

UUFL Weekly Newsletter

Sunday, September 6, 10:45 AM

Program: "The Morals of Climate Change"



Ruth will speak to us about the morals of climate change. Her presentation is adapted from an essay by Marilyn Sewell, pastor emeritus of First Unitarian, Portland. The Rev. Sewell is a longtime activist on the Portland scene and probably is owed credit for helping create The Angry Grandmas and other like groups.

The Rev. **Dr. Marilyn Sewell** is an accomplished Unitarian Universalist minister, and a respected writer, leader, activist, and speaker. She teaches on the adjunct faculty of Maitripa, a Buddhist college in Portland.

Zoom Sunday Service Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8780546386?pwd=dIFMVHNrSDcwS1N0TE5aazlUWnVadz09>

Carol's Words of Wisdom Collection:

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" (*Martin Luther King Jr.*)



Do you have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life.

(*Winston Churchill*)

Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated. (*Confucius*)

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.

UUFL Financial Support:

Those of you who wish to contribute financially can mail your contributions to:

UUFL P O Box 3451 Longview, TX 75606. *If you would like to contribute electronically, contact Tammy.*

1021der@gmail.com

Our Favorite Story Teller (The Four Elements of Prayers)



On November 20 of 2009, a paper calling itself *By Common Consent* published an article in which Kristine said that prayers contain four elements, “Please, Thank you, Oops, and Wow!” I know the source only because Google gave it to me, but I remember reading the four types of prayer, probably about that long ago. I think this typology applies pretty well, don’t you? And even we who doubt that anyone is listening are prone to say these four things to Somebody Somewhere, Somehow. Especially when life is extreme, we say these things.

I found myself saying at least three of those four kinds of prayer a few days ago when Hurricane Laura was supposed to come right through the real estate on which I live, the spot where my house is, my stuff, myself. I even considered whether Jerry and I should pack a bag and head east, maybe over to Minden for the night. And I walked around the house muttering a lot of Please. As I recall, I said a fair amount of What? and How? too, but there’s no need to quibble, is there? We can put What and How under Please, I suppose, as in, Help me, please. Help me know What to do. And How the heck do I proceed now?

Inertia won out, as it often does in my life, and in many lives, I think. This could be partly because not many of us get answers to our questions. I’ve known folks who have voices in their heads, and their prayers seem to get audible answers. Mine more often just get more questions, like Who the heck knows? And that was definitely a Who the heck knows kind of day or couple of days. I finally settled for putting the porch furniture and the trash cans in the garage, moving my colored glass treasures out of the front window, shutting the curtains, and hoping for the best.

The storm came with lots of rain and wind, and we watched television and waited. We waited for somebody on TV to tell us to evacuate, and we waited for the weather to worsen. Mostly we just waited. Inertia is something we do well – we’ve had a lifetime, or two lifetimes, of practice at inertia. And I said a lot of Please in my head. Please let us be okay. Please let me know what to do and how to do it.

Finally, we went to bed, and the storm kept right on with its wind and its rain, and we slept. In the morning we woke up to a whole lot of anticlimax, and Jerry, who is unflappable and would never even have moved the trash cans and porch furniture, let alone the colored glass keepsakes, felt pretty good about having made the right call. Me, I said a lot of Thank You prayers.

We learned from the television, since we still had electricity and TV, that the storm had made a surprise right turn, veering off toward the east and trashing things on its way, skipping Shreveport altogether, and smashing the heck out of Minden. Good thing we hadn’t evacuated to Minden, huh? Some folks here lost trees – I saw one yard a block east of us with two big trees down in the front lawn, and a neighbor told me that he lost one of the trees in his back yard. I expressed my sympathy for his loss, and we agreed we were mighty fortunate. He lost one tree, and I lost absolutely nothing.

It would be easy to think that our Please prayers had been answered, but the television broadcasts were filled with terrifying pictures of homes and businesses that Laura had destroyed, water up to the second story of some of those destroyed buildings, boats ferrying people away from all they had held dear except each other. And last I knew the death toll was up to eighteen.

Thank You seems a bit smug, a little presumptuous. But it’s all I’ve got. I’m deeply thankful that the storm turned east before it got to me. This time. Who knew a hurricane could come 240 miles inland, away from the Gulf Coast altogether and up here into the Piney Woods. We do tornadoes here, not hurricanes. And we say a lot of Please and a fair amount of Thank You. Now and then we do some Wow, probably not as often as the planet deserves. And whether or not we like to admit it, Oops comes through our minds pretty often too. Right now, as I sweep up all the excess Laura trimmed from the live oak Daddy planted for Mother in what is now my backyard, I’m just saying Thank you, thank you, thank you. And Please help all those poor people who have lost almost everything to this storm.

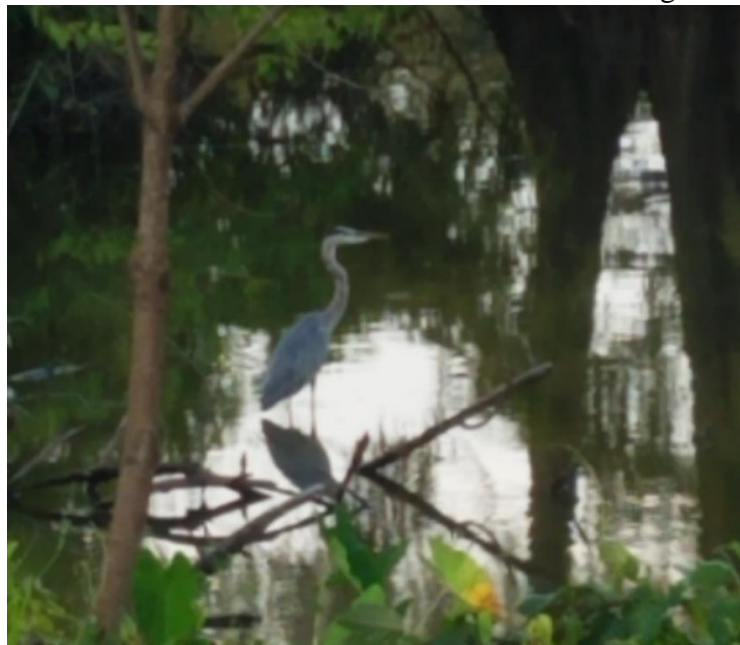
It’s easy to think that my family was smart to plant its familial roots here in the northern part of Louisiana, away from the Gulf Coast and its storms, but I doubt there was much intelligence in the matter. When Daddy researched his people, he found that they had started on the East Coast, like most immigrants from

the British Isles, and that each generation seemed to move about fifty miles west. Wanderlust? Hope for something better over the horizon? Maybe they just didn't cotton to their neighbors, or their kinfolk. The very first Lester he could find in the New World was a seaman on the Mayflower, who got into the Captain's Log when he was flogged for fighting. When the ship reached Massachusetts, he sized up the weather and decided to walk South. Got down to Virginia and settled in the Jamestown area, but may have been wiped out in a massacre there. Or not. Anyway, we Lesters have always preferred the gentler climes of the Southern United States, it seems. Our tendency to fight may be a built-in reason for moving steadily west. Gotta put some distance between ourselves and any kinfolk we've insulted or feuded within a lifetime, so off we go. And we've been here in North Louisiana for several generations. It's a good place. Not a lot of glamour, and we don't seem inclined to build any particular fortunes, but the menfolk do some good work in the building trades, and over time we seem to have stopped feuding. Nobody's been flogged for a few hundred years, as far as Daddy found.

Me, I live here because I inherited my parents' house. After a lifetime of not accumulating any wealth, a paid-for house is a real blessing, and I wouldn't dream of leaving it.

Shreveport is the second-fastest-shrinking middle-sized town in America, so apparently, a lot of folks are finding greener pastures elsewhere, but I'll stay, thank you. Retirement is sweet, and as I said, a paid-for house is a singular blessing for a person who's never accumulated much. And I love that live oak in the back yard. I certainly can't claim to have been smart to settle here – just lucky. And Hurricane Laura's veering away from me and my house was a matter of luck, pure and simple. So my prayer is a Thank You prayer, to whoever or whatever caused that storm to go east and leave my house intact. And Please, help all the people who lost so much to Laura.

Last night when I had walked down to commune with Cross Lake, there was a Great Blue Heron strolling about in the water, and it was kind enough to let me photograph it with my amazing cell phone. That big bird there among the cypress trees in the lake was as peaceful a picture as I can imagine. I said a few more Thank you prayers, to the world, to any available deities, to the lake, and most especially to the Great Blue Heron. Oh, and one or two to Samsung, who made my phone. Saying Thank you seems to me to be a healthy practice, even in the face of obvious randomness. And Wow. Let me never forget to say Wow!



Sherry K.

P.R. Committee:

Barbara McDaniel and Carol West are developing an on-site service for the 20th. of September, at the UUFL Fellowship, beginning at 10:45 AM.

If we could get a response on how many people are interested in attending the on-site service at the Fellowship, it would help with establishing the COVID 19 protocols. Please let Barbara McDaniel know by email, phone, text, or messenger and include how you want to be contacted.

Barbara's contact info barbaramcd@hotmail.com

903-720-2957

UU humor:

A Unitarian Universalist dies, and on the way to the after-life encounters a fork in the road. The left path has a sign "To Heaven" and the right has a sign "To a Discussion about Heaven" Without pausing, the UU turns right.

A traveler couldn't find the local Unitarian Universalist church. After looking in the center of town, in the suburbs, and out in the surrounding countryside. the traveler asked a farmer "Am I too far out for the UU church?" The farmer's reply: "Nobody is too far out for them."