

Reflections

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

APRIL 2015

PILING SYSTEMS: OR, SPRING CLEANING INSIDE AND OUT

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



Please do not come by my house on any Saturday for the next few weeks. Else it might take a search party to find you amongst the stuff piled out onto the driveway from our garage. Okay, “my” garage. It is mostly my territory in our family. And it is time to dig it out ... again. Actually, in this region it can be tricky to tell one season from another, Spring cleaning can happen anytime. So how does this pile-up keep happening?

That’s a question with too many answers. There’s the pile-up on the physical plane: too much material matter accumulating despite continuous efforts to contain it. Especially when it comes to the “just in case” items and the “that’s surely useful for something” category. Ah, but nothing compared to the “I’m gonna read that” stacks. Next to my chair. On my desk. By the bedside. On the porch table. In the interest of veracity and accountability, and the old notion that confession is good for the soul, going through one such pile recently, I found a whole section of the New York Times from 2010 on the latest greatest gotta-have-it tech, saved at the time as an invaluable resource for getting a new phone. And found again five years later in pristine condition, clearly never even thumbed through. Better still is searching for my favorite how-to-clear-clutter book only to find it – you guessed it – at the bottom of a pile of clutter. Surely, no such thing has ever happened to you (a-hem).



This is the point at which I comfort myself with that terrific Albert Einstein quip, “If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign?”

While I’d like to imagine myself aligned with one such as Einstein, I can assure you that even those times my desk really is empty my mind is not – which, I am assured by organizing experts is one reason my desk fills up again.

Which brings us to the pile-up on the spiritual plane. And the fact my meditation practice has led me to a place I just can’t abide the material clutter anymore.

It’s actually possible to track this process by looking at the titles of some of my favorite dealing-with-stuff books. Start at *Does this Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?* – amusing; then go to *Organizing from the Inside Out* – which is what has to happen because, as my favorite title declares *It’s Hard to Make a Difference When You Can’t Find Your Keys*.

Given that “to make a difference” is my deepest desire, seems it’s time to get serious, once more, about clearing out my “stuff” – materially and spiritually. And what better time to get free of it all than this season of holy renewal, revival, and release – Easter, the Feast of Ostara, Passover.

The material stuff goes out to the driveway for a yard sale or given away. The spiritual stuff goes into music or is given up in a quiet place at the sea. And suddenly there is open space – in my garage, and in my soul.



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Calendar

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

SUNDAY SERVICES – 10:30 AM

Sunday, April 5: *And Still We Rise*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Sunday, April 12: *Poetry Perspectives*, Zena Tucker

Sunday, April 19: *Earth Day Sunday*, Rev. Amy Carol Webb
(Neshamah – Evening Meditative Service – every 3rd Sunday @ 6:00 pm)

Sunday, April 26: *Spiritual Spring Cleaning*, Marjorie Loring



River of Grass

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Personnel Audrey Stang, Janet Schwartz, & Open
Service & Social Justice Rick Tucker
Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
Stewardship Ken Bresnahan
Worship Carolyn Sant Angelo

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.

THE SPEED OF LOVE

Marjorie Loring, Board President



Every time I turn around I find yet another reason to be thankful. We are a people who are truly abundant in the spirit of of life that moves among us and within us at the speed of love.

“Wait, the speed of love? What is the speed of love?” you might be asking.

Here is what I see when I take the time to look at the bigger picture of who we are, and how we are in this beloved community.



The speed of love is slow and steady. I look around and I see the countless times we step up to support a member in need by offering comfort, support, or company – no rushing – just a calm flow of kindness that our spirits move us to share. Then I look again, and the speed of love becomes fast and frenetic. I see people kicking their spirits into high gear – breaking down the sanctuary and reconfiguring it for concerts, or auctions, or rentals – transforming it in the blink of an eye. I look yet again, and the speed of love is suddenly moving in 3/4 time as we sing and sway together to the music of “Blue Boat Home” or “Come Sing a Song With Me”. Inspired, I keep looking, and I see the speed of love moving outside of our sanctuary and into the streets at the cadence of a march for equality, a run for a cure, or a 35mph bike ride across the country, all to help raise society’s awareness of the overlooked needs of the underserved who are facing human rights issues or illness in our families, our communities, and our world. Love doesn’t stand still here, even in silent meditation love moves us.

From what I see, there is no stopping love once you ignite its spirit. May it always be so in this place and beyond. May River of Grass ignite in you the spirit that will continue to bless this world by living your life at the speed of love.

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

by Esther Sampol

SCOT AND MICHELLE DALZIEL

SATURDAY, APRIL 18TH, 2015 – 8:00 PM



Local Florida Singer-Songwriters, Scot and Michelle Dalziel are entertaining and thought-provoking, sentimental and fun. They keep it real, honest, and wholesome.

The fresh and soulful sounds of their voices, combined with their high energy performance, memorable and meaningful songwriting, and instrumental finness, put them in a category all their own. Acoustic Rock or Folk genres could very well hold them but not completely. They dip down into R&B, Jazz, roots, and Blues showing the versatility of this duo. Since their Kerrville Folk Festival and South West Regional Folk Alliance Debut’s in 2004, they are gaining recognition and respect from not only audiences, but from venue owners and established artists alike.

The Dalziels will caress your mind and your heart with their songs of people and places that exist in all of our minds. You will feel as though you too have seen Topanga Canyon, been a Sea Faring Man leaving a family behind and the yearning of that young crush while you are Waiting for the Revolution. They are without a doubt one of the most talented songwriting teams and musicians that have ever graced our stage.

~Kim, Monson, Two Harbors Folk Festival, Two Harbors, MN

To purchase your tickets (only \$15 online), click [here](#) or go to www.riverofgrassuu.org – click on Events, then River of Grass Café.

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Rick Tucker, Zena Tucker, Steve Jens-Rochow, and Judi Oltmans



LIFENET4FAMILIES MARCH 14TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Thank you to all the River of Grass volunteers: Steve, Tracey and Tai, Max, Ken, Rick and Zena, and Judi, who helped out at the LifeNet4Families pantry on March 14th! We worked alongside the Haitian Evangelical Baptist Church of Pompano Beach and made it an interfaith volunteer day. It was awesome to see so many people working together to get the boxes for needy families filled with food. There was something for everyone to do and it was a chance to put our Covenant into action!

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. It's an awesome way to spend a Saturday morning - great company and great work! And remember, this is a great place for teens to earn their service hours. Upcoming dates are April 11th, May 9th and June 13th. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the 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.



SHIFT. ADVANCE. GROW – toward a better tomorrow! From March 22 to April 22, we will embark together on a spiritual journey for **climate justice** with fellow UUs around the world. How can each of us make a difference?

- ◆ **Learn** by signing up for daily messages at <http://www.commit2respond.org/>.
- ◆ **Share your art.** Check out the container of recycled treasures for you to use in creating something new from trash. Bring in your photos, artworks, poems, essays on what is precious to you in our world that is affected by climate change. Please limit to 8 ½ x 11 size.
- ◆ **Act.** Share your efforts to reduce waste, carbon emissions and preserve natural resources. From the simple (guitar picks made from old CDs) to elaborate (purse woven from plastic bags) – all ideas are welcome! Bring in your sample work or email your idea and we will spread the word to the community!

To learn more, see Steve Jens Rochow or Rick Tucker or email: ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org.

THE SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE SURVEY

The Service and Social Justice Committee (SSJC) represents our UU values put into action, whether this is helping LifeNet getting food to those who need it, or standing up for the rights of the disenfranchised, or addressing concerns for environmental justice.

The SSJC is conducting a survey from April 2-22. This is our congregation's opportunity to take an active part in shaping and prioritizing the issues engaged by the SSJC. The survey is short and will be conducted online by Survey Monkey, along with printed survey copies for those who want them. Help us by participating in this important opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions from our entire congregation. If there are any questions about the survey please contact us at: ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org. To take the survey click [HERE!](#)

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FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Faith Development Director

Water is the driving force of all nature.
~Leonardo da Vinci

The Faith Development-sponsored Seventh Principle Congregational Camping Trip the weekend of March 6-8 was a great success! (See pictures on page 6.) Over 30 people, members and non-members, family and friends, young and young-at-heart alike, joined us at Highlands Hammock State Park as we walked in the woods, learned about trees and Florida history, geocached, and just generally enjoyed the great outdoors and our time together. If you weren't able to make this year's trip, stay tuned; plans for the next one are already in progress!

Here's what Faith Development has going on in April:

- ◆ If you know a girl between the ages of 8 and 18 who enjoys music, please invite her to our Girls Rock Jam on Saturday, April 4 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Facilitated by our very own Rev. Amy, Girls Rock is a safe and supportive space for girls to make friends, explore their musical interests, and just generally rock out! We only have two meetings left in this congregational year, so please pass it on!
- ◆ Here comes Peter Cottontail! That's right, it's time for spring fun on Easter Sunday, April 5, with our annual hat parade, crafts, games, and an egg hunt! Everyone (not just kids!) is invited to wear your favorite hat or bonnet, plain or decorated, lovely or silly, and show it off in our parade during service. Families are asked to bring in one dozen pre-filled plastic eggs per child for the egg hunt by Sunday, March 29. No nut products, please!
- ◆ We're looking forward to our last field trip of the congregational year on Sunday, April 19, a slough slog with Nature Teacher extraordinaire Christy Schultz! Big Cypress is about an hour and a half from River of Grass, and we will be meeting Christy there at 10 a.m., so here are your options:

Option 1: Meet us at River of Grass promptly at 8:30 a.m. (Please note that we will not be able to wait for stragglers, so please arrive on time!) We will return around 3:30 p.m. Parents may attend, or may choose to allow their Elementary or Secondary students to ride with their teachers to the field trip.

Option 2: Meet us at the Oasis Visitor Center in Big Cypress National Preserve, 52105 Tamiami Trail E, Ochopee, FL, 34141 at 10:00 a.m.

To signup, please send an email to fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org. (Note: the cost of the trip is \$10 per person (child or adult). All ages are welcome, but pre-schoolers must be accompanied by a parent.

- ◆ Let's put our Seventh Principle into action right in our own backyard by participating in the 19th Annual Town of Davie Waterway Cleanup on Saturday, April 25! Please sign up in the hospitality area and plan to meet at Davie Town Hall, 6591 Orange Drive, no later than 9 a.m. on the day of the cleanup. All participants will receive a free Waterway t-shirt or hat along with a ticket to attend the "Trash Splash" pool party to be held the same day at Pine Island Park Pool. What a fun and rewarding way to help our community and our blue boat home!

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

(Continued from page 4)

JUMP INTO THE FUN AT THE DAVIE SPRING EGG HUNT ON SATURDAY, APRIL 4

River of Grass will have a tent at Davie's popular annual event and offer crafts for the children free of charge. Additionally, we'll have voter registration available with the help of the League of Women Voters. More importantly, we'll be ambassadors to the community, sharing literature and stories about our Unitarian Universalist principles and our beloved River of Grass. Volunteers are needed! Sign up for a shift at <http://tinyurl.com/nu2tuv5> or in the hospitality area.

The event runs from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Robbins Lodge in Davie. See Zena Tucker, Judi Oltmans or email ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.



SEVENTH PRINCIPLE CONGREGATIONAL CAMPING TRIP



BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary

With the end of our annual budget drive in sight, the board focused in on financial concerns for the March meeting. Our finance committee and treasurer are busy with computations and anticipate the deficit for next congregational year may be more than projected in our 5-year plan, due in part to unbudgeted expenses and fewer members than anticipated. However, it is too early to say with certainty. Please stay tuned to the announcements and mark your calendars to attend our Annual Congregational meeting on Sunday, May 3, following our regular service. Lunch and childcare will be provided.

Speaking of May 3rd, our facilities team is working toward enhancing the Sanctuary stage area in time for this big meeting. Additionally, the sensational music of “Tri-choir” will perform at this service. The Tri-choir features members from our congregation as well as UU Church of Fort Lauderdale and UU Fellowship of Boca Raton. It will be a wonderful time; we hope to see you there!



The board noted those who will be moving on from chairperson leadership roles. We are deeply grateful for the excellent and tireless service of the following chairpersons who will be stepping down at the end of this congregational year:

Auction: Esther Sampol and Sheryl and Toni Cattell

RoG Cafe: Aaron Stang

Faith Development: Karen Gonzalez and Diane Lade

Faith Development Coordinator: Ginger Parrish

Hospitality: Bennett Lorman

Membership: Diane Diaz

Newsletter Editor: Esther Sampol

If you are interested in service in any of these positions, please see any member of the board or email: secretary@riverofgrassuu.org.

The board also decided to hold off on sending board members to the Annual Southern Region UU leadership course in May as the timing is not right for most. However, we plan to send two board members in the next congregational year.

The board is forming an *ad hoc* team to examine actions needed in preparation for our facility lease expiration in February 2016. The team is charged to negotiate with the landlord and present options to the board. If you have questions or you would like to help, contact Scott May or email treasurer@riverofgrassuu.org

Our board meets next on April 9th at 7 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room. All are welcome. Thank you all and I hope to see you soon around the River!

FLORIDA DISTRICT AND UUA NEWS

The Florida District Annual Assembly is a gathering of UUs from the state and a great way to promote fellowship. This year it is held in Orlando from April 17-19. If you are interested in attending, register at <http://www.uuasouthernregion.org/aa2015.html>

The spectacular Unitarian Universalist Association **General Assembly (GA)** is in a few short months. Thousands of Unitarian Universalists will gather June 24–28, 2015, in Portland, Oregon to focus on climate and social justice and conduct the business of the UUA. The River of Grass board is **seeking volunteers** to be delegates to the GA, either in person or as an off-site delegate. Delegates represent our congregation to the UUA in voting matters and help shape the future of our faith community. The cost for your GA registration is covered by the congregation. Registration fees increase after **April 30**. Please visit <http://www.uua.org/ga/registration/index.shtml> for more information. If you are interested in being a delegate, see Zena Tucker or email: secretary@riverofgrassuu.org.



