

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 – April 8, 2021

Bear Witness: Save Lives

In order to tell our stories, it is vital that we are able to trust that people will be still and bear witness to us, acknowledge and accept what we share. We must be present with one another with an empathy that honors our different life experiences. C. B. will share about the spiritual practice of bearing witness, and trusting others to bear witness to us as crucial for creating space for us to become more of ourselves.

C. B. Beal, M.Div (they/them) is a fat, white, queer, non-binary educator, writer, storyteller, and speaker. C. B. was the 2019 recipient of the Unitarian Universalist Association's [Angus H. MacLean Award](#) for Excellence in Religious Education. They make their home in a farmhouse library loft in western Massachusetts and consult with individuals and organizations to increase consent culture, equity, and justice in the world. You can find them online at [About CB – Justice and Peace Consulting](#).

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](#). Tune in there for the service, then log onto our Zoom link for hospitality time afterward.

We'll be watching for you!

Topic: Worship April 11, 2021

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>

Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:

Sunday, April 11, 2021

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – C. B. Beal - Bear Witness: Save Lives

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

Faith Development: 12:30: Pre-K - 1st graders; **1:30 pm:** 2nd - 6th graders; **3:00pm:** Teens.

This Sunday our children and youth will be exploring what it takes to become our true selves. As we grow and change, we often have to "let go" of old ways of thinking and begin to "let in" something new. During these "stay-at-home" times, we've all had to let go of many things, but by doing so, we've also had room for new things to come into our lives. We'll share what's new and how it's helped us become who we are today. If you'd like more information about our Faith Development program for children and youth, contact our Director, Karen Gonzalez at ReligiouEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org.

Young Adults are now meeting on the 2nd Sundays, at 7:30 pm virtually on Zoom – Millennials, Gen Xers, and Gen Zs, are welcome to tune in to the YUng Adult Virtual Coffee Hour on **Sunday, Apr 11th at 7:30 pm**. Our group's purpose is to foster an inclusive, diverse and intentional community that inspires spiritual growth and connection. Please email youngadults@riverofgrassuu.org if you have any questions and to obtain the zoom details.

Rev. Amy's sabbatical:

Rev. Amy's sabbatical began on Saturday, March 13, 2021, and will end on Sunday, May 9, 2021. She will be back with us for the Annual Meeting and back in the pulpit on May 16th. 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](#).

The River of Grass Annual Pledge Drive (APD) ends this Sunday! Please Pledge Now! We have just a few days left for our River of Grass Annual Pledge Drive (APD) where we generate over 80% of the total annual operating income for the next fiscal year. We have generated over \$165K in pledges or about 80% of what we need to operate next year with a balanced budget.

We sustain the mission and operations of our beloved community mostly through the two P's. If you are a new member, then you are most familiar with our weekly request for financial support through the first "P", i.e., the "Plate" of which ½ goes to support our operations and the other ½ goes to one of our real connections to the community through direct support of LifeNet4Families of Broward County. The funds from your generosity to the "Plate" is usually about 3% of our real income each year. On the other hand, once a year we do our most critical fund-raising for the operating income for the next fiscal year for the River via the second "P", i.e., the annual "Pledge" drive.

You can commit to your pledge by going to our website at <https://riverofgrassuu.org> scrolling down the homepage until you see the 2021-2022 Annual Budget Drive notification link "[2021-2022 Pledge Card](#)". Click on the link and then just fill in the blanks of the "River of Grass UU Congregation 2021-2022 Pledge Form" and Click "Submit". It is that easy! Save postage and a trip to the post office! Otherwise, please fill out the enclosed form that you as a member should have recently received in the mail with an Annual Pledge Drive brochure.

Your financial contribution is essential to helping us to continue to love River of Grass into being. We are tremendously grateful for your current and past support for our Beloved Community!

Rob Giblin-Davis, RoG APD Chair and Treasurer, Treasurer@RiverofGrassUU.org

They're Back! With More Choices! Please [click the link](#) to purchase a River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation Fundraising Mask! Orders will be shipped right to your door for free! This face mask is a two ply mask made up of 60% Polyester, 40% Cotton. **\$15 each - 3 sizes available: Adult; Youth 9-15; and Child 3-8.**



<https://www.fundraisingmasks.org/product-page/river-of-grass-unitarian-universalist-congregation-fundraiser>

Capital Foundation Nominations:

Elections for three of our six Foundation Trustees will be held at the Congregation's Annual Meeting on May 16th after Sunday Service. Nominating for the open two-year terms of Trustee are Ahysa Boutron, Cory Fleming, and Roy Schwartz. Ahysa Boutron and Roy Schwartz are seeking re-election. Ed Lewis is stepping down. Continuing Trustees are Jacquie Velazquez, Kip Barkley, and Melissa Buehler. Following the Annual Meeting, the six Trustees will elect a President, Secretary, and Treasurer from among themselves. The six Trustees oversee the management of the Capital Fund and the Legacy Fund. See www.RiverOfGrassUU.org/foundation Kip Barkley, Foundation Trustee

LifeNet4Families Spring Newsletter:

The Spring edition of LifeNet4Families Lifeline reveals that the CoVID-19 crisis has tripled the need for our services in Broward County. LifeNet has made a substantial impact in our community during this unprecedented time. Learn more in the [latest newsletter!](#)

New Member Ceremony:

Next Sunday, Apr 18th, during Sunday Service, we will have a New Member Ceremony. Where we will celebrate those who have found a new home in this Beloved Community. If you are interested in becoming a member at this ceremony, please RSVP by Monday, Apr 12th via email to membership@riverofgrassuu.org. For more information see our website: <https://riverofgrassuu.org/becoming-a-member.html>.

No great task is ever accomplished alone. It's going to take all of us to move our world, and our faith, forward in the ways of truth, compassion, and justice.

—UUA President
Susan Frederick-Gray,
UU World



Other Events:

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/>

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, Apr 13th 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 more information, please email Gary Gonzalez at meditation@riverofgrassuu.org.

BUUkies Are Hearing Things! Well, we’re hearing the poems as we read them aloud. April is National Poetry Month, and we are reading “An American Sunrise” by Joy Harjo. Not only is Ms. Harjo the United States Poet Laureate (the first Native American for this) but an accomplished teacher, musician and activist. Her stage performances of her poetry include story-telling and music – she plays several instruments with her band Arrow Dynamics: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HilJFRXxa3o>). We’ll discuss and read our favorite poems out of the book on **Wednesday, Apr 14th at 7:00 pm**. Send an email to BUUkies@riverofgrassuu.org to get a Zoom invitation. All are welcome!



The Faith Forward Inquirers Series meets on Wednesdays 7:30 – 8:30 pm on Zoom, see the schedule below!

Faith Forward Inquirers Series is a rotation of seven 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 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! Our next class is scheduled for **Apr 14th and is FF Inquirers #2: Unitarian Universalist History, Principles and Sources**. For more info, email Zena Tucker, membership@riverofgrassuu.org. Zoom link for our session is: [ZOOM Link for RoG Inquirers](#).

Date	Time	Event
4/14/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#2: Unitarian Universalist History, Principles and Sources
4/28/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#4: Faith Development for Children and Adults
5/5/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#5: Worship & Liturgical Year
5/12/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#1: Q&A with Minister
5/26/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#6: Social Action & Community Service
6/2/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#7: Pastoral Care and Small Groups
6/9/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#8: Membership 101 & Congregational Life

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Stop paper billing statements! Simply go online and set up your bills and investments to send electronic statements, via email. It only takes a couple of minutes, and you will have less paper to deal with and will save trees!

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 CapitalCapaign@riverofgrassuu.org.</p>	

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

Team: Deb Buehler Ely, Karen Gonzalez, Susan Juncosa, Jeanne Masten

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: February 2021

Small Group Meeting COVID Requirements

The CDC has released guidelines which allow meetings of fully-vaccinated** people. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

In accordance with these guidelines, Official River of Grass meeting protocols have been updated to reflect the differences in the make-up of meeting attendees. **People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen). This meeting protocol has been developed and can be found on our web (RiverofGrassUU.org/teams-committees--small-groups.html). Contact Susan Juncosa at vicepresident@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions - Small Group Meetings

1. Can I meet with my RoG friends?

- That is your choice at all times. These recommendations are only for official River of Grass – sponsored gatherings.

2. What's the first thing to consider when organizing an in-person event?

- Is it necessary that the gathering be in person? Can the same purpose be achieved by meeting on Zoom? Is there a reason to meet other than the fact that we want to be together?

3. My small group has some people who are not vaccinated. Can we meet in person?

- Small groups with unvaccinated attendees can meet outdoors. Follow the procedure for such meetings and sign the covenant.

+ If any members of the group do not want to attend in person, provision must be made for attendance by Zoom or other application.

4. My group has all been vaccinated with all shots and have waited the recommended times. Can we have an in-person meeting?

- Yes, if you take these actions:

+ follow the procedure for such meetings and sign the covenant.

+ If any members of the group do not want to attend in person, provision must be made for attendance by Zoom or other application.

5. What about an indoor meeting?

- Yes, see question four.

6. Can children come to the gathering?

- At this time, there is no vaccine approved for children. They would have to maintain social distance and masking, etc. This might be a group decision.

Meetings with all attendees fully-vaccinated (INDOORS AND OUTDOORS)

Meeting Leader will do the following:

- + send the covenant to attendees prior to the meeting;
- + determine, with group members, if proof of vaccination must be provided;
- + collect signed covenants or procure signed covenants at the start of meeting;

Actions Prior to a Gathering

A covenant shall be developed and sent to attendees which includes the following:

- + attendee states they have been fully vaccinated and will provide card if requested;
- + attendee will comply with any contact tracing which may ensue; and
- + has not tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days and is not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

Actions During a Gathering

- + attendees will give meeting leader the signed covenant or sign a copy at the start of meeting;

- + Meeting attendees do not have to wear masks or social distance
- + Meeting attendees may share food or drink.

Fully-Vaccinated Small Group Gathering Covenant

We; the members, friends, and visitors of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation acknowledge the role we play in keeping ourselves, each other and our community safe from the spread of COVID-19. With that in mind, we agree to adhere to the following protocols when gathering in small groups in or out-of-doors:

- o We have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- o We have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days and are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- o We will comply with any contact tracing following our gathering, if needed.

Meeting with some attendees unvaccinated/not fully vaccinated (OUTDOORS ONLY)

Meeting Leader will do the following:

- + send the covenant to attendees prior to the meeting;
- + set up space and have sanitizer/hand washing supplies available;
- + collect signed covenants or procure signed covenants at the start of meeting;
- + locations of outdoor gathering will be chosen with the physical needs of the attendees in mind and alternative Zoom links will be offered if needed;
- + review masking and social distancing.

Actions Prior to a Gathering

A covenant shall be developed and sent to attendees which includes the following:

- + agrees to follow social distancing and masking protocols; and
- + has not traveled internationally in past two weeks; and
- + attendee will comply with any contact tracing which may ensue; and
- + is not experiencing any COVID symptoms.

Actions During a Gathering

- + attendees will give meeting leader the signed covenant or sign a copy at the start of meeting;
- + Meeting attendees will follow masking and social distancing guidelines;
- + Meeting attendees will not share food or drink.

Actions after a Gathering

- + Meeting leader will keep the covenants collected for two weeks;
- + Attendees will inform the meeting leader if they have Covid symptoms and/or a positive Covid test within two weeks after the meeting. Meeting leader will inform all attendees.

Small Group Outdoor Gathering Covenant

We; the members, friends, and visitors of the River of Grass Unitarian Universalist Congregation acknowledge the role we play in keeping ourselves, each other and our community safe from the spread of Covid-19. With that in mind, we agree to adhere to the following protocols when gathering in small groups out-of-doors:

- o We will wear masks at all times and keep 6 feet from persons who do not reside in our households.
- o We will not partake of food or drink.
- o We are not experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms.
- o We have not traveled out of the country in the past two weeks.
- o We will comply with any contact tracing following our gathering, if needed.

Factors Considered in forming the Guidelines:

All guidelines depend on both the public and the personal.

The public – the surrounding community – must meet certain standards for daily new cases, infection rate, test positivity percentage, contact tracing in place and hospital capacity.

Personal – each individual's state of health.

Scope of Recommendations:

At this time, the recommendations are only for small gatherings in **indoor and outdoor** spaces depending on who is vaccinated in the group.

Format of Recommendations:

The team will develop a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document to be posted on the web site and added to the weekly e-mail, which will be updated as needed.

Meeting Leader will do the following:

- + send the covenant to attendees prior to the meeting;
- + set up space and have sanitizer/hand washing supplies available;
- + collect signed covenants or procure signed covenants at the start of meeting;
- + locations of outdoor gathering will be chosen with the physical needs of the attendees in mind and alternative Zoom links will be offered if needed;
- + review masking and social distancing.

Actions Prior to a Gathering

A covenant shall be developed and sent to attendees which includes the following:

- + agrees to follow social distancing and masking protocols; and
- + has not traveled internationally in past two weeks; and
- + attendee will comply with any contact tracing which may ensue; and
- + is not experiencing any COVID symptoms.

Actions During a Gathering

- + attendees will give meeting leader the signed covenant or sign a copy at the start of meeting;
- + Meeting attendees will follow masking and social distancing guidelines;
- + Meeting attendees will not share food or drink.

Actions after a Gathering

- + Meeting leader will keep the covenants collected for two weeks;
- + Attendees will inform the meeting leader if they have Covid symptoms and/or a positive Covid test within two weeks after the meeting. Meeting leader will inform all attendees.

COVID-19 Response Update

Our River of Grass faithful is actively responding to COVID-19. Any face-to-face gatherings of any kind must follow the new small group protocols that were recommended to the Board by the COVID Re-Emergence Team. Otherwise, all gatherings are suspended or moved on-line, while we search for our forever home, continue to keep ourselves and our community safe, and prepare for congregational life after COVID.

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 contact' to help ensure our community has communication and is 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 Coronavirus

Your leadership at River of Grass are taking every precaution against 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 – 6 feet between yourself and anyone.
3. Even if well, try to maintain a distance of 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 a healthy lifestyle with proper diet, sleep, exercise, and social contact with loved ones via email, phone, etc.
4. Avoid smoking or using alcohol and other drugs to deal with your emotions.
5. Get the facts from credible sources such as the Center for Disease Control, World Health Organization, or local/state health agencies.
6. Limit worry and agitation through lessening time you spend watching media and the 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. **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 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.