

Reflections

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

MAY 2017



POLAR BEAR IN A SNOWSTORM

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

“**W**hat is this?” she said, holding up what appeared to be a blank white sheet of paper. While we thought this must be a trick question, it only turned out to be a tricky one. “Really,” she insisted, “what do you see?”

Now, when we were kids the answer to the trick question was a cheeky, “A polar bear in a snowstorm!” which yet tends to delight grade school young’uns to this day.

On this afternoon however, the tricky question was asked of a room full of adults, committed to deeper understanding of – and greater resolve to combat – racism and systems of oppression of which the majority of us remained unaware.

“Um,” a bolder person than I ventured a response, “... nothing?” The murmuring heard among us was not an expression of judgment of the answer or the answerer, but of relief the rest of us felt to not be scrutinized at the moment.

“Thank you for braving an answer,” our guide replied, “but it’s not nothing.... It’s what white privilege looks like to white people.”

Some of us gasped a little as it struck us.

“We don’t see it, because we move through it, with it, in it from our first breath,” she continued as a wave of equal parts awakening and resistance rolled over the



room. “And even when we do learn to see it, we too often still look for ways to justify it, or mollify ourselves in it ... or sometimes just plain deny it.”

That was then. Today we are learning to haul ourselves and one another out from the institutional structures of privilege our very nation, our society, and our dominant culture are founded upon – and dare to call them what they are: systems of white supremacy.

It’s not about guilt – it’s about accountability – it’s not about condemnation – it’s about reformation. It’s not about rescue – it’s about redemption.

The exposure of inequitable hiring practices in the Unitarian Universalist Association in March has given us opportunity to answer the call to face ourselves, our history and our future. To more fully live the faith we profess, River of Grass joins with more than 600 UU congregations around the world to do a White Supremacy Teach-In on Sunday, May 28th.

It’s hard to see a polar bear in a snowstorm. But we will keep working until we do. That the love we proclaim may prevail, and justice roll down as a living stream.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Stay Connected!</i>	2
<i>Board President</i>	3
<i>Faith Development</i>	3
<i>Membership</i>	4
<i>River of Grass Café</i>	5
<i>Worship Services</i>	5



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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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



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Zena Tucker



Many members expressed an interest in safety and security in our congregation. In response, Rev Amy requested a free of charge security assessment offered by the Davie Police Department. In response, Rev Amy and I met with Officer Elliott on Wednesday May 3 where he spent about 1½ hours with us looking over the facility. Officer Elliott was friendly and forthright and an expert in assessing houses of worship. In fact, he provides many volunteer hours at his own church!

While the official report is not available yet, I will share some initial insights of interest to the congregation.

Internal security practices are important! There are several measures we've implemented but it's worthwhile to review a few of them here.

- ◆ In general, keep the back door locked. There are few exceptions to this practice.
- ◆ Secure the facility when departing. Is the office locked? The equipment cabinet? The back door?
- ◆ Keep doors free of obstruction. This is particularly challenging in the nursery and the door next to the AV desk.
- ◆ Follow money-handling guidance. It's not only good stewardship for the generous contributions, but keeps our funds more secure.

The officer had several ideas to help, some that will be simple or low-cost, others, of course, will be more costly. I look forward to his final report and will work with the board towards implementing what we find feasible and prudent. Once received, I will make the full report available on request.

Until next month, stay safe River friends!



FAITH DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Deborah Ely, Faith Development Coordinator

We have three more Faith Development Classes, and then it will be time for our Faith Development Service! Please join us for this special day, when the children lead the congregation in song, give presentations, and assist with the Flower Communion Ceremony. It will be our little UU's chance to shine.

It is hard to believe the year is already coming to a close. Our children in Faith Development had such a fruitful year, focusing on democracy, peace, and kindness. They came together to learn about social justice as well as plan ways to help those in our community. Their creativity and humor kept us guessing, and often laughing. It was a delight to teach and learn from these young'uns. It was a treat to share Sunday mornings getting to know them. I hope you will all consider spending a little bit of your time getting to know these amazing children. We have Summer Fellowship for the kids from June to August, when two members of the congregation spend one Sunday morning sharing their hobby, talent, or specialty with the kids. It can be pottery, painting, yoga, pet rocks, music, building something, playing games, or anything you would like to share. We are also welcoming volunteers for teaching in the 2017-2018 year. Please speak with Debbie Ely or Tanya Gustafson if you are interested or have questions.



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

By Wendell Abern



Aha! Another Chicagoan who prefers our climate, our minister and our musicians to Midwestern winters. Welcome, Pat!

Pat Pecho and husband Vic relocated from Chicago – and they probably don't miss those winters any more than I do! They have four children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren spread all over the Midwest and Oregon.

"I am happily retired, most recently from library service," Pat reports. "Sales, real estate and custom decorating were my most rewarding jobs. As a returning adult, I earned my B.A. from Roosevelt University in Chicago. Vic still enjoys his career with American Financial Services."

Currently, Pat and Vic live in Kings Point in Tamarac, and are active in various clubs and activities provided by the active adult community.

Pat's e-mail address begins, "Quiltylady." She explains, "Making quilts and working with fabric and thread has been my passion for over 20 years. I am hoping to join the Coral Springs quilt guild and connect with other fabricaholics!"

Our religion is nothing new to Pat. "I joined the Unitarian Universalist church in Elgin, Illinois, in 2000, and was very active in community life there, serving in many positions, including the Board of Trustees.

And we have obviously made a good impression: "I am looking forward to becoming a more active member in River of Grass. There is great energy and commitment here to contributing to the greater good. And the minister and musicians are fantastic! So happy to have found this wonderful congregation!"

Also, the Membership Committee is looking for new committee members. If you like meeting and getting to know new people, please consider joining our happy family.

If you have any questions about what we do, please contact Leana Bresnahan or Debbie Kitner, or email membership@riverofgrassuu.org.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Deb Kitner, Co-Chair

The Membership Committee is happy to welcome three new members to our River of Grass family. They are:

Elizabeth LeFever



London Lott



Sam Alva



Please help our newest members feel welcomed. We are very fortunate to have them join our beloved community.

RIVER OF GRASS CAFÉ PRESENTS JANA STANFIELD MAY 20



You've heard her music on *20/20*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Oprah*, the movie *8 Seconds*, and radio stations nationwide. Her compositions are sung by Reba McEntire, Andy Williams and others, and Jana has shared stages with fellow performers ranging from Kenny Loggins to The Dixie Chicks. Jana describes her music as "psychotherapy you can dance to."

With soaring vocals, acoustic arrangements, and meaningful lyrics, Jana Stanfield says that her goal is to use her music to give people a "faith-lift." Her fans say the music is the ideal alternative to Prozac -all the mood elevation with none of the water retention.

"Jana knows how to really entertain an audience. Her voice, her humor and her songs are excellent. I highly recommend Jana Stanfield." ~ Kenny Loggins

Concert at 8 PM
Doors open at 7 PM for food and drink

11850 W SR 84 (Suite 1)
Davie, FL 33325

Suggested donation is \$17 in advance by May 18 (use link below)
\$23 at the door

<http://www.riverofgrassuu.org/river-of-grass-cafe.html>



									
	WORSHIP SERVICES								
	SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM								
	May 21	<i>The Wisdom of Geese: Leadership Sunday</i>							
		Rev. Amy Carol Webb							
	May 28	<i>Root and Branch: A White Supremacy Teach-In</i>							
		Rev. Amy Carol Webb							
	June 4	<i>This Rose: A Flower Communion</i>							
		Rev. Amy Carol Webb							
	June 11	TBA							
		Alex Pobinar							
	June 18	<i>Goodbye for Summer</i>							
		Rev. Amy Carol Webb							
	June 25	<i>The Male Mystique</i>							
		Kip Barkley							