# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION DAVIE, FLORIDA JANUARY 2016



TIME DOES NOT FLY: A THEORY OF ACCELERATING TIME Rev. Amy Carol Webb



**I** couldn't believe it as I wrote "2016" on a project beginning this month. 2016. How did that happen? Wasn't it just a moment ago we were gathered for Thanksgiving? A day or two since this year's Water Ingathering in September? Maybe a week since our summer adventures of body and spirit? Never mind events, what flags the downhill roll of time more pointedly than our families? How is it that my elder son can bring me his precious daughter so soon? Wasn't he himself born just a little while ago?

Ah, the conundrum of the notion of "time." A trip down the rabbit hole with Alice if ever there was one – and one we will not take on this page, for surely we can do no better than the sages and scientists of every era who have taken on the topic. "Time is a created thing," said Lao-Tzu. "Time is a sort of river," Marcus Aurelius declared, "and strong is its current." And then of course, as Einstein famously remarked, "The only reason for time is to keep everything from happening at once." Though some days my schedule makes me wonder whether that principle holds.

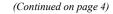
As the calendar flips to another new year (remembering our relationship with time was wrecked by inventing ways to track it, but that's another story!), I take some comfort in the "Proportional Theory" of time, first put forth by the French philosopher Paul Janet in 1897. The Proportional Theory suggests that as we get older, each time period constitutes a smaller fraction of our lives as a whole and so feels "faster." That is to say, a child of ten feels a year as 1/10th of his whole life while a man of fifty feels it as 1/50th. To a one-month-old baby, a week is a quarter of her time on earth; by age fifty, that week is a mere 2% of her lifetime. My granddaughter's recent visit to Miami occupied 1/60th of her life, but only 1/1,351st of mine. Refine the equation to days and hours and the effect is soon quite overwhelming – and persuades me that perhaps some days everything really *is* happening all at once, no matter what Einstein said.

Think about Janet's Proportional Theory relative to familiar time axioms we're salted with from earliest memory – say, like thinking one has "all the time in the world," or that we're "running out of time," or that "time is precious," and passing "in the blink of an eye," or, as Chaucer wrote and the Rolling Stones borrowed, "Time waits for no one."



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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 worshipers.

All meetings are held at 11850 W State Road 84, Suite 1 in Davie unless otherwise noted.

#### ➢ OUR PRINCIPLES <∞</p>

**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!

In 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 that changes each week: send an email to <u>office@riverofgrassuu.org</u>
- Visit our Facebook page: <u>www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu</u>
- Follow us on Twitter: @RiverOfGrassUU or <u>www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu</u>
- Try out the ROG App for your Android or iPhone: <u>my.yapp.us/RR94DQ</u>
- Visit our calendar: <u>www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html</u> (or go to: www.riverofgrassuu.org – click on Events – Calendar.)





# River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION Phone 954-723-7877 www.riverofgrassuu.org office@riverofgrassuu.org

#### Newsletter

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#### FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker

Ark your calendars for the **River of Grass Visioning Day**, Saturday Jan. 30, 2016. Together we will discern our will, be present for each other and make grand goals

for the future of our congregation for the next 5-7 years!

Why, you may ask? Aren't lofty visions often fraught with missteps and disappointments? We've only just found a settled minister and gotten comfortable with the idea. We don't need goals when we are already on the right path. Consider this:



A vision for the future inspires and motivates. Can you think of examples in your life where times were tough, but you kept going because of your belief in a better future? Our bright tomorrow rests with the hope-filled pathways we dream today.

A shared vision brings us together for the long haul. Where would we be today had others not had the vision of a River of Grass as a welcoming congregation, with a beautiful facility and an inspiring minister? How comforting to know we have the patience, fortitude and camaraderie to bring lasting positive change!



Our congregation has grown. We invite all to share thoughts and dreams in this vision-building time; thus binding us all in the shared dream. Moreover, diverse perspectives add brave new directions, color and depth to our plans.

A shared vision will help us when we make a mistake. Just like having a friend's comfort when you're feeling down about not meeting a certain personal goal, a congregation can do the same. Our beloved community finds its way to support each other through monumental glories and disappointing shortfalls. Our vision and Covenant of Right Relations will help us to pick up, dust off and try again anew.

All members and friends, please plan to attend on January 30<sup>th</sup>, from 9am to 2pm. If you can't stay all day, please attend as much as your schedule permits.

Lunch and childcare will be provided. Contact Zena Tucker at president@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

## ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE

Kip and Kristine Barkley, Stewardship Committee Co-Chairs

Here we begin our New Year. Looking down that road come February, Kip and Kristine Barkley will be leading our Annual Budget Drive. Here is a time when we rethink our religious community and the many connections between us and many others. You will be hearing more about this later. Kip and Kristine will be looking for Gift Facilitators. That is what we now call "canvassers." Welcome to the New Year.



#### TIME DOES NOT FLY

(Continued from page 1)

Tempus fugit, the Augustan philosopher Virgil proclaimed in Latin more than 2,000 years ago -- "time flies."

No, dear ones, time does not fly – we do. The clock struck midnight January 1st, and fast away the old year passes, as the holiday song goes. One year. Three-hundred-sixty-five days. Each one a portion of the whole of our lives. And each one the



The Prague Astronomical Clock

only one we've got. Whether today is one 365th of the oneyear-old lives we've newly welcomed among us, or one 29,000th of septuagenarians we've loved forever and a day, today is all we have together. Let us use every minute of it to love one another well. For as Henry Van Dyke advised us, "for those who love, time is an eternity."

#### SERVICES – SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM (AND AS OTHERWISE NOTED)

Jan. 3, Amy Carol Webb, *Fire Communion*Jan. 10, Allen Giese, *Biking*Jan. 17, Amy Carol Webb, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (6:00pm, *Neshamah* evening meditative service)
Jan. 24, Amy Carol Webb, *TBD*

Jan. 31, Amy Carol Webb, Seeing Our Shadows

#### **TREASURER'S TIDBITS** Scott May, Treasurer

e are half way through our congregational year, so it's time for a financial update!

Our expenses have been \$120,000 and we have \$1,000 surplus -- which is well ahead of budget! Key contributors to the surplus include:

- Members generously paying their annual pledge commitment on schedule
- Extra Café income
- Extra contributions
- Additional facility rentals
- Unfilled staff positions



More importantly, the members and friends of River of Grass are a generous bunch supporting many causes in our community. Since July 1, over \$10,000 has been collected through donations, concerts, Installations, and special collections. The worthy causes include:

- \$125 Habitat at Flamingo Gardens
- \$200 Unicef
- \$1,200 Syrian Refugee Crisis
- \$1,500 Living Tradition Ministers fund
- \$2,900 Ride to Awareness
- \$3,100 Lifenet for Families

This is amazing and shows the loving hearts that walk our halls! And more great things are yet to come!

Thank-you everyone for your time, talent and treasure!

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Deb Kitner, Membership Committee Co-Chair



Please welcome our newest members,Tanya Gustafson and Carolyn Moore!

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce the start of "Rollin' on the River" – a River of Grass membership pathway exploration and ongoing membership support process. Rollin' on the River was designed by Rev. Amy Carol Webb.

The objectives are to:

- Streamline the membership process
- Connect and involve new members more effectively
- Keep current members involved and connected.

A person-to-person pathway will include "River Guides" who will help answer questions that visitors and new members may have and support new members in becoming connected and involved.

Those interested in membership will have "Explorer" sessions with minister/membership, followed by a pathway session for those who desire to move toward membership, and finally, a membership book-signing ceremony as part of "New Member Sunday."

"River Rowing" will help guide each new member into an affinity group and keep new members-- and not so new members-- involved, connected and supported.

"Circling Back" is a periodic follow-up by Rev. Amy, the Membership Committee, and a River Guide.

Our first Explorer session will be on January 10th, and our first Pathway session will be on January 24th. A New Member Sunday will be scheduled for February.

If you are interested in taking part in this process, or know someone who may be, please contact Rev. Amy or co-chairs of the Membership Committee, Leana Bresnahan and Debbie Kitner.



#### **INSTALLATION OF REV. AMY CAROL WEBB** Pixie Wright, Installation Task Force Member

On Dec. 6, 2015, Rev. Amy Carol Webb and River of Grass formally joined together in a beautiful and historic Installation Service. Our sanctuary was filled with approximately 150 members, family, friends, guests, and visiting ministers. And we were all Rollin' on the River. From the Bach prelude and drum processional to the *Proud Mary* recessional, it was a beautiful and memorable installation, followed by an outdoor reception, champagne toasts and a specially designed cake.

We are ever so grateful to all who made this wonderful event possible. Our special thanks first to Rev. Amy for saying Yes! and joining River of Grass as our settled minister.

We would like to thank with extreme gratitude all those who worked on this installation: from the gorgeous sanctuary backdrop, to the loaned canopies outside, the beautiful floral arrangements and plants inside and out, the newly cleaned sanctuary chairs, the clean sanctuary, offices, meeting rooms, kitchen, restrooms and our "backyard." Many thanks to the

(Continued on page 7)



#### FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS Mary Warner

#### "And now we welcome the new year, full of things that have never been"

Rainer Maria Rilke

I always take a moment to stop and reflect on my previous year as I start a new one. I find myself very grateful for my River of Grass family as I say goodbye to 2015. I thank all the wonderful teachers, families, Rev. Amy, Diane and Karen. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

2015 was a wonderful year, and our Faith Development year is still going on!! We hope you all will mark your calendars and join us:

- Intergenerational Service will be January 3rd; Let's welcome our New Year all together!
- Valentine Pals is starting January 24th and will be revealed on February 14th! Even if you can't make it every Sunday, your letter can. Email your letter to <u>fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org</u>, and we will print and deliver it to your Valentine Pal!
- Our Secondary class welcomes the chance to have their phones out in class as they learn about photography. Our Primary youth are excited to work together, and independently, to create collages.
- We will be welcoming our new teachers and hosting a new teacher workshop this January! If you are interested in teaching our youth, please contact Mary Warner. There are a few more spots still open!
- **Kindler of the Flame** classes will be starting for a select group of youth, and we look forward to welcoming them.

Please contact Mary Warner if you have any questions. <u>fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org</u>.



#### YOUR OPINION MATTERS! By Scott May

As a member congregation in the UUA, River of Grass has been requested to provide our opinion on key topics for General Assembly, the annual meeting of UUs held each June.

At GA, attendees discuss critical issues that impact our world. These important topics are called Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs). Here are the proposed CSAIs for 2016:

- A national conversation on race
- Climate change and environmental justice
- The corruption of our democracy
- Ending gun violence in America

Our SSJC (Service and Social Justice Committee) will be emailing members an anonymous survey asking for your opinions on these CSAIs.

Please take a moment to complete the survey, and select which proposed CSAIs you feel should be discussed at GA. You can select any or all.

Please respond to the survey by January 15th, at which time the SSJC will compile the results and submit them to the UUA.

#### INSTALLATION

(Continued from page 6)

musicians, the band and choir, installation service designers, speakers and presenters, those who set up and cleaned up, the tear down and clean up crews and a second clean up crew, the welcoming people, and greeters and ushers. We so appreciate those who brought food, arranged food, served food and especially all who stepped in whenever there was a need. Thanks to the sound and lighting people, the videographer and photographer. And a great big thanks to all who supported this effort with their generous financial donations.

Thank you to the Installation Task Force members and participants and the team leader Michael Richardson. We are so grateful to all, known and unknown, who served to make this a very special day.

#### **LEADERS NEEDED** Zena Tucker, Board President





**D**o you enjoy social media? Would you like to create attention-grabbing graphics and writing? Then our Community Awareness team has a place for you!!

Let's shine our light to the world with compelling messages. If you would like to be part of this team, see Sheryl Cattell or email <u>communityawareness@riverofgrassuu.org</u>.



Strategic thinkers unite! We need 3-5 members to join a temporary task force to build our congregation's strategic plan. The team will connect the dots between where we are today and the vision we have for tomorrow. The plan

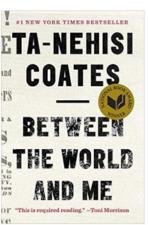
will be a 10-15 page document to outline the intermediate objectives and stepping-stones for the congregation's future. Our goal is to complete plan before the end of the congregational year. Please contact Zena Tucker or president@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.



**E** nrich the lives of our River of Grass Children. We are seeking motivated volunteer leaders for our children's Faith Development program, as Karen Gonzalez will be stepping down in

February, and Diane Lade will follow suit in June. Children are OUR future and our hope for years to come. Please contact Zena Tucker, Karen Gonzalez, or Diane Lade, or email <u>president@riverofgrassuu.org</u> for more information.

#### BUUKIES START THE NEW YEAR WITH THE BEST BOOK FROM LAST YEAR by John Kitner and Susan Juncosa



e've all heard "the pen is mightier than the sword." The bUUkies will be considering how well the pen has the power to show one person's world to a reader. This fierce book is a must-read for all Americans.

On Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 7:15 PM the BUUkies will host a meeting to discuss the controversial, 2015 National Book Award winner, Ta-Nahisi Cole's,

"Between the World and Me."

Ta-Nahisi Cole's book is presented as a letter from a father to his 15 year old son regarding the issues of the recent police killings of black males on the streets of America. While the book has a mere four chapters, it is conceived in ways that challenge America's social norms and conventional thinking. Written for black people, it seeks to confront white society's assumptions as to equal opportunity and responsibility as they relate to the culture of black people. This book offers a gateway into considering the agenda of Black Lives Matter. It is an eye-opening read and will not be forgotten by any reader, black, white or other. While it is an affront to the majority culture in America, it reads in a way that is poetic and moving in its imagery. To readers who are open to experiencing life through the hearts and minds of others, it is transcendent. Ta-Nahisi Cole is well suited to author such a book. He grew up on the streets of Baltimore and lived the difficult life of a teen-age boy inside urban chaos. College educated, he now writes for "The Atlantic" magazine and is heard periodically on NPR.

If you find this a compelling subject and have read or plan to read "Between the World and Me," please attend this meeting. If you are interested in social justice as part of your UU consciousness and calling, please attend this meeting. We look forward to seeing you there! Please contact <u>buukies@riverofgrassuu.org</u> for more information.



#### MLK DAY PARADE By Zena Tucker

onor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., celebrate his message of justice, and exclaim your River pride! March with us during the King Holiday Parade & Non-Violence March, on Monday, January 18, 2016!!



Line-up begins at 9:00 a.m., and the parade begins at 10:00 a.m., at the International Longshoremen's Association, 440 N.W. 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale. This is the corner of Sistrunk Boulevard and N.W. 5th avenue. The march is 1.1 miles and ends at Huizenga Park.



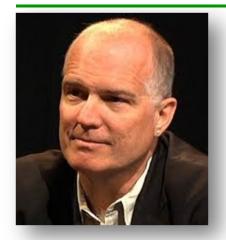
Can't march? Help out with the Multi-cultural Festival following the parade! The MLK Holiday Committee – the group who organizes Fort Lauderdale MLK events, including the Parade – needs our assistance for light logistics work from 10:30am to 2:30pm at Huizenga Park, 1 Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale.

In preparation for the parade, join us after service on Sunday Jan 17th, to make signs and decorate our River of Grass parade vehicle.

Participants are encouraged (but not required) to wear "Standing on the Side of Love" t-shirts. You may order your t-shirt at <u>http://www.uuabookstore.org/cw\_Search.aspx?</u> <u>k=standing+on+the+side+of+love</u>. SSJC will have SSL buttons for all participants.

Email SSIC@riverofgrassuu.org for more details!





## MOVE TO AMEND SPOKESPERSON TO VISIT ROG

David Cobb, a lifelong activist, is visiting River of Grass in an effort to build connections, inspire activism, and reveal the origins of corporate power in America. *Move to Amend* is a national coalition of over 400,000 people and organizations whose goal is amending the United States Constitution to end corporate rule by building a multiracial, cross-class democracy movement, and by establishing that corporations are not people and money is not speech.

David Cobb is Outreach Director of *Move to Amend* (<u>https://movetoamend.org</u>). He will be speaking at River of Grass as part of his national Barnstorming Tour, on Thursday, January 7, 2016 at 7 pm. He is one of the founders of *Move to Amend* and one of the authors of the *We the People Amendment*.

David is a lawyer and political activist. He has sued corporate polluters, lobbied elected officials, run for political office, and been arrested for non-violent civil disobedience. He truly believes we must use ALL the tools we have to effect the systemic social change we so desperately need.

In 2004, David ran for President of the United States on the Green Party. His presentations are part history lesson and part heart-felt call-to-action! "Challenging Corporate Rule & Creating Democracy" aims to help local folks understand how they can work to abolish corporate personhood and establish a government of, by, and for the people.

#### STAND FOR SUSTAINABILITY By Scott May

**R**iver of Grass members joined the Stand for Sustainability Climate March in Fort Lauderdale, held on the eve of the UN International Climate Conference in Paris.

100 voices called out for change, with speeches, signs, songs, and petitions.

As people of faith, our 7th principle calls us to act-- to help sustain our common home.







#### **CHILDNET ADOPT A WISH PROGRAM IS COMPLETE**



Zena Tucker, Board President

Outstanding!! Amazing!! Superb!! There aren't enough words to express the praise and gratitude due to the River of Grass UU Congregation for its support of the Childnet Adopt A Wish program. Because of your generosity, 60 foster children of Broward County received a gift for the holidays. Special thanks go out to our Service and Social Justice Committee's organizing team: Pat Fier, Linda Lathroum, Emilie Sayward Henry and Carolyn Moore. Well done!

#### RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ DOUG MACLEOD Saturday, February 20th, 8:00 p.m.



**R**iver of Grass Café is thrilled to present a special appearance by **Acoustic Blues Master Doug MacLeod.** In addition to showcasing our best local and regional artists, the Café occasionally has the opportunity to present national artists that that we typically don't get to see live in South Florida—especially in such a welcoming and intimate setting.

Doug MacLeod is an LAbased, acoustic blues maestro whose music is a direct link back to the blues-roots music

of the '30s and '40s. Doug's current album, *Exactly Like This*, has been nominated in three categories of the **37th Blues Music Awards – Best Artist, Best Album and Best Song.** And **DOWNBEAT** magazine has voted *Exactly Like This* "One of the Year's Best Albums."





- One of the Year's Best Albums

   DOWNBEAT Magazine
- NOMINATED FOR THREE 2016 BLUES MUSIC AWARDS!
- Probably the greatest living representative of the acoustic blues. – Heaven Magazine

Don't miss this amazing show. We hope to sell out the Café and show Doug we care about great music. Get tickets now at the River of Grass website or click here: <u>Café Tickets</u>.

#### LUAU/AUCTION FOR 2016 Pixie Wright, Auction Committee

*Oh, the Places You'll Go! Oh, the Things You Can Do!* ~ Dr. Seuss

ave you bought your auction tickets yet? The date is Saturday, February 27, 2016. And it's a luau! It's coming up soon – next month! Please go to our website <u>riverofgrassuu.org/auction-2016</u> to purchase your tickets at \$55.



Would you like to sponsor a member? This is not only our biggest fund raising event, but also our biggest social event of the year. There are some members who cannot afford to come for whatever reason. We would like all members to be able to participate in this fantastic party and are asking those who can to "sponsor" a member by purchasing an extra ticket (or two!).

Can you donate gift baskets, certificates, tickets, gift cards, passes, services? Are you into decorating, designing, drawing? Cooking, cleaning, catering? How about teaching, training, tutoring? Think of other services you could provide as your own special talents to make this one big fun and profitable auction.

Please solicit donations from your favorite restaurants, hotels, spas, hair salons, coffee shops, bakeries, florists...wherever you go on a regular basis.

How about having a party? Do you have an interesting garden, back yard, boat, vacation home? Do you have a mountain retreat, a seaside cottage, a Swiss chalet, a country house? Do you live on a lake or the ocean? Do you have a pool, a hot tub, or a barbeque? Would you like to share such with your friends and raise some money for River of Grass? Of course you would! Please donate a party or event, as these items are always very popular and many sell out.

See you in the islands.



# WhaleCoast Alaska 2016

- WHAT: Four Unitarian Universalist Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our unforgettable, 23<sup>nd</sup> annual Alaska tour program.
- TOUR #1: National Park Tour, June 11 to 20 -- \$2,879
- **TOUR #2: All-Alaska Tour, July 15 to 27 -- \$3,711**
- WHERE: From the coastal waters to the sunny Interior, from wilderness to modern cities. We experience the best of Alaska: Fairbanks, Denali Park, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, Seward
- SEE: -Wildlife: whales, seals, bears, moose, caribou, & more.
  -Glaciers, islands, fjords, and mountain ranges.
  -Native American artists and dancers.
  -Alaska's finest museums.
  -Spectacular travel by train and plane.
- STAY: Real Alaska! UU homestays, meals, & dinner parties with Alaska UUs who treat you like company.



Director: Dave Frey, longtime Fairbanks UU More information: www.WhaleCoastAK.org Email: dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org Address: 675 Gold Vein Road, Fairbanks, AK 99712 Telephone: 907-322-4966 Deadline: March 1 or until 36 guests register