



Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth

PO Box 11 Lyme, NH 03768
www.uuministryforearth.org 301-588-0944

Sponsors of the Green Sanctuary Program

Creating a Green Sanctuary

A Green Sanctuary is a congregation that lives out its commitment to the Earth by creating a sustainable life style for its members as individuals and as a faith community. Sustainable living is not about our material comfort (though these choices are an important part of the overall life style); it is about choosing to live in a way that nurtures life, builds relationships, and rejects material consumption as the sole determinant of happiness.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To build awareness of societal environmental issues among UU's.
- To generate commitment for personal lifestyle changes.
- To motivate UU's to community action on environmental issues.
- To build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.
- To build awareness of and rectify environmental injustices.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Green Sanctuary Program includes a variety of environmental activities in four program focus areas which are explained in detail in the Manual. These four focus areas are:

Worship and Celebration
Environmental Justice

Religious Education
Sustainable Living

You will complete at least twelve activities or projects spread over the four focus areas. Some projects will be one-time events, others will be on-going over a period of months. Please note:

- A minimum of two activities is required in each of the first three elements, while at least four must be carried out in the category of Sustainable Living, including at least one energy conservation activity. Two additional activities can be selected from any of the four program elements.
- One social justice project will be a major on-going activity in collaboration with another congregation or organization to address an issue of environmental justice in your community or in the world.

STEP BY STEP TO BECOME A GREEN SANCTUARY

1. Establish a Green Sanctuary Committee

The Green Sanctuary Committee is officially sanctioned (by whatever process is the usual practice for the congregation) as an on-going (not temporary) committee with a designated chair or contact person. Members will represent all aspects of the congregational life, including RE, worship, communications, buildings and grounds, finance, social justice, and any others that are relevant in your congregation. The committee's charter will declare the congregation's intention to seek recognition as a Green Sanctuary church. The Green Sanctuary committee will coordinate activities and document their completion. The role of this committee is not to "carry the water" of the environmental commitment, letting the rest of the congregation off the hook. Instead, the committee will facilitate planning and provide logistical support to the congregation so that the activities can be accomplished more effectively.

2. Conduct an Environmental Audit

The first Green Sanctuary action should be an environmental audit, providing a snapshot of where the congregation stands with respect to their environmental behaviors. The audit establishes the baseline or starting point for your program. The audit will include at least:

- Energy usage patterns and current conservation practices;
- Compliance with local recycling procedures;
- Church policies for use of non-disposable materials and non-toxic cleaning supplies;
- Church policies govern purchasing and investing;
- Landscaping policies directing use of native species, landscape chemicals, etc.;
- Religious education programs relating to the environment for both children and adults;
- Worship practices integrating the wisdom of the Earth;
- Social action projects or activities relating to environmental justice.

The audit may consist of a series of separate inquiries by different people who then create a comprehensive analysis of the relevant environmental issues in your congregational life.

3. Create an Action Plan

Develop an Action Plan to complete the dozen activities your congregation has chosen, including a communications strategy for sharing information about and inviting participation in the activities. Include both time-line targets and names of lead coordinators for each of the twelve actions. The Action Plan is a road map to help you think through your strategy and check the logistics of your program elements. If circumstances change, plans are no longer appropriate, or barriers for a particular project are insurmountable, the Plan may be adjusted.

4. Apply for Green Sanctuary Candidacy and complete all activities.

Using the form in the Manual (or available separately from the UU Ministry for Earth office), submit your Application for Candidacy, and your \$100 application fee to the UUMFE office (address at the top). Then carry out the activities in your Action Plan.

5. Apply for Green Sanctuary Accreditation

After completing all twelve projects or activities in your Action Plan, usually over a period of a year or two, the congregation must vote affirmatively to apply for accreditation as a Green Sanctuary. Using the Application for Accreditation, document all the activities you have completed. Submit your final report to the UUMFE office.