

First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo

Ministerial Search

The First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo (FUFON) is looking for a 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 167,062. As an affordable harbor town, Nanaimo offers residents the west coast lifestyle with breathtaking scenery, 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. That changed in 2004 when the Fellowship purchased a building in Nanaimo, hired its first professional minister, and began weekly Sunday Services. Currently, we have 68 members and 30 individuals who identify as friends and average 55 attendees for Sunday Services. We are an older congregation, mostly female and mostly married.

Recent Initiatives

We became a “Welcoming Congregation” and participated in Nanaimo’s first Pride Parade and festival this summer. This church year we initiated the Messy UU Church bringing families together Friday evening for fun and food.

Five years ago, the Fellowship changed its governance model. Previously, there were two boards; one for the Unitarian Foundation of Nanaimo, which owns and operates the building, and one for the Fellowship. The new model has only one board that operates more like a policy board with the committees of the Fellowship reporting to it. Recently, all Fellowship committees have reviewed and revised their mandates and a Covenant of Right Relations was developed and approved by the congregation. Currently, the bylaws are being reviewed and updated.

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 would also help increase pledges in turn supporting a greater engagement for the minister and improvements to our facilities for additional programming and other 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; and coming together to identify a vision for our role with the Nanaimo Winter Weather Shelter (which we currently operate out of our building’s basement).

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 that inspire and challenge us intellectually and 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 is 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.