



Green Sanctuary Manual

5th Edition

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Photos throughout the manual were provided by congregations who achieved Green Sanctuary accreditation in the 2009 fiscal year. We thank them for documenting their inspiring work.

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PREFACE

This manual provides specific projects and activities that congregations can undertake in a process that leads to recognition as a Green Sanctuary through accreditation by the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). The Green Sanctuary program gives roots and wings to the vision of a world in which all people make reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth central to their lives.

A Brief History of the Green Sanctuary Program

The Green Sanctuary program was originally an outgrowth of the Seventh Principle Project, a UUA-affiliated environmental organization that was created in 1989. In 1991, the Seventh Principle Project published the Green Sanctuary Handbook, introducing UU congregations to the concept of integrating our environmental consciousness into our faith communities. That first handbook helped UUs begin to imagine what it would look like if congregational life reflected the seventh Principle of Unitarian Universalism, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

The Green Sanctuary concept continued to circulate throughout the 1990s, but there was no specific process by which the activists in a specific congregation could engage the rest of the congregation in transforming that concept into reality. Finally, in 1999, one of the early promoters of the concept, Fred Small, seized an opportunity to move it to the next level. As his thesis at Harvard Divinity School, he developed a proposal for a comprehensive Green Sanctuary program modeled after the very effective Welcoming Congregation program.¹ This new program would invite congregations to carry out a series of actions addressing various environmental issues. Successful completion of these actions would bring the congregation recognition or “accreditation” as a Green Sanctuary.

Following the presentation of this concept at the 1999 General Assembly, a group of enthusiastic activists took on the challenge of translating Fred Small’s proposal into a real program. Seventh Principle Project member David Cockrell convened a task force to add new material to the original manual and to craft a step-by-step process that could be implemented by a congregation. That second edition of the Green Sanctuary manual was ready for distribution in the fall of 2000. Mr. Cockrell called for a number of “Founders” congregations to pilot the program, testing how the concept would actually work and what resources would be needed to support congregational efforts. Several congregations took up the challenge, with five completing the program in 2002 and three in 2003.

¹ Welcoming Congregation is a UUA program for congregations to reduce prejudice by increasing understanding and acceptance among people of different sexual orientations. The program provides study materials for workshops and guided discussions, culminating in UUA recognition as a Welcoming Congregation.

By early 2003, experience had shown that the concept worked well in congregations, but more flexibility was needed. The program has to be accessible to congregations with different sizes and capabilities, and adaptable to issues that varied widely with geographic location and culture of the congregation.

The third edition of the Green Sanctuary Manual was unveiled in 2003, inviting congregations to create their own program of activities and projects within a framework of four focus areas that encompassed all aspects of congregational life. Participation grew steadily in the following years. By 2005, when the Seventh Principle Project became the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE), thirty-one congregations had been recognized as Green Sanctuaries.

A turning point was reached in 2006, both in attention to environmental issues by congregations within the Unitarian Universalist Association and in commitment to addressing those issues through a structured program. That year marked the culmination of a two-year period of study and action in congregations on the issue of global warming. Delegates to the General Assembly that year campaigned for, and then voted overwhelmingly to adopt, a Statement of Conscience on the Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change—arguably the clearest and strongest statement on that subject by a religious institution to date. This was a grassroots effort, tied very closely to Green Sanctuary work in many congregations.

At that same General Assembly, a record nineteen new congregations were recognized as Green Sanctuaries, bringing the grand total to fifty. For the first time, certificates were presented to those congregations in a public ceremony on the plenary stage, dramatically increasing visibility for the program.

The fourth edition of the Green Sanctuary Manual was published by the UUMFE in the fall of 2007. By that time over 125 Unitarian Universalist congregations were formally enrolled in the Green Sanctuary program. The new version of the manual sought to provide more detailed information about how to manage the process and create a comprehensive program. A process was added for renewing accreditation every five years.

By 2008, the Green Sanctuary program had become so successful that the UUMFE's small staff had difficulty keeping up with demand. In July of that year, the UUMFE handed over responsibility for the Green Sanctuary program to the Congregational Stewardship Services office of the UUA.

In its new home, supported by the resources of the larger organization, the Green Sanctuary program continues to thrive. In the summer of 2009 there were 98 accredited Green Sanctuary congregations and 116 in candidacy. Combined, these represent over 20 percent of UUA congregations.

How to Use This Manual

The Green Sanctuary Manual is primarily intended as a guidebook for congregations formally enrolled in the program. However, it can also be useful for anyone who wants to learn more about the Green Sanctuary designation, as well as any congregation looking for ideas about how to integrate environmental awareness into its programming and operations.

The manual is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the program—why it was developed, its basic characteristics, and the benefits of participating. It also outlines the process of becoming a Green Sanctuary. The remaining chapters guide you through that process, providing detailed explanations and advice for completing each step.

In the appendices at the back of the manual, you'll find samples and other resources to help you along the way. Additional resources can be found on the UUA website (www.uua.org; enter “Green Sanctuary” in the search box). In particular, you may want to take a look at the accreditation application before you begin your planning, so that you can see where this process is leading.

You are invited to explore the following pages and consider the possibilities for “greening” your faith and healing your Earth. The need is great, and the opportunities are limited only by our imagination and willingness to commit. Working together with our faith communities to sustain us, we are making a difference.

Welcome to this shared journey to a greener faith!

CHAPTER 1

LEARNING ABOUT THE GREEN SANCTUARY PROGRAM

Most of us are aware of the enormous environmental challenges our world faces today. Global climate change, resource depletion, pollution, and species extinction are just a few of the concerns that trouble us, both as individuals and as Unitarian Universalist congregations. We may feel overwhelmed by the enormity of these problems, which are so difficult to understand, let alone solve.

Yet none of us is called to solve the world's problems on our own. We are called simply to do our part, through small steps carried out consistently, with faith in their power to make a difference. Religious leaders from most of the world's faith traditions have claimed that these environmental crises may be the greatest moral challenge facing humankind in the twenty-first century. Some suggest that religions may be the only human institutions still able to respond to the challenge.

Native American wisdom reminds us to look ahead in time to the impacts of our actions seven generations hence. Especially for environmental issues, we can consider the long-term impact of our individual and communal practices and behavior. Together we can imagine the "Earth Community" we wish to build for our children and grandchildren and theirs, seven generations into the future. We can make choices that will lead to a sustainable future for every being on this planet.

"We seem to have lost the wisdom of the indigenous people, which dictated that in any major decision, the first consideration was 'How will this decision we're making today affect our people in the future?'"

These days decisions are made based on the bottom line." – Jane Goodall

Green Sanctuary is a journey toward this ideal. We start with one step. As we move toward our vision of Earth Community, we gain from our experiences and build confidence that we can, in fact, create the world we see in our dreams.

Why Green Sanctuary?

Albert Einstein said, "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." For this reason, we need to bring conversation about our relationship with and our responsibilities toward Earth into the heart of our faith communities. A different level of awareness—a spiritual awareness—is critical.

Unitarian Universalists across the country gather in congregations to find meaning, support, and sustenance in community with others. At their best, our congregations inspire, educate, advocate, and celebrate. In a world in which people are too often isolated, congregations provide a place in which to care for and help one another. The environmentalists in our midst remind us that there is a need, also, to care for other creatures and for the ecosystems that support life.

For many Unitarian Universalists, our relationship with Earth is a core element in our spiritual quest. Nature is where many of us find one of the six sources of Unitarian Universalism: “Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder . . . which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.” Another source of our faith is the Earth-centered traditions that “instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.” And a sense of oneness with the natural world is at the heart of our seventh Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

We are also a faith community with a historic and deep commitment to the quest for justice. This commitment is reflected in our second Principle, “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.” Increasingly, we understand that caring for the Earth and all of its inhabitants is a critical ingredient in building true justice. We are asking ourselves the ethical questions that are so important in both environmental and religious contexts: “Who are my neighbors?” “How shall we live together?” “What, if anything, do we owe to each other and to this land?” “What does social justice require?”

As religious pluralists, one of the best things we can do is to encourage people of all faiths and philosophies—Christians and Muslims, Jews and Buddhists, Wiccans and Native American traditionalists, freethinking humanists, agnostics, atheists, and others—to work together. All of these groups, in their own ways, recognize and celebrate the interdependent web. “Ecology theology” starts with an appreciation of this religious and cultural diversity. We can then search for common ground, with the understanding that interfaith and intercultural cooperation is needed to solve global problems.



UU Society of Sacramento, CA – Interfaith Tree Planting Ceremony on Arbor Day

Thus, fulfilling our responsibility to care for our planetary home is an overarching commitment that crosses the spectrum of environmental and social concerns. Although UUs sometimes disagree on specific environmental issues, most now accept that the call to ecological awareness and action stems from our seven Principles.

In addition to calling us to live our Principles, our spiritual orientation shapes how we see ourselves in the world, how we relate to one another, and how we respond to the interdependent web of existence. Our world view and moral values offer us the opportunity to reshape our participation in the social, economic, and political systems we have helped to create. We are called to reexamine our daily patterns of living: how we live, what and how much we consume, and who controls the distribution of costs and benefits in our society.

The quest for justice and the healing of Earth—rolling up our sleeves to work for a better life for ourselves, our families, and the larger world—is one part of a life of faith. But we also remind one another that a healthy spiritual life balances action with reflection. In our faith community we can turn to liturgy and worship, celebration, study, reflection, prayer, and meditation to find the courage, strength, motivation, and patience to keep up the quest for a just and sustainable future for all beings.

The Green Sanctuary program offers a way to join our efforts, both symbolically and explicitly, with thousands of other Unitarian Universalists in congregations across the country. Green Sanctuary is designed to help congregations like yours develop and work toward a vision of healthier, more sustainable future.

Program Characteristics

The Green Sanctuary program provides a path for congregational study, reflection, and action in response to environmental challenges. If your congregation chooses to embark on this path, you will start by forming a team and conducting a self-assessment of current practices and programs. Based on the assessment, you will plan congregational projects to address specific areas of interest or concern. Your congregation will then complete these projects over a period of one to two years, with the goal of becoming an accredited Green Sanctuary. All along the way, you can work with the UUA Office of Congregational Stewardship Services, which oversees the program and grants accreditation.

Focus Areas

Green Sanctuary is based on a framework of four focus areas:

- Worship and celebration
- Religious education
- Environmental justice
- Sustainable living

These are the building blocks of the Green Sanctuary program. When completing the initial self-assessment, congregations examine their current practices in each of these four areas. Likewise, all four areas are represented in the projects that Green Sanctuary candidates plan and complete.

In later chapters of this manual, you will learn more about integrating the four focus areas into the program. For now, here is an introduction to each focus area-what it encompasses and why it is emphasized in the program.

*“Prayer does not use up artificial energy, doesn’t burn up any fossil fuel, doesn’t pollute.
Neither does song, neither does love, neither does the dance.”*

– Anthropologist Margaret Mead

Worship and Celebration

Those who are hearing about the Green Sanctuary program for the first time often assume that it’s all about increasing energy efficiency, recycling bottles and cans, and reducing carbon emissions. Many are surprised to learn that the first focus area is worship and celebration. Yet why not begin there? Worship, after all, is central to congregational life. If we bring environmental awareness to the kitchen, meeting rooms, thermostats, and parking lot, but leave it out of the sanctuary, we will have missed an opportunity to broaden and deepen our spiritual practice.

Participants in the Green Sanctuary program create new or expanded ways to integrate Earth-oriented spirituality into congregational worship and communal gatherings. As they do, they find that worship and celebration help to ground their work in other areas of the program, as well as deepen their relationships with each other and with Earth.

Religious Education

Green Sanctuary participants also focus on the environmental components of their lifespan religious education programs. Religious education for our children is designed to prepare them to live sustainably and with integrity. We want our children to understand that they are part of nature, not separate and outside of it. Religious education for adults helps us understand the complexity of Earth’s systems, how our lifestyles affect



UU Society of Sacramento, CA – Culmination of RE curriculum in dedication of Kids garden

those systems, and how we can change to live more sustainably. It also provides an integrated context for learning from Earth’s wisdom, drawing sustenance from the “peace of wild things” (in the words of poet Wendell Berry) and truly knowing the sacredness of all of life.

For both children and adults, these are goals of not only environmental education, but religious education. In addition to learning how and why to care for Earth, we explore how caring for Earth relates to our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Often, Green Sanctuary religious education programs will involve intergenerational activities that allow children and adults to learn together.

Environmental Justice

As Unitarian Universalists, we long for a just society where benefits for some do not come at the expense of others, especially disadvantaged and oppressed people in our communities and around the world. The advocates for environmental justice ask that special attention be given to the environmental experience of native peoples, inner city residents, migrant workers, those in economically depressed rural areas, and others who, in many cases, have very little influence in the development and protection of natural resources.

Eileen McGurty, an authority on the environmental sciences at Johns Hopkins University, writes, “Despite the diversity of backgrounds and approaches, the environmental justice movement united around three ideas: environmental problems are intimately entwined with social problems; the current environmental framework exacerbates both environmental problems and social problems; and the environmental establishment has neglected these relationships, in part, because of their elitism and exclusive practices.”



UU Society of the Dayton Beach Area in Ormond Beach, FL – Removal of invasive plants in the coast hammock restoration

Environmental justice acknowledges that environmental impacts fall first and most severely on those who receive the least of society’s benefits and have the least power to effect changes. For example:

- Around the world, environmental issues such as drought, erosion, and flooding often impact disadvantaged and/or indigenous communities, resulting in loss of homelands, forced migrations, famine, and disease.
- In an intersection of racism and environmental problems, pollution sources are often located near communities of color. Many of these communities are also affected by a lack of investment in adequate infrastructure, leading to problems such as frequent floods and toxic spills.
- The work of justice also requires that we look at the impact of our own congregational actions and practices on disadvantaged communities and people of color. Unsafe conditions or practices in our facilities—such as the use of toxic lawn chemicals or cleaning supplies, or a poorly maintained building with exposed asbestos or toxic mold—may impact congregants, employees, contractors, or neighbors.

If our own actions have negative impacts, surely we can change our ways. When the actions of others threaten justice, we can find ways to work in solidarity with the affected communities to prevent or lessen those impacts. We can also look for opportunities to build new relationships and create positive impacts in these communities.

Environmental justice extends beyond human societies to include all beings that inhabit this planet. Animals, plants, fish, birds, insects—all are affected by human actions. In our environmental work, we can look for ways to prevent or lessen damage to habitats and loss of species diversity. How we address the responsibility to care for our planetary home can become a model for creating justice around the globe.

Sustainable Living

The fourth focus area of the Green Sanctuary program, sustainable living, focuses on many issues in our day-to-day lives that have a particular impact on Earth.

This focus area calls for examining congregational practices such as energy use, landscaping, building management, waste management, transportation, food preparation and consumption, and water use. The work we do in this area is aimed at reducing our overall footprint on the Earth.

Goals

The Green Sanctuary program is aimed toward bringing about changes in three arenas of Unitarian Universalist life: personal lifestyle choices, congregational programs and practices, and outreach and activism within the broader community.



*Towsend UU Church in Lutherville, MD –
Green products display at coffee hour*

The Green Sanctuary program invites congregations to:

- Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues.
- Encourage personal lifestyle changes.
- Engage in community action on environmental issues.
- Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness.
- Work to heal environmental injustices.

In addition to these program goals, congregations may choose to set one or more of their own goals. For example, they might want their Green Sanctuary participation to enrich a particular program area, result in a more environmentally sustainable building, or address a specific issue, such as global food security.

Scope

The Green Sanctuary program is a collective effort, not just a personal project for a few of the most committed environmentalists in a congregation. It is about all of us, according to our talents and capacities, coming together to create the Earth Community we have envisioned. The program encourages individual actions that reduce our impact on this planet, but primarily it is a program of congregational action. It is about working together to strengthen our ability to create change.

The Green Sanctuary program encompasses the whole of spectrum of congregational life-worship, religious education, facilities management, social gatherings, justice programming, and more. Each of these areas expands to incorporate increased environmental awareness. Everyone in the congregation is encouraged to participate in activities that will make a difference locally and globally. From meditation to political action to celebration, the whole life of the congregation will increasingly consider the environment much more intentionally.

Flexibility

There are wide differences in visions and circumstances among UU congregations, and the Green Sanctuary program is designed to accommodate those differences. Large, medium, small, and very small congregations have successfully completed the program. Rural, urban, and suburban congregations have designed effective programs to reach their goals. Lay-led fellowships and multiple-staff congregations have developed different plans to address issues important to them and make good use of their varied capacities. Regardless of the situation, any congregation can step into the program at the beginning. Feel free to make adjustments as needed so that the Green Sanctuary program works for your congregation.

Benefits of Participating

Participating in the Green Sanctuary program will be an exciting and rewarding process for your congregation. A well-thought-out environmental program can bring the congregation together in many ways. By making Earth care a priority, some congregations are finding that they are attracting new members, too.

In the course of planning and carrying out Green Sanctuary projects, you'll worship and celebrate together, honoring and reinforcing your connection with Earth. You'll gain knowledge and wisdom in religious education activities from experts on the issues and from each other's experience and perspectives. You'll make practical changes in your personal and congregational lives, finding that when you combine your actions with those of other activists, you can make a substantial difference in the condition of the planet. And you'll experience once again the joy and satisfaction that comes from working together to restore right relations with each other and with beings on this Earth, for now and for the future.

As eco-philosopher Joanna Macy reminds us, it is a privilege to live in this time and place when we can participate in the self-healing of the world. Implementing your Green Sanctuary program is a one way to show your gratitude for this gift.

Participating in Social Change

Several books by prominent environmentalists-including David C. Korten's *The Great Turning*, Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest*, and Roger S. Gottlieb's *Greener Faith*-consider the social change needed to create a sustainable future, as well as the role of religious communities in creating this change. Important themes are prominent in these and other insightful works, themes that offer wisdom for the journey ahead:

- **Strengthening community.** From the very beginning of the Green Sanctuary process, you will take actions that are designed to bring your congregation together. When the entire congregation makes the commitment and follows through, your collective identity as a community that cares for Earth is

reinforced. Even if not everyone works on every project, there is still a collective “ownership” of the end result. Worshiping together, learning together, solving problems, and creating something new as a community; discussing, debating, even arguing (respectfully, of course) to arrive at collective decisions; putting your time, energy, and skills to work for a better world—these practices reinforce the bonds that hold your congregation together and strengthen your capacity to change. After completing the program, each year you will want to take your community to another level, gaining strength, deepening your commitments, and growing closer to that ideal of Earth Community you have envisioned.

- **Walking the talk.** In the process of becoming a Green Sanctuary, you will prove to yourselves that when you are committed to understand and change what is happening to the Earth because of human activity, you can take action to make a difference. Many of your congregants will make changes in their personal lives. The congregation as a whole will take steps to lessen the impact of your collective footprint. You will also recognize that other communities are suffering from environmental damage they did not cause, so you will try to reach out to make a difference in the larger community and the wider world.
- **Collaboration.** Paul Hawken posits in *Blessed Unrest* that the future is emerging through a global grassroots movement unlike any before. Networks, coalitions, alliances, and myriad other groups are constantly forming and evolving all over the world to address the environmental crisis. These groups are shaping an evolution of Earth Community that depends at a very fundamental level on the relationships we discover and develop through collaboration. We know more or less how to collaborate within our congregations, but it is also essential to reach out beyond our familiar boundaries to link up with others who share our hope for the future. This is why, as you will discover, the Green Sanctuary program requires you to work with another group or groups on your environmental justice project for accreditation. And as you experience the effectiveness of those collaborative relationships and the hope that emerges when you know you’re not alone, you will not hesitate to continue those relationships and gather new ones. The work gives us satisfaction, but the relationships bring us joy.

Green Sanctuary Program Success Stories

In their own words, congregations that have already completed the Green Sanctuary program reflect on their experiences:

“The results have been larger than the sum of parts. . . . There is no doubt that the Green Sanctuary program has been a major stimulus to change at UUCA.”

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, Virginia

“We believe the Green Sanctuary process has further expanded awareness throughout our congregation; provided validation for interested individuals to bring up change within the various groups in which they participate in the church; and created a group consciousness which has been formally and informally integrated into church life.”

Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Walnut Creek, California

continues on next page

Green Sanctuary Program Success Stories *Continues*

“The formation of a Green Committee was the spark that set into motion a wide range of progressive environmental movements within the church.”

Unitarian Church of Charleston, South Carolina

“The children in our RE program not only took initiative in helping with the church grounds, but also reached out to help an elderly couple with their yard work. . . . The Director of Religious Education reports that children show very high interest in environmental programs in their curriculum.”

First Unitarian Society of Schenectady, New York

“Our members have been putting into practice things they have learned, both in small and large ways. We are forming partnerships with other churches and faiths.”

Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon

“The community began nurturing and helping each other, and this is how the commitment grew. . . . A number of new members have joined because of our Green Sanctuary program.”

Saltwater Unitarian Universalist Church, Des Moines, Washington

“Our recognition as a Green Sanctuary enhances our ability to make positive contributions to our community.”

First Parish in Hingham (Old Ship Church) Unitarian Universalist, Hingham, Massachusetts

“The congregation is . . . aware that caring for the environment is not an elitist privilege but an ongoing responsibility that can in many ways be done economically.”

Towson Unitarian Universalist Church, Lutherville, Maryland

“These activities have provided increased opportunity for networking with other faith and community groups.”

Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church, Louisville, Kentucky

“There has always been an interest by the congregation in environmental issues; our Green Sanctuary program just gave people the opportunity to express it in action.”

Tapestry, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Mission Viejo, California

“Leaders of the church are taking on the task of spreading the importance of environmental awareness and, perhaps even more importantly, sending the message to our youth.”

DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church, Naperville, Illinois

“There is a much more energy around making a difference.”

Unitarian Universalist Church of Fairfax, Oakton, Virginia

The Green Sanctuary Process

The process for becoming a Green Sanctuary includes ten steps. The rest of this book will guide you through each step, providing instructions and advice to help you complete the process successfully. The steps, and the chapters in which they are discussed, are shown in the table on the next page.

As you embark on this journey toward becoming a Green Sanctuary, may you, like the congregations that have gone before you, find the process a rewarding one. It's time to begin!

Process for Becoming a Green Sanctuary	
1. Establish a Green Sanctuary program team.	Chapter 2, "Getting Started" (page 15)
2. Conduct an environmental assessment.	Chapter 3, "Conducting an Environmental Assessment" (page 23)
3. Create an action plan.	Chapter 4, "Creating Your Action Plan" (page 32)
4. Apply for Green Sanctuary Candidacy.	Chapter 5, "Becoming a Candidate" (page 45)
5. Review feedback from a Green Sanctuary review team.	
6. Make appropriate modifications to your action plan.	
7. Complete your action plan.	
8. Apply for Green Sanctuary Accreditation.	Chapter 6, "Achieving and Maintaining Accreditation" (page 51)

CHAPTER 2

GETTING STARTED

In any project, a good beginning helps lead to a successful outcome. So it is with the Green Sanctuary program. By setting up a strong leadership team, introducing the program to the congregation in a creative way, and planning how to buoy motivation in the face of challenges, you can embark on this journey with confidence.

Planting the Seeds

The idea of becoming a Green Sanctuary may emerge from within your congregation in a variety of ways. Perhaps a committed environmental activist discovered the program in a late night Web search. Or maybe a delegate to the General Assembly saw the recognition ceremony for newly accredited Green Sanctuaries and wondered why your congregation isn't one of them. The possibility may have been suggested by a new member who just moved from another congregation that was already a Green Sanctuary. A discussion circle or a book group might serve as an incubator for the notion that something has to be done about environmental concerns. Often the motivation for becoming a Green Sanctuary begins with an existing committee, such as land stewardship or social justice.

However the idea originates, usually a small group of congregants immediately see the connection between the program and the core values of the Unitarian Universalist faith. They find out how the program works and start getting organized.

One of the first tasks is to develop interest and support for the program among the congregation's leaders. Typically, the initial organizers make a presentation to the congregation's board of trustees (or other governing body), explaining what the Green Sanctuary program is and why they think the congregation would benefit from it. (The information in Chapter 1 of this manual can be a helpful resource for preparing this presentation.) If the board members agree that the idea has merit, they authorize the group to start a Green Sanctuary program.



UU Church of Greensboro in Jamestown, NC – Tree planting

Establishing the Team

In addition to authorizing the program, the congregation's board has another important role: formally establishing the team that will lead the Green Sanctuary effort. The purpose of this team is to manage the entire process and to insure that the required steps are completed. It's not enough for the board to simply assume that the team will consist of those who suggested the Green Sanctuary idea. Even though most or all of those persons will likely want to participate, additional team members may be needed. In any case, it's up to the board to decide how the team will fit into the existing organizational structure and to approve the team's official charter.

Deciding on the Structure

In some congregations, the responsibility for managing the Green Sanctuary program is taken on by an existing committee. Most congregations, however, prefer to designate a separate team specifically focused on the Green Sanctuary program. Because the program touches all areas of congregational life, it needs to be structured to allow for coordination and collaboration with all of the committees and staff who do the work of the congregation. Having a separate Green Sanctuary team makes it more likely that team members will represent many areas of congregational life and have a wide range of expertise.

Some congregations maintain a larger group of congregants interested in environmental issues, who meet regularly to discuss issues and strategies and reach out to encourage participation in the Green Sanctuary process. In this approach, there is still a core planning team that organizes the process steps and makes sure the documentation is completed.

The Green Sanctuary team could be called a committee, ministry, or whatever term is customary in your congregation. For simplicity, this manual uses the term "team."

Developing a Charter

Usually, the authority granted by the board to the Green Sanctuary team comes in the form of a charter that states the purpose of the team and some rules of operation. A proposed charter might be drafted by the initial organizers and submitted for the board's approval. (Sample charters are included in Appendix A.) For those congregations that don't use charters, the board minutes can spell out the purpose of the team.

A well-written charter or purpose statement clarifies that the role of this team is to organize and facilitate the Green Sanctuary process. The entire congregation, not the team alone, is responsible for completing the Green Sanctuary projects. The team leads the effort by conducting the assessment, planning projects, providing resources and logistical support, communicating with other leaders and staff, and preparing the documentation required. A key role of the team is to encourage participation in the program. In a sense, they are the congregation's environmental cheerleaders.

Selecting Team Members

The size of the Green Sanctuary team depends on the size of the congregation: the larger the congregation, the more team members will be needed. More important than the team's size is that its members have enough diversity of experience in congregational life to connect with all relevant program and administrative areas. Some may be current or past members of relevant committees, such as religious education, worship, communications, building and grounds, finance, hospitality, or social justice. Others may have great networking skills or a special knack for synthesizing different viewpoints and seeing the “big picture.”

It's helpful for the team to include members who have interest or expertise in those issues that will be the focus of your major action plan projects. However, when you're just starting out, you don't yet know what those projects will be. Keep in mind that when the time comes to design specific projects, you may want to bring in the expertise of additional team members.

Once the team has been formed, its members will find it helpful to read through this manual, if they haven't already, and become familiar with the Green Sanctuary process. The team may also want to plan a tentative (and flexible) timeline for completing key steps. With those preliminaries completed, it's time to get the congregation involved.



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship in WA – Green building and expansion key players

Introducing Green Sanctuary to the Congregation

Up to this point, only a small number of people in the congregation have been involved in-or perhaps even aware of-the Green Sanctuary program. But the program cannot be successful or meaningful unless it encompasses the congregation as a whole. Thus, introducing the program to the congregation is an essential step that deserves thought and planning.

Generally, the congregation is not asked to formally approve Green Sanctuary participation until a later stage. In the beginning, the team's objectives are simply to raise awareness of the program, to generate support and enthusiasm for it, and to inspire commitment and active participation. (In some cases, however, the board or congregation may deem it necessary to have a congregational vote at the start of the process. In this case, it is still the team's first task to build awareness and support before asking for approval.)

Every congregation has their own style of engaging congregants in important issues or programs. Many choose to introduce Green Sanctuary during a Sunday worship service, since that is the best opportunity to reach the majority of congregants. You might ask individuals to bring a poem, song, prayer, essay, photograph, or object that helps to express their personal feelings about life in the natural world. Water communions and flower communions help to focus attention.

Staffing a Green Sanctuary table at the coffee hour is a good way to get the word out, too. It can also be an opportunity for recruiting participation in the assessment and action plan steps.

As you launch the Green Sanctuary program and continue throughout the process, make use of all the communication tools that have proven effective in your congregation-announcements, newsletter articles, a page on the congregational website, presentations to various committees, and so on. You can also invent new techniques that will inspire congregants to get committed and involved. Performance and visual arts can be used to good effect. Intergenerational skits, dances and songs, making prayer flags for Mother Earth-anything that engages the right brain and whole body-can be a wonderful way to invite participation.

In some congregations, enthusiasm about Green Sanctuary is high from the very beginning. In others, people may need more convincing. Don't be too discouraged if the congregation seems skeptical or indifferent in the early stages. Usually, enthusiasm and commitment build as people learn more about the program and see how environmental concerns relate to their faith.

Building Motivation for Change

The Green Sanctuary program invites us to reexamine some of the basic premises and actions of our lives. If you've ever tried to change a longtime habit, you know how challenging the task can be. Now imagine asking your entire congregation to change many habits, both collectively and individually. That's a tall order-but not an impossible one, as the congregations that have successfully completed the program can attest.

An openness and desire to change is central to engagement in the Green Sanctuary program. The entire community needs to develop an understanding of the need for change and be willing to do whatever is required. If

your team recognizes the challenge, acknowledges that you may meet resistance along the way, and consciously works to build motivation, your congregation will be more likely to complete the program successfully.

Although the challenge is great, so are the rewards. If nothing else, this process will give your congregation practice at working through complexities and making difficult choices as a community! But beyond that, many congregations find that participating in the Green Sanctuary program creates a new level of excitement and engagement. One congregation reported that for them, the most important benefit of the program was the disappearance of resistance to change.

To help motivate change and energize your congregation, try the following suggestions. They are not step-by-step instructions, but guidelines to keep in mind all through the Green Sanctuary process.

Make It Personal

We are unlikely to change our habits unless we feel a strong, personal motivation to do so. Although fact and figures about environmental issues have their place, they are not always successful in stirring us to action. But when we see environmental damage for ourselves, or hear the stories of those who are affected, we understand the concerns more deeply. Direct experience can move us to action when all the intellectualizing of the world has failed.

“In the end, we conserve what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” – Senegalese Poet Baba Dioum

As you plan and carry out your Green Sanctuary program, look for opportunities to engage people on a personal level. If there are environmental activists in your congregation, find out what causes they are especially passionate about and why. Ask them to share their passion in a presentation or newsletter article, including concrete examples of how human and nonhuman species are affected.

Incorporate direct experience whenever possible. For example, if a local creek bed has become a dumping ground for trash, arrange an opportunity to visit it in person. Have someone take photos to share with the rest of the congregation.

When direct experience is not practical, look for other ways to make issues more real. Reading and discussing an article about the cruelty of animal feed lots may motivate some to seek out alternative sources for meat or give up meat all together. Seeing a documentary about the impact of global warming on native villages in Alaska might be the impetus to step up activism for regulation of greenhouse gases.

For many of us, the motivation to change comes when we recognize that our old ways are morally or ethically unacceptable. Throughout the Green Sanctuary program, encourage discussion of how issues and projects relate to personal moral values and the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Gather and Share Information

No matter how motivated we are to help solve a problem, we often experience confusion as to the best course of action. Becoming better informed can help. Fortunately, a lot of information is available for many of the

most significant environmental issues. Global warming and energy conservation, water access and quality, food sustainability, species extinction-these and other issues have attracted extensive scientific research. Many articles, books, films, and websites are available to translate scientific findings into language we can understand.

Congregational programs that educate congregants about environmental issues can have a major impact, encouraging people to act on new understanding and awareness. Forums and presentations by experts, book discussion groups, and collaborative research can go a long way toward helping your congregation understand the issues and possible options.

Take the Plunge

Even after gathering information, we are still challenged to find the right response. Environmental issues are complex, and seemingly mundane issues aren't as simple as they might first appear. However much we might wish, there is no universal right answer for the complicated environmental challenges we face. In almost every case, a response in one direction will result in some unintended impact in another direction. Scientists are still investigating many issues, and reasonable people may disagree about the correct course of action.

“The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful.” – E. E. Cummings

It's tempting to postpone actions as we continue to debate the issues. But allowing ourselves to become paralyzed with uncertainty will not save the planet! In fact, delaying action can drain enthusiasm and cause the entire Green Sanctuary project to lose momentum. Our challenge in the face of this complexity is to learn as much as we can about the issues and possible responses, and then make well-intentioned choices.

Remember that although you can't do everything, you can do something. Joanna Macy, the eco-philosopher and author, reminds us, “The truth is that all aspects of the current crisis reflect the same mistake, setting ourselves apart and using others-other people, other species, and other resources-for our own gain. To heal any aspect of our separateness helps the others to heal as well. Just find what you love to work on and take joy in that.”

Once you have chosen a course of action, be committed, but also flexible. If new information suggests a different course of action, or if a project doesn't seem to be effective, be willing to adjust your plans.

Set Realistic Goals

Keep in mind that at least initially, changes need to be relatively low in cost and high in convenience for most people to be willing to go along with them. A campaign encouraging people to become vegetarians overnight is not likely to be successful. Inviting people to choose a vegetarian menu at one additional meal per week, if they can, is more feasible.

Even then, it would not be realistic to expect 100 percent participation. The choices we each make depend on our personal values, experiences, family situations, health, and economic circumstances, among other factors. Show your appreciation for those who adopt lifestyle changes, but be careful not to pressure, chastise, or embarrass those who do not.

Emphasize the Positive

Like everyone else, UUs are reluctant to “sacrifice.” The environmental movement sometimes seems to have a reputation of demanding that we give up some of the things we enjoy most. Reframing lifestyle changes in terms of what is gained, rather than what is lost, can increase motivation.

An analogy can be made with many other situations, from losing weight to saving money. For example, suppose you’d like your family to spend less time watching TV. If you ask family members to limit viewing hours or give up favorite programs, you’ll meet resistance. But when you refocus your family’s social life around strong relationships and fun activities with others whose values are similar to yours, suddenly the importance of TV in family life seems to fade away.

Changes in congregational activities and structures may seem almost insurmountable if you start from “How much will it cost to make the change?” As you plan and promote Green Sanctuary activities, try to frame the discussion in a more positive way: “How can we live our faith in a way that’s best for the Earth as well as our community?” The answer to this second question is the true journey to becoming a Green Sanctuary.

Create a Vision

To increase motivation, create a vision of where your Green Sanctuary efforts are headed. Help your congregation vividly imagine the results of the work you’re doing together. How will it feel when you’ve earned your accreditation? What will it be like to live as a Green Sanctuary? (For ideas, you might want to reread the testimonials from Green Sanctuary congregations on pages 12-13.)

Try creating a “vision board,” using pictures and words to portray the future you imagine. You might do this for the Green Sanctuary process as a whole, for the individual projects within it, or both. Having a tangible reminder of your shared vision is especially helpful at the halfway point of a long project, when the initial enthusiasm has worn off and the end is not yet in sight.

Support One Another

Making individual lifestyle changes without the support of others with similar intentions can be nearly impossible. Most of us find change easier when we have the support of family, friends, community, and spiritual practice.

As part of the Green Sanctuary process, you’ll be integrating environmental themes into your worship services, celebrations, lifespan religious education, and social justice programming. By fostering a sense of community and spirituality, these programs, in turn, will be a source of support as you work on the other projects in your action plan.

Support also comes through the strength of acting together. In the Green Sanctuary program, the results of individual actions accumulate to create a larger impact than would be expected from each person acting alone. As an individual, you may be able to reduce your gasoline consumption only a few gallons a month; but if half or two-thirds of your congregation does the same, the impact adds up. Together you can see the difference, and together you can reinforce one another’s commitments.

Throughout the process, continually look for ways to give one another support. For example, if shifting away from a materialistic lifestyle seems daunting to many in your congregation, you may want to initiate “simplicity circles”-small groups that provide reinforcement and affirmation for adopting a lifestyle that is more healthy for the planet.

Respect Differences

In the midst of your Green Sanctuary work, take time for discussion and reflection. Be generous with each other. Don't expect complete agreement. Different individuals and groups-within and outside of your congregation-may view the natural world in different ways and use different words to talk about it. Some people say they “value” or “appreciate” the natural world, while others say that they “revere” or “worship” nature. Some individuals honor “the Creator” or “the Goddess,” while others are uneasy with these terms. Respect cultural and religious diversity while searching for points of agreement.

Celebrate Accomplishments

Celebrating what you have accomplished is not only fun, but inspiring. Don't wait until the completion of the Green Sanctuary program to celebrate! Acknowledge and applaud all the achievements along the way-completing the assessment, submitting the application for candidacy, and finishing a specific project, for example. Each celebration creates renewed energy for the next step in the process.

There are many ways to celebrate, from a joyful announcement during a Sunday service to a special gathering with food and entertainment. You might set up a display with photos of completed projects, or write an enthusiastic newsletter article.

As you celebrate, encourage reflection on what has been achieved. Ask positive questions based on the principles of appreciative inquiry, such as “What was the high point of this experience?” or “In what ways were we at our best when completing this project?” (You can read more about appreciative inquiry in the next chapter.) Reflecting together in this way not only deepens appreciation for what you've accomplished, but helps prepare the way for continued success.



Unitarian Church of Charleston in SC – Leaders celebrating accreditation

CHAPTER 3

CONDUCTING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

As your first major Green Sanctuary activity, you'll complete a comprehensive environmental assessment—a snapshot in time showing where your congregation stands with respect to environmental programs and practices. You'll look at everything from the management of your building and grounds to the elements in your worship and the contents of your educational programs. You'll examine consumption patterns, spending habits, and social activities.

A summary of your environmental assessment is a required part of your application to become a Green Sanctuary candidate. But even if you didn't need the assessment for that reason, it would still be valuable to you. For one thing, it will help you see where you are already in good shape. Acknowledging the positive steps the congregation has already taken provides a psychological boost just when it seems there is so much to do. The assessment will also identify where there are gaps, problem areas, and opportunities for improvement. With this information, you can develop a list of recommendations for facility improvements and opportunities that will strengthen operations and insure your long-term sustainability. You will also identify program opportunities to deepen your relationship with the Earth and to put your passion for justice to work healing environmental damage to both human and nonhuman communities. The results of the assessment will assist you in developing the substance of your Green Sanctuary action plan. As you carry out the plan, the assessment will serve as a baseline so you clearly see your progress in visible and measurable accomplishments. And when you complete the plan and apply for accreditation, the assessment will help you demonstrate accomplishment of the program goals for your program evaluation.

The assessment generally includes at least two components. The first is a professional energy audit of your facilities. The second is a congregational assessment—information that you gather about your organization's practices and programs. A third, optional component is personal assessments—a survey of the individuals in your congregation to assess their attitudes and habits related to environmental issues. This chapter will explain each component in turn.

Professional Energy Audit

Unless you fit in a special situation (explained below), a professional energy audit is an important part of your environmental assessment. This is the only element of the assessment that specifically requires technical expertise.

An energy audit is a professional examination of a building with respect to energy efficiency. Among the factors considered are the efficiency of the heating, cooling, and plumbing systems, heat loss potential (insulation and windows), systems management (such as use of programmable thermostats), lighting fixtures (exit signs, light bulbs, motion sensors, and the like), and energy efficiency ratings of appliances. Based on this information, the auditor calculates current energy usage and recommends improvements. Recommendations are

usually categorized as high, medium, or low priority, depending on the amount of energy savings, the size of the investment required, and the amount and speed of return on your investment. Often, professional energy auditors also provide information about potential rebates for energy improvements.

Cost of the Audit

Unless your congregation is fortunate enough to have a willing volunteer with the technical expertise to conduct an audit, you will need to contract for it. In many states, there are local resources for low-cost or subsidized audits. You may even qualify for a free audit. Some contractors that install heating and air conditioning systems will conduct an audit and arrange for payment over time out of the savings from implementing the recommendations. If your state has an Interfaith Power and Light program (www.theregenerationproject.org), it may be able to provide an energy audit for you or recommend whom to hire. So before you make a decision, research all the options in your area.

“The pleasures of spring are available to everybody, and cost nothing.” – George Orwell

Even if you don't qualify for a low-cost or free audit, the return on investment usually makes an audit worthwhile. Often it results in recommendations that, if followed, will eventually pay for themselves by reducing your utility bills. The higher the current cost of energy, the shorter the payback period.

Special Situations

There are a few situations in which an energy audit is impractical or not necessary. If this is the case, in your Green Sanctuary application include an explanation of why the audit was omitted. Possible reasons include:

- **Recent audit.** If you completed a professional energy audit within the last three years or so, you do not need to repeat the process at this time. Just include the summary and recommendations from that audit in your Green Sanctuary application, along with a brief report on any steps you have taken to implement the recommendations from the audit.
- **New building.** If you have a fairly new building (occupancy within the last five years), and the building was designed with energy conservation in mind, then an audit probably isn't necessary. You will probably have the documentation from the building design available. A review of your energy usage for the last two years may be sufficient, unless that review reveals anomalies that concern you.
- **Low-use building.** If you own your own building but use it only once or twice a week, major capital investments are not likely to be cost effective. Rather than going to the expense of a complete audit, look for low-cost improvements that can save energy, such as switching to compact fluorescent bulbs or adding weather stripping.
- **Rented or leased space.** If you don't own your own building, but rent or lease space, it may not be possible to conduct an energy audit. However, before you rule out the idea, contact the building's owner and try to work out a solution. You might offer to help find a low-cost resource, share the cost of the audit, or implement one or more of the recommendations at your own expense if the owner will pay for the audit.

If you don't conduct an energy audit, or if the audit shows that major changes are not needed, you can still include an energy conservation project in your action plan. As you'll see in Chapter 4, there are many ways besides building improvements to save energy.

Congregational Assessment

The second component of the environmental assessment looks at congregational programs and practices in each of the four Green Sanctuary focus areas: worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living. The Green Sanctuary team takes the initiative for this task. Your team will decide what specific issues, practices, and policies need to be evaluated and assign team members to investigate them.

Methods for Gathering Data

Depending on the issues and your particular situation, you may use a variety of methods to gather information:

- **Document review.** Information about the congregation's policies can usually be obtained by reviewing relevant documents, such as bylaws, board minutes, and policy directives. Newsletters and annual reports can provide basic information about programs.
- **Interviews and reports.** For more details about programs and practices, contact staff members, committee chairs, and other leaders. You might interview them or ask for written reports. (Suggested questions are provided later in this chapter.)
- **Direct observation.** Some information is best gathered by simply walking around the building to see what is happening. For instance, are lights usually turned off? Are people using the recycle bins?

Assign these data-gathering tasks based on the skills and perspectives of team members. Someone who is methodical and analytical might be well suited to reviewing documents, while tact and communication skills are important qualities when conducting interviews.

The actual assessment process will vary considerably among different congregations. Some have well-documented procedures, neatly filed records, and a clear structure of committee responsibilities. Teams in other congregations may have to work harder, digging through records in storage boxes or trying to find the name of the committee member who was in charge of a relevant project several years ago. If you encounter these challenges, just find out as much as you can. When information is unavailable, look at it as an opportunity to start fresh by identifying what policies or new practices are needed.

A question that often comes up is how far back to look. Generally, you don't need to go back further than two or three years. If a practice has been in place for three years, it's safe to say that it's ongoing. But if a major event happened four or five years ago (such as moving to a new building, or the arrival of a new minister with very different views on the environment), you might want to include an explanation in your assessment.

Courtesy with Staff and Contractors

Large congregations usually have several staff members who need to be involved in the assessment process. Some may be entirely supportive of the Green Sanctuary goals, while others may not see why you consider the project so important. A larger congregation may also have contractors such as janitorial or landscaping services, whose employees may or may not be willing to spend time with you explaining how they go about their work.

Board commitment to the Green Sanctuary program will help back up your requests for information from staff or contractors. However, remember that these individuals have other responsibilities. Your timetable is not their top priority, and they may see your requests as interfering with their tasks. Always express your respect and appreciation for their contribution. It's important to maintain positive relationships, especially since you may need these individuals' cooperation at later stages in the Green Sanctuary process.

Appreciative Inquiry

Your environmental assessment is a good opportunity to use the principles of appreciative inquiry. Developed by David Cooperrider in the mid-1980s, appreciative inquiry is a fundamental shift from the usual approach to making organizational improvements. Most of us have been conditioned to focus on solving problems: "What went wrong? How can we fix it?" Appreciative inquiry instead encourages us to build on our successes. It starts with the premise that positive change springs from asking positive questions: "When have we been at our best? What are we doing well right now? What do we want more of in the future?" Reflecting on such questions together can inspire organizations to reach new levels of excellence.

As those example questions show, appreciative inquiry usually includes reflection on the past, present, and future. Of course, this is a very simplified explanation. To learn more about appreciative inquiry, you may want to investigate the additional resources listed on page 116.

In conducting your assessment, look for opportunities to incorporate appreciative inquiry. Focus on the positive whenever possible. In addition to researching facts and figures about your congregation, ask people to share their feelings about successful programs and practices. For instance, if you're interviewing a congregant about a recent social action project, you might ask questions like:

- What was the high point of this experience for you?
- In what ways did we, as a community, express our best selves during the course of this project?
- What aspects of this experience might we want to emulate in future projects?

When appreciative inquiry is the focus, the assessment becomes more than just a tool for the Green Sanctuary process. It can be a way to infuse the congregation with positive energy that ripples through all your programs.

Suggested Assessment Questions

On the following pages are some specific questions you may want to address in your congregational assessment. They include topics pertaining to each of the four focus areas, plus some general questions. These are the types of questions that can help you-and the Green Sanctuary review team that looks at your application-understand where your congregation currently stands in terms of environmental practices.

This section is not meant as a checklist, but is intended to trigger your thinking. You may think of additional issues not listed here, and you may want to break some questions down further to provide more detail. The objective for this process is to begin thinking as broadly as possible, then address targeted issues as you learn more about your situation. In each area, consider including appreciative inquiry questions, as described in the previous section, in addition to the more factually oriented questions listed here.

Not every item here will be relevant to your congregation. If you try to gather details on every question listed, you could be at the assessment for a year instead of getting on with the program. That is not the intention! Be selective, and spend your time and resources where it matters most. If you don't collect some piece of information the first time around, you can always go back to get it later if the need arises.

Remember, too, that the purpose of the assessment is to document where you are right now so that you can plan where to go from here. Focus on what your congregation is actually doing, not what you've talked about doing or think you "should" do. Don't worry about whether your current practices are "good enough." No matter where you are starting from, the Green Sanctuary program will give your congregation the opportunity to grow.

Worship and Celebration

Your congregation's minister and worship committee can help you find the answers to these questions. You might also examine printed material from recent services.

- How are environmental awareness and Earth wisdom integrated into Sunday worship? (Consider sermon topics, music, readings, meditations, and so on.)
- What alternative and seasonal worship programs, such as solstice and equinox celebrations, does your congregation regularly provide?
- What other worship or spiritual practices have been used to help deepen your connections with "the interdependent web of all existence"? (Examples might include a weekly or monthly eco-spirituality vespers service, or a covenant group with a deep ecology theme.)

Religious Education

Your director of religious education is a good resource for the questions in this focus area. Also consider talking with participants in religious education programs.

- What age-appropriate lessons and activities are used to help children understand their place in nature and the interconnectedness of all life?
- In what ways does your religious education programming help children learn how caring for the Earth relates to our Unitarian Universalist faith?
- What adult programs and classes are offered to explore environmental themes and related faith issues? (Examples may include ongoing or one-time classes, special lectures and panel discussions, film festivals, field trips, book discussions, and other programs that appeal to different learning styles.)
- Has your congregation offered intergenerational learning experiences that encourage children and adults to learn these lessons from each other? If so, what themes and activities did they include?

Environmental Justice

As explained in Chapter 1, our Unitarian Universalist faith recognizes that environmental issues are matters of not only spirituality, but justice. Protecting natural systems and nonhuman communities is one form of this justice. Environmental justice is also concerned with the ecological health of human communities—especially disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities—and with building relationships to create a larger impact.

Some of the questions in this focus area relate to your current and recent environmental justice activities. Others are designed to assess local issues, resources, and relationships that might suggest environmental justice projects for your Green Sanctuary action plan.

- Among the social action programs in your congregation, which, if any, include an environmental justice component? (For example, have you undertaken a project to protect or restore natural resources and habitats? Have you organized a campaign to raise awareness about an environmental issue impacting a disadvantaged neighborhood?)
- How does the congregation's site relate to habitat for nonhuman species? (For instance, is there space to create a habitat garden? Are you located near a wildlife refuge?)
- How do your congregational programs, activities, and operations impact disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities in your area? Do local community groups use your facilities for programs that serve these communities?
- What environmental issues in your area affect disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities? What opportunities exist for collaboration with local groups to work on these issues?
- What other possibilities exist for programs or activities that could mitigate environmental injustice in your community?

Sustainable Living

This focus area looks at the day-to-day practices that affect your congregation's use and management of natural resources. Areas to investigate include energy use, water use, facilities management, transportation, and financial management. As before, some of the questions are designed to suggest issues or resources for possible projects.

Energy Use and Management

- What is the source of your energy? Is it sustainable? Do you purchase renewable energy for all or a portion of your use?
- What are your energy consumption patterns? (Review utility bills from the last three to five years. Make sure you're looking at usage, not cost figures, since the price can fluctuate widely.)
- What practices and habits affect your energy consumption? (For example, are lights turned off in empty rooms? Are thermostats adjusted when the building is not in use? Are computers and printers turned off at the end of the day?)

Water Use and Management

- What is your source for domestic water (ground water, well, river, reservoir)?
- What are your water consumption patterns (taken from water bills)?
- What practices affect your water usage? (Do you water the landscape? Do you have water-saving devices such as low-flow toilets and faucet restrictors?)
- Do you know the status of your water quality? What are the potential challenges to your local water supply (such as aging infrastructure, fire risk to the local watershed, agricultural chemical contaminants, or other issues)? Are there threats to free and open access to good quality water?

Facilities Management

- How is your building cleaned (volunteer function, paid staff, or service contract)? If you have a contract, are requirements spelled out for nontoxic cleaning supplies?
- What is your current practice regarding supplies for operations (such as kitchen and bathroom supplies, food service products like paper plates and napkins, office products like copy paper and print cartridges, and cleaning products)? Do you have policies for purchasing recycled content supplies, nontoxic cleaning products, and materials from sustainable sources?
- What is your congregation's awareness and practice regarding sustainable food (locally grown, low on the food chain, and/or organic, for example). Are vegetarian or vegan options made available as regular practice? Do you use fair trade coffee/tea and other products?
- What local recycling procedures are available? How do you handle the recycling for your congregation? (Is there an established recycling policy? Do you depend on volunteers, or is this a staff function?) What is your level of compliance with the opportunity for recycling?
- Do you compost kitchen waste?
- How do you care for your land and gardens? What are your practices and policies for landscape management (such as including native species and minimizing landscape chemicals)?

Transportation

- How do your congregants get to Sunday services and weekday events?
- What forms of public transportation (if any) are available? How convenient are the routes and schedules for getting to and from your services and other events?
- Is it practical to walk or bicycle to your location? Are sidewalks, bike paths, or bike lanes provided? Are they in good condition and well lit?
- Do you provide bike racks or other facilities for securely storing bicycles?
- Is there a carpool system in place? How does it work? How many people use it?

Financial Management

- What practices and policies are in place regarding investment decisions? Do they include socially and environmentally responsible criteria?

Congregational and Community Involvement

In addition to examining the four focus areas, take some time in your congregational assessment to consider the following questions. Here you are taking stock of any other congregational or community resources that might help you choose, plan, and carry out Green Sanctuary projects.

- What existing committees and groups within the congregation could work in partnership with the Green Sanctuary team? What expertise do their members have to offer?
- What interests, concerns, and opportunities within the congregation offer potential for environmental education and action, whether or not they have a readily apparent environmental connection? (For

example, is there a long-standing social justice program to address affordable housing, prison ministry, early childhood education, or farm workers rights? For any of these programs, you may find related environmental issues that the congregation would be excited to work on.)

- What skills and experiences of congregants might contribute to furthering environmental commitments? (Think creatively. An investment counselor may be willing to help review management of your endowment fund. Local teachers or college professors may have specific expertise on environmental issues or curriculum development. An energy specialist can help you find out how to conduct your energy audit. Someone who is an active member of an outdoor club may be interested in putting together a course for learning about your local bioregion.)
- What community resources and potential partners are already organized to address local environmental issues? (These might include activist congregations, secular environmental groups, and political action groups, for example.)

Personal Assessments

In addition to the congregational assessment, some Green Sanctuary congregations conduct personal assessments. They do this by asking individuals in the congregation to complete a survey about environmentally friendly practices they follow at home and in their daily lives.

Although conducting such a survey is not required, it can yield substantial benefits. Learning about positive environmental actions that your congregants are already taking can provide reasons to celebrate and give you hope for the future. You can also learn about your congregants' interests, which in turn may suggest projects to include in your action plan. Simply taking the survey often raises respondents' level of awareness, sometimes motivating them to actions they might not otherwise take. Repeating the survey after completing your action plan can show whether participating in the Green Sanctuary program has had an impact on individuals in your congregation.

Most surveys focus on participants' impact on the Earth's resources, with questions about energy and water usage, recycling, food choices, and other elements of sustainability. Some surveys also try to gauge respondents' level of knowledge about environmental issues, current involvement in environmental action, and interest or willingness to participate in specific activities.

You can either design your own survey instrument or adapt one from another source. Either way, following these guidelines can help increase the level of participation:

- **Keep it simple.** A survey that is too complicated or takes too long to complete probably won't get a good response.
- **Focus on the positive.** A tone that tends to make people feel guilty isn't inviting. Instead of asking about wasteful habits, ask whether people take specific steps to conserve resources.
- **Consider an online survey tool.** Web-based services such as SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, SurveyGizmo, and PollDaddy make it possible to offer surveys and collect data over the Internet. Most of these services offer a free basic version, as well as paid packages with additional features.

Your Completed Assessment

When you apply for Green Sanctuary candidacy, you will be asked to provide a summary of the key findings of your environmental assessment. Chapter 5 describes the information to include in the summary. Although you don't need to send in your detailed findings, you will want to keep them as a permanent part of your files. Periodically updating your findings can help you track changes and decide on future actions. First, however, you'll use the assessment as a baseline for starting your action plan-the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CREATING YOUR ACTION PLAN

The next step toward becoming a Green Sanctuary is to develop your action plan—an outline of the twelve or more projects that your congregation intends to undertake during the Green Sanctuary program. You will submit the action plan to the UUA Office of Congregational Stewardship Services as part of your application for candidacy. Once your application is approved, your action plan will guide your congregation's completion of the requirements of Green Sanctuary accreditation.

As long as your action plan fulfill a few basic requirements, as explained in this chapter, the choice of specific projects is up to you. The ideal action plan is an interesting and varied collection of actions that will engage congregants and move you toward accomplishing the goals of the Green Sanctuary program.

The action plan is a road map to help you think through your strategy and check the logistics of your program elements. If, as you carry out the plan, you find that some elements of it are no longer appropriate, simply adjust your plan as needed. If you make a significant revision and are not sure whether your revised plan still meets the program requirements, the Green Sanctuary program manager is always available to advise you.

Considerations for Choosing Projects

To qualify for candidacy, be sure your action plan includes at least the minimum number of projects in each of the four Green Sanctuary focus areas. The table below summarizes the program requirements.

Note that completing the minimum number of projects in each focus area would give you only ten projects, rather than the twelve required. Your remaining two projects can relate to the focus area(s) of your choice.

If a project seems to relate to more than one focus area, you may choose which area to count it toward. Each project can be counted only once.

Program Requirements		
Focus Area	Minimum Number of Projects	Additional Requirements
Worship and Celebration	At least 2	(none)
Religious Education	At least 2	Include at least one project for children/youth and at least one for adults.
Environmental Justice	At least 2	Include at least one project that is a major ongoing collaboration with another congregation or organization.
Sustainable Living	At least 4	Include at least one energy conservation activity.
TOTAL	At least 12 projects in all	

Involving the Congregation

Engaging congregants in developing the action plan can help you obtain congregational buy-in for the Green Sanctuary program. You might invite congregants to suggest project ideas, give their opinion of the proposals being considered, and/or commit to the completed plan before it is submitted to the UUA. If you asked individuals to complete a survey as part of your environmental assessment, the responses may suggest projects that would interest a large number of congregants. Congregational commitment at the planning stages is likely to increase participation later on, greatly improving your chances of success.

Brainstorming Project Ideas

Any number of sources can be used to develop your initial list of possible projects. Start brainstorming ideas by looking at:

- **Your environmental assessment.** After completing your assessment, you have probably identified gaps, problems, and opportunities for further action in each of the four focus areas. You may also have identified issues that individuals or groups are already passionate about or would like to understand better. Any of these could suggest potential projects.
- **Ongoing congregational programs.** Are there ways to expand or deepen existing programs by adding an environmental dimension? For example, if you already have an active program on affordable housing, you might decide to integrate energy efficiency into that program.
- **Your congregation's strategic plan.** If your congregation has, or is developing, a long-range plan, review its goals and objectives. You may be able to adapt some of those plans to include Green Sanctuary goals.
- **News reports.** Current events-local, regional, or global-may bring an environmental issue to the forefront that could inspire a Green Sanctuary project.
- **The project ideas in this manual.** You'll find a list of suggestions at the end of the chapter. Many of them are based on projects successfully completed by Green Sanctuary congregations.

Assessing Your Resources

When you're brainstorming possible projects, there is virtually no limit to what you can imagine. But there may be a limit to what you can realistically accomplish with the resources you have available. As you review your list of possible projects, consider what each one requires in terms of resources. Here are some questions for your team to ask yourselves:

- How much time and energy would it take to carry out this project?
- What skills would be needed? Does anyone in the congregation already have those skills? If not, could we learn the skills or bring in someone to help?
- What tools and materials would be needed? How could we obtain them?
- What costs would be involved? How could we raise funds?
- Which existing groups in the congregation might be willing to help with this project? What would their role be?
- Who might be willing to lead this project?
- What experience have we had with similar projects? What did we learn?

Discussing your resources in the early stages makes it much easier to plan a successful program. Your team may decide that a particular project is impractical as originally conceived, but could be feasible if scaled back to a more manageable scope. On the other hand, when you think creatively about your resources—including partnerships with other community groups—you may find that a seemingly daunting project is actually within your reach. Design an action plan that is realistic, but also ambitious enough to energize and motivate the congregation.

Making Every Project Count

Many congregations ask whether their action plan can include projects they have already completed. The answer is “sometimes.” Recent new projects—especially if they led to your decision to participate in the Green Sanctuary program, or were started while moving toward involvement in the program—can be included in your action plan. However, programs or policies that have been in place for a long time, while commendable, generally don’t count as one of your twelve action plan projects. That’s because the Green Sanctuary program is designed to help you move forward to new levels of awareness and action.

One faith activist describes it this way: “It’s not about changing light bulbs. It’s about transforming people on the assumption that transformed people will change light bulbs.” The projects in your action plan are not an end in themselves, but a tool for furthering that transformation.

Your twelve projects won’t solve the environmental crisis by themselves. But they will help raise awareness and encourage congregants to start or continue on the path of living more lightly. As a congregation, you will be deepening your relationship with the Earth and with each other, making your community stronger and more committed to protecting our planet. That is why some of the projects are about religious education, not just environmental education, and why some are about spiritual practice, not just environmental topics for the Sunday sermon.

The action plan starts where you’re at now and moves you forward from there. If you already regularly include Earth references in your worship, how can you create a deeper spiritual connection? If you have already switched from disposable cups to ceramic mugs for coffee hour, what else can you do to cut down on trash? If you have already created an organic garden, how can you further integrate the garden into the life of the congregation?

Remember that this is lifetime work, not a two-year project to check off your to-do list before moving on to something else. Strive to create an action plan that will move the congregation toward transformation.

Balancing Participation

An effective Green Sanctuary action plan involves a good mix of several types of projects. Different projects will appeal to different people, and not every project will involve everyone. Some projects, such as those that focus on policy development, may involve only the Green Sanctuary team and relevant decision makers. A class or discussion group may attract only a small number of people, even though participation is open to all. Still other activities, such as an annual Earth Day event, will involve a large portion of the congregation. Offering a range of opportunities increases the likelihood that everyone in the congregation will participate in one way or another.

Also consider the balance between active and passive projects. Watching a film about an environmental issue or writing a check for a good cause would usually be considered passive. Although passive projects have their benefits, an action plan that includes plenty of active, hands-on projects can get people energized and give them a greater sense of accomplishment. Planting a garden, organizing a community eco-fair, or installing insulation are examples of projects that call for active participation.

At the same time, look for ways to make your projects welcoming to people of different ages and abilities. A few simple adaptations may be all that is needed to make an activity more accessible. When planning a project that involves physical labor, offer alternative ways for people to participate, such as doing research, gathering supplies, or making phone calls to schedule volunteers.

Taking a Thematic Approach

Some congregations select an overall theme that will serve as a framework for the projects in their action plan. A theme can provide a unifying context for individual projects.

For example, you might choose as your theme something that you consider part of your congregation's identity. One midsize Florida congregation spends a lot of time outdoors on their seven-acre property, so they chose the landscape as their theme. You can see how they carried out that theme in their choice of projects within each focus area:

- **Worship and celebration**-Holding seasonal outdoor celebrations; developing worship services focused on gratitude for the beauty and bounty of the land; offering meditation services in a new memorial garden; planning a labyrinth.
- **Religious education**-Creating a butterfly garden and a produce garden; learning about the importance of the wetland area; identifying the wildlife that visits or lives on the property; learning about soil nutrients and microscopic inhabitants.
- **Environmental justice**-Enhancing the health of the wetland by improving water circulation and removing invasive species; contributing produce from the garden to a community food program; helping a local group start their own community garden.
- **Sustainable living**-Eliminating use of toxic chemicals on the landscape; starting a compost system for kitchen and yard waste.

Another option is to base the theme on a particular environmental issue, such as water scarcity, development sprawl, or food production. You can then develop projects in each focus area that relate to the theme. The result is a multifaceted approach to the issue, through spiritual connection (worship and celebration), learning and discussion (religious education), activism (environmental justice), and lifestyle and policy changes (sustainable living).

Some congregations take an issue that has long been their focus and find ways to relate it to Green Sanctuary goals. In this way they can integrate the Green Sanctuary program with other aspects of their mission and vision. For example, in a congregation that emphasizes racial and economic justice, Green Sanctuary projects might include learning about the environmental practices of indigenous cultures and honoring environmental activists in developing countries.

Project Ideas

The following section provides sample projects for each of the four focus areas. Some of these are real examples from congregations; others are ideas that might make great projects. Of course, you are not limited to these suggestions. Feel free to come up with your own ideas, or adapt these to better suit your situation and interests.

Worship and Celebration

You'll need at least two projects that integrate environmental awareness into the spiritual life of the congregation. There are many ways to deepen our connections to the natural world through worship and celebrations.

Possible Projects

- Choose or develop prayers, meditations, readings, and sermons that integrate Earth awareness into the ongoing worship life of the congregation.
- Add a statement on caring for Earth to the opening words or chalice lighting used on Sunday mornings.
- Commission a song that celebrates the Earth for the congregation to sing during worship services.
- Plan services or celebrations around special days or themes that recognize our relationship with the natural world, such as Earth Day, flower communion, or a water communion.
- Plan and carry out seasonal celebrations and rituals (such as a solstice service or harvest celebration) that deepen and enrich the congregation's relationship with the Earth. Hold at least one such event each season.
- Develop a class called "Gardening as Spiritual Practice," beginning with weeding as meditation and ending with an organic communion.
- Create a "green altar" honoring the sacredness of the natural world.
- Provide spiritual events such as an outdoor worship service, "mindful hike," or camping trip.
- Create meditation zones or a labyrinth on your congregation's property.



UU Church of Arlington, VA – Earth Dancers performing at a worship service



Quimper UU Fellowship in Port Townsend, WA – Congregants making apple cider at Harvest Festival



First Unitarian Society in Schenectady in NY – Congregational dedication of a Peace Pole

- As a ministerial support program, assemble a library of books on environmental themes with accompanying summaries.
- Create environmentally themed session plans for your small group ministry program.
- Plan a celebration with a “green” theme, featuring locally and sustainably grown foods.
- Create a rotating display of artwork highlighting the beauty of nature.

Religious Education

Religious education programs can bring children, youth, and adults to a deeper appreciation of the complexities of Earth’s systems and the sacredness of all life. They can also provide an understanding of how experiencing and caring for the natural world relates to our spiritual development and Unitarian Universalist faith. Religious education activities can include classroom learning, direct experience of nature, and hands-on projects focused on caring for the environment.

In your action plan, include at least one religious education project for children and/or youth and one for adults. Consider intergenerational activities that allow children, youth, and adults to reinforce each other’s learning and have fun together. An intergenerational activity counts as only one project, but it can satisfy the requirement for either an adult project or one for children and youth.

Possible Projects

- Adopt an Earth-centered curriculum for the children’s religious education program, teaching that we are all a part of nature, not separate and outside of it.
- Invite each class of children to adopt a small section of the congregation’s property. Encourage them to become familiar with its seasonal cycles and to learn about its inhabitants, from plants and animals to soil microbes and fungi.
- After children have learned about the ecosystem of an area, have them lead adults on a guided nature walk.



DuPage UU Church in Naperville, IL – Congregants on a field trip to a local wind farm

- Design an intergenerational project to learn about your local landscape’s biological and cultural history and any dangers that threaten it.
- Offer at least one Northwest Earth Institute discussion course each semester for adults and youth (www.nwei.org/discussion_courses).
- Start an ongoing discussion group on voluntary simplicity.
- Hold a series of classes to study global warming or another environmental issue.



Quimper UU Fellowship in Port Townsend, WA – Intergenerational vegetable car races

- Develop an adult course on eco-spirituality.
- Sponsor a community film festival of environmental films.
- Organize a book group focused on environmental topics.
- Collaborate with other congregations or environmental groups to design an educational series on an issue of significance in your area. Follow up with action to respond to what you learned.
- Invite local experts on environmental issues to give presentations or hold a panel discussion.
- Organize an intergenerational field trip—a visit to a bird sanctuary, for example.
- Teach children and adults to plant and care for a garden.
- Offer a workshop on canning and/or freezing fruits and vegetables from the garden.
- Hold an “Eat Your Values” food event, including programs, educational materials, and cooking classes that promote locally grown, organic, and fair trade food choices.
- Organize a summer day camp with an environmental theme.

Environmental Justice

The Green Sanctuary program calls on you to plan and carry out at least two environmental justice projects. Environmental justice can be defined as the human affirmation of our place within the interdependent web of all existence. It encompasses three goals:

- Protecting natural systems.
- Improving the ecological health of human communities, specifically disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities.
- Building relationships to create a larger impact.



Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship in WA – Work party with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to restore salmon runs to local creeks

Protecting Natural Systems

Environmental justice recognizes the inherent value of all species. It acknowledges our human responsibility to seek a sustainable balance between human rights and the rights of nature. Irresponsible human activity can cause wildlife habitats to be degraded, plants or animals to be harmed, and even entire species to be lost. A project that seeks to prevent or repair such damage would be a worthwhile part of your action plan.

Improving the Ecological Health of Human Communities

Disadvantaged, oppressed, and indigenous communities are often more directly and severely affected by environmental issues than are other groups in our society. They also tend to be less politically empowered to participate in decisions affecting their environment and well-being. Your Green Sanctuary environmental justice projects are an opportunity to directly address these types of inequities.

Building Relationships

A good way to begin an environmental justice project is by building a relationship with those impacted by



Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church in Louisville, KY – Congregants participating in a Mountain Top Removal Rally



UU Church of Fairfax in Oakton, VA – Katrina volunteers for environmental justice to create change.

the problem. Get to know the members of the affected community—their history, their concerns, their capacity to respond, their hopes for a better future. As you do, you will learn how you can best support their interests so that your project design will be most effective on their terms.

In at least one of your environmental justice projects, you will also build relationships by planning a major, ongoing project in collaboration with other groups or partners. It's a good idea to build on relationships you already have in the community. In addition, you may seek out other partners and collaborators who have existing relationships in the community you are supporting, and others who may have the expertise or connections that can help resolve the issue you decide to address. These partnerships will boost your capacity

Teaming up with another congregation (whether UU or another faith) is recommended as a way to reinforce the relationship of environmental justice work to your faith. Even if you are not working with another faith group, you are encouraged to make your faith a visible part of your motivation for your involvement. In a very real way, this is evangelical work. Make it clear that you are doing it because your faith calls you to care for the Earth and all of the Earth's inhabitants.

Building on Existing Social Justice Projects

UU congregations usually see themselves as strong supporters of liberal social justice causes and may already be active on several justice fronts. Sometimes the Green Sanctuary program is initially seen as another program competing for the attention and resources of the congregation's activists. But this program does not necessarily require initiating an entirely new social justice project. A little imagination will allow you to find the environmental aspects of almost any social issue. In fact, adding a dimension of environmental justice is a great way to bring new energy and creativity to a long-standing project.



Boise UU Fellowship in ID – Congregants at dedication of Habitat for Humanity LEED certified home which they had helped create

It's hard to think of a social justice issue that doesn't have an environmental dimension, or an environmental issue that isn't driven by a social dimension. So it's up to us to examine the social issues that call us and to understand their environmental aspects. For example:

- If your congregation has been helping to provide affordable housing, consider how to make sure that low-cost homes take advantage of energy-saving technologies and/or minimize carbon dioxide emissions.
- If your congregation promotes health care for all, you might study the issue of how children's health is affected by severe air pollution.
- If your congregation has been working to combat hunger, you could start a project to glean from local farms and give the produce to a local food pantry.

Maximizing Direct Benefits

Whatever environmental justice projects you select, aim to benefit those who are most directly affected by the issue. For example, selling fair trade coffee in the congregation is often a proposed project, but the benefit for the coffee farmer is very indirect; most of the benefit goes to the congregants, who get to drink good coffee without going out of their way. An example of a more direct benefit might be providing microloans to help individuals in developing countries start growing organic, shade-grown coffee following fair trade guidelines.

Possible Projects

- “Adopt” a community that is already feeling the effects of climate change. Learn from their situation and find out how you can help them lessen the impact.
- Investigate the impact of a proposed industrial development in your area (such as a power plant, factory, or landfill). What are the environmental risks? What communities will be most affected? How much of a voice have those communities had in the decision? Develop a partnership with those who are likely to be directly impacted, supporting their campaign to reduce or eliminate environmental hazards.
- Increase the energy efficiency of local affordable housing units by donating and installing energy-efficient appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Participate in an annual house-painting project for elders in your community, using low-VOC paint to minimize toxins.
- Hold a campaign to raise funds for solar panels for an apartment building planned for a nearby neighborhood.



UU Fellowship of Falmouth in MA – Congregants work at the community garden established at the Falmouth Service Center



Saltwater UU Church in Des Moines, WA – Native Forest Stewardship Project removal of invasive ivy

- Assess how your congregation’s landscape design and maintenance affect the natural habitat, native species, and nearby communities. If you discover negative effects, make changes to reduce them.
- Add features to make your congregation’s property more friendly to your nonhuman neighbors. You might create a butterfly garden, install bat houses, or add water sources and vegetation to attract birds.
- Repair environmental damage, such as by restoring a stream bed.
- Actively support an environmental justice issue in response to a book or film that got your congregation’s attention. For example, you might sponsor a community forum, organize a letter-writing campaign, or attend rallies.
- Contribute to recovery in an area affected by an environmental disaster, such as a hurricane or flood. Sponsor work teams for ongoing rebuilding efforts.
- Contribute to an organization in Appalachia working to fight mountain top removal, and take a leadership role in local activism to support their efforts on the issue.
- Research a public policy issue relating to environmental justice, and be a visible advocate for new legislation or regulations for that issue.
- Start a gleaning project, donating the food to a program that feeds the community.
- Sponsor economically disadvantaged children at a nature camp.
- Help develop and implement environmentally conscious policies at a local homeless shelter (such as green purchasing, recycling, composting, and use of local and organic foods).
- Start a household hazardous waste collection system for an inner city neighborhood.
- Work with Habitat for Humanity to help build a LEED-certified house.
- Collect unwanted bicycles to redistribute to community development programs in developing countries.



Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church in Louisville, KY – Youth displays Valentines letters written to legislators opposing Mountain Top Removal



Unitarian Church in Westport, CT – Display of CFLs

Sustainable Living

This focus area is an opportunity to reduce your congregation’s environmental footprint, lightening the burden of your lifestyle on Earth’s systems. Select at least four projects in this area, including at least one aimed at energy conservation. Other possible areas to target include landscaping, building management, waste management, water conservation, and transportation, to name just a few.



UU Society of the Dayton Beach Area in Ormond Beach, FL – Solar panels

Projects that focus on congregational practices often require developing or modifying relevant policies (including building rental agreements, when appropriate). And to ensure that policy changes are actually carried out in practice, consider a publicity campaign. For example, if you adopt a recycling policy, perhaps children and youth could create colorful posters reminding individuals to place recyclables in designated containers.

Some projects may encourage congregants to change their daily habits at home and elsewhere. For these, document the changes individuals make and calculate the collective benefits to show how individual actions can quickly add up to a big difference.

Possible Projects

- Implement at least some of the recommendations from your energy audit to reduce energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions.
- Start a program for recycling and/or composting waste.
- Establish a composting “buddy system”: those who don’t have a compost pile can give their vegetable waste to those who do.
- Form an energy task force to make suggestions on how to reduce energy and water usage.
- Develop and implement policies for purchasing recycled products (such as office paper) and/or using environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Encourage congregants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in their personal lives, perhaps by making a pledge to take specific actions.
- Ask for individual commitments to reduce energy consumption at home. Use one of the online tools available to calculate cumulative savings for the congregation.
- Suggest changes in dietary habits to become more sustainable, using the Ethical Eating Guide available on the UUA website.



UU Society of Sacramento, CA – Leader displays the Vegetarian Cookbook she headed putting together

- Commit to include vegetarian and/or local foods in your community potlucks.
- Design a program encouraging the use of alternative transportation, such as carpooling or bicycling.
- Develop policies to direct the congregation's investments into socially and environmentally responsible funds.
- If you serve meals at your facility, take steps to make them Zero Trash events. One congregation raised funds to buy additional dishes to replace paper plates and received a grant to hire a neighborhood resident to help wash dishes.
- Promote a "Bring Your Own Plates" campaign for congregational potlucks.
- Create a Green Campaign Fund, to be spent only on projects that reduce the carbon footprint of the organization.
- Redesign your property's landscaping using xeriscape techniques-using native and drought-tolerant plants to reduce water usage.
- Install a photovoltaic solar panel.
- Arrange for the facility to receive 100% of its energy from clean sources, and encourage families in the congregation to do the same.

Putting the Plan Together

Developing your action plan can be a rewarding activity in itself. It provides focus and purpose, inspiring you to envision what your congregation can achieve by truly living your Unitarian Universalist Principles in the pursuit of a better world. Take your time and enjoy this opportunity to reflect on your goals.

Before deciding which projects to pursue, identify who will lead each one. If you cannot find at least one or two volunteers willing to coordinate a project, consider choosing an alternative that generates more enthusiasm and/or is more feasible.

When your team is satisfied with the projects you have chosen, you're ready to document your plan and prepare your formal application to become a Green Sanctuary candidate. The next chapter will guide you through that process.

CHAPTER 5

BECOMING A CANDIDATE

Once you have formed a Green Sanctuary team, engaged your congregation, completed the environmental assessment, and developed an action plan for your Green Sanctuary projects, you are ready to become a Green Sanctuary candidate. Bringing your congregation to this stage of development prior to candidacy ensures that you understand what will be involved in your Green Sanctuary program and have the support of key people. Both elements are critical to your success.

Preparing Your Application

To become a Green Sanctuary candidate, you'll need to prepare an application that describes your congregation and explains what you plan to do. You can download the application form by visiting the Green Sanctuary section of the UUA website. The form is available in two file formats: PDF and Microsoft Word. Both formats allow you to type your information directly in the document, which can then be submitted electronically. At any time during your preparation work, don't hesitate to contact the Green Sanctuary program manager (uua_greensanctuary@uua.org) with questions about the process.

Congregation Information and Profile

The first part of the application is a fill-in-the-blank section that asks for basic contact information about your congregation. You'll be asked to designate one person as the Green Sanctuary contact.

Next, write a brief profile of your congregation in paragraph form—about one page in length, give or take half a page. Start by telling about the size of your congregation: the number of members and adult friends, the average Sunday attendance, the number of children and youth enrolled in your religious education program, and the number and roles of staff members. Also provide information about the demographics of your congregation.

The profile section is also the place to provide a brief congregational history. Your history is more than just names and dates; it's an opportunity to tell the story of what makes your congregation unique. What issues have been significant in your history? What challenges have you faced, and how did you meet them? What have you done especially well? The appreciative inquiry questions you asked during your assessment (see page 26) may suggest stories to include here. Examples of congregation profiles can be found in Appendix B.

Green Sanctuary Team

In the next section, provide information about your Green Sanctuary team. Include your charter or other statement of purpose. Also list the members of the team, describing their congregational roles and environmental interests.

Environmental Assessment

In the process of completing your environmental assessment, as described in Chapter 3, you will have collected a mass of information. Although you'll want to retain the full details for your files, your candidacy application requires only a summary of the key findings. This summary will probably be about 2 to 5 pages in length, depending on the size of your congregation and the complexity of your situation. You will find examples of acceptable formats for the assessment summary in Appendix C, suggesting the level of detail expected.

Here are some guidelines for writing the summary:

- Include sections for both the professional energy audit and the congregational assessment. If individuals completed personal assessments, summarize those as well.
- Be sure your summary of the congregational assessment addresses the four focus areas of the Green Sanctuary program: worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living.
- Include both positive findings and opportunities for improvement.
- Provide a list of recommendations. The recommendations may be reflected in your action plan, but not all of them need to be; some might require a longer time frame than the one to two years of your candidacy.
- Feel free to include any other information that you think is relevant.

Action Plan

In the next part of the application, provide a brief description of each of the twelve projects in your action plan. List each project under the appropriate focus area, filling in the following information.

- **Project Title:** Give the project a title (two to ten words) that summarizes its focus.
- **Project Description:** In one to three paragraphs, describe what will take place during the project. Remember that the people reviewing your application will be reading about this project for the first time. Include enough information so that they can easily understand what you intend to have happen. Usually a paragraph or two is sufficient, but in some cases you may need to include additional context and a more detailed description. Be sure to explain any terminology or acronyms that might not be familiar to anyone outside your own congregation or area.
- **Timeline for Completion:** Estimate how long it will take to complete the project. You may list a projected completion date for the entire project and/or target dates for completing specific phases.
- **Lead:** Name the person in your congregation who is responsible for the project.

Appendix D offers sample action plans.

Communications Plan

Communication techniques are among your most powerful tools for successfully achieving the goals of the Green Sanctuary program. Both within your congregation and in the wider community, you'll need to share information, recruit participation, and gather resources to carry out your action plan. Therefore, the final section of your application for candidacy is a communications plan. In it, you'll describe how you intend to:

- Share practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies with the congregation.
- Invite participation in your many program activities.
- Collaborate with other groups, organizations, or communities within and beyond your congregation.

The communications plan is typically one to two pages long. It will largely reflect current practices in your congregation, but it may also be an opportunity to develop new tools and new expertise that will serve the congregation in other ways. Here are some of the elements you may want to include in your communications plan:

- Congregational newsletter. You may want to create a “green” column to educate congregants on environmental issues and encourage them to take part in Green Sanctuary projects.
- Congregational website. Consider adding a Green Sanctuary page that links to Green Sanctuary information on the UUA website and other relevant resources.
- Congregational e-mail discussion list or chat group.
- Online social media, such as blogs, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
- A bulletin board dedicated to news about environmental issues and your Green Sanctuary projects.
- An information table at Sunday fellowship hour.
- Communication with community-wide networks, such as interfaith organizations, secular environmental networks, and local community groups. Such networks are a good way to share information and success stories and collaborate on projects.
- Local media outlets (newspaper, radio, cable TV, or others in your community). Most of these outlets are always looking for content to highlight local issues and events. Your material could be in high demand! Possibilities include announcements of specific events, feature stories about your congregation's environmental programs (a good way to attract new congregants), and articles that raise awareness of local environmental causes and activism.

To help you connect with local media, the UUA has developed a resource called “Publicizing Environmentally Friendly Programs.” You can find it in Appendix E and in the Leader's Library section of the UUA website (www.uua.org). In addition, media training is often available at local community colleges or adult education programs, and sometimes through community activist organizations.

Remember that your communications strategies are not ends in themselves, but tools to make your program more effective. Using a variety of both proven and emerging communications tools will go a long way toward

helping you build the kind of dynamic community that will support and motivate congregants to stay the course. Continually rethinking your communication strategy will also allow you to adapt and make use of new technologies as they become available. Appendix F offers sample communications plans.

Submitting Your Application

Before submitting the completed application, some congregations ask their congregation to vote to apply for candidacy. This is not a required step, but it can be one way of gauging a congregations' commitment and solidifying support. On the other hand, there is some risk in asking the congregation to vote at this stage. A negative vote or a very weak positive vote, reflecting hesitancy about the program or resistance to making a strong commitment, may tie your hands and preclude moving forward. Anticipate the likely outcome and choose your strategy accordingly. (Note that a vote is required later in the process, before applying for final accreditation. By that time, the action plan has been completed, so the congregation will almost certainly be fully committed to the program.)



Mount Diablo UU Church in Walnut Creek, CA – Congregants celebrating their new “green” facility

If you choose to ask for a vote before applying for candidacy, it's a good idea to keep the wording of the motion fairly general. As you move through the program, you may find that you need to make adjustments to your original plans. Less restrictive language will leave your options open.

The application form includes instructions for submitting your completed application by e-mail. If you cannot submit electronically, please contact the Green Sanctuary program manager for alternate mailing instructions. You are asked to pay a one-time application fee of \$100 to support the Green Sanctuary program. Instructions for submitting the fee are also found on the application form.

Receiving Feedback and Modifying Your Action Plan

Your application for candidacy will be forwarded to one of the Green Sanctuary review teams. These teams meet via conference call once a month, reviewing three to four applications at each meeting. After the review meeting, the program manager will send you a letter welcoming your congregation into the Green Sanctuary program and providing feedback about your action plan. Based on this feedback, as well as any changing circumstances, you may then modify your action plan as needed. You are also free to make any additional changes that you consider necessary as you go along. There is no need to send your revised plan to the UUA unless you have a question about whether it meets the program requirements.

Carrying Out Your Action Plan

Once your application is accepted, your congregation is officially a Green Sanctuary candidate. With your destination clearly spelled out, the path cleared, a map in hand, and many companions gathered, you are set to begin your journey.

Allow about one to two years to complete the projects in your action plan. It takes at least a year for everyone to get on board with the program, for changes in congregational practices to become well established, and for participants to integrate the learning and commitment into their lives. On the other hand, if you spread your action plan over more than two years, slow progress can cause you to lose momentum.

Maintaining Energy and Motivation

The suggestions for building motivation discussed in Chapter 2 (pages 18-22) can help keep the congregation engaged and enthusiastic throughout your Green Sanctuary work. Of course, not everyone will participate in every activity, but the goal is to get nearly everyone in your congregation involved in some way.

Some may approach this work as if it is simply another task to get done. A vision that narrow can make it difficult to stay interested and engaged. Others may approach this work as an urgent mission to save the world, but a view that expansive is likely to be overwhelming. As you implement your action plan, try to balance both perspectives. A task orientation keeps you organized and gives you milestones to celebrate along the way; a sense of mission inspires you to stretch beyond your usual comfort level and reach for a higher goal.

Documenting and Reporting Progress



Second Congregational Society Unitarian Universalist in Concord, NH – Congregants working in the Food Pantry Garden they've established on their facility's grounds

As you complete the projects in your action plan, be sure to compile documentation and photographs. You'll need these to accompany your final application for accreditation.

Green Sanctuary candidates are asked to submit a brief report to the Office of Congregational Stewardship Services once a year, on the anniversary of being approved as a candidate. These reports let the staff know what you've accomplished, whether you're on track with your time line, and whether you need any assistance. You will receive a message about three weeks before the report is due.

Meeting Challenges

With the groundwork you have laid with your assessment and program planning, you may expect implementation of your Green Sanctuary program to be a smooth road. But inevitably, challenges and roadblocks will appear that need to be resolved. The Green Sanctuary program is a learning time for everyone.

If you run into problems, don't hesitate to consult with the Green Sanctuary program manager. As a candidate, you have access to program support for your team, including telephone consultation on specific issues. Check the Additional Resources section of this manual (page 116-118) for contact information and other helpful resources.

“Along the way, as we treat nature as model and mento, and not as a nuisance to be evaded or manipulated, we will certainly acquire much more reverence for life than we seem to be showing right now.”

--Environmentalist Amory Lovins

Celebrating Successes

Remember, one of the best ways to maintain energy and enthusiasm during your Green Sanctuary journey is to celebrate your accomplishments along the way. Each project completed is a milestone that deserves recognition and celebration.

When you have completed all the projects in your action plan, a special celebration is in order! After that, the next step is to prepare for accreditation. The following chapter will guide you through that process.

CHAPTER 6

ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

Your congregation has been working hard for many months to complete all of the challenging steps of the journey to becoming a Green Sanctuary. The journey is almost finished—it's time to apply for accreditation.

Preparing to Apply

If you asked individuals to fill out a survey as part of your environmental assessment, consider repeating the survey after you have completed your action plan projects. Comparing the “before” and “after” responses will allow you to track changes in awareness, action, and long-term commitments among these individuals. Share a summary of the survey responses with the congregation so that everyone can see how the Green Sanctuary program has made a difference. This is also a good time for a final report on what the congregation has accomplished during the course of the program.

Before you can apply for accreditation, the congregation must vote to do so. The wording of the motion or resolution is up to you and can be as simple or as elaborate as you like. Ideally, however, it will go beyond simply affirming the desire to apply. Aim for an explicit commitment to live by your Green Sanctuary values—one that expresses your willingness to continue making environmentally appropriate choices in all your actions and decisions. One congregation crafted a covenant for their vote, giving added weight to their commitment. An adaptation of their covenant is included as Appendix G.

Applying for Accreditation

The application for Green Sanctuary accreditation is available at the Green Sanctuary section of the UUA website. You can download either a PDF or Microsoft Word file and fill it out electronically. You'll find that some sections are similar to the application for candidacy, while others are new.

- **Congregation Information.** As before, this section asks for basic contact information.
- **Congregation Profile.** Update the information from your candidacy application as needed.
- **Congregational Vote.** Provide documentation of your congregation's vote, such as annual meeting minutes. Be sure to include the specific statement the congregation voted on.
- **Completion of Action Plan.** This section is similar, but not identical, to the “Action Plan” section of the candidacy application. Revise the project descriptions to reflect the actions that were actually taken, and update the timelines as needed. In addition, describe the specific outcomes that resulted from each project. Be sure each project is clearly explained, since the review team may or may not be the same group that reviewed your candidacy application.
- **Accomplishment of Program Goals.** The five goals of the Green Sanctuary program are listed on the application form and on page 10 of this manual. Write one to three paragraphs for each goal, describing the degree to which your congregation has achieved it.

- **Program Evaluation.** Finally, the application asks you to evaluate the effect the Green Sanctuary program has had on your congregation. For more details on how to complete this evaluation, see the next section.

Evaluating Your Program

The program evaluation section of your application helps the UUA Office of Congregational Stewardship Services determine whether the design of the Green Sanctuary program is effective in meeting the program goals. It also can help you gauge your success and suggest new directions for living out your commitments after you receive accreditation.

To complete the evaluation, write one to three detailed paragraphs in answer to each of the following questions:

- What do you believe has been the most important benefit your congregation has gained as result of your participation in the Green Sanctuary program?
- What has been the most difficult or challenging aspect of the program for your congregation to achieve?
- Have you been able to discern positive changes in your congregation's culture as a result of the activities you accomplished? If so, what are they?
- What are your intentions/aspirations for continuing to live out your Green Sanctuary commitments?
- What ongoing role do you expect your congregation will take in the wider community relative to environmental issues? How do you feel recognition as a Green Sanctuary affects your position in the community?

Submitting the Application

When you have completed all the sections of the application, e-mail the electronic file to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org. If you cannot e-mail the application, contact the program manager for instructions. The program manager is also available to give information and advice for preparing your application, should you need it.

Receiving Recognition

Once you submit your accreditation application, it will be forwarded to a Green Sanctuary review team. After the review meeting, if the application is in order, the program manager will draft a letter officially recognizing your congregation as a Green Sanctuary.

Congratulations! After months of planning, implementing, and documenting your projects, you have earned the official Green Sanctuary designation. This is a joyful achievement, so take the opportunity to celebrate and to show appreciation for everyone who participated. (See page 22 for celebration ideas.)

Newly accredited Green Sanctuary congregations are recognized at a General Assembly plenary session each year. You will receive a certificate suitable for framing and display. You may also want to add the Green Sanctuary logo—a chalice with a leaf for a flame—to your congregation's website. This is a good time to send a press release to local media outlets so that you can receive recognition in your own community as well.

Living as an Accredited Green Sanctuary

The final phase of your congregation's journey, living as an accredited Green Sanctuary, is really the beginning. You know you wouldn't run a marathon or complete the Tour de France and then go back to being a couch potato. And you certainly wouldn't spend a couple of years working hard to become a Green Sanctuary, only to go back to business as usual once you are accredited.

Throughout your Green Sanctuary candidate process, your goal has been to develop and integrate an Earth consciousness into your individual and congregational lives. You've stretched your thinking, increased your awareness, and pushed yourselves to make better decisions. You've taken conscious action to reduce or mitigate environmental damage and strengthen your connections with the Earth.

Having achieved accreditation, you are all set to take your Earth ministry to the next level. But how do you maintain the momentum and continue thriving? What about the long haul? Where do you go from here?

In this ongoing phase of the Green Sanctuary process, you will continue to learn more about specific environmental issues and how they affect human and nonhuman life on this planet. Some of your individual and collective responses will evolve into appropriate new

habits in your daily lives. For issues that come up less frequently (like replacing an appliance or negotiating a new contract for janitorial services), you'll know what questions to build into the decision-making process so that you can make environmentally sound choices. And for those really big questions about your role as a faith community in response to environmental justice issues, the discussions and debate will range much broader and deeper when considering the social and economic implications: Who is impacted? What is our responsibility? How can we make a difference through our actions, right here and right now?

All of these decision processes, from small and immediate to vast and far-reaching, will look different now that you are a Green Sanctuary. The contents of the debate and the emphasis on various decision elements will be based on a more complete and integrated understanding of the issues and consequences than before.

This journey will not be completed within our lifetime. It is our job to imagine a sustainable future and initiate some processes to get us there; it is for future generations to continue clarifying the vision of Earth Community and working to make it a reality.



UU Fellowship of Falmouth in MA – UUFF President David Jewett points to solar panels installed on their facility

So the answer to the question “Where do we go from here?” is “Continue on.” You will continue to work in the areas of worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living, further integrating your Green Sanctuary efforts into your congregational life and reaching out farther into the community and the world. You may want to work more deeply on a few issues, or you may decide to branch out and explore new areas. You will nurture the relationships that you’ve already invested in, and you may move into new communities, connecting with strangers who will quickly become friends and allies as they partner with you in creating Earth Community.

Reporting Annually

To keep your Green Sanctuary status up to date, you are asked to submit an annual report summarizing your accomplishments for the year. This report is due by the anniversary date of your accreditation each year and may be e-mailed to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org. In your annual report, be sure to:

- **Update contact information.** Provide any new contact information for your congregation and/or your Green Sanctuary team.
- **Report on goals and accomplishments.** Provide a brief description of how you have furthered the Green Sanctuary program goals (page 10).
- **Summarize ongoing and emerging issues and challenges.** Briefly describe specific environmental issues that are emerging in your congregation or community, to suggest where the UUA might plan to focus the Green Sanctuary program in the future. Indicate any problems or challenges you have encountered in maintaining your Green Sanctuary commitments.

Your report will be added to those of the other Green Sanctuary congregations to detail the ongoing Earth ministry of Unitarian Universalists. From this report, the Office of Congregational Stewardship Services will select specific projects and accomplishments to highlight on the UUA website during the coming year.

Green Sanctuary Action Plan

Healthy Planet • Peace • Community



Becoming Re-accredited

Congregations that have already earned Green Sanctuary accreditation can be recognized for continuing their work to restore Earth and renew Spirit through the Green Sanctuary re-accreditation process. Congregations can begin the process four or more years after having earned initial Green Sanctuary accreditation. The re-accreditation process may take as little as three months or as long as two years to complete, depending on each congregation's unique situation.

The re-accreditation process has eight steps:

1. **Assess your current Green Sanctuary program.** Look back on your activities since becoming accredited. How you have continued to meet each of the Green Sanctuary program goals? How has your congregation lived your Green Sanctuary commitment? Take a look at the relevant sections of the re-accreditation application (see step 3) and begin drafting your answers to these questions.
2. **Create a re-accreditation action plan.** Based on what you found in your assessment, choose projects that build on your successes and/or fill gaps in your current program. Include a minimum of five projects: two in the area of sustainable living, and one each from the other three focus areas (worship and celebration, religious education, and environmental justice). Action plan items may be new projects, or they may be past projects that have been significantly expanded. With the approval of a Green Sanctuary review team, the action plan can include ongoing, previously approved environmental justice projects.

3. **Apply for re-accreditation candidacy.** The application is available on the UUA website in Microsoft Word and PDF formats. It includes sections for contact information, congregation profile, accomplishment of program goals, an evaluation of the effect that Green Sanctuary accreditation has had on your congregation, and your action plan. Submit your application by e-mail to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org.
4. **Receive feedback from a Green Sanctuary review team.** These teams meet via conference call once a month and review three to four applications at each meeting. After the review meeting, if the application is in order, the program manager for Congregational Stewardship Services will draft a letter approving your application and providing feedback on your action plan.
5. **Revise your action plan.** Based on the feedback you receive, as well as changing circumstances, make appropriate modifications to your action plan. If you have any questions, contact the Office of Congregational Stewardship Services.
6. **Complete your action plan.** Have fun carrying out your projects, and remember to celebrate your accomplishments along the way.
7. **Apply for re-accreditation.** Update your application, revising the project descriptions to reflect the actions that were actually taken and the specific outcomes of each project. Submit your application by e-mail to uua_greensanctuary@uua.org. A Green Sanctuary review team will review your application. After the review meeting, the program manager for Congregational Stewardship Services will draft a letter officially recognizing your congregation as a re-accredited Green Sanctuary.
8. **Celebrate.** Hold a congregation-wide celebration for achieving re-accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.

Continuing Your Commitment

Over time, your Earth consciousness will be fully integrated into congregational life. It will influence all decisions, whether or not Green Sanctuary activists are present for the conversation. Program leaders may move on to provide leadership to other aspects of congregational life, and they will bring their Earth wisdom and experience with them into these new arenas. Soon you may look around you on Sunday morning, or at some special event, and realize how much has changed since you began this journey. In that moment, you likely will feel joy for your role in that change, as well as hope, because you know it is possible to create the future of your dreams.

Through the Green Sanctuary program, Unitarian Universalist congregations model Earth ministry, encouraging and facilitating our congregants to live in ways that are consistent with these values. We continue our collective commitment to envision and work toward a future in which ecological values are the guiding principles for all our relationships. Our congregations can be like gardens where the seeds of a just and sustainable future are planted and nurtured.

May our gardens continue to blossom, helping to create a greener faith community and world!

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE GREEN SANCTUARY CHARTERS

The following samples are from actual congregations that have been accepted as Green Sanctuary candidates. Minor changes have been made for consistency, clarity, or to reflect current Green Sanctuary guidelines. Names of individuals have been omitted to preserve privacy.

Sample 1: Green Sanctuary Committee Charter

*Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor
Bangor, Maine
Candidate on October 8, 2008*

On Oct. 7, 2007, the Council of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor approved a Green Sanctuary Committee in order to further affirm and promote “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” In keeping with the goals of the Green Sanctuary program, the committee aims to:

- Build awareness of societal environmental issues.
- Generate commitment for personal lifestyle changes.
- Motivate members to community action on environmental issues.
- Build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.
- Build awareness of and rectify environmental injustices.

Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee represent many areas of this Society’s life, including Worship, Religious Education, Social Justice, Building and Grounds, and Membership/Fellowship.

This committee will conduct an environmental audit and create an action plan consisting of activities in the areas of worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living. These activities will involve all members of the Society.

It is our intention to seek accreditation as a Green Sanctuary and then to continue our work in eco-spirituality, environmental issues, and sustainable living through the ongoing efforts of the UUSB’s Green Sanctuary Committee.

Sample 2: Environmental Action Council Charter

*Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis
Corvallis, Oregon
Candidate on April 8, 2009*

Purpose and Mode of Operation

The Environmental Action Council of the UUFC is established for the purpose of increasing the role of UUFC in preservation and stewardship of the Earth. The areas of action include, but are not limited to, activities that insure:

- Sustainability of the Earth's resources.
- Public awareness of threats to environmental health and stability and actions that can be taken to ameliorate those threats.
- The protection of biodiversity and ecological services.
- The connection of spirituality and environmental action.
- Environmental justice around the world.

We will accomplish these goals through development, promotion, and implementation of actions to be carried out by the UUFC as a community or by any one or more of its members. Our work will include the following tactics:

- Education of ourselves and others on these issues.
- Improvements in our lifestyles and habits as individuals and as a fellowship.
- Outreach to the neighborhood, the community, and the region.
- Building coalitions.

The work of the Environmental Action Council is carried out in the spirit of honor and respect for the Earth as our one and only home, not only for the human species, but for all living beings.

Vision

We envision a world in which the way we conduct our lives is determined to a large extent by our respect and love for the Earth and our natural environment. In such a world, our highest priorities are not individual gains, but sustenance of this Earth, maintenance of the health of its inhabitants, elimination of war and other destructive actions of humans, development of peaceful and sustainable living conditions for all human societies, and preservation of the Earth and natural environment for future generations.

Sample 3: Green Sanctuary Committee Charter

*Kittitas Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Ellensburg, Washington
Candidate on July 13, 2008*

Mission

The mission of the Green Sanctuary Committee is to help build a connection between spiritual practice, sustainability, and environmental consciousness in our congregation.

Goals

1. To provide programs for both the Congregation and the wider community that will help integrate the UU Seventh Principle into our lives, both practically and spiritually.
2. To guide the Congregation's effort to seek accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.

Objectives

1. Build awareness of societal environmental issues among our members specifically and the community in general.
2. Generate commitment for personal lifestyle changes.
3. Motivate our members to community action on environmental issues.
4. Build a connection between spiritual practice, sustainability, and environmental consciousness.
5. Build awareness of and rectify environmental injustices.

Committee Structure

The Green Sanctuary Committee will serve as a standing committee. The chair is appointed by the board and recruits committee members as needed. The committee will network with all aspects of congregational life, including worship and celebration, religious exploration, social justice, building and grounds, communications, social activities, fundraising and money management, and membership, with a view to integrating sustainable living in our entire congregational life.

Sample 4: Green Sanctuary Committee Resolutions

*May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society
Syracuse, New York
Candidate on January 14, 2009*

(1) At the June 2006 Annual Meeting for May Memorial, the following resolution to form the Green Sanctuary Committee was passed:

“May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society shall hereby create a Green Sanctuary Committee. The Committee shall be a standing committee with a chairperson approved by the Board and shall be composed of representatives of the congregation, including representatives of all major committees, if possible.

“The purpose of the Green Sanctuary Committee shall be to facilitate the process of MMUUS becoming and maintaining Green Sanctuary status as outlined in the most current recommendations and requirements of the program. The Committee, with the concurrence of the board, shall bring the Application for Accreditation as a Green Sanctuary to the Congregation for an affirmative vote when the required Action Plan and activities are complete. The Action Plan shall be approved by the Program Council and the Board. If the Green Sanctuary Status is granted, the Committee shall continue the recommended and related activities with a periodically revised Action Plan, as approved by the Program Council and the Board.”

(2) In accordance with the resolution above, the Program Council approved the Action Plan on November 20, 2008.

(3) Also in accordance with the resolution, on December 16, 2008, the following resolution was passed by the Board of Trustees:

“Be It Resolved that the MMUUS Board of Trustees affirms the Green Sanctuary Committee’s process in developing the twelve-task Action Plan as a working document and approves the submission of the plan to the UUA as part of its application for candidacy as a Green Sanctuary congregation.”

Sample 5: Green Sanctuary Committee Charter

*First Parish of Watertown
Watertown, Massachusetts
Candidate on January 21, 2009*

Chartering Group: Charter approved by the Parish Committee of the First Parish of Watertown, December 10, 2008.

Green Sanctuary Committee to be voted on as Standing Committee at the Annual Meeting, April 26, 2009.

Committee Chair: [Name]

We, the members of the Green Sanctuary Committee of the First Parish of Watertown, covenant with one another and with the larger congregation to commit to personal and community action to confront environmental degradation, and especially global warming, with an active faith that results in plans and programs that call upon each and every member and friend of the congregation to orient their individual lifestyles, resources,

and consequent community behaviors toward building a more environmentally friendly world.

As a result of this covenant to be and become more Earth-friendly, we commit as a congregation to:

- Personal lifestyle changes.
- Congregational services and programs to increase awareness of environmental issues and resulting consumption reduction, including education programs, worship life, purchasing choices, and behavioral patterns.
- An active presence in the wider community to participate in programs and plans that facilitate greater Earth justice and sustainable living.

These programs and plans commit us to become a certified Unitarian Universalist Green Sanctuary.

Membership: Any member or friend of the congregation may become a Committee member.

Governance: The Committee shall have a Chair (or Co-chairs), and no fewer than four members. It will meet on a regular basis. The Committee will have an annual budget approved at the Annual Meeting of the Church, and it shall report on its activities on a regular basis, but at least annually in the church report. Each action item will have a project leader, who may or may not be a member of the Committee. The Green Sanctuary Committee shall have liaisons to the Worship, Religious Education, Building and Grounds, and Fellowship Committees. A secretary shall take minutes at each meeting, and these shall be shared with the Parish Committee.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CONGREGATION PROFILES

The following samples are from actual congregations that have been accepted as Green Sanctuary candidates. Minor changes have been made for consistency, clarity, or to reflect current Green Sanctuary guidelines. Names of individuals have been omitted to preserve privacy.

Sample 1: Congregation Profile

*Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito
Solana Beach, California
Candidate on January 14, 2009*

Our Fellowship had its beginnings on a dark and stormy night in February 1959. That night, 47 members of the First Unitarian Church of San Diego, who lived in the northern part of San Diego county, signed the register to become the founding members of the Unitarian Fellowship of San Dieguito, [which became] “Unitarian Universalist” in the mid-1970s when the two denominations merged.

Early members met in rented quarters for several years until they could afford to develop the nearly seven-acre hillside campus donated by generous members. By 1964, volunteers had completed the outdoor amphitheater, with terraced seating on wooden benches on top of brick, where most of the Sunday services take place. Original classrooms and a building that now houses the kitchen and nursery are still in use.

Our mostly temperate weather allows use of the outdoor core area for coffee hour, luncheons, and other congregational events. Informal trails from this space and from the upper classrooms lead to the highest part of the site, which is not landscaped and provides a great place to show children and adults what coastal Southern California looked like to the Kumeyaay native people long before we arrived.

A map of our site is included with this application. The Treetops, Footprints, and Pinecones classrooms are rented by the Sandy Hill Nursery, which uses them during the week. In the 1990s an expanded building program led to the creation of Founders’ Hall, the library, new restrooms, a spacious office, and ramp accessibility to the amphitheater. The map does not convey elevation. The climb from the main parking lot to the Treetops classroom is approximately 50 feet.

Some areas of the campus are not shown on the map or are not marked. South of the amphitheater is a pathway that leads to a classroom we rent from the neighboring Montessori school. The pathway is part of the campus and goes by a rustic meditation area and, just before it turns toward the school, past Compost Grove. East of the library is an area known as Diversity Grove, which provides a shady, quiet place to sit on a bench and breathe in the pine-scented air. West of Founder’s Hall is the site of a Memorial Wall currently under construction.

Our site is home to a rare ecosystem called southern maritime chaparral; only 15% of this type of habitat remains in the world due to modern development. It provides critical habitat to endangered species of birds and plants. Changes to the campus that involve removing plants must be approved by the California Coastal Commission.

The greatest challenge we face in maintaining our site is lack of water. Average rainfall in our area is calculated at 10 inches, but the reality is that we either have a wet year with upwards of 15 inches of rain or a dry year with about 5 inches of rain. The founding members envisioned and experienced a congregation of volunteers who would water plants as needed. Current members are supplementing this system with automatic irrigation.

These days, we are a congregation of 215 members. As we approach our 50th anniversary year, we are recognizing our obligation to maintain and improve this beautiful site in an environmentally sensitive manner. The Green Sanctuary committee at UUFSU became active in January 2006, and by carrying out our charter, we are gradually assisting the congregation in taking action in accordance with the Seventh UU Principle.

Sample 2: Congregation Profile

*BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Warrington, Pennsylvania
Candidate on November 12, 2008*

BuxMont was founded in 1961, and for several decades the Fellowship focused on growing its physical space and evolving its leadership. From 1988 to 2000, BuxMont transitioned to having staff: a full-time minister, half-time RE director, and accompanist, in addition to a part-time administrator. Music direction was done on a volunteer basis. Its current concept of shared ministry evolved to include staff in partnership with the Fellowship. Membership doubled, a second Sunday service was added, and a capital campaign helped finance building of the current sanctuary.

BuxMont's new sanctuary opened in 2000, and the second service was dropped. As part of the ministerial search in 2001, a vision process resulted in ten themes and new governance structures. Over the next few years, there was an increasing awareness that BuxMont is transitioning to something new. In 2004, we received a Chalice Lighters grant to pay a quarter-time music director.

BuxMont is now a midsize congregation of about 205 with weekly attendance of about 140 and operates by a programmatic style with more formal leadership and committee structure. BuxMont is located 25 miles north of Philadelphia in a predominantly white area with above-average annual household income.

In spring 2007, our Fellowship approved vision and mission statements.

Our vision:

The BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will be a diverse, welcoming, and caring spiritual community that fosters the spiritual growth of adults, children, and youth. We will be well known in the community as a beacon for Unitarian Universalist values, including social justice, environmental stewardship, and service to others. We will be a vibrant, growing congregation with sufficient resources to provide high quality personnel, programs, and facilities that enable us to achieve our mission.

It is our mission to:

- Live, teach, and promote Unitarian Universalism and our liberal religious values.
- Respect and care for one another, supporting the spiritual growth of each individual and providing a safe, tolerant, and welcoming spiritual haven.
- Provide a liberal religious education for children, youth, and adults that will enrich our lives and the spiritual life of the broader community.
- Match our actions to our values inside and outside our fellowship, becoming a fulcrum for environmental, spiritual, and social change in the community.

Sample 3: Profile of the Congregation

*First Parish of Watertown
Watertown, Massachusetts
Candidate on January 21, 2009*

The First Parish of Watertown, gathered in 1630 by Puritan immigrants from England, is one of the oldest congregations in America. It became Unitarian during the ministry (1819-1842) of Convers Francis, the moderator of the Transcendental Club. The Civil War brought industrialization and a U.S. weapons arsenal to Watertown, which helped the community become home to large numbers of immigrants from Europe. This pattern of industrial development and immigration continued throughout the First World War, creating an urban community with an ethnically diverse and notably strong Armenian population. The congregation declined sharply in the middle decades of the 20th century. The seventh building was torn down as a result of a dwindling congregation, which moved to a remodeled parish hall in 1975. This became the eighth meeting-house. Since then the congregation has grown and had two capital fund drives. The first, in 1996, resulted in the construction of an elevator, an additional meeting room, and complete accessibility. The second capital fund drive occurred in 2003 and allowed the sanctuary to be remodeled, structural problems to be corrected, and the roof to be replaced. This lovely, accessible space is well used by both members and large numbers of community groups, ranging from camera clubs, Scouts, and twelve-step groups to folk dancers, piano teachers, folk concerts, and choral groups.

The congregation is a small (approx. 125 members) but active community that is known for its caring support for its members. It is a humanistic, friendly, and informal group, with many members who are driving forces about town-on the school committee, the boards of cultural centers, and library trustees. In recent years the church has grown considerably, from being quite small with a church school of eight to a current registered

enrollment of 60. There is also a Youth Group. The members are good, enthusiastic singers, and there are a number of fine musicians and an excellent music program, which includes a children's choir, a youth choir, and an adult choir. Our congregation is composed of people in many different family situations and is quite diverse economically. Programs offered throughout the year include many social events, of which the Service Auction and Dinner and the Annual Dinner and Talent Show are the most prominent. There are frequent adult classes, movies, and other events, such as our Newcomer Breakfasts. The congregation has social action projects, including monthly charitable collections, volunteer programs with food banks and pantries, monthly donation boxes for local social service groups, and benefit concerts. The trustees of the church have recently voted to commit the entire endowment to socially responsible investing. We are a UUA Welcoming Congregation, inviting full participation of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons. We are currently working to become a certified Green Sanctuary. We publish a monthly newsletter, the Arbella, and maintain an active website: www.fpwatertown.org.

Watertown is an industrial, working-class community of 34,000 people which has been experiencing a change in the past 5-10 years as property values have soared as a result of proximity to Boston. The percentage of people who own their homes has increased from slightly less than 50% to approximately 80%, due to the condo conversion of many multifamily houses and to new developments. The number of elderly is large, and while the number of families with school-aged children has increased, Watertown has a small school system for the size of the town. Approximately 35 languages are spoken by the 650 students at the high school. The community has little open space, but does have a number of neighborhood playgrounds. The Charles River runs through Watertown, and the construction of a DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) walkway and bike path along the river has been one of the factors contributing to Watertown's recent growth. The community is working to preserve its character and identity while also changing to accommodate new residents and economic realities. The congregation of the First Parish of Watertown exists at the nexus of this, carrying so much of the history of the town and having members who are deeply integrated into community institutions, and yet also being home to people who are new to Watertown and its complex diversity.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

The following samples are from actual congregations that have been accepted as Green Sanctuary candidates. Minor changes have been made for consistency, clarity, or to reflect current Green Sanctuary guidelines. Names of individuals have been omitted to preserve privacy.

Sample 1: Environmental Assessment

*Birmingham Unitarian Church
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Candidate on May 6, 2009*

We conducted the Environmental Assessment in two phases. We performed an environmental audit of the church, concentrating on the people, programs, and practices that determine how the organization functions; then we called in an expert to assess the building's energy performance. These investigations were intended to establish a baseline of current practice/performance against which we could measure future improvements.

Prior to the interviews, subjects were contacted and informed of the purpose of the assessment. Interviews were conducted as a series of conversations about the current state of our church specific to the area in question, considering the awareness of environmental issues, the existence of policies relating to these issues, and specific application of these policies as practices. Discussions were wide-ranging, encouraging participants to consider what changes had already been made and how improvements might be accomplished.

Each interviewee was then asked to provide a self-assessment of their awareness, policies, and practices for their specific area of responsibility, expressed as a numerical score. In some cases, this score was a composite of scores from a series of questions that made up the framework of the interview.

The environmental audit was done by a subcommittee of the Green Sanctuary Committee, referred to as the Audit Task Group. They interviewed staff and committee members responsible for each of the four areas. Following is a summary of our findings.

Worship and Celebration: Participants generally rated themselves as low on awareness of the connection between environmental issues and the choices made in selecting sermon topics, music, and artwork, and in designing and using the aesthetic environment of the church. Nonetheless, it was found that, although formal policies did not exist, in practice, environmental themes were reasonably well represented in worship services, music, and art. The need to establish some measure of intentionality would seem to be a minimum goal, together with regularly scheduled events highlighting our commitment to Seventh Principle values.

Religious Education: Awareness among the RE staff was high, as was their assessment of the program's inclusion of Seventh Principle issues. The RE staff is in the process of creating a new curriculum, and environmental themes will be included as a regular part of the rotation. Work still needs to be done to generate written policies regarding classroom use of materials, recycling, snacks, and so on, as well as incorporating "green" priorities into teacher training.

Environmental Justice: The Social Justice Committee members were very aware of environmental issues as seen through the lens of social issue activism. While BUC does not have a specific policy regarding environmental justice, in practice many of our programs do address these issues. For instance, we support a local coalition of churches (MOSES) which advocates for improved mass transit serving low-income neighborhoods, among other things; we sell and serve fair trade coffee after Sunday services; and we participate in South Oakland Shelter, providing wintertime temporary housing for the homeless. All of these initiatives address some aspect of environmental justice. The Endowment Committee does not currently use a "green" screen for investment decisions, as its goal is to insure long-term growth and security. It is hoped that BUC could include environmental justice as a criteria for investing at some time in the future.

Sustainable Living: This is the area that we found had the highest levels of awareness and practice. For instance, natural lawn care, with no use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers, has been in place for many years; rainwater runoff from roofs and pavement is directed to an on-site pond/wetland area; our Capek Woods was certified as a Natural Wildlife Area by the National Wildlife Federation; we have been using china service and stainless flatware for social events; we use recycled content paper in the office and recycle much of our waste; and we have replaced furnaces as needed with 92% efficient units. These are just a few of the many examples of actions taken that have reduced our impact on the natural environment. At the same time, there remains much to be done. The building was designed to maximize the views to the natural world, but the extensive use of glass make the space difficult to heat or to cool. Funds have not been available to upgrade the building to take advantage of improved materials and technologies, for example, replacing the plate glass with insulated glass panels.

In general, we found that most of our members were aware of the issues and that in many areas, environmentally sensitive policies were practiced, but that few formal programs had been established. There was a widespread desire to improve our performance, and a great deal of enthusiasm for attaining Green Sanctuary certification.

Energy Audit: An energy audit was arranged by WARM Training of Detroit, a not-for-profit energy education organization. This was provided as a benefit of our church's membership in Michigan Interfaith Power & Light. An approved residential and commercial energy auditor inspected all six interconnected buildings and the grounds and calculated the total annual energy costs and potential annual savings to be had from implementing the recommended measures. WARM Training provided a prioritized list of energy-saving recommendations covering all aspects of the buildings.

Sample 2: Environmental Assessment

*First Parish in Lexington
Lexington, Massachusetts
Candidate on September 10, 2008*

An initial “walk-about” audit was conducted by the Green Sanctuary Committee founders in 2006, followed by a formal audit conducted by Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light. Committee members have also consulted with church staff and other volunteers to compile the following information.

1. SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Electricity and Heating

Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light noted several areas of concern, particularly the inefficiencies of using one large furnace. At the moment we have two heating zones, but we should have multiple zones. Lastly, the audit suggested the old and inefficient wiring throughout the church should be replaced.

The church will need to soon replace our furnace; members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee are researching the purchase of a more fuel-efficient unit. Substituting two smaller furnaces for the original will also allow for potential reductions in energy usage by customizing heating to specific areas, according to scheduled use.

In winter 2007, volunteers constructed and installed storm windows in our main social hall to reduce energy leakage during the cold months.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Convert all light bulbs to energy-efficient CFLs or LEDs. Reduce drafting and leakage of sanctuary windows.

Water

First Parish’s water is provided by the town of Lexington, and our tap water is considered to be of a safe and high quality for drinking. Our water consumption is relatively modest, being limited to kitchen and rest-rooms.

Our most recent toilet installation was a low-flow model; there are older toilets which are still functioning well. When the time comes to replace them, they will also be low-flow units.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Install flow restrictors on faucets.

Transportation

The majority of churchgoers drive to First Parish. There is no public transportation alternative on Sundays. There is a concerted effort to give rides to those who are unable to drive. A limited number of churchgoers walk, bike, or carpool. Our children’s Sunday school “Going Green” class did promote a “Bike to Church” Sunday once, in spring 2007.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Encourage biking by installing bike racks on site.

Compliance with Local Recycling Procedures

We are in full compliance with weekly recycling pickup in our town. Recycling baskets in our sanctuary, halls, classrooms, and offices collect paper; bins for glass, aluminum, plastics, and cardboard are located in our kitchen area. Signs and other reminders encouraging recycling are found throughout the church; orders of service include a “Recycle” reminder.

We do not currently compost kitchen waste.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Consider the feasibility of composting food scraps.

Policies for Use of Nondisposable Materials

Members of the Smaller Footprints Project, followed by the Green Sanctuary Committee, have raised awareness of the values of using nondisposable materials and issued a strong suggestion/request to do so at First Parish. The most visible example is in encouraging the use of our reusable mugs, china, etc., for social hours and for our monthly potluck lunches. Initially an area of hot debate (when does the energy to power up the dishwasher outweigh the inherent energy in producing paper cups and plates?), a majority of church-wide food-related events are using nondisposables.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Consider purchasing reusable, dishwasher-safe drinking cups appropriate for cold drinks, for both children and adults to use, and reduce our use of paper cups. Propose formal policy.

Policies Governing Purchasing

Although we do not have a formal policy, our church administrator and property manager are on the front line and exercise sound judgment with regard to purchasing office and other supplies of minimal environmental impact (i.e., recycled paper, toilet papers/paper towels of recycled content, nontoxic cleaning supplies). We have used mostly environmentally friendly cleaning supplies for several years.

Reducing resources, waste, and costs is a prime concern in the office administration: for instance, electronic distribution of our biweekly newsletter has reduced costs by one-third.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Board or council-mandated purchasing guidelines.

Policies Governing Investments

First Parish has no formal policy pertaining to its investments. Our endowment fund is invested in several well-known index and mutual funds, with no screening for environmental or other concerns. The Board of Trustees, when approached for this assessment, indicated an interest in learning more about socially responsible investing and examining our holdings.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Exploration of socially responsible investing with trustees.

Landscaping Policies

First Parish has a limited amount of landscaped areas surrounding the church building. We do, however, have a beautiful, peaceful Memorial Garden of native species plantings. A dedicated group of volunteers tends to the garden, and despite having no formal policy, engages in sound, pesticide-free gardening practices. Garden waste is not composted on-site, but carted away. Watering during times of need is currently by sprinklers.

Our rear parking lot borders a wetlands area, partly owned by First Parish and abutting land owned by a local grocery chain. The area has been neglected.

First Parish is fortunate to also own a separate lot, two doors away, which is mainly a grassy lawn surrounded by trees. The front portion of the lot faces the street; the rear part of the lot, which also has a small shed, is sunny and has been thought to be an ideal vegetable garden site. Regular mowing is provided by an outside firm.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Set up formal landscaping guidelines. Replace sprinklers with soaker hoses or drip irrigation; consider using rain barrels at the rear of the church for watering needs. Establish compost area on church property. Clean up, rejuvenate, or otherwise support the habitat of this wetland area. Expand plantings and use of spare lot. Consider a vegetable garden.

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***Children and Youth***

Emphasis on the Seventh Principle is strong throughout all levels of the religious education program. Most recently:

- In spring 2007, the primary cluster (about 10-12 children) participated in a five-session “Going Green” class, focusing on environmental awareness and related activities. They also sponsored a “Bike to Church or Share a Ride” morning, and planted trees in a nearby neighborhood.
- In winter 2006, the Junior High Youth Group undertook a CFL light bulb sale as its social action project within the church community, selling nearly \$1,000 worth of light bulbs to churchgoers during social hours.
- In winter 2007 and 2008, the Senior High Youth Group traveled to New Orleans with advisors and parents to volunteer for one week in cleanup and reconstruction efforts to aid those whose houses were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The youth raised funds for their expenses by hosting “Raging Cajun” fundraising dinners, ongoing soup sales, and a “Second Collection.”

Possible Areas for Improvement: We are doing well in this area and shall continue to integrate Seventh Principle themes and activities into the year’s programs.

Adults

In the past two years, our adult programs have included two sessions of “Voluntary Simplicity,” based on the Northwest Earth Institute curriculum. An outgrowth of the first class was “Simply Swap,” set up weekly in the 2006 and 2007 Lexington Farmer’s Market. The second class of Voluntary Simplicity consisted of nonmembers of First Parish and continues to meet as a Simplicity Circle.

The Green Sanctuary committee sponsored a Low Carbon Diet support group meeting. A handful of members attended to learn about the LCD program and book, and planned to meet together on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the group did not thrive. There does, however, continue to be interest in both the Low Carbon Diet and the team or group idea. We plan to try again.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Reach out to members and friends who have skills in areas related to science, sustainable living, and advocacy and suggest they offer an adult program. Some examples include our landscape designers and gardeners, our beekeeper, our “scientist types,” and our cooks and caterer.

3. WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

For years, First Parish has held an annual Green Sanctuary service near Earth Day in April. In 2007, Rev. Bill Clark offered “Global Warming”; in 2008, Green Sanctuary Committee members and lay leaders offered “Green for Life.”

Reverence for the Earth and the Seventh Principle are often evident throughout the year in reading selections, hymn and anthem selections, and children’s stories.

First Parish also has monthly alternative worship services, our Friday Night Sundown Services. Each year includes services marking both the winter solstice and summer solstice. We have also had congregants create services and share homilies on themes related to the Seventh Principle.

Possible Areas for Improvement: We are doing well here and shall continue to integrate Seventh Principle themes and activities into the year’s worship practices.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

[Though the congregation indentified the following as “Environmental Justice,” most of the activities listed under this heading actually pertain more to sustainable living. The congregation received further information about environment justice after their application was submitted.]

In fall 2005, the Social Action Committee launched the Smaller Footprints Project. The project was conceived in response to the UUA’s study and subsequent General Assembly 2006 Statement of Conscience on the Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change. Smaller Footprints included a range of activities to educate congregants about global warming and encourage steps to reduce their “carbon footprints.” They included: printing of a booklet and newsletter enclosures to disseminate information about global warming and emission-reducing actions; the Better Lights plan, distributing free compact fluorescent light bulbs to churchgoers, an introduction to CFLs for many; the Smaller Footprints Conservation Demonstration Project, with teams of families vying to reduce their home energy consumption by the highest level; the previously mentioned adult programs series of Voluntary Simplicity; a highly successful (and now annual) Holiday SWAP event, launched to encourage reuse of no-longer-wanted material goods; and securing a comprehensive audit of the church facilities from Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light.

Since that initial year, many of these events and activities have continued or evolved and have become a part of the fabric of church life. Additional events and activities have risen from the enthusiasm generated

by the Green Sanctuary program. The following listing is provided to illustrate our recent activities and accomplishments.

- The “Green Corner” has returned to the church newsletter; column topics in the past two years have included carbon offsets, reducing junk mail, supporting local agriculture, the Lexington Challenge (town-wide Low Carbon Diet program), idling, consumption, gift and holiday alternatives, and communications about resources ranging from books to websites and lectures. The column has also been the Green Sanctuary Committee’s major communications vehicle for publicizing the work and needs of the committee.
- A physical “Green Corner” display area is set up on selected Sundays in Parish Hall, where churchgoers can find timely information, browse through books and our Green Sanctuary Resource Manual, and support initiatives ranging from stopping junk mail to sales of string bags, biodegradable “bioplastic” bags, and copies of Low Carbon Diet workbooks.
- The Holiday SWAP table has continued every December for two weeks; in 2007, a Kid’s Winterwear Hand-Me-Downs table was added, with remainders going to charity.
- The SWAP table expanded to the Lexington Farmer’s Market during the summers of 2006 and 2007. Market shoppers were invited to contribute and take items, mostly cookbooks. This was also a high-visibility and public venue for distributing information about Earth-friendly practices and drew interested town residents to a second Voluntary Simplicity course.
- Our parking lot at the rear of the church has become a town-recognized “Idle-Free Zone,” as indicated by our signage. This entailed appearing before the Lexington Historical Commission for permission to post the signs.
- Community Food Drive: Our congregation conducts an annual food drive to benefit the food pantries of two communities. In spring 2008, biodegradable, reusable plastic grocery-type bags were distributed for collecting and transporting the food items. The bags were then passed on to pantry recipients.
- A member of our committee has also participated in the Interfaith Committee of Lexington’s Global Warming Action Coalition. Our Social Action Committee funded the purchase and distribution of ten Green Sanctuary Manuals to other houses of worship in Lexington.
- A “Second Collection” for the benefit of the Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition raised \$560 in February 2007.
- We have continued to encourage congregants to support one another in sustainable living; we have launched efforts to create Low Carbon Diet Support Groups, with mild success.
- In spring 2007, the Green Sanctuary Committee sponsored a potluck dinner focusing on organic and local foods.

Events open to the community have included:

- Showing of *An Inconvenient Truth* and discussion, October 2006.
- Evening lecture, “Converging Storms: Peak Oil, Climate Change, and the Fate of Industrial Civilization” by Dick Lawrence, co-founder and board member of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas, October 2007.

Possible Areas for Improvement: Consider possibilities for social action projects in the community and area specific to global warming concerns.

3. Environmental Assessment

*Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento
Sacramento, California*

Candidate on July 27, 2008; Accredited on June 10, 2009

The information for the UUSS Green Sanctuary environmental assessment was compiled by some of the members of the Green Sanctuary Task Force and Property Management Committee, our business manager, Religious Education staff, the chair of the Religious Education Committee, and an energy engineer from our neighboring Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis. Except where otherwise noted, the assessment generally describes UUSS activities between July 1, 2005, and January 2008. Following is a summary of the environmental assessment.

Worship and Celebration

The UUSS ministers and worship committee deeply understand that we are all children of the Earth and exist in total interconnectedness. Because of this understanding, our Sunday services regularly include song, prayer, meditation, and sermons to express and investigate the intertwining of humans, all other living beings, and Earth.

In order to help bring people together and have an alternative to traditional communion, we occasionally use Norbert Capek's 1923 Flower Communion ceremony. We also use drama and music to help us experience our eco-kinship. For instance, in August 2007, the play *Mother Earth vs. World's People-Perhaps the Most Important Trial in the History of Civilization* was performed for our Sunday service. Another Sunday service in 2007 featured an acoustic guitarist, singer, and composer of music who celebrates our connections with each other and with nature.

To help the whole congregation focus on our impact on the planet, in 2007 the UUSS Ministry for Earth held an Earth Day fair with activities related to recycling, energy conservation, vegetarian diet, planting trees, animals and agriculture, food choices and global warming, water, and solar ovens.

An additional way that we emphasize our bond with Earth and its cycles is to each year celebrate the solstices with the adaptation of an ancient ceremony and a potluck. At times a labyrinth has been rented for the ceremony and used for a walking meditation.

Personal Assessments of UUSS Members and Friends

During December 2007 and January 2008 we conducted an online survey for our congregation members and friends to review their own individual practices and behaviors which use natural resources and/or impact our environment. We felt that taking the survey might help each of us raise our level of awareness and sometimes motivate us to action we might not otherwise take. Seventy-nine people participated in the survey.

The survey gave us reasons to celebrate. Nine out of ten survey participants do a lot of recycling-metal cans, glass food containers, plastics, newspapers, mail and other paper, and cardboard. Over half say they will try harder to purchase recycled paper products, and almost that many will try harder to use reusable towels, rags, wipes, and napkins. Sixty-five percent have replaced their incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent light, and another 26% say they will try harder to do this. Three out of four don't use air conditioning or have set their thermostats for 75 degrees or higher. Regarding our food choices, over 80% said they have reduced their consumption of meat and poultry or will try harder to do so. Over 90% said they usually buy locally grown food and organic food or they will try harder to do so.

The survey also said we want more information on many of the ways we can reduce our ecological footprint, such as solar energy, composting, reducing or eliminating outdoor watering, planting native plants which require less water, on-demand water heaters, purchasing biodegradable and nontoxic cleaning products, and avoiding endangered species of seafood.

Transportation seemed to be a difficult area to reduce our energy usage. Over half said that it was not practical for them to use public transportation or carpool to work. On the positive side, over 80% said at replacement time they either will or will try to substitute a higher mileage vehicle and consider hybrid or biodiesel.

Religious Education

In the area of adult enrichment, programs have been offered in Solar Cooking and Personal Energy Conservation. In October 2007, we hosted an author and geography professor who spoke to the congregation about the latest scientific consensus on global climate change. In November 2007, ten people in the congregation participated in the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) discussion course "Voluntary Simplicity." In January 2008, another ten held a second NWEI course, "Global Warming: Changing CO2urse."

Other intergenerational activities have included the educational displays and activities on small changes individuals can make to help lower the impact on global climate change, including information about carbon footprint, solar cooking, shopping and eating for sustainability, 10 Tree Challenge, and making a wind-powered pinwheel (April 22, 2007); showing and discussion of An Inconvenient Truth (April 29, 2007); showing and discussion of Who Killed the Electric Car? (May 27, 2007); and a "water tasting" comparing various kinds of bottled, filtered, and tap water and providing information on the environmental cost of bottled water (June 3, 2007).

An effort is made to include environmental awareness as an implicit as well as explicit part of our religious education curriculum at all times. Children typically include recycling and care for the environment as part of the classroom covenants that each class creates at the beginning of each year. Efforts are made to use recycled and reused materials for craft activities and to have students recycle their classroom papers and other materials.

The following were specific lessons devoted to environmental concerns during the time frame on which this assessment focuses.

- *Summer 2005-Roy G. Biv*: Seventh Principle I (read The Lorax, discussion, made key chains to sell as a rainforest fundraiser) and Seventh Principle II (read Birds Build Nests, discussion, made birds' nest cookies).

- *2005-2006 Church Year:* During the course of a month, each grade level explored the web of interdependence and participated in a Garden Day, joining with members of the congregation to work on the USS grounds.
- *Summer 2006-Creation Stories:* During the summer of 2006, thirteen creation stories were studied from cultures around the world. Each of these stories sought to explain the creation of the Earth, its creatures, and natural phenomena. Some contained more explicit conservation messages as well.
- *2006-2007 Church Year:* One of the holidays studied by the 1st-2nd grade class was Tu B'Shvat, the "New Year of the Trees," which is celebrated in Israel by the planting of trees. The preschool and kindergarten class focused approximately one-third of their lessons around the natural world.
- *Summer 2007-Summer of Seuss:* "The Lorax: Respecting the Environment."

Environmental Justice

Four times per year the congregation hosts up to four families that are participating in the Family Promise Sacramento program, which aids homeless families and addresses specific reasons for homelessness. Congregation members serve on the Board of Directors and advisory groups, as well as provide volunteer support for the Family Promise day center. Additionally, once per month two separate crews help to cook and serve a noontime meal for up to 800 persons for Loaves and Fishes. Once per month a group provides the ingredients and prepares a full dinner for 100+ residents at St. John's Shelter for Women and Children.

A limited pilot program has been started to provide families who complete Family Promise with a start-up supply of CFL bulbs, information on proper disposal of the bulbs, and tips on energy conservation. There is some limited continuation of a program to provide water tasting (a comparison of bottled to tap water), an overview of the issues regarding bottled water, and reusable water bottles to participants in the Family Promise program.

USS members and friends help to clean up and maintain a mile of one of our local treasures and natural areas-our American River Parkway. Our congregation uses fair trade coffee.

The congregation or individual members are involved with several organizations that offer potential for education and action on local environmental issues. The USS is a member of California Interfaith Power & Light (CIPL), which provides forums regarding a wide range of environmental topics. Individual members of the congregation are involved in organizations such as the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), a consortium of environmental groups; the Sierra Club; Effie Yeaw Nature Center; and Master Gardeners, and they are anxious to engage the congregation in the programs of these organizations. These congregation members can bring their skills, knowledge, interests, concerns, and opportunities for environmental action and education to the Green Sanctuary program and to others in our church.

There seems to be interest in organizing to be more of a force for action in the community and in the larger world related to sustainable living issues and environmental justice, both for humans and for Earth's other creatures.

Sustainable Living on the UUSS Campus

UUSS uses Waste Management, Inc., to recycle its paper, plastic, metal cans, and glass products. We have two large recycling containers for plastic, cans, and glass located in the mail hall. Paper products such as orders of service, mail, cardboard, and other paper products are recycled. We do not have any specific policies on recycling, but we will look at developing a comprehensive policy in the coming year. The UUSS recycling program is primarily implemented by custodial and office staff. Large recycling containers were recently purchased to assist with collection of bottles and cans. UUSS recycling level of compliance is about 75%. The congregation has begun using reusable plates, glasses, and flatware for some church dinners.

We attempt to purchase nontoxic cleaning supplies when appropriate. Operational supplies such as office products, paper plates and napkins, copy paper, and cleaning products are usually purchased in bulk from Staples or similar stores. UUSS uses large amounts of white and colored paper products for orders of service, Blue Sheet (the weekly newsletter), Unigram (the monthly newsletter), copies for committees, special events, etc. Most of the office paper products are acid free and contain at least 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper. Purchases are generally based on cost savings, products that are easily available in bulk, and on recycled content. We do not have specific policies on purchasing recycled content supplies, nontoxic cleaning products, and material for sustainable resources. However, the majority of our purchases are environmentally friendly, as awareness in the congregation is high on our responsibility to be stewards of our environment.

Landscaping

First of all, here are some cold, hard facts. To get these numbers, our chief “Grasshopper,” with great dedication and time input, measured our grounds, calculated the size of these areas, and made a map of it. Our campus comprises 6.4 acres. About 2.3 acres are “green,” i.e., lawn and trees or natural vegetation.

Analysis of Campus Areas as an Estimated Percentage of Total Grounds		
Item	Percentage of 6.4 Acres	Approx. Sq. Feet
Lawn & tree area	50%	155,000
Parking	25%	77,000
Areas left natural*	10%	31,065
Buildings	5%	14,000
Play Areas	4%	12,426
Paved walks & patio	1.8%	5,000
Driveways & access	1.7%	3,800
Creek	1.5%	4,000
Gardens	1%	2,700
Total campus area	100%	310,650

*This overlaps with lawn and tree area.

Our landscaping is maintained almost exclusively by hardworking church volunteers: 27 “Grasshoppers” who mow, trim, rake, and generally maintain the tree and lawn areas, a volunteer master gardener who installs and maintains Mediterranean and native flowers and shrubs in the planting beds, and four to five “Waterbugs” who water the planting beds.

We have approximately 190 lovely trees growing on our campus, in varying sizes from vigorous young saplings to fully mature giants, such as our grove of venerable old blue oaks. Our forest is beautifully diverse, with 18 species, including five native species that carry on the legacy of California before humans arrived. This large number of trees acts as a natural air conditioner in the summer, with the dense green canopy providing shade from the intense valley sun. Throughout the year the canopy functions as a filter, removing air pollutants before they can get to our lungs.

The eastern perimeter of the campus has a bit of a wild feel that is created by a dense green canopy made up of some of the above tree species and a number of shrub/tree types that have been allowed to grow to a small tree height. These large shrubs include privet, oleander, and cherry laurel.

In addition to the above trees and shrubs, the grounds are graced with at least 50 other types of plants, which provide a rich garden feel as they come into bloom. Over a dozen of these are native species. Native species not only give much pleasure but provide much-needed habitat to our local wildlife. Our forest is great for bird identification (a mixed flock of about 25 robins and as many cedar waxwings decorated our campus on a recent fall Sunday), and sometimes at night you may see raccoons, opossums, etc., out for an evening stroll on our grounds. In addition to being wildlife friendly, most native plant species can live with little supplemental watering and don't require fertilizer.

A small creek that runs in winter and spring encourages various forms of wildlife to use it as habitat. Ducks sometimes use it during this time, and last year our creek was home to a duck family including 15 babies. The site currently supports some wildlife in an urban setting.

Water

Water for the UUSS campus comes from a combination of surface and well water, depending upon the season. The ground water we use comes from a well behind Loehman Plaza. The surface water we use currently comes from Folsom Lake and is treated through another water district before coming to us. Our water supplier also recently installed the infrastructure needed to enable them to supply our water from the American River water intake at Sacramento State College if it is needed in the future. Water is a precious commodity in California, and almost 20% of the electrical energy used in California is used to treat and deliver water.

The following chart shows, by month, water use for the UUSS campus (including kitchen, restrooms, drinking, landscaping, etc.). Units are CCFs: one CCF = 100 cubic meters of water, or 748 gallons.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
July		447	316 452
August		481	370 395
September		329	246 193
October		146	204
November		129	68
December		58	36
January		38	27
February		24	22
March		60	31
April		35	24
May		144	159
June		250	311

Our campus comprises 6.4 acres. About 2.3 acres are “green,” i.e., lawn and trees or natural vegetation. Of this, about 2 acres are irrigated, a small portion automatically, the remainder with moveable hoses and sprinklers. Some of the irrigated acres have been automatically watered, but the mechanisms are no longer working due to systemic breakdowns. Current plans call for repairs and expansion of the present automatic segment. The balance of the green area is not watered, but is mowed seasonally to prevent fire hazards. This includes our grove of blue oak trees, which does not have to be irrigated at all because of their low water demands. A great deal of the water we use is for our landscaping. Planting bed watering is thoughtfully done. The beds are watered once each week with soaker hoses. In 2008 there are plans to cut back irrigation time in some beds to once every 10 to 14 days. Other beds are either hand-watered with a watering wand or get by on lawn irrigation water.

Energy Usage

Attached to this application is the comprehensive energy audit of UUSS campus buildings and recommendations for making the campus energy efficient. An energy engineer from our neighboring Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis generously donated his time and expertise to perform this audit for us.

Sample 4: Environmental Assessment

*First Unitarian Church of Cleveland
Shaker Heights, Ohio
Candidate on March 25, 2009*

The environmental assessment has had four parts. The first was a process in which committee members interviewed the staff and other committees to get a picture of what was already happening in the congregation and to suggest possible actions to make the church more sustainable. Not surprisingly, just asking the questions produced a number of greener practices, which have been documented as the second part. The third part was

an environmental assessment by an outside consultant focusing on energy and building usage. The fourth was a survey of all members of the congregation. The results of each process are summarized in the following pages.

1. Congregational Assessment 2006-07

The assessment produced an overview of current practices, identification of issues that need to be addressed, and about seventy possible actions. The actions were prioritized by the committee to end up with the twelve activities in the Action Plan. The assessment, without the issues and possible actions, is summarized below.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

General

This assessment of First Unitarian Church's environmental practices indicates that there is a strong positive attitude that already exists within the church community to promote green practices, and that many positive steps are already being taken. There was a strong showing of interest at the February 2007 Future Search, and a team worked on recommendations that dovetail with the committee's work on Green Sanctuary candidacy.

Grounds and Parking Lot

We have a traditionally landscaped property with a number of large oak and maple trees. There is a children's playground and a memorial garden at the rear of the property. A row of largely untended shrub trees screens the back of the property.

There is minimal pest and weed control and fertilization (lack of funds more than designed policy). Conventional lawn mowing takes place on a regular schedule.

Transportation

We have a bike rack in the back of the building. We have a convenient Rapid (rail system) stop down the hill from the church. Members on occasion bike to church, and some take the Rapid regularly, but most of the congregation drives to church. We have not had any activities to encourage people to think about the way they get to church.

Food and Kitchen

We have a well-equipped kitchen with adequate serving capability for the congregation.

- Ceramic mugs are used on Sunday morning and washed by the custodians.
- Kitchen policy states that nondisposable dishes and tablecloths are to be used.
- Procedures for recycling are posted throughout the kitchen, and recycling receptacles have been conveniently placed.
- Healthy snacks are required in RE programs as of this year.

Many church dinners and receptions use the regular dishes, but on occasion the planners of an event will use paper and plastic for convenience.

Recycling

Paper

- Abitibi Paper Recycling bins in parking lot. All paper products except corrugated cardboard and telephone books can be recycled in the bin for weekly pickup by Abitibi, for which the church is paid by the ton. Amounts of paper have warranted a second bin.
- Boxes in offices and classrooms collect church paper.

Cans and Bottles

- Recycling center at back of kitchen. Committee members take turns taking the recycling to a drop-off. Bottled water is often used at church functions.
- New recycling bins in RE Wing and Fellowship Hall.

Office Supplies, Paper Supplies, Cleaning Products

There is not currently a coordinated policy to promote the use of environmentally friendly products and procedures, although a “green” approach is often used in specific practices.

- Printing paper is made from recycled material.
- Leftover one-sided fliers are recycled and cut up for use as note paper.
- Orders of service are printed in limited amounts (only 20 copies more than expected attendance). Additional copies of the Church Directory are printed as needed, rather than in an initial large amount.
- Used paper is recycled in parking lot bin.
- Recycling boxes are placed in each classroom. (Conservation is a theme stressed in the RE curriculum.)
- RE office donates used crayons to “Angel Fire,” a recycling program. When 50 pounds are donated, the RE program receives 50 multicolored crayons in return.
- Some products are nontoxic (e.g., permanent markers, dust-free chalk), although selection is based on cost.

Cleaning Supplies and Storage

- Storage closets are being cleaned and old flammable materials removed; two of four now completed.
- All exits have clear passage to outside. (Building recently passed fire safety inspection.)
- Cleaning products and paint are stored in custodian’s locked office. Paint is stored in a metal (fireproof) cabinet.
- Custodian plans to find out about “green” cleaning products, such as those used at the Shaker Lakes Nature Center.

Energy

- Burnt-out incandescent light bulbs are replaced with compact fluorescent lamps; all light bulbs will eventually be fluorescent.
- Classroom lights are not always turned off when not in use.

Investment Policies

The Investment Committee reviews the recommendations of investment advisors. They discourage investments in stocks focused on military, smoking, and alcohol, but don't currently have an environmental screen.

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

- A Sunday morning service this fall featured a singer-songwriter whose sung and spoken message was "Earth Day Every Day."
- Music regularly includes Earth awareness.
- Young Religious Education Earth Day worship service held.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***Adult Religious Education***

- About 20 people attended Northwest Earth Institute "Choices for Sustainable Living" course this fall.
- Adult RE forums regularly include environmental themes, such as "The End of Peak Oil," "Bio-Regionalism," and "Alternative Sources of Energy."
- Northwest Earth Institute "Global Warming" course starting.
- An Inconvenient Truth shown at Friday Flicks.

Young Religious Education

A positive attitude and some specific practices that support sustainability are present. A formal "green" curriculum is not currently in place, but an addition is being considered.

Each class has a recycling box, which students empty weekly into the recycling bin. The students are enthusiastic about this program, though difficulties sometimes arise (e.g., children forget to empty the boxes, boxes are mistaken for trash and thrown out by custodians, the staff coordinator does not always have time to monitor the program). Other conservation projects have also been suggested, but it was felt that it is best to assure this program's success before adding others.

Healthy snacks are recommended. An inconsistency, however, is that disposable rather than recyclable plates and cups are used.

The paper recycling program has been one way to add the topic of conservation into the YRE curriculum. An Earth Day youth worship service has been held. The staff will be doing a curriculum review and considering a social action curriculum that addresses sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

There are not any specific environmental justice programs, though there are opportunities with several ongoing projects and support from the Social Justice Ministries Council for Green Sanctuary activities.

Open Doors After School Program: Students are expected to put discarded papers in the program's recycle bin. Drinking cups are washed and reused. Plastic bottles and cans are recycled. A unit on sustainable living is being considered. Students and staff are encouraged to use both sides of the paper when printing from the computer or making copies. Concerned volunteers are dedicated to raising consciousness of students, other volunteers, and staff regarding conservation of resources.

2. Accomplishments Since Starting Environmental Assessment

As a result of the environmental assessment, the following initiatives took place between the spring of 2006 and the spring of 2008.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

1. Started taking recyclables to recycling center.
2. Created coordinated recycling center; now recycle CFLs, thermometers, batteries, cell phones, ink and toner cartridges, pop tabs, eyeglasses.
3. Installed recycling bins throughout building.
4. Created recycling center for hazardous items.
5. Continued Abitibi paper recycling, added a second bin.
6. Started collection of mercury thermometers.
7. Sold compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and gave info about disposal.
8. Continued replacement of incandescent lights with CFLs.
9. Built compost bins.
10. Started composting kitchen waste.
11. Recommended solution to sanctuary roof that includes better insulation.
12. Installed more efficient boiler.
13. Started buying organic, fair trade coffee.
14. Bought local food for Michael Dowd workshop.
15. Visited the UU Fellowship of Wayne County to tour LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building.
16. Future Search process indicated broad interests in greening the church; task group created.
17. Held feedback session on Green Sanctuary action plan serving local-produce soup.
18. Conducted congregational survey on sustainable home practices.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Started vegetable garden for class use.
2. Sponsored Michael Dowd workshop with other UU churches.
3. Held three adult forums on sustainability topics; two more planned for '09.
4. Held four Northwest Earth Institute courses.
5. Started Sustainable Living Covenant Group.
6. Provided "green tips" regularly in newsletter and church bulletin.
7. The kindergarten class is using a new curriculum focusing on living in harmony with the Earth.

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

1. Hosted environmental folk singer for service and concert.
2. Held intergenerational Earth Day service in April 2008 using the play Mother Earth vs. the Earth's People.
3. "Stewardship of the Earth" was theme of 1/25/09 worship service, with sermon "The Seventh Generation" by Rev. George Buchanan.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1. Conversations about gardening and farmers' markets.
2. Planning to show Van Jones's Ware lecture, with homemade pizza and discussion about green jobs.

3. Energy Audit

We contracted with a representative of the Renaissance Group to do an energy audit of the building. He produced a detailed document with a number of general recommendations and some specific to our building. Between the time that he started and produced the report, the congregation purchased a new boiler (December 2007) that has already significantly reduced the use of natural gas. The following recommendations resulting from the energy audit:

- Implement building-wide lighting replacements and retrofits. All T-12 lamps and ballast should be changed to T-5 or T-8 lamps and high-efficiency electronic ballasts. All other fixtures should be changed to compact fluorescents.
- Increase attic insulation to at least R-40.
- Repair or replace weather stripping building-wide.
- Seal all building penetrations on the exterior of the building and between floors from basement to the attic with caulk or expanding foam.
- Retrofit one test room with insulation over masonry walls to determine approach, impact, and building-wide viability.

- Investigate formal heating system commissioning for system optimization and efficiency.
- Investigate further segmenting of heating system and controls to allow for conditioning of spaces on an as-needed basis and with automated or scheduled controls.
- Investigate regional on-demand hot water for bathrooms and the kitchen.
- Develop and implement a formal carpooling plan for the congregation.
- Multiply impact by spreading conservation commitment to the entire congregation.
- Join with other communities and organizations to share resources and what is learned.
- Consider demonstration-scale renewable energy installations at your facility.

4. Congregational Survey

The committee created a survey to create a baseline for individual practices of the congregation, using other congregations' surveys as a starting point. The survey was administered on SurveyMonkey.com, with hard copies for those who wanted them.

There were 55 responses, relatively reflective of the demographics of the congregation. Those surveyed have strongly positive practices in food choices, being a green consumer, disposing of toxic wastes, and recycling practices. Areas of greatest interest in learning are energy use at home-solar energy and home energy auditing. There is interest in researching businesses and products to become more responsible consumers. In the area of fresh water, 75% indicate not having a number of conservation practices-dual-flushing toilets, drip watering, Energy Star washers, on-demand water heaters.

Sample 5: Environmental Assessment

*Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills
Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts
Candidate on April 29, 2009*

The Environmental Assessment was conducted by the UUSWH in two phases. The Personal Assessment, which measured the environmental practices and attitudes of congregation members, was carried out over the period November 1, 2007-October 31, 2008. The Congregational Assessment, which documented the environmental impact of our society's buildings and grounds and their use, as well as church programs and activities related to environmental issues, used the church year 2006-07 as the baseline.

A. Personal Assessment of Environmental Impact

HOUSEHOLD CARBON FOOTPRINT

In order to establish what the baseline behaviors of the congregation members were in relation to the environment, in March 2008 the Green Sanctuary Committee conducted a survey of the "carbon footprint" of households in the congregation last spring. Our basic tool was the Personal CO₂ Calculator that appears on

the Empowerment Institute website (www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd) and is used in conjunction with the Low Carbon Diet program.

In the first wave of this survey, we had 31 households submit their “footprints.” If we take 180 as the number of households in the congregation, which is the standard used by the stewardship drive, we had a 17% response rate. For those 31 households, we have an average carbon footprint of 67,000 pounds of CO₂ released into the atmosphere annually per household. This compares with the U.S. average of 54,000 pounds, the German household average of 27,700 pounds, and the Swedish average of 14,600 pounds. Our UUSWH average thus puts us at Level 2 out of 10, where 10 is the best. So far, we have had a high of 173,000 and a low of 33,000 pounds. Air travel and long commutes were reported the most painful expenditures, perhaps because they are not within the control of those surveyed.

1-2-3 EARTH STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

October 2008 was our Green Sanctuary month this church year, in which the activities of our committee were featured. At the Green Spotlight Service on October 26, 63 members of the congregation filled out their 1-2-3 Earth Stewardship pledges. The pledge sheets asked members to detail what they were already doing and to commit to three new actions over the next six months. The range of actions being taken by members was very impressive, with 80% of the respondents checking that they had already taken seven actions of the 31 listed. “Reduce the thermostat setting at home” was the most popular action, with 89% saying they have already taken this step.

As far as commitments to act in the next six months, our top ten pledges were:

1. Reduce driving speed by 2 mph.
2. Check tire pressure.
3. Replace three or more light bulbs with compact fluorescents.
4. Use a canvas bag for groceries.
5. Seal cracks and improve home insulation.
6. Increase air conditioning setting.
7. Make sure all lights and electronics are off when not in use.
8. Reduce the thermostat setting at home.
9. Use “green,” nontoxic cleaning supplies.
10. Use locally grown food.

Members made these pledges with the promise to act on them over the six months to follow.

STANDING COMMITTEE LOW CARBON DIET TRAINING

Finally, to show leadership and commitment to the Green Sanctuary cause, the Green Sanctuary Committee co-chair conducted training sessions with the twelve members of the Standing Committee, the Society’s governing body. This consisted of three intensive sessions in which members retook the Personal CO₂ Calcu-

lator survey, determined action plans for their households, and compared notes and built camaraderie as they pursued these plans. The three sessions were completed in early January 2009.

B. Congregational Assessment

The second major part of the Environmental Assessment was of our activity within the life of the Society. For this we took as our baseline the 2006-2007 church year.

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Within the area of worship, this year featured a Sunday service in April, “The Case of Mother Earth vs. the World’s People,” which portrayed the injustices done to the Earth and how Mother Earth (played by our minister, Rev. Phyllis O’Connell) brought successful suit against polluters.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our Society has a full calendar of adult education sponsored by the UULC (Unitarian Universalist Learning Community). During the 2006-2007 church year, there were no activities specifically dealing with the environment.

In April 2008, through UUSWH’s Making a Difference program, children who attend our Cooperative Church School learned about recycling, global warming, and conservation. Related social action projects included decorating and selling canvas shopping bags, making bookmarks with Earth-friendly suggestions, and building sculptures out of recyclable items.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

[Though the congregation indentified the following as “Environmental Justice,” most of the activities listed under this heading are not particularly good examples of environmental justice projects. The congregation received further information about environment justice after their application was submitted.]

Our church has a very active Social Justice Outreach Committee (SJOC). The following activities were pursued by the SJOC during the 2006-07 year. At the beginning of the church year, the SJOC developed a calendar to focus the congregation’s attention on a different social justice theme each month. The April focus was designated as “Earth.” Other social justice-related groups at UUSWH (Small Group Ministries, the Making a Difference Team) were encouraged to focus their activities on this theme.

The SJOC and other UUSWH members that the committee recruited hosted the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue, a multi-day walk from Northampton to Boston sponsored by Religious Witness for the Earth. Approximately 30 walkers stayed at UUSWH overnight in late March and were provided with dinner and breakfast prepared by UUSWH members.

As indicated in the Green Sanctuary Leaflet that was printed in March 2008, the idea of encouraging UUSWH to become involved in reducing global warming grew out of a January 21, 2007, meeting of a Global Warming Event Planning Team (GWEPT). Although that team consisted largely of members of a small group ministry, other individuals were invited to join the team. The event that they planned and promoted was the

showing on March 30, 2007, of the HBO documentary film *Too Hot Not to Handle* and a related talk by a Harvard professor. This event was advertised to the Wellesley community and was attended by over 100 church and community members. It included an action fair, with opportunities for attendees to gather information on how to counteract global warming and to calculate their “carbon footprint.”

In April, the SJOC allocated charitable funds to UUSWH’s budget to address environmental concerns and donated \$1,000 to the UU Ministry for Earth.

Climate change/environmental concerns became a monthly agenda item for SJOC meetings in January 2007. Beginning in late February, related programming was mentioned in every issue of the UUSWH newsletter. Consideration of working to obtain Green Sanctuary status for the congregation was initiated by an SJOC member in April. At that time, establishing a recycling program was also proposed (see information below on UUSWH’s recycling efforts).

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT

We believe that the approval of the Green Sanctuary Committee charter by the Social Justice Outreach Committee on 12/18/07 and by the Standing Committee of the church on 1/7/08, together with the members’ participation in our Household CO2 survey and our 1-2-3 Earth Stewardship campaign, give ample evidence of the commitment of our Society to the principles of the Green Sanctuary movement.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

A. Recycling

For most of the 2006-07 church year, recycling was done haphazardly or not at all. Although we had bins in the UUSWH kitchen dedicated to recycling, materials were not sorted and were often contaminated with food residue. Our sexton would occasionally take a load to the Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility; his focus on regular buildings and grounds maintenance precluded regular trips. There was not any effort made to recycle materials from Rice House during 2006-07. The sexton had set up special plastic holders in wastebaskets a few years back to collect mixed paper, but these were not used properly to segregate recyclable materials, so the effort was dropped.

In conjunction with the Social Justice Outreach Committee’s consideration of pursuing Green Sanctuary status, members began discussing establishing a formal recycling program for UUSWH at the April committee meeting. A member of the committee initiated this discussion after learning that the Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility was offering new bins for \$5 apiece and asked the committee to consider piloting a recycling program. A few members agreed to volunteer for a team that would make weekly “dump runs.”

During May 2007, bins were purchased to replace the old, dirty bins in the UUSWH kitchen and to establish a recycling center in Rice House. Working with the UUSWH office administrator, who supervises our sexton, bins were labeled for collection of paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, cans, and returnables. A preliminary volunteer schedule was established at the May SJOC meeting. The group agreed that it was appropriate to investigate the cost of hiring a recycling service to avoid relying on volunteers long-term. In fall 2007, we hired a local recycling firm. We purchased two 96-gallon containers and placed these bins outside, one for paper products, one for commingled materials (glass, plastic, and metal). We now use this system for sorting

our recyclables. It has worked well, and the recycling company has certified to us that they take materials to be recycled rather than used for landfill.

B. Landscaping Practices

During the 2007-08 year, most of the lawn was removed. Most of the lawn was replaced with shrubs and plantings using native varieties that need little water. The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides was discontinued. During the spring of 2008, the remaining lawn was reseeded with clover and other low-maintenance seeds, which reduced the need to water and mow the area.

C. Participation in Fair Trade, Etc.

The Society owes most of its activity in this area to [name] for sponsoring and promoting Equal Exchange coffee and chocolates, Uganda baskets, rug sale of Tibetan rugs, and the like, all of which serve to promote indigenous industries.

D. Water Resources

In its two buildings, the Society used 179,520 gallons of water during the 2006-07 church year. The Society gets its water from the town of Wellesley, the sources of which are groundwater wells in a few locations around town. Summer demand is higher, and this supply is then augmented by Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), the source of which is the Quabbin Reservoir. Wastewater is conveyed through the Wellesley sewer system to the MWRA, where it is treated at the Deer Island wastewater treatment facility and discharged through a tunnel several miles offshore. The level of treatment is in accordance with EPA regulations. Storm water from the church parking lot is conveyed to the Wellesley drainage system and then to a nearby stream. This water receives no treatment other than removal of some of the sand that is trapped in the catch basin sumps. UUSWH should minimize the discharge of pollutants to the storm drain system, including oil, soaps, debris, sand, salt, and the like. To reduce water consumption on church property, we should consider installing reduced-flow toilets.

E. Energy Use and Management

Record of Energy Use, Target Year 2006-07

Electricity throughout Wellesley is supplied by a town-specific municipal light company. Detailed records of electricity and natural gas usage throughout the year are attached to this application.

Professional Energy Audit

As required by the Green Sanctuary Candidacy application process, the Green Sanctuary committee arranged for a professional energy audit of the church, which was performed on February 12, 2008, by a professional auditor, courtesy of the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant. The auditor went through the premises very systematically and gave Green Sanctuary committee members a very illuminating picture of our energy usage. He subsequently documented his findings in his report, which we attach. During a report to the congregation by the Green Sanctuary committee on 4/24/08, we summarized the central recommendations of the report as follows:

Energy conservation measures (ECMs) for immediate implementation

1. Replace all lighting in church and office. This should be given high priority.
2. Install lighting controls (dual-sensing occupancy sensors) in both facilities. This should be given high priority.
3. Install setback programmable thermostats in both facilities. This should be given high priority.
4. In the children’s chapel (in the church), install infrared heat. Make certain these tubes are closed combustion and properly vented.

ECMs to be implemented upon burnout of existing equipment

1. Replace both water heaters (one in each facility) with tankless, on-demand, gas-fired units (KeySpan Energy Delivery incentive available).
2. In the church, replace existing boiler with two full condensing boilers.
3. In the office building, consider replacing boiler and air conditioning unit(s) with ductless, split-system, high-efficiency heat pumps.

Energy conservation opportunities (ECOs) for future consideration

1. Conduct an infrared survey of both facilities to identify heat loss areas. Insulation and air sealing may follow.
2. If the office facility is not renovated, consider replacement of windows and doors.

The auditor’s report contains a discussion of savings that can be gained by UUSWH through implementation of these basic measures, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Recommended Energy Efficiency Measures						
Measure	Annual Energy Savings (kWh)	Annual Gas Savings (therms)	Installed Cost	Annual Cost Savings	Incentive	Simple Payback (years)
Lighting	16,749	0	\$13,565	\$2,010	-	6.7
Lighting Controls	5,104	0	\$1,760	\$613	-	2.9
Setback Programmable Thermostats	0	783	\$1,351	\$1,276	\$175	0.9
Infrared Heat in l Children’s Chapel	0	173	\$9,994	\$283	\$1,000	31.8
On-demand Water Heaters	0	205	\$2,650	\$334	\$600	6.1
Totals	21,853	1,161	\$29,320	\$4,515	\$1,775	6.5

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE ACTION PLANS

The following samples are from actual congregations that have been accepted as Green Sanctuary candidates. Minor changes have been made for consistency, clarity, or to reflect current Green Sanctuary guidelines. Names of individuals have been omitted to preserve privacy.

Sample 1: Action Plan

*Unitarian Universalist Society of Phoenix
Paradise Valley, Arizona
Candidate on August 13, 2008*

1. WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION PROJECTS (2 required)

Project Title: *A Greener Sunday Service-The Worship Part*

Project Description:

Objective: To schedule and implement green Sunday Services, raising awareness and motivating the congregation to sustainable life in all our focus areas.

Plan: Work with Sunday Services Committee in bringing in new guest speakers and designing services around committee members' talents and contributions. We will have a new minister whose help we look forward to enlisting in the services endeavor.

Timeline for Completion: The committee will plan at least two services each calendar year.

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Incorporating Green Sanctuary into Ministerial Functions*

Project Description:

Objective: To establish clear and timely communication with the new minister to make sure UUCP is maximizing green potential through ministry wherever possible.

Plan: Meet with the minister regularly, invite her to Green Sanctuary committee meetings, assign a liaison to the Committee on Ministry, and incorporate any and all suggestions and new information into the above outline.

Timeline for Completion: Start in September 2008.

Lead: Committee Chair (currently [name])

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROJECTS *(2 required, 1 for youth/children and 1 for adults)*

Project Title: *Adult Religious Education Classes*

Project Description:

Objective: To develop a regular curriculum of adult religious education classes on “green” subjects.

Plan: Work with the Adult Religious Education Committee to implement classes and workshops with environmental themes. The Adult Religious Education Committee already generates an annual schedule of six to eight courses that are published at the beginning of every school year. For three years, they have offered a class about eco-spirituality in April to coincide with Earth Day. We will help formalize this as part of the Green Sanctuary program and help publicize it as such, and help build and keep strong enrollment in this annual course. New course offerings will also be researched and developed.

Timeline for Completion: Each church year; discussions for upcoming 2008-09 year have begun.

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Children’s Religious Education Projects*

Project Description:

Objective: To facilitate the opportunity for environmental service for the youth; to organize an activity promoting environmental awareness for the children.

Plan: In connection with the Children’s Ministry Committee, the Green Sanctuary Committee has identified that our children’s RE project will actually consist of two types of events with four different age groups. The YRUU (9th-12th graders) group and the Coming Of Age (7th-8th graders) group will each develop an environmentally friendly service project that they will perform. The Green Sanctuary Committee will meet with each group in the fall for planning purposes and will provide support when the service projects are performed in the spring. The other type of activity will be planned for the younger children in two groups: Pre-K through 2nd graders and 3rd through 6th graders. The children and their families will be invited to go on an environmentally educational field trip on one Saturday during the year. Possible destinations include a permaculture farm, a hydrogen house, or a trail cleanup with the local park service.

Timeline for Completion: One project/event for each age group during each church calendar year.

Lead: [Name]

3. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (2 required, 1 long-term that actively promotes justice for those affected by environmental injustices and creates relationships)

Project Title: *CSA-Community Supported Agriculture*

Project Description:

Objective: To increase UUCP's and our campus schools' support of local agriculture to benefit the environmental community and dietary health.

Plan:

- a.) Visit a CSA distribution site and talk to the coordinator to find out more about how it works and how much work is involved. Study websites and communicate (via e-mail) with the farms' principals. Possibly visit the farm. Crooked Sky seems to be the most viable local CSA produce provider, but we might discover others.
- b.) Publicize, within our membership and schools, our plan to join with a CSA. Publicity data will include prices, sample of share, and possible pickup dates/times.
- c.) We will need a commitment for a minimum of 30 subscriptions to have our own CSA provider.
- d.) Advertise for a coordinator/manager; this person gets paid with a share of produce plus a fairly nominal amount of cash, based on the number of subscriptions in the CSA group.
- e.) It would help to grow our CSA by having a newsletter. Any volunteer can do this, but the coordinator may have motivation, since the pay increases as subscriptions increase.
- f.) Explore alternative approaches to supporting local agriculture, such as hosting a monthly farmers' market.

Timeline for Completion: Research to be started in fall 2008. Remaining timeline and launch to be determined based on results of research.

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: *Environmental Justice Project with Booker T. Washington Head Start Program*

Project Description:

Objective: To assist Booker T. Washington School by performing service projects with an environmental focus.

Plan: UUCP has had a long relationship with the Head Start program at Booker T. Washington School. As one of our environmental justice projects, representatives from the committee and the Head Start staff will identify and develop two projects each church year. The projects will involve an "in kind" donation of service time from members of the congregation. The committee will work to emphasize the ways that the projects can be done in a more environmentally friendly/sustainable way. For example, if the Head Start program needs a room painted, UUCP will supply the labor to paint as well as assist in securing low-VOC paint for the project.

Timeline for Completion: Start discussions with Booker T. Washington staff in fall of 2008. Plan for first project in spring of 2009.

Lead: [Name] with the Social Action Committee

4. SUSTAINABLE LIVING (4 required, 1 that addresses energy conservation)

Project Title: *Incorporating Green Practices into UUCP's Master Landscape Plan*

Project Description:

Objective: To incorporate greener practices in UUCP's landscape master plan, where possible.

Plan: Review the landscape portion of UUCP's master plan to incorporate greener practices where possible. Of particular interest is the approximately 4 acres of natural (undeveloped) land. The enhancement of a currently existing trail within that land, including plant identification, will be considered a priority.

Timeline for Completion:

Review master plan with green considerations-Spring 2009

Implement trail enhancements-Fall 2009

Development of plan and timeline for other green landscaping practices-Spring 2010

Lead: [Name]; parents of Desert View Learning Center (elementary school on church campus)

Project Title: *Information Dissemination*

Project Description:

Objective: To educate the congregation on environmental issues and events.

Plan: Committee members will collectively serve as an information disbursement hub. We will provide monthly e-mail notices of meet-up gatherings and green events. To do this, we will collect information from members, friends, and others regarding local green events, such as monthly alternative energy meet-up meetings, lectures at the Phoenix Science Museum regarding climate change, green trade shows, film series, and the like, as well as practical websites regarding steps to preserve and conserve environmental resources. We will also post links to vetted and useful websites on the UUCP website under the Green Sanctuary Committee.

Timeline for Completion: Establish Green Sanctuary Committee presence on UUCP's website by winter 2008. Have regular e-mail updates operational by summer 2009.

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: Researching Solar Water Heaters and Electricity Panels

Project Description:

Objective: To investigate the feasibility of converting to solar water heaters at our facility.

Plan: The evaluation will at least include:

- a.) Determine the capacity and nature of UUCP's current hot water system, along with its current cost to operate.
- b.) Learn the age and its likely life.
- c.) Confer with solar energy company representatives regarding the feasibility and cost to convert to solar water heater, and any negatives.
- d.) Investigate the availability of grants or solar energy credits that may be available to nonprofits, if any, and/or the possibility of serving as a demonstration project in return for a discount.
- e.) Provide a cost savings analysis for conversion.

Timeline for Completion:

Summer 2009-Summarize results and report to Building and Grounds Committee for consideration as a future building enhancement.

Summer 2010-2011-Repeat this process with respect to solar electricity generation at UUCP, but in addition, confer with Building and Grounds and/or Construction Committee to assess feasibility and code issues with the Town of Paradise Valley. This will almost certainly take longer than two years before a recommendation could be made to Building and Grounds/Construction Committee team.

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: Comprehensive Recycling and Waste Reduction Program

Project Description:

Objective: To recycle as much as possible and reduce the volume of trash from our facility.

Plan: Contact services/providers for pickup of recyclable materials. Learn what materials they take; study cost or gain, if any; write procedures for separating glass, plastic, paper; determine details, such who provides the containers; ask whether the board needs to approve a contract. Investigate the feasibility of recycling aluminum cans to reduce the overall cost of recycling. Determine best place to cash in, for price and convenience. Find/provide a can crusher and containers for collection of cans. Determine best way to get the message out to the UUCP congregation to deposit cans and to bring in cans from home as well. Designate two individuals to be responsible for taking cans to cash-in place. Consult with administration about accounting. Longer-term plans include recycling of fluorescent tubes and CFL bulbs, if practical.

Timeline for Completion: Perform research for timely decisions related to recycling contract annual renewal date in May.

Lead: [Names]

5. ADDITIONAL (2 required; these can relate to the program elements of your choice)

Project Title: *A Greener Sunday Service-The Materials Part*

Project Description:

Objective: To discover ways to make our Sunday service a greener event.

Plan: Examine the Order of Service as the primary vehicle for communicating the service components and the announcements. Look at coffee hour to see if there are greener ways to feed and serve the congregation after service.

Timeline for Completion: To be done during the church year 2008-2009.

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Membership Profiles with Green Focus*

Project Description:

Objective: To help UUCP members get to know each other better, as well as spread tips that people have for living in a greener way.

Plan: Interview new as well as older members of the congregation to learn about them and their households' efforts to be green. Publish interview in monthly congregation newsletter, Horizons. Also, display interviews on the Green Sanctuary bulletin board in the main hallway. This project promotes our ties with the Membership Committee.

Timeline for Completion: Recruit reporters to conduct interviews-begin immediately. Have interviews ready for publication starting with the April issue of Horizons.

Lead: [Name]

Sample 2: Action Plan

*First Unitarian Church of Cleveland
Shaker Heights, Ohio
Candidate on March 25, 2009*

1. WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION PROJECTS (2 required)

Project Title: *Seventh Principle in Worship*

Project Description: Promote continuing mindfulness of the Seventh Principle in our Sunday worship. Establish the Earth Day Service as an annual intergenerational event, with all ages participating. Include sustainability themes regularly in services (e.g., conservation tips in open space at end of order of service, periodic updates on congregational green projects during announcements, periodic donation of Sunday offering to local sustainability programs).

Timeline for Completion: April 2009, ongoing

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Arts and Environmental Stewardship*

Project Description: Plan one or two events a year promoting environmental stewardship, spirituality, and the arts (music, visual arts, dance), including:

- Presentation of music and readings, based on a hymn festival and readings presented by Oberlin College with [Name], scheduled for fall 2009.
- Collaboration with Arts Committee, starting with a nature photography exhibit in spring 2009.
- An annual May Day event starting in 2010.

Timeline for Completion: Fall 2009, 2010, and ongoing

Lead: [Name] and Arts Net Committee

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROJECTS (2 required, 1 for children and 1 for adults)

Project Title: *Environmental Awareness Training*

Project Description: Develop a training component for teachers on infusing an environmental awareness into curriculum, including practices and policies on recycling and materials use.

Timeline for Completion: Started fall 2008, ongoing

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: *Low-Meat Diet*

Project Description: Provide education about health and societal reasons for and ways to move toward low-meat or no-meat diets.

- Include vegetarian recipes in church cookbook.
- Suggest In Defense of Food for book group.
- Offer Menu for the Future course (Northwest Earth Institute).
- Hold canning days.
- Hold vegetarian potlucks.
- Engage congregation in Study/Action Issue, “Ethical Eating.”
- Present adult forums.

Timeline for Completion: Plan in 2009, implement in 2010

Lead: [Name]

3. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE *(2 required, 1 long-term that actively promotes justice for those affected by environmental injustices and creates relationships)*

Project Title: *Interfaith Environmental Justice Work*

Project Description:

- Work with other UU and faith groups to include a spiritual component in the Great Lakes Bioneers-Cleveland, and to encourage attendance to help participants see the connections between environmental and social justice.
- Support InterAct Cleveland in adding environmental justice to its scope.
- Participate in development of Ohio Interfaith Power & Light.
- Partner with others on a workshop for faith groups in Northeastern Ohio to share and learn about initiatives that faith groups are using to engage in environmental stewardship and justice.

Timeline for Completion: 2008-2011

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Urban Food Systems*

Project Description: Raise understanding about urban food systems and impacts on communities by supporting urban farming and markets in the cities of Cleveland and East Cleveland, including hands-on experiences that will help members connect with people impacted by limited food options and learn about issues of food and justice.

- Support the Coit Market by supplying volunteers.
- Help at special events: Spring Fling, Corn.
- Clean and provide maintenance assistance, organize spring cleanup and paint project.
- Partner in putting on a fundraiser to benefit the market.
- Assist with the market newsletter and other publications.
- Explore possibilities for helping find farmers for acreage and/or engaging with City Fresh.
- Provide support for a City Fresh Stop in Buckeye.

Timeline for Completion: Spring-Fall 2009 and 2010

Lead: [Name] (Coit Market), [Name] (City Fresh)

4. SUSTAINABLE LIVING (*4 required, 1 that addresses energy conservation*)

Project Title: *Recycling*

Project Description: Create recycling program and education on reducing waste of all kinds, especially hazardous waste.

- Create recycling center for alkaline batteries, cell phones, CFLs (compact fluorescent lights), printer ink cartridges, thermometers and thermostats, eyeglasses, aluminum cans, and plastic water bottles (throughout building), and for paper (outside Abitibi bins). Summer 2008
- Set up and implement composting program. Spring 2008
- Educate congregation about ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle. 2009-10
- Inform through newsletter and website about best ways of recycling all materials. 2009-10
- Encourage members to advocate for strong recycling programs in their municipalities. 2010

Timeline for Completion: 2008-2010 as indicated

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Green Filter*

Project Description: Work with the staff and board to change the policies so that there is a “green filter” on purchases and construction, meaning that decisions are made with criteria that reflect sustainable practices. Make available educational material and promote the purchasing of recycled content products, environmentally preferable products and services, bio-based products, energy- and water-efficient products, products using renewable energy, and alternatives to hazardous or toxic chemicals.

Timeline for Completion: 2010

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: *Insulation and Caulking*

Project Description: Add insulation and caulking to all outside walls as recommended by energy audit. This can be accomplished by trained volunteers and raising some funds to pay for the materials. Include workshop for home owners on energy audits and insulation.

Timeline for Completion: Workshop March 2009, work in 2010

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: *Sustainable Practices Checklist*

Project Description: Create a sustainable practices event checklist for internal and external events, using best practices for purchases, food service, dishware, recycling, and decorations. Ask that all event planners review it and report changes made as a result of the list.

Timeline for Completion: 2009

Lead: [Name]

5. ADDITIONAL *(2 required, these can relate to the program elements of your choice)*

Project Title: *Wild Garden*

Project Description: Assist in the expansion and maintenance of the vegetable garden that is used by religious education classes. Engage across generations by:

- Helping to construct a fence around the garden.
- Assisting in finding a solution to the deer problem in the garden.

- Assisting religious education teachers with garden classes.
- Helping support the Stepping Stone fundraiser.
- Exploring the possibility of presenting a cold frame workshop that would be open to the congregation.
- Engaging more of the congregation in helping with aspects of the garden.
- Exploring curriculum connections for use of the garden.

Timeline for Completion: started 2008, ongoing

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Environmentally Responsible Investments*

Project Description: Work with the Investment Committee to consider ways to add an environmentally responsible filter to the investment policies. Explore strategies to ensure at least 10% of church investments are directed to maximizing environmental and social good and secondly to maximizing financial return. Provide opportunities to educate members of the congregation about various socially responsible investing strategies and filters, with encouragement to realign their own investments toward more socially responsible investments.

Timeline for Completion: 2010

Lead: [Name], chair, Investment Committee

Project Title: *Northwest Earth Institute Courses*

Project Description: Conduct at least one Northwest Earth Institute course or equivalent annually.

- Hold Menu for the Future, winter 2009
- Plan next course, possibly Healthy Children, Healthy Planet, 2010

Timeline for Completion: Winter 2009, annually

Lead: [Name]

Sample 3: Action Plan

*May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society
Syracuse, New York
Candidate on January 14, 2009*

1. WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION PROJECTS (2 required)

Project Title: *Dedicated Worship Service*

Project Description: The congregation, through the Minister, Worship Committee, and/or Green Sanctuary Committee, will plan and conduct the Earth Sunday services in April 2009 and 2010. Annually, we will celebrate the year's "green" accomplishments and inspire and educate the congregation, including the youth, toward ongoing efforts toward sustainability.

Timeline for Completion: May 2010

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Quarterly Emphasis*

Project Description: The Green Sanctuary Committee, working with the Worship Committee, the Minister, and the Director of Religious Education, will incorporate environmental concerns into a portion of a service in each quarter (January, July, and October only, since April features the Earth Day service) through readings or other elements of the service, using resources such as Honoring Earth Worship.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROJECTS (2 required, 1 for children and 1 for adults)

Project Title: *Youth Education*

Project Description: The Religious Education program will interface with the Green Sanctuary Committee on a regular basis to insure that issues relating to our environment are consistently a part of the children's RE program. The goal will be to maintain a focus on the Seventh Principle through curricula, worship, and stewardship.

During the 2008-2010 school years, this would include:

- a. A focus on environmental issues through spiritual movement.
- b. Using reusable dishes for RE snacks.
- c. Maintaining the Butterfly Garden located on the grounds.
- d. Youth grounds cleaning in the spring of 2009 and 2010.
- e. Exploring the current RE curricula, which focuses on social justice, to also include environmental justice issues.

Specific resources would include using “The Secret Life of Stuff” with older (10+) youth and using appropriate selections from the Northwest Earth Institute discussion course “Menu for the Future” with the teen group.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Using Resources Sustainably*

Project Description: A major barrier to reaching a sustainable life style is the excessive consumerism that permeates our society, consumerism that is viewed as being necessary to keep the economy growing. Education is the first step and the focus of this action. We will begin the educational process using resources such as “The Story of Stuff” (for both adults and youth), DVDs that show the effects of our way of life (for example, the physical and human damage of mountaintop removal), calculators that demonstrate that expanding one’s consumption would require four or five planets, and discussion guides such as Northwest Earth Institute’s discussion materials on “Voluntary Simplicity” and/or “Choices for Sustainable Living.” As a visible demonstration, we will organize several activities, such as an alternative gift fair featuring not only alternative gifts, but services and experiences; testimonials about something not bought; or a public pledge to have a “non-materialist” holiday season.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

3. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE *(2 required, 1 long-term that actively promotes justice for those affected by environmental injustices and creates relationships)*

Project Title: Building Bridges

Project Description:

Part 1: People with low incomes have little access to healthy organic produce, because it isn’t available in the stores in their neighborhoods and they couldn’t afford it if it was. According to the Organic Consumers As-

sociation, low-income families spend 30% of their household income for food, compared to 11% average for all households. One answer is a community garden. There are a number of community gardens in the low-income areas of Syracuse. One of these is the W. Newell Community Garden on the south side of Syracuse. The organizers of that garden are looking for volunteers to make the garden more productive. There is another project not far from there—the Bellevue-Lincoln project—that may also provide opportunities for volunteers. In this action, May Memorial will provide volunteers over the next two growing seasons (2009, 2010) to help the people in these neighborhoods in making their gardens productive and able to provide organic vegetables for the families living there.

Part 2: Working with developing Circles Campaign and Bridges Out of Poverty program, we will start by offering Cornell Cooperative Extension information about no-cost or low-cost steps that clients can take to save money on heat and electricity and also reduce their use of fossil fuel energy. We will explore other options with them regarding additional ways of promoting energy savings. We will explore working with the May Memorial Social Justice Committee on this project, since they have already begun participating in the Bridges Out of Poverty program.

Timeline for Completion: October 2010

Lead: John Allen

Project Title: *Advocacy Efforts Related to Global Warming, Water, Clean Energy, Clean Air, and a Healthy Environment*

Project Description: While the main thrust of our Green Sanctuary actions relate to our own building and grounds, it is equally important to vigorously advocate for changes in local, state, and federal government policies toward a more sustainable future. To do that we will:

- Inform the congregation and respond to Action Alerts from the UUA and its Washington Office for Advocacy, whose mission is to influence public policy decisions made by the U.S. Congress and Administration on issues of concern to the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Inform the congregation and work with Environmental Advocates of New York, a 501(c)(3) organization that is the state's government watchdog, to hold lawmakers and agencies accountable for enacting and enforcing laws that protect our natural resources and safeguard public health. One issue is the Bigger Better Bottle Bill. This bill would amend New York's Environmental Conservation Law 27-1003(1) and the State Finance Law to expand and update the definition of "beverage" in the State Returnable Container Act (the bottle bill) to include noncarbonated drinks other than milk and liquor, and to direct the unclaimed deposit money derived from that program to the Environmental Protection Fund. In conjunction with this effort, MMUUS would no longer serve bottled water, but rather rely on our own excellent tap water.

- Work on environmental and social justice issues with Interfaith Impact of New York State and New York Interfaith Power & Light (of which we are already a member).
- Inform the congregation and work on the coal plant issues in central New York, especially by supporting local town boards in continuing to oppose those who wish to site coal plants in the state. This is a continuation of advocacy that began when the Jamesville coal gasification plant was proposed.
- Maintain contact with elected officials on these issues.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: Geri Aird

4. SUSTAINABLE LIVING (*4 required, 1 that addresses energy conservation*)

Project Title: Green Purchasing and Cleaning Within the Church Building

Project Description: We will address two aspects of our environmental impact—the cleaning practices in the building (floors, windows, furniture, toilets, sinks, counters) and our use of office paper. The purposes of this action are to (1) clean the building and its contents only with nontoxic, environmentally friendly substances, and (2) decrease the impact of our office paper use on the environment by finding ways to decrease paper use and move toward paper that contains more recycled content and is process chlorine free. With respect to cleaning products, we will also share the information obtained about safe cleaning products with the congregation for application to their homes.

Timeline for Completion: October 2009

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Toward a Carbon-Neutral House of Worship: Heating and Electricity Use*

Project Description: The audit of our building shows that we have certain areas where we are inefficiently using electricity and gas. Understanding that some of the major problems relating to the fact that our building is not insulated will be dealt with in the architectural proposals (see next project), the following steps will be initiated under this action:

- Replace the current exit signs with LED exit signs.
- Replace the T-12 fluorescent fixtures with T-8 fixtures.
- Examine outside lighting for possible replacement.
- Complete the replacement of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, where possible.
- Establish a policy that as appliances need to be replaced, they will be replaced with energy-efficient (Energy Star) appliances.

- Take “quick fix” weatherization and energy conservation measures, recognizing that more permanent and substantive issues are being addressed in the architectural proposals.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Toward a Carbon-Neutral House of Worship: Architectural Improvements*

Project Description: We are aiming to become carbon neutral, and the condition that most stands in the way is that our building is uninsulated. The exterior and the interior of the building are the same pieces of wood. Fortunately, we have architects among our congregants and on the Green Sanctuary Committee. Their objective under this action will be to work with the Board of Trustees and the Buildings and Grounds Committee to develop a proposal that will reduce our use of fossil fuels by means of some or all of the following: insulation, skylights, updating of our heating system, use of passive solar, and possibly installation of photovoltaic panels. For a recent one-year period we used 10,445 therms of natural gas and 63,318 kilowatt hours of electricity.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Names]

Project Title: *How We Care for Our Own Piece of the Earth*

Project Description: We will develop a comprehensive policy and a ten-year landscape management plan. Our goals will be:

- (1) Reduce lawn/mowing size by at least 25% in order to (a) save the costs of mowing and trimming, (b) reduce maintenance required of volunteer members, and (c) reduce pollution from fossil fuel emissions.
- (2) Reduce energy usage in the building by planting shade and windbreak trees.
- (3) Use native plants and other elements to acquire and maintain certification by the National Wildlife Federation, Monarch Watch, and others as a “Backyard Habitat Garden.”
- (4) Model/demonstrate habitat gardening for church members, other faith communities, and the general public.

Our focus will be on identifying existing plants and adding native plants, dealing with invasive species, composting indoors and outdoors, and constructing the other elements needed for wildlife, particularly pollinators. For guidance beyond the National Wildlife Federation’s program, we will utilize suggestions from the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED program for existing buildings as they relate to landscape design and maintenance. These include dealing with erosion and management of storm water, which we will address by

working with the Building and Grounds Committee in design and construction of rain garden(s). For further guidance in moving beyond sustainability to regeneration, we will make extensive use of permaculture principles and designs.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

Additional (2 required, these can relate to the program elements of your choice)

Project Title: *Eating for Our Own Health and the Health of the Planet*

Project Description: This was a fortuitous choice as one of our twelve actions, because subsequently the UUA Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) for the next four years was chosen to be “Ethical Eating.” The UUA will be providing other materials in connection with the CSAI. The key elements of this project will be to organize discussion groups in the first half of 2009-using the Northwest Earth Institute discussion course “Menu for the Future”-and to pursue further actions that result from that study over the following year. To further provide education, we will work with event organizers to create a “Local on the Food Chain” potluck dinner and a “Low on the Food Chain” (i.e. vegetarian) potluck congregational event. In the months leading up to the events, we will provide a list of suggested dishes, recipes, sources of local food, posters explaining the benefits of each choice (global warming and other benefits, including social justice), and print materials explaining the benefits. Other suggestions may come from the materials provided by the UUA.

Timeline for Completion: 2009

Lead: [Name]

Project Title: *Reconnect with the Natural World*
(for adults and/or youth and/or intergenerational)

Project Description: Our focus will be on realizing and demonstrating our Seventh Principle. Building on the work done in our landscape management project, we will design and introduce one or more nature study areas in our varied landscape, involving both children and adults in research and creating signage. In our community we have nature centers (Baltimore Woods, Beaver Lake) that provide activities appropriate for youth groups and intergenerational groups. We have parks, such as Green Lakes State Park and Clark Reservation, that provide opportunities to view nature with qualified naturalists. In this action, we will organize annually two events/activities for the congregation to explore our own property; at least one activity in which youth are invited to participate in an activity at one of the nature centers or parks; and at least one activity in which the entire congregation is invited to participate in an activity at one of the nature centers or parks.

Timeline for Completion: 2009-2010

Lead: [Name]

APPENDIX E

PUBLICIZING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

As your congregation becomes more “green,” you will likely have opportunities to publicize your work to the local community. Many Unitarian Universalist congregations have garnered positive media coverage for environmentally friendly building renovations, community fairs, and other significant environmental initiatives. Here’s a list of steps that you can follow to successfully publicize environmental initiatives in your congregation:

1. As soon as possible, conduct an inventory of your congregation’s communications resources. Ask the following questions:
 - a. Who is qualified to serve as a media spokesperson? (Consider members of the governing board or communications committee, as well as leaders of the Green Sanctuary or environmental committee and congregational staff members).
 - b. With whom do we talk to make sure that our website, newsletter, and e-mail lists communicate timely and useful information for the media and for visitors?
 - c. Does the congregation already have a communications committee? Does that committee include the website administrator, a representative of the governing board, a qualified spokesperson, the newsletter editor, and any other communications-related volunteers in the congregation whose help will be needed to communicate with the outside world?
 - d. How do we prepare to welcome visitors and the media? Is our congregation easily accessible (with clear signs, handicapped access, and greeters on hand to answer questions)? What kind of information do we need to communicate so that new people can make it to our events?
 - e. What are the local media outlets (including print, web, radio and television outlets) that cover our area? Who in the congregation might already have contacts at these outlets?
2. Based on the answers to the above questions, assemble a communications committee (if the congregation has not already done so), work with the congregation to prepare to welcome visitors and the media, and start developing a list of media contacts. At this time, collect contact information (name, cell phone, e-mail and home phone) for the congregation’s spokespeople.
3. If possible, select a key event around which to build your publicity efforts. This could be a building rededication (in the case of environmentally friendly renovations), a holiday fair selling “green” products, an Earth Day demonstration, or another event that is open to the public.
4. Prepare a press packet with materials that you can circulate to members of the media via e-mail, postal mail, and your website. Have the press packet ready at least one month in advance of your key event. The packet may include:

- a. A media advisory to be circulated at least seven days prior to the event. The media advisory is a one-page alert that briefly states the “five w’s” (who, what, where, when, and why). Also include the names of your congregational spokespeople, along with their full daytime and evening contact information.
- b. A press release to be circulated two or three days before the event. The press release expands on the media advisory by offering additional quotations and background information. While the media advisory reads like a “Save the Date” notice, the press release reads like a news story and sometimes is reprinted verbatim in media outlets.
- c. A one-page fact sheet about your congregation’s environmental initiatives. Include numbers and facts where possible. These may include the amount by which your congregation has reduced its energy consumption or the amount of money you have spent on building renovations. Be sure to note any “firsts” as well. For example, if you are the first local congregation to install solar panels, mention it!
- d. A one-page history or backgrounder of the congregation.
- e. A one-page fact sheet about the UUA Green Sanctuary program (if your congregation is participating in this program).
- f. High-resolution photos of the congregation and of your environmental initiatives that can be reprinted by the media.

If possible, have all of these materials available as electronic documents, so that you can e-mail them to media outlets.

5. Finalize a list of local media outlets, including radio, television, magazines, blogs, and newspapers. A good rule of thumb is that the more local the media outlet, the more likely they are to cover a story at a congregation in their area.

For each media outlet, identify the names and e-mail addresses of reporters who cover religion, science, building projects, neighborhood news, or other relevant subject areas. If there are no such reporters or you cannot locate their contact information, add the name and e-mail address of the news editor to your contact list instead.

6. Distribute your media advisory at least seven days before your event. E-mail it to your full local media contact list.
7. Two or three days before your event, send a second e-mail to your media contact list, containing the press release, biography of your congregation, fact sheets, and photos.
8. Welcome members of the media and the general public to your congregation on the day of your event (and throughout the year!).

Consider the needs of first-time visitors to the congregation and be ready to meet those needs. For example, you may want to have congregants serve as greeters. Or you may put up additional signs to help visitors find their way into and around your building.

For more suggestions on making your congregation visitor-friendly, see the Mid-America District Staff group’s “Ten Good Ideas: About Getting Your Church Ready for the Fall.”

9. Create two media relations resources files: one for paper documents and the other for electronic documents. Save electronic and paper copies of your media kit materials in these files. Track coverage in the news media following your big event, and save hard copies and electronic copies of any news story covering “green” initiatives in your congregation.

Do not assume that an article published online will always be available; many smaller publications take articles off of their websites after several months or charge a fee to access them.

10. Send reporters who cover your event a thank-you e-mail, and keep in touch with local reporters in the future. Share with them news about your congregation that may be of genuine interest to them.
11. Regularly revisit your media relations resources file and make sure that materials, such as the bio for your congregation, are up to date.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

The following samples are from actual congregations that have been accepted as Green Sanctuary candidates. Minor changes have been made for consistency, clarity, or to reflect current Green Sanctuary guidelines. Names of individuals have been omitted to preserve privacy.

Sample 1: Communications Plan

*Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church
Hayward, California
Candidate on May 27, 2009*

We will use the following strategies to share information about environmental issues and sustainable living with the congregation:

- Communicate via our “Baba’s Green Tips” in the church’s weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter.
- Provide visual information through our Green Sanctuary bulletin board, posted in the library.
- Provide a Green Sanctuary section on our Starr King website (www.starrking.org), where members can read the minutes of our meetings as well as see what is being done and receive monthly green tips.
- Make verbal announcements at services regarding environmental issues that we will need volunteers for, as well as pledge drives for our green causes, such as the Hayward Community Gardens.
- Hold an Earth Fair in April to educate the congregation about the Green Sanctuary program and the recycling system at church. Have how-to booths for household information and composting, and workshops and programs on environmental issues.

We will use the following strategies to collaborate with the other groups, organizations, and committees within and beyond our congregation:

- Attend meetings of other church committees and the Board of Directors to coordinate efforts.
- Keep ministers informed through e-mail, telephone, and personal contact as to what we are doing.
- Utilize committee members’ contacts with outside organizations.
- Communicate with outside organizations through e-mail, phone, and personal contacts.
- Present updates to the board, per the annual schedule of committee updates.

Communications Plan

*First Parish in Lexington
Lexington, Massachusetts
Candidate on September 10, 2008*

To share practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies, we plan to:

- Publish “Green Corner” columns in our biweekly newsletter, *FocalPoint*.
- Staff and keep current our “Green Corner” table and display board during social hours.
- Send messages to our e-mail list, as needed, to publicize events and resources of interest.
- Develop a web page for the Green Sanctuary Committee.

To recruit participation in program actions, we plan to:

- Include course offerings in Adult Programs listings.
- Submit announcements to our newsletter, *FocalPoint*.
- Create and distribute flyers, when appropriate.
- Include timely notices in the announcements section of orders of service.
- Send reminders to our e-mail list, as needed.
- Place informational sign-up sheets at the piano during social hour.
- Engage in conversations and invite participation through personal contacts.
- Seek input from the communications task force for graphic design to tie together print materials with web page visuals.
- Publicize upcoming events via notices in the *Lexington Minuteman*.
- Send press releases of major speakers, events, and accomplishments to local and regional press.

To collaborate with other groups, organizations, and communities within and beyond our congregation, we plan to:

- Publicize and hold regular meetings.
- Hold quarterly meetings with “Green Links” to finalize planning and execution, monitor progress, etc.
- Make available minutes of Green Sanctuary Committee meetings to the board, administration, and congregation.
- Provide regular updates on the status of the action plan through our newsletter, *FocalPoint*, and in visuals at the “Green Corner” table.
- Provide updates through Council participation.
- Develop interfaith “Green Sanctuary” contacts with other Lexington houses of worship, communicating through e-mail, telephone, and personal contacts.

- Communicate often and meet with contacts at Lexington Farmer's Market and any other collaborators.
- Develop Green Sanctuary contacts with other UU congregations in the Massachusetts Bay District, communicating through e-mail, telephone, and personal contacts, time permitting.

Sample 2: Communications Plan

*Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
Madison, Wisconsin
Candidate on April 8, 2009*

Sharing practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies

- Share sustainable living tips and member success stories in the *Prairie Fire* newsletter. Offer to make audio recordings of member success stories for posting on the website's Green Page. If such recordings are made, consider including audio links to them in related stories in the electronic *Prairie Fire*.
- Establish a "Green Resource Center" where pamphlets containing topical information regarding environmental issues and sustainable living strategies are made available. Call attention to this resource center in the *Prairie Fire* newsletter. The article should also mention the Green Links page on the Social Action Committee website.
- If the Department of Natural Resources announces an air quality alert for our county, send recommendations on actions members can take or avoid taking until the alert is passed to the PrairieNews e-mail list as a Green Committee announcement.

Inviting participation in program activities

- Make the Green Sanctuary action plan available for comment from the congregation on the Green Page of the Prairie UU website.
- Provide regular updates to the congregation in the *Prairie Fire* newsletter to track progress on the action plan, announce key initiatives, and ask for input and volunteers.
- Make minutes from the Green Committee meetings available on the website's Green Page, and mention that availability in at least one *Prairie Fire* article.
- Announce at Sunday services, and/or via e-mail in the PrairieNews e-mail list, achievement of key milestones in the accreditation process.
- Wear a big green hat while making announcements on Sunday mornings about actions we are asking members to take.
- Include announcements of Green Committee meetings and special events in the order of service, *Prairie Fire* newsletter, and the calendar on the Prairie UU website.
- Establish a Green Committee bulletin board with information on programs organized by or for the committee, committee meeting dates, and specific areas where volunteers are needed.

- Include information on the Green Sanctuary accreditation process in our annual Earth Day service in April.

Collaborating with other groups within and beyond our congregation

- Present progress reports to the board.
- Advertise specific public events in the Guide section of Isthmus (weekly newspaper).
- Advertise special events to the other UU congregations in the area (Dane and adjacent counties).
- Utilize committee members' contacts with outside environmental organizations.
- Post current opportunities for local environmental activism on the Social Action Committee's calendar on that committee's website and bulletin board. This will include opportunities to submit public comment on key environmental issues when statutory changes are being considered by the state legislature and when rule changes are being proposed by state agencies with environmental regulatory authority.

Sample 3: Communications Plan

*First Parish of Watertown
Watertown, Massachusetts
Candidate on January 21, 2009*

In order to:

- Share practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies,
- Recruit participants in program activities, and
- Collaborate with other groups, organizations, or communities within and beyond the First Parish of Watertown congregation,

The Green Sanctuary Committee plans to announce and publicize events and activities in the following ways:

1. Add a Green Sanctuary section in the *Arbella*, the monthly newsletter sent out to First Parish of Watertown congregants and local community members on the mailing list. In addition to announcements, there will be personal stories of environmental activities.
2. Make announcements during the announcements time in the weekly service.
3. Display environmental literature and pamphlets of Green Sanctuary-sponsored events at the Church Street entrance of the church.
4. E-mail announcements to the First Parish community from the minister or the church office.
5. Provide Green Sanctuary meeting minutes to the Parish Committee.
6. Make announcements in the local newspaper, the *Watertown Tab*, announcing activities for the greater community as appropriate.

7. Staff an event table during select social hour gatherings after Sunday services.
8. Provide a Green Sanctuary link on the First Parish of Watertown website.
9. Attend committee meetings of other church groups within the congregation, such as Religious Education, Building and Grounds, Parish Committee, and the Worship Committee, to coordinate efforts.
10. Utilize committee members' contacts with outside organizations, such as the Town Council, Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety, the School Committee, and the Watertown Faire on the Square Committee.
11. Communicate with other UU congregations through e-mail, telephone, and personal contacts.

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE GREEN SANCTUARY COVENANT

COVENANT OF A GREEN SANCTUARY PROJECT

WE THE UNDERSIGNED,

- Recognizing the fragile and interdependent state of our Earth and all living things;
- Recognizing the need to protect and maintain the quality of our common life-giving natural resources such as water, soil, and air;
- Recognizing the need to join with others to bring forth a sustainable society based on respect for our planet and all its life-giving resources; and
- Recognizing our universal human rights to a clean environment:

DO THEREFORE DECLARE

To one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations, our acceptance of responsibility for preserving and protecting the health, vitality, beauty, and diversity of this planet Earth.

TO THIS END

As members of this congregation and participants in the Green Sanctuary program, we pledge our encouragement to one another in a personal and congregational commitment to living this promise through our Unitarian Universalist Principles, including the Seventh Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” In addition to specific projects and activities, we make the following commitments:

- We incorporate Seventh Principle values and practices into our worship services, celebrations, and religious education programs;
- We live lightly on the Earth and strive to continually improve our environmental impact;
- We support efforts to improve the quality of our watershed; and
- We affirm and promote programs to raise the awareness of human behaviors that affect the health and sustainability of the living Earth.

Additional Resources

Green Sanctuary Program Manager

Robin Nelson
 Program Manager, Congregational Stewardship Services
 Unitarian Universalist Association
 25 Beacon Street
 Boston, MA 02108
 (617) 948-4251
uua_greensanctuary@uua.org

Green Sanctuary E-mail List

<http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/greensanctuary>

Green Sanctuary Resources on UUA Website

www.uua.org (enter “Green Sanctuary” in search box)

Books on Creating a Sustainable Future

Gottlieb, Roger S. *Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet’s Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hawken, Paul. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*. New York: Viking, 2007.

Korten, David C. *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2006.

Appreciative Inquiry Resources

Appreciative Inquiry Commons (Case Western Reserve University) <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>

Cooperrider, David L., and Diana Whitney. *Appreciative Inquiry : A Positive Revolution in Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005.

Cooperrider, David L., Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline M. Stavros. *Essentials of Appreciative Inquiry*. Brunswick, OH: Crown Custom Publishing, 2008.

Northwest Earth Institute Discussion Courses

www.nwei.org/discussion_courses

Interfaith Power and Light

www.theregenerationproject.org

UUA Statements on Environmental Issues

1966 General Resolution: Natural Resources

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14022.shtml

1969 General Resolution: Environment

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14466.shtml

1971 General Resolution: Environment

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/19764.shtml

1977 General Resolution: Energy

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8098.shtml

1977 General Resolution: Problem of Environmental Policy

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/20276.shtml

1981 General Resolution: Alternate Sources and Conservation of Energy

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8100.shtml

1984 General Resolution: Toxic Substances and Hazardous Waste

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/19943.shtml

1989 General Resolution: Protecting the Biosphere

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14474.shtml

1994 General Resolution: Environmental Justice

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14257.shtml

1994 Business Resolution: United Nations and Earth Day Celebrations

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14262.shtml

1996 General Resolution: Population and Development

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14248.shtml

1997 General Resolution: Earth, Air, Water, and Fire

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14239.shtml

2001 Statement of Conscious: Responsible Consumption Is Our Moral Imperative

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14003.shtml

2002 Action of Immediate Witness: Endorse the Earth Charter

www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/13992.shtml

2006 Statement of Conscious: Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change
www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8061.shtml

2006 Action of Immediate Witness: End Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining
www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8062.shtml

2009 Action of Immediate Witness: In Support of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act
www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/144456.shtml



Unitarian Universalist Association

Office of Congregational Stewardship Services

25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

(617) 742-2100

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/greensanctuary/index.shtml>



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