



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **April 9, 2025**

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

1. [Upcoming Services](#)
2. [Children's Religious Education](#)
3. [Adult Religious Education](#)
 - [Pathways for Parents](#) - April 27, May 4, May 18
 - [Transgender Inclusion in Congregations](#) - May 4-June 8
4. [Community Night Dinner](#) - **Canceled for April 9**; Resumes April 16
5. [Passover Seder Dinner: Last Chance to Buy Tickets](#) - April 12
6. [Potluck Sunday](#) - April 20
7. [Women's Retreat](#) - April 25-27
8. [Seeking Volunteers: Gathering of the Eagles Fundraising Dinner](#) - April 28
9. [Retirement Shindig for Rev. Paul](#) - June 21 and 22
10. [Eliot Institute Family Camps](#)
11. [Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes](#)
12. [Help Meet Our Pledge Drive Goals: Stewardship Update](#)
13. [Paddle Call Proposals for BUF Auction](#)
14. [BUF Auction: Join the Event Team](#)
15. [Invitation to Attend Sunday Justice Collections Decision Meeting](#) - May 7
16. [SEJC's April Special Collections Recipient: The Airow Project](#)
17. [Sunday Justice Brainstorming](#) - April 13 & 27
18. [UUA Resources & Events for Supporting Trans/Non-Binary People](#)
19. [In Case You Missed It: The Science of Gender](#)
20. [Lunch with Paul](#) - most Tuesdays
21. [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, April 13, 10:30am - Afraid of Being with the Dying? Don't Be. - Rev. Barbara Gilday

Visiting family in Toronto last fall, I had no idea that I would walk into my uncle's hospital room and find him in the dying process, alone. Reflecting on the absence of his five children, I realized how little exposure we have to dying, and what a beautiful and meaningful experience it can be. I will share personal stories and stories from my chaplaincy in hospitals that highlight different kinds of experiences that hopefully, help you to feel more comfortable being present, when the opportunity comes. Especially in these days, we need courage to face the difficult social conditions we are experiencing. Stepping up to the challenges that come to us in the course of our natural lives, helps us to develop the courage and wisdom that bring us to wiser and more empowered presence in all things.

Religious Education

Children's Religious Education



Children who wish to attend Sunday School start in the Sanctuary with their families then 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.

Save the Date: Children's Sunday

June 1

Children's Sunday will be an all-ages service to celebrate our children, teachers, and families. It will be followed by an all-ages Choir service on June 8. Our Fall all-ages Choir service was a huge success, with parents and children reporting how much they loved the beautiful music and stories from the choir and BUF elders. All-ages, or intergenerational services, deepen our appreciation for and connections to one another, and nourish the future and endurance of the community and our values.

Adult Religious Education

Pathways for Parents - Gayle Tilles and Ellen Berning

3 sessions - Sundays, April 27, May 4, and May 18, 10:30-11:45am
Childcare provided.

BUF is offering a special three-session Pathways for Parents this Spring. Led by Gayle Tilles and Ellen Berning, participants will come out with a better understanding of UU theology, lasting friendships, and feeling more a part of BUF. To make it convenient for busy parents, this Pathways offering will be held Sunday mornings 10:30-11:45am with childcare provided. *Coffee, tea, and snacks will be provided.* We hope you will take this opportunity to deepen relationships with fellow parents and learn more about our unique denomination. Questions? Email Gayle Tillis at borders2@frontier.com.

[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](#)

Events

Community Night Dinner - Resumes April 16

There will be **no Community Night Dinner this evening**, April 9, due to spring break. Dinners will resume next week on Wednesday, April 16.

Passover Seder Dinner: Last Chance to Buy Tickets

Saturday, April 12, 5:00-9:00pm, BUF Social Hall



Jewish culture mandates the telling of the Passover story to children every year. Grace Nyblade will be sharing this with the BUF community on April 12 in the BUF Social Hall. This is a kid-focused program with lots of storytelling and music, including a reading of a short Passover Haggadah (story). This is a non-dairy event, so there will be vegan and gluten-free options.

Tickets on sale through April 9. Questions? Contact Grace Nyblade.

[Buy Tickets](#)

Potluck Sunday

Sunday, April 20, Social Hall

Join us on April 20 for another Potluck Sunday, dining in the Social Hall right after the service. The third Sunday falls on Easter this month so you might find a lot of deviled eggs and egg salad on the serving table!

Please bring a generous dish to share if you can, knowing visitors will be invited to join us. You can deliver your donation to the Social Hall before the service begins. Help with take down and clean up is greatly appreciated.

Questions? Email Judy Kasper at hospitality@buf.org.

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

April 25-27, Camp Lutherwood; [Register by April 10](#)

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) – or attend Saturday only.

[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](#)

The daily retreat schedule and workshop topics have been posted on the retreat website, check it out! Registrants: You'll soon receive an email containing directions and a packing list for the retreat. For additional questions, email Sarah Pearson (sarah.cat.pearson@gmail.com) or Constance Ohana (cohana61223@gmail.com).

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.

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. 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.

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 or Jeff Copeland at jeff.copeland@gmail.com.

Eliot Institute Family Camps

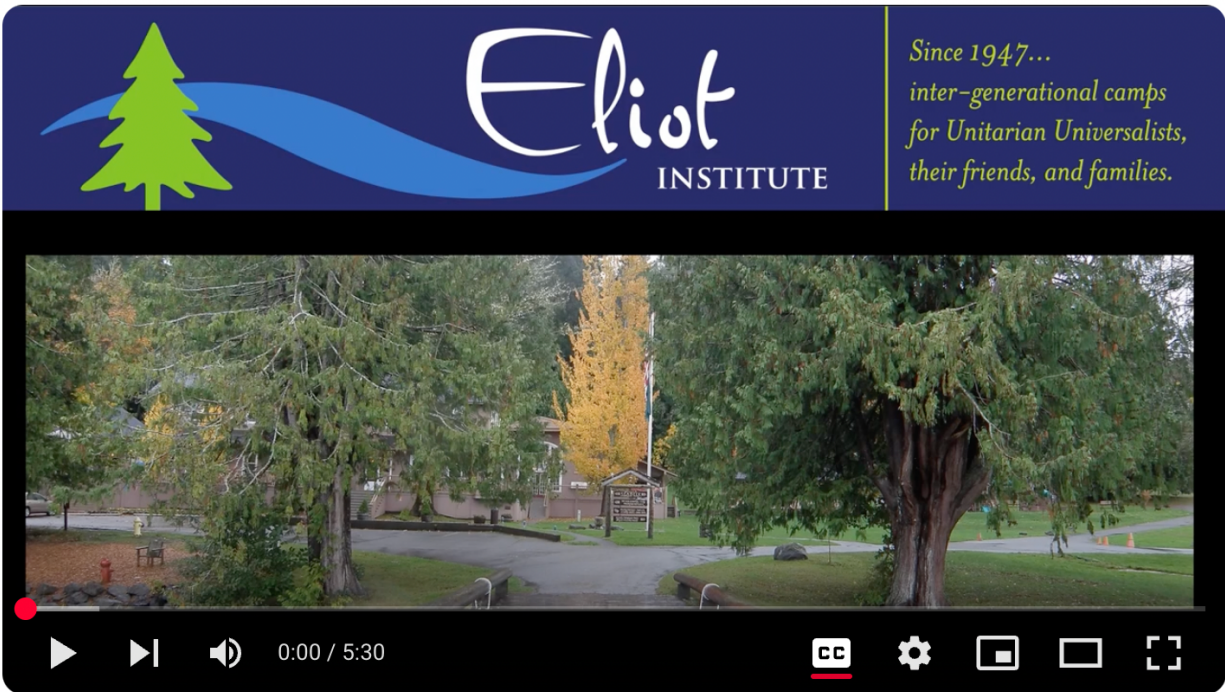
July & August 2025, Winter 2026

Are you looking for a wonderful way to spend a week with yourself, your friends, or your family at a gorgeous location where you don't have to cook or clean and you get to play, laugh, think, and have fun with other UUs? Barbara ten Hove and Drew Betz recommend Eliot Institute Family Camps.

There are three summer camps for all ages, one in July and two in August plus a Winter camp over New Year's. Learn more by visiting the [website](#), watching an [inspiring video](#), or talking to Barbara or Drew.

[Learn More](#)

Email Barbara ten Hove at revbabs10@gmail.com or Drew Betz drewlenore@me.com to learn more; they'd be happy to talk to you about their experiences at Eliot, so you can be one of many BUFsters who attend this incredible gathering.



Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

Highlighting BUF Members

Meet, greet, and bid adieu to BUF Members in this recurring MWU section.

Meet Ahwren Ayers



In the winter of 1977, Ahwren relocated to the Pacific Northwest from Connecticut. She loves the rain here, and is a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP), part of the 15-20% of the population who are HSPs. Her passions are singing, gardening (Regenerative, Permaculture, companion planting) and horseback

riding/jumping, and in her work, she enjoys supporting others to be empowered in good health and present time balance. Ahwren says her heart connections are with her Inner Spirit, Earth, Nature, her husband Charles, their miniature schnauzers Lucy and Emma, their home Anam Cara (“soul friend” in celtic), and anyone saying “Hello.”

Stewardship

Help Meet Our Pledge Drive Goals

We are nearing the end of our annual pledge drive, and **we need your help**.

So far we have received 20 fewer pledges than last year.

We have \$331,000 pledged so far. We are \$34,000 short of the minimum of \$365,000 that we need to cover our costs for the upcoming year.

Especially now, when so many new people are turning to BUF, we need a stable financial basis as we meet the new year.

If you are willing and able to pledge but haven't done it yet, please pledge online or call or email the office at 360-733-3837, admin@buf.org.

If you are willing and able to up your pledge, there has never been a better time. The best way to up your pledge is to call or email the office or to email stewardship@buf.org.

Thanks for all you do, and for making BUF all that we are. Let's do this!

Lee Seaman,
for the Stewardship Team

[Make a Pledge](#)

Paddle Call Proposals for BUF Auction

Deadline: April 30; Auction date: October 4, 2025

You may be familiar with paddle calls—a fundraising tool used at gala events to raise cash funds. The funds may go to supporting the mission of the organization or a specific project. In past years, BUF auction attendees have funded such items as the replenishing of emergency reserves and updates to the BUF website.

This year the Board is planning ahead for the October 2025 auction. If you have an idea for a project, consider submitting a proposal. A good project is one that doesn't exceed \$10,000, it solves a specific BUF problem, can be completed within one year, and will generate wide support. Proposals must include such details as the cost of materials and labor based on researched estimates, and a timeline for completion. If your project will depend on volunteers it will identify who is willing to help.

Check out the proposal form linked below, and submit your completed form **by April 30** to any of the Paddle Call Committee Members.

[Download Paddle Call Proposal Form \(PDF\)](#)

If you have questions or to return a completed form, contact a member of the **Paddle Call Committee**: Stephanie Sarver, Gayle Tilles, Kathryn Allen, and Murray Bennett. See us at the Paddle Call table in the Social Hall on Sunday!

BUF Auction: Join the Event Team

Save the date: October 4, 2025

It's time to start planning the next auction! Mark your calendars for October 4, 2025. Drew Betz (she/her) has agreed to be the chair again this year, her last year in the role.

We now need a new team to plan and execute the major social event of the BUF season. It's fun to be involved, and from start to finish, the more the merrier! What we're looking for:

- A new **Donations Team**
- A couple more folks for the **Technology Team**,

- A **Planning Team** that can take this event from a date on the calendar to a really fun and profitable one. The planning itself is fun and a fabulous way to cement connections in our community.

Drew will be available this Sunday after service at BUF to take your name and contact information. She'll be scheduling a meeting in the next few weeks and wants to include new and returning volunteers. You can also email Drew at drewlenore@me.com if you want to go ahead and put your name on the list.

Social and Environmental Justice

Invitation to Attend Sunday Justice Collections Decision Meeting

Wednesday, May 7, Zoom

This year, the Social and Environmental Justice Committee (SEJC) has decided to open the decision-making about monthly Sunday Justice Collection recipients to all interested members of the congregation.

Participating in this process is no small matter. First, participants are required to read in advance all the applications that have come in from various organizations. Second, all those voting are required to attend the full length (typically 3.5-4.5 hours) meeting, where we hear presentations from each applicant, as well as discuss our criteria and the pros and cons of various applicants. Of course, members of the congregation who wish to participate but not vote do not need to attend the full meeting.

This meeting is held on Zoom to facilitate all the organizational presentations. The meeting will be held beginning at 12:30pm or 1:00pm on Wednesday, May 7. The length of the meeting will depend on the number of applicants.

If you wish to participate in this meeting and/or vote on applicants, send your name and email address to Kara Black (kara.black525@gmail.com or 360-676-2300) by April 29. Kara will send you all the materials to review in advance as well as the link to join in the meeting.

[Email to Participate](#)

The committee looks forward to including the congregation in this process.

SEJC's April Special Collections Recipient *The Airow Project*



[The Airow Project](#) mission is to make recreational opportunities accessible to individuals with disabilities, thereby promoting inclusion, diversity and community. To fulfill these goals, the non-profit has developed programs to adapt to their needs. These include Summer Camp, Saturday Recreation, a Ski Program, Specialized Habitation, and Community Engagement.

The Airow Project raises funds by offering these experiences for a fee of \$50. Further, they organize an annual fundraiser with several events, such as the seasonal Ski Program at Mt. Baker, which is already sold out. In addition, the Project sells T-Shirts and Hats. The projects are tailored to the needs of individual clients. For details please reference the Project's website: theairowproject.org. For more information; contact April Katz, Executive Director at: aprilkatz@theairowproject.com. Phone: 360-788-3099. Please attend the BUF service on April 20 and contribute to bring joy to individuals with disabilities.

[Learn More](#)

Upcoming Sunday Justice Brainstorming

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

These next four years are going to be very difficult, with social and environmental justice issues 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.

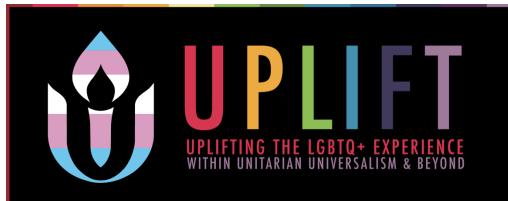
On the second and fourth Sundays, Deb Cruz continues to lead brainstorming sessions for folks who want to gather and express their concerns, share wisdom and maybe find ways to prevent, mitigate, or undo the damage that is to come. All are welcome regardless of expertise and experience. Bring your concerns, 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

Resources

UUA Resources & Events for Supporting Trans/Non-Binary People



March 31 was Transgender Day of Visibility. As conservatives target the transgender community for political gain, now more than ever is the time for Unitarian Universalists to be visible in our love and support for our trans/non-binary siblings.

The following are resources in a recent email from the UUA's LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director that are designed to strengthen our love, care, and resolve to be a faith that moves beyond welcome to full inclusion and belonging to transgender UUs who are here, have always been here, and will always be among us.



Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary: Presentation

Saturday, April 26, 8:30am-5:00pm ET

You can join the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse virtually for [Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary](#) featuring a presentation Spencer Bergstedt, a trans man, a lawyer, a trans activist, a parent; find him on his [Trans Dad channel on Instagram](#). You can register to attend this event online now with tech support and registration assistance from UUA staff.

[Register](#)



UPLIFT Trans/Non-Binary Gathering Space

Fourth Tuesdays, 5:00pm PT

UUA invites you to join the UPLIFT monthly gatherings for trans, nonbinary, and other not-entirely-or-at-all-cis UUs. Join us to connect with other trans/nonbinary+ UUs and co-create support and community across our faith. All you need to bring is yourself! These gatherings focus on getting to know each other and on sharing community and connection across all ages.

UPLIFT Pastoral Care Group Space

Second Fridays, 5:00pm PT

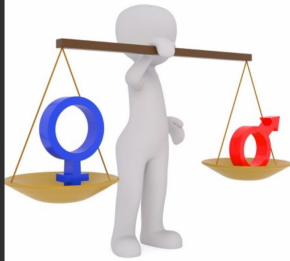
UUA invites you to our monthly drop-in small group for trans/nonbinary+ UUs for

fellowship, grounding, pastoral care, and connection. We know that things are tough right now, for so many reasons. We see you and are glad you are here; you are not alone! *This year's program is for adults ages 18 and older.*

[Learn More](#)

For additional resources to support trans/non-binary people, visit uua.org/lgbtq/resources.

In Case You Missed It: The Science of Gender



Thanks to Linden Jordan from [PFLAG Skagit](#) for joining us a couple of weeks ago with his enlightening, powerful presentation, “The Science of Gender.” We find these resources to be really helpful and powerful, and while they ran in last week’s Mid-Week Update, we wanted to share them again.

[View Presentation \(PDF\)](#)

Resources for Working with LGBTQ+ Youth

Video:

- [▶ “The Science of Gender” on PFLAG Skagit’s YouTube \[VIDEO\]](#)

Books:

- [“This Is How It Always Is”](#) by Laurie Frankel
- [“Gender Queer”](#) by Maia Kobabe
- [“A Clinician’s Guide to Gender-Affirming Care”](#) by Sand Chang and others
- [“Raising the Transgender Child”](#) by Michele Angello
- [“American Teenager: How Trans Kids Are Surviving Hate and Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era”](#) by Nico Lang
- [“Free To Be: Understanding Kids and Gender Identity”](#) by Dr. Jack Turban
- [“Trans Children in Today’s Schools”](#) by Aidan Key

For teens ages 13-19

- [Q Chat Space](#)
- [imi.guide](#) – great resources and skills for mental health support

For a great list of recommended books for all ages and parents:

- [PFLAG Skagit's School Book List](#)

Websites:

- [PFLAGskagit.org](#)
- [PFLAG.org](#)
- [Transfamilies.org](#)
- [Genderspectrum.org](#)
- [thetrevorproject.org](#) - Suicide hotline and more

Video:

- [▶ Intersexion: Boy or Girl? \[VIDEO\]](#)

Engagement & Support

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.](#)