



# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **September 17, 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, September 21, 10:30am - Good Grief: Embracing Grief and the Trouble with Not Doing So - Rev. Duane Fickheisen with Marsha Vollkommer, celebrant**

The cultural pressures to quickly get over grief and to move on do not serve us. We'll examine where they came from and how to counter them as we consider the importance of grieving well.

Duane Fickeisen is a retired Unitarian Universalist Minister living in Portland where he facilitates grief groups.

**Sunday, September 28, 10:30am - Honor the Wisdom of Time: 40 Years in Ministry - Rev. Barbara TenHove with Steffany Raynes, celebrant**

On her last Sunday as our Transitional Support Minister, Rev. Barbara will reflect on completing 40 years in the UU ministry. A special collection for CAST will be received.

**Taize - Monday, October 6, 7:00pm**

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

The theme for this service is "Body Blessings." In this season of change and turmoil in the world, we come together for a reminder of what it means to be kind, centered, and resilient in community. Taize is an hour-long service of candlelight, prayer, meditation, and singing. Please join us in welcoming our new keyboard artist, Leah Bruno, that evening.

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## 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

## The Great Questions - Bonnie Phinney & Emmie Schohohm

**5 sessions - Sundays, October 5-November 2, 12:15-2:00pm, Flex Room**

This five-week course will explore our varied answers to some of religion's biggest questions: What does religion mean to you? Who or what is in charge? What happens when we die? What is the nature of evil? What does it mean to be human? With an emphasis on discussion, we will make use of provocative questions, quotations, music and art to stimulate your thinking. Some (minor) preparation and journalling will be expected of participants.

[Register](#)

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## Events

### Interfaith Council Annual Meeting

**Thursday, September 18, 6:00pm, First Christian Church (495 E. Bakerview Road)**

BUF is a long-time supporter of the Interfaith Council of Whatcom County. Come hear its latest updates and plans at the IFC Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 18 at First Christian Church.

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### Project Warm Up

**Friday, September 19, 2:00-4:00pm, Interfaith Coalition Office at First Christian Church (495 E. Bakerview Road)**

If you knit, and have scarves, hats, sweaters, etc. you would like to donate or yarn you would like to swap, bring them to the Interfaith Coalition's annual Project Warm Up event on Friday, September 19. The event will be held from 2:00 to 4:00pm at the Coalition office, located in First Christian Church, 495 E. Bakerview Road. For more information, call the Interfaith Office at 360-734-3983.

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## Potluck Sunday

**Sunday, September 21, noon, Social Hall**

Third Sunday Potlucks are back! Let's all get together to enjoy a delicious meal and conversation after the service on September 21. Please bring your contribution downstairs and place it on the serving table or in the kitchen before the service. Hope to see you there! And if you can stay a while after eating to help put tables and chairs away, it will be appreciated. More volunteers are needed.

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## SEJC Fall Meeting

**Sunday, September 21, noon, library**

All are welcome to attend the Social Environmental Justice Committee's (SEJC) fall meeting next Sunday. New members and guests are always welcome, so bring your ideas and concerns, and join us next Sunday at noon. SEJC supports programs to advance justice, human rights and environmental sustainability through the work of issue-focused Action Teams, monthly Justice Collections, and through sales of Fair-Trade products each Sunday during the coffee hour following the Sunday services.

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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**

The BUF Auction is Saturday, October 4, and we **need volunteers!** Help is especially needed in these areas:

- **Kitchen crew:** Help plate and serve dinner to tables from 4:30-6:00pm, or help with dessert set up and clean up from 6:00-7:30pm.
- **Auctria tech:** Tech-savvy volunteers will check guests in and out, and enter auction bids and other purchases into the system. These volunteers will work during the entire auction (4:15-7:30pm), but will have a few breaks so they can enjoy the event! Must have your own laptop. A training session will be scheduled in the week prior to the event. The auction will not run smoothly without this team, so please consider volunteering!
- **Clean up:** After the auction from 7:30-8:30pm, volunteers are needed to clean up the social hall and library.

Contact Vanessa Lott or email [AuctionAdmin@buf.org](mailto:AuctionAdmin@buf.org) to sign up.

Tickets are on sale now, and online bidding will start September 28 for many items. (Even if you are unable to attend the event, you can still contribute toward BUF's biggest fundraiser of the year by bidding for items online. No ticket purchase is required to bid online.)

[Donate, Browse Catalog & Buy Tickets](#)

If you're interested in getting involved, please chat with an auction team lead: Brenda Goebel, Drew Betz, Annie Sorich, Vanessa Lott. Find us in the social hall after Sunday services.

Thank you to the businesses and BUFsters who have donated to the 2025 BUF Auction!



Beth Nyblade, Grace Nyblade, Rebecca Cowen, Drew Betz, Jan Stamey, Tom Nicholas, Su Livingston, John Hinkle, Kara Black, Gabe Epperson, Annie Sorich, Jim Reimer, Betty Scott, Steffany Raynes, Sue Doster, Kua Patten, Ann Stevenson, Michael Berres, Linda Twitchell, Judy Fruhbauer, Chris Sorich, Kathy Forrest, Francie Gass, Claire Lending, Murray Bennett, Sharon McCarty, Barbara Ellis-Quinn, Barbara Gilday, Marguerite Villalva, Stephanie Sarver, Rupert Ayton, Carrie Koehnlne, Bonnie Phinney, Lew Phinney, Llsa Moss, Barbara Sardarov, Gayle Tilles, Judy Kasper, Beth Brownfield, Debbie Boots, Carol Smith, Felice Davis, Lee Willis, Erik Pearson, John Stewart, Heather Higgins, Peggy Jones, Kathleen Nolan, Bruce Goebel, Joseph McCarthy

list updated 9/14/25

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## News

### Introducing Our New Keyboard Artists

#### Ian Pelot - Keyboard Artist 2



Ian Pelot has played piano for over 10 years, including three years of tutelage under Andrea Rackl. He has played in a variety of ensembles and settings, from jazz combos to school choirs to classical performances. His favorite genres to play are jazz, soundtrack, and classical, and he always enjoys the opportunity to bring extra emotional expression to musical performance. In addition to piano, he has extensive experience with the trumpet, guitar, and bass guitar. Ian is currently a junior at Western Washington University, where he is studying Spanish and Latin American Studies. Outside of music, he greatly enjoys philosophy and weightlifting.

#### Leah Bruno - Keyboard Artist for Taizé



Leah Bruno is a multi-disciplinary musician who specializes in both dance and contemporary art music. She began learning piano at age seven, and went on to add voice, percussion, and composition. Leah graduated from the UBC School of Music (BMus '24) where she studied piano with Terence Dawson and Rena Sharon, as well as composition with Stephen Chatman, Edward Top, and Sarah Hwang. During her time at UBC, Leah premiered several compositions, including her own, and began using her improvisation skills as a dance accompanist at



Arts Umbrella and Ballet BC. Her breadth of experience creates a nuanced performance practice influenced by the intersection of movement, groove, and storytelling. Leah is currently the music director at St. James Presbyterian Church, and an active collaborator in Bellingham.

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## Volunteers Needed for Potluck Sundays

The Potluck Crew needs a few more volunteers to help set up before the service. The job involves getting to BUF by 9:30 am, putting out tables and chairs, setting out silverware, plates and utensils on the serving table, and water pitchers and glasses on a side table. A small team can easily be finished in time for the service. We also need two more people to help take things down after the meal, including cleaning the tables, putting tables and chairs away, wiping up spills, and assisting the Steward with kitchen clean up as needed.

Do you enjoy our Sunday potlucks? Will you volunteer an hour or two of your time once a month so they can continue?

If so, please contact Judy Kasper, at [Kasper.jm828@gmail.com](mailto:Kasper.jm828@gmail.com) or text 563-271-9221 to volunteer.

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## Join the BUF Chalice Choir

**Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45pm**

The Choir Committee encourages anyone who sings or who has ever wanted to try out being in a choir to take up our director Ben Workman Smith's warm invitation to join the BUF Chalice Choir! We have lots of time to learn our pieces and extra help is available. Learning our songs deepens our connection to each other and the music.

We understand that you may not make every rehearsal or our monthly opportunity to be part of the church service. We would love to see people who are still working or with children at home to be able to come. Let us know what we can do to help. We would work to provide childcare if that is a barrier. We meet every Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:45pm. Come check us out!

—Carol Smith Committee Co-Chair



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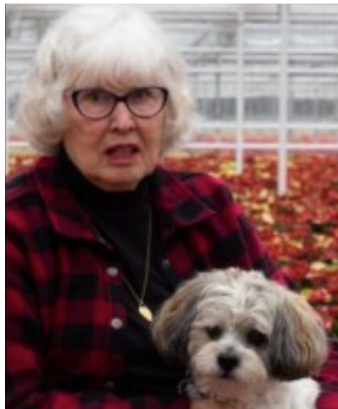
# Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

## 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**

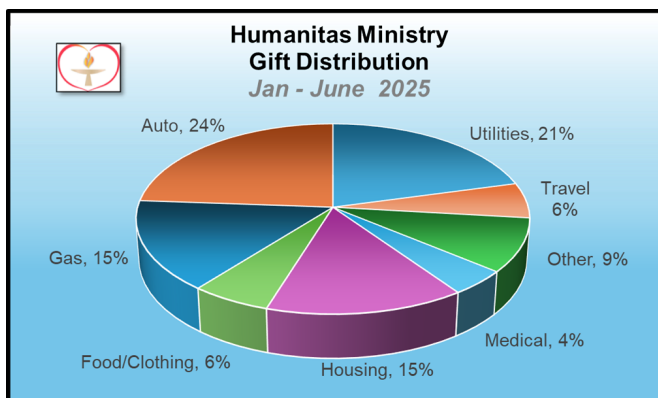


Longtime member Susie Walker passed on August 7, 2025. She was always a strong advocate for music here at BUF and beyond. A celebration of her life will be held Saturday, September 27 at 2:00pm at the Birch Bay Village Clubhouse.

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# Humanitas

## Gift Distribution Report, January-June 2025



### Factoids:

- Guests Served - 147
- Total \$\$\$ Gifted - \$10,87
- Av Gift/Guest - \$74.00

Due to changing political and economic conditions, our Humanitas outreach is seeing more requests for help from local families, especially those in the Latin community. With many facing financial stress or emergencies, our faith network (St Paul's Church, Humanitas, Hillcrest, St Vincent de Paul, Interfaith Coalition) is doing its best to respond, but Humanitas need your support now more than ever.

Thirty-one families who donated to Humanitas in 2024 have not donated in 2025. If this was intentional, we appreciate your past support. However, you may not be aware that changes in BUF's donation platform in January did not carry over your ongoing 2024 commitment into 2025. **If you wish to continue supporting Humanitas, please see below for donation options:**

- Obtain a donation form for automatic withdrawal, from the Administrator
- [Sign up for ACH withdrawal with Breeze](#)
- Text to give at (360) 345-3933, "\$10.00 Humanitas" – indicate the desired dollar amount you would like to donate.

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## Social and Environmental Justice

### SEJC's September Special Collections Recipient *CAST - Coffee and Sandwiches Together*



[Coffee and Sandwiches Together \(CAST\)](#) is the recipient of SEJC's Justice Collection for September. Since 1999 CAST has helped those in need of a simple meal and community connection. This volunteer run organization serves a simple meal of sandwiches, soup, fruit/snack, and beverages to anyone that shows up. There are no qualifications needed to receive this meal, and it is served non-judgmentally with kindness.

CAST sets up four nights a week, rain or shine, outside at the Arch of Healing and Reconciliation behind the library from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. In 2024, BUF donations helped provide supplies for the 20,000 sandwiches served. With sufficient funding, CAST hopes to serve five days a week. Most donations go towards

food supplies but may also go towards such purchases as socks, hand sanitizers, and toiletries when additional funds are available.

Besides monetary contributions, hands-on volunteers are needed to help prepare and transport meals; and set-up, serve, and clean up at the Arch. Thanks to the many BUF volunteers who contribute their time and commitment to CAST.

The Interfaith Council of Whatcom County is the fiscal agent for CAST. Contributions need to be made to IFC and designated for CAST.

[Learn More](#)

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## UPLIFT

### UPLIFT Update: Uplifting Queer Voices Within BUF and Beyond

- 1. The UPLIFT Committee meets on the first Sunday of every month in the Conference room at noon.** Please come. All are welcome.
- 2. Look for Rainbow ribbons attached to name tags.** These folks want you to come ask questions. These volunteers are up for telling you about networking with the queer folk in our congregation and will help you meet people. Friendly and welcoming is our goal.
- 3. Second Sunday of every month** - brown bag lunch with LGBTQIA+. We will gather after coffee hour for socializing and getting to know each other better. Bring food and food to share if feeling inspired. 12:30-2:00pm-ish.

We have some social activity each month. Check here in MWU. We will let you know. If you want to help organize an event please let us know. We welcome new energy and want to get to know you.

Please reach out to our co-chair Grace Nyblade. [Gnyblade@gmail.com](mailto:Gnyblade@gmail.com) or 360-545-3265 (cell).

—Grace Nyblade, Co-chair

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## Engagement & Support

### Help Restore Melanie Rieck's Beloved Piano



Many, many thanks for all the donations to help Melanie replace her unrepairable, badly damaged piano.

Melanie has additional expenses associated with replacing her piano so the GoFundMe is still active if you have not had a chance to contribute. This support means so much to her.

[Help restore Melanie Rieck's beloved piano and continue her passion for music!](#)

Thank you for your kindness.

[Donate Here](#)

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## 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.](#)