



March 2024

PUUF is currently offering in-person services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. An interactive Zoom option is available for those wishing to participate remotely (see link below). Meditations are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 9:00 AM. See below for details.

COVID Protocol:

CDC tracking of COVID-19 hospital admission levels in Archuleta County is currently rated as low. Masking continues to be optional and social distancing is encouraged.

Winter Weather Alerts:

If either the service or the meditation is cancelled due to winter weather, a notification will appear on pagosauu.org by 8:30 AM.

March Steering Committee Meeting: The next Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for **March 19 at 3:30 PM** at the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting is usually held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, but is subject to change. If you would like to attend, you may verify the meeting day/time and also request Zoom access by emailing info@pagosauu.org or by contacting any member of the Steering Committee.

Note from the Editor:

You'll find this month's newsletter longer than usual. We've included the full summary report from the survey as well as remembrances of Ann Graves. So, set aside some time, make yourself a cup of tea, put your feet up, and read on.

Karen LeCour

Sunday Services

The Sunday Service Committee is always looking for ideas for speakers and topics for the Message during the Sunday Service. We look for presentations that align with our Principles. This can be anything from what inspires us spiritually, to climate justice, social justice, belief systems, and more. It would be a great help if anyone has suggestions for speakers or a topic of your own. You can contact Joan Ward at joanyward@gmail.com or 970.382.1925.

Sunday, March 3 10:30 AM

On Zoom and In Person at the Fellowship Hall

Impermanence

with Michael Demchak

We often feel a degree of security in our lives by thinking of things being permanent or at least lasting awhile. Our possessions, our home, and our relationships with others. Yet the reality is, nothing is everlasting, including ourselves. Join me as I share some recent experiences that have taught me this and what lessons I've learned.

Sunday, March 17 10:30 AM

On Zoom and In Person at the Fellowship Hall

Kung Fu, Star Trek and the Many Paths to Spirituality

A TED talk with Rainn Wilson

Join us in person or on Zoom to hear and discuss a TED talk by Rainn Wilson, author of *Soul Boom: Why We Need A Spiritual Revolution*.

From TED.com: "Do you feel overwhelmed by the complex issues facing our world, not to mention your own personal problems? Spirituality is the key to staying grounded and hopeful -- even for skeptics, says actor and author Rainn Wilson. He explains why it's time for all of us to experience a spiritual shake-up and outlines two paths to tap into your innate wisdom, kindness and strength. The work begins within yourself."

Rainn Wilson is an actor ("The Office"), comedian and film producer, a climate advocate and a member of the advisory board of Arctic Basecamp.

Besides his many other comedic and dramatic roles on stage and screen, he is the cofounder of the media company SoulPancake and host of the Peacock docuseries *Rainn Wilson and the Geography of Bliss*. He is the author of *Soul Boom: Why We Need a Spiritual Revolution*, *The Bassoon King: My Life in Art, Faith, and Idiocy* and the coauthor of *SoulPancake: Chew on Life's Big Questions*, a New York Times bestseller.

From soulboom.com: "The trauma that our struggling species has experienced in recent years—because of both the pandemic and societal tensions that threaten to overwhelm us—is not going away anytime soon. Existing political and economic systems are not enough to bring the change that the world needs. In this book, Rainn Wilson explores the possibility and hope for a spiritual revolution, a "Soul Boom," to find a healing transformation on both a personal and global level."

Zoom Instructions:

Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8991941305>

Meeting ID: 899 194 1305

Dial by your location
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Coming This Spring

Sunday, April 21 Earth Day Celebration at the River Walk & GGP amphitheater

April 22nd is Earth Day and the Pagosa community will celebrate the event on Sunday April 21st ... which falls on the 3rd Sunday ... which is normally PUUF Sunday. So PUUF will take advantage of this opportunity to make PUUF Sunday an Earth Celebration. The Celebration will include both an opening and closing ritual, a meditation, a Community Tea Ceremony and, at least, one talk on some aspect of the reason for the celebration. Could easily be mistaken for a PUUF Sunday service moved to the River Walk and the GGP amphitheater! We will remind you again next month with more details, like time, etc.

Annual Meeting

In May, we will have an annual meeting where we will elect members to your Steering Committee. PUUF needs you. Please think about what you can offer to keep our UU Fellowship a vibrant place of refuge that offers community, spiritual support and the potential of doing some good in a world that is badly in need. We are currently accepting nominations for the Steering Committee in preparation for elections in May. Feel free to nominate yourself or someone you know who might be interested. Drop a name in the donation basket or send it to info@pagosauu.org.

A little background...

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the PUUF Steering Committee (SC) has not been compliant with its own bylaws regarding election of officers. The Reason? First, with the pandemic membership dropped to 14 (from 30) and attendance at (Zoom) service dropped to approximately 10-12 (from 20-25). As a result the SC and the Sunday Service Cttee (SSC), a total of four people plus our Newsletter editor, accepted the challenge of keeping the Fellowship afloat and did not try for elections since there were so few folks showing up. Two months ago each of the Committees grew by one member and a few more folks have begun to attend services. As a result the SC and the SSC distributed a survey aimed at eliciting input directed at increasing participation and have begun to put some of those suggestions into effect. At its last SC Meeting, the Board decided that it is time to call a General Meeting in May and will take nominations for new leadership, thus putting it back in compliance with the bylaws.

Donation to Cornerstone Project

After Michelle Johnson's recent presentation on the Cornerstone Project, the Steering Committee has decided to make a donation of \$500 toward their effort to build a home for survivors of sex trafficking. A donor has agreed to make a matching gift bringing the total to \$1000, allowing PUUF to purchase a building stone which will be placed at the gated entrance to the home or along the walkway to an on-site rental property. If you would like to make a personal donation, please make checks out to PUUF and note "Cornerstone Project" in the memo field. You may drop your check in the basket at Sunday service or mail it to PUUF, P.O. Box 5984, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147.

Survey Results

Input was requested of 96 members, former members and friends of PUUF through emails, word-of-mouth, and the December PUUF newsletter, and 22 responses were received, for a return rate of 23%.

The PUUF Steering Committee and Sunday Service Committee held a work session to discuss the findings and concerns and to begin to identify and assign appropriate actions which we will outline in this report as well.

If you have a particular interest in any of these areas, we welcome your suggestions for improvements and participation in the implementation process. It takes a village, and it will take a fellowship, to restore PUUF to the vibrant and growing community it once was and can be again.

We begin with some general observations. First, there is a recognition that COVID-19 has changed the landscape for organizations, like churches, whose success is predicated on people being willing to assemble and feeling safe to do so. Short of encouraging social distancing and the wearing of masks when transmission levels are high, there is not much else to be done. PUUF has purchased a whole room air purifier that has

been in operation for many months now. Second, we recognize that PUUF is no longer the only game in town for those looking for alternative/non-dogmatic spiritual communities. The arrival of New Thought and the Spiritual Experiences Group have expanded the offerings in Pagosa Springs.

Survey responses yielded three primary themes or areas of concern: **logistics/operations**, **structure/organizational elements**, and the **content of services**.

Logistics/Operations

Among the most frequently cited issues was the **perception of disorganization**, primarily around technical and organized delivery of services.

Action: The PUUF Steering Committee has already taken steps to address technology issues with the change of internet providers and the designation of a single member responsible for facilitating all technology-related aspects of services. Presenting a calm, ready environment when members and visitors arrive will help to address the perception of disorganization. Also new on the tech front is the purchase of a laptop to host Zoom calls and the purchase of microphones for the fellowship hall to both better amplify our presenter and to allow Zoom participants to hear the sharing of joys and sorrows.

A more **welcoming environment** was another issue identified. You may remember how Phyl Daleske made newcomers feel welcome and made sure they had name tags. Re-creating the role of greeter could help. So could follow-up with visitors, social get-togethers, and expanding who brings snacks.

Action: Barbara Asprey has graciously accepted this role and would like to identify a few other folks she could count on for backup if needed. If interested, please see Barbara. It has also been decided that the service leader is responsible for snacks and may choose to delegate the job so don't be surprised if you're asked to help! There are funds allocated in the budget for Sunday snacks and petty cash or reimbursement is available through Joan Ward.

Several respondents recommended more **outreach to the community** about UU (not service-specific). This could include visibility in community activities and a PR-like campaign such as radio, paid ads, information in the Pagosa Daily Post, etc.

Action: We will reach out to KSUT and KWUF for announcement guidelines. Any event sponsored by PUUF or that PUUF is participating in (Earth Day, for example) will be announced broadly. We will also look at any off-the-shelf media resources that might be available through UUA. Additionally, this spring we will launch a display ad in the Pagosa Sun intended to highlight what makes us unique and potentially attract young people with words like "Find Friends, Do Good, Grow your Spirit."

Structure/Organizational Elements

Participatory services and more interaction during and outside of services was requested. Suggestions included discussion groups on topics of current interest, particularly those topics (that could relate to UU principles) of interest to younger people.

Action: Please give this some thought and come to us with ideas for topics that would encourage discussion. If you are willing to facilitate and moderate a discussion, all the better. During services, we will leave time immediately after the speaker's presentation for Q&A and comments.

Sharing "ownership" and recruiting people into decision-making roles in PUUF structure could help reduce the burden on overburdened members and make attendees/members feel more committed, moving from "my UU" to "our UU" feeling.

Action: This one's for you! Your current Steering Committee consists of five members and has two positions open. We are accepting nominations for the Steering Committee in preparation for elections at our annual meeting in May. There are official positions for President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary who serve a 2 year term as well as 1-year advisory, at-large positions that do not entail any official duty. Meetings are open to all members and friends. We've not done a good job letting the fellowship know when a meeting is coming up. You'll notice the announcement at the beginning of this newsletter about the March Steering Committee meeting. In addition, your Sunday Service Committee would be grateful to have anyone join who has suggestions for speakers or would like to become a presenter or a service leader themselves. It's not necessary to officially join to share an idea! Just speak to Michael, Joan, Pauline, or Pat.

Having a **part-time or contracted person** to develop a plan with a quarterly spiritual topic or theme could provide continuity, focus services, and also relieve Sunday Service Committee members. (UUA resources are available.)

Action: Good idea. We're looking at the possibility of this.

Content of Services

The following order of preference was chosen by most respondents:

1. Presentations on other beliefs and practices, such as Buddhist, Sufi, Native American, and nature based
2. Sermons by visiting ministers, usually paid a fee and travel expenses
3. Presentations on or by local social action groups, such as Rise Above Violence and Habitat for Humanity
4. Presentations by members on their beliefs or other personal subjects

Action: Your input will help the Sunday Service Committee hone in on the types of services you enjoy and find meaningful and bring you more of them. We are gratified that presentations on other beliefs/practices rated first, as in the last 6 months, we've brought you Sufi ministers Revs. Janess and David Sheets, Stacey Couch speaking on spiritual alchemy, Michael Demchak reflecting on divinity across the spectrum, and the video presentation provided by First Unitarian of Albuquerque "Exploring Native American Religion as Place, Power, and Protocol" with Rev. Randy Granger.

Qigong Classes - Mondays 1:00 PM

Qigong is a Taoist energy art that uses gentle movements to support health by lessening tension and stress in the body. The goal of this class is to create a sense of space and peace inside our bodies, thereby enhancing our ability to share that peace with the world around us.

Jeanette Pike has been practicing and teaching qigong for more than 10 years. Her primary training is in the Water tradition.

Participants begin gathering at 1:00 PM on Mondays, with class starting promptly at 1:15 PM and lasting about an hour. An online Zoom option is also available. For the Zoom link, or any other questions, please contact Jeanette at lavender.moon.peace@gmail.com

This class is offered on a donation basis.

Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity: 2nd and 4th Sunday meditation

March 11, 24

Meditation Practice 9-9:45, Dharma talk 9:45-10:15; tea 10:15-10:30

Learn meditation and the purpose of meditation. Cultivate peace of mind and calmness of body. Develop patience, kindness and awareness. Diminish pain, conflict and stress.

Our group leader is a certified meditation instructor, authorized Dharma teacher and long-time student of Khenpo Migmar Tseten, Buddhist Chaplain at Harvard University.

Although we will be practicing traditional Buddhist meditations, one does not have to be Buddhist to benefit from these beautiful practices. Meditation instructions are reviewed every session, so newcomers can learn as those more experienced deepen their practice.

Please bring a blanket and water. Meditation cushions and chairs will be provided. Sessions will begin promptly, please arrive a few minutes early to settle in. For the consideration of others, mask wearing is encouraged.

Suggested donation of \$10-\$20 greatly appreciated, however no-one will be turned away for lack of funds. Meditation instruction itself is always free.

For more information, please email pagosauuf@gmail.com.

Homeless Care Kits

Friend of the Fellowship, Kristen Roth, has taken the initiative to assemble care kits for our homeless population. If you would like to help in this effort, Kristen's suggested care kits for both men and women as well as a resource guide to services within our community can be found using this link:

<https://pagosauu.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/homeless-care-kits.pdf>

UU Fellowship of Durango - Sundays, 10:00 AM

You are welcome to join with the congregation of UUFD for their Sunday morning service with this link:

<https://durangouu.org/worship/upcoming-worship-services/>

First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque – Sundays, 9:00 AM

Join with the congregation of First UU of Albuquerque in their Sunday worship service via Zoom at 9:00 AM. Use this link to their website - <https://uuabq.org/sunday-services/> - and click on **Virtual Worship** to link in.

Your Caring Committee

If you would like someone from the Fellowship to call periodically to say “hello” and check-in to see how you’re doing and if there’s anything you need, please contact Joan Ward with the Caring Committee at info@pagosauu.org or call 970.382.1925 and leave a message. We’re here to help!

In Memory

We lost a dear friend on January 13, 2024 when Ann Graves passed away. She had endured many months of slowly declining health from acute myeloid leukemia and far exceeded the time the doctors gave her to live.

They may have known the disease, but they didn’t know Ann. She bore it all with grace and acceptance and, although she was homebound, reveled in the beauty of nature and the wild things outside her window. She is missed by many – two legs and four legs alike.

From Karen, Bob, Windy and Ellie LeCour:

Bob and I (Karen) would visit Ann every few weeks during her isolation and if it was spring, summer, or fall, her yard would need attention. We started bringing our garden tools and doing a little work each time we visited.

The front of Ann’s house was lined with blooming cosmos and her yard was full of native and planted wildflowers, weeds, and ornamentals. Woe to the one who tried to pull a plant before its seeds had had time to mature and if you did so accidentally, you had to pull the seeds off the stalk individually and distribute them!

Ann was always grateful for the help and enjoyed sitting on her porch watching us work. She was especially grateful when many PUUF members and friends showed up for a garden work party.

Ann had a soft spot for dogs and when our new rescue pups, Windy and Ellie, were young, we would take them along when we visited. They were so excited to see Ann that Windy would start whining two streets away. They would bound to the front door and Ann would call out “Puppies!” and they would descend on her and her bag of Milk Bone dog treats. We spent many an hour in Ann’s company and even Ellie, who is normally very shy, would often rest her head on Ann’s lap.

From Pauline Benetti:

My Dear Ann Graves

You are missed! And in the Spring the missing will intensify. I will miss the clear delight in your voice as you described the blooming of spring, especially your delight with the cosmos that front your house along the porch line. I will miss your keen observations about the foxes that you could see from your front windows as they cavorted on the hill leading to your house. I will miss the excitement you shared at the sighting of an eagle. I so appreciate your quiet optimism as the expected 5 months stretched into 18. I have been so fortunate to know two, Phyl and now you, two exemplars for this last phase of life.

Your Friend

Pauline Benetti

If you would like to offer a remembrance of Ann, please email info@pagosauu.org. and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

We use this space to honor those loved ones who have passed, whether human or animal. If you would like to honor a passing, please send a photo and memoriam to Karen LeCour at info@pagosauu.org.
