



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **February 5, 2025**

In this edition of the BUF Mid-Week Update, read about:

1. [Upcoming Services](#)
2. [Words from Paul](#)
3. [Help Newcomers Feel at Home](#)
4. [Children's Religious Education](#)
5. [Adult Religious Education](#)
6. [Weekly Choir Update](#) - Choir Cancelled 2/5/25
7. [Community Night Dinner](#) - Cancelled February 5
8. [Women's Retreat \(April 25-27\) Planning](#) - February 8
9. [Sunday Justice Brainstorming](#) - February 9
10. [SEJC Recipient for February: Northwest Youth Services](#)
11. [Treasurer's Report](#)
12. [Third Sunday Potlucks](#)
13. [More Canvassers Needed](#)
14. [Get to Know Your BUF Building](#)
15. [Lunch with Paul](#) - most Tuesdays
16. [BUF Text to Give](#)

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 9, 10:30am - Generous Authority & Generosity of Spirit - Rev. Paul Beckel and Carrie Koehline

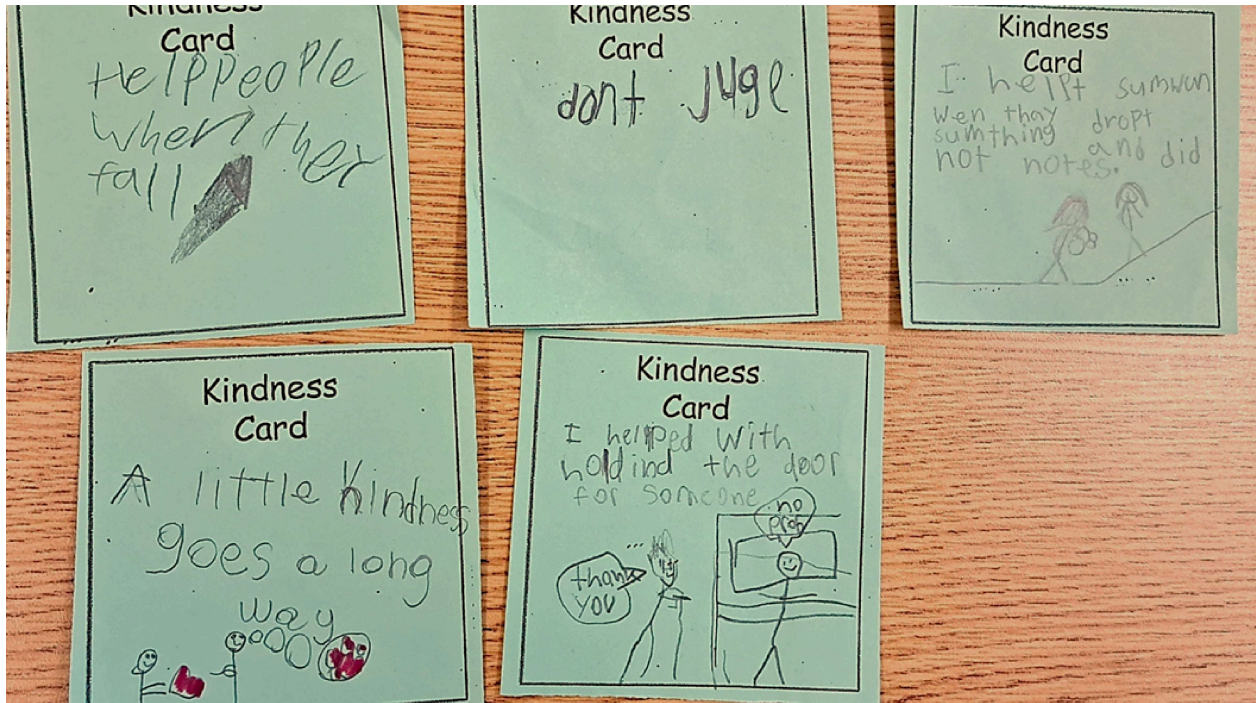
On “generous authority,” generosity of spirit, recognizing and owning our power, and why it’s necessary to put it to use. Featuring the BUF Chalice Choir.

Monday March 3, 7:00pm - Taizé

Our monthly Taizé service will be held at BUF and available on Zoom.

Words from Paul

My wife, Jane, is an elementary school counselor. Here are some results of her and dog Audie's recent lesson about empathy and kindness:



If this is a form of stealthy insertion of liberal religious values into public school curricula, so be it.

Courage, Paul

Help Newcomers Feel at Home

With all of the love you've put into making an activity engaging and accessible, you want to make sure people know what it is and where to find it. We have new display stands to help: large, small, short, and tall. They're in the copier room; please put them to use!

PS: For accessibility, use a large font (30+), large arrows, and very few words. For temporary use, please return. Easels, large paper pads, and large sandwich boards are



kept in the closet under the stairs that lead up to the Flex Room/classrooms.

PPS: Last week a volunteer spent hours removing scotch tape from glass doors and walls. Please don't use scotch tape to post anything. Stikki Clips are in the copier room behind all those signs.

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.

Adult Religious Education

Beloved Community - Rev. Dr. Rose Edington, Rev. Mel Hoover, Lucy Kesterson

3 more sessions - Sundays, February 9–23, 12:00–1:30pm

In 2020, BUF adopted our Covenant of Beloved Community. The [Black Lives Matter Action Team](#) invites you to join us in exploring what living the promise of our covenant means in practice. Participation in all four sessions is encouraged but not required.

- **February 9** - What is the history of racism and anti-Blackness in Unitarian Universalism? - (Flex Room)
- **February 16** - What would we need to change about ourselves to co-create an explicitly anti-racist Unitarian Universalism? - (Flex Room)
- **February 23** - How do we as Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship grow together in Beloved Community? - (Flex Room)

[Register](#)

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 and A with our minister, Rev. Paul. Fun and Informative! Lunch provided!!

Sign up by texting Felice Davis at 253-307-8981 or emailing 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](#)

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](#)

Community Night Dinner - Cancelled February 5

Wednesdays, 6:00pm

Wednesday, February 5

CANCELLED due to weather

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.

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.

Women's Retreat Planning Session

Planning Session: Saturday, February 8, 1:00pm, Conference Room

Retreat: April 25-27, Camp Lutherwood

Save the date! We have reserved space at Camp Lutherwood **April 25-27** for a Women's Retreat.

Come and help plan what you'd like to have happen. Music? Workshops? Games? Poetry writing? Crafts? It's up to you! Please join us on **Saturday, February 8 at 1:00pm at BUF in the Conference Room** to design what it is you would like to experience. Registrations will be out soon!

Questions? Email Sarah Pearson at sarah.cat.pearson@gmail.com

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.

The sessions are as follows:

- **February 9** - Justice and Racism and Oppression
- **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

SEJC Special Collection Recipient for February: Northwest Youth Services

Since 1976, Northwest Youth Services (NWYS) has provided critical support for vulnerable at-risk youth by empowering young people to lead full independent lives. Your donation will support NWYS to provide basic needs like shelter, food, clothing, and comprehensive support services that address the emotional, educational, and vocational challenges youth face. NWYS also operates the Ground Floor – a safe haven

and resource center located at First Congregational for youth experiencing homelessness/unstable housing . Ground Floor provides access to basic necessities such as showers, food, a place to do laundry, and a safe place to rest. Please support NWYS! A plate collection will be circulated during the Feb 9 BUF service.

Treasurer's Report: First Half of the Fiscal Year

Below is the financial snapshot for the 6 months ending December 31, 2024. BUF’s income was 117% of the forecast (happily, with no transfer from reserves!), and expense is 109% of the forecast. Pledge income is mostly on plan and non-pledge donations have been stronger than expected. We have been able to restart contributions to reserves. Challenges remain a continuing loss of rental income. Our wonderful congregation has supported us with pledges and contributions that make the whole thing work! We’ll see how the remainder of this year unfolds – we have a challenging and exciting year ahead of us next year.

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

INCOME	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
Total Income	\$292,199	\$250,615	117%
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%
NET OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	\$68,443	\$8,911	768%

Your questions or comments are welcome!

John Stewart, BUF Treasurer, Treasurer@buf.org

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 if you would like to join the crew.

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 to volunteer or to ask questions.

[Email to Sign Up](#)

Get to Know Your BUF Building

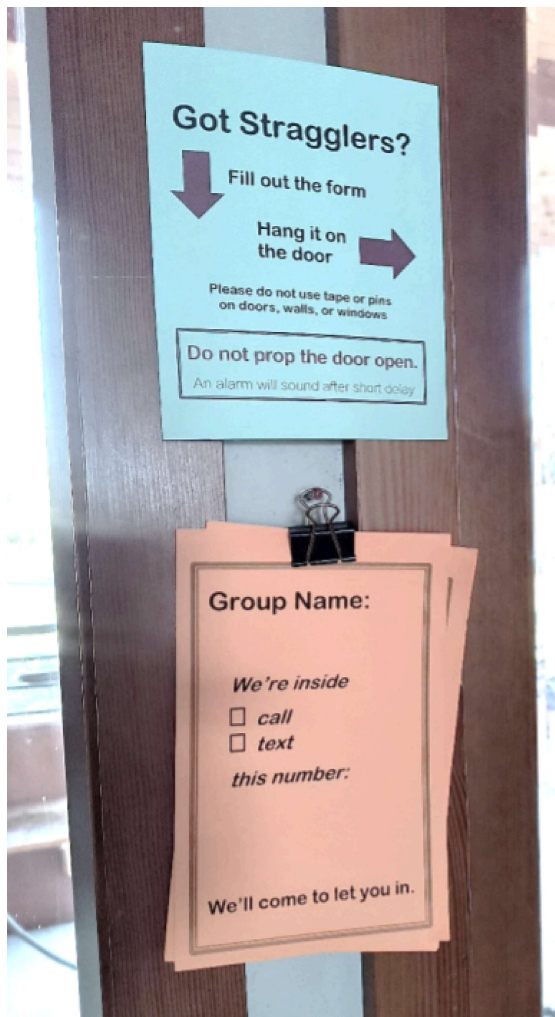
To welcome newcomers; make BUF a good place for renters; and enhance health, safety, accessibility, security, and energy efficiency

Making Security Easier

Since we keep all exterior doors locked, we require BUF groups and renters to station someone in the entryway to let people in. To discourage their propping the door and walking away, there is now an alarm on the door to alert if the door is propped.

And we've also *made it easier* if groups don't want to stick around forever for stragglers:

If you're hosting an activity, simply write your name and phone number on an orange card (these are next to the door) and hang it so people can read it from outside. Presto! Thank you, and thank you for showing hospitality to renters and BUFsters by showing them this little trick if they seem tempted to prop the door.



In the entryway



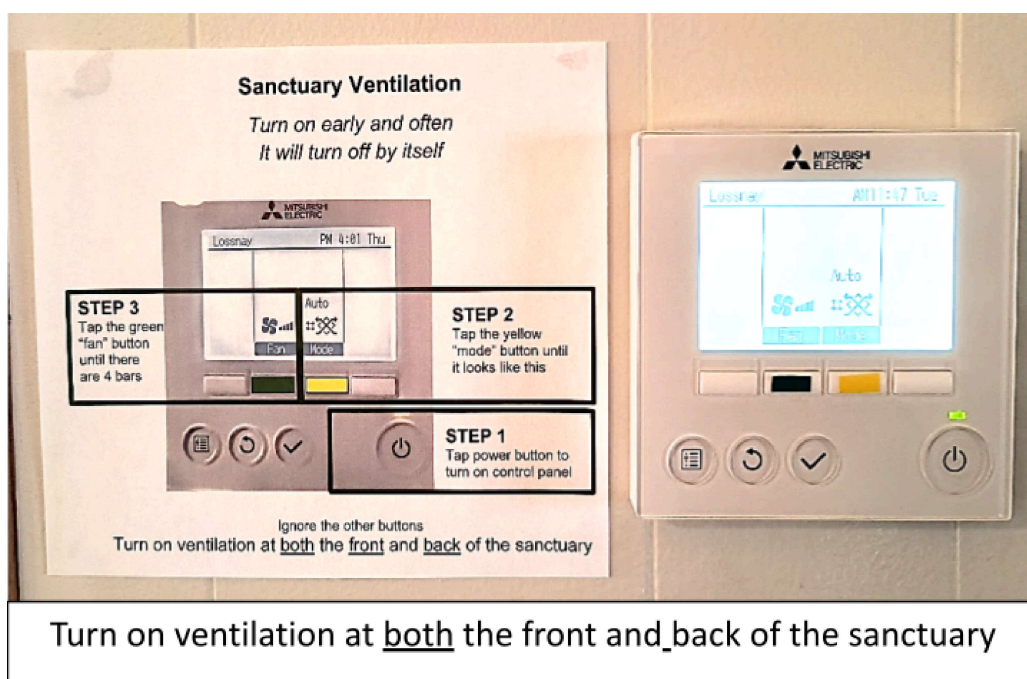
Hang to be visible from outside

Both Energy Efficiency *and* Security

Before we returned to the building after the COVID shutdown, we spent tens of thousands of dollars on a ventilation system for the sanctuary. It moves massive amounts of air (quietly) and turns on automatically on Sunday mornings (and for intermittent daily refreshers).

But *it needs to be turned on manually* for the sporadic activities throughout the week. Simple instructions are posted on the wall next to each control panel. Letting in cold air by opening windows or propping doors undermines the system's efficiency, so—for health, safety, and energy efficiency—turn on the system early and often when using the sanctuary.

Thank you, and thank you for showing this to others who use the sanctuary—helping both renters and BUFsters to be healthier and comfortable.



Easier Access to Sound Equipment to Enhance Accessibility

When our sound system was stolen a few years back, it wasn't good news, but it did force us to update our ancient equipment (plus lock it down hard, institute new lock-up policies for the whole building, install cameras outside the building, and alarms on all the doors).

One thing to be said for the old system: a person could learn how to use it (the new system takes multiple people with multiple keys, and Ph.Ds.) Soooo...how to *make it* easy for renters and BUF groups who need big sound in the sanctuary?

Our portable sound system, which is fully capable of filling the room, is now locked in place on the sanctuary stage. Just flip a switch, plug in the mic, and be heard! All the necessary parts are right there. Please use the system to ensure that the great program you've prepared is accessible to those who have difficulty hearing. Check with any BUF staff or AV tech for simple instructions or more equipment.

Once you know how to use it, please show other BUFsters, and renters, to help us save on the cost of providing AV staff for miscellaneous activities.

First Aid, Etc.

Several years ago, we installed an AED machine (automated defibrillator) in the social hall. Since then we've held AED trainings (and trainings, too, on de-escalation for people during a mental health crisis). Thanks Dick Kasper, Lawrence Allen, Elie Friedlob, and Sarah Pearson! We'll repeat these trainings annually, so please keep an eye on the newsletter for further info.

Just this month, we installed highly visible First Aid kits on each floor near the restrooms. Thanks Constance Ohana, and Elie. Please take note of where the kits are, now, so you can find them when needed. And let Michelle, our Administrator, know if you take anything from them.

The BUF Safety and Security Team

All of the above (and so much more) has come to be on account of many volunteers (AV, IT, Buildings and Grounds, Boards, Treasurers, Operations Team, so many others), plus staff *and your financial contributions*.

...And as much as anything: *your willingness as a community to make these practices part of BUF culture*. And, of course, our Safety and Security Team: Jim Reimer, Elie Friedlob, Felice Davis, Michelle Fox, Michael Berres, and Sarah Pearson—who have instigated, installed, trained, and brought together so many moving parts.



The good news (in addition to all of the above): this team has now created a calendar to ensure that we repeat, review, maintain, etc, all of this on a regular basis. The other good news: this is just a slice of what we've done together in recent years—all of us—to make BUF a safe place, a welcoming place (and an attractive place to rent too).

The other other good news: we are on such a roll that it will be comparatively easy for new volunteers to join the team—as new projects await, and leadership continuity is essential. Please contact Michael Berres (ammab81@gmail.com) to find out more.

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.

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

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

Office phone: 360-733-3887

buf.org | admin@buf.org

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

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