

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 11, 2021

Loved into Being

To help kick-off River of Grass' Annual Pledge Drive for our 2021-2022 congregational year and celebrate the generosity that sustains both our Unitarian Universalist movement and this River of Grass congregation, we bring you this service lovingly created by the UUA Worship Web, entitled "Loved into Being." If ever there was a place "loved into being" it is this one – this Beloved Community at River of Grass. We have integrated an original River of Grass message and song into the UUA's stewardship service to help open our hearts together to continue loving River of Grass and the UUA into being. And remember it is daylight saving time this Sunday, March 14th, so set your clocks 1 hour ahead so you don't miss us. A new Aaron Stang original song drops this Sunday, and you will not want to miss it 😊

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 March 14, 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, March 14, 2021

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Loved into Being - Rob Giblin-Davis

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

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

Our 5th UU principle inspires us towards "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." On Sunday in our Faith Development classes for children and youth, we'll talk about what it means to be committed to our conscience and letting it guide us to do what our inner voice tells us is right. 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 YUUnG Adult Virtual Coffee Hour on **Sunday, Mar 14th 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 upcoming sabbatical:

Rev. Amy's sabbatical will begin this Saturday, March 13, 2021, and end Sunday, May 9, 2021. She will be back with us for the Annual Meeting on May 9th, and back in the pulpit on May 16th. For more information about her sabbatical, please read the attached PDF (Rev Amy sabbatical book.pdf) or check out the information listed on our website: <https://riverofgrassuu.org/rev-amys-sabbatical.html>.

The Annual RoG Pledge Drive Kicks-Off on Sunday, March 14th during our Worship Service and runs through April 11th. The River of Grass UU Congregation exists, "to nurture our spirits, love intentionally, and create a just and healthy planet". Here at the River, we sustain this mission and the operations of our congregation 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 operating income for the next fiscal year for the River via the second "P", i.e., the annual "Pledge". Over 80% of the total annual operating income for next fiscal year, starting on July 1st, 2021 comes from the second "P" from the Annual "Pledge" Drive (APD). You can commit to your pledge during the month-long drive by going to our website at <https://riverofgrassuu.org> and clicking the "[Donations](#)" tab and then clicking on "[Stewardship/Pledging](#)". Fill in the blanks of the "River of Grass UU Congregation 2021-2022 Pledge Form" and Click "Send". It is that easy! And you can tell us if you plan to fulfill the pledge through a single annual, quarterly, or monthly payments, which can be set up online or with the help of our office manager. Save postage and a trip to the post office! Otherwise, please fill out the enclosed form that you as a member will be receiving soon 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

Registration for Unit One of Building the World We Dream About is now open: The registration link can be found on our website, on our Facebook page, and **[REGISTER HERE FOR BUILDING THE WORLD WE DREAM ABOUT](#)**.

In these first 12 90-minute sessions, we'll focus our gaze inward as we learn about ourselves and begin the work of becoming an antiracist / antioppressive / multicultural faith community. Specific dates and times will be determined by those who register.

Building the World We Dream About is a Unitarian Universalist Association program that seeks to interrupt the workings of racism and transform how people from different racial/ethnic groups understand and relate to one another. The full program consists of 24 workshops, with Taking It Home activities, reflections, and readings to be done between workshops. The program creates opportunities for participants to practice dreaming our world otherwise, and then commit to new, intentional ways of being.

As Unitarian Universalists, we hope developing antiracist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural habits and skills will lead us to build the multicultural world of the beloved community we dream about. **Contact Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org for more information or to sign up for this transformational experience.**

Important Announcement from the Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee is excited to announce the slate to fill the open positions on Board members for the year 2021-2022:

Vice President – Maureen Lundell

Secretary – Bruce Ngo

Trustee – Mallory McLaren

Trustee – Corrine Mann

Nominating Committee (3 people to be elected by the Congregation)

Peter Fox
Bev Kaufman
Karen (Kat) Holland

On behalf of the Congregation, the Board would like to thank the Nominating Committee members for putting together a great slate for our upcoming year. Thank you Toni Cattell, Dave Katz, Corey Fleming, Jacquie Velasquez, Monica Dyer, and Devon Smith.

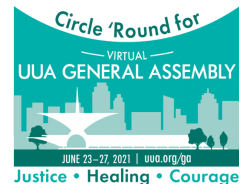
Per our By-laws - Other nominations may also be made by written petition signed by at least two members, delivered to an officer or Board member at least 20 days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting (May 9th this year) in order to be included on the final written slate. Members may nominate themselves. Nominations from the floor during the meeting are not permitted.

Poetry Service - Apr 25th! Do you enjoy poetry? Members are invited to submit a poem for our annual poetry reading service. The theme is "Becoming". Poems must be brief (no more than 4 minutes reading time) and in keeping with our UU principles. All poetry must have permission of the author or no known copyright restriction. Send submissions to Zena Tucker or email membership@riverofgrassuu.org. **All poems must be received by Mar 30th.**



Why Virtual General Assembly?

General Assembly (commonly referred to as GA) is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. That remains true even when we cannot gather physically. Last year, GA had more than 4,900 registered attendees participate from remote locations around the world. Although we give up the face-to-face interaction and hugs that are prevalent when we meet in-person, we retain our dedication to community and make our experience more accessible and more environmentally sustainable.



This year River of Grass will fund our three voting delegates, as well as others who are interested in attending. This is a major time commitment but so worth it. Go to <https://www.uua.org/ga> to view agendas and programs being offered. Only voting delegates are expected to attend the business meetings, but all are encouraged to attend. Last year we paid the registration fee for five attendees. With many ROGers attending, we can cover most of the workshops. Attendees will be expected to write a report to the Board. If you are interested in attending, please contact Kathy Jens-Rochow at president@riverofgrassuu.org.

Tax thoughts by Kip Barkley, Planned Giving:

I live off my IRA and I am not able to itemize on my taxes. So I pay my church pledge once a year with a check directly from my IRA custodian. Otherwise, I pay tax on the money that I am paying to the River. Say I pledge \$1,000, so at a 20% rate, this is \$200 I do not have to pay to the government. But, I have to be over 70 to do this.

Also, during the year, I make small charitable gifts to multiple causes. On Line 10b on the front page of my 1040, I can deduct up to \$300 of charitable gifts from my taxable income. At 20%, that is \$60 I do not have to pay in taxes. I can do this one at any age and then buy several Pizza Supremes. Just sayin' -- Kip Barkley

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/>

UUA's New Day Rising Conference feedback Mar 15th - Members of the Service, Social Justice and Green Team will give feedback to the Congregation on the recent UUA's New Day Rising Conference. There were workshops, discussions, worship and caucusing during the conference. We identified our next faithful steps in changing White

Supremacy culture as we create our Beloved UU Community. And we listened to testimonials from selected congregations around the continent as they shared their learnings, hopes and next steps in their quest for racial equity in their congregations. **Monday, March 15, at 6 pm; [Join Zoom Meeting](#); Meeting ID: 859 6845 8534 Passcode: 341838;** One tap mobile +16465588656,,85968458534# (Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85968458534>) If you have any questions, please contact Steve Jens-Rochow ssjgt@riverofgrassuu.org.

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, Mar 16th 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.

The River of Grass Men's Group is open to all men. The Men's Group meets via Zoom every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. **Next Thursday, Mar 18th at 7:00 pm we will meet on Zoom** and discuss our topic: "Leisure." As preparation, you might make a list of what you do for leisure, now and before COVID. At each session, we launch into a topic that is designed to encourage personal sharing. <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/670022402> The Meeting Room opens up at 6:30 pm before the Host arrives. For more info, please contact Kip Barkley mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org. Please let us know if you plan to try to make it.

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 **Mar 24th and is FF Inquirers #6: Social Action & Community Service**. For more info, email Zena Tucker, membership@riverofgrassuu.org. Zoom link for our session is: [ZOOM Link for RoG Inquirers](#).

Date	Time	Event
3/24/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#6: Social Action & Community Service
3/31/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#7: Pastoral Care and Small Groups
4/7/21	7:30 - 8:30 pm	FF Inquirers#8: Membership 101 & Congregational Life
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

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 #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>	

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Use reusable water bottles, rather than disposable plastic bottles or cups. Simply refill a reusable water bottle from your faucet or a water fountain. It's easy, it helps keep you hydrated, and it's green.

River of Grass in Pandemic: One Year Later

Rev. Amy Carol Webb, March 1, 2021

One year since River of Grass moved everything we'd do in person on-line to do our part to keep ourselves, one another, and our community safe COVID-19 changed virtually every aspect of our lives -- what a year of profound change, adaptation, learning and unlearning, creating a new normal that became, well, just "normal" before long, with all our coping and adapting and grieving and planning and dreaming and missing people we love to the bone and finding ways to stay connected driven by love that never gives up and renewed gratitude for all the good that lifts its head in the hardest of times.

And while we are grateful we've not lost a River of Grass member to the virus, none of us remains untouched by the loss of someone we love. Most of us also lost our way of life, whether from working from and schooling kids at home, or suffering mightily in isolation, while the COVID economy came down on so many as well.

Now one year later, hope rises as vaccines roll out and we can begin to see opportunity to gather in person again on the horizon – though we must yet remain patient until enough people have immunity to be safe together again.

Your leadership at River of Grass continues to take every precaution with every new stage of this process, especially as we weigh when/how/where we will gather again in person. To that end, your COVID-19 Re-Emergence Team has been at work examining data, listening to science, following guidelines as they come from science and health authorities, as well as recommendations from those who know congregational life, like the Unitarian Universalist Association and the World Council of Churches, and also watching trends and ideas being

developed across religious communities as absolutely all of us are on the same ground, facing the same questions, at the same time.

Here are the 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 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

Meetings in the Time of the COVID

We don't know when. We don't know where. But we are trying to provide answers for "How?" As vaccinations for COVID-19 roll out, River of Grass members are thinking about getting together. 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 Groups - Outdoors only

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 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:

+ everyone signs the covenant and a list of attendees is made;

+ everyone keeps their masks on and maintains social distance;

+ no food or drink sharing;

+ 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. Seriously, Question 3? What's the point of all these precautions if everyone has a vaccination?

- Seriously. At this time, it is unknown if vaccinated people can still pass along the virus or its' variants. So yeah. Follow the precautions.

5. What about an indoor meeting?

- At this time, no official River-of-Grass indoor gatherings should be held L

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.

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 **outdoor** spaces in which social distancing protocol can be maintained.

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.

Have you wondered:

- ❖ What multicultural competency is, and why it is important?
- ❖ How you might meet a longing for the kind of intentional experience that will transform your life, deepen your faith, and enrich your soul?

Are you ready to:

- ❖ Lead a different kind of educational experience, one which will develop you as a facilitator and a mentor?
- ❖ Practice, enhance, and share your multicultural competency?

Is your congregation ready to:

- ❖ Engage authentically with one another about ways race, ethnicity, and culture have shaped your lives?
- ❖ Begin an intentionally transformative learning process, based on techniques we know work to help people and congregations build multicultural competency?
- ❖ Embrace individual and community practices vital for sustaining our living Unitarian Universalist faith now and for the future?



BUILDING THE WORLD WE DREAM ABOUT

www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/btwwda

Are you ready?

(over) ⇨

What is Building the World We Dream About?

Building the World We Dream About is a 24-workshop curriculum to support Unitarian Universalists and our congregations in building the multicultural Beloved Community we want to embody. It seeks to disrupt the workings of racism and transform how we relate across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, in our congregations and beyond. Participants develop their anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural habits and skills and prepare to nurture a multiculturally competent, actively anti-racist congregation.

Why is it so long?

The program's education process depends on personal reflection and narrative and invites deep listening, sharing, and reflection. Participants practice skills for cross-cultural dialogue and authentic cross-cultural partnering, primarily through sharing formative stories about racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. The first 13 workshops elicit the voices of people in the group and bring in others' personal narratives as readings and video clips. The final 11 workshops invite participants to interact with people of diverse identities and backgrounds outside the workshop group, both in and beyond the congregation.

Can it be shortened or adapted?

An intentional, step-by-step process distinguishes this resource from other faith development programs from Tapestry of Faith; thus, using workshops selectively is not recommended. Explore creative calendaring rather than shortening the series. Workshop 13 offers a natural "break" after a concluding worship celebration, and the program can easily be done over the course of two years. Similarly, we recommend you adapt only with great care. Be sure to keep these core elements: inclusion of varied perspectives, opportunities for engagement and deep reflection, and opportunities to practice and integrate newly developed multicultural competencies.

What if we cannot find the ideal facilitators?

We recommend that a two-person team from your congregation facilitate the program. Both will need good facilitation skills and be well versed in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism. Ideally, one facilitator will identify as white and the other as a person from a group marginalized by race, ethnicity, and/or culture. However, a team of two experienced white facilitators from your congregation with good anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism competency can ably lead the program. Encourage such a team to seek help from peers using this program in other congregations and from Alex Kapitan, Congregational Justice Administrator for the UUA (akapitan@uua.org).

What if our congregation does not seem racially, ethnically, and/or culturally diverse?

Building the World We Dream About is designed to meet our congregations where each is, in terms of its multicultural make-up. Participants will still benefit from sharing their individual stories and listening to others, including the narratives provided in the curriculum. Facilitators of such a group might take special care to "widen the net" both within and outside the congregation to ensure participants encounter as many diverse voices as possible, at points where the curriculum provides such opportunities. Also, facilitators might seek further guidance, before beginning the program, from the UUA's Alex Kapitan.

How can we prepare to engage with the program?

It is highly recommended that congregations lay strong groundwork in preparation for engaging with this program—with proper preparation the returns are far greater. It is important to have more than one person leading the initiative; ideally, congregational leaders are on board, including the senior minister and the Director of Religious Education. Consider doing a series of events leading up to the start of the program, and reaching people in diverse and creative ways that speak to different learning styles. Services, panel discussions, guest preachers, a video series with follow-up discussions, and book discussions are some possibilities. For congregations that want an energizing introduction to the program, introductory workshops are now available.

Check out www.uua.org/multicultural for more, or contact Alex Kapitan at akapitan@uua.org.