

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
Community, Compassion, Commitment
January 10, 2024

Lowering the Protective Mask

Pop star Alicia Keys asked a keyboardist whom she'd never met to create a new song with her in a single day. Their process, edited down to a moving half-hour video, showed them working together in the studio. The keyboardist, Sampha, was very talented but did not want to be in the spotlight.

The song developed with increasingly personal themes. Late in the day, they determined this was only going to work if he, too, had a vocal part, and that it be equal to hers. He would need to sing a verse about his love for his recently deceased mother. It took Sampha a while to overcome his self-consciousness and compose himself. Afterward he said,

There are times where it's like I, you know, life can be too heavy for you to try and put on a mask or try and put on a face or try and be someone else. I think I felt like, you know, I'm just gonna be myself and what will be will be.

May each of us find/renew/welcome our own sense of purpose and belonging in this new year, wherever we may be on our life's journey.

Peace,
Paul

PS: Here's an easy volunteer role that takes about 30 seconds, 10-20 times a week:

BUF-news listserv moderator

Best for someone who has been around BUF a couple of years and has basic familiarity with people and programs...checks email regularly...and doesn't already have multiple volunteer roles. Minimal tech skills involved. It would be helpful to have an additional moderator to ensure submissions to BUF-news get out quickly. Let me know if you'd like to help: minister@buf.org

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

Is Spiritual Growth Possible? - Rev Paul Beckel

In the context of MLK Day, the call to revolutionary love typically involves inspiration to go out and be the change you want to see in the world. But what if we're not grounded inwardly? "BE the change" implies an inner strength. What about the times that's not there? Is it possible to grow?

NEW OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday thru Friday | 10 am – 3 pm

Your existing door codes still work, so feel free to access the building outside of office hours for regular volunteer activities and programs. Please do not use your door codes, however, in the early morning or late evening, as an alarm will sound and someone you love will have to get out of bed. If you do not have a code, you can make arrangements to get in with Michelle Fox, our new Administrator: admin@buf.org | 360-733-3837

KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

Please join us for a spirited evening devoted to honoring Dr. King and his vision for a beloved community on Monday, January 15, 7 pm at BUF. Special musical guest Checo Tomomaso will share soul music. Key presenters will be Ed Bereal, Ferndale resident and artist known for exhibitions that display, twist, and resist political, racial, and gendered stereotypes; and Vernon Damani Johnson, retired WWU professor and long-time champion of non-violence and civic engagement. TeeJay Morris will EmCee. Free. All are welcome! From the BUF BLM team.

VOLUNTEER HELP FOR PLEDGE DRIVE

Our greatest need is for canvassers and kickoff breakfast cooks.

To volunteer or get answers to your questions, call or text

Rick Steele (Vlad) at 360-319-7759 or email rickvladsteele@icloud.com

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

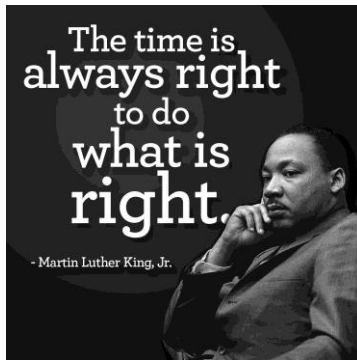
COFFEE HOUR SNACKS

It is lovely to find a bite of cake, a cookie, fruit or cracker on the treats table to have with coffee or tea after the Sunday service. But sometimes there is not enough for everyone to enjoy. The

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coffee hour snacks are provided by the community, for the community. Please consider occasionally bringing a snack to share. Simply deliver your ready-to-serve contribution to the kitchen before the service. It will be greatly appreciated! ~Judy Kasper, Hospitality Team

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Liberating Love is this month's theme, and in this session, we will learn about the life and lessons of Martin Luther King. We will explore through a story, short video, art and games how love, and our UU faith, calls us to fight the system, not just the symptoms of a problem; that it is not enough to just pull people out of the river, but as UUs we are called to go upstream and find out who or why they are being thrown in and work for the liberation of everyone.

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 Genia at genia@BUF.org.



COMMUNITY NIGHT DINNER

Join us at 6:00 in the social hall for soup (vegan and otherwise), chips, salad and dessert. Cost is \$5 per adult and children under 12 are free! 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!

IT'S SECOND FRIDAY FUN (SFF) GAME NITE!!

Our first Second Friday Fun Nite, this Friday, January 12, will be a game night. A variety of adult board and card games will be provided, but feel free to bring your own favorite. 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.





ATTENTION BUF FAMILIES!

BUF is excited to announce that we will be offering Our Whole Lives, or OWL, for 6- to 7-year-olds and 9- to 11-year-olds starting Sunday, January 28. 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 that supports those beliefs. For more information on OWL, please visit the UUA website to learn more:

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

Class sizes are limited, so register now to guarantee a spot for your child. You can copy and paste the following for the 1-2nd grade OWL registration <https://buf.breezechms.com/form/15156a185290>, or <https://buf.breezechms.com/form/15156a1852> for the 5th-6th grade registration. Contact Genia for questions or help with registration.

**RAISING CHILDREN IN A RACE CONSCIOUS SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 11, AND 25 FROM 10:30-11:45**



This class is designed for parents, guardians and grandparents who want to be prepared for The Talk that every family needs to have about race. This will be an opportunity to share learnings and insights, as well as gain new tools for talking in healthy ways about race.

The class will be led by James Addington, author, antiracism training consultant and part of a multiracial family. James and his wife, Cheryl, are currently parenting a five-year old granddaughter of color. “She is a daily source of insights, questions and new puzzles”, according to James.

Space is limited, so we encourage early registration [here](#) or go to the BUF website. Contact Genia for questions or help with registration.

WINTER QUARTER ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DATE/TIME	COURSE TITLE / DESCRIPTION
January 21, 28, February 4 12:00-1:30	GRATITUDE Recall those moments when you may have said, “Thanks to the universe, I got a parking place right in front.” This facilitated

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Facilitators: Tom Nicholas Patricia Conover	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 PROGRAMMING
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)

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](#)

[Gratitude](#)

[UU Theology](#)

CHOIR STARTS TONIGHT, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10!

You are cordially invited to join the BUF Chalice Choir this semester. We rehearse from 6:45 to 8:00 PM every Wednesday after “BUF Night In” dinner. If you’re just curious about choir but unsure, you are welcome to just come once to check us out with no obligation to continue.

Performance dates and what we’ll be singing:

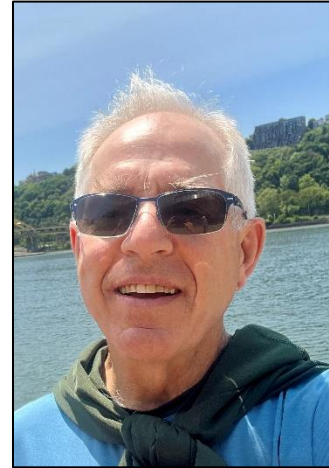
- 1/14 Dream Keeper
- 2/11 Soon I Will Be Done
- 3/10 Man in the Mirror, Canada in the Springtime
- 3/24 *Chalice Choir trip to Unitarian Church Vancouver*
- 3/31 Pilgrim Spring (Easter Sunday)
- 4/14 For the Beauty of the Earth
- 4/28 *BUF hosts choir from North Shore Unitarian in a full music service*
- 5/5 All Too Soon
- 6/9 I Love You/What a Wonderful World, I Have Had Singing (*Choir Finale*)

For more information click [HERE](#)

Love, Kevin Allen-Schmid kevin@buf.org cell: (406) 858-0142

WHAT BUF MEANS TO ME

I'm John Stewart, your current BUF Board Treasurer. As a retired commercial banker, being treasurer seems to fit within my background. I joined BUF in 1998-99, took a break and returned almost 6 years ago when I met my wife, Heather. To me, BUF is a big tent, a community for many who share my values of peace and justice, within which to base our activities. My role is less out front and focused more on helping the community from behind the scenes.



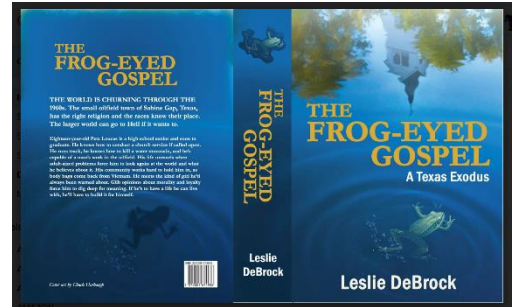
What I REALLY appreciate about BUF are the many amazing and dedicated people at BUF who say YES; who continue to say yes; who say yes, over and over. To say yes to showing up, to supporting this community with their time and talents—even for stuff that's not “fun,” “exciting,” or even obvious, but still needs to be done. It makes sometimes daunting tasks seem a lot easier and progress just that much more within reach. Those in and around the committees and other activities I'm involved in—Sky, Frank, Rupert, Ken, Sue, Sharon, Murray, Claire, the Barbaras, Scott, Francie, Haven, Jeff, and everyone on the Board and so many others. You know who you are and I celebrate your existence every day.

BUF-SEJC COLLECTIONS RECIPIENT FOR JANUARY 2024, PNW PLATEFUL

PNW (Pacific Northwest) Plateful is where plates overflow with hope. “We make more than meals—we serve moments of hope—to individuals, families and organizations, including the YWCA, Northwest Youth Services, and the Birchwood Desert Fighters.” (PNW Plateful website.) The Plateful vision is to be a community leader on food security by nourishing the body with food, the mind with education, and the spirit with hope. They emphasize that hunger is unacceptable and provide access to nutritious food, nurturing overall wellbeing. They ensure food security through education, collaboration, skill building, and service-driven action. A single nutrient-packed plate costs \$7.50. They seek our support to sustain their efforts to reach those in need. PNW Plateful also needs volunteers with large vehicles to deliver meals to their partner organizations. They are pleased to share their work with BUF Congregation. At the BUF service on Sunday, January 14, Plateful's Executive Director, Sarah Chan, will speak about her organization. Please welcome her and offer your contribution to PNW Plateful at the service or drop it off at BUF Office. Contributions can also be made throughout the month. Learn more at www.pnwplateful.com or phone 347-413-3983.

***The Frog-Eyed Gospel, a Texas Exodus* by Leslie DeBrock**

My newly-released novel, *The Frog-Eyed Gospel, a Texas Exodus* is now available at Village Books. Set in a small oil town in the 1960s, it depicts the turmoil of the time and a young religious fundamentalist's struggle with belief, morality, and patriotism. I believe the action-filled story will be of interest to my fellow recovering fundamentalists as well as to those who are curious about fundamentalist mentality.



Humanitas Ministry

Omar and a group of friends came to America from Morocco headed for New York City. He became separated from the group and somehow ended up in Bellingham. He spoke no English and had no idea where Bellingham was or how far he'd ended up from NYC. Another man brought him to us hoping we could help with clothing or food. Once we had an interpreter on the phone, we discovered that what he really needed was a ticket to New York. He showed us the address where he was hoping to end up. We considered a bus ticket but quickly realized he'd never make it because of having to change buses. After pricing flights, we decided that this was the time to make an exception and buy the ticket outright from Bellingham to New York City. What a journey! He left his county to come to one where he couldn't speak the language, got separated from the few people who he did know and ended up on the other side of America to walk through our door. Such determination for a better life. We were honored to be able to help him on his way. Thank you for your continued support enabling us to help whoever comes through our door.

FIND THE BUF CALENDAR ONLINE

The complete calendar of BUF events and building uses is available on our website under the News tab or by following this [link](https://73940468.view-events.com/calendar/73940468/month):
<https://73940468.view-events.com/calendar/73940468/month>

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<https://wp.buf.org/news/communication-sign-ups/>