

UniFire

March 2022

*Monthly Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima*

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

407 N 1st St, Ste 1, Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 453-8448 · uucyakima.org
admin@uucyakima.org

Unless otherwise noted, UUCY services will be held **in person** at 407 N. 1st St. on Sundays at 10 a.m. Following CDC guidelines, proof of COVID vaccination will be required for entry to in person services, and masks must be worn at all times within the building.

In-person services are also **livestreamed**! Watch your weekly update for the link; it is also in the reminder email sent on Sunday morning.

March 6 – The Theology of Unitarian Universalists

written by UU minister Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell; presented by Linda King and Sunny Sonker

Does being a Unitarian Universalist mean we can believe anything? As a non-creedal faith, what are our requirements? Dr. Sewell argues that UUs do have a type of theology that has been “relatively clear and consistent through time.” Join us for a bit of history, a bit of the present and UU beliefs that have been consistent through time. There will be time for discussion as well.

March 13 – Renewing Faith

Susan Kaphammer

What could the term “faith” mean for those of us involved in a non-creedal religion for which there are no required beliefs? How can Unitarian Universalists be “people of faith”? From materials offered through the Soul Matters series, Susan Kaphammer explores these questions and the importance of personal and congregational renewal of our faith in hope, courage and love.

March 20 – Tune In Together: A Devastating Love

Rev. Jon Luopa

(This service will be on Zoom; watch your weekly update or contact the office for the link.)

Join us for this virtual “Tune in Together” worship service exploring fear and love, the political and the religious and the possibility of the intersection of both.

March 27 – Mythology of the Future, Part IV: The Supermyth

Andrew Whitmont

Further developing the theme presented in prior sermons, this talk will address an overview or proposed “supermyth” that incorporates the myths of the prior ages to bring us into the Nuclear Electronic Age.

UUCY President's Report

I've been thinking a lot about Sarah Schurr's excellent message this past Sunday morning.

Her topic was a broad one: What is Unitarian Universalism in 2022 and how is it evolving to meet our needs? This topic is especially relevant to UUCY as we work through the questions facing us now, such as the searches for a new minister and a permanent home, and how to attract new members.

One of the points she made was that we are not a "creedal" faith – in fact, you could say we are just the opposite, in that we celebrate diversity of opinion, rather than celebrate dogma. Instead, we are a "covenantal" faith – we are committed to the concept of behaving with each other in certain ways. As Susan Kaphammer pointed out during the after service discussion, we do have a written Healthy Relations Covenant which summarizes these behaviors quite succinctly. Here it is:

UUCY's Healthy Relations Covenant

- Treat each other with kindness
- Celebrate each other's personal growth
- Listen deeply to others
- Speak with courage and humility
- Share the ministry of this congregation

Sarah suggested that this covenant be prominently displayed in our building, and I agree. We need to be constantly reminded of it as we proceed with the difficult task of determining where we are headed.

In faith,
Bill

Bill Jacobs is the President of the UUCY Board of Trustees for 2020-2022, and can be reached for discussion and comments at any time. Reach out to the office for his contact information.

Remembering Merrill Thomsen



Merrill was a member of UUCY for years and was actively involved through the board and multiple committees. She passed away on February 5, 2022. The following obituary ran in the *Yakima Herald-Republic* and was also read aloud at her memorial.

Merrill Elizabeth Thomsen was born the second of four daughters to John and Glennie Thomsen of Mansfield, Washington, on February 26th, 1945. She grew up in the wheat fields, haystack rocks and panoramic views of the plateau of North Central Washington, in an area dubbed Mud Springs by the settlers. The beauty and the solitude of the country nurtured her love of flora and fauna, as well as the traits of curiosity, imagination, independence and her ability to see the big picture.

She first attended school in a one room schoolhouse a few miles from the farm, where she made the first of her many life-long friendships. She graduated from high school in the very small town of Mansfield in 1963. In high school, her leadership skills bloomed, and were honed when she attended Eastern Washington State College from 1963 to 1967, where she held office in student government and women's service societies including SPURS prior to getting her BA in Education, with focuses in Natural Sciences and Language Arts. She later earned an MEd in Gifted Education at CWU and Administrative Credentials at WWU.

Merrill did not at first have a "calling" for being a teacher, but when she got her first job teaching middle school in the Bellevue School District she found her creativity and capacity for innovation helped her excel in her work. She went on to teach in Spokane and Yakima in Washington, as well as McClain, Virginia. Her career focus was teaching critical thinking and other challenging in depth course matter to gifted students. She also trained and mentored other teachers. Merrill retired after 35 years in 2004.

In 1976, Merrill met James D. Horton, who would become her husband and best friend. James was a risk taker and entrepreneur whose career at various times had

Remembering Merrill Thomsen (continued)

included banking, racing pit crew, and working on the Puyallup Tribal Police force. Marriage to James caused Merrill to stretch her comfort zone and grow in ways never expected, and also took them to Washington, DC, where James worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

As James was of Yakama Nation heritage, their family grew by adopting Benjamin (Blackfoot Nation) in 1983, and Kate (Yupik) two years later. The family eventually landed in Yakima. James died in 2007.

Besides her family, her life revolved around her many loves: The written word, including writing poetry, essays, journaling and reading; Music, including singing in chorals and musicals and finding new singer songwriters for listening; Archiving and organizing photo albums; The Yakima Unitarian Universalist Church, where she was active on the board and doing lay led services; Activism, including being involved in organizing the Yakima Women's March in 2016 and after; Tuning in to the metaphysical communication of the universe; And, last but not least, the many close friends particularly of her sisterhood, too many to list here, with whom she kept in contact over the years and who greatly enriched her life.

After being a widow for 14 years, Merrill took an intrepid leap into romance with long-distance love Neal Taslitz, who brought her much laughter, passion and companionship.

Merrill was serious and whimsical, organized and intuitive, dedicated and independent, a social introvert, and an inspiration to many people young and old. Memories of her will be cherished by many.

Merrill was preceded in death by husband James Horton in 2007, and by her parents in 1978. She is survived by son Benjamin Running Wolf; grandson Dante McConville; daughter Kate Horton; sisters Nance Thomsen, Christina (Tina) Thomsen-Park (John), and Wisten Aldrich (Glenn); and nephews Chris Aldrich (wife Jennifer and son Parker) and Jason Aldrich (wife Jennifer and daughters Sara and Emma).

UUCY Mini Mercado: Donations Needed!

The March Mini Mercado (virtual bazaar— all funds go to UUCY) will come out in early March; this month's selection will have a slight Irish theme, but can be enjoyed any time!

Donations for an upcoming edition are always welcome— let us know what you have to offer at uucyauction@gmail.com or call the office at 453-8448. Thank you!

- Your UUCY Auction Team

UUA General Assembly

General Assembly is the annual gathering of the Unitarian Universalist Association; it features a variety of programming to learn, worship, and connect with other UUs. [Click here](#) for more information. This year the in-person location will be Portland, Oregon; there will also be an option for virtual attendance. [Register here](#) for General Assembly!



UUCY Wednesday Coffee On Zoom

What is the UUCY Coffee Chat? For some time, members of our UUCY community and friends have enjoyed getting together on Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. at a local coffee shop to drink coffee liberally. They are currently meeting on Zoom; check the weekly update or reach out to the office for a link.



Photo by Ksenia Makagonova (@dearseymour / Unsplash)

Knit Night at UUCY

Knit Night resumes in March! The Eweknits group meets in person weekly to knit at UUCY on Tuesday nights from 5-7 p.m. All are welcome! Contact Nancy Born for more information.

UU Quilting & Crafting Group

The quilting group gathers in person at the church on the fourth Saturday of every month at 9 a.m. Proof of vaccination and masks are required. All crafty types are welcome! Contact Rosemary Saul for more information.

The next meeting will be March 26.

WHEN IT'S GRAY OUTSIDE, CURL UP INSIDE WITH A BOOK

The UUCY Book Club carries on through the seasons... reveling in “traveling” to various times and places, then gathering on Zoom to share our experiences. Join us at 6:00 PM on the second Tuesday of every other month. Check your Thursday update for the Zoom link.

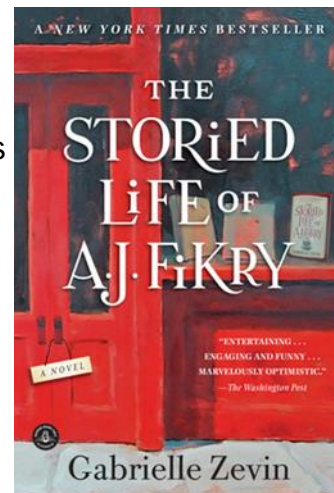
Titles selected are available from Yakima Valley Libraries, often in hardcopy and electronic versions. They are also out in paperback and available through Inklings Bookshop at a “Book Club Member” discount.

March 8, 2022: *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin

“We are not quite novels. We are not quite short stories. In the end, we are collected works.”

A.J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. His wife has died; his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history; and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. Slowly but surely, he is isolating himself. Even the books in his store have stopped holding pleasure for him. These days, he can only see them as a sign of a world that is changing too rapidly. But then a mysterious package appears at the bookstore.

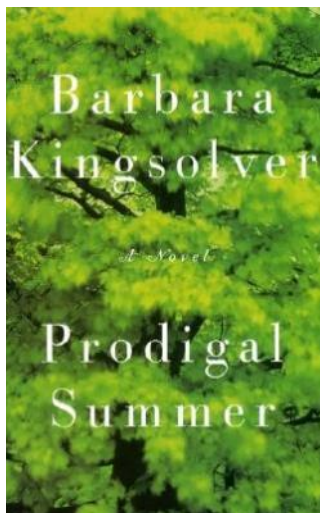
“This novel has humor, romance, a touch of suspense, but most of all love—love of books and bookish people and, really, all of humanity in its imperfect glory.” —Eowyn Ivey, author of *The Snow Child*



May 10, 2022: *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver

I was digging deep into one of my stacks of books and came upon a worn copy of *Prodigal Summer*. I don't even remember where or when I obtained it, likely at a yard sale or thrift store as it was a used copy still unread by me. From the first page I was enthralled and am eager to share the experience with my Book Club friends. I highly recommend reading, or re-reading this 20 year-old story that so engagingly celebrates nature and human nature.

Deanna Wolfe's reclusive life as a wildlife biologist on a Southern Appalachian mountain is thrown a-kilter when Eddie Bondo, a young hunter wanders into her home and her habits. In the valley, Lusa who left city life for her new husband's farm is forced upon her husband's death to discover her place and her relationship with the people and land. Down the road, Garnett and Nannie exchange cranky complaints about how each tends their neighboring farms. The author weaves these stories into a mosaic of living and loving, the connections to one another within the context of our connections to land and nature.



(Book information adapted from web pages for Inklings Bookshop and Yakima Valley Libraries.)

UUCY TEAMS AND LEADERSHIP

SUNDAY SERVICES

Chair: Linda King
Susan Gallegos
Susan Kaphammer
Debra Kroon
Sunny Sonker

AUCTION

Nancy Born

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Phil Dindia
Carole Sahlstrand

FAITH FORMATION

Susan Kaphammer

FINANCE

Chair: Janis Luvaas
Bill Jacobs

Your 2021 to 2022 UUCY Board of Trustees is:

<i>Board President</i>	Bill Jacobs	wsjacobs99@aol.com
<i>Board Vice Pres.</i>	Ray Yates	raycyates@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Rosemary Saul	rosemarian59@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Carole Sahlstrand	cjsahl@q.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Mary Brunelle	brufam@q.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Nancy Born	nancyjborn@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Ulla Whitmont	ullawhi@gmail.com

**UUCY OFFICE: 407 N. 1st St, Ste 1, Yakima, WA 98901 • uucyakima.org
509-453-8448 • admin@uucyakima.org**

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