

Intergenerational Candlelight Service

*The Messiah Is
Among Us*

**CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24TH
5:30- 6:30 PM**

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
FORT LAUDERDALE RESEARCH &
EDUCATION CTR**

**3205 COLLEGE AVENUE
DAVIE FL, 33314**

SEATING IS LIMITED

RIVER OF GRASS CHOIR DIRECTED BY GAYLE GIESE

FOOD & DRINKS ARE NOT PERMITTED.
- MASKS REQUIRED - SOCIAL DISTANCE -
COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS OBSERVED

River of Grass
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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 – December 9, 2021

Finding a Stillness: Season of Waiting

The paradox of this season is how stressful we may find it, how pressed to “hurry up and get ready” for the holidays upon us, at the same time we come into a time of waiting -- each year our Christian beloveds wait for the birth of Jesus, our Jewish beloveds wait to see if the lamp oil will last, our Pagan beloveds wait for the Sun to return, our Buddhist beloveds await new understanding, as every tradition marks the passing of mid-winter in the ways that give meaning to their lives. Again this year we continue in the midst of the pandemic with the new strains and the illness and loss of too many we love. We wait to see what parts of our lives can be restored to us and what can't. To finally get to that moment we can gather consistently as Beloved Community, while we endure this weary and painful separation. How do we find a moment of sacred stillness? A moment to breathe and bear witness to our own lives and those we love?

Gather with us this Sunday to breathe, to bear witness to and be with one another, to rest and reflect and restore ourselves for the days to come, assured that love always wins -- when we make it so.

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.

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

Topic: Worship December 12, 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/j/961564350?pwd=cFpKY2RtRk4wVE5NbDczdTU5THViQT09>

Upcoming Virtual Events - This Sunday:

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Virtual Sunday Service at 10:30 am – Finding a Stillness: Season of Waiting - Rev. Amy Carol Webb -

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

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

This Sunday we'll return to meeting online through Zoom and continue our theme of Opening to Joy with a **jingle bell craft**, so children will need to bring the little baggie of supplies to class. Music is often something that brings us joy, and on this day, we'll watch a whole town give in to joy in a surprising way! We'll also learn about the legend of Saint Nicholas and the joy he created through his generosity. Our teens will be Opening to Joy by celebrating the silliness of life. We'll have a special visitor who will share ways that their life has been blessed by their ability to embrace humor. If you'd like more information about our program, please contact our Director, Karen Gonzalez at ReligiousEducator@RiverOfGrassUU.org.

Chalica continues through the 12th (or 13th) of December:

This week-long UU holiday is a time for us to study, honor and celebrate our seven Unitarian Universalist principles. Those who celebrate Chalica spend each day reflecting on one principle and putting it into practice through their words and deeds. Each night of Chalica, a chalice is lit and one Principle is represented through food, discussion and/or activities. For example, the sixth night honors our Sixth Principle, where we affirm and promote working toward a fair and peaceful world. This might be a good night to discern where your charity dollars went this year and if you feel those donations were sufficient. Remember to talk about this as a family so that every member knows how you contribute to the greater good. You may want to gather with a UU friend or two during the week to help you celebrate Chalica. There are even several Chalica songs which could be sung. Find them on YouTube! And, if you're ready, add an eighth night to your holiday so that your family can discuss our [Eighth Principle](#).

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, Dec 12th 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.

Project Angel Tree supporting ChildNet: Wow, look at the generosity of River of Grass!



Auction News!

The Non-Event Event -- 2021-2022 Online Auction -- December 5 thru December 12

Did you look at the catalogue?

Look again! We've added more items.

WHAT? You forgot to check out the auction?

You still have time!

The auction is open for bidding until this Sunday, Dec 12th, at 6:00 pm. There is lively bidding happening. You don't want to miss out on this! Lots of gorgeous jewelry, including chalice jewelry, some parties, vacations, massages and even a beautiful piano! And more!!



From your desktop/laptop:

[To view the catalogue](#)

[To register to bid](#)

From your mobile device:

M - [To view the catalogue](#)

M - [To register to bid](#)

For more information and/or donations, contact auction@riverofgrassuu.org.

Your Auction Team: Steve Jens-Rochow, Kallie LeFever, and Kathy Jens-Rochow

8th Principle Team Message

8th Principle Adoption - WHAT IS BELOVED COMMUNITY IF IT DOESN'T INCLUDE EVERYONE?

Resources for the week:

- 1) [TEDxHampshireCollege - Jay Smooth](#)
[How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race](#)
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU>
- 2) [The Fence](#)
[Dick Lehr](#)

The Boston police officers who brutally beat Michael Cox at a deserted fence one icy night in 1995 knew soon after that they had made a terrible mistake. The badge and handgun under Cox's bloodied parka proved he was not a Black gang member but a plainclothes cop chasing the same murder suspect his assailants were. Officer Kenny Conley, who pursued and apprehended the suspect while Cox was being beaten, was then wrongfully convicted by federal prosecutors of lying when he denied witnessing the attack on his brother officer. Both Cox and Conley were native Bostonians, each dedicating his life to service with the Boston Police Department. But when they needed its support, they were heartlessly and ruthlessly abandoned.

A remarkable work of investigative journalism, Dick Lehr's *The Fence* tells the shocking true story of the attack and its aftermath—and exposes the lies and injustice hidden behind a "blue wall of silence."

"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."

The adoption vote of the 8th Principle will be held on May 15, 2022 at the Congregational Annual Meeting. In the meantime, the 8th Principle Team will be bringing forward historical perspectives and conversations through films, books and discussions that have been more recently revealed due to the killings and incarceration of Black citizens. White supremacy affects all parts of our society. We are excited to begin this work! Members of the Team are Lou DeSantis, Rita Cherubini, Tanya Gustafson and Steve Jens-Rochow. More information to come! Questions? Reach out to: 8thPrincipleTeam@RiverofGrassUU.org.

Policy updates from Board Meeting on December 2, 2021:

At our Board Meeting on December 2, 2021, the board voted to establish a policy that allows us to make “emergency” policy changes and then made emergency policy changes due to COVID-19 and also our lack of a physical location. Please also know that the Board minutes are posted after Board approval on the [Member Only page](#) of our website and that any member can attend our meeting, which are currently held on the first Thursday of the month at 6:00. If you would like to attend, contact president@riverofgrassuu.org to request the Zoom link.

In accordance to our Policy on Policies, the following is a notification and a request for feedback on the following amendment:

Part I, Section 14 – Policy on Policies

C. There are **three** methods to amend, add, or remove policies:

1. Method One – Newsletter or Weekly Email feedback:
 - a. Reviewed at one Board meeting and approved for gaining member feedback via the official Newsletter or Weekly Email.
 - b. Announced in the next copy of the Congregational Newsletter or Weekly Email requesting member feedback with a contact person listed.
 - c. Approved or rejected at a Board meeting following publication in the Newsletter or Weekly Email, reviewing all member feedback provided.
 - d. If approved, made available in the Board meeting minutes, and in an updated policy manual on the website within two weeks following passage.
2. Method Two – Congregational vote:
 - a. Reviewed at one Board meeting and approved for inclusion at an upcoming Congregational meeting for discussion and vote.
 - b. Policies approved by the Congregation to be made available in the Congregational meeting minutes, and in an updated policy manual on the website within two weeks following passage.
3. **During exigent circumstances, as determined by the majority vote of the Board, which prevent the timely execution of a congregationally approved policy via 14C, 1 or 2, the Board may approve additions, amendments or remove policies. Any approved amendment will be shared with the Office Administrator and inserted in the appropriate location in the policy manual with the board approval date and reviewed as soon as the mitigating situation changes but no later than the normal biannual review period.**

The following additions were determined to be required due to the exigent circumstances.

Part I, Section 8 - Finances

- D. The procedure for members handling Congregational funds received from the weekly plate collections or any committee/team fundraisers shall be:
1. In a non-public place, one member shall count all monies received and a second member will verify the count. The funds will be placed in a sealed envelope with the following information recorded on the face in pen.
 - a. Committee, Team and/or event name, details of funds, i.e. Plate, Auction, Tshirt Fundraiser, etc.
 - b. Current date
 - c. Total cash amount, and number & amount of each cash denomination, i.e. total coins, 1’s, 5’s, 10’s, 20’s, 50’s, etc.
 - d. Total check amount, and number of checks
 - e. Total credit card amount, and total for Amex, Visa, MasterCard, Discover
 - f. Grand total

2. The signatures of the two members involved in counting the money shall be made over the seal of the envelope, whenever possible.
 - a. The sealed envelope shall be placed in the locked wall safe after the contents of the envelope have been recorded in the cash ledger book.
 - b. (alternative in the case of being without a physical facility). The contents of the envelope shall be recorded in the cash ledger book and the sealed envelope shall be given to the Board Treasurer or their designee to hand deliver to our Congregational Office Administrator within 48 hours.
3. When monies are part of a fundraising event, personal expenses should not be commingled with cash receipts. A reimbursement form shall be submitted for expenses incurred, instead of paying expenses from cash received.

Part I, Section 11 – Personnel

- A. The Minister's contract, or letter of agreement, and all employee contracts, or letters of agreement, shall be on file in the Congregation office and available to members. Members may view the contracts or letters of agreement by appointment with the Minister or the President of the Board of Trustees. Members of the Personnel Team will be permitted to have a photocopy of each employee contract. No photocopies of these sensitive documents will be made available to anyone else.
- B. Staff positions are open to members, with the exception of the Office Administrator position, which cannot be held by a member. Other members of an employee's family may be considered for employment; however, relatives may not supervise one another. "Relative" means a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, or grandchild.
- C. All staff are required to show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to CDC guidelines.

Part II: Policies Specific to Faith Development Programs

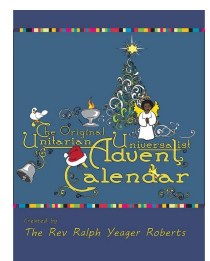
I. Adult Volunteers

- A. A. Volunteers in the Faith Development or youth programs at the River of Grass UUC must meet the following criteria:
 1. Leaders in the Faith Development program must be active participants at River of Grass for at least six months before volunteering (may serve as co-leader after 3 months). Exceptions will be considered in specific cases with the approval of the Director of Faith Development (DFD) or Religious Educator, or in their absence, the Faith Development Committee Chair and Minister.
 2. Adults supervising sleepovers must be active participants at the River of Grass for at least six months before volunteering, excluding parents who are staying over with their child.
 3. Youth Group Leaders must be active participants at the River of Grass for at least six months before volunteering. Exceptions will be considered in specific cases with the DFD or Religious Educator, or in their absence, the Faith Development Committee Chair and Minister. Youth Group Leaders will also be approved by the youth.
 4. All volunteers must read and sign the River of Grass Code of Ethics included in this policy prior to participating in Faith Development or youth activities.
 5. Prior to working in person with our children or youth, all volunteers are required to show proof of being fully vaccinated against Covid-19, according to CDC guidelines.

Hope & Heritage:

Hope - Advent Calendar:

The Rev. Ralph Yeager Roberts spent three years creating the Original Unitarian Universalist Advent Calendar. Unitarian Universalists of all ages can make it a part of their holiday season for years to come. This calendar was shared with the River last year, But if you missed it, you can download it at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/image/uu-advent-calendar>.



Rev. Yeager is an Ordained Unitarian Universalist Minister of religious education. He is one of the creators of the Montessori inspired curriculum used in hundreds of congregations across the US and Canada.

Heritage - The Flaming Chalice:

The Unitarian Service Committee adopted the flaming chalice as their logo in 1941. Years later in 1965 at the West Shore Church in Cleveland, OH, the youth-led Christmas service opened by ritually lighting a chalice. This is the first time the chalice was used in this way except for in children's classes and youth gatherings where the practice began.



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/>

You’re Invited! Compass: Navigating the Paths of Liberation Together – December 11 & 12 (registration fee will be reimbursed by River of Grass)

Dear Unitarian Universalist Leaders and Friends,

You are invited to reach into your spiritual toolkits and grab your “compass,” your wayfinder, that inner voice that points you toward goodness, and join us in charting a path toward a deeper knowing of Unitarian Universalism. Please join us for **Compass: Navigating the Paths of Liberation Together**, a virtual event taking place on December 11th and 12th. Our very own [Article II Commission](#) will ask for your input on our ever-evolving Purposes and Principles. This is Unitarian Universalism, our living tradition, at its theological best: striving to change and be better in a changing world, bending its arc toward a greater inclusivity and a more profound justice for all.

This event is for: **lay leaders, religious professionals, adults, youth, members of congregations, and anyone else who is interested in diving into an exploration of interdependence in UU theology and practice.**

[Learn more about Compass and register today!](#) We hope to see you on December 11 & 12!

In faith, Natalie Briscoe, Southern Region Lead

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 Dec 16th topic is: To Be Determined** The Topic Description will be 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.

The annual Full Moon Daughters Solstice Party is back!

Good food and drink, Good company, Lots of sharing and joy. FMD, which includes females, female children and female identifying people, will gather **Sunday, Dec 19th**, at Kathy Jens-Rochow’s home at 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM for potluck dinner, \$10 gift exchange (optional) and the sharing of annual blessings. This is one of our favorite Gatherings. We will be outside around the pool for safety and request all to be vaccinated. Please RSVP to Kathy Jens-Rachow and or Kristine Barkley at fullmoondaughters@ruverofgrassuu.org so we know how many people to expect.

SSJGT, Service and Social Justice Green Team, Green Tip of the Week: Try to reuse holiday gift packaging. Boxes, bags, and styrofoam peanuts can be reused throughout the year. Before throwing packaging away, think about what can be reused. And if it can't be reused, please recycle :).

WhaleCoast Alaska 2022

Have you ever wanted to visit Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2022** is for you! 4 Alaska UU congregations invite you to experience our unique environmental and spiritual tour program next summer. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and awe-inspiring tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, sea lions, etc. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. WhaleCoast Alaska is an inspirational way to visit our beautiful state. Complete info at: www.WhaleCoastAK.org. Proof of Covid-19 vaccinations required. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience you won't want to miss!



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 property 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. And a matching gift of \$25,000. In order to get a handle on our finances, we would like to know when you plan to complete your contribution.

With gratitude and hope, Your Capital Campaign Team. capitalcampaign@riverofgrassuu.org Go to our website, riverofgrassuu.org, scroll down to the Drive to the Finish information and [click on the link to make your pledge](#).

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: <i>Allen Giese, Steve Tepper, or Stacy Saavedra at (954) 693-0030</i> 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.

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 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. **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.