

## Three-Quarter Time Contract Minister Position With Our Congregation

The First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo is looking for a three-quarter time consulting minister to walk with us as we continue a long tradition of Unitarianism in Nanaimo, BC. This position starts March 1, 2023. However, as we may be able to be flexible with the starting date, we invite your inquiries now if the timing is not right for you.

We are located on beautiful Vancouver Island British Columbia, Canada in a region with a population of approximately 171,000. A harbour city of 100,000, Nanaimo offers its residents the west coast lifestyle with breathtaking scenery, year-round outdoor recreational activities, a vibrant arts scene, and a burgeoning local food culture.

### About Us

Our Fellowship began in 1960. In 2004, the Fellowship purchased a building, hired its first professional minister, and began weekly Sunday Services. We currently have 73 members and 42 friends, and have an average of 63 attending Sunday Services.

We are an older congregation, mostly married, with many years of Unitarian association. Pre-COVID, the Fellowship had seen a steady increase in the number of children attending our Spiritual Exploration program. COVID had a negative impact on this growth, and attracting more families and children was identified as a major area for the future.

### Recent Initiatives

Perhaps our largest and most important initiative has been the Fellowship's response to COVID. Immediately following lockdown, members of the congregation formed an Audio Visual (AV) team who figured out how to livestream Sunday services, and facilitate post-service online chat rooms to help maintain community connection. Simultaneously, another team of congregants (the Connection Callers) set up monthly calls to reach out to all congregants. When it became possible to resume in-person services, our AV team and Sunday Services Committee continued offering hybrid services, giving congregants the choice of attending in person or online. The Connection Callers have also continued with calls to more socially isolated congregants.

The Fellowship sees tremendous value in having its own building as its home and has invested in updating it for the future. In addition to dedicated space for the Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter, in recent years, the congregation has undertaken major renovations. This includes building new space for the minister's office, staff office, children's Spiritual Exploration program, and board room. Improvements included remodeling the kitchen and our restrooms, and updating the sanctuary with new flooring, paint, and wall art. This summer we will be installing a new roof.

Environmental justice is a priority for the congregation, and our recently formed Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) has been very active, with members championing specific environmental issues, working with other local climate action groups to promote green city policies, and participating in local multifaith Greenfaith Circle community events. A special project is the Greening Tree, when we hear from congregants during the Sunday service what new climate actions they have taken that week. Although the EJC has only been going since November 2020, we are already two-thirds of the way to being certified as a Green Sanctuary.

In 2016, we became a Welcoming Congregation and have marched annually in Nanaimo's Pride Parade, a popular well-attended community event. Our Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter has served the homeless population for more than a decade, and has expanded to include community outreach and assisting the City of Nanaimo in

operating a shower program. In 2020, we sponsored a Syrian refugee who is now settled in Nanaimo and doing well.

Recently, the Fellowship undertook an extensive internal consultation resulting in a strategic plan that was accepted by the members in June 2021. Fellowship committees have 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 from 56 responses form the basis for the following desired future and anticipated challenges reported by our congregation. The strategic plan and survey summary are available by request.

### Desired Future

The greatest desire is to rebuild the strong sense of in-person community enjoyed by the congregation prior to COVID. Though COVID was a major disruption, our leadership, AV team, and the minister received glowing praise for keeping the congregation vibrant during this difficult time. And, despite COVID, the Fellowship has met its financial goals and maintained membership numbers.

Another major desire is demographic diversification of the Fellowship. Congregants really want to attract more families with children for the Spiritual Exploration program, young adults and people of colour. We also envision becoming a more visible presence in the broader community.

### The Minister We Are Looking For

Our ideal minister will help us attract new people who will increase our diversity with forward thinking and charisma. They will also help us rebuild the deep sense of community the Fellowship seeks after COVID. And, they will have a passion and competence for pastoral care. We want sermons that inspire us spiritually and challenge us intellectually as well as warm interactions that will foster community.

Our survey respondents ranked ministerial priorities. The top three were Sunday Sermons, Pastoral Care, and Building Community Within the Fellowship. When asked to rate the importance of ministerial priorities, these same themes appear with the most important being Spiritual Leadership and Pastoral Care. The third most important priority identified was Congregational Growth and Vitality.

As with many congregations, we will present some challenges for a new minister. We are a mature and thriving Fellowship. And though we express desire for some change, we will still want to keep many of our long-standing traditions such as strong lay leadership and robust music and choir programs. You, as our spiritual leader, will need to engage us in creating that future as you guide us. We seek a leader who will walk side-by-side with us on our journey and who will be willing to go all in--preferably for the long term.

Base salary will be negotiated within CUC/UUMA guidelines for GEO Index 3 depending on the experience and background of the candidate.

If this sounds like a good fit for you, we would love to speak with you. Interested candidates can reach the Ministerial Search Committee by emailing the Committee Chair, Bob Goodman, at [goodmanvi@gmail.com](mailto:goodmanvi@gmail.com). Additional information is available at the UUA Transitions website.