

Reflections

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

JANUARY 2019

TO DWELL IN POSSIBILITY: OR, WHEN THE PERSONAL IS PROPHETIC

Rev. Amy Carol Webb



I dwell in possibility. – Emily Dickinson

An interesting enterprise, this, facing the blank white page of this newsletter piece, paused before the blank page of the new year to consider the theme we will explore throughout the month of January 2019 –

Possibility: The practice of personal unfolding and prophetic vision.

What is *personal unfolding* and *prophetic vision*, and what might their *practice* involve, exactly?

Very often when we think of “personal unfolding” we reflect on the teenage years and young adulthood, remembering the ferocious and sometimes disorienting rapid-fire self-discovery of that rich and rambunctious segment of our human lives – as anybody living those years now, or associated with someone who is, will affirm. What we may forget, is that that personal unfolding of self, of awareness, of human relations, of spiritual insight, of empathy, and discernment does not stop with passage into adulthood. It begins to move at a more digestible pace, perhaps, or in a more discerning rhythm, as we grow older, but it does not cease. At least not naturally. The natural development of human consciousness does not stop, unless we ourselves try to stop it. And we humans devise any number of ways to do that, like addiction – to substances, or work, or shopping, or video screens, or over-exercise, or hyper-intellectualism, or shallow sex, or money, or ... anything that promises to block or alter any feeling we might find intolerable, positive or negative. (In my own growing up, such was food: Happy: let’s go have ice cream! Sad: let’s go have ice cream! Lost the game: let’s go have ice cream! Won the game: let’s go have ice cream!)

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January Monthly Theme:

To be a People of Possibility

January 13: *Let America Be America Again*
4Cs Covenant Group

Bending the Arc of Justice series

January 20: *Peace in the Nations*
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
January 27: *Peace in the Cities*
Rev. Amy Carol Webb

WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM



February Monthly Theme:

To be a People of Trust

Bending the Arc of Justice series

February 3: *Peace between Neighbors*
Rev. Amy Carol Webb
February 10: *Peace in the Home*
4Cs Covenant Group
February 17: *Peace in the Heart*
Ann Lewis
February 24: *The Things We Do For Love*
Rev. Amy Carol Webb

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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Janet Schwartz

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Rita Cherubini

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Kristine Barkley, Linda Lathroum,

& Brit Lundell

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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;

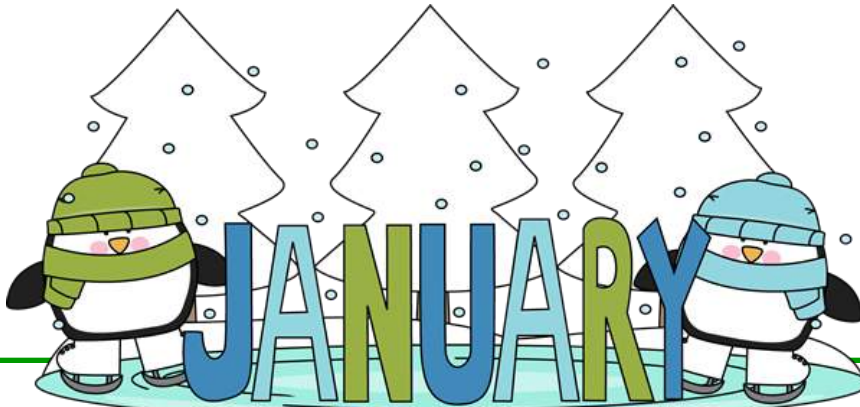
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

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



TO DWELL IN POSSIBILITY: OR, WHEN THE PERSONAL IS PROPHETIC

(Continued from page 1)

Fact is, most of us, eventually, come face to face with our own unfolding in some way or another – especially when we begin to heal from addictive behaviors. And it is in these reckonings, that we are rendered prophetic. Because unfolding personal truth becomes prophetic truth.

“Wait, what?” you say. “I’m not a preacher.” Well ... maybe not with your words. But with your life? You already are. And that’s where *practice* comes in. Personal and prophetic unfolding may occur spontaneously, or be nurtured into being – but either way such must be sustained with diligence and courage. Which is in turn how one learns to “dwell in possibility” – actively, intentionally, never passively or obliviously.



In this New Year, what might it mean for you? What might it mean for this Beloved Community at River of Grass, to dwell in possibility?

One thing is sure, it is not possible to dwell in possibility and remain as we are. For as Nietzsche instructed, “A thought, even a possibility, can shatter and transform us.” May 2019 find us willing enough, courageous enough, faithful enough, loving enough to dwell in the personal unfolding and prophetic vision that can utterly transform us, this congregation, and this community. Let the prophetic unfolding begin in us anew!

LOVE - LEARN - LEAD

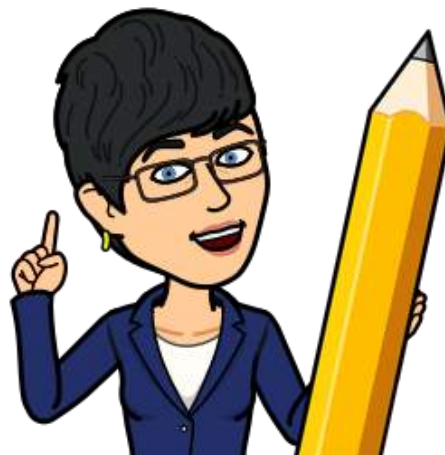
Marjie Loring, Strategic Plan Lead

Do you remember what strategy team you signed up for? Are you excited to get started, or simply wondering what comes next?

I will be reaching out later this month to schedule meetings with each strategy team to discuss how the individual members want to focus their time and energy for the remainder of this congregational year and set priorities for next year.

Your engagement with, and the contributions toward, the strategies that will move this beloved community forward should invigorate and inspire you, feeding you spiritually as they support the programs and activities that maintain River of Grass as a strong spiritual presence in Western Broward County.

Whether you care for our facility, sing in the choir, welcome members and guests, make coffee, teach our children, plan fundraising events, care for members in need, or take to the streets for social and environmental justice, together you create the true heartbeat of this beloved community.



As we enter into a new year, let’s make sure the beat goes on!

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

START ANEW

Scott May



The New Year blesses us with a chance to start anew.... a golden opportunity for a “fresh start”... to re-align our lives with our true selves.

Consider taking some time to reflect and ponder life’s big questions, such as: what is my life’s purpose... whose lives have I touched... what will I leave behind for future generations... how does my life make a difference...Who am I meant to be...

These reflections can be powerful and transformative... possibly reprioritizing what you find to be truly important and lighting a new path forward.

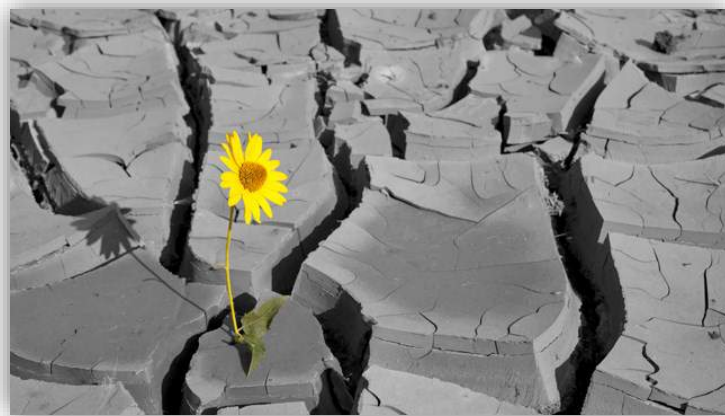
It may adjust your “bucket list”. It may inspire New Years resolutions. It may realign how you spend your time. It may adjust your attitude and outlook.

As you look within, here are my wishes for you:

- May you feel loved
- May you feel safe and healthy
- May you feel the warmth of community
- May you feel your life has purpose

And as you look at the world around you, here are my wishes for you:

- May you be grateful and smile
- May you accept life as it is
- May you be loving and compassionate
- May you walk lightly on our planet



Happy New Year. May each of us be inspired to live our values and reach our highest aspirations.

Peace.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 10



Mark your calendar! The mid-year Congregational Meeting will be held after service on Sunday February 10. Childcare provided.

UU JUSTICE FLORIDA ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see the video of the new Faithify campaign on “Climate Impact & Environmental Inequity” here: <https://faithify.org/projects/climate-impact-environmental-inequity-towards-justice-for-all/>. We have only 30 days to meet this goal! Please plan to attend the 5th Annual Interfaith Climate Action Network Assembly February 1-2 in Orlando if you can. It’s now or never to address climate change seriously!! Details forthcoming on the UU Justice Florida website: www.uujusticefl.org.

Registrations are now open for the UU Justice Florida 2019 Legislative Days here: <http://www.uujusticefl.org/BookingRetrieve.aspx?ID=127797>.

Sign up, bring friends, and see you in Orlando and Tallahassee!

Together we can make a difference!!



Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida
Bending Florida toward Justice

CLOSE YOUR EYES... WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE HOME FOR RIVER OF GRASS?

Scott May

Please take a moment and close your eyes... please keep them closed ... and ask yourself: "What do I see as the future home of River of Grass?"

On the outside, what do you see:

- our current home or a different home?
- is it visible from the highway, or tucked back and more private?
- are there trees and grass?
- is there a playground for the kids?
- are there solar panels on the roof and a compost in the garden?

On the inside, what do you see:

- is it bright and open, or cozy and intimate?
- are there plenty of classrooms for the kids and meeting space for non-profits and us?
- is it sized just for us, or large enough to rent out part of the space for income?
- should it be space to provide sanctuary for a family?

How do you see the ownership?

- is it our space full time, or do we set up each Sunday?
- is it rented or owned?
- how much of our budget should be spent on space?
- is it ours alone, or is it shared space with another faith community?

These are important questions, so please take some time to ponder and identify your hopes and dreams.

Then please come and share during our **New Home Envisioning weekend March 1-3**. Barry Finkelstein, a UUA Consultant, will be onsite to listen and assemble our collective new home dreams. A schedule of timeslots is forthcoming. Please let your vision be shared!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES!

Marjie Loring (1/14)

Carol Rudinsky (1/25)

Amy Taylor-Henry (1/28)

Barbara Ratchford (1/29)

Meg Roberson (1/30)

Sam Jacks (2/13)

David Henkel (2/14)

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Karen Gonzalez, Director of Faith Development



I hope everyone has had a joyful and relaxing holiday season and is ready to take on the challenges and opportunities that a new year brings. If you're looking for more connections this year, may I suggest the following?

Like or join our many Facebook pages; River of Grass (official and unofficial pages), River of Grass Faith Development, UU Parenting, UUA, UUA Southern Region - just to name a few!

Play at the park after service on **January 13th** with your River of Grass family and friends. We'll meet just around the corner from The River at Robbins Park on Hiatus Road. Bring a picnic lunch and meet under the oak canopy at the playground.



March with us on Monday, **January 21st** as we celebrate the MLK holiday. Decorating of our "truck/float" will begin around 9:00am. Be prepared to sing, chant, and shout for more justice and more joy!

Finally, start creating your variety show team for our spring show! Performing teams must consist of at least two members and span at least 20 years between the oldest and youngest. Ballerinas and basketball dribblers welcome!



SPRING VARIETY SHOW!



Dust off those marionettes, gather up those juggling balls, brush up on your pantomiming! Our first big all-ages Spring Variety Show is coming to town!! Think talent – outside the box! Perhaps you play an unusual instrument or want to show off your athletic skills. Maybe you're an amateur magician or can impress with origami. Might your covenant group want to entertain with a musical skit?

But, wait, there's a catch – all acts must consist of two or more members and span 20 years between the oldest and youngest of the team. Create your act, and then sign up during hospitality time after service. Need help getting your act together? Karen Gonzalez can help you to connect with teammates. Don't have an act but think you're funny enough to be a part of the announcing team? Great! Just want to help serve cookies and sell tickets? We need you, too! Of course, we need an audience as well, so mark your calendars for **April 6** for what is sure to be a rip-roaring good time!

CHOIR CORNER

CAROLS ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Gayle Giese



Where did the practice of holiday caroling begin? Caroling is not just related to Christian beliefs, but reinforces the preservation of diverse national customs and local family traditions, said one of the few sociological studies on caroling, done in the early 21st century in Finland. I began to think about this after one of our River of Grass choristers said, “Christmas carols give me the heebeegeebees.” Later, I turned to google to find that some modern Christmas songs are labeled “creepy” or, at the very least, “inappropriate,” such as “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus,” “Santa Baby,” and “Baby, It’s Cold Outside,” but I couldn’t find ‘heebeegeebee’ complaints about the more traditional carols. “Sometimes,” I thought, “history leads to understanding,” and so I googled some more.

The earliest carols were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced around stone circles in Europe (Full Moon Daughters: Field trip?!). Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones. Not many people liked the earliest Christmas carols, as they were all in Latin, a language that most people of the time could not understand. By the 1200s, most people had lost interest in celebrating Christmas altogether.

This changed in 1223 when St. Francis of Assisi started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the plays sang songs or ‘canticles’ that told the story. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but more often, they were in a language that the people watching could understand and join in! The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany, and other European countries.

Many carols from this time were loosely based on the story of Christmas, and were seen as entertaining rather than religious. Traveling singers (minstrels) started singing the songs and the words were changed for the local people. It seems the minstrels liked to play to the home crowd. When the Puritans came to power in England in the 1640s, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped; but the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols gained in popularity after the Reformation in the countries where Protestant churches gained prominence (as well-known Reformers like Martin Luther authored carols in the native tongue and encouraged their use in worship). Later in 1880, singing carols in church on Christmas Eve began in Truro Cathedral. Candlelight “Lessons and Carols” services like our “Calm and Bright” worship at River of Grass, became popular.

For our 2018 Christmas Eve service, we opened with the joyful “*Adeste Fideles*” (“O Come, All Ye Faithful”), which appeared in its current form in the mid-18th century, although the words, in Latin, may have originated in the 13th century. Then the barbershop quartet sang “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” (written by Edmund Sears, a Unitarian Minister in Massachusetts in 1849), a New England carol that speaks of “peace on the Earth, good will” and “the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.” *Solemn stillness.*

Our sopranos and altos sang “The Huron Carol” (“’Twas in the Moon of Wintertime”), with guitar and violin accompaniment. This magical tune, set in a peaceful forest, is Canada’s oldest Christmas song, possibly written in 1642 by Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit missionary at Sainte-Marie, living among the Hurons.

The band played “The Hills Are Bare at Bethlehem.” Rev. Kimberley Debus, in her blog, writes, “Set to the tune ‘Prospect,’ one of my very favorites from *Southern Harmony*, these lyrics are melancholy and holy and full of whatever it is that hearts are full of in that moment of exhaustion when something like a miracle happens.” “The heart is tired at Bethlehem, no human dream unbroken stands; yet here God comes to mortal hands, and hope renewed cries out: ‘Amen!’” *Hope.*

The second band piece paired a Jewish Hassidic tune with a Christmas lyric. “Touch the treasure of a faith that the mythic Easterns hear. See the measure of a love, come candescent down the air.” *Love.*

The barbershop quartet sang “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” which is about Peace, rather than the birth of Christ, and the practice of ringing church bells on Christmas. *Peace.*

(Continued on page 8)

CAROLS ON CHRISTMAS EVE

(Continued from page 7)

“Silent Night” comes from Austria and the carol was first performed in the Nikolaus-Kirche (Church of St. Nicholas) in Oberndorf, Austria on December 24, 1818. *It was 200 years old when we sang it at our Christmas Eve service!* “Still, Still, Still” is also an Austrian folk song, from the Salzburg region. The words describe the peace of the infant Jesus and his mother as the baby is sung to sleep. Our choir combined both of these tunes that led into the candle-lighting ceremony that I look forward to each year. *Still, Silent Peace.*



Christina Rossetti’s poem “In the Bleak Midwinter” was set to music by Gustav Holst in 1905. Our congregation sang it so beautifully, singing the original words that include: “Oh, what can I give him, poor though as I am? If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part. What though can I give him? Give him my heart.” I adore those lyrics and the thought that our love for each other means more than any other gift. *Love again.*

“Heebegeebes?” I still don’t understand, but am grateful that it sent me on an enlightening search. When I see her again, I’ll just ask her. Duh.

Getting to Know UU’s

FAMOUS UUs

Kathy Jens-Rochow

“The smallest deed is better than the grandest intention.”

ROGER NASH BALDWIN (1884-1981): activist, pacifist, author, founding member of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), executive director

Baldwin was a member of the American Union Against Militarism (AUAM), which opposed American involvement in World War I. After the passage of the Selective Service Act of 1917, Baldwin called for the AUAM to create a legal division to protect the rights of “conscientious objectors.” On July 1, 1917, the AUAM created the Civil Liberties Bureau (CLB), which eventually into the American Civil Liberties Union with Baldwin serving as its first executive director.



As director of ACLU, Baldwin was integral to the shape of the association’s early character; it was under Baldwin’s leadership that the ACLU undertook some of its most famous cases, including the Scopes Trial, the Sacco and Vanzetti murder trial, and its challenge to the ban on James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Baldwin retired from the ACLU leadership in 1950. Later he co-founded the International League for the Rights of Man, which is now known as the International League for Human Rights. He remained active in politics for the rest of his life.

Source: *Wikipedia*

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

FAITH FORWARD AT THE RIVER

Zena Tucker

Membership committee is stepping up in a big way...with Faith Forward programming! What is Faith Forward? It's training, it's connection, it's small groups, it's faith development, it's learning about our faith and how we can be a part of its nurture and growth.

Whoa! That sounds awesome! But won't that be difficult and time consuming?

At first, it will be challenging, as we have to edit course material, find facilitators and guest speakers and schedule the events. The course material comes to us from a large mature program at another large UU congregation. Eventually, the courses will become a regular part of congregational life, just like any other thing we do that we truly value.

How do we begin? We will start with the Inquirers classes-- these are a series of eight orientation classes for adults.

Who will attend? The classes are intended for newcomers and new members to learn about the congregation, in easy to understand parts. Even veteran members of the congregation will find value in attending!

Who will facilitate? We have a great group of volunteers --And we invite those interested to join this awesome team!

What are the classes like? First we begin with a chalice lighting and check-in. This is a sharing time where we get to know each other and is the bedrock of most River of Grass small groups. Of course, if one doesn't feel up for sharing at the time, this is perfectly okay.

Then we learn about the class topic, usually presented by an expert on the subject.

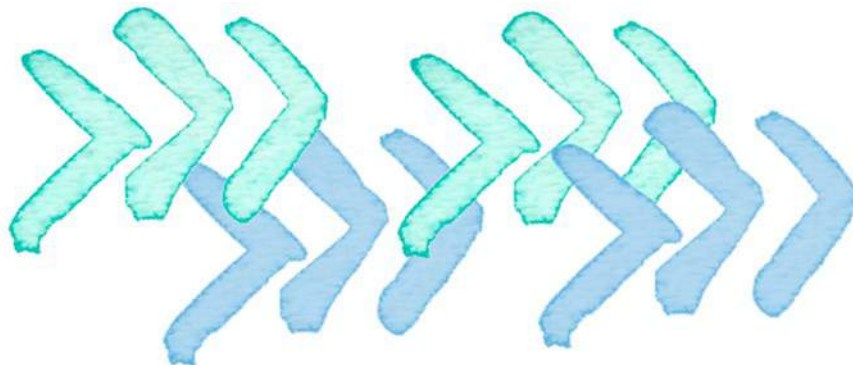
What are the topics?

1. *Question and Answer with the Minister*
2. *Unitarian Universalist History, Principles and Sources*
3. *Campus Tour and Orientation*
4. *Faith Development for Children and Adults*
5. *Worship and Liturgical Year*
6. *Pastoral Care and Small Groups*
7. *Social Action and Community Service*
8. *Membership 101 and Congregational Life*

What if I miss a class I wanted to take? The classes are offered in sequence. The class will come around again in a few weeks.

When and where are the classes given? Immediately following service in the Sanctuary. They will last for approximately one hour.

Where can I go for more information and class schedule? See our Facebook page, website or email membership@riverofgrassuu.org.





INQUIRERS SERIES

The Faith Forward Inquirers Series meets at 11:45 on Sunday mornings in the Sanctuary. It is a rotation of 8 conversations about our congregation and Unitarian Universalism. The series is designed for visitors and newcomers who are looking for a general introduction, and yet the sessions are also appealing to veteran members who want more information about our beloved community. New members and inquirers are encouraged to attend. Classes are not mandatory for membership but are highly recommended! For more information see Zena Tucker, Membership Committee Chairperson, membership@riverofgrassuu.org or call 954.663.4628.

Date	Event
1/20/2019	FF Inquirers#1: Q&A with Minister
2/3/2019	FF Inquirers#2: Unitarian Universalist History, Principles and Sources
2/24/2019	FF Inquirers#3: Campus Tour & Orientation
3/10/2019	FF Inquirers#4: Faith Development for Children and Adults
3/24/2019	FF Inquirers#5: Worship & Liturgical Year
4/7/2019	FF Inquirers#7: Pastoral Care and Small Groups
4/28/2019	FF Inquirers#6: Social Action & Community Service
5/19/2019	FF Inquirers#8: Membership 101 & Congregational Life
6/2/2019	FF Inquirers#1: Q&A with Minister
6/16/2019	FF Inquirers#2: Unitarian Universalist History, Principles and Sources

SACRED ACTION

VOLUNTEERING AT THE LIFENET4FAMILIES FOOD BANK



LifeNet4Families

Cooperative Feeding Program

954-792-2328 • www.lifenet4families.org

We're trying something new at LifeNet4Families! We were inspired by Karen Gonzalez and our Faith Development teachers, children and parents who volunteered at LifeNet4Families in November. They had such an amazing time volunteering as a group that we would like to encourage other River of Grass groups to try it. If you're in a River of Grass covenant or other group and you would like to spend one Saturday morning (9:00-11:00) together helping to make a difference in our community please contact us at ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org. Of course, individuals are still always welcome to volunteer at LifeNet4Families!

Healing injustice in our community is part of our River of Grass Mission and volunteering at LifeNet4Families is one way to put that mission into action. We can help by volunteering in their pantry, dining room, clothing and toiletries area, and kitchen doing a variety of tasks. There's something for everyone to do! Join us at our next LifeNet4Families Saturday Volunteer morning on **January 12th** from 9:00-11:00am. Sign up at the Service and Social Justice Green Team corner at the back of the River of Grass sanctuary or email us at ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org. Our upcoming Saturday LifeNet4Families volunteer days are: **February 9th, March 9th** and **April 13th**.

TEXAS MURDER MYSTERY WEEKEND JAN 25-27

January 25-27, 2019 will be a unique weekend at UBarU as we travel back in time to the Roaring '20s!

Flappers, the Mob, Speakeasies, Prohibition, Women's suffrage, the radio, Jazz and more.

Come be part of a Murder Mystery Weekend- "Murder at the Four Deuces"

The game is interactive and unscripted to allow you to develop your character as you try to solve the mystery. We will have theme-based fun and activities in addition to the problem-solving, scheming and character playing.

Lodging and meals will be part of the weekend, which will begin on Friday evening at dinner when you can chose your character.



For more details, see <http://ubaru.org/home/murderMysteryWeekend>.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Time	Event	Location
January 11	7:00-9:00p	Drum circle with Rev Amy	River of Grass
January 12	9:00-11:00a	Lifenet4Families Volunteer Day	Lifenet4Families 1 NW 33 rd Terrace Ft Lauderdale
January 12	TBA	Full Moon Daughters Kayak trip	Oleta State Park
January 15	7:15-8:15p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
January 17	7:00-9:00p	Men's Group	River of Grass
January 20	11:45a-1:30p	Faith Forward Inquirers Series #1	River of Grass
January 22	7:15-8:15p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
January 24	7:00-7:45p	Welcome Table Communion Circle with Rev Amy	River of Grass
January 27	12:00-1:30p	UUA Common Read discussion led by Rev Amy	River of Grass
January 28	6:00-9:00p	SSJGT JAM meeting and potluck	River of Grass
January 30	7:00-9:00p	SSJGT LWV National Popular Vote presentation	River of Grass
February 1	6:30-8:00p	River Mixer	River of Grass
February 2	9:00a-12:00p	Congregational work day	River of Grass
February 3	11:45a-1:30p	Faith Forward Inquirers Series #2	River of Grass
February 4	7:00-9:00p	Faith development meeting	River of Grass
February 4	7:00-9:00p	SSJGT meeting	River of Grass
February 5	7:15-8:15p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass
February 7	7:00-9:00p	Men's Group	River of Grass
February 8	7:00-9:00p	Drum Circle with Rev Amy	River of Grass
February 9	9:00-11:00a	Lifenet4Families volunteer day	Lifenet4Families 1 NW 33 rd Terrace Ft Lauderdale
February 10	12:30-2:30p	Mid year congregational meeting	River of Grass
February 12	7:15-8:15p	Flowing River Sangha	River of Grass