



Vacancy for a new Minister

1. Background

New Unity was formed from the merging of Newington Green Unitarian Church with Unity Church Islington. The two congregations started working together around 1995 and merged formally under a new legal structure as a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) in 2015. As a result of this history New Unity owns two freehold sites, the Grade II listed 18th century Newington Green Meeting House on Newington Green with its Victorian school rooms behind, and the 1950's community hall and office on Islington's vibrant Upper Street. The congregation, organisation and its buildings are dynamic, powered by a radical heritage and a bright future – and its diversity of beliefs, approaches and activities represent an exciting opportunity for the right candidate.

We have a membership of almost 70 individuals, as of 2023-24, and there is an extensive range of social justice, community and spiritual activities throughout the week, many of them inspired and led by members of the congregation. Our current Minister, Rev CJ McGregor, has served the congregation since 2022 and will be moving on in August 2024.

New Unity's mission is to build a radically inclusive community dedicated to love and justice. We know that our members value a variety of aspects of New Unity: community, a spiritual ethos, our gatherings and wider groups and events, the opportunity for personal growth, the ethos of radical inclusion and much more.

New Unity has been particularly independent and radical in its commitment to social justice, refusing – for example – to conduct any weddings until same-sex weddings were also legalised, a campaign that finally succeeded in 2014.

Congregational engagement held up during the pandemic, with the fortuitous advantage that New Unity has now mastered the challenge of combining both an on-line presence and in-person participation for its Sunday gatherings. In 2019, nearly £2m was received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to renovate the Newington Green premises, dealing with structural problems in the Meeting House and modernising the meeting rooms with additional toilets, a lift and audio-visual facilities, all whilst retaining the historic character of the building. Work completed in 2021, and the associated programme of activities (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund until December 2023) meant the Meeting House is now a recognised heritage and community arts destination, showcasing Newington Green's distinguished heritage of rational dissent and its outstanding congregants such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Richard Price.

New Unity's work is funded by a mixture of annual pledges and gifts from its members, income from room rentals and weddings, proceeds from events, and some grants. The Minister is supported by a General Manager who reports to the Trustees and looks after staff dealing with finance and operations. This structure allows the Minister to focus on ministry, programming, pastoral care and building their vision. New Unity usually also employs a part time Music Director, an Audio-Visual tech manager for hybrid gatherings, and a Kids' Club leader.

2. Role description

Purpose

- to work alongside the congregation to review, challenge and refresh congregational norms in the spirit of helping New Unity realise our full potential
- to lead and inspire members of the congregation in their spiritual and personal development
- to support the continued health and growth of New Unity's community, nurturing its diversity
- to ensure pastoral care is provided, as appropriate
- to help New Unity be a presence in the local community, as a force for good
- to focus on the whole week, not just on Sundays
- to work towards other purposes as might be reasonably required from time to time

Specific responsibilities

- to prepare and deliver 40 Sunday gatherings a year, with thought-provoking, challenging and inspiring messages
- to continue the growth in membership (as evidenced through pledges) and the growth in engagement (as evidenced through participation in Sunday gatherings, Kids' Club, and other congregational activities)
- to actively lead on designing additional programmes that contributes to spiritual, personal and community development, including NU's community arts and culture programme
- to inspire, encourage and support congregation members in additional programming
- to collaborate with and support the General Manager
- to collaborate with the Trustees and keep them informed of developments
- to help prepare the annual budget for approval by the Trustees and collaborate with the General Manager to control spending within it: to lead on pastoral care
- to represent the congregation within the local community and the wider Unitarian movement
- to assist with the annual appeal for pledges by congregational members
- to carry out other duties as reasonably required from time to time

3. Person specification – the qualities we seek in a new Minister

Good Interpersonal Skills

- Democratic, collaborative, and willing to delegate
- Flexibly receptive to opinions of others and willing to learn from feedback
- Positive and appreciative approach, connecting with and enabling others

Good Intrapersonal Skills

- Authentically self-aware - able to reflect and modify own actions where necessary
- Capacity to hold contradiction, conflict and uncertainty in self and for others
- Creative problem-solver
- Values own support structure
- Kind, tolerant and accepting

A Broad Spiritual Orientation

- Willingness to connect with wider Unitarian movement
- On their own spiritual path, whilst accepting all spiritual approaches
- Ability to enhance and explore spirituality and create spiritual space
- Holds a curiosity towards the mystery that is being a living being.

Supports Diversity, Inclusion and Equality

- Supports and manifests radical inclusion, feminism, intergenerationality and anti-racism
- Interest, experience and commitment to social justice

Community Orientation

- Ability and passion to build community, including through smaller groups
- Values New Unity's local history and legacy
- Prioritises pastoral care in the New Unity community
- Appreciates need for New Unity to be relevant in modern British life (social, cultural, legal)

Experience and Training

- Some previous ministerial experience and training
- Recognition that this is more than just a "Sunday" role
- Theological, philosophical and Unitarian literacy
- Strong message delivery skills
- Creative, innovative and diverse approach to Sunday gatherings
- On the Ministerial Roll of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches or willing to take the necessary steps to be appointed to the Roll

Technical Literacy

- Digital: strong on using Zoom, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Calendar, Gmail
- Financial: basic budget management skills
- Communications: ability to use mainstream social media platforms; willingness and ability to learn to use Squarespace and Mailchimp

4. Overview of main terms of appointment

- The full time appointment is initially for 2 years, with the hope and expectation that it will convert, by mutual agreement, into a called ministry at the end of that period. The Minister will not be an employee but an office-holder.
- The stipend will be according to the UK Unitarian GA scale recommendations, plus reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the work of the Ministry.
- The Minister will be eligible to join the Ministers' pension scheme (provided they are on the Ministerial Roll) with payment of contributions from the Minister and New Unity according to the current recommendations of the General Assembly.
- Accommodation provisions will be made by New Unity in line with the General Assembly's requirements. Details are specified here on page 3:
<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Stipend-Review-Report-24-25r.pdf>
- Six weeks holiday allowance per year, including bank holidays.
- Sabbatical paid leave in accordance with the guidelines of the General Assembly (currently two weeks for each completed year of ministry).
- The Minister is permitted and encouraged to contribute to the wider London and UK Unitarian movements and may devote up to 10% of their working hours to such efforts.
- New Unity holds a visa sponsor licence and would consider sponsoring a visa for candidates who require one to work in the UK.

5. How to apply

- Applications should be made in writing, addressed to Lisa Roskam Chair of the Transition Team, at lisa.roskam@new-unity.org. Please include a full CV and a short covering note (max 3 pages) stating what you feel you have to offer New Unity and how you meet the requirements of the job description and the person specification.
- Please also email Lisa Roskam if you would prefer to make an informal enquiry prior to a formal application.