

BUF Board of Trustees Meeting

May 30, 2019

Attendees: Kara Black (President), Rory McLeod (Vice-President), Sky Hedman (Secretary), Paul Beckel (Ex-Officio), Frank McDonald, Angie Lindquist, Rod Haynes, David Curley, Murray Bennett

Absent: Beth Nyblade

Other participants: Ann Newman, Treasurer, Genia Allen-Schmid, Bharti Kirchner, Melissa Swift

Minutes by Sky Hedman, Secretary.

Chalice lighting 7:01 pm

Checkins

Approval of last meeting minutes. Minutes from 4/25/19 meeting were approved by email on 5/9/2019.

Congregational Meeting Minutes: Sky moved that the minutes from the 5/19/19 Congregational Meeting be conditionally approved. Motion was seconded and approved. Final approval of Minutes will occur at next Congregational Meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Anne Newman, Treasurer

Treasurer Q&A: Bid was received from Larson Gross CPA was for external audit, for fiscal year 2018-2019. Cost was estimated to be \$800-\$1200. Final financial reports won't come out until 15-30 days after end of the fiscal year. Frank moves to accept bid. Motion was seconded. Discussion followed. Motion passed.

Discussion of cash on hand (2 months of cash flow). Goal is now \$70,000. Currently BUF has positive cash on hand balance.

UUA endowment: Discussion is ongoing about when to start disbursement.

Ann Newman is not able to send email to Board. Treasurer's report will be sent to Sky to distribute to Board.

Financial oversight committee status: Three new members showed up for committee. Members will be approved at the next Board meeting. The roles of the Treasurer were discussed:

- Treasurer signs checks. Besides the Treasurer, the BoT President, and the Administrator (except her paycheck and saving account transactions) can sign checks.
- Treasurer interfaces with banks. Transactions involving the savings account are off limits to Kathy and Sue.

- Treasurer produces the monthly report (based on template) based on financial reports generated by Bookkeeper. Estimated time required: about 30 minutes to review, 30 minutes to get questions answered, 30 to do report.
- Treasurer emails financial reports and presents Treasurer's report to Board.
- Treasurer present budget and financial status at Congregational Meeting.
- Assistant Treasurers approve checks before they are signed.
- Treasurer is called upon for financial training, and extra projects.
- Treasurer chairs the Financial Oversight Committee

Tasks for Bot July meeting: approve check signers and Treasurer.

Operations Team Report: Rod issued minutes of the Operations Team meetings. (Note Breeze database discussion.) ***Check that Rod's Op team report is available to be added to minutes.

Minister's Report: see written report. Requested that someone follow up on BJ Sherwood's bequest. Frank will talk to Molly. Frank McDonald and Rod Haynes will work together on Real Estate committee to report in a month. Also ask for right of first refusal for house next door.

Growth & Learning: Genia Allen-Schmid gave her report and emphasized the goal to have people connect. One project is to have everyone participate in a small group based on birthday months. David Curley suggested being represented at a table on Activities Day at WWU. Melissa Swift volunteered to help with that effort.

Congregational Meeting: The Board discussed what worked and what didn't at the Congregational Meeting.

What worked:

- Well organized
- Meeting was controlled
- Thanking of volunteers was terrific
- Presentation of Resolution and reminder of the process of bringing it to the meeting

What needs to be changed:

- Unclear whether the three candidates were all to be elected or only one. Announce that all three candidates for the Board need to be elected.
- Quite a few people who were not on member list. Announce clear policy of how to be on membership list.
- Make sure new members are inducted at least a month ahead.
- Keep records of people who showed up and were not on list.
- Different colors for different ballots.
- Collect ballots by two ushers down center aisle and count them. Report that result.
- Have report of results during meeting if possible.
- Counting ballots was haphazard.

- Issue of membership requirement for candidates to nominating committee (Bylaw change)
- Scheduling conflict at check-in tables
- Better announcement than ringing of bell
- Have a short service the day of Congregational Meeting
- Coffee and cookies available in lobby or in back of sanctuary

Membership & Diversity goal status: Kara Black reported that the committee met and noted successes. They made progress on more than half of goals. Team would like to meet again after Beloved Conversations goals are set. Paul Beckel noted that we should re-visit all four goals. Board will address the goals at the Board retreat.

Mission poster: Rod Haynes needs partner to look at design. Rod will come up with three alternatives for next time. Proposed location proposed is on the wall going down stairs to Social Hall. Paul Beckel recommends that Design Committee be involved.

GA Scholarships/PNWD Delegates: Two scholarships of \$600 have been awarded. Sky Hedman moved that three GA scholarship be awarded to leaders at BUF: Beth Brownfield, Deb Cruz and Kara Black. Motion was seconded and passed. \$200 will come from the GA Scholarship fund and \$1600 will come from the Board Contingency Fund.

Delegates to NW district meeting held at GA: Four people have volunteered to be delegates: Lew Phinney, Ron Ellis-Quinn, Rick Steele and Kara Black. Kara Black moved that we elect those four to be delegates. Motion was seconded. Motion passed.

8th Principle: Kara Black referred to the email that she had sent to the Board. The 8th Principle has not been put forward by UUA. Kara noted that we can change the wording. Kara would like to start dialogue to include everyone in congregation. Kara would like to use consensus building format, designed to be non-threatening and flow into larger issues. Would Board want to be sponsor? How would it be handled? Discussion followed. No commitment was made to support this project.

Board Fund: Kara Black proposed that the remainder of the Board fund (\$2092) be used to support the work that results from Beloved Conversations. Research is necessary to determine if the remainder of the Board fund can be carried over to the next fiscal year for the Board to use then. Sky Hedman will ask Kathy Wahto.

Fundraiser planning: Kara Black asked for help with the wine, chocolate and cheese tasting with live music at Treefrog Farm. Kara passed around sign up sheet for tasks.

Interfaith Amicus Brief AGP vs the state of Washington: Angie moved that we support the Interfaith Amicus Brief AGP vs the state of Washington in support of youth suing the state of Washington for climate change in support of Deb Cruz's proposal. Motion was seconded. Discussion followed. Motion did not pass. One in favor, one in abstention. Motion did not pass.

MWU article: Rod Haynes volunteered.

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 pm.: Rod Haynes volunteered to write an article for the MWU.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:35 pm.

Attachments:

5/19/19 Congregational Meeting Minutes (Including truth and Reconciliation Resolution)

Minister's Report

Operations Team Report May 17, 2019

Growth and Learning Board Report

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Safe Church Policies and Procedures For Religious Education Adopted May 2019

Minutes
Bellingham Unitarian Church
Congregational Meeting, May 19, 2019

Board members attending: Kara Black, **President**, Rory McLeod, **Vice President**, Angie Lindquist, Sky Hedman, **Secretary**, Murray Bennett, David Curley, Rod Hayes, Paul Beckel, **Minister**

Absent: Beth Nyblade, Frank McDonald

Also Present: Anne Newman, **Treasurer**

- 1) Call to order: Kara Black 12:07 pm
- 2) Chalice lighting
- 3) Quorum was confirmed. 87 members attended, which exceeds the minimum of 20% of membership (50 members) required.
- 4) Acceptance of Minutes from May 20, 2018 Congregational Meeting . Minutes were approved with no corrections.
- 5) President/Board Report: Kara Black gave an overview of the activities at BUF during the last year. She extended recognition and appreciation to each team/committee, mentioned the highlights of what has taken place, and suggested areas to pursue in the coming year.

Kara Black reviewed the Board's 3-5 year goals:

- BUF's culture of generosity supports our mission and includes sustainable financial practices
- Organizational Systems are clearly defined, clearly communicated, transparent, and representative.
- Be more welcoming of diversity (socio-cultural, economic, racial, age) and increase the engagement in BUF's membership
- BUF has knowledgeable, supported, and energized leadership

6) Proposed discussion process:

Heidi Ohana moved that the following discussion process be adopted for today's congregational meeting:

- 1) Everyone will speak from the single central microphone or from their seat (by raising their hand) if mobility is difficult.
- 2) Questions & answers will be given first priority in the discussion; then comments will be invited.
- 3) BUF Members will be invited to comment first, and then those who are not members will be invited to comment. Those who have already commented on a topic may comment once more, with a two comment limit, after everyone who wishes to has had a first chance to comment.
- 4) Comments will be limited to two minutes. Those speakers who may not be known to the congregation are encouraged to introduce themselves as part of this two minutes.

5) Speakers will speak in the order they line up or raise their hands, except that if one side of an issue is advocated 2-3 times in a row, the Chair will invite someone with a differing viewpoint to speak out of order.

The motion was seconded. Motion passed unanimously

7) Board Candidates election: Barbara Gilday made introductions of the three nominees:

Debbie Boots

Bharti Kirchner

Melissa Swift

Kaitlin Davis moved to accept nominations. Motion was seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7) Nominating Committee Candidates election: Barbara Gilday made introductions of the five nominees:

Ann Lachland

Amy Van Auker

Claire Lending

Jeff Copeland

Barbara Gilday

Judy Kasper moved to accept the nominations. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The question was raised about whether nominees need to be members of church. The motion was tabled while this issue was researched.

8) Budget

a) Presentation of the proposed Budget for fiscal year 2019-2020: Anne Newman, Treasurer

Reduction of mortgage balance and monthly payments. CC+ . Reserve funds.

b) Discussion of proposed Budget: Income, Expense

c) Vote on proposed Budget for fiscal year 2019-2020

Drew Betz recommended future consideration of replacing pews with chairs to increase value of sanctuary rental.

Carl Nyblade made a motion to accept the budget as presented. The motion was seconded.

9) Resolution

a) Presentation of Truth and Reconciliation Resolution (attached below). Deb Cruz introduced the resolution and the process.

b) Discussion of proposed Resolution. Questions and comments followed.

c) Members were directed to Vote on Truth and Reconciliation Resolution, which required 75% approval to pass.

Kara Black asked for volunteers to observe counting. Kara Black extended a general acknowledgment for all the work done for our community.

10) Motion to accept slate of Nominating Committee nominations was re-visited. Nominating Committee members are not required to be members. The motion passed unanimously.

11) Closing Reading

12) Adjournment 1:35 pm

Votes were counted after the meeting was adjourned.

The results were as follows:

The Board nominees were all elected:

Debbie Boots
Bharti Kirchner
Melissa Swift

The nominating committee members were all elected:

Ann Lachland
Amy Van Auker
Claire Lending
Jeff Copeland
Barbara Gilday

The Truth and Reconciliation Resolution was passed.

Truth and Reconciliation Resolution (Final Version)

Proposed for the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

May 2019 Congregational Meeting

WHEREAS we recognize that

-our Unitarian Universalist First Principle affirming and promoting “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” has been applied inconsistently regarding First and American Indian nations and that

-this Principle has been and continues to be unfulfilled regarding indigenous communities, through forced relinquishing of lands and waters, and the denial and denigration of indigenous cultural identities and continuity.

WHEREAS we recognize the necessity and responsibility to continue upholding the UUA “Truth, Repair and Reconciliation: 2007 Responsive Resolution” that calls for congregations “to uncover our links and complicity with the genocide of native people . . . past and present, toward the goal of accountability through acknowledgment, apology, repair and reconciliation.”

WHEREAS we recognize the necessity and responsibility to continue upholding BUF’s 2015 resolution supporting the UUA Pacific Northwest District’s signing of “A Public Declaration to the Tribal Councils and Traditional Spiritual Leaders of the Native Peoples of the Northwest,” calling upon us to “to uphold the treaty rights of native communities of the Northwest . . . [and] stand in solidarity with our native neighbors to safeguard the traditional lands, waters, and sacred sites of their peoples.”

WHEREAS we recognize that the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship has worked diligently over the years to acknowledge and provide support to Lummi Nation and other indigenous communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, but also that there is more work to be done.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the members of the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship as a congregation within the Unitarian Universalist Association, hereby commit to the journey of healing and reconciliation with Washington State's Indigenous Tribes and Nations by:

- Acknowledging the Nations/Tribes and their traditional tribal territories, ceded and un-ceded;**
- Recognizing and supporting tribal sovereignty and self-determination;**
- Learning and acknowledging the historical and current impacts and consequences of actions taken by the US and Washington State governments, and of our own denominational predecessors and contemporaries affecting indigenous peoples;**
- Promoting environmental protection and restoration to support indigenous land, resources, and food sovereignty, and acknowledging indigenous leadership in these areas and our shared responsibility in acting upon them;**
- Continuing to provide and increasing opportunities for our congregation and the greater community to hear and learn from historical and current stories and voices of our indigenous neighbors;**
- Deepening our commitment to speaking out when needed, standing beside the Tribes/Nations if asked, to prevent harm and to promote an equitable future;**
- Continuing to provide for a safe and welcoming space within our congregation, and working to support an indigenous sense of place within their ancestral homelands; therefore creating a safe and welcoming space for all to thrive in the greater community and**
- Committing to the creation and promotion of racial equity, intercultural competency, diversity and inclusion within our congregation, and in our partnerships and alliances with other groups and organizations**

Minister's Report to the BUF Board

May 2019

Rev. Paul Beckel

Real Estate and Endowment

BJ Sherwood's Will leaves to our endowment her share of the property next door on I Street—which is held jointly by several BUF members in an LLC. It will take several months for probate. In the likely event that we receive a deed rather than cash, the Board should investigate the implications of holding the property versus finding a way to transform the gift into cash.

Another gift to the endowment was received this month, \$25,000.

Also regarding real estate, it would be valuable for BUF to acquire the right of first refusal for the property next to us on Ellsworth.

Addendum to last month's Ministry Report

Since I reported to you last month about the ministry council, I'm happy to add that two Sunday services have been presented with the assistance of the Healthy Relationships Team, highlighting their presence and their process (April 28 with me and Mary Alden, May 19 with the whole team).

Also since then, Kevin sent the following note "to choir members past, present and future, and friends." It shows such an extraordinary depth and breadth to our upcoming music programs (continuing throughout the summer) that I feel the need to share:

Upcoming Dates for BUF Choir and Friends (all at BUF unless otherwise noted)

Saturday, May 4, 6pm - MayFaire 2019

25 BUFsters and friends perform!
Fabulous lamb or vegetarian dinner!
Great auction items!

Sunday Service, May 5

Madeline McNeill sings and talks about using breath and song to worship and to connect

Saturday, May 11, 7am - IN VANCOUVER

The Armed Man, A Mass for Peace, by Karl Jenkins

A concert presented by the Vancouver UU Congregations
Can\$25 tickets at door
Major work for choir and orchestra, Ernie & Kevin are performing in it
Highlands United Church, 3255 Edgemont Blvd, North Vancouver
See info@northshoreunitarians.ca

Sunday Service, May 12

BUF Tenor Bass Ensemble sings two songs for Sunday service

Wednesday, May 15, 7-8pm

Approaching "The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed" (see pink handout)

A community session during BUF choir time – please invite friends
Chalice Choir sings "I Am Willing"

BUF Operations Team Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2019

Chalice Lighting

Council Reports

Kathy W. reported on a council meeting w/ IT & Building & Grounds. IT has scheduled 2 meetings when they will have renderings of the proposed screen. The dates will be announced in mid-week update. The team is prepared to put up mock screen (same size) as proposal, but they want to start with renderings. Projector will be invisible, up in ceiling, will contain "fixed focus" so screen placement will be determined based on best image projection.

Paul noted: the Design Team should be explicitly invited to the IT mock-ups of the sanctuary AV project. Kathy will send notice to Design Team advising what is in the midweek update. Any balance left in paddle call goes back to cause that is consistent with paddle call call-out (sanctuary in this case). The anticipated expenses of 2900 is everything from cabling to hardware for the Sanctuary AV project.

Gil Baker is head of the Endowment Committee. The Endowment Fund is now significantly over \$50,000 because of two new gifts. The Endowment for the year, therefore, has more than reached the goal articulated earlier. Last year, the investment gain on the smaller amount was about \$5,000. The bulk of the funds will be returned to the fund. Paul noted it will probably be a few months before contemplation of further uses of the fund will be.

Healthy Relationships is leading service this Sunday. They seek greater visibility. Re: Music Committee, Kevin has just put out another incredible list of accomplishments.

BUF just bought monthly resource that is being used by a couple hundred UU congregations around the country that provides various curriculum for Chalice, RE, etc. This will help enrich the coordination effort.

Genia reported there was a great RE teacher meeting last night that surfaced ideas for new rituals with the kids and ways to incorporate families. There will be a parent potluck on June 2 to generate ideas for a new parents' group. Drew and Lisa volunteered to lead that effort.

Jae reported she attended the last SEJC meeting, and OPS Community Beyond BUF opening was discussed. SEJC is doing lots of amazing work throughout the Bellingham community.

Paul said next fall, a program will be rolled out first to Board then to staff and OPS then key leaders. Brian Quick is working on the subject of privacy and confidentiality within BUF's website. People will be able to change their own contact info and what they want in the directory. This conversation includes privacy rights around children, as well. A current organization gap is knowledge about who leads any given effort - this will fix that. Rod said that confidentiality and how that is communicated to the congregation is super important. Who is responsible to update the info? Kathy replied member update comes through cards - that process may change. The effort would have been done by the volunteer coordinator

Current needs

Kathy said the projector project would be listed as an expense for this fiscal, although the work may occur next fiscal. IT has about \$500 surplus in their budget, which will go to improved microphones. BUF has gone with the current assistance guideline, so BUF needs 6 and not 4 units. Building & Grounds has about a 3000 surplus. External Financial Review is about to receive a bid for a 4-hour review from an accounting firm that was referred by Bharti Kirchner. They would do the review over the summer. The Board has requested this work.

We've talked about replacing the current 3 phones (Paul, Sue and Kathy have those). We only have 1 voice line, and it is connected to the front door security panel, presenting a problem. The new system would have to have at least 2-line capacity and intercom. An intercom would also allow for building-wide announcements re: security issues.

Paul said there are larger security concerns and considerations. There is a button that can be installed in the pulpit that notifies the police department that there is a safety issue, but that is not an ideal solution. Genia said perhaps that should be turned over to a safety committee for research.

Kathy said Dale has been trying to get a bid on radio-technology for the cordless phone system. All this information is FYI for OPS at this time. Steam cleaning is also included on the list that details possible expenditures based on current surplus.

Paul said last year's paddle call were for improvements to the sanctuary including projection and improved audio. Kathy said it would be good to address in the congregational meeting the status of the 2018 paddle call. Wireless mic, #2 on the list, is a high priority. The Board has emphasized the importance of the financial review, so that is the highest priority with any surplus from this fiscal.

Genia reported last night at the RE meeting, it was universally agreed that the name “religious education” is not liked. One term to cover “life-long learning and religious education” would be useful. GA will do research. It would be good to simplify. She’ll also ask Tandy. Genia will report to the team in the near future.

Another question is that of moveable seating to facilitate Intergenerational service options.

Kathy added that Taize is a good example of what can be done with moveable seats. I’ve seen a California congregation that has light-weight, modern seating with various configuration options.

Paul said, related to renaming RE, if the change is on the org chart, OPS would make the recommendation and the Board would approve. Labeling matters. Genia will take the subject to the RE committee to further discuss. OPS team would like to know of other ideas in the UU universe on this subject. Those who grew up in the UU, know the RE term. We need to identify to ourselves what we are offering that is different from WWU’s Life Long Learning program.

Current projects

- Safety Policy and Procedures - Genia. Final draft for discussion was presented and approved by Operations Team **[see attached]**. Genia said she highlighted in bold everything I changed in response to comments. This is a living document. I’d like to present it to the Board.
- Final BUF Garden Proposal / Review and Vote – Genia passed out Proposal for a BUF Memorial Garden. **[see attached]**. Paul asked how is this project related to RE? What does it mean to sell a plaque? How many plaques fit per wall? If I want one for the future, would there be a registry? How long would the fund-raising phase go? If there is a significant push to have other additions in the future of things that have been suggested, it should be mentioned now. That should involve discussion by the Memorial Garden committee if that is the intention. The effort should not be just staff-driven. Jae asked what about maintenance costs? Suggest a marketing plan that is time-boxed. Genia said we can’t get the walls until we got \$7000, Once we got close, we would do calls. The fundraising is ongoing. It is already landscaped as is. This is a simplified concept of the Memorial Garden. The committee sort of disbanded. Lisa did a lot of research. This idea came out of the trip to Romania, where every church has a way to honor those have gone before. I’ll get with Lisa and get all the questions answered. Paul added that fundraising and follow up requires a lot of attention so an ongoing effort. The landscaping aspect needs to be dealt with in a financially sustainable way, consider it an operating cost. Kathy said we’d been suggesting this project, but it hasn’t been brought to Building and Grounds. There must be a commitment to upkeep whatever is installed. We do a lot of fundraising and that impacts overall fundraising. Is this a priority? We also need to let the insurance company know about the addition, as vandalism is a possibility.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Attached below:

Finalized Safety Policies and Procedures

Memorial Garden Proposal.

GROWTH AND LEARNING

Report to the Board 5/29/30

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RE Staffing

Our childcare provider, Astrid, left for another job in May and we recently hired Bri Gardiner who will be a freshman at Western. They grew up in the Spokane Unitarian church and was a part of the RE program run by Aria Curtis. Bri is a dynamo and will be a great role model for our children. They are also acting as a part-time building host.

Carol Sheppard will continue as my RE assistant which is so helpful!

I am still in the midst of getting all my volunteer RE teachers confirmed for next year. It is definitely a challenge to get people to commit to leading a class. Our new model of rotating between a class, a field trip, an art project and an intergenerational service each month has allowed us to cover everything more easily.

Safety report

After feedback from the Ops Team and the RE Committee, and numerous rewrites, the BUF RE Policies and Procedures manual was voted on and passed by the Ops Team last week! I've attached a copy of it if you wish to read it.

Carol Sheppard and Mark Allyn have completed a safety training video tailor made for BUF teachers. Carol will be finishing a Safety Handbook to go along with the training video so that teachers can complete the mandatory training on their own time and at their own pace this fall. This gives us more time to spend on best teaching practices during our team meetings and allows new volunteers joining us mid-year to be able to take care of their safety training right away. We are excited to have this big project nearly checked off!

Curriculum

Declining RE attendance is a concern across the country and this is affecting our curriculum and how we teach. Although we have 54 children registered in the program this year attendance is highly irregular and very few children come two Sundays in a row. Families, and children, are over-scheduled and when they arrive on Sunday our kids want to play and have experiences; they aren't interested in classroom-like learning. The old model of building understanding of a topic over many months is over and stand-alone lessons have become the norm.

We found the hands on activities, art and field trips were greatly appreciated and we will continue with this. We will be offering more Spirit Jam style sessions as well which rely on individuals from the fellowship sharing a skill or talent with the kids, such as wood working, collaging, Tai Chi and so forth.

The themes this year worked beautifully. It got a lot of people from the congregation involved upstairs and although some adults were reluctant initially, I'd say everyone of them really enjoyed their time with the kids and helping be a part of the planning process for a month. Kids got to take part in social justice projects like making hygiene kits for the homeless and planting vegetables at the York Community Farm.

May, for instance, was "Rainbow Connection; celebrating the LGBTQ community and diversity" month. I worked closely with Francie Gass and Cathy Campbell, representing PFLAG and Interweave respectively, to plan the month. They led two engaging lessons about gender identity, resulting in some great discussions. Our kids compassion and knowledge of the issues knocked our socks off! On Art Sunday Lisa Moss led children in making a rainbow banner for the Youth Pride Parade and we'll wrap up the month by taking part in the Parade on Sunday, June 9th.

We bought the UU Soul Matters Curriculum for next year which includes materials and resources for services, RE, and small group worship. It has monthly themes (see the list below). Paul, Kevin and I will be working to thread Soul Matter's themes through Sunday services, music and our Growth and Learning programing this coming year.

**Next year's monthly themes, starting with September:*

Visioning, Sanctuary, Memory, Mystery, Possibility, Generosity, Journey, Wholeness, Curiosity, Beauty

Youth

This year we had a few kids go to Spring Con. Numbers are down with our teenagers. We are currently promoting Middle School Con this coming fall. Cat has recruited Amoret Heise to help lead YRUU next year. We will be offering Coming of Age and OWL for middle school next year and we hope this will infuse some energy back into this age group.

RE Visioning Committee

Our RE Committee has morphed from being a pool of volunteers to a think tank and it has been enormously helpful. We meet every month to share ideas, discuss articles and tackle problems as they arise. The committee is made up of RE teachers, parents, BUF old timers and newbies. It provides me with invaluable support and feedback.

End of Year Happenings

We recently had our RE Teaching Team end of year dinner and had a great time debriefing the year.

Our annual Teacher Appreciation Breakfast is on June 9th. During the service we'll have a slide show and talk a bit about what we've done this year in RE. I'll also do a big plug for volunteers for next year with a sheet included in the program as well as a volunteer table downstairs during coffee hour on June 9th and the 16th.

PARENTS/families

Parents are overworked, overscheduled and exhausted. We only have three or four very occasional parent volunteers in RE. It has become clear to me that this is a demographic needing our support and attention if we want to sustain BUF into the future.

This coming Sunday we are holding a parent potluck with childcare provided during an after lunch meeting. We will be brainstorming about what BUF might offer to parents that will be helpful and keep them engaged at BUF. Ideas include monthly classes for parents on coping with stress, kids' screen time, bullying and so forth – with childcare offered. Other potential ideas are a monthly Parent's Night Out, casual family potlucks and family game nights, hiking and a service project for families to do together once or twice a year. We already have one parent volunteering to organize activities over the summer and another to organize classes.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Chalice Circle

I'll be providing lesson plans using our Soul Matters resources for Chalice Circles and have met with the leadership. Despite the lack of staff oversight last year the Chalice Circles have grown and there are 12 active groups now.

Adult Education

Loretta Willems is offering a Build Your Own Theology class next Winter and her husband Bill wants to offer a class in the Fall.

Jan Cavett is stepping down from her role as Adult Forum Coordinator. We'll be looking for someone to help continue with Murray – and in the meantime I'm hoping to snag her to help with RE!!

Lisa Moss will be launching what we hope will become a regular Women's group this summer.

Women's Retreat

The Women's retreat was a huge success. This year's theme was Letting Go and we had three breakout workshops: Letting Go of Fear, Grief and Clutter. We got positive feedback about the workshops, more free time being allowed for in the afternoon, and the awesome food organized by Debbie Boots!

All Church Retreat

Planning for the All Church Retreat this fall is underway. We already have a chef lined up and Mullane is planning a “Seven Principles Escape room” for Saturday morning which should be really fun! We’re holding a planning potluck on June 9th and will start promoting registration right after that.

Booktoberfest

Last year’s inaugural Booktoberfest was such a success that planning is underway for our second annual fest this Fall. As RE Director my focus will be to expand the children’s carnival and family fun aspect of it so it draws in our young families and starts the year out on an inclusive note. We’ll use our Bouncy House to generate excitement!

Intergenerational Connections

It is clear to me that BUF has to welcome and support young families if BUF is to survive. Lots of young families come, and then leave. Making personal and intergenerational connections is the key to attracting and keeping young people in our fellowship.

To that end Judy Fruhbar and I, along with help from the RE Visioning Team, are developing a small group model for next year to get people of different age groups engaged with each other. We will be meeting with a group of “elders” next week to share our draft plan and get their input and support. We will also touch base with the “Middles” group at our parent meeting this Sunday for their feedback.

The small groups will be based on birthday months, like Everybody’s Birthday. But we want to go much further with it and continue facilitated discussion/activities within these birthday groups during three or four Intergenerational services next year. You’ll be hearing a lot more about this in the fall – but the general goal is to open up communication and interaction between the ages so everyone feels connected and that they are valued members of this community.

Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Safe Church Policies and Procedures

For Religious Education

Adopted May 2019

The Director of Life Long Learner will ensure the following, unless otherwise noted:

Background Check

All RE teachers, childcare providers and staff who work with children and youth as a part of the RE program will submit a completed disclosure form for a national background check through Trusted Employees. Background checks will be conducted every two years for each individual.

Adult Code of Ethics

All RE volunteers and staff will sign and uphold an Adult Code of Ethics contract. This contract must be signed at the beginning of every program year.

Adult Driver

All adult drivers involving children and youth for an RE activity must sign a Field Trip Driver Information form and update it annually. This includes insurance information.

Safety Training

All volunteer teachers, childcare providers and staff working with children will receive safety training annually in the fall or upon taking up duties. A completed and signed BUF Safety Booklet, demonstrating understanding of **these BUF policy and procedures, as well as evacuation protocol and knowledge of fire extinguishers**, will be submitted to the DLL at the completion of the training.

Annual Drills

Evacuation Drills will be practiced every September and April by the teachers and children involved in RE.

Photo Privacy and Protection

Parents must indicate whether or not they give permission to have their child's photo displayed publicly or be included in any church website, publication or communication. Written permission is indicated on the registration paperwork and is valid from September through August of the program year but can be changed at anytime by notifying the DLL.

New volunteer requirements

The DLL must meet and approve of all volunteers involved in the RE program and will determine an appropriate position for them.

Volunteers must have been involved at BUF for a minimum of 6 months prior to taking the lead teacher position.

Registration

All parents must renew their child's registration form at the beginning of every program year to ensure all information is current, including contact and allergy information.

Visitors

Visiting parents must fill out a visitors' card with emergency contact and allergy information. Children without paperwork cannot be left in our care.

Medical Waiver and Field Trip Permission

All children participating in any RE activity outside of church and Fout's Park, must have a signed permission slip from their parent's/guardians. Permission forms are valid only for the RE program year and must be renewed annually.

Rule of Three

All adults working with children and youth will adhere to the "Rule of Three". The rule ensures that an adult is not alone with a child or youth. Where possible, the Rule of three will include two adults. If this is not feasible, the adult must have more than one child present with him/her. If that is not possible the adult and child must either join another class or meet

in a public space, such as the flex room. Classroom doors should be kept open whenever possible.

Emergency Contact information

Emergency contact information for all registered children will be posted on the classroom walls during class time. In the case of an emergency evacuation of the building teachers will take their class attendance roster and emergency contact sheet with them to Fouts Park. Children may only be released to parents/guardians after signing them out, using the form provided.

Open Door Counseling

Doors should be kept open at all times during one-on-one counseling or while advising any children or youth in church or church settings. If privacy is a concern and the child/youth feels more comfortable with a closed door, the counseling session must be accessible to viewing at all times.

Child Supervision

Children in fifth grade or younger must be accompanied, or watched by an adult if leaving the classroom until they return.

Adults and childcare providers may not enter a closed bathroom stall with a child at any time. If necessary the parent must be contacted for help.

Diapering

Parents of children in the Nursery will be responsible for diapering their own children.

Mandatory Reporting

Any adult who suspects a child is being abused must report their suspicion immediately to the DLL or minister who will contact the police and/or appropriate agency.

Response to Allegations or Violations

1. Anyone alleged to have violated behavioral standards or the Adult Code of Ethics will be suspended from participation in RE activities and presence in RE spaces.
2. Teachers, volunteers, staff, or parents who hear any allegation involving physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct are to report this to the DLL or Minister immediately and complete the attached Incident Documentation Form. In any such instance, the DLL, Minister, and RE Chair (or in the absence of any of the above, or allegation involving one of the above, one or more Board members) will meet within 24 hours to determine an appropriate response. This may include reporting the allegation to the police, temporarily or permanently suspending the alleged perpetrator from RE activities, and/or recommending to the BUF Board suspension from all BUF activities or presence at BUF.
3. The outcome of the above meeting **will be documented and communicated** to all involved parties within 72 hours of the meeting.
4. Nothing above is intended to prevent any individual from making an immediate report of abuse or assault to the police.
5. Any other allegation of inappropriate behavior, or failure to fulfill expected educational responsibilities will be addressed by the DLL and RE Chair who, when in agreement, are authorized to restrict participation or presence as they see fit.
6. In the case of any of the above circumstances, the DLL will follow-up as needed.
7. A record of all reports regarding child safety will be kept permanently by the DLL and minister and passed on to future DLLs/ministers.
8. Once the DLL, Minister, and RE Chair make a final determination about consequences for inappropriate behavior, any grievance about this decision can be addressed to the Board.

Incident Documentation Form

Name of reporter _____

-

Last first

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address: _____

Street city zip code

Time/date of incident _____

Exact location of incident (be as specific as possible):

How did you become aware of, or how are you involved in this incident?

Name of alleged perpetrator

Names of parties involved in the incident, including any important details (age, gender, role in RE, etc.)

Party 1

Party 2

Party 3

Party 4

You may continue on the next page if necessary.

Explain the incident, in as much detail as possible, including your role in it:

Who did you report this to?

Time/date of your verbal report _____

The information above is true as stated

_____ date _____

Signature

You will be informed of the status of this incident within 72 hours.

Although you are not obligated to report this incident to law enforcement or an outside agency, you are not prohibited from doing so. Mandatory reporting is the responsibility of the Director of Life Long Learning and/or the Minister (or RE Committee Chair if necessary).