

UU Fellowship of Bozeman

Contract Minister (in Cycle)

Bozeman, Montana | Pacific Western Region

Regional Contact: Rev. Summer Albayati | salbayati@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:

We are a congregation that celebrates our sense of community and connection.

Sunday mornings at the UU Fellowship in Bozeman begin early as our steady volunteer arrives from Livingston to start the coffee. Someone else arrives to set up the livestream. Our building livens up as greeters pick up the bulletins and take their places at the entrance, while those providing our Sunday service set up the flowers, candles, and a glass of water at the front of the sanctuary. On this beautiful October morning as we come together, children look for one another, one dressed for a day at Hogwarts another for a soccer game. Some adults arrive dressed for an early afternoon hike, others for the afternoon symphony. The

sound of the singing bowl lets us know the service is beginning, the pianist offers a prelude, we greet one another and those watching on live stream, and light the chalice.

Most Sundays this all happens as planned. When it doesn't, we meet the challenges that are given to us; we'll always have coffee, someone will pick up a shovel to clear the sidewalk, and if our pianist is suddenly sick a song leader will emerge.

At UUFB, everything we do—every service, gathering, and act of care—happens through the shared efforts of our members and friends. Our volunteers make the Fellowship come alive, serve on committees that plan worship, care for our building and grounds, guide our social justice work, introduce our children to Unitarian Universalism, and create opportunities for learning, connection, and joy.

Our Fellowship continues to thrive during this time when we are without a minister, with services that inspire and challenge us with a balance of head and heart.

Our soup and bread lunches, our Thanksgiving potluck, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, having inter-generational celebrations such as pumpkin carving, holiday cookie decorating, Easter egg hunts, bingo, circle suppers, chalice circles (Soul Matters small groups), a men's group, a women's group, family board game night, a banned books group, and a hiking group all bring us together. We also hold events such as candlelight labyrinth walks, events for our over-80 members, adult RE book discussion groups and some of us of us hike together.

We support our local community through social justice work, as discussed elsewhere in this document. When there is a parade, protest, or demonstration in Bozeman, UUs are well represented.

A beneficial result of our fellowship's sense of community is the high level of trust among members and between members and our leadership. 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.

Our community and connection shine when we bring ourselves and our resources together to get things done, such as the monumental project of purchasing, renovating and expanding 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. For example, high participation has resulted in meeting or exceeding our pledge goals for the last two years.

Our "Size A" congregation keeps our doors open, warmly greeting all who join us, and proudly advertising that we are a Welcoming Congregation. Newcomers comment on the friendly greetings they received. We help one another when times are hard and rejoice with each other when times are good.

Our sense of community and connection arises from the work we do together to make our lives and our world a better place.

We invite you to watch this slide show that portrays the life of our Fellowship.

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 [this webpage](#).

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 focus on historical UU figures or ideas. Our RE programs introduce other religious traditions such as Samhain, Holi, and St. Lucia Day.

We hire affirmatively, advertising openings (in the local newspaper, at hiring websites, and on social media) 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 paid modest bonuses at the end of 2020 to recognize the challenges of adapting to COVID. Our proposed 2026 budget provides for overdue compensation increases for our office administrator and RE staff.

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 & Spoon (our local community pay-what-you-can cafe). We take a special offering on second Sundays, giving it to an organization that shares our values. In 2025, more than \$16,000 was donated. If there is a fifth Sunday, we take a collection for emergency relief; the average over the past year was about \$1,400.

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. As a

demonstration of the congregation's ongoing commitment to social justice, the SJAC (Social Justice Action) committee is one of the longest-running committees at UUFB.

We have been a Welcoming Congregation since 1998 and helped with the first PRIDE parade in Montana in 1997 by providing security for the participants. Our UUFB minister performed the first legal gay marriages in Bozeman. Our members voted in January 2024 to commit to the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal, and we fulfilled these practices in 2024 and 2025, with the intention to continue our commitment to Welcome Renewal in future years. Some of our members have established a new social group for queer (including trans) members of UUFB and others in the community (FUUNQY).

We subscribe 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 books were *White Fragility*, *The Inner Work of Age*, *Shifting from Role to Soul*, and *Before We Were Trans*.

We are active in the interfaith community and are represented in the Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association. We partner with Beth Shalom and Pilgrim Congregational, sometimes sharing activities and working together once a month at Fork & Spoon. Following the October 7, 2023, 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. Several years ago, we showed similar support for the Bozeman Muslim community when it was threatened.

We care for the planet by recycling as much as we can. One Sunday a month, a member collects glass (which is not recycled by the city) and takes it to 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 reused from another facility.

What potential applicants should know about the congregation's lay leadership:

Our lay leadership (both lay leaders for worship and for other functions) has a long and strong history. At this time when we do not have a minister, they play a particularly important role. For example, our Sunday Services Committee puts together our weekly services, finds speakers and often speak themselves.

Each Sunday service has a lay leader volunteer who works with Sunday morning presenters in planning services and often chooses readings, chalice lightings, and hymns. Members of the Sunday Services Committee often serve as lay leaders.

The following is a partial list of the activities supported by our lay people:

- Serve as chairs or members of committees
- Greet attendees at Sunday services
- Volunteer to provide transportation, food, set-up, and clean-up for events
- Bring meals and provide transportation to doctors' appointments for members in need
- Manage short-term tasks like the art bazaar or book sale; maintain our facility
- Support the RE program
- Lead groups such as Chalice Circle, the Humanist group, and book discussions
-

[Click here](#) for a current list of active committees, which provides an overview of our lay activities. Most importantly, members serve 2-4 year terms on our Board of Directors. The Board partners with the minister to oversee all aspects of congregational life. All of these volunteers are viewed as part of our shared ministry.

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 AM to 11 AM every Sunday 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.

We continue to meet weekly during the summer, with one service a month at a nearby park, which has a pavilion that makes gatherings feel more festive.

Visit our website to view [past Sunday Services and sermons](#).

Personnel

Name	Position	Paid Hours per Week	Year Started
Lisa Baker	Board Vice President	Volunteer	2025
Kaylin Greene	Board Co-President	Volunteer	2025
Janine Roberts	Board Treasurer	Volunteer	2024
Sandra Oldendorf	Board Co-President	Volunteer	2025
Christy Huddleston	Church Administrator	30	2019
Asherah Bauquier	Religious Education Coordinator	14	2025
Laurel Yost	Pianist	3	1994
Megan Makeever	Choir Director	1.5	2024
Joy LaClaire	Board Secretary	Volunteer	2024
Roxanne Klingensmith	Clergy Pastoral Care Visitor	5	2024
Sheldon Williams	RE Co-Teacher	5	2025

Describe the diversity in congregational staffing, now and in the past. Detail how leadership can assure opportunities and on-going support for people with marginalized identities in hiring practices:

Bozeman is a city with limited ethnic and racial diversity, and the makeup of our staff reflects the community. There is strong support in our leadership to increase the diversity of our staff when possible.

Our current Coordinator of Religious Exploration is a trans woman. The lead volunteer who coordinates our coffee service each Sunday morning is also a trans woman.

The process for hiring is outlined in a UUFB Hiring Best Practices Policy following the criteria in our Personnel Manual. Both can be found at [our website](#).

Please see our responses in the "Demographics" section as well.

Additional personnel notes:

We were ably served by an interim minister for the last 3 years. We are now lay-led for Sunday services and employ a part-time minister of pastoral care.

Our pianist, choir director, and pastoral care provider are paid based on hours worked; the hours listed are a rough estimate and are variable.

Congregation History

Provide your Congregation's founding history:

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bozeman grew out of a small, liberal discussion group that began meeting in 1955. During the next four years the group met bi-weekly in members' homes. Members or guest speakers gave presentations followed by discussion around ethical, philosophical, and religious problems. The group was visited by a Unitarian minister from Salt Lake City in 1956 and a Unitarian minister from Spokane in 1959. The latter's presentations so impressed the members of the discussion group that they urged affiliation with the AUA. A majority voted on April 26, 1959 to affiliate and become a Unitarian fellowship.

Over the following 23 years the fellowship met in different locations in Bozeman while Sunday School was held in members' homes. The need for a home for adults, children, and youth to be together prompted a yearning to own a building. The group split over the decision to find a building, build a building, or

have no building. After the decision to build was made and land was purchased there were not enough dues-paying members left to build a church. This smaller group continued to meet as a fellowship.

In 1982, The Montana Cluster (Fellowships from Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, and Bozeman) called Rev. Mary Scriver, a modern day UU circuit riding minister, to travel to each fellowship once a month for services. Rev. Scriver drove her camper truck no fewer than 560 miles each month meeting with each fellowship for five days. She slept in her camper or in members' homes. 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.

Date founded: 6/1/1959

Describe important events in your Congregation's history:

1959 – We joined the American Unitarian Association.

1982 – Rev. Mary Scriver begins her ministry with the four UU fellowships in Montana.

1984 – We celebrated our 25th Anniversary.

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 leader and visions for the future. We welcomed ministerial support as we remained a lay-led congregation yearning to have a minister of our own.

1988 – The land purchased by the Fellowship in the 1960s was sold as the group realized it was not an appropriate site for a church.

1990 – We sent our first representative to General Assembly.

1991 – Our church year began with a fall retreat. Men's and Women's groups began meeting.

1995 – We cooked and served a Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant owned by members of the Fellowship for those alone and wanting to share the holiday.

1997 – UUFB participated in the first Montana Gay Pride Parade in Bozeman by providing security, sharing our Sunday Service with the PRIDE community and holding a same-sex Commitment Ceremony.

1998 – We became a Welcoming Congregation.

1998 – Our first paid position was a Coordinator of Religious Education.

1999 – A large group of members and friends traveled to Salt Lake City to attend General Assembly.

2000 – We designed and created a six-paneled fabric screen for an altar backdrop as we continued to hold services in various venues.

2002 – Welcoming Congregation adult workshops were held.

2003 – The “Very Occasional Choir” was formed.

2003 – We have a minister! We welcomed Rev. Lois Van Leer to a half-time position as our first minister with us in Bozeman.

2005 – A new UUFB logo was created by one of our members.

2006 – 2007 We hired an Administrative Assistant and rented office space we called “UU Central.”

2009 – Our 50th anniversary!

2011 – Rev. Dr. Nina Grey began her 5-year ministry with us.

2015 – With a generous jump-start from a member, we purchased the Shining Mountains Lutheran Church, which we transformed into our current home. Following a vigorous, enthusiastic, and successful Capital Campaign, we undertook extensive expansion, remodeling and renovation of the building, helped by amazing contributions of time and talent from members and friends, including the gift of professional architectural services.

2016 – During this exciting time Rev. Dr. Grey retired in 2016, and Rev. Dennis (Duffy) Peet was called to serve the congregation. During his ministry, the position grew from 3/4 to full-time. Finally, we had a full-time minister AND a building.

2017 – We held a dedication for our first UUFB home.

2018 – We began holding Sunday services in the summer.

2019 – Our long-time volunteer pianist was hired as a paid staff member, and a new Coordinator of Religious Education joined the team.

2019 – We celebrated our 60th Anniversary with a service led by Rev. Duffy Peet and Rev. Sarah Schurr, from the UUA Western Region.

2020 – Responding to the challenge of COVID, we quickly learned about and created virtual services. Our building remained closed for Sunday services and meetings through May 2021. When we opened our doors and began meeting in person, we continued sharing our services by Zoom.

After Rev. Duffy retired in the summer 2022, Rev. Margo Rinehart joined us as interim minister in August. In 2023-2024, we searched for a settled minister; that search was not successful. In the fall of 2024, we began searching for a full-time contract minister to join us in Bozeman.

Ministerial History

Start	End	Position	Name	Job Title
2024	Now	Other	Roxanne Klingensmith	Clergy Pastoral Care Visitor
2022	2025	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
1999	2000	Contract	Judith LaFollette	Consulting Minister

List non-UU ministers who have served the congregation, including their names, denominational affiliation (if any), and approximate dates of service:

Rev. Lois Van Leer was a minister in the United Church of Christ when we met and welcomed her into a half-time ministry with our Fellowship in 2003. She was exploring becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister and became one after years of growth in ministry with us, much reading and study, and many trips to Boston to meet with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. We grew together in Unitarian Universalism during the 7 years that Lois was our minister.

Rev. Roxanne Klingensmith, an Episcopal deacon, has served as our in-person pastoral care provider since September, 2024 and has been warmly embraced by our congregation. In addition to pastoral care, she provides one service a month.

Recall if a minister with a marginalized identity has served the congregation, and describe how this ministry did go / is going:

Rev. Lois Van Leer and her partner, Lori, were heartily welcomed to our congregation. and celebrated their wedding with us. Neither the fact that Rev. Lois was a UCC minister nor that she was a lesbian were barriers in creating community with our congregation and representing us in the Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association or the Bozeman community.

Additional ministerial history notes:

From the mid-1980s into the late-1990s the fellowship hired consulting and visiting ministers who provided a variety of sermons in Sunday Service. This ministerial support inspired us and helped us grow not only in numbers, but in social justice activity, organizational skills, training for lay leaders, and visions for the future.

We met Rev. Lois Van Leer when she was visiting the area and invited her to be a guest minister one Sunday. She easily made a connection with both adults and children. In 2003, Rev. Van Leer became our first minister living in Bozeman.

Because we had no Fellowship building we met over time at Pilgrim Congregational UCC, The Senior Center, Temple Beth Shalom, an Episcopal church, and Christus Collegium, a campus ministry.

As more ministers joined us, each brought different gifts. Rev. Jackie Ziegler, our first interim minister, provided the bridge during a challenging time between the ministries of Rev. Van Leer and Rev. Dr. Grey. Rev. Nina helped strengthen our Adult RE program with Spiritual Pluralism discussion groups – Humanism, Buddhism, Mysticism, and Earth-Centered Spiritualities.

During the exciting time of moving into our own building, Rev. Dr. Grey retired and Rev. Duffy Peet was called to be our minister. In time Rev. Duffy's 3/4-time ministry became full-time, and we finally had a Fellowship home and a full-time minister. Rev. Duffy guided us through the most difficult years of COVID.

Rev. Duffy retired in the spring of 2022, and we welcomed Rev. Margo Rinehart as our interim minister. Rev. Margo was with us full-time until June 2024 and served us half-time through June 2025, while living at home in western Washington and commuting to Bozeman at least 8 days each month. At that time Rev. Roxy Klingensmith was hired to provide pastoral care and one service a month on a half-time basis.

Rev. Duffy rejoined us for Summer 2025 and Rev. Roxy continues to provide pastoral care and her monthly service.

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
2025*	\$228,199	\$203,268	112		
2024*	\$205,050	\$216,774	110	16	51-75
2023*	\$199,874	\$185,875	116	18	51-75
2022	\$180,495	\$167,045	141	17	26-50
2021	\$185,627	\$167,125	143	18	51-75
2020	\$170,397	\$162,594	144	32	92
2019	\$159,911	\$138,855	140	34	87
2018	\$136,555	\$167,213	130	30	83

Year	Total Pledge Income	Total Operating Expenses	Membership	Youth Enrollment	Avg. Attendance
2017	\$131,900	\$140,800	121	21	88
2016	\$124,606	\$115,297	118	33	92

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

Year	Note/Explanation
2025	<p>We have been gaining members this year. We began with 110 and as of November, now have 127.</p> <p>In November 2024, we had 110 members. In 2024, attendance at Sunday services (including online attendees and children) is typically around 70 each week. 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.</p>
2024	<p>In the past two years, we have been offering orientation sessions twice a year for prospective members, and we expect some of our regular attendees will become members.</p> <p>Our pledge campaign for 2024 had 101 pledge units and exceeded its goal. Our pledge campaign for 2025 exceeded its ambitious goal of \$234,000.</p> <p>Our average attendance each Sunday including adults, children and those on You Tube is 92.</p>

Year	Note/Explanation
2023	<p>Before COVID arrived in 2020, UUFB sometimes had more than 100 attendees at Sunday services. In 2021, we averaged only 43 attendees per Sunday at our Zoom services.</p> <p>From the resumption of in-person services in March 2022 through the end of 2022, there was an average of 64 attendees per Sunday service, which included in-person adult and child attendees and live stream (YouTube) viewers.</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.</p> <p>The number of in-person adult attendees has gradually 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

Our congregation is mostly female (about 70%) and about 30% male.

The number of LGBTQ+ attendees and members has increased in the past two years and includes both individuals and families.

Our congregation now hosts a monthly gathering for LGBTQ+ members and friends.

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

0

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 can you say about the diversity in congregational leadership, now and in the past? How does leadership assure opportunities and on-going support for people with marginalized identities in leadership development practices?

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 US census, followed by the racial makeup of UUFB members who have reported their race.

White: 92% census 89.5% UUFB

2 or more races: 3.26% census, 1.3% UUFB

Asian: 2.24% census, 1.3% UUFB

Native American: 0.95% census, 0% UUFB

Black: 0.72% census, 0% UUFB

Other: 0.75% census, 3.9% UUFB

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

We now do have non-cisgender persons who have begun to take roles in the congregation. Our Director of Religious Education and the volunteer who makes our coffee every Sunday are both trans women.

We have offered positions of leadership to persons of color and marginalized identities based on their skills, interests, and history with the community. We hope to see this situation improve as our surrounding community and the Fellowship become more diverse.

Accessibility

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.

List parts of the building(s) which are accessible to people who use wheelchairs or have disabilities which affect mobility:

Our building is all one level without stairs to entry. The sanctuary, gathering hall, minister's office, restrooms and children's room are all on one level. We have accessible bathrooms. The parking lot has reserved parking adjacent to a sidewalk ramp access with tactile paving for the visually impaired.

List parts of the building(s) which are not accessible:

The chancel with the lectern has two steps without a ramp for access at this time. A hand hold has been added to support those who need additional stability on the stairs.

We are in the process of buying hand-held microphones, so people will be able to speak from anywhere in the sanctuary.

Does your building have accessible, automatic exterior doors? No

Describe other ways your congregation is working toward being more accessible:

We've found the facility to be accessible, except for the chancel area, and feel like cordless microphones will be of some help to those who cannot manage the two steps to the lectern.

As our congregation has grown we have begun to be more aware of the individual support that is needed for the visually impaired. We have invested in a Braille copy of both hymnals and congregants have learned the best ways to help a blind person navigate.

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, RE, and monthly Chalice Circle meetings
- Transforming Hearts Collective, web series subscribed in 2021; three rounds of discussion held. We last offered the program in this year. We have purchased the web series, so we can use it again as we desire
- UUA Website template, communications, social media resources
- UUA resources for the Committee on Shared Ministry
- UUA resources on evaluation of ministers and ministries
- UUA listservs 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 our Congregational Life representative
- *The Interim Minister as System Analyst* by Richard A Nugent of the UUA staff
- Montana UU Assembly

Describe your religious educational programs across the lifespan:

UUFB's RE programs consist of a school-age RE class during services and special events and programs for families. Children participate with the whole congregation at the beginning of the service and every service has a Story for All Ages. 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 and explore personal ideas about spiritual and personal topics. Our Humanist and Mystics groups have been meeting for a number of years. We began Chalice Circles (Soul Matters small groups) in 2023 and now are sponsoring a Banned Books Group open to the public.

Describe your youth and campus ministry programs:

The Gallatin Valley Interfaith Youth Group (grades 6-12), formed in 2024. Some of our youth attended events and we hosted a craft night and supper. At this time some modifications are being made and the UUFB Lifespan Religious Exploration committee is actively participating.

For many years, each fall we have participated in Catapalooza, MSU's campus welcome event, where we distribute handouts and collect sign-ups for further contact.

We held several Our Whole Lives programs in partnership with Pilgrim Congregational UCC from early 2004 until approximately 2022. We have trained OWL facilitators for different age groups and are prepared to offer this program in the future. At this time we are exploring continuing an OWL-like program with other churches in Bozeman.

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, make it a popular tourist destination. Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN), just 13 miles from downtown Bozeman, is the busiest airport in the state. In summer 2025 eight airlines offered direct connections to 24 cities.

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

Bozeman has cultural amenities usually found in much larger cities. It boasts numerous performing arts organizations including a symphony, opera, ballet, and several theater companies. There are multiple unique museums including the world-famous Museum of the Rockies. In addition, Bozeman has a fantastic public library that is large, well-used, and hosts public lectures, outdoor concerts, and activities and groups for individuals of all ages. Bozeman hosts the annual Sweat Pea Arts Festival, Music on Main (street) in the summer, and the downtown Christmas Stroll.

Bozeman abounds in outdoor recreation opportunities, including miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, camping, world-class fly fishing, kayaking, world-class downhill skiing at the Big Sky destination resort and at community-owned Bridger Bowl, and cross-country skiing at Crosscut Mountain Sports Center (which offers biathlon and para-athlete programs). Nearby are several National Wilderness Areas, extensive US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land, and a robust system of state parks.

Bozeman's estimated 2024 population was 57,844; the metropolitan area contains more than twice that number of people. Although estimates vary, about 87% of Bozemanites are non-Hispanic white, and 5% are Hispanic. The population of Bozeman is quite young, on average, with a median age of about 29 years old.

Whereas Montana is a "red" state, Bozeman is liberal and progressive. The state's constitution guarantees a number of important rights, including the right to a "clean and healthful environment," the right to know (open government), and the right to privacy. Montana voters overwhelmingly approved in November 2024 a constitutional amendment to secure reproductive rights.

Education is highly valued in Bozeman, and its public schools are consistently among the highest-performing school districts in the state. For students for whom the public schools aren't the best option, alternatives include Cottonwood Day School, Bozeman Field School, and Headwaters Academy, among others.

Bozeman has a thriving local economy that includes large employers such as Montana State University (MSU), Bozeman Health Group, and the tech company Oracle. Bozeman is also home to manufacturers such as Simms Fishing Products and Gibson Guitar, as well as a plethora of laser technology companies.

Although Bozeman has a great community feel, it does have some challenges. While many new housing units have recently come on the market, the lack of affordable housing is a primary concern to the community. Many middle-income people, including professionals, live in nearby communities where housing is less expensive. Nonetheless, our congregation will do everything we can to help our new minister find appropriate housing. Indeed, we recently formed a Ministerial Housing Task Force to research and provide recommendations to address this issue.

Bozeman's scenic beauty, outdoor activities, clean air and water, as well as its abundance of gyms, trails, yoga studios, and educational and cultural offerings combine to nurture both body and soul and to make Bozeman a place for anyone to be healthy, happy, and thriving. Yet, it is Bozeman's human assets that make it a "most livable" place.

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

Our congregation is known for its participation in social justice events in the city and at the state level. UUFB members and friends joyfully participate in local PRIDE events, serve food at the "pay-what-you-can" restaurant in town, host interfaith gatherings, and march in support of our values and in opposition to legislation that harms marginalized populations. We are proud of our social justice work and our strong positive relationships and collaborations with organizations that share our values.

At a recent parade in the city, members of all ages marched carrying signs displaying our UU principles. One of the parade judges shouted, "We love UUs!!" Although we were enthused with that response, we know that many people in the community have never heard of UUFB. The Fellowship building is somewhat out of the way, in a residential neighborhood. We have made our building available to such community organizations as Temple Beth Shalom, Tenants United, Bienvenidos, and a local neighborhood group. This has helped raise our profile, but we still have room to grow our community presence and provide a spiritual home for more people in the Gallatin Valley

Describe how the surrounding community shaped your congregation, and how your congregation has shaped the surrounding community:

Montana is strikingly beautiful and has vast open spaces and diverse natural environments and resources. As such, many members of our UU community, including our ministers, not only like the outdoors, but feel a special spiritual connection when adventuring in nature.

With regard to the broader political context in Montana, the state has turned increasingly conservative. This context has only reinforced the importance of our fellowship and our commitment to peace as well as social and environmental justice.

Our congregation shapes the surrounding community as we aim to live our values every day. When we say “service is our prayer,” we mean it! Members and friends of UUFB give their time, energy, and financial support to countless individuals, families, and organizations across the Gallatin Valley. These acts of service and support help to strengthen our community, protect our earth, and support the most vulnerable among us.

Position Basics

Anticipated Start Date: August 2026

Term: Multi-year

Percent Time: 100% Time

Minimum Salary + Housing: \$73,500

The compensation package (for a full-time, on-site position) is based on the UUA template and can be accessed at this link: [Click here..](#)

Our Fellowship is also willing to consider a part-time (i.e., 50% to 80% time) hybrid contract minister. Salary and responsibilities (both in-person and remote) would be negotiated with the candidate and would include, but not be limited to,

staff supervision and delivering some Sunday services on-site. The compensation package is for a full-time, on-site position and would be amended for a hybrid position.

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

Plan to offer relocation expense reimbursement:

The congregation is offering \$15,000 toward relocation expenses.

Information about the draft ministerial agreement:

The position is full-time, and the contract reflects this. The offer is for a three-year contract. The board and minister will mutually consider moving into a call process in the third year of ministry partnership. Tracked changes to the UUA template were made in Google Docs "Suggestion" mode. All changes are noted in-line and in the comment sidebar. Link to draft agreement: [Click here](#). Link to Tracked Changes Document: [Click here](#).

Our Fellowship is also willing to consider a part-time (i.e., 50% to 80% time) hybrid contract minister. The draft ministerial agreement is for a full-time, on-site position and would be amended for a hybrid position.

Questionnaire

How did the last ministry end (or how is it ending)? How is the congregation doing with this time of transition? What momentum would you like to maintain in the next ministry?

Our last called minister, Rev. Duffy Peet, retired in 2022. He was succeeded by Rev. Margo Rinehart, who served two years as a full-time interim minister and a third year as a half-time hybrid minister spending 10 days a month in Bozeman. Rev. Roxanne (Roxy) Klingensmith, an Episcopalian deacon, provided pastoral care while Rev. Margo was away. Rev. Duffy came out of retirement to serve as temporary full-time minister during summer 2025. Beginning in September 2025, our congregation has been lay-led, though Rev. Klingensmith delivers one sermon a month and provides pastoral care.

In view of the unsuccessful search for a settled minister in 2023-2024, in 2024 the Board charged the new Search committee with conducting a search for a contract minister, which we believe offers our Fellowship the best potential for a long-term ministry placement. We look forward to hiring a permanent, full-time minister and are flexible about the start date.

What does the congregation hope the minister will focus on in the next ministry partnership?

We would hope our new minister would first and foremost get to know us and our community just as we hope to get to know our new minister. Being visible to every extent possible will be appreciated. To that end, welcoming people as they arrive at the service, joining the coffee hour, and attending whatever social activities feel inviting will be important for connecting with us. Small group discussions with congregants about themselves and their relationship to UUFB would help congregants and the new minister connect with each other.

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 to improve committee functioning. It would also be helpful for the minister to function as an ex-officio member of the Board and provide support to the Board President.

We recognize 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 becoming members. Thus, making a strong effort to connect with newcomers is important. We have been heartened by the presence of more young people at our Sunday services over the past year. The ability to make younger adults--and also men--feel comfortable and welcome will be especially valuable.

We have a long history of social action. We hope a new minister will share this focus and be on the front lines with us as we try to make the world a better place. Our Social Justice Action Committee (SJAC) is aware and active. The role of the

minister will be to collaborate with SJAC for ideas and actions.

We expect our minister to be active with the Gallatin Valley Interfaith Association, to continue our relationship with the Jewish and Muslim communities and to look for new opportunities for interfaith activities.

Bozeman and even Helena (our state capital) are small communities relative to major cities elsewhere. As the only full-time -- and perhaps sole -- UU minister in Montana, our next minister will have many opportunities and invitations to represent our values at both the local and state level. Such venues include the state legislature, Bozeman City Commission meetings, and various demonstrations, e.g. for Climate Justice Day and Transgender Visibility Day. Also, a few times a year our minister writes a guest column for the religion section in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle.

We would also 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.

Describe the minister's relationship to other paid staff. Who is responsible for hiring and firing other paid staff?

The minister supervises the Office Administrator, the Coordinator of Religious Exploration, the choir director, and the pianist. The CRE 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 for paid employees. The process for hiring is outlined in a UUFB Hiring Best Practices Policy following the criteria in our Personnel Manual. Both can be found at our website.

A letter of agreement is created and approved by the employee, minister and a Board delegate before employment starts. Supervision involves at least an annual review. Additionally, there are many opportunities for interaction, as both the CRE and administrator have offices in the building so are able to collaborate with the minister as they do their work.

We feel fortunate to have our present staff members. Our office administrator is highly experienced, and all are capable of doing their jobs well. We believe our office administrator and RE staff are undercompensated, and our proposed 2026 budget provides for overdue compensation increases for these employees who are so vital to the smooth functioning of our Fellowship.

Is your congregation designated as a Welcoming Congregation? Please include information on Welcoming Congregation Renewal status.

UUFB has been a Welcoming Congregation since 1998. We successfully completed the Welcome Renewal process in 2024, have already fulfilled the requirements for renewal in 2025, and will continue renewal in the future.

Is your congregation designated as a Green Sanctuary? Are you participating in the Green Sanctuary 2030 process?

UUFB has not sought approval as a Green Sanctuary congregation, though we do practice the UUAs Seventh Principle of "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." When we remodeled and expanded our newly acquired 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 may be used to charge an electric vehicle. Our interior carpet and furnishings were chosen to be hypoallergenic. Once a month we collect glass for recycling and we have had Sunday services celebrating our respect for our beautiful surrounding environment.

Does your congregation support our association of congregations through the UUA's Annual Program Fund at the Honor level?

Yes, UUFB has contributed at the Honor level since 1983. This is a routine budget item for UUFB.

What debt does the congregation have? How is the debt structured (terms)? Reserves? How are reserves used/accessed?

Our only debt is the mortgage on our building. The remaining balance on the mortgage is \$235,996. In 2025, UUFB will pay \$25,817 on the mortgage.

The Endowment Fund balance is \$11,405.

The Capital Improvement Fund balance is \$1,526.

The Fellowship & Development fund balance is \$3,083.

The Justice & Outreach Fund balance is \$2,388.

The Long Term Facilities Reserve balance is \$11,790.

The Minister Sabbatical Reserve balance is \$20,203

The Operating Fund Reserve balance is \$74,847.

The total Special Fund and Reserve balance is \$125,242.

All of this information is as of October, 2025

The following context was provided by our Finance Committee chair in November 2024:

UUFB has one debt, its mortgage, with a balance of \$235,996 as of 9/30/25. It is a balloon mortgage, which means that every 5 years we need to renegotiate the mortgage. At that point the mortgage will continue at a new interest rate, which is determined by an established index that has a cap on how much the interest rate can be increased. Our next interest rate adjustment will be on 9/22/27 and should not be a big issue. Our mortgage is held by First Security Bank in Bozeman. The mortgage is amortized on a 30-year basis, and the current rate is 4.25% annual interest.

Reserves are in place to provide funds for larger expenses that are not normally incurred. A long-serving minister is entitled to a sabbatical on a periodic basis. Funds from the long-term facility reserve were used to pay for new front doors for the church this year. UUFB has built up its reserves over the last 5 years and

should be able to handle large unanticipated expenses going forward. Use of funds from either a reserve or a special fund requires approval of the UUFB board in the form of a resolution.

Describe how the congregation defines good preaching and worship:

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 once 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 -- a good sermon finds the balance between head and heart.

Our services are enriched by the beautiful playing of our pianist and guest musicians and the contributions of our choir. The minister's ability to bring all elements of the service into harmony will be appreciated.

How does the congregation handle conflict?

The Search Committee has a sense that our congregation does not have serious conflicts, and that those in leadership positions have had the skills and practices to resolve conflicts when they arise.

We have had no major conflicts in the last few years. There was some resistance to changes in the Sunday services, especially regarding Joys and Concerns (which are no longer stated aloud by participants), but nothing that split the Fellowship.

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. Congregants have shared 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 which Sunday services can be saved on YouTube, the Board was able to point to policies we have in place to answer those questions. We also have a strong disruptive behavior policy, which to our

knowledge, has been implemented only twice since it was created in 2008.

Policies may be found at our website <https://uufbozeman.org/members-friends/policies/>

Also, perhaps we do not have serious conflicts because those congregants express that UUFB is usually open to change and see the congregation as flexible enough to implement new ideas easily. Congregants generally trust the Fellowship leadership and feel there is a core group of leaders who are able to lead change in a productive way, because leaders focus on our Fellowship as a whole rather than on the preferences of individuals.

When asked in our survey 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 services or contact the Board. Others (about 10%) indicated that they would keep their concerns to themselves or share with friends.

What is a current source of pride for your congregation?

In 2025, we are especially proud of:

Our growing membership (from 110 to 127) and that new people visit our services almost every week

The social justice work our members engage in, both through the Fellowship and in our personal lives

The way we work together

The way we take care of one another, as a community and person-to-person

Our ambitious and successful pledge campaigns for 2024 and 2025, which exceeded our goals

Our financial stability

Our building, which continues to serve us well and which we are financially able to maintain and improve

The strong attendance and new faces at our Sunday services this year

The increasing number of LGBTQ+ members of our congregatlon

Our Chalice Circles (Soul Matters small groups)

How we picked ourselves up quickly and kept going during COVID, including our pivot to online services

We invite you to watch this slide show, which brings our congregation to life.

What work is slow, stuck, or left undone within the congregation?

Perhaps the most important area where we need to get unstuck is in attracting members and friends to lead or serve on committees and the Board. These leaders need to be trained to feel empowered and to ensure decisions are carried out. We also need more volunteers to support our other needs, such as fund-raising, membership recruitment, social activities, 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 YouTube 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.

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

How is trust in your congregation right now? Historically? Do people trust the minister? Do congregants trust leaders to lead? How can the minister best build trust with the congregation? How could a minister break trust in

your congregation?

A past survey indicated that there is a high level of trust in our leadership, including our former interim minister. 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.

Looking to the future and based on the past, 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 was appreciated was 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.

We continue to work especially to establish relationships with families and the LGBTQ+ community. Increased RE attendance and number of LGBTQ+ members suggest that some trust has been developed.

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.

Regarding "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.

In 2025 there seems to be new energy in our services, with many new faces and younger people in attendance. We have many opportunities for growth.

Imagine that, early in the next ministry partnership, a member of your congregation behaves in a way that escalates over time from curmudgeonly criticism to disruptive actions to bullying staff or other members. Keeping in mind your congregation's real experiences, policies, and covenant, how would leaders handle this situation?

An experience similar to this more than 15 years ago led to the development of the UUFB Congregational Policy on Disruptive Behavior. This policy states that in the first instance, "the minister, committee chair, or other Fellowship leader will initiate necessary action."

Based on recent, less intense disruptions, we believe most members' response to disruptive behavior is to call on a board member or other respected leader to de-escalate the situation. The minister would no doubt be made aware and might also intervene.

There have been some theological divisions and spirited discussions in Unitarian Universalist circles in the last several years about our shared values, how to articulate these values, and what these values call us to do, especially around equity, inclusion, power, and covenantal relationship. Please share some examples of how this is playing out in your congregation.

Our minister offered three workshops on Article 2 in 2023, and they were well attended. Our congregation has continued to use the older set of principles as members felt they were more easily understood. As previously noted, our congregation committed to Welcome Renewal in 2024 without dissent.

Our committee's sense is that our members are not overly energized about denominational issues, and they do not create controversy in our community. We are Unitarian Universalists and follow denominational practices, but our Fellowship has limited interaction with the larger denomination.

What else would you like potential applicants to know about your congregation?

How UUFB can help a new minister find housing:

Affordable housing is a community-wide concern in Bozeman and there are many efforts by the city government, the Human Resource 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 additional housing. Recently the number of rental vacancies has risen and housing prices have begun to fall slightly.

In 2025-2026, we have established a Ministerial Housing Task Force to look into best practices, options, etc. for securing appropriate housing for our minister. We are a determined and skilled group with many contacts, and we feel confident that we can help our minister find a home in Bozeman. We hope any candidate having an interest in our Fellowship will not be deterred by the housing issue.

What about UUFB would be attractive to a potential minister:

The most attractive components of UUFB are: our people, our Fellowship and our greater Bozeman community. In the past members and friends have been described as 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 Coordinator. 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 cultural life. Its political culture is progressive.

We invite you to watch this [slide show](#), which portrays the life of our Fellowship.