

# UNIFIRE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YAKIMA

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

### MAY 2025

#### **May 4: Siddhartha Gautama and the Metta Sutta**

Siddhartha Gautama (often referred to as Buddha) lived in Northeastern India about 2600 years ago. He spent his adult life wandering about the countryside, living in voluntary poverty, giving sermons and spiritual guidance to a group of disciples -- and anyone else who would listen. Sound a little like another itinerant spiritual figure who lived in Palestine 500 years later? Bill Jacobs will briefly explore how Gautama's life and teachings were in some respects very similar to that other guy's, but in some ways were very different.

#### **May 11: Mother's Day**

Join Sunny Sonker and Linda King as we explore this primal relationship in story, song, thought and discussion. Please bring a small item or one or two word thought (a challenge) related to mothers to share.

#### **May 18: Imagination**

Today we celebrate the practice and power of imagination in our lives. We can recognize that leadership, creativity, and hopefulness all depend upon imagination as a bridge from what is to what can be. In addition, the searches for truth and meaning we seek as Unitarian Universalists, as well as advocacy, resistance, and social justice work, require our imaginations to question norms, envision possibilities and build the path to a better world. Join us as we consider imagination as a potent spiritual practice.

#### **May 25: Coffee & Conversation — Living Our Values in a Complex World**

How do we stay true to our Unitarian Universalist principles while faced with the challenges and complexities of everyday life? Join us as we explore what it means to live with integrity, compassion, and justice in a world that often presents gray moral areas. We'll share experiences, reflect on our personal journeys, and support each other in finding ways to put our values into action. Jen Berry is our host on this day.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Why do we do this? A land acknowledgement is a step toward correcting stories and practices that erase indigenous people's history and culture, and it honors the truth.*

*This facility and our community rest on the ancestral lands of the fourteen confederated bands and tribes of the Yakama Nation. The Yakama people inhabited more than twelve million acres across much of central and eastern Washington. Today we honor the native peoples who are tied to this land through history, legend and culture. We thank these caretakers of the land who have lived here since time immemorial. Recognizing that an acknowledgement without action rings hollow, we vow to, as we are able, take action to support and restore this land and our diverse, interdependent community.*

## GAME NIGHT TAKES A SUMMER BREAK

We will be putting game night on pause for the summer; look forward to its return in autumn!

## CHALICE CIRCLE

**April 29; May 6, 3, 20 & 27; June 3 at UUCY**

Gean Dindia is organizing another Chalice Circle, weekly meetings to share in understanding and deepening our engagement with spiritual topics. This time around will be held at UUCY with participants supplying finger food. Open to 6 to 10 people. Look for the signup sheet at church!

## CIRCLE SUPPER COMING ON MAY 31ST!

What a treat! Thank you to Dindias for hosting a wonderful supper in April. If you missed your chance, now is the time to sign up for the next, which will take place on **Saturday, May 31**. The number of suppers depends on how many people sign up and the number of hosts available.

Please see the sign up sheet at church and contact Hannah in the office if you have questions.

## LIFESPAN LEARNING SUMMER PROGRAM FOR KIDS

If you are interested in participating in a summer program for our youngest church attendees, there will be a planning meeting right after church on **Sunday, May 18, 2025**. Some ideas will be presented but there is always room for more so bring whatever you may have to share. Date, time, teachers and beginning curricula will be decided at this meeting.

# 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

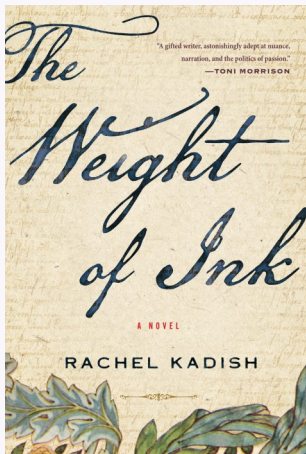
*Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m.!*

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!

## MAY 2025 BOOK CLUB SELECTION

The March gathering of our UUCY Book Club, facilitated by our leaders, Gean Dindia and Rosemary Saul, was a small but lively group engaged in discussion of the NY Times Bestselling historical fiction book *The Orchardist* by Amanda Coplin.

Our next selection is another historical fiction, this time set in two time periods: 1660s and modern day London. GoodReads says: “Electrifying and ambitious, sweeping in scope and intimate in tone, *The Weight of Ink* is a sophisticated work of historical fiction about women separated by centuries, and the choices and sacrifices they must make in order reconcile the life of the heart and mind.”



### **The Weight of Ink by Rachel Kadish**

From the author herself: “My novel *The Weight of Ink* reaches back in time to ask the question: what does it take for a woman not to be defeated when everything around her is telling her to sit down and mind her manners? I started writing with two characters in mind, both women who don’t mind their manners: a contemporary historian named Helen Watt and a seventeenth century Inquisition refugee named Ester Velasquez. It’s been a delight working on their story.”

*Book description and reviews excerpted from GoodReads.com.*

**Please note a schedule change: this UU Book Club meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 14, at 5 p.m.**

**Also, due to the book’s length, this meeting will look at the first half; the last half will be tackled at the next meeting.**

## INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OUR CHURCH

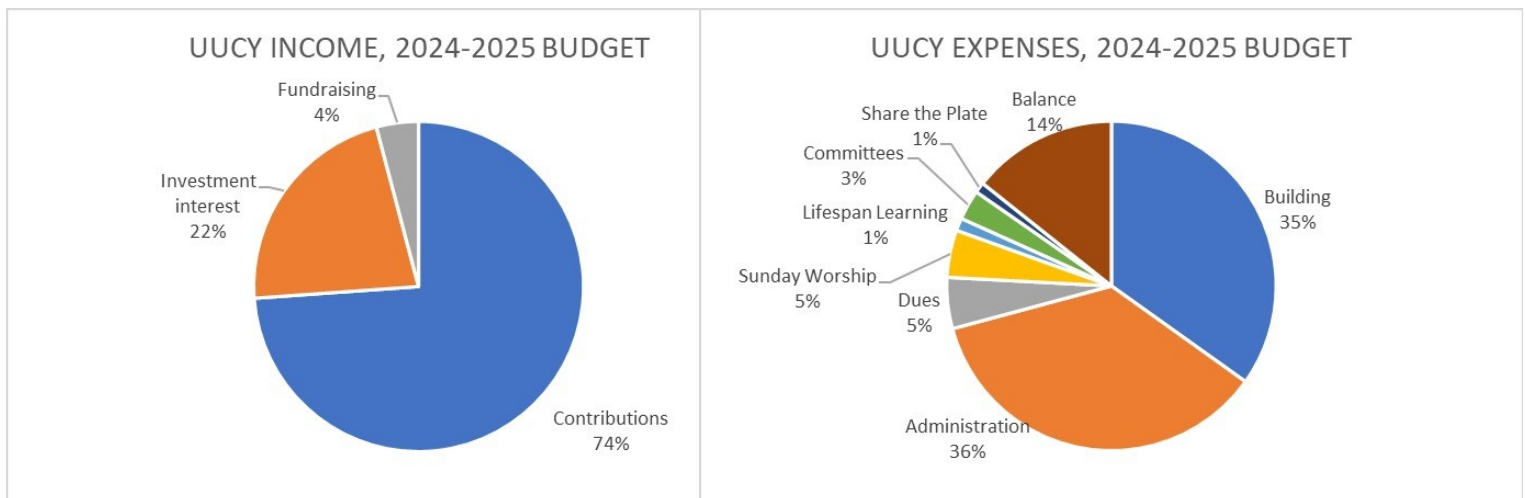
Since 1956 in the Yakima Valley, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima was established, evolved and continues as a group of people joined in their commitment to this liberal religious community. Truly, UUCY is the people who belong and what we do.

We can be proud of our church – our people and what together we do to serve our spiritual growth and to meet needs in our Yakima community. Being this and doing this requires infrastructure, defined by Dictionary.com as “the basic, underlying framework or features of a system or organization.”

As a completely self-supporting congregation, we identify and fully fund the elements of our infrastructure that allows us to function. We are currently conducting our stewardship drive, our request for members and friends to let us know how much they expect to contribute to UUCY. The total of all of the individual pledges becomes the basis for our church year budget. At our annual congregational meeting, scheduled for June 22, members will be asked to approve the budget for July 2025 through June 2026. Let’s take a look at this year’s budget to better understand what’s included in our church infrastructure.

Our income was projected at \$72,700, with \$53,700 from contributions, \$16,000 from investment interest, and \$3000 from fundraising. Projected expenses are identified by categories: *[see the charts below]*

- Building: including rental of \$1336 per month, insurance, maintenance and labor, equipment
- Administration: including salary, computer hardware and software, website, internet, phone, supplies
- Dues: to the Unitarian Universalist Association and Yakima Association of Churches
- Sunday Worship: Music stipend, visiting ministers and speakers
- Lifespan Learning: programs and supplies for children and adults
- Committees
- Share the Plate: portion of non-pledge collection plate proceeds to local organization, currently YWCA Program for Domestic Violence
- Balance: returned to savings allocated to Building Fund and Contingency Fund





## *Perspectives from UUCY President...*

As we engage in this year's stewardship campaign, we are facing changes that will impact our budget, especially our need for a larger space, happily due to more people joining with us. The current proposal to share space with the Englewood Christian Church is for \$1500 per month for the rest of this calendar year, then assumption of 10% of utility and maintenance costs which could average up to \$900 per month. Another possibility is sharing space with the United Christian Church in Terrace Heights. A financial proposal has not yet been developed, but it is likely to be less. The next step in this consideration is the opportunity for members and friends to visit this facility; watch the weekly update for information.

Many considerations will come into our decision to move, including budget concerns. But, back to the key term of this writing, we need a larger and better space for adequate "infrastructure" for our church. Added attendance and the development of Lifespan Learning programs for all ages depend on this.

Such talking and writing about money in the context of a church community can be uncomfortable. But members of the community deserve to understand church funding. And in this context the topic of money is a spiritual as well as practical consideration. As spoken in the April 27 service, money is neutral. It is our use of it that makes it a curse or a blessing. Each of us needs to balance our realistic situation with our value of generosity. I hope that we all can experience the pleasure of "Giving until it feels good!"

Take care,

*Susan Kaphammer*, president

***Note for those involved in committees, activities and programs:  
Begin considering plans for the next fiscal year – July 2025  
through June 2026. Budget requests need to be received by the  
Finance Committee before May 23.***

### **DATES TO NOTE:**

**Friday, May 2 – board agenda drafted; committee reports due**

**Thursday, May 8 – 1:00 p.m., board meeting — open to all**

*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.*

# STEWARDSHIP UPON A TRACTOR

*Linda King shared the following at our April 27 Service to the delight of those present. Each Sunday another pledging member or friend will share their perspective on stewardship through our 2025 drive that concludes Friday, May 23.*

My most memorable stewardship moment came many years ago, not long after I had arrived in the Yakima Valley pursuing a lifelong dream of becoming a farmer. I settled in the small Nile Valley, became a hired hand on a wheat ranch, raised dairy goats, cows, chickens, pigs and was custodian to four horses as well as having a large garden. I learned to fell trees, split wood, set irrigation lines, plow snow on an old John Deere tractor, disc and plant fields, buck bales in the hay field and prime irrigation pumps.

The community consisted of many old time farmers – probably at least in their fifties and sixties. They taught me about farming – butchering chickens – “It will all be over soon,” one woman told a hen on the way to the chopping block. They thought I had “the awfulest getups,” meaning the clothes I wore tended toward patched hippie garments and “floor-sweeping dresses.” There was a small library – part of the Yakima Valley regional library system and the librarian never failed to set aside books she thought would pique my interest.

I lived with my dog Sylvie – first in a single wide trailer and then in a house I designed and helped build. I made many friends in the older set, loved farming, worked hard, slept well and considered myself content. Then an older woman friend asked me if I would like some friends my own age. I assured her I was fine and enjoyed old people, but soon she showed up on the ranch with her son and his wife. Lo and behold, they were members of the Unitarian Church in Yakima and invited me to try it out. Having been happily unchurched for about 10 years and not being good at direct conversation, I listed every excuse I could think of that would keep me from going to this church. My final reason – given triumphantly – was that I worked every day in the summer and could not possibly attend. When Ted said, “We don’t meet in the summer,” I caved. What kind of weird church was this anyway?

I found a group of thinking people with a minister once a month who caught my attention and a madrigal choir that I called “high brow,” but enjoyed anyway. They talked about anything and everything and I found an intellectual outlet that I realized was missing from my farm communications. I soon volunteered to teach religious education classes and began attending church and also events for – yes - the many people my age in the congregation. There

*(continued on next page—keep reading!)*

were whole church campouts, apple cider making, summer picnics, and informal get togethers in members' homes.

I kept a low profile when it came to the annual pledge drive. I didn't know much about it and felt fine not knowing much about it. I didn't have much money, was not a member and considered myself exempt from the whole process.

Then Helen was assigned to be my canvasser. I wasn't sure what that meant, but she told me she would visit and discuss my pledge amount. What?!? I didn't belong to any other groups asking for pledges, was not comfortable with the whole money conversation and didn't really listen when they had meetings discussing finances. I didn't have a vote as I was not a member and thought I could just skate by participating in the things I enjoyed and volunteering a bit of my time.

So I again fell back on my excusitis defense. I lived too far away – she wouldn't want to travel to my house – my time was extremely limited – I worked constantly. In fact, I told her the day she wanted to visit I would be busy on a tractor discing one of the wheat fields. She was quietly insistent about wanting to visit so I then joked that she could come up but would have to ride in the tractor with me if she wanted to talk. She said that would be fine and she would be up that afternoon. Who were these people anyway? They didn't tell me I would burn in hell if I didn't contribute but were quite insistent on letting me know about the process.

She arrived, climbed into the tractor with me and began to explain church finances. I explained that I did volunteer work at the church and figured that was enough. I then received a calm and soft-spoken tutorial – as soft as it could be over the noise of the tractor – about just what it took to run a church. There were actually bills to pay – building rent, utilities, and minister being just a few of them. Who knew?

I don't remember what I ended up pledging – it couldn't have been much. And over the years I have continued to pledge in varying amounts depending on income and circumstances. I was even on board supporting a capital fund drive.

I ended up becoming a member, participating in pledge dinners and other fund-raising events, volunteering to canvass others and helping organize formal and informal stewardship events.

But I still remember opening my eyes to financial responsibility on the seat of a tractor working up a wheat field with a dedicated Unitarian Universalist friend by my side.

# UUCY TEAMS AND LEADERSHIP

## SUNDAY SERVICES

**CHAIR:** Debra Kroon

Jen Berry

Denise Edwards

Bill Jacobs

Susan Kaphammer

Linda King

Sunny Sonker

## FINANCE

**TREASURER:** Janis Luvaas

Bill Jacobs

Kia Tudor

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

Phil Dindia

Lana Barnes

Bill Jacobs

Chuck Forster

Joy McKinney

## LIFESPAN LEARNING

**FACILITATOR:** Linda King

Jen Berry

Rosie Hill

Susan Kaphammer

Craig Moore

## AUCTION

*CHAIR POSITION OPEN*

Nancy Born

## MEMBERSHIP

**CO-CHAIRS:** Lana Barnes  
& Jen Berry

Denise Edwards

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

**Board President** Susan Kaphammer [susanlkap@gmail.com](mailto:susanlkap@gmail.com)

**Board Vice Pres.** Ray Yates [raycyates@gmail.com](mailto:raycyates@gmail.com)

**Trustee** Nancy Born [nancyjborn@gmail.com](mailto:nancyjborn@gmail.com)

**Trustee** Mary Brunelle [almybrufam@gmail.com](mailto:almybrufam@gmail.com)

**Trustee** Chuck Forster [bddirtpile@gmail.com](mailto:bddirtpile@gmail.com)

**UUCY OFFICE:** 407 N. 1st St, Ste 3, Yakima, WA 98901 • [uucyakima.org](http://uucyakima.org)  
509-453-8448 • [admin@uucyakima.org](mailto:admin@uucyakima.org)

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