

# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

*Community, Compassion, Commitment*

February 21, 2024

## SUNDAY SERVICE ZOOM LINK

Meeting ID 738 363 620

Worship starts at 10:20 AM

<https://zoom.us/j/73836362> Passcode is BUF



## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

"Creating the Garden of Beloved Community"

Led by Revs Rose Edington and Mel Hoover

Inspired by Camille Dungy's book "Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden," we have been imagining Beloved Community using garden imagery. We invite you to let your imagination play with that imagery as well -- what do you imagine placing or discovering in a garden of beloved community? How do you tend it? What would you do with the symbolic weeds and invasives? What plant could you imagine yourself being? There will be time to briefly share some of your imaginings as part of the sermon. Let's dig into the garden together!



## If you can't take in anymore, there's a reason

*on circuit breakers, empty buckets, and the shame-show of social media*

By Nadia Bolz-Weber, an ordained Lutheran Pastor and author of three NYT bestselling memoirs: *The Cranky, Beautiful Faith Of A Sinner & Saint*; *Finding God In All The Wrong People*; and *Shameless: A Sexual Reformation*.

I used to live in a very old apartment building with super sketchy electrical wiring. Were I to audaciously assume my hair drier could run while my stereo was on, I would once again find myself opening the grey metal fuse box next to the refrigerator and flipping the breaker. My apartment had been built at a time when there were no electric hair driers, and the system shut down when modernity asked too much of it.

I think of that fuse box often these days, because friends, I just do not think our psyches were developed to hold, feel and respond to everything coming at them right now; every tragedy, injustice, sorrow and natural disaster happening to every human across the entire planet, in real time every minute of every day. The human heart and spirit were developed to be able to hold, feel and respond to any tragedy, injustice, sorrow or natural disaster that was happening IN OUR VILLAGE.

So my emotional circuit breaker keeps overloading because the hardware was built for an older time.

And yet, when I check social media it feels like there are voices saying "if you aren't talking about, doing something about, performatively posting about \_\_\_(fill in the blank)\_\_\_ then you are an irredeemably callous, privileged, bigot who IS PART OF THE PROBLEM" and when I am someone who does actually care about human suffering and injustice (someone who feels every picture I see,

and story I read) it leaves me feeling like absolute shit. I am left with wondering: am I doing enough, sacrificing enough, giving enough, saying enough about all the horrible things right now to think of myself as a good person and subsequently silence the accusing voice in my head? No. The answer is always no. No I am not. Nor could I. Because no matter what I do the goal of “enough” is just as far as when I started.

And yet doing nothing is hardly the answer.

So I wanted to share something with you. Every day of my life I ask myself three discernment questions I learned from one of my teachers, Suzanne Stabile:

What’s MINE to do, and what’s NOT mine to do?

What’s MINE to say and what’s NOT mine to say?

And the third one is harder:

What’s MINE to care about and what’s NOT mine to care about?

To be clear – that is not to say that it is not worthy to be cared about by SOMEONE, only that my effectiveness in the world cannot extend to every worthy to be cared about event and situation. It’s not an issue of values, it’s an issue of MATH.\*

So I try and remember, 1. We are still living through a global pandemic and that means the baseline of anxiety and grief is higher than ever and shared by everyone. 2. The world is on fire literally and metaphorically. But 3. I only have so much water in my bucket to help with the fires. The more exposure I have to the fires I have NO WATER to fight, the more likely I am to get so burned, and inhale so much smoke that I cannot help anymore with the fires close enough to fight once my bucket is full again.

So I try and tell myself that It’s ok to focus on one fire.

It’s ok to do what is YOURS to do. Say what’s yours to say. Care about what’s yours to care about.

That’s enough.

If immigration reform is yours to do, if it is the fire you have water to throw on, (thank you! and...) that is enough. There will be voices saying “but what about climate change? You don’t care that the planet is dying?”. Tune that shit out. I mean, you could turn around and ask the environmentalist next door why they heartlessly don’t care about immigrants, but there is no percentage in that. Instead, we could be so grateful for the people who are called to work on and respond to worthy issues that are not fires we ourselves are equipped to put out.

I’m not saying we should put our heads in the sand, I’m saying that if your circuits are overwhelmed there’s a reason and the reason isn’t because you are heartless, it’s because there is not a human heart on this planet that can bear all of what is happening right now. So thank you for being a person who cares about and responds to animals, or the environment, or immigration, or domestic violence or any of the other worthy-to-be-cared-about shit-shows we are in the midst of right now. Just, thank you.

## LISTENING SESSIONS / BUDGETING UPDATES

The links posted in last week’s MWU didn’t work; sorry. Let’s try again:

Budgeting Assumptions

<https://wp.buf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/advance-info-for-listening-session-2-updated-2-12-24.pdf>

An editable Excel spreadsheet you can use to evaluate various budget options

<https://wp.buf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/listening-session-2-worksheet-updated-2-12-24.xlsx>

The BUF Board is meeting this week and will continue to follow up on suggestions made at the listening sessions: assessing the potential for immediate or long-term budget impact, and the degree to which we have financial and volunteer resources to initiate

## CHILDREN’S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



This week we are going to learn how we can help heal the wounds of injustice, specifically the injustice of racism. Through a story, some experiential games and discussion, we will celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of each of us, and the joy that come with being in a Beloved Community. 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](mailto:genia@BUF.org).

## COMMUNITY NIGHT DINNER WEDNESDAY AT 6:00

Looking for some warmth and companionship? Come join us at 6:00 this Wednesday night in the BUF Social Hall for thick, creamy potato leek soup (with bacon optional), a kale salad, whole wheat rolls, and dessert—all for just \$5 per person and children under 12 free!



If you are interested in being a part of the dinner planning and leadership team, please let Genia or Jennifer Villalva know. We need more volunteers if our weekly dinners are going to continue next year. This is a worthwhile community endeavor, and a great way to meet people too!

### **BUF WOMEN'S RETREAT SATURDAY, MARCH 23**

Save the date for the BUF Women's Retreat. It will be held Saturday, March 23, at The Cannery Lodge at Semiahmoo in Blaine. More information will be coming soon.

### **WINTER QUARTER ADULT RE PROGRAMMING**

<b>DATE/TIME</b>	<b>COURSE TITLE/DESCRIPTION</b>
February 11, 25 10:30-11:45 Facilitator: James Addington	<b>Raising Children in a Race Conscious Society</b> This class is designed for parents/guardians who want to be prepared for The Talk that every family needs about race. We will learn some new tools to help navigate this challenging topic. The class is led by James Addington, author, antiracism training consultant, and part of a multiracial family.
March 2 10:00-2:00 Facilitator: Felice Davis	<b>NEWCOMERS PATHWAYS</b> 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 Facilitator: Natalie Johnson	<b>UU THEOLOGY</b> 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: [Pathways](#)  
UU Theology: [UU Theology](#)  
Raising Children in a Race Conscious Society: [Raising Children](#)

Register here <https://wp.buf.org/learning/adult-programs/>  
Register early! Space is limited. Questions, please contact Director of Life Long Learning, Genia Allen-Schmid. email: [Genia@buf.org](mailto:Genia@buf.org).

## **WHAT I APPRECIATE ABOUT BUF**

Hi, my name is Pam Graham and I've been a member of BUF for just about 10 years now. I'm the mother of three adults, grandmother of three, and great grandmother of one. I've lived in the Pacific Northwest for 50 years, initially settling on the Olympic peninsula, where my husband and I raised our children in a log cabin on eight acres and practiced sustainability as a lifestyle. In 1989 my career as a psychotherapist took us to Seattle. After my husband died in 2012, I moved to Bellingham.



The values I've tried to live by and instill in my family are reflected in the principles we practice as Universal Unitarians. While I am comforted to be among kindred spirits, I am also challenged daily to walk my talk. I experience BUF as a spiritual community that offers its members and the broader community, opportunities to join together and grow together in living out those principles.

In these extremely precarious times, I believe it is paramount to be actively developing and nurturing community...a strong sense of our interconnectedness and interdependency...in order to meet suffering with compassion and move beyond our conditioning so that all life flourishes.

## **NOM COMM SEEKS CANDIDATES**

Spring is in the air! And that means the Nominating Committee is looking for potential candidates to serve on BUF's Board of Trustees. If you are interested in learning more, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee: Annie Sorich, Naomi Gary, David Curley, or Rod Haynes.

## **HUMANITAS MINISTRY**

Carla came in this week hoping to find help with the medication she needs, which isn't covered by her insurance. She's an older lady who has been dealing with cancer for several years now. As she told us her story, she explained that she never expected to find herself in the position of having to seek outside help, and yet here she is. We assured her that any one of us could find ourselves in the same position at some point. It's surprising whenever we hear about this type of thing but not as uncommon as you'd think. We added our pledge to those she's gotten from the rest of the network and she'll now be able to get this important medication.

## **BUF-SEJC COLLECTIONS RECIPIENT FOR FEBRUARY: CAST**

CAST (Coffee and Sandwiches Together) is a nondenominational all-volunteer service organization under the umbrella of the Interfaith Coalition. CAST is united by the common

belief that NO ONE should go hungry. CAST has been providing free meals in Bellingham since 1999. BUF members volunteer regularly, making sandwiches, serving, and packing/delivering the supplies. In addition to sandwiches, other items are distributed: water, granola bars, hot-cocoa and apple-drink packets, cup of soup packs, basic toiletries, and hats/scarves/socks when available. The guests at CAST are always so thankful! CAST serves more than 11,000 meals annually at the city-sanctioned downtown serving site by the Arch of Reconciliation behind the Bellingham library. Meals are served four nights each week. This organization is in need of our support, and any amount you contribute will go directly to purchasing needed supplies for the guests. Your contributions can be given at BUF throughout February, and you can volunteer or donate to CAST through the Interfaith Coalition at [interfaith-coalition.org](http://interfaith-coalition.org). Also, we have a collection box in the BUF coat closet labeled CAST, where you can donate new hats, socks, razors, soap, and shampoo. You can talk with BUF volunteers if interested in more info: Beth Fuller, Hank Ohana, Connie Ohana, or Ann Stevenson

### **INTERWEAVE: WHY PERSONAL PRONOUNS ARE SO IMPORTANT**

Proper use of personal pronouns is a critical way to signal courtesy and affirmation. Alex Schmidt of GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) compares using someone's correct pronouns to pronouncing their name correctly—"a way of respecting them and referring to them in a way that's consistent and true to who they are."

Everyone has pronouns that are used when referring to them—including those who do not identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, plus others). People who are not LGBTQ+ often refer to themselves as she/her and he/him. People who are LGBTQ+ also use these pronouns, as well as a variety of pronouns including, she/them, he/them, and they/them.

"Pronouns are basically how we identify ourselves apart from our name. It's how someone refers to you in conversation," says Mary Ellen O'Hara of GLAAD. "And when you're speaking to people, it's a really simple way to affirm their identity."

"So, for example, using the correct pronouns for trans(gender) and nonbinary (does not identify as exclusively female or male) is a way to let them know that you see them (and) you affirm them," O'Hara says.

### **BUF CHOIR TRIP TO UNITARIAN CHURCH AND DIM SUM RESTAURANT VANCOUVER BC, SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024**



The BUF Choir invites BUFsters, family and friends to join them in traveling to the Unitarian Church of Vancouver (UCV) on Sunday, March 24, 2024, to take part in their service at 11:00 AM, and then go out for Chinese dim sum lunch at 12:30 PM.

**UCV, 6450 OAK STREET, VANCOUVER**

### **A BUF Trip to Our Unitarian Neighbors Across the Border**

BUF members, family and friends can enjoy a road trip to meet our Canadian neighbors and attend a regular Sunday-morning service, with special music by the combined BUF and UCV choirs. After the service and coffee social at the church, we will head to a dim sum restaurant together with UCV members, where for a set cost (to be announced soon) we will feast on delectable Chinese dishes.



### **Carpool Arrangements**

Starting February 21, we will post carpool signup sheets in the BUF lobby with blank slots available for passengers. You can write your name and phone into any available slot, under the name of the volunteer driver. Some cars may be designated as Nexus only. Carpools may, if desired, decide as a group to add another activity in Vancouver before heading home. Passengers should offer the driver \$5 or \$10 for gas. The signup sheets will stay posted in the lobby until being confirmed on Wednesday evening, March 20. Meet at BUF at 8:00 AM on March 24.

### **Questions?**

Contact choir president Carol Smith	<a href="mailto:smithcaroldavid@gmail.com">smithcaroldavid@gmail.com</a>	360-592-5720
or music director Kevin Allen-Schmid	<a href="mailto:kevin@buf.org">kevin@buf.org</a>	406-858-0142

**The BUF Sunday service will take place as usual at 10:25 AM.**

### **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/>

### **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>