

# 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 – April 28, 2022

## Birthing Beauty: Beltane!

*First Sundays Dual Platform: In-person + Zoom and Facebook Live*

Join us this Sunday in person or on zoom and facebook live to chant and sing and DRUM! as we begin our May exploration what it means to be a people who Nurture Beauty – and continue celebration of the Spring holy days with observance of Pagan Beltane. We'll lift up this season of rebirth and renewal with all manner of joyful noise – and DRUMS! and take a gleeful look at how these holy days of Spring weave together across so many faiths and traditions and rituals and history. And did we mention DRUMS!?

Follow the directions below to gather with us in person at UF – IFAS Building. Follow the [Zoom link](#) below to gather with us virtually in Zoom. Catch us on Facebook live on our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu>.

Come as you are – we'll be watching for you! We welcome you on Sunday morning at 10:30. Come a bit before and we can Chat prior to the service... See you then!

### **In person at:**

**University of Florida - IFAS**

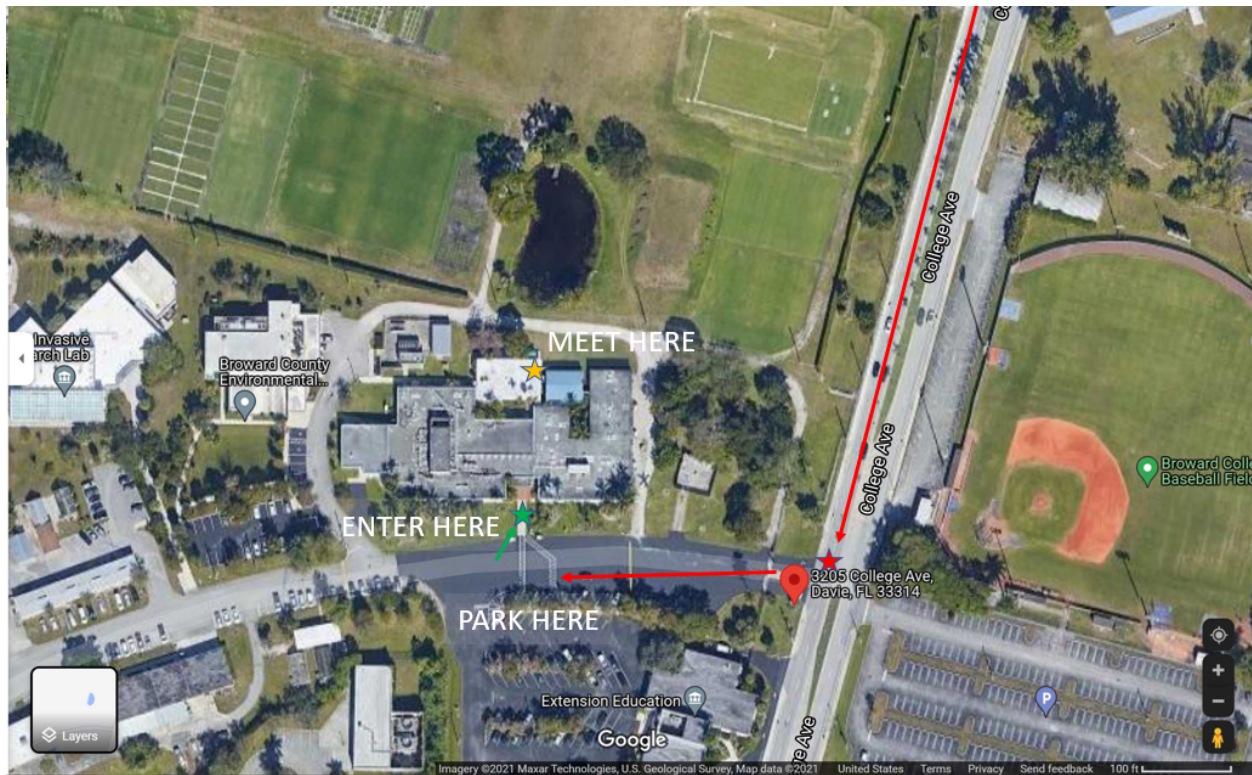
**Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center**

3205 College Avenue, Davie, FL 33314

**Directions:** <https://flrec.ifas.ufl.edu/directions/>

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.



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

### *Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:*

#### **Sunday, May 1, 2022**

**Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am** – Birthing Beauty: Beltane! - Rev. Amy Carol Webb -

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

**Faith Forward Series – Q&A with Rev. Amy this Sunday!** The Membership Committee is so excited that THIS Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, Rev. Amy will host a session of the Inquirers' Series after the worship service and following the hospitality time. This is a wonderful opportunity for folks who are new to learn more about River of Grass and its ministry and many opportunities for service, as well as about the Unitarian Universalist faith. But it's also a great place for those who are already members to learn more too! The session will be offered in hybrid fashion, in-person and via Zoom. Drop-ins are welcome, but it's helpful to know if you are planning to attend, so we can be on the lookout for you. Please contact [membership@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:membership@riverofgrassuu.org) for more information and/or to let us know you'll attend.

**Faith Development:** On Sunday, our children and youth will be gathering in-person, under the pavilion to "Celebrate the Beauty That is Us". They'll practice acknowledging their own beauty and make gifts for themselves that will help to keep that practice alive. For more information about our Faith Development Program for Kids and Teens, contact our Faith Development Director, Karen Gonzalez at [ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org](mailto:ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org).

**OWL Parent Info Night:** Like so many other states today, Florida is choosing to limit the amount of information our kids have access to and need in order to grow into healthy adults. Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, **River of Grass is proud to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula for teens.** Come learn more about this distinguished program, meet our facilitators and hear about our options for this curriculum for the 2022-23 school year. This program is open to teens outside of River of Grass, so if you know of a family who may want to join us, please feel free to share this invitation. [Please complete this quick survey](#) so that

we may find a date that works best for most for this meeting. If you have any questions please contact our Faith Development Director, Karen Gonzalez at [ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org](mailto:ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org).

### **The Worship Team has a number of opportunities STILL OPEN!**

Without volunteers we cannot do what we do on Sunday morning!! Volunteer positions are typically once a month for 2.5 hours on a rotation! That's it! Please inquire as your dynamic ministry may just be an email or phone call away!! We cannot do what we do without everyone doing their part. Training is available. Here are the positions and a little about what is involved.



- **Tech Runner** - Run the Pre-recorded services every Sunday morning with the Tech Team.  
**Duties:** After all pre-recorded segments are completed, they are sent to the Runner for Sunday morning. An ethernet connection and some basic skills taught to you by our professional, Rebecca Rice, and you are on the Team! **Time Commitment: Two hours a month!**
- **Host Scheduler** - **Duties:** Assists Worship Chair scheduling Service hosts for upcoming services. Sends emails, schedules on the Sunday Morning Volunteer spreadsheet. **Time commitment: One hour a month.**
- **Co-Chair for Worship** - Worship needs a co-chair to assist and support Rev Amy in all aspects of putting services together weekly. **Duties:** Scheduling and training of Service Leaders, building Sunday scripts and OOS, scheduling Storytellers and Zoom Hosts; keeping our services inclusive; and responsibility for all lay worship services. Member of the Sunday Experience Team. **Time commitment: 3 - 5 hours a week. With two people, the schedule would be less demanding! I would love to share what I've learned with YOU!**

Please consider how you support River of Grass with your efforts. This is your spiritual home. We value and truly need the gifts you bring! Inquiries to Rita Cherubini, Worship Chair, 781.856.2335 or [worship@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:worship@riverofgrassuu.org).

### **8<sup>TH</sup> PRINCIPLE TEAM MESSAGE**

#### **WHAT IS BELOVED COMMUNITY IF IT DOESN'T INCLUDE EVERYONE?**

*The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle states, "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."*

Support of Black Lives Matter and calls to defund the police reverberated across America in 2020 following the death of George Floyd, igniting social justice protests and riots at a time when the corona virus and lockdowns upended society in unprecedented ways. What was left in 2020's wake was a massive increase in the number of murders, dealing a disproportionate blow to Black Americans.

"Certainly, the protests and riots mid-2020 after the death of George Floyd followed a pattern of spiking violence that we've seen following past viral police incidents, such as the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray. This pattern has been termed the 'Ferguson Effect': police pull back while violent crime spikes precipitously," said Hannah Meyers, director of the policing and public safety initiative at the Manhattan Institute.

Murders across the board spiked by nearly 30% in 2020 compared to the year prior, according to FBI data, marking the largest single-year increase in killings since the agency began tracking the crimes. Among Black Americans, the number of deaths spiked by more than 32% compared to 2019.

The figures are more staggering considering White Americans make up 76% of the population compared to Black Americans representing only 13%, according to census data.

Murders in the 2010s first broke the 7,000 murder benchmark in 2015 after the high-profile deaths of Freddie Gray that same year and Michael Brown in 2014, jumping by nearly a thousand in one year. Brown was fatally shot by a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer and Gray died after he sustained injuries in the back of a Baltimore police van. Their deaths sparked protests and riots similar to the ones following Floyd's death. Prior to Brown's death, Black murders had fallen the previous four years.

Don't forget the adoption vote of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle will be held on May 15, 2022 at the Congregational Annual Meeting! 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Team: Lou DeSantis, Rita Cherubini, Tanya Gustafson and Steve Jens-Rochow. Questions? [8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto:8thPrincipleTeam@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/>

#### **The SE UU Cluster and UU Justice Florida present - Justice Saturday 2022 - Environmental Justice: Big Money, Sugar Cane, and Racism - Saturday, Apr 30<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 pm**

Other countries have effectively banned sugar cane burning and found better ways to harvest sugar cane. While in Florida, Big Sugar continues to burn sugar cane fields despite the environmental and health issues of surrounding BIPOC communities.

Join us as Rev. David Lawlor, Co-Chair of UU Ministry for Earth, and Keynote Speaker, Dr. Rashid Shaikh, Co-Chair of UU BIPOC Caucus for Climate Justice, and a panel of activists discuss the issue and what we can do to stop this injustice.

**Free: Pre-register for the zoom link: [vicepresident@SEUUcluster.org](mailto:vicepresident@SEUUcluster.org)**

Panelists:

- **Colin Walkes**, former mayor of Pahokee, representing Sierra Club's "Stop the Burn" Campaign
- **Robert C. Mitcherll**, Friends of the Everglades
- **Dr. Arkush Banzal**, Clinicians for Climate Action
- **Aliki Moncrief**, Executive Director of Florida Conservation Voters
- **Rep Anna V. Eskamani**, District 47, Orange County, Florida House



**RoG Men's Group: We meet the first and third Thursday each month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.** We will meet on [Zoom at Meeting ID 670 022 402](#) for the foreseeable future. We gather and do check-in where we share our day. Then a discussion topic is presented. We read aloud the premise and questions and then discuss it all until 8:30 pm. The goal is that the sharing moves from head to heart. **The May 5<sup>th</sup> topic is: "TBD."** The Topic Description is online at [KipBarkley.com/topic/](http://KipBarkley.com/topic/). There we post past topics and links to the UU Small Group Ministry Network. We are a lay-led group and look to our members for future topics and the direction we take. Do come out and join us. The Meeting Room opens up at 6:30 pm before the Host arrives. If you have any questions please contact Kip Barkley; [mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org); RoG Men's Group Facilitator.

**POSTAL FOOD DRIVE - On Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>,** River of Grass needs 30 volunteers for the Postal Food Drive. We got the Post Office we had 3 years ago: Plantation Post Office, 7580 NW 5 St, Plantation, FL 33317. This Drive is where we sort and pack food coming in during the Postal Food Drive for LifeNet4Families, the feeding program we support. This is a family friendly event. Children and youth can help by sorting and packing food for LifeNet4Families. We will have two shifts: **4 to 6 pm and 6 to 8 pm.** Please sign up by replying to Steve Jens-Rochow, [SSJGT@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:SSJGT@riverofgrassuu.org).



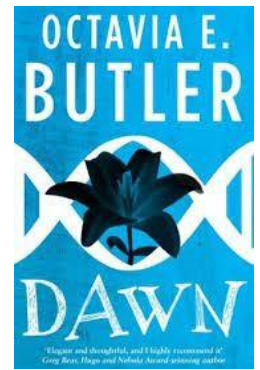
**BUUKies May Read - "Dawn" by Octavia E. Butler. We will meet on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.**

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

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

An alien race calls on one woman to revive mankind after Earth's apocalypse in this science fiction classic.

Lilith Iyapo has just lost her husband and son when atomic fire consumes Earth—the last stage of the planet’s final war. Hundreds of years later Lilith awakes, deep in the hold of a massive alien spacecraft piloted by the Oankali—who arrived just in time to save humanity from extinction. They have kept Lilith and other survivors asleep for centuries, as they learned whatever they could about Earth. Now it is time for Lilith to lead them back to her home world, but life among the Oankali on the newly resettled planet will be nothing like it was before. For the first time since the nuclear holocaust, Earth will be inhabited. Grass will grow, animals will run, and people will learn to survive the planet’s untamed wilderness. But their children will not be human. Not exactly.



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

**HI LOVERS OF BLACK FILM** – The Black Film group will discuss **"In the Heat of the Night"**. A black Philadelphia police detective [Sidney Poitier] is mistakenly suspected of a local murder while coming back to his racially hostile Mississippi hometown, and after being cleared is reluctantly asked by the police chief [Rod Steiger] to investigate the case. The film explores the rampant racism of the police and townspeople. The film won five Oscars including Best Picture and Best Actor for Steiger.



The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Black Film Group will discuss "In the Heat of the Night" on **Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**. Please reply to Steve Jens-Rochow [blackfilms@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:blackfilms@riverofgrassuu.org) if you are coming. For Discussion join Zoom Meeting at 7pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84418593114> Meeting ID: 844 1859 3114; One tap mobile +13017158592,,84418593114# US (Washington DC). Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kvLOD4l8Y>

**SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week:** Purchase energy efficient appliances. When it's time for a new TV, fridge, dishwasher, washer, dryer or AC, look for the Energy Star (r) rating. It ensures an energy efficient green product. Even if it costs more up front, it will save money on your electric bill, reducing the pollution created to provide electricity to your home.

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

**Team:** Deb Buehler Ely, 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: considers first those who are most at risk.

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

### **Sources:**

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

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

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

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

## **MEETINGS IN THE TIME OF COVID**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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