

Membership Committee Page of The First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo

Questions about membership.

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Membership at The First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo

What does Membership Mean?

Membership may have different meanings for different people. For some, it may be a way of outwardly acknowledging an inward commitment to our religion. For others, it may reflect the desire to join this particular Fellowship and assume some sense of responsibility to it.

What if I'm not sure about my religious beliefs?

Few Unitarians are ever sure of their religious beliefs. In fact because it has no set creed, Unitarianism appeals to many people who see their religious life as a journey, or searching process. Membership in our Fellowship does not require any sort of test or declaration of belief.

What does the constitution say about membership?

2. Membership

2.1. Membership is open to all persons regardless of national origin, race, colour, abilities, gender or sexual orientation.

2.2. Any person eighteen years (18) or older who:

2.2.1. is willing to support the constitution and bylaws of the Fellowship;

2.2.2. is supportive of Unitarian principles;

2.2.3. makes a responsible financial contribution according to his or her means;

2.2.4. is willing to participate in the life of the Fellowship, may become a member by having their* name presented to the Board and signing the membership book in the presence of a Board

member, the Minister if available and two members of the Fellowship or their clearly indicating a desire to have their name inserted into the membership book.

2.3. To remain a member in good standing, a member must have made an identified financial contribution to the previous year's operating budget For those experiencing financial hardship, a nominal contribution as determined by the Executive Committee will satisfy this requirement

What are the Benefits of Membership?

- You will be given voting privileges at Congregational meetings
- You will receive our monthly newsletter. This may be emailed to you,
- or you may request a printed copy.
- The Canadian Unitarian Magazine will be mailed to your home quarterly.
- The Services of our Consulting minister and Lay Chaplains will be available on request Some examples of their services are weddings, child dedications, and memorial services.
- You will have the opportunity to join with others in worthwhile projects in the larger community.
- You will experience belonging to a growing spiritual community.

What are the Responsibilities of Membership?

Membership is a public commitment to support the values and principles of liberal religion, to support and encourage one's own and others' efforts to grow spiritually, and to support the congregation and the denomination.

Our responsibilities as members of the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo include the following long term goals:

- **Attend regularly.** Be an active participant by attending Sunday services as often as you are able.
- **Work on your spiritual development.** Read, reflect and become more observant of yourself, others and the natural world. Participate in Adult Religious Exploration courses, our book club or discussions.
- **Serve the congregation by giving your time and talent.** Working together on the many tasks needed to maintain a vital congregation is a joyful experience and the best way to get to know others. Choose activities in which you can put your talents and interests to work and that you find most rewarding. Even relatively simple tasks, such as helping with coffee or landscaping, are important since they foster community.
- **Pledge at a stewardship level.** Generous financial giving is crucial to the health of the congregation and its ability to serve its members and

the community at large. An annual dollar amount, pledged and paid by each Member (or each Member household), should reflect the needs of the Fellowship and the financial capacity of the Member.

- **Participate in the democratic process.** Attend congregational meetings, become informed and exercise your right to vote.
- **Be involved in service to others.** Help other people in need through the Caring Committee or one of the social justice initiatives of the Fellowship. Become involved.
- **Connect to the wider U*U movement.** Read the publications of the Canadian Unitarian Council; attend a conference or workshop with other U*Us.

Opportunities for Involvement

Social:

Pot Luck Socials - are held the first Friday every other month. There is often entertainment or a planned activity following the dinner.

Work Bee - many hands make for light work. We get together from 3 to 4:30 the afternoon before the Pot Luck Socials (the first Friday every other month) to do some cleaning, gardening, repairing etc.

Book Club - meets every Monday afternoon at 1:30 PM.

Sacred Circle Dancing - held 2nd Thursday every month.

Fundraising Events - each year we have a Goods and Services Auction, plus an annual fundraiser for Child Haven International.

Chalice Circle - meets the 2nd Friday of each month for 6 months.

Worship Service:

Fresh Flowers - each Sunday a volunteer brings fresh flowers to the service.

Choir - practice is twice a month (October through June) from 9:30 to 10:30 on a Sunday morning with "drop in" participation, no audition necessary.

Sunday morning set-up of chairs - we rent the church to many organizations so the chairs often need to be rearranged for Sunday Service.

Readings - be one of the people to do a reading during a service.

Music Offerings - sing or play an instrument.

Chalice Lighting - volunteer to light the chalice during service.

Offertory Collection - volunteer to collect the offerings during service.

Service Leader - training is provided to be a Sunday Service Leader.

Sunday Service Committee - organizes the weekly Sunday Services.

Greeting - each Sunday Service 2 or 3 people greet members and visitors.

Children's Religious Education Program - has a facilitator and a formal program.

Child Minding - babies and toddlers are cared for in a separate room with a qualified teen child minder.

Education:

Workshops throughout the year - are publicized through newsletters, web page, Sunday announcements, weekly fellowship updates and local newspapers.

Adult Religious Exploration Workshops - are held 2 or 3 times a year.

Choir - retreats and musical education are held several times during the year.

Library - is located in the Board Room and there are numerous books for loan.

Getting to Know UU - is presented by the Membership Committee. This is an introduction to Unitarianism and is held twice a year.

Potlucks for Progressives - provides a setting for socializing and educating. Guest speakers address environmental issues.

Volunteering:

Kitchen - set up, clean up, food storage, providing and serving Sunday refreshments.

Gardening - we have flower beds outside the building that require maintenance.

Phone Tree - in the event that a service is cancelled, members are informed by volunteer phoners.

Recycling and Composting - we have receptacles for compost and other types of recycling. These are collected each week by a volunteer.

Committees:

Committee meetings are open - you just need to notify the "chair" ahead of time. Dates and times of meetings are published on the email weekly updates.

Care and Concern Committee - writes cards, visits shut-ins, and arranges rides for people who need assistance.

Aesthetics Committee - are concerned with the appearance of our church, striving to make it both beautiful and welcoming.

Social Responsibility Committee - always in need of more volunteers this committee has 2 branches:

- 1) People at Risk Task Force is involved with providing a "homeless shelter," for 5 months over the winter, here at our church. The shelter is open each day 7 pm to 7 am.
- 2) Environmental Task Force - organizes the **Potlucks for Progressives**. Guest speakers address environmental issues.

Membership Committee - greet members and visitors at the door each Sunday Service. They also plan membership ceremonies and educational opportunities.

Lay Chaplaincy Committee - provide Rites of Passage to Unitarians and non Unitarians.

Publicity Committee - produce the monthly newsletter, send weekly email updates regarding church activities, manage the website, put out press releases and advertisements for special events.

Annual Events 2011

Canadian Unitarian Universalist Leadership - 4 day Leadership School - mostly adults - held in Nanaimo July 14 - 17.

Canadian Unitarian Council ACM - May 20 - 23, 2011 in Toronto.

Canadian Unitarian Council Fall Gathering - BC wide, held on a weekend in the Fall. It has a youth component, workshops, education, meals and entertainment. Date not yet determined. Accommodation - do your own planning or some billeting is available.

Vancouver Island Unitarian Council - annual summer camp, in August, for families.

Annual All Island Service - April 10th at First Unitarian Church in Victoria.

Unitarian Women's Retreat - held in Nanaimo, September 16th - 18th features activities and workshops.

Vancouver Island Unitarian Summer Camp - for families is August 5 - 7 and is held at Shawnigan Lake. Fun for all.