



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **September 24, 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 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.

Sunday, October 5, 10:30am – A Sense of Presiding Goodness - Loretta Willems, speaker with Carrie Koehnlne, celebrant and Sunny McMillan, minister

Throughout history there have been those who survived terrible times with their spirits intact and with an enduring capacity to be in love with life. What can we learn from them? Our speaker, Loretta Willems has a Ph.D. in Religion and the Arts and is the author of a family heritage trilogy. Her most recent book is entitled, “A Sense of Presiding Goodness.” We'll also be introducing our new contract minister, Sunny Joy McMillan and our new keyboardist Ian Pelot.

Taize - Monday, October 6, 7:00pm

Carrie Koehnlne 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.

From Our Transitional Support Minister

It is with gratitude and a little relief that I write this column on my last week of serving you as Transitional Support Minister since June 29. During that time, I've worked to assure the Sunday services are well planned and instituted, the staff supported and our soon to be new minister, Sunny McMillan, brought up to speed on how this congregation does its work. I've witnessed how committed the leaders are here and the willingness so many have to step up when asked. I've heard from many of you how much this congregation means to you and why you're so glad to work hard to support it. I've sung a lot of hymns, told some stories and been given the “bully pulpit” to share a few things I've learned over my forty years in ministry (with more to come on my last Sunday, Sept. 28).

And, not surprisingly, I've heard some frustration and concern about how some of our systems and ways of doing church might work better. That's truly normal in a transition such as this one. A lot can rise to the surface as the ground beneath us shifts a bit. As we grow and change as a congregation, I am excited to get to work with our new minister, learning from her and with her. I'm ready to give her the reins of leadership as I let them go into her capable hands.

After this Sunday, when I share my thoughts one more time from the pulpit, I'm going to take a short break from BUF, not participating in services or events until Mid-November. I want to give Sunny a chance to settle in and frankly, I need the break. With Sunny's support, I look forward to returning to the pew as a caring retired colleague.

Let me end by saying a big thank you to everyone who made my short tenure as BUF's minister so meaningful. I am fortunate to be a part of this beloved community.

—Rev. Dr. Barbara Wells ten Hove

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 journaling will be expected of participants.

[Register](#)

Events

De-escalation Refresher Course

Sunday, September 28, 1:00pm, Social Hall

BUF is updating its de-escalation training for the congregation that was first initiated last year. The purpose of the course—taught by the Whatcom County National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)—is to increase awareness of how to offer effective support, demonstrate compassion, and communicate to a person who is overtly troubled or anxious during a service or other BUF-sponsored event at the church. The course is an hour and a half and begins at 1:00pm on September 28, allowing for lunch beforehand.

The course instructor is Deana Ottum from NAMI. Please contact Elie Friedlob if you have any questions: 360-510-0843.

Community Night Dinners Need Your Help

Wednesday, October 1, 5:45pm

Hello! My name is Jennifer Villalva-Cheap. I am the lone organizer of the Community Night Dinners. I need your help!

First, what is Community Night Dinner (CND)? Traditionally, CND is held Wednesday nights at BUF where for \$5 you can enjoy a home-cooked soup, a fresh salad, a bread option, and a simple dessert in the wonderful company of other BUFsters.

Second, how can you help? There are THREE big ways you may be able to help!

1. Come help to **plan, shop, and facilitate the cooking** each week. I need 2-3 more leaders to keep the dinners running. When we started up dinners three years ago, there were three people organizing this amazing event and now it is just me. With 3-4 people organizers, the time commitment is about 4-5 hours a month per person.
2. Sign up for **set-up, clean up, or help in the kitchen**. Time commitment is as much or little as you like. Sign-up once or come every week; any frequency is useful!

- a. Set-up Folks: Arrive around 5:20pm to set up tables/chairs, fill water pitchers, put out salt/paper.
 - b. Clean-up Folks: Begin around 6:30pm to put away everything above and help to store leftover food, and sweep the floor
 - c. Kitchen Help: Arrive at 3:45pm to prep the soup ingredients, chop the salad, prep the bread, and plate the dessert. If you can use a knife, you can help!
3. You can **come to eat dinner on Wednesday nights!**
 - a. The first dinner is October 1!

Finally, you can sign-up by putting your name on the sign-sheet found on the clipboard in the Narthex at BUF or online at [Sign-Up Genius](#) for the Option 2 helping.

If you have interest in helping in the organization of CND, please contact me (Jennifer Villalva-Cheap) at jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com.

[Sign Up to Volunteer](#)

Co-Housing Presentation

Friday, October 3, 7:00-8:00pm, BUF

Please join national Co-Housing expert Katie McCamant for an inspirational presentation on Co-Housing and the local effort here in Bellingham to create a new Co-Housing opportunity across the street from BUF.

Katie's presentation will be held at BUF with a \$10 donation appreciated.

Questions? Contact Ann Stevenson (360-961-4468) or Michael Berres (360-393-6802).

BUF Auction

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



The BUF Auction is less than two weeks away! Join us on October 4 from 4:30pm to 7:30pm for BUF's biggest fundraiser of the year. Bid on over \$25,000 worth of handcrafted goods, art, parties, gift certificates, vacation rentals, and more! We'll be celebrating the Full Moon Festival by giving thanks for a bountiful harvest, spending time with family and friends, and of course feasting on an amazing meal catered by Xing's Panda Palace.

Ticket sales will end Sunday morning, so don't delay in reserving your spot! Online bidding will start Sunday, September 28, for many items. (Even if you are unable to attend the event, you can still bid online without purchasing a ticket.)

For more information or to volunteer during the event, please email the auction team at AuctionAdmin@buf.org.

[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.

Hospitality

Pathways for Newcomers with Felice Davis

Saturday, October 18, 10:00am-2:00pm, Flex Room (Top Floor)

Hosted by the Hospitality Committee and open to all those new to BUF, Pathways is a Unitarian Universalist (UU) tradition for adults to get to know others in a small group setting and to learn about our church and UUism. The session features a Q&A with one of our ministers.

Partial lunch provided. Fun and Informative!

To sign up, text Felice Davis at 253-307-8981 or email fdavis1944@gmail.com.

News

Email/Text Scams Target Church Members

Scammers are everywhere and they are known to target people in trusting environments like congregations. Recently, BUF member Ruth Ann Hanlin's computer was hacked and we know other BUFsters have been scammed as well, including a particularly malicious attack a few years ago.

Scammers have gotten a lot more sophisticated and these things can look legit. If you receive a suspicious-looking email of any kind that purports to be from BUF or a church member, please ignore it. Never, never click on anything unless you are 100% sure it's from a trusted source! It also helps to let the church office know.

There's only so much BUF can do to prevent or disrupt these scams. Thanks for doing your part to stay alert and avoid getting caught up in them.

News from BUF's Safety and Security Team

Our AED has a new home! The AED (automated external defibrillator) has been relocated to the narthex, near the sanctuary doors, to be closer to where main activities take place. This was a change recommended by our resident medical experts. Many, many thanks to Constance O'hana for re-installing the AED.

Workshops:

You are enthusiastically invited to our upcoming training series:

- Behavioral de-escalation training on Sunday, September 28 at 1:00pm in the Social Hall, presented by NAMI
- Intruder response training on Sunday, November 16 at 12:45pm in the Social Hall, presented by the Bellingham Police Department Community Engagement Officer.

The more of us who feel up to speed on these topics, the better; please come!

Questions?

Talk to any team member: Jim Reimer (chair), Michael Berres, Michelle Fox, Elie Friedlob, Sarah Pearson, Felice Davis, Linda Twitchell, Cindy Denchfield, and Doug Branson

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.

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 6:00pm 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](#)

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. Next meeting is October 5.

2. Look for Rainbow ribbons attached to name tags. These folx want you to come ask questions. These volunteers are up for telling you about networking with the queer folx 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, October 12.

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 or 360-545-3265 (cell).

—Grace Nyblade, Co-chair

Engagement & Support

Update from Melanie Rieck

I have reached my [goal](#) and have ordered the replacement from Seattle Piano. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your loving generosity. This will allow me to continue MUSICHEALS!

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.

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.

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](#)

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