

# River of Grass

## Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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

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

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## River of Grass Weekly Update – December 1, 2022

### But Wait, There's More: A Wonderbox Service

*Wonder rather than doubt is the root of all knowledge.*

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Our first Unitarian Universalist Source calls us to heed –

*Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.*

In our multi-platform in-person service this Sunday, we begin December's exploration of what it means to be a People of Wonder – beginning with a kind of service we've not shared before – A Wonderbox Service!

Bring something with you, a token, a memento, a piece of nature, or anything that inspires or represents the innate call to wonder in your life, to find deeper meaning, spark curiosity, or meet the mystery where it lives in the world and in us. We'll put it in the Wonder Box, then draw at random and see what we find. And who knows – it just might lead us to some wonder-ful place we never expected!

Come as you are – either in-person at University of Florida IFAS Satellite Building or virtually on Zoom. We welcome you on Sunday morning at 10:30. Come a bit before and we can Chat prior to the service... See you then!

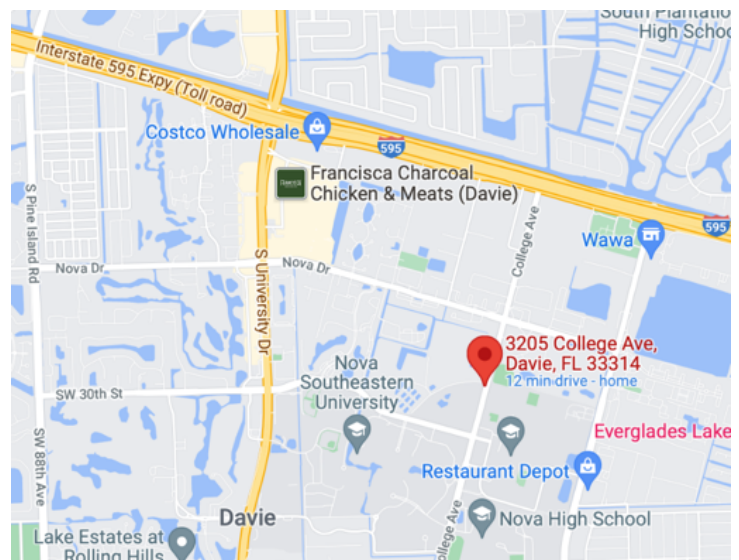
### University of Florida - IFAS (Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center )

3205 College Avenue, Davie, FL 33314;

Directions: <https://flrec.ifas.ufl.edu/about-us/>

If you Are arriving via University Drive:

- Turn east at Nova Drive (SW 24th Street), which would be a right turn if driving from the south and a left turn if driving from the north.
- Drive east on Nova Drive to the first stoplight, which is College Avenue.
- Turn right onto College Avenue and drive south ¼ mile to the first entrance on the right side of the street. Look for a large blue monument sign with University of Florida on it. The entrance is 600 feet past this monument sign.



Use the Zoom link below to gather with us virtually in Zoom. Catch us on Facebook live on our [facebook page](#).

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 In-Person or Virtual Events - This Sunday:***

#### **Sunday, December 4, 2022**

**River of Grass UU Congregation** – But Wait, There’s More: A Wonderbox Service – Rev. Amy Carol Webb

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

**New Member** - Our next New Member Ceremony will take place during worship service this Sunday, **December 4<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Leana Bresnahan as soon as possible at [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) or at 954-258-6315 if you wish to become a member and sign the membership book that day!

**Faith Development** - The theme this month is Wonder. Our Faith Development class for kids on Sunday will explore the wonder of light. The winter holidays are full of lights - the Hanukkah menorah, outdoor lights on houses, Christmas tree lights, Chalice lights, candles for Solstice and Advent. There is also inner light, often kindled during quiet times in the candlelight. When our inner light grows dim from hardship and struggle, another person can rekindle our inner light just by listening or giving us a smile. Following class time, our kiddos will be rehearsing for this year's holiday play in the sanctuary. For more information about our religious education program, contact our director at [religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org).

### ***Future Home Search Team***

Wait, wait, what is that I see in the distance?

Could it be a flicker of light at the end of the tunnel?

The Future Home Search Team has identified a religious property to purchase, partnering with Temple Adath Or. We are in the very, very beginning of the process, but we wanted you all to know, there’s something in the air! I promise updates as we go along.

Kathy Jens-Rochow, President

### ***Looking for Help:***

Love babies? You're in luck! The River has been attracting quite a few, lately. Our new location in January will include a paid staff position for the nursery. If you know someone who might be interested in caring for our babies and kids for 3 hours each Sunday, please contact our Faith Development Director, Karen at [religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org). We are also looking for some items to fill this space. Let Karen know if you can contribute any of the following: extra-large baby gate, high chair, and play items such as stacking blocks, cars and puzzles.

### ***Chalica - December 7<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>***

Chalica begins every year on the first Monday of December and runs for 7 nights. Each night, the chalice is lit and one of our Unitarian Universalist Principles is honored. This can include chalice lighting words, a reading, discussion or journaling, a special meal, and particular actions that bring that Principle to life.

- The first night honors our first principle, where we affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Tonight’s meal could include everyone’s favorite food – no judgment, just enjoy! Take some time to let the people you love be reminded of that. Then, find some common ground with someone whose ideas challenge you.

- Night two, an orange candle can represent offering fair and kind treatment. Is there a neighbor or friend who could use a meal tonight? Maybe a waiter needs an extra tip. Decide as a family what charity could use your help. Still need to choose a child from our angel tree? Tonight's the night!
- On the third night, we light a yellow candle and seek to gain new understandings. Find a religious service online from another faith or take a virtual tour of the Vatican. Try a new food tonight – perhaps from an ethnicity you haven't tried before.
- Our fourth night, our candle is lit to remind us that our spiritual growth is our responsibility. Try a new spiritual practice – like yoga, or join Carolyn and Scott for meditation.
- Night five, we light a candle to affirm democracy. Take a vote for tonight's dinner, then play a game to see who can name the most elected officials.
- The sixth night is a good night for leftovers. We light our sixth candle to remind us to work for a fair and peaceful world. This would be a good night to visit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's website and learn about the good work that you can support.
- We light our seventh candle to show our respect for our interdependent web – a good night for a vegetarian meal and stargazing! Find green ways to wrap your presents on this day – dish towels, brown paper or recycled wrapping can help.
- And, finally on the eighth night, we light a candle to remind us that we still have much work to do to dismantle oppressive systems. We can add to our understanding tonight, by watching a movie that highlights ways our country has caused harm to people in the past or shares a perspective we're not familiar with.

The possibilities here are endless! However, you decide to bring Chalica to life in your home this year, I hope it provides you with a connection to your faith and a connection to each other.

### *World AIDS Day is observed on December 1 each year*

It is a day of solidarity for people around the world who are affected by HIV. This is a day for voices to unite by sharing experiences, remembering those lost, and standing together in the fight against HIV. While great strides have been made over the four decades since the first known reported cases of AIDS, this disease remains a public health challenge. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for every community and each individual to honor the more than 32 million people who have died worldwide from AIDS-related illness.



Each World AIDS Day focuses on a specific theme, which this year will be Equalize. UNAIDS is urging each of us to address the inequalities which are holding back progress in ending AIDS. This year's theme joins a growing list of challenges that World AIDS Day has alerted people to globally.

Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever international day for global health. Every year, United Nations agencies, governments and civil society join together to campaign around specific themes related to HIV.

World AIDS Day remains as relevant today as it's always been, reminding people and governments that HIV has not gone away. There is still a critical need for increased funding for the AIDS response, to increase awareness of the impact of HIV on people's lives, to end stigma and discrimination and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV.

Sources: CDC & UNAIDS

### *Heritage and Hope*

**Heritage - Universalist Thomas Nast** (September 26, 1840 – December 7, 1902) was German-born American caricaturist and editorial cartoonist often considered to be the "Father of the American Cartoon".

Thomas Nast produced over 70 illustrations of Santa. It is from Nast that the world first learned of Santa's red suit, that he gives coal if you're naughty, and even then Santa, as a world citizen, belonging to no single country, lives at the North Pole.



In addition, Nast's drawings were instrumental in the downfall of Boss Tweed, the powerful Tammany Hall leader. As commissioner of public works for New York City, Tweed led a ring that by 1870 had gained total control of the city's government, and controlled "a working majority in the State Legislature". Tweed and his associates defrauded the city of many millions of dollars by grossly inflating expenses paid to contractors connected to the Ring.

Tweed so feared Nast's campaign that he sent an emissary to offer the artist a bribe of \$100,000, which was represented as a gift from a group of wealthy benefactors to enable Nast to study art in Europe. Feigning interest, Nast negotiated for more before finally refusing an offer of \$500,000 with the words, "Well, I don't think I'll do it. I made up my mind not long ago to put some of those fellows behind the bars". His cartoons were probably one of the chief factors in the machine's downfall. Nast's caricature of the fleeing political boss led to Tweed's identification and arrest in Vigo, Spain, in 1876.

Source: Wikipedia and Britannica.org

**Our Hope - Chalica** is a week-long celebration of our Unitarian Universalist Principles. The holiday first emerged in 2005 out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values.

Chalica begins on the first Monday in December and lasts seven days. Each day, a chalice is lit and the day is spent reflecting on the meaning of that day's principle and doing a good deed that honors that principle. Not all Unitarian Universalists celebrate Chalica, but it has a growing following. There is a [Chalica Facebook page](#), [blog](#), and many Chalica-themed videos on [YouTube](#).



### ***Help Spread UU values by participating in the UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship's (CLF) Worthy Now Prison Ministry Program***

This year, on Giving Tuesday, (Nov 29<sup>th</sup>), the CLF's goal is to recruit free-world folks (you), to send Holiday messages to people living their lives in a penitentiary. The CLF currently has 1600 "pen pals" on their roster waiting to hear from a friendly "free-world" UU (you). This short term opportunity to send a holiday message is a wonderful way to spread, experience, practice and live our UU values... and it's easy!

There are 2 wonderful program opportunities found on the website link (below):

1. The short term holiday greeting, mentioned above, and
2. Becoming an actual Pen Pal - a longer term commitment.

Whichever one you choose, I encourage you to make a difference in the lives of these men and women! ...on or before Giving Tuesday, November 29, ...and Shine On!!

<https://worthynow.org/3-simple-ways-to-spread-holiday-cheer-to-incarcerated-uus>

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is a nonprofit ministry offering Unitarian Universalist spiritual resources to those who are unchurched. Thank you for helping spread our love and principles. Contact me for further information: Kat Holland, [ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org).

### ***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](mailto:Carolyn@InsightInstituteLLC.com) or [Scott@InsightInstituteLLC.com](mailto:Scott@InsightInstituteLLC.com), or visit <http://www.insightinstitutellc.com/>

**RoG Men's Group: We meet the 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.** We are now meeting in person as well as via [Zoom Meeting](#). Our meeting location is at The Transformation Project: 4431 SW 64th Ave Ste 109, Davie, FL 33314. All who are able can meet early for dinner at 5:00 pm at Uncle Al's, 8200 Griffin Rd, Davie, FL 33328. (If you're joining for dinner, please email Ken, group facilitator, so he can coordinate space.) All who identify male are invited to join. **Our Dec 1<sup>st</sup> topic: Experiencing Wonder & Awe.** 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 Zoom Meeting Room will



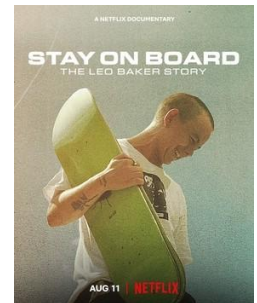
open up at 7:00 pm and we will begin at 7:15 pm. If you have any questions please contact Ken Bresnahan; [mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org); RoG Men's Group Facilitator.

**Leadership Roundtable on Dec 10<sup>th</sup>** - All leaders of Committees, Teams and Small Groups are asked to share all your group is doing at a Leadership Round Table Saturday, December 10 from 1 - 2:30 PM via Zoom. It will be a check-in of our entire community with crosstalk allowed. Let's get a sense of all that's going on. For more information, please contact Maureen Lundell at [vicepresident@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:vicepresident@riverofgrassuu.org)

**Faith Development Annual Holiday Gathering** - Faith Development is excited to again be holding our Annual Holiday Gathering for families and teachers on **December 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 9:00 pm**. We will be doing holiday crafts and might even have a visit from Santa! Bring a dish to share if you can. Families should have received an Evite recently with directions and details. Any questions, please email [faithdevelopment@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:faithdevelopment@riverofgrassuu.org).

### **MUUVies for Change December viewing is "Stay on Board"**

Starring Leo Baker, this movie is a documentary available on Netflix. This is a candid look at one person's experience with coming out, a humane film that shows the bravery and resilience of queer people who seek relief from the categories that are imposed on them. Leo Baker was a champion skateboarder who left the US 2020 Olympic Team to come out as trans.



We will discuss this film on **Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**. Please reply to Steve Jens-Rochow [muuvies@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:muuvies@riverofgrassuu.org) if you are coming for the Discussion. Join our Zoom Meeting at 7pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84418593114>. Meeting ID: 844 1859 3114; One tap mobile: +16465588656,,84418593114# US (New York); Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84418593114>

local number:

### **The annual Full Moon Daughters Solstice Party is here!**

Good food and drink, Good company, Lots of sharing and joy. FMD, which includes females, female children and female identifying people, will gather **Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at Kathy Jens-Rochow's home at 5:30 PM-9:00 PM** for potluck dinner, \$10 gift exchange (optional) and the sharing of annual blessings. This is one of our favorite gatherings. We will be outside around the pool for safety and request all to be vaccinated. For directions and RSVP to Kathy Jens-Rochow at [fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:fullmoondaughters@riverofgrassuu.org) so we can count people.

### **BUUKies December Read - "The Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie. We will meet on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm.**

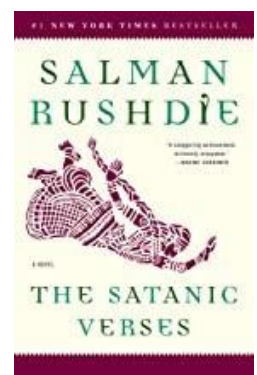
[River BUUKies Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 926 5701 7488; Passcode: 746613

One tap mobile +13017158592,,92657017488#,,,,\*746613# US (Washington DC)

"A torrent of endlessly inventive prose, by turns comic and enraged, embracing life in all its contradictions. In this spectacular novel, verbal pyrotechnics barely outshine its psychological truths."

One of the most controversial and acclaimed novels ever written, "The Satanic Verses" is Salman Rushdie's best-known and most galvanizing book. Set in a modern world filled with both mayhem and miracles, the story begins with a bang: the terrorist bombing of a London-bound jet in midflight. Two Indian actors of opposing sensibilities fall to earth, transformed into living symbols of what is angelic and evil. This is just the initial act in a magnificent odyssey that seamlessly merges the actual with the imagined.

Steve Jens-Rochow [BUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:BUUKies@riverofgrassuu.org).



Please remember to **Smile when you shop at Amazon.com**. When you use the River of Grass link while shopping on Amazon, our community receives a .5% donation as one of their eligible charitable



organizations. The direct River of Grass Amazon link is: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/65-0791653>. River of Grass has received \$2,135.76 since we signed up with AmazonSmile. This holiday season you can help support River of Grass while online shopping with Amazon.

**SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week:** Use efficient LED light bulbs. Resist the temptation to buy "old fashion" light bulbs, and instead replace bulbs with LEDs. They barely cost more, and they use 1/7 the electricity, produce less heat, reduce your electric bill, and last for 20 years.

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

**Team:** Karen Gonzalez, Susan Juncosa, Jeanne Masten ([COVIDTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto: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: consider 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 October 16, 2022**

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

COVID-19 is moving from pandemic to endemic status – it is always circulating in the community but the number of infected people varies from community to community. Individuals should take appropriate precautions based on their personal risk. River of Grass will follow the following measures for community gatherings based on CDC Guidelines and the Broward County risk levels.

Remember, you may choose to wear a mask and maintain social distancing at any time. If you have symptoms, a positive test or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should wear a mask.

Our COVID Team is monitoring the Broward County status weekly and will promptly advise if the status changes.

#### **Community Level LOW: Current Broward County Status**

- Individuals may elect to wear masks and socially distance at all times.

#### **Community Level MEDIUM:**

- Wear face masks for indoor gatherings.
- Choir will wear singing masks.
- Unmasked speakers and the Minister must test negative with a rapid test the previous evening.

#### **Community Level HIGH:**

##### In person Worship Services – Inside

- Masks required for all, special requirements for speakers
- Masks should be KN-95
- Unmasked speakers and Minister must test negative with a rapid test the previous evening
- No singing except the Minister (humming OK!)

- Social distancing between family groups
- No food or drinks
- All attendees sign in

#### After service Hospitality – Outside

- Maintain social distancing

#### Meetings – inside and outside

- Group leader will inquire if anyone in the group wants the meeting to be masked. If everyone is not comfortable, masking and social distancing should be maintained.
- Food and drinks – determined by the group.
- All attendees sign in.

To see all of the upcoming events at River of Grass, please visit the calendar on our website at [riverofgrassuu.org/calendar.html](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:office@riverofgrassuu.org).

*Announcements to be sent out in the weekly congregation-wide update should be e-mailed to [WeeklyEmail@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto: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.*