

# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

*Community, Compassion, Commitment*

March 20, 2024



## **Sunday Service, March 24, 10:25 a.m.**

*Shifting Grounds of Home:* Making a new start ... envisioning and then building the scaffolding ... on a long journey home. Led by Su Livingston and Rev Paul Beckel

## **Taize, April 1, 7 pm**

A candle-lit Contemplative Service (held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of Each Month)

All BUF services are accessible in-person on Zoom using this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/73836362> Passcode BUF  
Meeting ID 738 363 620

## **Local Planned Parenthood Leader Retiring**

Congratulations to Linda McCarthy, who after 49 years of service to Mount Baker Planned Parenthood (the last 21 years as CEO), will retire in December. I'm especially appreciative to Linda for regularly bringing together religious leaders from around Whatcom County. On one level she did this to keep clergy informed about legislative matters around reproductive rights, and to ensure that local clergy would be available for client support when needed. Also, when (in the name of religious righteousness) protests and threats against the Bellingham clinic became especially hostile—I know the PP staff found it reassuring to know that they had allies whose commitment to women's health was firmly rooted in their religious commitments.

But no less important was how these meetings among a diverse set of about 30 clergy created broader connections among us—leading to other collaborations among us for interfaith services, advocacy, and dialogue. Much of that slipped away when the pandemic began, but Linda assures us that getting these meetings going again is important to her before she retires. Regardless, many of these relationships have continued. For this I am very grateful.

I believe an outpouring of cards of thanks to Linda McCarthy (at 1509 Cornwall Ave, Bellingham 98225) would convey not just to her, but to all of the local PP staff, that religious communities will continue to support access to women's health care here and throughout the country.

Thank you,  
*Paul*

...and speaking of making interfaith connections:

## **CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL'S ANNUAL PURIM CARNIVAL**

Sunday, March 24 - 12:30-3:00pm

Not a Jewish religious service but an invitation to the Bellingham community at large to enjoy with us our annual festivities including carnival games, a clown and balloon animals, arts and crafts, lots of hamantaschen cookies, pizza, popcorn, salad, two henna artists, a face painter, and hopefully a chair masseuse. Tickets at the door. *Rabbi Josh Samuels*

## **SPRING CANVASS PROGRESS**

As of this past weekend, with 78% of pledges received, we are exceeding last year's pledge total by about \$15,000. Help push that higher! If you haven't pledged yet, please contact [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org), or [rickvladsteele@icloud.com](mailto:rickvladsteele@icloud.com)

## **BUDGET LISTENING SESSION 3**

### **In-Person and on Zoom**

The Board will prepare a draft budget for 2024-25 at the end of March, and email a copy to all BUF members and friends.

This will not be the Board's final budget proposal. Instead, this draft will be the basis for an open conversation about our realities and visions for the coming years—an opportunity for all of us to consider, together, some significant changes to our programs and staffing. Please attend the Zoom or in-person session (or both) to help guide the Board in their development of a final budget—which they will distribute by May 5 for your vote at the Congregational Meeting on May 19.

The tentative dates for these Listening Sessions are:

On Zoom: Tuesday, April 9, 7 pm (using the Sunday/sanctuary Zoom link)

In Person: Sunday, April 14, noon at BUF

## **Transition to a New Newsletter Schedule**

Discussions on how to make this transition are continuing. For now, plan to see the next newsletter by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Make submissions to [mwu@buf.org](mailto:mwu@buf.org) by next Wednesday, March 27.

## **VOLUNTEER REQUESTS**

### **- Coordinator for Rides to BUF Activities**

We receive periodic requests for rides on Sunday mornings and for other BUF events. There are definitely volunteers who would offer rides, but without someone to recruit drivers and coordinate rides, our only answer to these requests has been: please post your request on our email list-serv. So: this is a request not for drivers, but for someone who would be willing to receive requests and quickly distribute the request to your already-recruited pool of drivers. Please contact me ([minister@buf.org](mailto:minister@buf.org)) if you're willing to take this on.

### **- Slide Show Compiler**

On Sunday mornings and for our once-monthly Taize services, we assemble slides to ensure that music lyrics are accessible to all, and to add simple visuals to enhance our services. This is not a hi-tech job, and it all gets done beforehand, so there's no pressure of managing anything live. It just requires familiarity with PowerPoint or similar presentation software...and a willingness to learn from our excellent current volunteers who have developed the necessary templates. Please contact Jeff Copeland if you'd like to know more ([jeff.copeland@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.copeland@gmail.com)).

### WHAT I APPRECIATE ABOUT BUF

My name is Kathryn Allen. My husband Lawrence and I moved to Bellingham shortly before Covid arrived, and that impacted our entry into both the community and BUF. We began attending BUF right away, mostly via Zoom, (thanks, Zoom techs!) which gave us a start. Since then, I have found a number of ways to be a part of the BUF community. Here are a few of my favorite things:



Working with the Refugee Team to help two Syrian families become beloved members of the Bellingham community, participating in the Chalice Circle small group ministry, preparing veggies destined for soups and salads at the Wednesday BNI meals, making calls with the phone outreach team, appreciating programs organized by the Black Lives Matter team, and learning each month about an organization doing the work of justice in our community,

On Sundays I delight in the music, both choral and instrumental, and the thoughtful messages from the pulpit. Over coffee, I welcome encounters with friends both of some years and brand new.

It has been life enhancing to give to or learn from each of these facets of BUF in some way. I am grateful for the people and programs that this congregation has made possible, for the friendships formed, and I look forward to new experiences yet to come.

### BUF CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Our theme for March is *Transformation*. Sunday, March 24, we focus on our UU Principal of “the free and responsible search for truth” by learning about the Hindu holiday of Holi, and the way it highlights the importance of changing ignorance into knowledge. We will have fun with colors and water balloons like Hindu’s do on Holi as well! On Easter Sunday we will discuss the symbolism of Jesus’ death and resurrection, and as UUs be reminded that after sad and hard times, we can still find good times again. We will take some old, “sad” hats and make them into beautiful creations we can wear and, of course, have our traditional Easter egg hunt!

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).

### FLOWERING CHERRY SANGHA MEDITATION

Every Thursday at 12:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Contact Cynthia Bauman [cynauman@gmail.com](mailto:cynauman@gmail.com) 408.656.6083

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AND DE-ESCALATION WORKSHOP

APRIL 7, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Local National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) educators will address what you can do when a loved one, friend, or BUF congregant experiences a mental health crisis. You will learn how to recognize when someone is exhibiting troubled or disruptive behavior, what to do to assess risks, and how to apply de-escalation strategies including when to call for assistance while maintaining safety for the person and yourself. Contact Elie Friedlob for more information:

[Eliana.steele@gmail.com](mailto:Eliana.steele@gmail.com) 360-510-0843



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VIRTUAL GA • JUNE 20 - 23, 2024

### VIRTUAL UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 20-23

The Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly will be located in, **hummm**,

#### **Your Virtual Link!**

**For many years the UUA has sought to have GA in some way, some capability so that everyone interested can attend, listen, learn, interact with fellow UUs without the expense of travel. Now we have the technology to make GA accessible to all interested UUs.**

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Yes, it is a business meeting, but it is so much more. Paid attendees will have the opportunity to attend lectures on a very wide range of topics, yes, to learn about UU activities in other areas of the country. But that's not all, you will be able to connect with UU friends from across the country --- don't really know how that will work, but somehow we will make it work. Will GA be fun, social, entertaining, enjoyable?? Let's work to help make it so.

More info: several BUF members have attended GAs. Just ask, we will be glad to share. A key part of GA is a business meeting and our BUF Board will select delegates to represent BUF at this GA and vote on important questions. If you are interested in representing BUF as a delegate to this GA, please contact Lew Phinney ([lew@usa.net](mailto:lew@usa.net) or 719-332-3562) to find out more. Yes, this will be a business meeting, but you will learn a lot about how the UUA works and have a voice in how and where it will work going forward.

Probably the most important business item is the proposed changes to the UUA by-Laws Article II. Just in case you want to review and read about some concerns, click here: [info-utheconversation.org@shared1.ccsend.com](mailto:info-utheconversation.org@shared1.ccsend.com).

To register for GA, to attend worship, lectures, virtual social times, etc. click on <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>.

## MARCH IS DONATE TO THE AUCTION MONTH

### Auction Donations Keep Pouring In – But We Need More!

*Parties, Movie tickets,  
Hikes, Handyperson skills,  
Fine Jewelry, Gift Certificates  
Ask where you shop!*

### We are particularly in need of High-End Items for the Live Auction –

*Vacation Getaways, Theatre Tickets with Dinner, Framed  
Local Art*

*It's easy to donate through the Auctria Website*

*And it's not too early to start browsing the catalog: <https://fundraiser.bid/BUF>*

*\$25 tickets On Sale Starting April 7 (or buy online)*

We need volunteers! To learn more or to offer to help - email [Auction@buf.org](mailto:Auction@buf.org).



## GIVE A YOUNG TRANSGENDER WOMAN WHO HAS ESCAPED OKLAHOMA SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT!

Several BUFsters have supported Nora as she settled here in Bellingham. Now she needs help to regain her health! **If you are wondering how, you can make a difference in the lives of transgender individuals who are being threatened in many states, here's your opportunity.**

Please help 26-year-old Nora pay for emergency dental surgery. Due to years of parental neglect, she has lost most of her teeth, suffered severe jawbone degenerations, and chronic pain and infection. These dental issues have led to an eating disorder as well as a speech impediment, and social isolation and malnutrition. Her doctors have said that the only way forward is complete tooth removal, multiple implants, and full mouth bridges.

Nora's dental surgery will cost \$37,000. She can get a personal loan for \$15,000, leaving \$22,000 to be raised so that she may have the surgery on April 24<sup>th</sup> as scheduled. The dental surgeon is donating his labor, but needs payment upfront.

**Go here to donate:** [gofund.me/34d50f2f](https://gofund.me/34d50f2f)

Your tax-deductible donations will go to a special bank account of PFLAG WHATCOM which is a 501 (c) 3. Please read, donate and share. THANK YOU! Francie and Ken Gass

**WHATCOM PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER  
- MARCH SEJC COLLECTION RECIPIENT**

This month's SEJC collection is dedicated to Whatcom Peace and Justice Center (WPJC). Located at 1220 Bay Street, the office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 12pm-4pm, phone number: (360) 734-0217. Their lending library offers free access to more than 900 books and DVDs, as well as resources such as tables, projector, peacekeeping vests, materials to create signs and more. This month and next, Executive Director Aline Prata invites the BUF community to participate in a new training for Alternatives to Military Service. Volunteer program coordinator Aneesa Ahad has vital, updated information for newcomers and those trained before 2023. Aneesa also offers 1:1 training on Zoom or at the office. Please contact Aneesa at [aneesaxahad@gmail.com](mailto:aneesaxahad@gmail.com). Aline finds chatting with youth about nonviolent career options rewarding especially since this project is strengthened by its intergenerational nature. Join them in envisioning, planning and supporting 2024's International Day of Peace event. Meetings begin in spring. If interested contact them at [office@whatcompjc.org](mailto:office@whatcompjc.org). This year's International Day of Peace is September 22. Please attend.

**INVITE ORGANIZATION TO APPLY BY APRIL 12  
FOR NEXT YEAR'S SUNDAY JUSTICE COLLECTIONS**

You all have a role to play in helping the Collections Team follow our beloved community covenant. We ask BUF congregants to help undo racism by promoting inclusiveness in our collections process. We seek inclusion of community groups to which we are accountable, representing diverse ethnic, racial, national origin, and BIPOC (Black Indigenous people of color) backgrounds. Newly-established groups in the community are welcome to apply. The Team improved on this goal in 2023-24 thanks to your help in attracting a diverse pool of applicants.

The Collections Team is looking to you, BUF congregants, to join our journey towards becoming an equitable/inclusive institution. We urge you to invite any not-for-profit organization in Whatcom County that meet our criteria to apply for a collection next year. The deadline for applications is earlier this year--April 12th. Please share this application link: <https://wp.buf.org/justice/social-environmental-justice-committee/sejc-collection-guidelines-and-application/>



**Humanitas Ministry Helps**

During the past week, we met an elderly man named Joe who needed help with gasoline. Living in a van full-time can be challenging for anyone, but it's even tougher for Joe, who is on disability due to congestive heart failure. He frequently needs to go to the hospital because of swelling in his legs, and each time he goes, he knows he'll be admitted and stay for a week or more. He only trusts hospitals in Olympia, and this will be his fifth admission this year. We asked him if he could find housing, but his income wouldn't be enough to pay rent, let alone cover other expenses. This is a common challenge we hear from many people living in their cars or on the street. We're grateful that we can help, even if it's just by providing Joe with a tank of gas so he can get the medical care he needs. Thank you for your ongoing support.

**TRIP FOR OUR CONGREGATION TO THE UNITARIAN CHURCH VANCOUVER BC, SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024 ...AND DIM SUM RESTAURANT**



The BUF Choir invites BUFsters, family and friends to join them in traveling to the Unitarian Church of Vancouver (UCV) on Sunday, 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 will enjoy a road trip to meet our closest Canadian Unitarian neighbours 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. (To clarify, BUF will still hold a regular service in Bellingham that Sunday for those staying home.)



For information about the schedule, carpooling and lunch get a flyer from the bulletin board in the BUF narthex, or click

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cDcEI6LNAcfnFKeg8atsEYgVssnaYgwD/view?usp=sharing>

**Questions?**

Contact choir president Carol Smith  
or music director Kevin Allen-Schmid

[smithcaroldavid@gmail.com](mailto:smithcaroldavid@gmail.com)  
[kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org)

360-592-5720  
406-858-0142

**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>

**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/>