

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Green Sanctuary Action Plan

And How You Can Become Involved

Plan to attend Reverend Kate's service and other Green Sanctuary events when they are announced. Look through the Action Plan and find one or more projects you would like to volunteer for and contact the lead coordinator or coordinators.

A. Worship and Celebration (minimum: 2 projects)

1. Reverend Kate will present a sermon on environmental spirituality sometime during 2007-2008.

The Green Sanctuary Committee will coordinate with Reverend Kate and Vicki Dudley, Chair of Religious Services, the ways in which we might assist with the service.

2. The Green Sanctuary Committee will collaborate with the Religious Services Committee, chaired by Vicki Dudley, on an Earth Day Service the Sunday prior to Earth Day. This will be a pilot project that the congregation may want to continue as a yearly event. It will give the Green Sanctuary Committee and the rest of the congregation the opportunity to share with one another what we have learned throughout the year about living a green, sustainable life in accordance with our UU principles.

The committees will co-sponsor a related educational event afterwards during coffee hour. The theme will be "Ways we can live a green life: making every day Earth Day."

Date: April 20, 2008 (Earth Day is officially April 22nd).

3. At our annual Water Communion, Green Sanctuary Committee members (and anyone else interested in contributing to this project) will make information about water and water justice available during coffee hour.

Date: September 9th, 2007

Lead Coordinator: Helen Deffenbacher

B. Religious Education (minimum: 2 projects)

- 1A: Sponsor simplicity circles/workshops/classes/lectures on various green topics led by church members and guest speakers. These can be one-

time events or of longer duration. We encourage multi-generational classes/workshops.

Time-Line Target: during the church calendar year

Lead Coordinators: Karen Deffenbacher and Shawna Thompson
Max Monclair, Adult RE Chair

- 1B: Sponsor an interfaith forum on a topic pertaining to ecology. We will invite members of neighboring churches and Second Unitarian Church.

Time-Line Target: spring of 2008

Lead Coordinators: Helen Deffenbacher & Shawna Thompson
Dave Olson, Social Justice Chair

2. The Green Sanctuary Committee will work with Cheryll Wallace, Director of Religious Education, and the RE Council to review the curriculum across all grade levels in order to assess what is already being presented to the youth on Earth Ministry. Following that review, interested Green Sanctuary members will work with Cheryll and RE Council members throughout the church year to research appropriate books, lessons and other materials related to our Seventh Principle that might build upon and further strengthen the present curriculum.

We will work with Cheryll and the RE Council to create a list of Earth Ministry books appropriate for preschool through sixth-grade level and plan age appropriate projects and activities from those books and other related materials.

We will ask individual children to review a book and determine whether it should be included in the curriculum. (Children are often even more discerning critics than adults). We will also ask for their recommendations for other books and for activities and projects to include in an Earth Ministry Curriculum.

Time-Line Target: Church School Calendar Year, September through May
Lead Coordinators: Lynette Ryder and Helen Deffenbacher

C. Environmental Justice (minimum: 2 projects)

* One project has to be a major on-going activity in collaboration with another congregation or organization to address an issue of environmental justice in our community or in the world.

1. The Green Sanctuary Committee is working toward the goal of bringing about legislation that would effect a change in policy in the recycling

of plastics. Presently Omaha is recycling types 1 and 2 while in Ralston and Papillion all types of plastics (1-7) are recycled. Matt Dewell has been in consultation with leaders in the Nebraska State Legislature and the Sierra Club on this project.

Lead Coordinator: Matt Dewell

- 2a. Evaluate companies that make up First Unitarian's two Capital Trust funds for social responsibility. Identify companies that are environmentally responsible and those that may not be. Present these findings to the congregation in a workshop on socially responsible investing.

Time-Line Target: January 1, 2008

Lead Coordinators: Ken Deffenbacher and Bob Hess

- 2b. Sponsor a workshop on socially responsible investing to identify and discuss investing techniques that advance environmental and social justice. Provide educational materials on socially responsible investing.

Evaluate the free UUA Teleconference Workshop on socially responsible investing for our possible use in addition to or in lieu of our own workshop.

Time-Line Target: spring of 2008

Lead Coordinators: Bob Hess and Ken Deffenbacher
Social Justice Chair, Dave Olson

D. Sustainable Living (minimum: 4 projects)

* At least 1 has to be an energy conservation project.

1. The Green Sanctuary Committee will donate energy-saving light bulbs to Habitat for Humanity houses that First Unitarian Church will help restore or build.

The money for this project will come from money raised by the Kids Eco Club and from any members or friends of First Unitarian Church who care to donate light bulbs or money to the fund. This is a pilot project; our goal is to continue it indefinitely.

Time-Line Target: Following the building or restoration of Habitat Houses

Lead Coordinator: Doris Francke and Sandi Bruns

2. The Green Sanctuary Committee will work with Habitat for Humanity in a seasonal project in which we will ask our youth to help us plant trees in the yards of homes we will help restore or build. Barb and Matt Dewell

have volunteered to donate trees for this project. They also have lilac bushes for transplanting at the appropriate time. This is a pilot project; our goal is to continue it indefinitely.

Time-Line Target: first planting: fall of 2007

Lead Coordinators: Barb and Matt Dewell, Shawna Thompson
RE Director, Cheryll Wallace

3. In this year's collection for the Siena Francis House by First Unitarian Church's youth, Green Sanctuary will include books for children on nature/ecology for example: *The Giving Tree*, *A Tallgrass Prairie Alphabet*, *As Long as There Are Mountains*, *The Big Book For Our Planet*, *The Gardener*, *In the Heart of the Village: The World of the Indian Banyan Tree*, *Joseph Had A Little Overcoat*, *Letting Swift River Go*, *The Lorax*, *Seed Folks*.

The money for this project will come from one or more of our adult and/or youth fundraising projects and from any member or friend of First Unitarian Church who cares to donate books or money to the fund.

Time-Line Target: spring of 2008

Lead Coordinators: Shawna Thompson, Doris Francke, and Volunteers from grades K-8
RE Director, Cheryll Wallace

4. Kids' Eco Club: a club run by and for children during coffee hour.

Suggested projects and activities include: Plan an environmental project for the church, their school, or neighborhood. This can be an individual or group service project. The Green Sanctuary Committee will discuss with Cheryll Wallace and the RE Council some kind of volunteer service award and recognition. (For RE children who belong to Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, creating and completing a "green" service project for their church, school, or community can be a way of earning a merit badge).

They may want to plan and hold a fundraiser and use the money for an environmental or social justice project of their choice, for example: sell cloth grocery bags and energy-saving light bulbs during coffee hour and 100% recycled paper during Arbor Day/Earth Day week in April.

Additional suggestions for projects and activities: Conduct an energy audit of their homes with information and instructions they and the Green Sanctuary Committee can put together. Design colorful switch plate "Turn Off the Lights" reminders for their homes and for the church, which the

Green Sanctuary Committee can have laminated on one side only so they can be glued onto the switch plates.

Ask the Caring Committee to co-sponsor a Card-Making Party for all ages during coffee hour one or two Sundays in the fall. These one-of-a-kind greeting cards can then be used by the Caring Committee.

Research and plan a field trip for the entire church to a nature preserve such as the Allwine Prairie Preserve. Or research other nationally registered landmark buildings in addition to our own and plan a Saturday tour to increase their awareness of the imperative to preserve not only old natural places but human-made ones as well.

Time-Line Target: Church Calendar Year Beginning in October
Scheduling of meetings will be determined by the youth.

Youth Leaders: Justin Deffenbacher and at least one other youth volunteer.

Advisors: Helen Deffenbacher and RE Director, Cheryl Wallace

An additional 2 projects are required in any of the four focus groups above the minimal 12. We have chosen the following:

5. The Green Sanctuary Committee is putting together a local guide to green businesses and organizations. We will publish the guide in paper and pdf format as a fundraiser.

Time-Line Target: When we have enough material for a book.
Lead Coordinator: Shawna Thompson

6. The Green Sanctuary Committee will ask the Fellowship Committee to co-host a Potlatch for all ages. This is an event based on a Northwest Native American tradition. This will be a fun way to give away things we no longer need and to take home things we can use. The person who gives away the most "wins".

Time-Line Target: spring of 2008
Lead Coordinators: Shawna Thompson and Fellowship Chair, Judith Wright

7. Reviews of Green Books & Organizations for the Flame

People of all ages at First Unitarian Church are invited to write about a book or organization that has to do with the environment. It can be one of interest to children, adults, or all ages. This column will appear in the Flame each month.

Time-Line Target: Year-Round
Lead Coordinator: Helen Deffenbacher

Additional Fundraisers:

1. We are collecting empty ink and toner cartridges through a fundraising program Cartridge World (www.cartridgeworld.com) has developed for non-profit organizations. This project will be given more publicity once our Common Room renovation has been completed (sometime in September) and our regular recycling program, managed by Matt and Barb Dewell, resumes.

Time-Line Target: Year-Round
Lead Coordinators: Barb and Matt Dewell

2. We will sell Fair Trade chocolates and nuts from Equal Exchange & Fair Trade coffee from Hill of Beans during coffee hour in the Unique Boutique. We'll also provide information about Fair Trade (pamphlets & posters) at the boutique site. And we will assist the youth in selling energy-saving light bulbs and other items they choose to sell during coffee hour.

Time-Line Target: November 4th through the end of May
Lead Coordinators: Lynette Ryder, Doris Francke, and Shawna Thompson
Lead Coordinator for Youth Fundraising: Helen Deffenbacher

3. We will ask First and Second Church vegetarians to help us host a vegetarian fundraising luncheon after church. We will provide information about the impact of a vegetarian diet on the environment and global warming.

Time-Line Target: Spring of 2008
Lead Coordinators:

* See the Green Audit for our committee's Wish List of green items we plan to purchase for First Unitarian Church from our fundraising projects.