

River of Grass

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

3225 N Hiatus Rd, Unit 452485, Sunrise, Florida 33345

WELCOME TO OUR RIVER OF GRASS FAMILY. WELCOME TO OUR WARMTH. WELCOME HOME!

River of Grass Weekly Update – March 24, 2022

JUSTICE SUNDAY

(April 17, 2022)

Looking for some hope and some grounding in these chaotic times? Please join us for a special UU Service Committee Justice Sunday worship service. An annual spring program for congregations, UUSC Sunday complements and continues Guest at Your Table, which offers congregations a broader look at UUSC's mission and programs.

Come as you are to gather with us for this Sunday's love-streamed service, remembering only the medium is virtual; the connections, the love, the spirit are real. Following the service, we will share virtual Hospitality time with a live chat and small groups where we can relish each other's beautiful faces and voices together once again.

Follow the link below to join us in Zoom – or if you'd like, we'll be simulcasting on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu/>. Tune in there for the service, then log onto our Zoom link for hospitality time afterward.

We welcome you on Sunday morning at 10:30. Come a bit before and we can Chat prior to the service... See you then!

We'll be live on Zoom at the link below, as well as on our facebook page.

Virtually at:

Topic: Worship March 20, 2022

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/961564350?pwd=cFpKY2RtRk4wVE5NbDczdTU5THViQT09>

Meeting ID: 961 564 350; Password: 873805

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ab3E9JRtb9>

Ukraine Special Collection through UUSC:

Many are asking how River of Grass can support relief efforts in Ukraine, especially to target a contribution to those offering equal access to funds and support services.

We can do this by supporting the special collection which is beginning today, March 17th and will continue for two weeks. The money collected will go to our [UU Service Committee](#) who is working with the Hungarian Unitarian Church and other partners in Eastern Europe to help refugees, both inside and out of the Ukraine.



To donate, please go to our Donation tab on our website and click on the blue Donate button: [Donate](#). On the “special collections” line enter the amount you want to donate and write Ukraine on the line. Or you can send your check payable to River of Grass with “Ukraine collection” in the memo line to River of Grass at 3225 N. Hiatus Rd., Unit 452485, Sunrise, FL 33345.

Rev. Amy's sabbatical:

Rev. Amy's sabbatical has begun and will end on Monday, April 11, 2022. She will be back in the pulpit on April 17, for the Season of Renewal - Easter, Passover, and Earthly. For more information about her sabbatical, please read the information that Rev. Amy prepared. It is listed on our website: [Rev. Amy's Sabbatical Page](#).

Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:

Sunday, March 27, 2021

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Justice Sunday - Diane Lade -

<https://zoom.us/j/961564350?pwd=cFpKY2RtRk4wVE5NbDczdTU5THViOT09>

Congregation Town Hall Meeting – This Sunday, March 27th at 12:30 pm (via Zoom)

At our Annual Meeting, we will approve a budget for the next year. The budget reflects the monetary need to achieve our mission. It requires a congregational vote to put this in place, as our democratic process.

We, the members of the River of Grass, need to be informed voters. Where we want to go and how we are going to get there is the very heart of the River. This congregational town hall meeting will discuss options. Please plan to be there! The meeting will be recorded if you are unable to attend.

Many of us strongly wish to begin in-person worship services on a weekly basis. At the same time, we recognize that we will need to maintain our virtual capabilities to reach those of us who are unable to attend in person. The initial numbers for our July 2022 – June 2023 budget reflect that, incorporating plans to double our in-person, multi-platform worship services and in-person faith development to two Sundays/month in September, followed by a move into rented space (available 24/7) in January to support weekly worship and faith development uses. This move would be into a space similar to our facility at 595 Park of Commerce was. One teensy-tiny problem: Cost.

The budget presented to the Board reflects this scenario. And also estimates a \$53,000 shortage (deficit). Decisions regarding our next year's (and future) budget needs to recognize the reality of our dreams and the future of River of Grass. We cannot sustain a deficit budget.

Here are some possible scenarios to ponder before the meeting and calculations of average pledge needed.

- The current year's budget (FY2021-22) \$180K/year \$1,385/adult member
- Church in a Box (FY2022-23) \$235K/year \$1,808/adult member

A “Church-in-a-Box” path, where we rent a small space for offices/meeting rooms 24/7, and each Sunday rent a set of large spaces to use for in-person, multi-platform worship services, in-person faith development, and hospitality. This requires a weekly commitment of time and labor to assemble and disassemble all the elements needed for those uses in their designated locations. For those who remember, this would be similar to what we did at Central Park Elementary School. **Are you willing to commit to that?**

- One room Church (FY2022-23) \$235K/year \$1,808/adult member

A “One Room Meetinghouse” path, where we rent a medium space (perhaps 1,200 sq. ft.) 24/7, with enough space for a secured office or two, plus an assembly area that we configure for in-person faith development, then reconfigure it for in-person, multi-platform worship services, then once again reconfigure it for hospitality, but would also give us the flexibility of having it available during weekdays and evenings, if desired. We've never used this path, though other congregations have (dating back several centuries). **Are you willing to commit your time and effort to execute such configuration every week?**

- Traditional rental (FY2022-23) \$295K/year \$2,270/adult member

By contrast, to implement the "Traditional" plan (perhaps 5,000 sq ft) as stated at the beginning of this message would require an estimated \$295,000 annually, or approximately \$2,270 per adult member.

This discussion is based upon averages to illustrate the reality of our congregation's monetary needs for the respective scenarios. Regardless of whether your annual pledge falls above or below the average, this illustrates a need for significant increases in pledges.

Questions? Ideas? Contact board@riverofgrassuu.org.

Faith Development:

Happy Spring Break to all of our families! There are no Faith Development classes scheduled for this Sunday. We look forward to seeing each other in-person, under the pavilion on April 3rd. For more information about our River Kids, contact our Faith Development Director, Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org.

canned food drive



APRIL 3RD. TO BENEFIT LIFENET FOR FAMILIES

Please bring non-perishable food items to our in-person worship on April 3rd - to benefit LifeNet and also our children's "egg" hunt. For more information, contact Karen at ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org.

River of Grass Capital Foundation - Board Nominations:

Jennifer Migliori has now joined Rita Cheribini and Kip Barkley as candidates to the Foundation Board at our May 15th Annual Meeting. Jacquie Velazquez has stepped aside. She and partner Beth have moved to Boynton Beach. She will be joining a UU Congregation closer to her new home.

Jennifer is a partner at the international law firm Duane Morris LLP. One of Jenn's specialties is estate planning. Planned Giving is the second focus of the Foundation after overseeing our Capital Fund. Additional nominations

may be submitted to Foundation@RiverOfGrassUU.org via email by April 25th. See more about the Foundation at RiverOfGrassUU.org/foundation.

The Worship Team has a number of opportunities that might interest YOU!

Some of these positions are scheduled on a weekly rotation. Please inquire as your dynamic ministry may just be an email or phone call away!!

- **Tech Builder** - Create Sunday morning worship with Rev Amy and the Crew.
 - **Tech Runner** - Run the Pre-recorded services every Sunday morning with the Tech Team.
 - **Media Librarian** - We have a media library chock full of music, stories, Chalice Lightings that need to be managed.
 - **Zoom Host** - Ever wonder how we make Worship happen on Sunday? The Zoom Host is the key!
- Inquiries to Rita Cherubini, Worship Chair, 781.856.2335 or worship@riverofgrassuu.org.



8TH PRINCIPLE TEAM MESSAGE

The Destruction of Negro Fort in 1816

Even though Florida was still controlled by Spain the African-American population present at Negro Fort in Apalachicola, Florida was a detached unit of the Corps of Colonial Marines, Marine units composed of former slaves that served in the British Army. After the end of the War of 1812, the British left the area and paid off the Marines, freeing the infantry to reside at the fort. The foundation of the black community with many former slaves so close to Georgia loomed large in the minds of the slave owners across the border. Over the next months, hundreds of freed men and women migrated to the fort and settled there or in the area. Once word began circulating about the autonomous free black community, Georgian plantation owners sent letters to the U.S. government demanding that action be taken against them

With the permission of the Spanish Governor of Florida and under the pretense of “national defense,” Major General Andrew Jackson dispatched gunboats to Negro Fort in 1816. About 200 black militiamen began preparation for battle. They were accompanied by 30 Seminole warriors under a chief also ready to fight, along with 100 women and children housed in the fort. After only a couple minutes of engagement, a cannonball entered the fort’s magazine, where ammunition was kept, and caused an explosion that destroyed the entire post. The explosion killed 270 men, women, and children. No casualties for the Americans were noted. General Edmund P. Gaines, who led the American troops, commented that “the explosion was awful and the scene was horrible beyond description.” Many of the survivors at the fort were taken prisoner and placed back into slavery under the claim that the Georgia plantation owners had owned their ancestors.

By eliminating this refuge for fugitive slaves, the United States government closed an escape valve that African Americans had utilized. At the same time, it intensified the subjugation of southern Native Americans, including the Creeks, Choctaws, and Seminoles.

This destruction of Negro Fort is a reason why I am Voting for the proposed Eight Principle:

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

The adoption vote of the 8th Principle will be held on May 15, 2022 at the Congregational Annual Meeting. 8th Principle Team: Lou DeSantis, Rita Cherubini, Tanya Gustafson, Vernon Allen and Steve Jens-Rochow. Questions? 8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org.

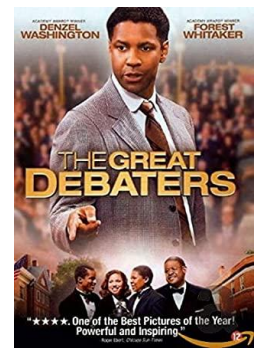
HI LOVERS OF BLACK FILM

The Black Film group will discuss “The Great Debaters” on Wednesday, Apr 27th, at 7pm. It is a docudrama based on the true story of a young James Farmer Jr. (who went on to create the Committee on Racial Equality), a 14 year old attending an all-Black college in Texas in the 1930’s. He is selected to be on the debate team. The team was the first black debate team to compete against a White University (Oklahoma City University) but then went on to

challenge Harvard (although in the real life story it was University of Southern California, the number 1 debate school at that time). Directed by Denzel Washington [black]. Great cast Denzel Washington, Denzel Whitaker, Forest Whitaker. [all black]

Watch the movie "The Great Debaters" on your own (available on Amazon). We will meet via Zoom on **Wednesday, Apr 27th, at 7pm**. Please reply to Steve Jens-Rochow blackfilms@riverofgrassuu.org if you are coming.

For Discussion join Zoom Meeting at 7pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84418593114>
Meeting ID: 844 1859 3114; One tap mobile +13017158592,,84418593114# US (Washington DC). Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kvL0D4l8Y>



Interim Report from the Future Home Team

During the last two years of our search process we have been active, looking at properties and opportunities, and we have learned a lot. We have looked at nursery schools, IT buildings, retail strip malls, warehouses, office buildings, former group homes and empty land. During the 2 years of our search prices have increased substantially. And there has not been a church for sale in our price range in our area, which is a five-mile radius from 595 Park of Commerce.

Two examples of properties we have looked at are:

1. 11200 Griffin Road 2.2 acres mainly wooded. \$595,000 Large billboard in front. The reason for the low price is that there is a 2 story Comcast building in the center. Demucking needed in the rear before building. Very approximate cost to build \$1.5 to 2 million. The lot had a contract on it when our realtor inquired.
2. Group home at 4111 SW 53 Ave., Davie 1.58 acres \$739,000. Property consists of an old house with attached garage like addition divided into small rooms. This floods when it rains. 3,600 sq. ft. total. The problem is that the property is on the approach path for Fort Lauderdale airport, and it is noisy. Extensive renovations, additions or demolition would be needed.



Pam Kelner is our Realtor. She is a member of both River of Grass and TAO, the Jewish Congregation that rented from us when we were at 595 Park of Commerce. We have had one meeting with Rabbi Marc, the Rabbi of TAO. We discussed forming a possible partnership with TAO where we might share parking and some other facilities.

We currently have \$1,300,000 in cash available for purchase. And we have over \$100,000 in outstanding pledges. We urge people to give to our capital campaign since we need roughly double that for a Future Home.

<https://riverofgrassuu.org/capital-campaign.html>

Stay tuned to this space as we keep you informed of our continuing progress.

Steve Jens-Rochow futurehome@riverofgrassuu.org

Other Events:

Still on a break for this week, coming back on Mar 31st. We will **not be meeting today, Mar 24th - Free "Mindfulness for Today's World" weekly online sessions:**

Thursdays 6:00 - 7:00 pm for adults, [zoom link for Thursday night at 6 pm](#)

For more information or to register contact Carolyn@InsightInstituteLLC.com or Scott@InsightInstituteLLC.com, or visit <http://www.insightinstitutellc.com/>

SUUSI 2022, "Gratitude," will be held in-person on the campus of Western Carolina University, from July 17-23. What to expect from SUUSI 2022? We're anticipating a smaller and more intimate event, both in terms of the number of attendees and in the amount of space we take up on the WCU campus. We'll all need to be on our toes, because events and locations may be a bit different from when we last gathered



in-person in 2019. The 2022 Catalog has gone live **on our website**, with **registration opening April 1 at 7pm**. We will continue to use the new web-based interactive format we debuted last year. Beginning on March 15, the SUUSI website will be packed with up-to-date information about SUUSI 2022 programs and events. You'll be able to search by type of activity (for example, Workshops) or by day. We understand that not everyone is ready to gather in person, so SUUSI 2022 will offer a few events in a multiplatform format. Worship services and concert hours will be streamed online, and we're also developing plans for an informal daily time for online socializing. If you prefer not to travel to Cullowhee, these online options will be available for a small per-family fee.

Everyone who attends SUUSI in person must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 if vaccines are available for their age group. In addition, participants under the age of 18 must be up-to-date with all of the vaccines listed in the CDC's Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule, and staff and volunteers working with children must be up-to-date on MMR and TDap or Td vaccines. Documented medical contraindications will be accepted. SUUSI has a new Vaccination Coordinator position to help implement this new policy, and Sarah Gonzalez will be serving in this role. She is available to help with questions and concerns at vaccination@suusi.org.

Apply for Staff! SUUSI is built exclusively through the contributions and efforts of its volunteers. All departments are currently seeking staff members! Please consider sharing your gifts with SUUSI by applying for a staff position. Staff are compensated by receiving a credit for a percentage of their SUUSI registration and housing, up to 100% for full-time staffers. Apply now in **SOLIS, the SUUSI Online Information System**.

RoG Men's Group: We meet the first and third Thursday each month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. We will meet on [Zoom at Meeting ID 670 022 402](#) for the foreseeable future. We gather and do check-in where we share our day. Then a discussion topic is presented. We read aloud the premise and questions and then discuss it all until 8:30 pm. The goal is that the sharing moves from head to heart. **The Apr 7th topic is: "TBD."** The Topic Description is online at KipBarkley.com/topic/. There we post past topics and links to the UU Small Group Ministry Network. We are a lay-led group and look to our members for future topics and the direction we take. Do come out and join us. The Meeting Room opens up at 6:30 pm before the Host arrives. If you have any questions please contact Kip Barkley; mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org; RoG Men's Group Facilitator.

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Check the air pressure in your car tires -- it just takes a minute! Properly inflated tires will improve fuel economy, using less gas and reducing air pollution. Plus it will extend tire life, saving you \$\$\$!

Drive to the Finish: Capital Campaign - Our Future Home Search Team is diligently looking for our new home. There are many ways we can go, either find an existing church, find a building we can use and build out to suit our needs, or even purchase and build our church ourselves.

We need your help in order to be better prepared when the right opportunity presents itself. Those of you who made your pledge during our campaign last fall, thank you for your commitment. We have received about 65% of the total amount pledged.

In order to get a handle on our finances, **we would like to know when you plan to complete your contribution.** And we are always open to new pledges and contributions. Go to our website, riverofgrassuu.org, scroll down to the [click on the link to make your pledge](#).

With gratitude and hope, Your Capital Campaign Team, capitalcampaign@riverofgrassuu.org.

Capital Campaign Contributions

We have set up several methods for you to make your pledges/contributions to the Capital Campaign. The table below details the various methods, including charges that the River accrues when this payment method is used. We are here to help with any questions you may have. Feel free to contact our office administrator, Sandy Blair Chibnick, via email at office@riverofgrassuu.org.

Monetary Donations		
Method	How	Processing fees paid by River of Grass
Check	Write CC on memo line Mail to River of Grass: 3225 N Hiatus Rd, Unit 452485 Sunrise, FL 33345	\$0
Checking account via Vanco	Set up payment on our Donations page . Designate on the Capital Campaign line	\$0.45 per transaction plus processing fee 1%
Credit Card via Vanco	Set up payment on our Donations page . Designate amount on the Capital Campaign line.	\$0.45 per transaction plus credit card processing fee: American Express: 3.5% Visa/MasterCard: 2.75%
PayPal	https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/my/profile In the notes write "Capital Campaign"	Varies based on method of payment
Zelle	Use your bank to set up \$ transfer. Send Zelle payment to CapitalCampaign@riverofgrassuu.org .	\$0
Securities	<p>Any questions contact Northstar Financial Planners: <i>Allen Giese, Steve Tepper, or Stacy Saavedra at (954) 693-0030</i></p> <p>Securities should be transferred per instructions from the donor's brokerage or advisor using the following DTC and A/C numbers as the destination</p> <p>#0188 - TD Ameritrade Institutional A/C #944110334</p> <p>RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION, INC.</p> <p>The donor should notify the CC Team and the Office Administrator of the details of the donation by emailing CapitalCampaign@riverofgrassuu.org.</p>	

Interim Recommendations from the RoG COVID-19 Re-Emergence Team

Team: Deb Buehler Ely, Karen Gonzalez, Susan Juncosa, Jeanne Masten (COVIDTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org)

Purpose of Team: To review guidelines for congregational and smaller group gatherings in order to provide recommendations to the Board to be used for official River of Grass meetings and events.

These recommendations are:

For: only for official, River of Grass - sponsored outdoor and indoor small group gatherings.

Fluid: new information comes out all the time and the recommendations could change.

Inclusive: all attendees should be able to attend physically or virtually.

Protective: considers first those who are most at risk.

Science-based: follow the directives according to the experts.

Sources:

UUA: <https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/covid-19>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Johns Hopkins: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map>

UU Reston Covid-19 Guidelines: <https://www.uureston.org/covid>

MEETINGS IN THE TIME OF COVID

RIVER OF GRASS COVID-19 TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD: Updated March 24, 2022

This is a living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated.

River of Grass COVID-19 Re-Emergence Team is monitoring Broward County's risk level of transmission. The level of risk used by the River of Grass UU Congregation shall be as measured on [Broward County, Florida \(FL\) - COVID Vaccine & Risk Tracker - Covid Act Now](#). Risk levels are **low**, **medium**, **high**, **very high**, and **severe**.

In-person/hybrid Worship services, large group concerts, fundraisers, other large events (with 50 or more participants) shall occur while the COVID risk is at low, medium, or high levels. In-person worship services and other large gatherings shall be suspended if the level of risk for Broward County is and has been very high or severe for two or more weeks. The level of risk, as reported on the COVID Act Now website, will be monitored by the Re-Emergence Team, which will alert the Board and Worship Team if the risk level changes to or from very high or severe and stays at that level for two weeks.

When risk levels are very high or severe, for over two weeks, in person gathering may be canceled.

Further, all attendees of in-person gatherings, small or large, are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated as possible based on eligibility by age. Vaccination or recent negative COVID tests are strongly encouraged for in-person gatherings. Facial coverings/masks are required for large indoor in-person gatherings and strongly encouraged for other groups to protect the most vulnerable, including unvaccinated babies and young children.

It is highly recommended that persons attending in person gathering be vaccinated.

In person service leaders, hosts and singers may wish to be unmasked. If so desired, the individual shall have tested negative within the last 24 hours.

The meeting space shall be well ventilated. Air purifiers or fans may be utilized within the meeting space.

Chairs shall be arranged utilizing social distancing (6 ft).

Food may be shared outdoors only, provided people remain socially distanced while unmasked.

Small groups are encouraged to set-up and enter into their own covenants, using the guidance herein, regarding COVID-19 safety procedures.

If protocols at rental facilities are more restrictive, their guidelines will be followed.

To see all of the upcoming events at River of Grass, please visit the calendar on our website at riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html. **River of Grass UU Congregation** is on [Facebook](#) (LIKE us) and [Twitter](#) (FOLLOW Us). For more information, please contact communityawareness@riverofgrassuu.org.

Unsubscribe - If you do not wish to receive this weekly email, please send an email and we will remove you from the mailing list, office@riverofgrassuu.org.

Announcements to be sent out in the weekly congregation-wide update should be e-mailed to WeeklyEmail@RiverofGrassUU.org by 12 pm Wednesday. All announcements will pertain to congregational life and affiliated groups and will be for activities or events occurring within two weeks of the e-mail. Outside groups and individuals, wishing to use this vehicle of congregation-wide communication, must have the approval of the Board of Trustees.