

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment
August 28, 2024



All BUF services are accessible in-person or on Zoom.

Use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/738363620>

Passcode = BUF / Meeting ID 738 363 620

Summer Sunday Services 10:30am

Similar to last year, our summer services (through September 1) are being coordinated by affiliated minister Rev. Barbara W. ten Hove. There is a simple but fun program for kids each Sunday. Join your BUF community for these meaningful services throughout the summer.

September 1 – Loving and Learning from the Natural World

Steffany Raynes & Carolyn Koehline

What might we learn from the plant and animal creatures who live alongside us? And what can we learn from those who have been paying deep attention to those lessons and applying them? This will be a restful, hopeful service of poems, songs, and reflections.

Long-time BUF members, Carrie and Steffany coordinate the monthly Taize service here at BUF. They both love poetry, singing, journaling and other meditative practices that provide solace and connection with wild nature.

Lunch with Paul

Resumes each Tuesday at noon, beginning Tuesday, September 3rd. Each Tuesday we gather in the Social Hall to share about what's going on in our lives, questions on our minds, etc. We steer clear of politics for as long as we can. Drop in anytime, bring your own lunch.

Time to Talk Politics?

Our political process is inescapably woven with social issues vitally important to us—both in our secular communities and as a religious movement. So it'll be on our minds, hearts, and lips a lot this fall. That's great, so:

1. UU the Vote

UU the Vote is a way to support voters of color in states where there is voter suppression. At BUF, and in congregations around the country, we mail postcards with information on voter registration and early voting. UUtheVote works with the nonpartisan organization [Center for Common Ground](#).

You can help. We are writing postcards immediately after Sunday services Sept 1, 15, 22 and 29 in the Library or Social Hall. In addition, we are having a special Labor Day (Sept 2) writing session from 2-4 pm at BUF. Or you can take postcards home to write. Donations of postcard stamps—or money towards postcard stamps—is appreciated but not necessary. For more information contact claire.lending@gmail.com.

2. Neutrality

We rent our building to some groups that endorse or oppose political parties or candidates for office. Neither BUF as a whole, nor representatives of BUF will do so.

3. Deeper than Despair

When we talk about politics or social issues, please pause and consider: how can I make this conversation deeper? In what ways do the issues we're talking about touch your own life, or the life of someone close to you? In what ways are you influenced by or reminded of particular UU principles?

4. Make Room for Nuance

Our congregation seems to be pretty homogenous politically. But does this impression come because some are holding back? If you tend to be outspoken, make a point to leave space for others to express their perspectives. Avoid the simplistic rhetoric of headlines. Notice: does your tone contribute to an atmosphere of polarization—in which everyone who isn't precisely in-line is viewed with suspicion? Do you avoid conversations with people who might have even slightly different points of view?

How we engage in political conversations is likely how we are going to engage in all of our conversations at BUF, whatever the season. It's an important part of our tradition to be forthright with our perspectives. It's equally important to use our engagements with one another to grow in our own self-awareness...and to welcome new perspectives. Sometimes, I imagine, that will mean taking a break from politics—leaving ourselves a moment, here and there, to just breathe.

Peace,
Paul

Water Communion - Sunday, September 8

Each year we gather to celebrate the gift of water and to acknowledge how—in its flow within us and throughout the world—it connects every being. Today I invite you to bring a bit of water; each of us will pour a bit into our common bowl and share a word about its meaning to us at this moment in our lives. (If you forget to bring water, we'll have a pitcher on hand.)

– Rev. Paul Beckel

UUthe Vote Postcarding - September 1, 15, 22, 29



BUFsters (and some [Indivisible Bellingham](#) members) have written over 800 postcards to voters in states with voter suppression. We are encouraging and providing information on voting in partnership with the nonpartisan Center for Common Ground; they provide scripts and names and addresses. We are writing to Florida, Georgia and North Carolina voters.

You can help in this effort. We are writing postcards immediately after Sunday services September 1, 15, 22, and 29 in the Library or Social Hall. In addition, we are having a special Labor Day (September 2) writing session from 2:00-4:00pm at BUF. Additionally, you can take postcards home to write.

Donations of postcard stamps or money towards postcard stamps is appreciated but not necessary. For more information contact Claire.lending@gmail.com.

Chalice Circle Fall Sign-Ups

People new to BUF or who feel disconnected are encouraged to join a Chalice Circle this September. We have openings in some existing groups and a facilitator ready to begin a new group this fall.

A Chalice Circle is a small relational group made up of 6 to 12 people who meet regularly to establish and nurture themselves in their own beloved community. The circles offer expanding opportunities for growth and caring within the BUF community: a way to connect at a deeper level than is possible on Sunday mornings and to pursue some of the deeper spiritual questions we rarely take time for in our busy lives.

For more information contact Bonnie Phinney (bonnie_phinney@hotmail.com) or Kathryn Allen (kasavelie@aol.com).

SEJC Justice Collections Recipient for August - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The objectives of [NAMI](#) are to support, educate, and advocate by group and individual peers and, facilitators with training and lived-in experiences; educating the community with work-shops, providing resources, and volunteer advocates.

The following excerpt from a son's account presents the insights of a personal experience.* His mother was a kind and selfless human being with Schizophrenia. Some people only saw her as a crazy person. Unable to manage on his own, the son moved her into a permanent supportive housing, with onsite health care, counseling and activities. There, the mother worked with professional staff that understood her symptoms and the challenges of mental illness. They worked on those, built her trust, and made her feel safe. They understood her as a wonderful human being. The son concluded that families need a place where their members with mental illness can get the support they need without judgment, and trained professionals who understand the intersection of mental illness and related aspects. Families need people to look past the stigma of mental illness and see the real person. This is NAMI's mission.

Support NAMI with your generous contribution to BUF-SEJC, throughout August, either through Breeze as special collections, mail a check, or in the offering plate on Sunday.

*["Look past mental illness..." R. Henderson, Opinion, Seattle Times 8/9/2024.](#)

The BUF Auction Returns this Fall - November 2

Mark the date and plan to join us for a festive evening! As we begin to prepare for the event we need everyone to think about how they might contribute to the auction. We need volunteers, items and, of course, attendees.

We learned from our May Auction that the best selling and most profitable items as a group were parties and experiences. Please consider offering a party to enjoy with others. Dinners, brunches, musicals, hikes, tours, and day trips are all popular. All are ways of connecting with people from the greater BUF community. Services were also very popular.

We will begin gathering items in September. Our auction software is updated and ready to go. We will begin tabling at coffee hour on September 15. We can answer your questions about donations and volunteering.

A new feature this year will be catered seasonal food. We are planning a tamale dinner. The committee is meeting on September 6 at 11:00am at [New Mexico Tamale Company](#) to sample options. It is a fun way to get connected with the planning group. Join us for lunch if you are interested. We are also planning to ask people to make a dessert that comes from a family recipe or honors an ancestor in keeping with our Day of the Dead-themed event.

Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering in any way.

Drew Betz, Auction Chair, drewlenore@me.com

Children's Religious Education



During the summer months our teenage childcare providers will lead fun activities and games, along with our usual joys and concerns, plus stories for children two and up. We will include plenty of movement and outdoor time to get warm-weather wiggles out!

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 for supervised fun and time to make friends.

Adult Religious Education

Calendar 2024-25



Fall

September –Newcomer Pathways to BUF with Lunch, Felice Davis

1 session - Saturday, September 28, 10 am - 2 pm

Pathways sessions welcome new members or visitors in knowing more about the UU tradition and BUF. These fun and informative sessions introduce participants to each other, and to Unitarian Universalism. Sign up with Felice Davis: text at 253-307-8981, email at fdavis1944@gmail.com.

October – UU 101, Bonnie Phinney

4 sessions

Designed for people new to UUism or who want to understand their UU faith more fully. UU 101 will include a little history and theology, discussions on how Unitarian Universalism differs from other religions, and how you can better articulate your chosen faith to others.

November – Revisiting History, Rod Haynes

1 session

When and where we are born and live, and our race, class, ethnicity, and gender provide each of us with a unique vantage point with which to view the world. This class will consist of discussions about prevailing concepts of the nature of history, and how a revisiting of popular concepts is called for.

December – Grief Group, Tom Nicholas

1 session

This discussion format workshop is primarily designed for people who have lost a loved one—recently or not. Participants will have opportunities to talk about their own experience of grief and what they found to be helpful in dealing with it.

Winter

January – Aging, Kathryn Allen

3-4 sessions

We will explore various concepts and expectations related to being an elder such as grace, wisdom/aging, dignity, losses, memory, acceptance and our own realities as we face the many changes of this chapter in life.

February/March – Pathways for Young Parents, Ellen Berning/Gayle Tilles

3-4 sessions

This Pathways workshop will be held during church, so parents of young children can attend while their children are taken care of. Learn about the UU tradition in relationship with your peers!

February – Black Lives Matter (BLM) Programming, TBA

Spring

March – UU Theology II, Natalie Johnson

4 weeks

UU Theology II continues the examination of the development of Unitarian Universalism during the late 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The course is intended for anyone interested in understanding our Unitarian Universalist dynamic, ever-developing beliefs.

April – Newcomer Pathways to BUF, Felice Davis

1 day

Pathway sessions welcome new members or visitors in knowing more about the UU tradition and BUF. These fun and informative sessions introduce participants to each other, and to Unitarian Universalism.

BUF Text to Give

BUF has established a Text-to-Give phone number to enable people to donate to the church through their smart phone. The number is (360) 345-3933 and the donations are directly fed into our Breeze church management database and credited to the donor's Giving history.

There are three donation options. For example to donate \$5, text as follows noting the keyword following the amount:

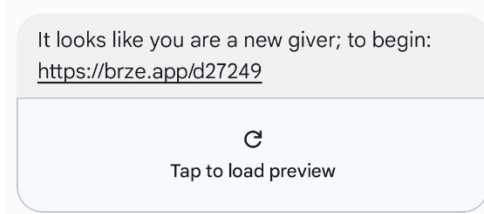
\$5 Plate a donation to BUF

\$5 SEJC a donation to BUF’s monthly Special Social Justice Collection

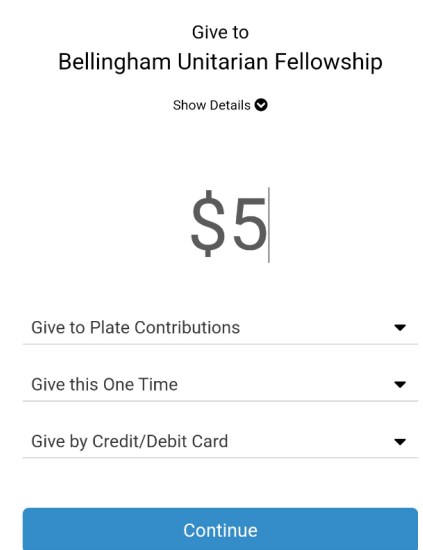
\$5 Taize a donation for BUF’s Taize services

If you do not include a keyword, your donation will go to **Plate**.

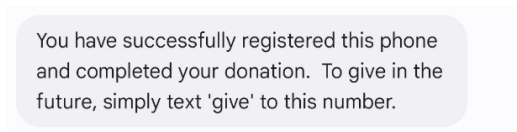
The first time you do this, you will receive a message that states “It looks like you are a new user” and provides a link. Something like this:



Once you select this link, you will be taken through brief steps to enter information to complete the initial transaction on a page like this:



Once you enter this information and click the “Continue button”, you will receive a text acknowledging your generosity and giving the option to type “refund” if you made a mistake.



After this first donation you will be set up to swiftly and easily make any further donations without the need to fill in the data, by just texting an amount to (360) 345-3933 – “\$5” – or an amount and a fund – “5 Taize”.

You can even scan this QR code which should take you directly to your phone’s messaging app:



You’ll find this easier than you think and helpful those days when you’d like to contribute but have no cash in your wallet. If you need help, feel free to contact our Administrator, Michelle Fox, or Rev Paul.

Midweek Update Summer Schedule

Over the summer, the MWU will be published and distributed every other week: 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

Find the BUF Calendar Online

Visit buf.org for the [complete calendar of BUF events](#) (found on our website under the News tab).

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

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[Sign up for the Mid-Week Update and/or the BUF News Digest.](#)