

# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

*Community, Compassion, Commitment*

May 8, 2024



**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

## **SUNDAY SERVICES AT BUF**

**May 12**

**Nurture, and Leaving Space—Tom Nicholas, Rev Paul Beckel**

Whether with children, adults, or adult children ... whether we're caregiving, mentoring, or companioning ... to nurture is to leave space for those we love to be and to grow.

**May 19**

**Listening Forward—Rev Paul Beckel**

The UUA is on the verge of adopting a new identity statement. BUF, too, is listening to the forward call of who we are becoming. Neither process is being directed from the top-down, nor predetermined by our past. So what resources will guide and support this continual transformation?

**May 26**

**Flower Communion—Rev Paul Beckel**

Reflecting upon the spectacular beauty of our transient selves and surroundings, we'll create a mandala of flowers and other organic treasures. Please bring flowers, etc., to release—both as natural beauties and as symbols of more personal things you wish to let go of.

## **BUF ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday, May 19, Noon**

In the Sanctuary or on Zoom (the regular Sunday and Taize service link : <https://zoom.us/j/73836362>

Passcode = BUF / Meeting ID 738 363 620

Here is this year's agenda:

<https://wp.buf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Congregational-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>

Here is the BUF Board of Trustees budget proposal for 2024-25:

<https://wp.buf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024-25-BUF-Budget-Proposal.pdf>

Here are the minutes from last year's Congregational Meeting that need to be approved this year:

<https://wp.buf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Provisional-Congregational-Meeting-Minutes-2023-05-21-MERGED.pdf>

Thank you all for your financial generosity and generosity of spirit that make all of this possible.

### ***From the Stewardship Team***

Congratulations to the BUF community on a VERY SUCCESSFUL pledge drive!

This year we focused primarily on communication:

- ◆ Explaining BUF’s financial situation
- ◆ Listening to concerns of BUF members and friends
- ◆ Emphasizing our connection to one another

The response was amazing. We had excellent engagement at our “Listening” meetings. Over 40 canvassers stepped up to make one-on-one calls and visits. We received a total of 162 pledges, well over our goal of 142. The total pledged for 2024-25 was \$350,057\*, which is a real testament to the strength and vision of our BUF community.

*\* Although this brings us up to our target of \$350,000, we have lost some rental income and have also chosen to bring salaries slightly closer to UU-recommended levels and begin funding our reserves again after a several-year gap, which means we will still be reducing the number of hours for our Lifelong Learning and Choir Director positions.*

Here are the details:

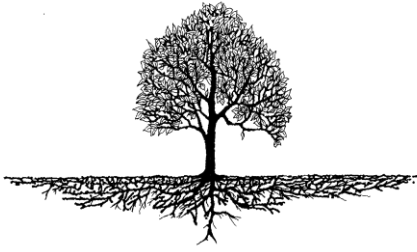
- o 162 pledges were received, totaling \$350,057; this surpassed our goal of \$350,000
- o 130 current year pledgers pledged \$320,629, a 7% increase from their pledges for the current church year
- o 6 prior pledgers pledged \$3,130
- o 26 first time pledgers pledged \$26,298 (7.5% of the total amount pledged)
- o Only 12 of the current pledgers canvassed did not respond
- o The drive concluded much sooner than last year
- o The average pledge is \$2,161
- o The median pledge is \$1,360

A big THANK YOU to our 40 canvassers who made personal connections that build our community; to the BUF staff who helped with everything, especially Paul who got us started early this year, and Michele who gracefully managed spreadsheets and questions while simultaneously responding to multiple unrelated phone calls; and to the many BUF volunteers who stepped up when we needed them most.

We are particularly grateful to Rick “Vlad” Steele, who has been a steady source of energy at BUF for many years and will be taking a break from stewardship this next year – Way to go out on a high note, Vlad! Lee Seaman and John Jurceka will continue to keep the stewardship ball rolling.

And finally and most important, our grateful thanks to everyone in the BUF community. Without you, none of this could happen!

## CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



This Sunday, we continue our exploration of pluralism with a special nod to Mother's Day and the idea that we are all “mothered” and nurtured by many things, people, and experiences. We also look at how, like ourselves, our UU faith is one that is fed by many roots, some sacred, some secular, and some scientific.

Children will start in the Sanctuary 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 THIS WEDNESDAY!

This Wednesday night we are serving a variety of delicious soups from our freezer. (heated up, of course!) We'll have vegetarian tortellini soup, lentil, peanut soup, and others. Join us in the Social Hall at 6:00 for soups, garlic bread, salad, and dessert, all for just \$5 per person, and kids under 12 for free!



## Humanitas Ministry

With the many houseless people in our community, it's always nice to see some positive things happening for this population. Over the past two weeks, we've had three different families come in telling us that they had won a spot on the housing lottery. Some needed help with finding furniture and other household items. Tom and Lisa came in asking for help with their deposit. They had been staying in a tent through the winter, having to pack everything up and move every time the police cleared them out. His name was chosen in the lottery, and they were offered a place in a brand-new apartment building. Normally we're unable to help with deposits, but working with the rest of the network we were able to cover this expense for them. It's always rewarding being able to offer a hand up as a person is making a new start.

## ATTENTION MEAL TRAIN-ERS

Multiple BUF members and friends could use our help with meals in the coming weeks. Please consider signing up to bring food if you're able!

- Jessica & family, welcoming a new baby: <https://mealtrain.com/roe4vl>
- Asko, recovering from hip surgery: <https://mealtrain.com/lov6gd>
- Eleanor & family, welcoming a new baby: <https://mealtrain.com/gmd55l>

If you encounter any technical difficulties with the Meal Train website, call, email, or text Annie Sorich (360-305-7034), and she can sign you up. Thank you for serving our community through nutritious and delicious meals!



## WE DID IT!

**Preliminary Results Are In and We Reached OUR GOAL of \$25,000!**

It was a wonderful event full of great food, fun and financial success. Many thanks to everyone who helped make it such an out-of-this-world event. See below for a full list of volunteers.

*Items still available for bidding are listed below. Donors will be hearing from the Auction Team about who purchased their items and how/when to contact them.*

Many Thanks to These Folks Who Made  
*Across the UUniverse–May the Fourth Be With You*  
A Grand and Glorious Success  
*(This list is long but may not be complete. Apologies if we missed you!)*

**Auction Team:** Barbara W. ten Hove, Judy Kasper, Annie Sorich, Drew Betz, Rina Jurceka, Lin Skavdahl, Helena Chaikin, Beth Nyblade, and Kjerstie Nelson.

**Staff:** Genia Allen-Schmid, Kevin Allen-Schmid, Michelle Fox and Paul Beckel, plus Stewards Anna Vickers and Cory Horton

**Other Volunteers:** Barbara Ellis-Quinn, Kathryn Allen, Su Livingston, Sabie Graham, Carol Smith, Ann Miller, Jon Hinkle, Steffany Raynes, Jane Ronca-Washburn, Sue Doster, Grace Nyblade, Jim Reimer, Jane Lowrey, Jayne Kuhlman, Sarah Pearson, Anna Matheson, Julie Hubner, Kathy Forrest, Claire Lending, Murray Bennett, Lawrence Allen, Chris Sorich, Ann Lackland, Michael Berres, Ann Stevenson, Ken Gass, Francie Gass, John Jurceka, Jaco ten Hove, Lee Seaman, Brendan Brown—and we're sure there are more whose names we never got—**THANK YOU!**

And **Many Thanks** to everyone who donated items, created raffle baskets, bought raffle tickets, bid on items, came to the event or just generally was a part of creating and sustaining this very important all-church event. **IT TAKES A VILLAGE!**



photos by Alan Friedlob

### **SEVERAL AUCTION ITEMS ARE STILL AVAILABLE**

Bidding has re-opened online at [fundraiser.bid/BUF](https://fundraiser.bid/BUF) for some services and many hosted events. If you'd like to sign up for one of the events listed below but you're struggling with the website, please email [AuctionAdmin@buf.org](mailto:AuctionAdmin@buf.org) and we'll assist you.

Everything Has a Story, hosted by Beth Brownfield  
Sunday, June 2, 1:00-4:00 PM

The Longest Day - An Afternoon with Snacks, hosted by John Jurceka  
Saturday, June 8, 3:00 PM

Pantom Party, hosted by Carrie Koehline and Tessie Mandeville  
Saturday, June 8, 2:00-4:30 PM

Que Syrah Shiraz Wine Tasting, hosted by Cindy Denchfield  
Saturday, June 8

Fermented Hot Sauce Class, hosted by Chris and Annie Sorich  
Sunday, June 9, 3:00-4:30 PM

Tapas and Meze Buffet, hosted by Beth Nyblade  
Saturday, June 22

Games and Taco Bar, hosted by Kara Black  
Sunday, June 23, 4:00 PM

Teddy Bear Picnic Treat Decorating Party (All ages!), hosted by Rose Edington and Annie Sorich  
Sunday, July 14, 2:00-4:00 PM

Midsummer Tea, hosted by Kjerstie Nelson  
Saturday, July 20, 3:30 PM

Murder Mystery Dinner, hosted by the Phinneys and Allens  
Saturday, August 24, 5:00 PM

continues...



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Dessert & Jewelry, party hosted by Beth Nyblade  
Event date TBD

Tarot Card Party, hosted by Naomi Gary and Khore Phoenix  
Event date TBD, Saturday in late summer

## MUSICIANS GIVE THANKS FOR FOOD

BUF's Community Night Dinners on Wednesdays have been a delicious and successful way of building community within the congregation and of helping choir members to get to their weekly rehearsals.

Huge thanks to Jenn Villalva and Genia Allen-Schmid and their slew of volunteers, who re-imagined and produced the Community Night Dinners this year.

Kudos also to Kjerstie Nelson and Beth Nyblade for designing and preparing the food for the BUF auction, together with a long list of volunteers. Here are some of the clever food names that were dreamed up from across the UUniverse: Spocklava, Live Long and Pasta, Boba Ghanouj, Amidala Challah, and "Beam Me Up, Scotty" Shortbread.



Kjerstie Nelson and Beth Nyblade present out-of-this-world food for the auction.



After leading a sing-along of his favorites at the BUF auction, Elton John thanks Jenn Villalva for preparing Community Night Dinners all year. Together, call them "Elton Jenn."

Kevin Allen-Schmid  
BUF Music Director  
[kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org)

## **HIRING UPDATE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND MUSIC POSITIONS NOW POSTED**

We have known for some time that Kevin and Genia will be retiring from their positions as Music Director and Director of Lifelong Learning at the end of this church year (June 30).

Two hiring teams were formed in March to begin the work of reconfiguring both positions to fit into the reduced budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. This work has now been completed and both teams are ready to post the positions to be advertised widely in the community and nationally. The jobs are now posted on the BUF website at the following link: <https://wp.buf.org/administration-overview/employment/>

We encourage interested members of the BUF community to apply for one of these positions. In addition, please encourage people who you think might be good candidates to apply. The procedures for applying for each position are detailed in the particular job description.

We hope to have enough candidates to begin interviews by the middle of May. Our ultimate goal is to have chosen the successful candidate by the end of July for a start date in August 2024.

Please thank the following people who have worked so hard to prepare these job descriptions and will continue working until we have hired the new employees:

- The RE Coordinator Hiring Team consists of Bonnie Phinney (now gone to Turkey and Greece), Gayle Tilles, Anne Stevenson, Annie Sorich, Daria Haynes, Steffany Raynes and Rev Paul Beckel.
- The Choir Director Hiring Team consists of Barbara Ellis-Quinn, Melanie Rieck, Jane Ronca-Washburn, Eliana Friedlob and Paul Beckel.

Direct your questions to the leaders of each interview team: Barbara Ellis-Quinn for Music, Gayle Tilles for RE.

Barbara Ellis-Quinn & Bonnie Phinney

## **MIDWEEK UPDATE MOVES TO SUMMER SCHEDULE AFTER MAY 22**

The MWU will be published and distributed every other week following the May 22 edition. Look for it in your inbox on June 5, 19, July 3, 17, 31, August 14, and 28. We will return to weekly issues on September 4.

## **HOW TO SUBMIT CONTENT FOR THE MID-WEEK UPDATE**

Content must be received by 10:00 AM on the Monday before the distribution date. Submit via email and include an attached Word doc, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 font. Avoid any formatting, including bullets. Limit: 200 words. Submittals may be edited for space and clarity. Submit your content to [MWU@buf.org](mailto:MWU@buf.org)

## **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**

Office phone: 360-733-3887, [buf.org](http://buf.org) or [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/>