

# UNIFIRE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YAKIMA

*We celebrate community and promote spirituality,  
justice, responsibility, and compassion.*



## DECEMBER 2024



### **December 1: Tune In Together: A Love of Liberty**

Rev. Dr. Daniel Kanter's post-election sermon "A Love of Liberty" reminds us that even in the face of despair, love endures. Through grief, rage, and exhaustion, the message is clear: we are called to action. Together, we confront injustice, uphold freedom, and refuse to let love be extinguished. Join us as we recommit to a future rooted in compassion. Watch now and be inspired to rise because love will not die here today—or any day.

### **December 8: Soul Matters — Presence**

Have you ever (I am sure you have!) been in a place and time while your mind is elsewhere? Our daily existence is often one of being pulled in different directions by competing demands for our time and attention. Only later may we realize we missed the here and now, or the here and now may have come and gone completely without us knowing it. This service by Susan Kaphammer will remind us that the practice of presence allows us to see more widely, think more expansively, understand more clearly, share more generously, love more deeply, and live more fully.

### **December 15: The Main Strings**

Raise your voices in song in this uplifting holiday sing along led by Jeff Main of MainStrings. Song sheets will be provided, traditional music will be sung, and apple snacks will be brought by all of us. Please bring any finger food snack that contains apples or goes with apples to share. Hot cider will be provided as well as the usual coffee, tea and water. All ages welcome!

### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 4 P.M. - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

Join in this traditional Unitarian Universalist celebration of the season. Songs will be sung, winter traditions will be honored, a uniquely Unitarian story will be told, and the service will end with a candlelight communion. All ages welcome.

### **December 29: Open House**

Join us for our coffee and conversation service, where we are bringing back the grab bag! Everyone is welcome and will be asked to write down a topic of your choice onto a piece of paper. They will all then be placed in the grab bag and chosen at random! Facilitated by Jen Berry.

## **WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY**

“Community” is a central tenet of Unitarian Universalism and leads in our congregational mission statement. We are called, however, not just to simple community, not just to being together in appreciation of our like-mindedness. Rather we are called to create and expand “beloved community.” This goes beyond *being to doing*.

As beloved community we come together with our whole selves – our kindness, our beliefs, our troubles, our doubts, our generosity, our weariness, our joys and, always, our love! Our love calls us to participate in and strengthen our congregation as we practice our covenant of kindness, support, deep listening, courageous and humble speaking, and shared ministry, “that we might touch deeper springs and be renewed.” (Kirk D Loadman-Copeland from *Worship Web*.) Even more, beloved community challenges us to go further; “it calls us to practice our values beyond the limitations of Sunday mornings in the sanctuary.” (Shannon Harper, UUA Central East Region Blog, June 11, 2018.)

At UUCY we have many opportunities to experience community and build beloved community within our congregation and out in our larger world. Various activities provide for learning, planning, ministering and, of course, fun and satisfaction.

### **Opportunities include:**

**Adult Lifespan Learning**: Various programs and workshops will be offered throughout the active church year. The next, “Stories of Our Lives” workshop, tentatively scheduled for February, 2025, will provide time and structure for introspection and sharing. Linda King is currently leading this effort.

**Aesthetics Committee**: Group of members addressing appearance and ambiance of our physical space. They meet online under the leadership of Andrew Whitmont.

**Book Group**: Meets bi-monthly to discuss a shared reading from a variety of genres. Next gathering will be Thursday, December 12, at 5:30 p.m. at church. Rosemary Saul and Gean Dindia are leading the group.

**Chalice Circles**: A series of weekly small group meetings to share in understanding and deepening our engagement with spiritual topics. Next session will be scheduled after the first of the year, under the direction of Gean Dindia.

**Children’s Programs**: In addition to inviting children’s participation in a portion of our services, special activities are planned the first Sunday of the month, facilitated by the parents.

**Circle Suppers**: Casual gatherings in individuals’ homes for food and conversation. Currently inactive, but may be scheduled in the next few months.

## *Perspectives from UUCY President...*

**Community Coffee**: Drop-in for fellowship and roving conversations every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. at Catalyst Coffee, within Single Hill Brewery at 102 North Naches Avenue, Yakima.

**Crafty Afternoons**: Every Tuesday at UUCY, 3 to 5 p.m. Bring your own craft of any kind, or just enjoy the company and conversation. Led by Nancy Born.

**Finance Committee**: Monthly meetings to work with small group of members for budget and fiscal aspects of our church.

**Meditation**: Most Sundays after service, 11:20 to 12 noon, led by Joy McKinney.

**Membership Committee**: Now being organized by Lana Barnes and Jen Berry with opportunities for various projects and activities.

**Social Justice Committee**: Meets monthly to coordinate and support our efforts to take our values to the larger community, under the leadership of Phil Dindia.

**Sunday Services Committee**: Active committee meets monthly to plan our weekly services, with the opportunity to help with technology or as celebrant or as presenter. Debra Kroon is current chair.

For a small congregation, we have a lot going on! And additional events may pop up; there's rumor of an evening gathering at a pub. Stay tuned.

Information and schedules for ongoing and special activities are shared through our UniFire and in our weekly Thursday updates. Or contact me, your board president, or any of the individuals mentioned above, or the office. All are welcome, for...

**It is together that we are UUCY,  
celebrating community and promoting our values.**

Take care,

*Susan Kaphammer*, president

### **DATES TO NOTE:**

**Friday, December 6 – board agenda drafted; committee reports due**

**Thursday, December 12 – 1:00 p.m., board meeting — open to all members**

*Susan Kaphammer is the President of the UUCY Board of Trustees for 2024-2026, and can be reached for discussion and comments at any time. Reach out to the office for her contact information.*



## GAME NIGHT TO RETURN IN 2025!

In the new year, we will be resuming a monthly game night. The first instance will be on **Friday, January 3** starting at 6:30 p.m. Bring your favorite game or try something new! There will be treats too!

Photo by [Dave Photoz](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## COFFEE MATTERS



Whether you like coffee, tea, or just a glass of water, join the Community Coffee group on Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. for casual conversation. We gather at **Catalyst Coffee** (102 N. Naches Ave.)

## CRAFTERNOONS

*Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m.!*

Every Tuesday afternoon from 3 to 5, crafters come together at UUCY to do handwork in good company. Some sew, some bead, some knit, some embroider, some crochet—all are welcome!

## WHALECOAST ALASKA

### A MORE AUTHENTIC TRAVEL EXPERIENCE!

Two unique, exciting fundraising tours organized by 4 Alaska UU congregations are being offered again next summer by WhaleCoast Alaska. Experience majestic scenery, wildlife, Denali National Park, Alaska Native culture, glaciers, and UU homestays. For 31 years, WhaleCoast Alaska tours have been the BEST way to visit Alaska. Register now for this amazing experience!

Details: [www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org)

Questions: [info@whalecoastak.org](mailto:info@whalecoastak.org)



# ***LIFESPAN LEARNING FOR ADULTS***

## ***Starting Point from Soul Matters***

Adult religious education is usually enlightening and worthwhile with an element of fun as well. But this particular Starting Point journey at this particular time in our lives, in our church life, and the life of our nation was truly outstanding!

Anywhere from 14 - 18 amazing, diverse and friendly people met weekly for four weeks to examine our individual and collective spiritual journeys - past, present and future. Participants' ability to be honest, reflective, and vulnerable made this a journey of connection - with much laughter, some tears, wonderful snacks and so much fun!

Many thanks to all the participants, who took time to show up each week, to do preparation work prior to each class, who listened deeply to others and spoke with courage and humility as they shared thoughts, experiences, sorrows, joys and more.

We found that:

- \* Sharing personal journeys deepens our connections to one another.
- \* The history of UU, UUCY and self not only provide a solid footing but also a recognition of work that still needs to be done in our evolving faith.
- \* There are three types of relationships: to self, to life and to others.
- \* There are three practices: listening to our deepest self, opening to life's gifts and serving needs greater than our own.

We learned to listen with these thoughts in mind:

- \* Hold still until others have spoken, hold at bay unhelpful comments, hold up gratitude for something shared that struck us, and hold out how it deepened our own understanding.
- \* No fixing, no saving, no advising, no setting each other straight.

And as a bonus, some members of the class made plans to revive the membership committee and Circle Suppers as a way of deepening connections and "serving needs other than our own."

A quote from Annie Dillard shared at the last session:

"When people come to church they should not be handed an order of service with a smile, but should be given hard hats and life preservers, because church should be a dangerous place, a zone of risk, a place of new birth and new life, where we confront ourselves with who we truly are and who the church is calling us to become."

In gratitude (while donning hard hats and clinging to life preservers),

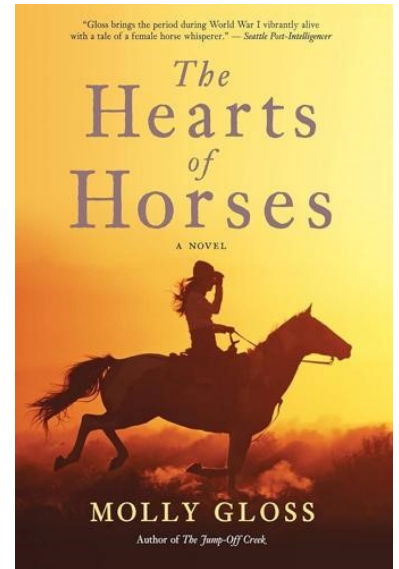
*Linda King and Joy McKinney*, facilitators



# HISTORICAL FICTION SET IN EASTERN OREGON FOR JANUARY BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

The November gathering of our UUCY Book Club, facilitated by our new leaders, Gean Dindia and Rosemary Saul, was a small but lively group engaged in discussion of the award-winning historical fiction book *March* by Geraldine Brooks, which offered a different perspective on the family of *Little Women*.

The next book takes us to Eastern Oregon in the winter of 1917. Award-winning author Molly Gloss' *The Hearts of Horses* is an elegant, heartwarming story about the profound connections between people and animals.



## Here's what reviewers had to say:

"[An] affecting, timely novel that lays explicit emphasis on empathy as a yardstick of humanity." — *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Not just a horse story or a tale of the West, Gloss's moving novel . . . is a story not soon forgotten." — *Bookpage*

"Gloss's lyrical story follows the mesmerizing journey of 19-year-old Martha Lessen." — *Hallmark Magazine*

"The moving story of a . . . strong-willed woman bucking society's norm to gently train horses without breaking their spirit." — Temple Grandin



The first week of December, Rosemary Saul will have eight copies of *The Hearts of Horses* from the Yakima Valley Libraries Book Club kit to distribute. Copies are also available on Kindle, with print and electronic editions available at the Yakima Valley Libraries, and from Inklings Bookshop; indicate it is a book club selection for a discount.

Then plan to meet on **Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.** at our church home at 407 N 1st Street, Suite 3 to share your thoughts and reactions to the novel.

# UUCY TEAMS AND LEADERSHIP

## SUNDAY SERVICES

**CHAIR:** Debra Kroon

Denise Edwards

Bill Jacobs

Susan Kaphammer

Linda King

Sunny Sonker

## AUCTION

*CHAIR POSITION OPEN*

Nancy Born

## LIFESPAN LEARNING

*CHAIR POSITION OPEN*

Susan Kaphammer

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

Phil Dindia

Lana Barnes

Bill Jacobs

Chuck Forster

Joy McKinney

## FINANCE

**TREASURER:** Janis Luvaas

Bill Jacobs

### Your 2024 to 2025 UUCY Board of Trustees is:

<i>Board President</i>	Susan Kaphammer	<a href="mailto:susanlkap@gmail.com">susanlkap@gmail.com</a>
<i>Board Vice Pres.</i>	Ray Yates	<a href="mailto:raycyates@gmail.com">raycyates@gmail.com</a>
<i>Trustee</i>	Nancy Born	<a href="mailto:nancyjborn@gmail.com">nancyjborn@gmail.com</a>
<i>Trustee</i>	Mary Brunelle	<a href="mailto:almybrufam@gmail.com">almybrufam@gmail.com</a>
<i>Trustee</i>	Chuck Forster	<a href="mailto:bddirtpile@gmail.com">bddirtpile@gmail.com</a>

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UUCY Administrator – Hannah Born (hours: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tues., Thurs., & Fri.)