

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

April 10, 2024



Sunday, April 14

In Solidarity, Seeking Liberation

Parents from our recent class, “Raising Kids in a Race-Conscious Society,” and members of our Immigrant Resettlement Team will speak about how they have been inspired to continue their own learning by serving.

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

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

Meeting ID 738 363 620

AUTHENTICITY / INTEGRITY



I came across the following wisdom in an intriguing book called *Alphabetical Diaries*, by Sheila Heti, available in the public library.

This is applicable at any time, and certainly as we wonder how to live—with integrity to something solid—when it seems everything else is unpredictable:

I've been thinking about authenticity, and about how we have been done a great disservice by being taught that what we are to be authentic about is our feelings, as opposed to our values.

Peace, Paul

FINAL 2024-25 BUDGET LISTENING SESSION

Sunday, April 14 NOON

In person, with potluck lunch

Please plan to attend the BUF Board’s Final 2024-25 Budget Listening Session. This will be an opportunity for all of us to review our draft budget and consider together some significant changes to our programs and staffing.

The Canvass has been successful in gathering pledges from more than 90% of members and friends. This has made it possible to project our income for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Per-household pledging is up significantly, but membership is reduced from pre-covid levels, covid relief funds are no longer available, and our reserves are down, so we do not have the funds to maintain our 2023-24 budget.

Update from last night’s Listening Session

It was great to have about 20 participants last night on Zoom.

One thing that might not have been clear: The draft budget distributed in last week’s MWU was prepared at the Board’s most recent meeting on March 28. That draft is repeated here because the Board can’t make decisions based on financial updates and volunteer commitments which have been made since March 28 ... until they meet again tomorrow night (or on April 25, when they will finalize their budget proposal for the Congregational Meeting).

We deeply appreciate your understanding that much is in flux and the Board is still gathering details to enable them to make projections into next year and beyond.

Fortunately, since our previous listening sessions, several members and friends have created a team to assist with rental efforts; others have been meeting to develop alternative job descriptions for our changing RE and music positions.

Please join us at our final listening sessions to learn more about the trade-offs we face and options we have to ensure that BUF maintains a solid financial footing during this time of change.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

by BUF Treasurer, John Stewart

How we got here, and where we are now:

Over the past few years, we have benefitted from federal “COVID support.” We had anticipated a final \$27,000 grant this current year, but it has largely failed to materialize. At the same time, our congregation has shrunk by 18%, from 234 to 192 members. We also just received notice that a large, long-term renter is leaving at the end of this school year.

On the wonderful side, new members are joining our community, and per-household pledge giving has increased. We have much to celebrate. The upcoming retirement of Genia and Kevin creates an opportunity to consider the best paths forward. We need to evaluate where we are now and act accordingly.

Looking forward:

In drafting the budget for the year ahead, the Board has made several assumptions. Our current best guess is that we will have income of about \$415,000 for next year (pledges plus rent, fundraising and miscellaneous income). That’s a reduction of our anticipated income of \$497,000 for the current year. We believe that our fellowship needs a full-time minister and a full-time administrator, and we want to provide them, all of our existing staff, and our new hires fair compensation.

We have certain unavoidable ongoing expenses (mortgage, utilities, maintenance, etc.) and certain foreseeable part-time staff expenses. When we remove these expenses and concentrate on those over which we have some discretion, we are left with difficult choices. Unfortunately, in order to balance this budget draft, we felt it necessary to suspend the Taize service as of the end of this current year (June 2024). This will leave us with approximately \$40,000 to cover the salaries of our RE and Music directors. The Board feels strongly that permanent staff positions like these must not be funded from our limited and shrinking reserves nor from short-term resources that we cannot rely on continuing.

[Here's a link to the current budget proposal.](#) Some of the numbers are still being fine-tuned, but we believe that most are pretty close. This is a DRAFT for discussion at our upcoming Listening Sessions. The Board will deliver a final budget proposal at the beginning of May for vote at the May 19 congregational meeting.

The Board very much appreciates you staying up to date on all of this, and your continued engagement with the process.

COMMUNITY NIGHT DINNER TONIGHT

6 PM in the Social Hall

It's taco soup with all the fix'ins. Along with the soup (both with and without meat), we'll have tortilla chips, a salad, and dessert. The cost is \$5, children under 12 free.



AFTER-CHURCH POTLUCK AND LISTENING SESSION THIS SUNDAY, APRIL 14



There will be a potluck and Listening Session this Sunday after the service. Please bring some food to share, and stay for lunch as we process this year's budget and discuss priorities. This community effort is important and we appreciate your support and participation.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The theme for April is Interdependence, and this week's focus is on The Web of Community. Kids will explore the many different ways we can contribute and pour ourselves into our church and local communities and how our communities pour their support, wisdom, concern back into us. 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.



Are You Ready for a Great Party?
It's the BUF Auction!
Time to Buy Tickets! Online at
<https://fundraiser.bid/BUF>
or at church on Sunday.

Your \$25 ticket includes extraordinary food, a costume parade, fun with friends and the chance to support BUF.

Enter the Costume Parade and Get a Free Raffle Ticket.
Winner Receives ten tickets!

The auction site is available for viewing. <https://fundraiser.bid/BUF>

Here's a sample of the amazing things on offer:

Events: Kayak Tour, Backyard BBQ, Geology Excursion

*Items: High End Purse, Hand-crafted Skirt,
Cord of Wood*

Services: Elder care, Coaching Sessions, Gardening

And the Live Auction Will Include:

Samish Island Sojourn, Arizona Homestay, and more!

Check out the Raffle Baskets. Raffle Tickets are \$5 for one, \$10 for three

Auction Items May Be Dropped Off at BUF after church on Sundays. No Large Items, please!

*This is BUF's biggest Fundraiser and we need you to attend,
buy raffle tickets, and bid on these fabulous items.
Bring your Friends!*

Need More info? Pick up an Auction FAQ at BUF.

We need volunteers! To learn more or to offer to help - email Auction@buf.org or sign up at [Auction Sign Ups](#).

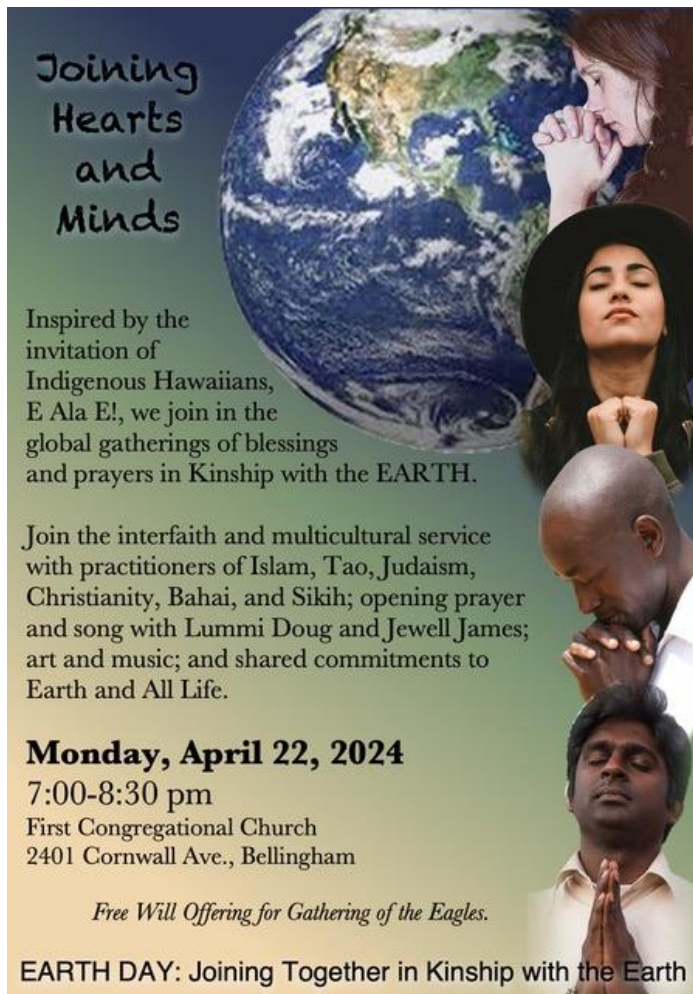
CHILDREN OF THE SETTING SUN PRODUCTIONS- April SEJC Collection Recipient

Children of the Setting Sun Productions creates and shares Indigenous stories of gratitude, generosity, respect, and responsibility. We seek to empower the minds and hearts of future generations. **SALMON PEOPLE PROJECT:** We are embarking on a journey to tell the story of the ancient bond between the Native people and salmon. The research, gatherings and documentary series will help magnify Indigenous voices in the fight to reverse the devastating loss of salmon and protect Mother. **INDIGENOUS LED THINK TANK:** The mission of Setting Sun Institute is to put things back together. We endeavor to resolve human conflict and protect the natural environment by using the traditional wisdom of the Salish people in a new way: through a Native-led think tank grown in the home region of the Pacific salmon. **YOUNG TRIBAL LEADERSHIP:** This program creates opportunities for young people to embrace their culture and strengthen professional skills. **COMMUNITY PROJECTS:** We partner with community organizations and help capture

meaningful moments through gatherings and interviews transformed into beautiful videos. Working together, we help shine the light on important work that is happening and messages that need to be heard. **BUF INVOLVEMENT:** Can provide handouts, links to videos, and invites to local events. The April 14 collection will go to **Children of the Setting Sun Productions.**

EARTH DAY GATHERING: JOINING TOGETHER IN KINSHIP WITH THE EARTH

Monday, April 22, 7:00-8:30 pm, First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Ave, Bellingham. Inspired by the invitation of Indigenous Hawaiians, E Ala E!, we join in the global gatherings of blessings and prayers in Kinship with the EARTH.



**Joining
Hearts
and
Minds**

Inspired by the invitation of Indigenous Hawaiians, E Ala E!, we join in the global gatherings of blessings and prayers in Kinship with the EARTH.

Join the interfaith and multicultural service with practitioners of Islam, Tao, Judaism, Christianity, Bahai, and Sikih; opening prayer and song with Lummi Doug and Jewell James; art and music; and shared commitments to Earth and All Life.

Monday, April 22, 2024
7:00-8:30 pm
First Congregational Church
2401 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham

Free Will Offering for Gathering of the Eagles.

EARTH DAY: Joining Together in Kinship with the Earth

Join the interfaith and multicultural service with practitioners of Islam, Tao, Judaism, Christianity, Baha'i, and Hinduism; opening prayer and song with Lummi Doug and Jewell James, art, and music; and shared commitments to Earth and All Life. Free Will Offering to Gathering of the Eagles.

We'd like a good showing of BUFSTERS. Put it on your calendars and attend. Su Livingston is playing the opening and closing music. Annie Sorich is forming a small chorus to give body to the two hymns we will be singing. Mel Hoover, Rose Edington, and Deb Cruz have helped with the planning, and Paul is formatting the Order of Service. SEJC gave \$200 towards expenses. Please share the poster on your social media and personally invite any young adults you know to attend. Questions: Beth Brownfield, bethbrownf1@gmail.com.

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>

INTERWEAVE (LGBTQ+ Support and Advocacy) POTLUCK – April 21st @ 6:00 PM
All are invited to this potluck at BUF! We will gather in the Social Hall.
Expect lively conversation and discussion. We'd love to hear from folks about what Interweave can do to continue making a difference at BUF. Email Natalie Johnson at NatalieLJohnson53@gmail.com to let us know what you'll bring.

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/>