

UNIFIRE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YAKIMA

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

🌿 **APRIL 2024** 🌿

April 7: The Gift of Transformation

Transformation – living, learning, changing, becoming. From our *Soul Matters* series, Susan Kaphammer shares perspectives on choosing paths and directions of transformation, and on allowing the paths and directions to choose and work within us.

April 14: Stewardship Sunday & Membership

Stewardship season is nearly upon us, where we renew our commitment to sustaining our support of UUCY. We will also hold a ceremony in recognition of new members.

April 21: Pieces of Earth

Reflections on our favorite pieces of earth on the day before Earth Day. Come prepared to sing (of course!) and participate in some storytelling.

April 28: Poetry Day

This will be a participatory service for all ages. Bring your favorite poem to share, or use one provided. April is National Poetry Month.



Photo by [Sixteen Miles Out](#) on [Unsplash](#).

Stewardship: This Church Is Ours to Support and Love

by Mike Gempler

This church, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima, has a history, and it has a voice in the community, but it also has impact on the people who have attended and participated. This aspect of our church is often overlooked and underappreciated. As we enter our stewardship campaign and look to fund our church for the next year, we are looking at the reasons for supporting our church, for caring about it and keeping it alive and healthy. Let's take a look at what this church's impact has been on the people who attend and participate, and include that in our vision for this next year and beyond.

This church has raised and created people from children to young adults to adults. Hundreds of children have attended our Religious Education program through the years. These children learned about morals, and ethics; how to treat other people within the context of kindness, reason and empathy. They learned that this is the way to a better and more peaceful world. We have children in our congregation now, and we owe it to them to continue to teach them, and our support for our church will allow us to do that. The RE program for children and youth is what brings so many to our church, and it is so important to keep this opportunity alive in Yakima.

This church has provided growth to adults at a time when many assume their minds and opinions are set, as if adults can't learn and change and transform with the same vigor as the youngsters. But through our church we have seen adults take the time to search and explore and discuss and grow. Adult RE experiences have absolutely awakened and transformed people in our church. What a beautiful thing for people in their 20's to 90's to have epiphanies! We don't always have Adult RE scheduled, but we do have it as a long-term, ongoing part of us.

This church provides a place for people who were unsure and searching to find inspiration and new sources of wisdom, and for people who think they have everything figured out to discover that they did not. We have created opportunities for people to become awakened and aware. And uniquely, we have created an opportunity for people to explore and be introduced to new ways of thinking and to values and positions that challenge the norms of our society.

Think about LGBTQ rights, and refugees, and racial equality issues. Where else in Yakima is there an opportunity to listen, learn and be challenged about privilege, class, reproductive freedom, gender identity, immigrants, human caused climate change, and more under one roof, in one organization? And then to have our church welcome people of diverse backgrounds to be together to learn about each other and live and enjoy each other. This church has helped with and supported the LGBTQ community in Yakima. We have sponsored and organized multiple forums on race relations, relationships between religions, immigration and refugees, civil rights, and alternative cosmology.

Where else is this happening in our community? When a social issue is tearing at the fabric of our society and affecting us here locally, this church raises the issue and invites

people together to find understanding. The opportunity to hear from a Muslim religious leader, from a gay activist, from an undocumented immigrant, from a local activist on climate change or population issues, all are unique to this church for the bulk of us.

This church has connected people. Think about the many times we have heard from each other as we shared our innermost thoughts through our poetry, books, art, music and a few times, even dance. This is an especially profound opportunity to learn deeply about each other. And through these connections, we make lifelong friends of kindred spirits, because of this church.

We have seen members of this church organize around new ways of thinking and challenge our larger community. We have seen members of this church meet together with new groups of people, people who do things that count. We have seen members of this church adopt new ideas and move forward with social justice actions that they probably would not have engaged in on their own.

This church has empowered us as individuals. Being a part of a bigger group that actively promotes liberal values enables many of us to feel more confident and comfortable in doing the same in everyday life with our neighbors and family. This church serves as source of strength and as a backstop for us all. This church and the members in it have our backs.

And now is a good time for those who attend, but who are not yet members, to join. Ask to sign the membership book the next time you attend a service. Commit to supporting and participating in our church. We want you to be a part of us. We want to share our journey together.

This Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima is unique in our city and its surroundings. It deserves to be nurtured by us, to be supported and fueled and fed by us. This church is a place and a group and an idea that we love, and that loves us back with growth and support and strength to stand for the values that we share together. This church, is our church. Let us support it by responding to the stewardship campaign with generosity.

Mike Gempler is the President of the UUCY Board of Trustees for 2022-2024, and can be reached for discussion and comments at any time. Reach out to the office for his contact information.

APRIL 7 MEETING FOR LIFESPAN LEARNING

All who are interested in adult learning and/or children's programs and activities at UUCY are invited to an initial meeting after Sunday Service on Sunday, April 7.

Lifespan Learning will be the umbrella term for opportunities for people of all ages to explore, reflect, learn and find inspiration to navigate our lives.

Previous programs at UUCY known as "Religious Education" and "Faith Formation" have included various children's programs including weekly RE classes and youth groups. These have been dormant as participants aged out. Few or no children regularly attended as our church home shifted to different sites over the past couple of years. Now may be the time to consider what we can offer our younger UUCY attenders and their families.

Adult programs have included discussion and learning sessions on topics such as ethics, UU history, social issues and spiritual growth.

These, too, have paused as membership shifted and our congregation moved our church home. It may be time to consider activities again.

All voices are welcome at the April 7 meeting after church. Susan Kaphammer will facilitate the meeting to gather input, identify ideas and begin planning for Lifespan Learning. What are people interested in? What can we manage?

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY BEGINS APRIL 27TH

The kick off for our season will be Saturday, April 27th. This leaves time on April 20th for the enjoyment of Earth Day events and activities around Yakima. The weather is likely to be agreeable by the 27th while we walk outside and support keeping the environment clean and beautiful. Please contact coordinator Denise Edwards 11denisis@gmail.com whether you are a continuing participant or if you wish to join as a new volunteer. An email with the start time and other details will be sent to those who have volunteered for the 2024 season. It is likely there will be four total pick-up dates. You do not need to attend all of them to participate. General information as well as a training video are available on the [WSDOT website](#).

THE AUCTION IS BACK!

Sunday, May 19 • 12–3 p.m. • Geet's Indian Restaurant

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, May 19**, from noon to three p.m., at Geet's Indian Restaurant on North First Street (a neighbor!) for the first UUCY auction FUNdraiser in 5 years! This is always a fun time! Invite friends, too!

Geet will provide a delicious brunch buffet (tickets available for purchase soon), and, as always, there will be enticing shopping available!

Speaking of that, it's time to be thinking of what fun activity you would like to offer—share your passion, be it cooking, crafting, gardening, wine tasting, local history, hiking, birding, home brewing...or providing a service like tech help, weeding, organizing, cleaning... The possibilities are numerous!

AND, volunteers to help with the planning are still wanted! Email uucyauction@gmail.com to sign up!



UUCY COFFEE GATHERINGS

Join us every Wednesday at 9 a.m. at **Catalyst Coffee** (221 E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.) for coffee, companionship and conversation!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Lifespan Learning Planning: April 7th after Sunday service

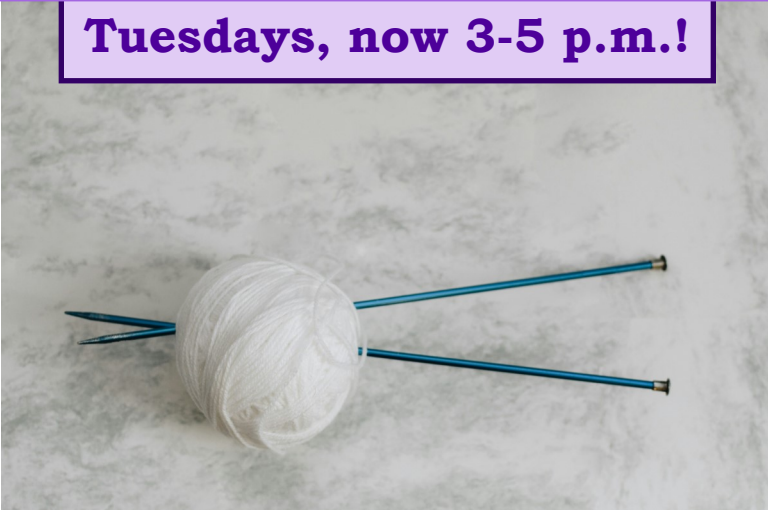
Board of Trustees: April 8th, 4 p.m.

Sunday Services Committee: May 7th, 11 a.m.

Crafternoons at New Time

Tuesdays, now 3-5 p.m.!

Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Knit Night has morphed into Crafternoons. Come down to UUCY any Tuesday afternoon from 3-5 to craft in camaraderie.

Photo by [Hassan Pasha](#) on [Unsplash](#).

UUCY Game Night

Friday, April 26th

6:30-8:30 p.m.

The last Friday of the month means it's time to learn a new game or enjoy a long-time favorite!

Pinochle, Spoons, Hearts, Upwords, Scrabble, Wizard, Ticket to Ride, Farkle, Cribbage, SkipBo, Racko, Rummikub, Splendour, Euchre, Hand & Foot...

Bring your own or take a chance with the many choices that will be on offer. Treats, too!



Book Club Pick for MAY Explores Personal and Social Impacts of Genetic Testing

“A riveting mystery combined with a beautiful meditation on family and identity.”
- Monica Hesse

Our UUCY Book Club takes up a non-fiction narrative for our May 9, 2024, discussion. Susan Kaphammer will have eight library copies of *The Lost Family: How DNA Testing Is Upending Who We Are* by Libby Copeland to distribute on a first come, first serve basis the first week of April at Wednesday Coffee and at Sunday Church Service. Additional copies in book and electronic formats are available at Yakima Valley Libraries, or purchase it at Inklings with a Book Club discount.

Join the friendly group at our Book Club meeting, **Thursday, May 9, 2024, 3:00 PM at our church home at 407 N 1st Street, Suite 3.** Everyone is welcome.

***The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are* by Libby Copeland. 2021. 304 pages.**

A deeply reported look at home genetic testing and the seismic shock it has had on our culture and on individual lives.

You swab your cheek or spit in a vial, then send it away to a lab somewhere. Weeks later you get a report that might tell you where your ancestors came from or if you carry certain genetic risks. Or, the report could reveal a long-buried family secret that upends your entire sense of identity. Soon a lark becomes an obsession, a relentless drive to find answers to questions at the core of your being, like “Who am I?” and “Where did I come from?” Welcome to the age of home genetic testing.

In *The Lost Family*, journalist Libby Copeland investigates what happens when we embark on a vast social experiment with little understanding of the ramifications. She explores the culture of genealogy buffs, the science of DNA, and the business of companies like Ancestry and 23andMe, all while tracing the story of one woman, her unusual results, and a relentless methodical drive for answers that becomes a thoroughly modern genetic detective story. Gripping and masterfully told, *The Lost Family* is a spectacular book on a big, timely subject.



“[*The Lost Family*] wrestles with some of the biggest questions in life: Who are we? What is family? Are we defined by nature, nurture or both?” — *The Washington Post*

“Up-to-the-minute science meets the philosophy of identity in a poignant, engaging debut.”
— *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

UUCY TEAMS AND LEADERSHIP

SUNDAY SERVICES

Chair: Debra Kroon

Denise Edwards

Bill Jacobs

Susan Kaphammer

Linda King

Sunny Sonker

AUCTION

Nancy Born

FAITH FORMATION

Susan Kaphammer

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Phil Dindia

Carole Sahlstrand

FINANCE

Chair: Janis Luvaas

Bill Jacobs

Your 2023 to 2024 UUCY Board of Trustees is:

<i>Board President</i>	Mike Gempler	mikegempler@msn.com
<i>Board Vice Pres.</i>	Carole Sahlstrand	cjsahls39@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Nancy Born	nancyjborn@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Mary Brunelle	almybrufam@gmail.com
<i>Trustee</i>	Rosemary Saul	rosemarian59@gmail.com



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