

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

JANUARY 2014

MINISTER'S CORNER

WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb, Consulting Minister

We humans need to measure. We like to weigh and compare, look forward and backward. We trace our fingertips over the creases in our life's map to calculate how far we've come ... and how far we've yet to go. We set dates and times to mark the course. We declare holidays. We circle Big Days on the calendar, and use those Big Days to make Big Declarations.

With blessings on every attempt to live forward in body and spirit, the truth is most of the promises declared on Really Big Days fade away, and we find ourselves disheartened by how much we have *not* progressed. When all that's left of the Really Big Day Party is the confetti clean-up crew, can we be brave enough to see where we've been, to look where we might go, to stand on the moment – any moment – and begin again?

George Eliot, a.k.a. Mary Anne Evans, the 19th century English Unitarian author famously said, "It's never too late to be what you might have been." Our better selves want to believe that. But, oh, how our lesser selves set about a rebellious ruckus to rebut and rebuke our recharged resolve! So that more often than we'd like to confess, our newfound aspirations are scuttled by our old-habit thinking till we give up on Big Day Beginnings – and perhaps ourselves – altogether.



IN THIS ISSUE



<i>Services</i>	2
<i>Calendar</i>	2
<i>From Our President</i>	3
<i>Full Moon Daughters</i>	3
<i>Board Matters</i>	4
<i>Faith Development</i>	5
<i>Holiday Pageant</i>	6
<i>Service & Social Justice</i>	8
<i>Membership</i>	9
<i>bUUKies</i>	9
<i>Auction News</i>	10
<i>Film Festival</i>	10
<i>River of Grass Café</i>	11
<i>Women's Group</i>	11



My dear ones, remember this: We don't need this Big Day January 1, to start anew. We don't need this marker to measure our worth as people on this planet. We don't need a dropping disco ball or anyone's permission to adjust our internal GPS and begin again. We don't even need to make sense.

All we need is our own perfect power. Our own intuition. Our own belief that we already embody what we need to become everything we dreamed we might. Any day can be a Big Day.

Any moment can be *the* moment. Any breath can sing out our new voice. Any morning can be the dawn of our own personal new year. As individuals. As families. As this Beloved Community at River of Grass. As the Unitarian Universalist movement the world over.

Let us dare to look backward and forward. Let us dare to calculate how far we've come. Let us dare to envision where can go. Let us dare to make a Big Day, stand on the moment, proclaim Big Declarations and then proceed to live into them.

In 2014, let us be what we might have been.

JANUARY SUNDAY SERVICES



- January 5 Rev. Amy Carol Webb
 January 12 Kip Barkley, *When God Was a Woman*
 January 19 Rev. Amy Carol Webb, *Lift Every Voice*
 January 26 Marjorie Loring, *Original Blessing*

JANUARY CALENDAR (Click [here](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html) or go to www.riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html)



JANUARY 2014

River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Phone 954-723-7877
www.riverofgrassuu.org
office@riverofgrassuu.org

Newsletter

Editor Esther Sampol
 Design & Production Brit Lundell
 Copy Editors Diane Diaz & Zena Tucker

Congregational Administrator

Sophia Brown

Board of Trustees

President Marjorie Loring
 Vice President Leana Bresnahan
 Secretary Zena Tucker
 Treasurer Gary Gonzalez
 Trustee Tom Robinson
 Trustee Natalie Hutton-Corp
 Trustee Audrey Stang
 Trustee Troy Gies
 Youth Representative James May

Committee Chairs

Auction Sheryl Cattell & Esther Sampol
 Caring Ingrid Furlong
 Community Awareness Esther Sampol
 Concert Aaron Stang
 Consulting Minister's Diane Diaz & Committee on Ministry Esther Sampol
 Facilities Susan Juncosa
 Faith Development Karen Gonzalez & Diane Lade
 Finance Janet Schwartz
 Membership Diane Diaz & Bridget Morris
 Nominating TBA
 Pastoral Care Riley Cothran, Pat Katz & Marjorie Loring
 Personnel Audrey Stang, Esther Sampol & Janet Schwartz
 Service & Social Justice ... Steve Jens-Rochow & Judi Oltmans
 Shared Ministry Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
 Stewardship Ken Bresnahan
 Worship Kathy Jens-Rochow

OUR PRINCIPLES

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

OUR SUNDAY LOCATION

11850 W. State Road 84, Suite 1, Davie, FL 33325

EVERY SUNDAY

Worship Service: 10:30 to 11:30 am. **Hospitality Hour:** 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Faith Development Classes: 11:00 am to 12:00 noon

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR OUR MEMBERS

There is plenty of parking outside the sanctuary, but please leave the closer parking spaces for our guests and physically challenged worshippers.

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

LESSONS FROM THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS

Marjorie Loring, President
Board of Trustees



As we enter the new calendar year, I am hesitant to fall into my typical new-year resolution cycle, so instead, my goal will be to try and carry forward into the new year the lessons from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Charles Dickens was, after all, a UU with an important message to all of us "Scrooges", and, let's face it, we are all Scrooges now and then.



So, even though the holidays are once again behind us, we need to remember that the message within this timeless tale was not meant to end with Auld Lang Syne. Every December, as this story is told all over the globe and across the generations, it gives us a true but intangible gift - a reflection of ourselves. It reveals to us the good and the not so good, and it provides us with both the inspiration and the opportunity to be who we really want to be in this one wild and precious life.

As with any other gift given during the holidays, the intention is for us to continue to enjoy it in the days, weeks, and months ahead, not to put the story (and its lesson) away like a Hanukkah menorah or Christmas tree lights without another thought until next year. To leave the gift of this story behind once December is over is akin to giving a child a toy for the holiday season and packing it away on December 31st.

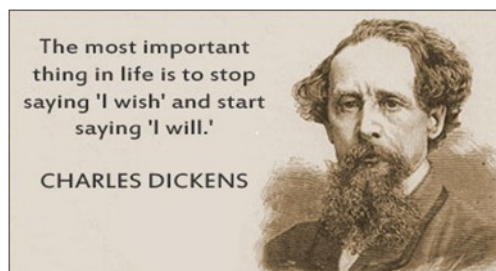
So here is my plan for the New Year:

The Ghost of Christmas Past showed me where I have been. I can use this to learn from my mistakes and be encouraged by my accomplishments. It helped me to see and face those people and those things I may have overlooked and reminded me of all the things that brought me joy so I could connect with them once again.

The Ghost of Christmas Present showed me where I am now. How in the day to day, I can get so caught up in what I think is important that I risk missing those things that are *really* important. It reminds me that the now is the only time I have to be who I really want to be.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come has shown me how I can change the world. How the future depends on whom I choose to be each day, and that those choices impact a whole lot more than just me.

This New Year, I resolve to carry Dickens' gift into my new year and to let it guide me until the pages turn once again. May your new year bring you all that you hope for.



FULL MOON DAUGHTERS' JANUARY EVENT

by Diane Lade

Our popular Slough Slog (that's a walk through the swamp for those of you not up on your Everglades terms) has been scheduled for **Saturday, January 11th**. We will be led again by nature educator extraordinaire Christy Schultz.

According to the National Park Service, "With only the sound of the wind and your footsteps, explore a side of the Everglades that most people never see by getting your feet wet in an off-trail hike. Slough slogging gives you a hands-on view of the River of Grass and reveals the hidden world of a cypress dome."



For more information on this event or to sign up, please email me at: fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org.

BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary
Board of Trustees



Jupiter's icy moon spouts water into space! Imagine a cold moon where water lingers beneath a thick ice covering the surface, when suddenly awesome forces move the water up, up through the crust where it vaporizes and ascends to the height of a great mountain. And we are awestruck witness. What is happening on Europa? Is there possibility of other life there? More importantly, what does this event have to do with Board Matters? Read on.

Financially speaking, it's time for members to examine their progress of pledge payments, as we haven't reached the expected year to date level and are experiencing a shortfall. Notwithstanding the shortfall, I'm very grateful for the generosity of everyone in our congregation – and with the holidays behind us, we hope for a return to normal contribution levels.

The board approved a request by a member for a special fund raising concert at River of Grass for Abilities Venti, a non-profit organization “created by and for people with developmental disabilities.” They are advocates and educators, who travel to Tallahassee to promote their issues to our state representatives. (They are the creators of the t-shirts with the slogan “Label Jars Not People.”) See their [website](#) for details on the concert as soon as they are available.

The board approved a request by facilities to purchase a bigger dishwasher. If you would like to make a designated contribution for this much needed improvement, please drop your check in the collection basket and indicate: dishwasher.

The board also approved a Service and Social Justice Committee request for a petition signing to amend the Unitarian Universalist Association's by-laws to include gender identity. See our SSJC article for more details.

Board members again reported on progress toward our goals and objectives for the year. Slow incremental progress was noted on most goals. We also began painstakingly reviewing our congregational policies and came up with suggestions. We will be working with the policy committee to bring these suggested changes to you in the coming weeks.



SAVE THE DATE!
Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 2nd, 2014
12:00 noon

We discussed our upcoming mid-year congregational meeting agenda and planned the Board's contribution to our annual auction. We are cooking up some fun so look for our event sign up at the auction! (BTW, the Congregational Mid-Year Meeting is on Sunday, February 2nd, 2014, after service.)

So how are River of Grass activities like water on Europa? I envision our numerous activities to be like the this water, moving under the surface, making slow progress and channeling our way, struggling on unnoticed by the casual observer. Occasionally, our efforts emerge in a brilliant display with time, persistence and courage, like Europa's water. For instance, our recent holiday pageant and Christmas Eve service, the touching stories of caring compiled by our Caring Committee, the outpouring of holiday gifts for the foster children and the unfailing support to the less fortunate in our community through LifeNet4Families. I am witness and in awe of the beautiful River of Grass UU Congregation and so too, is the grateful world

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Faith Development Coordinator

*Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another
as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.*

- Goran Persson

December was a wonderful month at River of Grass, and a busy one for families! On December 6th, we held our very first Polar Express Pajama Movie Night. Children, parents, and grandparents dressed up in their comfiest jammies, spread out sleeping bags and blankets, and enjoyed a great holiday movie, accompanied by popcorn, cookies, and hot apple cider, of course!



On the evening of December 13th, we came together for our annual Holiday Gathering, a fun and festive holiday party where we played, crafted, decorated, and enjoyed one another's company in the spirit of the season. We even had a special visit from Santa!

And let's not forget our Holiday Pageant, featuring our children and youth as actors, dancers, singers, musicians, artists, martial artists, and costume and set designers! (See the pictures on pages 6 and 7.)

But just as we welcome the change from holiday excess to healthier choices in the new year, we are looking forward to getting back down to business in Faith Development classes this January.

Our Upper Elementary and Junior Youth (middle school) students will continue their study of world religions, with a particular focus on our Jewish and Christian heritage, Early Elementary students, meanwhile, will begin a new curriculum: *Picture Book World Religions* and our Senior Youth (high school) students will meet the first Sunday of each month for Faith Development classes, and will get together for an additional youth group activity later in the month.

Parents and caregivers, please remember that, in order to incorporate our children more fully into congregational life, we will have a slight change in class schedules this year. Beginning January 5th, children and youth will stay in service for both Remembrances and Celebrations and the Offering. **Faith Development classes will then take place from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**, and parents will be asked to sign children directly out of class at 12:00 noon. There will be no supervised children's fellowship; rather, children will be welcome to enjoy snacks in the hospitality area with parental supervision.



THE LEGEND OF THE POINSETTIA





HOLIDAY PAGEANT

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Judi Oltmans and Steve Jens-Rochow, Co-Chairs

LifeNet4Families December Volunteer Day

Thank you to Steve, Zena, Rick, Ken, Bennett, Daniel and Taneco for giving their time to help out at the LifeNet4Families pantry on December 14th! What a wonderful way to spend the holidays - giving back to the community at LifeNet4Families!

Our members were joined by a group from the Knights of Columbus and together they prepared boxes of food for the needy, and stocked the shelves in the pantry. Thank you for your service to the community!

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. Upcoming dates are: January 11, February 8, and March 8. Check our River of Grass calendar for all the LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer days in 2014. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the sanctuary or email us at ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org.

Can't make it to LifeNet? Every Sunday you can bring canned foods for LifeNet4Families to River of Grass and place them in the basket at the SSJC corner. They are especially in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken or beef.



Holiday Gift Tree

Thank you so much to everyone who purchased holiday gifts for the children in need at ChildNet. Your generosity is truly appreciated. Our members provided gifts for every tag on the tree ... 55 children in all! ChildNet is a non-profit organization that manages child welfare services for Broward County, and distributes holiday gifts each year directly to children.

Special thanks to Zena Tucker for organizing our Holiday Gift program this year.

UUA By-Laws

Our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has always taken the lead regarding the defense of those who are subject to discrimination. Although ahead of its time when first adopted, the current UUA Bylaws do not include "gender identity or expression" in its Non-discrimination clause. As written, the Non-discrimination clause promotes "the full participation of people in the UUA without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, language, citizenship status, economic status or national origin."

Because of the absence of "gender identity or expression," transgendered people are not currently covered by the UUA Non-discrimination clause as written. To remedy this, we will be proposing that an amendment to the Non-discrimination clause be presented at the 2014 General Assembly.

During January, the Service and Social Justice Committee will be gathering member signatures on a petition to amend the UUA Bylaws at General Assembly to include gender identity or expression in the Non-discrimination Clause.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

THE RIGHT "PATHWAY" FOR 2014

by Diane Diaz

Whether you've been a long time visitor, a member who can refer family or friends who might be interested in our congregation, or have just found out about River of Grass, what better way to start off 2014 than to attend our next **Pathway to Membership** class.



The date: **Sunday, January 12th from 12-4pm** in the Multipurpose Room. It's an opportunity to find out about Unitarian Universalism and our dynamic and growing River of Grass community.

It is free and open to everyone - just bring a brown bag lunch and we will provide the drinks and desserts. Childcare is available with prior notice and there will be lots of materials and opportunities for discussion and questions. No further commitment is required, but any attendees who decide to join our congregation can then meet with our Board President and sign the Membership Book on the next New Member Sunday.

This is one resolution that is easy to keep - just sign up in the Hospitality area on any Sunday or contact Diane Diaz at membership@riverofgrassuu.org.

Welcome - bienvenido - bem-vindo - willkommen - bienvenu!

BUUKIES BOOK GROUP

by Toni Cattell and Kathy Jens-Rochow

HI BOOK LOVERS! WE WANT YOU!

Please let us know what kinds of books pique your interest. Or, in other words, what would encourage you to check out the bUUKies Book Group?

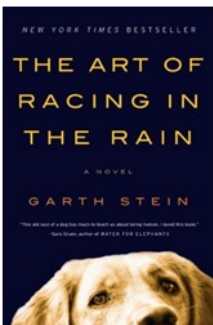
Upcoming selections and dates are listed below – all are welcome!

We encourage you to read the selection, but it is not required – all that is necessary is an interest in the book!

Where and when do we meet?

7:15 pm - meet in the multi-purpose room for munchies and sharing

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm - book discussion and sharing



Our January gathering will be on Wednesday, January 15th at 7:15 pm. We will be discussing "The Art of Racing in the Rain", by Garth Stein. If you aren't a dog lover before you read this, you will be when you're done. According to author Jodi Picoult, this is "the perfect book for anyone who knows that some of our best friends walk beside us on four legs; that compassion isn't only for humans and that the relationship between two souls ... meant for each other never really comes to an end."

February: In February, we will be discussing this year's UUA [Common Read](#) – "Behind the Kitchen Door", by Saru Jayaraman – The date is to be determined (based on Rev Amy's availability). This book is available at the [UUA bookstore](#) and [Amazon](#).

"For all its talk of organic foods and sustainability, the restaurant industry pays little mind to the health and welfare of its own low-wage employees. In this persuasive volume, Jayaraman draws attention to servers, bussers, runners, cooks, and dishwashers across the country 'struggling to support themselves and their families under the shockingly exploitative conditions that exist behind most restaurant kitchen doors.' . . . Jayaraman champions employee causes and argues fervently against discrimination, giving restaurant owners, diners, and readers considerable food for thought."—*Publishers Weekly*



Please contact us at: bUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org for more information. We hope to see you at our next meeting!

AUCTION NEWS

by Sheryl Cattell and Esther Sampol

Don't know what to do with that gift you received for the holidays? Is it not your taste? Or your color? Perhaps not your style? We can guarantee that SOMEONE will think it's just PERFECT for them!



So - here's an idea: REGIFT! Donate the gift to our ROG Annual Auction!!!!

You can also help out by attending our next Auction Planning Meeting.
The January meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

Wednesday, January 15th and Wednesday, January 29th
(7:00 pm – in the hospitality area)

Please join us to find out the latest updates – and to join in the F-U-N !

Also, to **purchase your tickets NOW** (limited seating) or to review our **amazing menu** for the evening, please click [here](#). (The Request for Donation letter for local businesses and a Donation Form for your personal donation (items or services) can also be found here.)

For more information, please contact: auktion@riverofgrassuu.org.

ANNOUNCING



**THE RIVER OF GRASS
FRIDAY FAMILY FILM FESTIVAL!**

Please join us at 7 p.m. one Friday a month as we turn the River of Grass sanctuary into a movie theater!

January 10	<i>E.T.</i>
January 31	<i>Cool Runnings</i> (In preparation for the Winter Olympics!)
March 7	<i>Fly Away Home</i>
April 4	<i>My Dog Skip</i>
May 2	<i>Matilda</i>
June 6	<i>The Sandlot</i>

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS!



The Auction Team is looking for a small business (or a sponsor) to support River of Grass AND, at the same time, promote their business, too.

We have a sponsor (Northstar Financial Planners) for our auction casino equipment. However, we have another (less expensive) opportunity to advertise on the tuxedo t-shirts that will be worn by our Auction Volunteers on the night of the auction!

Want to see your business name on a t-shirt? For only \$250, this can happen. Hurry, this is a first-come, first-get the opportunity deal! Send an email to Sheryl or Esther at: auktion@riverofgrassuu.org and the opportunity is all yours!

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

Aaron Stang and Esther Sampol

Richard Smith: Saturday, February 1, 2014

Show starts at 8:00 pm - Doors open at 7:30 pm

The most amazing guy I know on Guitar. He can play anything I know, only better.

~Chet Atkins

Richard first met his hero, the Godfather of finger style guitar, Chet Atkins when he was only eleven and was invited by Chet to play with him on stage at Her Majesty's Theatre in London in front of an audience of about a thousand. He played Chet's arrangement of Whispering, and Chet played along with him. Then the audience went mad and Chet asked him to play another one. By the time he reached his early twenties, both Chet Atkins and Jerry Reed began to refer to Richard Smith as their Hero and still do.

There seems to be no limit to Richard's ability to quickly master whatever guitar style captures his fancy. The complex styles of many guitar greats including Django Reinhardt, Les Paul, and Lenny Breau have proved to be no impediment to his voracious musical appetite. Apart from his guitar virtuosity, he is also an accomplished banjo and violin player.

Richard has toured around the world, surprising audiences everywhere with his genius, showcasing a repertoire spanning an incredible range of musical styles from country, bluegrass, mainstream jazz, modern pop and rock, to classical guitar.



WOMEN'S GROUP

by Ingrid Furlong



The Women's Group gathered at the home of Drea Kelley for our annual Christmas gathering. Drea made amazing enchiladas and served a wonderful tomato and mozzarella salad along with wine and cheese. Additional fare included a black-

eyed peas salad, vegetarian carrot and string bean casserole, apple dumplings, pineapple and coconut quesadillas, and pork molé.

The evening included Christmas readings and a Sufi prayer, and members shared their plans for the holidays and upcoming events. With one member on the way to Haiti in January, Diane Diaz shared her knowledge of Voodoo rituals and how to make a zombie. We also discussed our plans for underwriting an escorted trip for 10 to the new Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) for the upcoming auction.

We look forward to new members joining the group in the coming year. Our next meeting will be January 26th in the teen room. Please contact Ingrid Furlong at womensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

Richard Smith is nothing less than a phenomenon. But, words alone are inadequate to describe his guitar wizardry. You may be a doubting Thomas until you've witnessed him for yourself. But, once you have, you'll be a fan for life!

Tickets: \$15 Advance Purchase / \$20 at the door

Click [here](#) to purchase advance tickets.



Check out our River of Grass Café [Facebook](#) fan page for all the latest news!

UPCOMING CONCERTS

- ◆ March 22, 2014, **Still on the Hill**, "The creativity and originality of these two blows through the stale air of singer-songwriters like a gale of genius." ~Rich Warren, *Sing Out!* Magazine
- ◆ April 19, 2014, **Josh Rowand**, "The Pitbull of Blues" – 2012 *Blues Alliance of the Treasure Coast* SOLO Blues Challenge Winner