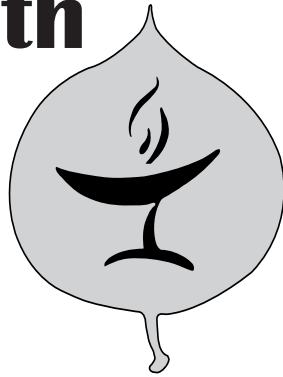


The Seventh Principle Project



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Sponsors of the
Green Sanctuary
Program

Newsletter

Seventh Principle Project Celebrates First Green Sanctuary Congregations at GA in Quebec

Annual Meeting/Green Sanctuary Celebration

by Katherine Jesch

This year's Annual Meeting served as the setting for the first ever celebration of newly accredited Green Sanctuary congregations. Five congregations were honored with the presentation of beautiful frames certificates: First UU Church of Portland, Oregon; First UU Church of Albuquerque, New Mexico; UU Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich, Vermont; UU Fellowship of Morristown, New Jersey; and the Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia-Port Huron in Ontario. We were very proud that the first group of Green Sanctuaries covered the continent from east to west, including both Canada and the US, and represented congregations from among the smallest and the largest in the denomination. These congregations proved that anyone can accomplish the program!

Representatives from three of the congregations were able to attend the celebration to receive their certificates in person, and they each shared a few reflections on their experience with the process. All five provided display materials to illustrate their accomplishments for everyone to see.

A brief business meeting preceded the celebration to bring members up to date and make decisions on routine affairs. After more than a decade of service to the Seventh Principle Project, including the last two years as Board co-chair, Jim Scott has retired from front line involvement on the Board. His lifetime of commitment to Earth healing was formally recognized with presentation of a certificate of appreciation and a standing ovation. He won't get off that easily, however, as he is still serving on the Advisory Council. We expect to continue receiving his invaluable contributions for a long time to come.

A slate of new Board Members were introduced and voted into office by acclamation. Continuing Board members are Steve Maier who will serve as Board chair, Dianne Rahm continuing as Treasurer, Lyn Stangland Cameron, and Claudia Kern. New members include Rick North, Sharon Roberts, and Kathleen Schomaker. Katherine Jesch is continuing service as the Director of Environmental Ministry, a part-time staff position for administrative and program support and coordination of the Green Sanctuary Program.

As our program grows, the need for financial support is growing as well. Shortly after General Assembly, we were notified by the Internal Revenue Service that we have qualified for tax exempt status as a 501(C)(3) organization. That means all contributions are fully tax deductible. Also, in order to assure continuing support for the Green Sanctuary program, the Board proposed, and the membership agreed to impose a \$100.00 application fee for candidate congregations, beginning in July, 2002. ~



“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

-John Muir

Seventh Principle Project Program Offerings at General Assembly

by Katherine Jesch

The 2002 General Assembly in Quebec City was a major milestone for the Seventh Principle Project. Our program was larger than ever, including workshops, presentations, and the first ever celebration recognizing five newly accredited Green Sanctuary congregations. By collaborating with other groups, we were able to co-sponsor three presentations with tools and philosophies for sustainable living.

In an inspiring presentation, Roger Gottlieb, Professor of Philosophy at Worcester Institute near Boston, offered a powerful vision of the possibilities emerging from connecting our religious vision with political action. Based on his new book *Joining Hands: Religion and Politics Together for Social Change*, he challenged us to put our faith to work with renewed commitment for healing the earth.

On the practical side, Warren Leon of the Union of Concerned Scientists spoke about how to choose priorities in the never ending struggle for sustainable living. Looking at the relationship between consumer's actions and the environment in his presentation on "Congregations, Consumers, and Environmental Choices," he explored concrete, practical, and effective actions we could take to reduce our impact on the Earth.

A third presentation brought the matter of sustainable energy directly into our congregations when Lara Hoke, outreach coordinator for Massachusetts Power and Light, and Don Kane, member of Mainline Unitarian Church in Devon, PA, discussed green energy initiatives for UU congregations. They shared information about currently existing clean, renewable energy options that are available to both churches and residential dwellings.

Our thanks for collaborating with the Seventh Principle Project go to the New Hampshire-Vermont District and to UU in the Pines. Their support made it possible for us to offer a more diverse program than we have in the past. In addition to our offerings, there were at least 14 other program sessions on environmental topics. It is clear that concern about our earth and how we are living on it is a priority for Unitarian Universalists. ♪

Earth Charter Endorsed at General Assembly

by Steven Maier, Board Chair of the Seventh Principle Project

UU's from across North America concluded this year's General Assembly, held this past June in Quebec

City, Canada, by passing a resolution (an Action of Immediate Witness or AIW) endorsing the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter, a declaration of fundamental principles for a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society, embraces the view that the problems of environmental degradation, ethnic and religious conflict, violence, and social and economic injustice are all interdependent. The effort to bring the AIW to the GA was led by the Seventh Principle Project and by UU's for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

In endorsing the Earth Charter, the delegates to the General Assembly called for all member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to do likewise, for the UUA to communicate the Assembly's endorsement to all members of Congress, and for the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office to seek endorsement by the United Nations in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

Sixteen principles and sixty-two sub-principles are outlined in four main categories of the Earth Charter: "Respect and Care for the Community of Life," "Ecological Integrity," "Social and Economic Justice," and "Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace." The complete text of the document is available on the website (www.earthcharter.org) which also contains extensive information about the worldwide Earth Charter Initiative.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg is now over, but it is not too late for congregations interested in endorsing the Earth Charter. Momentum is still building for organizations to make statements of support. If you are interested in bringing a resolution to your congregation, please feel free to borrow language from the Action of Immediate Witness passed at GA. It can be found at www.uua.org/actions/immediate/02earth_charter.html. You may also contact Steve Maier (802-388-7669, smaier@adelphia.net) for additional information. ♪

Other News from General Assembly

The General Assembly also passed a groundbreaking Statement of Conscience calling upon the United States to explore alternatives to the "war on drugs" and additional resolutions in support of the International Criminal Court, calling for peace and justice in the Middle East, supporting legislation to create a U.S. Department of Peace, and celebrating Quebec's recent passage of a law legalizing same-sex unions. More than 4,100 attended this year's gathering which included worship services, workshops, and business meetings of the UUA. The UUA website (www.uua.org) includes extensive coverage of the General Assembly. ♪

Green Sanctuary Program Progress

Green Sanctuary Movement Continues to Spread

Report by Katherine Jesch, Director of Environmental Ministry

Requests for Green Sanctuary Program information continue to arrive at a record pace. Since General Assembly we have distributed more than a hundred Green Sanctuary manuals, responding to requests from at least 40 congregations and individuals. Interest seems to be especially high in the midwest region, representing about a quarter of recent inquiries.

Five congregations received certificates in the first ever award ceremony for accredited Green Sanctuaries at General Assembly last June. This elite list included First Unitarian in Portland, OR; First Unitarian in Albuquerque, NM; Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia and Port Huron, Ontario; First Unitarian in Harrisburg, PA; Morristown, NJ, Unitarian Fellowship; and Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich, VT.

Congratulations to each! (See article on GA events on the front page of this newsletter.) Just a couple of weeks later, a sixth congregation, the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, submitted their application for accreditation as well. Rather than waiting until next summer, I traveled to Harrisburg in November to present their certificate at a Sunday worship service for the congregation.

The roster of candidate congregations is growing rapidly to a current count of 15, six of which were accepted in the last three months. At least half of these can be expected to complete their programs by June for recognition at the General Assembly. A number of other congregations are setting up their committees and completing the initial requirements to qualify for candidacy. We are very proud of these congregations that are making the commitment to become Green Sanctuaries.

The hectic pace of workshops and concerts with Jim Scott kept both of us on the road last spring. An on-site workshop continues to be an effective tool for getting congregations started on their Green Sanctuary Program. We have also been grateful to have some congregations use the workshop as an opportunity to raise funds for the Seventh Principle Project to support the program. Elgin, Illinois, hosted a very successful workshop in September which included 61 participants from 15 congregations, four of which were not UU churches! I am now scheduling my Spring travel, so congregations interested

in hosting a workshop or other Green sanctuary event should contact me soon to get it on my calendar.

New Task Forces to Gather Resources

In other news, we plan to initiate at least two task forces this winter to extend the resources available for the various Action Areas in the Green Sanctuary program. A great deal of information and technical advice has been developed by other organizations, but little of it has been “packaged” in a way that is focused on the needs of UU congregations. The task forces will identify the specifically UU aspects of the issues and develop materials in a way that would be most useful for our congregations.

Environmental education is critical for our religious development, but finding the curriculum resources, especially for children, is a little like finding a needle in a haystack ... you have to know where to look. While existing materials from other sources can be easily adapted for adults (such as the courses from the Northwest Environment Institute described in the article on page 4), curricula for children can be more problematic. I am aware that curricula have been developed at numerous congregations across the continent, but there is no mechanism to coordinate reviews, publicize, and distribute these materials to other congregations. RE specialists are needed to inventory and review existing texts, identify gaps in the subjects covered, and make this information easily available to RE professionals and teachers. It's time to get this project started. Eventually it may even be possible to develop and publish a new comprehensive curriculum.

Two other topics I hope to target are green building and environmental justice. These issues consistently attract the most inquiries for advice and assistance on how address them in the Green Sanctuary program. Anyone interested in working on one of these topics should contact me as soon as possible. I am now recruiting participants on all three, and intend to have the task forces up and running soon after the first of the year. Also, if there are other topics you would like to tackle, let me know that, too, as there is no limit to the number of task forces that can be set up if there are champions to lead them.

Green Sanctuary Manual

And now, the news everyone has been waiting for: The revised edition of the Green Sanctuary Manual is still under construction. Target date for its availability is the first week in January. Based on our two years

of experience, we are clarifying and adjusting the accreditation process to make it less ambiguous. We are also describing the activities in a more flexible way to accommodate the varying capacities of congregations with various sizes and resources, and the different issues in the local area of the church. The references and resources will be updated for each of the Action Areas to take advantage of the wealth of new material that has become available more recently. Watch for the announcement of availability on our web site and in our winter newsletter.

Canadian Partnership

With growing participation by Canadian Congregations in the Green Sanctuary program, we knew we had to take a special look at this partnership as the new institutional structure evolves for the Canadian Unitarian Council. It turns out to have some wonderful possibilities.

Katherine Jesch recently traveled to a regional gathering of Unitarian churches in Waterloo, Ontario to participate in a Green Sanctuary workshop. She presented a summary of the Program to the participants and answered questions about how to get started. The event also featured representatives from three of the candidate Green Sanctuary churches in Ontario who shared their experiences with the Program. The Sarnia-Port Huron Fellowship, the first certified Green Sanctuary in Canada was featured, along with the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton and First Unitarian Church of Waterloo. Phil de Gruchy of Waterloo coordinated and hosted the workshop.

Mary Bennett, Executive Director of the CUC has offered to filter Canadian monies for us to ease the conversion of dollars across the border. Canadian members will pay their SPP dues to the CUC office, who will periodically send a check to us in US dollars. This eliminates a major barrier to attracting Canadian members. Next we'll explore the mechanics of making Green Sanctuary manuals available through the CUC office.

Canadians have a strong environmental consciousness, and don't want to be left out of any opportunities for making a visible statement about their values through their religious affiliation. Neither do they want to reinvent a Canadian organization to duplicate what SPP does within the UUA. This promises to be a very productive relationship on both sides of the border. ☞

Other Seventh Principle Project News

It's Official – We're Tax Exempt!

On July 10th, we were both pleased and relieved to receive notice from the Internal Revenue Service that the Seventh Principle Project application for tax-exempt status has been approved! This is important for our members, as this makes your dues and other contributions tax-exempt, but it also important for the organization, as it opens up wider possibilities for grant sources. This brings us one step closer to being able to realize our goals of more extensive involvement with congregations throughout the continent, and adequate compensation for the Director of Environmental Ministry. Please keep the Seventh Principle Project in mind as you do your year-end accounting and look for last minute tax deductions. ☞

Earth Institute Discussion Courses

The Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) develops environmental education programs that motivate and educate individuals and organizations to protect the earth. Congregations from California to New England, and in Canada as well, are finding these curricula helpful in stimulating discussions about environmental values and lifestyles. NWEI offers a variety of programs in workplaces, homes, centers of faith, neighborhoods, and other places where groups of 8 to 12 can meet.

NWEI has produced a series of four discussion courses: Exploring Deep Ecology, Voluntary Simplicity, Discovering a Sense of Place, and Choices for Sustainable Living. There is also a resource guide and a follow-up program for each course. Nationwide, these courses have been offered by local organizers in more than 260 communities in 46 states. NWEI encourages formation of local organizations to coordinate distribution of the courses and train course facilitators. Across the country, local Earth Institutes have been greatly influenced by efforts of UU activists such as Fred and Claire Mayer who started the Garden State Earth Institute several years ago.

The Potomac Valley Earth Institute is another of these organizations starting in the Washington, DC, area with involvement of Bob Ross and others at the UU Congregation of Fairfax in Oakton, VA. The Potomac Valley Earth Institute is a project of EcoStewards Alliance, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to helping individuals craft and cultivate the practices of Earth-centered living while working together to strengthen our bonds with nature.

NWEI programs are organized around three key principles:

An earth-centered ethic promoting individual responsibility for the Earth.

The practice of engaged simplicity to enrich life and reduce personal impact on the Earth.

A dedication to living fully in place and protecting the unique ecosystem in which you live.

The ultimate objectives of the discussion groups are to motivate individuals to examine and transform personal values and habits, to accept responsibility for the Earth, and to act on that commitment.

The courses run from 8 to 9 sessions each, one session per week, and consist of small (8 to 10 person) groups of people meeting in a home, work place, faith center, or other facility. Typically, courses are held for 1 to 1-1/2 hours for each session. The following briefly describes the specific purposes of the four courses offered:

Voluntary Simplicity: To understand the meaning of voluntary simplicity, to explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the Earth, and to acknowledge the connection between our lifestyle choices and the condition of the Earth.

Deep Ecology: To clarify earth-related values through discussions about Deep Ecology, to discover how personal values affect the way we view and treat the Earth, and to understand what it means to take personal responsibility for the Earth.

Discovering a Sense of Place: To understand the meaning of a bioregional perspective and what it would mean to develop one, to consider the benefits of consciously developing an intimate relationship with your place, and to explore what it might mean to protect the place where you live, the Potomac Valley bioregion.

Choices for Sustainable Living: To explore the meaning of sustainability, to consider the ties between lifestyle choices and their impact on the earth, and to learn about steps that can be taken to move toward ecologically sustainable organizations, lifestyles, and communities.

Further information on NWEI and on the discussion courses may be found on their website at www.nwei.org . ☞

Green Sanctuary Membership Update

As we go to press, 110 individuals, households, and organizations have committed to membership in the Seventh Principle for the year June 2002-June 2003! In addition, the following congregations have stepped forward to participate in the new Congregational Membership voted upon at GA last June:

First UU Church of Cincinnati, Ohio
First UU of Hamilton, Ontario
Granite Peak UU, Prescott, Arizona
Live Oak UU Congregation, Goleta, California
UU Congregation of Atlanta
UU Fellowship of Flagstaff, Arizona
UU Fellowship of Pottstown, Pennsylvania
UU Church of Elgin, Illinois
Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, Northampton, Massachusetts
UU Congregation of the Upper Valley, Norwich, Vermont

Your memberships and additional contributions are vital to the Seventh Principle Project. We are hoping to have a strong, visible presence at General Assembly this year where crowds of 10,000 or more are expected. Your support will help to make it possible to attract top speakers and offer diverse programming. There is great urgency for UUs to become activists on the issues of environmental justice, energy and global warming, sustainable living, clean air and water, preserving the web of life, and more. Thank you for helping to give concerned UUs a voice and a model for limiting the

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

Newsletter News:

Help us reduce costs by receiving your newsletter electronically. The newsletter is available as a PDF document requiring only the free Adobe Acrobat Reader to open, view and print. The reader can be downloaded from www.adobe.com. To receive future newsletters via e-mail, please contact Katherine Jesch at kathjesch@earthlink.net. ☞

The Seventh Principle Project Needs You!

Help our organization grow by joining us today! We are a volunteer organization dedicated to affirming and promoting the Seventh Principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Annual membership is \$25.00. Please join or renew today by completing the membership form below and sending it along with your check to :

Seventh Principle Project
PO Box 1523
Arlington, VA 22210

Name: _____

Street or PO Box: _____

City: _____

State or Province: _____ **Zip or Postal Code:** _____

Congregation: _____

email address: _____

Check here if you'd like to receive your newsletter electronically: _____

If you have questions regarding the Seventh Principle Project, the Green Sanctuary Program or membership, please contact us at membership@uasp.org or contact the office at (703)-920-3615.



The Seventh Principle Project

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