

UNIFIRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YAKIMA

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

FEBRUARY 2025

February 2: Lunar New Year & Imbolc

Lunar New Year is the beginning of a new year based on lunar calendars or, informally but more widely, lunisolar calendars. Lunar calendars follow the lunar phase while lunisolar calendars follow both the lunar phase and the time of the solar year. The event is celebrated by numerous cultures in various ways at diverse dates. Come celebrate with UUCY!

February 9: The Practice of Inclusion

The spiritual challenges of inclusion include recognizing the complexities of situations and relationships, and admitting the limits of our own experiences and understandings. The real-life challenges of inclusion include discerning when to step forward and when to step aside. For this service Susan Kaphammer will ask us to consider the gifts as well as the hard work of inclusion.

February 16: UU Poets Rise Up!

This is the service where all the poets in the congregation step up and share one or several of their original writings i.e. this is not the time to read your favorite Mary Oliver or Robert Frost piece but rather something you have written. It's all good and we'd love to hear it! Celebrant will be Chuck Forster so come also prepared to sing (no rounds this time).

February 23: YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter

We welcome Lupita Carrillo, Donor Engagement Director with our local YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter. YWCA Yakima is dedicated to eradicating domestic violence and assisting all survivors of intimate partner violence who contact them. For 2024-2025, UUCY has chosen the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter as their Share the Plate partner. In a sad statistic, Yakima County has the highest rate of domestic violence in our State.

A GOOD PROBLEM TO HAVE

UUCY is facing a serious problem; we are getting too big for our space!

Our beloved community of members and friends has maintained a consistent presence in Yakima since our first gatherings in 1956. Our membership numbers have risen and fallen through the decades, as happens with changing people and changing times. (It's an interesting history that we will review in the future.)

Our church "home" changed several times including renting or leasing spaces, sharing with another congregation and owning our own church.

Services and other activities were held at the original YWCA for our first ten years, then at the Women's Century Club for nine years then back to the YWCA for another nine years. About 1986, we settled into sharing space with the Congregational Christian Church in their large traditional church building on Second Street. Bolstered by several years of capital fund raising, UUCY achieved a long-held dream to "own a church of our own" by buying the church we had been occupying for many years. In 2021 we recognized that our smaller and older congregation could not sustain the maintenance of our grand but aging building. Keeping the proceeds from the sale in a dedicated building fund, we returned to leasing space, first in Unit 1 and then in 2023 moved into Unit 3 at 407 North First Street.

The move from Unit 1 to Unit 3 was prompted by increasing attendance. Although the same overall size, Unit 3's configuration provided for more people at services and events. Just two years ago we were setting up about 30 chairs on Sunday, and there were usually several empty. Now our attendance is typically over 40, sometimes over 50 people, including more than a handful of children!

With more people finding us and checking out services, we are also increasing membership, with several new members since fall. If you have been coming for some time, you surely have noticed the growing energy, enthusiasm and activism of UUCY. If you are among the new attenders, THANK YOU for contributing to our thriving community.

So here we are, with the good problem of dealing with an increasingly crowded facility. Our options are familiar from our history: rent or lease space, share with another congregation, or purchase a facility. A quick recap of our current searches for solutions:

The search for space to lease has not to date yielded a viable option. Commercial space is often not configured with what we are looking for: a larger gathering space, office space, "classroom" space, adequate parking and a kitchen. In addition, what we have looked at prices out at three to four times what we are currently paying.

Perspectives from UUCY President...

Sharing with another congregation is emerging as a possibility. I met this past week with Rev. Christie Love of the Englewood Christian Church on Englewood Avenue. We find ourselves compatible in our spiritual outlooks. She welcomes our interest in sharing and expressed willingness to make it work for us with a committed office, use of a fellowship hall for our services with access to a kitchen, and use of a conference room for our meetings and small group activities. Sharing space comes with the need to work with others and compromise on matters such as service and meeting times and space for special events.

The option of purchasing a facility prompted visits to a church for sale on Ahtanum Road. Many members and friends got the chance to tour the property, and it would satisfy many of our needs. But it is, compared to our central locations to date, out of the way and beyond public transportation lines. And the price and ongoing expenses would strain our financial capacity although it might be doable. Our message to the realtor is that this is still on the table for us, but we do not have a timeline for a decision.

Where does this leave us? Thinking and talking and still looking. Everyone is invited to keep your eyes open and pass on any possibilities you become aware of. Find out what you can, then let Susan or a board member know. The board in conjunction with our finance committee will continue to consider the implications of various possibilities.

This is a whole-congregation matter and a decision requires formal congregational approval. Through emails and occasional briefings after church services, I will work to keep members and friends informed of the process. And I ask that each of you take responsibility for expressing your questions and ideas. And always, let us remember the meaning and purpose of a church facility, a spiritual home. In the words of our former minister, Rev. Greta Crosby:

A church home of our own.

A simple dream of many meanings.

Not to have a church, but to be a church –

Securely, effectively, imaginatively.

Not to own but to live –

Openly, abundantly, responsively

In free religious community.

Take care,

Susan Kaphammer, president

DATES TO NOTE:

Friday, February 7 – board agenda drafted; committee reports due

Thursday, February 13 – 1:00 p.m., board meeting — open to all members



GAME NIGHT FEB. 7

It's a fun evening of lighthearted competition, if it can even be called competition when winning is kind of beside the point! Bring a game or take potluck with whatever games other people bring—there are always plenty of choices. Treats are welcome, but entirely optional. The fun starts at 6:30 p.m.

Photo by [Tim Foster](#) on [Unsplash](#)

STORIES OF OUR LIVES

FEBRUARY 22, 9:30-12:30

No matter our age, we all have stories to tell. Be prepared to write - to share a little or a lot - and write some more! Co-facilitated by Mike Gempler and Linda King. Look for the signup sheet at church or contact Linda.

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!

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.)



Our thanks to **Jacob Mack of Sign Craft and Solar Graphics** in Yakima for his repair of our portion of the sign on North First Street. His gracious assistance at no charge is much appreciated!

1015 E. Lincoln Ave., #108

yakimasigncraft.com

ANTIRACISM LEARNING CIRCLES ***Organized by First Unitarian in Portland***

You are invited to join an **Antiracism Learning Circle** this winter/spring. It's on Zoom, so you can join from anywhere! First Unitarian in Portland is the organizer. The first Circles start the week of January 16th.

How Do LEARNING CIRCLES Work?

- Each cohort (typically 4-12) gathers for a series (from 6-12 sessions) of facilitated Zoom discussions.
- Register for specific Learning Circle(s). Meeting dates & times vary.
- Everyone is given the opportunity to share reactions, then discuss as a group
- We ask that you plan to attend all sessions so we can build bonds of trust and insight

Full descriptions, schedules & registration information are [HERE](#).

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

Questions: info@whalecoastak.org



HISTORICAL FICTION SET IN WENATCHEE FOR MARCH BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

The January 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 a book by award-winning author Molly Gloss set in Eastern Oregon during the winter of 1917-1918 called *The Hearts of Horses*. It is an elegant, heartwarming story about the profound connections between people and animals. It's worth a read even if you did not participate in the book club discussion.

For our next selection, eight copies of *The Orchardist* by Amanda Coplin from the Yakima Valley Libraries Book Club kit have been distributed. You can read it 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.

The Orchardist by Amanda Coplin

At the turn of the twentieth century in the Pacific Northwest, reclusive orchardist William Talmadge tends to his apples and apricots. One day, two teenaged girls steal his fruit and later return to his orchard to see the man who gave them no chase. Feral, scared, and pregnant, they take up on Talmadge's land and indulge in his deep reservoir of compassion. But just as the girls begin to trust him, men arrive in the orchard with guns...

It was a nominee for numerous literary awards. Some reviews:

"Beautifully written, so alive to the magnificence of the land and the intricate mysteries of human nature, that it inspires awe rather than depression." — *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

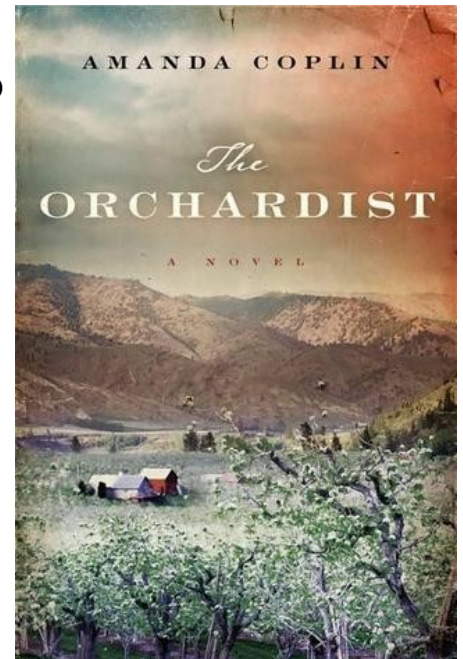
"Many contemporary novelists have revisited the question of what constitutes a family, but few have responded in a voice as resolute and fiercely poetic." — *New York Times Book Review*

"A stunning debut... *The Orchardist* is a poetic book, but its strength doesn't lie solely in its language. Coplin's understanding of abuse and the lasting effects of fear and loss on the individual psyche are deeply resonant. As a debut novel, *The Orchardist* stands on par with Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*." — *The Oregonian* (Portland)



Plan to meet on **Thursday, MARCH (not February!) 13, 2025, at 5:00 PM** at our church home at 407 N 1st Street, Suite 3 to share your thoughts and reactions to the novel.

Book description and reviews excerpted from yvl.org and inklingsbookshop.com.



UUCY TEAMS AND LEADERSHIP

SUNDAY SERVICES

CHAIR: Debra Kroon

Jen Berry

Denise Edwards

Bill Jacobs

Susan Kaphammer

Linda King

Sunny Sonker

AUCTION

CHAIR POSITION OPEN

Nancy Born

LIFESPAN LEARNING

CHAIR POSITION OPEN

Susan Kaphammer

FINANCE

TREASURER: Janis Luvaas

Bill Jacobs

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Phil Dindia

Lana Barnes

Bill Jacobs

Chuck Forster

Joy McKinney

MEMBERSHIP

CO-CHAIRS: Lana Barnes

& Jen Berry

Denise Edwards

Your 2024 to 2025 UUCY Board of Trustees is:

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

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