



Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

The Log

December 2020

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
2824 E. 18th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska
www.anchorageuuf.org

Table of Contents

From the Minister: Rev. Lise Adams Sherry

Virtual Forum

Virtual Worship

Notes from Religious Exploration By Rosene Beachy

Various Updates

AUUF Volunteer Awards Presented During Auction Gathering

Our Board President's Message By Sid McCausland

Board Mission, Goals & Objectives

Farewell & Welcome - AUUF Board Roster Update

AIM Accessibility & Inclusion

Social Action By Dennis Arashiro

December Half Portion Recipient By Kalen Saxton

The Alternative Gift Fair

December Board of Directors Update

Together We Are Whole
By Pi Luna.com

From the Minister Rev. Lise Adams Sherry



I am so excited to be here for my first proper Solstice! I say “proper” because although I have noted the shorter and lengthening days during winter before, I have never experienced it in quite the same way that I am now. It’s interesting to observe all the differences: the increasingly low angle of the light as we approach Solstice, the way there seems to be a parade of people walking by my house between 11 am and 1 pm when the day is brightest, all the “Christmas” lights that have been popping up since early October. Noticing the light and through it, how we all are connected to nature seems simpler, more foundational to our existence as we approach this busy holiday time of year.

I don’t know about you, but the words simple and foundational help me to breathe more deeply when I think of all that we think needs to be done between now and the New Year. So, something that I try to do at the beginning of each December is sit down and think about 3-4 things that are really important to me about the holiday season. I make those 3-4 things a priority, and if everything else falls by the wayside, so be it. A couple of my priorities are playing Christmas music because it reminds me of my mom, and having a very simple gift exchange so people feel appreciated and my pocketbook stays intact. What is important to you?

Here are some questions to think about as you consider what is central to you this holiday season:

- What would your fantasy holiday be like if you could do it exactly as you wanted? Are there elements of that fantasy you can incorporate into what you may feel obligated to do for and with others?
- What gifts that you have given or received have brought you the most joy? Why? Can you replicate that feeling of joy and purpose?
- What does this holiday season mean to you? Is it religious, about nature, about family or obligations? If it tends to bring up negative feelings, is there something you can do to reframe the meaning?

The holiday season can be one of the most joyous and/or one of the most stressful times of the year. This year, as we continue to be in the midst of a pandemic, those feelings are likely to be amplified. We also will be continuing to deal with grief over a loss of traditions and gatherings that are better postponed in the midst of coronavirus. It’s not going to be easy. That’s why I think it’s more important than ever this year to put some thought into what we want and expect from this holiday season, our loved ones and ourselves.

Once upon a time, this season was simply about the return of the sun, celebrating the possibility of peace and goodwill, and enjoying time with our loved ones in the quieter fallow time of winter. And that was enough. May we all be blessed with enough this season as well.

Blessings, Rev. Lise

Virtual Forum Sundays at 9am



We've got another great month of Forums to look forward to in December.

Dec 6. We start with Chad Hansen, from the Disability Law Center, who will talk with about making our community accessible and inclusive—something we all want to be more aware of.

The following Sunday, December 13, Sr. Helen Prejean, a Catholic nun and leading American advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, will be joining us from New Orleans. This is a particularly opportune time to focus on this topic, as the Barr/Trump Administration plans to conduct multiple executions before Inauguration Day, and to approve more ways to kill death row inmates.

On December 20, UAA Professor Travis Rector, Ph.D., chair of UAA's Department of Physics and Astronomy, will talk to us about climate change. Science matters!

And to close out the year, on December 27 we'll shift gears and celebrate the world's best ultraendurance bicycle racer, Anchorage's Lael Wilcox.

Join us at www.anchorageuuf.org/sundayonzoom

Virtual Worship Sundays at 11am



Welcome to the month of
Stillness!

This season, our SoulMatters theme for December is Stillness. It seems apt, yet it also seems contradictory to how many of us spend the holiday season. Hopefully, our worship together will help us find some of the quiet moments in the midst of everything else that's happening right now.

Dec. 6 Blue Christmas: Holidays aren't always Happy Rev. Lise Adams Sherry

A lot of the holiday season is about spending time with loved ones. This can be a joy or extremely difficult, especially if there's been a death in the family or we're experiencing other losses that affect how we celebrate. Join us for a quiet time of reflection and acknowledgement that it's okay to not be joyous this time of year.

Dec. 13 Bodhi Day Rev. Lise Adams Sherry

Bodhi Day is the yearly celebration of when the Buddha attained enlightenment through meditation. It is often falls in early December, depending on your Buddhist traditions. Join us for a Buddhist primer and time of Stillness as we explore what we can learn from this tradition.

Dec. 20 Here Comes the Sun! A Multigenerational Solstice Service

Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, Rosene Beachy, DLRE and Megan Webb, Music Director
Join us for readings, music and dance as we bring in the brighter days again.

5 pm-6:30 Solstice Celebration at AUUF. Come sing carols in your cars (or ride your bike or walk and stand away from others)—we'll have caroling books and a song leader. Pick up a Solstice Goodie bag and light a candle/luminaria as we welcome back the lengthening days. Come for the whole time, or stop by as you're able.

Dec. 27 Out with the Old, in with the New! Michele Champion, Koala Vandruff, and Joyce Laine. A virtual burning bowl to get rid of all the bad juju from 2020 may be in the works, and humor and reflection will definitely be present. Let's all celebrate the opportunity and blessing of a new beginning.

Adult Religious Exploration

Join Rev. Lise for a discussion of this year's Common Read, *Breathe* by Imani Perry. Dec. 15, 7 pm. The Zoom link will be on the AUUF calendar on our webpage. Books are available for purchase in the AUUF office.

Notes from Religious Exploration November

By Rosene Beachy, DLRE

The days are short the night is dark. Warm up with some December events to bring Christmas joy to yourselves and others. The December RE Kits have many joyful activities to bring love to others:



- Make cards and use the addressed envelopes to mail them to Providence Horizon House.
- Decorate your windows with Chalice snowflakes!
- Make your Guest at Your Table boxes and add coins with the help of the fun activity calendar.
- Make a coupon book gift for someone in your family.
- Go through your closet and find warm winter gear to add to the donation boxes at the Fellowship.
- Decorate your glass jar luminaria to bring to the Solstice event.
- Bring hot chocolate to drink in your car while singing Christmas carols together at AUUF!

SPECIAL EVENTS - SHARE SOME WINTER JOY!

December 20 - 11:00am Participatory Solstice Service for all ages

Volunteers (We'd love some families) needed for lighting a candle and reading a verse in the service.

5 – 6:30pm LIVE!!! WINTER SOLSTICE Caroling Celebration!

Share the warmth and love of the sun's shortest days with your AUUF family.

For ALL ages Mitten Tree collection, Caroling (in cars) at AUUF! Bring a luminaria to place on your car! And receive a Solstice goodie bag!

December 24 –Christmas Eve around the ZOOM Fireplace!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, Thursday, Dec. 24th 6:00 – 7:00pm.

This year's Christmas Eve Service will include volunteer participants in a dramatic reading of The Night Before Christmas. Contact Lise, Megan or Rosene, if you are interested in participating. Listen to some beautiful choir music, sing traditional Christmas carols, and light your candle for peace in the world!

SHARE SOME SUPPORT!

Dec 27 – NO RE programs. Guest at Your Table boxes were sent out in the RE Kids activity kits. Boxes and story flyer are still available at the Fellowship. This is the annual holiday box collection from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. This program teaches people about human needs, human rights and sharing. This year the focus is on Women who are making a difference with funding from the UUSC. Their stories are included with the box.

Notes from Religious Exploration continued

Each year at this time, UU's across the United States place Guest at Your Table boxes on dining tables to invite the world into our kitchens and dining rooms. Participants then put a contribution equivalent to feeding a guest at your meal in the box each day.

Share your Blessings with others!

Here's how to participate: When you sit down for dinner (or lunch or breakfast or a snack), take a moment for silent reflection and ask yourself: Who would appreciate sharing this meal with me? You might imagine someone who needs food, shelter or safety, or just needs to know that there's someone who cares. For visual effect, set a place for the box!! Read a story about someone and welcome him or her to your table. When you've finished, put a contribution in the box as a means of thanking your guest for her or his company. Other fun daily activities for filling your box are in the Activity calendar available downstairs.

Please bring the boxes or envelopes back in January!

Remember the Guest at Your Table during the holiday season

SHARE SOME LOVE!

The annual Mitten Tree collection will be set up to collect mittens on December 20. There are collection boxes for other winter gear for Men, women and children in the flower bed by the South doors at the Fellowship.

SUNDAY ZOOM Groups

RE Groups meet weekly via Zoom. The links will be emailed to the group or will be on the Remind app or RE Facebook group. To keep up to date on what's happening, if you are a registered family, make sure you are added to these lists. Request to Rosene.

- RE Chalice Circle on Sunday mornings from 10:15 – 10:45am. Join Rosene and Bev to sing songs, hear a story on our monthly theme and participate in other interesting activities.
- Coming of Age Mentor/Mentee circles 1 -2:30pm twice a month on Zoom or the AUUF Firepit.
- Jr Youth Meet Up – 6:30 – 7:30pm on Sunday - Check in with your RE friends, Play games, participate in a discussion or other activities.
- Sr Youth Hang Out - Wednesday evenings 8-9pm with Cyrus and Lauren.
- Looking for youth to help with programming ideas.

Have a joyful and peaceful Christmas!

With love and light, Rosene Beachy, DLRE

Various Updates

Freethinkers are venturing into *A Promised Land*

Early in *A Promised Land*, President Barack Obama says, "...I wanted to pull the curtain back a bit and remind people that, for all its power and pomp, the presidency is still just a job and our federal government is a human enterprise like any other, and the men and women who work in the White House experience the same daily mix of satisfaction, disappointment, office friction, screw-ups, and small triumphs as the rest of their fellow citizens. Finally, I wanted to tell a more personal story that might inspire young people considering a life of public service..."

You are invited to join Freethinkers Friday at Noon on Zoom as we read to the end of chapter 3 in President Obama's reflections on our American journey. Follow the link on AUUF's homepage.

Service for Shirley Dickens, Jan. 23, 2021

Save the Date! Just to let you know, the Celebration of Life service for Shirley Dickens will be on Saturday, January 23, 2021 at 11:00 am. It will be a virtual service via Zoom, so look for the link on the Fellowship's website or in the TAYF emails in January. More details to follow in the January Log.

Have Time to Chat With Friendly UUs?

The Communications Team -- and others who routinely rely on our Fellowship's data base -- are cleaning up our contact information for members and friends and need your help. Are folks we haven't seen in a while still interested in being on the list? If so, is their contact information still correct? That's where you come in. We're looking for help to make quick phone calls to folks to ensure we have the most current information possible. If you can help with this safe, at-home task, please contact Judy Engh and she'll get you started. judyrae427@yahoo.com or 605.359.5594. You'll make her day!

Skills Inventory

As we begin the critical work of establishing a Healthy Congregations Team, one of our first tasks is to create a skills inventory of AUUF members and friends. To be absolutely clear, this is not a request for you to join the team (although we certainly welcome new members) and by responding you're not agreeing to serve on the team. You're simply letting us know what skills we, as a congregation, already have. So, if you have skills in communication, mediation, active listening, including facilitating listening circles, conflict resolution or others you think helpful, please let Amanda Mack know so she can begin our list. This is such important work and we very much appreciate your help with this first step. amdmack@gmail.com

AUUF Volunteer Awards Presented During Auction Gathering

David O'Brien, AUUF Past President

During the online auction gathering on Sunday November 22, I announced the recipients of our two AUUF volunteer awards. The awardees are nominated annually by members of the congregation and selected by your Board. This year's recipients are:

The Volunteer of the Year Award: Ministerial Search Committee (George Bryson, Sam Cason, Mary Ann Eininger, Mara Hill, Katherine Huffman, Sid McCausland, and Yolanda Meza)

The Fred Hillman Distinguished Service Award: Ruth Sheridan (posthumously)

I have included the text of my presentations here in case you missed the auction gathering. Please join me in celebrating the service these individuals have given to our beloved community.

The Volunteer of the Year Award is meant to honor people who contributed a significant amount of volunteer time to the Fellowship during the last year. Previous awardees are Bruce Roberts (2015), Denise Martin (2016), Kalen Saxton (2017), the members of the Capital Project Oversight Team (2018), and Carma Reed in 2019. This year's recipient is the Ministerial Search Committee.

AUUF's Bylaws call for the creation of a Ministerial Search Committee to manage our search for a Settled Minister. Candidates to serve on the Committee were nominated through a canvas of all AUUF members early in the Spring of 2019. The Bylaws call for four of the team's members to be selected by the Membership and for three additional team members to be selected by the Board from among the nominees to reflect a full range of AUUF demographics.

Following their election at AUUF's 2019 Annual Meeting, the Committee met more than 80 times over the course of the next 10 months. The search was conducted in accordance with procedures and deadlines outlined by our national Unitarian Universalist Association. Workshops, focus groups, and a congregational survey were all used to ascertain AUUF's aspirations and hopes for a Settled Minister. UUA's detailed formal questionnaire required many hours of intense dialogue amongst the committee members to reach consensus on each key descriptor of AUUF and our aspirations and produce a final document. In addition, the committee members assembled an AUUF virtual encyclopedia of resources for ministers with an interest in researching our Fellowship.

[Click here to read the entire article.](#)

The Fred Hillman Distinguished Service Award is meant to honor a person who lives the Seven Principles as part of their everyday life. Previous awardees are Shirley Dickens (2015), Sylvia Short (2016), Rod McCoy (2017), Helen Nienhueser (2018), and Wendy Romberg (2019). In some ways it can be considered a lifetime achievement award. This year's recipient is being presented posthumously to our beloved Ruth Sheridan.

Ruth was born in Harlem, New York City, on January 25, 1918. Her family moved to Far Rockaway, Queens. She was the second oldest of four girls. After her father died when she was twelve in 1929, her mother then invested their savings in stocks but lost it all in the stock market crash. Ruth said that this was when she learned that people, not money, is the most important part of life.

Ruth's mother, aunt, and grandmother consolidated their resources into one home as their husbands died. It was the depression and keeping food on the table was a struggle.

[Click here to read the entire article.](#)

Our Board President's Message Sid McCausland

This Thanksgiving Day I told the World that I am thankful for each and every one of you.

Why? Because during probably the most tumultuous year of our lifetimes you have stood up, showed up, ponied up, and put up with challenge after challenge. Doing the hard work of keeping our community safe, keeping our families safe. Doing the hard work of creating your virtual lives. Marching safely with Black Lives Matter, Sharing the Care, UUing the Vote, Halloweening in the Parking Lot, popping up on Zoom screens everywhere...

You are the reason AUUF continues to be a welcoming beacon in troubled times. You are the reason I look forward to seeing you time after time in my Zoomiverse. You are the reason AUUF remains financially sound in the middle of this horrendous pandemic and recession.

Quite honestly, You rock.

And I am the luckiest guy of all because I have been granted the privilege of leading your Board of Directors this year as we welcome Rev. Lise, partner Nelson, and their canine buddy Tali for at least two years of healing ministry.

It is my fervent prayer that you will walk side by side with Rev. Lise and our Board as we journey together into 2021 with a sigh of relief that we are leaving 2020 in the dust and our tomorrows will be filled with opportunities to flourish.

Thanks a million. Forward in Fellowship.

Farewell and Welcome — AUUF Board Roster Update

Please let Alison Hansen know how much you appreciated her service on our Board during perhaps the most tumultuous year in our lifetimes. Alison has resigned in order to devote more of her energies to her family. Alison has served AUUF as member and Chair of the CYRE Committee, member of the Finance Committee, and member and Secretary of the Board.

Robin Hill has accepted the Board's invitation to complete Allison's term. Robin's involvement in many aspects of AUUF life will be much appreciated as we continue to evolve during these challenging times.

Thank you, Alison and Robin for your dedicated service to AUUF past, present, and future.

--Sid McCausland, Board President

Board Mission, Goals, & Objectives

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Board of Directors
Board Mission, Goals, and Strategic Objectives through Fiscal Year 2022
Adopted November 18, 2020

Mission

Our Mission as members of AUUF's Board of Directors is to facilitate our Fellowship's efforts to aspire and adhere to Unitarian Universalism's Seven Principles through the prudent exercise of the powers and duties delegated to us by the Membership and our management of Fellowship resources.

Goals

- Complete our search for a Settled Minister
- Continue making physical improvements to the building
- Foster a community of open communication and trust to deal with conflict in a healthy manner
- Promote leadership development at all levels within the congregation
- Support a Board culture that encourages each of us to flourish in this role of ministry to our Members, our Friends, and our Community

Strategic Objectives

1. Present a Candidate for Settled Minister to the Membership for its Vote to Call by 4/1/22
2. Complete Phase III AUUF Renovations no later than 3/31/21 & electric exterior South door openers no later than 6/30/21
3. Encourage, Support & Participate in Healthy Congregation Team activities no less than once a quarter, when activities are scheduled
4. Participate in three Leadership Development programs selected by the Board every twelve months
5. Nurture new AUUF leadership by recruiting twelve or more members for participation in Leadership Development programs
6. Reflect on Board efforts to live in Covenant quarterly
7. Review our Strategic Objectives progress quarterly

December's Half Portion receipt is RAIS By Kalen Saxton

Refuge Assistance and Immigration Services

RAIS helps clients transition to life in Alaska by providing supportive services, such as case management, job readiness classes and life skills. RAIS clients have arrived within the previous five years.

Refugees – have fled their country because of a well founded fear of persecution. The term refugee is a U.S. Government recognized immigration status.

Asylees – An asylee is already present in the U.S. who fears persecution in their own country of origin.

Cuban or Haitian - Entrants have been granted parolee status or another special status. Amerasian - is a child fathered in Asia by a U.S. soldier. Victims of Severe Forms of Trafficking - are brought into the U.S. and caused to enter into forced labor without an option to leave.

The Alternative Gift Fair

The Alternative Gift Fair is returning! The Alternative Gift Fair is an opportunity to donate to any one of several nonprofit organizations caring for people in Anchorage and around the world. In return, you get a cheery gift tag for sending or hanging on the tree in honor of someone special. Consider this for giving to those who need othing more than a good feeling and a warm heart!

We can't safely have our Fair in person, so we'll be using the same platform as the (very successful!) Stir Crazy Auction. The Fair will run online for an entire week, from Dec. 6th to the 13th.

Some of the organizations we love to support will return this year, along with new ones we're sure will become favorites. As with the Auction, keep an eye on your email for an invitation to join the Fair!

AIM – Accessibility and Inclusion By Kalen Saxton

The Board is moving ahead to complete Phase III – Renovations of the Building with the goal to be finished by March 31, 2021.

1. These include a ramp from the sanctuary floor to the raised area with the lectern with fixed microphone and the Steinway piano.
2. The Audio-Visual system is getting replacements and major improvements. The part that applies to accessibility is a better sound system that will improve hearing for those with hearing aids.
3. There are now funds to buy and install the electric door openers for the new doors on the south side of the building. This makes it possible for people in wheelchairs to open the door themselves, as well as people using walkers, and canes, and other mobility supports. The Board goal for electric door opener completion is no later than June 3, 2021.

With many accessibility goals to be completed, the AIM ad hoc committee will look at the places that AUUF has written descriptions that describe our intent to be inclusive. We will write about some ways that we practice inclusion in adult services and groups as was described last month about practices in the RE Religious Education programs for children and youth.

We hope to support the Healthy Congregations Committee as they look at the ways our Fellowship can practice deeper listening and communication, especially when there are strong feelings or mental health issues.

Sunday, December 6, 2020, the Forum Speaker is Chad Hansen with the Disability and Law Center, speaking on “Making Our Community Inclusive and Accessible.” He is a disability rights attorney. If you miss the Forum you can hear the content and the questions asked by members of the Fellowship.

Social Action-By Dennis Arashiro

My former wife was a loan officer at Alaska State Bank. She told me that she trained one new employee after another on how to do the work in the loan department.

Invariably, each new employee she trained became her supervisor. What could possibly explain this? Was it because each new employee was so superior to her that it was obvious that they should be promoted above her? Or, was it because they were all white males? Every one of the white males who rose in rank at Alaska State Bank would probably tell you that they deserved their promotions, that they worked hard, and that they performed well. Would it have even occurred to them that white supremacy and patriarchy gave them bonus points in their evaluations?

One of the arguments against affirmative action is that it works against meritocracy. That would only be true if there was a level playing field to start with. What is true is that a level playing field in any area of American life has never existed and still does not exist. And who suffers because of this? Not just women and people of color. White males of excellence also suffer. Because too many white males rise above their level of competence and suffer from the resulting insecurities, they limit the opportunities for all who are truly talented. When you have nothing to offer except your race and gender, you value race and gender above any qualifications.

The result is a white male “mediocracy.” Affirmative action is just the thumb on the other side of the scale to level the field of opportunity that the thumb of white supremacy and patriarchy have tilted throughout our history. My former wife faced a low glass ceiling at Alaska State Bank because true merit was not valued. White male mediocrity was. It is a myth that affirmative action puts unqualified women and people of color ahead of superior white males. A myth designed to protect the positions and fragile egos of the unqualified. Why do I believe that and not in the merit of the white males who advanced at Alaska State Bank? Because it went out of business.

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship | (907) 248-3737

www.anchorageuuf.org

Minister, Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, 907-248-3737 x2, revlise@anchorageuuf.org

Congregational Administrator, admin@anchorageuuf.org

Kelly Spring, Communications Specialist, communications@anchorageuuf.org

Rosene Beachy, Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration, rbeachy@alaskalife.net

Megan Webb, Music Director, auufmusic@gmail.com

Office Hours – By Appointment Only