



# UU Laramie News

December 2021

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

## Services for December

We continue to meet in person, with a zoom component. Masks are required of everyone in the building. All services begin at 10 am, unless otherwise noted.



**HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS**

**December 5:** “Reflections on power, letting go, and the promise of Radical Love” led by UUFL member Linda Meeker. In a social world beset by anger, aggression, and acrimony, what would happen if we stopped resisting and instead opened ourselves to the whole of the moment? Join us for a morning to consider the nature of ego, suffering, and the oneness that unites us all. If you have a token or small item which stirs your heart yet calms your soul, please bring it with you as a focal point for meditation and remembering.

**December 12:** “Making Christmas Memories”

We’ll gather in the sanctuary to decorate the tree, sing carols, and share stories of family Christmases gone wrong – rogue relatives, gag gifts, dinner disasters, and other fond holiday memories.

**December 19:** Rev. Kee will be in the pulpit speaking on the theme “What Does Love Demand of Us?”

**December 24:** Celebrate Christmas Eve with Rev. Kee. The service will be live, via the Casper zoom room, with worship associates from both congregations. Starting time is 7 pm.

**December 26:** Coffee and Conversation: “Pushing the pause button on the holiday season.”



### Minister

Rev. Leslie Kee ([lkee@wyoming.com](mailto:lkee@wyoming.com))

### UUFL Board

Board Co-Chars: Linda Meeker ([ldangrous1@gmail.com](mailto:ldangrous1@gmail.com))

David Perry ([dperry@uwyo.edu](mailto:dperry@uwyo.edu))

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

Secretary: Robin Chestek ([rchestek@gmail.com](mailto:rchestek@gmail.com))

Catie Ballard ([cdonbdoc@bresnan.net](mailto:cdonbdoc@bresnan.net))

### UU Laramie News Editor

Laura Miller ([uularamienews@gmail.com](mailto:uularamienews@gmail.com))

## Minister's Musings

As winter is arriving, our UU family has lost two beautiful high-spirited souls whose time has come to cross over into the spirit world. I share this poem in honor of Jerre Jones and Clarine Dunder.

### *Rough Country, by Dana Gioia*

Give me a landscape made of obstacles,  
of steep hills and jutting glacial rock,  
where the low-running streams are quick to flood  
the grassy fields and bottomlands.

A place

no engineers can master—where the roads  
must twist like tendrils up the mountainside  
on narrow cliffs where boulders block the way.  
Where tall black trunks of lightning-scalded pine  
push through the tangled woods to make a roost  
for hawks and swarming crows.

And sharp inclines

where twisting through the thorn-thick underbrush,  
scratched and exhausted, one turns suddenly  
to find an unexpected waterfall,  
not half a mile from the nearest road,  
a spot so hard to reach that no one comes—  
a hiding place, a shrine for dragonflies  
and nesting jays, a sign that there is still  
one piece of property that won't be owned.

*Rev. Kee*

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## Clarine Joyce Dunder (1943 – 2021)

Clarine was born at the first Iverson Hospital in Laramie on January 12, 1943. She lived most of her life in Laramie and spoke fondly of her time living in Germany and Maine. She was a fiber artist and teacher, and the bumper sticker on her last vehicle read: "A WARPED WEAVER LOOMS AHEAD". She directed the Foster Grandparent program in Laramie for several years. She was one of a group of women who dressed as clowns and entertained children and the elderly. Clarine loved animals and over the years adopted several dogs and cats.



She was an active member at UUFL for several years. Her many contributions include serving as the director of religious education and newsletter editor. She maintained to the end, her wonderful cheerfulness and humor in the face of the many challenges she faced in later years. Clarine was a good friend to many and will be missed by our community.



## Musings of a Board Co-chair

A year ago, anti-COVID vaccines were just starting to roll out and we were joyously optimistic that we were finally going to bring this dreadful pandemic to an end. Yet here we are in the middle of another surge in case numbers in the state of Wyoming. It is all so frustrating. We may forget that we really have made tremendous strides in our knowledge of the disease, how it's transmitted and how to treat it. Thus, we are in the unenviable position of just weighing our risks and getting on with the business of life. For instance, I sing in the UW Civic Choir that rehearses for two hours every Monday night and will be performing alongside others at the Annual Christmas Gala the weekend of December 11<sup>th</sup>. I am fully vaccinated and all choral singing is done fully masked. Is it ideal? No. But it mitigates the risk to a level I'm willing to tolerate. A couple weeks ago, I attended an Opera Colorado performance of Puccini's *Tosca* at Denver's Ellie Caulkins Opera House. Every attendee had to show proof of vaccination and wear a mask throughout the performance. Again, the attendance requirements brought the risk down to a level I was willing to take. Normally, we would go out to a fancy restaurant in Larimer Square before the performance. That was NOT a risk I was willing to take. We all must constantly consider what risks are inherent in any activity and decide whether it is a level we are willing to tolerate.

In church, we are also having to deal with the levels of the risk of disease transmission. We know now that the virus is carried in the air, not just on large droplets, and can travel significant distances. We know that masking reduces the risk of transmission significantly. We also know that vaccinated individuals are far less likely to transmit a significant viral load even if they suffer, knowingly or not, a "break through" infection. Thus, the Board is continuing to request that any activities in the church require face masks of all individuals in the building and we certainly hope that everyone is taking advantage of the freely available vaccines. Again, every individual has a different risk tolerance, and we will continue to transmit our services via Zoom for anyone uncomfortable with engaging with live, breathing human beings in an enclosed space for an hour on Sunday morning.

I write this on the eve of Thanksgiving. As I contemplate the standard question of "what am I thankful for," I find I truly am thankful that we know enough about this scourge that we can now mitigate the risk levels sufficiently to allow us to return to something approximating what we once considered "normal." I hope everyone has found some reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving and is girded for the usual headlong plunge toward Christmas.

Stay safe. Stay well. Enjoy the holiday season.

*David*



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## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:dperry@uwyo.edu)).

## Contemplative Yarns

Contemplative Yarns is starting a book study on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. We'll meet in the Laramie zoom room from 10 – 11 am, and read and discuss *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Paganism* by Carl McColman. We plan to meet weekly and do 2 chapters a week. All are welcome to attend and no masks required. If you are interested in participating, e-mail [uularamienews@gmail.com](mailto:uularamienews@gmail.com).

## 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](mailto:rchestek@gmail.com).

## Social Action

Check out this 501(c)(3) non-profit's website to see how this works. MILES4MIGRANTS ([MILES4MIGRANTS.org](http://MILES4MIGRANTS.org)) accepts donations of unused airline miles and credit card points to purchase plane tickets for refugees trying to escape war, political oppression, and natural disasters. They are currently focusing much of their efforts on helping more people get out of Afghanistan.



Much closer to home, the Laramie Animal Shelter is in need of some things not paid for with their city funding, especially canned dog and cat food. Older animals find this easier to eat and the others appreciate the variety it brings to their diet. Preferred brands are Pedigree dog food and Friskies pate for the cats. Treats and chews would also be appreciated as well. Donations can be brought to 1064 N 5th.

We are trying to improve Change for Change (C4C). Starting December 1, we will be accepting donations for the same recipient through the entire month. There will be a different recipient each month. A box will be provided in the sanctuary to receive C4C contributions, and the name of that month's donee will be on or near the box. All money collected during the regular weekly offertory will go to the UUFL, unless otherwise designated. Please deposit all C4C

donations separately in the box. You won't be penalized for putting designated C4C money in the collection basket, just make sure it is clearly marked for C4C. There is also a list of all the recipients for the year on the Social Action bulletin board in the social room. The December recipient is the Laramie Animal Shelter.

We are also looking into partnering with Citizen's Climate Lobby and other UU groups on climate change actions, and working with other groups around the state on voter suppression. Another good idea that came up was to contact non-profits around the state to learn what we might do to help them in ways beyond just giving money.



## Family Promise of Albany County

There is currently a mom and her four year old child with Family Promise. The program is doing well and is an asset to our community. Family Promise helps parents find housing and other various necessities of keeping their families fed and cared for. They also have a diaper bank where parents can get those expensive but necessary items for their babies. It is nice to know UUFL has participated in Family Promise since the beginning.

## Holiday Giving

This year we are collecting donations for Family Promise\* and Laramie Foster Closet\*, two organizations that assist people in need. You can bring items or monetary donations (checks preferred made out to the organization) to the Fellowship services on Sunday December 12 and 19. Or you can contact Nancy Lockwood (nanlockw@gmail.com) to arrange a time to drop off items. Below are lists of items these organizations need.

**Family Promise:** Non-perishable foods, disposable diapers (all sizes), hygiene products, baby wipes

**Laramie Foster Closet (including Cody's Closet):** New underwear and socks, all sizes from toddler to youth/adult, especially youth sizes; pajamas, preemie through youth/adult sizes; teen clothing including hoodies and athletic wear; clothing for size 5-Toddler through youth 10/12 and Adult XS through XL; long sleeve t-shirts; sweatshirts and sweatpants; coats and jackets; thermals; snow boots size 2 Toddler through Adult XL; backpacks; disposable diapers, all sizes; baby wipes and hygiene products; acne products to include face wipes; deodorant; travel size shampoo and conditioner; hair brushes and combs; Q-tips; nail kits; wash clothes; hair accessories

**\*Family Promise's mission** is to help homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. They meet personal needs by providing resources like case management, hygiene essentials, temporary lodging, vital resource recovery, and rent and utility relief through engagement with local community partners. Family Promise provides resources to families with children experiencing homelessness in Albany County. We work with a network of community support partners to both prevent homelessness, and help families transition out of homelessness. They also operate a diaper and hygiene pantry that is available to the broader community.

**\*Laramie Foster Closet including Cody's Closet** “...strives to encourage and support children and youth from hard places and foster families.” The Foster Closet is equipped with items to enrich lives, restore dignity, and create a positive environment for healing and foster hope for the future for those in foster care.



members and friends  
of UUFL for all you do  
for our community.

## 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.

