

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

February 7, 2024

Sunday Services in person at 10:25 a.m.

And on Zoom: Meeting ID 738 363 620

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

Passcode BUF



Hmmm...

Footsteps behind me as I pruned shrubs yesterday, then

“Mom?”

“Yes?”

“The world sure takes a long time to build.”

The observation was delivered with calm and curiosity. If the future is in the hands of such insightful (and consequently dogged, imperturbable) people, I feel there is less to worry about.

Peace,

Paul

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Sacred Places—Rev Paul Beckel

Sacred places engage all of our senses: sight, hearing, touch, and scent, but hopefully flavors too as we share food and drink. And of course our sense of "proprioception"—our perception of our body's movement and balance. All of these can convey a message of belonging. Some sacred spaces are grand and world famous, others are intimate and private. Whether we call these places "sacred" or something else—how do we recognize and create spaces of liberation, beauty, and belonging?

Why no Order of Service?

There are many good reasons to print Sunday orders of service. For one, sometimes it feels like a bit of paper is the only thing between ourselves and anarchy. On the other hand, more clutter and more information can be part of the anarchy. So on those occasions when there is no printed order of service, I invite you to sit back and trust.

It's a blessing on Sundays to have multiple participants sharing their insights, stories, songs, art, meditations and invitations. Thank you for being open to and appreciative of one another—and going with the flow—knowing that you're always in good hands.

LISTENING-FORWARD: Budgeting for 2024-25 and Beyond

Federal covid grants have helped to keep us humming for the past few years. Looking forward, this will no longer be the case. As we begin budget preparations for 2024-25, and knowing whatever we choose will have repercussions into the following year.

Lacking covid grants, and wanting to be less dependent on our reserve funds, and a slow return toward pre-pandemic rental income, without other changes to income or expenses, we anticipate a \$50,000 shortfall for our 2024-25 budget.

To make up for this solely in pledges, pledge income—which has not increased since 2019—will need to increase 15%. Other options include restructuring staffing, using reserve funds, and/or increasing rental income, fundraising, and volunteering.

So let's talk—and listen—along with the BUF Board, who need our support and input well before they present their proposed budget for an up or down vote. To ensure we have a transparent, well-informed decision making process, we'll have two listening sessions: this coming Sunday, February 11 at noon in the social hall—and again next Tuesday, February 13 at 7 pm on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/99721055665> Passcode BUF).

With early input...and counting on you to make your 24-25 financial pledge within the next few weeks

- the Board will be able to prepare a draft budget for everyone to review and discuss before the Board's deadline to present a balanced budget for our Annual Congregational Meeting in May.
- The teams that will be forming to develop job descriptions for new staff also need to get a sense of where we're going as soon as possible.

Making hard choices about our collective priorities takes a great deal of trust and collaboration. Thank you for being part of the conversation.

Please bring snacks to share on Sunday. And please come prepared—prior to our Listening Sessions, read about the specific budgeting parameters that will frame our decision-making:

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



WHAT I APPRECIATE ABOUT BUF

Hi, I'm Haven Silver, BUF is a community of like-minded souls with whom I feel comfortable expanding my personal boundaries to share feelings and ideas that I would normally conceal within. The Sunday services provide the wisdom, ceremony, and music which is conducive to opening my heart to others during the following social hours. I attend two Buddhism book groups and a men's group facilitated by BUF which I find informative and uplifting. Most of my present friends I

have met through the fellowship. BUF provides ample opportunities to become involved in social and environmental causes whenever I feel so inclined. The family retreat at Silver Lake last December was especially enjoyable: uplifting singing, thought-provoking small group exercises, and mingling in the beautiful lakeside campground made for a most memorable experience. BUF provides a sense of belonging and meaning to my life.

Volunteer Request: Scott Heise dramatically improved the BUF website 5 years ago, migrating it into the UUA template and maintaining it ever since. One of the most important ways that we can support our volunteers is with a heartfelt thank you and making it easy for them to migrate into new roles from year to year. Let me know how you can help: paul@buf.org

CHILDREN’S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



This month’s theme is Justice and Equity. In this session, we explore how justice and equity relate to our personal relationships, such as with our family and friends. We also explore the concept of intersectionality of our identities through a puzzle and game. By beginning to explore intersectionality and identity, we hope that the concept of fairness/unfairness and kindness/unkindness become clearer in the children’s minds.

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.

RAISING CHILDREN IN A RACE CONSCIOUS SOCIETY

February 11 and 25, 10:30-11:45 AM

It’s not too late to register!!

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.

COMMUNITY NIGHT DINNER



Join us this Wednesday at 6:00 in the social hall for Moroccan lentil soup, along with a green salad, hearty bread and dessert. The cost is just \$5 per adult and children under 12 are 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!

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

There is still time to register for our 9- to 11-year-old Our Whole Lives (OWL), sexuality education class! Classes start Sunday mornings on February 25, and the mandatory parent/child orientation is Thursday, February 22. 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, and registration ends February 22. Register now to guarantee a spot for your child. To register, you can copy and paste the following into your browser <https://buf.breezechms.com/form/15156a1852> . Contact Genia for questions or help with registration. Scholarships are available!!

WINTER QUARTER ADULT RE PROGRAMS

DATE/TIME	COURSE TITLE/DESCRIPTION
February 11, 25 10:30-11:45 Facilitator: James Addington	Raising Children in a Race Conscious Society 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	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 Facilitator: 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)
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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.

SECOND FRIDAY FUN NITE is THIS FRIDAY, February 9, 7:00-9:00 PM

This month our Second Friday Fun Nite will feature TEDTalk films in the flex room at BUF. We'll be open for ingathering at 6:30 and the films start at 7:00. Joan MacKay is our host, and she'll have two or three short, interesting, and provocative TEDTalk films to share, along with a chance for discussion afterwards. Please bring a snack to share as well as some comfy pillows and blankets for viewing comfort. What a perfect way to spend a chilly winter's evening—with friends and a film!



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.

NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY TODAY, FEBRUARY 7

As part of Interweave's mission to combat the oppression of LGBTQIA2S+ people, we will be publicizing and observing days that are particularly meaningful to queer people. The first observance is today, National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. This day is special because it

acknowledges strides within the Black community to prevent and treat HIV and AIDS. National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day matters because it keeps the conversation going not only in the Black community, but in all communities. This is particularly true for gay and bisexual Black men, who suffer inordinately from HIV/AIDS. Despite progress, racism, poverty, and stigma continue to produce health inequities and make it more difficult for Black people to access HIV testing, prevention, and care services.

Did you know (from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

1. Gay and bisexual men are disproportionately affected by HIV. In 2019, Black gay and bisexual men accounted for 37% of new diagnoses among all gay and bisexual men.
2. Black Americans make up 12% of the US population. However, of the 30,365 new HIV infections in 2020, 42% were among Black Americans.
3. Black people account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses and people with HIV, compared to other races and ethnicities.
4. There are approximately 472,000 Black Americans living with HIV.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

The canvass kickoff is Sunday, February 11, and we are so excited! We are hoping to connect with all of you. You have been assigned to a canvasser who will reach out to you after our kickoff. Your part is to respond in a timely manner to their outreach even if you are unable to pledge at this time. Timely responses make the canvasser's job much easier.

And you hear from Lee Seaman on Sunday. While we have had only one listening session so far, the consensus was that we appreciate all that BUF has been doing and wish to support these things that are so important to us. These are having excellent leadership with the choir, religious education (RE) and the ongoing social justice support. We no longer have COVID grants to help cover our expenses, nor our large previous contribution towards RE. To maintain these programs, we are seeking a 15% increase in pledge income for the coming year. This translates to \$50,000.

So clearly, we need everyone's help to get BUF on a sustainable economic path. We can do it and are COUNTING on you. Thank you. Rick (Vlad) Steele, Co-Chair BUF Stewardship Team.

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. A number of 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. George Mustoe, CAST volunteer and newsletter editor and Blaine Unitarian member will speak at BUF services on February 11 to share the work of CAST. 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. 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

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>

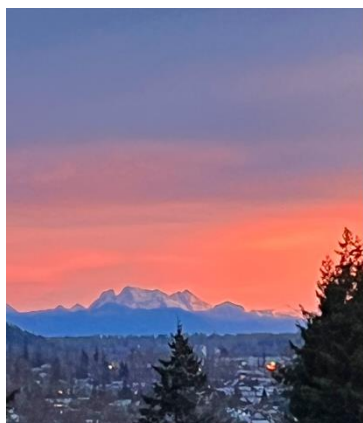
Nature's First Green Is Gold . . .



—Fairhaven ferry terminal and Bellingham Bay

Lest we succumb to the winter blahs, let us remember that we are surrounded by gold, nature's first sign of spring.

*from the Robert Frost poem, "Nothing Gold Can Stay"



Photos by Kevin Allen-Schmid

—Mount Robie Reid in the Canadian Coast Range
—Nooksack River near Glacier, WA
—Snow-dusted Chanterelle Trail

Kevin Allen-Schmid, BUF Music Director kevin@buf.org

Humanitas Ministry

Many times, people will come in with a particular need making it a quick interview and fulfillment of that need. Other times we have a client come in with many needs requiring some brainstorming on how we can best meet their needs. Sarah came in this past week with a variety of needs. She'd been living in a basement that was full of mold. Her long-term health has been affected, which prevents her from working or living the way she has in the past. Luckily, she has the opportunity to move into a tiny house in the near future. After spending some time talking with her it was apparent that she needed to furnish her new living space. We were able to give her a voucher to start that process and the information on where to go to get additional help. It always feels good to walk out of the door on a Wednesday morning knowing that we've been able to lighten the burden for another,

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

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/>