

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

JANUARY 2017



RESOLVED!

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

What we need is resolve, not resolutions. Generations of over- and mis-use, has rendered the concept of “resolutions” too dilute to hold much sway over even our most sincere desires. Because we too easily leave our resolutions in the realm of “intention,” and too little in the discipline of “determination.” We know good intentions are never enough. But this year, 2017, living in the midst of a profound paradigm shift in our culture, we recognize we must be resolved if we are to live the principles we claim as Unitarian Universalists.

But how? As the list of the issues clamoring for our attention explodes exponentially by the moment, the voices of those whose worth and dignity we would safeguard growing louder in our ears, the woundings of body, mind and spirit we would tend growing deeper each day. How to bring the healing we hope for? Where to begin?

With ourselves. With myself. Here’s what I propose to do this New Year: cultivate the strength I will need to be of use to others in the coming days, weeks, months and years.

1. Cultivate strength in the body: Our bodies signal their needs, but we don’t always know how to listen. Begin by learning what is right for your body – what clean whole foods nourish you best, what kinds of exercise, how much cool water, learn better how to breathe, get up off the sofa and out under the sky, and how to fully rest. Rest. Remember the Sabbath, our wise Jewish ancestors directed. Remember the Sabbath. Feed your body.
2. Cultivate strength in the mind: Your grey matter matters. Over-stimulated, it needs a break; under-stimulated, it needs a challenge. Try something new for both. Over stimulated? Write haiku, re-read a classic you loved and discover what it might mean to you now. Under-stimulated? Try learning a language, or a new skill or craft. And when your mind races off in every direction, practice gently returning to the present moment. Remember the Sabbath. Feed your mind.
3. Cultivate strength in the spirit: We are going to need solid spiritual practices more than ever now. That can be anything that soothes, inspires, comforts, and connects you with the creative life force of the Universe, by whatever name you might call it. Could be mindfulness meditation. Could be learning the precepts and principles of traditions new to you – or revisiting those you once knew – for new insights. Could be walking the beach, or the woods, or your own street stopping to look closely at flowers and listen for birdsong. Could be prayer in its many forms from silence to pounding the drums. Remember the Sabbath. Feed your spirit.



And finally – Cultivate strength in community: you are not alone. Put your strengthening body, expanding mind, and deepening spirit to good purpose reaching out to others and letting them reach for you – resolved this New Year like never before that together we will do what none of us could ever hope to do on our own.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Stay Connected!</i>	2
<i>Board President</i>	3
<i>Board Matters</i>	4
<i>Faith Development</i>	4
<i>Money Matters</i>	4
<i>Worship Services</i>	4
<i>Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida</i>	5
<i>Welcome!</i>	6
<i>LifeNet for Families</i>	7
<i>WhaleCoast Alaska 2017</i>	8

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

Phone 954-723-7877

www.riverofgrassuu.org

office@riverofgrassuu.org

Minister **Rev. Amy Carol Webb**
minister@riverofgrassuu.org

Newsletter

Editor Monica Dyer
Layout Brit Lundell
Copy Editor Diane Diaz

Board of Trustees

board@riverofgrassuu.org

President Zena Tucker
Vice President Scott May
Secretary Toni Cattell
Treasurer Brit Lundell
Trustee Kristine Barkley
Trustee Emilie Sayward Henry-Richardson
Trustee Dave Katz
Trustee Lynn O'Brien

Committee Chairs

committee contact info at

www.riverofgrassuu.org

Caring Deb Kitner
& Kristine Barkley
Community Awareness Sheryl Cattell
Concert (Café) Robby Greenburg
& Aaron Stang
Facilities Management Jon Kitner
& GL Franklin
Facilities Rental Ingrid Furlong
Faith Development Tanya Gustafson
Finance Pam Schrimsher
Green Sanctuary **Open**
Hospitality Bennett Lorman
& **Open**
Membership Leana Bresnahan
& Deb Kitner
Personnel Lynn O'Brien
& Dave Katz
Service & Social Justice Rick Tucker
Shared Ministry Diane Lade
& Janet Schwartz
Stewardship Kristine & Kip Barkley
Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

Other Resources

contact info at www.riverofgrassuu.org

Office Administrator Sandy Blair Chibnick
Faith Development Coordinator Deb Ely
Choir Director Gayle Giese
Pastoral Care Riley Cothran
& Pat Katz
Web Designer Marjorie Loring
& Esther Sampol

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!

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 office@riverofgrassuu.org
- ◆ Visit our **Facebook page**: www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Follow us on **Twitter**: [@RiverOfGrassUU](https://twitter.com/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 new MeetUp group: www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker



What gives you hope? Where can we find courage in grim times? Dear friends and family who share our values is the answer I give. Their examples, their music, their art and their words come to mind when I face challenges, when I see injustice, when I am tired and alone.

Where may we connect to such a principled people? In beloved community, in a spiritual home, say I. For me, a life-sustaining connection is found in River of Grass Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregation.

Interested in how you too can connect? There are so, so many ways!!!

Worship: Our Sunday worship service is one important way, with music, story, message and humor. Rev Amy's homilies have won many awards and our lay led services are exceptional and we offer child care and hospitality time.

Faith Development for Children: We offer classes to teach our guiding principles to our children. Additionally, many children enjoy the myriad of other activities including field trips and special programs (such as our Holiday Pageant).

Choir: We sing to cheer our hearts, express our sorrows, honor our ancestors and give hope to our children. In short, we build up our beloved community. We practice weekly and perform monthly.

Drumming Circle: Once a month Rev Amy leads us to drum in connection between ourselves, to our ancestors and to different cultures. We raise a noise and let our emotions out. It builds a primal connection and it's FUN!



Neshamah is a quiet, moving meditation service one evening per month. Rev Amy provides soft music, inspirational readings and above all a peaceful time together.

Welcome Table Communion Circle: The gospel of Jesus of Nazareth is one of radical love, inclusion and transformation. In that spirit, we will gather in remembrance and renewal for the Lord's Supper of the Christian tradition. Join us for fellowship in body and spirit, with singing, prayer, and communion service.

Flowing River Sangha: Join in a mindfulness meditation practice every Tuesday evening. You will be learning and practicing meditation on the breath. Experience the scientifically proven benefits of a routine meditation practice with us!

Small Group Ministry: We have a myriad of groups to suit almost every interest. Men's Group, Women's Group, Full Moon Daughters (Women and girls outdoor group), BUUKies (Book discussion), covenant groups (intimate, sharing and connection groups). These small groups make big impacts, supporting each other and reaching out by sponsoring service projects and congregational events.

Social Justice: What better way to live our our principles than with action. River of Grass sponsors once per month volunteer



(Continued on page 4)

BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Board President



Your Board discussed the purchase of new chairs at our December 2016 meeting. Here is the statement from our minutes: "We fully support obtaining New Harmony chairs as provided in the quote, but for an expense of this magnitude, we recommend congregational input through the budgeting process..." We invite your feedback on how we may involve the congregation in the purchase of these much-needed chairs. Send feedback to president@riverofgrassuu.org.

MONEY MATTERS

By Kip Barkley, Planned Giving Group



January is the month when we resolve to lose weight and to tidy up our act. Now might be a good time to make a list of all your financial accounts and insurance. Include account numbers and contact names. Don't forget your military discharge. Then there is that list of passwords to everything from Facebook, to banks, to Amazon.com. Hopefully all your passwords are not the same. Do your family a favor and save all this data, just in case it is ever needed. Visit <http://riverofgrassuu.org/planned-giving.html>.

WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

- Jan. 22 *Through Clarity to Community*,
Kathy Jens-Rochow
- Jan. 29 *Through Community to Compassion*,
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Feb. 5 *Through Compassion to Commitment*,
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Feb. 12 *The Ghosts of Slaves Past: Coming to a University Near You*, Rita Cherubini
- Feb. 19 *The Courage of our Convictions*,
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Feb. 26 *Mardi Gras: Tribulation to Celebration*,
Rev. Amy Carol Webb

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 3)

days at LifeNet4Families. We support a holiday gift drive for foster children, a school supply drive for troubled teens, UNICEF, the UU Service Committee and the list goes on and on. Last but not least, we join in peaceful protests, marches, petition signings and educational seminars. Our collective work not only builds connection between us, but shines a light into the broader community and illustrates our resolve to work towards peace, justice and sustainable earth.

And there are even more ways to connect available! If you have questions on any of these activities, see our website, our facebook page or email president@riverofgrassuu.org.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator

Happy New Year from Faith Development! We hope you had a wonderful holiday season. The Holiday Gathering and Christmas Pageant made December a month to remember for Faith Development. Thank you to everyone for your involvement and support with both of those events.

This January we have some exciting classes arranged for our children. We are also planning a multigenerational service for January 15, in celebration of Martin Luther King Day, and we would love to have the children involved in this service. Additionally, if any members of the congregation are interested in teaching in Faith Development, volunteers are welcome at this time. Please contact Debbie Ely or Tanya Gustafson if you would like to help with our Religious Education.





Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida Bending Florida toward Justice

WELCOME TO 2017 FROM UU JUSTICE FLORIDA

The mission of UU Justice Florida (www.uujusticefl.org) is to promote justice, equity and compassion in public policy, guided by our faith tradition and working with public interest groups and interfaith partners who work for the common good. We are working to address Climate Change, Escalating Inequality and Justice for All. Join us. <http://www.uujusticefl.org/action-network/sign-up>. Together we can make a difference.

2017 promises to be a challenging year for all working for a just and compassionate society, an improved global economy, and a sustainable earth.

Our two major statewide events are the **Interfaith Climate Assembly** Feb. 23-25 (see below) and **UU Justice Florida Legislative Day** March 20-21 (see page 6). Please save the dates and check the special offer below for early registrants for the Climate Assembly. Register by January 23rd for a special rebate! Regional events will be highlighted in a separate email.

Please let us know of other events in your area so we can add them to that list. <http://www.uujusticefl.org/get-involved/join-us> and please add your comments and posts on our public Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1704254003141776/>.

STATEWIDE

One major use of our funds is for two key statewide conferences, for which we offer support to encourage UUs to attend from all over the state. Why do this? Because this is a big state, and we want to involve UUs from all congregations to show how we can each benefit by working together. We know that person-to-person connections and hands-on experience are most important for building the partnerships we need to address the important issues of our day. Please come to these special events, or help others attend.

We realize not everyone can be as active as they might like. By supporting UU Justice Florida, you let others work for justice on your behalf. Please make your tax-deductible contribution here. From all our dedicated volunteers, we thank you. <http://www.uujusticefl.org/donate>.

THE 3RD ANNUAL FLORIDA INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK ASSEMBLY FEB. 23-25

Climate change is one of our core issues. People of all faiths and ethical convictions are needed to work together to address this growing problem. The 3rd Annual Assembly will be held in Orlando this year. To encourage Unitarian Universalists from all over the state to attend, UU Justice Florida will offer a \$50 rebate toward hotel costs to each of the first two representatives who register by January 23rd, from each of the 46 UU congregations in Florida. We have never had all congregations represented. Now is your opportunity. To qualify for the rebate, please register on our website here <http://www.uujusticefl.org/BookingRetrieve.aspx?ID=92979>. You will also need to register on the official registration form for the conference at www.interfaithflorida.com which will be available later this month.



UU JUSTICE FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE DAY MARCH 20-21

UU Justice Florida encourages UUs and friends from all over the state to join us in Tallahassee to learn about the legislative process and bring the values of justice, equity and compassion to the Florida Statehouse. Training is provided by members of the Florida League of Women Voters. People of all ages are encouraged to attend. Monday night dinner and hotel accommodations for UUs are covered by UU Justice Florida, and discounted hotel rates are offered to our interfaith friends. Carpooling makes the event doable and fun. It is a great learning experience for all: each year is different. Our legislators need to see us, otherwise they only hear from paid lobbyists. Registration forms will be available soon at www.uujusticefl.org.

Thank you for all your good efforts for social and environmental justice and a sustainable earth.

All our voices are needed now.

Kindra Muntz
Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida
www.uujusticefl.org
<https://www.facebook.com/uujfactionnetwork/>
941-266-8278



WELCOME, ANN!

By Wendell Abern

Ann Lewis, a new member, began her response to my query letter with such an engaging opening paragraph I see no reason to alter it in any way:

“Who am I? I’m still finding out. Every time I think I know exactly who I am, another manifestation of ME emerges. There are, however, some immutable facts. I became the loving partner of Rita Cherubini about a year ago. Believing that spirituality should be a part of our relationship, I accompanied Rita to church frequently and grew to love the people I met.”

And the newest version of Ann is indeed fascinating! Ann was raised Roman Catholic in upstate New York, in a deeply loving Lebanese family she describes as profoundly spiritual and only mildly religious; something she now realizes is a blessing. “My spirituality,” she says, “was always about family togetherness and acceptance, even during harsh times. And simplicity I’m sure my humble parents didn’t devise this spiritual agenda consciously. It was

simply a result of focusing our lives on what is truly important.”

At 18 years old, Ann joined the sister of Saint Joseph order in Troy, New York, and spent eight “difficult but rich years” as a Roman Catholic nun, leaving the convent with her \$200 dowry to start life again at age 27. She began teaching for the public school system in upstate New York, bought her first car and married. She and her husband adopted a son and daughter.

Toward the end of her marriage, Ann earned a Master’s, Specialist Degree, followed by a Doctorate in Psychology and 28 years of private practice as a psychotherapist. She uses her Blog “to bring psycho-spiritual wisdom to those who hunger for it.”

In closing, Ann states, “I have become a Unitarian Universalist because in the River of Grass community, I have experienced the warmth of my childhood, the openness of my adulthood, and hope for a better world. Thank you for your hugs and uplifting dreams.”

Don’t know about you, but that choked me up a bit.

LIFENET4FAMILIES DECEMBER 10TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair

The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thank you to all the River of Grass volunteers who came to LifeNet4Families on Saturday, December 10th to make a difference including Rita and Ann, Josh, Nichole and Jacob, Zena, Sam, Geri and Delia! They helped out in the LifeNet pantry by putting away the food from two large pallets and followed it up by packing 64 boxes of food for needy families. There was something for everyone to do and they worked together to accomplish a lot!



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 in action. LifeNet4Families serves approximately 5,000 individuals and families, and provides 1.4 million meals annually. They do everything in their power “...to reduce the pain and suffering of those needing food and resources to improve their lives.”

Join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day on January 14th. We volunteer there once a month from 9:00-11:00am. Upcoming dates are January 14th, February 11th and March 11th. You can 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.





WhaleCoast Alaska 2017

WOW! Four Unitarian Universalist Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our awe-inspiring, 24th annual Alaska tour program.

TOUR #1: National Park Tour, June 10 to 20 -- \$3,156

TOUR #2: All-Alaska Tour, July 7 to 19 -- \$3,758

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, plane, and boat.

STAY: Real Alaska! UU homestays, meals, & dinner parties with Alaska UUs who treat you like friends.



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

Hurry! Each tour sells out when 40 guests register.