

First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo

Ministerial Search

The First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo (FUFON) is looking for a half time consulting minister to lead us into the future. We are located on beautiful Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada in a region with a population of 160,942. As an affordable harbour town, Nanaimo offers residents the west coast lifestyle with breathtaking scenery, a mild climate, outdoor recreational activities, a vibrant arts scene, and a burgeoning local food culture.

About Us

Our Fellowship began in 1960 and met every other week for over forty years. In 2004, the Fellowship purchased a building in Nanaimo, hired its first professional minister, and began weekly Sunday Services. Currently, we have 70 members and 30 individuals who identify as friends and average 63 attendees for Sunday Services, including 9 children. We are an older congregation, mostly female and mostly married, though outreach to families has seen a recent increase in the number of children attending our Religious Education program.

Recent Initiatives

Motivated to fund professional ministry at FUFON, we concluded our 2017-2018 church year with unprecedented financial support from the congregation. Our April 2018 pledge drive for next year exceeded our goal and amounts raised in any prior year. And our energized fundraising team contributed significantly with several well attended and successful activities that exceeded our wildest expectations.

We will own our building outright in less than 10 years, which will decrease operating costs by \$24,000/year. With ownership of our building comes responsibility to maintain and improve. We have increased our building contingency funds at the same time that we have been making significant building improvements with new bathrooms on our main floor last year, bathroom updating in the Unitarian Shelter we run from our basement, expansion of our RE space, just completed kitchen remodeling, and plans to build out new office space in anticipation of a new minister.

We became a “Welcoming Congregation” in 2016 and we march annually in Nanaimo’s Pride Parade, a well-supported community event. Two years ago, we initiated the Messy UU Church to bring families together for fun and food.

Recently, all Fellowship committees reviewed and revised their mandates and a Covenant of Right Relations was developed and approved by the congregation. In addition, we reviewed and updated our bylaws.

The Ministerial Search Committee surveyed friends and members to identify the desired qualities and priorities for the next minister in addition to identifying aspirations for the future. The results form the basis for the following desired future and anticipated challenges reported by our congregation.

Desired Future

Our greatest desire is to grow the Fellowship especially by attracting more families and young adults and, ultimately, to become a pastoral size congregation. We hope this growth would increase pledges to support greater engagement for the minister and more improvements to our facilities enabling additional programming and activities related to a vibrant Fellowship life. We envision becoming a more visible presence in the broader community, province, and nation; improving our governance practices to align with our UU principles and further refining our processes to ensure right relations with all. Lastly, we hope to identify a shared vision for the future of the Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter.

The Minister We Are Looking For

We seek someone who can help us achieve our desired future! That means our ideal minister will be growth-oriented, forward thinking, and charismatic. We desire sermons to inspire and challenge us intellectually that are followed by warm interactions as we invest time and energy in getting to know each other. Our survey respondents identified three duties as most important for our next minister: (1) Sunday Sermons; (2) Building Community Within the Fellowship; and (3) Expansion of Membership and Vitality. When asked how the minister should prioritize ministerial responsibilities, these same themes appear with the number one priority being Spiritual Leadership; the second, Congregational Growth and Leadership; and the third, Facilitation.

While we want to be entranced by your sermons, struck by your warmth and charm, and delighted with your ability to attract new folks to our doors, it is only fair that we share with you challenges you may face with our congregation. After all, we are a mature and gifted group. And, while we express desire for change, we will still want to keep many of our long-standing traditions. Change may be hard for us at times. You, as our spiritual leader, will need to engage us in creating that future even as you guide us. Survey respondents suggested that you, as our minister, will need to be comfortable with a shared leadership role and competent and experienced in managing conflict in constructive ways. We seek a leader who will walk side-by-side with us on our journey and be willing to go all in.

If this sounds like a good fit for you, we would love to speak with you. Interested candidates can reach the Search Committee by emailing the Committee Chair at goodmanvi@gmail.com.

Additional congregational survey information is available upon request and more information about FUFON is available on UUA's Settlement System.