

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

November 22, 2023

Listening Forward

Since I don't know what the future holds, I do what I can to learn from the past. At the same time tho, it would probably be helpful to listen forward. But how? Sci-fi? Maybe. Astrology? Maybe not. People younger than me? Definitely. And people older than me also have important insight into what's ahead. And the earth and her creatures can tell us a lot about what's ahead when we let down our pride to listen.



To look into the future of BUF, we have each other to listen-forward to. As we look into 2024 and beyond, your BUF Board of Trustees and I will make listening forward a major focus, starting with a listening session in December in preparation for the 2024-25 budget. It's important that we get an early start on this conversation. While our current budget is balanced, it includes about \$30,000 from federal covid grants and \$25,000 from reserve funds that we won't be able to draw from forever. And unfortunately, our rental income has not returned to pre-covid levels. For expenses, we expect that higher-than-average inflation will have an impact, especially on our staff health insurance benefits. Also, the State of Washington has new employee-protection laws which require us to pay overtime. And BUFsters have consistently expressed a desire to compensate staff at levels nearer to UUA guidelines.

There are any number of ways to approach this situation: raising income, lowering expenses, some of each. In any case we will need to do this as a community, making decisions based on our core values, with everyone having full access to relevant information and opportunities for input. Our first listening session will be held along with our potluck lunch on Sunday, December 3. Please join us. This meeting will be in-person only; future conversations will be held Zoom-only.

Where is the intersection of what the world needs...and what we have to offer? Where is that intersection for me as an individual? Where is that intersection for us as a congregation? As the world changes, let's listen for insights from within and beyond...and especially let's listen forward.

Peace,
Paul



Thanksgiving Day Potluck

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 23 – 1:00 PM set up and socializing, 3:00 PM dinner

We provide the turkey, you provide the trimmings!

RSVP Mark Allyn allyn@well.com. Please indicate how many people and what you plan to bring.

No Community Night Dinner tonight (Nov 22) - Next one next Wednesday



CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We are continuing this month's focus on Gratitude this Sunday by playing games! We are grateful for the simple pleasure of talking and laughing while playing with friends. What could be more fun? We've got a wide variety of age-appropriate board and card games, but feel free to bring your own favorite to share if you wish!

Children will start in the sanctuary, as usual, where we have a child-friendly space with pillows, drawing supplies, fidget boxes, and a front row seat for the Story of All Ages or interactive song. After the Children's Focus, we will head upstairs where we will explore our theme through stories, activities, games, and art.



On Sunday, December 3, we will introduce the month's theme: *Mystery*. In this session, we explore the dance between mystery and wonder by taking a look at the magic of snowflakes. Through a story about the unique pattern of each snowflake, an art activity and games, we'll experience the wonder of the "ordinary" world all around us.

If you have any questions or concerns about our children's programming or want to volunteer, please contact me at genia@BUF.org.

Winter Quarter Adult RE Courses Announced

Adult RE programming for fall has wrapped up and was a great success with over 40 people attending two Pathways to Membership classes, UU History Part I, and Spirit in Practice. Many thanks to our dedicated and skilled facilitators: Felice Davis, Bonnie Phinney, Stephanie Sarver, Natalie Johnson, and Patricia Conover.

Based on congregation feedback from our Adult RE survey last spring, we are offering some enriching workshops for Winter Quarter. Some course offerings include:

- January – Gratitude
- February – Black Lives Matter Special Programs
- March – UU Theology



Registration will begin soon. Keep watching this space for course details and registration links!

SUNDAY LOOK AHEAD

November 26

Grief and Gratitude – Rev Rose Edington

As we complete Indigenous Peoples Month and Thanksgiving Weekend, and before we plunge into the winter holidays, let's take a look at Grief and Gratitude. Both often tend to show up during this time of year. With some inspiration from Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Rev. Rose will consider some of the dynamics of this early winter season.

Rose grew up in West Virginia, began ministry as an American Baptist in Rochester, NY, as a seminarian in the fall of 1969; transferred ordination to UU ministry in 1984 while living in Stamford, CT; held various parish ministry positions in the Boston area; completed Doctor of Ministry in Feminist Liberation Theology; shared a co-ministry with Mel Hoover in Charleston WV. She and Mel are co-ministers emeriti of the UU Congregation in Charleston WV. They moved to Bellingham in 2020 to enjoy grandparenting, the beauties of Washington State, reconnecting with retired UU ministers and spouses here, and BUF.

December 3

Generosity of Spirit – Rev Paul Beckel

Fatigue and resistance are understandable reactions to the many demands of the holiday season. So what might we do when we're pressed up against our limits of time or finances—and even our ideals of unlimited goodwill?

December 10

Holiday Music Service: “The Angels Sing
Glory: Songs along the Arc of Justice”

Presenting the BUF choir and soloists Walt
Ellis (l) and Joel Gabriel Johnson (r).



December 17

Solstice – Rev Paul Beckel

December 24

Christmas Eve

Revs Barbara ten Hove and Paul Beckel

**NOTE, we will not have a Sunday morning service this weekend.
Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 SUNDAY NIGHT**

December 31

What Tends Your Wholeness in These Divisive Times? – Steffany Raynes, Su Livingston, et al.
BUF members and friends are invited to contribute music and poetry, original or old favorites on the topic of what it means to live in this time of uncertainty and change. Info on how to contribute to the service is coming soon.

Taize

The theme for December's Taize Service is "Unbroken." In this time of change, turbulence, and brokenness, we come together for a reminder of what it means to be unbroken and resilient in community. Taize is an evening of candlelight, prayer, meditation, and singing.

Please join us at 7:00 PM on Monday, December 4, in the sanctuary or on Zoom.

Walt Ellis is taking the leadership for Taize services starting in January.

The January date for Taize has been changed to January 8.

Join by Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97456974163>

Meeting ID: 974 5697 4163

Passcode: BUF

Men's Group

The Men's Group will meet in the Conference Room from noon to 1:30 PM on November 26 and December 10. (We won't meet on Christmas Eve.) Contact jeff.copeland@gmail.com with questions.

Humanitas Ministry

So many times, we have people come in when they're at rock bottom. This week Jen came in seeking help with a portion of her rent. She's a full-time student and working two part-time jobs. When her hours got cut from one job it put her on the edge of losing her apartment. Being short only a couple of hundred dollars, she had most of her rent covered. She told us about her life plans and she's right on track other than for this small bump in the road. There are so many people in our community who are living from paycheck to paycheck. We've had many people come in over the years describing this same scenario. Their hours get cut, they can't pay rent, end up on the street and are lost, all for a couple hundred dollars. Sometimes people are looking for someone to pull them up from the bottom and other times they just need an outstretched arm to hold them steady. We were happy we could be there for her to keep her on the path she's traveling.

Even Rain Didn't Stop Them!

Thank you to those that braved the typical November rainy weather on the 4th to rake leaves and help with yard clean-up. Volunteers were: Alex Gilman, Lin Skavdahl, Murray Bennett, Pam Fox, Michelle Fox, Dick & Judy Kasper, and Peter Luton.

Fair Trade

Fair Trade is excited to announce that we have a seasonal product of recently harvested pecan halves from Cypress Pond, a black owned former plantation in southern Georgia.

They will be available for purchase along with our coffees and teas and would make a great gift this holiday season!



New Look for the Mid-Week Update

We're in the process of simplifying the Mid-Week Update (MWU). Over the next few months, you'll see some changes to our format and distribution. The MWU will be on holiday, along with staff, **the last week of both November and December**. Continue to send content to mwu@buf.org, knowing that buf-news@buf.org may be a better choice to spread your message.

How to Submit Content for the Mid-Week Update

Content must be received on Monday by 10:00 AM. Submit via email and include an attached Word doc, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 font. Avoid any formatting, including bullets. Limit 200 words. If you have an item for the calendar, please put "Calendar"; if you are seeking Volunteers, please put "Volunteer" in the subject line. Submittals may be edited for space and clarity. Submit your content to MWU@buf.org

BUF Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday, Nov. 22	9:30am	Humanitas In Person	Sanctuary
Thursday, Nov. 23	9:45am	Mindfulness Meditation Group	Library
	12:30pm	Flowering Cherry Meditation	Sanctuary
	1:00pm	Thanksgiving Dinner at BUF (Dinner at 3pm)	Social Hall
Sunday, Nov. 26	10:20am	Sunday Service, in person and zoom	Sanctuary
	10:00am	Children's Religious Education	contact genia@buf.org
	11:30am	Coffee Hour after Service	Social Hall
	12:00pm	Men's Group	Conference
Monday, Nov. 27	4:00pm	YFLU	Social Hall and back patio
	6:00pm	Multifaith Network for Climate Change	Social Hall
Tuesday, Nov. 28	7:00pm	Black Lives Matter Program Meeting	via zoom
	12:00pm	Buddhist study group via zoom	via zoom
	12:00pm	Lunch with Paul	Social Hall
Wednesday, Nov. 29	6:45pm	BIMS Meditation and Dharma	Social Hall
	9:30am	Humanitas In Person	Sanctuary
	12:00pm	BUF Writers Group	Conference
	6:00pm	BUF Night In/Community Night Dinner	social hall
Thursday, Nov. 30	6:45pm	Choir Rehearsals	Sanctuary
	9:45am	Mindfulness Meditation Group	Library
	12:30pm	Flowering Cherry Meditation	Sanctuary
	1:00pm	Gabriel's Art Kids After School/Early Release	social hall, flex room
	6:30pm	Red Cedar Zen Meditation & Dharma	Social Hall
Friday, Dec. 1	7:00pm	Board Of Trustees Monthly Meeting	Conference Room
Saturday, Dec. 2	4:00pm	Safety Committee Meeting	Conference Room
	6:30am	Red Cedar Zen Retreat	social hall, library, kitchen
Sunday, Dec. 3	3:00pm	Choir Holiday Party	Sanctuary and social hall
	10:20am	Sunday Service, in person and zoom	Sanctuary
	10:00am	Children's Religious Education	contact genia@buf.org
	11:30am	All BUF Holiday Potluck & Coffee Hour	Social Hall
Monday, Dec. 4	4:00pm	YFLU	Social Hall and back patio
Tuesday, Dec. 5	7:00pm	Taize Service, in person and via zoom	Sanctuary
	12:00pm	Buddhist study group via zoom	via zoom
	12:00pm	Lunch with Paul	Social Hall
Wednesday, Dec. 6	5:30pm	PFLAG Whatcom Meeting	conference
	9:30am	Humanitas In Person	Sanctuary
	6:00pm	BUF Night In/Community Night Dinner	social hall
	6:45pm	Choir Rehearsals	Sanctuary

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

360-733-3887 Buf.org. admin@buf.org Sign up for the Mid-Week Update and/or the BUF News Digest at <https://wp.buf.org/news/communication-sign-ups/>