



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

Community, Compassion, Commitment

Mid-Week Update: **November 26, 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 30, 10:30am - Finding Awe

Sunny McMillan, worship leader; and Steffany Raynes, celebrant

In the 13th century, Sufi mystic and poet Rumi wrote that “awe is the salve that will heal our eyes.” 800 years later, professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, Dr. Dacher Keltner, would find awe in the lab. Defining awe as “the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world,” Keltner and his colleagues at UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center have found awe to be the salve that Rumi described. In this service, we will explore how awe can bring us joy, meaning, and community, and why tuning into awe is especially important in times of uncertainty and challenge.

Monday, November 1, 7:00pm - Taize

Please join us for our monthly Taize Service. This is a quiet meditative service with chanting and candles. Our theme this month is **Slowing Down**. We gather Monday, December 1 at 7:00pm in the BUF Sanctuary or you can join us on Zoom (same link as Sunday service). This special service is offered every month on the first Monday. Come for rest and renewal at this busy time of year.

News

Letter from Michelle Fox, Our Beloved Administrator

As we enter into this upcoming holiday season, so many things run through our minds...preparation for sharing time with family and friends, anticipation of arrivals of loved ones we haven't seen in a while, the expectations we hold for traditions and events, concern for our fellow mankind who has not shared in our prosperity, and gratitude for our personal success – however you choose to define that!

This holiday season is also a time of reflection for me. Time to reflect on all the things I'm so grateful for – and you ALL are one of the main blessings I'm so very grateful for, which makes my decision to reduce my role at BUF so difficult. Because of family needs that I am also grateful to prioritize, I will be stepping down as the Congregation Administrator and assume the role as the Bookkeeper, on a part time schedule consisting of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings.

Serving as your Administrator for these last two years has been a true honor and pleasure! Getting to know such wonderful, generous, passionate, giving, and welcoming individuals has been life-changing in a time in my life when you were most needed. I have come to love and appreciate each and everyone of you in your own way.

I will miss working in the same capacity with you, but this is not goodbye, but instead just a reduced interaction to focus on family and health.

Thank you to everyone for every opportunity you have provided me – I'm so GRATEFUL for each one, while I look forward to new opportunities to interact with you in a slightly different role.

—Michelle Fox

Sunny Notes

Sunny is taking a break from Sunny Notes this Thanksgiving week and will return next week following the holiday.

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

P.S. One of our dedicated volunteers, Doug Branson, helpfully brought to my attention that this is a time of year when we will likely see an uptick in text and email scams. You may receive texts and emails from a scammer using my name (Sunny McMillan) asking you to buy gift cards, or send a copy of the directory, or to call me about something urgent. Variations of this scam are targeted at congregations of every stripe, all across the country, [as described in a previous issue of UU World magazine](#). Please know this: **BUF staff and volunteers will never send you an email or text asking you for money, bank account info, or credit card numbers.** To make contributions electronically, you have to initiate the contact—either by calling us, or through our website, or in person. If you are ever in doubt about a suspicious call or message, do not respond. Contact us directly to check out anything you're unsure of.

— Sunny Joy McMillan, J.D., M.Div.

Religious Education

Children's Religious Education

Sunday Religious Explorers

This Sunday children will spend half of class practicing music with our choir director Ben! Then, the Youth class will begin the six-week JetPig Cooperative curriculum and earn weekly challenge coins. Grades K-2 will experience a Beehive Art Bar and grades 3-5 will have orientation with Alycia in the Beehive Art Room.

Youth Group

Our team this year is led by Gabe Epperson (eppersonator@gmail.com), Jen Villalva, and Carl Meyer. Youth Group will meet once a month to do an activity together. Parents of children in middle and high school should expect contact via email soon. Please contact RE@buf.org with questions or if you do not hear from us and want to join. Thank you, Volunteers!

Events

Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner

Thursday, November 27, 1:00pm, Social Hall

BUF will be providing the turkey, but we need everyone to bring a side dish. We will gather at about 1:00pm and help set up and have the dinner at about 1:30pm.

Please RSVP to Mark Allyn at allyn@well.com or call him at (360) 733-3301 with the number of people in your party and what dish you plan to bring.

[RSVP](#)

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.

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



**Andrew Tsow-
Met Johnson**
Native American Flute

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.



**Ben Workman
-Smith**
Cello/Vocals



Mark Nichols
Piano/Vocals

Special Guest
**Bernie Pahalicktun
Thomas**
Story & Poems



**JP Falcon
Grady**
Guitar/Vocals

1207 Ellsworth St, Bellingham, WA 98225

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 Pahalicktun Thomas (story and poems).

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

Holiday Joy Program

Donation Drop-Off Deadline: Wednesday, December 10

BUF will be collecting unwrapped gifts for [Holiday Joy](#), a program of [Interfaith Coalition](#) in conjunction with the [Opportunity Council](#). For local families experiencing significant financial hardship, it's a chance to provide gifts to their children and meet basic needs. Holiday Joy relies entirely on donated gifts and volunteer efforts from more than 40 faith communities. The families who participate have been selected based on the greatest need and they express overwhelming gratitude for the donations. Each unwrapped gift is suggested to cost around \$25. Rose will be collecting our donations for delivery on Thursday, December 11. Donations can be dropped off at any time but please make sure they're dropped off no later than the December 10 deadline.

If you are able to contribute, please [click here for gift ideas](#). A paper list will also be on the box in the entry of BUF. Additional lists will be available at the collection box. We have committed to purchase gifts for the 6 to 13 year age group for donations. If you have any questions, contact Rose Edington or Ann Stevenson, Interfaith Holiday Joy coordinators at BUF.



INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

[View Gift Ideas](#)

Unitarian Universalist Bible Study for Skeptics and Seekers

Sunday, December 14, 12:15pm, Flex Room (Organizing Meeting)

The Bible is a significant part of our Unitarian Universalist heritage. It was a sacred text of both our forbearers — the Unitarians and the Universalists — who for hundreds of years were Christian. Today, the Bible endures as one of our Unitarian Universalist sources, providing “direct experiences of transcending mystery and wonder.”

Contemplating the Bible today leads to myriad questions: How does the historical Jesus differ from the Jesus of faith? What was the impetus to write the gospels? What do the parables and stories of the New Testament tell us? What were some of the gospels that were not included in the New Testament?

Skeptics, seekers, and religious liberals are invited to read about and discuss these and other questions in a new study group. Starting with the New Testament, we will read from the Bible and a variety of critical texts that offer explanations of, and questions about, the New Testament.

This will be an initial/organizing meeting where we'll also decide when and where to hold meetings, how the group will operate, and what our first book will be.

Questions? Contact Natalie Johnson: NatalieLJohnson53@gmail.com, 703-639-7290.

Weekly BUF Events

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

Community Night Dinners - **CANCELLED November 26.** 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](#).

Volunteer Opportunities & Needs

<i>Opportunity / Item</i>	<i>Details & Contact Info</i>
Volunteers: Short-term help for B&G team (5-6 people)	Share your home repair skills. BUF B&G needs individuals who can be available to help with occasional repairs and improvements. Scheduling at your convenience.
For: Building &	Contact: Ahwren, 360-312-1244

Grounds (B&G) team	
Volunteer: Building & Grounds committee Co-Chair and New Members	Co-chair needed December through May for Building & Grounds committee. New members are needed too. Contact: Ahwren, 360-312-1244
Volunteers: Various roles 4 total) For: Concert event on Nov 28	• 2 front door monitors doing 1/2 hour shifts to open the front door for latecomers or guests leaving and returning (7:00-7:30, 7:30-8:00, 8:00-8:30) • 2 volunteers to clean up the sanctuary and help load food donations into a vehicle Contact: Beth Brownfield by email bethbrownf1@gmail.com with the Volunteer Position + NAME, EMAIL, and PHONE NUMBER.
Items: Gifts (unwrapped) for 6-13 year-olds For: Holiday Joy program, for local families experiencing financial hardship	BUF will be collecting unwrapped gifts for Holiday Joy, a program of Interfaith Coalition in conjunction with the Opportunity Council. View gift ideas. • Suggested cost per gift: \$25 • Age group to shop for: 6-13 • Gifts should remain unwrapped • Drop off donations at BUF by December 10 Contact: Rose Edington or Ann Stevenson, Interfaith Holiday Joy coordinators at BUF
Volunteers and Items (warm socks, gloves, hats) For: CAST, for unhoused community	CAST donations are always needed for our unhoused community: warm socks, gloves, hats can be put in the CAST box in the BUF coat closet. A team of 50 volunteers serve sandwiches and other food items, four nights a week downtown by the library. At least six BUF members are regular volunteers. If interested in joining the team, talk to Judy F., Beth F., Constance O., Henry O, Ann S., or Linda T.
Volunteers: Dinner Leads (2-3 total)	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

For: Community Night Dinners (CND)	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

Social and Environmental Justice

Update from Community Forum on Immigration

David Curley emailed this update to us on November 16, regarding the Community Forum on Immigration:

To all of you who came, or wanted to come but were unable, YES! We are planning two follow-up meetings, one in person and one by Zoom. If you came you will get an email invitation with details, and please send a phone message to Lucy Kesterson if you do not get an email invitation. And YES! In the meantime we will send you an edited summary of what was said at the Forum, as soon as we have approval of the edit from all panelists. Finally, YES! there are things you can do immediately without inadvertently putting people in jeopardy. To find out more, please come to a special planning meeting to the BLM team, Monday November 24, at 7:00pm. Contact David or Lucy for details.

I want to relay to you what someone who is in a position to know said about his work in Whatcom County: "The helpers lead us right to them. We just follow the helpers."

At a meeting last night of Black business-owners I learned how they are planning to give food, other necessities and gifts to people who are struggling. They are fully aware of the need to do this safely, and they know people whom we are not likely to know. They will put any help we can give to good use. To donate you can visit Headquarters Barber Shop, 1211 Cornwall, Bellingham or the [Fatherhood the Foundation Bellingham website](#). Please say you are from BUF, and want to help with the Holiday Community Initiative.

—David Curley, BLM team

SEJC Special Collection for Partner Church

On Sunday, November 23, BUF held 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. Donations will be accepted all month.



P.S. For a heartwarming introduction to BUF's Partnership with Transylvania, and some fun footage of BUFsters exploring the world, please watch [“The Pilgrims’ Journey”](#) a fun and moving 13-minute video that Sarah Bauer and Dave Wagner made of BUF's 43-member 2017 Transylvania trip.

[Watch Video](#)

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

Office phone: 360-733-3887

buf.org | admin@buf.org

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