

## 2025 BUF Board Nominees

**Tom Nicholas** came to BUF in the spring of 2023. After retiring from WWU, where he taught English to international students in the Intensive English Program, Tom was looking for meaningful ways to connect with people. At BUF he found a variety of ways to do just that—by participating in the choir, by joining the celebrants' team and helping to plan and deliver Sunday services, by hosting fundraising concerts, by joining the Adult RE committee and designing classes, and just by attending Sunday services and getting to know people. Tom enjoys playing the guitar, writing, practicing yoga, cooking, and messing around in the backyard. From his time at Western, Tom brings leadership and committee experience. Tom is nominated to complete the term he was appointed to by the BUF Board in January 2025. Tom's term will end in June 2027.

**Natalie Johnson** joined BUF in September 2024. Natalie brings a lifetime of experience at multiple UU congregations across the country, where she has been a canvasser, greeter, children's RE teacher, and board president. At BUF, Natalie chairs the Adult RE committee and co-chairs UPLIFT, and enjoys participating in Chalice Circle and the Women's Retreat. Outside of BUF, Natalie enjoys chess, hiking, backpacking, classical music, and reading military history. Natalie's professional experience in computer science and business will bring incredible administrative, technical, and leadership skills to the BUF board. Natalie was appointed to a vacant seat by the BUF Board in January 2025, and is now nominated to a new full term, 2025-2028.

**Jim Shaver** came to BUF to connect and meet with a community of like-minded people, and he jumped right in and began running a chalice circle with his wife. Jim and his family moved to Birch Bay four years ago and have a child attending Bellingham Technical College. Jim works in information security and, in his spare time, is a beekeeper. Jim also serves on several other committees around Whatcom County. He brings prior board experience, technical skill, and a fresh perspective as one of our newest BUF members. Jim is nominated to fill a vacant BUF Board role with a term ending in June 2026.

**Patricia Conover** had a long career in corporate work from leading a manufacturing team building components for the space shuttle to helping organizations define and implement strategy and managing the impacts of change on employees. She also served as the Executive Director of a small nonprofit assisting 21st century military veterans. Since coming to BUF in 2019 she participated in Choir, edited the MWU and most recently served on the Financial Oversight Committee. She enjoys the welcoming community she has found at BUF and the many opportunities to be helpful such as volunteering with Humanitas, and the Celebrant Team. Together, these activities appeal to both head and heart. Patricia spends her free time working in her flower garden, dog hiking, attending music, movies and other cultural events with friends. She is looking forward to supporting BUF in the transitions ahead. Patricia is nominated for a three year term, taking on the treasurer role.

**Ahwren Ayers** not only volunteers her own time at BUF, but has been creating and facilitating opportunities for others to connect with and support BUF. Currently a very active member of Buildings and Grounds, Ahwren has a passion for building maintenance that includes not just the hard skills, but also the appreciation of the history and needs of a physical space. Ahwren is a small business owner and practitioner, licensed in healthcare. She works one on one with individuals in health and wellness, has years of experience teaching Intentional Ethics, and brings knowledge around working with Spirit, practicing mindfulness, healthy boundaries, and process work to heal and let go of the past by focusing in present time. Ahwren also brings leadership experience, having served as president of the local North Cascade Massage Connection and leading the Fourth Corner Folk Dancers, growing both organizations substantially during her time at the helm. In her spare time, Ahwren shares her talent of singing and teaches dance. Ahwren is nominated for a three-year term.

**New candidate for Nominating Committee:**

**Kathryn Allen** joined BUF five years ago after moving here from Illinois, where she was a 35 year member of the UU Congregation of the Quad Cities. While there, she served on the board and numerous committees, and led the Green Sanctuary certification process. At BUF Kathryn has participated in planning and facilitating Chalice Circles, and serves on the Adult RE committee. Kathryn dreamed of living in the PNW for many years, and now loves residing near the mountains and walking among the trees and along the beautiful shorelines. Kathryn is very grateful for the friendships that continue to develop with others in this congregation.