Thank you to Steve Jens Rochow, Rick Tucker, Scott May, Riley Cothran, Deb Giblin Davis, Ken Bresnahan, Gary Gonzalez, Ed Lewis, and Carolyn Sant Angelo for volunteering.



### LIFENET4FAMILIES VOLUNTEER DAY

– Saturday, October 11

Thank you to Bev Kaufman, Ken Bresnahan, Drea Kelley, and Marilisa and Shani Lawless for volunteering to help at the LifeNet4Families pantry on October 11th.

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. It's a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning - and remember, this is a great place for teens to earn their service hours. Upcoming dates are November 8, December 13, and January 10. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at [ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org).

Can't make it to LifeNet? Every Sunday you can bring canned foods for LifeNet4Families to River of Grass and place them in the basket at the SSJC corner. They are always in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken or beef.

### THREE CHEERS FOR RIVER OF GRASS GOOD CITIZENS!



The SSJC sponsored two events to raise voter awareness last month and what a success! There were 10 volunteers for the joint League of Women Voters (LWV) and River of Grass “*Get Out the Vote*” Event on September 27 at the Pembroke Pines Arts and Craft Fair. They were: Diane Diaz, Juan Gomez, Lynne Joshi, Scott May, Lynn O'Brien, Maureen Lundell, Steve Jens Rochow, Maxine Kamin, Rick and Zena Tucker and Pixie Wright. A total of 14 voter registrations were completed (includes new registrations and address changes).

For the “*Get Ready to Vote*” Event Oct 7, 2014 at the West Regional Library, seven of us attended. Thanks to all who participated with special appreciation for our resident LWV members Lynne Joshi and Diane Diaz. Let's keep the momentum going and don't forget to vote – **November 4 is election day.**

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Diane Diaz, Membership Committee Co-Chair

Our annual Fall Frolic Picnic took place on Sunday, October 5th. It was a glorious day and once again many thanks to Liz and John Perez for their gracious hospitality. More than 75 members, families, and friends enjoyed the tasty treats and libations, conversations on the patio and all the kids were cool in the pool, making it another memorable River of Grass event.

But, a picture says a thousand words --- see below!

A **Pathways to Membership** Class is being offered on Sunday, November 16th from 12-4pm in the multi-purpose room after hospitality time. All visitors and friends are welcome to attend and find out more about Unitarian Universalism, River of Grass - past, present and future plans and meet some of our leaders.

We look forward to getting to know you! There are still spots available, so sign up after service any Sunday or email [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) if you wish to attend. Bring a light lunch and we will supply the drinks and dessert.

### THE RIVER OF GRASS WELCOME BACK PICNIC SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2014



## FULL MOON DAUGHTERS

Diane Lade, Coordinator

### OUR 2014-15 EVENT CALENDAR!

*(Some of the dates still are in flux. Notices of these events will go out via email, as well as be posted in the RoG weekly email update.)*

**Oct. 17:** Long Key Nature Center Night Hike. Sponsor: [Esther Sampol](#).



**Nov. 8-10** (Sat-Mon): Bahia Honda camping trip. (Hotel option available.) Sign-ups are taking place NOW for this trip. Sponsor: [Diane Lade](#)

**Dec. 20:** Winter Solstice Party. Sponsor: [Susan Juncosa](#)

**Jan. 24-25:** Airstream Adventure in Homestead. Come stay in renovated funky trailers, and explore the beautiful fruit groves and Everglades National Park. Sponsors: [Karen Gonzalez](#), [Deb Giblin-Davis](#)

**Feb. 20-22** (Fri-Sun): Jonathan Dickinson camping trip. Cabins as well as tent sites. Lots of kayaking, hiking, beach-going. Sponsor: [Diane Lade](#)

**March 7:** Slough Slog in the Everglades. Come see the swamp in a new way. Sponsor: [Kris Stewart](#)

**April 11:** Labyrinth Walk and Delray Adventure. Meditation coupled with a fun night out. Sponsors: [Toni](#) and [Sheryl Cattell](#), [Gayle Giese](#)

**May 2:** Sunrise Salutation at the Beach. Greet the dawn. Sponsor: [Marilisa Lawless](#)

**June** (date to be determined): Chillin' at the Pavilion. Last year's ultimate lazy afternoon returns. Sponsors: [Zena Tucker](#), [Ingrid Furlong](#), [Lynn O'Brien](#)

**I**f you are interested in any of the above adventures or if you wish to be placed on the Full Moon Daughters email distribution list, please contact [Diane Lade](#) at [fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org).

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