



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **October 1, 2025**

Upcoming Services

Sunny Notes

Religious Education

- [Children's Religious Education](#)
 - [Family Campout Recap](#)
- [Adult Religious Education](#)
 - [The Great Questions](#) - October 5-November 2

Events

- [Community Night Dinners Need Your Help](#) - October 1
- [Co-Housing Presentation](#) - October 3
- [BUF Auction](#) - October 4

News

- [News from BUF's Safety and Security Team](#)

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

- [Aloha of Goodbye to Jane DeBrock](#)

Building and Grounds

- [Parking Lot - Potholes - Pickaxe - and Cider](#) - October 18

Hospitality

- [Pathways for Newcomers](#) - October 18

Social and Environmental Justice

- [SEJC's October Special Collections Recipient - Whiteswan Environmental \(WE\)](#)

Stewardship

- [Dining With Friends](#)

UPLIFT

- [UPLIFT Update: Uplifting Queer Voices Within BUF and Beyond](#)

Engagement & Support

- [Lunch for All](#) - most Tuesdays
- [BUF Text to Give](#)

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, October 5, 10:30am – A Sense of Presiding Goodness - Loretta Willems, speaker with Carrie Koehnline, 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 Koehnline 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.

Sunday, October 12, 10:30am – Together in the Boat - Marsha Vollkommer, celebrant and Sunny McMillan, minister

The late William Bridges, a preeminent authority on change, once used the metaphor of a boat moving away from an old shore and toward a new shore to describe how we as humans navigate transition. As we embark upon the journey of my ministry at BUF, we will explore this boat we'll be sharing, who is in it, and where we are headed together. Here's to the voyage!

Sunny Notes



It is with excitement and gratitude that I write this first column as I embark upon serving you all as your contract minister—excitement because I have spent the last three years at Yale Divinity School eagerly anticipating this very moment of beginning my ministerial walk alongside a congregation, and gratitude because I am beginning my ministry with a congregation as wonderful as BUF. What an honor and a privilege.

I write to you from my new studio apartment here in Bellingham, where I am getting settled and beginning to explore all that your special city has to offer. I have received the warmest of welcomes and over-the-top hospitality from all those among you who I have met so far. Thank you! And I look forward to meeting all those I have not yet met very soon.

To that end, I will be holding "Getting to Know You" small-group meetings in the coming weeks so that I can hear what you love about BUF, what BUF does best, and what your hopes for BUF's future are (please stay tuned for instructions coming soon on how to sign up for these meetings). Echoing Rev. Barbara ten Hove's words in her final column as your Transitional Support Minister, I am here to learn from and with you all as we navigate this transition together. I have seen already that this is a vibrant congregation full of caring and committed folks who hold a wealth of personal and institutional wisdom (I also am thrilled to have so many practicing and retired ministers in our midst!) and who are showing up to help in this beloved community and in the world beyond through numerous social justice endeavors. I am here for all of it and will support the work of this incredible congregation to the best of my abilities.

I cannot wait to hit the ground running with you all this week—here's to a wonderful year ahead!

— Sunny Joy McMillan, J.D., M.Div.

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.

Family Campout Recap

A big belated THANK YOU to Abe and Katrina Lloyd-Poppe for hosting BUF families and BUFsters on your beautiful property for a BUF Family Campout in September. Fun was had by over 45 people, young and old. Kids got dirty and free-ranged, new friends were made, old were treasured, spooky stories were told, food was shared, songs were sung, and families left happy and tired, smelling like campfire smoke. Parents in attendance said “It was really nice to have an unstructured chunk of time to meet and talk with other BUF parents.” We’re all looking forward to the next one!

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

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 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



Our Full Moon Festival is this Saturday, October 4 from 4:30pm to 7:30pm, and online bidding is already underway on many items! Bidding will pause today and then resume at the event on Saturday. We are so excited to celebrate with you!

If you signed up to volunteer, you will receive an email from our Volunteer Coordinator Vanessa detailing what you need to know for your volunteer shift. If you have any questions about bidding, volunteering, or the event itself, please contact us at AuctionAdmin@buf.org.

View the catalog (and your bid status) here: auctria.events/buf2025

[View Auction Catalog](#)

News

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:

- 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

Aloha of Goodbye to Jane DeBrock



Long time BUF member Jane DeBrock breathed her last breath on Wednesday, September 24, at the Whatcom Hospice House. Family is now with Leslie (shown here with Jane) and arrangements are pending.

Jane was one of the sweetest, kindest of souls. Yes, there's a hole in the heart of everyone who was touched by her. Safe travels, dear Jane.

Building and Grounds

Parking Lot - Potholes - Pickaxe - and Cider

Saturday, October 18, 9:00am-noon (or until done, whichever comes first)

Our beautiful BUF has a parking lot with some pot holes that need filling. Bring your pickaxe or shovel, if you have one, or come to help spread a little gravel. As they say, "many hands make light work." We can get this effort finished quickly with lots of hands, and we can have fun and camaraderie while doing it. We will serve hot cider to help keep you warm and hydrated.

Questions? Call Ahwren at 360-312-1244.

Hospitality

Pathways for Newcomers with Felice Davis

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

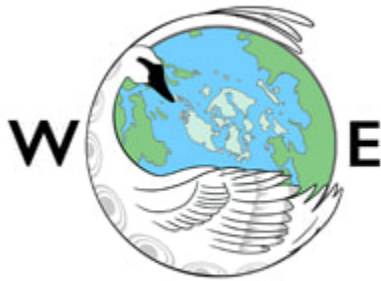
Hosted by the Hospitality Committee and open to all those new to BUF, Pathways is a Unitarian Universalist (UU) tradition for adults to get to know others in a small group setting and to learn about our church and UUism. The session features a Q&A with one of our ministers.

Partial lunch provided. Fun and Informative!

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

Social and Environmental Justice

SEJC's October Special Collections Recipient *Whiteswan Environmental (WE)*



[Whiteswan Environmental \(WE\)](#) envisions a future where the environment and Coast Salish culture thrive together in the Salish Sea. 170 years ago, our ancestors were removed from their village sites. WE dreams of healing that begins with the restoration of Houses of Healing, Houses of Learning Longhouses. Through these sacred waters that flow from Kwelshan (Mt. Baker) to the Salish Sea, perhaps one day future generations will witness Truth, Healing, and Reconcili-ACTION. To address the disparities left to Mother Earth and her people, WE co-founded a Washington State Charter School. This

initiative arose from the urgent need to create a learning environment where indigenous youth and their peers can grow in ways that honor both Indigenous and Western worldviews — reconnecting education to land and culture. WE is leading a resurgence of classroom-to-place-based education that uplifts all peoples' history, culture, governance, and language, and prepares youth to carry forward intergenerational responsibilities of land care and relational leadership.

The SEJC Collection On October 12 Will Be Used For:

- Learning from the Homeland Language Camps — a safe, immersive experience for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth that revitalizes knowledge systems and nurtures future leaders grounded in ancestral homelands.

[Learn More](#)

Stewardship

Dining With Friends

Dining With Friends is a wonderful opportunity to get to know fellow BUFsters in small, casual social gatherings. We need another volunteer to help coordinate hosts and guests.

If you can help please contact Heather Higgins at hhiggins31@gmail.com or 360-820-2259.

[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

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.

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](#)

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