

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 5, 2022

Mama's Day

Mother's Day is special for not only mamas and future mamas, but also for families who use the holiday to honor the caregivers and nurturers of the Black community. While some literally grew up with "surrogate" mothers, all had some level of big sisters, "play" aunties, God-mamas, and cousins to help with the rearing. It often takes more than a village and for this community, those connections tend to run long and deep.

As we look back at the many who helped to raise children, and especially mothers who may have had to play multiple roles and work multiple jobs, to help keep the family afloat, we take this day above all of the others, to celebrate these strong women!

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!

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

Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:

Sunday, May 8, 2022

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Mama's Day - 8th Principle Team -

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

Faith Development: There are no Faith Development classes for children and youth on Sunday, so that they can spend time celebrating the beautiful mothers in their lives. For more information about our Faith Development Program for Kids and Teens, contact our Faith Development Director, Karen Gonzalez at 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.

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.

8TH PRINCIPLE TEAM MESSAGE

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

The 8th 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."

BIG MONEY, SUGAR CANE AND RACISM

This past Saturday many attended this presentation sponsored by SE Florida UU Cluster and UU Justice Florida. The practice of burning sugarcane fields has been largely discontinued throughout the world because of concerns about air pollution, but farmers still do it in Florida's main sugar-producing region known as the Glades.

Discriminatory sugarcane burning regulations overseen by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and enforced by the Florida Forestry Service are based on wind direction and speed. The rules are written to protect the more affluent communities of eastern Palm Beach and Martin counties; permits will be denied if pollution and ash fall from sugarcane burning are projected to impact them.

Meanwhile burn permits are approved when winds blow smoke and ash toward the lower income rural communities in and around the Everglades Agricultural Area. This leads the predominantly African-American and Hispanic communities in western Palm Beach County, which are surrounded by over 75 percent of the total sugarcane acreage in Florida, to disproportionately bear the negative impacts of Big Sugar's outdated harvesting practices.

As many as 70+ plus burn permits covering 5,000 acres impacting an area of up to 1500 square miles can be approved on a single day during the harvesting season. In the 2018-2019 harvest season alone, 11,334 burns across 442,409 acres took place and only 3% of all sugarcane permits submitted were denied.

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 [Black, Indigenous, People of Color].

Why it matters

Sugarcane burning produces what nearby communities refer to as “black snow” which is particulate matter that, when inhaled, can lead to increased risk of cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. It can also cause chronic conditions like asthma to worsen. People living near cane fields in Florida are predominantly lower-income Black and Hispanic communities.

Don't forget the adoption vote of the 8th Principle will be held on May 15, 2022 at the Congregational Annual Meeting! 8th Principle Team: Lou De Santis, Rita Cherubini, Tanya Gustafson and Steve Jens-Rochow. Questions? 8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org.

Heritage and Hope:

Heritage - Dorothea Dix (1802-1887)

Dorothea made one of the most important contributions to our society by helping to create hospitals for people with mental illness. In her time, there were no hospitals for people with mental problems. People who acted strange or could not communicate because they had difficulty thinking and interacting the same way most others did, were kept in prisons. Often they were chained and given very little clothing. In fact, many people thought that those with mental illness were not fully human at all.



Dorothea was religious, attending her grandmother's Congregationalist church every Sunday. One day, Dorothea decided to visit the Unitarian church where Dr. William Ellery Channing was speaking. What she heard that day changed her life forever. She heard Dr. Channing preach that God was love and we are all a part of that love and we are called to show that love to others. Dorothea became a Unitarian.

When Dorothea was in her forties, she visited a women's prison and saw women in chains with no clothes on. When she asked why, the prison matron told her those people were mentally ill and didn't understand anyway. Dorothea was appalled. She was so upset, she called her friends in the Massachusetts government to tell them. They told her they would need a written report before they could act. Dorothea went to every prison in Massachusetts and wrote a detailed report about the conditions for the mentally ill in each one. With her reports, Massachusetts began to open hospitals that treated the mentally ill with respect and gave them good food and warm clothing.

“Even when someone's words or behaviors cannot be understood by others, they are still a person who deserves dignity, respect and love.”

Source: UUA Tapestry of Faith

Hope - UUHMN - Unitarian Universalist Mental Health Network

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Mental Health Network (UUMHN) is to empower the Beloved Community in honoring each individual's unique mental health journey towards wellness. Our vision is: We envision a world where the Beloved Community: is a place where all members feel welcomed, understood, and held in love; engages in respectful curiosity to understand emotional distress; welcomes open, authentic, and fearless sharing about mental health; and passionately commits to mental health justice.



Our goal is to promote great opportunities for those in need. With access to the right resources, people can become empowered by their own abilities and gain the confidence to fulfill their potential. Learn more about our work by getting in touch with our team today.

With our organization's mission always in mind, we strive to find new strategies for educating others about mental health challenges.

Source: <https://www.uumentalhealth.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 or Scott@InsightInstituteLLC.com, or visit <http://www.insightinstitutellc.com/>

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 5th topic is: "Male Bonding."** 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.

POSTAL FOOD DRIVE – On Saturday, May 14th, 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, SSIGT@riverofgrassuu.org.



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.

Good Grief Bereavement Group --

3rd Tuesdays, 7p

May 17, plus bonus May 31

Welcome Table Communion Circle --

4th Thursdays, 7p

May 19, plus bonus June 9

Drum Circle --

4th Fridays, 7p

May 27, plus bonus June 10

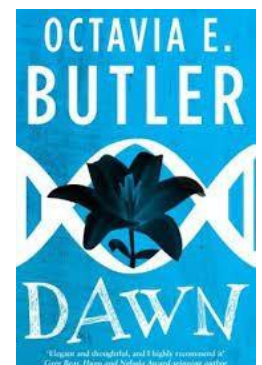
Email minister@riverofgrassuu.org for details, and we'll be watching for you!

BUUKies May Read – "Dawn" by Octavia E. Butler. We will meet on Wednesday, May 18th 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.

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 8th Principle Black Film Group will discuss "In the Heat of the Night" on **Wednesday, May 25th 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/u/kvL0D4l8Y>

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Skip the bottled water when grocery shopping. Resist the urge, and instead refill bottles at home. You save money, you help the environment, and you send a message that reuse is the way to go. Be green!

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: 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. **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.