

**Committee On Ministry  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Laramie  
2022 Survey Comments**

*Survey results compiled by Sara Saulcy, COM member*

Question 1a: Did you attend any of the Zoom services while the church was closed to in-person gatherings?

- I often still attend Zoom services.

Question 1b: When in-person services resume, should they also be online?

- It is important to continue with Zoom services in the short run for those who aren't comfortable or aren't in town. If viewership declines over time, may want to reconsider continuing with offering services online.
- I am a bit torn about providing hybrid services. It's a good way to connect to remote members and friends, as well as a way to allow prospective members to virtually visit us before attending in person. However, being physically present is powerful. I worry a bit that the Zoom option could become a way for people to drift away or diminish their involvement/commitment. I would lean toward the Zoom/online option, but with these stated reservations.
- This allows us to be more inclusive and accessible to persons who may be unable to or prefer not to attend in-person, including persons outside the Laramie community.
- Yes, they should continue to be offered along with a monthly, in-person potluck, game night, etc. to keep in touch.
- I attended most of the joint meetings for a year or so after the pandemic started, but gradually felt less and less like a participant and my attendance dropped. For me, the services devolved to me being an observer. For me, Zoom is best for smaller, committee-sized meetings, as I still feel like part of the group. That said, I think it would be helpful for several folks that we still offer the option of Zoom attendance.
- Yes, I think that services should be available online. It allows people to be part of the UUFL if they're snowbirds or if they are home sick or caring for loved ones. It is also an avenue for people to get to know UUFL. Is there a place on UUA's website that lists congregations that have services available online and how to access those online services? If so, we could post how to access our services online at that site in addition to on the UUFL website.

Question 2: Did you attend any of the UU Casper or joint Laramie/Casper services? Would you like to see more collaborative efforts with the Casper congregation and/or other congregations?

- The joint services were fine during the COVID era, and it was nice to virtually connect with Casperites. However, I didn't find them particularly engaging or stimulating, perhaps due to the sterility of Zoom, so I'm rather ambivalent about

such ventures in the future, at least on a very regular or frequent basis. That said, I can imagine that connecting via Zoom a couple of times a year might be meaningful. If there was a way to be physically present together, that would be interesting, but we've had a very difficult time trying to link up with the Cheyenne UUs, and the Casper UUs would be an even greater logistical challenge. The possibility is intriguing and perhaps a joint program in the summer would be viable.

Question 2b: Would you like to see more collaborative efforts with the Casper congregation and/or other congregations?

- Yes, I would like to see more collaborative efforts with the Casper congregation and other congregations.
- I would like to see more collaborative efforts between Laramie and Casper as well as other congregations. Also the UUA has free online services we can use.
- I think we should, for now, put our efforts and planning into getting UUFL "up and running." Collaboration with other congregations could subtract energy from those priorities.
- Perhaps collaborating for special occasions once or twice a year.
- Yes, I think we should continue our collaborative efforts, though perhaps only in the summer months. Early in the pandemic there was a Zoom service that included UUFL, Cheyenne, Casper, and possibly Ft. Collins as well. It was a beautiful service, and my favorite one when we were exclusively online. The outdoors are literally common and sacred ground for UUs. Perhaps the four congregations could rotate hosting camping or picnics at favorite recreation areas during the summer and warmer months. For example, Casper could be host up at Casper Mountain. Ft. Collins could be the host at Horsetooth Reservoir. Cheyenne could be the host at Curt Gowdy State Park. Laramie could be the host in the Snowy Range. Congregations could show off some of their favorite places, attendees could visit areas potentially new to them, and congregations would only be responsible for the logistics of one event. People could attend any or all of them based on their interests and their schedules.

Question 3: Which types of issues do you think are best engaged through the UUFL: global, national, statewide, or local?

- I find local issues to be most compelling followed by global, then national/state. It seems that we can be most effective and knowledgeable about local challenges. It's also interesting to have a global perspective (e.g., climate change). However, our ability to do much at the national/state level given our size makes dealing with those issues seem frustratingly futile.
- It depends on the issue. That being said, primarily local issues in terms of direct, active engagement and wanting to be visible and engaged in our community. Many issues can be addressed at other/all levels and by so doing would benefit the local community as well.
- All of them, although I would like to see more local issues addressed.

- I don't think we need to prioritize among these things. All important, all are worthy of discussion and consideration.
- Not sure what's meant here. Local is almost always the best place to begin.
- I have difficulty determining the types of issues that are best engaged through UUFL. I think that there are some issues which are best addressed at a local level but that have global impacts such as climate change and reducing the use of single-use plastics. There are issues such as those addressed by Wyoming Promise that have state and national implications. Perhaps we could have a congregational issues discussion to decide which ones at various levels people would like to focus their attention on, possibly choosing one issue at each level (global, national, statewide, local) where the congregation sees the greatest need, where the congregation can have an impact, and where we can get training to have an impact, e.g., local experts, webinars, and conferences. I also think that we need to be careful about spreading ourselves too thin.
- Local and statewide, mostly.

Question 4: Are you satisfied with our social media presence? How could it be improved?

- Not much of a social media user, however social media is important to young people and we really should be attentive to our presence on various platforms.
- This isn't my area of expertise. I am satisfied, but for others who access this more as their primary source of information, it likely could be improved, but I don't know how or what is most effective.
- We should have more presence. Not sure how it could be improved because I'm not very active in social media.
- It seems to be a one-way medium on one platform only (Facebook). Announcements are made there but nobody seems to engage in discussions. I don't know how you encourage people to engage with it more fully.
- On a scale of 1-5, I'd say we're at about a 3. We have a presence, but there's room for improvement. As for how to improve it, I think that adding a UUFL Instagram account would be worthwhile, and possibly Twitter. There may be others worth considering as well. It also may be worthwhile to employ someone for 5-10 hours/week to increase and maintain a social media presence. I think that increasing our social media presence is especially important to attract and retain young(er) people.
- We should do more advertising, possibly events posted in coffee shops and the co-op. Also there are free radio spots with some of the local radio stations.
- Should we look into other social media platforms? We should remember to put notices/announcements of special events in the Boomerang.

Question 5: When conditions permit in-person gatherings, would you be interested in adult RE classes and presentations?

- I think that in-person classes/presentations might be best organized as short classes in which each meeting could even “stand alone,” as I think it’s very difficult to get a sustained commitment from people. However, the BYOT course did have quite a bit of success, and it required repeated attendance.
- Adult RE classes and presentations.
- I vividly remember discussion sessions with Penny Rather, Catie Ballard, and Ken Chestek (BYOT), especially since they could focus on everyone participating, not on lectures.
- I am very interested in a Building Your Own Theology class. I am interested in attending other presentations that engage attendees rather than just being lectures.
- Possibly – depending on time and topic.
- That would depend quite a bit on the topic and the time commitment. The UUFL isn’t my only volunteer activity.

Question 6: Are you interested in resuming social functions such as meals and celebrations?

- I have missed our potlucks, Easter brunches, and Thanksgiving feasts. Social functions are crucial to the life of the Fellowship and one of the things we have missed the most the past two years.
- We really need to come back together. This may be one of the most important aspects of the UUFL to reenergize/restore in the coming months.
- If outside, yes. Inside, probably, preferably with masks and I’d support requiring proof of vaccination.
- It would be nice to start the potlucks again.
- Yes for social functions and celebrations. For now, I think “bring your own meals/drinks” would be a good idea. This is what Contemplative Yarns has done the past two years.
- Yes, but outside as much as possible. Also, I think that we should avoid potlucks for now. I think that we could bring our own meals, though.

Question 7: Should we talk about using our endowment to promote and enhance our ministries?

- I am a little leery of what is meant by this question. There seem to be two groups, those that see it as a savings account and those that see it as a true endowment whose purpose is to generate income into perpetuity and to be a place to receive large gifts or estates to increase the amount of sustainable income over time; I’m in the second camp. It appears that the endowment will have to provide for structural repairs to the building, whether through income or other mechanisms.
- The income from the endowment might well be used to promote/enhance our ministries, once it is no longer committed to some of our building projects. However, I’d be strongly opposed to using the capital for any purpose.
- Only the interest, not the principle, and in accordance with the established policies for using the endowment fund.

- We should use the endowment to promote UUFL in any way, including building upgrade, half-time minister, local social events, etc.
- Only within the parameters already established in the church bylaws. The endowment should never be used for ordinary costs of running the church, it should be limited to special projects as specified in the by-laws.
- YES we should use the endowment for promoting and enhancing our ministry. That money does no good in savings, unless people are waiting to hire caretakers to push them around in their wheelchairs as they continue to age – We need new and younger people and it will take some money to do that. I can see leaving some money in the endowment – but only about half!
- I'm strongly against spending down the endowment entirely, as I think having it as a long-term nest egg is important to the future of the Fellowship.
- Those have always been tough discussions, and still will be. How best to use an endowment is an important topic for all members, and we should not shy away from it.
- I think that we should, at a minimum, talk about it. I think that we should have in mind various goals, from urgent goals (fix the building) to “wish-list” goals (e.g., employing a tech host) then determine which, if any, of those could best be met with what is in the endowment. I do think that a portion, perhaps half, should remain in savings, though I also think that we should use the income from it only, insofar as possible based on our goals. I think that all of us should keep our minds open to the varying opinions about the goals that may need some money to help them be achieved and proposals to use \$ from the endowment to pay part or all of the expense needed to achieve them. Discussions about money are often uncomfortable, but I think the discussions are necessary for transparency and to consider the range of possibilities, one of those possibilities being that no \$ is taken from the endowment.
- Yes, but only the income, not the principle.
- Yes, but for capital projects only, not the regular day-to-day expenses.
- Yes, based on any rules established for it.
- Yes, treat it as a true endowment.
- Use the interest, but probably not the principle.