

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

November 1, 2023

Words From Paul

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Sunday Service Zoom Link:
Meeting ID 738 363 620

Worship starts at 10:20am

<https://zoom.us/j/73836362>

**Passcode is BUF Phone: (669)
900-6833**

Lunch with Paul at BUF

Please join Paul for a bring-your-own lunch and conversation every Tuesday noon.

Tremendous thank-Yous to Kathy Wahto

Kathy has served as our Congregational Administrator for the past 6½ years through some very challenging, successful and, as she describes them, rewarding times. This period included not just the pandemic, but significant reorganizations of many things financial, programmatic, technological, staffing, internal and external communications, governance, digital record-keeping and equipment upgrades, and major building projects.



Kathy tends to deflect accolades onto the many BUFsters who have collaborated with her all these years. She points out it's just that her job puts her at the hub of BUF's extensive and evolving activities made possible by BUF donors and volunteers. Still, as she retires this month, I want to point out some highlights.

In August 2018, ICE raided a local employer and incarcerated the primary breadwinners of 24 immigrant families. Within a few days, in partnership with Community to Community, she set up "Raid Relief to Reunite Families" through which BUF managed over \$200,000 for these families' basic needs, bail bonds, and legal representation from donors throughout the county, the Whatcom Community Foundation, and a fundraising dinner that overflowed our social hall with 170+ people. Working closely with the families, Kathy oversaw the accounting for and disbursement of these funds, plus food and household goods. Over the next four years, 22 of the 24 families received work permits and legal status in the US.

After that, you can imagine how isolated she was during the pandemic, alone in the building for much of the time, and concerned for the well-being of so many volunteers, contributors, and renters she'd been working with...and concerned too about BUF's ability to function since those

volunteers, contributors, and renters were isolated as well. But this was not fallow time. You probably noticed the dramatic expansion of our audio/visual and live-streaming capacities that she facilitated. But you might not have noticed, behind the scenes, Kathy secured \$127,000 in grants and tax credits from three different federal pandemic relief programs. Of course we were eligible for these, but many organizations and businesses that did not apply quickly enough—or couldn't manage the paperwork—did not receive them. Kathy's initiative, wading through obscure and complex rules, and maintaining credible documentation has been vital to keep us afloat for these three years. And she continues to follow up on \$47,000 applied for but not yet received. Also during that time, we had a major flood that destroyed ceilings, walls, floors, and damaged the elevator shaft—in all about \$80,000 worth of damage (fortunately covered by insurance). Kathy oversaw months of cleanup and repair—while simultaneously overseeing the installation of a \$37,000 air handling system for the sanctuary, and after that, our kitchen renovation. She won't take credit, but it's not insignificant that since she arrived our endowment has grown from

\$27,000 to \$185,000. Our mortgage has decreased from \$514K to \$252K.

Over the years Kathy has been the willing hub of communication, a reliable repository of institutional knowledge, and ever-supportive colleague to the BUF staff. Her welcoming and service-oriented presence has enabled us to establish new relationships with regular rental groups. She hired multiple staff members, established new contracts with security, telecommunications, building maintenance, and janitorial services, and automated accounting practices. And she assumed bookkeeping duties when our bookkeeper retired.

As grateful as I am for all of the above, I want to give Kathy a special shout out for dogged follow-up with non-flashy but grueling and essential matters of code compliance, dealing with break-ins, installation of a security system, and day after day responding to countless email requests, phone calls and drop-in visitors. Yeah, we're going to miss her. Her deep commitment to the values of this congregation came through in all she has done.

And to all of you who have collaborated with Kathy over the years: thank-you!

Peace,
Paul

Upcoming Sunday Services

Sunday, November 5

Priorities - Rev Paul Beckel

So many possibilities, so many opportunities, so it seems. And yet: these limits we have on our time, attention, and capacity to absorb complexity and change. So we make plans, or we make choices on-the-fly. Either way, we discover our priorities.

Upcoming Sunday Services

Sunday, November 12

“...To Nurture the Spark of your Precious Life”

What’s on your heart as you sing these words to our BUF kids leaving for their classrooms? These particular kids in these particular times and circumstances? And how about nurturing the spark of your own precious life? How do you day by day fan that spark into flame?

Praying Together for Peace

Taizé Service November 6 at 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

May we see the many in the one and the one in the many.

May you, Life of All the Worlds,

Source of All Amazing Differences

Help us to see clearly.

Guide us gently and firmly toward each other,

Toward peace. Amen.

--Rabbi Sheila Weinberg

With all the heartbreak and devastation that is happening in our world, we feel strongly that this service of gentle chants and candlelight is right where we need to be, finding our center, calming our nervous systems, singing and reminding ourselves that peace is possible, and that it begins with me.

We’d love to have you join us either in person or via zoom for our monthly service.

Join by Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/97456974163?pwd=WkdHQ3UzRINyYzFBMGRwQTJsY0lZdz09>

Meeting ID: 974 5697 4163

Passcode: BET

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Rev. Tessie at Tessie@BUF.org

MUSIC NEWS -

KEVIN ALLEN-SCHMID, Music Director - kevin@buf.org

Music at BUF in November

We have some wonderful music to look forward to at BUF this month.

NOVEMBER 5 Jane Ronca-Washburn and Reka Zoltan sing two songs in Hungarian with zither, to promote the following week’s special collection for our partner church in Romania

NOVEMBER 12 On the Sunday of the special collection for the Unitarians in Magyarszovat, Transylvania, BUF’s Chalice Choir sings a thrilling anthem called “Hark I Hear the Harps Eternal”

NOVEMBER 19 For the Sunday service, BUF music director



Kevin presents a slide show with an ecumenical message called "The Nyblade Legacy in Tanzania." Come hear stories of beautiful people, some related to Carl Nyblade, who have made a difference in Africa, while the Phoenix Ensemble sings a *cappella* African songs of protest and praise.

NOVEMBER 26 On Thanksgiving weekend, TJ Anderson, music director at Bellingham Theatre Guild, will be at the piano. Let Kevin know if you have an requests or offerings for special music.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Cascadia Online Bioregional Summit

November 3 - 12, 2023

For details, registration and to sign up to give a workshop, [click here](#).

NOTE: You are welcome to attend the Summit whether you attended the Activation Tour events or not. If you did not attend Joe Brewer's talk on Saturday evening at BUF, we recommend watching the recording on YouTube by [clicking here](#). After David MacLeod's tribute to the recently deceased Michael Dowd and introduction to Joe, Joe's talk begins at 14:47 and ends at 1:46:32. Apologies for the poor sound, but stick with it - the sound is fine for Joe's presentation.

Summit Overview This three-part event is a capstone to the activation tour to take place over two weekends and each weekday evening in-between. Its purpose will be to give participants an opportunity to talk about the vision of this project, share your experience of the tour, report successes and lessons learned and to further connect and plan our future work together. Your participation, whether you attended any of the activation tour events or not, is vital to the success of this Summit. Through your participation, this movement will pick up momentum and continue building on the successes of the tour.

Humanitas Ministry

We had an unusual situation this week. A woman came in who was working with the Northwest justice project. Her landlord had illegally tried to evict her. The agency was able to help her go to court to fight the eviction. When the judge referred the case to a jury, the landlord backed down knowing that he would not prevail. To retaliate he put all the utilities in her name without notifying her that he had done so. Because she never received a bill for any of these utilities, she had no idea until her water had been turned off. Thankfully Energy Assistance through Opportunity council could help her with her Electric and Heating bills. They referred her to us for her water bill. We along with the other churches in the network were able to pay the back amount allowing her water to be turned back on.

Interweave Organizing Meeting, November 12, 12:00-1:30

On Sunday, November 12, 12:00 - 1:30, there will be an organizing meeting for Interweave, the UU program to fight the oppression of LGBTQIA2S+ people. Interweave has been dormant for some years, and this meeting is intended to help us identify actions and projects for the remainder of the 2023-2024 church year. All those interested are encouraged to attend. You do not need to be LGBTQIA2S+ to participate. Supporters are welcome! The meeting will be in the library, off the social hall.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Pre-Holiday Treasures Sale at BUF, Sat Nov 11th 9am to 3pm

Come and find treasures that can be re-gifted or re-purposed for holiday gifts..or as a treat to yourself.

Find bargains in our social hall that will include kitchen and household goods, children's clothes and toys, games for the entire family and much more.

Doors will open at 9am. Cash and Checks only. To drop off items, Sunday 11/5, 9am - 1 pm, Weds., 11/8, 5-6:30 pm, Thurs. 11/9, 10am -noon, Fri. . 11/10, 9am - 1 pm. Pick up can be arranged if needed. Contact Drew Lenore, drewlenore@me.com

Since I Been Down, presented by Black Lives Matter

Please come Friday, November 3, 6 to 8pm in the Sanctuary

BUF Black Lives Matter will screen this film about the Hilltop district in Tacoma, about drugs and gangs and police, and about children who "became the face of the threat"

For more info, contact David Curley.

Fall Clean-Up at BUF—Saturday, Nov 4 9am to 12noon

Join us as we start our seasonal battle with fallen leaves! We trim hedges and do general cleanup outside, with coffee and treats for break-time. Dress warmly, bring your favorite tools and gloves and we will bring out our BUF tools. We welcome all volunteers, for as long as you like. For more info: Jim Reimer at jdreimer@comcast.net or call the office!

Thanksgiving Day Potluck Thanksgiving Day - Thursday November 23

1 PM Set Up and Socializing and 3 PM Dinner

We will provide turkey, you all will provide the trimmings!

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Genia Allen-Schmid, RE Director, genia@buf.org



CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our theme for the month is Generosity, and this week we explore Widening our Circle of Love through a story, games and art. We will look at the parable of the Good Samaritan and discuss

how we can expand our care and concern to people we don't know very well, or even at all. It's easy to be generous to our friends and family, but Jesus challenged us to expand that circle of love to strangers as well.

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.

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

Adult Religious Education FALL 2023 - Sign up NOW!!

To register for a class, just click on the appropriate link, in blue. If that doesn't work for you, just copy and paste the addresses listed below in blue into your browser. If none of this sounds doable, no worries! We can register for you on Sunday mornings at coffee hour (just visit our table), or email me at genia@BUF.org and I will register you.

Spirit in Practice 11:00-12:30

Wednesday, November 8, 15, 22, 29

Spirit in Practice will be an opportunity to explore and cultivate regular practices that connect us with the sacred ground of our being, however we understand it. Whichever path we follow in this diverse congregation, the Spirit in Practice workshop will offer a forum for learning, sharing, and growth that can enrich our faith journey.

Register: buf.breezechms.com/form/buf.breezechms.com2125551767

How to submit content for the Mid Week Update:

Content must be received on Monday by 10:00 a.m. Submit via email and include an attached Word document, single spaced, Georgia 12 font. Avoid any formatting, bullets, etc. 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

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

BUF's website is BUF.org. Contact us by email at admin@buf.org Phone 360-733-3837.. Sign up for our online newsletter, the Midweek Update at <https://wp.buf.org/news/communication-sign-ups/> Sign up for BUF News Digest at <https://wp.buf.org/news/communication-sign-ups/>

BUF CALENDAR		
DATE	TIME	EVENT
November 3	6pm	BLM Movie Night, "Since I Been Down" in the Sanctuary
November 4	9am	Fall Outside Work Party at BUF, raking leaves and getting ready for winter! More info: admin@buf.org 360733-3837
November 6, 2023	7-8:00 pm	Taizé https://zoom.us/j/97456974163? pwd=WkdHQ3UzRlNyYzFBMGRwQTJsY0lZdz09 Meeting ID: 974 5697 4163 Passcode: BET If you have any questions, please email Rev. Tessie at Tessie@BUF.org
November 12, 2023	Noon-1:30pm	Men's Group in the Conference Room Contact Jeff.copeland@gmail.com with questions.
November 13	4pm-5:30pm	Financial Oversight Committee, Conference Room

