



UU Laramie News

November 2021

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Laramie
1402 E. Gibbon Street
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Services for November

November 7: Philosopher and historian Yuval Noah Harari challenges us to rethink our ideas of progress in his book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. UUFL members Ken Chestek, Sara Saulcy and Barbara Bogart lead a discussion of how we might reassess some of our most cherished assumptions about the world in light of the pandemic.



November 14: “Progress: Are We Getting Better, How Would We Know, Why Does it Matter?” As we think about life after COVID, we might wonder whether we know more about the world and whether we are better people for our experiences - either individually or collectively. This Sunday, our guest speaker is Dr. Franz-Peter Griesmaier, a philosophy faculty member at UW, who will take a conceptual and historical approach to these questions. He will explore the origin of the ideal of progress in Western culture. Nobody can doubt that there is change, but do we merely know and do different things from an ever-changing perspective such that there is no absolute improvement? Surely, our rejection of slavery and child labor and our acceptance of science and democracy are better than the alternatives, right?

November 21: Rev. Kee will be in the pulpit speaking on the theme of “Progress and Prospective.”

November 28: “Life’s Leftovers”: Dictionary definitions of leftover fall along the lines of “something left, remaining, unconsumed, unwanted or unused from a larger amount; a remnant.” Being the Sunday after Thanksgiving, you may have foods hiding in the back of your fridge or freezer that fit this definition. What other leftovers are lurking in the backs of our closets, cupboards, hearts, or minds - reminders/remainers of the good or bad times in your life? How do these leftovers serve you in life now or in your future--and do you have a recipe for making them into something palatable or should they be thrown out? Come join us for coffee (bring your own) and conversation as we share and discuss the things we can’t let go of even if they have gone stale or moldy! Hosted by UUFL member Nancy Lockwood.

Don’t Forget: Events for Sunday, October 31

No morning service on Halloween, but members can join the UU Cheyenne congregation where Rev. Kee will be in the pulpit. The service is at 10 am. Zoom information is on www.uucheyenne.org. The UU Casper service is also on zoom at www.uucasper.org.



Join us for “A Maskerade Party” at 3 pm. Pandemics are scary but let's have some defiant fun in the form of a Masked Costume Party! At 3 pm, we will gather at the UUFL Fellowship for a grand and absurd costume party in which your COVID mask will constitute your costume. The mask should be functional and marvelously, cleverly, intriguingly, oddly, spookily, or otherwise decorated. There will be a distinguished panel of judges to evaluate the contestants (which includes everybody because some sort of mask is required!) in various categories such as most humorous, most original, most UU, and most scary. Bring along some Halloween holiday treats (wrapped for safety) and get in the spirit of the season.



Minister's Musings

Among my mother's nuggets of homespun advice was the reminder, 'sometimes you do something, just because it's the right thing to do.' After I studied some psychology and philosophy, I learned this wasn't very 'homespun' because intrinsic motivation without the desire for personal reward is pretty foundational and aspirational to good mental and emotional health. For those of us who have taken the UU "Building Your Own Theology" class, this topic is right up there when thinking about evolved ethics.

All of us at some time or another are faced with situations where the choices we face have us immersed in this exact junction. Recently I've been encountering several different opportunities to 'do the right thing' and actually have folks 'do the right thing' for me! So thank you Barbara Bogart for stepping up when I had to cancel my monthly Laramie service because my mom took a turn and ended up in the hospital. When one is faced with asking for help and it is offered without question or hesitation – it truly is a gift – to all of us. I was able to go back to Casper early, and Barbara was able to keep our Sunday service uninterrupted and smooth.

Another issue which has been facing all of us in the UU Mountain Desert District is the dissolution of the actual district and the formal formation of the Pacific Western Region. Those discussions have been taking place for well over two years, and when it came to voting, representatives from the Laramie congregations said yes when asked to attend and cast a vote in favor of the resolution based primarily on the MDD team's recommendation. When all is said and done, it was significant to bring the MDD era to a dignified end while ushering in a wonderful opportunity to imagine and evolve! By saying yes when asked, our UUFL reps did the right thing – for all of us and UU!

And because we are facing another winter with Covid and its variant raging, it's probably fair to say this past year and a half has been filled with examples of all of us doing the right thing, just because it was the right thing to do. From wearing masks, to getting vaccinated, to adjusting our services and programs, to all those other hundreds of right things each of us has done – just because it was the right thing to do.

I am so grateful to be part of this amazing extended UU family! I am confident all the good we have been choosing will help the whole world return to a state of health because health in all its forms is the flourishing of life – through this age and all the ages to come. See you in church!

Rev. Kee



Minister

Rev. Leslie Kee (lkee@wyoming.com)

UUFL Board

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

David Perry (dperry@uwyo.edu)

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Musings of a Board Co-chair

A couple national news stations recently featured a story about a student from our local high school and her rejection of the current school policy requiring all students and staff members to wear masks. The story was, unfortunately but predictably, followed by a barrage of angry, cursing phone calls and emails to various personnel in the school district. My work email address was somehow identified, and I received one of those ugly messages. Although it was addressed to me personally, it was probably written by someone who has never met me and has no idea what I do. The next day I composed a response, which reads in part:

. . . Living in rage and hatred robs you of who you can become and of the beauty you might otherwise experience. That, my friend, is a great tragedy. It is also tragic that you have forgotten that we are your brothers and sisters. The mass of humanity on this planet must reach out to one another with open hearts and open minds in order to meet the challenges of each day.

I wish for you calm, and serenity, and clarity. May you find health and happiness and wholeness in each new day. I hope you feel the love of your family, the satisfaction of hard work, and a never-ending spiritual connection with this blue marble which we all call home.

*Sincerely yours,
Linda*

This is not the end of the work, as I continue daily to mull over what might be better ways to respond to hatred and anger and fear. Please join me in person or via zoom on Sunday, December 5 for an exploration, a meditation, a moment in time dedicated to the idea of Radical Love.

Linda

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.*

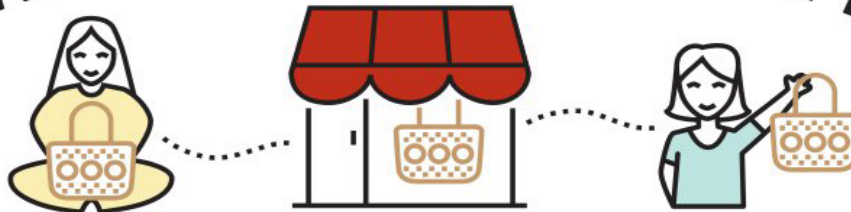
Website: uularamie.org *For more news and events, and the latest updates!*

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).



MAKER-TO-MARKET



TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES FAIR TRADE HOLIDAY SALE

Spread blessings around the world when you shop your values at Laramie's Ten Thousand Villages Fair Trade Holiday Sale on Friday, Nov 5, from 4-8 pm, and Saturday, Nov. 6, from 9 am to 4 pm, at the First United Methodist Church, 1215 E. Gibbon (please use Harney Street entrance).

Fair trade means that the makers of each item receive a living wage for their country and work in a safe environment. Your holiday gifts and decorations will help artisan families earn the income to recover from natural disasters (such as the earthquake in Haiti), to send their children to school, and to improve their shelters and health care.

The long-standing relationships built between Ten Thousand Villages and Third World artisan co-ops gives the artisans the opportunities, dignity and hope they need to achieve economic success.

Laramie's sale will include unique holiday decorations and ornaments, jewelry, warm hats, baskets, housewares, toys, coffee, chocolate, and many other beautiful handcrafted items!

As a thank-you for publicizing the sale, and in recognition of the fact that many nonprofits have had to cancel fundraisers, Ten Thousand Villages Fort Collins will contribute 10% of total purchases made by members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Laramie back to the Fellowship. Customers may designate the Fellowship at checkout.

Masks will be required.



Contemplative Yarns

We continue to meet on Saturdays at 12:30 pm at Harbon Park for a picnic and conversation. We will meet as long as the weather permits. Later this fall, we will begin to hike on Saturday mornings, mostly in town at Pilot Hill. We are also starting a book group late November or early December. We will be reading and discussing *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Paganism*. If you are interested in participating in any of these activities, e-mail uularamienews@gmail.com.

Notes from the Program Committee

We continue to offer Sunday services both in our sanctuary and via zoom. So far, the system has been working pretty well, and we have seen a modest increase in attendance over the past couple of months, especially in person. We have also seen a number of new visitors to our services, both on zoom and at the Fellowship.

The program committee sees this dual system having a strong impact on rebuilding our connections as a congregation. We have begun printing Orders of Service again and wearing our name tags. And we are experiencing again the satisfaction of lighting the real chalice and sharing our joy and concerns face to face.

Of course, this dual system requires a tech host for each service. We've streamlined the process so that it is pretty simple. If you'd like to serve as a tech host on the occasional Sunday, please contact Barbara Bogart at ballenbogart@gmail.com or 307-399-0806.

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.

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



Building Use Policy *updated October 6, 2021*

Laramie UUFL services are available both in-person at the building and via Laramie Zoom room.

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 and Meetings:

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. The Board will continue to monitor the advisability of indoor services and meetings as circumstances evolve.

