

# Reflections

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

FEBRUARY 2017



## LOVE THE HELL OUT OF THE WORLD

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

**T**he world looks like hell right now. Torn by bitterness and rancor and division by a thousand metrics: age, size, skin shade, geography, education, gender, sexual orientation, political bent, wealth, work, country of birth -- even hair color, eye color, accent. You name it. That's before we even speak of religion. Surely none of us can be unaware at this moment of the vitriol and violence burning around the world fueled by religious acrimony. How are we as a religious community to respond?

In a world so deeply fractured by creed, the late UU Rev. Forrest Church said, "Unitarianism proclaims that we spring from a common source; Universalism, that we share a common destiny." Unitarian Universalism is a tradition that seeks to bridge the divides and heal their woundings. But how? Especially now?

By loving the hell out the world, that's how. And right now.

This notion of loving the hell out of the world grows from the Universalist branch of our UU family tree. The historical Universalism we inherit teaches that God loves each and every person. No matter what. Too much to damn any. And that we should do likewise. Which is why we are sometimes called "the religion of 'no hell'." It was this teaching that motivated our Universalist foremothers and fathers to give themselves to the work of social justice. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Universalists fought for the abolition of slavery, separation of church and state, women's rights, labor rights, and the welcome of refugees and exiles.

Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are called to fight for ... abolition of institutional racism, separation of church and state, women's rights, labor rights, and the welcome of refugees and exiles.

So what does loving the hell out of the world mean for us? It means acting from love rather than fear. It means looking for the broken heart beneath the anger, at the same time risking ourselves to stop the actions of that anger. It means not turning away from pain and grief -- another's or our own. It means acknowledging our own privilege -- of race or class -- and finding ways to harness its power in solidarity with those without it. It means staying in the conversation when it's hard and in right relationship when it hurts. It means daring to keep our hearts open, even when they break over and over again. It means staying woke when going back to sleep sounds so sweet. It means recognizing when we ourselves need to stop and breathe and re-create ourselves to be of even better service down this road to justice, peace, and liberty for all. It means answering the bitterness and hatred in our own hearts with forgiveness and reconciliation. It means getting up and doing it again. Today. And tomorrow.



So, yeah -- the world looks like hell right now. Let's go love the hell out of it.

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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

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Phone 954-723-7877

[www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org)

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**Minister** ..... **Rev. Amy Carol Webb**  
[minister@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:minister@riverofgrassuu.org)

### Newsletter

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### Committee Chairs

committee contact info at

[www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org)

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& Kristine Barkley  
Community Awareness ..... Sheryl Cattell  
Concert (Café) ..... Robby Greenburg  
& Aaron Stang  
Facilities Management ..... Jon Kitner  
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Faith Development ..... Tanya Gustafson  
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& **Open**  
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& 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](http://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!

**B**etween 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](mailto:office@riverofgrassuu.org)
- ◆ **Visit our Facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu](http://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu)
- ◆ **Follow us on Twitter:** @RiverOfGrassUU or [www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu](http://www.twitter.com/riverofgrassuu)
- ◆ **Visit our calendar:** [www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html) (or go to: [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) – click on Events – Calendar)
- ◆ **Join our MeetUp group:** [www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu](http://www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu)



## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker



**W**alking with both hands free, I have awareness of my steady gaze and my direction. With both hands free, my arms swing freely, my shoulders are relaxed and my breath energizing. My heart, breath and footsteps form a recognizable pattern and I am comforted by it. Walking with another, I have motivation to take more steps, adding interest and bringing attention to previously un-noticed things on our path... a beautiful bird, a fascinating lizard, a storm on the horizon. I cherish this walking together and my steps adjust to keep time with the other, my direction changes a bit to accommodate. We have harmony and we travel far.

When my hands are full, my steps are shorter, my gait less free. The burden is my guilt. I am determined to carry on without comment on it. Walking with another, who also has hands full, our attentions are not on each other but on our internal turmoil. Our walk becomes labored, discordant. Our company is not as rewarding to the other and our work together unfruitful.

Then I recall my promise ... our promise. I must listen, and respond respectfully. I can be forgiven. And my companion does the same. Our discord is healed with this grounding. And our walk begins anew.

Our Covenant of Right Relations is the way we adjust our behaviors to walk together. I have my faults and shortcomings, my guilt and my thoughtless words. This covenant calls me to adjust my behaviors, to be intentional in our walk together because I truly *love* to walk with you in harmony, travelling far and moving mountains.

This is what our covenant means to me, dear River. What does it mean to you? Is there a careless word that may have hurt you? Is there need for forgiveness? Let us have the conversation about it within the confidence of this beloved covenant we uphold and honor. I look forward to our walk.

## RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

**W**e, the members and staff of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation agree to strive to be in relationship with each other and the larger community in ways that build a safe, healthy, nurturing environment and strengthen our common bonds. To that end, we are committed to putting forth our best efforts to live out the ideals expressed in this our covenant of right relations.

### Welcoming and Hospitality

We practice hospitality and inclusion, welcoming all who enter and showing a genuine interest in each other. We honor and respect the differing cultural perspectives of others. We are all stewards of this sacred space.

### Listening and Speaking

We listen with respect and attention, without assumptions. We speak and respond thoughtfully and honestly, respecting diversity of opinions.

### Conflict and Reconciliation

We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and we are willing to forgive ourselves and others we make every effort to settle differences openly, directly and with compassion. We strive patiently to build trust in all our relationships, focusing on the issue, not the person.

### Celebration, Support and Service

We support each other in times of joy and need. We serve with generosity and good humor. We recognize and acknowledge the service of others.



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator



**H**appy February from Faith Development! Our children are feeling so much love for each other this month, and it shows! The inherent worth and dignity of each person in our program is valued and treasured. It is a beautiful thing to see our children and teachers growing together in such a loving environment. Our multi-generational service this month will be on February 26, for the celebration of Mardi Gras. Please join us for this exciting service. We look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces.

## SPRING CLEANING!

### RETURN OF THE YARD SALE

By Susan Juncosa



**D**id you get an ugly sweater for Christmas? Are you cleaning out your kitchen pantry and finding appliances you used once? Have your kids outgrown some toys that are still in great shape? Don't toss – donate! We'll be having a yard sale in late March or in April (date to be determined) and we'd love to have your gently used items! The yard sale will be held at the River of Grass facility, and due to lack of storage space, you'll have to hold on to your items until the week prior to the sale. More details will follow, but for now, please hold on to items for donation! Contact [fUUndraising@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fUUndraising@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information.

## WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

- Feb. 19 *The Courage of our Convictions*,  
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Feb. 26 *Mardi Gras: Tribulation to Celebration*,  
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Mar. 5 *Pennies from Heaven: So Shall We Receive*,  
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
- Mar. 12 *Right to Die*, Bill Schoolman (past President  
of the Broward County ACLU)
- Mar. 19 *Rising Green: Celebrating the Vernal Equinox*,  
Rev. Amy Carol Webb

## RIVER OF GRASS PLANTS THE FLAG

**J**oin the congregation for a special ceremony during worship service this Sunday, February 19th, as we plant and bless the *Black Lives Matter* flag.

After both a special and a regular Board of Trustees meeting to consider the three Listening Circles, and to document actions taken and outline appropriate ongoing programs and actions, the Board upheld its previous approval of the *Black Lives Matter* feather flag display, as proposed by the Cypress Springs Covenant Group.



## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Deb Kitner, Membership Co-Chair

We want to welcome new members, Susan Malca, Miki Boyer, Pat Pecho and Karen LeFever. They joined our beloved community on January 29 and we are thrilled to have them at River of Grass.

Also on January 29, the annual congregational picnic took place at the beautiful home of John and Liz Perez. Thank you so much, John and Liz, from a grateful River of Grass community.

If you are interested in learning more about the UU faith in general and River of Grass in particular, the Membership Committee is conducting a Pathways to Membership session. This class is for those who are interested in joining ROG and also for those who have recently joined, but were unable to attend an earlier Pathways session. The class will be conducted on Sunday, February 19, following service, at 12:15 and will continue until 3:00-3:30. Snacks, drinks and desserts will be provided, as well as child care. If you would like to attend, or need more information, contact the River of Grass office, Rev. Amy, Leana Bresnahan, or Debbie Kitner.

Circle Dinners are a great way to connect with old friends or those members at River of Grass who you may not know very well. These dinners are held in a member's home, usually, in groups of 4 to 10. The host provides the main course and guests provide side dishes and desserts. Please contact Kristine Barkley for more information, or if you would like to host or attend an upcoming Circle Dinner.

The Membership Committee is always looking for new, energetic members to help River of Grass grow and flourish. We would love to have you as part of our committee. Please see co-chairs Leana Bresnahan or Debbie Kitner for more information about all we do in our committee.



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## BUUKIES SPRING READING

by Susan Juncosa

The bUUKies have chosen their Spring 2017 selections. With the possible exception of books about canines, this book club reads fiction and non-fiction tomes of redeeming spiritual and/or intellectual value, and meets once a month to discuss. Meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:15 pm at River of Grass.

This spring is starting out with *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. This autobiography chronicles the story of the global advocate for the education of girls. Although many of us know of Malala and her background, we are eager to learn more.

Other selections for the spring are:

- ♦ *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult
- ♦ *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead
- ♦ *Symptoms of Being Human* by Jeff Garvin
- ♦ *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* by James Welch

Please contact [bUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:bUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information.



## LIFE4FAMILIES JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> VOLUNTEER DAY

Judi Oltmans, SSJC Co-Chair

**T**hank you to the amazing group of River of Grass volunteers that came to LifeNet4Families on Saturday, January 14th including London, Zena and Rick, Tanya, Karen, Dennis, Elizabeth and Joshua, Sam, Juan, Marilisa and Shani, Ed, Esther and Marjorie, and Brittany! River of Grass loves to volunteer! They helped out in the LifeNet pantry packing enough boxes of food to fill 3 pallets! There was something for everyone to do and it was a busy assembly line. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication!



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 by providing necessary food, ancillary services and referrals.” 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.” Come and give them a hand!

Join us at one of our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer days: February 11th, March 11th and April 8th. We volunteer there once a month from 9:00-11:00am. What a great way to spend a Saturday morning! 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](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.



## THIS RIVER MARCHES!



**R**iver of Grass members marched in three social justice events in January: The Fort Lauderdale King Holiday Parade (20 participants) the Women's March in Washington DC (12 participants) and the Miami Women's Rally (50 participants). The River MARCHES.



# WhaleCoast Alaska 2017

**WOW! Four Unitarian Universalist Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our awe-inspiring, 24<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org)**

**Email: [dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org](mailto:dfrey@WhaleCoastAK.org)**

**Address: 675 Gold Vein Road, Fairbanks, AK 99712**

**Telephone: 907-322-4966**

**Hurry! Each tour sells out when 40 guests register.**