



UU Laramie News

March 2021

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Laramie
1402 E. Gibbon Street
Laramie, WY 82072
(307) 745-8874

Services for March

Please see page 5 for important information regarding Zoom services, including login information.

March 7 (Casper Zoom Room)

Reverend Leslie Kee will introduce the March worship theme “Soul Work.”

March 14 (Casper Zoom Room)

Reverend Leslie Kee will continue with the March worship theme “Soul Work.”



March 21 (Laramie Zoom Room)

"Myth as a Way of Knowing" - Ken Chestek, UUFL member. Most people think of myths as tall tales, unconnected to reality yet somehow conveying something important and relevant to their lives. What gives myth such power? Ken will explore the idea that myths are just a different “way of knowing” about the world. Even though they may not be empirically “true,” myths represent significance to many people, and therefore must be understood as “true” on a different plane.

March 28 (Laramie Zoom Room)

"The Nature of the Soul" - Catie Ballard, UUFL member. Culture to culture, humans talk of the Soul. What is it? Does each of us contain a soul? How does the understanding of Soul differ or stay the same? Join us to explore the subject of the Soul. Fair warning: some Motown Sound will be involved!



Minister

Rev. Leslie Kee (lkee@wyoming.com)

UUFL Board

Co-chairs: Linda Meeker (ldangrousl@gmail.com)

David Perry (dperry@uwyo.edu)

Treasurer: Michael Wade (darooke22@gmail.com)

Secretary: Robin Chestek (rchestek@gmail.com)

Catie Ballard (cdonbdoc@bresnan.net)

UU Laramie News Editor

Laura Miller (uularamienews@gmail.com)

Facebook: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Laramie (public)

Facebook: UUFL Community Group (private)

This is a private group for UUFL members and friends who want to discuss current issues and challenges.

Website: <http://www.uularamie.org/>

For more news and events, and the latest updates!

Minister's Musings

One idea I never get tired of thinking about is covenant. With theological roots in the Abrahamic tradition, covenant is an ancient idea stemming from the promise God made to humanity after he'd flooded the earth, that never again would he bring such total destruction upon humanity for their transgressions. He figured humans would probably be able to do it themselves.

Through the generations, the idea of a promise between God and Humans has been an effective way for humans to monitor their own behavior. An oversimplified way to say it sounds like this, 'God promises not to inflict painful punishment and/or annihilation on humanity if we in turn promise to respect and obey his authority over us.'

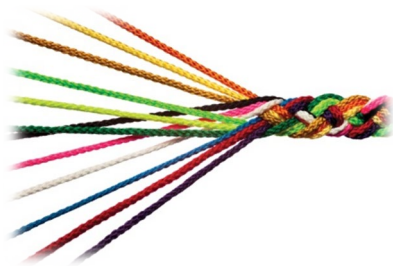
But when the Age of Reason blossomed, humanity's understanding that we could actually make good choices and pursue reasonably successful self-governance emerged. Fast forward to today, and within our UU communities covenant has become a gentle, strong – spiritual way for us to be in relationship with each other. I figure if such an eclectic mix of folks like us can find a way to be in right-relationship, then we might even be a role model for the larger community!

But I've been wondering lately, if a covenant is the heart of our religious/spiritual communities, then what is at the heart of the heart? For some, the heart of our spiritual heart is still God. For others it has many names; and for all of us, a covenant of right relations is the starting point. But given all our fabulous and diverse understandings, experiences, formal and informal educations, and hopes and dreams for the future, to name a few – how does each one of our individual commitments to right relationship look, sound, and feel in our day-to-day interactions with each other? How does committing to be in covenant actually work?

For me, the starting point has been making the commitment to learn and grow into right-relationship understandings and behaviors. When I decided to enter the UU ministry, I knew I had a lot of 'out-west' cultural baggage and so I needed to listen and learn. I was fortunate to live and study in Chicago and Bethesda, and so was finally emersed in a fairly engaging multi-cultural environment. One of my first insights was that I needed to learn how not to just listen and hear, but to try and see myself how my new friends and acquaintances saw and experienced me. And that's where the hard work began.

The hard work of actually valuing diversity is an exciting challenge the UUA has taken on, and even though we are far from the center of the UU-universe, we here in Wyoming are important. We not only have an institutional obligation, more importantly, we have a spiritual obligation to deepen and enrich our individual and collective understanding of how covenant can and should work. Because we are only stewards of our beloved UU communities, it is vital we not only understand covenant, we must let its power fill us and guide us because, at its heart, is the human spirit. See you in church!

Rev. Kee



**"We all know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry...
all of the threads equal in value no matter what color."**

Maya Angelou

Musings of a Board Co-Chair

People attend church, any church, not just ours, for a myriad of different reasons. Some come for the intellectual stimulation of an inspiring sermon. Others come for a spiritual experience and crave the ritual elements of every Sunday. Some come for the emotional lift of the musical offerings. Still others come for community and personal contact with fellow human beings. Many seek a peaceful sanctuary, a refuge from the stresses and worries of the week. Most of us probably arrive at the front door for some combination of the above.

We are coming up on the one-year anniversary since we last dared to meet in our Fellowship building. We have made an incredible pivot to virtual services on Zoom, much of it due to collaboration with the Casper congregation, the “tech hosting” skills of Barbara and Ken, and the live musical offerings from Matt along with the prerecorded wizardry of Jim Bailey in Casper. We have maintained a reasonable facsimile of our regular service elements. But a facsimile is just that. Joys and Concerns in a chat box is not the same experience as the spoken and silent candle-lighting in person. Singing along in an empty room is not the same experience as sharing our voices in person. The community of seeing each other on a screen is not the same experience as engaging (perhaps even touching!) in person. We have missed so much. I fear our numbers have dwindled over the year to our stalwart core as those who find the facsimile experience unfulfilling have tuned out.

As the future is looking brighter, however tentatively, we need to take stock of how we safely return to the sanctuary while continuing to serve those who have been able to join us precisely because we have been accessible online. If all continues to go well, I hope we can start meeting again outside on the lawn in the summer as we did on a handful of occasions last year. By the Fall, it would be wonderful to be meeting in the sanctuary again. However, we need to create ways to continue to deliver services online as well. The technical aspects are relatively easy. The hard part is how do we encourage members to return? Once habits are broken, often they are difficult to restore. In addition, how do we engage with members simultaneously online so they can be active participants and not just observers from afar? Last, but most importantly, how do we bring new visitors and members into the fold?

These are issues the Board will be grappling with over the next few months as the pandemic situation evolves or, we hope, devolves. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

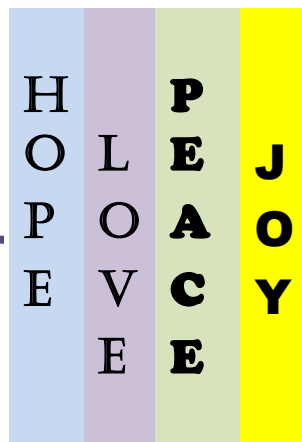
David

UUFL Calendar of Events

David Perry maintains a current event calendar on the UUFL website (<https://www.uularامية.org/>). You can always check there to see what is happening. Remember, all scheduling for use of the building must be done through David (dperry@uwyo.edu).

New UUFL Website

Remember to check out our new website <http://www.uularامية.org/> for more news and events, including latest updates.



Social Action: Change for Change

We are collecting Change for Change again. There will be a recipient for an entire month. You can either send a check to the church with 'Change for Change' in the memo space, or go to the UUFL website (www.uularamie.org) and click on DONATE at the bottom of the page, to use either plastic or Pay Pal. Where it says "write a note" put in Change for Change or the name of the recipient.

March's Change for Change collection is for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Wyoming. Their goal is to help children realize their potential and build their biggest possible futures. Please do what you can.
Ralph Garrett, Chair UUFL Social Action

Family Promise

The UUFL schedule for participating in the Family Promise program for 2021 is as follows:



March 28 - April 4
June 20 - 27
July 18 - 25
October 10 - 17

UUFL is seeking a volunteer to be our Family Promise Coordinator. Please contact a member of the Board if you are interested.

Please take your donations of food (preferably non-perishables) to the United Presbyterian Church, 215 S. 11th Street between 9 am and 4 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Due to the pandemic, families have limited facilities to heat and cool foods within their hotel/motel rooms. For more information regarding families, types of food donations, contact Family Promise directly at 742-6480.

Membership Committee

The UUFL Membership committee is Robin Chestek (Chair) and Andi Noakes. Please help keep the member / friend database up to date! If you have a change of address, phone number, or email address, please send your updated contact information to Robin at rchestek@gmail.com.

Welcome New Member Sara Sauley

Sara Sauley signed the Membership book at a book-signing ceremony at the Fellowship on Saturday, January 30. Members of the Board, Barbara Bogart, and Marian and Jim Erdelyi were there, as was Rev. Kee (on FaceTime), to welcome Sara into the UUFL congregation.

Sara is a Wyoming native and has lived most of her life in the State. Sara first became aware of Unitarian Universalism when she read an article about Christopher Reeve in a 2004 edition of the Reader's Digest. Reeve talked about what he found attractive about the liberal denomination: "It gives me a moral compass," he said. His comments struck a chord with her. A few years later, Sara attended a UU service in Casper where she and her daughter were living at the time. Not long after, Sara became active in the congregation, serving in various capacities.



In 2013, Sara moved to Laramie to further her education. She attended services at the UUFL over the years, while also assisting with and participating in different activities. Why become a member now? Sara just felt that the time was right to make a full commitment to the congregation. She currently participates in Contemplative Yarns and serves on the Caring Committee.

Building Use Policy *updated October 2020*

The UUFL board has drafted a policy governing the use of the Fellowship building by small groups during the COVID-19 crisis.

Requirements:

1. Users must wear masks or cloth facial coverings.
2. Users are responsible for cleaning tables, doorknobs, and bathroom surfaces with appropriate solvents.
3. There must be a gap of 24 hours between groups using the building.
4. A maximum of 20 people is allowed in the Sanctuary and no more than 12 people are allowed in the Social Hall. The two spaces may not be occupied simultaneously.
5. The kitchen remains closed.

Recommendations:

1. Please maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more.
2. The doors and windows may be open for ventilation, weather permitting.

The board will regularly review and revise these policies as conditions and state guidelines change.

NOTE: All scheduling for use of the building **MUST BE** done through David Perry (dperry@uwyo.edu).

Important Information Regarding Zoom Services

The Zoom information for every Sunday service in the UU Laramie zoom room is the same. The meeting id is 290 700 5294. The passcode is Board0805. This is all the information you need to access the Zoom room. You do not need to have a live link to click on.

Please keep this information handy. You could copy and paste the meeting id and passcode onto the desktop on your computer or to a piece of paper kept next to your keyboard. Another option is to print out this page and keep it by your computer. This will avoid the frustration of trying to find the link in the newsletter or on Facebook on Sunday morning.

To get to the service, open Zoom on your computer, click on "Join a meeting" and then enter the meeting id and passcode when prompted to do so. You can access the UU Casper Zoom room by using their room id (459 187 0381) and passcode (084964) in the same way. *Barbara Bogart, Program Committee Chair*

Zoom Room Information

UUFL has a Zoom Room members and friends may use to host UUFL related events. Contact Michael Wade (darooke22@gmail.com) for details on how to use the Laramie Zoom Room to host a meeting.

Below is the Zoom access information for both the Laramie and Casper Zoom Rooms. The location of each Sunday service is stated on page 1 in the service announcements.



Laramie Zoom Room
Meeting ID: 290 700 5294
Passcode: Board0805

Casper Zoom Room
Meeting ID: 459 187 0381
Passcode: 084964