



UU Laramie News

July 2021

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

Services for July

UUFL is offering all its own services now. We are allowing in-person services depending on the current County Metrics available on the Wyoming Department of Health website. See page 5 for details.

At this time, we are planning on holding all services at the Fellowship building, unless otherwise noted (e.g. hikes). Many services are planned for meeting on the Fellowship lawn. If there is inclement weather, we will meet inside the building. If in-person services are not allowed, we will meet virtually, via the Laramie Zoom room.



July 4 Enjoy the holiday. No program today.

July 11 Join member Andi Noakes for a hike near the Twin Mountain area at Pole Mountain. It's a beautiful 6 mile round trip hike, so bring sturdy shoes, plenty of water, sunscreen, bug spray, and lots of snacks to keep you going. This hike has a little elevation gain and loss for the first half, but it's mostly flat for the second half. The hike includes one small section of bouldering and is the best kept secret on Pole Mountain! Meet at the Fellowship at 8 am to caravan to the Blair picnic area where we will start.

July 18 Rev. Kee leads this service with a message on the theme of "Being Neighbors."

July 25 Join member Linda Meeker for a fun Sunday of poetry and wordplay. We'll review common conventions in poems, read a few selections aloud, and draft some short pieces of our own. No experience or expertise is required, just a good summer attitude and a little imagination! Bring pen and paper and your own coffee or beverage.



Minister

Rev. Leslie Kee (lkee@wyoming.com)

UUFL Board

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

David Perry (dperry@uwyo.edu)

Treasurer: Jennifer Wade (jswade.wyo@gmail.com)

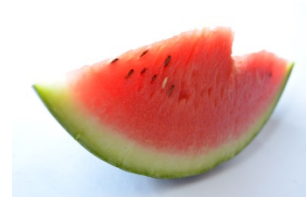
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Minister's Musings



The month of July, in many ways, seems where the idea of ‘Americana’ comes from. As a daughter of the American Midwest, July conjures cherished memories of my grandfather riding his black quarter horse, proudly bearing the American flag in the Belle Fourche Fourth of July parade (which I think sets the standard for parades – lots of ‘real’ cowboys, horses and the Cowboy Band). Thick dark pink watermelon slices chock full of black seeds, perfect for spitting contests between all degrees of cousins. Warm potato salad and pork and beans (yuck to both), and the first of the season’s sweet corn. Thick red slices of beefsteak tomatoes (not sure where they came from so early in the season), and slabs of chocolate cake.

Out West, summer in July also means a crisp break in the dry daytime heat as the sun dips below the horizon and bare feet run through the cool grass in games of hide and seek, the music of children’s laughter merging into the twilight. Long days at the local reservoir, playing, swimming, cribbage marathons, PB&J sandwiches, salty chips, and pure relaxation. Camping in the mountains, complete with ghost stories by the fire, fingers sticky with melted marshmallows – who doesn’t agree that food cooked and consumed while camping always seems to taste better?

The times we spent our July vacation time on the East Coast with my husband’s family, everything was the same, but yet different. The parade didn’t have horses and wagons, cowboys and rodeo continuously since the Revolutionary War. Red white and blue bunting draped from Cape Cod porches lined with flower boxes overflowing with blossoms bursting with color. Clam bakes and boils; lobster sandwiches, and lazy cruises around the bay on a friend’s vintage sloop. Iced coffee-cabinets from the small corner deli (which I’ve never taken a shine to), but clams on the half-shell and fresh scallops can be my dinner choice every day!

No matter the region, July is Americana – those wonderfully diverse, yet so much the same, traditions and celebrations which define and fill this short span of long days with enjoyment and memories. In July, life seems to slow down a bit, its warmth soothing and loosening the contraction of the cold days. In America, this has always been the season of sunscreen and floppy hats, food, vacations, and fun. I hope the freedom which has re-emerged from the year of the pandemic is available to everyone across the country this July -- wouldn’t it be great if its largesse, warmth, and joy lasted the whole year round?

Maybe while I’m thinning my baby vegetables in my sun-filled garden, I’ll begin thinking about ways I can do just that! See you in church!

Rev. Kee



What’s New at UUFL?

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: uularamie.org *For more news and events, and the latest updates!*

Musings from the Co-Chair

As I write this column in the last week of June, I am feeling a sense of optimism and hope. We are planning a family vacation in Jackson with grandchildren now that everyone in the immediate family over the age of 12 has been fully vaccinated. I am also planning an August trip to my southern Indiana roots for a musical event and early celebration of my younger sister's birthday. This will be the first time both sisters and I have been together in over three years. And finally, as of June 16th, Albany County, for the first time since March, is in the "light green zone" for COVID transmission indicators. Currently we appear to be on track for more in-person gatherings as the summer progresses. Things are truly looking up.

However, my optimism is tempered by a couple of worries. First, the overall vaccination rate for Wyoming is distressingly low. Rock Springs and Sweetwater County made national news last week for being one of the worst counties in the entire country for vaccination acceptance and a corresponding rate of new infections. This endangers us all as a potential hotspot for an outbreak of new infections. Even worse, it makes us a potential breeding ground for new and unpredictable variants of the disease. In the worst-case scenario, we could end up having to snap back on restrictions for in-person gatherings at the Fellowship.

My second worry is about the future of our congregation and our denomination as a whole. We have always had a bit of a tug-of-war both locally and nationally between those who are seeking primarily a spiritual home and those who are focused more exclusively on social action. Both are necessary, but how do we achieve a balance? Without a spiritual core, we risk becoming nothing more than a chapter of the Sierra Club that happens to sing hymns. More importantly, exactly what is our spiritual core? We are proud of being a group of freethinkers who impose no creed or belief test on members, but what common set of ethical and moral values truly binds us together? The Programming Committee is starting to grapple with these issues and there will undoubtedly be some services exploring some of these questions throughout the Fall. In the meantime, I ask you to reflect on some of this yourself. What is our common bond in our community? What brings you to services every Sunday, or for that matter, if you don't attend regularly, what would entice you to come more frequently? What brought you through our doors in the first place? What do you think would bring others through that portal as well?

Now that I've given you your summer homework assignment, enjoy your summer! And if your summer involves any travel, remember to gather some water from places of significance to you to share in our annual Water Service ingathering at the end of the summer.

David



UUFL Calendar

David Perry maintains a current event calendar on the UUFL website (uularamie.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).

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.

Contemplative Yarns

Saturday picnics are happening once again. We meet at 12:30 pm each Saturday. Look for us either on the SE corner of Harbon Park (the park across the street) or on the lawn by the front doors of the building. If the weather is bad, we may be inside the building. We have even been known to meet in the parking lot when the wind is bad. If you are interested in participating in Contemplative Yarns, e-mail uularamienews@gmail.com.

Family Promise

The week of July 19th the UUFL is hosting Family Promise (FP). We no longer need to host them at the Fellowship because the families stay in a motel. But FP still helps with providing food.

The preferred way to deliver food is to drop off nonperishable food, or food in serving size containers, to the United Presbyterian Church, located at 215 South 11th. Drop off times are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 am to 4 pm. Ring the bell at the side door and a person will come and pick up your delivery.



The last family graduated and moved out June 29th. Yay for them and for FP helping the family go forward with their lives. Right now there are no families to bring meals to, but that could change at any moment. But on our week to host please, remember, even if there are no families, FP needs shelf stable foodstuffs and disposable diapers for their pantries. Thanks for helping this needed organization. Bren Lieske, FP Volunteer Coordinator, 307.761.0887, Brenshens@yahoo.com.



Building Use Policy *updated June 9, 2021*

The UUFL board has updated the policy governing the use of the Fellowship building during the COVID-19 crisis as of June 9, 2021. The Board will reconsider and update this policy at the end of the summer.

Requirements:

1. Users must wear masks or cloth facial coverings **inside** the building.
2. Users are responsible for cleaning tables, doorknobs, and bathroom surfaces with appropriate solvents.
3. There must be a gap of one hour between groups using the building.
4. A maximum of 20 household groups 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. While the kitchen may be used, we do not anticipate food being served inside the building.

Recommendations:

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

Indoor Church Services:

We are allowing in-person services inside, but to protect those among us who might be vulnerable to infection, we continue to require masks or facial coverings **inside** the building.

We are allowing in-person services depending on the current County Metrics available on the Wyoming of Department of Health website. This policy applies if the Albany County Transmission Indicator* remains in any of the green or yellow zones. If the county Transmission indicator declines to one of the **Red Zones**, services will be **virtual only**.

* <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-orders-and-guidance/>, click on County Transmission Indicators

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.

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

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