



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **October 29, 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, November 2, 10:30am - What Kind of Ancestor Do You Want to Be?

- Rev. Marsha Vollkommer, and Steffany Raynes as Celebrant

In a time that provokes us, challenges us, and often saddens us, we may be left feeling frustrated at the question “what am I called to do?” It is a question with so many (too many) answers. On November 2, All Souls Day, we will explore the ways we live, create and reinforce the foundations of life for future generations – the world we cultivate for the lives that follow ours. A different question “What Kind of Ancestor Do You Want to Be?” might lead the way.

Taize - Monday, November 3, 7:00pm

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

The theme for this service is “Finding Beauty in the Fragility of Life.” In this season of change and turmoil in the world, we come together for a reminder of what it means to be resilient, centered, and open-hearted in community. Taize is an hour-long service of candlelight, prayer, meditation, and singing.

Sunny Notes



During the Sunday service this past weekend on October 26, I shared a few fun facts about fungi from Dr. Merlin Sheldrake's book, *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures*. Of all the various fungi Sheldrake explores in the book, I am most fascinated by "radiotrophic fungi" that are “able to harvest the energy emitted by radioactive particles.” These remarkable fungi are thriving in the ruins of Chernobyl. As Sheldrake explains:

"Fungi are veteran survivors of ecological disruption. Their ability to cling on—and often flourish—through periods of catastrophic change is one of their defining characteristics. They are inventive, flexible, and collaborative."

Inventive, flexible, and collaborative. I cannot help but think these three fungal characteristics will serve us humans well in these chaotic and challenging times we are living in—times of great disruption and change. I also am heartened by the fact that we

are part of a tradition that embodies these characteristics. Historically, Unitarian Universalism has shown itself to be inventive and flexible, growing and changing over time in its theology, its purposes and principles, and its values. And we Unitarian Universalists, united not by creed but by covenant, are collaborative in our efforts. As we navigate what lies before us, may we be like the radiotrophic fungi who are able to survive, even thrive, in the harshest of conditions. May we continue to be inventive, flexible, and collaborative.

Speaking of collaboration, I would like to mention two specific items of note:

- As I shared in my Opening Words at the October 26 service, the organizer/leader of Wednesday Community Night Dinners needs our help. Jennifer Villalva-Cheap (aka Jen) has put out the call for 2-3 folks from the BUF community to step up and share in the leadership efforts so that this important BUF event is able to continue. Please contact Jen (jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com) for more details—the time commitment would involve leading approximately 1 dinner per month, if we get just a few folks signed up.
- I have announced several dates in November for more "Getting to Know You" Meetings with me. If you have not yet signed up, I would love to meet you. Please feel free to [use the scheduling link to grab a spot](#). And if you are unable to find a day/time that works well for your schedule, you are always welcome to contact me directly (minister@buf.org) to schedule something.

— Sunny Joy McMillan, J.D., M.Div.

Religious Education

Children's Religious Education

Sunday Religious Explorers

Sunday Religious Explorers is now offering Middle and High School Art Studio time during the service! Please send your Youth upstairs following the Time for All Ages to explore their creativity with artist Alycia Lund of The Beehive Art Collective.

Pre-K still meets in the Pre-K room and K-5 is finishing the last two weeks of the JETPIG Cooperative Challenge, where we have been exploring each of our six UU values with cooperative games and challenges.

Pathways for Parents

Sundays, November 7, 9, 16, 10:30-11:15am, Conference Room

with Gayle Tilles and Ellen Berning

Open to all parents new at BUF, this is a fun tradition aimed at helping you get to know other parents in a small group setting and helping you and your children get the most from your BUF experience. This class runs for three consecutive Sundays from 10:30 to 11:15am when your children are already in their Sunday classes. We will meet in the conference room and light snacks will be served. If you have not already signed up and would like to participate, please register by emailing ellenberning@gmail.com.

[Register](#)

Halloween Movie/Potluck Recap



Our Halloween Movie/Potluck last Saturday evening was a hoot. We had 20+ adults and kids attend and a delicious fun time was had by all.

We hope you can join the next one in November. Watch this space!

Exploring Spirituality with Teens

Do you care about the future of UU-ism? Interested in exploring spirituality and religion with our teens? Contact RE Coordinator Lis Epperson to learn more. Or, contact Gabe Epperson, our Youth Coordinator, who is **looking for a team to join him in getting a Youth Group started at BUF**.

Contacts:

- Lis Epperson, RE Coordinator - RE@buf.org; or call the office at 360-733-3837 and leave a message for her.

- Gabe Epperson, Youth Coordinator - eppersonator@gmail.com

Adult Education

The Thomas Jefferson Bible – with Rod Haynes

Sunday, November 16, 12:15–2:00 pm, Flex Room (Top Floor)

Through guided discussions and examining Jefferson's annotated Bible, participants will explore Jefferson's rational approach to Christian principles — emphasizing Jesus's morality while removing supernatural elements of Christ's biblical life.

We will review Jefferson's groundbreaking work in establishing religious freedom in colonial Virginia's government. This was a precursor to the Constitution's 1st Amendment.

We will ask, how does the Jefferson Bible touch our lives today?

[Register](#)

Events

Community Night Dinners

Wednesdays, 5:45pm (and weekly on Wednesdays)

Weekly Wednesday night dinners are back on! Tonight's menu:

- Soup - cheddar broccoli soup, plus a veggie/vegan soup option
- Salad - a simple salad
- Bread - buttered baguettes
- Dessert - An assortment!

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.

Did you participate last year and LOVE it? Sign up again and encourage other BUFsters to join as well. Sign up online at the link below; paper forms will also be available at coffee hour.

[Learn More & Sign Up](#)

Community Forum: Immigration Issues in Whatcom County

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

When I, David Curley, spoke to BUF on September 14, I said that listening to and speaking the truth with each other is the best way I know to discover our next step in difficult times. The increased presence of ICE in Whatcom County poses difficult challenges that need a common effort from us. This Community Forum is how we can start. The Community Forum will be co-hosted by BUF BLM and by the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (WREC).



WHATCOM
RACIAL EQUITY
COMMISSION

We will have a panel of 10 people who have lived 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 together we are inviting in to the audience only members and friends of BUF.

Why?

- **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, about our values and moral commitments as Unitarians, and what hinders and helps us to take action.

- **To decide and act** — Later we will schedule a meeting to review common interests and to make decisions for collective actions by us as BUF members.

Questions or want to volunteer? Contact David Curley: dlcurley1945@gmail.com, 360-739-6292

[Register to Attend](#)

NAMI De-Escalation Training Workshop

Sunday, November 9, 1:00-2:30pm, Social Hall

BUF has rescheduled the de-escalation training for the congregation that was first initiated last year and was originally set for September 28. This **free** course will be taught by Deana Ottum, an instructor from [Whatcom County National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#). This course will increase our 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 or in our community.

Questions? Contact Elie Friedlob: 360-510-0843

Operations Rental Committee Meeting

Monday, November 10, 5:00pm, Conference Room

The BUF Rental Committee will get organized to address both short term and long term needs to assure we are able to meet the facility needs of BUFsters, friends and community members. If you are interested in helping, plan to attend this organizing meeting.

Endowment Committee Workshop

Saturday, November 15, 9:30am-12:30pm, Social Hall

The BUF Endowment Committee will host a half-day workshop. Committee Chair John Stewart will provide an update on current value and use of the BUF Endowment Fund begun in 2012. We invite you to learn more about and discuss leaving a financial legacy

to BUF and planning lifetime gifts, with Rick Steele presenting tax planning for charitable giving and Brian Hansen presenting planned giving through Estate Plans and simple wills. Rod Haynes will discuss Medicare and other health insurance options for retirement and Ken Gass will discuss support for wellness as you age into and through retirement and the importance of end-of-life planning and discussions with your loved ones.

Presentation outlines and resources will be provided on all topics and there will be time for questions. **RSVP to Ken Gass at kbgass@gmail.com subject line “BUF EC Workshop”** if you plan to attend, either alone or with a partner, to aid space and food planning; however, last-minute arrivals without an RSVP will not be turned away. The refreshment break will divide the presentations into the first three of interest to all adult BUF members and last two for those close to retirement.

[RSVP](#)

Intruder Response Training

Sunday, November 16, 12:45pm, Sanctuary

Please join us for the Safety and Security Team’s upcoming intruder response training presented on November 16 by the Bellingham Police Department Community Engagement Officer. The more of us who feel up to speed on these topics, the better!

Questions? Contact admin@buf.org.

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 and we’re so close to making our goal of raising \$30k for BUF.

Check out the [auction website](#) to browse more 2025-26 events that still have openings.

[Sign Up & View Catalog](#)

Volunteer Opportunities & Needs

Opportunity / Item	Details & Contact Info
Item: Office Chair (1) Requested by: Operations Team	Seeking one more quality, used office chair to replace the one that is falling apart in the BUF Office. Thank you to whoever already provided one! Contact: Doug Branson - email dougebranson1@gmail.com
Volunteers: Dinner Leads (2-3 total) For: Community Night Dinners (CND)	CND still needs 2-3 dinner leads. These leaders in the kitchen follow a recipe provided (we'll plan which soup you cook), help make sure everyone has a task, and ensure dinner is served on time. If you'd like to try it out or shadow Jen for a week, contact her ASAP. Contact: Jennifer Villalva, Community Night Dinner organizer - email jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com , or call/text 360-202-7866
Volunteers: Community Night Dinner volunteers, various roles (several) For: Community Night Dinners (CND)	There are many ways to help support Community Night Dinner. Sign up to help chop the vegetables and prepare the dinner, help with setup, help reset the social hall, or just come eat the soup. Help once, or help on a regular basis; it is totally up to you! Sign-up online or in person on the clipboard on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Contact: Jennifer Villalva, Community Night Dinner organizer - email jennifermvillalva@hotmail.com , or call/text 360-202-7866
Volunteers: Short-term help for B&G team (5-6 people) For: Building & Grounds (B&G) team	Do you like to organize? Share your home repair skills now and then? BUF B&G needs 5-6 more people who can be available for occasional repairs. Contact: Ahwren, 360-312-1244

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

Highlighting BUF Members

Aloha of Goodbye to Marian Beddill



We are sad to say that longtime BUF member, Marian Beddill, passed away in September. Marian was active in her church, her community and the world, both in her professional life, and her personal life, much of which is documented in her self-published book: "None of the Three." Bellingham will remember her from her active participation in Whatcom Democrats and her presence at City Council meetings - particularly those related to water quality. We at BUF remember her for many things - creating our first website, being an engaged greeter, her faithful presence at Women's Retreats, and of course, her ever-present harmonica, among others. For

many of us, Marian was the first transgendered woman we knew personally.

Memorial Service for Marian Beddill

Friday, November 7, 7:00pm, Sanctuary

Come celebrate Marian's remarkable life. Share a brief memory or story, and be in solidarity with one of our own who has passed on. Nibbles and conversation afterwards.

If you prefer not to drive in the evenings, Kristin Barber (360-305-4103), Joan MacKay (360-703-7835), or Ann Stevenson (360-961-4468) would be happy to drive you.

—Barbara Gilday (journeys333@comcast.net, 360-927-6627)

Aloha of Hello to Maryann Welch



You've probably been seeing my name on the MWU team as of the last month. I joined BUF less than a year ago (although I've been coming much longer).

I have two energetic children Leo (8) and Alice (4) who I'm sure you've seen on Sunday's and at the CND gatherings. My partner is Jerimiah. I'm a stage 3 breast cancer survivor, a past social worker, past daycare provider, artist/teacher and just love our Bellingham community. When I'm not here on a Sunday you can probably find me playing kayak polo at Marine Park, or hiking on the trails.

I'm glad to be a part of this beloved community and look forward to raising my children among you. You'll probably be seeing me help coordinate some family hangouts at BUF as I love building community with other families and creating a fun/safe village for our kids. I'm looking forward to meeting many more of you and doing the MWU has been a great way to do that.

Building and Grounds

BUF Grounds Clean-Up and Leaf Raking

Saturday, November 15, 9:00am-done

It's leaf raking time and we have some free mulch for your gardens! If you're excited by nature's bounty relating to leaf mulch you can 'Rake and Take' at any time or look to the right of the parking area along the wooden fence and see if a pile of leaves are already waiting to go home with you (bring your own bags). The benefit to BUF is that we will be walking and driving on fewer wet slippery leaves. A more formal all over clean-up will be on November 15.

We Can See The Light Update

Our ceiling globe lights were cleaned, all new bulbs installed, and the broken ceiling fan replaced. Quinn Williams was the lead on October 14 picking up the “lift” and doing all the work up in the Sanctuary ceiling. Quinn also installed new lights, camera, and a long “to do” list for AV.



Jeff Copeland, Jim Reimers, and Lena Mason-Zollfrank were the ground crew, supporting Quinn’s aerial work up in the lift. Jim put together the new ceiling fan, and Jeff was involved in figuring measurements and more to help the project move along. David Shirey, Cindy Denchfield, Mark Allyn, and Ahwren Ayers helped with prep work earlier in the day. Doug Branson moved all the seating and pews aside to clear the floor for the lift, and put them all back in place again when the project was finished.

It was a big job and a great team effort in which everyone worked well together. We even learned some new jokes like: “How many ‘blank’ does it take to screw in a light bulb?” Quinn, Jeff, Jim, Doug, Lena, David,

Cindy, and Mark: your help was greatly appreciated. BUF THANKS YOU!

- Ahwren

Parking Lot/Pot Holes Update



We left the entrances to the BUF parking lot better than how we found them. Pickaxes and shovels and delicious apple cider. Thank you: Murray Bennett, Cindy Denchfield, Frank Klassen, Lin Skavdhal, Dick Casper, Haven Silver, Chris Sorich, Jim Riemer, and Ahwren Ayers.

Social and Environmental Justice

SEJC Special Collection for Partner Church

Sunday, November 23

On Sunday, November 23, 2025, BUF will hold a special collection for the Unitarians in Magyarszovat, Transylvania. Since 1992 BUF has maintained a partnership with this historic Unitarian congregation. Through letters, financial contributions, and many visits by Bellingham congregants, we have built a deep connection with the Transylvanian descendants of the founders of Unitarianism.

In 2017, a 43-voice BUF choir toured Transylvania and spent several days in Magyarszovat, singing and eating together, strengthening our bond of friendship. In 2023, BUF, together with Reka Zoltan and George Bor, hosted long-time Magyarszovat minister Reverend Tamás Balázs and his wife Kato to Bellingham. Rev. Balázs is now retired.



Előd Szőcs is the new minister in Magyarszovat, and he also serves another Unitarian congregation in a neighboring village. Előd also happens to be a regionally acclaimed, young ultra-marathoner!

Pictured left: Előd Szőcs, Unitarian Minister, Magyarszovat, Transylvania, Romania

BUF's Partner church committee will be meeting soon to prepare a report and to plan our special annual Thanksgiving-time

collection for Magyarszovat. Please plan to give generously, either in person on that Sunday, or by other means at any time in November.

Questions? Email committee chair Kevin Allen-Schmid - kevinallenschmid@gmail.com.

Köszönöm ("Thanks" in Hungarian)

UPLIFT

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 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.

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.

Questions? Want to help? Contact UPLIFT co-chair Grace Nyblade at Gnyblade@gmail.com or 360-545-3265 (cell).

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.

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).

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