

Info for Ministerial Candidates

2025

Greetings from our island,

We hope you will carefully consider Contract Ministry at the Unitarian Universalist church on Nantucket. Our liberal religious congregation embraces a mix of people who live here year-round, summer residents, and visitors from a variety of religious backgrounds. This means that our church calendar needs to be in full-functioning mode all summer long. We make accommodations by finding breaks at other times of the year for a bit of relaxing. It is a tight-knit community which values the many roles filled by its members.

Come on over, join our church family, and help us learn about our options. Your efforts with us and our community will show results.

Our congregation views itself as a supporter of social causes. We are looking for ways to reactivate our social justice work. Nantucket is home to people from all walks of life and a wide range of income levels. It takes a certain kind of person to wish to live 30 miles out at sea and relinquish control over the guaranteed ability to travel on and off the island on a whim. With plenty of ferries and planes, it is often possible to leave on short notice...except when it is not. We get used to monitoring the weather (and especially the wind) as we approach a planned vacation.

Are you curious about what it's like to live in a close-knit community where most people know you or, at least, recognize you? Well, for most, there is a sense of comfort at being "seen" and accepted as part of the fabric of the wider community. Here on Nantucket, we need to rely on one another in good times and times of challenge. Nantucket is a microcosm of our country as a whole and affords us the opportunity to stand in solidarity with one another and make a big difference in a small place.

There is a significant group of undocumented people who are, largely, responsible for keeping the rest of us glued together with their excellent skills, outstanding work ethic and grateful attitude for the blessings they receive. Without some government subsidies, they need our appreciation and help as they struggle to fabricate a reasonable way for their families to live. Though we may come from different backgrounds, all are embraced as "one of us". All are valued for their contributions to the whole island community. Together, we are all Nantucketers!

Please reach out to ask questions
and learn more about us!

Barbara Elder

President of the Board of Trustees



Located 30 miles at sea, Nantucket is a self-reliant microcosm of the larger country and world. Although seen as a vacation playground by some, for year-rounders, the community is more complex. We need your help as we prepare our congregation for its next evolution and make choices about where to put our efforts.

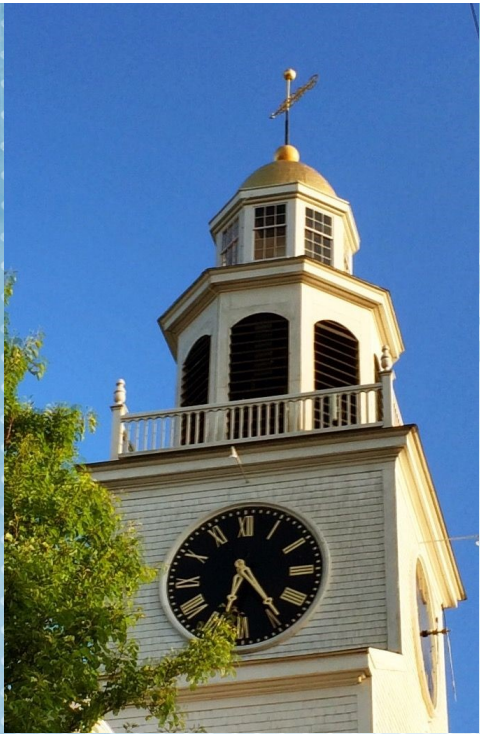
Our Mission

Working toward a more just and inclusive society, our congregation supports spiritual growth and service with open doors, minds, and hearts:

Open doors for welcoming our diverse island communities and visitors;

Open minds for exploring differing ideas and beliefs;

Open hearts for deepening our connection with others and ourselves.



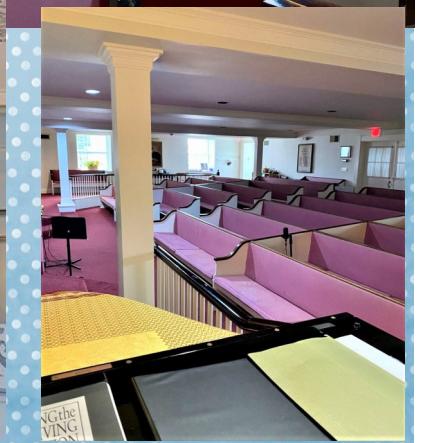
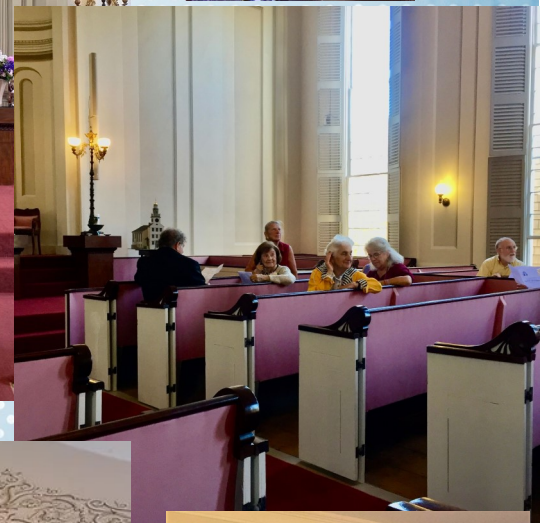
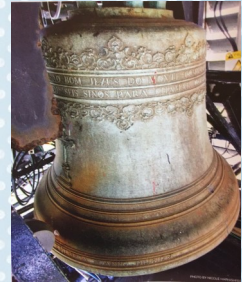
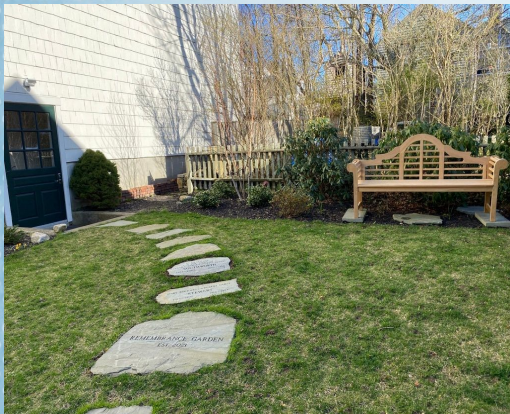
About us

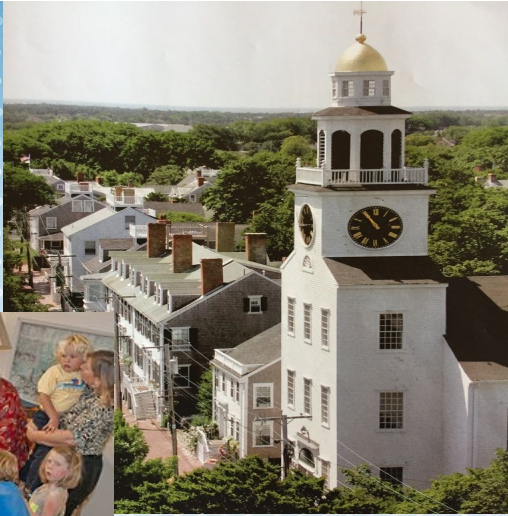
Our congregation certified 80 members to the UUA in January 2025. We own our Meeting House and parsonage free of debt.

Throughout our history (since 1810), our congregation has held services at 10:45 a.m. every Sunday. In the summer we meet in our large, historic, but unheated sanctuary. In the colder months, we meet in our smaller but fully HVACed meeting room named Hendrix Hall.

There are several weekly activities (Crafts Group & Wednesday Tea,). We also have a vibrant coffee hour and occasional potlucks.

There are annual events including Reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th; Noonday Concerts throughout the summer; Yard sales; Craft sale; and Goods and Services Auction.





Living Here

The island measures about 46 square miles (roughly twice the land area of Manhattan). We have most modern conveniences (high speed internet, Cable TV, Stop & Shop groceries, gas stations, a Ford dealership, etc.)

Travel

There is year-round ferry service provided by the Steamship Authority for people, cars, and freight. There are also high speed ferries that take one hour from the mainland operated by HyLine Ferries as well as the Steamship Authority.

Steamship Authority

Hy-line Cruises

There is also an airport which is open year-round and has active seasonal arrivals and departures from major airlines.

Nantucket Airport

Governance

The Town of Nantucket is governed by an elected Select Board. There is a robust town meeting in May. The Town Manager is in charge of most of the town business.

Town of Nantucket

Culture & Arts

Nantucket is home to a significant amount of cultural & artistic non-profit organizations. There are three live theater companies, one movie/performing arts center, one music school/center, the historic Atheneum, several concert series, many art galleries, an art school, a well known Whaling Museum, and a few other organizations and festivals of note. The best place to explore these is on the Nantucket Cultural District website.

Nantucket Cultural District

Health Care

Nantucket Cottage Hospital, a MA General Brigham affiliate, offers 24/7 Emergency Room as well as Urgent Care and Primary Care Clinic.

<https://www.nantuckethospital.org>

The Land and the Seasons

Summer is Nantucket's signature season and its delights have made Nantucket a world class destination. It begins when students get out of school at the end of June through Labor Day. It's all hands on deck as our population swells. It is a paradise for families with its miles of bike paths and pristine public beaches and a paradise for children with its adventure camps and science programs.

Summer highlights include: a book festival, a film festival, a reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th at our UU church and also fireworks on the beach. The Boston Pops plays every August to benefit our hospital and is enjoyed by thousands. With over 100 non-profits on the island, summer sees no end of galas and road races to benefit charity.

September and October are thought by many to be our most glorious time. The weather is spectacular and it is still warm enough to swim. The Moors turn out in reds, browns and yellows and the island gets quieter. There is an Arts festival, a Halloween parade and our scalloping industry gets underway.

Our winter shoulder season starts with the Christmas tree lighting and caroling after Thanksgiving and features the Nantucket Christmas Stroll in December with Santa delivered by the Coast Guard.

Daffodil Festival is in April when businesses fully open up for the season. We attract thousands of visitors to these events who come to shop and see the millions of Daffodils that we've planted all over the island. There is an antique car parade and tailgating on the east end of the island at a little hamlet called Sconset where tiny houses are covered by roses in the summer. So there is something for everyone throughout the seasons on Nantucket and everyone is welcome.



Nearly half of Nantucket is forever protected open space. There are many miles of trails and open properties to explore.

[Nantucket Conservation Foundation](#)

[Nantucket Land Council](#)

[Massachusetts Audubon](#)

[Linda Loring Foundation](#)

[Nantucket Land Bank](#)

Nantucket UU Parsonage

Our parsonage at 10 Fair Street is one block from the center of town, directly behind our Meeting House. There is off-street parking for two cars. The weathered grey cedar shingles are one source of Nantucket's nickname "The Grey Lady". The living area on the first floor includes the living room, dining room, kitchen, full bath and a laundry area with a washer and dryer. In addition, there is a nice covered side porch for outdoor living space in the warmer weather. The second floor includes three bedrooms plus a full bathroom.

In addition, the parsonage building provides space for the minister's office. (There is no minister's office in the Meeting House.) The parsonage also provides space for some long-term storage in the basement and for our 'archives' in the attic.



Living in the historic district makes it possible to walk to the grocery stores, the post office, the ferry, restaurants, ice cream parlors, and coffee shops.

The public schools are located in the mid-island and have a population of 1,666 students grades K-12. There are also two private schools grades K-8, The Nantucket New School and the Nantucket Lighthouse School.

Our congregation, founded in 1810, has engaged a continuous line of full-time ministers over 213 years. Currently, Rev. Dr. Althea Smith is our minister, serving as a contract minister doing interim work.

Name	Start	Until	Years		Summary Statistics as of 2/2023	Cumulative	
			Served	Count		#	%
Seth F Swift	1810	1834	0	2		2	5%
Henry E Edes	1834	1844	1	1		3	8%
William H Knapp	1844	1852	2	9		12	31%
Jacob G Forman	1852	1855	3	4		16	41%
George H Hepworth	1855	1859	4	8		24	62%
Orville Brayton	1859	1863	5	2		26	67%
John K Karcher	1863	1866	6	2		28	72%
Thomas Dawes	1866	1871	7	2		30	77%
Lemuel K Washburn	1871	1873	8	2	Revs. Brooks and Knapp	32	82%
Jesse H Temple	1873	1873	9	2	Revs. Reid and Kent	34	87%
Nahum A Haskell	1873	1877	10	3	Revs. Simmons, Edes, and Pickett	37	95%
James B Morrison	1877	1880	24	1	Rev. Seth F Swift 1810 - 1834	38	97%
John A Savage	1880	1884	28	1	Rev. Edward B Anderson 1972 - 2000	39	100%
Henry F Bond	1884	1886					
Cyrus A Roys	1886	1893					
Frederic P S Lame	1893	1898					
George H Bardger	1898	1900					
John Frederic Meyer	1900	1904					
Edward Day	1904	1908					
John Snyder	1908	1914					
H Van Ommeren	1914	1921					
Josiah C Kent	1921	1930					
Harold L Pickett	1930	1940					
James Z Hanner	1940	1942					
Willard L McKinstry	1942	1948					
William P Horton	1948	1952					
Paul Harris Drake	1952	1954					
Carlyle Meacham	1954	1956					
Arthur Schoenpeldt	1956	1957					
James Stevens Hammond	1957	1961					
William R Reid	1961	1970					
Brainard F Gibbons	1970	1972					
Edward B Anderson	1972	2000					
Emily Palmer	1998	2000					
Robert Thayer	2000	2000					
Tim Jensen	2000	2003					
Jennifer Brooks	2003	2011					
David Horst	2011	2013					
Linda A. Simmons	2013	2023					
			So	16	of our Ministers served 3 or fewer years:	41%	
			out of	39	total ministers since 1809		
					5.51 years average (mean)		
					4.00 years median (middle value)		
					2.00 years mode (most frequent value)		

