



# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **March 19, 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, March 23, 10:30am - Resilience and Reciprocity: Lessons from the Natural World** - Steffany Raynes, Carrie Koehline and Lark Clayton

Steffany Raynes, Carrie Koehline and Lark Clayton will offer reflections on what we can learn from the earth in this time of great turmoil—and the beginning of SPRING.

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## Words for Paul: Singing on the Steps

Whether in preparation to sing along with gentle-angry crowds in the streets—or just to proclaim our vision of peace and love in one more way—we'll gather on the steps at the BUF entryway on Sunday mornings at 10:00am to sing together.

Last Sunday a few people came together to give it a try, and others spontaneously joined in. Others, as they walked in, suddenly got big grins on their faces.

We'll keep at it this coming Sunday and for as long as the spirit moves. We'll sing songs that you can learn as you go. I'll anticipate your voices and/or smiles this coming Sunday.

Peace, 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

### **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](#)

## **Transgender Inclusion in Congregations - Constance and Hank Ohana**

**6 sessions** - Sundays, May 4-June 8, 3:00–5:00 pm, BUF Sanctuary

Designed specifically for UU congregations, this discussion-focused course counters mainstream narratives about who trans people are, supports understanding of non-binary identities (such as genderqueer, agender, and Two-Spirit), and employs a deeply intersectional approach. Among other topics, we will explore congregational welcome, relationship-building, and skills-building. Congregational teams (e.g., Board, Staff, Hospitality, Choir, Worship Arts, RE) are particularly encouraged to participate. Individuals welcomed!

[Register](#)

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## Community Night Dinner

**Wednesdays, 6:00pm**

**Wednesday, March 19**

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 Always 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 role using Sign-Up Genius](#).

[Sign Up for a Role](#)

Questions about volunteering? Email Jennifer Villalva at [ennifermvillalva@hotmail.com](mailto:ennifermvillalva@hotmail.com).

You can 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 - Wild Rising: Shedding, Becoming, Emerging Together

**April 25-27, Camp Lutherwood**

Don't miss out! Register now for the BUF Women's Retreat, April 25 (starting 5:00pm) through April 27 (ending 11:00am) at Camp Lutherwood on Lake Samish! With a nod to the Year of the Snake, our theme is "Wild Rising: Shedding, Becoming, Emerging Together."

[Find details and register here](#) or on the BUF homepage under "featured events". We want everyone identifying as she/her/they/them to be able to attend, so don't let cost be a barrier!

[Register](#)

## Scholarships

Simply register and pay the amount that you are able to pay. In the comment field, state that you are requesting a scholarship to cover the rest. To support this, donations toward our scholarship fund are gratefully accepted! Just add the donation to your own registration fee with the comment "please donate the extra to scholarships."

Alternatively, stop by the table during Sunday social hour to donate or contact Sue at [suraku@concast.net](mailto:suraku@concast.net).

## Seeking Proposals for Workshops/Skill-Sharing

**Apply by March 31**

Are you attending and able to offer a skill/workshop, especially one that relates to the theme? We want your proposals! In the past, we've had yoga, meditation, dance, tai chi, art, storytelling, writing workshops and more. Don't be shy; share your idea with [claire.lending@gmail.com](mailto:claire.lending@gmail.com) before the March 31 deadline.

[Email a Proposal](#)

More questions? Stop by the Social Hall following the Sunday services to chat with the **Retreat Planning Team**: Sue Doster, Claire Lending, Genia Allen-Schmid, Constance Ohana, Ann Lackland, Karen Collins, Sarah Pearson, and Peggy Jones.

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# Save the Date: Retirement Shindig for Rev. Paul

**Saturday, June 21 and Sunday, June 22**

Rev. Paul Beckel is retiring and we're planning a celebratory send-off! The retirement shindig will take place Saturday evening, June 21 and Sunday morning, June 22. Saturday's event will celebrate Paul's 30 years in ministry with stories, music, food, and drink, while Sunday will include a ritual of goodbye between Paul and BUF and one last time to hear Paul preach before he and Jane move to Minnesota.

There will be a lot more information to follow but please mark your calendars now for this important event in the life of BUF.

Questions? Email co-planners Barbara ten Hove at [revbabs10@gmail.com](mailto:revbabs10@gmail.com) or Jeff Copeland at [jeff.copeland@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.copeland@gmail.com).

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## Stewardship Update

March is Pledge Drive Month. A pledge is your annual promise to financially support BUF. It is usually paid once a month, but other options are also available.



Last year we received 160 pledges, and this year we hope to top that. We've just finished Week 2, and have received about 60 pledges so far. **Thank you if you have already pledged!**

Check out our Pledge Drive Graph, posted near the door into the sanctuary and also pictured on the left. We plan to give you an update every Sunday and also every week here in the Midweek Update.

Our pledges make up about 85% of BUF's annual income. Pledges keep the lights on, pay our staff and our mortgage, and support the infrastructure that sustains our community, both inside and outside our doors.

Pledges let our Board create a budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year. This year we are doing the draft budget especially early because we need budget numbers to start recruiting candidates in early April for our new interim minister.

The following graph shows the percentage of pledges received so far. For charts of our income and expenses, check out the Midweek Update from last week and two weeks ago.

We are contacting every BUF member and friend, either in-person or by email. For in-person visits, your canvasser will bring you a pledge card. Or if you prefer, you can pledge online [here](#).

Thank you for all the many ways you build our BUF community!

[Make a Pledge](#)

Our BUF community and presence are so greatly needed this year. Thank you for everything you do to help all of us Raise the Light!

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## Safety Team Update

The BUF Safety team includes Paul Beckel, Michelle Fox, Michael Berres, Elie Steele, Jim Reimer, Felice Davis, and Sarah Pearson. It aims to enhance safety features at BUF and provide periodic evacuation drills along with first aid, CPR, mental health, and intruder trainings.

**First Aid bins:** First Aid bins have been installed near the restrooms on each floor for your use. Narcan is included in the bins on the lower level and main level. The AED is located on the lower level in the social hall.

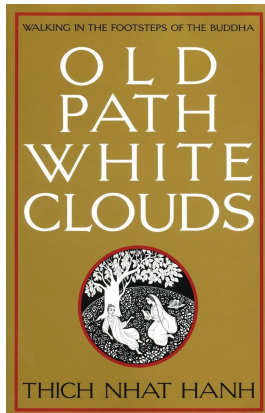
**Incident Reports:** If you use anything from a first aid bin, or participate in any kind of medical or mental health intervention at BUF (or at a BUF activity), please complete an incident report (located inside the bins) and return it to the BUF office immediately after the event.

The Safety Team's next meeting is Thursday, April 3, 3:00-4:00pm in the Conference Room. Please feel welcome to attend if you are interested in contributing to our safety efforts.

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## Buddhist Books Reading Group

Wednesdays, 11:00am, Zoom



This new group is currently reading “Old Path White Clouds” by Thich Nhat Hanh. The subtitle of the book is “Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha.” It is a rare gem that describes the life and the teachings of the Buddha in a novel-like fashion. It details the struggles of the Buddha in achieving enlightenment and then devoting all his life to teaching the wisdom he discovered.

We meet each week on Wednesdays at 11:00am by Zoom and discuss one or two (very short) chapters assigned for the week. The discussions are informal, and all are encouraged to express if or how what they have read meets with their own experiences in life or how it relates to the world now.



If you are interested in learning more in depth about Buddhism, please join us. We will be your Sangha. Email Debu Majumdar at [debumeister@gmail.com](mailto:debumeister@gmail.com).

[Email to Join](#)

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## Help with the MWU: Seeking Backup Volunteer

Do you have copy editing and proofreading skills and are you good with Google Docs (gmail account required)? The Mid-Week Update team is looking for a backup volunteer to help when Clare is super busy or Heather is away.

The time commitment is a couple of hours per week on Monday and/or Tuesday. Email [MWU@buf.org](mailto:MWU@buf.org) if you're interested and willing to provide support to the MWU team!

[Email to Volunteer](#)

# SEJC's March Special Collections Recipient *Children of the Setting Sun* - Young & Indigenous Podcast



Through groundbreaking interviews and civic advocacy, [Children of the Setting Sun's "Young & Indigenous" podcast](#) inspired reconnection with ancestral knowledge and amplified Indigenous leadership. The podcast reached global audiences with content on key issues including the environment, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Indigenous language revitalization and elections.

Episodes have ranked in the top 20 and top 40 on Apple Podcasts. Personal Journals in the US and Canada. Audiences are global, ranking in the charts of countries as far away as Taiwan, Australia.

## Highlights:

- Partnered with the Whatcom County Library System to interview acclaimed author Sasha LaPointe
- Engaged with national thought leaders, including Oren and Rex Lyons at the Bioneers Conference
- Produced a 7-part series featuring Indigenous herbalists and wildcrafters on the importance of seeking natural healing medicines, safe harvesting practices, and respecting mother nature
- An insightful conversation with renowned botanist and author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, about how communities reconnect with nature and revitalize ancestral ecological knowledge.

[Learn More](#)

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## Invite Organizations to Apply: SEJC Collection

**Application Deadline: Friday, April 11**

We encourage all in the BUF community to invite organizations to apply to receive a collection during the next church year. Please let them know that the firm deadline for applications is April 11, 2025.

[Access the Application](#)

We particularly encourage organizations to apply who serve a diverse and/or underserved population. Grassroots and small organizations are welcome to apply. Social change organizations are welcome to apply. We prefer to select organizations where BUF's contribution will make a significant difference for the organization and its work.

Thank you for your help in creating a diverse, effective and meaningful pool of applicants.

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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:

- **March 23** - Justice and Immigration
- **April 13** - Justice and the Economy
- **April 27** - Justice and Democracy

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## Social Justice Opportunities

### Discussion Participation for Research Project on Climate Change and Leadership

**Completed by end of April; RSVP by March 24**

James Addington, author of “Tragic Investment: How Race Sabotages Communities and Jeopardizes America’s Future – And What We Can Do About It” (iUniverse, 2019), is conducting a research project on climate change and leadership. James worked with BUF RE folks last spring on “Raising children in a race-conscious society.”

James would like to bring together a group of no more than 20 BUFsters for a 90-minute discussion seeking perspectives on how leadership can impact the crucial question of our future in the face of climate change. The discussion will likely be a Zoom event and James would like to have this done before the end of April. The small group events will be supplemented by individual interviews, as well.

Email Deb Cruz at [dwcruz@comcast.net](mailto:dwcruz@comcast.net) by **Monday, March 24** if you are interested.

[RSVP](#)

### Gathering of the Eagles Fundraising Dinner: Seeking Volunteers

**Monday, April 28**

On April 28, SEJC will be hosting a fundraising dinner for the [Gathering of the Eagles](#). We are looking for volunteers to help with set-up, clean-up, and greeting. There is also the opportunity to help with some cooking with the Lummi food prep team. If you are interested in helping out that evening, please email Deb Cruz at [dwcruz@comcast.net](mailto:dwcruz@comcast.net). Tickets for the dinners will be available shortly.

[Email to Volunteer](#)

Gathering of the Eagles is an annual event that brings together our Indigenous and non-Indigenous neighbors for a multicultural exchange and celebration of our land, waters, and sky. It starts out with an island canoe journey visiting Orcas, San Juan, Lummi, and Lopez islands. The mainland landings include Lummi Nation and Waypoint Park in Bellingham. The Waypoint Park landing and following celebration in Maritime Heritage Park are now part of the Ski to Sea weekend.

## Defend Trans Lives: A Webinar for People of Faith

**Tuesday, March 25, 12:30-2:00pm**

**Tuesday, April 8, 5:30-7:00pm**



This webinar, offered twice (on March 25 and April 8), is geared toward pro-LGBTQ Christians (but is open to all people of faith), presented in partnership with [Enfleshed](#) and [Soulforce](#).

Prior to the webinar registrants will receive essential background info from trans faith leaders and national trans advocates from the Transgender Law Center, the National LGBTQ Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and more. On the webinar, speakers will discuss the moral and spiritual imperative to defend trans lives and how attendees can take action in the public square and in their own churches and faith communities.

We hope these resources will help you and yours feel more equipped for the vital work of defending trans people in this moment. Sponsored by [Transforming Hearts Collective](#).

[Learn More and Register](#)



# 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.](#)