



UU Laramie News

September 2021

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

Services for September

The current plan is for services to be held in the building, with masks required. Services will also be available in the UUFL Zoom room. If Albany County COVID cases put us into the orange or red zones, we will revert to meeting only via Zoom. See page 5 for details on the current County Metrics available on the Wyoming Department of Health website.

September 5 “Blessing of the Boots, Bikes & Backpacks” - **1 pm on the Fellowship lawn.** We welcome everyone in the Laramie community to bring their gear for a non-denominational blessing, along with gifts for those bikes and backpacks. Jeff Lockwood will officiate this community event.

goodbye, august
hello, september



September 12 “What Now?” Finding wisdom in our difficulties sheds light on more than struggle. It shows us how we’ve grown, stretched, become our better selves. Catie Ballard leads us in this exploration and illumination of the past 18 months.

September 19 “This I Believe” (version 20.21). The craziness, uncertainty, and stresses of these pandemic times have prompted many of us to reexamine our assumptions and even some long-held beliefs. Join us as four UUFL members share their self-observations about which personal truths have continued, what has been discarded, and what new ideas have been realized.

September 26 Rev. Kee will be in the pulpit speaking on the theme of “New Beginnings.”



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)

Secretary: Robin Chestek (rchestek@gmail.com)

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Laura Miller (uularamienews@gmail.com)

Minister's Musings

It seems, literally and figuratively, 'when it rains it pours' and so what started out as one project to shore up the southwest corner of our building, it turns out was only the beginning of a larger concerning issue. We have known about the unstable ground around our building for some time now, but when plans to put the RE rooms back together revealed more cracking, it became apparent the urgent priority is the safety and security of the building as well as all of us who spend time in it.

Along with UUFL's actual infrastructure, our programs and ministries also are a priority – but instead of cracking walls, we have the arrival of the Covid variant and new concerns for the health of everyone.

As your minister, I felt it was time for all of us to take a big collective breath and give ourselves a moment to sit down and refocus. There was a good turnout for the congregational meeting that was held August 19 wherein participants were asked several things the first of which was to establish a covenant of right relations so we would have the freedom to: Be known in relationship; Be heard; Dream in community; Choose to contribute; and Be positive. Participants then created the following:

We covenant with one another to: Listen deeply; Share honestly; Be open to unlikely truth; Offer mutual respect; Learn again to communicate; Value diversity; Honor our time; and Assume good intentions.

Although I was very appreciative of the covenant, the part of the meeting I enjoyed the most was the sharing of personal stories. Each person was asked to tell how they came to UUFL and why they stayed; and to just listen and enjoy these stories was more than enjoyable, it was a reminder of how we make meaning and how meaning is infused into the spirituality of our shared community.

This meeting did allow us to take a collective deep breath, to share with and listen to each other. It also was a time to name our UU values and then list our own personal values because it is where these lists overlap that we will be able to see how UU values are the positive core of our beloved community. We will meet again in the weeks to come and our next step will be to dream. For those who missed this first gathering, no worries, everyone is welcome to join in the conversation where we will explore our answers to the question: what do we want UUFL to look and feel like five years from now?

I am available by phone or email for more thinking and dreaming, please feel free to call or write if you have insights, suggestions, comments, or questions. Even though there are some serious issues we must address, we also have the opportunity to take this time to ask some interesting questions and to give our responses the consideration they deserve!

Rev. Kee



Fall-time Musings of a Board Co-chair

Have you seen that movie, Groundhog Day? Bill Murray plays Phil, a sarcastic, egotistical weatherman forced to cover corny Groundhog Day festivities for the fourth year in a row. He fumbles through the assignment but awakens to find he is reliving the same day. Initially disbelieving and fighting what is happening to him, Phil eventually accepts that he will re-live the same day over and over again. He uses the opportunity to acquire new skills like playing jazz piano and learning to speak French; he also experiments with treating people differently and finds he can greatly improve his relationships. Through trial and error he evolves and learns that the key to life isn't what happens but how you react to it. If forced to repeat the same day over and over again, how would you spend it?



Perhaps that is an overly dramatic illustration of a point, but I've had an uncomfortable déjà vu this Fall. Recent COVID-19 statistics suggest that we might have to postpone in-person Sunday services and instead resume with computerized attendance this Fall. Just when we thought we were almost out of the woods, we awaken to... maybe starting all over. And then there's the issues with the building and grounds! A couple years ago we had the structure assessed, hired engineers, paid a whole lot of money for important repairs to shore up the foundation. Just when we thought we could resume focus on the RE room and program, we awakened to... more cracks in more places. And it looks like we may be starting all over.

Of course, not all repetition is negative. Our Fellowship has also embraced seasonal transitions which we happily celebrate each year-- flower communion in the spring, mixing of the waters in the fall, and UU-inspired celebrations to welcome the end of winter and the coming of spring. And every some years we bid adieu to a retiring minister or engage in search for a new minister or work to create a renewed vision of shared ministry. These endeavors are as cyclical as the tides, and they help to sustain our structure and mind us of who we are.

Whether we rework the drudgery of problems or are guided by the comfort of familiar patterns, each repetition gives us the opportunity to try again, do it better, get it right-er, and put our whole selves into the process. Once he gave himself over to the inescapable (un)reality of Groundhog Day, "Phil" let himself explore different ways to be, better ways to relate to others, and find new skills he had never imagined for himself. Trial-and-error were possible through the gift of repetition; Phil eventually learned that what happens isn't nearly so important as how one reacts to it. That rings true for us as well. We've been here before, we might be back here again in the future, but what is most important is how we come together in love and openness to the Now. Helping one another to remain forthright, and determined, and even joyful in the midst of whatever is happening in the world and in our small UUFL world. I am so deeply grateful to share this time with my church family, my tribe, my friends. Together we are brilliant like the sun.

Linda Meeker



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.*

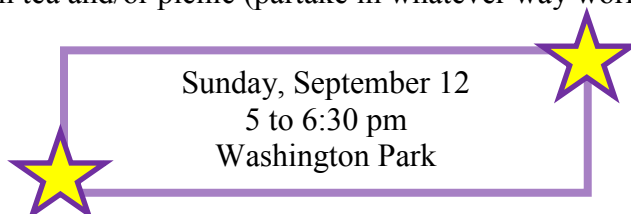
Website: uularamie.org *For more news and events, and the latest updates!*

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).

Early Equinox Celebration!

For an early Equinox celebration, we reserved one of the medium sized Washington Park shelters for a Sunday late afternoon high tea and/or picnic (partake in whatever way works best for you and your family's schedule).



Let us end the weekend together. Potluck if you wish, but not required. Or bring your own food. Whatever you prefer. We just want to get together in a COVID safe and friendly manner!

Contemplative Yarns

Come join our women's group on Saturdays at 12.30. Bring a lunch and lawn chair to have some pleasant time socializing. We meet at Harbon Park under the big shade tree unless it is too windy or rainy then we rotate to the UUFL parking lot or inside with masks. If you are interested in participating in Contemplative Yarns, e-mail uularamienews@gmail.com.

Family Promise

Thanks to everyone who donated food in August. We are not on the schedule for September. Please call Bren Lieske (307.761.0887) or get on the Family Promise website for more information.



Changing of the Guard

Barbara Bogart has stepped down from her position on the Committee on Ministry (CoM); she will continue to contribute as Chair of the Program committee as well as tending our UUFL website. Bob Kelly has agreed to join the CoM as its newest member. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, Barb and Bob!



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.

Building Use Policy *updated August 4, 2021*

The UUFL board has updated the policy governing the use of the Fellowship building during the COVID-19 crisis. The Board will reconsider and update this policy on an ongoing basis as data and events demand.

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.
5. While individuals may bring their own food or drink, food may not be prepared or served to groups without advance agreement by the Board.

Recommendations:

1. Please maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more.
2. The doors and windows should be opened 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. 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.

Lost and Found

If you recognize this object from our parking lot as a missing part of your vehicle, contact Linda Meeker. Otherwise it will be going to metal recycling in the near future.



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

Snowy Range Hike

August 8, 2021

Photographs provided by Ken Chestek

