

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 – June 2, 2022



Blessings Abound

Bring a flower and join us on the patio for the dedication of children, the showering of gratitude for our Faith Development volunteers and a blessing for us all!

"I have blessed you so that you may be a blessing to each and everyone." ~Genesis 12

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>.

In person at:

University of Florida - IFAS

Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center

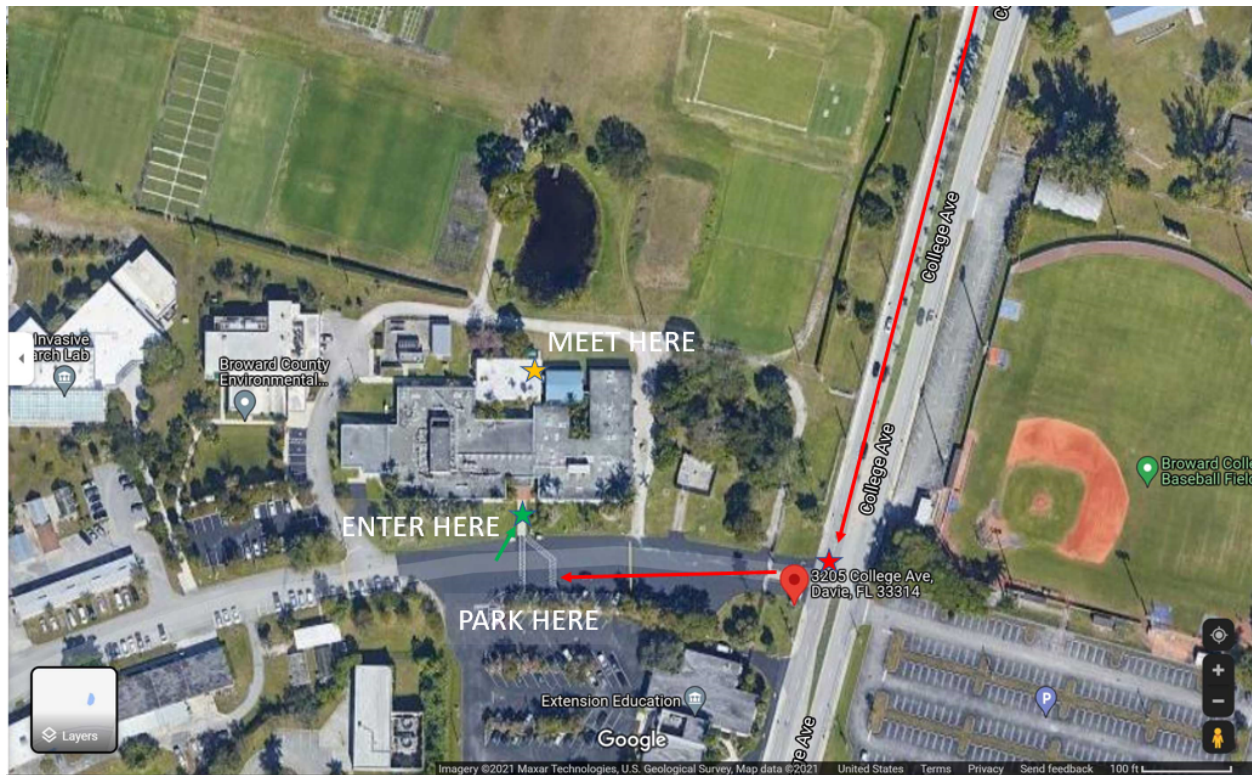
3205 College Avenue, Davie, FL 33314

Directions: <https://frec.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.





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!

Use 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>.

Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:

Sunday, June 5, 2022

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Blessings Abound: flower Communion - Karen Gonzalez and Rev. Amy Carol Webb <https://zoom.us/j/961564350?pwd=cFpKY2RtRk4wVE5NbDczdTU5THViQT09>

Faith Development: We look forward to worshipping together, under the pavilion, when we will look back on our school year, thank our teachers, bless our newest young friends and share in a flower communion. For more information about our Faith Development Program for Kids and Teens, contact our Faith Development Director, Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org.

Faith Forward Series – Q&A with Rev. Amy this Sunday! The Membership Committee is so excited that **THIS Sunday, June 5th, 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 the Unitarian Universalist faith and a little about River of Grass and its history. 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 for more information and/or to let us know you'll attend.

Heritage and Hope: In Celebration of Gay Pride Month

Our Heritage – The Rev. James Stoll (1936-1994) was the first minister of any American religious denomination, and probably the world to publicly admit his homosexuality. Stoll was a Unitarian minister and his act was the first of many that came to mark the Unitarians as the country’s most accepting, welcoming denominations. Stoll was

instrumental in the Unitarian Universalist Association issuance of the first-ever gay rights resolution in 1970. The Unitarians were first to have an openly gay minister, first to officially condemn discrimination against homosexuals, and first to take official church stances on matters of special importance to the gay and lesbian community.*

*This statement must be qualified. The Rev. Troy Perry, a born-again evangelical Christian, came out in 1969 and founded his own denomination, the Metropolitan Community Church. His admission of homosexuality, however, was made without any church affiliation and prompted him to create a new church. While Stoll acted within an extant faith with which he remained affiliated.

Source: "Gay Unitarians and the Birth of Sexual Tolerance in Liberal Religion" by Mark Oppenheimer, History Department, Yale University

Our Hope – Robert Joseph Greene (born January 11, 1973) is a Canadian author of gay romance fiction, best known for *The Gay Icon Classics of the World*, a collection of gay-themed love stories from over 12 different countries. Each story represents a culture and a people. The book was listed by PFLAG Canada as a recommended book in their "Books Worth Reading" section.

One of the short stories in the *Gay Icon Classics* collection is "Halo's Golden Circle", a tragic love story set in ancient Judea. Author and Jewish scholar Steven Greenberg remarked that it was a "beautiful story".

Following the release of *The Gay Icon Classics of the World II* in 2012, a group of Russian students translated "The Blue Door", a story from the collection about a young Russian prince who comes out as gay, and used it as a protest against the "homosexual propaganda" laws enacted in Saint Petersburg. In 2013, Greene publicly stated that he had received death threats from readers in Russia over the story.

In June 2013, publishing group Weltbild, which was owned 100% by the Catholic Diocese of Germany, removed Greene's books from their stores. The reason given by Weltbild was that Greene's books did not conform to the company's "traditional values". The decision was criticized because the publisher at the same time kept more erotic heterosexual books in its inventory.

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/>

Gatherings Beginning and Beginning Anew!

As our COVID stats remain low-to-manageable at this time, we're bringing back some of our favorite ways to gather, and beginning another way we have profound need of in these still-difficult days. We aim for each group to meet twice before the Summer arrives, then monthly, and each group will decide whether to meet during the Summer or reconvene in September. Mark your calendars with these dates for the remainder of this Congregational Year, and email minister@riverofgrassuu.org for details.

Welcome Table Communion Circle – Our Welcome Table will be via Zoom only this evening.

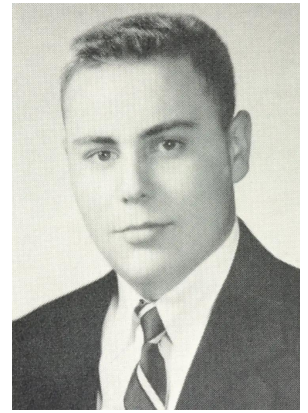
4th Thursdays, 7pm

Bonus June 9

Drum Circle --

4th Fridays, 7pm

Bonus June 10



Email minister@riverofgrassuu.org for details, and we'll be watching for you!

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 Jun 2nd topic is: "Families of Choice."** The Topic Description is online at 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; RoG Men's Group Facilitator.

HI LOVERS OF BLACK FILM – We will discuss "In the Heat of the Night" on Wednesday, Jun 22nd at 7pm. **June Discussion: "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 8th Principle Black Film Group will discuss "In the Heat of the Night" on **Wednesday, Jun 22nd at 7pm.** Please reply to Steve Jens-Rochow 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/kvL0D418Y>



SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Avoid buying stuff. Try a birthday or holiday where no gifts are bought. Simply re-gift unused things found around the house. Or give a gift that is handmade from the heart, like a poem or painting. Or give the gift of your time, like a stroll with your loved one, or a kayak excursion. Or donate to a charity in honor of them. There are many ways to give, without buying more stuff!

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

Team: Deb Buehler Ely, Karen Gonzalez, Susan Juncosa, Jeanne Masten (COVIDTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org)

Purpose of Team: To review guidelines for congregational and smaller group gatherings in order to provide recommendations to the Board to be used for official River of Grass meetings and events.

These recommendations are:

For: only for official, River of Grass - sponsored outdoor and indoor small group gatherings.

Fluid: new information comes out all the time and the recommendations could change.

Inclusive: all attendees should be able to attend physically or virtually.

Protective: consider first those who are most at risk.

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

Sources:

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

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

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

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

MEETINGS IN THE TIME OF COVID

RIVER OF GRASS COVID-19 TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD: Updated May 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**.

Based upon the updated CDC guidelines and the Broward County risk levels, the following measures are recommended to the Board.

Community Level High: Follow our previous guidelines, listed below.

In person Worship services - inside

- Masks required for all, with possible exception of speakers (see below). Masks should be KN-95 if possible.
- If the Minister and/or other speakers wish to be unmasked, they must take a rapid test the night before the service. They must maintain social distancing at all times while unmasked.
- Singing transmits more aerosols than speaking. At this time, no singing except the Minister. Humming OK!
- Maintain social distancing between household groups while indoors.
- No food or drinks inside.
- All attendees should sign in with current contact information in the event that contact tracing is required.

After service - outside

- Maintain social distancing.

Meetings and Small Groups - inside and outside.

- Group/meeting leader should determine if all attendees are vaccinated and comfortable with disclosing status. This may require some quick private conversations prior to the meeting! If everyone is not comfortable, masking and social distancing should be maintained.
- Food and drinks: up to the group. Be mindful of crowding.
- All attendees should sign in with current contact information in the event that contact tracing is required.

Community Level Medium: Individuals should follow CDC Guidelines for Medium

Community Level Low: Individuals should follow CDC Guidelines for Low

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. **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 to 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.