

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 7, 2020

Beloveds — This Sunday at River of Grass we'll share Nurturing Day - aka Mother's Day - by exploring how we care for one another, ourselves, our community, our world in the midst of this pandemic. How do we get the nurturing we need? How do we give it others? How do we support and honor those who do what must be done, again and again, often unknown and unnoticed?

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 10, 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 10, 2020 - Happy Mother's Day!

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am - If the trees keep dancing, so can I... Rita Cherubini

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

Faith Development - No Faith Development classes today - Happy Mother's Day!

There will not be FD classes on Mother's Day. It might be a good afternoon to create that family altar space, write your family's poem stanza or paint/draw/chalk rainbows for your neighbors and essential workers (and mothers!). I would appreciate all photos and poems by Monday, the 11th - consider them birthday presents for me. ;) I am excited to incorporate all of your offerings into our Faith Development Worship Service on the 17th.

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 10th 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.

Faith Development - Parents Having Coffee Online:

Parents will join together for conversation and camaraderie in a Zoom Room on **Saturday morning, May 8th 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.**

Children's Bedtime Story: Wednesdays at 6:00 pm

Come meet Dakota and listen to a sweet story via Zoom on **Wednesday evenings, May 13th at 6:00 pm**. Look for an email from Karen or reach out to her at religiouseducator@riverofgrassuu.org for more information.

THE ANNUAL PROSPERITY DRIVE 2020-2021 HAS COME TO A CLOSE!!

Rita Cherubini and Kathy Jens-Rochow, Co-Chairs

Annual Prosperity Drive 2020-2021

Beginning on Mar 29th, the Annual Prosperity Drive got off to a great start with 18 Stewards reaching our Members and Friends for the pledges needed to begin the fiscal year 2020-2021. However, our Kupcake Kickoff was not available to us, enthusiasm and acceptance for a new way to reach our congregation was provided by our Stewardship Team. Through this excellent caring members and friends, the pledge dollars received total:

\$196,222

We are so grateful for your welcoming spirit to the 18 Stewards and your generosity and financial ministry to our beloved River of Grass UU Congregation. If you missed this pledging process, you can still go to the [Stewardship web page](#) and scroll down for the pledge card, fill it out and click SEND and it's on the way.

Be well, be safe and we continue to look for you at Zoom Worship with Rev Amy!

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.

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 7:00 pm. **TONIGHT, May 7th at 7:00 pm we will meet on Zoom** and discuss our topic: Together Apart. Thoughts on Social Distancing, <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/670022402>. For more info, please contact Kip Barkley mensgroup@riverofgrassuu.org.

Flowing River Sangha – We will meet online on **Tuesday, May 12th 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.

bUUKies – Blowout by Rachel Maddow (non-fiction). Next meeting Wednesday May 13th at 7:15 pm. The bUUKies have tackled some serious reading this year but May's selection is in a class of its own. Rachel Maddow's "Blowout" tackles the fossil fuel industry and the role it has in the world's politics. I particularly look forward to this in light of the historical low price of oil (as of this writing) of NEGATIVE \$37 per barrel. The world has truly turned upside down.

With her trademark black humor, Maddow takes us on a switchback journey around the globe, revealing the greed and incompetence of Big Oil and Gas along the way, and drawing a surprising conclusion about why the Russian government hacked the 2016 U.S. election. She deftly shows how Russia's rich reserves of crude have, paradoxically, stunted its growth, forcing Putin to maintain his power by spreading Russia's rot into its rivals, its neighbors, the West's most important alliances, and the United States. Chevron, BP, and a host of other industry players get their star turn, most notably ExxonMobil and the deceptively well-behaved Rex Tillerson. The oil and gas industry has weakened democracies in developed and developing countries, fouled oceans and rivers, and propped up authoritarian thieves

and killers. But being outraged at it is, according to Maddow, “like being indignant when a lion takes down and eats a gazelle. You can’t really blame the lion. It’s in her nature.”

Blowout is a call to contain the lion: to stop subsidizing the wealthiest businesses on earth, to fight for transparency, and to check the influence of the world’s most destructive industry and its enablers. The stakes have never been higher. As Maddow writes, “Democracy either wins this one or disappears.”

bUUkies meet on the second Wednesday evenings of each month. Our May meeting is May 13th at 7:00 pm, and at this time it appears that it will be an on-line Zoom meeting. If you are not on the regular mailing list, please contact us at bUUkies@riverofgrassuu.org in order to get an invitation.

June: *Red, White and Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston

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: When we are able to go back to shopping on your own, don't forget to bring your own reusable bags to the grocery store. Avoid the disposable plastic bags offered at checkout,

as over 500 Billion of them are used each year, often ending up in landfills and waterways...as they are not biodegradable. Be green! :)

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.

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.