

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



BUUF News

February 2016

Welcome to our new, monthly, online newsletter where you can read more in-depth news and reflections about this great fellowship.

March newsletter deadline: Monday, March 7th

March newsletter will be sent March 14th

From the Minister

Rev. Sara LaWall

What does it mean to live a life of love?

Last week we launched our new, mid-week, contemporary worship service, Soulful Sundown. It was a beautiful, intimate service with stunning music by Will Smith and provocative readings lead by a dynamic worship team. I hope you will mark your calendars for the 2nd Tuesdays of each



month and join us on March 8. Each month focuses on a theme and this month's theme was love. Love has long been my theological call and when explored beyond its obvious romantic sensibilities can lead us to the opposite of comfort. What I **love** about Unitarian Universalism is that it too pushes us to expand our understanding of love into wider and wider circles, constantly asking the question, "Are you sure your **loving** large enough?"

What does it really mean to love your neighbor? You know, that kind of deep, neighbor love that honors our interrelatedness to one another; our inextricable link through this interconnected web of which we are a part. How does this kind of love show up in your life? How do you show up for love in the world? These are deep and powerful questions to consider. Take some time this month to sit with them and explore your own answers. [See the list of more spiritual exercises on love](#) in this issue.

We will continue to explore this theme of love in our companion discussion **Soul Talks** meeting off-site on the 4th Tuesdays of each month. This month we'll be at The Leaf Tea House on 9th & Idaho. Using worship themes is a central component to these new ministries that the worship team and I are exploring how we might use them more widely next year in worship, small groups, online, and more. We're using our Soulful Sundown and Soul Talks as an experimental launchpad and your feedback is welcome.

President's Letter

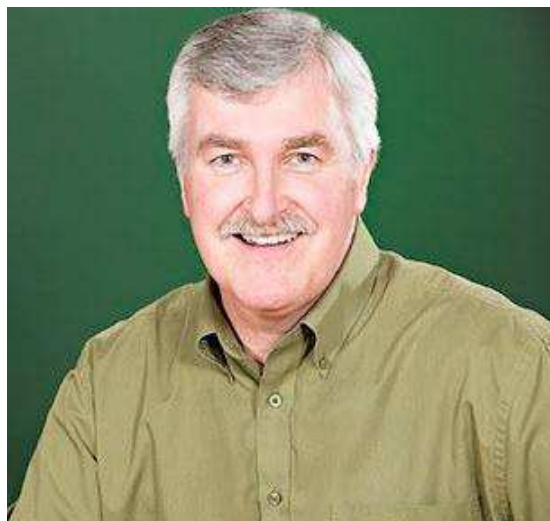
Sue Langley

This month I want to use this space to encourage attendance at the upcoming Pacific Northwest District Assembly. It's on March 5th in Seattle with the theme of **"Where Do We Come From, What Are We, Where Are We Going?"**

It's a one day Saturday conference, but there are free events on Friday night and plenty of UU services to choose from on Sunday if you stay the whole weekend. Our district president, Hayden Nevill, says the focus will be on how we should move as a District into the new era of regionalization at the UUA. In a nutshell, we are figuring out how to share resources with other Districts in the West while also ensuring our congregations receive the resources they need. There are workshops to choose from that look very valuable:

- **Building Beloved Community:
Congregation-Based Justice Ministry**
(sounds familiar if you attended the recent Social Justice Summit)
- **Creating a Culture of Generosity**
- **Nurturing Healthy Congregations**
- **Staffing for Growth**
- **What is Your Congregation's Story?**

[Visit the website with more information.](#)



Rev. Jon Luopa
Keynote Speaker for District Assembly

If you are interested, we also need delegates to represent Boise. Those delegates need to be chosen by February 29 th, the registration cost is \$95. **There is also an opportunity to be an off-site delegate and participate from the comfort of your home computer! Let us know if you are interested.**

February 21st is the date of our next World Café. Big questions about the growth of BUUF will be asked in a world café style, which encourages participation by all. Please attend this event after the 2nd service. Lunch and child care provided.

Next Board meeting is February 18th at 6:45. There is an ingathering at 6:30 of personal story and gratitude circle - official meeting starts at 6:45.

From our Social Justice/Volunteer Coordinator

Sarah Olson

My first month as your new Social Justice and Volunteer Coordinator has been a whirlwind! When I started at the beginning of January, I jumped right in and started working on several projects, including the Social Justice Summit that was held at the end of the month. It was a hugely successful event; we had eight community partners attend and over 40 BUUFers participated in the Summit.



In addition to the Summit, I have also been working on several other new projects. You may have noticed the increase in colorful Facebook posts from the Boise UU page. That is part of my role as social media maven for BUUF. I have been working on a weekly schedule for posts that will include community announcements (to complement the weekly newsletter) and social justice posts as well as announcements about volunteer opportunities, worship services and BUUF events.

I am also working on a volunteer database this month. I hope that this will make it easier for everyone

to find volunteers for their committees and events, and for volunteers to connect with the issues and activities that interest them.

There has been one tiny "fly in the ointment," though: a lot of people don't actually know what my job actually is! Don't worry, it can be a little confusing. The biggest misconception has been that I will be "taking over," well, anything: existing volunteer work, social justice ministries, etc. This position is not meant to do that. You are already doing great work in our church and our community, and, as your SJVC I am here to support that work, connect volunteers with you, and help build infrastructure. Whether you need help finding volunteers, promoting your cause or event, or just want to help and aren't sure where to start, I can help. You can contact me at volunteer@boiseuu.org. I look forward to working with you all!

Social Justice

BUUF Refugee Ministry is Organized and Activated

by Kelly McConnell

Many of us have watched with increasing dismay the horrific impact of global conflict as millions of displaced people have fled their homes in a desperate quest for basic safety. If that alone is not horrible enough, the political backlash against the displaced is perhaps even more alarming. The overwhelming numbers of refugees in today's world combined with a new energy of hate has launched refugee issues to a heightened level of need. The Treasure Valley as a home for many refugees has been impacted by these new developments.



In furtherance of BUUF's history of supporting refugees, the Social Justice committee has launched a Refugee Ministry group dedicated to assisting with the increasing needs of our local refugee community and actively combating a new wave of hate groups. Our mission: to support and advocate for refugee issues in our community (and beyond) through connection with our community partners. We held our first organizational meeting in early February where we outlined an advocacy strategy and identified a number of support projects for further development.

Among the possible projects we are exploring are - mentorship opportunities for refugee families, diaper drive, community dinner and support for Global Gardens. Smaller teams have formed to develop further the viability and details of each concept. In addition, we will keep a close watch on the Statehouse for any legislation presented where refugees might need political advocacy. The group is prepared to mobilize forces quickly for demonstrations, testimony, letter writing or whatever might be most appropriate in the circumstances. You might hear us call for action as political events develop and you will certainly hear our call when our support projects are up and running.

The Refugee Ministry is an inclusive group where all hands are welcome. [Contact Kelly McConnell](#) or [Reverend Sara](#) if you would like to become involved and stay tuned to hear more about our exciting work.

Quest - A Spiritual Journey

Quest. Why am I here?

by Cynthia Alleman

Earliest memories....attending Sunday School on an Air Force Base, non-denominational that embraced all protestant faiths. Lackluster!

I wanted to come down that aisle at the rockin Southern Baptist church to Lamb of God. My parents advised me to wait and that desire moved through. The flag that we saluted every day at 5:00 pm was in the church yard in the middle of the Air Force base. It was all so confusing.



...sitting at my desk, second grade existentialism, wondering at the arbitrariness, "why the pencil wasn't called a door and the door wasn't called a pencil". Aaah a thinking mind.

For much of my life I have not felt at ease. I tried being busy, eating, therapy, running, yoga and meditation. It seemed years before lightness came. I was finally comfortable in my skin and could be present for others. I like connecting with people from this place.

This spiritual biography was started for Quest three years ago. Since then meditation practice with a sangha and yoga have become more central to my life. Buddhism and existentialism come together nicely. They are similar but Buddhism is not depressing.

The feelings and practice deepen. Getting in touch with more than thinking - with breath, body and feeling is powerful, words can not convey. My heart is open to loving kindness as the way.

Daily meditation makes each day a gift. Smelling and tasting a spicy soup, hearing a lone basketball bouncing on an empty court in the dark, feels like living a poem. Not all days, because life is like that, but glimpses are rich and spacious.

When BUUF started Quest I was enthusiastic immediately.

A spiritual quest for us all.

[Read more about our Quest program here.](#) Information sessions each Sunday after worship beginning February 21st. Applications accepted March 1st - April 30th.

Religious Exploration

Emmie Schlobohm,

Director of Religious Exploration

Where Children Are Wise and Adults Can Play

Here in our beloved community, our children and youth and the religious exploration ministry are the beating heart of our congregation. Magic and profound transformation happens in those classrooms down those halls every Sunday. Throughout the year, volunteers spend an hour a week exploring our seven principles and much more together telling stories, singing songs, playing games, and sharing joyful time. Everyone involved in BUUF's religious exploration community is building something meaningful together, a place that is accepting and loving where children learn to be a force



for justice and love in the world, a community where families can come and feel supported.

To those of you who volunteer, I want to send out a heartfelt thank you for continuing to join with me on this magical journey. Sharing your hearts and love of learning and spending an enchanted hour with our young people is an essential part of what Unitarian Universalism is all about.



To our families, thank you for sharing your children with our community. Your presence and participation enriches BUUF immeasurably adding the essential spark to all of our ministries!

And to those of you who are not yet involved with RE and would love to join us to find out what all the buzz is about ... What are you waiting for? Come on in! The water's fine! Religious Exploration is an extraordinary place where you can find your inner whimsy, wonder and awe! People of all ages grow and learn in our RE wings during any given Sunday. Come talk with me and find out how you can discover where your inner child has been hiding.

Committee on Ministry

by David Clopton

A newly formed Committee on Ministry is now meeting monthly with Rev. Sara LaWall. The Committee has finalized a mission and is starting to work on several types of activities. As the name of the committee implies our focus is on successful ministry of the church.

We serve as a resource for Rev. Sara to discuss ideas and are beginning work required by the UUA to grant Final Fellowship status to Rev. Sara.

Committee members are David Clopton, Elton Hall, Wanda Jennings (chair), Rev. Sara LaWall, Patty Nakaoki, and Sharene Watsen. Talk to any committee member if you have questions, suggestions, or any other topic.

Witnessing the Magic

David Scott

David Scott's testimony on Witnessing ...



Check out [our YouTube channel](#) for video testimonials to connect with the many ways BUUF is "Where the Magic Happens!"

Spiritual Exercises - Living a Life of Love

Re-embrace a Love That's Fallen Away

"I was cleaning my hiking boots yesterday- it felt like massaging the feet of an old friend. Looking at the cuts and scrapes-noticing that the sole was worn almost flat, but their character and soul was very much intact. As I rinsed the saddle-soap suds away I realized that my "old friends" were coming apart-beyond repair. I dried them, put them in the sun. All day I passed them, casting growing shadows as they sat there. I felt an unconditional love, and a loss."

~ reflection from [Soul Matters](#) facilitator

For most of us, hiking boots are not the first things that come to mind when one mentions love, or a "life of love." But who of us doesn't have our own version of "hiking boots"? Who of us doesn't have something, someone or some activity that's served as an "old friend"? And who of us hasn't let one of these old friends "come apart"?

That's what this month's exercise is all about: noticing an old friend--an old love--that we've allowed to come apart, to dry up, to fall from the center of our attention and the core of our living. And it's not just about noticing this old love, it's about re-claiming it, about taking a couple concrete steps to bring it back to life--to bring it back to your life.

So here's your charge in a nutshell:

- Find an object or take a picture that represents a "love" you've let slip from your life.
- Place that object or picture in a prominent place for the entire month of January--some place you will see it every day.
- Commit yourself to doing TWO things during January that will reconnect you with that love. (Yes, two things: one will come easy; the second will challenge you to get creative!)
- Use that object or picture to hold you accountable.

Here's something that might help. Think about those times in your life recently when you've caught yourself saying, "I used to love to _____. " or "I'd love to _____ again." Remember this is not about trying something new. It's about remembering, reclaiming and reconnecting. Unlike the traditional New Year's resolutions which encourage us to reinvent or improve ourselves, this is more about returning to self, to the self that you've let slip a little.

And have fun with it. Don't you just love the idea of our friend's hiking boot sitting in the middle of his kitchen! Pushing him every weekend to get lost in the woods, and do it with a friend! What will it be for you? A piano book on your office desk that encourages you to set up piano lessons again--for the first time in 40 years!? A picture of your wife in your wallet that holds you accountable to weekly date nights in January? An order of service from church that reminds you that regular attendance at church ends up making you feel as good (maybe even better) as regular visits to the gym?

The poet, Derek Wolcott, challenges us, "You will love again the stranger who was your self. / Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart / to itself, to the stranger who has loved you / all your life, whom you ignored / for another."

May this be a month of welcoming those "old strangers" and "old loves" back to our tables! - Rev. Scott Taylor, Director of Congregational Life, UUA

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