

# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

*Community, Compassion, Commitment*

December 13, 2023

## before solstice

winter shadows / winter light  
combine to re-invent the air

I breathe

all night the  
tide pools suckle  
at the moon's breast  
rising and falling  
in ancient rhythm

glimmer of gray  
Salish Sea turns  
bioluminescent  
before clouds  
disappear the moon

pouring water as grace

we have this whole winter  
to be engulfed in dark rains  
to discover Earth's  
still point  
in the long dream  
of December



by Rick Hermann (1951-2023)

*Please join us for this Sunday's service (December 17), Solstice: A Sacred Pause  
And note that*

- *our Sunday December 24 service, Christmas Eve, will take place at 7 pm*
- *the MidWeek Update will not be published December 27*
- *The BUF Office will be closed December 23-31*

*Peace,  
Rev Paul*

## CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



The theme this month is The Gift of Mystery. This Sunday we explore the mystery in the Winter Solstice and how this natural event offers hope, inviting us to see our “dark days” differently. We will read a special solstice story, play some games and make beeswax candles to light up these dark nights.

If you have any questions or concerns about our children's programming or want to volunteer, please contact Genia at [genia@Buf.org](mailto:genia@Buf.org).

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING, Holiday STORIES and COOKIES!!



Help spread the joy of Christmas by Caroling with BUFsters of all ages on Wednesday, December 20. We'll start at 5:15 at Columbia Place Assisted Living on 2315 Williams Street, and then return to BUF by 6:00 for our usual Wednesday Night Community dinner of soup and salad.

**After supper we invite children to stay for our Christmas party from 6:45-7:30.** We'll have people read their favorite seasonal stories while enjoying home-made cookies and hot chocolate! Please contact Genia if you can bring a plate of cookies to share.

## Community Night Dinner – special lasagna meal for \$10



Join us this Wednesday at 6:00 in the social hall for a special holiday meal. Our menu this week is lasagna, salad, bread, and dessert for \$10 per adult and children under 12 free. We'll have a gluten free lasagna and vegetarian option – and Annie is bringing homemade bread! Stay after dinner to play card-oriented games- Fluxx or Sea, Salt, and Paper or Gubs. Or bring your own card game or board game to play!

## Introducing Second Friday Fun (SFF) Nite!

Starting Friday, January 12, BUF will host a variety of fun activities every second Friday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Activities will rotate each month between a game night, movie night, and a TEDTalk with discussion. Our goal is to connect people through fun!

Our first SFF Nite, on January 12, will be a game night. A variety of adult board and card games will be provided, and we'll have a couple of childcare providers hosting a children's table so parents can



play an adult game should they wish. Please bring a snack to share. People are invited to start socializing in the Social Hall at 6:30; games will start in earnest at 7:00.

### Our Whole Lives is coming this winter!



Our Whole Lives, or OWL for younger, and older elementary age children this winter. OWL is based on the philosophy that parents or guardians hold primary responsibility for the sexuality education of their children. Our Whole Lives is a positive, comprehensive, and age-appropriate educational program led by trained facilitators. For more information on OWL, please visit the UUA website at

<https://www.uua.org/re/owl>

Details and registration will be out soon. If you are interested or want more information, contact Genia Allen-Schmid at [genia@BUF.org](mailto:genia@BUF.org).

### WINTER QUARTER ADULT RE PROGRAMS

DATE/TIME	COURSE TITLE / DESCRIPTION
January 21, 28, February 4 12:00-1:30 Facilitators: Tom Nicholas Patricia Conover	GRATITUDE Recall those moments when you may have said, “Thanks to the universe, I got a parking place right in front.” This facilitated conversation will explore the role of gratitude not just when life “goes our way,” but for those inevitable times when it does not. We’ll explore to whom and for what we’re grateful. (3 sessions)
February	BLACK LIVES MATTER SPECIAL PROGRAMS
March 2 10:00-2:00 Facilitator: Felice Davis	*NEWCOMERS PATHWAYS: Pathway sessions welcome new members, visitors, or anyone interested in knowing more about the UU tradition and BUF. These fun and informative sessions introduce participants to each other and to Unitarian Universalism.
March 3, 10, 17, 24 12:00-1:30 Facilitators: Natalie Johnson	UU THEOLOGY: How did Unitarian Universalism evolve into the liberal faith we know? What fundamental issues and individuals shaped our understanding of UUism from our earliest beginnings onward? Why do we not have a creed or dogma, but instead embrace our Principles and Sources? These and other questions are explored in this course. (4 sessions)

## **ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, continued**

We ask that folks register at the links below. A maximum \$10 donation is suggested towards the cost of materials each semester, but Pathways classes are free. If you need help registering, contact Genia and she will happily register for you!

Pathways: [Pathways](#)  
Gratitude: [Gratitude](#)  
UU Theology: [UU Theology](#)

Questions, please contact  
Director of Life Long Learning,  
Genia Allen-Schmid. email: [Genia@buf.org](mailto:Genia@buf.org)

## **Volunteers Needed to Help with Pledge Drive**

Call or text Rick Steele (Vlad) at 360-319-7759 to volunteer or with any questions.

Activity	Estimated Time	Time Span	Total Needed
Canvass 3 to 5 households	2 hrs/week	2/11/24 to 3/15/24	40 to 50
Recruit Canvassers	1 hour/week	11/15/23 to 2/1/24	10
Spreadsheet Analysis	5 hrs total	Mid-April	1
Write Inspiring Article for Brochure	5 to 10 hours total	12/1/23 to 1/15/24	1
Desktop Publish Brochure	5 to 10 hours total	1/15/24 to 2/1/24	1
Oversee Kickoff Breakfast	5 hours total	1/15/24 to 2/10/24	1
Cook for Breakfast	3 hours total	2/11/24	3 or 4
Setup for Breakfast	1 hour	2/11/24	2
Cleanup/Breakdown Breakfast	2 hours total	2/11/24	2
Stuff Envelopes for Mailing	2 hours total	2/1/24	2

## SUNDAY LOOK AHEAD

### December 17

Solstice: A Sacred Pause – Rev Paul Beckel and Steffany Raines

### December 24

Christmas Eve – Revs Barbara ten Hove and Paul Beckel

**NOTE, we will not have a Sunday morning service December 24. Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 SUNDAY NIGHT**

### December 31

What Tends Your Wholeness in These Divisive Times? –

For the last few years BUF's Sunday Service near the beginning of the new year has featured original works of art, music, poetry and short essay by members of this congregation. It has been a heart-warming service with many participants who don't usually come to the front of the sanctuary. Su Livingston and Steffany Raynes want to continue that tradition and we invite you to participate. The topic is "wholeness in divisive times." You could be commenting on your own personal experience or what you observe in the culture. You could share your own work or a favorite from someone you want to introduce to us. You can share yourself or ask one of us to share it for you. Please contact Su Livingston via email [sulivingston@gmail.com](mailto:sulivingston@gmail.com) describing your contribution. Written and musical pieces need to be in the 3- to 5-minute range. Please help us welcome the new year by contributing your gifts to this service. Submissions due by Dec. 22.

## Christmas Day Potluck

Mark Allyn will be hosting a Christmas Day Potluck Dinner on Christmas Day at 1:00 PM in the Social Hall. This will be a potluck (everyone brings a dish; we will not be cooking turkey as we did for Thanksgiving). Mark also plans to invite folks from the local LGBTQ community in addition to the BUF community. He is usually at coffee hour after the services.

RSVP Mark Allyn [allyn@well.com](mailto:allyn@well.com). Please indicate how many people will be in your group and what you plan to bring.

## Taize

Taize is an evening of candlelight, prayer, meditation, and singing. Walt Ellis is taking the leadership for Taize services starting in January. **The January date for Taize has been changed to January 8.** Please join us at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary or on Zoom.

Access Taize via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/738363620?pwd=TmdwVjYyOXMrNU4ydFhaZXpEV1Urdz09>

Meeting ID: 974 5697 4163

Passcode: BUF

**NEW:** This is the same Zoom link and passcode as our regular Sunday service.

### **Fair Trade Pecan Halves**



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!

### **BUF has ties with a family in Gaza that needs our help**

Saed and Hussam Abdou have a brother in Gaza who needs our assistance immediately. Our BUF refugee team has worked closely with Saed and Hassam; who have given countless hours of translation, assistance and gifts to “our” Syrian families as well as other refugees in Bellingham and are inspiring community leaders.

Their brother, Ahmed Abdou and his four children, have been bombed out of their accommodations and the youngest daughter is injured. The family is currently staying in a car near the Egyptian border with about one million other Palestinians under harrowing conditions.



Saed and Hussam have borrowed money for the exorbitant fee to have the family put on an exit list from Gaza, and expect the family may be able to cross into Egypt this Wednesday, the 13th. Saed is in Cairo now making arrangements. Having exhausted their financial resources, they are asking for our help with the family’s living expenses once they reach Egypt.

Please give by check made out to BUF with “Palestinian Family Fund” in the memo line. Your contribution is tax deductible.

--The BUF Refugee Team

Questions? Contact Kara Black at [kara@cedartreellc.com](mailto:kara@cedartreellc.com))

### **SEJC Collections Recipient for December: Restorative CommUnity Coalition**

The Restorative Community Coalition has been working on reclaiming lives of those out of jail since the year 2006. They provide skill training, navigating the legal system, and other support activities to help the released transition back into society, as productive members and taxpayers,



one person at a time. Here is an estimated impact, for example: Cost for taxpayers to keep a person in jail: \$30,000 a year. Cost for education and training a person, for 5 months: \$1,500. Eighty percent of those imprisoned are non-violent and could be contributing to their families and the local economy.

You can contribute throughout this month; drop off a check or cash at the office.

### **Proposed changes to Article II from the Unitarian Universalist Association**

The UUA Article II Commission just released the latest version of the Proposed changes to Article II of the UUA By-Laws. Please have a look.

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii>

As you might expect, a lot of work has gone on by the Commission, people/groups who proposed amendments to the version presented at the last General Assembly. Much of the process is described [in this post](#):

The proposed Article II will be presented at GA in June. Note that this GA will be entirely virtual, which will make it very possible for more of us to be present and involved in the discussion.

### **BUF Calendar**

<b>Date and Event</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Thursday, December 14, 2023</b>		
<u>Mindfulness Meditation Group</u>	9:45 AM	Library
<u>Flowering Cherry Meditation</u>	12:30 PM	Sanctuary
<b>Sunday, December 17, 2023</b>		
<u>Children's Religious Education</u>	10:00 AM	contact genia@buf.org
<u>Sunday Service, in person and Zoom</u>	10:20 AM	Sanctuary/Zoom
<u>Coffee Hour after Service</u>	11:30 AM	Social Hall
<u>Adult RE Classes</u>	12:00 PM	Flex Room
<u>YRUU</u>	4:00 PM	Social Hall, back patio
<b>Monday, December 18, 2023</b>		
<u>Black Lives Matter Program Meeting</u>	7:00 PM	via Zoom
<b>Tuesday, December 19, 2023</b>		
<u>Buddhist study group via Zoom</u>	12:00 PM	via Zoom
<u>Lunch with Paul</u>	12:00 PM	Social Hall
<b>Wednesday, December 20, 2023</b>		
<u>Humanitas In Person</u>	9:30 AM	Sanctuary
<u>BUF Night In/Community Night Dinner</u>	6:00 PM	Social Hall
<u>Choir Rehearsals</u>	6:45 PM	Sanctuary

### **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](mailto:MWU@buf.org)

### **Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship**

360-733-3887 [Buf.org](http://Buf.org). [admin@buf.org](mailto: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/>