

UU Fellowship of Bozeman

Settled Minister

Bozeman, Montana | Pacific Western Region

Regional Contact: Rev. Sarah Schurr | sschurr@uua.org

About UU Fellowship of Bozeman

Contact Methods

Website: <https://uufbozeman.org/>

Meeting Address

Same as mailing address

Mailing Address

325 N. 25th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718-2688

This Congregation **does not have** a 501(c)(3) status of its own

Congregation Life

Describe your Congregation and its culture:

Our culture can be best summed up in two words: community and connection. Our sense of community and connection arise from the work we do together to make our lives and our world a better place. We gather together to worship on Sundays, receiving inspiration for better lives and a better world.

We are a very open and welcoming congregation, and we like each other! This is apparent at our services, our social activities, and our interaction with the community. In a recent survey, 88% of our congregants identified “fellowship/community” as among the top five reasons they attend UUFB. When

asked their favorite thing about our congregation, the most common answer was the “sense of community and the people.” Another top answer was “the sense of welcome, acceptance and open-mindedness.”

At our services, we enthusiastically greet each other and the people who are participating via Zoom. We give visitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and then engage them in conversation after the service during coffee hour. Two retired ministers from another denomination have said, on visiting our coffee hour, that “You people are good at this!” Long-time members are not overly protective of tradition, and we encourage newcomers to be involved. We became an official Welcoming Congregation in 1998. We began discussing the Welcoming Congregation Renewal process before Covid and it remains a goal of ours. We have already fulfilled many of the steps.

The Caring Committee, Hospitality and Membership, and Stewardship Committees all use some method of individually contacting members throughout the year. Our RE Coordinator has created activities such as sending valentines to connect our RE youth with our physically isolated folks.

We have a number of social and other activities where members can get to know each other and have fun. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries the first Sunday of each month after our service. We have inter-generational celebrations including pumpkin carving, holiday cookie decorating, Easter egg hunts and bingo. This fall, in connection with our Water Communion service, our RE kids helped us play games where we learned about where our water comes from and how it’s used. Outside of church we have Circle Suppers, Chalice Lighter small groups, a men’s group, an occasional women’s group, family board game night, and a hiking group. We also hold events such as candlelight labyrinth walks, events for our over-80 members and have Adult RE book discussion groups.

We also gather together to connect to our local community through social justice work, as discussed in our BCT Workshop Application and in this document. Most recently, our members came together to join members from other Bozeman churches to pack school meals for children in Haiti.

A beneficial result of our Fellowship’s sense of community is the high level of trust among members and between members and their leadership. Most congregational votes are fairly lopsided: a good example is the special major meeting in June 2016 on whether to undertake the process of acquiring and renovating our building. The “no” votes on the main motions were in the single

digits. The only “close” vote was to cut off debate. Congregants are willing to listen respectfully to other points of view and change their minds. There is a long-standing habit of subsuming individual agendas to the interest of what is best for the congregation as a whole. When conflict does arise between two individuals or within a small group, it is usually handled at that level, without rumors or the creation of factions.

Another beneficial result of our community and connection is our ability to come together to get things done (such as the monumental project of purchasing and renovating our building). There is a residual frontier tendency to “get ‘er done” once a decision is made, along with the sense that it takes everyone pitching in to accomplish our goals. Our stewardship campaigns may not always meet our stretch goals, but they are generally successful, and pledge fulfillment is high (upwards of 95%). Our only capital campaign, to purchase and renovate our building, exceeded its goal of \$600,000 by \$56,000.

Although our Fellowship is the largest UU Fellowship in Montana, we are a “Size A” congregation. While there remain elements of being a family-sized congregation, we have generally moved on to living as a larger community, aided by the experience of those who have moved here from larger congregations. Our small-ish size, however, continues to contribute to our sense of community. While we may not know all of each other’s names anymore, we are successful in achieving that part of our mission statement to “nurture community.”

Your Congregation's mission:

UUFB's Mission Statement adopted in January 2019 is as follows:

WE:

WELCOME DIVERSITY

ACT FOR JUSTICE

FOSTER SPIRITUAL GROWTH

INSPIRE COMPASSION

NURTURE COMMUNITY

SUSTAIN OUR LIVING PLANET

Our Vision Statement which was developed in 2019-2020 and adopted by congregational vote in May 2020 can be found at: <https://uufbozeman.org/about-us/mission-and-vision/>

Describe and provide examples of how your Congregation lives its values:

We honor spiritual diversity by inviting clergy from other denominations to speak (some of them annually), and we invite speakers from marginalized communities to speak at our Sunday services. We hold solstice events. Recently our Humanist group presented a Sunday service. A couple of times a year, services present historical figures or ideas. Our RE programs introduce other religious traditions such as Samhain, Holi, and St. Lucia's Day.

We hire affirmatively, advertising openings and considering all applicants fairly. We value our staff and ministers and provide pay and benefits in line with UUA guidance. We have created and adopted a Personnel Handbook to assure fair treatment of staff.

During the pandemic we retained our staff, laying off only one teenage nursery aide (and paying out the remaining months of her employment). We even added to our staff by hiring a vocalist to perform for Sunday Services. We paid modest bonuses at the end of 2020 to recognize the challenges of adapting to COVID. We did not take a PPP loan, both because we are financially stable and to avoid any conflict on church-state separation.

We are almost reflexively active on social justice issues. Our ongoing commitments are to the Gallatin Valley Food Bank (for as long as anyone can remember), Family Promise (founding member), and Fork and Spoon (our local community pay-what-you-can cafe). We take a special offerings on second Sundays, giving it to organizations who share our values. In 2022-23 (through September) the average amount donated was \$1304. If there is a fifth Sunday, we take a collection for emergency relief; the average was \$615. Many of our members are involved in other community social justice causes and share notices via our listserv, announcing events and organizations to support, along with occasional links to background articles and videos.

We are a Welcoming Congregation and helped with the first PRIDE parade in Montana. Our UUFB minister performed the first legal gay weddings in Bozeman. A proposal to renew our Welcoming Congregation status will soon be discussed by our Board. We are subscribed to the webinar series *Transgender Inclusion in Congregations* offered by the Transforming Hearts Collective which is accessible to all in UUFB. We have held two discussion group sessions on this series. We have shown films focusing on diversity and had book discussion groups, most recently the book *The Inner Work of Age, Shifting from Role to Soul*.

We are active in the interfaith community; for example, engaging in the Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association and joining Montana Interfaith Power & Light as a covenanted partner. (Bozeman clergy are prominent on the MT IP&L Board.) We partner with Beth Shalom and Pilgrim Congregational in "The Power of We," sometimes sharing activities and working together once a month at Fork and Spoon. Following the October 7 attack on Israel, Beth Shalom asked if some of us would attend their Shabbat service, both for support and safety. Although this request came just a day before Shabbat, about 20 of us attended.

We care for the planet by recycling as much as we can. One Sunday a month we collect glass (which is not recycled by the city) and collect the funds to pay a private recycler. We avoid using disposable food service and kitchen items, and we try to support local businesses as much as possible. Our endowment and other long-term financial investments are in socially responsible funds. We completed our building in 2017 as an energy efficient structure. We reused as much of the original structure as possible, including the overhead light fixtures in the sanctuary. Some of our kitchen appliances and fixtures were donated to UUFB by Family Promise when they remodeled their facility.

Link to your Safe Congregation policy:

<https://uufbozeman.org/members-friends/policies/>

Worship service schedule:

Sunday Services are held in our building from 10:00 - 11:00 AM and are live streamed on YouTube. Children's RE is held at the Fellowship during this same time. Nursery care has been suspended since Covid, but the nursery space is available if needed for a quieting time. However, our congregation is quite accepting of baby noises.

Below is a link to the UUFB web page where past Sunday Services and past sermons can be found.

Personnel

Name	Position	Paid Hours per Week	Year Started
Bruce De Priester	Treasurer		2022
Jeanne Moe	President/Chair		2023
Margo Rinehart	Interim Minister	40	2022
Christy Huddleston	Church Administrator	30	2019
Beth Witte	Coordinator of Religious Education	14	2020
Christine Wilcox	Religious Educator	4	2020
Laurel Yost	Pianist	3	1994
Erin Henke	Vocalist	3	2020
Faila Bianchini	RE Assistant	1.5	2022
Barbara Tylka	Vice President	Volunteer	2023

Additional personnel notes:

Our pianist and vocalist are paid on a per performance basis; the hours listed are rough estimates and are variable.

Congregation History

Provide your Congregation's founding history:

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bozeman (UUFB) grew out of a small, liberal discussion group that began meeting in 1955. In 1959, after a Unitarian minister's visit, the discussion group voted to affiliate with the then American Unitarian Association. The Fellowship met every other week and offered a Sunday School throughout the '60s and the '70s. They met in local venues or in homes and invested in the future by buying land for the site of a future church.

In 1982, The Montana Cluster (Fellowships from Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, and Bozeman) called Rev. Mary Scriver to travel once a month to each fellowship for services. She strengthened our bonds with the denomination by introducing hymns, chalice lightings, formats for services, and creating communication with the UU Mountain Desert District and the Unitarian Universalist Association. She served us for two years.

From the mid-1980s into the late-1990s the fellowship hired consulting and visiting ministers to help us grow not only in numbers, but in social justice activities, organizational skills, training for lay leading and visions for the future. Following the 1988 sale of the land purchased in the early days, a Long Range Task Force was formed with the intention of being more thoughtful and deliberate in our growth. In 1997, UUFB participated in the first Montana Gay Pride Parade in Bozeman by providing security for the participants, providing a buffer between them and the street, and offering a Sunday Service and a Commitment Ceremony. In 1998 we became a Welcoming Congregation.

Rev. Lois Van Leer was welcomed in 2003 as our first settled minister. During her years with us we met at the Senior Center and Temple Beth Shalom. Following her resignation in 2010, we hired an interim minister for a year, and then called Rev. Dr. Nina Grey as our settled minister in 2011. During her tenure we hired our first RE Coordinator and strengthened the Adult RE program with Spiritual Pluralism discussion groups – Humanism, Buddhism, Mysticism and Earth-Centered Spiritualities. Rev. Grey retired in 2016, and Rev. Duffy Peet was called to serve the congregation.

In 2015, with a generous jump-start from a member, we purchased the Shining Mountains Lutheran Church at 325 N. 25th Ave., which we transformed into our current home. Following a vigorous, enthusiastic Capital Campaign, we undertook

extensive remodeling and renovation of the building, helped by amazing contributions of time and talent from members and friends.

The Dedication of our first home took place in the fall of 2017. We celebrated our 60th Anniversary in 2019 with a service led by Rev. Duffy Peet and the UUA Western Region Representative. Rev. Duffy retired in June of 2022. Rev. Margo Rinehart was hired as our interim minister in spring of 2022. Her contract with the UUFB was renewed for the 2023-2024 year as we go through the UUA Settled Ministerial Search process.

We offer in-house Sunday services with live streaming on You-Tube. We also have a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Date founded: 6/1/1959

Describe important events in your Congregation's history:

Welcoming new ministers is always a notable event, and their names may be found in the History section above and in the list of our ministers.

1959 – We joined the American Unitarian Association.

1983 – Our first banner was created for Rev. Scriver's ordination in Helena, MT.

1984 – Our 25th Anniversary was celebrated.

1988 – The land owned by the fellowship was sold.

1990 – We sent our first representative to General Assembly in Milwaukee.

1991 – Our first fall retreat was held and Men's and Women's groups were started.

1995 – We cooked and served a Thanksgiving dinner to those in need in the community.

1997 – We helped facilitate Montana's first Gay Pride parade held in Bozeman.

1998 – We hired a Coordinator of Religious Education, our first paid position.

1999 – A large group of members and friends attended GA in Salt Lake City.

2000 – A six paneled fabric screen was designed and created by the fellowship as a backdrop for our altar as we held services in various venues.

2002 – Welcoming Congregation Adult workshops were held.

2003 – The “Very Occasional Choir” was formed.

2005 – A new UUFB logo was created.

2006 – Our first Administrative Assistant was hired.

2007 – “UU Central,” our first rented office space, was acquired.

2009 – We celebrated our 50th Anniversary with a dinner party and entertainment.

2015 – We purchased our first building and had our first Capital Campaign.

2017 – We held the dedication of our building.

2018 – This was the first summer we held weekly services.

2019 – A full time pianist was hired along with a new Coordinator of Religious Education.

2020 – We began meeting only by Zoom during Covid.

2021 – In-building services resumed.

Ministerial History

Start	End	Position	Name	Job Title
2022	Now	Interim	Margo Rinehart	Interim Minister
2016	2022	Called	Dennis Peet	Minister
2011	2016	Called	Nina Grey	Minister
2010	2011	Interim	Jacqueline Ziegler	Interim Minister
2003	2010	Called	Lois Van Leer	Minister

Start	End	Position	Name	Job Title
1999	2000	Contract	Judith LaFollette	Consulting Minister

Additional ministerial history notes:

After our half-time minister, Rev. Lois Van Leer, left, we had a one year interim minister. When Rev. Grey was called, she made it clear that she would retire after five years. She was a 3/4 time minister. We then called Rev. Duffy Peet, who served us for 3/4 and then 4/5 time. He retired in the spring of 2022, and we were delighted to welcome Rev. Margo Rinehart who is now serving her second year as our interim minister. She is a full-time minister and we expect that having full-time ministers will continue.

Describe any important Lay Leaders:

There have been too many important lay leaders to mention, and in our “everybody pitches in” tradition, even those who were most active would resist being singled out.

Membership & Finances

The data for the table below comes directly from the UUA's annual congregational certification.

Year	Total Pledge Income	Total Operating Expenses	Membership	Youth Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
2024	\$205,050	\$216,774	110	16	
2023*	\$199,874	\$185,875	116	18	
2022*	\$180,495	\$167,045	141	17	
2021	\$185,627	\$167,125	143	18	
2020	\$170,397	\$162,594	144	32	92
2019	\$159,911	\$138,855	140	34	87

Year	Total Pledge Income	Total Operating Expenses	Membership	Youth Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
2018	\$136,555	\$167,213	130	30	83
2017	\$131,900	\$140,800	121	21	88
2016	\$124,606	\$115,297	118	33	92
2015	\$118,139	\$116,682	119	31	90
2014	\$116,565	\$135,062	115	40	99

The following notes and/or explanations have been offered by the congregation:

Year	Note/Explanation
	As of October 2023, we have 116 members. Except for voting and positions on the Board, we do not make a marked distinction between members and friends. We have some long-time friends who have served the congregation in many capacities.
2023	Since the onset of COVID, we have not focused on enrolling new members. We recently offered our first orientation session for prospective members and expect some of our new regular attendees will become members.

Year	Note/Explanation
2022	<p>Before Covid hit in 2020, UUFB sometimes had more than 100 attendees at Sunday services and we formed a task force to explore the idea of two services. In 2021, we averaged only 43 attendees per Sunday at our Zoom and short period of summer, in-person services.</p> <p>We began post-Covid in-person services on March 20, 2022. Services were also live streamed on YouTube and remained available for later watching.</p> <p>From the resumption of in-person services on March 20 through the end of 2022, there was an average of 64 attendees per Sunday services, which included in-person adult and child attendees and live stream viewers. There was no minister in July.</p> <p>For the first ten months of 2023, average Sunday service was 66, again including adult and child in-person attendees and live stream viewers. The number of in-person adult attendees has gently trended upward, while the number of live stream viewers has decreased correspondingly.</p>

Demographics

What percentage of members do you estimate identify as people of color?

5-9%

What percentage of members do you estimate identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)?

10-24%

Please describe the gender makeup of your congregation

From our congregational survey, we had 76 responses to "With which gender identity do you most identify?" Our responses were:

1. 72% woman
2. 22% man
3. 1% Two-Spirit

4. 2% prefer not to answer

5. 1% questioning woman

No one identified as Gender Queer/Gender Fluid, Transgender, Agender/Gender Androgenous.

What number of staff (including full and part time) identify as people of color?

1

What number of people of color serve as leaders or chairs of your volunteer committees and program teams?

1

What number of your Board of Trustees identify as people of color?

0

What changes have you made in the last 3-5 years, if any, to include the racial and ethnic diversity of your congregational staff and volunteer leadership?

Bozeman is a city with limited ethnic and racial diversity, and UUFB membership, leadership, and friends of the congregation reflect this fact.

The following lists the racial makeup of the community from the 2020 census followed by the racial makeup of those who answered the 2023 UUFB Congregation Survey:

- White 92% census, 89.5% UUFB survey
- 2 or more races 3.26% census, 1.3% UUFB survey
- Asian 2.24% census, 1.3% UUFB survey
- Native American .95% census, 0% UUFB survey
- Black .72% census, 0% UUFB survey
- Other .75% census, 3.9% UUFB survey

Additionally, 16% of families responding to the survey said they considered themselves to be part of a multi-racial family.

We do connect with Native Americans, especially the Crow Nation (the closest Native American reservation), in several ways. We have contributed cash to their food pantry, helped make toys for their Native American Children's Toy Company, assisted with community clean-up, and supported the successful grant application of the Mountain Shadow Association to fund a Restorative Justice Circle in Lodge Grass through a UUA "Fund for a Just Society" grant.

Our 2nd Sunday offerings have gone to Rocky Boy Clinic and the Chippewa Cree Wellness program (in 2016), as well as to two Navajo organizations (their official COVID relief fund and Utah Diné Bikeyah in 2020-21), and fire relief for the town of Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne reservation last fall. Another Second Sunday offering went to the Native American Scholarship fund at Montana State University. A land acknowledgement in our Sunday service mentions several of the tribes who lived and hunted on this land.

Accessibility

Is your Congregation's meeting space wheelchair accessible? Yes

Wheelchair accessibility details:

Our building is one level and only requires rolling over the threshold to access the building. Designated handicapped and limited mobility parking spots and a cut-out in the curb from the parking lot to the front entry sidewalks add to accessibility.

The bathrooms were designed to allow for wheelchair accessibility and one bathroom has an ADA compliant shower.

Does your Congregation provide assisted listening systems? Yes

Assisted listening system details:

We have wireless listening devices available for use with hearing aids or cell phones.

Describe other ways your congregation has dealt with accessibility:

We recently installed two air filtration devices to add protection against COVID. They will also filter allergens and smoke. With the increase in severity and frequency of wildfires, these filters will make our building safer for everyone, especially those with respiratory issues.

When our building was being expanded, low VOC paint was used and bathrooms were all made handicap accessible including grip bars.

We use only fragrance-free cleaning products and encourage those attending services to respect the needs of some of our congregation who are sensitive to fragrances. At our common gatherings we identify the ingredients of our food for people with dietary restrictions.

Resources & Programs

List the resources and programs your Congregation used or participated in during the past year:

- Welcoming Congregation Renewal resources since 1998
- “Music for Online Worship” is a major source of music. We honor copyrights and fair payment for our live streamed services.
- Soul Matters provides themes and materials for services and RE
- Transforming Hearts Collective, web series subscribed in 2021; two rounds of discussion held. We haven't used it since 2022, but we have purchased the web series so can use it again as we desire.
- UUA Website template, communications, social media resources
- UUA resources for Committee on Ministry (CoM) formation
- UUA resources on evaluation of ministers and ministries
- UUA listserves for administrators and finances
- Stewardship for UUs webinars and consultants
- Leadership development, Leader Lab, governance resources
- *Heart to Heart and Soul to Soul*
- Board President Regional group facilitated by Congregational Life representative, Sarah Schurr
- *The Interim Minister as System Analyst* by Richard A Nugent of the UUA staff
- *The Inner Work of Age, Shifting from Role to Soul*

Describe your religious educational programs:

UUFB's RE programs traditionally consisted of nursery care during services, a school-age RE class, and various special events and programs for families. Pre-Covid, when we met in-person, we had five to 20 children attending per week. During Covid we tried a few different programming options: online RE classes (all ages mixed together), outdoor classes, special events, and integrating more kids into the online Sunday service. At this time, we have weekly classes that children attend after spending some time in the service. The RE curriculum is aligned with the Sunday services by using the same Soul Matters themes.

Adult programming has included small groups meeting for a specified period of time to discuss books (the current book is *The Inner Work of Age, Shifting from Role to Soul*), explore personal ideas about spiritual and personal topics. We have a Humanist group that has been meeting for a number of years and in the past have had Mystics, Buddhist, and Earth Centered groups which some congregants are asking to be revived. Recent activities are listed in the "Ministerial expectations for RE."

Describe your youth and campus ministry programs:

Pre-Covid our youth group met once or twice a month for meetings and service projects. There were about five youth involved in programs regularly. The group continued to meet online, but after a few months' participation fizzled. Now that we are meeting in-person, we are working to restart youth group programs, but have struggled to find the youth to participate. Our staff has the skills and desire to lead a youth group, but at this point, recruitment is stopping us from holding a youth group.

We are working with our local family planning clinic to try to offer the OWL program (or something similar), which we hope will bring more teens into our fellowship.

Each fall we participate in Catapalooza, MSU's campus welcome event, where we distribute handouts and collect sign-ups for further contact.

Surrounding Community

Describe the character of the surrounding community, including population and demographics:

Bozeman is a vibrant, fast-growing community located in the Gallatin Valley in southwest Montana. The breathtaking scenery and outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the mountains and National Forest lands surrounding it as well as its close proximity to Yellowstone National Park and two downhill ski areas make it a popular tourist destination. Yellowstone International Airport (BZN), just 13 miles from downtown Bozeman, is the busiest airport in the state. Nine airlines provide non-stop flights to 24 destinations.

In 2021 Bozeman was classified as the fastest growing micropolitan area in the US. Its estimated 2023 population of 57,500 represents an 8.24 percent increase since the 2020 census; the metropolitan area contains about 100,000 people. As a result of the large influx of out-of-staters to the Bozeman area, in 2022 only 37 percent of Gallatin County residents were born in Montana.

Ninety two percent of Bozemanites are white, and four percent Hispanic. The median age is 28 years. Montana State University (MSU) with nearly 6,000 faculty and graduate teaching assistants is the largest employer, while Bozeman Health Group with more than 2,400 employees ranks second. The July 2023 unemployment rate stood at 1.6 percent, well below its long-term average of 3.65 percent.

Bozeman stands high in several national livability rankings and publication reviews, which take into account Bozeman's cultural, artistic, educational assets, the safety of the community, its extensive free public bus transportation, healthiness of lifestyle, community life, outdoor recreation opportunities and the vibrancy of the area's economy.

Bozeman has cultural amenities usually found in much larger cities. It can boast of many local performing arts organizations including a symphony, opera, ballet, and several theater companies.

Education is highly valued in Bozeman. Bond issues for education usually pass, resulting in fine public schools. Bozeman public schools, with their approximately 7500 students, are consistently among the highest performing AA school districts in the state. Bozeman has two high schools, each with an enrollment of about 1,280. The lines dividing the two high school areas were drawn with scrupulous attention to equity, considering factors like percentage of students qualifying for

free or reduced lunch and test scores. There are also options for students for whom the public schools aren't the best option, namely Cottonwood Day School and Headwaters Academy. The district also operates a charter school with a combination of on-line and in-person schooling. There are many preschool options, including one with a Spanish-English curriculum.

Montana State University, with its nearly 17,000 students, is the largest and fastest growing university in Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas. About half of the students are from Montana, 16.3 percent are minority and approximately 70 foreign countries are represented. MSU is among the top 12 colleges and universities in the country for its number of Goldwater Scholarship recipients, the nation's premier award for excellence in Math, Science, or Engineering. Opportunities for learning outside of schools for scholars of all ages include the adult Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), the Montana Outdoor Science School, and Academic Technology and Outreach Extended University (Distance Learning). MSU's two-year Gallatin College partners with local industries to offer Associate Degrees and one-year certificates to its 900 students.

The Bozeman public library is large and well used. It occupies the first LEED certified (green) public building in Montana. The library sponsors a Children's Festival of the Book every year, as well as a chamber music series and concerts on the lawn. The MSU library is also available to residents. The public lecture is a prominent feature of community life here, with visiting speakers at MSU, museum lectures, an "Extreme History" series, a couple of science series, our own TEDx program, and a community PechaKucha program. We are well served by public radio and television.

There are several unique museums in Bozeman. The Museum of the Rockies, operated by MSU, has one of the best paleontology collections in the country, along with its planetarium, living history farm, and visiting national and international exhibitions. Bozeman is also home to the American Computer Museum and the Montana Science Center (a hands-on museum for children). We have a fledgling art museum which offers curated exhibitions featuring state, national and international artists.

In addition to the cultural amenities, Bozeman abounds in outdoor recreation opportunities, including miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, camping, world-class fly fishing, great downhill skiing at the Big Sky destination resort and at close-in community-owned Bridger Bowl, kayaking, and a nearby cross-country ski center which offers biathlon and para-athlete programs. And, yes, Bozeman is very dog friendly, with several off-leash "bark parks."

Community events are well-attended and happen year-round. In the fall, residents look forward to the family-friendly Raptor Festival held at the Bridger Bowl ski area in conjunction with the annual raptor migration. Also in the fall is the One Book, One Bozeman Event, which usually culminates in the author speaking at fall convocation at MSU. In December, children and their families flock to downtown's Main Street for the Christmas Stroll and Santa's lighting of the town's decorations. In spring, the Watershed Festival educates about the importance of the region's waterways. In summer, the Sweet Pea Festival of the Arts brings together people from Bozeman and surrounding areas to enjoy visual and performing arts as well as food, a parade, and a races for adults and children.

Bozeman's economy is strong. The highly-educated workforce (59 percent of the population 25 or older have at least a bachelor's degree), the growth of businesses, the more than 250 non-profit organizations, the large number of active retirees and the area's ecology, extensive access to public lands with its attendant recreation and tourism have all contributed to its vitality. Bozeman is home to small manufacturers related to recreation such as Simms (maker of high-end fly-fishing gear and clothing), as well as Gibson Guitar and several high-tech companies, including Oracle and Schedulicity. Its approximately 35 laser-related firms make Bozeman one of the nation's top laser optic centers.

Bozeman is also home to many conservation organizations. The non-profit Gallatin Valley Land Trust has put more than 60,000 acres into conservation easements and developed more than 100 miles of urban trails as part of its Main Street to Mountains project. Remote workers – 89 percent of households have active broadband – are increasingly present in our community. The construction industry is booming.

Bozeman's downtown never went through the serious decline that many cities experienced and is a center of retail business. It is vibrant with restaurants, art galleries, and many locally-owned specialty shops. The locally-owned Country Bookshelf offers lectures, often by our many local authors, and the Community Food Co-op has catered to local tastes since 1979.

The Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) is a public-private organization in Southwest Montana, headquartered in Bozeman, which offers essential support for those who need it. Included in the support it provides are emergency shelters and longer-term housing assistance, utilities support, mental health services, senior services, and food banks. HRDC also offers two public transportation services: the above-mentioned Streamline bus system, and Galavan, which serves seniors and residents with disabilities. Our UUFB Second

Sunday offerings often go to HRDC programs, and UUFB members have long been active participants in two of its programs, the Food Bank and Fork and Spoon, a “pay what you can” restaurant.

But Bozeman does have problems, not all of them unique. Foremost among them is the lack of affordable housing with its attendant shortage of workers. Though many residential units have recently been built or are under construction, too many members of the workforce cannot afford to rent or buy them. The lack of affordable housing results in too many residents with no alternative but to live in recreational vehicles parked on public streets (“urban camping”). Many middle-income people, including professionals, live in nearby communities where housing is less expensive and commute to Bozeman, where most employment opportunities, services and cultural amenities are concentrated. The City Council recently passed an ordinance to address the urban camping issue but it does not provide a solution. Tenants United, an organization seeking solutions to the lack of affordable housing, meets in our building.

And yes, we do have winter in Bozeman. It provides great opportunities for outdoor recreation, but also requires some safety measures. Most vehicles are all-wheel drive with snow tires mounted in the winter. Yaktrax or similar products worn over boots provide traction for pedestrians navigating snow-packed or icy sidewalks.

Despite its problems, Bozeman’s scenic beauty, skiing, hiking, fishing, clean air and water, as well as its abundance of gyms, trails, social dance clubs, yoga studios and educational and cultural offerings combine to make Bozeman a place for anyone to be healthy, happy, and thriving. Yet, it is Bozeman’s human assets which make it a “most livable” place. Because of these many assets (and, of course, UUFB), we live meaningfully and beautifully.

Montana 2023

When you think of Montana (“The Last Best Place”), images of the Old West with cowboys, cattle drives, and prospectors may come to mind. You may even have seen the TV hit “Yellowstone.” Unless you have spent some time in Montana recently, we suggest you forget what you think you know about our state. Montana is more varied and interesting than those common images would lead you to believe.

Or, if you watch the political news, you may know that the Montana electorate has recently and rapidly swung to the right. The pundits have deemed us a deep red state. Bozeman, however, stands out as a blue island and UUFB as a beacon of

hope in this sea of red: five of our seven state representatives and both of our state senators are Democrats.

This rapid turn to the right is not consistent with Montana's history of progressive legislation. The Montana state constitution is celebrating its 51st anniversary this year. It guarantees a right to a "clean and healthful environment", enshrines a right to know (open government), and the right to privacy. In Article X (Education), "the state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity."

The right to a "clean and healthful environment" was the basis for the August 2023 Held v. Montana state court decision which received national attention. In this case, 16 youthful plaintiffs supported by three environment-focused law firms argued this right is violated by a provision of the Montana Environmental Policy Act which forbids state agencies from considering the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions or climate change in their environmental reviews.

Native Americans are Montana's largest racial/ethnic group, at 6.2% of the population; the state is home to seven reservations and a dozen nations. In 1999 the State passed its unique "Indian Education for All Act" that mandates instruction on the contributions of Native Americans for all Montana students. Montana State University now offers a Native American Studies program.

Montana is big and largely empty. It is the fourth largest state in the union by land area and surpassed one million in population only a few years ago. The distance between Bozeman and Helena, where the nearest UU Fellowship is located, is 95 miles. There is no sales tax. Recreational marijuana is now legal.

Agriculture is the largest industry sector in the state, with travel and tourism in second place and mining a distant third. Over 62% of all land is in farms and ranches. Montana has twice as many cattle as people

Montana is home to Glacier National Park and is a gateway to Yellowstone National Park. We also have several National Wilderness Areas, extensive US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land, and a robust system of state parks. To protect our famous trout streams, we do not use salt on roads in winter.

Mining has historically been a prominent economic sector. Gold was first discovered in Montana in 1858, and by 1862 the first big gold rush was on. Butte was known, 100 years ago, as "the richest hill on earth," where copper was mined

to enable the nation's electrification. Living with the environmental damage done by mining has led to active resistance when new mines are proposed. There is still some gold mining, and Montana has the only American platinum and palladium mines. Another legacy is a long history of labor activism: Butte has United Mine Workers Local #1 and Teamsters Union Local #2.

In sum, Montana has a rich and varied legacy of mining, ranching, farming, logging, progressivism, labor organization, education, culture, tourism and recreation. We in UUFB look forward to sharing our city and state with you!

Describe how your Congregation is known/perceived by the larger community:

We are not as well known as we would like, outside of clergy and the religious community. While we love having our own space, its location in a residential neighborhood limits awareness of our physical presence. We provide a curated "little library" that is used by neighbors, and we just began flying the Progress Pride flag on our new flag pole. We advertise in special sections of the local newspaper (Earth Day, Christmas services, newcomers guide, etc.). We also have a history of our ministers participating in community social justice and interfaith events. We have opportunities to grow in this regard.

Describe your Congregation's religious, political, and social context from a historical and current perspective.

Religious Views

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bozeman is made up of people with a variety of beliefs and faith backgrounds. Our 2023 Congregational Survey found that 42 percent of respondents came from another faith tradition, 36 percent were raised in another faith tradition but unchurched as adults and 13 percent were unchurched.

In response to the question of what brought you to Unitarian Universalism and what keeps you there, about 94 percent cited fellowship/community. Also frequently mentioned were intellectual stimulation, celebration of common values

and UU beliefs (about 70 percent each). Forty-four percent of respondents have considered themselves Unitarian Universalists for more than 20 years. Eighty-three percent of respondents have attended UUFB for three years or more.

Political Views

We have no data on the political affiliations of our members, but we are generally politically liberal with a mix of views. We maintain a clear separation between Fellowship activities and partisan politics and have policies to address the issue. One policy allows speakers to address issues from the pulpit, but does not allow explicit support or rejection of individual candidates or political parties.

(uufbozeman.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Policy-Political-Speech.pdf) Many members are engaged in political work as individuals.

Interfaith Cooperation

Bozeman has a long history of cooperation among denominations and faith communities. The Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association includes many Christian denominations, as well as participation by Bah'i, Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish, Latter-Day Saints and, of course, Unitarian Universalist communities.

Social Context

In many respects we are quite representative of the Bozeman community as a whole. We are a fairly affluent group (36 percent report income of more than \$100,000) just as Bozeman is an affluent city. We are, however, older: 65 percent of our respondents are 60 or older, whereas the median age of the Bozeman population is only 28 years. Some of our membership growth has come from the recent surge of newcomers to Montana and some from Montanans returning to where they grew up. Bozeman has a range of cultural and intellectual resources which find strong support among individuals in our congregation. We are well educated (84 percent have a four-year degree or higher), which is not surprising in a university town that is also home to several high-tech businesses, natural resource management agencies and environmental non-profits.

Position Basics

Anticipated Start Date: August 2024

Term: N/A

Percent Time: 100% Time

Minimum Salary + Housing: \$68,000

Benefits: Self-employment offset tax; Retirement Plan; UUA Health Plan; Disability Coverage; Term Life Insurance; Dental; Professional Expense Allowance

Questionnaire

Description of minister's role in relation to other paid staff

The minister supervises the Office Administrator, the Religious Education Coordinator, and our pianist. The Religious Education Coordinator supervises RE staff.

Paid employees are hired by the Board after candidates are presented by a search committee. The minister is an ex officio member of the search committee. The process for hiring is outlined in a UUFB Hiring Best Practices Policy following the criteria in our Personnel Manual. Both can be found on our website at <https://uufbozeman.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022.01.17-UUFB-PersonnelManual.pdf/>

A letter of agreement is created and approved by the employee, minister and a Board delegate and finalized before employment starts. Supervision involves at least an annual review but there are many opportunities for interaction as two of them work in offices in the building and both expect interaction with the minister for information about congregational activities and collaboration on themes or projects. We feel lucky to have these staff members. They are experienced and capable of doing their jobs well and our present minister describes them as people who are easy to manage and do great work.

Primary areas of focus for the minister

There is near consensus in the Fellowship that the minister's primary areas of focus should be fostering a sense of fellowship and community within the congregation, which includes pastoral care; presenting challenging Sunday

services that create a sense of wonder and encouraging congregational social justice programs. Lower priority areas for focus include adult and children's RE, leading the staff efficiently and providing visible leadership in the community.

Desired strengths of the minister

The three areas of focus for the minister listed above suggest the strengths we would hope to find.

They include the ability to foster fellowship among all elements of the congregation, from children to young parents to retirees and everyone in between. That would involve getting to know us well enough to discover our strengths, needs, and issues and providing pastoral care when needed.

Helping us stretch and grow would include the ability to present Sunday services with sermons that challenge people and be a resource for individual or small group personal faith growth.

A passion for social justice is very important to this congregation, so we would hope for willingness to foster social justice awareness and action in both our congregation and community.

Additionally, we hope for the minister to have the ability to work productively with the Board, committees and the staff and to have some administrative skills.

Finally, we hope for someone who is flexible, kind and committed to UUFB and its values - and a sense of humor would be appreciated too.

Ongoing momentum we would like to continue

There is a strong consensus from the survey and cottage meetings that we are a healthy, stable community with members and friends who care about each other and offer aid when needed. We have a vibrant Social Activities Committee that arranges social events such as Circle Suppers and monthly birthday and anniversary celebrations after the service. This spring there was a highly successful "Over 80's" luncheon and it will be followed by a Holiday Tea.

There are no serious splits within the congregation. Along with great Sunday services we offer a beautiful, functional worship and meeting space located not far from mid-town. We have a strong and stable RE program with a hired RE Director, and our Administrative Assistant is not only personable but highly skilled.

Guided by our UU values, we offer a lot to our Bozeman and wider community. We are “doers” with a great energy for social justice and action. This energy is put into action consistently, not only by our congregational commitment to Social Justice Sunday collections held on the second and fifth Sundays of the month, but also by active volunteer work by members and friends.

Programs and traditions we want to maintain

We have many traditions that the congregation enjoys. They include Water and Flower Communion, a monthly birthday and anniversary Sunday, Christmas Eve service, bread and soup lunches and an annual labyrinth walk.

We have a tradition of lay led services with guest speakers, both from the community and the congregation. Our order of service does not vary much from week to week when the minister is providing the service. Service elements that the congregation particularly values are greeting our neighbors, Joys and Concerns and the closing circle.

In years past we did a weekend fall retreat at a campground and a nordic ski weekend. Both faded away because of expenses and planning, but many of us would like to see some sort of fall gathering reinstated.

Participation of children in the worship service, and the frequency of inter-generational services

Our younger children stay in the main service for the first 15-20 minutes, which usually includes an opening song, greetings, lighting the chalice, reading of our covenant and a Story for all Ages, after which the children go to class while the congregation sings "Go Now in Peace." We try to include children in these rituals - having a family light the chalice, a child read the covenant, or act out or read the Story for all Ages.

Intergenerational services happen about 3-4 times a year. We are trying to start a tradition of beginning and ending the church year with the Water Ceremony and Flower Ceremony and intentionally making those very family inclusive. Then there are usually 1-2 other services during the year that include youth which either revolve around holidays/celebrations or have a special guest component.

We host monthly intergenerational activities after service, such as pumpkin carving and cookie decorating. Our goal is to continue to expand these efforts and increase the number of services that are intergenerational.

Traditional holiday services celebrated outside of Sunday morning

The Sunday Services Committee looks at traditional holidays as the basis for the theme of a service. In 2023 for Martin Luther King Day Dr. Jelani Mahiri, a Black professor at MSU, presented "The Measure of Our Lives - Reflecting on the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." For Memorial Day the presenter (a congregant) provided a personal story connected with the overseas burial of American soldiers. For Labor Day the topic was "A History of Child Labor in Butte, Montana" (Butte was a groundbreaker for a lot of US labor law). In November our Veterans Day service will address not only the history behind it, but also the struggles of veterans who served. Our second Sunday collection that day will go to the local warming center, which numerous veterans utilize.

If Christmas does not fall on a Sunday, we have always been invited to gather at UUFB for refreshments and perhaps music/carols. We also have a Christmas Eve gathering, typically consisting of stories, singing and special music.

Status of the congregation as a Welcoming Congregation

Yes - since 1998

We will take a congregational vote at our annual meeting in January to decide whether or not to pursue Welcoming Renewal.

We already routinely implement most of the Welcoming Renewal Practices. This last week's service was entitled "Celebrating the Opportunity for Welcome Renewal and can be found on our web site under "Past Services." or with this link.

<https://uufbozeman.org/services/welcome-renewal>

Status of the congregation as a Green Sanctuary congregation

UUFB has not sought approval as a Green Sanctuary congregation, though we do practice the UUA's Seventh Principle of "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." When we remodeled and expanded our building, we did as much as possible to keep it environmentally friendly. For example, it is over-insulated and we do not need air conditioning. The radiant floor

heat is designed to use warm rather than hot water. Eight circuits are installed in the roof for potential solar panels (though we have subsequently learned that the building is not well positioned for efficient use of solar panels). Interior paint was chosen for its low volatile organic compound (VOC) content. All lighting is LED for low power consumption and long life. We have an exterior outlet by the parking lot which our minister uses to charge her electric vehicle. Our interior carpet and furnishings were chosen to be hypoallergenic. Once a month we collect glass for recycling. We have had Sunday services celebrating our respect for our beautiful surrounding environment.

Status of the congregation as an Honor Congregation

Yes, since 1983.

This is a routine budget item for us.

Lessons the congregation has learned about nurturing ministers and ministry

We try to value and nurture our minister by expressing authentic gratitude often and openly, by listening and by asking thoughtful questions. We recognize that it's important to let a new minister lead and preach in their own style, and not compare the new minister to former ministers.

We understand that ministers have more in their lives than just their congregations. We are also aware of the need to nurture a minister's work-life balance: from time to time our interim minister has had to take care of family matters in her hometown that is 800 miles away. We have tried to be supportive of her by being flexible about the Sundays she is in the pulpit and the time she has needed to be away. We want to be a warm and nurturing congregation in an appropriate way that honors the needs of all involved.

How the congregation has evaluated its ministry and its history with ministers

Up until 2015, UUFB did surveys to assess the minister's performance. In 2015, the Committee on Ministry (COM) changed focus and began evaluating the many ministries of our congregation which flow from our mission statement. This was

based on the idea that fulfilling our mission depends on all of us.

Based on these ideas, in 2015 we did a “reflections” approach, looking at Sunday morning activities which included the work of the minister but also other areas such as our welcoming of congregant and guests, the music, and the social activities after the service. We asked about the Sunday morning experience in focus groups and then distilled the responses and wrote a “reflections” summary covering all of the Sunday morning activities.

In December of 2021, the COM took a similar approach. It evaluated our shared ministry by interviewing a representative cross section (approximately 10%) of our Fellowship, including adults and children. The COM asked several open-ended questions so that interviewees could talk about what was important to them. The results were grouped into six categories (Sunday Services, Community, Communications, Social Justice Issues, Religious Education, UUFB Leadership) and distributed to the congregation.

The Transition Team’s work recently has been to identify areas where UUFB needs to focus attention in preparing for our next settled minister. We’ve based that analysis on the article “The Interim Minister as Systems Analyst” by Richard A. Nugent of the UUA staff. He identifies a dozen or so “systems” that make up any religious community —things like membership, caring, religious education, finances, etc. We sorted through those systems and set aside those components where we felt the Fellowship is stable and working well; among them, Staffing, Finances, Physical Plant and Worship. We next prioritized and combined several of the others to identify three core areas to focus on in the next 18 months. In alphabetical order, they are: Connection and Engagement; Governance and Leadership and Religious Education and Theological/Spiritual Grounding.

We are not aware of any significant displeasure with any of our ministers.

What cottage meetings and surveys tell about the congregation

The majority of what we learned from cottage meetings, focus groups and the survey are incorporated into other questions in this Congregational Record. The gatherings were congenial and engaging, sometimes bringing out conflicting opinions on topics. For instance, when asked about the format of Sunday Services, one person said, “If they change anything, I’ll be upset.” To which

another person replied, "Oh, I would like to see everything change!" We may not always agree with one another, but that ability to engage in respectful debate is part of what draws us to the UUFB. We make every effort to respect all opinions.

These activities yielded many, many ideas with a strong sense emerging that most of us are in agreement on the gifts we receive from UUFB, and the ways we want it to continue to be a strong voice for helping us stretch and grow, and help the world be a more loving place.

Cottage meetings were attended by 35 people and focus groups were attended by 34 people.

The work that the minister(s) is expected to do on their own

We expect the minister to be responsible for Sunday services, even when not presenting and plan services in collaboration with our Sunday Services Committee.

The minister keeps "an ear to the ground" for news, good or bad, about congregants and tries to be available to congregants when needed. When necessary, the minister arranges pastoral visits and provides support and counseling to congregants.

The work that the congregation is expected to do on their own

Committees function fairly independently, but may benefit from occasional ministerial support, which can be provided either by attending on a scheduled basis or when requested. The minister should trust that committees can work on their own, but establish a way to share ideas as a way of maintaining communication.

Congregants take responsibility to share their needs and to help others. Our covenant reminds us that "service is our prayer." We promise to live out our congregation's mission and vision, to demonstrate effective leadership, to be open to change, to broaden our definition of community and to communicate issues in a forthright and respectful manner through established communication channels.

The work of the congregation and minister(s) that is shared by both

Shared ministry is an important value at UUFB. Except for those things that require ministerial privacy, most work is, to some extent, done collaboratively.

Work of the congregation done by other staff

Our Office Administrator handles administrative tasks. Among other things, she keeps financial records, prepares materials for Sunday services and meetings, handles payroll, maintains our web-site and handles communication with the congregation through a monthly newsletter and weekly email.

Planning for the children's RE program is done by our Religious Education Coordinator, using the same "Soul Matters" themes as the are used for the Sunday service.

Music is chosen by the pianist after consultation with the Sunday Services Committee about the theme of the service. If additional music, such as string quartets or brass ensembles, is added to the service, it is usually arranged by the pianist.

The building is cleaned weekly by a cleaning company.

Description of a typical Sunday at the congregation, including a typical Sunday worship service

Early arrivals at the Fellowship are the volunteer greeters, the coffee services committee, the pianist, the Religious Exploration staff, the technician for audio and live streaming and the Lay Leader and presenter for the service. As everyone prepares for the service, members and guests are greeted and welcomed as they take their seats.

At the appointed time the pianist performs a piece she has chosen as our gathering song. Live stream commences when the music begins. The service follows a general outline unless special circumstances warrant a change. It begins with a welcome, announcements, land acknowledgement and chalice lighting. A "Story for All Ages", appropriate for young children, is read (or displayed on the screen). After the story, the children exit with the RE staff as the congregation sings, "Go Now in Peace."

Typically a reading precedes the sermon or presentation. Each service includes greeting our attendees watching virtually and extending the Hand of Friendship to those who are present, at least two hymns, opening and closing words, and a reading of the covenant. Previously submitted Joys and Concerns are shared by the minister or Lay Leader and congregants are then invited to express their joys and sorrows by silently putting stones in a bowl of water. An offering is collected. The closing of the service involves the entire congregation holding hands and singing "From You I Receive," after which we recite "Go in Peace".

The post-service social time in our Fellowship Hall can involve any number of things: one Sunday is always dedicated for birthdays and anniversaries for that month. Other Sundays are dedicated to activities for families, organized by the RE Director, that we are all invited to enjoy (pumpkin carving, cookie decorating ,etc.). Everyone, including our guest presenter, is always invited to stay, gather, chat and have a cup of coffee.

Our three summer services in parks roughly follow the same format.

After the service kids often gather in the RE room to chat or color. They sometimes play hide and seek, or other games, inside and outside the building adding a bit of laughter while the adults are visiting. Their parents are able to relax knowing that no matter where their kids are (inside or outside the building), the whole congregation is watching over them.

How the congregation defines good preaching and worship

Based on our survey results, our Sunday morning worship services are what make people feel the most UU, inspire people to stretch and grow and give people the deepest sense of belonging. One of our congregants aptly said, "A good sermon is one that transforms people, gives people something to think about and teaches people." We appreciate preaching and worship that lean toward these goals.

Of course that's not always easy since different people look for different things from worship. A large number of our congregants have advanced degrees. For this reason, to some people, some of our services may feel more "professorial"

than "spiritual." As with all things UU - a good sermon finds the balance between head and heart.

Things a prospective minister should know about the theologies of the congregation, including where to find inspiration, comfort, and conflict

Our 2023 Congregational Survey asked respondents to select from a list of religious orientations all that apply to them. Almost 60 percent of the 76 respondents described their religious orientation as "Eclectic," i.e., including values from many sources. The two choices revolving around nature were chosen by 40 percent (Earth-centered Spirituality) and 29 percent (Natural Theism) of respondents. Humanism was selected by 41 percent and 27 percent selected Mysticism. Significant numbers of respondents identified as atheists, agnostics or skeptics. We know that about one quarter of respondents practice or engage in Buddhism. Almost one quarter believed the function of religion is to develop ethical living. Significant numbers of responders chose more than one option.

Our congregation does a good job of remembering that we value each person and their ideas. Having services with emphasis on certain beliefs is accepted, perhaps because congregants know that in the future other points of view will be featured.

Ways the congregation handles conflicted situations

The Search Committee has a sense that we do not have serious conflicts, and that those in leadership positions have the skills and practices to resolve conflicts if or when they arise. We asked many questions about this topic in our survey to be sure that we were understanding correctly.

We have had no major conflicts in the last few years. There has been some unhappiness about changes in the Sunday service Joys and Concerns and making announcements as part of the service. Our interim minister has talked personally with those who were concerned. Some would still have liked things to be as they were in the past, but they have felt listened to.

We are not aware of a lot of interpersonal conflict. When frictions have arisen they have been dealt with in respectful and problem-solving ways, so that the greater congregation is usually unaware of them. We are fortunate to have people in the congregation with very good problem solving and communication skills who have been able to address these issues. Some have come to our interim minister to ask

for help rehearsing before having a difficult conversation with another congregant. On the survey, there was strong support for the idea that we do a good job of having difficult conversations and staying in relationship.

Another plus is that we have policies that address many of the situations that could lead to conflict - for example, when questions arose about what flags can be flown on our flag pole or what Sunday services can be saved on You Tube, the Board was able to point to policies we have in place to answer those questions. We also have a strong disruptive behavior policy. Policies may be found at <https://uufbozeman.org/members-friends/policies>.

Also, perhaps we do not have serious conflicts because those congregants who responded to the survey give UUFB high marks (a rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5) for being open to change and see the congregation as flexible enough to implement new ideas easily. Congregants trust the Fellowship leadership and feel there is a core group of leaders who are able to lead change in a productive way because we focus more on our mission than on the strong preferences of some individuals.

When asked how they would handle a disagreement with the minister 78% responded that they would either think about and then meet with the minister or write the minister a note. None said they would stop coming to church or contact the Board. Others (about 10%) indicated that they would keep their concerns to themselves or share with friends.

Role of music and the arts in the life of the congregation

Music is an integral and essential part of the life of our congregation. Much of every service is musical, with nine different musical selections in every service!

There is, typically, congregational singing of the opening and closing hymns as well as singing the children out, "Comfort Me", and a closing circle song. In addition, the pianist typically plays a prelude, and meditation, as well as music for placing of the stones during Joys and Concerns and music for the offering.

Our pianist, a retired MSU professor of piano, chooses music that enhances the theme of the services - ranging from modern to folk, solemn to fun.

We also have musical groups of people who add diversity to the Sunday services - drummers, string and brass groups and an occasional "occasional choir." Hiring a choir director is a goal of ours.

The Fellowship has niches for small displays in the foyer. UU banners and quilts made by members grace our walls, We have a fabric mosaic screen behind the chalice table that was created and made by members in the early years of the Fellowship. Flowers are displayed on our chalice table.

In addition, at special gatherings and social events we often offer craft-making for both adults and children. At our annual auction, several artists from our Fellowship offer items for bid. Plans for the future include continued attention to using art to create our own UU space.

Current and former theater professionals occasionally stage and direct “readers' theaters” and plays, some of them original.

The governing structure of the congregation and how the minister is a part of this structure

The business and affairs of the Fellowship are governed by a Board of Directors (“the Board”) of at least six but not more than eight Active Members of the Fellowship . The Board is responsible for the property and funds, the conduct of Fellowship business affairs, including hiring of staff, control of the administration, the appointment of committees and the development of governing policies for the Fellowship. The Board is aware that its role does not include inserting itself into areas that are pastoral or ministerial. The minister is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Board.

Staff is hired by the Board and supervised by the minister, except that RE staff is supervised by the RE Director.

The minister is responsible for all services. We have a very strong Sunday Services Committee that designs lay-led services.

Some committees have a chairperson, usually a member who has served on the committee for a while. Others rotate responsibilities among members.

The Governance and Leadership Committee recruits Board members and helps recruit committee chairs and staff committees.

Recent successful work of the congregation

UUFB, like all congregations, was hit hard by COVID, but we have emerged strong. We didn't lose any members to the disease, but it disrupted our congregational life and momentum. We had adopted a vision statement in 2019 and our membership was growing before we had to close our doors. We were diligent, creative and successful in keeping our services and community going as much as possible. At the beginning of COVID we established a phone tree to maintain contact with everyone in the congregation. Our Sunday Services Committee learned about Zoom technology, copyright issues and presenting the Story for All Ages via the iMovie app. Our Social Activities Committee held meetups in the parking lot and facilitated "coffee time" after our services via Zoom. Our Religious Education Staff even held weekly kids' programming over Zoom, which was interesting because most of the kids attending were ages 2-9 . They often wandered on and off camera at will, regularly interrupting each other to share their Joys and Concerns! Now that we have returned from COVID, our Sunday service attendance, though reduced from its pre-COVID level, is growing again.

One thing COVID didn't dampen was our spirit of generosity. UUFB has had, and continues to have, very successful pledge drives and other fundraising campaigns. Our biggest success was the \$656,000 we collected in 2015-2019 to purchase and renovate our building, exceeding our fundraising goal by 9%. Our more recent pledge drives mirror this dedication to fund our goals: we have been able to consistently raise more money year after year and our pledge fulfillment rate has been upwards of 95% each year, even during COVID.

We have long been active in social justice issues, but a recent focus has been on the LGBTQ+ community. We navigated the Bozeman bureaucracy to erect a flag pole and often fly the Progress Pride flag, which has received positive comments from neighbors and others driving by, and wrapped our trees in rainbow yarn. We also had a booth at, and participated in Bozeman's Pride Day this spring. We showed Transgender Inclusion in Congregations: Welcome as a Spiritual Practice by Rev. Mykal Slack and Zr. Alex Kapitan, and had discussion groups on the webinar. We have made Special Offerings to Bridgercare, a family planning clinic, totaling \$1566 to support their LGBTQ+ Allies Trainings.

Finally, we have begun rebuilding post-Covid community among ourselves. In addition to resuming activities we held before Covid, such as small group work and book discussions, we have added special events for our members over 80, monthly celebration of birthdays and anniversaries, a monthly intergenerational game night and a hiking group.

We hope to build on these successes in the coming year by hiring a music director and finding a new settled minister!

The work within the congregation which is slow, stuck, or not attended to

Perhaps the most important area where we need to get “unstuck” is in inducing members and friends to lead or serve on committees and the Board. We also need more volunteers to support our other needs, such as fund-raising, membership recruitment, social and social justice activities. We have a cadre of people who have served UUFB in many capacities over the years and are, to put it frankly, slowing down. Perhaps we need a new paradigm. If so, we need help developing one.

We have been slow to bring our live-stream viewers back to the in-person services, which could lead to their taking a more active role in the life of the fellowship. We might need to learn new ways of helping Zoom attendees be more active in the life of the Fellowship.

We have not systematically attended to raising our visibility in the greater community. Despite the fact our members and friends are involved in a great deal of volunteering in Bozeman, too many people are unaware of Unitarian Universalism and the values it represents.

Finally, a new minister may want to pay special attention to valuing our families, LREC staff, and volunteers. We need to continue to be careful about considering their needs and demonstrating our appreciation.

Why people leave the congregation, and why new visitors do not return

We do not have solid answers to this question but we do know that some of our losses occur because some of our older congregants have died and others have moved to warmer climates or to be near children. Our guess is that newcomers to Bozeman may leave the community because of the cost of living and others may never have found the niche that helped them connect with UUFB. Others may feel the need to return to Christian roots or make a decision that church attendance is not important for them.

Like churches across the country we have lost some members since Covid, but our core seems to have remained strong. We learned in our Congregational Survey that the main things which keep people coming back to UUFB are

fellowship/community (93% of 76 respondents) and 70% of respondents also said they stay for UU beliefs, intellectual stimulation, and celebrating common values. We are expecting that our membership and attendance numbers will rise.

We may lose some visitors because they don't find people they connect with or don't see others who "look like me." This is especially true of young adults and people of color, although more are attending. Some visitors searching for a spiritual home may discover that UU is not a good match for them.

How money is raised within the congregation

The primary source of funds for our congregation is our annual stewardship campaign, which we conduct in the fall for the following calendar year. We also raise money through the Sunday offerings, special fundraising events, and a small amount of building rental. The proportion of our funding from stewardship was around 88% in 2019; last year it was 94%.

Since 2015, we have set more aggressive Stewardship goals as we incurred additional expenses with ownership of our Church building and moved from a 75% minister to a full-time minister. Generally, we fall a few thousand dollars short of our ambitious goal, but we have been able to consistently raise more money year-over-year.

The average number of pledge units over the past five year is 97. The average pledge has steadily increased from \$1800 in budget year 2020 to just over \$2400 last fall. Our pledge fulfillment rate is upwards of 95% each year.

Sunday offerings: The plate offering as a percentage of income has been a pretty steady average of four percent. This amount does not include the second and fifth Sunday collections which are donated in support of our social justice activities.

Fund-raising: We've had inconsistent fundraising efforts in recent years. We have had book sales, a holiday art market, treasure sales and auctions.

Building rent: In the fall of 2017, we occupied our building as owners for the first time. We had anticipated generating funds through building rental, but we underestimated how much we would use it for our own purposes, leaving less time available to rent. And of course, during Covid we did not rent our space. We are now beginning to earn some rental income which in 2023 should total around \$2,000.

Legacy giving: After many years of discussion, in the 2022-23 program year the Board approved a Legacy Giving program and appointed a committee (LGC) to encourage and manage planned gifts. We have already received about a half dozen donor intent forms.

Endowment Fund: An Endowment Fund and relevant policy were established in 2018.

Financial Health: UUFB continues to be financially stable. Each year we add to each of our three Reserve accounts which have grown to a total of about \$95,000. We have an additional \$10,000 in a savings account, which we view as a short term source of cash if needed. UUFB makes its mortgage payments each month, and pays its Fair Share assessment to UUA.

The most recent capital campaigns in the congregation

Capital Campaigns: UUFB has only conducted one capital campaign, in 2015-19. In the spring of 2015, our building search committee identified a building that could meet the Fellowship's needs. A generous member bought the property and signed an agreement to transfer the title to the Fellowship when all stipulated conditions were met. The major stipulation was to conduct a capital campaign to remodel and refurbish the building. At the end of 2015, a goal of \$600,000 was set, a campaign committee was established, and a financial manager appointed. The conclusion of the campaign was celebrated in early March 2019.

- These figures include a \$6,430 Chalice Lighters grant from the Mountain Desert District of UUA. They do not include a \$25,000 First Home grant from the UUA.
- The total amount collected in pledge payments was \$655,925.67 or 109% of the goal.
- The total amount pledged was \$664,535.67 or 111% of the goal.
- 106 pledges were received from individuals and households.

During this time, the growth in stewardship was faster than in the previous several years. When our first and major donor called the UUFB president to offer her gift, she said, "I don't want any big kudos for this. I'm fortunate to be able to do this right now. I just hope it inspires other people to be generous too." It did.

Debt and reserves that the congregation has

Our only debt is the mortgage on our building. The amount remaining on our current loan is \$265,022. We will pay \$25,817.00 toward the mortgage in 2023.

We have an endowment fund which now contains \$6,746.60.

Our Reserves are:

Capital Improvements Fund \$1,378.71

Fellowship & Development Fund \$307.27

Justice & Outreach Fund \$1,852.83

Long-term Facilities Reserve \$15,363.59

Minister Sabbatical Reserves \$25,390.03

Operating Fund Reserves \$54,491.83

Total Reserves/Special \$98,784.260

How the congregation feels about its stewardship

Our stewardship campaigns generate positive results: increasing the amount pledged, the average pledge, and the number of pledgers at higher levels. We are proud that we met our pledge goals even during Covid. Our members and friends are generous.

There has long been a culture of discomfort with talking about money. That relaxed quite a bit with the building gift and capital campaign, but some signs of discomfort remain. Publishing a list of capital campaign donors (in alphabetical order) was a milestone in recognizing one another as givers.

Individual pledge amounts are known only by the treasurer and the Office Administrator who tracks the pledges with Breeze software. The minister may access pledge information on a need-to-know basis

On the survey, members and friends overwhelmingly responded that they give what they can afford while meeting their other obligations. Several commented they take into consideration UUFB's needs as well as the needs of other worthy causes. Others base their contribution on the amount of their involvement, the significance of UUFB in their lives and the level of service our congregation provides to the community. The pledge goal and suggested contributions listed in the stewardship brochure are a factor for a few people.

Personal financial situation is the primary factor respondents mentioned as a determinant in whether they increase (or decrease) their giving. Some donors increase their giving for specific purposes, e.g., ministerial search, ensuring staff are adequately compensated, the RE program, the OWL program, UUFB dedication to social justice activities and the needs of the building or its furnishings. Finally, an individual's level of giving can be correlated to frequency of attendance.

From survey responses we learned that some congregants are concerned about the congregations's financial sustainability.

In the opinion of our long-time and financially savvy treasurer, at this point the congregation is financially stable and healthy. Reasons for some congregants' concern may be a lack of understanding of our current financial situation and concern from the perceived (and probably correct) idea that older members give the most and that with their deaths or their moving from Bozeman their financial support will be lost. The new Legacy Giving program has encouraged some older members to include UUFB in their estate planning.

Role of the minister(s) in stewardship

The minister, in collaboration with the Stewardship Committee, has often presented a service focusing on stewardship during the pledge drive. This year the title was Stewardship: A Heritage of UU Generosity.

During the pledge drive the minister makes room in the order of service for weekly "stewardship moments" presented by congregation members in which congregants share their reasons for supporting the Fellowship.

The ten largest pledges within the congregation

We are choosing to share the range of these contributions in light of our policy of confidentiality.

\$10,000+ 2 pledges

\$7,000 to 9,999 3 pledges

\$5000 to 6,999 5 pledges

What a prospective minister should know about the building and grounds for the congregation

In the fall of 2017, we dedicated our first permanent home after many years of wandering from one venue to another. Two years earlier, we had -- with a generous contribution from a member -- purchased an A-frame residence which had been converted to a Lutheran church. We knew it was inadequate -- we had to hold two services to accommodate our attendance, there was no office space, and it had minimal classroom and social space. We used 2015/2016 to conduct a fund-raising campaign which raised over \$650,000, roughly five times that year's pledge campaign goal. Concurrently, one of our members -- a retired architect -- drew plans to turn the 1900 square foot building into a bright 5000 square foot building with a sanctuary seating roughly 140 attendees, an adjacent social area where about 70 people can be seated at tables, a minister's office, an administrator/RE leader's office, a nurse's office, a classroom which can be divided and holds 20 people, and a full kitchen. Another member, who had extensive experience in managing large building projects, rode herd on the contractors as they constructed our new building during 2016/2017. Many members contributed to the contractor's efforts, whether by cleaning the site every weekend or selecting color schemes, furniture, etc. To top it off, an anonymous donor contributed a new grand piano.

Moving into our new building was certainly a joyous event. We are so proud of our accomplishment. Some feared that after such an effort, fatigue would set in. But just the opposite happened. The new opportunities offered by the building provided new energy to our Fellowship.

Here are some details about the building:

Our interim minister describes her office as a fabulous work space for contemplation and creativity and for interacting with staff.

Our kitchen contains a range, microwave, sterilizing dishwasher, 4 sinks, cabinetry for dishes and utensils, full size washer and dryer, and 2 coffee makers.

The building has radiant floor heating with auxiliary space heaters for offices. Like most of Montana, the building has no air conditioning, but has timed ventilation and floor fans for cooling.

There are three all-gender restrooms, two of which are wheelchair accessible. One has a shower. There are floor monitors in the kitchen and restrooms for detecting plumbing leaks.

Our contract with a security company includes interior motion sensors in four areas and indoor cameras next to the two main entrances. At the back door there is a ring doorbell, an electronic keypad lock and a security screen.

The six fire extinguishers are checked monthly as are the batteries for EXIT lights and the AED is checked monthly.

We have contracts with a lawn mowing company and an irrigation/snow removal company. Additional snow shoveling is done by congregation members. Pet-safe snowmelt and sand are applied in both parking lot and on sidewalks when icy conditions necessitate.

Irrigation water comes from a previously existing well.

Flower gardens are tended by members of the congregation.

We have a sheltered bike rack, which is used year-round.

On our flagpole a Progress Pride flag is flown every day except Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veterans' Day, when we raise the American flag.

Our parking lot holds 24 cars. There is adequate street parking near-by.

The condition of the buildings and grounds

Our seven-year-old building is in good shape.

Annual maintenance is required for the following:

- Radiant floor heating system boiler cleaning
- City-required backflow testing of plumbing valves
- Carpet cleaning
- Irrigation on/off, including winterization

The paved parking lot is to be crack-sealed and whole-lot-sealed on a 5-year schedule starting next June.

NEEDS (not urgent):

- Refinish the altar floor
- Replace the dying aspens in front of the building
- Add a ring doorbell for the front door.

A Long-term Facilities Fund is maintained for large costs such as roof replacement, interior remodeling after disaster, etc. At this time it holds about \$15,350

We also have a Capital Improvement fund for smaller items such as cabinetry, tables, etc) has about \$1400.

Expectations of the congregation for a minister(s) around pastoral care / spiritual guidance / counseling / home and hospital visitation

Pastoral care - Our interim and preceding ministers have visited those in assisted living and low-income housing that can't get to UUFB, offered care to families that lost a member, helped with memorial services and contacted those with physical and mental health issues.

Spiritual guidance - People say they want to dig more deeply and take something home that has them thinking throughout the week. We would like a minister to be able to serve as a resource for questions about major life changes and for exploring spiritual practices.

We realize that we can all stretch and grow even if the foundation for a service is not our preferred spiritual path. Our interim minister has said that she has been comfortable using many different religious traditions and has not received push-back.

Counseling - There is no expectation of ongoing counseling, but some members and friends visit the minister once or twice to talk about issues and think through the next steps. These visits are often drop-in visits.

The settled minister may choose to write their sermons at home and should establish days off, but for other times it's good for the minister to be in the building and be willing to take the time for connecting with the 5-ish people who drop by per day.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around children and adult religious education

The minister is expected to collaborate with the Lifetime Religious Education (LRE) Committee to support children's RE activities and work to involve children more in Fellowship activities.

Children in an RE Children's Focus Group said they would like a minister who:

- makes church fun
- lives in Bozeman
- comes to the RE room
- likes events, like Halloween
- comes to events at people's houses
- makes art work with us
- helps decorate the RE room
- dresses colorfully (we talked with the children right before Halloween!)

Parents, in a separate focus group, said they want their children to be involved in services, not just the Story for All Ages, but also chalice lighting, readings or anything that makes them feel like they are an important part of worship. They like all-ages activities so kids can relate to adults and older folks, and advance notice about activities where children's participation would be welcome. They mentioned wanting a minister who is flexible and OK with things sometimes changing at the last minute, or not going exactly as planned, as tends to happen if children are involved - especially if they are UU children!

Adult RE - Small group discussion or ministry groups activities have been revived by the interim minister with the idea that they could then be handed off to a lay person. These activities have been well attended, but have not found new leaders. Our interim minister has recently begun a monthly Chalice Circle class and has encouraged newcomers to attend. She and a member are facilitating *The Inner Work of Age: Moving from Role to Soul*. Discussions based on *Heart to Heart* and *Soul to Soul* were initiated and run by congregants. About 10 years ago groups for Humanist, Mystics, Buddhist, and nature-based practices were developed. At this time the Humanist Group continues to meet monthly to explore religious Humanism and its impact on and future within Unitarian Universalism. There is also a Mystics Group which meets occasionally. Some interest has been expressed in restarting some of the other groups.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around community building / facilitation skills / coffee hour and social times

We feel certain that our new minister will be warmly welcomed into our community and will enjoy our company. Being visible to the extent possible will be appreciated. Joining the coffee hour and attending whatever social activities that feel inviting will be important for connecting with us. When our interim minister came, she invited us to participate in some small group discussions about ourselves and our relationship to UUFB which helped congregants connect to her.

We would appreciate ideas and help with finding ways to reconnect with those who stopped attending during Covid and to be more welcoming to newcomers.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around committee / task force work

Our expectation is that the minister will collaborate with committees, first getting to know them and then being available as requested or special projects arise.

We have a Program Council which meets every other month. It is convened by the Board Vice President and a representative of each committee is invited. This is a time to share plans and look at activities in a more global way.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around leadership development

The Fellowship could use help with leadership development. Several members put together a leadership training about five years ago. It successfully provided training to existing leaders and encouraged new people to step up into leadership positions. A number of people have mentioned that we need some sort of leadership training again, both for members in general and for Board and committee chairs in particular. In our small group discussions we often heard about the need for committee meetings to run more efficiently. It would also be helpful for the minister to provide support to the Board President, maybe with monthly meetings.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around membership and membership growth

Like many congregations, our membership has fallen since Covid. When we look at our demographics, half of our people are 70 and above. Although many of our older members are still very active in the Fellowship, we are missing the younger people who will carry this congregation forward.

We know that recruiting new members is not up to the minister alone, but also know that in addition to Sunday services, personal relations with the minister are important as people decide whether or not to continue coming and possibly become members. Thus, making a strong effort to connect with newcomers is important.

We have begun to re-implement some of the steps we used successfully in the past to recruit members, but because the Membership Committee is small, some of the pieces of the successful process have not been implemented. We hope that the new minister would collaborate with an enlarged Membership Committee in whatever ways they can.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around staff relations and supervision

We have a small but dedicated and capable staff. They are well-loved by the congregation. Our expectation is that the minister will trust their skills, show them appreciation and support them.

Our Office Administrator is often alone in the building and appreciates friendly interaction with the minister. She is hoping for an approachable person who is able to work well with a variety of people/personalities. Comfort with using computers, printers and Google Drive would be pluses.

Our pianist would appreciate a minister who knows music and UU hymns.

Processes for staff interaction are outlined in the Personnel section of the web-page.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around anti-oppression work / social justice / social action

We have a long history of social action. Ministers have seen this as an important part of Fellowship life since Lois Van Leer was minister in 2003. We would hope a new minister would share this focus and be on the front lines with us as we try to make the world a better place. There is a sense in the congregation that social justice is what UU's do. Someone said, "Social justice is a reflexive action with this Fellowship." Our survey results confirmed that this congregation believes one of the most important functions of UUFB is social justice.

Our last minister was a founding member of Montana Interfaith Power and Light. Membership in this organization would be a way to connect with others and help focus on environmental issues.

Our Social Justice Action Committee (SJAC) is aware and active. The role of the minister would be to collaborate with SJAC for ideas and actions.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around interfaith / community work

We expect our minister to be active with the Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association and look for opportunities for interfaith activities for the congregation. We jointly participate in some social justice activities with our "Power of We" partners in the local Congregational church and synagogue. Many UU's recently attended, and our interim minister addressed, an interfaith prayer vigil for peace in Israel and Gaza.

Our interim minister has continued our relationship with the leaders of the Jewish and the Muslim community. We expect our new minister to continue these relationships. UUFB members took part in the interfaith "Faith Over Fear"

workshop about how to support Muslims in our community, hosted by our Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association

We would encourage our minister to become part of local organizations of interest that are not church related as part of our effort to become more known in the community.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around denominational activities

We expect that our minister will attend GA and regional UU meetings, either in person or on-line and will encourage us to attend also.

Sarah Schurr, our Congregation Life Representative, checks in with ministers several times a year and is available as needed.

It is our sense that our congregation does not feel much involvement with UUA. We use and appreciate UUA resources, but most do not follow the business of the organization.

Any expectations there might be about a minister's family and personal life

We are very aware that we are hiring a minister, not a family. If the minister were to have a family, we would welcome the family's participation in the Fellowship, but that is not an expectation.

We are also aware of the need for work-life balance. Although a minister's life does not operate on a typical schedule, we would hope that the minister will keep track of the hours spent on UUFB tasks and not feel obligated to spend more time than is outlined in the contract. We hope the minister will feel comfortable scheduling personal time and establishing appropriate boundaries.

Expectations the congregation has for a minister(s) around other areas not already addressed above

One of the committees we specifically interviewed in this process was our Sunday Services Committee. We asked them what expectations they had of a minister and what qualities they valued. Their responses were:

- The ability to take responsibility on services and follow through on offers of assistance;
- Flexibility

- Creativity
- Ability to collaborate
- Ability and willingness to make difficult decisions about services and take responsibility for them
- Openness to allowing the lay leader to select the hymns and readings (if the lay leader wants to do that)
- Ability to work with lay leaders who have different levels of experience and comfort

How trust is built between the congregation and the minister

Members and friends expect from the beginning that they can trust the minister and that the minister can trust them - and that if issues arise, we will face them, rather than ignore them in the hope they will go away. Our interim minister stated trust developed quickly and easily and she would expect the same to happen in the future.

One thing that has been appreciated is our interim minister's trust of committees. Although she attended meetings at the beginning to get to know the committees and their members, she then trusted the committees to reach out when they wanted input.

Some families felt that they were not fully supported during Covid and as we were transitioning back. Better communication among the minister, families and the congregation can help build trust.

One mistake a minister could make that would seriously affect the ministry

The biggest mistake a new minister could make would be to push for too many drastic changes too soon, especially doing so without collaboration with the appropriate committee. That is not to say the Fellowship does not accept change. There have been several tweaks to the order of service which have been

implemented gradually and in collaboration with the Sunday Services Committee. The switch from spoken Joys and Concerns to having them submitted to and read by the minister or lay leader initially encountered some resistance, but is now accepted. Some areas are more or less sacrosanct, including social justice activities and the UUFB Vision and Mission Statements, which were drafted by the Fellowship. Shared ministry, lay leadership, RE presence in services (Story for all Ages) are long established and have significant support.

How has your ministry changed since COVID began? Where do you see decline? What have you let go of? Where do you see fresh energy?

We did not meet in person for almost two years and waited longer than most other Bozeman churches to begin in-person services. In the time we were not meeting in person, we purchased and learned how to use technology for meetings, streaming Sunday services, and RE classes.

Although Zoom attendance was high and a Zoom coffee hour was offered after the service, the general sense was that the pandemic had a negative effect on our sense of community. Since resuming in-person services this has begun to turn around, but there are still several who choose to watch services via YouTube. We miss our connections with them and realize that they are now a lesser part of our activities.

Fresh energy - We have an intense increased desire to be together, both in worship and socially. We are holding more social activities following services such as celebration of birthdays and anniversaries, soup and bread lunches and activities with children - carving pumpkins and learning about the water cycle were two recent ones. A hiking group was established and we have a monthly family game night. These activities are well attended.

After time spent away from each other, we seem to have an increased sense of how important UUFB is to us - for spiritual growth, for our sense of community and for our commitment to social justice. Although we have issues caused by the pandemic, we are committed to solving them. This Fellowship is so important to so many of us, that we will not let it founder.

Have you passed the Eighth Principle, or is the congregation in process of moving to a congregational vote?

Although we have not yet taken up the Eighth Principle, we did study the adoption of Article II. Our minister offered three workshops on Article II in 2023 and they were well attended.

How is trust in your congregation right now?

Our survey indicates that there is a high level of trust in our leadership. 84% of respondents rated the trust level at 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5. When asked if we have a core group of leaders that are able to lead change in a productive way, 80% responded with a 4 or a 5.

Although we did not ask a question about trust in our interim minister, we feel that it is high. She is responsive, provides Sunday services that challenge us and is a model of UU values. People enjoy being with her and see her as someone who is capably helping us prepare for transition to a new minister.

How did the last ministry end (or how is it ending)? How is the congregation doing with this time of transition?

Our last minister retired with the thanks of the congregation for his leadership, particularly through Covid. We now have an interim minister who is greatly appreciated and are looking forward to having a new settled minister.

The congregation has done well with this transition. Our interim minister has helped us look at areas that need improvement as well as supporting all of the congregation's work. We will say good-bye to her with great thanks and wish her well. The congregation she serves next will undoubtedly feel as lucky as we have about her time with us.

The congregation has been made aware since our interim began that she is just that, an interim minister, and that we will be doing the work to have a settled minister for next year. Although we will miss our interim minister, we feel confident that our settled minister will be welcomed as warmly as she was.

How is technology currently used in your congregation and what are the expectations of the minister around that?

UUFB has a robust audio-visual (AV) capability which we use to live-stream our services and special events such as memorial services, workshops and outdoor activities. We also use it to archive our services. We have become comfortable

using Zoom for meetings. The office administrator and minister use both PC and Apple computer systems.

We expect the minister to understand the AV capabilities, but not how to operate the system. We have a couple of members who are in charge of live-streaming the Sunday services and our office administrator is a knowledgeable resource for technology. The person who oversaw the purchase and installation of the AV equipment is still involved when we have glitches - which doesn't happen often any more.

Our AV system consists of the following components:

- A sound system with three microphones and three loudspeakers;
- A pull-down screen at the altar and fixed projector which can be used with a computer
- Two cameras used to live-stream our services
- Both a large and small TV on wheels
- A Meeting Owl 360 camera for use in Zoom meetings and conference calls
- A rechargeable Bluetooth speaker with microphone for use at outdoor events
- A portable AV system (speakers and microphones) that requires power

Questions the congregation would have liked to have been asked which were not included here

How can UUFB help a new minister find housing

Affordable housing is an issue in Bozeman. It is a community-wide concern and there are many efforts by the city, the Human Rights Development Council and some builders to increase the number of moderately priced homes and apartments. New apartment buildings are springing up in every part of town. Our City Commission recently passed an ordinance disallowing some types of vacation rentals which may free up some housing.

We have a number of ideas which we think will be helpful for locating housing in Bozeman. We hope any candidate having an interest in our Fellowship will not be deterred by the housing issue. We are a determined and skilled group with

many contacts and feel confident that we can help our minister find a home in Bozeman.

What about UUFB would be attractive to a potential minister?

The cottage meeting responses to this question can be grouped into three areas: our people, our Fellowship and our greater Bozeman community. The answers overwhelmingly focused on our members and friends. Adjectives used to describe them included warm, friendly, welcoming, committed, energetic, progressive, open, caring, supportive and diverse in faith orientation. We have a strong sense of community, are committed to social and environmental issues, embrace a wide range of ideas and consider ourselves open to new ideas and accepting of change.

The second most cited attractive factor is our strength as a Fellowship. We have a lovely building, are in a sound financial position and have an excellent Office Administrator and RE Director. We are long established and stable, but with possibilities for growth. We have strong leadership and good communication. We have little or no conflict or squabbling factions, but we know how to handle conflict if it arises. We collaborate with other organizations and have an opportunity to grow intergenerational connections.

The third most often cited attractive factor is our greater Bozeman community. Respondents believe this area is a great place to live. It is in a beautiful setting, is vibrant and growing, has close connections to nature and a stimulating culture. Its political culture is liberal.

Below you will find a link to a slide show which portrays the life of our Fellowship.

<https://youtu.be/HqstRn-L6KI>