



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **April 30, 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, May 4, 10:30am - May the Forest be with You – Revs. Paul Beckel and Tessie Mandeville

Via meditation and lamentation, an immersion into our grief and appreciation for our revered forests. Come dressed as you would to go hiking!

Taize - Monday, May 5, 7:00pm - How do we pray in times like these?

Taize is our monthly meditative service held in the sanctuary and on Zoom. Please join us for singing, candles, meditation, and centering in community.

This month's Taize service will be dedicated to Leslie McFee, a long-time member of Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship who served on the Taize support team before moving to Canada to be near family. She died suddenly in April; we honor her life and loving legacy.

Words from Paul

Asking "How are you? (when you suspect they won't have a simple answer)"

How uncomfortable for both of us. Even more nowadays, when we hear the familiar greeting, "How are you?" we may find ourselves pausing before offering a banal, "Fine." I've observed awkwardness even from those offering the greeting—realizing what a complex question they've just asked.

What if we could create a new cultural ethic: when possible, upon receiving this greeting, to stand still, and pause for a few seconds to breathe. This could become a mutual invitation to one another: to pause, and breathe...before...responding.

OK, maybe that would feel even more awkward. BUT, what if both parties got to know this tiny ritual? What if we were to start with one another here at BUF? Will you give it a try?

Peace,
Paul

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.

Adult Religious Education

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](#)

Pathways for Newcomers - Felice Davis

1 session - Saturday, May 17, 10:00am–2:00pm

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. Fun and Informative! Sign up with Felice Davis: text 253-307-8981, or email fdavis1944@gmail.com.

[Register](#)

Events

Community Night Dinner

Wednesday, April 30, 6:00pm

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 are always needed. You can [sign up for a role using Sign-Up Genius](#). Questions about volunteering? Email Jennifer Villalva at ennifermvillalva@hotmail.com.

Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Beloved Community?

Friday, May 9, 6:30pm (doors 6:00pm), First Congregational Church of Bellingham



Noted speaker Rev. Adam Taylor from [Sojourners](#) presents and answers questions, followed by a reception and opportunity to give.

How do we resist the dangers of authoritarianism while casting a bold alternative vision of a healthy democracy that enables everyone to thrive?

Supporting churches: First Congregational Church of Bellingham, Garden Street United Methodist, Christ the Servant Lutheran, St. Paul's Episcopal



Rev. Adam Russell Taylor is president of Sojourners, an author and speaker. Among many roles, he led the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group and served in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs and Public Engagement.

[RSVP](#) requested but not required.

[RSVP](#)

Rev. Paul's Farewell Party

Saturday, June 21, 6:00-8:30pm & Sunday, June 22, 10:25am

Rev. Paul Beckel is retiring at the end of June and moving with Jane to Minneapolis. In honor of his long ministry, we're bidding him a fond farewell with a party and a Sunday service, both at BUF.

We want as many people as possible to be a part of giving Paul a wonderful farewell. We have many ways you can contribute – and if you think of something we haven't listed, please let us know.

For the Saturday night party, we need help with:

- Dinner prep
- Room prep
- Clean up
- Desserts for our dessert potluck

- Flowers from your garden
- “Florists” to put together bouquets

If you can help with any of these tasks, please contact Genia at geniaas@gmail.com.

There will also be a wonderful final service followed by a festive coffee hour. Mark your calendars to attend both meaningful events in honor of Paul’s long ministry at BUF and his retirement from 30 years of active UU ministry.

Questions? Please contact Jeff Copeland at jeff.copeland@gmail.com or Barbara ten Hove at revbabs10@gmail.com.

Stewardship

Our Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26

We are close!! So close. As of last Thursday afternoon, we had \$355,000 in pledges. **NOW WE HAVE \$357,980 IN PLEDGES!** But we are ~~\$18,000~~ \$14,325 short of where we need to be. We have all the minimum expenses of our operation covered, such as mortgage and utilities. We’ve been able to fund a couple of important shortfalls. But what we may think of as discretionary costs don’t really feel that way. In order to balance our proposed budget, the Board has had to

- ~~eliminate a cost-of-living increase for our wonderful staff;~~
- ~~cut back on our annual pledge to the UUA, which maybe needs it now, more than ever;~~
- reduce hours for Building Sextons and AV Technicians;
- cut back on maintenance of our beautiful BUF building;
- eliminate a needed upgrade to our WiFi;
- and defer an important external review of our financial statements

[See the Budget](#)

If you have any comments and/or questions, please contact John Stewart, BUF Treasurer, or attend the Budget Discussion on May 4 at 12:00pm in the BUF Library.

[Email John Stewart](#)

Really, the time to act is now. If you have already pledged, think about reconsidering your pledge and adding something to it. As pledges increase, we'll be able to add these important pieces back into our budget for the coming year – you'll see a direct correlation between your contribution and the kind of community we want to be.

Thank you.

[Make a Pledge](#)

Auction Team Meeting

Friday, May 9, 9:30am, Bellingham Food Co-op

The Auction Team will hold its organizing meeting at 9:30am on Friday, May 9 at the downtown Food Co-op, gathering upstairs above the deli. Please come if you are interested in helping to shape this year's event!

Questions? Email Drew Betz at drewlenore@me.com or text 360-930-0015. You can also find Drew at BUF on Sunday.

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

Highlighting BUF Members

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

Welcoming Two New Members

Our BUF community welcomes two new members: Mary Rausch, who joined during the New Member Ceremony this past Sunday, and Diane Groody, who joined during a ceremony at the Womens' Retreat.

Celebration of Life: Leslie McFee

Beloved, long time BUF member Leslie McFee passed away recently. She had moved to the Yukon only days before. An informal celebration of her life will be held Friday, May 20, 2:00pm, at BUF.

Social and Environmental Justice

SEJC Contributes Towards Budget Shortfall

At the spring SEJC meeting, in addition to the regular agenda items the committee also talked about the budget shortfall. Because we know that without a strong healthy church, SEJC and all the work that the committee does would not be possible AND because we know that in order to have a thriving church we need a happy, well-compensated staff, SEJC voted to donate \$1,000 of our funds towards the \$18,000 shortfall to go towards staff cost of living increases.

We believe that social justice starts at home and that it is necessary for us to provide living wages for our staff - especially in our current inflationary economy. This is the second year in a row that SEJC has voted to give \$1,000 of its own funds to help the BUF budget. We hope that others will follow our lead and help make up the shortfall so that we can take care of our staff.

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



The AIROW Project runs many programs year-round, including hiking, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, scavenging, pickleball, and arts and crafts. Over the last four years, the Project has had a visible impact on the

disability community, the Bellingham community, and the outdoor community as a whole. The Project's current grant request is for their new Adaptive and Inclusive Summer Camp program to expand its scope to people aged 8-30, and to enhance the well-being of the Whatcom County community at large. Besides other expenses, contributions will cover costs, approximately, as follows:

- Two staff members - \$4420
- Kayaking with community boating center - \$350
- Pickleball equipment - \$200
- Van rental for two trips, zoo/San Juan Island - \$200
- Snacks - \$60
- Camp supplies - \$40
- Sponsor-a-camper - \$350/week

Those who have not contributed yet, please avail this opportunity to give the rest of this month.

For more details, read the articles in the [earlier BUF weekly newsletters](#), visit their website at theairowproject.com, or contact aprilkatz@airowproject.com.

[Learn More](#)

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. 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.

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.](#)