

# Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Choral Program

We are proud of our choral music at BUF. Our goal is to enhance the quality of our worship and to strengthen our relationships with one another by creating meaningful, engaging and inspiring music; music which uplifts us and illuminates the diverse themes that we explore within our community of seekers. We encourage BUF members, friends and area singers to join the excellent choral groups described below.

## Chalice Choir

The BUF Chalice Choir is the centerpiece of our music program. This 60-80 voice, non-auditioned mixed choir meets from September through early June, rehearsing on Wednesdays from 6:45pm-8pm. We perform for a Sunday morning service about once a month, stage a big December concert and an end-of-season *Choir Finale*, and also sing for a few community events throughout the year. We enjoy presenting a wide range of inspirational songs including classical and world music, spirituals and contemporary arrangements.

We encourage interested singers to come try us at any time, and we promise to help you feel welcome! No previous choral experience is necessary, but we do like to stretch ourselves!

We implement various schemes which allow our choir members to help each other further develop our music reading and performing skills, including vocal workshops, sectionals, retreats, a music reading buddy system and on-line rehearsal tracks. Our members tend to feel comfortable singing, loved and loving with each other, and inspired to serve the BUF community.

For more information, including recordings, photos, our current repertoire list and a performance schedule, please visit <http://bufchoir.blogspot.com/> or email music director Kevin Allen-Schmid at [kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org)

## Phoenix Ensemble

The Phoenix Ensemble is a select, auditioned group of 18-20 singers who rehearse after the Chalice Choir from 8:10pm until 9pm on Wednesday evenings. Auditions are held first in September, and thereafter as needed. Members must also belong to the Chalice Choir.

Phoenix performs an eclectic mix of challenging and inventive repertoire for a once-monthly Sunday morning service, and also sings for community events. For more information, see <http://bufchoir.blogspot.com/> or contact [kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org)

## Women's Ensemble

Karen Fitzgerald directs the Women's Ensemble, a congregational favorite because of their soulful and sound and sisterly connection. This non-auditioned group rehearses after the Chalice Choir on Wednesday evenings, from 8:10pm until 8:45pm or 9pm in the flex room upstairs, and performs for Sunday morning services once a month. Contact [karen@karenfitzgerald.com](mailto:karen@karenfitzgerald.com)

## Kids Choir

Annie Sorich and Amy Van Auker direct the BUF Kids Choir, open to elementary and middle school grades. Kids come to the sanctuary right after their RE classes for a special kids' snack, and then rehearse until 12:20 or 12:30pm. The Kids Choir performs fun stuff with lots of laughs and movement, and they get to be the main musical act for special Sunday services like Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentines, St Patricks and Earth Day. For more information, contact Annie at [asesorich@gmail.com](mailto:asesorich@gmail.com)

This year we are encouraging students in the upper grades to explore creative outlets for their own enjoyment and expression and to start developing a musical presence at BUF.

Please contact music director Kevin Allen-Schmid at [kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org) with ideas or requests.

(read more about BUF music on the back)

## Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Music Staff and Directors

*Kevin Allen-Schmid, Director of Music*

Kevin directs the Chalice Choir and Phoenix Ensemble, and also co-ordinates and performs music for Sunday services. He holds a Masters in Choral Conducting from Central Washington and a Bachelors of Music Education

from Pacific Lutheran. Kevin directed the acclaimed choral program at Flathead High School in Montana for twenty years, and has taught music in international schools in Malaysia, Germany, Spain and Tanzania.

### *Melanie Rieck, Keyboard Artist and Choir Assistant*

Melanie has served BUF for many years as staff keyboard artist, choir assistant and accompanist. She has two degrees in music from the University of Washington, as well as a law degree and part of an MBA. Her passions in life are teaching piano, performing at BUF, singing, composing, sound healing, and gardening. For ten years, Melanie acted as the Worship and Music Coordinator for BUF's summer services.

### *Andrea Rackl, Keyboard Artist II*

Playing the piano has been a life-long passion for Andrea, and she has been teaching piano lessons for over 25 years. She is an active composer, improviser, arranger and concert artist, performing with the Whatcom Symphony Orchestra and in concerts throughout the region. Andrea also takes pleasure in her roles as mother, daughter, gardener, and hiker.

### *Karen FitzGerald, Womens Ensemble Director*

Karen has enjoyed a lifetime of choir singing, including the Oberlin College Choir and Seattle Pro Musica. She currently sings with Bellingham Chamber Chorale and her women's quartet, Calyx. Karen directed the choir at the Abundant Living Center (now the Center for Spiritual Living) in the 1990s, and was co-director and accompanist of the Kulshan Chorus for ten years. She also composes and records music for solo piano.

### *Annie Sorich and Amy Van Anker, Kids Choir Directors*

Sisters Annie and Amy are originally from Springfield, Ohio. They have attended BUF and sung in the choir for a few years. Annie is an engineer with BP in Blaine and Amy is a Speech Pathologist with the Lynden School District. The two have participated in choral groups since childhood and are excited for the opportunity to work with the kids at BUF!

## *Performing at BUF*

### *Special Music*

The Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship incorporates special music into services throughout the year, especially on Sundays when a choir is not performing, and during the summer when the choirs are off. We are delighted to give individuals and ensembles from the congregation the chance to share their talents. Offerings may be vocal or instrumental, and volunteers may perform preludes, calls to worship, offertories or postludes as well as stand-alone special music. We like variety, diversity and inclusivity ☺

For some special events we may also invite or hire guest musicians from the wider community. If you are interested in volunteering or being hired to perform, please email Kevin Allen-Schmid at [kevin@buf.org](mailto:kevin@buf.org) and tell him what you have to offer.

### *Sanctuary Rental and Music Exchange Program*

The BUF sanctuary is in demand as one of Bellingham's nicer performance venues. Musicians looking for a performing space can sometimes make a deal with BUF to gain discounted or free use of the sanctuary in exchange for performing on a Sunday service. Please contact our administrator at [admin@buf.org](mailto:admin@buf.org) for rental rates, availability and other inquiries.

(read about the BUF choral program on the back)