



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **November 5, 2025**

Upcoming Services

Sunny Notes

Religious Education

- Children's Religious Education
 - Sunday Religious Explorers
 - RE Committee Meeting - November 9
 - Pathways for Parents - November 7, 9, 16
 - Thanksgiving Movie/Potluck - November 15
 - Exploring Spirituality with Teens
- Adult Education
 - The Thomas Jefferson Bible - November 16

Events

- Community Forum: Immigration Issues in Whatcom County - November 6
- NAMI De-Escalation Training Workshop - November 9
- Operations Rental Committee Meeting - November 10
- Film Screening: Water is Love - November 14
- Endowment Committee Workshop - November 15
- BUF Grounds Clean Up and Leaf Raking - November 15
- Third Sunday Potluck - November 16
- Intruder Response Training - November 16
- Native American Heritage Concert - November 28
- Save the Date BUF Women's Retreat (2026) - May 15-17, 2026

Volunteer Opportunities & Needs ***(New)***

Alohas: Hellos and Goodbyes

- Aloha of Goodbye to Marian Bedill - November 7 memorial service

Social and Environmental Justice

- Special Collection for Partner Church in Magyarszovat, Transylvania - November 23

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 9, 10:30am - Sing Out Praises for the Journey

-Rev Sunny McMillian and Tessie Mandeville as Celebrant

In our very own gray hymnal, the first line of #295 "Sing Out Praises for the Journey" reads: "Sing out praises for the journey, pilgrims, we who carry on, searchers in the soul's deep yearnings, like our forebears in their time." As Unitarian Universalists, there is great theological and philosophical diversity in our songs and spiritual searches, but we don't often talk about it. In this service, Sunny McMillan and Tessie Mandeville will explore our theological diversity and share from their own spiritual searches.

Sunny Note



My official start date at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship (BUF) was on October 1. As I write this column, we are now in November, and I have been with BUF for a little over a month. What a month it has been!

I have dropped in on various activities, from choir practice to the Pathways for Newcomers class; I have marched and protested with you all during the No Kings rally on October 18; I attended the Auction and was excited to win a few experiences offered by BUFsters; I spent the evening of Indigenous People's Day at Lummi Nation School for an incredible community event "Weaving Past, Present and Future"; I have participated in Wednesday Community Night Dinners (thank you to all who heard Jen's call for assistance—we are hopeful we are on our way to making these important dinners sustainable again!); I have made pastoral care visits; and I have facilitated approximately 30 "Getting to Know You" meetings with small groups, committees, teams, and individuals around BUF.

I do feel as though I am really getting to know BUF—its members, its friends, its work, and its services. Truly, I have loved becoming acquainted with everyone and everything that makes BUF so special. Thank you to all who have shown up to share with me, and thank you for the welcome you have provided to me. I am so delighted to be with you all, and I look forward to all that we will do together.

Part of the work we do together involves reflecting on the past. As worship leader Rev. Marsha Vollkommer reminded us this past Sunday: "This isn't just about us personally. It's about all those who have come before us with their gifts to us, and all those to whom we pass those gifts...If we can remember that we live not only for ourselves, but for all who will come after us, in honor of all who came before, there's every reason to believe that we will have been the best possible stewards of the flame."

In honor of stewarding the flame for those past, present, and future, we will soon unveil the BUF History Wall in the Social Hall. The History Wall will provide an opportunity for each of you to write and post notes about how significant events in BUF's history have affected you. I invite you to be thinking about what you would like to include on this wall, and I look forward to learning even more about you all as the wall takes shape with all you share.

— Sunny Joy McMillan, J.D., M.Div.

p.s. It's not too late to sign up for a "Getting to Know You" meeting with me. Please feel free to use the [scheduling link](#) below 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).

[Schedule a "Getting to Know You" Meeting](#)

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.

RE Committee Meeting

Sunday, November 9 (2nd Sunday, Monthly/Ongoing), **4:00pm, Flex Room**

The Religious Explorers (child/youth RE) committee is still forming, so all stakeholders in the children and youth RE program are invited to attend, including those interested in supporting the RE Coordinator in some role or interested in joining the team.

Drinks and light snacks will be provided. Contact Lis (RE@buf.org) to RSVP or if you need childcare to attend a meeting.

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](#)

Thanksgiving Movie/Potluck

Saturday, November 15, 5:00-7:00pm, Social Hall



Come join a family-friendly and all-ages gathering for all BUFsters to celebrate fellowship and gratitude. We'll have a potluck dinner (bring a dish to share) from 5:00 to 7:00pm with a showing of the movie *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*. There will also be some options for group games or crafting for kids and adults.

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

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

Weekly BUF Events

Lunch for All - Tuesdays, noon, Social Hall. *Bring-your-own-lunch and conversation with fellow BUFsters, hosted by Mark Allyn.*

Community Night Dinners - Wednesdays, 5:45pm, Social Hall. *Soup, salad, bread, dessert. \$5 suggested donation for those over 12+ (kids eat free).*

For more recurring events, visit buf.org for the [complete calendar of BUF events](#).

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



**WHATCOM
RACIAL EQUITY
COMMISSION**

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).

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: dcurley1945@gmail.com, 360-739-6292

[Register](#)

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.

Film Screening: *Water is Love*

Friday, November 14, 7:00-9:00pm, Sanctuary



RIPPLES OF REGENERATION

[Regenerate Whatcom](#) will be presenting the film [Water is Love](#), which follows a group of young individuals grappling with the climate crisis. The movie shares inspiring stories of regenerative ecosystem design to create water retention in communities and regions. It delves into traditional ecological knowledge, how water regulates climate, and the importance of restoring complete water

cycles. Following the movie will be a conversation with a panel of local water experts.

Advance registration would be helpful, but isn't required.

This award-winning film showcases the beauty of an intact water cycle, its widespread degradation and, ultimately, the potential for regeneration. [Watch the movie trailer here.](#)

Suggested donation: \$5-10. No one will be turned away due to financial constraints.

[Register](#)

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](#)

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! Join us Saturday, November 15 for a fall clean-up and leaf raking. Or, if you're excited by nature's bounty of leaf mulch you can "rake and take" at any time. 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.

Third Sunday Potluck

Sunday, November 16, after service, Social Hall

Join us Sunday the 16th in the Social Hall following the service for our monthly potluck. Please bring a dish to share, if you are able, and enjoy the good company as you dine. If you're feeling adventurous, try sitting at a table with people you don't know and make some new friends!

After eating, everyone is invited to the Sanctuary at 12:45pm to learn the best ways to respond to intruders from a BPD Community Engagement Officer.

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.

Native American Heritage Concert

Friday, November 28, 6:30-8:30pm, BUF

Sponsored by BUF's Native American Connections Committee. A freewill offering will be taken to support the performers, and donations of canned and dried food will be accepted for Lummi Nations Food Bank.

Performers include Andrew Tsow-Met Johnson (Native American Flute), Ben Workman-Smith, (Cello/Vocals), Mark Nichols (piano/vocals), and JP Falcon Grady (guitar/vocals), plus special guest Bernie Pahalictun Thomas (story and poems).

Native American Heritage Concert
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
SPONSORED BY BUF'S NATIVE AMERICAN CONNECTION COMMITTEE
FREEWILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN TO SUPPORT OUR PERFORMERS
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28TH 6:30-8:30 PM

A government shutdown leading to federal food assistance programs, like SNAP, for November, leave millions of Americans at risk. Tribal Nations and Peoples are particularly vulnerable at this time. Support Lummi Nations Food Bank with your food donations. **NEEDED:** Peanut Butter, Canned Meats, Vegetables, Dried Beans and Rice, Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Healthy Cereals, Baby Formula, Baby Food.


Andrew Tsow-Met Johnson
Native American Flute


Ben Workman-Smith
Cello/Vocals


Mark Nichols
Piano/Vocals


JP Falcon Grady
Guitar/Vocals

Special Guest
Bernie Pahalictun Thomas
Story & Poems

1207 Ellsworth St, Bellingham, WA 98225

Want to volunteer? Contact Beth Brownfield: bethbrownf1@gmail.com

Save the Date: 2026 BUF Women's Retreat

"Weaving the Web of Connection"

Friday, May 15-Sunday, May 17, 2026, Camp Lutherwood*

Held from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, the weekend retreat includes most meals (no cooking) and is a wonderful time to connect with other women and yourself. More info to come in the following months. We hope you will join us.

**Camp Lutherwood (on Lake Samish) was selected by popular request via a poll of this past year's attendees.*

Volunteer Opportunities & Needs

<i>Opportunity / Item</i>	<i>Details & Contact Info</i>
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)	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

For: Community Night Dinners (CND)	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

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

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 Magyaraszovat. 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)

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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