



UU Laramie News

June 2022

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

Services for June

Services begins at 10 am. We continue to offer our Sunday services both in person and via Zoom. Masks are recommended for those attending services in the Fellowship building.



June 5 *Flower Communion*

We'll celebrate our traditional start-of-summer ceremony by creating a congregational bouquet. Bring a bloom from your garden, the prairie, or wherever else you can find one. If you received a seed from the "Seeds" program in March, bring along your seedling to show off! Led by UUFL members Jenn Wade and Barbara Bogart.

June 12 *Coffee & Conversation: Poet for a Day*

Join UUFL 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 a spirit of curiosity.

June 19 *Coffee & Conversation: Book Lovers United!*

What books have astonished or delighted or challenged you this past year? What's on your reading shelf right now? We'll share our thoughts about books, authors, and the deep pleasures of reading. Led by UUFL member Barbara Bogart.

June 26 *Rev. Kee is in the pulpit*



Minister

Rev. Leslie Kee (lkee@wyoming.com)

UUFL Board

Board Co-Chairs: Linda Meeker (ldangrous1@gmail.com), David Perry (dperry@uwyo.edu)

Treasurer: TBD

Secretary: Robin Chestek (rchestek@gmail.com)

Catie Ballard (cdonbdoc@bresnan.net),

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Minister's Musings



As many of us have struggled to find a sense of normalcy coming out of, what we had hoped, was going to be post-pandemic, it seems our collective trauma has just kept flowing. When we find ourselves pondering so much chaos and carnage, the Rev. Rob Hardies reminds us we want to love the world, but does that mean we must condone all that is wrong with it? Must we quietly acquiesce to injustice and violence? Learning to love distressing contradiction is no small thing and it amounts to a fundamental spiritual imperative for our time. And so, making sense of unfathomable distress is a religious task because religion is the faculty through which we try to make sense of the world and our place in it.

Process Theologian, Bernard Loomer asks us, “What is the size of your soul?” By which he means, what is your soul’s ability to grow and expand, to stretch when life throws more contradictions your way? And so, we need a spiritual practice that moves us beyond fight or flight; one that sees complexity not as an enemy but as a friend. We need a spirituality that views paradox as a creative opportunity and contradiction as a stimulant. We need souls that can take in the world in all its complexity and diversity, yet still maintain personal integrity.

No one can tell us how to make sense of the contradiction of our world. We each have to struggle with these tensions ourselves, but to understand this place of paradox, that place deep within our soul where we hold the conflicts of the world, can be a place of immense creative power. I believe Unitarian Universalist spirituality nurtures spacious and resilient souls which embrace the tensions of our world and propel us forward in our task of right-relationship.

Our world desperately needs such freeing and affirming spirituality. If our world is to survive in all its contraction and complexity, it needs more soul-deep people who are capable of loving it in its entirety. Unitarian Universalism’s third principle sets before us a vision of our congregations as communities where spacious souls can flourish and grow.

The purpose of a church and its religion is to provide spiritual sustenance for world engagement. Now more than ever, the world needs our UU congregations to be incubators of a generous, loving, and justice-seeking spirituality – places where contradiction and chaos are not the enemy, rather where our soul finds the pathways to growth and health.

My prayer for all of us is to love and nourish our beautiful church with the holy (human) spirit we infuse within its spaces. Our church is our spiritual sanctuary for these times which try our souls.

Rev. Kee

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!*



Musing From Your Board Co-Chair

Every year I plant a garden in the Spring hoping against experience that I will have a successful crop of peas, beans, lettuce, spinach and even tomatoes. Some years are better than others. Often, the rabbits munch on anything green that comes up, the birds grab the strawberries just as they ripen, and the raspberries try to take over the lawn without so much as bearing any fruit. Last year, the first frost was so late I actually succeeded in harvesting vine-ripe tomatoes. More frequently, I end up pulling up the vines before the first frost and ripening the fruits in the garage and they're never quite as tasty. So why do I keep trying year after year? I guess it's because the memory of the flavors of garden-fresh produce are so wonderful that I can't resist.



This past month, we had what I thought was a tremendously successful annual congregational meeting. We have come through a couple difficult years in terms of safe Sunday services and programs such as children's religious education and the Social Action Committee going into temporary hibernation. We had a successful pledge drive, and we are financially stable. However, this year feels different. We had our Annual Meeting in person. Most of us remained for a wonderful potluck—recalled peanut butter aside—that reminded us of our pre-pandemic days of social gatherings. I look forward to a new year of recovery to some sense of "normal." Perhaps being in a leadership position in a small UU congregation, then, is a bit like gardening in Wyoming. Despite the difficult years, we always persevere in the knowledge of how wonderful the good years can be when all goes well.

I look forward to seeing you this summer as we turn to more casual programming with our Flower Communion, our book discussion/exchange (one of my favorites), summer hikes up in the high country, and our annual in-gathering Water Service. Enjoy your summer and save water samples from places of special significance to you.

David

UUA General Assembly 2022

General Assembly is from June 22 - 26th this year, both online and in-person, in Portland, OR. Anyone can attend and the Board can certify up to two people to be voting delegates from our congregation. Contact David for details.

UUFL Calendar of Events

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



Opera News

Courtesy of Jeff Lockwood

Religion, environmentalism and opera came together on April 23rd, when two, new chamber operas (~15 minutes each!) premiered at the University of Wyoming (I am the librettist). However, due to COVID concerns we had to limit the size of the live audience. But we now have the operas, filmed the next day in a local tavern with no audience but lots of ambiance, available on YouTube.



Genesis: Adam and Eve Walk Into a Bar... contemporizes ancient and abiding lessons of the Judeo-Christian creation myth by using gentle humor to raise serious, modern questions about human freedom, human nature, and human responsibilities to the natural world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4ZkDeBzSoY>

Miracles: A Mormon, a Seagull, and a Cricket Walk Into a Bar... delves into a religious legend of the Latter-day Saints by using surrealistic absurdity to explore how we might use perspectivism in understanding the nature of myth, faith, miracles—and the natural world itself.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwwHO6x0Tmc>

Enjoy these unusual but evocative performances, which I think you'll find are tinged with UU sensibilities. And please feel free to share the links with anybody who might find these mini-operas to be of interest!

Family Promise



Our next week to host meals for Family Promise is in late July. Meals and shelf stable food items are always welcome and can be delivered to the Presbyterian Church on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you've any questions you can call Bren at 307.761.0887 or text her at bpatchranch@yahoo.com.

2022 UUFL / Family Promise Dates

July 31-August 7

September 11-18

October 16-23

Membership Committee

The UUFL Membership committee is Robin Chestek (Chair) and Ken Chestek (Database Administrator). 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

We meet at Harbon Park at 12:30 pm on Saturdays, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, we meet in the fellowship building. We welcome others to join us. If you are interested in participating, e-mail uularamienews@gmail.com or drop by on Saturday.



New COVID Policy *updated March 25, 2022*

We strongly encourage all eligible members to be fully vaccinated and we continue to recommend indoor masking as ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect our community, but in the current phase of the pandemic, we no longer require masks inside the Fellowship. In addition, use of the kitchen and food service is permitted by groups that wish to do so. The Board will continue to monitor pandemic conditions and adjust our policies if we need to return to more restrictive measures.

Zoom Room Information

Laramie Zoom Room
Meeting ID: 290 700 5294
Passcode: no passcode needed

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

We had a lovely potluck after the annual congregational meeting.

Photos courtesy of Marian Erdelyi.



Thanks for being part of our UUFL community!