

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 – May 20, 2021

Changing the Story: or To Be What We Might Have Been

This Sunday at River of Grass, we'll dig into a declaration of the 19th century novelist and poet known as George Eliot -- the pen name of Unitarian, Mary Ann Evans:

It's never too late to be what you might have been.

If we are the stories we tell about ourselves, if we are inseparable from the stories of who we are as individuals, communities, cultures -- congregations -- does it not follow that we can change ourselves and the world around us by changing our stories? What if "might have been" has been only a ruse along designed to keep us from being the people we really are, from doing what we really meant to do with our lives? What if it's all still right here no matter how long we've been distracted with other things, just waiting for us to get clear? If the stories we have told ourselves about who we are no longer serve us or our world, how do we begin to change the story -- especially with the opportunity before us to build the world we have dreamed of so long, knowing the one be left behind just a year ago is not, cannot, must not come again?

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 May 23, 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, May 23, 2021

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Rev. Amy Carol Webb - Changing the Story: or To Be What We Might Have Been <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 honoring Memorial Day a little early. The theme of story will invite us to think of stories about our UU military veterans and others who have served our country. Stories of courageous people inspire us to be courageous people too! For more information about our Faith Development classes for children and youth, contact our Director, Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org.

Registration Is Open for SUUSI 2021! [View the 2021 SUUSI catalog now!](#) [Register now in SOLIS!](#)

We recommend that you browse the catalog website first to learn more about this year's programs and offerings. To register, you will need to have an account in SOLIS, the SUUSI Online Information System. Follow the link above to sign in or create an account. Questions about how to register or how to "do" virtual SUUSI? [Start here.](#)



NEW: Social Justice Education Program

SUUSI's mission calls for us to be a community that "evokes the best within us" and that lives Unitarian-Universalist values of inclusion and mutual respect. In recent years, we have become increasingly aware of ways that our community has not lived up to that mission. We've heard from Black and Indigenous people of color and from queer, trans, and nonbinary people that SUUSI does not always feel safe for them.

We strive to learn and to do better. The Board has hired a consultant from the UUA, Michael Crumpler, to help SUUSI leadership identify ways to make SUUSI into a space that is radically welcoming to all. Every member of the Board and Core Staff is completing trainings for trans inclusion and anti-racism.

We are pleased to be offering several FREE workshops on social justice and equity at SUUSI this year. Some are led by our own SUUSI clergy:

701: Trans Inclusion: Rev. Kimi Riegel facilitates discussion as workshop participants attend the online workshop "Transforming Hearts," which the workshop creators describe as "an exploration of the intersection of trans identity, spirituality, and faith community."

700: Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity: This is a film that people have described as "life changing." Following the film, Rev. Jan Taddeo and others will facilitate small group discussions.

Called to Justice

SUUSI has also brought in an anti-racism coaching group, "Called to Justice", to lead several free workshops for SUUSI this year. Each is 90 minutes long and contains one break. The workshops are presented by UU religious educators Christina Rivera and Aisha Hauser.

Basic Elements of Racial Justice

702: Black Lives Matter 101: This workshop covers the history of the BLM movement using live footage of the BLM founders. It addresses common misconceptions about BLM and engages participants in learning.

Implementation Tools

703: Bystander Intervention: This workshop delves into how to confront micro-aggressions as they happen. Learn the tools to identify and engage racism in your everyday life.

704: Unconscious Bias: In this workshop we will explore what it means to have unconscious bias, and what to do about it when you identify it.

Taking it Home

705: UU White Supremacy Teach-In: What does it take to disrupt "business as usual" and how do we lead from the margins? Join two of the founders of the #UUWhiteSupremacyTeachIn as we explore how to bring the TeachIn model to your congregation (or your SUUSI).

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/>

The River of Grass Men's Group is open to all men. The Men's Group Men's Group meets via Zoom every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. **On Thursday, May 20th at 7:30 pm we will meet on Zoom.** Our Topic will be: "Stories That Influence." 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 7:00 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.

SE Cluster Virtual Meeting Saturday, May 22, 2021, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm - "Cultivating Empathy, Inspiring Justice: Widening the Circle of Concern" Engaging with the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change. Keynote Speakers: Natalie Briscoe, Lead, UUA Southern Region and the Rev. Marcus Fogliano, Project Manager to the Office of the UUA President. Interactive Breakouts, New Tools, Ritual, Music. How can we move forward in addressing the perennial problem of racism and white supremacy in the Association? [FREE \(Registration Required, click here\)](#)

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, May 25th 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.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) classes starting online May 25th - Carolyn Sant Angelo and Scott May will be offering Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) online starting May 25th. MBSR has positively impacted our personal and professional lives, helping us to better respond to life's challenges.

MBSR is an 8-week research-based program developed at the UMass Medical School Stress Reduction Clinic in 1979. It helps to cultivate participant's discovery of their own resources and strategies to reduce stress, plus builds on foundations of awareness & compassion.



Here are the details:

- **Tuesdays 5:30-8pm, May 25-July 13, and Saturday June 26, 9am-3pm.**
- Sliding scale investment: \$250, \$150, \$50. Scholarships available.
- Registration link: [MBSR Registration](#)

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 **May 26th 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
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

Wear Orange 2021 Weekend starts June 4th [Save the date and learn more about Wear Orange](#)

We're less than a month away from the start of Wear Orange Weekend. On June 4th, we'll kick things off by commemorating National Gun Violence Awareness Day to honor the lives of people in the United States affected by gun violence and demand an end to this crisis. [Learn more about what we're doing this year to Wear Orange, including events happening across the country.](#)

After Hadiya Pendleton was shot and killed in 2013 at the age of 15, her friends and family organized in Chicago to honor her life by wearing the color orange. Wear Orange originated on June 2, 2015—what would have been Hadiya's 18th birthday—and is now observed nationally



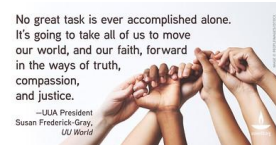
on the first Friday in June and the following weekend each year in order to raise awareness for gun violence prevention.

This year, that means calling special attention to how the gun violence crisis has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the number of people killed by gun violence exceeded 40,000—the highest rate of gun deaths in two decades.¹

So, on June 4th, we'll #WearOrange and come together with communities across the country as we work to end gun violence. [Save the date and learn more about how you can be a part of Wear Orange Weekend.](#)

Thank you for being a part of this movement. We hope you'll join us this year to make #WearOrange as impactful as possible.

New Member Ceremony, Jun 6th during service. At our New Member Ceremony, we celebrate those who have found a new home in this Beloved Community. If you are interested in becoming a member at this ceremony, RSVP by Jun 1st via email membership@riverofgrassuu.org. For more information see our website: <https://riverofgrassuu.org/becoming-a-member.html>.



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, Jun 13th 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.

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Irrigate during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speeds are the lowest. This reduces water loss through evaporation. Also position sprinklers to put all the water on your lawn and landscape, not onto paved areas nearby. This weekend: Please take a few minutes, check your sprinkler system timing and positioning...and live our 7th principle.

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		

Any questions contact Northstar Financial Planners:
Allen Giese, Steve Tepper, or Stacy Saavedra at (954) 693-0030

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 RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION, INC. The donor should notify the CC Team and the Office Administrator of the details of the donation by emailing CapitalCapaign@riverofgrassuu.org .
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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 contract 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.