



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **October 15, 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, October 19 - Welcoming Congregation and Strangers in our Midst
Grace Nyblade celebrant and Odessa Karwyn past priest are presenting on The Welcoming Congregation Certification.

We will share lessons learned and the intersection of Queer, Neurodiversity and Religion. Grace Nyblade has been co-chair for the last three years of UPLIFT - BUFs committee on uplifting queer voices within this congregation and in the community. Odessa Karwyn has served 13 years as a priest in the Anglican Church in North America, until being pressured to resign in 2025 for raising questions about gender and sexuality that challenged denominational orthodoxy.

Sunny Notes



It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces this past Sunday—my first official Sunday preaching from the pulpit. And it was wonderful to meet so many of you who I had not yet met.

My sermon featured the work of the late William Bridges from his book *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*—a book that recently celebrated its 40th Anniversary Edition and has sold over one million copies. In the book, Bridges identifies an important distinction between change and transition: Change is situational (e.g., the birth of a baby, the death of a loved one, the start of a new job, the move to a new city...or the arrival of a new minister to your congregation—I added that one). Transition, on the other hand, is psychological.

As Bridges puts it, a transition is not the “events, but rather the inner reorientation and self-redefinition that you have to go through in order to incorporate any of those changes into your life.” My arrival is a change, yes, but I hope we can make it a transition—a transition full of meaningful reflection and inner reorientation *inspired by what I hear and learn from you all*. I have already heard from many of you through the "Getting to Know You" small-group meetings I've been holding. And I look forward to hearing more. If you have not already done so, I invite you to [sign up for one of these meetings](#). There are paper sign-up sheets hanging in the box outside my office door at BUF. Alternatively, you may use the link to below to sign up via my online scheduler:

<https://sunnyjoymcmillanscheduling.as.me/?appointmentType=83784886>

Right now, our world is chaotic and challenging and pretty scary. I think it is good to acknowledge and hold on to our awareness of the sorrow and suffering we are seeing.

But I think it is also possible to hold wonder and awe and possibility. As our Regional Lead for this Pacific Western Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Rev. Sunshine Jeremiah Wolf wrote this past summer, “To say yes to joy, humor, wonder, and play in a time of ever-increasing stress and uncertainty is an act of resistance all by itself...Cause good trouble and comfort in equal measure—it is needed now more than ever.”

I believe this is our true work—to come together in both lament and joy, precisely so that we can remain engaged, do our own work at BUF, do good work out in the world, and keep moving forward. I am so honored and privileged to be here at BUF. In spite of all that is happening around us, at BUF, I am optimistic for what the future holds.

— 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.

Events

Sunday Potluck

Sunday, October 19, Social Hall

Let’s all get together for a potluck in the Social Hall after the service on October 19. We’ll have a chance to enjoy some interesting and tasty food and lively conversation with old and new friends. Please bring your contribution downstairs before the service and place it on the serving table or in the kitchen.

Hope to see you there! Questions? Talk to Judy Kasper.

Halloween Potluck/Movie Night

Saturday, October 25, 5:00-7:00pm, Social Hall



Come join a family-friendly and all-ages gathering for all BUFsters to celebrate the fun that can be had around Halloween. We'll have a potluck dinner (bring a dish to share) from 5:00 to 7:00pm with a showing of the movie *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* and other kid-friendly Halloween shows ("Sesame Street"). Costumes encouraged.

If you can help set up and clean up (30 minutes before and after), please contact maryannwelch33@gmail.com.

Invitation to a BUF Community Forum on Immigrants in Whatcom County

Thursday, November 6, 7:00-8:30pm, BUF Social Hall

We will have a panel of people who have experience and expertise, a moderator from WREC, and time for questions and comments from the audience. For everyone's safety, and to help us decide what we can do we are inviting only members and friends of BUF.



**WHATCOM
RACIAL EQUITY
COMMISSION**

What you can expect:

- To hear about ongoing issues faced by immigrants and the increased presence of ICE in Whatcom County.
- To learn what local governments and police can and cannot do, and what non-governmental organizations have been doing, how they have succeeded, and where they need help.
- To share our own feelings about what we have learned, our moral commitments as Unitarians, and what helps us to take action or hinders us.

By participating we hope to see the outlines for collective decision, and we will schedule a later meeting to make that decision. We hope to create collective actions by BUF members, not just by individuals acting alone.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact David Curley at dlcurley1945@gmail.com or Lucy Kesterson at lkesterson@gmail.com.

Co-hosted by BUF BLM and other SEJC teams at BUF and the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (WREC)

Community Night Dinners Need Your Help

Next Dinner Date TBD

Community Night Dinner is on hiatus until we can get some dishwashers hired. We look forward to starting back up once this critical role is filled. Additionally, we are still looking for two to three folks to help oversee/lead the dinner- these are the leads in the kitchen following the recipe, making sure everyone has a task, and the dinner is served on time. This is a once every couple of weeks commitment. Shadowing opportunities will be available before being asked to lead solo. 😊

You can also volunteer with helping to put on the CND weekly; here's the weekly sign up for various roles. 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.

For any questions: email jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com or text or call 360-202-7866

[Sign Up to Volunteer](#)

Hosted Events Sign-Ups (Auction Update)

Sign up for a hosted event to raise money for BUF!

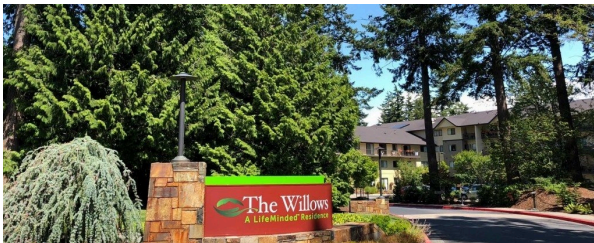
Several of the events that were up for bidding during the auction still have space remaining. Check out the list below and use the auction website to sign up for an event.



October 21 evening (start date)
[Weekly Mah Jong class](#) with Kara Black



November 1, 10:30am
[Cemetery Tour](#) with Drew Betz



November 1, 2:00-6:00pm
[Mindful Living as You Age](#) with Beth Brownfield



November 8, 12:00pm
[Cheap Wine, Good Lunch, Great Company](#) with Linda Twitchell

Browse many more events in January and beyond, plus some art and handmade items! Check the catalog at auctria.events/buf2025.

[Sign Up & View 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 Sanctuary**, 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

Dining With Friends

Dining with Friends, a great way to meet and get to know fellow BUFsters, will start in November. Families, singles, couples and people of all ages are encouraged to sign up and join. You can learn more and sign up by clicking the button below.

Paper forms will also be available at coffee hour.

[Learn More & Sign Up](#)

Building and Grounds

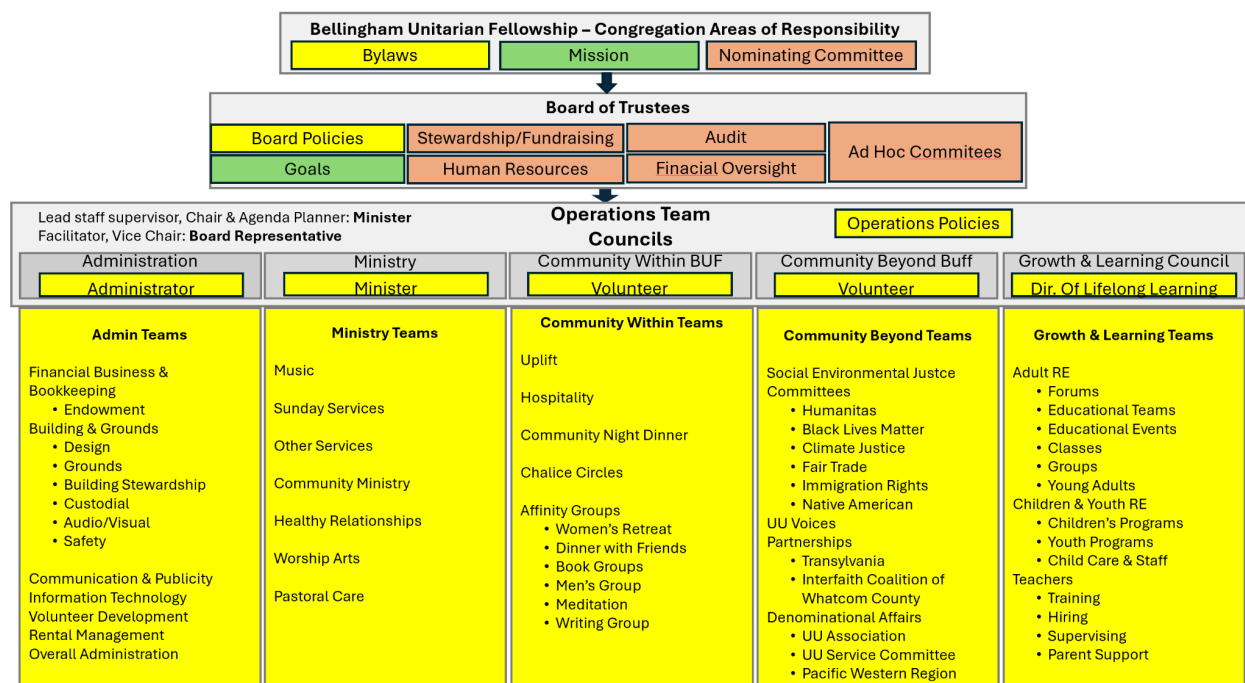
BUF Operations Team Update

Your BUF Operations Team has been working hard, meeting two times monthly over the summer updating BUF Community Information and More to share with you. More to come...

We also need two good quality used office chairs to replace the ones that are falling apart in the BUF Office. Please contact us if you have one or two you can donate dougebranson1@gmail.com.

Below is the flowsheet we created to understand how we're organized.

Questions? Ask Cindy Denchfield (cdenchfield@yahoo.com) or Ahwren Ayers (ahwrenayers@gmail.com).



IT Update

A Wi-Fi upgrade is in progress.

BUF's IT team is working on upgrading the building's network and wifi infrastructure. Our goal is to improve wifi availability and reliability throughout the building. This may take a month or two, so please be patient.

You may see things like blue tape on the walls (marking the locations of new and existing wiring), or mock Wi-Fi access points in various locations. Please leave these in place.

If you have questions or comments, please send them to either Rory McLeod (mcleodnw@gmail.com) or Jed Reynolds (jed@bitratchet.com).

~ Your volunteer IT team

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

NO KINGS RALLY

Saturday, October 18, meet at BUF at 12:30pm

Come one and all to the NO KINGS RALLY October 18th. You are invited to meet at BUF at 12:30 to march together to Maritime Heritage Park.



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](#)

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.

Interfaith Coalition's Winter Coat Drive

Through Friday, October 24 (drop off at BUF by Thursday, October 23)



BUF has traditionally participated in the [Interfaith Coalition's Winter Coat Drive](#) to provide new or gently used coats to help keep our neighbors warm.

This year's Coat Drive is now underway until October 24. You may drop off donated coats in the bin provided in the entryway at BUF during office hours, Wednesday choir, and on Sunday mornings. Coats will be taken to Interfaith by BUF on the 23rd so please drop them off before the deadline.

All sizes are needed. In high demand are children's sizes and XL, XXL, XXXL for adults.

Thanks for your generosity!

Questions? Ask Rose Edington, BUF Liaison to Interfaith Coalition

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.](#)