



# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **March 26, 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 30, 10:30am - The Science of Gender** - Linden Jordan, Steffany Raynes, and Cindy Denchfield

Linden's career has included attorney, mental health counselor, and college professor. Now in his retirement, he works with [PFLAG Skagit](#) to support, educate about, and advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, friends, and allies. His goal is to help others understand the complexities of gender which will help our community receive the respect, care, and dignity that they deserve. He is part of the Speakers Bureau and has given over a hundred trainings locally and beyond for making the world a more welcoming place for the LGBTQ+ community.

He will be discussing The Science of Gender. We are taught that it is all so simple, yet nothing could be further from the truth. We will explore the world of in utero development as it applies to the formation of sexual anatomy and our gender identity. You will understand why gender identity is so critical and so interesting. And so misunderstood.

**Monday, April 7, 7:00pm - Monthly Taizé Service**



A quiet service held on the first Monday of each month. Our UU adaptation of the Taizé tradition includes contemplative chants, poetry, meditation, and candle lighting.

This month's theme: Shifting the Story.

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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.

# 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 26**

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](#)

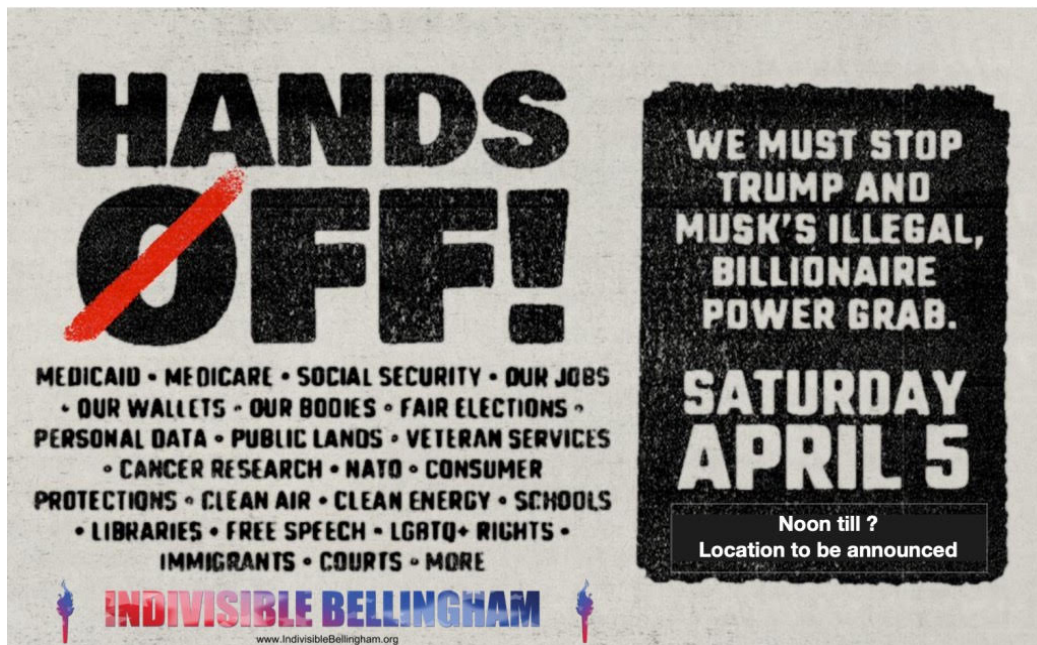
Questions about volunteering? Email Jennifer Villalva at [ennifermvillalva@hotmail.com](mailto:ennifermvillalva@hotmail.com).

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.

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## Singing for Our Lives

**Sunday, March 30, 10:00am, BUF Porch**



Everyone is invited to a singalong on BUF's porch from 10:00-10:20am before this Sunday's service. We will be singing protest songs in preparation for the [HANDS OFF! nationwide protest](#) on April 5.

[Learn More](#)

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## Budget Listening Session

**Sunday, March 30, 12:00pm, BUF Conference Room**

Come hear about and discuss the current budget plans for next year in a listening session hosted by BUF Treasurer John Stewart. Click on the link below to access the current draft. As always, budgets are a reflection of both opportunities and challenges of the time: how to do the best with our limited resources.

[Review Draft Budget](#)

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## Women's Retreat - Wild Rising: Shedding, Becoming, Emerging Together

**April 25-27, Camp Lutherwood**

Don't miss out! Register on or before April 10 for the BUF Women's Retreat, April 25 (starting 5:00pm) through April 27 (ending 11:00am) at Camp Lutherwood on Lake Samish!

[Find details and register here](#) or on the BUF homepage under Featured Events. You can pay by credit card, check (mail or drop off at the BUF office), or text "GIVE" to 360-345-3933 and once you get the reply, enter the amount you are paying along with the word "RETREAT".

[Register](#)

## Scholarships

**Deadline - March 31**

We want all those in our BUF community to be able to attend, so don't let cost be a barrier! Simply register by March 31 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 email Claire at [claire.lending@gmail.com](mailto:claire.lending@gmail.com).

## Seeking Proposals for Workshops/Skill-Sharing

### **Deadline - 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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## Top 100 Congregations Certificate from Equal Exchange



Because of your dedication and commitment in purchasing your coffee, tea, Palestinian Olive Oil, cocoa, nuts, and chocolate bars from Fair Trade, the support of the buying congregation made this all happen.

The proceeds from the sales allow SEJC to give back to our community in so many ways. T list a few of the organizations they contribute to because of your generosity – Lummi Nation, Bellingham Food Bank, Interfaith, MLK events, Bellingham Human Rights Festival, Social Justice Groups, Climate Change, Immigration Resettlement, and Special Collections.

Thank you to the volunteers of [Fair Trade](#) for providing the service. Your efforts are appreciated.

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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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## Stewardship Update

March is Pledge Drive Month. A pledge is your annual promise to financially support BUF. As of Sunday morning we have received approximately half of the pledges we received last year! Budget planning can't happen until we know what the pledges amount to. In these challenging times, with so much uncertainty, help reduce the stress on your Canvass Team, and on the Board, by turning in your pledge card or communicating with Michelle or Lee Seaman as soon as possible.

Our goal is to complete this Pledge Drive by the end of March so that budgeting and planning for the Interim minister can proceed. Many, many thanks if you have already made your pledge.

[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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## 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 assemble the MWU when Clare is super busy or Heather is away, as is the case May 7.

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* - Institute

CSS Institute, a think tank, addresses the root causes of declining salmon populations while addressing climate change and social injustice. It takes an applied storytelling approach, conducting qualitative research and documenting oral histories through film and audio.

100 tribal leaders, educators, activists, scholars and supporters gathered at [SSI](#)'s 2024 inaugural event at the [Inatai Foundation](#) and showcased the new [Digital Heritage Library](#) of oral histories, cultural teachings, and traditional ecological knowledge.

It serves as a vital platform for preserving and sharing oral histories, cultural teachings, and traditional ecological knowledge. The SSI Education Program continues to expand its outreach and work with schools throughout the region with resources for Since Time Immemorial, and the state's native studies curriculum. The Hanford Graphic Novel Project uses storytelling to engage Indigenous communities and regional stakeholders in addressing the Hanford Nuclear Complex, the Western Hemisphere's most polluted site. It took on voter outreach, championing democracy with videos targeting Native populations in swing states.

[Learn More](#)

## CSS Digital Heritage Library

The [CSS Digital Heritage Library](#) is a resource to support Indigenous leaders, educators and activists.

Helping to preserve Indigenous wisdom, facilitating deep cultural learning, and supporting SSI by grounding positive social and environmental change in Indigenous experiences.

[Access the Library](#)

# Seeking Paddle Call Ideas

We're starting early to plan for our next auction in November, in order to give everyone an opportunity to ponder what BUF needs. More information is coming. Put on your thinking caps!

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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:

- **April 13** - Justice and the Economy
- **April 27** - Justice and Democracy

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## Social Justice Opportunities

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



This webinar 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](#)

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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.](#)