



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **May 21, 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 25, 10:30am - Betrayal, Erasure, and Moral Courage - Rev. Paul Beckel and Rupert Ayton

On the fifth anniversary of George Floyd's murder, we stop and ponder the fall-out from the 2024 election in the form of betrayal and erasure in the public and private sectors, and the courage we need to stand up against it.

Monday, June 2, 7:00pm - Taizé - We Can Do Hard Things (with Love) - Steffany Raynes and Carrie Koehnlne

Please join us for our monthly, meditative Taizé service. Chanting, poetry, and candle lighting provide a quiet nurturing experience. We offer this service on Zoom (Sunday Service link) or in person in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

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.

Events

Outdoor Work Party

Saturday, May 24, 9:00am-12:00pm, BUF

This is an invitation to participate in an outdoor work party at BUF Saturday, May 24 with the goal of keeping BUF looking clean, attractive, and tidy as summer approaches. We will be doing general cleanup, lawn care, pruning, trimming, weeding, sweeping, and other gardening tasks. Bring gloves, your favorite gardening tools, and choose the task that appeals to you. Arrive and leave as you wish. BUF will provide some tools, and coffee.

Contact Ron Quinn, Jim Reimer, or Michelle Fox for further information.

George Floyd Memorial

Sunday, May 25, following the worship service, Fouts Park

On May 25 five years ago, Officer Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department knelt on the neck of George Floyd for more than nine minutes until he died. In 2022, Kristina Martens and BUF BLM organized a community gathering in the park to remember George Floyd by nine minutes of silence, and to raise funds for a memorial bench, two plaques, and a tree. This is now an annual BUF tradition.

On Sunday, May 25, immediately after the worship service, we will hold our fourth memorial, in circumstances that make community celebration unfitting. Please join us at the bench for nine moments of silence and a chance to recommit ourselves to racial diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Auction Planning Meetings

Next Planning Meeting - Friday, May 30, 9:30am, Downtown Co-Op

Planning is underway for our BUF Auction on October 4, with the Auction Team having a productive first meeting on May 9. Our next meeting will be Friday, May 30 at 9:30am at the Downtown Co-op.

Working teams have been formed, with the Organizing team members being Drew Betz, Vanessa Lott, Annie Sorich, and Brenda Goebel.

- Event Team - Led by Drew, working closely with Vanessa
- Communications and Volunteer Team - Led by Vanessa, assisted by Annie
- Tech Team - Led by Annie
- Donations Team - Led by Brenda, who is looking for help; please reach out to her to help organize donations.

The supporting cast on these teams are as important as the leaders. **You can still volunteer to help** – there is room for pre-auction volunteers, especially for planning the event (decorations, food, desserts, silent and live auction, and more).

Menu Meeting - Friday, May 23, 11:00am, Panda Palace

The 2025 BUF auction will include food and decor in the spirit of Golden Week, a Chinese family tradition in early October. The team is meeting at Panda Palace on Friday, May 23 at 11:00am to eat lunch, talk about catering options, and what menu items will work best for serving family style. If you are interested in joining that team and sampling wonderful Chinese food, please RSVP to Drew by texting 360-920-0015 ASAP.

News

“In the Silence” Selected for New UU Hymnal

Written by our own Rick Hermann, who died in 2023, “In the Silence” has been selected for a new UU online hymnal. Several years ago we honored Rick’s music and poetry by adding this song to our own grey hymnals; we’ve sung it frequently in moments of deep hurt and resolve when thinking about our social and environmental concerns and commitments. We’ve posted a video (provided by Lee Willis) of Rick’s brother, Ron, singing [“In the Silence” on our BUF YouTube channel](#).

[Watch Video](#)

Rick, thanks again for your music, which will continue to console us, and move us... along with generations to come.

Peace,
Paul

PS: This wouldn’t work as a marketing slogan, of course, but it occurs to me that we could say, “BUF: where you don’t have to apologize for crying.”

Annual Meeting Voting Results

Five members of the BUF board were elected. Ahwren Ayers, Patricia Conover, and Natalie Johnson were elected to three-year terms. To fill open seats, Tom Nicholas was elected for a two-year term and Jim Shaver was elected for a one-year term. Members elected to the nominating committee are Kathryn Allen, Rod Haynes, Steffany Raynes, and Annie Sorich.

In addition, the 2025-26 budget was approved by a membership vote.

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

Highlighting BUF Members

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

Meet Marsha and Rob Vollkommer



Marsha and Rob Vollkommer moved to Bellingham from Iowa in 2014, to be nearer to family, as well as nature. Now retired, Rob worked for a “major corporation” and Marsha, at age 60, enrolled in seminary and was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church. They have deep appreciation for the kindness that is prevalent both in Bellingham and BUF.

Marsha and Rob are easy to find at the Fellowship, selling Equal Exchange goods on Sunday mornings, setting up tables for potlucks, spending Wednesday mornings at Humanitas, participating in the celebrants’ committee and, as Rob said when they signed the book, sharing some business acumen. They feel welcomed and invited in, as participants in the important work and fellowship that is BUF.

Building & Grounds

A Note on Recent Interior Building Changes

Change is inevitable in every aspect of our lives, as we all know during this current pending change of leadership at BUF. As we encompass this upcoming change, we are also welcoming the opportunities to make other changes within the building as well. Changes that are intended to welcome everyone that enters and provide them a feeling of belonging, acceptance, compassion, and cohesiveness. We are excited to freshen up the many wonderful spaces BUF has to offer our members, friends, and community while proudly taking a stand for BUF's core values and passions!

These next two years will bring changes and experiences we look forward to while we navigate the unknown but feel the security from the walls within and the people, values, ideals, and principles we share.

Here's to embracing change, within and everywhere!

Social and Environmental Justice

SEJC's May Special Collections Recipient *Bellingham Queer Collective*



The [Bellingham Queer Collective \(BQC\)](#) connects, celebrates, unites, and advocates for the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. The BQC started in 2022 and grew into a nonprofit organization, supporting over 3,000 people in Bellingham and beyond. The BQC is improving the Social Health of the queer community through arts, movement, nature, service, and belonging.

The BQC, partnering with Northwest Youth Services, opened the first LGBTQ+ community center, between Seattle and Canada, last year. The BQC is growing and just obtained their own long term lease and moved into a new space in March.

The BQC Community Center space is a free, queer, 3rd Space for the 18+ community. Hosting peer-led groups including identity, recovery, social, and interest groups. They hold wellness and educational workshops, including fentanyl overdose awareness.

This all-volunteer organization relies on community contributions only. All funds collected support rent and operations. Immediate needs include purchasing basic furniture, equipment, and safety features including security cameras, window film, and new door hardware. Donations today will significantly impact the BQC June Pride Fundraiser Campaign titled “Unite and Thrive in 2025; Let’s Raise \$30,000 in 30 Days.”

[Learn More](#)

Engagement & Support

UPLIFT T-Shirts

Celebrate and support LGBTQIA+ people by purchasing an [UPLIFT t-shirt](#)! June is Pride month, and as we gear up to march and celebrate, let’s show some love for the queer community. The shirts are 100% cotton in a deep purple, with the front featuring “Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship” and a flaming chalice, and the back displaying the UUA UPLIFT logo. Men’s (pictured below, left), Women’s (pictured below, right), and Children's shirts are available in many sizes.



The cost is \$25 per shirt, and the proceeds go to a queer-focused nonprofit. Orders will be taken through June 15, with delivery at BUF by Sunday, June 29. Stand with us!

[Place Order](#)

Lend a Quilt for Display in Sanctuary

If you have a quilt you would like to lend to BUF for two to three months, it would be displayed on the wall behind the podium, for everyone to enjoy. If you are interested in sharing your works of art, please send a photo to admin@buf.org for consideration.

[Share Your Art](#)

A huge thank you to Drew Betz for her beautiful contribution of the quilt that is currently hanging behind the podium. It is appropriately called "Dancing Birds" that brings the Spring time in for us all to enjoy.

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.](#)