

# 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 – February 10, 2022

## The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith

### Racial Justice, adapted from 2017 Service by Rev. Erika Hewitt

Our worship service this morning is uniquely prophetic: it calls to us who identify as white to listen, humbly and perhaps with some discomfort, to the lived reality of black Unitarian Universalists in our midst. This discomfort is both a gesture of hospitality to voices that have not been heard enough and a sign that we're growing in the right direction.

River of Grass is doing sacred work: collectively, we will wrestle with what it means to be a majority-white faith whose anti-racist intentions have not always been borne out. We invite you to witness this moment of transparency and vision.

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 at <https://www.facebook.com/riverofgrassuu/>. Tune in there for the service, then log onto our Zoom link for hospitality time afterward.

We welcome you on Sunday morning at 10:30. Come a bit before and we can Chat prior to the service... See you then!

#### **Topic: Worship February 13, 2022**

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/ab3E9IRtb9>

#### **Worship Then – Worship Now – Worship NEXT: Reimagining Sunday Gathering at River of Grass**

It was 102 Sundays ago in the Before Times that we turned on a dime with COVID breathing down our necks to move the life of this Beloved Community into a virtual world we knew little about, but knew we must venture into to keep safe and stay connected at the same. The “we” was so many people with the skills, courage, commitment, and love who rose to challenge. The Sunday worship we knew and loved “then” was all of us in a room in a building at the same time every Sunday. Then, as COVID took over our known world, we did 89 Sundays in a row fully virtually, for despite our plan to begin a new way with First Sundays Blended Worship (in-person + virtual), plus Three Virtual, COVID challenges prevented us being together safely until December, and keep us virtual even now

as the Omicron variant winds down (Broward's COVID stats are better, but still outside our COVID policy for large gatherings).

**Beloveds, now it is time for "Next!"** Weighing the myriad factors that affect what we need in Beloved Community as we navigate our changed world, we're drawing together a plan for in-person Worship Pods for River Folk to gather in small groups to experience Zoom worship together! This can happen in parks (with wi-fi or 4G/5G phones), members' patios, backyards and other places safe to gather in small groups on Virtual Sunday mornings to connect and re-connect as we make our way forward through our new realities!

So, this Sunday, as we hold Zoom worship and our young'uns gather in person for their classes (Karen has the details below), we invite you to reach out to folks you might gather with to share Zoom worship in person! And watch for more specific organization of River Worship Pods in the weeks to come!

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

#### **Sunday, February 13, 2021**

**Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am** – The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith - Racial Justice, adapted from 2017 Service by Rev. Erika Hewitt -

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

**Faith Development:** Dragonflies 9:30am; Teens 12:00pm; Mockingbirds 1:30pm

This Sunday in our Faith Development classes, our children and youth will be focusing on "widening the circle of love we share" to include asylum seekers and refugees. We'll learn about why people leave their home countries and how we can help them to feel welcomed. In this Valentine's Day week, we'll remember that love is for everybody. For more information about our program, contact Karen Gonzalez at [ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto:ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org).

#### **Monthly Family Fun, Outdoors!**

Mark your calendars for two fun events for families -

**Saturday, Feb 19<sup>th</sup>** - gather at a member's home for an outdoor movie

**Saturday, Mar 19<sup>th</sup>** - gather at Bergeron Park for playground fun

Contact Karen Gonzalez at [ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto:ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org) for more information.

**Faith Development is for Adults, too!** Would you like to know more about our Unitarian and Universalist histories? Or, need some help in articulating your faith? Maybe you're wondering about the origin of our UU Principles or just how our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors decided to become one faith. Our Southern Region staff of the UUA is hosting an online series to help you to grow your understanding. This is a self-paced online program which culminates with one group session. We can also arrange a River of Grass study group for those taking the course. Contact Karen Gonzalez at [ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto:ReligiousEducator@RiverofGrassUU.org) if you're interested in being connected to others on the journey. [Learn more or register here.](#)

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

#### **Let's talk football...**

It seems fitting as Super Bowl LVI is this Sunday, Feb 13<sup>th</sup>. African Americans make up 68% of the players in the NFL, but only two are NFL head coaches.

Brian Flores, an African American football coach in the National Football League, began his NFL career with the New England Patriots, where he served as an assistant coach from 2008 to 2018. He was fired by the Dolphins last month after two winning seasons and then replaced with a bi-racial coordinator from the 49ers. Flores has had some condescending interviews with other teams but none offered employment. He is suing the Giants due to the tip-off of an accidental text message indicating the interviewing team had already offered the job to a white candidate and Flores' interview was just for show.

"It's hard to speak out," Flores said on CBS, "But," he added, "this is bigger than football. This is bigger than coaching."

Robert Griffin III, a former quarterback, tweeted: "Brian Flores effectively had to end his chances at coaching in the NFL to point out what we already know about discrimination in the hiring process for head coaches in this League."

Finding ironclad proof of racial discrimination is rarely easy, especially in an individual case. But the evidence that the NFL has engaged in a pattern of discrimination against Black coaches is very strong when you consider the number of black players on all football teams. Just something to ponder as you watch the game...

*"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."*

Come join the conversations either at the Black Film series, listening to the testimonials of the members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Team on Sunday morning and the Potluck Conversations that will take place in March. More information can be found on the website at [RiverofGrassUU.org/8thPrinciple.html](http://RiverofGrassUU.org/8thPrinciple.html). Do you have questions? [8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org](mailto:8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org)

### 8<sup>TH</sup> Principle Potluck Conversations

In preparation for the vote of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle at the Annual Meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>, we will be providing opportunities for members of the congregation to have some nourishment and conversations at Members' homes to discuss the many faces of racial disparity that we have been raised in and may not even recognize. We are on this journey as Unitarian Universalists to raise awareness and openness by doing this work together. We start by looking within ourselves for answers to questions we never thought to ask.

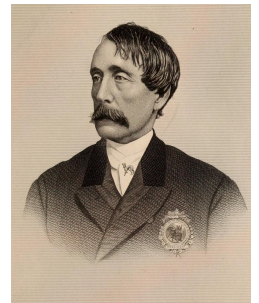
Members will be receiving invitations by email to join a discussion group in March about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle in a safe outdoor space at a Member's home to listen and think deeply. We hope you will join each other in building the world we dream about! See Q&A about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle [on our website](#).

8th Principle Team: Lou DeSantis, Rita Cherubini, Tanya Gustafson, Vernon Allen and Steve Jens-Rochow. Questions? [8thPrincipleTeam@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:8thPrincipleTeam@riverofgrassuu.org).

### *Heritage and Hope:*

**Heritage - Henry Bergh** (1811-1888) was the founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty, having dedicated his life to the cause of ending animal cruelty.

Under Bergh's leadership, the early ASPCA involved itself in a wide variety of issues, including slaughterhouse practices, animal transportation, care of horses, elimination of vivisection, cock fighting, and dog fighting, and the abolition of use of live pigeons in shooting matches. Bergh and the ASPCA are particularly credited for the use of clay pigeons in trap shooting.



During the 1872 outbreak of Horse Flu, Bergh stood wearing a top hat in the middle of New York City's streets and stopped horse-drawn trolleys and wagons being pulled by sick animals, sending them back to their stables. Although he was threatened with lawsuits by transit companies, his advocacy raised the profile of the cause.

Bergh commenced his life work not from an affinity with animals, nor as a squeamish sentimentalist, but stirred by suffering and injustice. Some newspapers labeled Bergh "the Great Meddler"; others, "An Ass That Should Have His Ears Cropped."

Bergh's industriousness knew few bounds. He developed slings for injured horses and clay pigeons for shooting matches. Uninvited, he waded into legislatures in white spats and slaughterhouses in rubber boots. Criticized for tending animals rather than people, he replied that if animals had to await mercy until human affairs were resolved, they would still be waiting at the Second Coming.

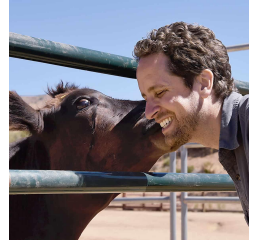
Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow eulogized Bergh as "among the noblest in the land, Though he may count himself the least, that man I honor and revere, who without favor, without fear, in the great city dares to stand the friend to every friendless beast."

“This is a matter purely of conscience. . . “It has no perplexing side issues. . . . It is a moral question in all its aspects.” Bergh

Source: UUWorld & Wikipedia

### Hope - Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh & the UU Animal Ministry

UUAM is a group of concerned Unitarian Universalists who express their faith, in part, through compassion towards all beings. They do good work not just for non-human animals, but for people and all of life, knowing that our connection with the more-than-human world helps us live most fully, deeply, and authentically.



The Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh is the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM). His award-winning justice work has focused on modern slavery, LGBTQ rights, climate justice, and animal protection. He led the team that organized over 400 congregations to collectively write and adopt Unitarian Universalism’s intersectional “Ethical Eating” statement in 2011, the first known instance of a U.S. faith adopting a position statement of its kind. He and his wife and son live with their dog – who may or may not be a black Labrador mix – in San Diego, CA.

Source: UUAM website



### 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/>

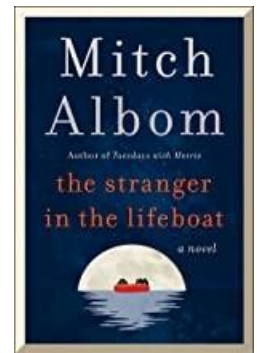


The River BUUKies February read is "the stranger in the lifeboat" by Mitch Albom. We will meet on Wednesday, Feb 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

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

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

What would happen if we called on God for help and God actually appeared? In Mitch Albom's profound new novel of hope and faith, a group of shipwrecked passengers pull a strange man from the sea. He claims to be "the Lord." And he says he can only save them if they all believe in him. Adrift in a raft after a deadly ship explosion, ten people struggle for survival at sea. Three days pass. Short on water, food and hope, they spot a man floating in the waves. They pull him in. "Thank the Lord we found you," a passenger says. "I am the Lord," the man whispers.



**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 Feb 17<sup>th</sup> topic is: To be determined.** The Topic Description will be 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.

**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.

**Drive to the Finish: Capital Campaign** - Our Future Home Search Team is diligently looking for our new home. There are many ways we can go, either find an existing church, find a building we can use and build out to suit our needs, or even purchase and build our church ourselves.

**We need your help in order to be better prepared when the right opportunity presents itself.** Those of you who made your pledge during our campaign last fall, thank you for your commitment. We have received about 65% of the total amount pledged.

In order to get a handle on our finances, **we would like to know when you plan to complete your contribution.** And we are always open to new pledges and contributions. Go to our website, [riverofgrassuu.org](http://riverofgrassuu.org), scroll down to the [click on the link to make your pledge](#).

With gratitude and hope, Your Capital Campaign Team, [capitalcampaign@riverofgrassuu.org](mailto:capitalcampaign@riverofgrassuu.org).

**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](mailto: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 <a href="#">Donations page</a> . Designate on the Capital Campaign line	\$0.45 per transaction plus processing fee 1%
Credit Card via Vanco	Set up payment on our <a href="#">Donations page</a> . 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	<a href="https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/my/profile">https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/my/profile</a> In the notes write "Capital Campaign"	Varies based on method of payment
Zelle	Use your bank to set up \$ transfer. Send Zelle payment to <a href="mailto:CapitalCampaign@riverofgrassuu.org">CapitalCampaign@riverofgrassuu.org</a> .	\$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</p> <p><b>#0188 - TD Ameritrade Institutional</b> <b>A/C #944110334</b></p> <p><b>RIVER OF GRASS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION, INC.</b></p> <p>The donor should notify the CC Team and the Office Administrator of the details of the donation by emailing <a href="mailto:CapitalCapaign@riverofgrassuu.org">CapitalCapaign@riverofgrassuu.org</a>.</p>	

### *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 November 4, 2021**

*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. According to the Updated Gathering Guidance from UUA.org, "In areas where transmission risk is very high or severe, suspend all large in-person (indoor and outdoor) gatherings such as worship, concerts, or fundraisers." As such, 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.

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 test is 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. 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.*