



# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: August 27, 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, August 31, 10:30am - Work and Its Rewards - Led by Tom Nicholas and Carrie Koehonline, with contributions from BUF members and friends.

In acknowledgement of Labor Day, we will explore ways that work can bring meaning into our lives (or not). This service will be Andrea Rackl's last in her role as BUF pianist,

so we will honor the work she has done for us. And Lin Skavdahl, the president of the board, will make an announcement about ministerial leadership plans for the fall.

Sunday, September 7, 10:30am - The Shining Sea: BUF's Annual Water Communion Service - Rev. Dr. Barbara Wells ten Hove with Carrie Koehnlne, celebrant and Lis Epperson, RE Coordinator

On this annual All Ages service of return, we share brief reflections by collecting water from our summer. We will also take part in a backpack blessing for our young people. Please bring a vial of water to share in this meaningful ritual. (There will be extra water for those who forget)

Sunday, September 14, 10:30am - We Begin Again, in Love - Rev. Barbara with Tom Nicholas, celebrant

As we face the blessings and challenges of change moving into the fall, can we ask "what's possible?" rather than "what's wrong?" The Choir will sing.

Taize - Monday, October 6, 7:00pm

Carrie Koehnlne and Steffany Raynes coordinate these services in BUF's Sanctuary and on Zoom.

We are committed to continuing to bring Taize to this community and are hoping we will find just the right musician soon. In the meantime, we are cancelling Taize for September ONLY. Thank you for your support of this ministry.

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## Words from the Transitional Minister

Exciting news! After a long and thorough search, the BUF board has approved moving forward with a contract for a new minister to start October 1. While we are not quite ready to name this person, we have a few more hoops to jump through, we are all excited and believe we are making an excellent choice for the next year.

More information will soon follow and for now we ask that you hold your questions. Be patient and not bother Rev. Barbara, or BUF leadership for more details. We promise to let you know as soon as we can.

Let's take a deep breath and hold this good news for a moment in our hearts.

Fall is Coming! Here are some dates to remember.

- Wednesday, September 3 – Choir Practice begins. Note the new start time of 6:30pm! Everyone who likes to sing is welcome to join in. NOTE: Community Night Dinner does not begin until October 1 (see below for more info). Questions about choir? Contact Choir Director Ben Workman-Smith at [choir@BUF.org](mailto:choir@BUF.org).
- Sunday, September 7 – Water Communion All-Ages Service. Please bring a small sample of water to mingle with others at this cherished service. There will be extra water if you forget. We will also do a Backpack Blessing for kids.
- Sunday, September 14 – In-Gathering Service with Choir on the theme “We Begin Again in Love.” The Religious Explorers Program for grades Pre-K through 8th grade begins. For more information, please contact Lis Epperson at [re@buf.org](mailto:re@buf.org).
- Wednesday, October 1 – Community Night Dinners Return. Note the new start time – 5:45pm. Helpers are needed to make this important part of BUF continue strong. If you can help in any way, please contact Jen Villalva at [jennifermvillalva@gmail.com](mailto:jennifermvillalva@gmail.com).

—Rev. Barbara ten Hove, Transitional Minister

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## Religious Education

### Children’s Religious Education

#### School Year Kick-Off

Sunday, September 7



Summer Religious Explorers ends on August 31 and the regular school year begins for the BUF Religious Explorers on Sunday, September 7. We will kick off the new school year with three exciting events happening that day - an open house, backpack blessing, and water communion!

9:15am - Open House in the Flex Room - You and your family are invited to say hello to familiar faces and meet our new Child/Youth Religious Explorer volunteers at our Open House! We will do introductions, you will get to see the curriculum and the space, and have coffee/tea and pastries.

Backpack Blessing (kids, bring your backpacks!) + Water Communion During the service on September 7

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## Family Camp-Out

September 13-14, Katrina & Abe Lloyd-Poppe's Place

Save the Date: the Family Camp-Out is happening September 13-14! This event is for families of all kinds with children and teens. There will be a camp lantern craft, a potluck, and a "campfire" circle with songs and stories. Contact Lis at [RE@buf.org](mailto:RE@buf.org) for more information, and look out for an email with more details including a suggested packing list!



-Lis Epperson, RE Coordinator: [RE@BUF.org](mailto:RE@BUF.org)

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## Adult Religious Education

### From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians - Jim Reimer

4 sessions - Sundays, September 7-28, 12:15-1:45pm, Flex Room

From Jesus to Christ traces the rise of Christianity, explore the life and death of Jesus, and the men and women whose conviction and martyrdom created the religion we now know as Christianity. Archaeological finds have yielded new understandings of Jesus' class and social status. Fresh interpretations offer new perspectives on the identity of the early Christian communities. Drawing upon historical evidence, the series challenges assumptions about Christian origins.

This course will shed light on one of the historical sources of our Unitarian Universalist faith, which began as a liberal Christian denomination several hundred years ago. Four video sessions with facilitated discussion. Feel free to bring a snack. Scholarships are available.

[Register](#)

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## Events

### Volunteer Sunday

Sunday, September 7

Volunteer Sunday is September 7. After the service, sign up for a wide variety of volunteer work. This is an opportunity for us to show our support for BUF, acknowledge our ongoing need for volunteers, and demonstrate that “service gives (BUF) life.” On September 7, look for staffed tables in the Narthex and Social Hall where you can register for your chosen volunteer work. We’re using hand-written forms and online registration through Breeze. Volunteering is flexible; we can accommodate your schedules.

Please pitch in and do your part. We’re all in this together!

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## Community Night Dinners Begin

Wednesday, October 1, 5:45pm

It's soup, salad, and bread on most Wednesdays beginning October 1 at 5:45pm. Come join us Wednesday nights in the social hall. If you are interested in being a part of the dinner planning and leadership team, please let Jane Ronca or Jennifer Villalva know. We need more volunteers if our weekly dinners are going to continue. This is a worthwhile community endeavor, and a great way to meet people too!

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## BUF Auction

Saturday, October 4, 4:30-7:30pm



Our auction is Saturday, October 4 and we need your donations and we need your help! The value of items donated so far is about \$15,300. For last year's event, you donated over \$27,000 in auction items. We can still accept your generous items. We are looking for a diverse range of items, including:

- Gatherings: Host a tea party, instructional class, wine tasting, or themed dinner. It doesn't need to be fancy, and you don't have to host a lot of people! Some of the most popular events have been small, simple meals.
- Tours: Offer tours of interesting locations, a guided mushroom hunt, or hike with a picnic.
- Services: Provide services such as portrait photography, childcare, music lessons, yard work, pet-sitting, or IT assistance.
- Meals: Donate a dining experience at a restaurant, a home-cooked meal, or a monthly pie subscription.

- Trips: Contribute travel packages, weekend getaways, house swaps, or other unique experiences.
- Fine Crafted Items: Are you a woodworker, fiber artist, jewelry maker? Share your handmade, high-quality crafted goods.

Submit donation offerings, purchase your tickets, and start browsing the catalog [here](#).

[Learn More](#)

We need your help! Our auction team needs a leader to take on setting up the tables and settings for the catered dinner. We will recruit volunteers but we need someone to take charge. We also need a leader to plan, and with help, decorate the social hall.

If you are unsure about what to give or how to participate, please chat with an auction team lead: Brenda Goebel, Drew Betz, Annie Sorich, Vanessa Lott. Find us in the social hall after Sunday services.

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## News

### BUF Office Closure

The BUF Office is closed Monday, September 1 in recognition of the holiday.

Questions? Contact Michelle at [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org).

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### MWU Returns to Weekly Schedule

This MWU marks the return to weekly updates. Submit by Monday at 10:00am before a Wednesday distribution. Submit your content in the body of an email to [mwu@buf.org](mailto:mwu@buf.org). Late submissions create late distribution.

[Submit to MWU](#)



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# Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

## Highlighting BUF Members

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

## Celebration of Life of Susie Walker

Saturday, September 27, 2:00pm, Birch Bay Village Clubhouse



Long time member Susie Walker passed on August 7, 2025. She was always a strong advocate for music here at BUF and beyond. A celebration of her life will be held Saturday, September 27, 2:00pm at the Birch Bay Village Clubhouse.

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## Humanitas

[Humanitas](#) is a ministry action team supported by individual contributions from members of the BUF congregation. The program provides financial assistance as an expression of community service and operates in alignment with our Covenant:

“Love is the spirit of this fellowship and service gives it life.”

Humanitas operates on a weekly basis to assist individuals experiencing financial difficulties, whether these challenges stem from unforeseen circumstances, prior decisions, or struggles to meet essential expenses. Recent economic and political developments have contributed to increased demand.



Humanitas volunteers listen, offer a safe, non-judgmental environment, and provide limited emergency support when possible. When needs exceed available funds, guests are referred to our comprehensive support network that includes St. Paul's Alms Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul Society at Sacred Heart, Hillcrest Chapel, and Interfaith Coalition. Pledges are then combined to address these larger needs. Through the generosity of donors and volunteers in 2024, this network provided around \$100,000 in support to the Community.

Services are available to guests on Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:00am.

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## Seeking Spanish-Speaking Volunteers

URGENT REQUEST: Humanitas urgently needs volunteers who can leverage their Spanish-speaking abilities to connect with and serve our vastly increasing non-English-speaking clients, more effectively. We are experiencing a surplus of clients who desperately need assistance, and we only have one Spanish-speaking volunteer, who can't be here every Wednesday. If you can help, please contact Henry Ohana.

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## Social and Environmental Justice

### SEJC's August Special Collections Recipient Bellingham Food Bank

Because hunger is unacceptable, the [Bellingham Food Bank](#) (BFB) has, since 1972, provided free food to hungry people in Whatcom County while addressing the root causes of hunger in our communities.



Today BFB provides food to 5,000 families weekly with its Free Grocery Program, Drive Thru, and Home Deliveries. Through the Whatcom County Food Bank Network, BFB also is the food distribution center for Whatcom County.

When Federal SNAP funds (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) were cut in 2021, BFB's weekly visits

jumped from 1,700 families to 3,500. The new federal budget will cut SNAP funds further. The following funds have already been eliminated:

1. Local Food Purchase Assistance, providing \$180,000 to purchase food from local farmers
2. Emergency Food and Shelter Program, providing \$50,000
3. The Commodity Credit Corporation, providing \$650,000 worth of emergency assistance food

Washington is maintaining State funding, but new federal funding cuts bring huge challenges for hungry people and to BFB in its work to alleviate hunger. Learn more about BFB at [bellinghamfoodbank.org](http://bellinghamfoodbank.org), sign up for their newsletter, or arrange a tour.

BFB proclaims “Food justice is social justice” and does not have proof of address or ID requirements to receive food! BUFsters’ generosity is much appreciated.

[Learn More](#)

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## Engagement & Support

### Join a Chalice Circle

Need to feel more connected at BUF? If you are new to BUF or just want to feel more deeply connected, consider joining a [Chalice Circle](#)—small groups designed to help participants deepen connection and expand personal and spiritual growth. We will be placing people into existing groups or new chalice circles early in September. If you are interested, please contact Kathryn Allen at [kasavelie@aol.com](mailto:kasavelie@aol.com) or Bonnie Phinney at [bonnie\\_phinney@hotmail.com](mailto:bonnie_phinney@hotmail.com).

[Learn More](#)

# Lunch for All

Tuesdays, noon, Social Hall

Join fellow BUFsters for a "Lunch for All" hosted by Mark Allyn. Please join us at noon in the social hall for food and conversation. This will still be a bring-your-own lunch as it was with Lunch with Paul. We hope this will be the beginning of a new tradition.

Questions? Contact Mark Allyn at [allyn@well.com](mailto:allyn@well.com).

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## 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 "\$10" to donate \$10 to the collection basket
- Text "\$10" to "Humanitas" to support the community in need
- Text "\$10 SEJC" to send your contribution to this month's SEJC recipient
- Text "\$10 Taize" to support BUF's Taizé ministry
- Text "\$10 CND" for Community Night Dinners
- Text "\$10 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 account 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.

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## 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](mailto:MWU@buf.org).

## Find the BUF Calendar Online

Visit [buf.org](http://buf.org) for the [complete calendar of BUF events](#) (found on our website under the News tab).

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Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Office phone: 360-733-3887

[buf.org](http://buf.org) | [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org)

Handy Links: [Calendar](#) | [Choir Updates](#)

[Sign up for the Mid-Week Update and/or the BUF News Digest.](#)