Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
DAVIE, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 2018

WORLD ON FIRE Rev. Amy Carol Webb

Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for Good the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.

~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

These days, any given moment it can feel the world is on fire. And for some, it is. We keep our loved ones in the Western American continent in our hearts and prayers as their homes and well-being are threated with flames daily – where authorities no longer refer to fire seasons, but fire years.



For the rest of us, the threat falls not on structures and buildings and land, but on institutions, systems, social norms, moral baselines, and even the measures of common decency. We rail, and gasp, and mourn – as we should. For the old ways are, in truth, passing away.

That's not a bad thing.

It's a hard thing. A painful thing. A disorienting disruptive discombobulating thing. A necessary thing.

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But not a bad thing, we come to understand, the more we wake up to the structures of privilege, genocide, racism, greed, and the lust for power in which our social norms are rooted and upon which our institutions are built.

What, then, are we, the people of liberal religion, to do? What is before us as seekers of justice and makers of peace? How shall we fight this world on fire?

How else? With fire! The kind of fire prophesied by the great philosopher Teilhard de Chardin, whose wisdom crested the turn of the last century – the fire of Love. The kind of Love we will give ourselves to at River of Grass in this new Congregational Year, following our Grand Theme – The Way of Love.

What would it look like, feel like, be like, to be a people who follow only the Way of Love? The kind of love that has the power to set the world on fire, love that can burn away the houses of hatred, that can bring down the towers of greed, and purify our own hearts of the fear and resentment that steal our peace and throttle our hope.

Oh, yes, this is the Love we are called to. And now is its time. We were built for this my beloveds! And so we dedicate the 2018-2019 River of Grass Unitarian Universalist congregational year to the Way of Love. That we might be a people who harness for Good the energies of Love, and so discover fire for human kind once more.

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 ◆

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!

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: send an email to office@riverofgrassuu.org
- ♦ Visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu
- ◆ Follow us on Twitter: @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 MeetUp group: www.meetup.com/riverofgrassuu





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

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contact info at www.riverofgrassuu.org

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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Scott May

elcome Home!

I hope your summer was spectacular, and provided the travel, adventure, rest, or nourishment that all of us need from time to time. And hopefully you were able to join some of the many inspiring lay-led services during the summer. I continue to be amazed by the creativity and talent of our diverse and welcoming community. Thank you to all who made the summer services so special.

And now, together, we are embarking on a vibrant, exciting congregational year! The River of Grass community accepts you and your whole self just as you are - your heart, your smile and your spirit are needed for our community to flourish. Welcome, Welcome to your River of Grass home!

In case you're curious to learn a little more about your recently installed board of trustees president, here is some background about me. First and foremost, I'm very energized and excited to continue to serve our beloved community. I'm a charter member, signing the River of Grass membership book back in 1999 in Weston. I have served River of Grass in many ways, including vice president and treasurer of your board, president of the capital fund, finance chair, annual giving chair, served on several committees, and have taught faith development classes to middle school and high school students.

I was raised UU, attending a congregation in central New Jersey, along with my parents and three older brothers. I have fond memories of growing up UU and moving through the phases of religious education. The names of most phases have changed – back then it was 'Sunday school' instead of 'faith development', I happily attended AYS (about your sexuality) now called OWL (our whole lives), I was very active in LRY (liberal religious youth) now called Beacon, and attended several weekend-long UU Cons (conferences for teens). I also have fond memories of camping and canoe trips, bake sales, and overnight lock-ins. Growing up UU has helped to shape who I am today, with many imperfections and dreams.

I met my amazing wife Carolyn at River of Grass and we blended our families, raising our four children through River of Grass faith development. Our children are grown now, aged 22 to 27, and most live in the area. We live in Davie with our cat and golden retriever. Carolyn and I attend SUUSI (southeastern UU summer institute) and UUA General Assembly in the summers, and practice mindfulness and meditation. I'm semi-retired, doing some consulting work and serving on the board of LifeNet4Families. Carolyn teaches middle school horticulture and mindfulness.

I am truly excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for River of Grass. All of the pieces are in place to forge ahead and realize our highest aspirations as a spiritual community. We are blessed to have the Reverend Amy Carol Webb serving as our Minister, sharing her sermons, her spirit, her music, and her love. Our Faith Development program is reaching for new heights, with a renewed congregational commitment and energized by the experience and passion of Karen Gonzalez. Our Music and Choir continue to lift our spirits and raise our voices. Our Caring team keeps connections even through life's difficult times. Our very active SSJC (Service and Social Justice) engage us to spread beyond our 4 walls and bring our light into the world. Amazing leadership and the dedicated service of our Members makes it all come together.

The pieces are all in place for our beloved community to reach its highest dreams and aspirations. This congregational year will be a time for us to stretch and grow, to embrace change, and learn new ways of working together... enabling us to move ahead with new vigor and vitality. Of course not every step will flow as smoothly as hoped, but we will join our hearts and spirits and move forward together – as a community.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Sunday mornings, at the Welcome Back Picnic on Sunday October 14, and at the Strategy/ Committee Fair on Sunday October 28. Our congregation has an exciting year ahead, and I am honored to serve with you in such an amazing and committed spiritual community. Blessings to all!

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

Karen Gonzalez, Director of Faith Development

don't think I ever actually assigned that iconic essay to my public-school students, but as I contemplated what to share with you this month, it seemed so applicable! I am happy to report that my summer was quite busily spent preparing to begin anew here at River of Grass. I spent a full week at our year-round camp and conference center, *The Mountain*, in Highlands, North Carolina where I attended the annual Religious Education Week sponsored by the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA). While there I participated in two trainings; the Curriculum Renaissance Module and Shared Leadership in Innovation. I also had the invaluable opportunity to brainstorm with and be inspired by religious educators, ministers and UUA staff from our UUA-Southern Region and beyond. In essence, this was religious educator boot camp! The energy and knowledge I gained there is sustaining me as I undertake much preparation for our new school year together.



Here at River of Grass, every age group is a participant, leader, and recipient of every part of the life of the church; worship, social gatherings and social justice work. With that in mind, there are regular opportunities for families to partake in worship, fellowship and good works in the coming months.

- On Sunday, September 23rd we will meet at Bowlarama in Davie at noon for a bowling lunch. Please sign up during Hospitality time so that we know how many lanes to set up.
- Our Annual Congregational Picnic is Sunday, October 14th where there'll be lots of old-fashioned games in a nearby park.
- The annual auction event is on November 3rd and our young folk are being asked to be the paparazzi for the movie stars on the red carpet! I encourage families to sign up to offer some family-friendly events to help in our fund-raising efforts.
- Our first social justice family event will be at Lifenet For Families on November 10th. Come help with stocking shelves and creating food boxes for local families in need.

Multigenerational Worship will happen on the third Sunday of every month. Remember that this is part of your child's Faith Development experience. How nice to partake in a shared worship experience where all ages are honored and we learn from each other.

Remember to register your child(ren) for Sunday School here. Or contact Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@riverofgrassuu.org.

DID YOU KNOW....

A 2003 report from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) explored the relationship between family closeness and the number of religious experiences a family has during the week. It showed that the family which prays or engages in spiritual activities together is more likely to produce children who have stronger, more positive relationships with their parents – even as they navigate the difficult waters of adolescence. If that isn't reason enough for families to explore their faith, a National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health concluded that teens who have stronger relationships with parents are significantly less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol, experimenting with illegal drugs, engaging in violent behavior, or contemplating suicide.

- excerpt from Tending the Flame, The Art of UU Parenting

TOSSING FLOWERS (AKA BEHIND THE SCENES AWESOMENESS)

Rev. Amy challenged us during the September 2nd service to "imagine a world where love is the way". Being in community with all of you makes meeting this challenge easy. Each time we walk through these doors, we are among justice seekers who love fiercely and "make peace wherever they go". So many people work to make River of Grass the vibrant community that we all cherish and love. We would like to give special thanks to the **Caring Committee** who has selflessly offered compassionate care to our beloved community. Thank you for loving all of us through the difficult times. We would also like to highlight the contributions of **Vickie Koutoulas**. Thank you for ensuring that our congregation welcomes everyone who walks through our doors.

RIVER OF GRASS T-SHIRTS!

River of Grass has new T-shirts for adults and kids! Marjorie Loring and Karen Gonzalez designed new shirts for us to wear to group events - Family Fun trips, Social Justice gatherings, UU events, etc. The shirts can be ordered online so that you get just what you need for your family. (The kid shirts are priced a bit higher than the adults because we couldn't guarantee selling as many.) The new window for ordering shirts closes on December 7th.





T-shirt order - Adults (https://www.customink.com/g/pve0-00bh-c97y)





T-shirt order - Kids (https://www.customink.com/g/pve0-00bh-c9g2)

SACRED ACTION SECTION By Kathy Jens-Rochow



AWAKENING THE DREAMER CHANGING THE DREAM SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, October 20, 2018, 12:30 to 5:00 pm At River of Grass

Presented by the Pachamama Alliance SE Florida Facilitators: Nanette Bartels and Valerie Silidker and the Service & Social Justice Committee, A free will offering will be accepted.

wakening the Dreamer was created to shift the dominant culture of consumption and alienation to one that honors and sustains all life. You'll look squarely at the state of the world – where we are and how we got here – and then explore what role you can play in bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just human presence on this planet.

Awakening the Dreamer is a transformative educational program that explores the challenges facing humanity at this critical moment in time and the opportunities we as a human family have to create a new future. You'll look at actions you can take, on your own and with others, and new ways of being that are consistent with your vision.

RSVP at Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/awakening-the-dreamer-tickets-49431270260 (Copy and paste if link does not work)

For more information, contact Kathy Jens-Rochow, SSJC@riverofgrassuu.org.

CHOIR CORNER MAKING THINGS NEW

By Gayle Giese



A living faith has both roots and wings, honoring and documenting our inheritance, while lifting us in present and future. A hymnal exists for decades, sometimes centuries. As I greet each day with singing and pondering hymns from *Singing the Living Tradition*, I am awed by the history and theology I must consider. I am also daunted by the task ahead of me; I'm on the "O's," and the "Z's" are beyond the horizon. I am entering each hymn into a UUMN (Unitarian Universalist Music Network) song database, so that anyone can search by theme, composer, arranger, religious tradition, voicing, instrumentation, etc. The database includes songs and hymns and choral music and piano solos and more from many, many sources.

As part of my data entry, I must determine the religious traditions and themes for each song, and this has been the most difficult task for me. There are 26 religious traditions. I googled "religious naturalism," and found that besides a Unitarian Universalist, I'm also a Religious Naturalist, someone who finds the divine in nature. Who knew?!

Today's hymn is #12 "O Life That Maketh All Things New." I'm choosing the themes of "hope, truth, joy, God, and transformation/journey," which leads me to consider that this could be an Easter song, even though it's not in that section of our hymnal. The words are by 19th Century Unitarian poet, Samuel Longfellow. The tune is from Thomas Williams' *Psalmodia Evangelica*, from 1789 (but you'll find other tunes applied to the same text in other hymnals). As always, I check Rev. Kimberley Debus' blog, because she's quite clever, to see what she has to say:

"Life that maketh all things new ... not worn, not reused, not tired. New.

the blooming earth, our thoughts within ... even as the seasons cycle through, so will – or should – our thoughts.

our pilgrim feet, wet with thy dew ... we are always searching, seeking, moving

in gladness hither turn again ... and thank god Life DOES make all things new, because we need it to be that way,
for our sanity. We need to be refreshed, renewed, revived, and clearly – at least today – reminded that this does
happen. It does get better. It does get easier."

Ahhhhhh, feeling better! Thanks Samuel Longfellow!

Check out Rev. Debus' blog: http://farfringe.com/stlt12-o-life-that-maketh-all-things-new/

This year, really listen to our singing as congregation and choir voices blend. The choir will learn several of our favorite hymns in 4-part harmony, making things new!



IN MEMORIAM – JOHNNIE PECK By Pixie Wright

Johnnie Peck, a founding member of River of Grass, and a previous member of UUCFL, died on July 19, 2018, in Pennsylvania. She was married to Bernard and had two sons, Charles and Joseph, and two grandchildren. Johnnie was married later in life to G.L. Franklin (former RoG member) in a beachside ceremony officiated by Rev. Jackie. She received her Ph.D. in Child Psychology from the University of Maryland and was a published author of two books, "Kindergarten Policies" and "Young Children's Behavior".

Johnnie was a member of the Board, served as Auction committee co-chair, and SSJC chair. She was part of the first 5-Year Envisioning Plan and a New Space Task force. She also served on the Faith Development, Hospitality, Finance, Installation, Caring, Nominating, and Concert committees. A team that included Johnnie developed this very newsletter. When Rev. Ken first came to River of Grass, Johnnie was there to help him set up meetings, make coffee, and provide a snack. And the food! Always the food with Johnnie! Was there ever an event at River of Grass where Johnnie did not bring food? It is clear that Johnnie was a part of every single facet of this congregation.

Johnnie enjoyed flowers, art, music and ballet. She was generous, compassionate, kind, and caring. She has been described as "an independent strong woman ahead of her time". She would describe herself as an "old soul".

Rest in peace, Johnnie Peck, you old soul; we miss you.

Getting to Know UU's

FAMOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SPOTLIGHT

By Kathy Jens-Rochow

Theodor Seuss Geisel [Dr. Seuss] (1904 – 1991) American author, political cartoonist, poet, animator, book publisher, and artist. Geisel adopted his "Dr. Seuss" pen name during his university studies at Dartmouth and the



University of Oxford. He left Oxford in 1927 to begin his career as an illustrator and cartoonist for Vanity Fair, Life, and other publications. He later published his first children's book "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street" in 1937. A major turning point in Geisel's career came when, in response to a 1954 *LIFE* magazine article that criticized children's reading levels, Houghton Mifflin and Random House asked him to write a children's primer using 220 vocabulary words. The resulting book, *The Cat in the Hat*, was published in 1957 and was described by one critic as a "tour de force." The success of *The Cat in the Hat* cemented Geisel's place in children's literature.

Over the next several years, Geisel would write many more books, both in his new, simplified vocabulary style and using his older, more elaborate technique. His work includes several of the most popular children's books of all time, selling over 600 million copies and being translated into more than 20 languages by the time of his death. When Dr. Seuss was asked how he could connect with children in spite of not having his own, his stock answer was, "You have 'em, and I'll entertain 'em."

Sources: Wikipedia & biography.com

GENEROSITY MADE SIMPLE WITH EGIVING!

A new way to stay in touch. ROG is now offering new ways to show your generosity ... whether it's a way to pay your Pledge, a special collection, or giving your plate offering even while you are away for the summer.

- <u>Text to Donate:</u> 954-504-6239 Simply text an amount (no dollar sign needed) to the number shown and follow the prompts to complete your donation!
- <u>Give+ Mobile App:</u> Download the "GivePlus Church" app from Playstore to set up a one time or recurring gift. Search zip code 33325 for our congregation. Follow prompts.
- *Online at riverofgrassuu.org:* Go to the Stewardship section of the website. You will see Make a Difference! DONATE button. Follow prompts and make your donation. You can actually set up your recurring Pledge donations!

You will be seeing opportunities in the next many weeks to make eGiving your first choice for contributions to The River. If you have any questions, please contact Rita Cherubini at vicepresident@riverofgrassuu.org.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Date =	Event =
10/7/2018 1215-130pm	PATHWAYS CLASS
10/14/2018 2-5pm	Annual Picnic -Volunteer Park
11/4/2018 1030am	New Member Sunday
12/2/2018 1215-130pm	Pathways class
12/7/2018 630-8pm	River Mixer
1/6/2019 1030am	New Member Sunday

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A have a confession to make and I think many of you will be able to relate to this...I have missed the newsletter. While my inner introvert loves to have something to read while waiting for the service to begin, in truth, I miss hearing from all of you. Thankfully, our faithful comrades-innewsletter-arms, Brit and Diane, have agreed to help resurrect our beloved newsletter so here we are again! Thank you to all who have submitted suggestions and content over the summer as we have prepared its release. I encourage all of you to submit content to be included in future newsletters (newsletter@riverofgrassuu.org).

Have something to sell or donate? Post it in the newsletter!

Have some questions and/or musings about the sermon, current events topic or River of Grass/UU event/issue? Email us a Reader Reflections letter!

Want to "toss flowers," give thanks or celebrate with our congregants? Send us an email!

Want to share your artistic side? Send us your poems, drawings, art, etc.

Until next month, be well and shine on....

Melissa

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING

TO ROUND OUT YOUR VACATION SCHEDULE? SEPTEMBER 29TH TO OCTOBER 4TH, 2018

Onsider visiting San Diego with the First Unitarian Universalists of San Diego! Our members want to show you around our town. San Diego has so much to offer: beautiful beaches, hip urban areas, a World-Famous Zoo, inspiring universities, and a park filled with fascinating museums. And we have even left most of a day for you to tell us where you want to go!

Please go to www.firstuusandiego.org/sdvisit to see the details of this exclusive and all-inclusive tour. There you will also find our email address, sdvisit@firstuusandiego.org to ask any questions you may have. Hope to see you in San Diego!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ CONCERT SERIES 2018 - 2019 SEASON

F ood and drinks are available at every concert for a suggested donation. Our gourmet chefs will be busy preparing varied and delicious offerings for each show!

For the most up-to-date information, go to the River of Grass Café Facebook page.

For more information or to be added to our mailing list, please contact: concerts@riverofgrassuu.org

All Advance Tickets will be held at the door. All ticket donations are final and non-refundable. (Note: The link for "Advance Purchase" will only be active until the day prior to the concert before 12:00 pm.)







an you help at LifeNet4Families during the week? Since many of the LifeNet4Families volunteers are back at school, they are in need of help during the week. We have received a specific request for assistance Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 4:00pm. Most of the volunteers are needed for the dining hall and to prep for the next day's meals. Please contact Phyllis Bard at phyllis.bard@lifenet4families.org.

ANNUAL AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

Journal Ought To Be In Movies! On November 3 at 5:30 pm, we will be hosting our Annual Auction, featuring food, beer, wine, "Oscar" ceremony, and even paparazzi. Dress up like you are going to the Oscars or come as your favorite actor or actress or movie character. Put it on your calendar. It is a family event. Tickets will go on sale at the beginning of October. Kids under 16 are free and nursery care will be provided.

But it takes a whole bunch of people to make this happen seamlessly. We are accepting donations – parties, baskets, gift cards and certificates for service. Ask your favorite restaurant, hair stylist, or masseuse to donate something. Or consider offering to host a party – poker party, wine tasting, beer tasting, etc. We are also looking for some big-ticket items, like a weekend time-share for our live auction.

Volunteers are needed as well!

- ◆ Tapas Table Sponsors (3 tables)— buy or cook tapas for about 50. Set up a table at the auction. Costs will be reimbursed.
- Dessert Table provide a variety of desserts at the auction.
- Donation Collectors collect forms from members for donations after services
- Ticket Sellers sell tickets after services beginning in October.

Contact Kathy Jens-Rochow for other volunteer opportunities and for more information at auction@riverofgrassuu.org.



Tickets \$30 per person \$35 After October 21 Children under 16 FREE! Nursery care provided



WORSHIP SERVICES SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

September Monthly Theme: To be a people of Vision

September 16: Love is the Water

(Annual All Ages Ingathering)

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

September 23: Welcoming A Wild God

(Autumnal Equinox) Rev. Amy Carol Webb

September 30: Danger! Scales Falling! Daring to See

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

October Monthly Theme: To be a people of Sanctuary

October 07: Watch Your Step

(Indigenous Peoples Day) Rev. Amy Carol Webb

October 14: Is America Changing?

Scott May

October 21: In Another's Shoes (All Ages)

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

October 27: When All Else Fails

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

VISIT THE NORTH CAROLINA CRYSTAL COAST



Stay with fellow Unitarian
Universalists in Morehead City
and Beaufort, NC, as you
experience this North Carolina
wonder.

Explore the area

No matter your vacation destination, variety is key. With more than 85 miles of enticing North Carolina coastline, nine distinct regions – including "America's Favorite Town" – and hundreds of events and activities, you're sure to find your Crystal Coast. Come discover North Carolina's Gem.

https://www.crystalcoastnc.org/

Explore UU B&Bs

The Unitarian Coastal Fellowship Bed and Breakfasts include waterfront accommodations in Morehead City and Carteret County. Nearby are the Intercoastal Waterway, Cape Lookout National Seashore and lighthouse, Beaufort Historical site, NC Maritime Museum and Aquarium, historic 1825 Ft. Macon State Park, Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, and many annual festivals. Enjoy maritime forests, pristine beaches, fine seafood restaurants, fishing, dolphin watching, horseback riding on the beach, antique shopping, dinner cruises, and harbor and walking tours. https://www.ucfnc.org/bed-breakfast/



Hi Friends,

I hope you enjoy our UBarU Camp & Retreat Center Newsletter.

Lots of great things happening out here in Mountain Home.

Planning a gathering? Think UBarU!

Hope to see you soon.

Kind Regards,

Robyn Stout

Executive Director - UBarU Camp & Retreat Center http://www.ubaru.org

Donations to UBarU Camp & Retreat Center are always tax-deductible! We appreciate your generosity.



IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
Fall 2018-retreats version.pdf





