

Reflections

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

DAVIE, FLORIDA

SUMMER 2014

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

by Rev. Amy Carol Webb

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do,” Mary Oliver asks in her poem *The Summer Day*,
“Tell me what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”*

I love that question. I hate that question. It’s one of those that once raised cannot be recinded. It seems altogether too big to even consider. Funny that, as it closes Oliver’s careful chronicle of the smallest movements of a grasshopper snacking on sugar from the poet’s own hand – and the possibility that the act of paying attention is itself a form of prayer.

Sometimes big questions are better asked in small portions. So for the moment let’s ask only this: What is it you plan to do with your one wide and precious Summer?



I love Summer. And I don’t. Summer begins with endings and ends with beginnings. Begins with graduations, ends with matriculations. Begins with teens and young adults launching into life, ends with kinders’ first day of school. Begins with the end of a congregational year, ends with the beginning of new one, with time between for lay leadership to offer inventive services, members to travel, ministers to rest and study – and for all to reflect on what what lies behind and before, released from at least some of the routines that drive other seasons.

Summer is a time to move more slowly, to wander, to ponder, to lie on your back in the grass and contemplate the lives of clouds – to pay attention in ways not possible at the often relentless pace of the ‘regular’ year.

And what a year this has been for River of Grass! Vision coming into focus, seeds lovingly planted and fiercely tended coming to fruit, the practical and prophetic clasping hands for the climb. A year this Beloved Community lived deeper and wider into this faith through a cycle of growth and challenge and change.

So ... what *will* you do with this one wild and precious Summer? This pause at the threshold of new horizons for River of Grass? Perhaps take time to reflect on the journey thus far, your place in it, and your part in what comes next? How the curves and turns and rises and falls of your own path interlace with those you have covenanted to travel alongside on your life’s pilgrimage toward truth and meaning – that none need venture alone.

As for me? You can find me on the rocky shores of Rhode Island (UU General Assembly), in the hills of Virginia (SUUSI!), among the old oaks of Savannah, walking the steaming sands of Miami’s Atlantic shores and watching the Summer rains from my own heavenly front porch, all the while charting new paths forward in faith, rejoicing we shall continue together to row this living, loving River upward, onward through this one wild and precious life!

*from *New and Selected Poems*, 1992. Beacon Press, Boston, MA



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JUNE SUNDAY SERVICES



June 1 – 10:30am *Rev. Amy Carol Webb*

June 8 – 10:30am *The Worth of a Book, bUUKies, the RoG Book Group*

June 15 – 10:30am *'Til We Meet Again-Reaching Forward, Rev. Amy Carol Webb*

7:00pm *Neshamah: Gather in Spirit, a reflective and meditative evening service*

June 22 – 10:30am TBA

June 29 – 10:30am *Journeys, Kathy Jens-Rochow*

Summer Months (July and August)

Our summer services will start at the regular time (10:30 am) and will be led by various members of our congregation. Join us for our summer services and enjoy a less formal, but informative, thoughtful, and engaging service.



Calendar

Click [here](#) for June 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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 Service & Social Justice Diane Lade & Janet Schwartz
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 Stewardship Open
 Worship Open

SUMMER MUSINGS OF JOY

Marjorie Loring, Board President

Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future. Jobs, family, employers, and friends can exist one day without any one of us, and if our egos permit us to confess, they could exist eternally in our absence. Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. ~Maya Angelou



I remember looking out, dreamily, from the open window of my elementary school classroom and feeling the warm breeze coming in from outside. I remember being so excited that SUMMER VACATION was just a week away. No more homework. No more getting up early. No more getting “dressed up” for school. I remember looking forward to what always seemed like an endless summer of play, adventures, and fun. In fact, I can close my eyes now and I am transported back to that time and place – and the anticipation, oh, the anticipation.

Years later (quite a few, actually) and I still feel that twinge: the one that reminds me that summer is a special time for special things. And, whether you are looking forward to a summer away, a few weeks with family, a special weekend, or a personal retreat from it all right from home, you can probably sense that summer IS different from the rest of the year. And, for us in sunny-all-year-round Florida, it's not so much a weather thing, but, more of a feeling left over from childhood when for many of us it meant freedom and two months of play and vacation.

So, what will you do with this upcoming summer? Similar to the children in our community that will be experiencing that summer anticipation soon (if not, already), we should all be thinking about how we will spend ours. Will you use the time to refresh and renew? Start a new project? Learn something new? Travel a bit? Whatever you decide to do, it's time to give yourself a pat on the back for all the time, treasure, and talent that you have given to our River of Grass community this past year. Go ahead! You deserve it – and, you deserve a break!

Yes, this is the time of year when, typically, UU congregations step down a bit from the busy schedule of congregational life to take it easier. Our summer worship program is less structured, there are no faith development classes (although there will be children's fellowship, a time for fun kid activities), and many committees (and your board) do not meet during the summer months.

So, perhaps, in between the summer fun and travels, you can try your hand at leading a worship service. After all, summer is the ideal time to take a dip (or the plunge). While we do kick back a bit for the summer, we still are open and welcoming. In fact, summer is the time that many families visit UU congregations if they're new to the area and seeking a spiritual home before the start of the school year.

And, while I am looking forward to summer and traveling a bit to be with our children that live away (and SUUSI), I am excited, also, because we have so much to look forward to next congregational year! We elected two new board members, voted in a new annual budget, and decided that we were ready for a ¾ time ministry with Rev. Amy Carol Webb while we go through the discernment process to call a full time minister from within. What an exciting time to be a River of Grass member, don't you think?

FULL MOON DAUGHTERS



The Full Moon Daughters will take a summer break during July and August. We will meet for our one annual meeting/brunch gathering to plan our upcoming year in September.

Save the Date:

Saturday, September 20th, 2014

BOARD MATTERS

Zena Tucker, Board Secretary

As our congregational year closes, the River of Grass Board of Trustees would like to take a deep breath and recognize the leaders who are or have recently transitioned from key positions. These dedicated members have stepped forward to serve selflessly and exceptionally. We are grateful for their service in these important committee chairperson roles:



Auction: Esther Sampol
Caring: Ingrid Furlong
Hospitality: Pam Schrimsher and Grant Basham
Membership: Bridgette Morris
Service and Social Justice: Steve Jens-Rochow and Judi Oltmans
Worship: Kathy Jens-Rochow

Many of those listed have served well over two years and have made many personal sacrifices to our beloved community. Their actions and passion have enriched our lives and made significant contributions towards making our congregation and community a better place. They have heeded our covenant that says, “Love is the spirit of the congregation, and service is its law”. We appreciate your service. Thank you from all of us!

As for Board news, the board approved 3 delegates to the UUA General Assembly (GA) 2014. This year River of Grass will be represented by Karen Gonzalez, our on-site delegate, and by two off-site delegates: Leana Bresnahan and Maddi Gutfriend. GA is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. If you would like to learn more see the UUA website: <http://www.uua.org/ga/>

In other news, the Board nominated one of Rev Amy’s sermons for a Florida District UUA award—and it won! Her sermon “A Force for Beauty” was selected for the Clarence R Skinner Award on April 26, 2014 for best sermon illustrating our UU principles. If you didn’t get to hear this beautiful service, see the full text posted to our website. Congratulations Rev Amy!

For all the rest of the board news, please plan on attending our annual meeting on June 1st, email me at secretary@riverofgrassuu.org or better still, see you around the coffee pot. Have a great summer!



THE RIVER OF GRASS BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR 2014-1015

President: Marjorie Loring
Vice President: Leana Bresnahan
Treasurer: Scott May
Secretary: Zena Tucker
Trustee: Audrey Stang
Trustee: Natalie Hutton-Corp
Trustee: Gary Gonzalez
Trustee: Lynn O’Brien



GAME NIGHT

Ingrid Furlong



Are you missing out on all the FUN? River of Grass has a Game Night the third Friday of the month. And the good news is that it will continue over the summer months.

Plan to stop by on June 20th, July 18th, and August 15th.

Bring your favorite game – or play one of the many games that are already there!

FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Ginger Parrish

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.

~ John Lubbock

In a flash, another school year has come and gone, and even in South Florida, what child doesn't welcome the lazy days of summer? As we trade uniforms for flip-flops and late-night study sessions for days at the beach, we are reminded that some of our most precious memories and valuable lessons have taken place in this annual intermission from life's serious business.

Summer is the perfect time for discovery, for turning off the t.v., putting away the digital devices, and exploring the world. It is a time for indulging in new hobbies, meeting new friends, and reconnecting with far-flung family. This summer, I challenge everyone to do the following and to be prepared to tell us about it when classes begin again in September:



- ◆ Learn a new skill
- ◆ Visit a place that's new to you
- ◆ Visit a place that's unique to Florida
- ◆ Visit a friend or family member who you haven't seen in a while
- ◆ Read for pleasure
- ◆ Go to the beach
- ◆ Go electronics-free for one day

Of course, just because school's out doesn't mean that there's no fun to be had at River of Grass! After all, summer is also a time for adults to share their talents and interests with our children and to be inspired by them in return. Do you practice yoga or meditation? Do you draw, sculpt, or paint? Have you just been looking for a good excuse to watch that latest children's movie? Whatever your passion, we invite you to share it with our children. Who knows what wonderful things we can all learn and do in the lazy days of summer?

BRETT KARLIN WOWS TRI-CHOIR WITH VOCAL WORKSHOP

Gayle Giese

Brett Karlin, Director of South Florida's Master Chorale and Assistant Director with the Grammy-Award Winning vocal group Seraphic Fire, came to River of Grass on Saturday, May 17th to present a workshop on the voice for tri-choir members and others interested. (Even our very own, [Rev. Amy Carol Webb](#) was in attendance!)

[Susan Juncosa](#) provided Brett's PowerPoint presentation to explain the anatomy of singing, and Brett followed up with vocal exercises to assist with breath support and tone production. We all learned the "infinity inhale exercise" to practice daily to increase our breath support! A dynamic question-and-answer period ensued, followed by the combined choirs working with Brett on John Rutter's beautiful choral arrangement of "For the Beauty of the Earth."



It was a wonderful workshop and a great opportunity to visit friends from UUCFL (Unitarian Universalist Church of Ft. Lauderdale) and UUFBR (Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Boca Raton). We shared a potluck lunch, hugs, interesting talk, and wishes to sing together next year!

Many thanks to Susan Friend, Choir Director at UUCFL, for asking Brett to lead our workshop. Also, thanks to our River of Grass community for help with setup, the PowerPoint presentation, coffee, hospitality, and cleanup. You rock!

SERVICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Judi Oltmans and Steve Jens-Rochow

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY LUNCH ACTIVITY



Join us on Saturday, June 28th at River of Grass for a Habitat for Humanity activity! We will be preparing lunches and snacks for a Habitat for Humanity construction site. This is a great activity for all ages! If you would like to participate please email us at ssjc@riverofgrassuu.org or look for a sign up sheet at the SSJC corner. (For more information talk to [Carolyn Sant Angelo](#).)

POSTAL FOOD DRIVE - MAY 10TH

On May 10th, our Xtreme River of Grass volunteer day, we had volunteers in two locations from 9:00 am until 8:00 pm. Thank you to all our River of Grass volunteers at the Inverrary Post Office for the National Letter Carriers “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive. The Postal Food Drive supplies the LifeNet4Families pantry with food until the end of summer. We sorted, packed and stacked **8,560 lbs.** of food! Thank you to [Steve Jens-Rochow](#), 1st shift leader, and [Alan Meerow](#), 2nd shift leader for their guidance and organization. Our River of Grass volunteers gave their time to make those boxes, wrestle with those tape machines, mark all those Cs, Gs and Ds boxes (cans, glass, and dry goods), and work together to make a difference for LifeNet! A special thank you goes out to [Steve](#), [Kat](#), [Elyse](#), [Rick](#), and [Zena](#) who did double duty volunteering at both LifeNet and the Postal Food Drive!

LIFENET4FAMILIES - MAY 10TH VOLUNTEER DAY

Thank you to [Steve](#), [Kat](#), [Elyse](#), [Bennett](#), [Rick](#), and [Zena](#) for giving their time to volunteer at the LifeNet4Families pantry on May 10th. The shelves at LifeNet were well-stocked and they packed up lots of boxes for needy families.

If you'd like to join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer day, we volunteer there once a month. What a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning - and remember, we volunteer at LifeNet throughout the summer. Upcoming dates are June 14, July 12, and August 9. 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 always in need of peanut butter and canned meats such as tuna, chicken, or beef.



GREEN TIP
Recycling newspaper and paper is important, and easy. Every time you recycle a pile of paper a yard high you save a tree from being chopped down (From *1001 Ways to Save the Earth* by Joanna Yarrow).

members faith
projects unique
include provides service developing
provides opportunities express
agencies variety congregation
working friends

LifeNet4Families & Postal Food Drive May 10th



RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

Aaron Stang and Esther Sampol

Sneak Peak at our 2014-2015 Upcoming Season – Save the Dates!

Saturday, September 20th

Opening Night Concert Series Kickoff

Featuring **Amy Carol Webb**

“From raucous rhythms to mellifluous melodies, her music makes brave new territory feel like your own back yard, a transforming celebration!”)



Saturday, October 18th

“All You Need Is Love” Concert Event

featuring the **River of Grass Musicians**

The River of Grass musicians (**Allen Giese, Gayle Giese, Gary Gonzalez, Aaron Stang, and Steve Tepper**) 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.



Saturday, January 17th

Back by Popular Demand

Bob Sima

(“Spiritual growth and transformation as each song speaks directly to you, often being the inspiration that will touch your heart, challenge your mind, and nourish your soul.”)



(Continued on page 9)

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ

(Continued from page 8)

Saturday, March 21st

Traditional and Contemporary Original Folk Music
from Ireland, Australia, and the USA

Jammin' Divas

(“Stunning three part harmonies bedded against the plush
melodic landscape of the flute and the double bass.”)



Saturday, April 18th

Local Florida Singer Songwriters

Scot and Michelle Dalziel

(“Entertaining and thought provoking, sentimental and fun.
They keep it real, honest and wholesome.”)

