



# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **February 12, 2025**

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## Upcoming Services

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

### **Sunday, February 16, 10:30am - Upholding Dignity - Rev. Paul Beckel**

How do we honor another person's dignity? I mean: real specifics? Let's think about what we need, then commit to providing that to others. And what circumstances will tempt us to violate dignity? Even if we "know" what not to do, will we recognize it when most needed?

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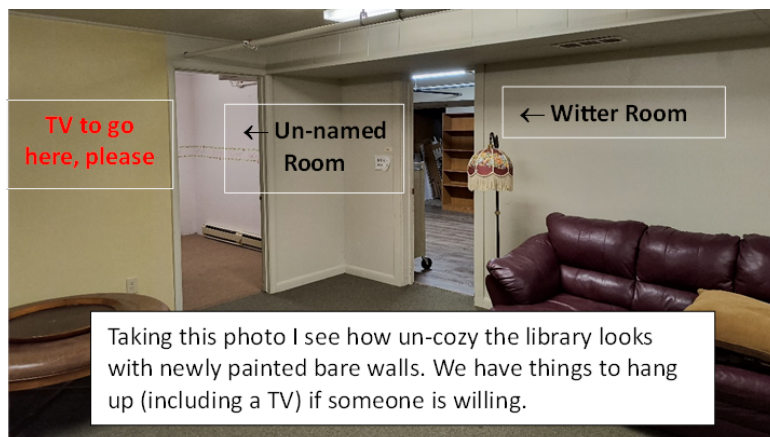
## Words from Paul: Making Room

### **What?**

Two rooms (until recently, jam-packed with things we don't need) newly available for scheduled meetings or impromptu gatherings during coffee hour.

## How?

Ahwren Ayers, working diligently for weeks. Often alone, but more importantly (I've got to point this out because it's our most significant gap in volunteerism at BUF) by recruiting and coordinating multiple volunteer crews to remove junk and years of miscellaneous donations (much of it to Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, the public library, and the Re-store). Note that Ahwren is still recruiting volunteers for painting projects, for routine cleaning, and to remove still more clutter, flammable materials, and recyclables. Contact her via the BUF office – [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org).



## Where?

The rooms are adjacent to the BUF library. The library is adjacent to the social hall (or you can use the back stairs—exit the sanctuary through the double doors opposite the main sanctuary doors).

## When?

Impromptu gatherings till noon on Sundays, otherwise please reserve in advance with our Administrator, Michelle Fox - [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org).

## Why?

It's loud in the social hall. In these smaller rooms it may be easier to have a conversation about something that comes up during a Sunday service.

## Who are the rooms named after?

The Witter Room (in the corner) is named for our beloved Kay and Norm Witter (BUF 2005-2017). The Witters were extraordinary volunteers—here throughout the week with no agenda other than to notice what needed to be done, and to do it. Back then the room held cleaning and maintenance supplies which they put to constant use. No job was too messy; almost all their work was done behind the scenes. Kay and Norm were a couple of the humblest people I have ever known. Their humility was exemplified by their remarkable disposition: they expected nothing from others, and no matter what happened they never took offense. At Kay's memorial it was said: "...whether in a person or an organization, fallibility and imperfection were not a big deal. There were more important things in her life."

The other room has yet to be named.

I appreciate the BUF culture of making room for everyone,  
Paul

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## Children's Religious Education



This Sunday, children who wish to attend Sunday School start in the Sanctuary with their families, then will go up together to their classes. Caregivers pick them up at 11:45am. Classes are most closely geared to children K-7th grade. Preschool-aged supervised care is also available.

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## Adult Religious Education

### **Pathways with Lunch - Felice Davis**

**1 session** - Saturday, February 22, 10:00am–2:00pm, Flex Room (top floor)

Hosted by the Hospitality Committee and open to all those new to BUF. Pathways is a Unitarian Universalist tradition for adults to get to know others in a small group setting and to learn about our church and UUism. The session features a Q&A with our minister, Rev. Paul. The session will be fun and informative, with lunch provided!

Sign up by texting Felice Davis at 253-307-8981 or emailing [fdavis1944@gmail.com](mailto:fdavis1944@gmail.com).

[Email to Sign Up](#)

### **Unitarian Universalist Theology II - Natalie Johnson**

**5 sessions** - Sundays, March 2–30, 12:15–1:45 pm, Flex Room (top floor)

UU Theology II examines the development of Unitarian Universalism during the late 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Among other topics, we will explore the move away from Christianity and toward humanism, the merger of the two denominations, and such UU theologies as earth-centered, humanist, process, and social gospel. While picking up where UU Theology I ended, the course is stand-alone and intended for anyone interested in understanding our Unitarian Universalist dynamic, ever-developing beliefs.

[Register](#)

**Before the Scramble: A Scottish Missionary's Story - Rod Haynes**

**4 sessions** - Sundays, April 6–27, 12:15–1:15 pm, BUF Flex Room (top floor)

Before the Scramble: A Scottish Missionary's Story by Rod Haynes tells the untold tale of James Sutherland, an ordinary man in the late 19th century, caught between two worlds, who was dedicated to serving God in a time and place rife with danger. Contemporary Unitarian theology will be presented to compare and contrast the evangelistic efforts of missionaries like Sutherland. Participants will receive a copy of the book free of charge before the first class.

[Register](#)

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## Weekly Choir Update

Each week, a link to the weekly Choir Gazette can be found here as well as in the footer of this email.

[Read Choir Gazette](#)

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## Community Night Dinner

**Wednesdays, 6:00pm**

**Wednesday, February 12**

We'll be serving soup, salad, and dessert. Suggested donation is \$5.00 per/person; children 12 and under are free. Come and enjoy!

**More Volunteers Needed**

In order to sustain our weekly dinners, we need kitchen helpers, folks to set-up and set the tables, and folks to help reset the social hall. You can sign up for a single night or all of them, depending on what your schedule will allow. You can [sign up for a role using Sign-Up Genius](#).

[Sign Up for a Role](#)

Any questions regarding volunteering can be sent to Jennifer Villalva at [jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com](mailto:jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com).

You can now pay with Text to Give through Breeze (see instructions below). Simply text to the number **360-345-3933** the amount you'd like to donate along with the keyword "CND" (e.g. - \$5 CND) - remember to put the "space" between the dollar amount and the keyword.

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## Third Sunday Potlucks

Our third Sunday Potlucks are on! We now have a crew of nine volunteers to do the set up and clean up needed for our beloved Sunday potlucks to continue. Give a high five and thanks to these folks who stepped up to the task: Mark Allyn, Felice Davis, Rod Haynes, Allison Jones, Dick Kasper, Lauraine Maness, Ann Stevenson, and Marsha Vollkommer. Of course, more volunteers are welcome, so please Judy Kasper at [kasper.jm828@gmail.com](mailto:kasper.jm828@gmail.com) if you would like to join the crew.

The next Potluck will be **Sunday, February 16**.

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## Indivisible Bellingham Monthly Meeting Event with Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools

**Monday, February 17, 7:00pm, Downstairs at BUF**

The flyer features a background image of a classroom with desks and chairs. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top, in a dark orange box, is the title: "Navigating a Public School District through Challenging Financial & Politically-Polarized Times". Below this, in a dark grey box, is the guest speaker information: "Guest Speaker: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools". To the left of this, in a white box, is the text: "Impacts on students, families, staff, and our community". At the bottom of the dark grey box, it says "Monday, Feb. 17, 7:00pm". At the very bottom, there are two logos: "Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship 1207 Ellsworth Street, Bellingham, WA 98225" and the "INDIVISIBLE BELLINGHAM" logo with the website "www.IndivisibleBellingham.org".

[Indivisible Bellingham](#)'s monthly All-Hands meeting on Monday, February 17 will feature a presentation by and discussion with Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools.

He will address two issues: 1) the budgetary crisis faced by the District and how it will impact students, families, staff, and our community, and 2) how our District serves marginalized student groups (e.g., refugee/immigrant, homeless, gay, trans... and their families) when there are increased call to not serve or to minimize service to groups. Dr. Baker will address how schools are addressing Trump deportation/"round-up" threats.

Questions? Call Michael Berres at 360 393 6802.

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## Upcoming Sunday Justice Brainstorming

**2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, 9:15-10:15am, Conference Room**

This next four years is going to be very difficult and social and environmental justice issues will be requiring more attention from all of us. People and the planet are going to be devastatingly impacted from health care to fossil fuels, from endangered species to food insecurity, from pollution to LGBTQAI+, from racial and ethnic inequity to climate chaos and everything else in between.

On the second and fourth Sundays, Deb Cruz will be in the BUF conference room from 9:15-10:15am **for folks who want to gather and express their concerns, share wisdom and maybe find ways to prevent, mitigate, or undo the damage that is to come.** All are welcome regardless of expertise and experience.

Bring your concerns, questions, knowledge, ideas and experience to share. Come speak, or come listen, or both. If you have phones, computers or iPads, you might want to bring them so we can explore resources together.

Upcoming sessions:

- **February 23** - Justice and LGBTQAI+ Communities
- **March 9** - Justice and Indigenous Communities
- **March 23** - Justice and Immigration
- **April 13** - Justice and the Economy
- **April 27** - Justice and Democracy

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## Women's Retreat

**April 25-27, Lutherwood Camp**

**Save the date** for the Women's Retreat at Lutherwood Camp this April! Registration and more information will be out soon.

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## Treasurer's Report: Clarified

Apparently, my financial snapshot last week generated more questions than answers. And one does have to be very careful about how numbers are presented – the phrase “lies, damn lies, and statistics” is very apt here. In the interest of brevity, I omitted some important clarifying information about a pretty complex topic.

### **Income**

**Pledges, Donations and Fundraising:** Pledges are more or less on plan. This is very difficult to predict because giving patterns have changed over recent years. More of our older members are paying in large chunks, rather than monthly. We budget annually and then try to predict when we'll receive funds. I hope that we'll end the year on target, but wouldn't be surprised if we fell a little short. I would never expect to exceed expectations here. Other donations are doing well. We have received a couple of larger non-pledge donations that have helped out. One was for \$10,000 to support a variety of smaller building and maintenance needs. We also received two years funding for Taizé services from generous donors. Half of that is, therefore, income that is really for next year's Taizé services. **Fundraising** is another area of interest. The Auction generated over \$39,000 in gross income, well over the hoped-for \$25,400. However, over \$15,000 of that number goes straight into reserves – not usable as operating income. Also, we spent more than planned on the auction – so the gross income number is a little misleading. I'm still grateful for the results.

**Rental Income** is an area of real concern. Two years ago we planned for \$39,000 and received \$28,000. Last year, we planned for \$28,000 and are falling short of that. I won't be surprised if we wind up below \$20,000.

**Interest Income** is slightly ahead of plan. This is not a major factor, though.

**Transfer from Reserves:** This is \$0. Last year we needed to transfer a lot from Reserves to plug shortfalls in rental income and other areas. I'm really grateful that we haven't had to do so this year.

### **Expenses**

**Denominational Dues & Fundraising Expense:** This is over budget, primarily because of higher-than-expected Auction expense.

**Facilities, Utilities, Administrative & Program Expense** show slightly ahead of budget. I think we'll wind up close to expectations here.

**Staffing Expenses** are slightly below budget, primarily because Lis and Ben started their positions in August, instead of July.

**Transfers to Reserves.** Happily, we've been able to restart funding our Reserves after several years where we were unable to do so. We're funding them at a lower rate than expected because we fund the Building and Maintenance Reserve at a percentage of Rental Income, which as discussed above, is falling short. We have not yet transferred the portion of the Auction Income to Reserves yet. That will happen shortly.

Finally, **NET OPERATING INCOME** shows a huge percentage over budget. Technically that's true. However, when I take the other line items into account, while I'm happy it's above \$0, it's not a number that I really pay any attention to and probably shouldn't even have published. It fluctuates too much and it's not meaningful until the end of the year.

I hope this clarifies where we are. I could go into far more detail. Suffice it to say that it's always a mixed bag. We're stronger than last year, but last year represented a financial low point for us. Next year we have the challenge of preparing for the ministerial transition.

**Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship  
Summary Income & Expense Report  
As of 31 December 2024, 50% of FY**

<b>INCOME</b>	YTD 12/31/2024	Year to Date Budget	% of Budget
Pledges, Donations & Fundraising	\$262,349	\$234,365	112%
Rental Income	\$9,269	\$14,000	66%
Special Collections & Programs (Unbudgeted)	\$17,561	\$0	N/A
Interest Income and Misc Income	\$3,020	\$2,250	134%
Transfers from Reserves	\$0	\$0	N/A
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$292,199</b>	<b>\$250,615</b>	<b>117%</b>

**EXPENSES**



Denominational Dues & Fundraising Expense	\$18,074	\$15,405	117%
Special Collections & Programs (Unbudgeted)	\$19,678	\$0	N/A
Facilities, Utilities, Administrative & Program Expense	\$53,396	\$50,818	105%
Staffing Expense	\$125,464	\$128,465	98%
Transfers to Reserves	\$7,144	\$9,891	72%
Total Expenses	\$223,756	\$204,579	109%
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)</b>	\$68,443	\$8,911	768%

– John Stewart, BUF Treasurer, [Treasurer@buf.org](mailto:Treasurer@buf.org)

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## More Canvassers Needed

Help build connections within our community. As long as we have enough canvassers each of us will talk to three families. There will be training and very clear directions. Thank you if you have already signed up!

Contact Lee Seaman [lseaman@seamanmedical.com](mailto:lseaman@seamanmedical.com) to volunteer or to ask questions.

[Email to Sign Up](#)

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## Lunch with Paul

**Tuesdays, noon**

Every Tuesday we gather at noon 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.

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## BUF Text to Give

You can donate to BUF from your phone by sending a text message to 360-345-3933.

There are a few different options for designating your gift:

- Text “\$5” to donate \$5 to the collection basket
- Text “\$5 SEJC” to send your contribution to this month’s SEJC recipient
- Text “\$5 Taize” to support BUF’s Taizé ministry
- Text “\$5 CND” for Community Night Dinners
- Text “\$5 Fair” for purchases of fair trade products at the church (coffee, chocolate bars, etc.)



You’ll need to do a little setup and provide your credit card information the first time you do this, but after that, it’s just a text message.

You can even scan the QR code to access the phone number.

## How To Submit Content For The Mid-Week Update

Content must be received by *10:00am on the Monday before the distribution date*. Submit via an email single spaced; no Word doc attachment needed. Avoid any formatting, including bullets. Limit: 200 words. Submissions may be edited for space and clarity. Submit your content to [MWU@buf.org](mailto:MWU@buf.org)

## Find the BUF Calendar Online

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

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### **Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship**

Office phone: 360-733-3887

[buf.org](http://buf.org) | [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org)

*Handy Links:* [Calendar](#) | [Choir Updates](#)

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