

# Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

OCTOBER 2014



## NO ORDINARY DAY

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb, Consulting Minister

**A**ck! It's happened already! It's happening earlier and earlier, year upon year. I go to get something or another from some shopping outlet and said shopping outlet already has Santa stuff out alongside pilgrim stuff and ghost stuff which is also mingled with back-to-school stuff -- *because I'm writing this in September!*

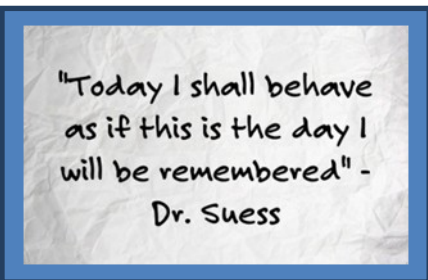
I looked away quickly. As if I'd seen something I shouldn't. Well ... actually, I did see something I shouldn't, and something you shouldn't either. Nobody should have to witness Winter holiday come-ons just days after Labor Day (after which, I WILL wear white, thank you).

But there he was. That hyper-cherry-cheeked St. Nicholas I nearly tripped over, placed as he was at juuust the right height to snag the attention of the average 3-5 year old.

Ack!, I say, **ACK!!!**

We humans so like to make holidays. Did you know every day of October (and just about every other month) marks *something*? Oh yes, October features the likes of National Frankenstein Day, Mad Hatter Day and National Corn Day (somewhat logical) and Carve a Pumpkin Day (no surprise), as well as the totally trivial – both the Be Bald And Free Day and the No Beard Day, Count Your Buttons Day and Babbling Day. There are important commemorations, too: United Nations Day and Coming Out Day. Columbus Day continues despite sustained calls for repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery under which Columbus sailed, which by decree of Pope Nicholas V sanctioned the conquest, colonization and exploitation of non-Christian lands and peoples. In 2012, our own Unitarian Universalist movement took up a resolution on the matter, to uphold the sovereignty and dignity of indigenous peoples the world over. My own ancestors are grateful.

Matter of fact, we inherit our need for and practice of holiday observances from indigenous people who believed in the power of ritual and the responsibility of humankind to honor both the earth's movements and human beings' passage through those movements. It is by our ancient ancestors we began to mark the days. And it is from them we learn that each day is important of itself. Easy to forget that this time of year. Any time of year. But especially when my local market has Santa set in along with the pumpkins.



Sacred scripture of every tradition reminds us "this is the day we are given." This one. Only this one. This day rendered holy by the kindness, the hope, the compassion we bring to the world. That's what makes this no ordinary day.



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## OCTOBER SUNDAY SERVICES – 10:30AM



Sunday, October 5: Rev. Amy Carol Webb, *Music Sunday*

Sunday, October 12: Marjorie Loring, *What do UUs REALLY believe?*

Sunday, October 19: Rev. Amy Carol Webb  
6:00pm: *Neshamah Evening Meditative Service*

Sunday, October 26: Natalie Hutton-Corp and Carolyn Sant Angelo, *Habitat for Humanity*



[Click here](#) for October activities.

### 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.

## River of Grass

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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### Newsletter

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Personnel ..... Audrey Stang, Janet Schwartz, & Open  
Service & Social Justice ..... Rick Tucker  
Shared Ministry ..... Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz  
Stewardship ..... Ken Bresnahan  
Worship ..... Carolyn Sant Angelo

## STEP-UP AEROBICS

**Marjorie Loring, Board President**

We all know that getting exercise is good for us. It improves our health by strengthening our bodies, supporting an increase in blood flow, and increasing our energy level. There are many ways to exercise - from stretching, to resistance training, to aerobics - and we need them all to be healthy. Stretching prevents the injuries that result from a body that has become too stiff and rigid. Resistance training helps us stay strong against opposing forces that would prevent growth, and aerobics are good for the heart, keeping our endurance balanced and strong.



Here is where I overlay the spiritual. Stretching, resistance training, and aerobics are good for the spirit as well. As UUs, there are many things that stretch us and keep our spirits from becoming too rigid. New programming ideas can challenge the way we have always done it, new styles of music can challenge us to loosen up and engage with the rhythms, sermons can challenge our way of thinking and call us into a continuing practice of our faith that reaches beyond the Sunday morning sanctuary. And then there is aerobic exercise - step aerobics call us to step up over and over again in ways that are good for the heart of this community and will keep us strong for the long haul.



Participation at River of Grass is like step aerobics where many of us step up to volunteer again and again, often leaving us both tired and energized at the same time. Aerobics takes on many forms in the spiritual realm. Agreeing to lead or to be an active member of a committee, or showing up to participate in committee sponsored events and meetings is not a commitment without some sacrifice - but it's necessary to keep the spirit alive and healthy. By stepping up to openly share your hopes and visions, volunteer your talents, or do what needs to be done, you keep the life blood of this community flowing. You all contribute in so many ways to the health of this community. It is you that make us strong for the long haul. So I celebrate you, and your dedication to continuing to step up to keep our spiritual community heart healthy.

Keep up the good work of this beloved community by holding fast to the commitment to continue to stretch in new ways, to resist being static or passive, and to step up to participate in all that needs to happen to keep River of Grass strong and in balance with our mission and our vision, for ourselves and for our world.

## FLOWING RIVER SANGHA

**Gary Gonzalez**

Starting September 23rd, every Tuesday night at 7:15 pm, the Flowing River Sangha, a new small group ministry, will meet. Member **Gary Gonzalez** will be teaching, and we will be practicing together the mindfulness meditation technique he was taught in the 10-day silent meditation retreats he attended recently (in March of last year, and again as a refresher in April of this year), called Vipassana meditation, also known as insight meditation.

You will be learning and practicing Anapana meditation, or meditation on the breath, which is the first step on the path toward Vipassana. This first step can be in and of itself a deeply beneficial practice. You don't have to ever move beyond this step, or sit longer than 20 minutes at a time to receive the many scientifically documented benefits of a regular mindfulness meditation practice, which include:

- ◆ Reduced rumination
- ◆ Boosts to working memory
- ◆ Less emotional reactivity
- ◆ Increased relationship satisfaction
- ◆ Numerous health benefits, including increased immune functioning, improvement to well-being, and reduction in psychological distress
- ◆ Increased information processing speed
- ◆ Other benefits: Mindfulness has been shown to enhance self-insight, morality, intuition, and fear modulation.
- ◆ Stress reduction
- ◆ Improved Focus
- ◆ More cognitive flexibility
- ◆ Improved task efficiency



So, come join us at River of Grass every Tuesday night at 7:15 pm. Chairs will be provided for all participants, but feel free to bring your own meditation cushions if you have them. For more information, please contact **Gary** at [meditation@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:meditation@riverofgrassuu.org).

## BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Secretary



**H**ello friends! Here is the news from our September Board of Trustees Board meeting.

Our auction committee requested approval for a Bingo theme with a buffet/sit down dinner – approved! SSJC sought approval for a Get out the Vote event on September 27 – approved! Additionally SSJC asked for ok to advocate “Yes on 2” Florida amendment regarding medical marijuana on the SSJC table in the hospitality area – approved!

Our worship and facilities committee are working through several technical challenges of late, including greater demand for phone and internet service. The board approved the Facilities committee to coordinate with others and come up with potential solutions.

Two new regular activities were approved: A weekly Mindfulness Meditation small group ministry and a community outreach effort by Faith Development called Girls Rock!

We are all excited about these activities and thank [Gary Gonzalez](#), [Ginger Parrish](#) and [Rev Amy](#) for making these possible. Look for more details on these events elsewhere in the newsletter. If you have any questions about board activities, contact [Zena Tucker](#) at [secretary@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:secretary@riverofgrassuu.org).



## NESHAMAH MEDITATION AND GREEN SANCTUARY POTLUCK IS BACK!

Deb Giblin-Davis



**T**he Green Sanctuary Committee and Rev. Amy would like to invite you to our Green Sanctuary Potluck and Neshamah Meditation Service on Sunday, October 19th at 4:30 pm.

Come learn about **Sustainable Living and Edible Landscaping** from local expert Cynthia Schaefer and find out more about the Green Sanctuary program and the accreditation process River of Grass is undertaking.

Everyone bring your best dish for an organic potluck AND bring your own place settings from home! Water and ice tea will be provided. Then please stay for the **Neshamah** Meditation Service with Rev. Amy at 6:00 pm. Nourish your body and your soul and start the week with a full tank!

For more information contact [greensanctuary@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:greensanctuary@riverofgrassuu.org)

## WINDOWS INTO WORSHIP

Carolyn Sant Angelo, Chair

**Y**ou may have noticed a few updates in the liturgy and in our worship space. We recognize that change and choices can be challenging but stepping out of our comfort zone can offer us a place to reflect on just how flexible we are with our thinking and our practice of tolerance or how entrenched we are with our opinions and preferences. Much gratitude goes out to those who have helped create a space with music, color, light and love!

Do you often wonder what goes on behind the scenes of our Sunday services that make them flow so seamlessly? Perhaps you have found just what you are looking for! There are positions open while they last! Learn the skills to join a team of creative and devoted crew. We will provide training! Yup, you're needed!



Perhaps you have fantasized about having your own café buzzing with intellectual stimulation with the aroma of herbal tea and warm mugs of Joe in the background. Well, consider joining the team and helping with Hospitality on Sunday mornings. No need to devote time to opening your own restaurant when you could volunteer 1-2 hours a month serving up smiles in our own fellowship area.

There are ideas brewing as well as coffee. Throughout our upcoming congregational year we still have a few opportunities for members to offer a spiritual Sunday service that inspires or challenges us with topics close to our hearts. Assistance and support is available at many levels from music to readings to guiding the message. Consider writing that service that has been brewing in the back of your mind. Your gifts are appreciated and supported here at River of Grass!

Contact [Carolyn Sant Angelo](#) at [worship@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:worship@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information on how to connect with worship and fellowship.

## SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Rick Tucker, Chair, and Judi Oltmans, Committee Member



This month the SSJC will be sponsoring a volunteer day for **Habitat for Humanity**. This will be a working volunteer gig and we'll need volunteers to assist in building an actual home for future homeowners. October 25th is the date so be sure to sign up as soon as possible. Those who want to volunteer can contact **Carolyn Sant Angelo** directly at [worship@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:worship@riverofgrassuu.org).

Let's "**GET READY TO VOTE**" River of Grass! Join your Service and Social Justice Committee at a Free Amendment Forum on Tuesday, Oct 7, 2014 presented by the League of Women Voters. Location: West Regional Library at 8601 W. Broward Blvd in Plantation. The time is from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Join your River of Grass friends to learn the pros and cons of the 3 state amendments, 2 questions for Broward voters, and 8 municipality issues on the November 4th Ballot. (If this date doesn't fit your schedule, there are numerous other forums. See the LWV website for more locations and dates: <http://lwvbcfl.org/>). Sign up by contacting **Rick** or **Zena Tucker** or emailing [ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org).

## LIFENET4FAMILIES SEPTEMBER 9TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Thank you to **Marilisa** and **Shani, Bev, Georgette** and **Ed, Steve, Judi, Olga** and **Alex** for volunteering at the LifeNet4Families pantry on September 13th. Our RoG group packed up over a hundred boxes for needy families! It just takes a few of us working together to make a difference in our community.

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. It's a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning - and remember, this is a great place for teens to earn their service hours. Upcoming dates are October 11, November 8 and December 13th. You can sign up at the SSJC corner at the back of the 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.

Our next SSJC meeting will be held on Monday, October 6th at 7:00 pm. We look forward to seeing new people, along with our current members, to take part in serving our congregation and our community at large. Join us.



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish, Faith Development Director

*Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.* - Albert Camus



If September is the month for getting back to work, then October must surely be the time to loosen the reins a little! On September 7th, Faith Development students headed “back to Sunday school,” meeting their new teachers and classmates and planning for the year ahead. In service that day, we held a teacher dedication to honor our hard-working volunteer teachers, [Elyse Brunt](#), [Natalie Corp](#), [Riley Cothran](#), [Katrin Csvany](#), [Hal Hamblen](#), [Jennifer Hutton](#), [Diane Lade](#), and [Lynn O’Brien](#). We also welcomed and affirmed a new chalice lighter, Cassidy, and celebrated her completion of the Kindlers of the Flame program.

In October, it’s time to get hands-on with our first field trip of the congregational year. As you probably know, our Faith Development themes for this year are social justice and our UU 7th Principle, Respect for the Interdependent Web of Existence (of which we are all a part). During class time on October 5th, we will head to Long Key Nature Center, where our students will participate in the North American Butterfly Association’s Annual Fall Butterfly Count! (This sounds like a tradition in the making!)

Also in October, our students will learn about and participate in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, raising funds to help provide clean water, nutrition, health care, education, and a number of other life-saving services to children around the world. Last, but certainly not least, we will hold our annual Spooktacular event on Sunday, October 26th. Kids (and adults) are welcome to come to River of Grass in costume and participate in our costume parade! After class time, there will be spooky crafts, games, and snacks for all in the multipurpose room. If you are interested in lending a hand, please see [Ginger Parrish](#) or email her at [fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fdcoordinator@riverofgrassuu.org).



## WELCOME, OLGA WATSON!

Olga Watson is excited to join the River of Grass team as our Sunday Assistant. In this position, she will handle our nursery childcare and assist with hospitality.



A middle school Language Arts teacher in Broward County for the past 18 years, she loves young children and is passionate about providing opportunities for them to learn and grow. Olga loves to spend time with her family, read, play board games, ride her bicycle, and cook. She is a great organizer and decorator and enjoys creating special events. She has two teenage children who are both talented

musicians. Her husband is in the Coast Guard and is currently stationed in St. Petersburg, FL.

Olga is looking forward to being a part of the River of Grass family. Welcome, Olga!!

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Diane Diaz, Co-Chair

Membership is getting off to a strong start as we hold our Annual Fall Frolic Picnic on Sunday, October 5 from 12-4 at the [Perez](#) residence. It's not too late to RSVP. We look forward to seeing a huge happy crowd.

A *Pathways to Membership Class* is being offered on Sunday, November 9th from 12:00-4:00 pm in the multi-purpose room after hospitality time. All visitors and friends are welcome to attend and find out about Unitarian Universalism, River of Grass (past, present and future plans), and our leaders.

All are welcome to attend and if you decide you wish to join, a brief meeting with our President, [Marjorie Loring](#), is the only other requirement besides making a pledge and signing our book at a New Member Sunday.

We look forward to getting to know you. There are places still available, so sign up after service any Sunday or email [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) if you wish to attend. Bring a light lunch and we will supply the drinks and dessert.



## BUILDING OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY: THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSION AND COVENANT

**I**s your congregational mission clear? Is it short? Do you remember it? Does it say what your purpose is? Is your covenant short? Is it a clear agreement between congregational members and the world?

The UU Southeast Cluster Annual Meeting is on Saturday, October 11th, 2014 from 9:45 am to 5:00 pm (Continental Breakfast at 9:00 am) at the Treasure Coast UU Congregation, 21 SE Central Pkwy, Stuart, FL 34994, <http://www.tcuuc.com/>



The workshop will feature Rev. Kenn Hurto, Congregation Life Staff, UUA Southern Region.

**Morning Session:** *“Whence & Whither – Why & To What End”*

**Afternoon Session:** *“Lean on Me, Lean on You – Living in Beloved Community”*

The cost is \$15 including continental breakfast and lunch. Deadline for registration is Saturday, October 4th, 2014. If you are interested in joining the River of Grass team (no solos for this conference; only teams), please contact **Steve Jens-Rochow**. Pre-meeting information and “homework” will be sent to participant teams before the Workshop.

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## READY! SET! LET'S GET OUTSIDE!

**Diane Lade, Full Moon Daughters**

**W**e had a great turnout for our annual Full Moon Daughters Brand New Year brunch on September 20th. This is our only “committee meeting” of the year, where we plan events, and review our policies and our covenant for our outdoor spirituality group for women and girls. Thanks to all the Full Moon cooks who contributed to our delicious feast.



We will be offering one official event a month from September through June.

Our **October** outing will be: **A Night Hike**, led by a Broward County naturalist, at Long Key Nature Center in Davie. The county charges a small fee for attendance. Women and girls of all ages are welcome. There will be details on this event in the weekly electronic updates, as well as sign-up sheets after Sunday service. And watch for our new poster during hospitality hour, which will include our calendar for the entire year.

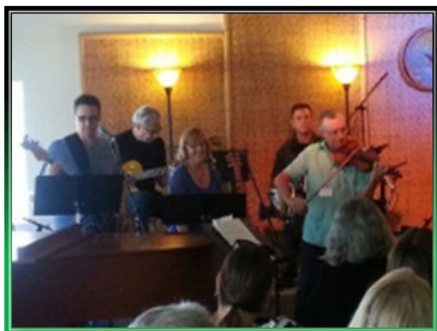
Full Moon Daughters is open to all River of Grass women and girls, as well as their friends and family. You do not need to be a congregational member to participate. Want to stay up to date on where we are going? You can sign up to be on our email list by dropping us a note at [fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org). Please include your full name, email and cell phone number.

See you on the water, along the trail and under the stars.

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## RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

Esther Sampol



### SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT: ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE CONCERT

Saturday, October 18th, 2014 - 8:00 pm

An evening of music (Beatles and more) with River of Grass musicians Steve Tepper, Aaron Stang, Gary Gonzalez, Allen Giese, and Gayle Giese.

The RoG Musicians have been performing together for over a decade. No matter how you mix and match them, their amazing blend of vocal and instrumentation, and their mix of both traditional and sometimes unique spins on the classics are pure entertainment.

Purchase your advance ticket(s) for the **All You Need is Love** concert by clicking [here](#).

(Or go to the River of Grass website at [www.riverofgrassuu.org](http://www.riverofgrassuu.org) – and click on Events.)

**\$15 Advance Ticket / \$20 at the Door**

## Girls Rock!



**What: Girls Rock Jam**

**Dates: November 1, 2014**

**December 6, 2014**

**February 7, 2015**

**March 7, 2015**

**April 4, 2015**

**May 2, 2015**

**Time: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Where: River of Grass**

**Ages: 10 to 18, with parent**

**Cost: FREE**

**Calling all girls who rock!** Join us for a Girls Rock jam the first Saturday of each month. Our goal is to empower preteen and teen girls to find their voices and develop self-esteem through the use of music education and performance, positive role models, and supportive community.

To sign up or request more information, email [GirlsRock@RiverOfGrassUU.org](mailto:GirlsRock@RiverOfGrassUU.org). You can also check out our Facebook page - Girls Rock South Florida!