

River of Grass

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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

River of Grass Weekly Update – May 14, 2020

This Sunday we'll be highlighting our children's year in their quest to develop their Unitarian Universalist faith. We'll have special music, photos, poetry and a send-off for our high school senior with a bridging ceremony. Come celebrate with us!

Come as you are, pajamas and coffee 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 at <https://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu/>. Tune in there for the service, then log onto our Zoom link for hospitality time afterward. And now that we have a larger Zoom space ready to welcome all who will join us from over this world – who will we meet this week?

Sunday morning, gather with us at the River – on your computer, your tablet, your phone (with video or only audio if you like, we'll miss your face!) -- just click or dial into our RoG Meeting Room at the link or numbers below. We'll be watching for you!

Topic: Worship May 17, 2020

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, May 17, 2020

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am - Karen Gonzalez and Faith Development - Counting our Rainbows: Celebrating our Growing Faith

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

Faith Development – Faith Development classes will continue meeting this Sunday and next, as we finish out our regular school year online. Reach out to Karen at religiuseducator@riverofgrassuu.org for information about joining our Zoom rooms..

Young Adults are meeting every Sunday, at 6:30 pm virtually on Zoom – Millennials, Gen Xers, and Gen Zs, are welcome to tune in to the YUUnG Adult Virtual Coffee Hour on **Sunday, May 17th at 6:30 pm**. We are an intentional community of young adults that uplift and inspire each other. We seek to grow together while enjoying life to the fullest. Please email youngadults@riverofgrassuu.org if you have any questions and to obtain the zoom details.

May 17th is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia was created in 2004 to draw the attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender, intersex people and all other people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, and sex characteristics.

The date of May 17th was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

The Day represents a major global annual landmark to draw the attention of decision makers, the media, the public, corporations, opinion leaders, local authorities, etc. to the alarming situation faced by people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, and sex characteristics. - From the Welcoming Congregation Renewal Team

Faith Development - Parents Having Coffee Online:

Parents will join together for conversation and camaraderie in a Zoom Room on **Saturday morning, May 16th at 10:00 am**. Look for an email from Karen Gonzalez or reach out to her at religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org.

Children's Summer Fellowship

Through the summer months, our River of Grass children will be exploring our National Zoo, virtually, with games and activities - making connections to our 7th Principle which calls us to value Earth's web of life. **If you'd like to be a part of this adventure by hosting a Sunday or two, contact Diane Lade, faithdevelopment@riverofgrassuu.org, FD Committee Chair.**

Other Events:

Thursday Mindfulness Drop-in 6:00 pm – How are you doing, and are you tending to any felt anxiety or stress? Are you taking time to pause and check-in with your heart, body and mind? Consider joining tonight's community mindfulness Zoom session every Thursday at 6:00 pm. <https://zoom.us/j/551319571>. Note: This is not a class, just a time to pause and notice, and share with others. Drop in any week. Contact: Carolyn@insightinstitutellc.com or Scott@Insightinstitutellc.com.

River of Grass Café presents: Zoe Mulford in a Virtual Concert via ZOOM on Saturday, May 16th, from 8:00 - 10 pm. Zoe Mulford is becoming best known as the author of "The President Sang Amazing Grace," which was covered by Joan Baez in 2018 and received an International Folk Award as Song of the Year at Folk Alliance International. She is also a powerful and engaging performer in her own right. She backs her voice with guitar or claw-hammer banjo, drawing on the traditional music of Appalachia and the British Isles and to create music that feels both comfortably lived-in and sparkingly fresh.

She has been a Kerrville Newfolk finalist and a Falcon Ridge Emerging Artist. Her songs have been recognized by the Great American Song Contest and the Mid-Atlantic Song Contest, and appeared in Sing Out! Magazine. Her song "Welcome In Another Year" has become a seasonal favorite on folk radio. It has been performed by many other artists, including John Roberts and Tony Barrant in their Nowell Sing We Clear Christmas revue and Four Shillings Short in their Samhain show.

Tickets are \$15 per person. ([Purchase using this link and using the BUY NOW button.](#)) Please purchase a ticket for each person attending the virtual concert. More than ever, artists are depending on us during this time of social distancing. You will receive a link to the ZOOM concert before the scheduled date/time. **(Please note: Ticket sales close at 4:00 pm on the day of the concert.)**

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, May 19th at 7:00 pm**. Every Tuesday night we will meet via Zoom. <https://zoom.us/j/201911385>. We will meet from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. This is an open-ended, drop-in group for all levels of meditation experience. For further information, please contact Gary Gonzalez at meditation@riverofgrassuu.org.

Do You Want to Help the Search for Our Future Home for River of Grass? The River of Grass Future Home Team welcomes additional members as we start our search for our future home. Please contact Steve Jens-Rochow if you are interested. SSJGT@riverofgrassuu.org

LifeNet4Families Donations needed - As you may know LifeNet4Families has suspended their volunteer program until further notice. The staff continues to hand out about 300 hot to-go meals a day, Monday-Friday, as well as providing showers, food boxes and bags.

If you would like to help, LifeNet has provided a list of items they are in need of. The items can be dropped off outside the gate at LifeNet from 8:00am to noon, Monday-Friday. There are security guards at the gate. Let the security guards know that you have a donation and then leave it outside the gate (or security can get a staff member to come out).

Here's the list of items needed at LifeNet4Families:

- Drop off hygiene products (deodorant, toothpaste, soap/shower gel, razors, shaving cream, lotion, hand sanitizer, etc.)
- Drop off specific menswear (t-shirts, shorts, belts, underwear, socks, sneakers)
- Drop off masks for clients (homemade or store bought)

Another option! If you would like to support them with a financial donation there is a fundraiser to provide housing assistance for LifeNet clients. Please contact Scott May at scottmayrog@gmail.com for more information.

Location and Directions:

Lifenet4Families, 1 NW 33rd Terrace, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

On Broward Blvd. just east of 441 on the north side of the road.

Landmark: there is a Mobil gas station at the corner of 33rd Terrace and Broward Blvd.

Stay safe! Any questions about LifeNet4Families please contact Judi Oltmans, SSJGT@RiverofGrassUU.org.

Welcoming Congregation Opportunity – Have you started it yet?

“Transgender Inclusion in Congregations” course, of course

River of Grass UU congregation has made a commitment to be welcoming to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We became a UUA recognized Welcoming Congregation June 4, 2002. Throughout this past congregational year, the Welcoming Congregation Renewal Team has taken intentional steps to renew our commitment to welcoming and inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

We are now offering “Transgender Inclusion in Congregations.” This module is a very important one for all of us.

This course is for congregations who want to take their knowledge and skills to the next level in terms of trans identity and learn how to create congregations that are fully inclusive and affirming of the full breadth of gender diversity. Over 6 sessions you will deeply explore the intersection of trans identity, spirituality and faith community and gain the grounding, context and skills to transform yourself and our congregation.

This module can be very deeply moving, with personal reflection. Many people may need to process what they learned. We will also talk about how the River can incorporate changes to become more naturally welcoming. We will be scheduling some Zoom sessions for anyone who wishes to participate.

Yes, we are already pretty welcoming, but awareness of the multi-layers of identity can make critical subtle changes to improve our welcome to all.

Please take advantage of this “stay at home” time to take this course. You can view the sessions at your own pace. For more information and the link to connect to the sessions, contact Kathy at Welcoming@riverofgrassuu.org.

***SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week:** Quick tips at the gas pump: Avoid spills by not topping off your gas tank. And tap the gas hose nozzle a few times and point the nozzle up before removing it from your tank to eliminate drips. Stopping even a few drips helps to protect our environment!*

COVID-19 Response Update

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

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

Our extended Caring Team has coordinated a 'network of contacting' to help ensure our community 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 the New Coronavirus

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

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

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

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

How to cope with stress during this coronavirus outbreak:

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

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

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 e-mail and we will remove you from the mailing list, office@riverofgrassuu.org.

Announcements to be sent out in the weekly congregation-wide update should be e-mailed or called into the congregation's office by 12 pm Wednesday. All announcements will pertain to congregational life and affiliated groups and will be for activities or events occurring within two weeks of the e-mail. Outside groups and individuals, wishing to use this vehicle of congregation-wide communication, must have the approval of the Board of Trustees.