



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **June 11, 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, June 15, 10:30am - Flower Communion, Fathers' Day, Wheel of Life - Rev. Paul Beckel

Our annual Flower Communion ceremony will remind us of the beauty which earth gifts to us through its magnanimous variety of living shapes, colors, and purposes. Our ritual of creating a mandala with our flowers will remind us of the preciousness and transience of all that is.

Please bring flowers to help with the creation of our mandala. Afterward, we will carry the mandala down to Whatcom Creek...and release.

Potluck afterward.

Sunday, June 22, 10:30am - To BUF: What brought me? What did I bring? What will I take with me? – Rev. Paul Beckel

I'll address these questions directly, but mostly all of this will be conveyed through a collaborative feast of music, others' reflections, and a ritual of leave-taking. It will mean so much to me to have you there!

Summer Sunday Services Begin June 29

For the third year in a row, Rev. Barbara ten Hove, along with BUF's excellent team of celebrants, will plan and implement all the summer services between June 29 and August 31. There will be childcare provided by our wonderful teens, music by our keyboard artists and others, and interesting topics (see below). Please make a point to attend and bring your friends!

June 29 – Sing DE!!DE!! Songs that celebrate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Rev. Barbara ten Hove

Delight, Energy and Inspiration. Led by Rev. Barbara with the Celebrant Team and Andrea Rackl, keyboard artist.

July 6 - A Crazy Quilt Religion: Exploring UU Theology through a Creative Lens - Rev. Barbara ten Hove

Led by Revs. Barbara & Jaco ten Hove with Marsha Vollkommer, celebrant, and Melanie Reick, keyboard artist.

July 13 - Let's Talk About It! - Rebecca and Erika Crichton

A presentation by mother-daughter duo, Rebecca and Erika Crichton, with guidance and insights for how we can openly talk about issues related to aging and end of life. With Steffany Raynes, celebrant and Melanie Reick, keyboard artist.

Words from Paul

Lessons on Leaving

I hope you've observed the strong camaraderie and warmth between me and BUF's Affiliated Ministers, and my retired colleagues. BUF benefits tremendously from the quality of these relationships; it's not something a congregation can take for granted.

In identifying Revs Barbara ten Hove, Barbara Gilday, and Tessie Mandeville as "Affiliated Ministers," past BUF Boards have developed mutual agreements with each of them—with clarity that their ministry will be in support of that of the Senior Minister. Their positions are unpaid, except when separate agreements are made for very specific roles for a limited period of time (for example, from July through the end of September, Barbara ten Hove will be coordinating Sunday services and providing staff support).

My other ministerial colleagues have chosen a variety of ways to be engaged at BUF. Some are members, some not. Some have preached, volunteered, or participated in BUF activities; others have chosen to remain in the background. Each of them has been clear in defining their boundaries, and it's very important we honor these—that is, to not make any assumptions or generate expectations. Unless otherwise delegated by the Board, or by the congregation as a whole, none of this will change during BUF's time of ministerial transition.

As colleagues within the UU Ministers Association, we enter into a Covenant with one another, and we follow a Code of Professional Practice. These ensure healthy relationships among ourselves and between us and congregations. An essential aspect of our Covenant is that we not insert ourselves into the ministry that a congregation has delegated to another colleague without first consulting with them.

This applies to me as well, of course. It will apply as I explore relationships with colleagues and congregations in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area...and in my relationship with BUF. So my relationship with you will change. But I will miss you. And I will hold you close in my heart.

With much love, Paul

Admin & Interim Minister Update

Transitional Support Minister Hired

Rev. Dr. Barbara Wells ten Hove

Since we were sadly unsuccessful in finding an Interim Minister, and are currently unsure when a contract minister may be hired, the BUF board has asked retired UU minister, Rev. Dr. Barbara Wells ten Hove, to provide quarter-time transitional support ministry June 29-September 30. She formerly served BUF as Sabbatical Minister and this role will be similar as she will manage the Sunday services, provide supervision and support for the staff, and generally offer ministerial advice and experience.

Rev. Barbara has been a UU minister for 40 years and is glad to offer support to this congregation that has been so welcoming of her in retirement.

The board is also creating an Interim Operations Team to provide guidance to the congregation as we navigate this time of change. They will oversee general day to day administrative, program, and ministry functions of BUF.

New Interim Operations Team Formed

In anticipation of Paul's retirement in late June, the BUF Board of Trustees has voted to create a new Interim Operations Team to provide support to our administrator, Michelle, and offer general oversight on the many day-to-day functions at BUF. The Interim Operations Team replaces the existing operations committee, and will exist for two years. It will steer BUF on a steady track and provide support when a new contract minister joins BUF.

The Interim Operations Team will include our administrator Michelle Fox, Board members Natalie Johnson and Ahwren Ayers, and John Stewart and Lucy Kesterson. Cindy Denchfield and Todd Jones have also agreed to join. The team will select a leader and recommend additional members to the Board as needed.

Thanks to the outgoing members of the Operations Committee – Jim Reimer, Deb Cruz, and of course, Paul Beckel – for their contributions to BUF.

Events

Community Night Dinner Tonight

Wednesday, June 11, 6:00pm, BUF

Don't miss this week's CND. Enjoy sausage and spinach tortellini soup, garlic butter baguettes, salad, and dessert!

There will only be one more CND this summer, on June 18. The dinners will resume again in September.

Potluck Sunday is June 15

Sunday, June 15, following the service, BUF Social Hall

The final potluck for this church year will take place on June 15. Please come! Bring your contribution to the Social Hall before the service. Then come downstairs after the Flower Mandela goes into Whatcom Creek or earlier if you don't want to walk to the creek. Select from an amazing variety of foods and enjoy conversation with new and old friends.

Help with the set up or take down and clean up is always appreciated. Many thanks to this year's Potluck Crew: Mark Allyn, Felice Davis, Rod Haynes, Allison and Todd Jones, Dick and Judy Kasper, Lauraine Maness, David Shirey, Ann Stevenson and Marsha Vollkommer.

Paul's Retirement Celebration

Saturday, June 21, Dinner and Program, 5:50pm-8:30pm

Sunday, June 22, Service, 10:20am-noon

Paul's retirement celebration is coming right up! The celebration to honor Paul's retirement from 30 years of UU ministry and 11 years at BUF is a wonderful opportunity to come together as a community and wish Jane and Paul an excellent next chapter in their lives. Please make it a priority to attend one or both of these meaningful events.

Saturday Evening Event Needs

The Saturday Evening Event needs YOU!

We hope as many people as possible will be a part of giving Paul a wonderful farewell. We still need help making our lasagna dinner party a success. If you can help out with one of the items below, please contact Genia Allen-Schmid at geniaas@gmail.com who will provide more details about when and where!

- **Lasagna** - Three more people to make and bake their favorite lasagna at home
- **Dessert** - Desserts for our dessert potluck – we need six more!
- **Flowers** - Flowers from your garden – we only have one person offering to bring flowers and we need armfuls!

Have memories or photos you wish to share? Jeff Copeland is collecting photos for a slideshow. Please email any you might have during Paul's ministry to jeff.copeland@gmail.com **no later than June 14**. Cards and gifts may be brought to BUF at the event. If you'd prefer to write an email message, they can be sent to Barbara ten Hove at revbabs10@gmail.com.

Donations for Gift for Beckels

Shhhh - Gift for Beckels at June 21 Party! (Don't tell them!)

A special gift has been selected to bless Jane and Paul as they retire and move away from Bellingham. Donations to help cover the cost would be graciously accepted.

You can donate any amount by check (memo Beckel Gift); cash (please put in envelope and give to Barbara ten Hove or Jeff Copeland); or through the donation button on the website (also memo Beckel Gift). Anything collected over the amount spent on the gift will go to help them with their move. Thanks for your generosity! (And if you want to know what it is, ask Barbara, but don't tell!)

News

MWU Summer Schedule

MWU will move to an every other week schedule **starting June 18** and resume the weekly schedule on August 27. The first Wednesday with NO distribution will be June 26. Submit by Monday at noon before a Wednesday distribution. Submit your content in the body of an email to mwu@buf.org.

Summer distribution dates and submission deadlines:

- **Wednesday, June 18** | Submit by Monday, June 16
- **Wednesday, July 2** | Submit by Monday, June 30
- **Wednesday, July 16** | Submit by Monday, July 14
- **Wednesday, July 30** | Submit by Monday, July 28
- **Wednesday, August 13** | Submit by Monday, August 11
- **Wednesday, August 27** | Submit by Monday, August 25

[Submit to MWU](#)

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

Highlighting BUF Members

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

Meet Natalie Johnson, Board Trustee



Natalie joined BUF in September 2024. Natalie brings a lifetime of experience at multiple UU congregations across the country, where she served as 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 serving a new full term, 2025-2028.

Celebration of Life: Gil Baker

Saturday, August 2, 2:00pm, BUF

Long-time member Gil Baker, 85, passed on Monday, May 12 surrounded by his loving family. He had "the most peaceful passing one could ask for," as described by his compassionate wife Ginny. A celebration of his life will be held Saturday, August 2 at 2:00pm.



Social and Environmental Justice

SEJC's June Special Collections Recipient *PFLAG*



The mission of [PFLAG \(Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays\)](#) is to act as the bridge between straight and queer communities. The [Transgender Assistance Fund](#), a collaboration between PFLAG Bellingham/Whatcom and PFLAG Skagit, will utilize the SEJC collection to provide members of the transgender community with the direly needed

financial resources. The organization has a speakers' bureau to help the straight community understand and support the queer and transgender community.

The Bellingham Whatcom chapter hosts meetings every Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00pm. For more information, email info@pflagwhatcom.org or call 360-255-3408.

[Learn More](#)

Please contribute to PFLAG anytime during this month.

UPLIFT

Pulse Night of Remembrance and Its Importance

Thursday, June 12

The Pulse Night of Remembrance on June 12 is an annual testament to the work that still needs to be done in the fight for equality. But it also stands as a powerful illustration of hope, resilience, and the healing power of love and community. The Pulse Night of Remembrance gives us space to honor those who are no longer with us. The Pulse nightclub was a known sanctuary for the LGBTQ+ community in Orlando, and at the time of the shooting, more than 300 people were inside celebrating the club's weekly Latin Night. As a result, the 49 people who lost their lives, and the 50 who were injured, were predominantly Latinx members of the LGBTQ+ community. The Pulse shooting is still the most significant single act of violence against the LGBTQIA+ community in the US, and, at the time, was the largest mass shooting in US history.

But love always wins. More than 50,000 people visited the location for an impromptu Pulse memorial service to show support, love, and honor to the victims. Churches held memorial services and candlelight vigils. Neighbors, co-workers, and relatives came to leave letters and tokens of love, and one man drove from Illinois to build 49 crosses in remembrance of each victim of the shooting. Annually, remembrances are observed in Orlando and other LGBTQIA+ communities across the country, honoring those who

died, reaffirming the fight for equality, and making a clear statement against gun violence.

UPLIFT T-Shirts

Order by June 15

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](#)

Engagement & Support

Lunch with Paul

Tuesday, June 17, noon, BUF Social hall

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. **Tuesday, June 17 will be the last lunch with Paul.**

Auction Team Members Needed

The Auction Team needs 2-3 people to help solicit donations to the BUF Auction from local businesses and services. Brenda Goebel, our donations chair, has created a tracking system to make sure we are not making duplicate asks.

We can also use help from all members and friends who are willing to make an ask of one or more businesses/providers; think of your favorite garden stores, restaurants, coffee shops, breweries, clothing stores (new and resale) and service providers. We are representing the mission and presence of our beloved community when we ask for support.

The Auction Team will be present this Sunday after the service to sign you up. We need to have our donations wrapped up by Mid-September.

Thanks for considering this.
Drew Betz, 2025 Auction Chair

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.](#)