

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Centre County
(UUFCC)

Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation

April 2018



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Table of Contents

Congregation Profile	1
Congregational Vote	2
UU Identity and Spirituality	2
Completion of Action Plan	3
1. Environmental Justice	4
1.1 Food Justice	4
1.2 Guatemala Service Project	5
1.3 Housing & Energy	6
1.4 Landscape and Drinking Water Preservation	6
2. Worship and Celebration	7
2.1 Worship Services	7
2.2 GS Moments	9
2.3 Celebrations	9
3. Education	10
3.1 Religious Education (RE)	10
3.2 Sustainable Film Series	11
3.3 Food Education	12
4. Sustainable Living	15
4.1 Car Footprint Reduction	15
4.2 Recycling and Composting	16
4.3 Physical Plant Sustainability	17
4.4 Grounds Sustainability	18
4.5 Ecojustice	19
Accomplishment of Program Goals	20
Congregational Culture	21
Empowerment & Stewardship	21
Community Action	22

Congregation Profile

We are one of the largest UU fellowships in Pennsylvania with 289 members in 2017.¹ We have an average attendance of 135 adults and 40 children and youths (out of 80) during the reporting period.² We have one lay-led Sunday service every month and 13 lay-lead services during the summer months. Children participate in the service twice-monthly. A lay-led Sunday evening service meets twice-monthly, and a small Penn State University Campus group meets on-campus.

Rev. Mark Hayes, our minister of 15 years, retired in the summer of 2015. Rev. Gabriela Parks began her interim ministry in August 2015. In September 2017, Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel started as our new minister. We hired a Director of Religious Education, Matt Shineman, in 2014. We have other paid positions: office manager, music director, band director, a fiscal manager, and a membership director. All have been very supportive of the Green Sanctuary (GS) application.

The UUFCC sits on 4 acres of land on the edge of a residential area nestled in the Appalachian ridge-valley and rural farmland of central Pennsylvania. The fellowship draws members from the municipality and small surrounding towns; about 67% live nearby in the State College Borough, population over 42,000. Though we have members of diverse ethnic backgrounds, about 94% of members are of European descent. The surrounding area is 82% Caucasian, 10% Asian, 4% African-American and 4% Latinos. Due to expensive student housing and high home prices, lower-income persons working in State College usually live 15-40 miles out-of-town.

Penn State, a university of over 45,000 students, is situated in the borough of State College and spreads into the land of surrounding townships. Our congregation is highly educated. Many members are affluent and have PhDs and Masters degrees. University professors and their families started the UUFCC in the 1950s. Formerly, the congregation was very intellectual, but with more millennials and families with young children, the UUFCC has begun integrating more spiritual elements into its programming. Indicative of this, recently the Service Committee changing their name from Sunday Services to Worship Service Committee.

Our congregation welcomes newcomers. Hospitality committees provide coffee and brunch and greet everyone personally and give newcomers a tour before the service. We have promulgated this particular talent within our Joseph Priestly district meetings and to another local church.

Governance is via two bodies: the Board of Trustees: a president, officers, minister, trustees and property point person, and the Program Council made up of a chair, secretary and

¹ The UUFCC gained 46 new members in 2016 and 2017, but lost an equal amount due to moves out of the area, deaths, etc.

² May 22, 2016 - January 31, 2017.

representatives of 6 areas of UUFCC programs, including communications, community life, religious education, services and music, social action, and youth.

We started our GS efforts in 2003. At that time an energy audit was performed, and our present extended building was built with energy efficiency in mind. We formed the current Green Sanctuary Committee at the beginning of 2015 as part of our standing Social Action Committee. We work cooperatively with other UUFCC committees and with similarly-minded community organizations and religious groups in Centre County. The GS meetings are open to all attendees. We communicate our activities in the monthly UU Connections newsletter, the weekly UU Enews, on the UUFCC website, and via tri-fold posters and tabling at the post-service social hour. Ziggy Coyle and Wendy Snetsinger, members of the Aesthetics Committee, crafted a sizable “tree” poster (see cover page) that symbolizes the breadth and depth of our 12 point approach to achieving GS status and is prominently displayed in the Fellowship Hall.

Congregational Vote

At our 2016 Annual Meeting on May 22, 2016, the congregation voted unanimously to go forward with the accreditation, based on our Action Plan. 75 members attended the meeting.

Excerpt from the meeting notes: “Dorothy Blair and Frans Padt presented work to date and asked for a vote of congregational support to submit an application for UUFCC Green Sanctuary Candidacy. About one quarter of UU churches have Green Sanctuary certification, which derives from the 7th Principle, the respect for the web of life. This is not just recycling, but also standing beside endangered creatures and examining how our habits of consumption affect humans and other creatures. Some examples of existing practices at the UUFCC are the social action trip to Guatemala to build fuel-efficient and less environmentally harmful stoves and the food garden at the Fellowship. To receive certification, we need to complete a major project and to work with existing committees. The group has chosen food justice as an area for a major project. One idea is to have raised-bed garden workshops. They need ideas from the congregation and they need volunteers. So far, they have doubled the number of Sunday services with a Green Sanctuary theme, the RE program has established the celebration of Earth Day, Buildings and Grounds has chosen a hot water heater that requires less fossil fuel, and they have run a film series. The group meets in Room 6 at 11:30 on the third Sunday of the month. Sue Smith moved that the congregation provide a vote of confidence in this application for candidacy. Seconded by Janet Irons, the motion passed unanimously.”

UU Identity and Spirituality

The UUFCC motivates, supports, and nurtures volunteers by various means, ranging from practical assistance to leadership development. Without this encouraging environment, our GS work would not have been possible.

Common motivations of volunteers include meeting people, learning skills, gaining knowledge, joy, leaving a legacy, a sense of challenge, self-improvement, and helping and working with

others. These motivations are not different for GS volunteers than for other volunteers in the UUFCC and elsewhere.

For the GS work the UU's 7th principle is particularly inspiring: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." This principle not only inspires our work but also transforms us by doing this work. We frequently share with other GS members and the wider congregation the small changes we make in our own lives.

The GS services, Soulful Sundays, and TED & Talk are a means to express our identity and spirituality as UU-ers, to shape our work, and to motivate others.

The GS Committee is part of the Social Action Committee, which has a long tradition in reaching out to the wider community. Being part of the Social Action Committee is a continuous reminder that our work should be relevant outside the walls of the UUFCC building in the first place.

Completion of Action Plan

On May 22, 2016, the congregation voted unanimously to go forward with the accreditation, based on our Action Plan. We sent the Action plan to the UUA on June 16, 2016.

Upon the recommendation of our new Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel, Dorothy Blair sent a progress report to Rev. Karen Brammer at UUA on August 15, 2017, to ask whether we would be ready to start the accreditation process. On September 27, 2017, Rev. Brammer responded positively and recommended to report "impact" for as many projects as possible and to report in more detail on the Environmental Justice project. In this report, we follow up on these recommendations. We submitted the draft-report on February 1, 2018. The UUA review team suggested to include more evidence that we build relationships with community organizations, create more eco-justice, and mobilize UUFCC members. Community gardening was mentioned as a specific example (phone meeting February 27, 2018). We added this community part in this report (section 4.5 specifically).

This Application for Accreditation reports on the completion of the Action Plan. The Action Plan included the following projects: Environmental Justice (1 project)³, Worship and Celebration (3 projects), Education (3 projects), and Sustainable Living (5 projects). We describe how we implemented the projects and whether we have met the goals in the Action Plan.

This Application for Accreditation covers the period from June 2016 to December 2017 and follows the UUA template. The GS Committee collected most of the information and others involved in the projects provided additional information. To illustrate the breadth of involvement across the UUFCC, we have included the names of more than 30 members responsible for the projects in this report.

³ Now 4 projects, see Chapter 1.

To further engage the congregation in the application, we posted the report on the UUFCC website and asked members to sign the following petition: "We the members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship support the application of our Fellowship for Green Sanctuary accreditation by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Signing yea on this petition obligates us, jointly and individually, to become a greater blessing to the Earth and to make our life choices and actions better reflect dependence on earth's web of life." 137 members signed the petition, which is the average attendance during the reporting period.

1. Environmental Justice

1.1 Food Justice

Increasing community gardening to improve access to fresh vegetables

In May of 2016 and 2017, the UUFCC GS program, Centre County Master gardeners Dorothy Habecker (Quaker and honorary UU), and Kate Hynes (UUFCC member) collaborated on a community gardening project at the Ashworth Woods and Limerock Courts affordable public housing projects in State College. The GS Committee provided the funding and expertise for bed frame-making, the Master Gardening Program paid for the soil, and the master gardeners encouraged residents to help make the beds. Bill Butler, Ken Riznyk (as members of the underutilized UUFCC Weatherization Team), James Hynes and Dorothy Blair built five 8' by 4' raised bed vegetable gardens, which the residents filled with soil and mushroom compost. We also helped create an 8' by 8' ft. community vegetable garden and refurbished a 10' by 10 ft. pollinator garden.

Evaluation: Sustainable food and food justice behaviors are a particular gap in UUFCC green behavior, as noted in the Action Plan. Food Education (section 3.3) addresses this gap with Fellowship suppers, UUFCC raised beds, and the Green Hospitality Table. With the community gardening, we reached out to the community. The residents are gardening the beds intensively, and have asked for more beds. We are working with our County's Community Action Agency and Central PA Community Action to expand UU involvement in community gardening for poverty pockets in Centre County, low-income housing, group housing for the elderly, and individual houses.



The following projects were contiguous with and continued alongside the development of our Action Plan and are included in this report because they fit our environmental justice goals and time frame.

1.2 Guatemala Service Project

In January and February 2016 and March 2017, 6 to 9 members of the UUFCC Social Action and GS Committees, led by Peg Dobrinska, traveled to Guatemala for 1 to 2 weeks to work with more than 100 Mayan children, adults, and families. They worked with Mayan Families, a UU-related organization that focuses on educational, medical, nutrition and housing needs of poor and malnourished Mayan families. They purchased and installed 20 energy efficient, child-safe wood stoves over those two visits, with money raised through a Guatemalan Dinner at the fellowship, sales of Guatemalan jewelry and fabric, and through UUFCC donations. The stoves are 75% more efficient than standard stoves, child safe, with pipes to vent smoke out-of-doors, and have significantly improved the lives and health of 20 families and reduced long-term deforestation and air pollution for villages.

Besides installing the stoves and working with children (Deb Hager, Nancy Noll, Tony Guerrero), we provided a doctor (Deb Hopkins), preschool help (Doris MacKenzie) and expertise on building (Ken Riznyk and Peg Dobrinska), nutrition (Dorothy Blair), and social work (Helen Dempsy). Needy children were “adopted” and will receive school fees from individuals in our group.

To extend awareness of the situation of Mayan families in Guatemala, on returning we cooked an authentic Guatemalan meal at the UUFCC for 125 people and created and showed a professionally made slideshow. Through the dinner and sales of handicrafts purchased from Mayan Families, we raised money for our next trip. The effect of this project was two-sided: our team witnessed the terrible impact of former US foreign policies on the Mayans of Guatemala. The warm interactions among our group, the Mayan children, and their families helped foster solidarity between our two cultures.



1.3 Housing & Energy

The UUFCC fellowship purchases power from a green provider (see section 4.3). Since embarking on our quest for certification, GS committee members have encouraged fellowship members to switch as well. James Hynes, Troy Frank, Andy Lau, Janet Swim, and Dorothy Blair helped those interested to navigate the PA-PowerSwitch website and provided suggestions, encouragement, and reminders. 15 members have switched to solar and wind power electricity providers via this education campaign, 25 are working on it, and 6 switched more than 3 years ago. Members who live in for example a retirement home have no control over switching.

Building houses for Habitat for Humanity and weatherization of low-income housing have been long-standing ecojustice projects for the UUFCC. We have collaborated with Interfaith Human Services, the State College borough, and Central PA Community Action (Centre and Clearfield Counties). Local hardware stores donated storm windows and insulation. Two UUFCC members (Ken Riznyk, Peg Dobrinski) and volunteers from another church work on various projects across Centre County. Many of the other church groups have dropped out of this program due to the local Habitat for Humanity's change in priorities and the lack of cooperation from homeowners and renters in setting up appointments for the free weatherization service. The volunteers are willing, but assignments have been difficult to arrange.

1.4 Landscape and Drinking Water Preservation

The Pennsylvania Constitution. Article I, Section 27 states: "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."

We rely on this constitutional right in a new social action project with the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition to fight the loss of open space, well-field purity, and environmental quality. A recent example was the fight against the decision of Penn State University to sell 45 acres of their agricultural properties to a notorious developer to be converted into a 1093 student luxury housing project. This property is located in a precious and scenic open area with bike and pedestrian access outside the urban growth boundary and in the recharge area of the major community well fields adjacent to the UUFCC property. Development includes the extension of the public sewer system and creation of a 4000 ft. high-pressure sewer line over fragile karst geology. Due to that line, owners of at least 1,000 now agricultural acres could apply for rezoning for development in the future. The proposed development has raised the anger of many local citizens. A significant number of UUFCC members have bought yard signs, given money to the cause, and a few demonstrated on the site. Members Art Curtze and Dorothy Blair joined the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition in an occupation of the site, negotiations with the township and State College Borough, and a fight for a "land swap" to

move the development to a less environmentally delicate Penn State property. Despite the sale of the Penn State land to the developer, the fight has continued with petitions and township testimony. Due to the petition the developer will be asked by the township to voluntarily post a bond in case of engineering failure. Also, the NVEC encouraged local artists to memorialize the beauty of the area. Currently, there is a public exhibit of their work.

2. Worship and Celebration

2.1 Worship Services

Lay-Led Services

- *Where is Food in the Web of Life.* Drawing on new awareness drawn from the Green Sanctuary's Web of Life Course, course attendees shared their personal stories about food, sustainability, and ecojustice. March 13, 2016 (during the application process); Dorothy Blair; attendance: 99.
- *Every Way of Seeing is Also a Way of Not Seeing.* Understanding and transforming non-environmental behavior. July 17, 2016; Frans Padt, Janet Swim; attendance 96.
- *Protecting the Endangered and Threatened Species in our Backyard.* Centre County is home to many endangered and threatened plants and creatures. We can embrace awareness and habits that will protect the further degradation of the beauty within our reach. July 31, 2016; Cathi Alloway, Dorothy Blair; attendance 101.
- *Soil: The Magic Beneath our Feet.* The importance of soil, what it is, how it deepens, and the importance of building soil for reversing climate change. December 11, 2016; David Mortensen, Mabell Rivas, Dorothy Blair; attendance 126.
- *Ecojustice and the 2nd Principle.* January 8, 2017; James Hynes and Peter Buckland; attendance 142.
- *Blue Boat Home.* A lyrical and eye-opening treatment of land/ocean degradation using Landsat photos; movement toward reforestation and safeguarding coral reefs. April 9, 2017; Bob Minard, Dorothy Blair, Frans Padt, Troy Frank; attendance 140.
- *The Garden as Metaphor.* An exploration of how our gardens can stretch our perceptions of spiritual growth, the search for truth, and interdependence. July 9, 2017; Dorothy Blair, Darlene Chivers; attendance 130.
- *Traveling (to the UUFCC) as a Spiritual Practice.* Encouragement of congregants to prepare for the service by walking, biking, carpooling, or parking nearby. August 27, 2017; Frans Padt; attendance 153.
- *Farming and Eating with Gratitude.* Sustainable farmers shared their stories and motivation for farming and producing food in harmony with the land and animate life. November 12, 2017; Mabell Rivas, Dorothy Blair; attendance 148.
- *Public Advocacy, Public Service, and the Environment.* Just in time for formulating New Year's resolutions to be more civically proactive on the environment. December 31, 2017; Jesse Barlow; attendance 75.

Regular Green Services

- *Water Communion Service. September 11, 2016; Rev. Gabriela Parks; attendance 152.*
- *Animal Blessing Service. October 9, 2016; Rev. Gabriela Parks; attendance 110.*
- *Water Communion Service. September 10, 2017. Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel; attendance > 200 (estimate).*
- *Finding Reverence, December 10, 2017, Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel; attendance 142.*

About 135 people attended the services, which is the average attendance for all services (Figure 1). Since September 2016, the Sunday Worship Committee holds an after-service survey and adds comments to the Service Facilitator Notebook. Attendees thought the services were well-organized, enjoyed the services with an inspirational component in particular, and made them think about changing their environmental behavior on an everyday basis.

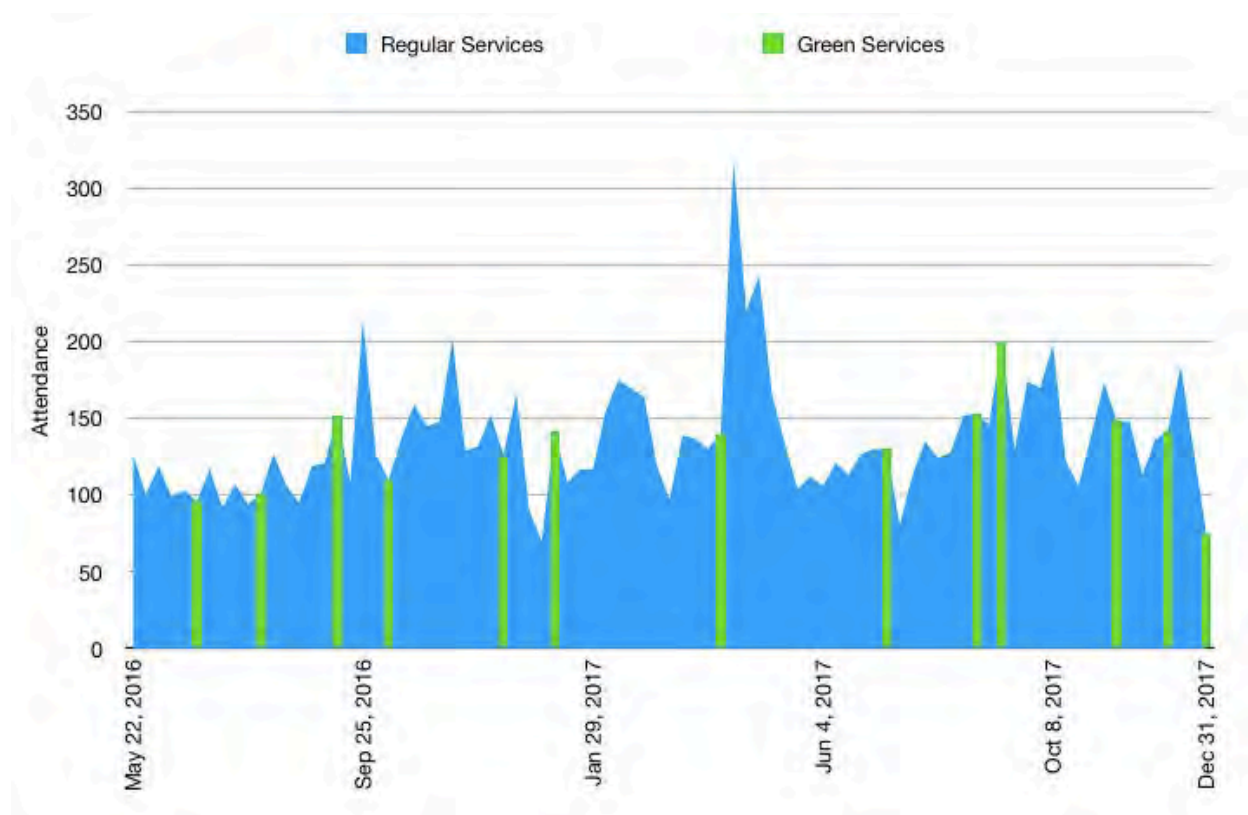


Figure 1. Attendance Sunday Services.

Soulful Sundown Services

Not included in our Plan of Action was leadership in the twice-monthly Soulful Sundown evening service - more meditative and free-form than the regular Sunday service, and attended by an average of 12 persons. Green Sanctuary members were asked to give 2 of these services in the last 18 months:

- *Experiencing Oneness [with the natural world]*. Poems, songs, meditations on kinship and interconnectedness using a leaf of the meditator's choice. October 2, 2016; Virginia Hubbs, Dorothy Blair.
- *A Meditation on the Miracle of Trees: Enlightenment, groundedness, sustenance*. What lessons can we learn from the trees around us?" For this service, we brought in many tree parts, tree gifts, even soil, that could be touched, chosen, and meditated on. October 15, 2017; Dorothy Blair.

Evaluation: In the Action plan, we stated that environmental Sunday services are infrequently held and that we wanted to double the number from 2-3 to 4-6. We exceeded this goal with 9 GS services alone (10 including the one during the application process). The services covered the topics mentioned in the plan and aimed to encourage environmental behavior from a spiritual perspective. Good attendance and the positive feedback indicated that the services were an excellent way to reach the congregation, especially when it inspired people to take everyday actions. We also offered 2 green Soulful Sunday services (not included in the Action Plan).

2.2 GS Moments

This project was dropped because the GS Committee provided many services (see section 2.1) and because the other services typically have a full program already.

2.3 Celebrations

Yule

The meditative Soulful Sundown Service for Yule is a UUFCC tradition, with a walkable spruce/pine spiral. The group organizing this, and those making the long chain of evergreen boughs, did not feel that they needed help. Soulful Sundowns are an excellent example of an ongoing Earth-based spirituality that already existed at the UUFCC. Although we were led to think we could be involved and help with the service, we were just as happy to support what was already happening.

Earth Day

We have cooperated with the Religious Education committee for 2 Earth Day Celebrations (2016 and 2017) after the Sunday service. These were held outdoors on the UUFCC playground. The 2016 celebration occurred during the application process.

2016: Matt Shineman, Directory of Religious Education coordinated nature crafts, such as peanut butter bird feeders, nature painting with stencils, and face painting. GS members held a

raised-bed making workshop, with Bill Butler, a master carpenter, taking the lead. At another booth 2 master gardeners answered gardening questions. We donated the built bed to the UUFCC vegetable garden, then in May Bill constructed 2 other beds in cooperation with the residents on the playground of an affordable housing development (see 1.1). A member donated the funds for the building materials, and the Grounds committee purchased the necessary mushroom compost topsoil.

2017: Under the capable leadership of Kate Hynes (GS and RE committee member), we organized a bicycling education and repair workshop, a composting game, and invited a solar company to educate us by demonstrating their products and calculating power output needs for attendees. Other activities included writing postcards to legislators, helping plant the 5-bed UUFCC vegetable garden, nature art, fun drumming, and face painting. We served a vegetarian lunch and were able to make some money for our programs. RE-Youth participated in most of the activities.

Evaluation: In the plan, we observed a need to augment UUFCC Earth-based celebrations. The above indicated that we succeeded. The Religious Education Committee wants to develop Earthday as a signature project.

3. Education

3.1 Religious Education (RE)

Kate Hynes and the Religious Education Committee have involved the youth and children in many ecojustice, social action, and green outreach activities throughout the year, including:

- Out of the Cold Homeless Shelter Program in April 2017. Young children and youth prepared food for the guests. The youth completed 2 dinners with primarily organic food and the younger kids prepared vegetables that we roasted and put in soup, contributing to 2 more meals. Members of the GS Committee talked about the importance of high quality and nutrient dense foods.
- Fundraising and participation of 20-30 adults and children in Crop Walk 2016.
- Christmas used-toy sales in 2016, 2017. Money was used to fund UNICEF.
- Participation of 12 to 20 UUFCC members and their children in Clearwater Conservancy's Clean-Up Day at our iconic trout stream Spring Creek for the last four April's. Clearwater Conservancy appreciates our steadfastness, diligence and extensive territory along the stream. Numbers of youth participating have increased from a few to 8+.
- Participation of the RE-youth in the Earth Day celebration (see section 2.3) and planting pollinator gardens on Memorial Day in 2017 (see section 3.3). While doing the work, the youth were educated on these aspects.
- 2017 Service Auction: A green basket.
- TED & Talk. This is a new activity by Janet Swim and Dorothy Blair that was not included in the Action Plan. TED & Talk is a kid-parent friendly discussion of a particularly good TED talk on an environmental/nature subject. So far we discussed:

- Emma Marris: “Nature is Everywhere.”
- Suzanne Simard: “How Trees Talk to Each Other.”
- Janine Benyus: “Biomimicry in Action”
- Chef Dan Barber: “How I Fell in Love with a Fish.”

Evaluation: In the plan, we observed a lack of environmentally focused RE opportunities. With the shift to action-oriented projects, we have secured children and youth engagement in existing activities (Out of the Cold, Crop Walk, Spring Creek Clean-Up Day, Earth Day) and added new activities for adult education (Service Auction, TED & Talk). The latter activities have growth potential.



3.2 Sustainable Film Series

We showed the following educational environmental and social justice films:

- *Fractured Earth*, May 4, 2016 (during the application process) at UUFCC.
- *Cowspiracy*, May 18, 2016 (during the application process) at UUFCC.
- *The Botany of Desire*, September 21, 2016 at UUFCC.
- *The Future of Energy*, October 19, 2016 at the Quaker Meeting.
- *Place at the Table*, November 16, 2016 at UUFCC.

- *Gerrymandering*, March 30, 2017 at Central PA Convention & Visitors Bureau.
- *The Age of Consequences*, April 11, 2017 at State Theatre, with a post-film panel.
- *Hometown Habitat*, May 2, 2017 at Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) Auditorium, with a post-film demonstration.
- *Chasing Coral*, September 13, 2017 at Foxdale Village Auditorium.
- *Sustainable*, October 4, 2017 at Foxdale Village Auditorium; post-film discussion.
- *From the Ashes*, November 8, 2017 at Foxdale Village Auditorium; post-film discussion.
- *Bidder70*, December 6, 2017 at Foxdale Village Auditorium, post-film discussion.

Our first attempts to attract fellowship members to these films were somewhat dismal, so we have taken the tactic of advertising widely and partnering with others: PA-IPL churches, Friends Meeting, League of Women Voters, PSU Institute of Sustainability, and the PA Native Plant Society. Troy Frank and Dorothy Blair selected the movies; Troy took care of the technical aspects. This collaboration has increased our audience and given us higher visibility in the community. Since fall 2017, we have partnered with Julia Hix, a UU and head of the Foxdale Village (Quaker-based) Retirement Community Green Committee to show 4 films in their spacious and centrally located auditorium. We invite other PA-IPL churches to participate. About 60-100 people attended the movies.

Frans Padt made posters for each season that we distributed in town. Julia Hix and Troy Frank additionally advertised the Fall 2017 series in the Centre Daily Times and other media outlets. The Moshannon Sierra Club used their email list to inform hundreds of people about each film.

On August 20, 2017, 20 UUsers went to the movie theatre to see the movie “An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power,” with dinner and discussion, led by an invited speaker, afterward (organized by the Program Council).

Evaluation: In the plan, we identified a need to increase Fellowship awareness of climate change and green behaviors through movies and discussion. Since the films moved to Foxdale’s excellent auditorium, more UUFCC-members have been attending, as well as Foxdale residents and other members of the community.

3.3 Food Education

The Green Hospitality Table has been in place during our post-service coffee hour since Summer 2016. We encourage the 5 UUFCC hospitality groups to bring food items with at least one local or organic ingredient. Through signage and a green checkered tablecloth, the Green Table prompts the membership to reflect on how an individual choice for sustainable food collectively makes an impact on the Earth with a healthier environment, better labor conditions, and thriving local food economies.

About 15 to 20% of the UUFCC hospitality group food providers have regularly brought green foods or 5-8 green offerings. The UUFCC uses shade-grown organic coffee (Ken Riznyk). The

hospitality teams provide organic or local dairy-based and plant-based milk most of the time. Guidelines for supplying green products and the milk were added to the Hospitality Handbook. We regularly email suggestions to the Hospitality Teams for easy and inexpensive sustainable food. Thanks to the five Green Table leaders: Frans Padt, Etta Habegger, Mabell Rivas, Libby Gage and D. Blair; as well as the 5 hospitality group coordinators – Chuck Berry, Jim Sullivan, Sue Haug, Ann Snowman, Laura Brown (overall coordinator), and Linda Eller, (previous overall coordinator) who decided jointly that such a program was essential to pursue, thereby institutionalizing the Green Table.

Poster boards have been displayed in the Community Room when a green sanctuary service lends itself to further amplification. Topics included: sequestration of carbon in soil, how to increase biodiversity in your backyard, transportation, and sustainable food.



Perk Up!
News about Hospitality Teams

Hospitality Q & A

Q: Must I bring local products or organic foods for the buffet?

A: No and yes!

No, ALL contributions are appreciated! However ...

Yes, if you want to live our seventh principle. Yes, if you want to help the UUFCC goal of becoming a Green Sanctuary congregation <www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary>.

It's not necessarily more costly or time consuming. Some popular treats can be made with local or organic ingredients: deviled eggs, sliced apples, grapes, veggies, baked or purchased cakes, cookies, crackers, dips, and cheese.

Sustainable food education events: We gave 2 lessons in vegetarian cooking and 1 course in building raised beds in 2016. In 2017, we deployed additional actions that were not mentioned in the Action Plan, using the February UUFCC Services Auction to schedule these events and also to provide sign-up money to the UUFCC. Classes given during spring and summer 2017 included raised bed gardening techniques, extending the gardening season, Asian fusion vegetable cookery, and a UUFCC garden tour, educating at least 40 members. Thanks to Sharon Shen, D. Blair, Helen Dempsey, Darlene Chivers, Tony Guerrero, Bill Butler, and Jacinda Li for offering courses.

Four local CSAs presented themselves in the Fellowship Hall after the December 2016 Green Sanctuary “soil” service. Two local organic farmers were featured in the Farming and Eating with Gratitude service.

Fall Vegetarian Fellowship Suppers: The GS committee organized three suppers and committee members provided the entrees. Attendance is usually about 70 members. For one supper (October 19, 2016) we invited international student members of “Global Connections” to attend and bring a dish to the dinner. This was a very successful event for both the UUFCC members and the international students. At least 4 international families and 10 Global Connections friends attended.



UUFCC Vegetable Gardens. This project was not mentioned in the Action Plan. Jay Searles and his wife Jodi Vender grow a vast amount of organic vegetables in 5 raised beds on the UUFCC property. The GS Committee donated one of these beds. RE Youth participated. The

vegetables, as well as wild-harvested fruits made into jams and fruit pies, are sold to Fellowship members during a long harvesting season (May to October). Proceeds go to the UUFCC.

The GS Committee worked with Jay Searles to donate leftovers to our locally funded Meals on Wheels program (about 25 pounds a week). The program has an excellent chef who can utilize leafy vegetables such as kale and other greens, often tricky for locals from a PA Dutch tradition to cook with confidence.

Evaluation: In the plan, we noted a lack of green food awareness at the UUFCC. This situation seems to improve slowly. We offered more food education than planned. Offering green items through the Services Auction has potential. The vegetarian Fellowship Suppers and the UUFCC raised bed produce are highly appreciated. We would like to see UUFCC funding for the milk products, like for organic coffee, as well as more attendees bringing food.

4. Sustainable Living

4.1 Car Footprint Reduction

Frans Padt, Bob Minard, Toby Short and Ron Smith led an effort to improve the efficiency of the Fellowship parking lot. With creative finagling, they increased the number of parking spaces from 75 to 125 (> 50% increase) out of necessity to accommodate the growing congregation and to remain a welcoming place for visitors. Importantly for staying “green”, this was accomplished without adding impermeable surface while curtailing spaces under sensitive trees, thereby preventing cars from damaging tree roots and the scenic entry. More parking places were created on our grounds along the entryway, on the Campbell Road side, and on the upper parking lot.

Attendees have been encouraged to walk, ride bikes, carpool, take a bus or park and walk from the nearby South Hills Business School lot, a five-minute walk. We made a poster board to this end. At least during spring, summer, and fall Sundays 8-12 people were walking and biking, 5-7 people were walking 5 minutes from off-site parking lots, and carpooling (numbers unknown). The average car occupancy was 1.8, which is the national average for church-goers.⁴ Car occupancy was calculated by dividing attendance plus the number of RE teachers and children by the number of cars (both counted during the service).

The Program Committee approved the parking guidelines “Let’s keep our grounds beautiful, welcoming, and safe”, published in UU Connections September 17, 2017.

⁴ http://nhts.ornl.gov/tables09/fatcat/2009/avo_TRPTRANS_WHYTRP1S.html

Evaluation: This project addresses the poor parking situation/behavior and underused transportation alternatives, as stated in the plan. The parking situation/behavior has drastically improved by adding 50% more parking space while avoiding environmental damage and safety risks and protecting the trees at the scenic entry. Snow may create a shortage of parking places in the winter though. We will monitor this carefully. A sign redirecting cars to the South Hills and Campbell parking lots will be placed on the main parking lot. Although we observe a change in travel behavior, the broader goal of utilizing transportation alternatives and reducing car miles of members and visitors needs greater effort, for example through targeted marketing for the members as mentioned in the Action Plan.⁵

4.2 Recycling and Composting

Organic Composting: Bob Minard has guided us in a transition to compostable plates, cups, and utensils by installing 7 compost receptacles, creating and hanging composting signage, and hauling the compostables to homes in the State College Borough. The Borough is currently the only government body in Central PA collecting curbside compostables and making them into finished compost for resident pick-up. Bob worked with the Borough to legalize such a transfer and held a field trip to our transfer station to help educate the UUFCC membership. UUFCC volunteers transfer 65 gallons per week or more than 3,800 gallons a year. The compostables now travel only 4 miles to a composting facility, rather than 40 miles to the landfill in a neighboring county. In summer 2016, Centre County honored the UUFCC at a Centre Region Recycling Award banquet with a certificate of merit. Bob Minard was awarded during a UUFCC service for his successful composting efforts. Thanks to all UUs who sort their garbage and help Bob to take UUFCC compost to outside bins or move it into the Borough bins.

Bob created a composting game for teaching RE Children how to separate compost from other waste. This game was successfully used during our Earth Day Celebrations and will be repeated in future years.

Recycling: We recycle all glass, metal, paper/cardboard and plastic as required by the Centre County regulations and Pennsylvania Act 101, plus what is called miscellaneous plastic which we collect and transfer to one of the collection sites for this. Batteries are also collected and recycled due to the efforts of Patty Zarkower. Between Centre County recycling and State College Borough composting, we have reduced our landfill waste by 75 to 80%. Recycling was not mentioned in the Action Plan because we had done some most this previously.

⁵ To offset carbon emissions 1 to 2 trees should be planted for each service. This is a very rough estimate from <https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/greenhouse-gas-emissions-typical-passenger-vehicle> and <http://www.carbonify.com>, based on 106 cars per service and an average travel distance of 4 miles.



Child-proof prescription containers were collected in 2016, stripped off of their labels by Linna Muschlitz, and hand carried to the program serving Mayans in Guatemala, where child-proof prescription containers are rare.

Evaluation: In the plan, we wanted to take advantage of the State College Borough's food waste and compostables recycling program. This goal has been achieved with this successful project while creating greater awareness among the congregants. In 2018, Centre County hopes to start collecting compost countywide, which would make it easier for us. An added benefit is the reduced use of our dish sterilizer, saving fuel, water and repair costs.

4.3 Physical Plant Sustainability

Physical Plant Committee: Andy Lau, Ron Smith Phil Halleck, and others have advocated for and had installed a new energy-efficient heat pump water heater on 5/25/16. We also installed LED lights for the sanctuary in fall 2017. This involved 87 lamps, going from 65 W to 9 W each, with an estimated payback of just over 5 years. A wind-energy electricity provider was chosen for the fellowship in 2014 and renewed in June 2016. Instead of buying four new low-flow toilets in for the old wing of the building and haul the old ones to the landfill, we have decided to install a water saving device in the tanks of the existing toilets, thereby saving 1 gallon per flush, or 15,000 gallons per year, and eliminating the embedded material and energy costs of new toilets.

We have changed to non-toxic soaps and cleaning fluids, which was not yet mentioned in the Action Plan. We left the selection of these items to the contracted cleaning crew which includes two UU FCC members. The Membership Committee has started using less paper.

Evaluation: In the plan, we observed lingering ways to green the Physical Plant Project, but with the new water heater, new LED lighting, and switch to wind energy we have become more energy-efficient and have reduced CO₂ emission. Our change to non-toxic cleaning products (not mentioned in the Action Plan) has a direct impact on the health of our janitors and the environment.

4.4 Grounds Sustainability

The Grounds Committee has taken the UUFCC 7th principle seriously. Activities include:

- Installed and expanded a beautiful, well-cared-for butterfly garden in 2015 (with the timing of installment coinciding with our Green Sanctuary application survey) and have continued to expand it (Amy Hasan, Stephanie Szakal, Religious Education children). On 9/28/2017, Stephanie Szakal counted two dozen Monarch butterflies. Application for certification as a Monarch Waystation is now underway with Monarch Watch. (<http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/certify.html>)
- Reduced mowing on 0.25 of the 4-acre grounds by letting some areas revert to nature (Ron Smith, Toby Short, Bob Minard). More acres to follow.
- Planted more native and pollinator species (Michal Stump, Darlene Chivers, Stephanie Szakal). In the retention area, more milkweed will be planted to attract more Monarch butterflies.
- Developed a memorial garden with green principles in mind, using many native plants (Doris McKenzie, Louise Goldstein).
- Our 5 raised beds produce a vast amount of vegetables and strawberries; the RE children have helped with planting those vegetable gardens (see section 3.3).



Evaluation: In the plan, we emphasized a need to reduce mowing (decrease fossil fuel use) and continue to create an environment more hospitable to native species, including pollinators, and food production. These goals have been achieved. The project has inspired the Grounds Committee to put in more native species. As mentioned in the plan, the Grounds committee proposes to add more pollinator gardens, more vegetable and strawberry producing raised beds, and a new potato area. A berry patch will replace a scrub-woods area that has been weeding-intensive.

Overall evaluation of Sustainable Living: The congregational sharing after the Earth Day Service in 2017 indicates that 50% of those present have taken or want to take personal action on a wide range of GS topics (310 responses) (Figure 2). This number is in line with the survey we held in 2015 as part of the application process, indicating a continuous need for awareness-raising among the congregation.

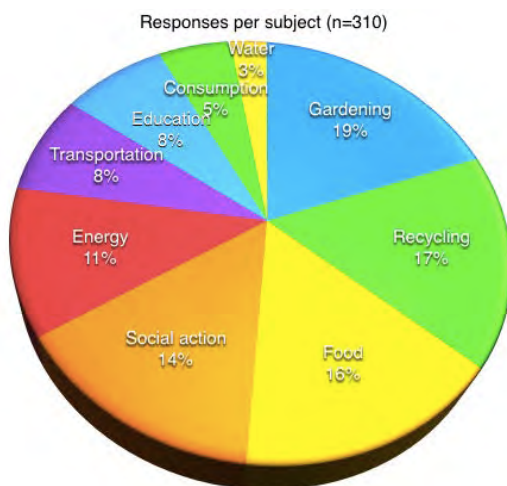


Figure 2. Percentage of attendees indicating they take or want to take personal action.

4.5 Ecojustice

The GS Committee is part of the Social Action Committee which creates synergy in ecojustice projects. A brief overview is provided below:

- We wrote letters to the EPA decrying their approval of the new Dow-Monsanto GM seeds resistant to the proven carcinogenic herbicide cocktail Enlist Duo (Marleen Irwin and Dorothy Blair).
- For the 5 slots available for 1st Sunday plate collections in Spring 2018, two environmental organizations were selected by vote out of 9 member-nominations during the mid-year

congregational meeting in November 2017: National Resource Defense Council and Citizens Climate Lobby, National and State College Chapter.

- Some members went to the People's Climate March, April 29 2017, in Washington DC. Others tabled for Citizens' Climate Lobby at the local Climate event.
- A few UUFCC members are a member of the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition to protest for landscape preservation (section 1.4). The UUFCC has become a member of the Sierra Club, and we work with the local Moshannon chapter as well. We also work with Clearwater Conservancy on landscape preservation, specifically the yearly Spring Creek Clean-Up Day (section 3.1).
- The UUFCC is a member of PA Power and Light. A few members bike to Washington D.C. every year to lobby Congress and to raise money for the organization. We have also presented at their yearly conference.
- We tabled for the State College chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby at the UUFCC and elsewhere in the community.
- We cooperate with Penn State's Master Gardeners Extension Program, the County's Community Action Agency, and Central PA Community Action for building gardens in low-income communities and other locations (section 1.1).

Evaluation: In the Action Plan it was noted that the Fellowship was not very involved in eco-justice actions. This was partly a misconception. Individual UUFCC members have long-term and multiple working associations with local eco-justice organizations, but this is not well-known among congregants. We plan to utilize this existing network to mobilize and train more UUFCC members for our ecojustice projects and to strengthen our network within the community. The vote for 2 environmental Sunday Plate collections indicates congregational support for ecojustice. We will also keep track of our eco-justice achievements.

Accomplishment of Program Goals

From the UUA template: *"More than a study curriculum, Green Sanctuary is a way for congregations to educate themselves on environmental issues and take part in transformational activities designed with several goals in mind. The Green Sanctuary Program seeks to:*

- 1. Deepen ties to UU faith and the seventh principle, bringing congregational culture into greater alignment with environmentally sustainable practices.*
- 2. Empower congregations, families, and individuals to embrace and integrate effective stewardship of the Earth into their daily lives.*
- 3. Grow the environmental movement among people of faith by inviting congregations to support Commit2Respond, a UU-affiliated coalition addressing climate injustice through activism."*

In this section, we aggregate the information from the previous sections and the information we received from the committees.

Congregational Culture

Positive signals of a culture change include:

- The number of GS services (10 in total, averaging 135 attendees) we were asked to give and the consistently positive congregational response.
- 100% participation of children and youth in green RE-activities.
- Increasing attendance for our showing of the 10 environmental and social justice films (up to 100+ attendees, including members of the UUFCC and the community).
- The 3 vegetarian fellowship dinners with high attendance (70 each), and the number of vegetarian dishes at the other potluck dinners (indicating broader acceptance than in the past).
- The congregational vote for 2 “green” First Sunday Plate Collections for spring of 2018 (for the first time).
- The number of people that switched to clean energy within the last 2-3 years (15, while 25 are working on it).
- The 30 members that led the various projects and others who participated otherwise, for example in GS services and vegetarian potlucks.
- The well-established relationships between the GS Committee and the Grounds Committee, the Worship Committee, the Hospitality Teams, the Building Committee, and the RE Committee.
- The standard announcements of our work and events in the weekly UU Enews, monthly UU Connections, UUFCC web page, and the Order of Service.
- The 20+ turnout when we went to the movie theatre for Al Gore’s new movie (a spontaneous idea of a Program Council member).
- The compliments we received on our work during coffee hour and other occasions.

The combination of worship, education, practical activities, and collaboration secures successful continuation of our work and provide a breeding ground for new ideas and new projects in the future, including the challenges.

Empowerment & Stewardship

The UUFCC has moved toward a more environmentally sustainable place regarding food (sustainable food), the building (energy, water, composting & recycling, cleaning products), the grounds (hardscape and softscape). Here are some numbers:

- A weekly Green Hospitality Table with sustainable food, dairy and plant-based milk added to the organic coffee.
- CO₂ reduction by switching to wind energy, energy-efficient central room, and water heating, and LED lighting.
- 65 gallons compostable waste and all other recyclable material weekly brought to the local recycling center.
- Conversion to 100% non-toxic cleaning products.
- 1 raised bed added to the 4 on our grounds producing organic food for UUFCC attendees and the locally funded Meals on Wheels program (weekly delivery of 25 pounds to during the harvesting season).

- 50% increase in parking capacity without sacrificing the environment and safety.
- Environmentally friendly gardening on 100% of our grounds; 2 dozen Monarch butterflies counted.

By setting examples, we have encouraged and empowered congregants to take “green” actions at home. Additionally, the worship services, which have been well-received, engaged the congregation spiritually in the Green Sanctuary program and led them to take action at home (Figure 2). Finally, the 10 environmental and social justice films (with 100+ visitors from the community), 4 educational posters, and the TED & Talks have helped.

Community Action

The following accomplishments have started more outreach to local communities and environmental action at all levels of scale:

- 7 gardens built in local affordable housing communities and some homes weatherized across Centre County.
- Ecojustice support for more than 100 Mayan families, including medical and nutritional care, education, and installation of 20 sustainable wood stoves.
- Civic engagement in local open space preservation (sections 1.4 and 4.5) and climate action (section 4.5).
- The congregational vote for 2 “green” First Sunday Plate Collections for spring of 2018 (for the first time).

We plan to build more raised beds in affordable and low-income housing and individual homes (Kate Hynes, Dorothy Blair). We will work with UU organizations in other parts of the US and other countries, such as Guatemala. Finally, we want to build on our locally strong reputation and strengthen our role in landscape preservation and climate action. A challenge with these projects is that volunteers need specific skills, and proper training to roll out these projects on a larger scale.

As for Education (see Congregational Culture), we will continue to partner with the community for the Sustainable Film Series (Julia Hix, Troy Frank) and the Spring Creek Clean-Up Day (Dorothy Blair). Earth Day will become an RE signature project with community outreach (Matt Shineman).

Commit2Respond was a new movement and unknown to us when we were busy planning our strategy and writing our initial requests for Green Sanctuary certification. Our committee frankly had too much on its plate to explore or become part of that movement. We were unaware that some of the aspects of Commit2Respond were embedded in our action plan, such as creating an Earth Day or showing the film *Bidder70*. This omission can be rectified in the future stages of our greening efforts.

We will ask the committees to standardize specific activities, including GS Services by the Worship Committee (Caitlin Sager), RE-activities by the Religious Education Committee (Kate Hynes), and Sustainable Living activities by the Grounds Committee (Bob Minard) and the

Building Committee (Andy Lau). We will develop a shared leadership model, including more recruitment and training of long-term and new members.

Challenges include:

- The Green Hospitality Table. People enjoy the healthier, less processed food. The response is mixed among the food providers. About 15 to 20% embrace the concept and are glad to participate. Others continue to bring what is routine, cheapest or easiest but feel excluded or chastised when they do not participate. Behavioral change requires moving away from our industrial food system and will need additional (educational) efforts.
- Transportation: The parking management for our growing congregations is under control, but the number of cars and resulting CO₂ and other emissions are still too high. Similar to food, additional (educational) efforts are needed to move away from our car-dependent transportation system.

The GS Committee will put thoughtful, continuing effort in these challenge projects, as well as in new projects such as the green auction, TED & Talk, and the community action projects.