

River of Grass

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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

River of Grass Weekly Update – April 3, 2020

Beloved River of Grass Community – hello and how are you in this time we love one another best by keeping apart during the COVID-19 pandemic – working to stay virtually connected and spiritually grounded. We hope you are staying safe, and have necessary supplies to sequester yourself and your families to stop the spread of the virus. Your healthy and wellbeing in body, mind, and spirit is paramount to us. How can we help?

As this Weekly Email attests, life of this congregation goes on, just outside the building, as your leadership has moved all operations to their homes for the foreseeable future – which we are humbled to know is not much foreseeable at this moment. Nonetheless, we keep faith with one another in the midst of the great unknowing travel through.

This is a time we learn new lessons from the old stories we keep our truths in. This Sunday we will once more receive the wisdom of the Passover Telling, hearing its traditional teachings with new ears as we consider the meaning of liberation in a season we keep sequestered. What does freedom mean now that it did not until now? What does unity mean now? What does keeping traditions and rituals and the power of community mean in this time we cannot gather together to share the ritual foods and blend our voices and recite our prayers with one voice? What does it mean to set out for a new place when we can't yet see it, and make sacred space wherever we are right here and right now?

Come as you are, pajamas and coffee, and gather with us for this Sunday's love-streamed service, remembering only the medium is virtual; the connections are real. Following the service, we will share virtual Hospitality time with a live chat 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. PLEASE NOTE: while we await establishment of our larger Zoom meeting space, we remain at the 100-participant limit for this week, SO – 1) log on early at the link below, or 2) tune in live on our Facebook page, then join us at the Zoom link for hospitality time as some folks head off for other programming.

Either way, we'll be watching for you, so head on over to The River – on your computer, your tablet, your phone (with video or only audio if you like, we'll miss your face!) -- just click or dial into our RoG Meeting Room at the link or numbers below.

Topic: Worship April 5, 2020

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8671641414>

Meeting ID: 867 164 1414

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,8671641414# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,8671641414# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US

Meeting ID: 867 164 1414

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ac7ckp4Jlv>

Upcoming Virtual Events -This Sunday:

Sunday, April 5, 2020

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – “The Cost of Liberation” <https://zoom.us/j/8671641414>

Faith Development – Karen Gonzalez, ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org

12:00 noon: Mockingbirds (Grades 3-6)

1:00 pm: Fireflies (Ages 3-5)

1:30 pm: Dragonflies (Grades K-2)

2:30 noon: Teens (Grades 7-12)

Kids are invited to a Faith Development Meetup on Zoom on Sunday. Look for an email from Karen or reach out to her at religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org. These meetups require passwords.

Here is an important justice action to take:

RISE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBE

The UUA has worked closely with the Mashpee Wampanoag in preparation for General Assembly 2020. On Friday, Mar 27th, they received notice that the federal government stripped them of their reservation lands. Click the link above to act. - Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, UUA President

Faith Development – Parents Having Coffee Online:

Parents will join together to share their woes, joys and ahas in a Zoom Room on **Saturday morning, Apr 4th at 10:00 am**. Look for an email from Karen Gonzalez or reach out to her at religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org.

Children's Bedtime Story: Saturdays at 7:00 pm

Come meet Dakota and listen to a meaningful bedtime story via Zoom on **Saturday evenings, Apr 4th at 7:00 pm**. Look for an email from Karen or reach out to her at religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

APD Campaign began on MAR 29th... you will be hearing from your campaign stewards!

Rita Cherubini and Kathy Jens-Rochow, Co-Chairs

Annual Prosperity Drive 2020-2021

Mar 29th was the Kickoff for this Campaign! You should have received a pledge packet by now. Please open them and read the words of what River of Grass means to many who gave us their feelings quoted in this brochure. These haven't changed and now need steadfast commitment of all of those promises and expectations by you, our Members and Friends. Even though our doors are closed, the bills still go on!

So, have you been thinking of how you will support River of Grass with your new 2020-2021 pledge? We hope you have. And in consideration of your thinking, a Steward, one of your friends at ROG, will be contacting you to discuss your Annual Prosperity Pledge. Please welcome their call.

Also, right on our website is a digital pledge card! Go to www.riverofgrassuu.org. Under Donations, hover over “Donations” and “Stewardship” will be a choice; click on that and the scroll down to the pledge card. Fill in the blanks and Click “Send” and it heads out to the appropriate person at The River. Save postage, delay and a trip to the post office!

Remember, Virtual Worship will be available this Sunday at 10:30. Stay tuned on how to connect! Our Caring team is making calls to everyone...you are never alone at The River! Thank you for your generosity. You are in our hearts!

From the SUUSI Board – April 3, 2020:

Dear Beloved SUUSI Community,

First and foremost, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. We know that some of our community have fallen ill with COVID 19 and we hold them in love, hoping for a swift recovery.

The SUUSI Board and Core Staff have been monitoring the situation daily. We don't know what the future holds. However, one thing has become clear - **we will not be gathering together physically for SUUSI 2020**. My heart aches as I write this and I know that your heart aches as well.

Western Carolina University has said there will be no summer camps or conferences and this includes SUUSI. However, even if they had allowed us to gather, it would not have been safe, and your safety is our top priority. Prior to

WCU's decision, we had heard from several of you expressing that you would not be able to attend if SUUSI went forward, and we realized that attendance would have been significantly low. A decision to keep SUUSI for 2020 would have felt exclusionary and counter to our community values. **We will miss you so very much, but we have hope - SUUSI 2021 is our promise to each other.**

Our community is strong and though we cannot gather physically, the Core Staff is working out how to gather virtually. We are already dreaming of ways we can bring SUUSI into our homes this July. Meanwhile, we encourage you to email, call, text, video chat with your SUUSI family. Reach out to each other.

With much love for all of you,

Jennifer Sanders, SUUSI Director

Amy Davis, SUUSI Director Elect

Wilson Farrell, SUUSI Board President

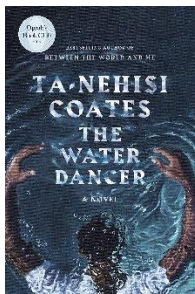
Other Events:

Pause and Check-in with Yourself – Sensing our world right now and all that we're living through, a chance to pause and check-in with your heart, body and mind... Consider joining tonight's community mindfulness online session every Thursday at 6:00 pm. <https://zoom.us/j/551319571>. Information and guided meditations can also be found at www.InsightInstituteLLC.com. **Note:** This is not a class, just a guided meditation time and sharing with others. Drop in any week. Contact: Carolyn@insightinstitutellc.com or Scott@Insightinstitutellc.com

The River of Grass Men's Group is open to all men. The Men's Group will meet **TONIGHT, Apr 2nd at 7:00 pm on Zoom**. Tonight we will discuss *Abundance*. For more info, please contact Grant Basham mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org.

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, Apr 7th at 7:00 pm**. Every Tuesday night we will meet via Zoom. <https://zoom.us/j/201911385>. We will meet from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. This is an open-ended, drop-in group for all levels of meditation experience. For further information, please contact Gary Gonzalez at meditation@riverofgrassuu.org.

bUUKies – The Silver Lining to Staying at Home. Next meeting **Wednesday Apr 8th at 7:15 pm**. Hi bUUKies! I hope



you are all staying safe and socially distanced! If you're like me, life isn't all that different – I still have to go to work. But, I miss going out and going to River of Grass. Having extra time to read is nice but still... At this point, it looks like our next meeting will be on-line. If so, I'll send out a link the day before. Make sure to RSVP to Susan at bUUKies@RiverofGrassUU.org.

The April read was one of the most anticipated books of the year, and from all reports, it lives up to the anticipation. We're reading "The Water Dancer" by Ta-Nehisi Coates. The Amazon summary says:

"Coates's novel is the story of Hiram Walker, who was born into slavery on a Virginia plantation that is owned by his white father and experiencing a slow decline. Although Hiram is gifted with a photographic memory, his mother—who was sold away when he was young—is the one thing he cannot remember. Indeed, many of the women in his life are taken away from him too early—a fact that will guide his actions later in the novel. The story blends the brutality of history with more imaginative elements: for example, white people are called the Quality, black people are called the Tasked; and Hiram possesses powers that fall into the spectrum of magical realism. As the novel moves north to Philadelphia, where Hiram grows into his own and begins working for the Underground, and eventually turns back to his southern birthplace, the fantastical elements only give greater power to the story."

Join us and be educated and entertained in so many different ways! bUUKies meet on the second Wednesdays at 7:15. bUUKies@riverofgrassuu.com for more information.

May: *Blowout* by Rachel Maddow

June: *Red, White and Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: *It takes over 50 years for leather shoes to break down in a landfill. Be sure to buy quality comfortable shoes, not just the latest fashion. And as they wear, take them to the shoe repair shop. In the long run, it will help your feet, save you money, and help the environment.*

COVID-19 Response Update

Our River of Grass faithful is actively responding to COVID-19. All face-to-face gatherings of any kind are suspended or moved on-line, and our building is closed. Numerous meetings and gatherings have transitioned online via Zoom. Welcome to our new norm!

We are grateful that many many members and friends are in self-quarantine, doing their part to protect themselves as well as reduce the spread of the virus, and only venturing outside when absolutely necessary.

Our extended Caring Team has coordinated a 'network of contacting' to help ensure our community is communication and cared for..... and our Covenant Groups are a large part of this.

There is deep gratitude for the way our community cares for each other, remains flexible, and is diligent in responding to this unprecedented situation!

Take a deep breath. Allow any feelings and thoughts to be as they are. Know you are supported. Stay safe!

Basic Protective Measures Against the New Coronavirus

River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Your leadership at River of Grass are taking every precaution against the new coronavirus here at River of Grass and in the wider community we share. River of Grass is adhering to the following recommendations from the World Health Organizations.

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak. Most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. Be aware of those in our midst with compromised immune systems.

Take care of your health and protect others by doing the following:

1. Regularly and thoroughly CLEAN YOUR HANDS with an alcohol-based hand-rub or washing with soap and water, especially – after coughing/sneezing; when caring for the sick; before, during, and after you prepare food; before eating; after toilet use; when hands are visibly dirty – and when they are not; after handling animals or animal waste.
2. Maintain social distancing – 5-6 feet between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing.
3. Even if well, try to maintain a distance of 5-6 feet from others and when greeting, instead of elbow and fist bumps (no handshakes or hugs), consider placing your hand over your heart as a gesture of welcome and hello.
4. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to avoid transfer of viruses from contaminated surfaces.
5. Practice respiratory hygiene: 1) Cough/sneeze into your elbow, 2) If you use tissues, dispose of them immediately, then clean your hands.
6. If you have fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care promptly.
7. If you feel unwell, stay home, even with mild symptoms like headache and runny nose.
8. Stay informed, and follow any guidelines from your healthcare advisor.

How to cope with stress during this coronavirus outbreak:

1. It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared, or angry during any crisis.
2. Talk to people you trust, and contact your friends and family.
3. If you must stay home, maintain healthy lifestyle with proper diet, sleep, exercise, and social contact with loved ones via email, phone, etc.
4. Avoid use smoking, alcohol, and other drugs to deal with your emotions.
5. Get the facts from credible sources such as the World Health Organization or local/state health agencies.
6. Limit worry and agitation through lessening time you spend watching media and internet.
7. Draw on coping skills that have helped you in the past.
8. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor, and have a plan to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

To see all of the upcoming events at River of Grass, please visit the calendar on our website at riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html.

Unsubscribe - If you do not wish to receive this weekly email, please send an e-mail 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 or called into the congregation's office 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.